

GaWC Data 2016

The data gathering strategy and the calculation model is described in detail in [Taylor and Derudder \(2016\)](#). In the latter book, the focus is on the 2013 data gathering. Subsequent data gatherings such as the one described here for 2016 are carried out in the same spirit, but some of the operational details may be different (e.g. firm and city selection). This document provides information on some of the core elements of this 2016 data gathering strategy in terms of firm and city selection, but it needs to be cross-referenced with information in Taylor and Derudder (2016).

In our data, we focus on the leading firms in 5 sectors: 75 financial services firms, 25 management consultancy firms, 25 advertising firms, 25 law firms, and 25 accountancy firms. The information on the location strategies of the 'GaWC 175' used in the present data gathering exercise was gathered in July and August 2016. Criteria for inclusion in 2016 were as follows: for financial services, we included the top 75 most valuable banking brands were identified as ranked in Brand Finance's Banking 500 (published February 2016; <http://brandfinance.com>); for accountancy the revenue ranking by World Accounting Intelligence (published February 2016, <http://www.worldaccountingintelligence.com>); for advertising the revenue ranking of 'marketing organizations' by Advertising Age (published December 2014, <http://www.adage.com>); for law the revenue ranking by American Lawyer's Global 100 ranking (published September 2015, <http://americanlawyer.com>); and for management consultancy the Vault Management & Strategy Consulting Survey evaluating prestige, quality of life and overall best to work for (published 2016, <http://www.vault.com>). Substitute firms were identified for each sector (ranking just below the top 75 and 25) to cover for situations where a firm had disappeared (e.g. been taken over) over the course of the data collection.

Note that although our starting point is firms, the information we collected defines firm networks with very different levels of corporate integration. Alongside tightly organized global firms operating under a single corporate flag (e.g. PricewaterhouseCoopers), there are also 'firms' that are in fact *groups* of firms (e.g. Leading Edge Alliance Group). In the latter case, the firm is in fact an alliance of medium-sized firms constituted as a network in order to compete globally with the very large firms leading this sector. Furthermore, some – if not most – service firms have developed service portfolios that straddle the sectoral boundaries adopted in our selection of firms. Several firms in the Leading Edge Alliance Group, for instance, also provide financial and business advisory services to their clients. The world's major global services firms have even developed into across-the-board providers of professional services. PricewaterhouseCoopers, for instance, is best known as one of the 'Big Four auditors', but has in practice become a fully-fledged professional services network also providing legal, consulting and financial advisory services. In case of such overlap, firm networks were allocated to what is generally recognised as their 'core business'. Thus in spite of also providing other services, both Leading Edge Alliance Group and PricewaterhouseCoopers are included here as firm networks in the accountancy sector.

A few of the larger firms have branches in many hundreds, even thousands, of cities and towns. The data collection has been restricted to the more important cities for two reasons. The first is analytical: the more cities included, the more sparse the final matrix

will become with nearly none of the 'GaWC 175' networks present in the smaller cities and towns. The second is theoretical: the interest is in the more important inter-city connections, ultimately the world city network. Nevertheless, it is also important not to omit any possible significant node in the world city network so that a relatively large number of cities need to be selected. Similar to our selection of firms, our criterion for inclusion has been revised compared to the initial data collection in 2000. The initial ad hoc selection of 315 cities in the 2000 data gathering was biased towards Northern America, Western Europe and Pacific Asia. To ensure that all continents are reasonably represented, we devised a new and more inclusive roster of cities compared to the 2000 data gathering. In addition to the original 315 cities, we used a series of overlapping criteria such as a population of more than 1 million inhabitants; all capital cities of states with a population of more than 1 million, and every city with a headquarter office of one of our selected firms. This led to the selection of 708 cities in the 2016 data gathering.