

Urbanism Through the Lenses of Globalisation

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Two notions of the term urbanism

- ◉ Anglo-Saxon: urbanism as a way of life, specific urban attitude and behaviour of the urban dwellers as result of the size, density and heterogeneity of the cities;
- ◉ Continental European: theory and practice of urban ordering and design.
- ◉ Urbanism as the activity in public domain

Urbanism embedded in social change

- Spatial/urban configurations are the outcome of the socio-economic transformations
- The produced “spatial fixes” in turn affect socio economic processes by new territorial divisions of labour, housing...
- Urban forms and structures never perfectly match socio economic processes and structures

Topics

- ◉ How globalisation changes contemporary urban realities
- ◉ Time-space compression; does “the death of the distance” kill our cities;
- ◉ Is there a an open room for new utopias, for the new spaces of hope?

Driving forces of globalisation

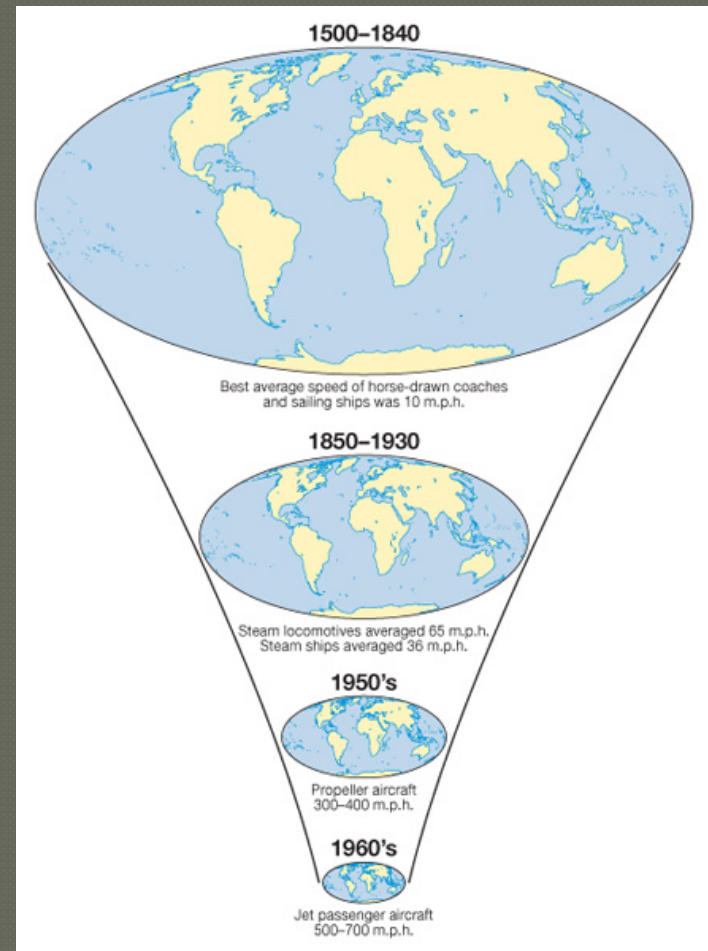
- Technological revolution: the advance of ICT profoundly changed all spheres of societal life and the meaning of the space;
- Washington consensus: an agreement on liberalisation of international trade and finance, free market fundamentalism, fiscal discipline...
- The collapse of socialist world – the dismissal of the three-worlds image of the planet

Globalisation and planetary urbanisation

- Urbanisation has become a planetary phenomenon: half of the population lives in urban settlements;
- The process affects the whole territory of the world – there is no longer any outside to the urban world;
- Constant transformation leads continuously to the production of the new urban configurations and constellations;
- Greater heterogeneity and polarisation

Time-space compression

- Objective qualities of space and time revolutionised (Harvey)
- Flexibilisation of the locational patterns: if the physical barriers of space play minor role then specific characteristics of particular location play more important role;
- Division: global cities vs. cities under globalisation



Urban polarisation – edge cities I.

- ◉ Urban assemblages designed and built from the scratch;
- ◉ Some in close proximity of the traditional urban tissue, some not...
- ◉ Function as enclaves
- ◉ Poor spill-over effects to the regional economy



Urban polarisation – edge cities II.

- Iconic architecture designed by “global architects”
- Belgrade on water: not addressing the real urban problems of capital of Serbia ...



Urban polarisation: shrinking cities

- Cities that have lost economic activities and population;
- Europe: 57% out of 220 large and medium sized cities lost the population;
- Detroit (US) population decline for 50,2%



Urban polarisation: urban ruins,

- New forms of ruination in contemporary landscape
- Debris of global capitalism?
- Annihilation of space: uncompleted project, “ghost houses”;
- Border areas, walls, refuge camps
- Wounded cities



Ruins – new dimension of urbanism?

- Ruins, uncompleted projects, deserted construction sites, “ghost houses” = part of our urban reality
- Traditional self-evident and unquestioned notion that urbanism is about building, creation and not about annihilation;
- Annihilation of place and urban forms is inscribed into the praxis of urbanism
- Reconceptualisation of ruins and healing wounded cities = one feature of future urbanism?

Do we need a new utopia?

- Our urban future seems to be fairly open, but
- If social and economic inequalities rise so will the urban conflicts focused on struggle for decent life
- Reopening utopian thinking in terms of relations between real, possible and impossible?
- The category of real should not obscure the possible
- How far we dare to go in exploring what is possible?