

# Urban Corridors in Pacific Asia

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## I. Introduction

Although terms such as 'urban corridor' and 'Pacific Asia' have never been precisely defined, these two metaphors reflect an unprecedented sense of community and opportunity on the Asian Pacific Rim. The Time magazine in its January 11 and February 22 editions heralded two exciting cover stories relevant to the theme of this paper. The cover stories went on as follows: Megacities, the world's sprawling urban centers are rife with problems and filled with promise. By the millions they come, the ambitions and the down-trodden of the world drawn by the strange magnetism of urban life. For centuries the progress of civilization had been defined by the inexorable growth of cities. Now the world is about to pass a milestone. More people will live in urban areas than in the countryside. Does the growth of megacities portend an apocalypse of global epidemics and pollution? Or will the remarkable stirrings of self-reliance that can be found in some of them point the way to their salvation? Trade across the Pacific Rim already surpasses its transatlantic counterpart. With the apparent dawning of the Pacific Age years ahead of schedule, the East Asia will continue to set the world pace for prosperity.

Surely, Pacific Asia, which includes the East Asia and the Eastern South Asia by the United Nations' taxonomy has been passing through great socio-economic transformations and a new era of urban revolution. Urbanization in Pacific Asia

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is not simply the up-surge of rural-to-urban migration. It is the surprising growth of megacities, the shaping of megalopolises, and the emergence of urban corridors across national borders. Megacities and megalopolises in Pacific Asia are not completely new but the concept of urban corridor, growth triangle and/or natural economic region began to appear in the literature since the late 1980s. This paper is to address these new urban phenomena. It is to begin with the review of urbanization pattern in general and highlights the emerging urban corridors in Pacific Asia, and how urban system be changed by the globalization of the Pacific Asian economy. Finally, it is intended to bring attention to the promises and disenchantments of urban corridor phenomenon and policy implication for urban development.

## II. Urbanization Pattern in Pacific Asia

In 1920, less than one-fifth of the world's population lived in urban places. By 1980 urbanization had reached the level of more than two-fifth, and by 2000 is projected to exceed one half. Although there are great variations in the size and growth rates of urban population among countries in Pacific Asia, the proportion of population living in urban areas is the lowest in the region as a whole with some exceptions of the highly urbanized countries like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the city-states of Hong Kong and Singapore as shown in Table 1 and 2. As of 1990, the proportions of urban population for East Asia and Eastern South Asia were 38.6 and 28.1 per cent respectively as compared to the world average of 45.9. However, momentum for rapid urbanization have just begun in Pacific Asia. The urbanization level is related to the level of industrialization. In this regard, Japan and the Asian NIEs (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) have led economic growth and concomitant urbanization until 1980s but the rate of urbanization is approaching to a steady state. Instead, China and ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand) will experience rapid urbanization along with belated economic development. The Asian NIEs are now facing new problems and challenges in global competition. Challenges include ever soaring wages, labor shortages in production, price and exchange rate fluctuations, increasing competition in export markets, and protectionist tendency

〈Table 1〉 Urbanization Profile of East and Eastern-South Asia

	Mid-1994 population (in millions)(A)	Urban Population(%) (B)	Population in Urban Areas of 1 Million or More		Per Capita GNP 1992 (US \$)
			as % of (A)	as % of (B)	
World	5,607.0	43	17	38	4,340
China	1,192.0	28	9	35	380
Hong Kong	5.8	100	95	100	15,380
Indonesia	199.7	31	11	36	670
Japan	125.0	77	37	47	28,220
Korea	44.5	74	3	73	6,790
Malaysia	19.5	51	10	24	2,790
Philippines	68.7	44	15	36	770
Singapore	2.9	100	100	100	15,750
Taiwan	21.1	75	20	27	N/A
Thailand	59.4	19	13	60	1,840

〈Table 2〉 Urban Population in East and South-East Asia

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
World Total	724,147 (100.0)	1,012,084 (100.0)	1,354,559 (100.0)	1,806,809 (100.0)	2,422,298 (100.0)	3,208,028 (100.0)
Pacific Asia	138,506 (19.1)	232,748 (23.0)	321,793 (23.8)	445,320 (24.6)	610,987 (25.2)	830,113 (25.9)
East Asia	112,812 (15.6)	194,734 (19.2)	265,153 (19.6)	359,457 (19.9)	476,462 (19.7)	622,441 (19.4)
South East Asia	25,694 (3.5)	38,014 (3.8)	56,640 (4.2)	85,864 (4.7)	134,525 (5.5)	207,672 (6.5)

United Nations, Patterns of Urban and Rural Population Growth, 1980.

in major world market. The rise of low-cost economies of China and the ASEAN countries starts to show visible outcome.

Of the total urban population in 1950, Pacific Asia contained 19.1 per cent with 15.6 per cent in East Asia and 3.5 per cent in South East Asia. As of 1990, urban population in Pacific Asia shared 25.2 per cent of the world's urban population. By 2000, it is projected to contain 25.9 per cent. In other words, the foregoing trend tell us the rapidity of urbanization, although overall urbanization rate is still lower than other parts of the world as given in Table 2. The low rate of urbanization has been largely caused by China and the ASEAN countries which

has remained as one of the least urbanized countries in the world. China is entering into a new phase of development since new economic policies and the opening of coastal cities for foreign investment venture have introduced. Under these circumstances controlling migration into urban areas may become much more difficult. It is clear that, with a policy of less controlled migration, the level of urbanization will accelerate and urban problems will become even more severe. The ASEAN four countries tend to outpace NIEs in terms of economic growth rate and become major recipients of foreign direct investment from NIEs, eventually contributing to the massive relocation of rural population into a few urban areas. The ASEAN-4 countries as well as China are also projected to experience robust growth, with China's growth of GDP and its share in regional importance being the most notable of all Asian Pacific countries.<sup>1)</sup> In carrying forward the national economies of Pacific Asia, foreign direct investment, which tends to locate in large urban centers will also accelerate the growth of megacities in the recipient countries.

A second characteristic of Pacific Asian urbanization is the concentration of population in a few large cities, especially in megacities. With the enormous expansion of urban population, the largest urban centers grew to unprecedented sizes. Since urban revolution started in Western Europe and North America in the nineteenth century, most of the largest cities were located in those regions. But the current phase of the urban revolution is marked by the urbanization of less urbanized regions, and the largest cities will be in Pacific Asia. The nature of this phenomenon can be seen vividly in Table 3 which lists the twenty-five largest urban agglomerations from 1960 to 2000. Out of the twenty-five megacities in the world, nine will be in Pacific Asia in the year of 2000 from six in 1960.

### III. Urban Corridors, Growth Triangles and Natural Economic Regions

Urbanization does not appear everywhere and all at once. Taking advantages of initial spatial system and natural endowment, urban corridors have many historical precedents. Urban growth depends largely on the configuration of transportation routes and the geographical sequences of sources, junctions and markets along a specific route. In the classical and medieval world, the Silk Road

〈Table 3〉 Ranking of city agglomerations by population, 1960, 1980, and 2000

1960		1980		2000		
Agglomeration	Population (millions)	Agglomeration	Population (millions)	Agglomeration	Population (millions)	
1	New York/NE New Jersey	14.2	*Tokyo/Yokohama	17.7	Mexico City	25.8
2	London	10.7	New York/NE New Jersey	15.6	Sao Paulo	24.0
3	*Tokyo/Yokohama	10.7	Mexico City	14.5	*Tokyo/Yokohama	20.2
4	*Shanghai	10.7	Sao Paulo	12.8	Calcutta	16.5
5	Rhein-Ruhr	8.7	*Shanghai	11.8	Greater Bombay	16.0
6	*Beijing	7.3	London	10.3	New York/NE New Jersey	15.8
7	Paris	7.2	Buenos Aires	10.1	*Seoul	13.8
8	Buenos Aires	6.9	Calcutta	9.5	Teheran	13.6
9	Los Angeles/ Long Beach	6.6	Los Angeles/ Long Beach	9.5	*Shanghai	13.3
10	Moscow	6.3	Rhein-Ruhr	9.5	Rio De Janeiro	13.3
11	Chicago/NE Indiana	6.0	Rio De Janeiro	9.2	Delhi	13.2
12	*Tianjin	6.0	*Beijing	9.1	*Jakarta	13.3
13	*Osaka/Kobe	5.7	Paris	8.7	Buenos Aires	13.2
14	Calcutta	5.6	*Osaka/Kobe	8.7	Karachi	12.0
15	Mexico City	5.2	Greater Bombay	8.5	Dhaka	11.2
16	Rio De Janeiro	5.1	*Seoul	8.5	Cairo/Giza	11.1
17	Sao Paulo	4.8	Moscow	8.2	*Manila	11.1
18	Milan	4.5	*Tianjin	7.7	Los Angeles/ Long Beach	11.0
19	Cairo/Giza	4.5	Cairo/Giza	6.9	*Bangkok	10.7
20	Greater Bombay	4.2	Chicago/NE Indiana	6.8	*Osaka/Kobe	10.5
21	Philadelphia	3.7	*Jakarta	6.7	*Beijing	10.4
22	Detroit	3.6	Milan	6.7	Moscow	10.4
23	Leningrad	3.5	*Manila	6.0	*Tianjin	9.1
24	Naples	3.2	Delhi	5.9	Paris	8.7
25	*Jakarta	2.8	Baghdad	3.9	Baghdad	7.4

Sources: United Nations, Urban and Rural Population Projections 1950-2025 : The 1984 Assessment (New York, 1986)

cities such as Loyang, Ch'angan, Tunhuang, Kashgar and Tashkent, the Mediterranean and Aegean urban civilization extending from Asian Minor through Greece to southern Italy, and the Hanseatic League cities during the Crusades

would be the modern counterparts of urban corridor. The concept of urban corridor has many synonyms and has been used interchangeably with megalopolis,<sup>2)</sup> extended metropolitan region,<sup>3)</sup> and ecumenopolis.<sup>4)</sup> Urban corridors, while they have different morphologies, are commonly characterized by absorbing an increasing proportion of their countries' population and economic growth. The historical juxtaposition of port cities, which remain almost universally the centers upon which these regions have developed, with the high density regions surrounding them creating the necessary preconditions for global linkage and readily available surplus labor.<sup>5)</sup> There are already the two well-known urban corridors. On the northeastern Atlantic seaboard, from Massachusetts Bay to the valley of the Potomac, there is an almost continuous chain of impressive cities along the old highway known as U.S.1. Along this axis over a distance of about 800 kilometers are five of the largest metropolitan areas in America - Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. Between them and in the interior immediately west of this axis there are a dozen other metropolitan areas each with populations ranging from 200,000 to 800,000.<sup>6)</sup>

As Figure 1 shows, the axis containing most of Europe's major cities has a north-west/south-east orientation from the United Kingdom, through Belgium, the Netherlands, northeast France, Germany and northern Italy. Within the vital axis are two major foci: (a) a north-west focus concentrated upon the historic capitals of the former colonial powers (London, Paris, Randstad-Holland) and (b) a south-east focus concentrated upon cities in southern Germany, Switzerland and northern Italy (Munich, Stuttgart, Milan). The faster relative growth of these cities has pulled the center of gravity of the axis southwards.<sup>7)</sup> Professor Gottman, the inventor of the term 'megalopolis' succinctly predicted 40 years ago in his seminal book on the urbanized northeastern seaboard of the U.S. He predicted that it would certainly have immensely pleased the Founding Fathers of cities in megalopolis to find that the way of life and the economic organization developed in the northeastern seaboard serve as a model to many other parts of the world undergoing the process of urbanization. It is exactly what has been happening in Pacific Asia.

The most dramatic one in the East Asia is the Beijing-Seoul-Tokyo (BESETO) urban corridor which transcends national boundaries. It encompasses five

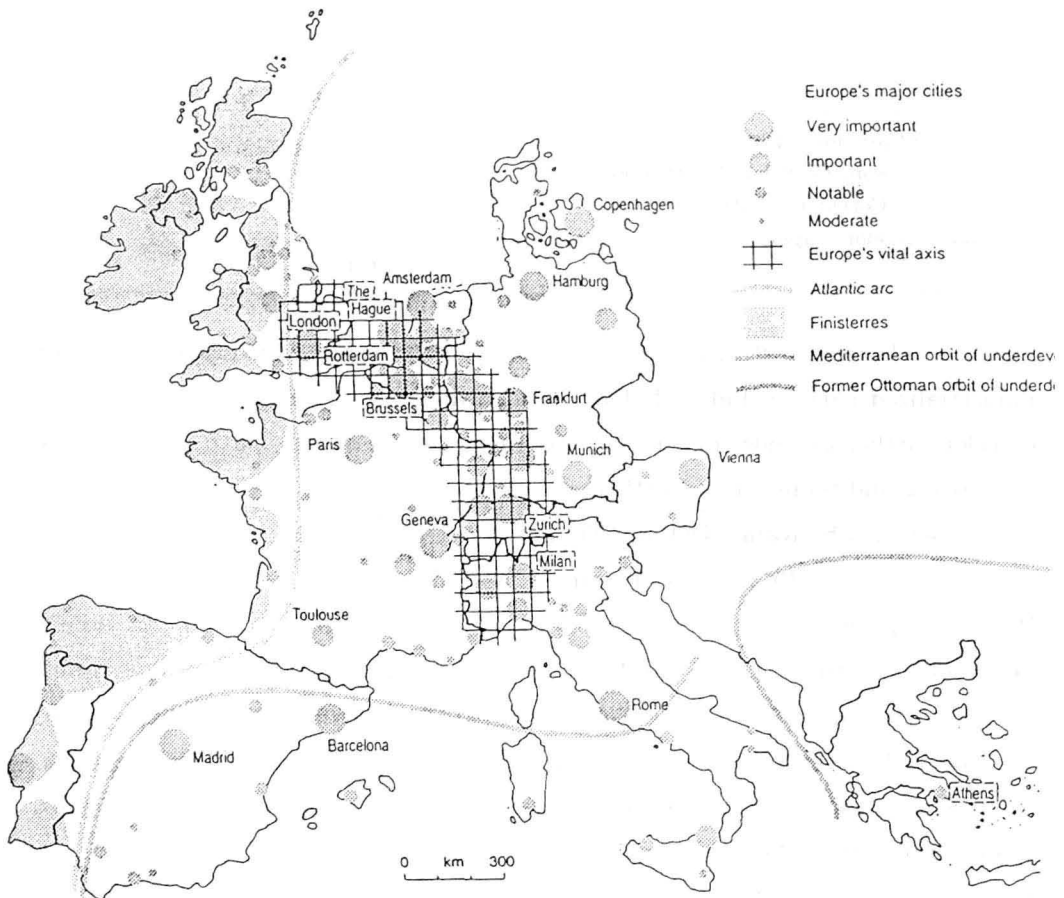


Figure 1. The European Urban Corridor

megacities of 10 million or over (Beijing, Tianjin, Seoul, Tokyo-Yokohama, Osaka-Kobe) with population of 10 million or over. It is larger than the European and North American counterparts in terms of population size. In the inverted S-shaped corridor from Beijing to Tokyo via Pyongyang and Seoul there are about 97 million urban inhabitants, and 112 cities with a population of over 200,000 are almost contiguous along a 1500 kilometer strip of densely populated land as shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, becoming a so-called 'ecumenopolis' in terms of the Greek urban planner, C. A. Doxiadis. An ecumenopolis is defined as a unified settlement system spanning the entire habitable area on a global or continental scale. An urban corridor from the Tokaido megalopolis to Fukuoka in Japan is extending across the Korea Strait, via stepping stones of islands such as Tsushima

〈Table 4〉 Urban Population and No. of cities in BESETO Urban Corridor

	Population (1,000)	No. of cities
Bohai Rim Corridor, China	31,556	36
Shinuiju-Kaesong Corridor, North Korea	4,997	9
Seoul-Pusan Corridor, South Korea	22,642	15
Tokaido Corridor, Japan	39,269	52
Total	98,464	112

and Ikii to Korea's south-eastern region centered on Pusan, which covers the most industrialized parts including Pohang, Ulsan and Masan. This borderless urban corridor further extends from Pusan, to Taegu and Seoul in South Korea and to Pyongyang and Shinuiju in North Korea. It then continues to China's Bohai rim cities such as Shenyang, Dalian, Tianjin and Beijing. This region can only be traversed in one and half hours by air and would be 10 hours commuting distance if a high-speed train is introduced, and the Korea Strait between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago is connected by an under-sea tunnel. Actually, the bullet train from Tokyo to Fukuoka is in operation. A high-speed railway of the Korean TGV from Pusan to Seoul is scheduled to complete by 2002. The region covers the most developed parts of respective countries, with bundled lines of railroads and expressways. Also, the region is connected by four distinctive megalopolises in each countries, becoming an integrated natural economic region.<sup>8)</sup>

In the other parts of Pacific Asia, smaller urban corridors are also developing in southern China, Malaysia, the far north-eastern Asia, Taiwan, and Indo-China peninsula. Among the most prominent ones are the Pearl River Delta (Guangzhou - Shenzhen - Dongguan - Hong Kong), the Taiwan-Fujian region (Taipei - Taichung - Kaosiung - Xiamen - Fuzhou), the Johor-Singapore-Riau Triangle the Yangtz River region, and the Tumen River Delta. Common features of these transnational groupings are the participation of two and more countries and the inclusion of only parts of these countries. It is what Professor Scalapino has termed 'natural economic territory'. It is an entity that cross political boundaries, often encompassing only portions of states, but with their *raison d'être* resting upon the combination of natural resources, manpower, technology, capital that can be pooled to maximum advantage. Again, Professor Scalapino calls this phenomenon as a soft regionalism. It is the growth of economic interaction among



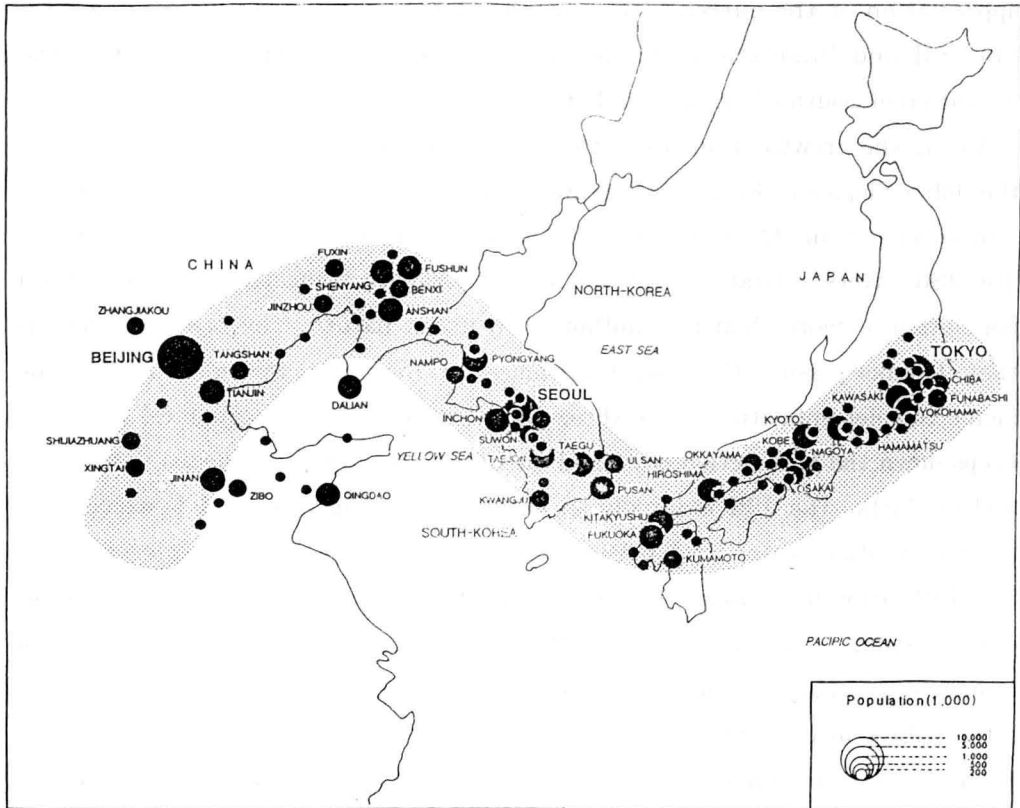


Figure 2. Beijing-Seoul-Tokyo Urban Corridor

and between nations. It has had no solid institutional structure by largely political reasons nor has it necessarily encompassed entire nations.<sup>9)</sup>

The southern China Growth Triangle which can be subdivided into two distinct entities (the Pearl River Delta and the Taiwan-Fujian Region) consists of Hong Kong, Taiwan and four special economic zones (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou and Xiamen). The members operate under different political and economic frameworks, with their cooperation and integration being driven solely by mutual needs and private sector initiatives. The massive inflow of investments into the southern China region has been promoted by a number of factors. On the part of People's Republic of China, these include the open door policy and subsequent liberalization of economic policies, limited linkages with Taiwan after the Statute for Relation's across the Taiwan Strait in 1992. In the case of Taiwan, a rapid and major

appreciation of the currency was an added reason for investment elsewhere. Cultural and linguistic affinities and geographical proximity added to the formation of South China as an urban agglomeration.

Among the growth triangles in the South East Asia the most celebrated one is the Johor-Singapore-Riau (JSR) region that includes Singapore, the neighboring southern peninsula Malaysian state of Johor, and the Indonesian province of Riau. The JSR covers a land area of about 23,000 square kilometers and has a total population of more than five million with urban nature. The basic rationale is that it make possible the joint development of the region by capitalizing on the factor complementarities of the three participating areas. Geographical proximity keeps down the transaction costs and facilitates the flow of resources, labor force and products. The JSR is largely an outgrowth of Singapore and is expected to become eventual cross-border urban agglomeration of Singapore. The formation of the JSR Growth Triangle has been in part a response to the phenomenon of globalization of production by multinational corporations. The sub-regional economic grouping and urban agglomeration should be seen as an attempt to attract these investment funds and direct them to labor and land surplus areas in Riau as well as in Johor. Recently, one of the most active natural economic region is the Tumen River Delta region. The Tumen River, which marks borderline of the three countries (North Korea, China and Russia) flows into the East Sea (the Sea of Japan). The three countries agreed, in principle, to lease their land around the estuary of the Tumen River for 70 years to an international corporation. Within the larger Tumen River Delta region of perimeter of 100 kilometer there are three cities of Vladivostok of Russia, Chongjin of North Korea and Yanji of China and many smaller cities like Rajin and Sonbong of North Korea, Posyet and Zarubino of Russia, and Hunchun and Fangchun of China which will become an extended metropolitan region if the Tumen River development program is carried out as planned. In this era of globalization, many schemes under the name of growth triangle or natural economic region have been brought about among academic and political circles and are waiting to be materialized into practical purposes. The concept of the Yellow Sea Rim economic region which includes China's Bohai rim cities and provinces (Tianjin, Beijing, Shantung and Liaoning Provinces), South Korea's south and west coastal cities and provinces (Inchon,

Kunsan, Mokpo, Yosu and Pusan) and the south-western Japan centered on Fukuoka and Kita-Kyushu has been widely discussed but still in embryonic stage except inter-city coalition for fraternal exchange among Kita-Kyushu, Pusan and Dalian.

Another natural economic region is the East Sea Rim (the Sea of Japan Rim) region, which covers the Japan Sea littoral prefecture and cities, the eastern coastal provinces of Korea, and China's Jilin Province and the Far East Russia although none has progressed beyond a wishful concept. Most active cities in the cause of transnational cooperation are Niigata in Japan, Pohang in South Korea, Chongjin in North Korea and Vladivostok in Russia. Inter-city networks such as the opening of direct air link and shipping lines are rapidly developing one way or another. At present, many other subregional economic regions have been on the move in Pacific Asia. One of them is the Northern Growth Triangle, encompassing the contiguous subregions of northern peninsular Malaysia centered on Penang, southern Thailand and northern Sumatra. Another proposed natural economic region is to link Davao in southern Philippines, Madao in northern Indonesia, and Sandakan in Sabah, Malaysia although it is far from being urban agglomeration. Urban corridors, growth triangle and natural economic regions mentioned above are given in Figure 3 in schematic manner.

Similar train of thoughts have been suggested by other scholars. Professor Rimmer identified four emerging corridors within the Western Pacific Rim: 1) Japan's Pacific Belt stretching from Tokyo to Kyushu, 2) the Eastern Australia Corridor reaching from Cairns to Adelaide, 3) the Southeast Asian Corridor running between Chiang Mai and Bali and 4) the East Asian Corridor spanning Seoul via Eastern China to Hong Kong with a possible extension to Hanoi as shown in Figure 4.<sup>10)</sup> Professor Naidu also brought attention to the evolving subregional economic zones in Pacific Asia<sup>11)</sup> (see Figure 5) After all, explosive population growth and a torrent of migration from rural areas are creating unprecedented as compared with the great cities of the past. In Pacific Asia, a new order in the organization of inhabited space is to be created.

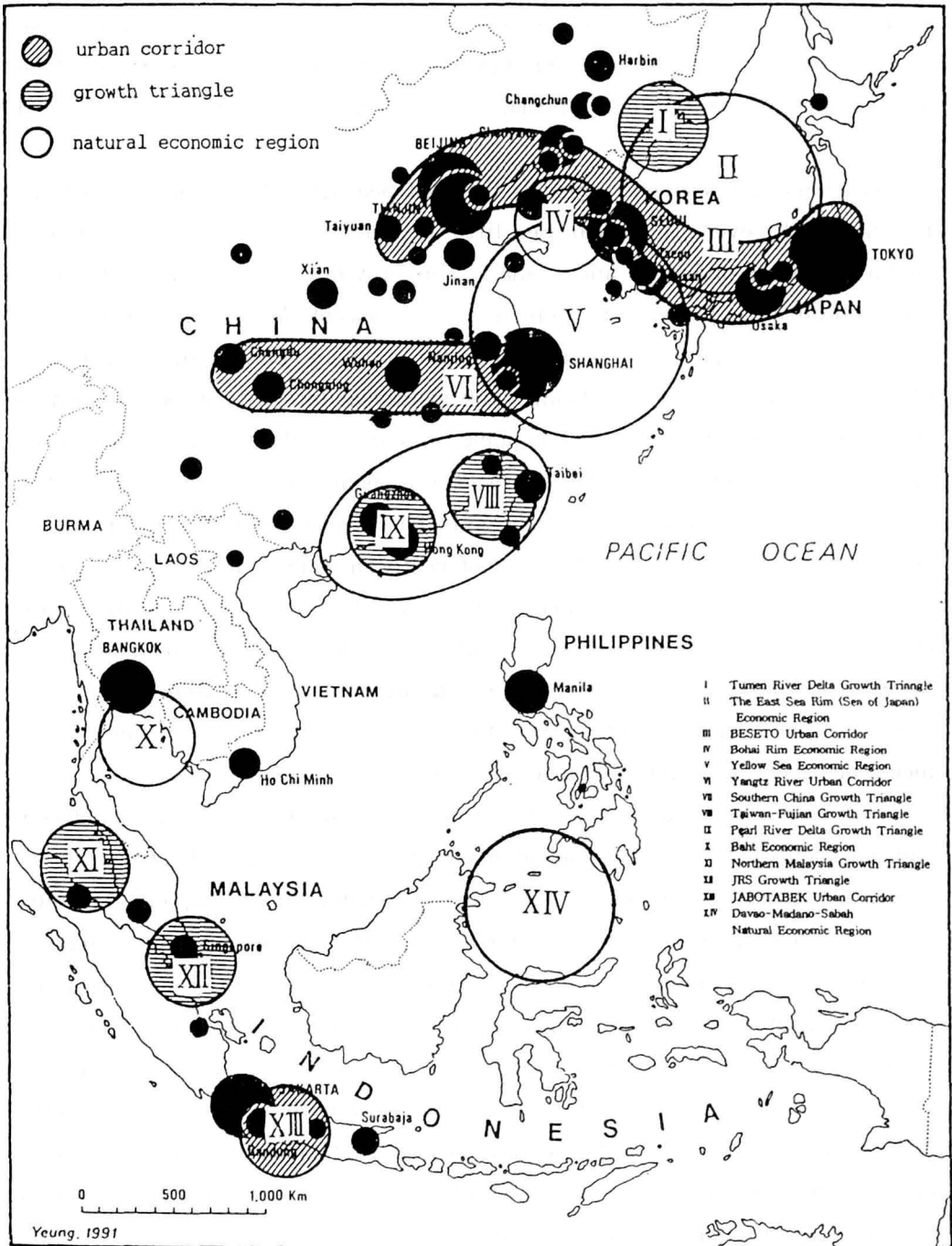


Figure 3. Urban Corridors, Growth Triangles and Natural Economic Regions in Pacific Asia

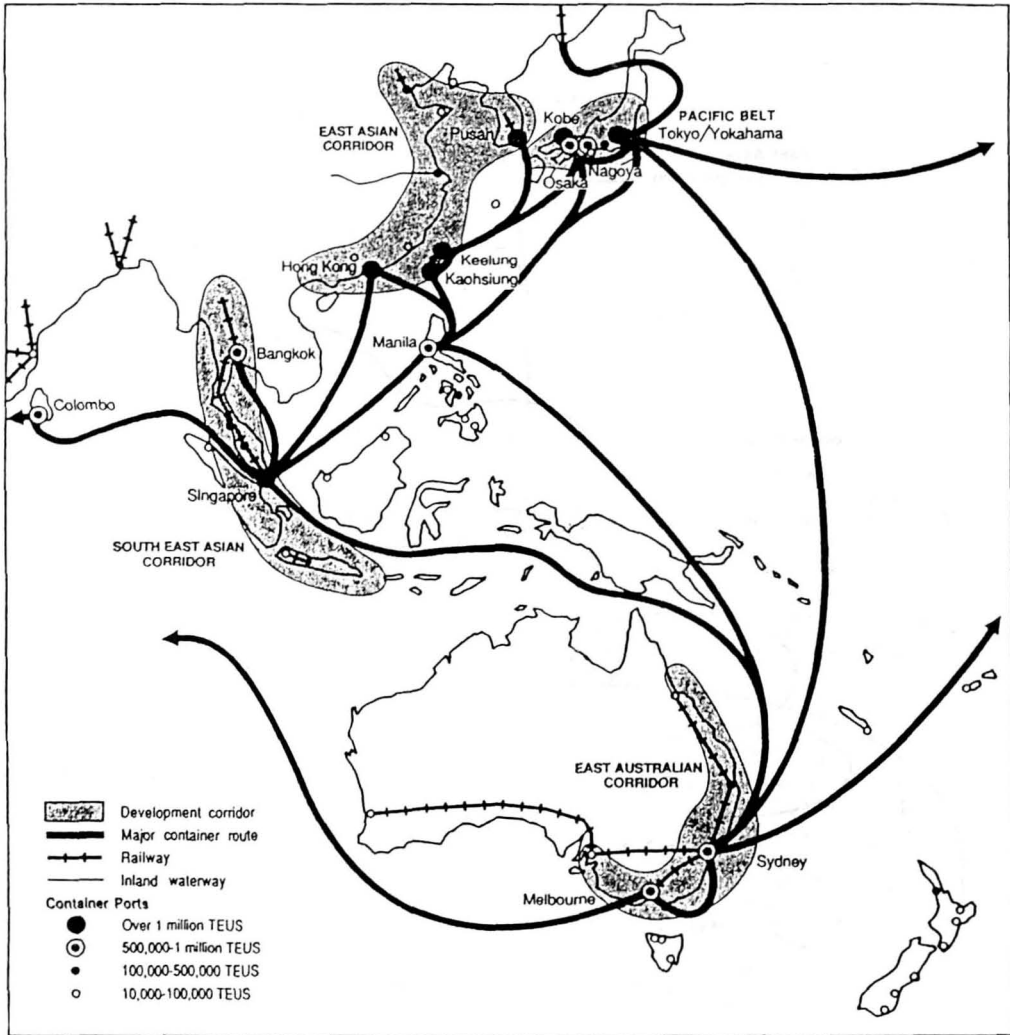


Figure 4. Four Corridors in Western Pacific Asia

#### IV. Globalization and Changing Urban System

Cities now increasingly perform in ways which are transnational. They compete for mobile capital, employment, institutions and events which have been evidenced by foreign direct investment and the competitive hosting of international sport events in recent years. Seoul and Nagoya bid for the 88 Summer Olympic but Seoul won. Serious competition is going on for the hosting the 2002 World Cup Game

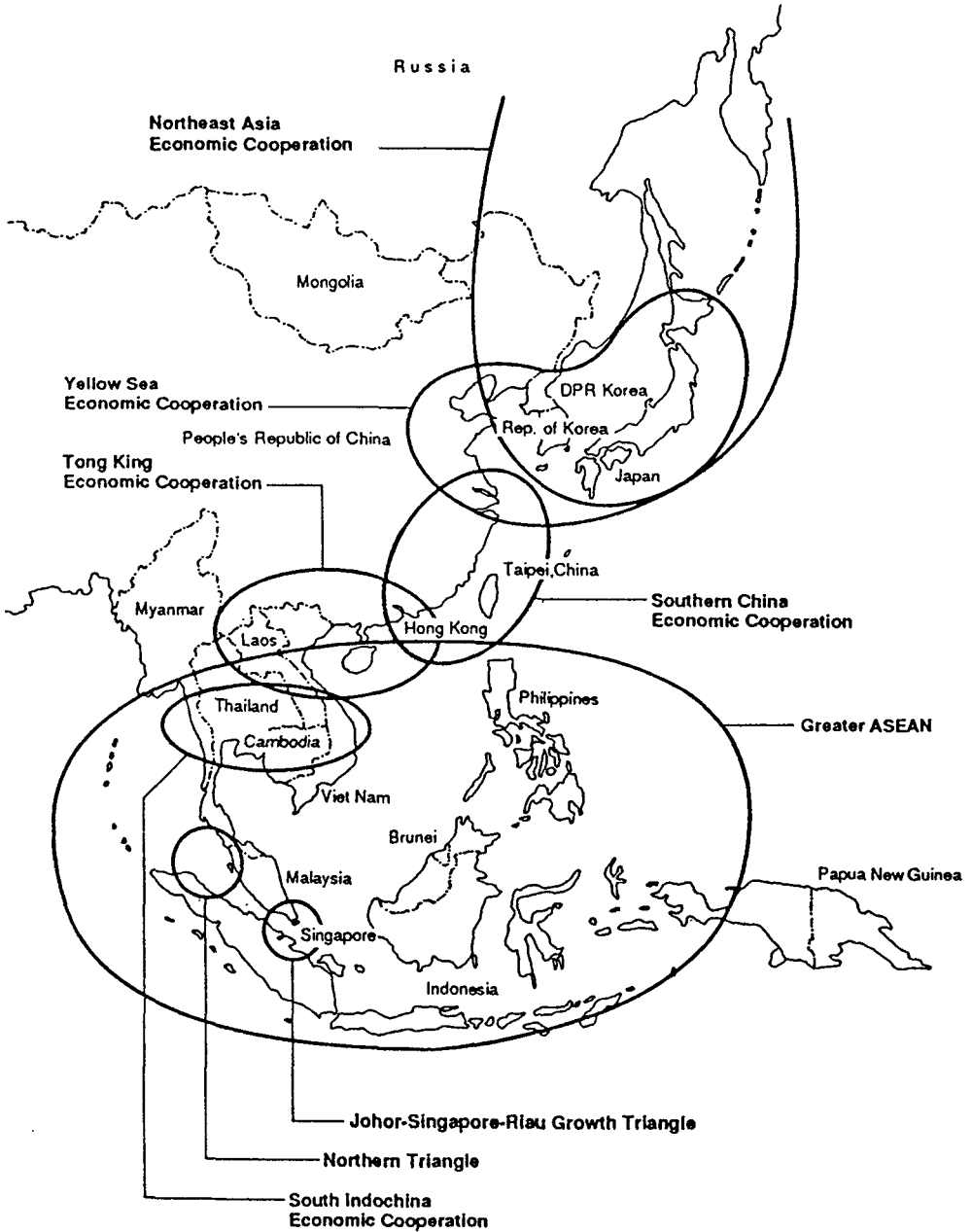


Figure 5. Regional Economic Zones in Asia and The Pacific



player in world trade and technology. Most cities in Pacific Asia are still national cities except Hong Kong and Singapore. There is also no hierarchical order in terms of functional role. Each city in competition with others in their respective areas. Competition among cities is likely to increase rather than diminish. Competition now is between cities across national borders, and not between countries as it used to be. Cities represent countries in the global economic system: depend on global capital transfers and the new economic order, and how government can handle urban institution to prosper and compete globally. The competitive cities have tried to create a level playing field for games among cities. Urban productivity is becoming a catchword. It is based on the premise that the macro performance of the economy as critically determined by the productivity of individual households and firms in urban areas. Growth strategies have been introduced to remove constraints that inhibit efficient functioning of urban system, and hence, the productivity growth in urban areas.

To this ends, urban coalition across national borders is commonly accepted without great hesitation. Super-infrastructure investments in airports, seaports, teleports, convention and trade centers are being made to gain a competitive edge in the global economy. The state-of-art airports are built and under construction like the Kansai International Airport in Osaka, the new Seoul International Airport in Youngjongdo, and the Chep Lap Kok Airport in Hong Kong which are located offshore and are trying to become an international hub accomodating supersonic, intercontinental air services. At the Pacific Asian rim lies over a great land mass and is separated by the seas and is, therefore, difficult for passenger traffic to rely on other means of transport than air transportation it is quite natural that air transportation will become increasingly crucial. As Professor Rimmer ointed out, the Western Pacific Rim provides an ideal laboratory for exploring the changing interrelationships between ports, inland transport, and regional development. Collectively ports and inland transport reflect the Rim' semergence as a major focus of world trade and economic activity rivalling Europe and North America as a center for capital accumulation.<sup>12)</sup>

The surge of foreign direct investment, the globalization of financial and real estate markets, the international migration of labor force and the opening of oversea construction industries are all contributing to the changing pattern of



urban system in Pacific Asia. They have been key agents in translating national urban centers into the global networks of urban system with transnationalization of business organization, production and investment. The foreign direct investments are basically urban oriented. As Figure 5 shows, South Korea's foreign direct investment is highly concentrated in major urban areas. Since the mid-1980s, intra-regional trade and investment growth within Pacific Asia has accelerated. The current trends in the FDI pattern can thus be summarized as follows: 1) the introduction of new home countries, and diminishing difference in volumes between the established home countries of FDI and the declining stance of Japanese total outward intra-regional FDI; 2) the gradually appearance of a more balanced FDI flows in several bilateral relations as a result of growing Taiwanese, South Korean and Singaporean investment in Japan, and Malaysian investment in Taiwan and Singapore; 3) a gradual shift of investment from labour-intensive sectors to market-oriented FDI in technologically advanced industries; 4) a rapid growth of labour-intensive investment to Chinese inland provinces and; 5) a continuous increase of investment in the service sectors.<sup>13)</sup>

## V. Conclusion: Promises and Challenges

There is no alternative to cities. Cities have no choice but to live with and to catch up with others that are already way ahead. However, the phenomenal

〈Table 5〉 Korea's Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN Countries by Industry

Industries	No. of Firms	Amount (\$ million) (%)
Mining	6 (0.8)	323.0 (22.8)
Forestry	6 (0.8)	33.0 (23.2)
Fishing	17 (2.5)	8.0 (0.6)
Manufacturing	561 (82.7)	958.0 (67.6)
Construction	24 (3.5)	4.6 (0.3)
Transportation	2 (0.3)	0.5 (0.04)
Trading	40 (5.9)	25.0 (1.8)
Real Estate	2 (0.3)	0.6 (0.04)
Others	20 (2.9)	64.0 (4.5)
Total	678 (100)	1,417.0 (100)

Source: Bank of Korea, The Yearbook of FDI, 1994

growth of urban population in Pacific Asia poses its own blessings and grave challenges. The process of urbanization must be understood as a basic condition for as a functional consequences of economic, social and technological development. But rapidity that surpass an absorptive capacity, and megacity phenomenon and its offspring of urban corridors have rendered promises as well as challenges. Professor Yeung once articulated some important urban challenges. The first is the international impact of urbanization in Asian countries. As economic growth becomes more interdependent among nations, cities in national systems begin to articulate across national boundaries with specific functional complementarities. Secondly, excessive concentration of population and economic activities has brought with serious environmental problems. Questions arise on the sustainability of urbanizing Asian continent. Environmental problems are also becoming transnational. Acid rain by the heavy use of fossil fuel in the Chinese provinces of Hebei, Shandong and Liaoning and the cities of Beijing and Tianjin which are densely populated and most industrialized parts of China has been great concern to Korean peninsula and Japanese archipelago. The semi-enclosed Yellow Sea surrounded by densely populated littoral regions of China and Korea is threatened to die. Environmentally hazardous industries would have been relocated to escape the stern environmental regulations in their home countries under the disguise of foreign investment.

The third issue is that the emergence of urban corridors have accentuated the on-going disparities at international, national and inter-urban levels. At a macro geographical scale there is a core of advanced areas and major megacities that extends from the BESETO corridor through the Chinese coastal cities such as Shanghai, Xiamen and Guangdong, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City to a great arc of Indo-China and Malayan peninsulas. At increasing distance from this developed zone lie orbital areas of relative underdevelopment. Depressed areas within the respective countries are mostly away from this developing urban corridors. In Japan, regional disparities hardly disappear between the Tokaido megalopolis and other parts of the country. Korea's depressed regions lie in south-western and north-eastern parts which are far away from the Seoul-Pusan megalopolitan influence. China may not be an exception. In the process of nation-building from 1949 development priority was given to inland areas away from coastal cities where

colonial and imperialistic imprint persist. However, the opening of its coastal cities since 1980s will surely reinforce the development of coastal regions at the cost of inland which has been evidenced by the massive influx of population to coastal cities. In the same vein, South East Asian countries including Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia will experience the peripheralization of the regions other than urban corridors and growth triangles in their respective countries.

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