

The Impact of Authoritarian Rule on the Success of Global City Branding Efforts:  
Dubai, Singapore, and Mumbai

Abigail Struxness

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### Abstract

With forces of globalization and a neoliberal commitment to open markets, cities in the developing world face increased competition with each other and implement branding to differentiate themselves from their competitors. City brands must appeal to tourists, investors, and residents alike, simultaneously demonstrating that the city is modern enough to be integrated into the global economy, but culturally unique enough to stand apart from rival cities. This thesis investigates how city governments use branding to communicate their commitment to neoliberal principles and their desire to become a respected global city. Using the case studies of Dubai, Singapore, and Mumbai, I find that an authoritarian government can effectively implement cohesive branding to convince the rest of the world that theirs is a true global city. This is because authoritarian governments have the consolidated control necessary to swiftly and effectively implement specific aspects of neoliberal policy favorable to a global city image. These findings contribute to a larger political economy debate regarding the most effective implementation of political institutions to promote economic development, suggesting that a strong state government is necessary in implementing comprehensive policy changes.

## Introduction

A shift in the international division of labor, forces of globalization, and neoliberal political policies have converged and interacted with one another in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to alter the global political economy, especially in urban areas. Increased global, inter-city competition led to the practice of “re-positioning,” where city governments construct a new image for themselves in order to attract more business investment, tourists, talented residents and consumers than their competitors. These cities’ branding efforts attempt to portray themselves as “global cities,” conforming to the global norm of neoliberal policies such as capitalism, privatization, and free markets (Sassen 1991). With this, governments in developing cities, known as “wannabe” global cities, are faced with a unique challenge (Short 2006). They must distinguish the place as culturally unique while simultaneously proving conformity to certain modern “global city” ideals. The role of local government’s control and authority, or lack thereof, is critical in analyzing the success of city branding. This thesis asks the question: How do city governments use city branding to convey their commitment to neoliberal principles and their desire to become a respected global city?

Drawing on examples of authoritarian city governance in Dubai and Singapore, and democratic rule in Mumbai, this thesis contributes to the larger debate among political economists regarding which political institutions are most capable of fostering economic development and modernization. Specifically, this thesis fits into a discussion on the implementation of neoliberal policies for economic development. While one camp argues that neoliberalism’s emphasis on open economic markets and freedom complements and leads to democracy, another argues that neoliberalism relies on the strength of an authoritarian state in order for policies to be effectively implemented (Purcell 2007). If the latter statement is true, it brings about another debate of whether it is acceptable to relinquish political freedoms in order to spur rapid economic growth. Analyzing city branding is a useful way to understand the outcomes of certain policies and processes implemented by different types of city governments in their attempts to become neoliberal global cities.

I argue that authoritarian governments can use the power of their regimes to effectively implement neoliberal policy resulting in cohesive branding to convince the rest of the world that theirs is a global city. Dubai and Singapore manage to selectively implement neoliberal tactics using their consolidated authority to achieve a balance that liberalizes the city enough for the global audience to accept them as a global hub, but not enough for the regime to lose its grasp on power. Branding helps to showcase the positive neoliberal elements of the city while also keeping the control of the image in the hands of the authoritarian regime. Authoritarian regimes also use the implementation of neoliberal policies to strengthen their capacity to brand. Dubai and Singapore altered their governance structure away from a managerial style of administration towards an entrepreneurial one modeled after corporate governance. With this style of government, the city is more flexible towards stakeholder demands and capable of “selling itself,” much like a company would promote its product. In contrast, Mumbai’s multi-tier city governance system remains managerial, failing to adopt an entrepreneurial system that can expedite the implementation of neoliberal policy and strengthen branding abilities.

Commitment to neoliberalism shines through in the authoritarian regimes' brands for a global city. In Dubai, the wedded interests of government and business due to overlapping leadership make it easier for the city to implement a cohesive city plan and branding strategy. Fantastical architecture and a commitment to consumerism give a futuristic appearance and convey modernization. In Singapore, the authoritarian government gains legitimacy by promising increased economic growth in exchange for political control. By updating arts infrastructure and branding the city as "cosmopolitan," Singapore attempts to attract foreign talent, boost its creative service-based industries, and unify the population. The case of Mumbai, a democracy, demonstrates the failure to create a cohesive city brand when the government is decentralized and fragmented. Each city experiences tensions between government, neoliberalism, and city branding, but ultimately the cities led by authoritarian regimes successfully market themselves as global cities.

Today, over half of the world's population lives in urban areas (Population Reference Bureau 2012). With globalization and a neoliberal commitment to open markets, cities in the developing world face increased competition and implement branding to differentiate themselves from their competitors. This thesis looks at city branding in the context of a larger political economy debate about the most effective implementation of political institutions and policy to improve economic development. With the case studies of Dubai, Singapore, and Mumbai, I find that cities with authoritarian regimes are more successful at implementing strong global city brands. However, in terms of policy implications, I do not mean to suggest that the only cities to be successful in creating global city brands are those under authoritarian dictatorships. In fact, many democratic cities in the developed West have strong city brands as well. The most important prerequisite for global city branding is that the city government is strong and has enough control and integration in the city to swiftly implement policy. In the developing world, most strong states or city governments are authoritarian, while emerging democracies tend to be much weaker. Democratic city governments in the developing world can learn lessons from their authoritarian counterparts' success in city branding.

## Theoretical Framework

In this paper, I implement three theoretical frameworks in order to analyze the branding capabilities of wannabe global cities and understand why authoritarian regimes are particularly successful at branding. World City theory is used to define the elements of a global city, and also to confirm the desire for developing cities to become global cities in the context of a competitive global hierarchy. World City theory provides a lens through which to analyze the ideals these cities strive to convey in their branding. The second framework looks at specific branding tactics. This is used to understand the breadth of city branding policies and to understand the unique challenges a wannabe global city faces in creating a brand that appeals to residents and foreign stakeholders alike. An analysis of branding reveals that authoritarian regimes are particularly skilled at implementing strong city brands and are attracted to branding as a method of city promotion because it gives them control over people's perceptions of the place. In order to investigate why authoritarian regimes are skilled at creating these global city brands, I analyzed the theory of neoliberal political economy. I found that cities implement aspects of neoliberalism in two manners. First, neoliberal tenets influence the city's ideal image of a global city: open, free markets, modern, privatized, and committed to consumerism and capitalism. Second,

neoliberal shifts in the style of city governance help to facilitate brand implementation. In theory neoliberalism conflicts with authoritarian rule because neoliberalism calls for a scaling back of state power. However, in practice, authoritarian governments have the consolidated control necessary to swiftly and effectively implement specific aspects of neoliberal policy favorable to a global city image.

### *World City Theory*

World city theory presents definitions of a “global city,” and proposes a global hierarchy in which cities are classified on a spectrum of global integration based upon a number of pre-determined factors. While only London, New York, and Tokyo have achieved true global city status, there are multiple categories of “wannabe global cities,” that exhibit some of the elements necessary to become a global city (Sassen 2010, 129). This competitive hierarchy intensifies the need for city branding and restructuring programs designed to convince tourists, investors, and residents of the global capabilities of cities in the developing world.

John Friedmann’s world cities hypothesis was the first to propose a hierarchy for cities relative to their global economic power (Friedmann 1986; Robinson 2002). Under this hypothesis, cities possessing high concentrations of global business headquarters, strong international financial institutions, modern transportation infrastructure, and rich cultural traditions are classified in the top tier, while places with fewer of these institutions are classified as semi-periphery or core cities (Palquin 2001). This hierarchy supports the notion that cities must constantly compete with one another in order to benefit the most from the global economy. Global cities “should be able to articulate regional, national, and international economies into a global one and serve as organizing nodes of a global economic system” (Robinson 2002, 534). Large cities serve as hubs connecting the national economy to the global marketplace. The large role placed upon cities requires them to compete with one another in hopes of moving up the hierarchy.

Complementing Friedman, Saskia Sassen coined the term, “global city,” in her 1991 work. She defines the “global city” phenomenon as unique to the new world economy, 1980s-present (1991). Sassen refers to the global city as one that has a monopoly of “control and command” networks and institutions. These are embedded in both government and corporate structures and are designed to facilitate the “management and coordination of global economic systems” (Sassen 1991). Today, this definition has been expanded to include sectors such as service, transportation, communications and tourism (Chang 2000). In a post-modern world, a city must not only foster an environment conducive to business and finance, but it must also offer appealing culture and lifestyles for its citizens and travelers (Chang 2000). Methods of “upgrading” cities include: improving business climate and trade policies, developing infrastructure and architecture, strengthening banking sectors, remodeling transportation hubs and communication networks, and promoting culture and tourism destinations (Short 2006, 114; Jenn-Hwang 2004, 385).

Recently, critiques of the dominant world city theory and definitions have arisen. Robinson challenges Friedman and Sassen’s belief that cities can be hierarchically structured, noting that not every city can possess the command and control structures necessary to dominate

the world economy, but dozens of cities contribute other “global functions,” that connect them into the world system and increase their global competitiveness (2002, 547). Similarly, Short opposes the static labeling of cities as “global,” preferring instead to refer to them as “globalizing,” suggesting that “almost all cities can act as a gateway,” for political, economic, and social globalization (2006, 74). With these criticisms in mind, this paper employs a broader definition of a “global city,” than that reflected in classic world city theory. I define a global city as one that is a hub for international business, has a secure financial sector, diversified industries, a cosmopolitan culture and lifestyle, enchanting architecture, and which captures a large segment of the global economy. This broader definition of a global city for today’s developing cities assumes that cities ascribe to neoliberal ideals of free, open markets, good governance, commodification, private industry, and a commitment to capitalism.

Achieving global city status is what governments of wannabe global cities aspire to. This ideal, defined by variations on world city theory, is what they try to mold their brand image towards in an attempt to alter the perceptions of crucial stakeholders such as tourists, investors, and the residents themselves. This ideal will be examined more thoroughly as we look at the strategies city governments and policy makers in developing cities employ to brand themselves as places that have already achieved global status.

### *Place Branding*

As competition between cities increases due to forces of globalization, city branding has become an important method for cities to differentiate themselves from one another in order to gain the maximum capital, tourists, and consumers. Wannabe global cities face challenges in creating their brands because they must appeal to a broad variety of stakeholders. City governments must prove that their city is modern and neoliberal enough to integrate well into the global economy, but also demonstrate that the city retains a cultural distinctiveness that makes it more appealing than its competitors. Branding differs from marketing or advertising in that a city brand is often part of a cohesive strategy for development, such as a plan for neoliberal policy implementation. Branding also differs from strictly marketing in that a brand tries to remold or re-imagine reality, whereas marketing tactics try to promote what already exists.

City branding embodies the concept of constructivism in which places believe they can “construct” their own identities and present them to the world as reality (Shen 2010, 206). Through image construction, city governments exert control over outsider’s perceptions of the city by only presenting the appealing aspects of their city to the world (Gotham 2007; Coleman 2004; Ooi 2008). The level of control that branding provides makes it an appealing strategy for an authoritarian regime seeking to boost its image. Some call this practice “Disney Reality,” in which the governing power eliminates all negative aspects of a place (Eeckhout 2001). Goodwin describes city branding as myth being constantly revised and rewritten (1993). Short contributes to the theme of constructivism noting that branding is “reimagining of the city, as cities seek to represent themselves positively in the new geographies, created or imagined, of late capitalism” (2006, 112). In sum, branding is an effective tactic for authoritarian regimes because it requires a level of control that these governments can provide and because it directly benefits the preponderance of their power as well.

For maximum efficacy, a city brand must appeal to a broad range of stakeholders. Unlike a product, where the brand must only please consumers, place brands must appeal to a variety of interest groups including prospective businesses, tourists, and the residents themselves (Gotham 2007). On one hand, cities in the developing world must achieve a balance between branding themselves as “Western” enough to attract a positive reputation from developed, neoliberal, countries and multinational corporations. A wannabe global city must brand itself using “powerful growth rhetoric,” in order to convince the world that it is developing into a global city (Short 2006, 115). On the other, the brand must reflect the city’s culture and social norms, as well as the regional business climate, which may contrast from the neoliberal ideal posited by Western powers. In order to accomplish this, a successful city brand must demonstrate that it “leans-to-both-sides,” that it balances the demands from East and West (Shen 2010, 209). Additionally, a successful brand gains legitimacy if its residents “internalize the brand” (Gotham 2007, 840). Citizens who support a regime’s branding help make the constructed identity a reality. Additionally, a strong city brand with lots of resident buy-in can unify a heterogeneous population and boost city spirit (Evans 2003). Governments implementing city branding face a dilemma in which they must prove that their city simultaneously exhibits modern, neoliberal traits common to all global cities, but is also differentiated enough to appeal more than all the other wannabe global cities.

In order to convince stakeholders of their modernity and commitment to neoliberal policies, cities’ branding policies incorporate a variety of specific tactics. One of the most powerful ways to emphasize global reach in a city brand is through architecture. Wannabe global cities embark on expensive construction projects to build a memorable skyline that reflects modernity. If an internationally renowned architect designs the signature building, that validates their image further (Short 2006; Ward 1998). Short defines this type of branding as “flash urbanism,” where the primary goal is to create a “visual rhetoric,” emphasizing spectacle and drawing attention towards the city (2012, 12). Wannabes also try to accrue support from well-known international food and clothing chains to encourage consumerism and promote the city as a destination for multinational corporations, a practice known as “ingredient branding” (Balakrishnan 2008, 80). The presence of well-known global brands in the city legitimizes the city’s global status (Gotham 2007). Governments also apply neoliberal values of consumption and free business markets by creating “fantasy cities,” havens of upscale consumerism (Hanngian 2007, 68). These places integrate business development into the city’s image and reflect the place’s growing global and cosmopolitan ambitions.

While the strategies establish the city as modern, adhering to neoliberal principles, and global, these can be implemented in any developing city. The next challenge is to distinguish the wannabe global city from its counterparts. One way to achieve this is through promotion of city culture and heritage. In the postmodern age, culture is no longer an optional part of city identity, it is a necessity (Ward 1998). Evans defines cultural branding as hardbranding, “facilitated by the agglomeration of cultural consumption in both spatial and symbolical terms” (2003, 436). Many cities commodify their culture in order to make it appealing to tourists and investors. Short notes that cities promote themselves with various types of cultural capital such as: Historic Feel (heritage), Festive Package (resorts, spas, shopping), Green and Clean Theme (environmentalism), and Package of Pluralism (rich ethnic mix) (Short 2006). Another form of city differentiation is via superlatives: cities try to have the world’s tallest building, the fastest

metro system, or label themselves as the “world capital” for a certain commodity or industry (Balakrishnan 2008).

Wannabe global cities attempt to brand themselves as such with a slew of factors highlighting their modernity and commitment to neoliberalism, while simultaneously trying to differentiate themselves by focusing on culture and historic appeal. Despite trying to achieve these two sides, Ooi notes that developing cities have a tendency of becoming more alike, especially when governments mimic one another’s branding strategies (Ooi 2010). Ward is skeptical of the city’s ability to be truly unique whilst conforming to norms of a “global city,” noting the irony of trying to be distinct, when in reality “post-industrial cities have already begun to caricaturize themselves” (1998, 189). In sum, cities face a challenge in branding themselves as global in which they must be simultaneously differentiated from and identical to one another. As discussed in greater detail below, the case studies of Dubai, Singapore, and Mumbai demonstrate that a strong authoritarian regime can most effectively implement neoliberal policies and brand the city as a “global city.”

### *Neoliberalism and Authoritarianism: Theory and Practice*

With the understanding of what a global city is, and how it can be branded as such, the final theoretical section examines reasons as to why authoritarian governments are so skilled at branding themselves in accordance with the neoliberal principles which are necessary for achieving global city status. An authoritarian city government that successfully implements neoliberal policy may seem paradoxical because neoliberalism promotes freedom while authoritarianism restricts it. This section discusses the motivations for authoritarian regimes to adopt neoliberal policies and the reasons it is effective in practice. I argue that neoliberalism is readily adopted by authoritarian regimes because a strong authoritarian power can make quick policy implementation decisions. In order to engage fully with neoliberalism, many authoritarian city governments shifted from a managerial style of governance to an entrepreneurial one. Overall, neoliberalism and authoritarianism work in tandem to promote city branding: the strong government enables the implementation of neoliberal policy designed to convince the world of the city’s global nature.

As the world experienced a new wave of globalization, a new political ideology emerged in the United States and Great Britain. Popularized by developed countries, the adoption of elements of neoliberalism became a way for developing countries to earn increased status in the international marketplace. Neoliberalism advocates free-market economics and a reduction of government involvement in economic activity. Foreign policy under the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the U.S. and U.K., respectively, advocated for privatization, market liberalization, and free trade (Harvey 2005). The driving force behind neoliberalism, and one of the reasons it emerged as the Cold War ended, was the promotion of freedom. The premise of neoliberal political economy is that individual entrepreneurial freedoms, if nurtured in an environment that promotes private property rights, free trade, and free markets, lead to the highest form of socio-economic well being and ultimately democracy (Harvey 2005). Legitimized with popular support in powerful Western countries, the ideology of neoliberalism spread to developing countries across the globe (Harvey 2005). Neoliberal practices became prerequisites for development and foreign aid assistance, and generally the global norm. This

made neoliberalism an appealing policy for developing countries to adopt as it would generate legitimacy for them among developed nations. Cities were logical places in which to implement these policies as they are hubs for international commerce.

Neoliberalism in theory contrasts with neoliberalism in practice. According to the theory, a city with an authoritarian government should not be able to successfully implement neoliberalism because authoritarian rule limits freedoms. While neoliberalism in theory advocates a reduction of government power, in practice the government needs a lot of concentrated power in order to maintain order and create these institutions. Global free-market capitalism needs a strong state either democratic or authoritarian, and this reality is counterintuitive to the theory (Springer 2009). In fact, Polanyi “dooms” neoliberalism to only be successfully implemented by authoritarian regimes because free enterprise benefits a privileged group while offering few freedoms to the majority (as cited in Harvey 2005, 37). According to this view, neoliberal policies must be executed via force and authoritarianism. This contrasts with the view propounded by some political economists in the developed West that neoliberalism leads to democracy (Friedman 1962). Within this debate, Harvey notes that some other neoliberal theorists are skeptical of democracy’s effectiveness as a method of implementation and prefer rule by “trained elites” (2005, 66). In practice, neoliberalism needs a strong state to make policy a reality. This makes it a logical policy for authoritarian regimes to adopt and implement neoliberalism in cities because it improves their appearance in the international community and elevates their global status.

A common example of an authoritarian state trying to implement neoliberal reforms is a “developmental state,” defined as a benevolent authoritarian regime pursuing policies to develop the country’s economy and global standing. Harvey notes:

“Developmental states become consistent with neoliberalization to the degree that they facilitate competition between firms, corporations, and territorial entities and accept the rules of free trade and rely on open export markets. But they are actively interventionist in creating the infrastructures for a good business climate. Neoliberalization therefore opens up possibilities for developmental states to enhance their position in international competition by developing new structures of state intervention” (2005, 72).

States and local governments in developing, authoritarian countries selectively implement neoliberal reforms while still maintaining their authoritarian power. Instead of engaging in a complete neoliberal political overhaul, they use the power of their regimes to perpetuate their control while creating institutions necessary for the integration into the global economy.

The rise of neoliberal ideology and the increase in global competition that followed was a contributing factor to a shift in the role of cities worldwide, their management practices, and the need for a cohesive branding strategy. Neoliberal philosophy holds competition between firms and “territorial entities,” as a “primary virtue” because of their strong belief in the market to determine the most efficient outcomes (Harvey 2005, 65). Neoliberalism also creates “uneven geographical development,” as regions with successful innovation inherently pressure other locations to catch up or risk being left behind (Harvey 2005, 87). Cities become “loci of investment and development” in the global economy (Springer 2009, 273). “As the world

flattens, cities in many different countries are brought into greater international competition whether it be attracting corporate power and financial concentrations, encouraging manufacturing, or promoting tourism” (Short 2012, 40).

A Marxist interpretation of city competition emphasizes the paradox between the mobility of capital and labor found in the globalized world, and the necessity of cities to have strong fixed institutions and physical infrastructures in order to attract that capital. The problem with this is that some capital must be devoted to the creation of these permanent institutions, but that does not guarantee that these international mobile flows of capital and labor will stay in the city forever. In this manner, cities must constantly assert their competitiveness and update their institutions in order reap the benefits of mobile capital and labor power, or risk vulnerability if they leave. Free-market capitalism causes “restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes,” something that city governments must constantly try to manage (Harvey 2001, 332-333). In order to remain competitive and attractive, cities must take on the risk and expense of upgrading infrastructure.

Believing in the market as the most efficient allocator of capital, neoliberalism focuses on privatization and emphasizes the commodification of nearly everything (Goodwin 1993). Monetization and privatization in cities occurs with everything from public utilities and property, to culture and heritage. “The city becomes a place of growth promotion as stimulating private growth trumps social redistribution, commodified spaces replace public places and citizens are recast as consumers” (Short 2012, 39). Commodification can be used to explain how cities manage to navigate the hyper-competitive global environment—in essence neoliberal reforms help cities to “sell themselves” and their perceived competitive advantages in hopes of attracting capital, tourists, or consumers (Coleman 2004; Kearns and Philo 1993, 18). Commodification also plays into the post-modern shift in which consumers are highlighted as important constituents in the global order.

Cities led by authoritarian governments with neoliberal policy tend to shift in governance styles from managerial to entrepreneurial. The argument is that authoritarian governments maintain control while implementing neoliberal policies by changing their governance practices. Instead of eliminating the government, the government changes its practices to become more neoliberal; in essence it runs itself as a corporation. As competition between cities intensifies, decision-making power transfers from a central government authority to local and regional governments, minimizing the appearance of strong top-down government planning (Wu 2000). Managerial government styles, often equated with Keynesianism, featuring welfare, social redistribution, and strong state planning, that were popular during the period before globalization and neoliberalism, cannot handle the increase in global competitiveness. With neoliberalism, an entrepreneurial style of government leadership becomes the best and most dominant approach for cities trying to achieve global city status (Harvey 2001).

Entrepreneurial governments act like venture capitalists, focusing on becoming a competitive, well-branded region, with institutions that promote free-market capitalism (Ong 2006). An entrepreneurial state creates optimal conditions for business investment and tourism by making adjustments to the “invisible hand” of the market, but not exerting outright control (Ong 2006, 180). The purpose of entrepreneurial, neoliberal minded government is to create an

appealing and competitive environment that is attractive to key stakeholders, and to promote their city as one that is truly global (Short 2012). Cities promoting neoliberal philosophies via authoritarian regimes shift governance practices from those that are “redistributionist-productionist-socialist to entrepreneurial-consumptionist-capitalist” (Short 2012, 234). However, Wilkinson critiques Harvey in her analysis of government policies in a post-modern world. She suggests that governments are inherently managerial in practice, and that they cannot avoid that role. Instead, entrepreneurial techniques, such as the commodification of places, must be taken on in addition to managerial responsibilities. She does not agree that neoliberalism has infiltrated ideology to the extent that it completely reorganizes government structure and purpose (Wilkinson 1992). She argues that an authoritarian government must strike a balance between managerial and entrepreneurial style leadership in order to enact neoliberal reforms.

Entrepreneurial city governance is an important way that the authoritarian regime maintains legitimacy in its power. Entrepreneurial style government convinces the population that economic growth necessitates strong leadership in order to implement policies that foster capitalism and improve competitiveness. The message is that neoliberal policies allow for growth that is “good for all” (Coleman 2004, 23). The government’s new role is to “optimize” the city, and its solutions are “technical” rather than politically or ideologically charged (Ong 2006, 3). However, Coleman argues that neoliberal reforms in government are very politically charged and reduce citizen participation and further promote authoritarian leadership. He notes:

“A neoliberal state form can be characterized as a set of institutions that demonstrate a shift to private sector power in decision-making, relative inoculation from public scrutiny, being less reliant on public elections, and which are centrally concerned with building a legitimacy base for its activities through public consultation rather than participation” (Coleman 2004, 25).

Coleman notes that neoliberal and entrepreneurial leadership can reduce the transparency of city government and thus aid an authoritarian regime in maintaining its dominance. By adopting entrepreneurial or corporate techniques for city governance, such as commodification, and privatization, and branding these reforms, city governments react to neoliberal ideology in a unique way. Instead of government reduction, they simply alter the way government works to make it function similarly to a business and in accordance with neoliberal principles. The entrepreneurial government actively fosters competitiveness of a city and assists in the implementation of neoliberal principles necessary for achieving global city status. In addition to the commodification of place, place selling is an important component to this entrepreneurialism. One form of social control is the manipulation of a city’s image, which entrepreneurial city governments do very effectively (Coleman 2004). A government employing neoliberal reforms desires a unified brand for the city; the most sought after brand is “global and neoliberal.”

Neoliberalism is successfully implemented by authoritarian developmental regimes specifically for the purpose of city branding for several reasons. First, a commitment to neoliberalism makes the regime more legitimate in the eyes of the global community and thus will help secure the tourism and investment necessary to become a true global city. Second, authoritarian regimes can swiftly implement neoliberal policy, which enhances the competitiveness of a city. Third, neoliberalism can help change the authoritarian regime by

increasing commodification, privatization, and an entrepreneurial style of government, which all improve a city's branding abilities.

## Introduction to the Case Studies

Dubai and Singapore were chosen as real life examples to illustrate how authoritarian regimes use principles of neoliberalism to restructure government and create global, neoliberal city brands in order to attract investment, tourists, and a diverse consumer population. Mumbai was chosen as an example of a city with similar global city aspirations but one that lacks the strong city governance necessary to implement a successful branding policy. Using Friedman's 1986 World City Hypothesis, the Globalization and World Cities Research Network updated the hierarchy of cities in 2010 using quantitative analysis (GaWC 2010). The three case studies were chosen because they are cities in Alpha + category, just below the truly global cities, the Alpha ++ category of London and New York, yet they are also all situated within developing countries. As "wannabe" global cities, the three cases already exhibit strong integration into the global economy, but seek further consolidation and influence. Each city prioritizes rebranding and strategic plans in order to convince the global community of its rising power. Products of British imperialism until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the three confront challenges of attempting to fulfill the "lean to both sides," hypothesis of maintaining Western favor while remaining loyal to conservative, national interests as well (Shen 2010). Each city lacks a bounty of natural resources and depends on the international community for supplies and foreign investment, which heightens the need for a brand signifying strong global city status. The recent independence of each of these cities makes the cases interesting to analyze as they all face the pressures of competition from the rest of the world. The case studies will discuss specific tactics implemented to demonstrate commitment to neoliberal ideals as well as analyze the successes and tensions arising from city governments attempting to convince the world of its liberal values.

### *Dubai: Flash Urbanism in the Desert*

This section will look at how Dubai has become a "model city for neoliberal policies," through the analysis of their branding strategies, specifically their architectural projects, their emphasis on consumerism, and their "lean to both sides" advertisements (Elsheshtawy 2010, 18). Elsheshtawy notes, "more than any other city in the region, and perhaps in the world, it has made the notion of branding... a key ingredient in pursuing global city status" (2010, 128). Dubai's unique authoritarian leadership allows for the creation of cohesive brand policies designed to promote neoliberalism and help the city achieve global city status.

Dubai came into existence as a small fishing village off the coast of the Persian Gulf. Today, it is an internationally connected city known for its impressive skyline, luxurious hotels and shopping malls, and its bustling sea and air ports. Dubai began opening itself up to the outside world in the 1950s, when the monarch Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed ordered the creation of a large port to facilitate international trade. In 1971, after independence from British rule, Dubai became part of the United Arab Emirates; this increased its competitiveness with other emirates, especially because it has less natural resources compared to oil-rich emirates like Abu Dhabi (Herb 2009). Globalization forces coupled with competitive pressure in the region, led the ruling

royal family of Dubai, the Al Maktoums, to begin implementing neoliberal development policies to make Dubai a truly global city. Concentrated political power in the ruling family allowed for the Dubai leadership to become the “leading capitalists,” in the city, and to create policies that favored private-sector growth (Herb 2009, 385). In this manner, Dubai rules under “radical free-market absolutism” (Kanna 2010, 107).

Dubai’s government, under the leadership of Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, explicitly made achieving global city status the central goal in its 2015 Strategic Plan. In a speech delivered upon the release of the Strategic Plan in 2007, the Sheikh expounded upon neoliberal policies necessary in a global city including good governance, transparency, accountability, adoption of free-market economic principles, and partnership with the private sector (Mohammed 2007; Government of Dubai 2007). He links these strategies with Dubai’s ability to simultaneously “keep up with global growth and develop and shape our national and cultural identity and character” (Mohammed 2007). This hope for a balance between global economic power and national cultural preservation will be examined further as a branding goal. These goals garnered praise from Thomas Friedman, who said, “Dubai is precisely the sort of decent, modernizing model we should be trying to nurture in the Arab-Muslim world” (Elsheshtawy 2010, 273-274). The approaches spelled out in Strategic Plan 2015 not only liberalize the economy but also bring legitimacy to the authoritarian government by giving the appearance that it works for the people through the adoption of good governance and transparency practices, even though it lacks the ultimate form of accountability, the people’s vote. The government’s strong vision for urban development since the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has greatly contributed to Dubai’s rapid growth (Balakrishnan 2008, 70). Lee and Jain note: “With ambitions to become a hub of global commerce, a top tourist destination and a shopping Mecca, a New York-Las Vegas-Miami rolled into one, Dubai has spent billions of dollars to build an astonishingly modern city – nearly from scratch – in only 15 years” (2009, 235). One way to articulate this grandiose vision is through branding.

Dubai heavily promotes consumerism in its branding, one of the key tenets of neoliberalism. Dubai pursues “ingredient branding,” attracting foreign, trans-national brands to bring more credibility and legitimacy to a shopping area or district (Balakrishnan 2008, 80). The international shopping festival, designed to promote Dubai’s image of luxury and to attract tourists, is arguably the largest “cultural” event that the city sponsors (Elsheshtawy 2010, 171). Conspicuous consumption boosts the city’s image as a powerful, wealthy and modern place. It is through the creation of shopping meccas that Dubai builds fantasies and creates superlatives for itself, such as the largest indoor mall, the largest indoor ski slope, and the largest aquarium (Elsheshtawy 2010, 128 and 180). These novelties alienate Dubai from real life and promote its modernity and increasing consumerism (Hashim 2010).

Perhaps the most striking way in which Dubai attempts to draw attention to itself as a modern, global city is through the construction of massive architectural projects. These projects exemplify Short’s theory of flash urbanism, in which a city creates fantastical “visual rhetoric,” designed to impress the viewer and lead them to assume the city is global (Short 2012, 10). The Burj Khalifa became the world’s tallest building, an iconic futuristic skyscraper. The Burj Al Arab, with notable sail shape architecture, self declared itself to be the “world’s only seven star hotel” (Jumeriah 2013). Off the coast of Dubai is the Jumeriah Palm’s Resort, a completely man-

made archipelago including islands fanning into a palm shape. Works in progress include islands comprising the geography of the world and islands spelling out a poem in Arabic script, which can be viewed from space. These architectural marvels were all created for the purpose of furthering Dubai's global brand image. Bagaeen notes that the rationale of large construction projects for wannabe global cities is to: "create an image of progress and dynamism where the fastest, biggest, most amazing structures are being built in order to attract the affluent and the talented, all essential to the consolidation of the successful Dubai brand" (2007, 177). This tactic has also been named the Guggenheim effect, referring to what happened when a striking brand of the Guggenheim museum was built in Bilbao, Spain—the once ordinary town instantly attracted more tourists and business investors, thanks to the museum's significance and appeal (Elsheshtawy 2010,143). With these high velocity construction projects, Dubai is physically shaping its sky and coast lines to look like a modern city with the idea that if it looks like a global city, it will become one.

Dubai uses large architectural and real estate projects, and creates a culture of consumerism as mechanisms to ensure a brand that aligns with a neoliberal ideal of a global city. They have been so successful at generating international attention through their projects that this method of development has been dubbed "The Dubai Model" (Elsheshtawy 2010, 251) However, Dubai has been criticized as overdoing the "futuristic" image and neglecting the "cultural" aspect of the branding. Dubai's flash urbanism and rapid development has resulted in a general feeling of "fakedness and artificiality," and "soulessness" (Elsheshtawy 251; Govers 2012, 57). The Dubai tourism agency launched the brand "Definitely Dubai," with the intention of "exhibiting the duality of a modern city with a rich traditional and cultural backdrop" (Government of Dubai 2013). In their promotional materials, the agency juxtaposes old Arab culture with images of a modern city in its branding boasting: "old-world souks and modern shopping malls, rolling sand dunes and championship grass gold courses, remote Bedouin villages and an array of five-star hotels" (Hashim 2010). The imagery of an old Arab culture may serve as a garnish to make modern city development more exotic, but Dubai has done little to actually preserve its heritage. In fact, only 300 historic buildings remain in Dubai out of the 3000 that existed before modern expansion; the others were bulldozed to make room for modern buildings (Stephenson et al. 2010, 286).

Despite the illusion of fully free-market economic development, Dubai's government plays a large role in the vision and implementation of these large architectural and cultural projects and the promotion of these achievements and is an example of an entrepreneurial style authoritarian government. Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is rumored to have dreamed up the original design for the palm project (Elsheshtawy 2010; Hashim 2010). Emaar properties, the real estate development group responsible for building the Burj Al Arab hotel and surrounding environs, granted the Government of Dubai, via the Dubai Holding Corporation, a 32% majority equity stake in the company, in exchange for public land (Reuters 2007). Nakheel Properties, the agency in charge of managing the archipelago developments is headed by executive director Shiekh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who is also the chairman of the Dubai Shopping Festival and happens to be the ruling Sheik's uncle (Elsheshtawy 2010). Indeed, the Dubai Holding Corporation, of which Emaar and Nakheel are subsidiaries, is the largest corporation and most powerful corporation in Dubai, with its leaders also serving on the Dubai

Executive Council (Kanna 2010). In this manner, Dubai's governing family has a large role in determining Dubai's image and the way in which it will sell itself to the world.

Family-run corporations allow Dubai to remain authoritarian while simultaneously pursuing neoliberal policies for the purpose of branding themselves as a global city. Since there is an overlap in leadership between the city government and the company executives, Dubai is able to enact a unified development policy, such as the establishment of a modern, "global" environment, without blatantly exerting government force. This gives Dubai the appearance of following the principles of neoliberalism, i.e. minimal government involvement in the marketplace. In theory, companies are allowed to make their own decisions, and are liberated from governmental regulation. However, the agenda of city and corporation is the same in Dubai since the leadership is the same. This unique relationship has led to the city's nickname, "Dubai, Inc." with the leader Mohammad Al Maktoum as the CEO (Herb 2009, 385; Kanna 2010, 106). The notion of a "city-corporation" that is a true combination of city governance and corporate executives is a unique permutation to the entrepreneurial city model, where city governance acts like corporate governance.

In 2008, Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum published an editorial in the Wall Street Journal, which both reaffirmed his commitment to neoliberal governance and refuted the label "Dubai, Inc" (Al Maktoum 2008). He explained that the role of the government is to provide incentives to the private sector, but leave it to the private sector to innovate and thus promote economic growth. In this manner, he re-couched the nickname as "Catalyst, Inc," in which their vision helps the private sector promote economic growth and cultural inclusiveness. This rephrasing tries to deflect the wedded interests between city and corporation and suggests that the government merely attracts and inspires corporate innovation, instead of the reality where they work jointly to realize large development projects.

Dubai succeeds in maintaining authoritarianism while also promoting neoliberal policies. Development projects such as architectural marvels and vast shopping malls contribute to the brand of a neoliberal global city dedicated to modernity, consumption, and private enterprise. The manner in which Dubai manages to create this image is through authoritarian means with consolidated power, especially through the common interest developmental partnerships between city government and private business. The greatest constraint for Dubai's brand is that the image of modernity overshadows the promotion of cultural authenticity, which is an important factor for an aspiring global city and one that will be analyzed in the following case study.

### *Singapore: Creating a Cosmopolitan Environment*

This section will examine how the Singaporean government attempts to brand the city-state as a cosmopolitan place or "Global City for the Arts," in hopes to increase city competitiveness by attracting foreign talent and upgrading the economy. The city's goal was to convince the world of its cultural vibrancy in hopes of attracting a higher caliber of tourist, foreign investor, or resident as it focuses its economy towards creative, service-based industries. The branding has succeeded but has tested the government's leniency towards liberalism in the process.

Singapore gained its independence from Great Britain in 1959, and from its neighbor Malaysia in 1965 (Salaff 2004, 243). One of the few city-states in the world, Singapore hosts a population of five million on 433 square miles (CIA 2013). Considered one of the most economically developed non-democracies in the world today, Singapore enjoys the 6<sup>th</sup> highest GDP per capita while under authoritarian rule by the People's Action Party (PAP) (CIA 2013). Under colonial rule, Singapore served as a vibrant urban entrepôt for the region, so the city is used to being inundated with foreign trade and a multicultural society (Yeoh 2004). The city-state has no natural resources of its own, so diversifying the economy has been a priority since independence. Singapore implemented policies of economic growth through rule by its strong development state. In the 1960s, the government enacted export-oriented industrialization policies to boost infant industries and economic growth (Liow 2012). By the 1990s, it shifted towards the promotion of a service-based economy. Responding to the forces of globalization and global neoliberal ideology, the PAP "refashioned" its role as a development state (Liow 2012, 248). Government tourism and urban planning agencies collaborated to develop new brands for the city such as "New Asia-Singapore," and "YourSingapore," and began positioning Singapore as a "Global City for the Arts" (Ooi 2012, 245; Chang 2000, 823).

As a developmental state, Singapore legitimized its authoritarianism by promising, and delivering, economic growth (Sussman 2007). This "social-contract" by establishing economic performance legitimacy between elites and the rest of society ensured that the citizenry would not demand a liberal political environment so long as the government kept up its promises of a comfortable material economic climate (Pei 2012). In recent decades, the PAP implemented neoliberal reforms into its governance, such as the liberalization of the economy, and with that the promotion of foreign workers and foreign owned companies. However, it did not abandon authoritarianism altogether; the embedded power relations of the development state allowed for a continuation of authoritarian control, only this time for the purpose of enacting neoliberal reform. Instead of using neoliberalism to completely overhaul the existing governance and economic structure, the PAP implemented elements of neoliberal reform selectively and strategically (Liow 2012, 248). Harvey explains Singapore's approach: "It has combined neoliberalism in the marketplace with draconian coercive and authoritarian state power, while invoking moral solidarities based on nationalist ideals... and, most recently, a distinctive form of the cosmopolitan ethic suited to its current position in the world of international trade" (Harvey 2005, 76). This ideal of cosmopolitanism and culture is necessary for the success of a post-modern city to achieve global city status.

The PAP promotes cosmopolitanism as a strategy to attract foreign talent and investment and upgrade the skills and values of the local population. The Ministry of Trade and Industry targeted three creative industries to boost the economy: arts and culture, design, and media (Ooi 2008, 291). However, their promotion of a creative economy and cosmopolitan culture does not always mesh with their authoritarian structure of control or the needs of their target populations. The following brand analysis examines these tensions. Since independence, Singapore branded itself with three unique campaigns (Ooi 2012). From the 1960s to 1970s, Singapore dubbed itself "Instant Asia," suggesting the tourist or investor could experience a wide array of Asian culture in one convenient location. In the 1980s, "Surprisingly Singapore," highlighted contrasting images of modernity and "Asian exoticism" (Ooi 2012, 245). From the 1990s to the present, Singapore promotes the "New Asia-Singapore" brand with the hopes of showing the complete

fusion of Asian arts and culture with modern development. This came after critiques that Singapore was becoming “too modern” and losing the cultural authenticity that attracts tourists and foreign talent in today’s post-modern age (Ooi 2012, 245). As a response, in 1992 the Ministry of Media and Arts, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry launched a brand development initiative designed to make Singapore a “Global City for the Arts” (Chang 2000).

The brand initiative progressed quickly and efficiently because of the vision and control of the developmental state that implemented the reforms. There is some absurdity in coining Singapore’s new cultural investments as a “renaissance” since there was nothing like this previously in the city that they try to return to (Chang 2000; Yeoh 2004). The image of Singapore as a creative and artistic hub developed inorganically, as a result of policies and “high levels of coordination” by the government, who were using this image in a strategic manner to pursue boosts in global flows of tourists and foreign talent (Yeoh 2004, 2435). Since the brand was inorganic and not particularly rooted in truth, the brand needed to broadly appeal to residents and foreigners alike.

In a 1999 speech on National Day, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong portrayed a “cosmopolitan” as the ideal citizen: “cosmopolitans' speak English, are international in outlook, skilled in banking, information technology, engineering, science and technology, and able to navigate comfortably anywhere in the world, 'heartlanders' speak 'Singlish,' are parochial in interest and orientation, [and] make their living within the country...” (Yeoh 2004, 2434-2435 ). Cosmopolitanism has been described as the humanist counterpart to globalization (Yeoh 2004, 2431). This speech appeals to the residents to accept the brand the government puts out as its own. A brand that the population accepts and internalizes is a much more effective one. Additionally, residents will be less skeptical of foreign talent entering their workforce if they feel as if they are all unified under this “cosmopolitan” ethos (Yeoh 2436).

Singapore implemented many “hardware developments,” for their brand such as the creation of arts infrastructure in the city (Chang 2000, 824). The largest project was the revitalization of the waterfront, an area previously filled with low income housing, to reposition the space as one of culture and vibrancy (Chang and Huang 2011, 2092). Construction of cosmopolitan spaces such as shopping malls and the iconic Esplanade-Theaters by the Bay entertainment complex simultaneously promote a modern and a cultured image. The waterfront area was developed by private companies with assistance from the Singapore Totalisator Board, which allocates profits from gambling to city development projects. (National Library Singapore). Today, according to the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the area still relies on “constant tending,” a euphemism for the injection of state funds, in order to remain economically viable (Chang and Huang 2011, 2091). Though this redevelopment was designed to attract foreigners and residents alike, the branding has had an uneven effect. Young Singaporean cosmopolitan residents appreciate the development for its modernity in architecture and openness to globalization, such as an entire shopping mall devoted to Korean and Japanese brands and fashions (Chang and Huang 2011). However, older Singaporeans feel resentment towards the developments for not respecting the place’s heritage as a working port and home to poor residents. Foreign tourists also do not appreciate the modernity of the area saying that they could see shopping malls anywhere, but it lacked a distinctly Asian culture that travelers yearn for (Chang and Huang 2011). The tension in stakeholder attitudes towards the development

reflects uneven branding success.

In order to combat this disparity between local and foreigner's needs for modernity and culture in a city desperate to become cosmopolitan, the Singapore Tourism Board created several institutions designed to specifically promote culture and heritage. These include: the Singapore Art Museum, the Asian Civilizations Museum, and the Singapore History Museum (Ooi 2012). In addition, they significantly renovated Chinatown. These new and refurbished sites were aggressively promoted to tourists and residents alike (Ooi 2012). In addition to the creation of physical spaces branded as cosmopolitan and artistic, the government promotes festivals and events that highlight Asian culture, but also showcase the talents of the international community as well (Ooi 2008). This type of programming serves to strengthen the Singapore's brand as cultured and cosmopolitan.

By promoting the "Global City for the Arts" brand and lifestyle, the government takes a calculated risk in order to ensure that this liberalization does not undermine their legitimacy to power. On one hand, too much foreign influence can change the mindset of a conservative, repressed population and artistic culture inherently clashes with repression by testing its limits. However, foreign human capital and creativity are vital in achieving a diverse, creative economy that promotes economic growth and important in achieving global city status. Chua describes this as a clash between "modernity of capitalism and western cultural modernity" (1998, 985). Singapore needs to use neoliberalism to open itself up to the global economy, but also fights to maintain its authoritarian hold. The following examples portray the tensions in this delicate balance.

At a 2006 Biennale event, which presents arts and culture to a global audience, the government squashed protestors and banned certain plays from being performed because they were "political" (Ooi 2008, 298). Similarly, a choir was banned from singing at a fringe festival because their content was negative towards Singapore (Ooi 2008, 298). At a concert, a foreign artist was fined for "performance non-compliance" (Chang 2011, 828). These repressive measures are seen as a way to keep control as a liberal, foreign presence comes in and threatens to change the mindset of Singaporean audience. However, too much authoritarian control poses the threat of undermining the credibility of the brand. After the play was banned, critics noted that the action "makes mockery of Singapore's aim to be a global city" (Ooi 2008, 296). However, Ooi counters:

"To the authorities in Singapore, a lack of freedom of expression in certain quarters does not mean that a city cannot pursue the creative industries and be branded as a creative hub. Secondly, the Singaporean authorities also make a tacit distinction between economically valuable and economically insignificant creativity" (2008, 298)

In this manner, the government brands itself as neoliberal selectively, while also retaining the authoritarian elements of a developmental state. The brand and programs designed to help solidify the brand, such as the development of the waterfront and of cultural museums, are solely designed to attract foreign talent, tourists, and promote the cosmopolitanism of the population. They were never designed as measures for a complete neoliberal overhaul of the government system.

### *Mumbai: City of Fragmentation*

The cases of Dubai and Singapore demonstrate the success of an authoritarian regime in branding its developing city as a global one that ascribes to principles of neoliberalism. The case study of Mumbai demonstrates the failure to create a cohesive global image in a developing city that does not have a strong unified government. Mumbai, previously named Bombay, was ruled and administered by the British until India gained independence in 1947. Today, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region is governed by multiple competing political entities, each with unique political and administrative responsibilities (Patel 2007). As a democracy, branding Mumbai is subject to competing visions for city development by multiple political parties. This case will look at the city's global city brand as Bombay under the authoritarian rule of the British and the devolution of this image and transition to an un-unified Mumbai in the years following independence and as different political groups compete for power. I argue that the decentralization of city authority makes it difficult to implement a strong city brand.

While under the rule of the British, Bombay had a strong global brand reflecting its commitment to neoliberal principles. Bombay served as an important hub for international trade between West and East, and hosted the busiest port in India during the colonial period (Patel 2004). The city was home to a diverse and cosmopolitan population of native Bombay residents, Indian migrants, British expatriates and international traders (Hoskote 2007). The colonial administration improved infrastructure and built buildings in a British style. The architecture connoted modernity and linked Bombay's image with the era's global powerhouse Britain. The linkages with Britain via colonialism gave Bombay a ready consumer market for goods and services out of the city. As an important colonial trading city, Bombay accelerated in its development, modernity, and international openness while under British authority. However, upon independence, the image of a globally connected and open city began to dissolve.

After independence, a variety of political entities took responsibility for city administration and policy planning. In the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, seven municipal corporations and 13 municipal councils manage day-to-day operations for their respective parts of the city (Patel 2007). The state of Maharashtra, in which Mumbai is located, handles economic development policy, land management, and has control of law and order in the city (Patel 2007, 66). With this arrangement, "there is thus a variety of formal structures with administrative functions over or within parts of the city. None of them, no single institution among them, controlled or controls the city." (Masselos 2007).

In the 1960s, the Shiv Sena political party emerged. This party advocated for the independence of the Maharashtra state with Mumbai as its capital (Patel 2004). Shiv Sena chafed against the global image that the city of Bombay had acquired under British rule and sought to transform the city into a more parochial, nationalist and authentically Indian society (Hoskote 2007). With the rise of this group, "Bombay's reputation as a city of many tongues and many cultural expressions is under threat" (Patel 2004). In 1995, after gaining political control of Mumbai's largest municipal district, the Shiv Sena made an important step towards transforming this image by legally changing the city's name (Hoskote 2007) Bombay, was a title given to the place by Portuguese explorers in 1534 and was adopted by the British imperialists (Hoskote

2007). Mumbai is the name of the mother goddess worshiped by the native Marathi in pre-colonial times (Hoskote 2007). This name change attempted to quickly and widely alter the image and brand of the city. However the change has not been as successful because it was not uniformly implemented. This is because the Shiv Sena are not the only political party and other groups have contrasting ideas for Mumbai's future. As a result of these "competing discourses," Mumbai has yet to come up with a "coherent self-image" (Raiser and Volkmann 2007, 234).

Without consolidated control, these different entities are left clinging to the little power they have and "party competition on and between different political levels further complicates the formulation of a coherent strategy for the city" (Raiser and Volkmann 2007, 136). Additionally, there is "No single dominant image of the city...no common discourse regarding policy objectives, no agreement on the greatest common good of the metropolis." (Hoskote 2007, 261). This fragmentation due to a lack of consolidated authority limits the city's ability to project a strong global brand. In 2003, McKinsey consulting group issued a report outlining key strategies for Mumbai to become a "world-class city" (Bombay First-McKinsey 2003). One of its key recommendations for policy implementation was to create a single coordination body (Bombay First-McKinsey 2003). Drawing on the success of other city transformations led by other global cities, McKinsey suggested the creation of a Minister of Mumbai to head a steering committee of key advisors. This recommendation attempts to harness some of the successes that authoritarian regimes have in branding and implementing policy under a single authority. Although this recommendation has not been implemented, there have been attempts to launch branding campaigns for Mumbai. Unfortunately, this project has also been delayed due to a democratic, overtly political, and fragmented process. Beginning in 2011, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority and the Mumbai Transformation Support Unit issued a call for bids from brand development companies interested in branding Mumbai (Rawal 2011). After taking many bids, the embassy community and locals were polled on the attractiveness of these campaigns. This lengthy process still has not reached a resolution.

The inability to select and implement a branding and marketing strategy reflects the government of Mumbai's managerial style of governance. City administration and policy making is fragmented and decentralized with each entity managing a small portion of the whole. This system lacks an overall vision and is also much less flexible than an entrepreneurial style system. Mumbai as a managerial city is paralyzed by inefficient low-level bureaucracy. This paralysis leads to the inability to even launch a branding campaign at all. Instead of following a "City, Inc." model, Mumbai is classified by Raiser and Volkman as a "patchwork city," fragmented and lacking integration (2007, 348).

Perhaps the most strongly branded and neoliberal element of the city is its Bollywood industry. Bollywood now produces the largest volume of films in the world and the industry dominates across South Asia (Segbers 2007, 9, 12). Unfortunately, the city has done little to integrate or connect this globally known sector into the city's brand. Most people associate Bollywood with India, but few connect it to Mumbai, particularly now that the city name is no longer Bombay. Bollywood could serve as a perfect branding tool for the city. It exemplifies elements of capitalism and openness to Western ideas and modern technologies, while also retaining a distinctly Indian cultural feel whose novelty appeals to a global audience. With these elements, the Bollywood brand is able to achieve the balance between modernity and

neoliberalism and cultural authenticity necessary for the success of a global city brand. Bollywood could serve as a useful asset to the Mumbai global city brand. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to happen due to political fragmentation. Shiv Sena, in particular, disapproves of the industry and has done little to associate the city with its activities. However, they are not a strong enough party to alter the industry to their wishes and so it persists. This exemplifies the fragmented image and lack of strong brand in the city.

Despite its past image as a global city under the name of Bombay and the leadership of the British, Mumbai today struggles to have a cohesive brand image to present to the world. This is due to a lack of coordination among city administration organizations, and due to competing political views. The most striking example of this is the Shiv Sena political group's desire to remove the city's cosmopolitan, global image and replace it with a narrow, ethnic-based ideology. But even this recreation has not been successful because the Shiv Sena do not have total control over city planning and policy making either. The result is a city image lacking in cohesion due to competing views, and the lack of a strong brand to present to the world.

### Policy Implications

The cases of Dubai, Singapore, and Mumbai demonstrate that cities with strong developmentally minded authoritarian leadership succeed in implementing policies that brand themselves as a global city while the politically fragmented and decentralized cities struggle with implementing a cohesive brand. Successful global city branding entails developing the brand in more than just a marketing campaign, but rather incorporating the image into other development projects such as architecture, infrastructure, and cultural events.

This research does not mean to imply that authoritarian regimes are the only governmental systems that can implement place-based branding campaigns. Several democratically run cities have also launched successful campaigns. In recent years, the I Heart NYC and I Am Amsterdam campaigns have each emphasized those cities' respective neoliberal traits as global cities (Ward 1998). However, these democratic cities are also situated in developed, Western countries. This research suggests that wannabe global cities in developing countries need the consolidated control that authoritarian regimes provide in order to swiftly implement policy changes, collaborate with multiple departments and stakeholders, achieve flexibility and entrepreneurialism, and maintain a unified brand image. As demonstrated by the cases, without authoritarian control, city branding in the developing world is less effective, held back by political infighting and bureaucratic delays. Other developing global cities can learn lessons from the successful cases of Singapore and Dubai. They created a strong city brand image due to the cooperation between many city officials and private business, the ability to act swiftly, performance legitimacy and buy-in from residents, and large scale developmental projects that were able to integrate the image of a global city. Authoritarian city governments in the developing world are successful at this because they possess strong state governance whereas democracies often have a weaker control over policy and implementation.

This argument has been made in other instances of development as well. The broader debate is whether or not it is best to relinquish political freedoms in order to rapidly grow economically. In the case of the East Asian Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong

Kong), economic development preceded democracy. It was argued that an authoritarian development state was most effective at implementing massive economic reforms such as Import-Substitution-Industrialization and Export-Oriented-Industrialization, designed to modernize the countries' economies (Cheng 1990). The notion of this "modernization paradigm," is that once the countries reached a certain level of economic development, they began implementing policies to democratize (Escobar 1999). In a similar manner, I argue that authoritarian regimes with developmental goals for its cities can more easily implement the policies necessary to convince the world of its modernity than a democracy with the same economic conditions could. However, if a city has reached a great enough level of economic development as that a strong state emerges under democratic rule, than surely they would do a good job implementing global city branding as well, just like their Western counterparts.

## Conclusion

I argue that authoritarian regimes in developing countries are effective at implementing strong and comprehensive city branding. In the wake of increased city competition and globalization, city governments wish to brand their cities as "global" in order to convince tourists, foreign investors, and residents that the city exhibits a commitment to modernity and neoliberal principles, yet also is a unique and distinctive city. Authoritarian city governments are skilled at this because they have the consolidated control necessary to implement the policy changes, development projects, and shifts in government leadership necessary to create a cohesive city brand.

The cases of Dubai and Singapore reveal the success of their respective authoritarian governments in creating brands that ascribe to neoliberal, global city ideals. Dubai conveyed an image of luxury and modernity through ambitious architectural projects and a thematic commitment to high-end consumerism. It was able to do this by shifting its leadership style towards an entrepreneurial one and because of the wedded interests between city leadership and private developers. Singapore upgraded its arts infrastructure in hopes of boosting its creative, service-based industries. It successfully altered its image into one that was cosmopolitan, but the new, more liberal mindset the brand promotes has begun to clash with the city's repressive control over personal freedoms. In contrast, cities ruled by democracies in developing countries have a difficult time implementing a cohesive brand because the city government is fragmented and decentralized. Mumbai has been unable to create a global city brand because the city is run by dozens of small political entities, all vying for control. Particularly, the Shiv Sena political group has challenged the ability for Mumbai to showcase its global identity and instead proposes a regionalist, ethnic-based brand that limits Mumbai's participation in the global sphere. These conflicts have led to brand stagnation in Mumbai.

The conclusions drawn from this paper can be applied to a greater debate in economic development studies. My findings show that authoritarian regimes are best suited to implement cohesive branding policies to promote economic development in the developing world. However, this assertion raises further questions. Can authoritarian regimes create city brands that truly benefit every citizen, or are there groups being left out? Is branding a way for authoritarian regimes to give the appearance of neoliberal political economy while continuing with a

repressive status quo? If authoritarian regimes transition to democratic rule will the city be able to retain a strong brand image? This paper's scope was limited to creating the understanding that authoritarian regimes are most capable of implementing strong city branding. However, these additional questions illustrate that the debate surrounding this topic is complex and there is room for further discussion and additional research.

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