

Asian studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: a retrospective

Lei Tang

In the winter of 1963, before visiting the African countries, Premier Zhou Enlai submitted 'A Report on Strengthening Research about Foreign Countries' to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which had been formerly endorsed by the Central Foreign Affairs Leading Group. In the report, Zhou proposed to strengthen research on foreign affairs by establishing institutes of area studies in response to the changed international status of China as a big country with the world's attention. This report was approved by Chairman Mao on 31 December 1963. After that, area studies in China took off.

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) is a case in point. It was originally the Philosophy and Social Sciences Division under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, formed in June 1955. It was during the 1960s and 1970s that CASS gradually took shape and developed its capacities in Asian studies. The main body of Asian studies at CASS today is composed of a number of administrative offices and institutes founded prior to its very own establishment and

now generally associated with international studies. For example, the Institute of West Asian and African Studies was established in 1961. In 1965, the Research Institute of Soviet Union was established and later became part of the CPC Central Foreign Liaison Department and finally absorbed into CASS in the early 1980s.

After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Chinese government resumed its promotion of research on humanities and social sciences and proposed new development agendas of area studies. A number of new institutes were added after the establishment of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1977. They included the Institute of Japanese Studies (1978); the Institute of South Asian Studies (1978), renamed the Institute of South Asian and Southeast Asian Studies in 1986; as well as the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies.

In 2006, CASS restored the Academic Division system [xuebu zhi 学部制] and established five divisions to cover Literature, History and Philosophy [wenshizhe 文史哲], Economics [jingji 经济], Sociology, Politics and Law [shehui zhengfa 社会政法], International

Studies [guoji yanjiu 国际研究] as well as Marxist Studies [makesi zhuyi yanjiu 马克思主义研究]. While bits of Asian studies can be found across all the divisions, the main institutes are in the Academic Division of International studies, namely the Institute of Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, the Institute of Asian Pacific Studies (renamed as the National Institute of International Strategy in 2011), the Institute of West Asian and African Studies, as well as the Institute of Japanese Studies. These institutes cover the regions North, South, Southeast, West, East and Northeast Asia. Besides the research institutes, there are more than a dozen non-entity research centers of Asian studies, which coordinate interdisciplinary and trans-institutional research. The latter includes the Gulf Research Center, the Research Center of Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific Areas, and the Korea Research Center. In March 2002, with the support of the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies (KFAS), the CASS Center for Asian Studies was established to promote Asian studies at CASS through funding projects and international exchanges. The CASS Center is one of the 18 Asian research centers the KFAS has sponsored in Asia with two-thirds of them in China.

Today, CASS has become China's largest, most influential and comprehensive academic organization. It undertakes the dual roles of academic research and governmental think tank. Hundreds of researchers here are engaged in research on regional and international issues, and about one hundred

of them are engaged in Asian studies, with 40 scholars in the Institute of Japanese Studies alone. On the one hand, the researchers are engaged in basic academic research, including organizing and compiling comprehensive introductions to the latest developments in different areas in Asia on a large scale (all Asian countries have their respective introductions), and hosting such research reports as *Central Asian Yellow Book*, *Annual Report on Development in the Middle East and Africa* and *Japan Blue Book*. On the other hand, they also provide policy advice to the government and write reports for internal circulation.

CASS has more than 80 national academic journals. The ones related to Asian studies are *World Economics and Politics*, *West Asia and Africa*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia Pacific Studies*, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*, *Japan Studies*, *Contemporary Korea*. It supervises more than 100 national-level academic associations, including the Chinese Association of West Asian and African Studies, Chinese Association of Asia Pacific Studies, Chinese Association for South Asian Studies, etc. It owns five national-level publishing houses. Through these academic institutions and platforms, CASS also plays the important role of organizing and promoting Asian studies across the country.

Lei Tang Associate Professor and Secretary General, Center for International China Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
tanglei@cass.org.cn

Building global cities in Asia. Shared experiences and challenges.

Wei Tang

In order to explain the global influence of cities like New York, London and Tokyo, the theory of global city is proposed, which in turn becomes the developmental vision and reference point for leading cities in major developing countries. The rapid moving up of the Chinese cities in the global city rankings has aroused great interest among researchers. It becomes a focus of attention at my home institute, the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, to study the internal logic and developmental path of the global cities in China, especially in comparison with the archetypical ones and the other emerging ones.

Recently, I have begun to examine the strategic planning and related policy instruments of the leading cities in the BRICS countries, namely Shanghai, Johannesburg, Mumbai, Sao Paulo and Moscow. I started my field study in Mumbai and New Delhi, because I think China and India share the most common experiences and challenges among all BRICS countries. When comparing the emerging global cities of China and India, I couldn't help noticing their similar trajectory of development: to reform the domestic system in accordance with the requirements of the international economic system, to upgrade the industrial structure with much emphasis on producer services and to renew the urban space through gentrification. Obviously, all of these institutional adjustments and policy instruments are responding to the fast globalization, which is particularly promoted by neo-liberalism and informatization. Though the degrees of achievements vary in these leading cities, the global city policy indeed brings significant economic growth and higher ranks in the world city system. Thus, these leading cities have been turned into emerging global cities.

However, the institutional setting, resource abundance, infrastructure and cultural atmosphere of the emerging global cities in China and India are quite different from those of New York, London and Tokyo, which are considered the archetypical global cities. The former all have long histories,

profound humanistic traditions and huge populations. Different races, castes, tribes, strata and communities coexist, presenting unimaginable complexity. The impact of the 'global city policy' on these cities with such complexity deserves examination.

The global city policy has brought huge changes, particularly in the social structure, which is far different from the current archetypical global cities. There are not only high-end professionals in high-end producer services, but also the employees who provide everyday services to the professional class; there are not only a large number of formal manufacturing workers in large-scale manufacturing industry, but also a large influx of immigrants to the fairly large-scale informal economy. As a result, unlike the polarization of income distribution caused by occupational structures in New York and other global cities, the number and proportion of high-end professionals in those of China and India are relatively limited, while manufacturing, low-end service sector and informal economy are so large that a very small number of professionals are at the top of income distribution while a large number of them are at the bottom. In between, there is a certain percentage of the middle class. The layers are typically pyramidal.

The key to the difference between the archetypical and emerging global cities lies in the urbanization stage of developing countries. The surges in population have made the cities unable to meet the basic needs such as housing and transportation, resulting in outbreaks of urban diseases, traffic congestion, pollution and social disorder. The industrial upgrading policy further made it impossible for cities to generate enough job vacancies, resulting in the fast expansion of informal economy and the spread of slums. This is particularly evident in the case of India. The mushrooming of new townships on the outskirts of the cities leads to a substantial



Above: Coexistence of formal and informal economy in Dharavi, India: A food factory in the slum producing cookies for the local big hotels (10 December 2018).

reduction in farming land and let the cities sprawl beyond any limitation. This is observed in both cases of China and India.

Hence, when orchestrating global city policies, the emerging global cities have to maintain a balance: to safeguard the social welfare for all stakeholders, especially the poor and the vulnerable groups; to coordinate the industrial upgrading and the domestic labor market; to enact urban preservation and renewal; as well as to better integrate the global development system into the existing urban system.

Unfortunately, with the outbreak of the financial crisis and the reversal of the world economic cycle, the emerging global cities, as they are so dependent on the world market, become more vulnerable. Thus, when seeking world-class influence, emerging world cities need to not only rethink the profound implications of globalization for their own development, but also to examine their own development strategies from the perspective of internal integration and complexity.

Compared with other emerging global cities in the BRICS, especially India, Shanghai has achieved considerable success in becoming a global city under the national reform and opening-up strategy. It is the rising node in the global city system. It also serves as the

engine of China's modernization and the bridgehead for China's going out strategy. In the global city theory, Asia's global cities like Tokyo and Seoul are considered as nation-led while western cities like New York and London are market-led. It is well understood that Shanghai falls into the nation-led type, and even more so than Tokyo and Seoul. Efficient public services supplied by the state, such as labor, healthcare and education, matter much in the process. Besides that, the informal governance based on a household registration system and local social network, which are indeed of Chinese characteristics, has effectively decreased the negative impact of global city practices. Thus, for any emerging global city in the BRICS to succeed in its global city policy, it must appropriately deal with the inherent complexity of its own development stage.

Wei Tang Associate Professor, Institute of International Relations, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
tangruc@126.com