

URBAN AGE CONFERENCE

GOVERNING URBAN FUTURES

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*Urban governance- but at what
scale?*

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***Urban* governance— but at what scale?**

Neil Brenner | Urban Theory Lab

Harvard GSD

Urban Age Conference

Delhi, India

**Is urban governance
a weapon of the
weak?**

THE CONTEXT

- Global economic / financial crisis
- National state restructuring (austerity, market-oriented governance)
- Explosive worldwide urbanization (“urban age”) + environmental crisis

NEW GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES AT ALL SCALES

Local governments at the “front lines”:

- Economic growth, public health, housing, transportation, water provision, land expansion, environmental insecurity ...

LOCALISM PROLIFERATES

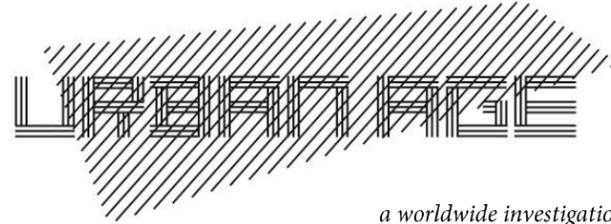
Proliferation of local regulatory experiments (“from below”) — often through the quest for new local / global linkages.

THE ENDLESS CITY

The Urban Age Project by the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society



PHAIDON



a worldwide investigation into the future of cities organised by LSE Cities at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Alfred Herrhausen Society, the International Forum of Deutsche Bank

LOCALISM CONSOLIDATES

Expansion of transnational inter-urban networks: sharing of “best practices” in a context of global governance volatility

C40 Cities

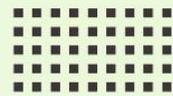
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Each city in the C40 is unique in its infrastructure and progress in addressing climate change. C40 works to empower cities to connect with each other and share technical expertise on best practices.



● Steering Committee ● Innovator City ● Megacity ○ Observer City

C40 CITIES
account for



70
affiliated cities



18 %
of global GDP



1 in 12
people worldwide

8,068

actions to combat
climate change

↑
TAKE ACTION
IN YOUR
COMMUNITY

LOCALISM DIFFERENTIATES

- Local economy / global linkages
- Urban environmental management / adaptation / “resilience” / “sustainability”
- Local democratic participation / “rights to the city” / global struggles over rights

GLOBAL URBANISM: A POLITICAL STRATEGY

- Entrepreneurial cities
- Global / world cities
- Creative cities
- Smart cities
- Sustainable cities
- Eco-cities

THE QUESTION

To what degree can locally scaled forms of urban governance offer an adequate basis for confronting the great problems of early 21st century global capitalism (economy, society, politics, environment)?

A CAUTIONARY ARGUMENT

We urgently need “urban”
governance—but:
there are serious operational limits
to “local” strategies for the
regulation of early 21st century
urbanization processes.

In contrast to
celebratory viewpoints

**... WHAT IF 'URBAN
GOVERNANCE' IS NO
MORE THAN A
WEAPON OF THE WEAK?**

**LIMITS TO
LOCAL INITIATIVES . . .**

**. . . THREE
CAUTIONARY
ARGUMENTS**

LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (1)

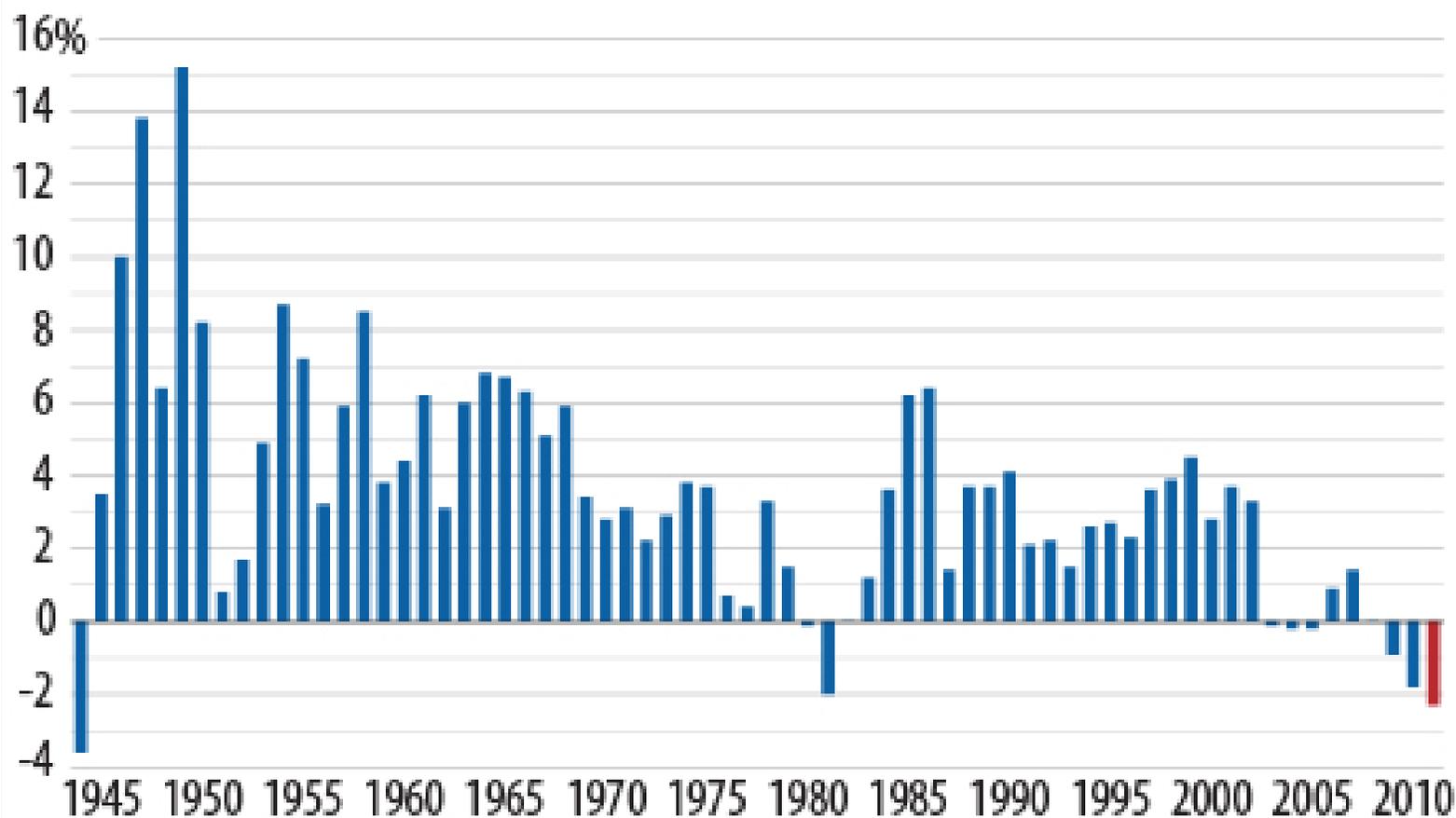
The regulatory capacities of cities (and local governments) are circumscribed by national intergovernmental systems (which may empower suburbs, rural or low-population areas, supralocal tiers).

LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (1)

Devolution / decentralization
entail opportunities *and*
constraints: rescaled
geographies of state power ...
and austerity.

In 2011, Steepest Decline in State and Local Spending Since 1944

Percent change in spending on goods and services from previous year



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (2)

The “power of agglomeration” (urban dynamism) hinges upon broader territorial economies and large-scale (planetary) metabolic flows

LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (2)

Extended urbanization: distant regions, territories and landscapes are “operationalized” to support city growth (food, energy, water, materials, labor, waste)

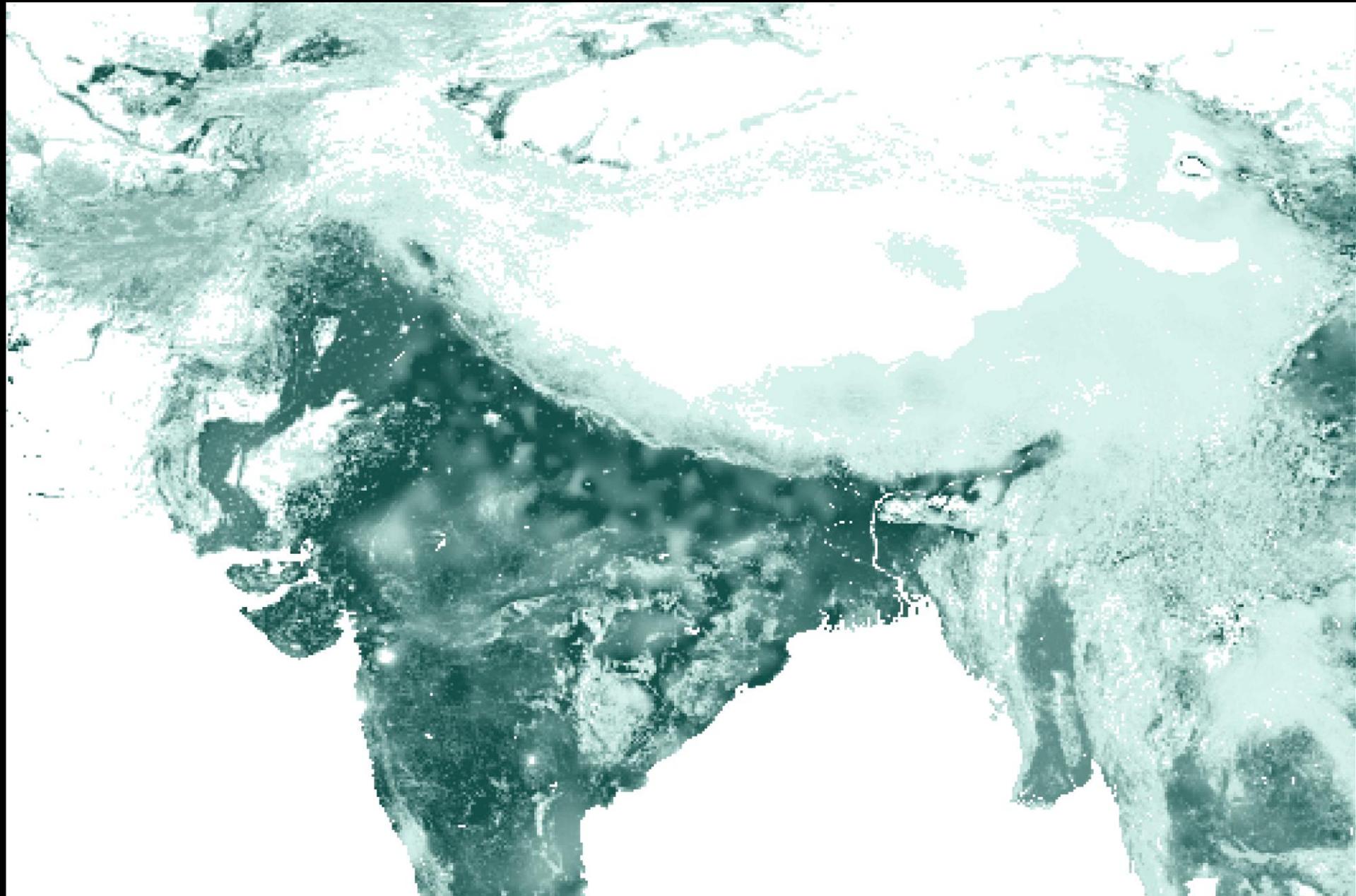
LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (2)

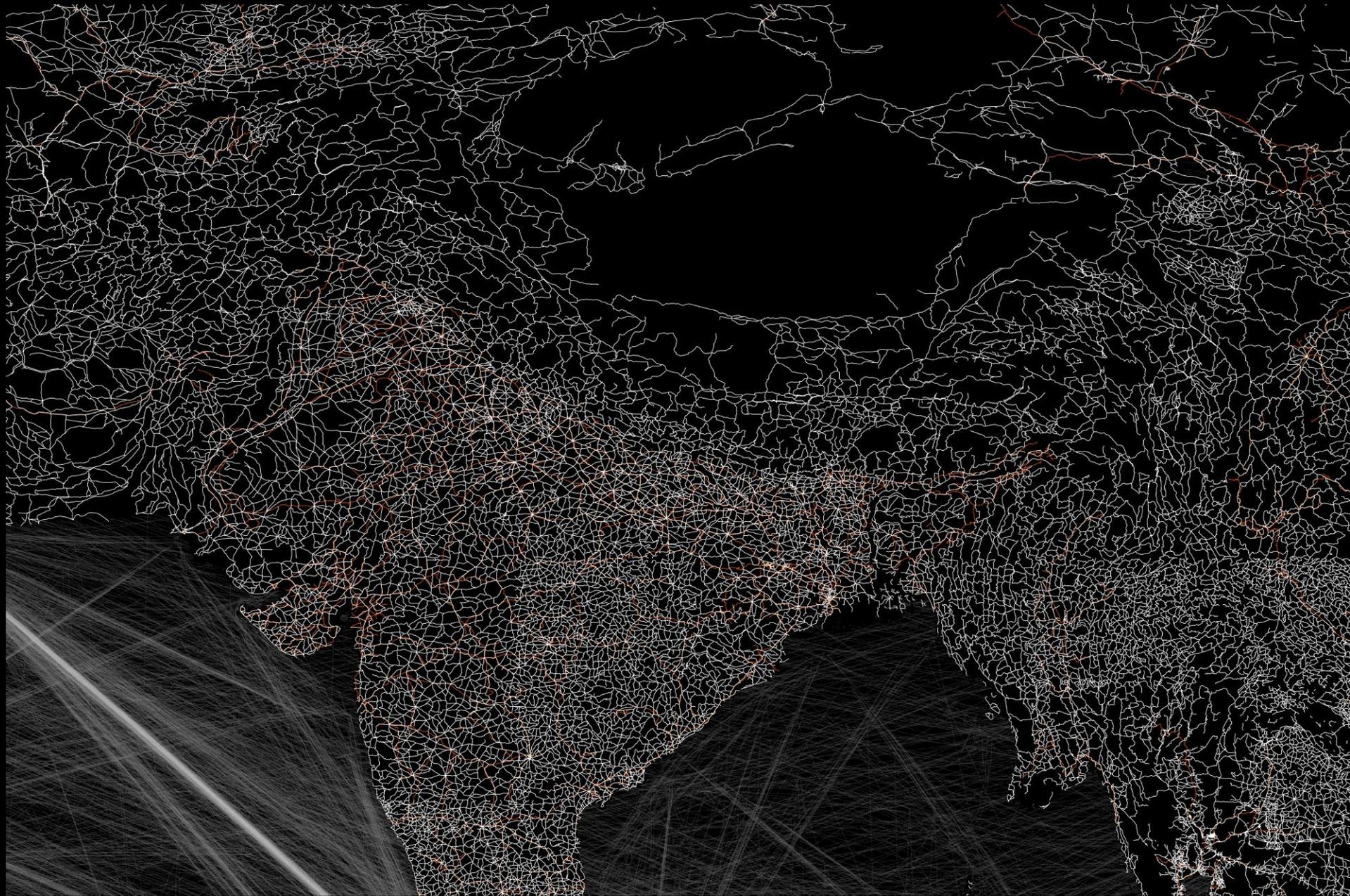
Thus emerge fundamental geo-governance (geopolitical) issues related to energy and resource supply chains, transnational migration patterns, large-scale environmental footprints, large-scale social impacts.



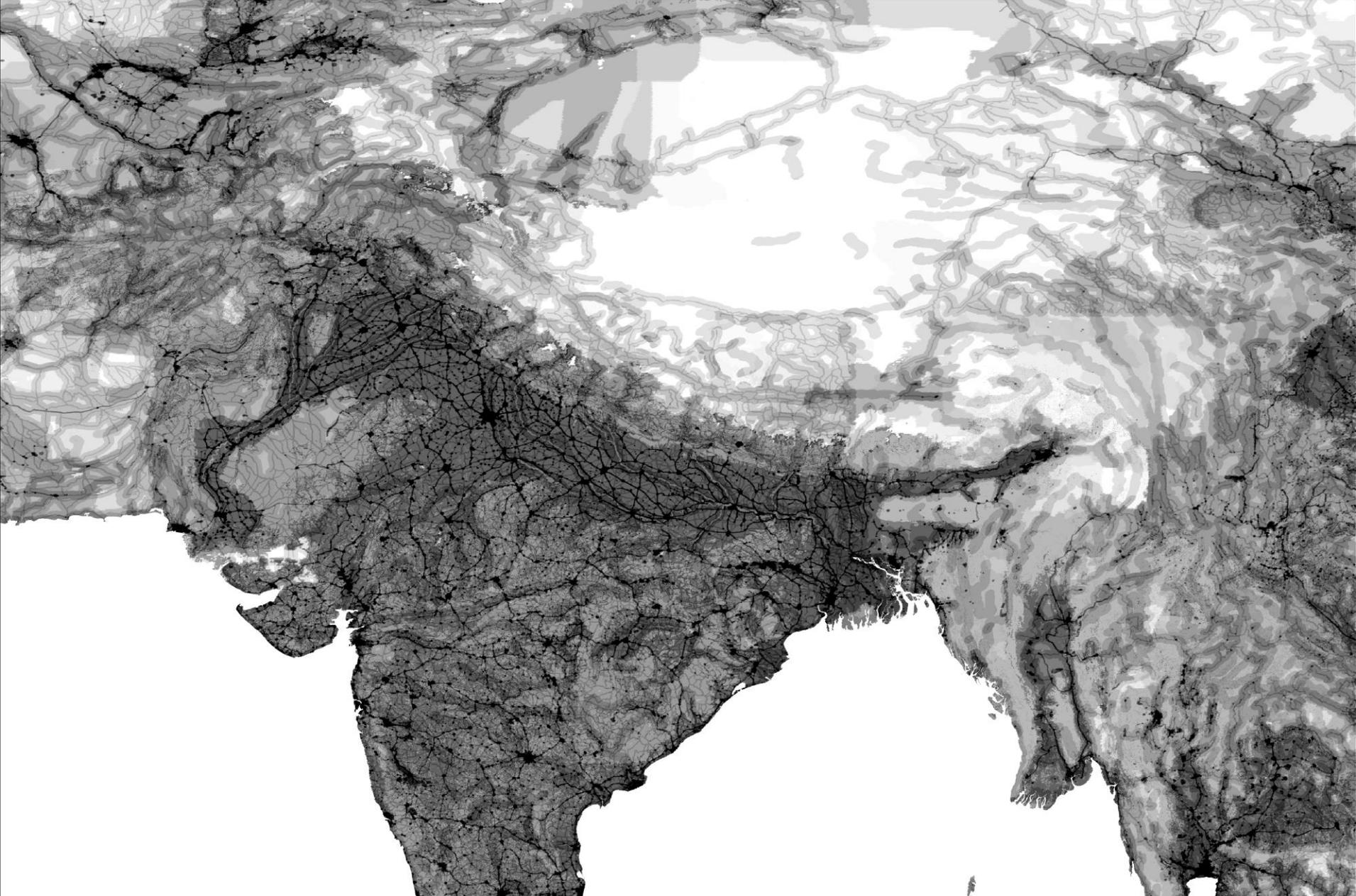


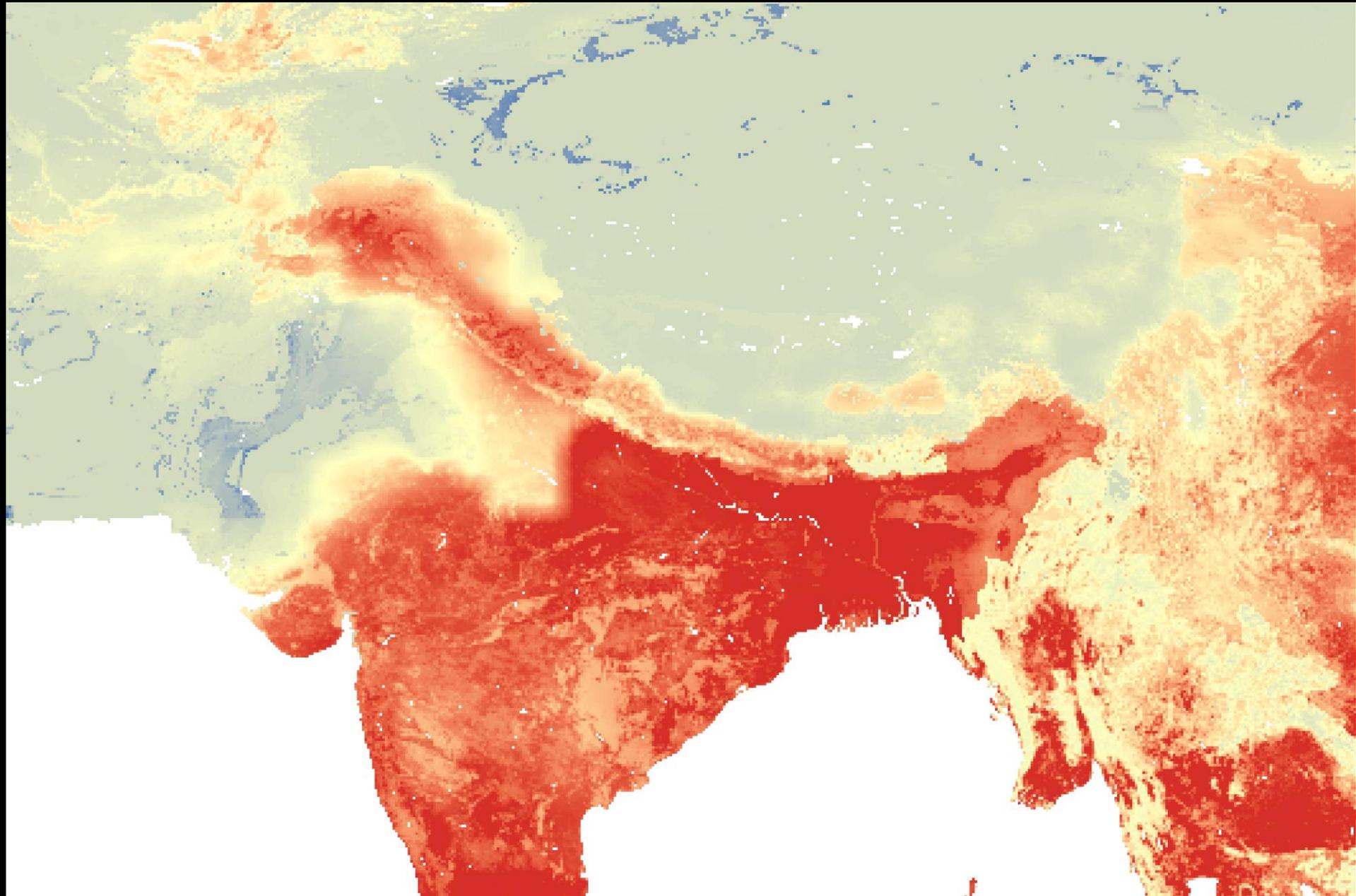


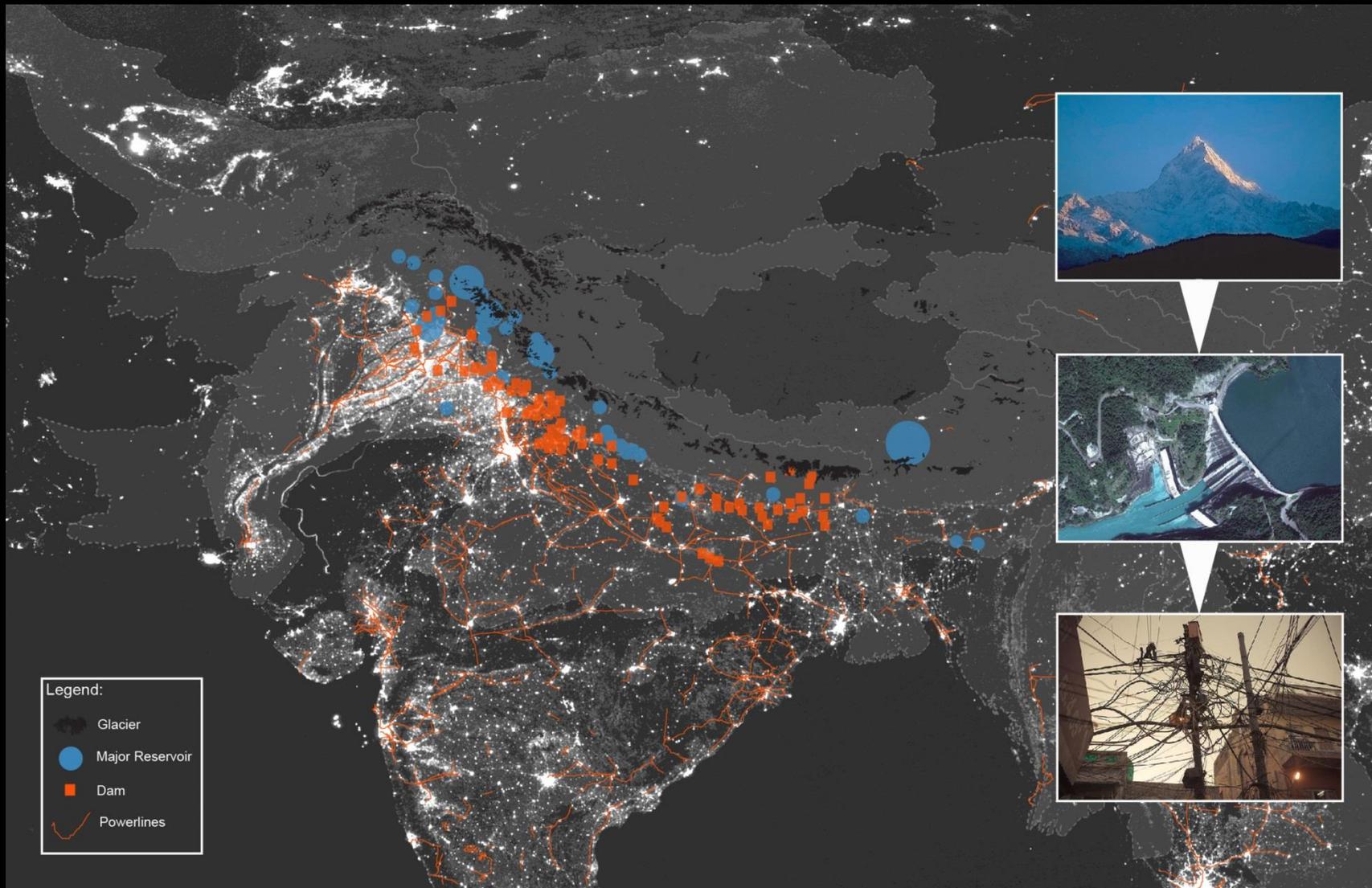












Source: Chris Alton and Michael Chieffalo, Urban Theory Lab, Harvard GSD

LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (3)

Exclusionary / elitist localisms may create enclaves of concentrated wealth and technological insulation in a global sea of poverty and volatility

LIMITS TO LOCAL INITIATIVES (3)

A new spatial apartheid
dominated by global cities
(enclaves of ecological security)
under planetary conditions of
“neo-Haussmannization”.

MASDAR

ABU DHABI FUTURE ENERGY COMPANY



مصدر

شركة أبوظبي لطاقة المستقبل





SONGDO

Korea's City of the Future

Sculptor
Shim Moon-seup

Lake Country,
Chuncheon

www.korea.net

ISSN: 2005-2762





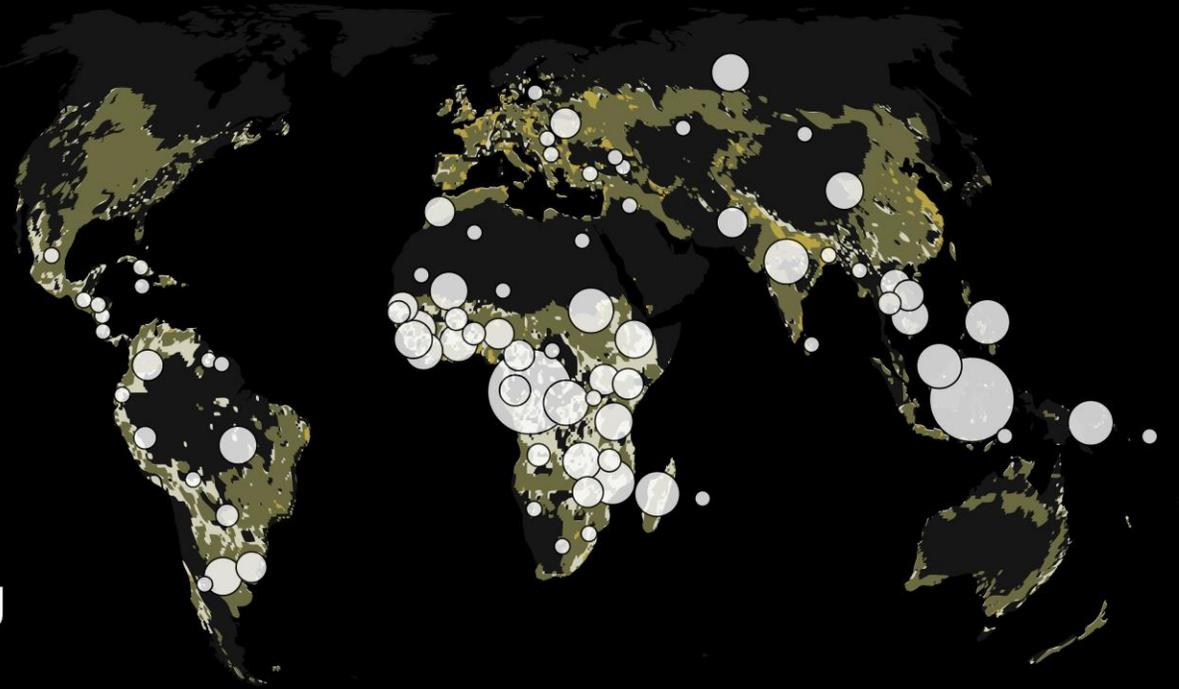
SITE

Urban Threshold

Sejong City Master Plan

Landgrabbing

● Country under landgrab deal



Oscar Malaspina | **Urban Theory Lab** | GSD Harvard

Sources: Map_UN Environment Programme, 2009
Data_Landmatrix.org, 2013

Source: Oscar Malaspina, Urban Theory Lab, Harvard GSD



A CAUTIONARY ARGUMENT

A CAUTIONARY ARGUMENT

“Local” strategies for the
regulation of early 21st
century urbanization
processes do emerge ...

A CAUTIONARY ARGUMENT

... but their conditions of possibility, parameters of actualization and impacts are national, continental and planetary

INTERPRETATIONS

- Celebratory views: a pathway to solve the world's problems?
- Pessimistic views: a weapon of the weak?
- Or: a tactical maneuver under conditions of (temporary) retreat?

INTERPRETATIONS

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**BEYOND
TACTICS ...**

**... TOWARDS
ALTERNATIVE
STRATEGIES?**

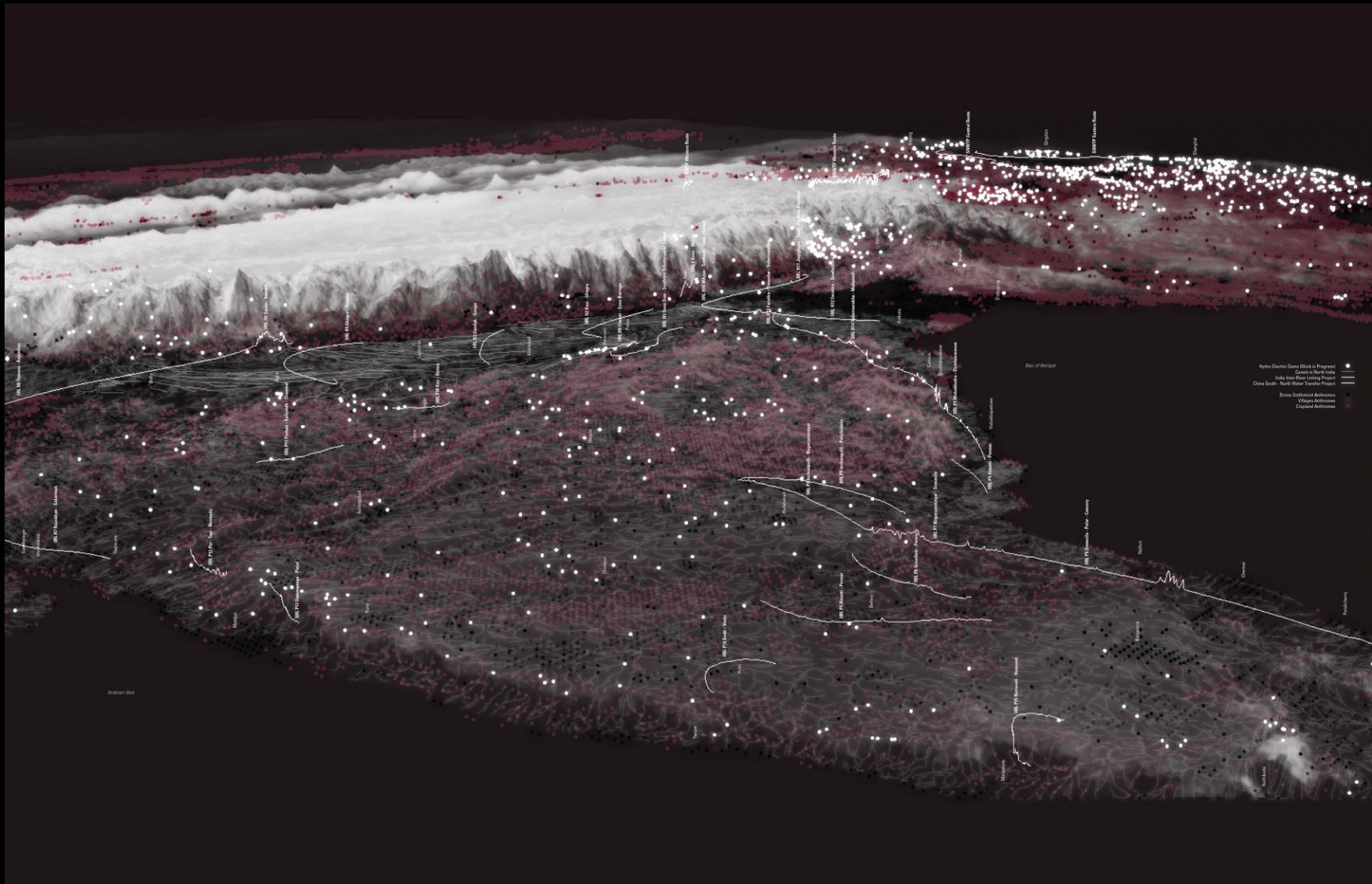
**FROM
'URBAN
GOVERNANCE' . . .**

**. . . TO THE
GOVERNANCE
OF URBANIZATION?**

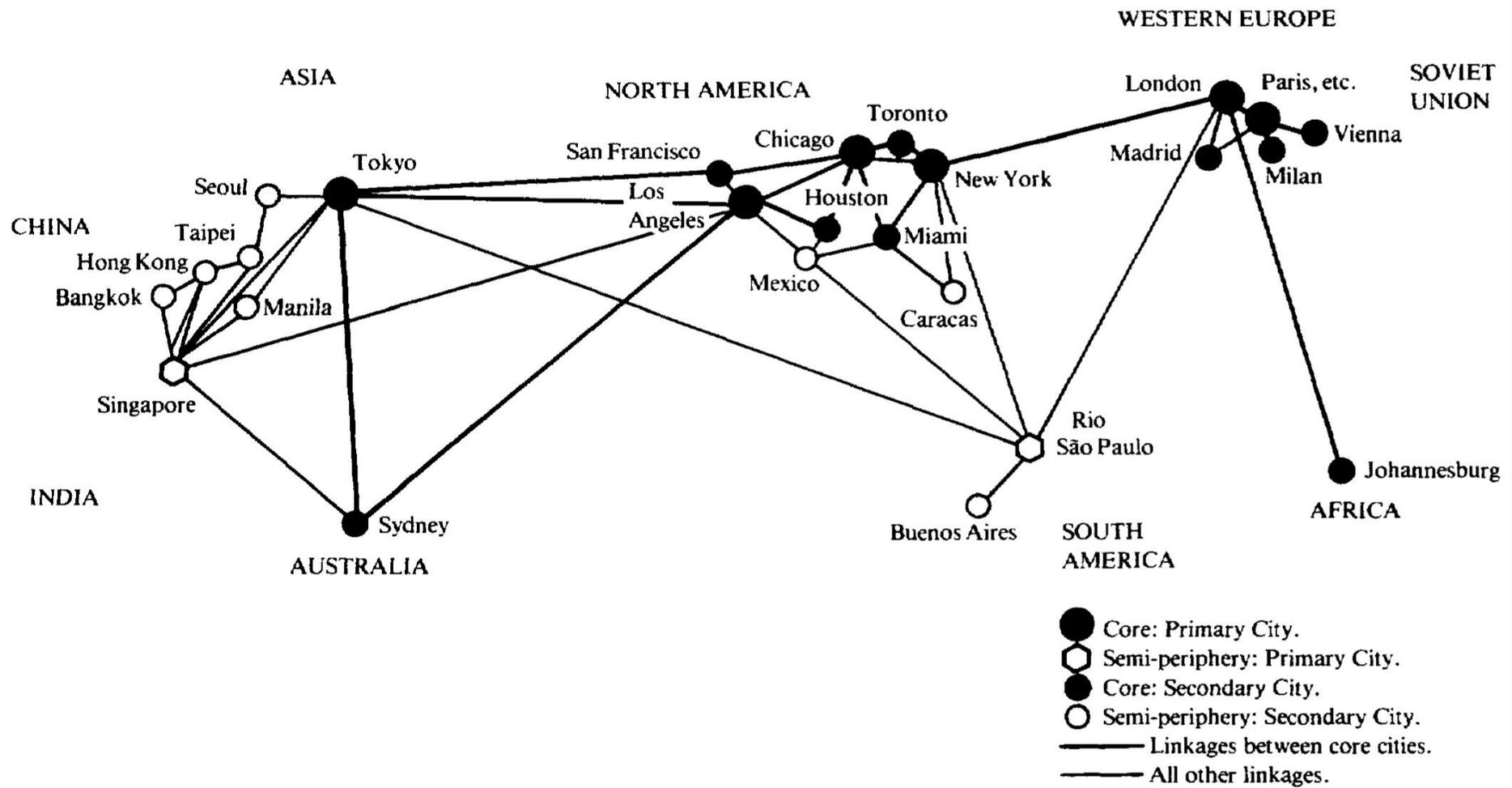
STRATEGIES (1)

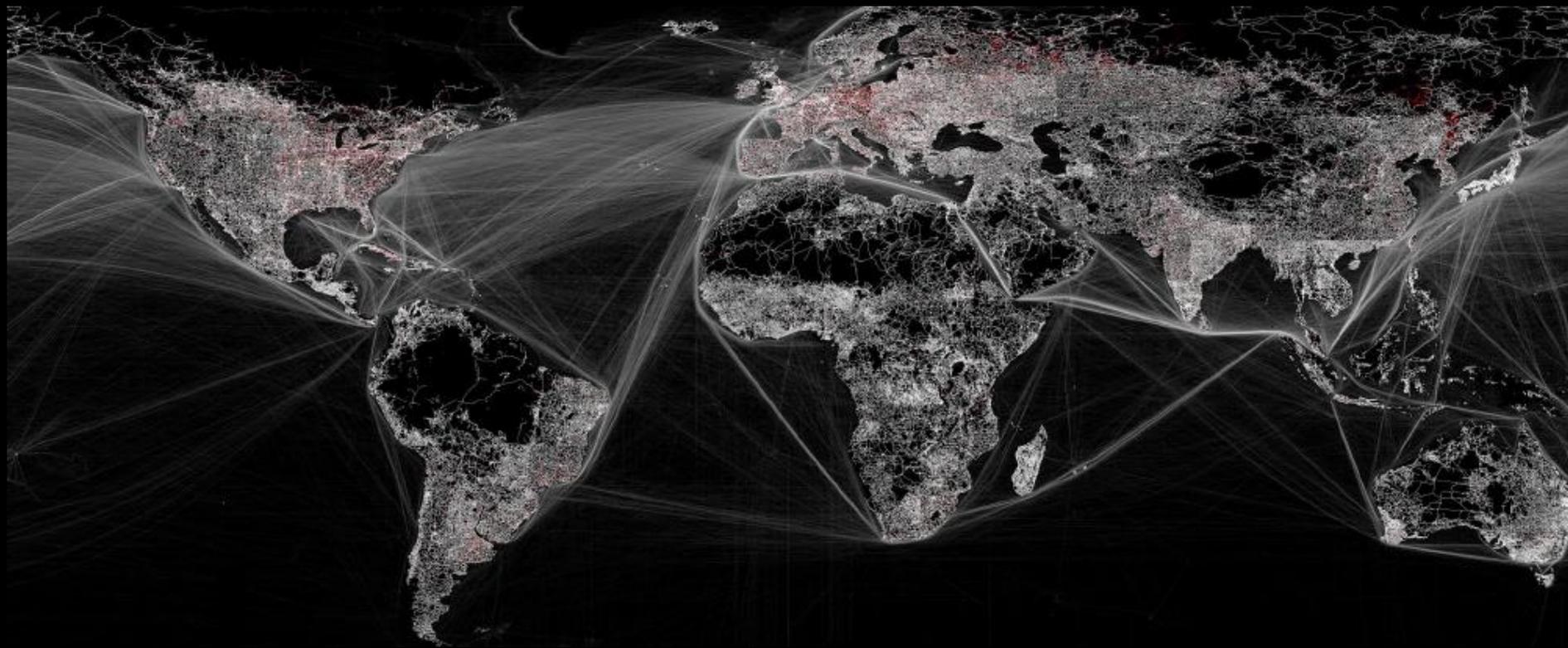
Conceptual realignment:
consider the interplay between
concentrated and *extended*
urbanization as a governance
problem





Source: Vineet Diwadkar, Urban Theory Lab, Harvard GSD



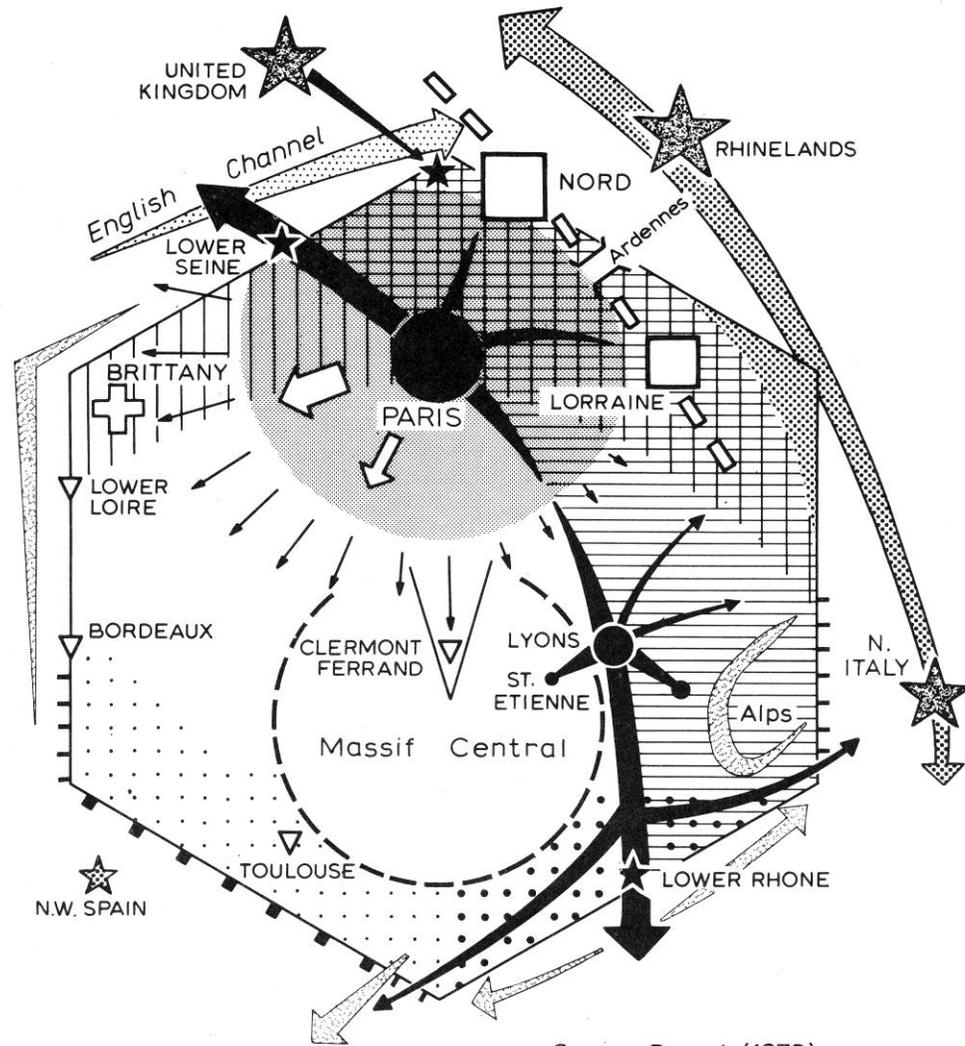


Source: Nikos Katsikis, Urban Theory Lab, Harvard GSD

STRATEGIES (2)

Redistribution / equalization:

rejuvenate the politics of
spatial Keynesianism ... at
national, continental and
planetary scales.



★ BARCELONA

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |  6 |
|  7 |  8 |  9 |  10 |  11 |  12 |
|  13 |  14 |  15 |  16 |  17 |  18 |

TENTATIVE POUR UNE DEFINITION SPATIALE
DES ZONES D'INTEGRATION MONDIALE PERIPHERIQUE

Les trois secteurs de polarisation périphérique potentiel

Corridors de developpement

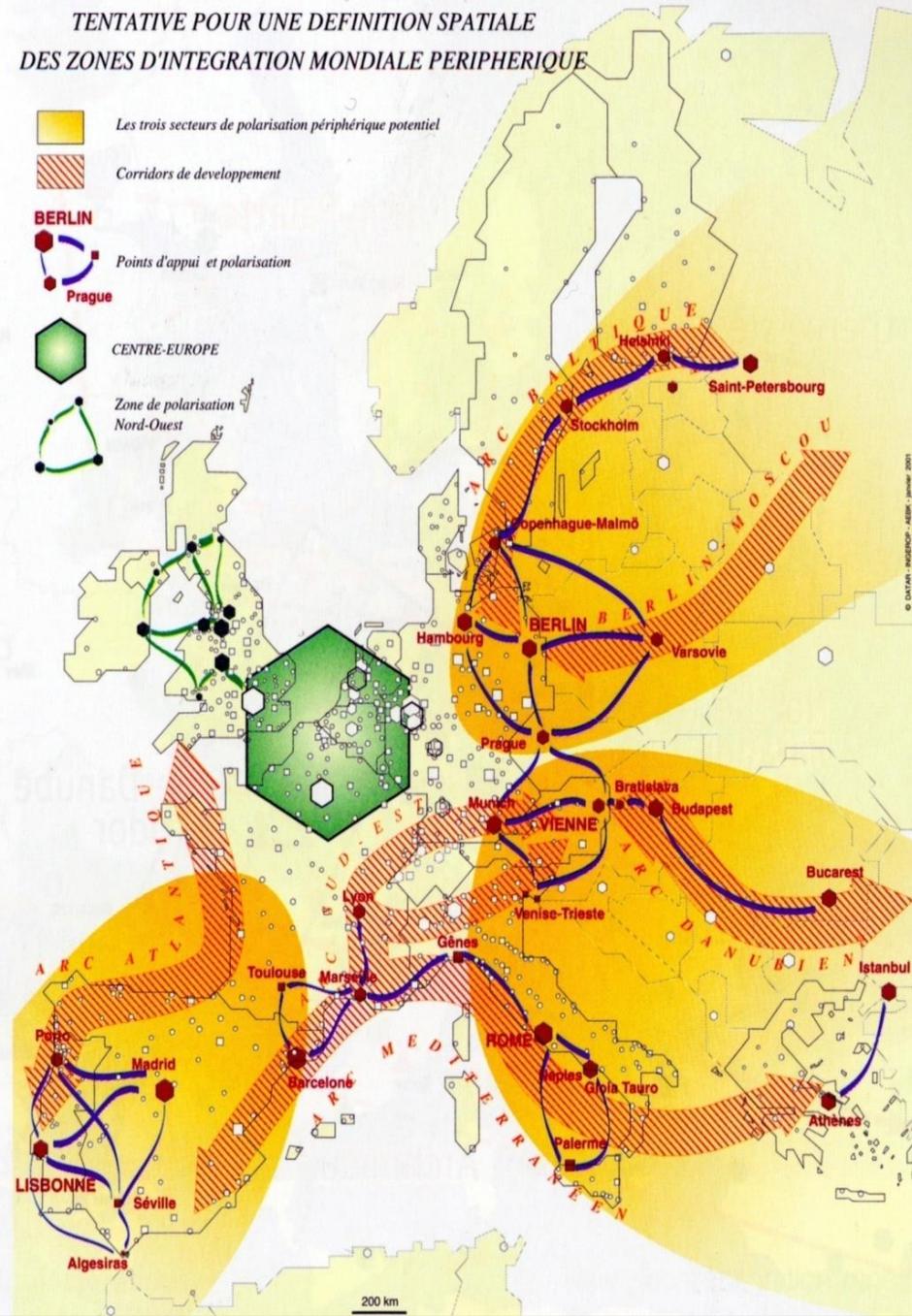
BERLIN

Points d'appui et polarisation

Prague

CENTRE-EUROPE

Zone de polarisation Nord-Ouest



STRATEGIES (3)

Rejuvenate and re-invent the tradition of **speculative territorial planning and design** at very large (continental and planetary spatial scales).

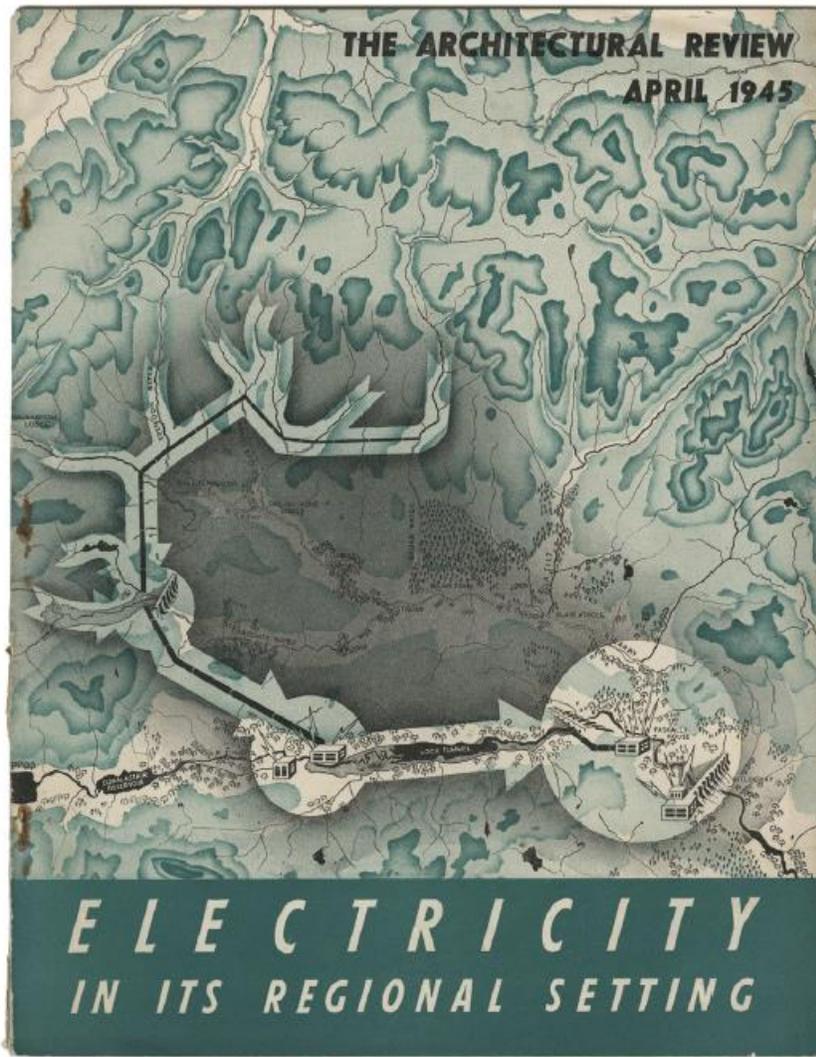


Figure 05. Cover for "Electricity in Its Regional Setting, prepared for the Architectural Review by the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction," *Architectural Review*, April 1945.

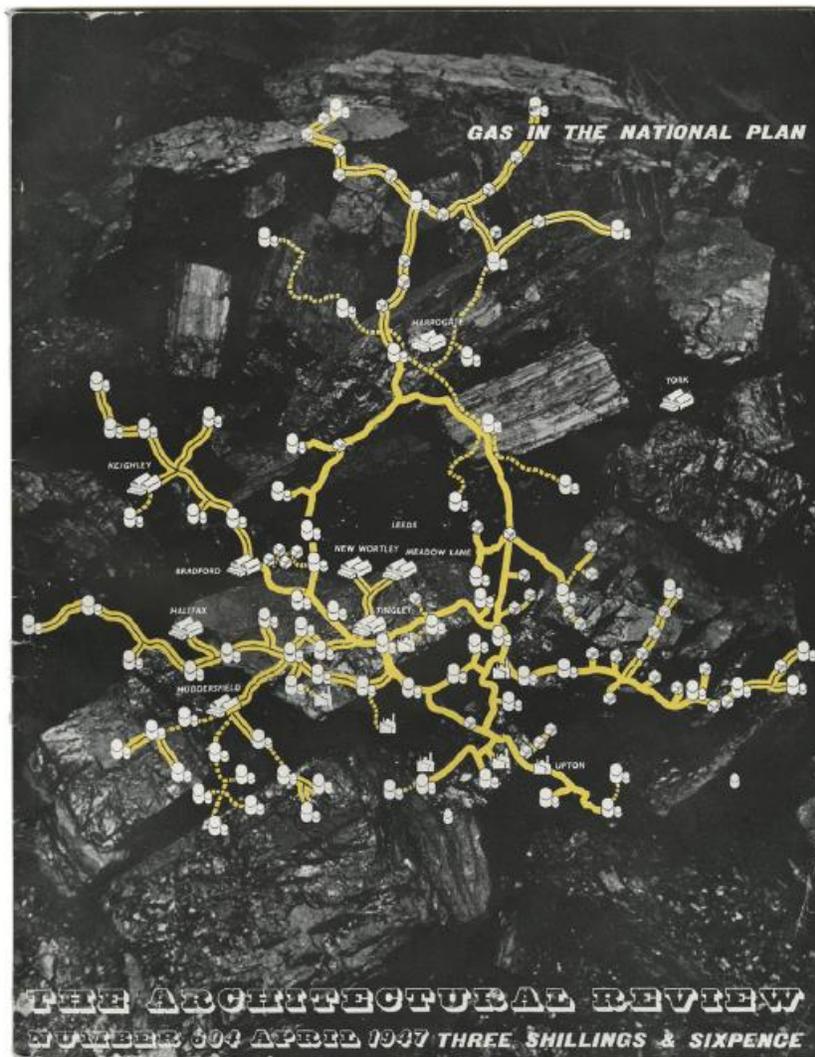
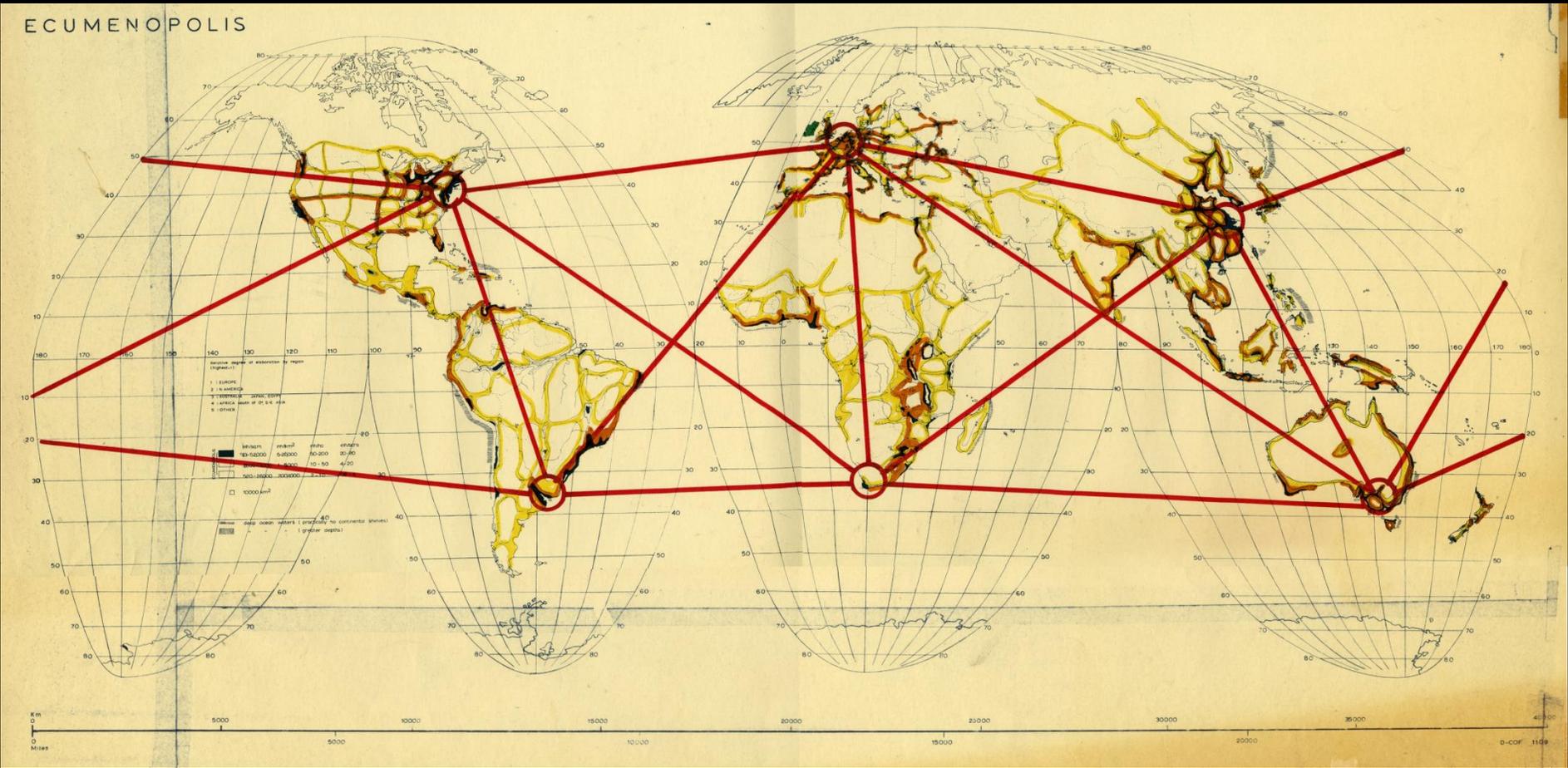
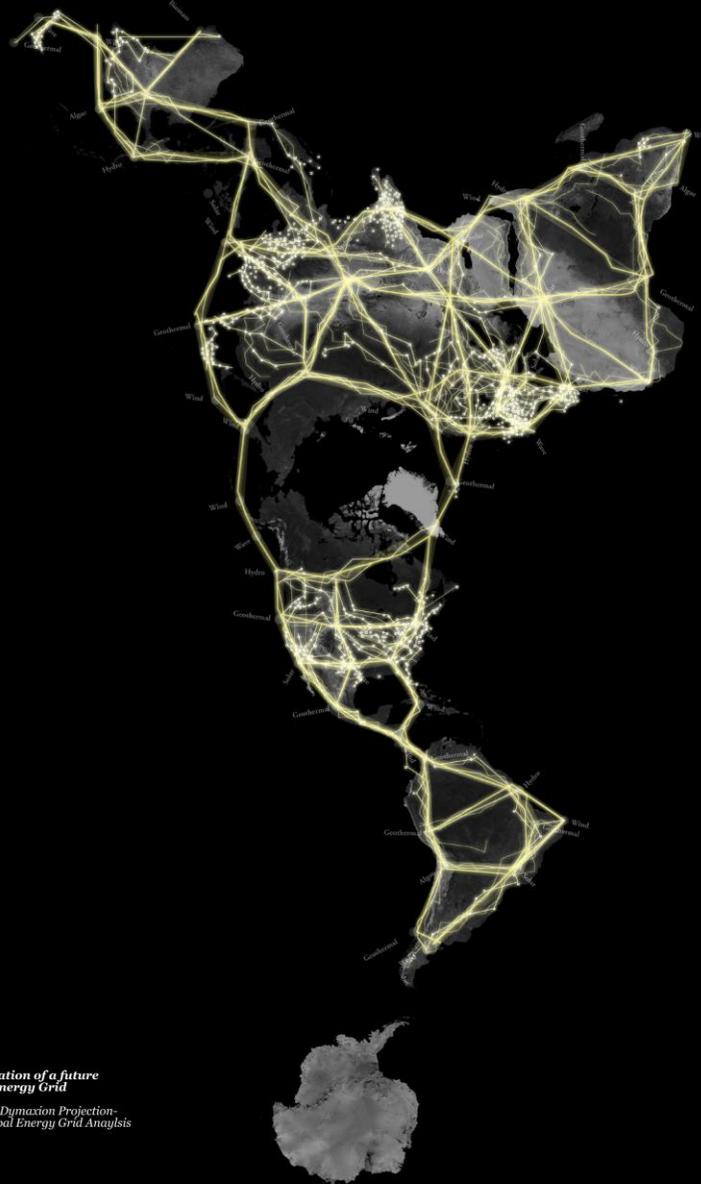


Figure 06. Cover for "Gas in the National Plan, a Special Number of the Architectural Review for April 1947 ... produced in collaboration with the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction," *Architectural Review*, April 1947.

ECUMENOPOLIS



GLOBAL ENERGY GRID



Visualization of a future
World Energy Grid

GIS 2010 Dymaxion Projection -
AMO Global Energy Grid Analysis

WORLD ENERGY REGIONS

