Mapping Transformation of Nineteenth-Century Chinese Cities within China's Incorporation Process

Abstract

During the 19th century, China's socioeconomic geography experienced unprecedented spatial changes. Through these spatial transformations, which were caused by the penetration of western capitalism, Chinese cities morphed into epicenters of uneven international trade between Western powers and China. These geographical changes also played a significant role in the establishment of economically advanced *cities* within the broader special economic zone concept and China's Deng and post-Deng era economic development. By examining the major transformations having taken place in 19th century Chinese cities, I investigate unexplained or neglected transformations in three areas: (1) the decline of interdependent inland cities connected by waterways; (2) the simultaneous rise of independent port cities under the influence of the capitalist world economy; and (3) the forging of port city–hinterland relationships in connection with the world economy. It helps to understand the role that port cities have played in the development of China's historical capitalism.

Keywords: Port city, port city–hinterland relationships, China's incorporation process, world-systems analysis, nineteenth-century China.

Introduction

Following the 1978 economic reform of China, the rise of special economic zones (SEZs), such as Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Xiamen, Tianjin, Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, and Hainan, laid the groundwork for the success of China's capitalist transition and continuous economic development throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Under various pragmatic economic policies and the rhetoric that "It is good for some people (areas) to get rich first," the rapid growth of these SEZ cities also led to the rapid economic development throughout China (Ge 1999; Asian Development Bank 2007; FIAS 2008; Zeng 2010). Relying on statistical data collected by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Chinese government, social scientists investigating the growth of China's contemporary capitalist economy have tended to focus on the rise of SEZs in the late twentieth century, contrasting these reforms from late Qing and Mao era economic history (Yao 2011). Notwithstanding, praise for China's late twentieth century economic policies is often transformed into scorn and ignorance when it comes to trying to understand nineteenth-century China. For many social scientists, this is considered China's Dark Age, the period otherwise known as "the sleeping giant" (or the "sick man of Asia").

This theoretical ignorance, at least partially, has something in common with an older research paradigm in the field of comparative historical sociology: late imperial Chinese cities were often considered, in the comparative historical sense, to be underdeveloped spaces devoid of modernization. The study of Chinese cities in the context of comparative history has a tradition going back to Max Weber. Weber (1958; [1922] 1978) examined how only Westernized cities had an affinity for the development of capitalism. Moreover, according to Weber, topics related to China, including late imperial Chinese cities, were necessarily subordinate to his primary dichotomy of the West's modern rationality and non-West's

enchantment. Weber's Western-oriented outlook has bequeathed us the city historical and the comparative historical sociology perspectives.[1] Consequently, most subsequent historical narratives of Western cities have drawn upon Weber's theoretical frame (Elliot and McCrone 1982; Saunders 1986).

In contrast with comparative historical sociologists who draw upon Weber's theoretical frame by reproducing a fixed West–China divide, recent historians assert that (late) imperial Chinese cities also possessed what Weber argued were characteristics unique to Western cities (e.g., a rising urban proto-proletariat and city autonomy).[2] Before long, however, this theoretical frame came to face two unexpected obstacles: the lack of attention to Western impacts and an overemphasis on the city-centered research paradigm. First, the more that recent historians have focused on unique and indigenous elements in explaining the development of late imperial Chinese cities, the less apparent the historical impact of Western capitalism on the development of nineteenth-century Chinese cities becomes. In fact, Western-oriented capitalism is sometimes so taken for granted that there is sometimes little to no discussion of the impacts of the Westernized world economy. At best, this predisposes Chinese historians to view port cities as places in which a mixed or hybridized Chinese–Western political economy prevailed. However, describing these nineteenth-century Chinese port cities simply as a mixture of Chinese and Western influences would not be accurate because such descriptions overlook the economic, political, and military pressure applied by England to coerce China to open her ports to trade in 1840s (King 1976). Considering that the loss of the first Opium War and the opening of ports marked the beginning of a period of stagnation for the Chinese-centered world order (Hao and Wang 1980; Spence 1991; Platt 2018), the evolution of nineteenth-century Chinese port cities might more accurately reflect British colonial power or the relentless expansion of the West. Second, contemporary historians have been increasingly concerned with the spatial division between the city (or

town) and country. This relatively narrow focus on the city has unfortunately ingrained an increasingly parochial perspective, thus leading to the omission of the relationship between the city and countryside, which often felt pressure from Western sources. In sum, while recent Chinese historians have aimed to overcoming the dominant Eurocentric perspective, their studies remain limited by two debilitating problems: the inability to provide a global historical perspective and their failure to account for the city–hinterland relationship in the context of China's nineteenth-century spatial transformation.

For this paper, instead of relying on the dominant view of Chinese historians, I will borrow from China's incorporation process stemming from the world-systems analysis. This world-systems approach is used for two reasons; first, because key aspects of the transformation of nineteenth-century Chinese cities lies in the interaction between these cities and the world economy. Second, it enables us to investigate trimodal relationships (i.e., port city, hinterland, and world economy) in the evolution of China's incorporation process. The focus on China's geographical transformation in the context of the incorporation process helps to elucidate the asymmetrical relationship between the European powers and China, as well as China's transition to capitalism.

In the following section, I briefly discuss China's incorporation process and how it relates with the analysis of China's spatial transformation. From here, I go on to examine China's nineteenth-century geographic transformation, changes in major port cities, and the reconfiguration of port city–hinterland relationships combined with the dynamics of the capitalist world economy (CWE). Lastly, I investigate how the transformation of Chinese cities gave rise to such contrasting results, following the incorporation of Chinese society into the CWE.

A Theoretical Resource: China's Incorporation process into the Capitalist world-economy

In this paper, I use world-systems analysis and the incorporation framework to interpret China's nineteenth-century spatial changes. In doing so, I investigate how China's geographic changes paved the way for capitalism; this is followed by a brief discussion as to what constitutes the incorporation process, what we mean by the nineteenth-century CWE, how China became integrated into this CWE, and what happened to Chinese cities during China's incorporation process. I use these themes as a guide to begin this exploration of China's spatial reorganization. In the following section, I shall briefly explain the context of the nineteenth-century CWE and its expansion into China. This will allow us to recognize how and why China opted to shift away from its traditional and dynastic space to embrace a capitalistic and transnational space.

The Nineteenth-Century CWE and Its Expansion into China: China's Geographic Transformations

Since the emergence of the CWE in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, the CWE continued to expand its territorial boundaries. More than anything, the nineteenth-century CWE was marked by a period of massive expansion. In the course of its expansion, the CWE was spatially extended into East Asia, including China.

According to Wallerstein's conception, the outer boundary of the CWE had been growing rapidly since the mid-eighteenth century as a reaction to a long period of Kondratieff B phase (stagnation) in the CWE between 1600 and 1750. The extension of the CWE's boundary lasted long enough to keep pace with the expanded reproduction and the extended

distribution network of capitalist society (Wallerstein 1989). In the eighteenth century, new zones, such as the Indian subcontinent, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, and West Africa, entered into the CWE. The secular trend of the CWE's incorporation process had come to a climax by the late nineteenth-century or at the turn of the twentieth century; as a consequence, few external arenas remained by the early twentieth century.[3] Considering that the CWE swept China, this paper considers the nineteenth century as an important time period for interpreting China's incorporation process.

Based on this scheme, what happened during China's incorporation process? China not only underwent politico-economic changes,[4] but also an unprecedented degree of geographic reorganization over the course of this incorporation process under the influence of the CWE. Chinese port cities are the epitome this reorganization, becoming epicenters of foreign-led international trade (Murphey 1953). This transformation was largely the product of continuous pressure from the capitalist modes of production, which in turn transformed and added Chinese port cities, such as Hong Kong and Shanghai, to the production system. I argue that it was the economic interconnections of port cities with the CWE that made them the heartland of incorporation, being the first to embrace the logic of Western capitalism. Following the notions of Wallerstein and other scholars of world-systems theory, I argue that international trade, foreign concessions, and a city economy with connections to Western merchants represented a further stage of incorporation. This suggests a novel perspective of port cities under pressure from the CWE. Simultaneously, I contend that in viewing the massive transformation of the Chinese port city through the prism of capitalist transformation, we must recognize that the horizontal integration of the nineteenth-century Chinese port city that paved the way for the acceleration of China's capitalist transition.

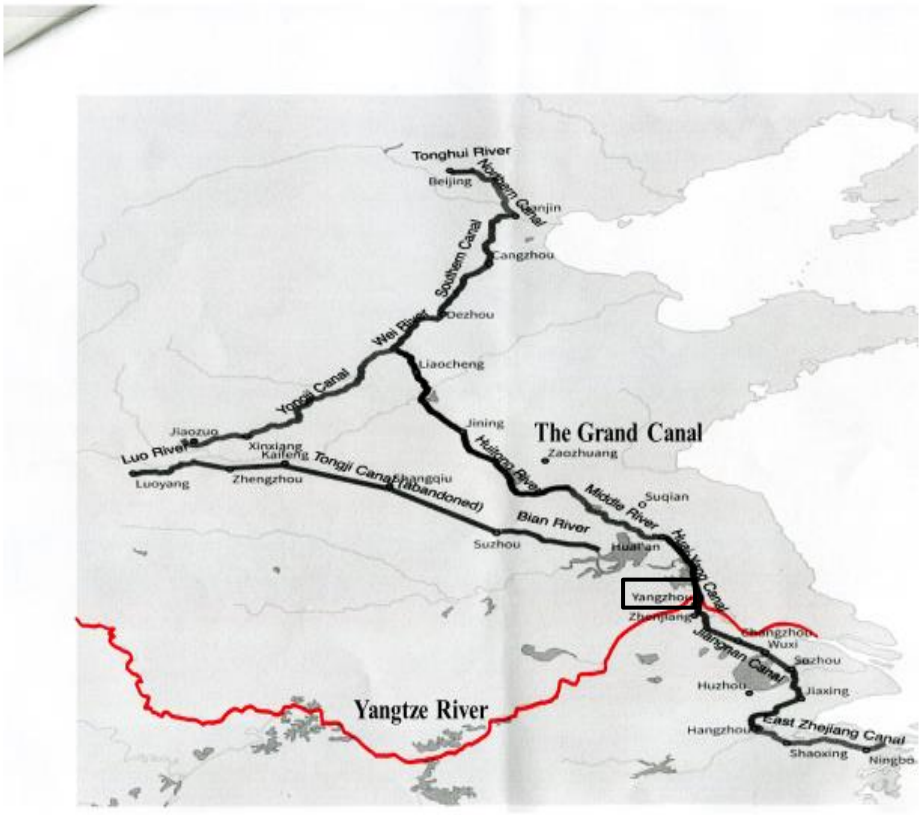
Although the relationship between Chinese port cities and the world economy is a central feature of this study, I do not intend this as a single concept. Understanding this

relationship cannot elucidate the entire picture of China's nineteenth-century spatial changes. Therefore, in order to further elucidate the spatial reconstruction of nineteenth-century China and its connection with the world economy, I will examine: (a) the gradual transition from interdependent river networks to independent coastal networks, (b) the massive transformation of major port cities as led by Western powers, and (c) the port city–hinterland relationship and how this relates to the logic of the world economy. By way of an empirical evidence-based discussion, I suggest that China's spatial changes were in fact coupled with the dynamics of the world economy.

The Transition from River Networks to Coastal Networks under the Influences of the CWE

The transformation of port cities has broader implications in terms of the gradual transition from interdependent river networks to cooperated coastal networks. Before China began to incorporate into the CWE, China's river networks, which were interlocked with waterways and the Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal, played a decisive role in the development of commerce and inland cities. In the Jiangnan region, Hangzhou and Nanking were major trading centers, populated urban areas, and economically well-developed because they were interconnected by waterways (Metzger 1972). Also, due to the development of the canal system, canal cities had already become economically developed centuries earlier. For instance, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Wuxi, Huaian, Xuzhou, and Liaocheng were already economic centers in late imperial China. Yangzhou, inter alia, experienced unprecedented economic development because it sits atop the meeting point for the Yangzi River and the Grand Canal. Consequently, Yangzhou became home to a great many markets, guild halls, accommodations, and entertainment facilities (Meywe-Fong 2003; Cho 2006).

Figure 1. Interconnections among inland cities through waterways



Note ▭ Yangzhou: In case of the Grand Canal map, I bring it from Wikipedia: Wikipedia contributors. (October 23, 2018). Grand Canal (China). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 05:38, 23 October 2018, from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grand_Canal_(China)&oldid=837408234. After that, I by myself highlight the Yangtze River (the red line).

In particular, the Grand Canal contributed to the development of merchant commercial activities and provided a convenient system of transport for tax grain under strict sea ban policies (Finnane 2004). With the exception of the Canton system, the sea route was not open for commercial use or the transport of tax grain until at least the 1840s, thus prompting the evolution of the canals under China's hydraulic system (Johns and Kuhn 1978). Under the canal system, merchant groups who made better use of the waterways enjoyed commercial advantages (Du 2015). A typical example of a merchant group with such Grand Canal advantages include the Huizhou merchants. From the beginning of the Qing regime, the Huizhou merchants had gained the trust of the Qing government by cooperating with reconstruction efforts (e.g., rebuilding schools and religious facilities, riverbank revetment,

and relief work), and by providing the Qing's military forces with financial aid. In return for politico-economic support, the Huizhou merchants could monopolize salt trade (Ho 1954; Hung 2008). In addition, the Huizhou merchants fostered a culture of generosity to ensure a stronger community. To set up public services, they showed a collegial attitude and devoted their private fortune to improve quality of life of local communities. The more their activities played a vital role in improving the quality of local communities, the more their influence expanded (Rankin 2000; Cho 2011). As the CWE penetrated into China, however, coastal cities like Amoy, Hong Kong, Fuzhou, Shantou, and Shanghai showed marked improvement in urban growth. Unlike the urban growth of Grand Canal cities, which depended entirely on domestic trade, urban growth in coastal cities was at the mercy of international trade. After the first Opium War, economic activity in the Grand Canal cities slowed because of the rise in foreign steamships transporting tribute rice (Halsey 2015). The penetration of these foreign steamships into domestic transportation meant that the transportation businesses of the Grand Canal cities began to lose ground.

The presence of the British military during the first Opium War indeed accelerated the decline of the canal economy. For instance, when the British blocked the operation of the canal system in 1842, commercial trade and the grain tribute were hit hard.[5] As the Grand Canal and waterways through the Yangzi River were considered insignificant (Marmé 2018), the economic dominance of Huizhou merchants was on the verge of collapse.

In contrast to the cities of the Grand Canal, the coastal cities came into the spotlight, becoming centers of international trade due to their easy access to sea routes and ocean shipping after China opened its ports to trade. With the integration of China's cities into the CWE, port cities were forced to cooperate under the influence of Western merchants. For instance, Canton often cooperated with Hong Kong due to the migration of Cantonese coolies overseas. Once these Cantonese coolie ships had gathered off the coast of Hong Kong, they

began to move the coolies to the plantations of Cuba or Peru. Canton and Hong Kong were also intertwined due to the migration of Cantonese *compradors*. Cantonese compradors, like Wei Yuk (Wei Yu), Robert Ho Tung (He Dong), and Law Pak Sheung (Luo Bochang) moved to Hong Kong and worked for Western companies: Wei worked for the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China in Hong Kong; He Dong for the Jardin Company in Hong Kong; and Law for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (Lee, 1991:8–9).

This geographical reorganization of Chinese cities under the influence of the CWE highlights the role of Western economic intervention, with the cooperation of port cities, in influencing the changing fortunes of Chinese cities. Drawing upon the socioeconomic transformation of the coastal cities for evidence, the following section suggests argues that the CWE penetrated the port cities. In effect, China's incorporation into the CWE was contingent upon the connection of port cities to Western merchants in nineteenth-century China.

Transformation of Major Port Cities under Pressure from the CWE

Shanghai

With international trade an integral part of the CWE, Shanghai—a major port city—became a center of European merchant-led international trade. Before the 1840s, Shanghai was a small, idyllic fishing town, just like other pre-modern Chinese city; however, after the 1840s, Shanghai became the living quarters of the British, French, and American international trading areas (Yeh 2002). Most of all, it was the remarkable and rapid development of Shanghai's infrastructure that induced Westerners to flock to the city. To a surprising degree, Shanghai had "gas lighting and a drainage system by 1862, the telegraph in 1866, … daily

newspapers in Chinese from 1872, rickshaws in 1873, electricity in 1882, running water in 1883, tram lines and the first automobiles in 1902" (Marmé 2018:101). As time passed, Shanghai's international settlement continued to grow, indicating that the foreigners who lived in the international settlements were more than satisfied with the city's amenities (Wright 1908:62).

Shanghai transformed into the heart of foreign trade, in proportion to the increase in the city's Western population (Keller, Li, and Shie 2012). Few Western merchants were permitted to enter Shanghai until 1842; however, after the Opium Wars, foreign traders flocked to Shanghai to exploit the geographical advantages provided by a trading center located alongside the Yangzi (Murphey 1970; Wakeman and Yeh 1992). Fortune concludes that "Shanghai is by far the most important station for foreign trade on the coast of China and is consequently attracting a large share of public attention" (Fortune 1847:110). Likewise, Shanghai's economic dominance, which was based on international trade, was unchallenged after the abolition of the *cohong* or *gonghang* system in the 1840s. Shanghai also served another important role in international trade, functioning as a hub for re-exportation since at least the late nineteenth century: "the trade in re-exports of Foreign goods to Foreign Countries is almost entirely centered at Shanghai. The largest market is Japan, which took Re-exports to the value of Hk. Tls. 1,624,335" (CIMC 1875:20).

As Shanghai became entrenched as the most important trading place in China, Shanghai's geographical area was enlarged. Such geographical expansion, however, represented a disintegration of the traditional inter-city relationship. In pre-modern times, the area or length of a Chinese city's plural walls was often determined by the city's political intentions or functions (Mielants 2007). In terms of city area, Beijing was 6,320 hectares in the late nineteenth century; Nanjing was 4,055 hectares; Hangzhou, Xian, and Chengdu were each about 1,200 hectares; Taiyuan 840 hectares; Wuchang 635 hectares; Guangzhou 520

hectares (Yoshinobu 2008). The size of traditional Chinese cities was structured as a hierarchical formation in accordance with their political importance or functions. In contrast with older, traditional Chinese cities that were at the mercy of patrimonial politics, the geographical expansion of Shanghai, under the influenced of the West, was derailed from the city's traditional pattern of evolution. The urban expansion of Shanghai resulted in the decline of the traditional city, while a new spatial formation emerged under the influence of the CWE.

Another significant vestige of Shanghai's transformation is also evident in its landscape. As King (1990:1) explicitly noted, the "physical and spatial urban form actually constitute as well as represent much of social and cultural existence." Shanghai's Westernized landscape, as seen in house decoration, malls, arcades, and so on, provide insights into rapidity of the changes that swept through the city. In the 1880s, in particular, travelers to Shanghai were confronted with an authentic European-style landscape in the Zhang Garden (Yue 2002). Shanghai's cityscape somewhat reflected the city's rapid assimilation of Western culture. More importantly, Shanghai's embrace of Westernized housing architecture proves evidence of China's acculturation and played a major role in stimulating the consumption of Western culture. The emergence of Westernized housing in the transition to capitalism did not, in fact, lead to an increase in demand for Western images (or messages), but in the consumption of "the West." To paraphrase Baudrillard ([1970] 1998:26), the appearance of Westernized housing in Shanghai cannot be defined by its use but rather by what it signifies; and what it signifies is almost entirely determined by Chinese people's longing for Western culture. In this sense, the emergence of Western housing in Shanghai was a fetish of Western modernity to which Chinese people aspired, rendering old, indigenous, and traditional architectures valueless and inferior against Western culture.

Hong Kong

Another city whose transformation serves to illustrate its incorporation into the CWE is Hong Kong, which was turned into an international trading port during the second half of the nineteenth century. Before 1800, Hong Kong had been a small island, its inhabitants' relying primarily on fisheries to produce an income despite an increase in the island's population and level of agricultural development during the Mongol era. However, Hong Kong was transformed into an international harbor and settlement after the 1840s. Moreover, Hong Kong saw a significant increase in the frequency of Western architecture corresponding with a rise in the number of foreign settlements (Warner 1979). In addition, the increased importation of European manufactured goods saw Hong Kong became a place par excellence for international trade in the mid-nineteenth century (Kuo 2009). As an economic center of Western expansion, Hong Kong controlled over a fifth of China's total exports and more than one-third of its import trade by the 1880s. The *Hong Kong Daily Express* (July 20, 1899) painted a portrait of proud Hong Kong commerce: "Hong Kong being an absolutely free port for the entrance at all foreign goods … is the entrepôt for merchandise destined for other ports in the Orient, and well established steamship lines radiate from this center in every direction". This was not an exaggeration.

Since Hong Kong was opened to Western merchants, many Western companies established commercial enterprises related to international shipping. Among these Western companies, Jardine Matheson and Company took the lead in Hong Kong's international trade. After Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1843, Jardine Matheson and Company opened an office in the East Point of Hong Kong, eventually also moving its head office from Scotland to Hong Kong (Connell 2003:113). Jardine Matheson and Company established much of Hong Kong's commercial and trading infrastructure, like storage buildings, docks,

and shopping parades. Indeed, the company established Hong Kong's first ice plant, cotton textile factory, and sugar mill, as well as the Hong Kong Tramways and public transport system. Numerous other Western corporations also entered Hong Kong. Hong Kong newspaper advertisements for various shipping-related businesses (e.g., maritime insurance companies—see Figure 2) or ship-related workers (e.g., practice engineer—see Figure 3) reveal the extent to which Hong Kong had already developed as a center for international trade.

Figure 2. An advertisement of the Marine Insurance Company
(source: January 3, 1872. The Daily Advertiser and Shipping Gazette)

China and Japan Marine Insurance Company.

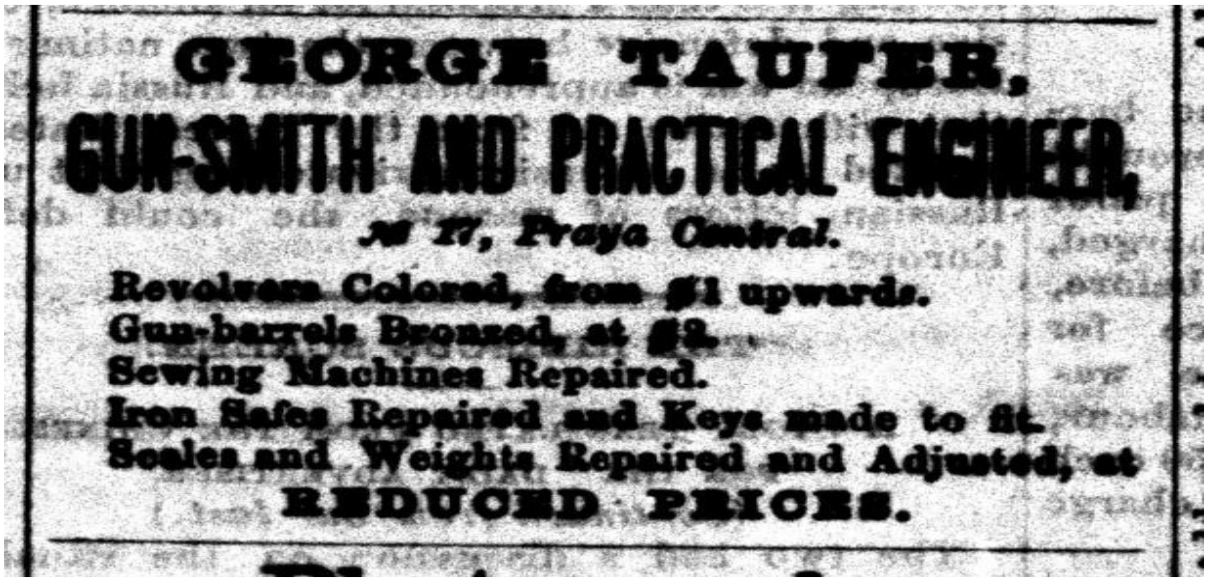
THIS Company grants Policies on Marine risks to all parts of the world at current rates.

In additional to the usual Brokerage, and to a return as heretofore of thirty per cent (30 %) of the annual Nett profits of the Company made *pro rata* on all Nett Premia contributed, a further bonus out of the said profits may be declared payable in a like manner to such contributors only, as at the time of contributing business on and after the 1st January 1872, shall be registered as Shareholders, in the Company's Books.

Wm. PUSTAU & Co.,
Agents.

Hongkong, Jan. 1, 1872.

Figure 3. A Self-advertisement of a Practical Engineer
(source: January 10, 1872. The Daily Advertiser and Shipping Gazette)



GEORGE TAUFER,
GUN-SMITH AND PRACTICAL ENGINEER,
№ 17, Praya Central.

Revolvers Colored, from $1 upwards.
Gun-barrels Bronzed, at $2.
Sewing Machines Repaired.
Iron Safes Repaired and Keys made to fit.
Scales and Weights Repaired and Adjusted, at
REDUCED PRICES.

Various forms of business were introduced to Hong Kong. For instance, Hong Kong played an important role in the importation of opium from the West. Po-Keung Hui suggested that "by 1880, China imported about 45% of opium from Hong Kong" (Hui 1995:133). Hong Kong was also a significant *entrepôt* for important export items, like silk, tea, and porcelain. This rise of Hong Kong as an international trading hub was largely the product of Western intervention; accordingly, after the formal acceptance of the Treaty of Nanking in 1843, Britain declared Hong Kong a free port under the protection of British law and removed all obstacles that might otherwise restrict trade. An active community of foreign traders developed very soon after the establishment of the Hong Kong free port (Ho 1992). This strongly indicates that Hong Kong's socioeconomic development was not spontaneous, but a product of British control (Stapleton 2013). Taking matters one step further, Hong Kong's geographical size was expanded by the British colonial government after it was ceded to Britain. Hong Kong's territorial extension was in part propelled by Britain's colonial expansionism. In particular, "the Convention Between the United Kingdom and China respecting an extension of Hong Kong Territory"—which was signed in Peking on June 9, 1898—enabled the work to be initiated. As the British government explicitly noted its main purpose that "an extension of Hong Kong territory is necessary for the proper defense and protection of the Colony" (British Parliamentary Papers 1972:629), Hong Kong's territorial extension was entirely reflective of Britain's national interests. As Britain's first colonial expansion sowed the seeds for and shaped the territorial acquisition of Hong Kong, Britain's second colonial expansion sowed the seeds for and shaped its territorial extension.

Canton

Canton, which was once a port city of the Qing Empire, was transformed into an outpost for the penetration of the CWE into China's southern mainland. In effect, a coastal city in Guangdong province, Canton was the only place where Western merchants could enter China until the outbreak of the Opium Wars. Canton prospered because it was one of the biggest markets in the Qing dynasty and ran the Canton system (1758–1842), an exclusive and unique international trading system. Owing to its geographical advantage (i.e., safe anchorage and proximity to the major trading ports of Southeast Asia and India), Western traders themselves also regarded Canton as an ideal location for international trade. Canton's Thirteen Factory system was a major trading hub in Asia where Western and Chinese merchants could come together to trade. Foreigners, therefore, could easily find Chinese men who spoke Pidgin English and a variety of foreign flags in Canton (Chung 1978:67). Notwithstanding, the Thirteen Factory system eventually came to an end in the wake of Canton's increased volume in international trade.[6]

However, for most Western merchants, the attraction to Canton rested in its reputation for illegal trade. Opium smuggling became particularly widespread in the coastal areas of Canton (Chung 1978:70). How did this come to be? One plausible explanation might be found in Canton's geographical location, being the closest Chinese port city to the ports of India. The British East India Company concentrated the production of opium in Bengal and Malwa, with most of the opium from these production centers being exported to China (Platt 2018:195). In terms of transportation distance, the ports of Calcutta in India and Canton in China received considerable attention from private traders because the route between them were the shortest distance between the two countries. Many, if not most, of these private traders were focused on opium smuggling, a venture in which short transportation distances are important in view of business uncertainty. Consequently, Canton was attractive to reckless British profit seekers.

Canton, however, experienced a severe economic downturn after the first Opium War. Following the war, the number of treaty ports increased from one (i.e., Canton) to five cities where the British could trade and reside. Just as the "the older center of oceanic trade (of Indian subcontinent)—Masulipatnam, Surat, and Hugli—declined in importance, beginning to cede place to new centers linked to European trade, like Calcutta, Bombay, and Madreas" (Wallerstein 1989:138), Canton also ebbed in importance as an international trading hub. As Canton's role in foreign trade declined, the city experienced a sudden economic downturn (Mei 1984; Rowe 1984).

To make matters worse, after the Second Opium War (1856–1860), the environment of Canton was left in shambles. Canton had been laid to waste and it was difficult for its economy to recover (Wakemen 1966; Schinz 1989). Seeking improved economic opportunities and stability from the Taiping threat, much of Canton's population migrated to Hong Kong (Smith 1971). Unlike Shanghai and Hong Kong, which prospered following the entry of Western merchants, Canton experienced an economic downturn during the same period due in part to the exodus of Western merchants and the aftermath of the Second Opium War. To examine the increase in Shanghai's international trade volume and the simultaneous decline in Canton's trade, I compare the customs revenue of Shanghai and Canton since the 1840s (see Table 1).

Table 1. Customs Revenue from 1841 to 1872 (1,000 tls)
(source: Ch'en 1980: 189)

	1841	1845	1849	1863	1872
Shanghai	66	80	73	2,527	3,296
Canton	864	2,362	1,430	951	1,058

These statistics reflect the woeful economic conditions of Canton after the Second Opium War and helps to support the notion of how Western-led commercial activities affected Canton's economy. That said, it may be too simplistic to attribute Canton's economic downturn to any single reason. Many factors, such as the fiscal difficulties experienced by local government or the frequency of resistance movements, might be considered. Still, the changing structure of commercial activities in Canton, led by Western merchants, was one of the main factors behind Canton's economic downturn, at least to some degree.

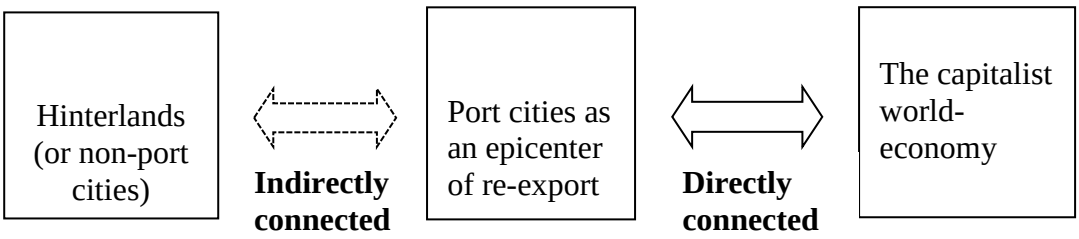
Finding the Logic of Capitalism in Local City-Hinterland Relationships

The story of the city–hinterland relationship during China's incorporation process is another aspect of its spatial reorganization generated by the influences of the CWE. Chinese port cities, created by the vector of the expansion of the modern world system, forced their hinterlands to ally with globalized commercial networks (King 1990). To delve into both the Chinese port cities and their hinterlands that were subsumed into the sphere of the CWE's logic in the nineteenth century, I examine these city–hinterland relationships.

Obviously, the influences of the CWE crossed the threshold of Chinese port cities, both directly and indirectly, despite the intensifying regulations of the Chinese government to prevent the penetration of Western powers from the mid-nineteenth century. Murphey offers a clue as to how large port cities were interdigitated with their hinterlands: "The third level, of smaller regional or provincial service centers, was represented by places like Changsha, Chungking, Foochow, or Wu-chou, all of them also part of the treaty port hierarchy" (Murphey 1974:52). Needless to say, the inhabitants of rural areas had few opportunities to meet Western merchants or to trade with them (or Western countries) directly, despite China

having already opened its doors to them. Conversely, the major port cities were directly connected to the inhabitants of the hinterlands. Various goods and the coolie workers, both available for export, were produced in the hinterlands of port cities. While these hinterland goods might not have been transferred to the ships of Western merchants directly, they were nonetheless moved through port cities before being loaded aboard Western ships. In this regard, the hinterlands were embedded in the means of production, albeit weakly (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Port City-Hinterland Relationships during Incorporation Process



This focus on the city–hinterland relationship requires that we address a number of intricate and multi-dimensional issues. To unpack the complex unfolding of the triadic relationship among hinterland, port city, and the CWE, I identify two types of city–hinterland relationship. First is a city–hinterland relationship through export commodities. The relationships between Shanghai and its hinterlands show how China's production of export commodities connected both Shanghai and its hinterlands. Shanghai was a perfect place for transshipment. During the Treaty Port Era (1870–1925), "the heart of foreign trade is Shanghai" (Keller, Li, and Shiue 2013:341). Given that Shanghai is close to the major silk-producing areas in the lower Yangzi basin and tea cultivation areas located in the mountains or hills of southern China, many Western merchants regarded Shanghai as the most important transshipping point. This means that the hinterlands of Shanghai specialized in producing export commodities, whereas Shanghai focused more on the transshipment destined for foreign markets (Morse [1908] 1967). This strongly implies that Shanghai, in its capacity as a

transshipment hub (or *entrepôt*), played a significant role in exporting Chinese goods to international commercial networks; it also shows how Shanghai was connected to its hinterlands under the influence of the CWE.

China's tea exports strengthened the relationship between port city and hinterland. The more China commercialized tea cultivation, the more both Chinese port cities and hinterlands were integrated into the CWE (Hao 1986). The growth of tea cultivation in Taiwan accelerated the rise of Amoy as a shipping port for Taiwanese tea. In this case, Taiwan, as a hinterland, played a role in cultivating tea (Lin 1997), while Amoy, as a port city, played a role in (re-)exporting teas to Western countries (Wright 1908). The cultivation and export of tea also tied Canton to its hinterlands. In effect, there were two routes for the transport of black tea to Canton. One was "Town of sing-csun (near the Bohea hills) > Csong-ngan-hien > Ho-keu > Kan-chew-fu > Ky-ngan-fu > She-pa tan > Canton," while other was "Nan-gan-fu > Kau-chew-fu > Nan-hyong-fu > Shau-chew-fu > Canton" (Ball [1817] 1972:19).

The relationship between the hinterlands and port cities in connection with the world market was not limited to the tea trade. Cotton, as an export trade item produced in the northern plains of China, attracted foreign traders, and stimulated the integration of much of northern China into the world market. In the course of cotton export, Tianjin, as a re-exporting hub and port city, played a role in connecting the northern plains of China where cotton was produced with the globalized commercial network of the CWE (Bun 1996).

Second, the port city–hinterland relationship was not limited to export crops or commodities, but extended to the export of Chinese laborers as well. The relationship between Hong Kong and its hinterland areas typifies China's export of manpower and the port city–hinterland relationship (Skinner 1999). The involvement of Western merchants in the coolie trade was essential for maintaining the connection between the hinterlands and Hong Kong. Due to poor economic conditions,[7] political instability,[8] and racial conflicts

between Hakka and Punti ethnic groups in nineteenth century,[9] many peasants of southern China lefts their hometowns and flocked to the port cities, especially Hong Kong. Having moved to the port cities, they were subsequently transported to work in not only Peru and Cuba, but also in British colonies like Jamaica, Guyana, British Malaya, and Trinidad and Tobago. As Hong Kong developed a reputation as a stopover for the coolie trade, Hong Kong's population expanded. Much of this population growth was the result of migration from the hinterlands (Roberts, Sum, and Bradshaw 1992). Some flocked to Hong Kong to seek employment opportunities (Ng and Wong 2007); while a decent number of Chinese men, among other migrants, were sold into coolie labor.

The transplantation of much of the Foshan populace overseas shows how and why they left their homeland, becoming immigrant workers via Hong Kong. Foshan, located in central Guangdong province, experienced unprecedented urban growth from 1730 to 1830 due to the fast-growing iron manufacturing, pottery, and textile industries. Additionally, Foshan serves as a major collection and distribution center for rice cultivated in the Guangxi and Hunan provinces. In the early eighteenth century, Foshan was home to approximately twenty-three rice mills. Given that Foshan in its heyday was a major center of industrial activity and distribution hub, it comes as no surprise that a great number of people moved there. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, major routes of internal and international trade moved to coastal areas and the inland transportation system fell into a state of decline. This paved the way for Foshan's decline and the flocking of much of Foshan's population to Hong Kong in order to move abroad (Yoshinobu 2008). For those leaving their homeland, Hong Kong was considered the point of connection between Foshan and foreign countries.[10]

To recap, these hitherto unknown historical scenes—the relationship between port cities and hinterlands—reveal the newness of China's incorporation process. What was novel was not simply that the hinterlands were subordinate to the port cities when China began to

be subsumed into the CWE. Rather, one of the evolving patterns of China's incorporation process targeting spatial reorganization produced a distinctive formation of port city–hinterland relationships. This spatial reorganization engendered a new system of spatial order characterized by accessibility to the globalized commercial network and the international division of labor.

Two Conflicting Truths in China's Nineteenth Century Spatial Transformation

China's nineteenth century unprecedented geographical changes led to the decline of river-based commercial networks, the rise of coastal cities, and the development of city–hinterland relationships. Given that Chinese spatial dynamics were forced to connect with the logics of the globalized CWE, this could be interpreted as an essential part of China's incorporation process. Such changes in the physical fabric of Chinese cities resulting from China's incorporation process gave rise to conflicting results.

First, the internal dynamics of China's spatial transformation was predisposed to suppressing the emergence of a capitalist–industrial economy. Unlike England's eighteenth century transition to industrial capitalism, which stemmed from the industrial revolution, the early stage of China's capitalist mode of production involved a transplanted form capitalism that emerged following China's penetration by Western powers.[11] This contrasting tendency was largely a product of capitalism itself. Following the emergence of the CWE in Europe, it quickly came to operate on the basis of unequal or forced exchanges between core countries in Europe and peripheries in non-European areas. Given that the continuous growth of politico-economic power for the core at the expense of the periphery's disproportionately small share of wealth was central to the development of the CWE (Wallerstein 1983), the nineteenth-century China's geographical changes was initiated by not a venue for creating

indigenous industrial capitalism but a place for exploitation of the capitalist space economy. Viewed in this light, China's geographical transformation seems largely unrelated to China's advance as an economic powerhouse. Rather, it seems that China's geographical transformation was about promoting uneven geographical development between core countries and China, with Chinese port cities assuming their subordinate place in the CWE.

However, the exclusive emphasis on the unequal relationship between penetrating European powers (especially Britain) and China's geographical changes often overlooks the benefits that China received from this arrangement. Taking a long-term perspective, both China's geographical transformation and incorporation helped to accelerate its transition to capitalism. As Walker (1978:32) noted, "capital invariably creates for itself in its process of geographic generalization a "reserve" of places, in a fashion analogous to the creation of an industrial reserve army of workers," the Chinese port cities was not the place of exploitation but a potential zone that can be considered a fully developed capitalist space. The more Chinese port cities contributed to accelerating the circulation of capital accumulation, the faster these port cities drew attention from western merchants. The influx of western merchants and their capital investment turned Chinese port cities into a place for capitalist development and it consequently served to rising new Chinese merchant groups. In fact, the new merchant groups (e.g., compradors, traders, bankers, and speculators), ironically, began to emerge in the port cities where the unevenness between Western powers and China was concentrated. For Western merchants who aimed to make profits in Chinese market, the presence of Chinese compradors was indispensable for reducing errors in interpretation and translation, for notarizing important transaction documents, helping to use unfamiliar Chinese currency, and for their knowledge of Chinese market conditions and business-related customs related to their own businesses. The increased demand for compradors would, in turn, lead to an increase in their numbers by the late nineteenth century (Hui 1995). In China "alone there

were roughly 700 compradors in 1870, and as many as 20,000 in 1900…" (Osterhammel 2009:769). After the rise of the compradors, Western merchants snugly ensconced themselves in the Chinese market; however, it is difficult to think of them as a mere parasitic class dependent upon economic ties with Western merchants or "colonial mimicry" (Bhabha 1994:86). Their deft command of the foreign language, excellent accounting skills, and assiduousness in their accumulation of wealth proved to be a stepping stone for many, providing an opportunity for them to turn themselves into a new and independent class of industrial or bank capitalists. In fact, some compradors accumulated such wealth as to allow them to play an important role in the development of Shanghai's banking businesses from the 1840s to the 1900s (Ji 2003). Others, like Tang Jingxing (Tong King-sing), Zheng Guanying, and later Yu Qiaqing gained upper-class status through their own wealth.

In addition, China's incorporation process into the CWE paved the way for the expansion of Chinese trading networks and businesses overseas, many of which were centered on the coastal-border cities where Chinese had migrated in large numbers. Because of the Opium Wars and large-scale uprisings in the nineteenth century, the Qing government's control over the international movement of commodities and people loosened, thus opening the door to new opportunities for overseas Chinese businesses. The trade in opium and coolies provided overseas Chinese businesses with the capital to expand, eventually leading to a rise in the number of Chinese-owned businesses abroad. Moreover, these Chinese businesses played an important role in the development of many coastal-border cities and led in no small way to contemporary China's economic development (Arrighi 2007; Hao 1986).[12] In sum, China's nineteenth-century geographical changes gave rise to contrasting results. On the one hand, it deterred China from developing an indigenous model of industrial capitalism. On the other, the capitalized space formed by the CWE paved the

way for the rise of new Chinese merchants who helped to accelerate China's transition to capitalism.

Conclusion and Discussion

Henri Lefèbvre (1991) insisted that the space was reconstructed to facilitate capitalist modes of production. Seen from the framework of the political economy, especially China's incorporation process, the remarkable economic advance of *cities within SEZs* in the late twentieth century was neither new nor phenomenal because major port cities in China were already operating in accordance with capitalist economics in the nineteenth century as they are today. In fact, Chinese port cities had opened their door to Western powers in nineteenth century, allowing foreigners from wide range of core economic countries to undertake capitalist experiments in these port cities. Chinese cities underwent various changes during the nineteenth century, including a decline in the might of interdependent inland cities connected by waterways, the rise of independent port cities and their radical transformations, and the formation of port city–hinterland relationships in connection with the world economy.

This study of the transformation of Chinese cities in the nineteenth century in response to China's incorporation process offers two important contributions. First, this study sheds light on the reorganization of nineteenth-century Chinese cities within the macro-historical context, thus departing from the city-centered approach as used by many historians. It is uncontroversial that most front-runners and unrivalled researchers of the late imperial Chinese cities have been Chinese historians; these researchers have made deep inroads into late imperial Chinese city studies. By studying city maps, population changes, trade volumes, market size, the lifestyles and political roles of merchants, and the roles of guilds, Chinese

historians have dug deep to elucidate the pattern (or patterns) of Chinese urban change over time. Thanks in part to a number of studies by historians, we now have a more detailed picture of the geographic, socioeconomic, and political aspects of late imperial Chinese cities, meaning that we are no longer constrained by Eurocentric perspectives. However, despite their valuable contributions to the study of late imperial Chinese cities, their studies seem to have an unbalanced view—often focusing on one city at a time while overlooking the impacts of Western influences on cities in a broader context. This study challenges this long-held epistemological view, bringing the trans-societal entity to the study of nineteenth-century Chinese cities. Using the world-systems perspective enables us to examine the long-term macroregional changes undertaken by Chinese cities. In particular, understanding the transformation process undertaken by nineteenth-century Chinese cities in the context of China's incorporation process elucidates a number of previously neglected dynamics between nineteenth-century Chinese cities and the CWE. However, I do not invoke the concept of a shared world-systems project to efface the microscopic approaches of historians; rather, I aim to establish a baseline for a new perspective that would allow us to discuss a relational and process-oriented dynamic between Chinese cities, their hinterlands, and the world economy. Second, this study provides social scientists and Chinese historians with an opportunity to rethink the experience of the nineteenth century in relation to China. Unlike the dominant perspective that considered nineteenth-century China to be the epitome of China's decline, I interpret the nineteenth-century Chinese port city to be emblematic of a time of rapid and revolutionary change. This analytical lens offers a constructive way forward for researchers to develop China's historical capitalism.

Notes

1. For instance, Barnes 1939; Cox 1959; Postan 1972; Braudel 1979; and Arrighi 1994.
2. On detailed explanations, see Goody 1996; Isin 2003; Rowe 1984, 2013.
3. On detailed explanations of nineteenth century as a global expansion of capitalism, see Marx and Engels [1848] 2012; Buzan and Lawson 2015.
4. Hopkins and Wallerstein (1987) argued that an external arena's incorporation process involved two structural transformations. One was the reorganization of the production process. Faced with the CWE's expansion, an external arena's economic system is reorganized to serve the globalized production networks of capitalism. In the case of China, entry into the international commodity chain (e.g. tea–opium trade) and the participation of Chinese coolies in the axial division of labor are evident during the incorporation process. The second structural transformation involved a change from an *ancien régime* to an inter-state system as the society was restructured within a globalized hierarchical framework. The Qing government accepted a Western-oriented international legal system and established *Zongli yamen* to handle foreign policy in the second half of the nineteenth century.
5. In fact, Morrison, who was well aware of the political affairs in the country, advised the British armies: "(Here is a way) you can threaten Beijing (Qing government): Nanjing is a gate way of (the Yangzi River and the Grand Canal). Thus, if you occupied it, and then cut off waterways which connected the North, you can get what you want" (YFWJ 1959:54).
6. Regarding the increase in Canton's international trade volume from 1831–1837, see Morse 1900:168.

7. China's nineteenth-century economic crisis can structurally be attributed to unprecedented population growth. The sharp increase in the population, particularly from 1650 to 1850, resulted not only in the loss of arable lands but ecological degradation (e.g., deforestation and soil depletion). China consequently fell into a Malthusian trap, with the amount of arable land incapable of supporting the increased population (Brenner and Isett 2002; Chao 1986:89; Naquin and Rawski 1987:25). Faced with economic difficulty, many peasants had to leave their homelands and become coolie laborers.
8. Between the late eighteenth century and the mid- to late nineteenth century, the Qing government confronted a series of large and small rebellions. Due to these long-lasting social uprisings, the late Qing could not halt the exodus of labor, although it did officially prohibit emigration until at least 1859 (Northrup 1995; Yun 2008). This resulted in the movement of Chinese workers throughout all regions of the world, becoming enmeshed with the reorganization of the international division of labor, transforming them into the subordinated laborers of the production network of capitalism.
9. Due to racial conflicts between Hakka and Punti (i.e., the Hakka–Punti clan wars of the nineteenth century) and political reasons like "the prominent Hakka involvement in the Taiping Rebellion" (Constable 1996:13), Hakka people found it difficult to stay in mainland China; as a result, they emigrated from China and became coolies (Leo 2015).
10. This distinct spatial characteristic of Hong Kong—as a Chinese coolie stopover—cause it to develop into an informal hub for the sharing of coolie labor-related information. The Tung Wah Hospital was at the center of this coolie communications network. Established in 1869, the Tung Wah Hospital offered not only Chinese

Medicare but also a meeting place for coolies. Regarding this, see Wickberg 1999:38–39; Sinn 1989; and Lim 2005.

11. Of course, some late imperial Chinese coastal areas were already interconnected with Western countries due to the bullion trade between China and Spanish merchants (Flynn and Giraldez 2002; Von Glahn 1998), China's silk exports to Mexico (Deng 1997), China's tea exports to Holland, China's immigration to the Western colonies (e.g., Malaya or Batavia) (Blussé 1986; Pomeranz 2000). Although there were Sino–West connections in China's coastal areas before the nineteenth century, these were controlled by Chinese governance and did not lead Western-led geographical changes. On the contrary, China's massive nineteenth-century geographical changes, led by the penetration of Western powers, were beyond the control of the Qing government.
12. For an extended discussion of the *huaquio* (Chinese sojourners or oversea Chinese) long-term economic contribution to China, see Hamilton 1999; Hung 2016.

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