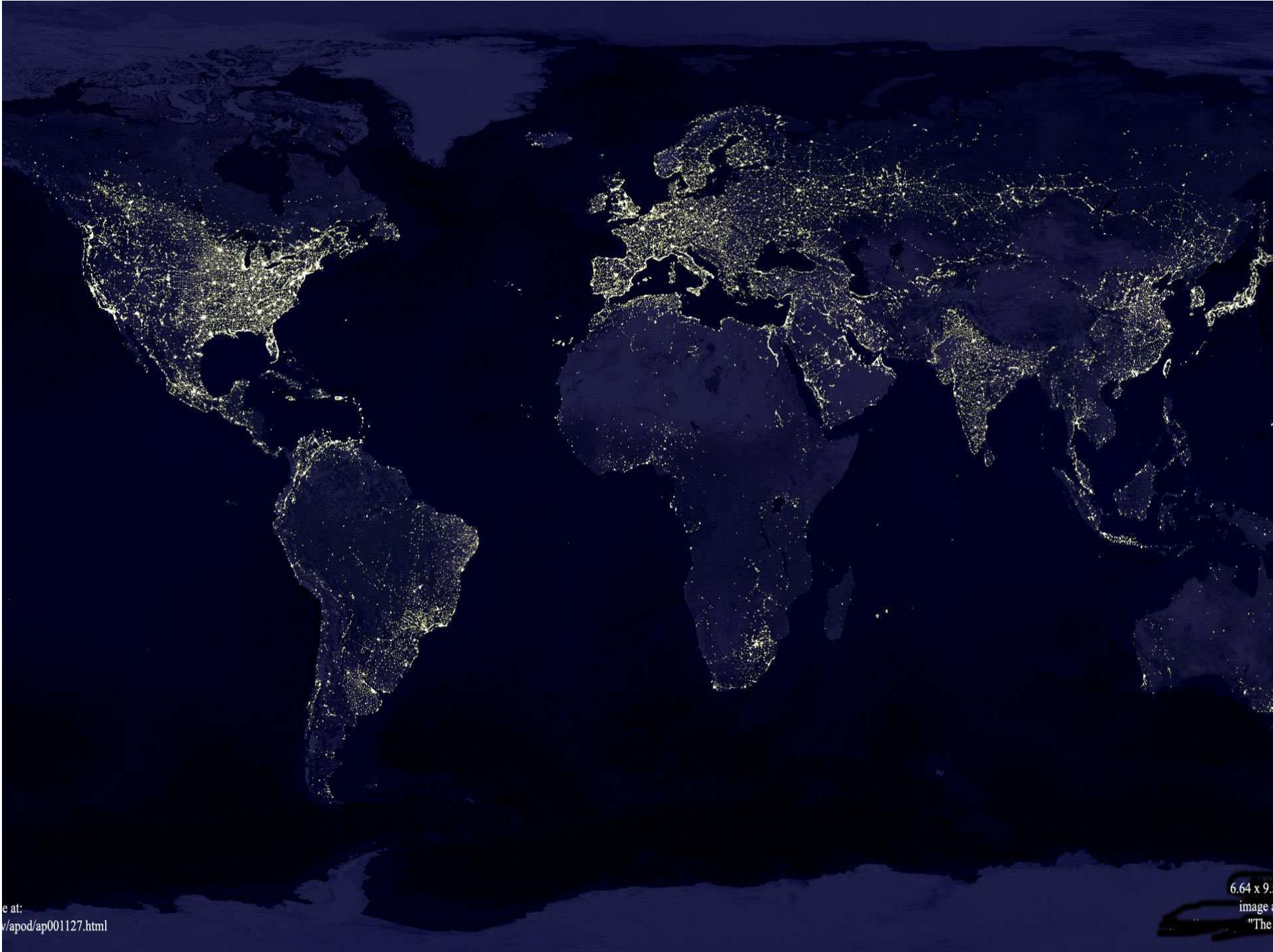


Lesson 1

# Introduction: keywords

Contemporary city:  
descriptions and projects

*Gabriele Pasqui*



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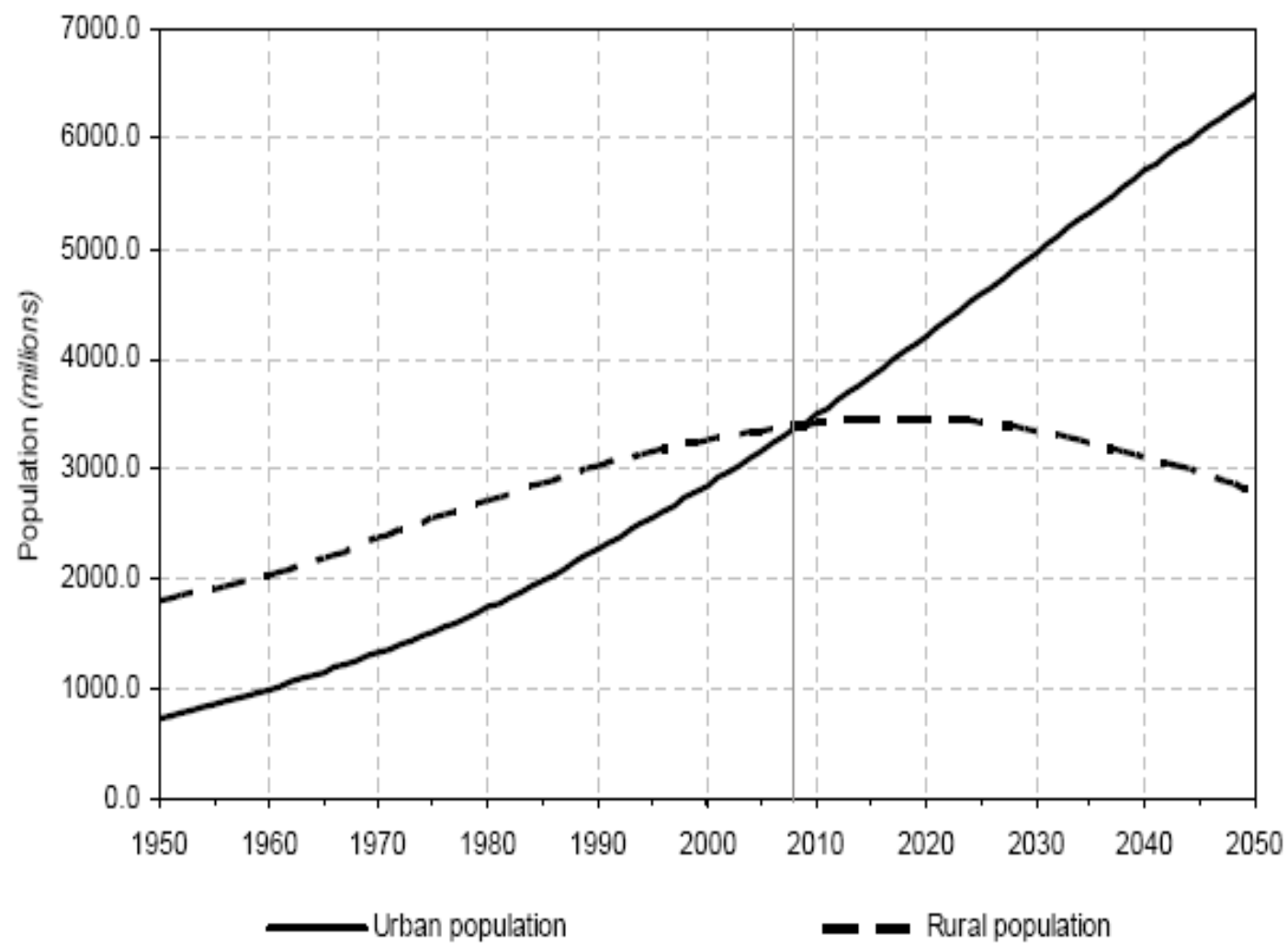
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*Davide Necchi - 2002*

# The process of urbanisation at a global scale

- The world's **urban population** continues to grow faster than the total population of the world
- During 2008, for the first time in history, the proportion of population living in urban areas has reached 50%
- The urban population is expected nearly to double by 2050, increasing to 6.4 billion.
- Large cities (5 to 10 million inhabitants) are expected to be 48 in 2025.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of these “mega cities in waiting” are located in less developed countries
- Mega cities (urban agglomerations with at least 10 million inhabitants) are expected to increase from 19 to 27 by 2025.



## Total, urban and rural population by development group

(source: United Nations, *World Urbanisation Prospects, The 2007 Revision*)

| <i>Development group</i>    | <i>Population (billion)</i> |             |             |             |             | <i>Average annual rate of change (percentage)</i> |                  |                  |                  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                             | <i>1950</i>                 | <i>1975</i> | <i>2007</i> | <i>2025</i> | <i>2050</i> | <i>1950-1975</i>                                  | <i>1975-2007</i> | <i>2007-2025</i> | <i>2025-2050</i> |
| <b>Total population</b>     |                             |             |             |             |             |   |                  |                  |                  |
| World.....                  | 2.54                        | 4.08        | 6.67        | 8.01        | 9.19        | 1.90  | 1.54             | 1.02             | 0.55             |
| More developed regions....  | 0.81                        | 1.05        | 1.22        | 1.26        | 1.25        | 1.01  | 0.48             | 0.16             | -0.04            |
| Less developed regions..... | 1.72                        | 3.03        | 5.45        | 6.75        | 7.95        | 2.26  | 1.84             | 1.19             | 0.65             |
| <b>Urban population</b>     |                             |             |             |             |             |   |                  |                  |                  |
| World.....                  | 0.74                        | 1.52        | 3.29        | 4.58        | 6.40        | 2.89  | 2.42             | 1.84             | 1.33             |
| More developed regions....  | 0.43                        | 0.70        | 0.91        | 0.99        | 1.07        | 1.98  | 0.81             | 0.49             | 0.30             |
| Less developed regions..... | 0.31                        | 0.82        | 2.38        | 3.59        | 5.33        | 3.88  | 3.35             | 2.27             | 1.58             |
| <b>Rural population</b>     |                             |             |             |             |             |   |                  |                  |                  |
| World.....                  | 1.80                        | 2.56        | 3.38        | 3.43        | 2.79        | 1.41  | 0.87             | 0.08             | -0.82            |
| More developed regions....  | 0.39                        | 0.35        | 0.31        | 0.26        | 0.17        | -0.44   | -0.32            | -0.94            | -1.67            |
| Less developed regions..... | 1.41                        | 2.21        | 3.06        | 3.16        | 2.62        | 1.80  | 1.02             | 0.17             | -0.75            |

| <i>1950</i> |  |                   | <i>1975</i> |  |                   |
|-------------|--|-------------------|-------------|--|-------------------|
| <i>Rank</i> | <i>Urban agglomeration</i>             | <i>Population</i> | <i>Rank</i> | <i>Urban agglomeration</i>                 | <i>Population</i> |
| 1           | New York-Newark, USA                   | 12.3              | 1           | Tokyo, Japan                               | 26.6              |
| 2           | Tokyo, Japan                           | 11.3              | 2           | New York-Newark, USA                       | 15.9              |
|             |  |                   | 3           | Ciudad de México (Mexico City), Mexico     | 10.7              |
| <i>2007</i> |  |                   | <i>2025</i> |  |                   |
| <i>Rank</i> | <i>Urban agglomeration</i>             | <i>Population</i> | <i>Rank</i> | <i>Urban agglomeration</i>                 | <i>Population</i> |
| 1           | Tokyo, Japan                           | 35.7              | 1           | Tokyo, Japan                               | 36.4              |
| 2           | New York-Newark, USA                   | 19.0              | 2           | Mumbai (Bombay), India                     | 26.4              |
| 3           | Ciudad de México (Mexico City), Mexico | 19.0              | 3           | Delhi, India                               | 22.5              |
| 4           | Mumbai (Bombay), India                 | 19.0              | 4           | Dhaka, Bangladesh                          | 22.0              |
| 5           | São Paulo, Brazil                      | 18.8              | 5           | São Paulo, Brazil                          | 21.4              |
| 6           | Delhi, India                           | 15.9              | 6           | Ciudad de México (Mexico City), Mexico     | 21.0              |
| 7           | Shanghai, China                        | 15.0              | 7           | New York-Newark, USA                       | 20.6              |
| 8           | Kolkata (Calcutta), India              | 14.8              | 8           | Kolkata (Calcutta), India                  | 20.6              |
| 9           | Dhaka, Bangladesh                      | 13.5              | 9           | Shanghai, China                            | 19.4              |
| 10          | Buenos Aires, Argentina                | 12.8              | 10          | Karachi, Pakistan                          | 19.1              |
| 11          | Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, USA  | 12.5              | 11          | Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo | 16.8              |
| 12          | Karachi, Pakistan                      | 12.1              | 12          | Lagos, Nigeria                             | 15.8              |
| 13          | Al-Qahirah (Cairo), Egypt              | 11.9              | 13          | Al-Qahirah (Cairo), Egypt                  | 15.6              |
| 14          | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil                 | 11.7              | 14          | Manila, Philippines                        | 14.8              |
| 15          | Osaka-Kobe, Japan                      | 11.3              | 15          | Beijing, China                             | 14.5              |
| 16          | Beijing, China                         | 11.1              | 16          | Buenos Aires, Argentina                    | 13.8              |
| 17          | Manila, Philippines                    | 11.1              | 17          | Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, USA      | 13.7              |
| 18          | Moskva (Moscow), Russian Federation    | 10.5              | 18          | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil                     | 13.4              |
| 19          | Istanbul, Turkey                       | 10.1              | 19          | Jakarta, Indonesia                         | 12.4              |
|             |  |                   | 20          | Istanbul, Turkey                           | 12.1              |
|             |  |                   | 21          | Guangzhou, Guangdong, China                | 11.8              |
|             |  |                   | 22          | Osaka-Kobe, Japan                          | 11.4              |
|             |  |                   | 23          | Moskva (Moscow), Russian Federation        | 10.5              |
|             |  |                   | 24          | Lahore, Pakistan                           | 10.5              |
|             |  |                   | 25          | Shenzhen, China                            | 10.2              |
|             |  |                   | 26          | Chennai (Madras), India                    | 10.1              |
|             |  |                   | 27          | Paris, France                              | 10.0              |

# Three driving forces of urbanisation

The main social, economic and cultural driving forces of global urbanisation are:

- **demographic increase** (especially in less developed and emerging countries) and migrations from rural areas to urban regions
- increasing **flows and networks** of capital, labour, technology between urban areas
- diffusion of **urban culture**, globalisation of consumption patterns and urban lifestyles



# Specialization and territorialization

- Modern economies are increasingly structured around flows of people, images, information and money, moving within and across national borders
- The economic base of urban areas is thus changing because cities become the “hubs” of knowledge productions and transmission in a new global space of flows (M. Castells)
- These processes imply new forms of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of economic activities and new forms of economic **specialisation** of urban areas

# Urban processes between spaces and places

- Cities are not only localized economic systems. They are also **sites** in spatially stretched economic relations, rich ecologies of urban economic life (A. Amin and N. Thrift).
- In this social and spatial perspective cities are not only (bunch of) spaces, but also (connections of) places
- A **place** is the locus of complex interactions and outcomes of power geometries and operates across many spatial scales (D. Massey)

# Social forms of urbanisation: urban populations

- The social processes of urbanisation are linked with the growing importance of **urban populations**
- An urban population is an aggregate of individuals defined by one or more simple common traits. Contrary to the kind of theoretical assumptions we need in order to analyse *classes, movements, groups* or *organizations* it is possible to talk about populations without any strong assumption about their rational collective behaviour (G. Martinotti)
- Urban populations (for example commuters, city users, businessmen) are very important in cities' governance because they represent the disjunction between social processes and traditional political representation

# Breaking the barriers: the “endless city”

- From the spatial perspective, the urbanisation means the breaking of the traditional distinctions between city and non-city (city and countryside, core and periphery)
- The spatial morphology of the city have become extraordinarily intricate, and difficult to generalize

# Cities (1)

**What is a city?**

What is “contemporary” city?

“Most cities now sprawl across many miles, incorporating settlements of varying composition, derelict areas, parks and gardens, factories, shopping centres, parking areas, warehouses, dumps. Half of the world’s population now lives in cities” (Amin, Thrift)

## Cities (2)

### **The urbanization of the world** Same problems, different morphologies

An important process of urbanisation will involve the planet population in the near future. Most of the world population will live in large metropolitan areas or in highly urbanised regions

“All these metropolitan areas and regions must face, in the near future, the same problems, but these problems will be differently defined according to different physical morphologies as well as different social, economic and institutional morphologies” (Bernardo Secchi)

# Cities (3)

## **A new urban question**

Environment, mobility, social exclusion

The main problems of urban regions at the beginning of this third millennium can be summerized in three questions:

*Environmental issues* (climate change, energy and natural resources management, pollution and use of non reporducible resources)

*Mobility issues* (congestion, intersection between diffent populations, costs of mobility and spatial organization of the urban areas)

*Social issues* (growing differences between poor and rich, social frailty, ethnica and cultural conflicts)

# Cities (4)

## **City of the riches, cities of the poors**

In contemporary city the new urban question is also a social question,  
involving crucial spatial dimensions

The spatial organisation of the city is also a mechanism  
of social exclusion and inclusion, for poor and affluent social groups



# Cities: everywhere and everything

If cities are everything, maybe they are nothing...

Urbanized world as a **chain of metropolitan areas** (regions) connected by places/corridors of communication (airport and airways, stations, railways, ports, parking lots and motorways, teleports, information highways, ...)

The first dimension of urban life is **movement**

But, what is not “the urban”?  
Towns, villages, countryside?

The pattern analysis can give some answers.

# The footprint of the city

The traditional divide between the city and the countryside has been subverted

But we still name cities, and we think of them as **distinctive places**

The **footprints** of the city are all over the world and its places, in the form of city commuters, tourists, teleworking, Facebook, the media and the urbanisation of lifestyle and consumptions

Analysing contemporary cities means identifying urban practices and forms of life, spaces/places modified by these practices and intentional and unintentional effects of these practices on spaces/places and their patterns and organisation

# The city: classical definitions (Wirth)

“Urbanism no longer denotes merely the process by which persons are attracted to a place called the city and incorporated into its system of life. It refers also to that cumulative accentuation of the characteristics distinctive of the mode of life which is associated with the growth of the cities, and finally to the changes in the direction of modes of life recognized as urban...the power of its institutions and personalities operating through the means of communication and transportation” (L. Wirth)

What characterizes a city is the relationship between

- population,
- density of settlement,
- heterogeneity of inhabitants and group life

# A vocabulary: space

A city can be seen from the perspective of **space** (geographical, economic, social, functional) and from the perspective of **place** (phenomenological, symbolic, sensemaking)

In a broad sense, space plays a role in shaping social life, being a backdrop against which human behaviour is played out...

... but absolute space cannot exist, because, at the moment it is colonized through social activities, it becomes **historicized** space (H. Lefebvre)

There are many different kind of spaces

# A vocabulary: place

For many scholars, place represents a distinctive (more or less bounded) type of space, that is defined by (and constructed in terms of) the lived experience of people

Both space and places are **non isomorph**  
Spaces and places are connected with **power**

Places are thus relational and contingent, experienced and understood differently by different people; they are **multiple, contested, fluid and uncertain.**

Places are the **locus of everyday life practices**

# A vocabulary: practice

**Practice** is what people do in their life, with their **meaning**  
(practices are events occurring with their sense)

Urban practices are activities (action) that individuals and groups are involved in, often through **routines**

Each practice is an **interplacement** of many practices, subordinate to main practice's aim, the achievement of his object (C. Sini)

Each practice is not isolated, but is linked in a **network** with other practices of different kind, each of them generating their object (that is “transcendental” to the practice)...

... and their subject (that is “internal”, and generated by the practice itself)

# A vocabulary: everyday life

Everyday life is the sphere of our existence that is well known, that is “at hand”  
(P. Jedlowski)

Everyday life is the only life (what is outside everyday life?)

Everyday life is a **point of view** (for example, upon city and urban practices)

In everyday life it may be supposed that practices (multiform and fragmentary) conform to certain **rules**. “There must be a logic of these practices” (M. de Certeau)

The logic of urban practices is a **spatial logic!**