

# LA COSTITUZIONE TRANS-URBANA DELLA CITTÀ. GENEALOGIE OLTRE IL PENSIERO SCALARE

## TRANS-URBAN AND GLOBAL SYSTEMS: TWO PERSPECTIVES EMERGING BEYOND THE SCALAR THOUGH

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«Scalar thought» [Isin 2007] has historically been the way in which the emergence of the modern State has framed and organised a vision of the world. The idea of a hierarchical geographical scale (global – national – local) has been a powerful tool to govern political dynamics for many centuries. Even if it is possible to sustain that globalisation processes of the last 40 years have had at their core precisely a huge re-scaling process [Brenner 1999], at the same time their very output has been a trend towards a world that is not any more organised around a scale [Farinelli 2008]. Interconnections, supply chains, global flows, migration processes etc. are constantly reshaping the ways in which the globalised world is shaped in an immediate and intimate trans-scalar pattern, where cities are the strategic hearts and engines of this emerging configuration [Sassen 2005; Khanna 2017].

The session looks into this scenario from a two perspectives: on the one hand, elaborating a genealogical approach to study such dynamics, considering that every transformation has profound and complex historical proveniences that should be traced and explored; on the other hand, we proposed to reflect on the concept of «trans-urban», meaning to focus on dynamics, trends, and processes that both historically and today have been and are taking their forms “simultaneously” within many different cities, exploring the urban as a matrix and a matter that is neither local nor global, but rather something that constitutively goes beyond a world made as a scale.

Moreover, the panel focuses on going beyond the glorification of global cities as the unique paradigm for framing contemporary urban dynamics within the planetary dimension, and in this way another concept was mobilised: «the glocal» [Gills 1993]. This meta-dimension has been proposed as a move to dialogue with the changing rhetoric that is growing with the integration of the «five-thousand-year world-system» theory supported by Andre G. Frank and Barry K. Gills since 1993, replacing the first world-system in the Bronze Age, distancing the modern capitalism usually associated with [Wallerstein 1974], and taking globalisation as a key indicator of the world-system's ever-changing hegemonic phase.

According to this approach, the paper of Louissette Rasoloniaina explores a megaregion morphogenesis within the first Afro-Eurasian world-system, articulated around the Indian Ocean. It's the Swahili territory, a long-reticulated network along the coast and offshore of Oriental Africa, erected from the meeting of the Bantu and Austronesian migrations during a drastic climate change around 3000-800 BC. The paper evaluates how a non-ethnic based community structures urban and social policy, setting a territorial resilience coping with local and world-system scales to compare past and contemporary histories, and, from them, to extract the parameters to conceive a sustainable megaregion.

In resonance with Rasoloniaina's argument, the paper of Ottavia Starace demonstrates how the glocal dimension is a constitutive layer of the urban since its foundation. Starace analyses the «glocal» concept through a strict urban declination, conceiving the city as the place where the signs of human needs are recorded, which refer to the exchanges and connections that modify its shape and configuration. Starace frames the city as a network where these connections (local and global) are manifested, elaborating a reflection on the nature of these exchanges (physical and/or digital), on the actors of these connections and which of these are capable or will be able to modify the morphology of the places that surround us.

Mattia Frapporti too adopts a genealogical method for his enquiry, testing the «trans-urban», concept of urban development of London as a case study to articulate a ground-breaking perspective of analysis applicable to contemporary urbanscapes. More precisely, his paper reports an ongoing research on digital urban platforms in Europe showing how a trans-urban methodology is necessary to fully grasp their operation, and sustains this idea by enlarging and challenging the paradigm and concepts through which cities used to be conceived in academic literature. Alina Dambrosio Clementelli points to how a new wave of feminism has taken place in cities across the globe since 2016, re-signifying the strike as a feminist practice, starting from the analysis of the Italian feminist movement as a socio-spatial theory. She shows how the strike, intended as a transnational experience by the movement, not only acts on both the local and the global scale, but also goes beyond this dichotomy because it creates a new meaning for all the dimensions it tackles. The strike turns the pre-established spatial forms upside down and challenges their hierarchies, constituting what a trans-urban dimension could mean in terms of struggles. Alina's argument converges with the Swahili study whereby an emphasis is placed on the need to redefine society/democratic expression and social representations. Saskia Sassen pointed out this issue regarding global cities – «spatial form embedding and nurturing minorities' expression» [Sassen 1998, 54] – and their presupposed independence from governing states. Their predominance in the world-system can be jeopardised by national politics, and the current case of Hong Kong exemplifies this crucial aspect. This has been overlooked in the past and calls for urgent review since our connections within the system are not only logistical, financial or economic flows, but also local and global (glocal) ideas and principles, tending to a global community that is increasingly conscious of its interrelated fate, drastically challenging our sense of scale and scale of thought.

To conclude, this set of papers points towards a new vocabulary and a new perspective for grasping contemporary urbanisation processes and their forms by a radical challenge to consolidated spatial and temporal coordinates, and is intended to be a collection of preliminary insights of a necessarily collective project of forging adequate instruments to understand and modify the assets and ways of interpreting the emerging urban planet.

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