

Knowledge, Networks and Mobilities: Transnational Talent and the ‘Expatriatization’ of World Cities

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Highly-skilled international immigration and mobility has always been a pre-eminent process of world city growth and network building. The burgeoning economies of world cities generate unprecedented demand for highly-skilled international mobility in both private and public sector employment as knowledge circulates over space and time. For firms, managing human capital and mobility has become a strategic operation of the organization to internationalization and diffuse (and capture) knowledge from different geographical markets, especially the metropolis of world cities. For individuals, world cities have become the ‘global elevators’ for career development and wealth creation. Over the last three decades the geo-economic reach and connectedness of world city corporate economies have created the demand for a new breed of talented, mobile, worker required to engage in *transnational* working practices. For employers and policy-makers, in the race to be highly competitive on a global stage, the significance of attracting and retaining highly-skilled, transnational experienced labour has never been so important in the context of a global ‘war for talent’. Talented, highly-skilled labour is *the* conduit through which capital and knowledge is accumulated, networks built, connections made and cosmopolitanism reproduced through its embodied knowledge and social relations. Following a brief discussion of the significance of transnational work, executive labour markets and highly-skilled, transient international labour migration in making the world city, the remainder of the chapter will use the exemplar of Singapore to: firstly, show how both private enterprise and Central Government value the importance of ‘talented’ labour, particularly immigrants, to enhance the firm’s and Singapore’s world city competitive status on a global scale, respectively; and, secondly, illustrate how particular spaces within the city of Singapore have become influenced by foreign talented workers through a process known as ‘expatriatization’.