

*Postmodern City Films & Global Flows*

**TIME-SPACE  
DISTANCITATION,  
“DIS-EMBEDDEDNESS,”  
TRUST & REFLEXIVITY**

Anthony Giddens



# Post/Modern Urbanism

(Wirth → Harvey & Giddens)

utilitarian,  
segmental,  
transitory

Schizophrenia  
Loss of History  
Placelessness

Trust, Risk, Security,  
Reflexivity

Large  
Population  
Density  
Heterogeneity

Time-Space  
Compression

Multinational  
Capitalism  
Telecommunication

Time-Space  
Distantiation

Disembedding  
Systems:  
Money &  
Expert System

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the examples Giddens give to **time-space distantiatio**n?
- 2. What causes **disembeddedness** of social institutions via money and expert system? What are the consequences?
- 3. Do you agree with his definition of **trust & "security"** (pp. 33, 35)?

# OUTLINE

- Separation of time and space
  - Development of disembedding mechanism
    - symbolic token (e.g. money)
    - expert system
    - trust and risk intertwined // determination & chance (contingency; **stranger**)
  - Reflexive appropriation of knowledge
    - knowledge reflexively applied (vs. tradition as foundation)
    - values connected with empirical knowledge
    - Double hermeneutics -- knowledge  $\leftrightarrow$  circumstances
- [next week] **postmodernism, cognitive flexibility & “aesthetic reflexiveness”**

# TIME-SPACE DISTANCIATION

- Traditionally, time is connected with place (locale), defined as solar time.
  - When is always connected with “where.” (17)
- Early causes for distancing: invention of railway, printing, mechanical time and “time zones”
  - Empty time: clock time & calendar time
  - Empty space (18); place becomes increasingly “phantasmagoric” (e.g. What Time is it There)

# SEPARATION OF TIME AND SPACE → DYNAMICS OF MODERNITY

- 1) **disembedded institutions everywhere**, extending the scope of time-space distancitation
- 2) **rationalized organizations** connect the local and the global
- 3) **radical historicity**: insertions into time and space in a world-historical framework (20-21)

disembedding



re-embedding

# DISEMBEDDING MECHANISM

- symbolic tokens (22): e.g. money – “whore of the world” (cash, credit, debit, bitcoin, digital wallet)
- expert system (27; e.g. railway, construction, e-transaction)
- “trust”? (29) – trust (blind); risk and trust are intertwined; security: “The experience of security usually rests upon a balance of trust and acceptable risk” (36)

# REFLEXIVITY OF MODERNITY

- “double” hermeneutics
- The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that **social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information** about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character. (38)



# MAIN THEMES

- Postmodern City & Globalization
- Urban Flows & Dis/Connections
  - 【Urbanism as a Way of Life】
  - vs. 【History】 in Spaces and Places
  - 【Time-Space Compression & Family】 in Flows
  - Disembeddedness, Expert System and Trust
- Global Flows &
  - 【Flâneurism】
  - 【Risk Society, Global Strangers & Connectivity】

**【*Photo-Project due—12/19*】**

# GLOSSARY

- Postmodern City: 3 G's and 1 P
- Globalization: 3 Theses
- Urbanism: A way of life caused by **the density, size and heterogeneity** of the population of a place.
- How these three terms are intensified by **flows and turned into multiple layers of network, multiple time-spaces, and multiple webs of relations**
- **Anomie**: a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of purpose or ideals.
- Flow: A name for movements between relatively fixed nodes in networks, **flows can be of commodities, money, people, energy or even ideas.**
- Space of Flows vs. Space of Place
- Cities as sites of proximity and co-presence; with stretched connections and incessant flows; as nodes of incessant flows on local, regional, national and global levels

# WORKS CITED

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