Mobility in the in-between city:  
Getting stuck between the local and the global

Creating Cities: Culture, Space and Sustainability

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The metropolitan century

- More than 50 percent urban globally
- 70 percent of Canadians in cities
- Most Canadians live in large urban areas
The urban century is in-between

- Urbanization as the defining social process of the emerging century
- For most, this means suburbanization
- Creating cities means creating suburbs
- But suburbanization and suburbanism are changing shape
- New forms of in-betweenness are prevalent
Between the glamour zones

The traditional downtown  The conventional suburb
• *in-between cities”*
  complex urban landscapes
  (Sieverts, 2003)
The topology of the in-between city

- Sieverts’s *Zwischenstadt* originally based on recent spatial developments in Europe (critique of concept of the traditional, more compact, uni-centred European city). Sieverts notes that this new urban form is now pervasive and home as well as workplace to a growing percentage of Europeans. The in-between cities now appear as the most dynamic and problematic forms of suburbanization.
Zwischenstadt in North America

• in-between cities now the most dynamic and problematic forms of suburbanization.
• In North America, they comprise the old post-WW2 suburbs in particular, but also the transitional zones between those suburbs and the exurban fringe
• a wild and often unexplainable mix of uses untypical for either the inner city or the classical suburb, they present landscapes of extreme spatial and social segregation.
The In-between city

• that part of the urban region that is perceived as not quite traditional city and not quite traditional suburb (Sieverts, 2003).
• new urban morphology where a large part of metropolitan populations live, work and play.
• Conceptually, a particular view towards urban Canada and beyond.
Socio-morphological basics

The socio-spatial landscape of the in-between city (Sieverts, 2003)

“splintering urbanism” (Graham and Marvin, 2001)

Urban regions as “archipelagos of enclaves” (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001)
In-between city as relationality

• The in-between city is less a spatial form that can be defined in static positive terms (fixed average densities, specific constitutive elements, particular minimal features, mix of uses, etc.) but a set of internal and external relationships that realign the elements of urbanity more fundamentally.
In-betweenness as relationality

- the rescaling of socio-spatial relationships in the globalizing city region
- a reordering of socio-demographic and socio-economic relationships
- relationships of labour and life, of workplace and housing
- urban political ecology of the city region is reorganized
Toronto CMA
Population change, 2001 to 2006
by 2006 Census Tract (CT)
Map 1 of 2

Percentage change
(Number of CTs)
- 10% + (190)
- 0% to < 10% (261)
- -10% to < 0% (500)
- < -10% (43)

Census Subdivision
Major road
Idiosyncratic decentralization
Emerging centrality
Income

Classified using Natural Binning (Optimal Clusters)

Average Indiv. Income ($)  
- $15,000 - $30,000  
- $30,001 - $60,000  
- $60,001 - $90,000  
- $90,001 - $120,000  
- $120,001 - $150,000

Median Indiv. Income ($)  
- $15,000 - $30,000  
- $30,001 - $60,000  
- $60,001 - $90,000  
- $90,001 - $120,000  
- $120,001 - $150,000

Economic Family LICO (%)  
- 0% - 1%  
- 1% - 2%  
- 2% - 3%  
- 3% - 4%  
- 4% - 5%  
- 5% - 6%

Pop in Priv. Hholds LICO (%)  
- 0% - 1%  
- 1% - 2%  
- 2% - 3%  
- 3% - 4%  
- 4% - 5%  
- 5% - 6%

Govt Transfers (% of Inc)  
- 0% - 1%  
- 1% - 2%  
- 2% - 3%  
- 3% - 4%  
- 4% - 5%  
- 5% - 6%

Classified using CMA-metropolitan Location Quotient

Average Indiv. Income ($)  
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- $60,001 - $90,000  
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Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census
Mobility
Ethnicity
In-between infrastructure

• dramatic structural inequalities in infrastructure provision and service delivery
• many urban residents vulnerable to unpredictable events – environmental, economic, social
• Understanding the infrastructure problems of the “in-between city” is a necessary precondition for creating more sustainable and socially just urban regions, and for designing a system of social and cultural infrastructure that has everything a community needs and meets global needs as well
Infrastructure builds cities

• but it also dissolves cities: as it creates centrifugal possibilities.
• A global “suburban solution” (Walker, 1981) drains the urban centres and leads to new forms of concentration where there are no traditional accumulations of infrastructure services.
• a more pervasively sprawled metropolitan landscape entirely dedicated to provide the most efficient conduit for global capital.
Infrastructure builds cities

- Even in overall “healthy” metropolitan regions the centrifugal dynamics continue.
- In Toronto, for example, the recent census figures suggest an unbroken, if not accelerated trend towards suburbanization of housing and jobs.
- This has social and spatial implications: The traditional focus on collective consumption is partially replaced with a purely exchange value oriented set of criteria for infrastructure development which makes global economic competitiveness, rather than local social cohesion the marker of success.
• infrastructure for the connection of prime network spaces (Graham and Marvin, 2001)
• little attention paid to the spaces that are traversed in the process of connecting the splintered premium locales of the metropolitan region.
• exurban voters conspire with downtown interests in creating better bypasses of the in-between city in order to move goods and people more efficiently
• The in-between city is produced to be transgressed at high speed to reach other points in the urban region.
Waiting for the bus
Conclusions: “politics of infrastructure”

- “politics of infrastructure”: a growing awareness that “governing and experiencing the fabric of the city” (McFarlane and Rutherford 2008: 363) involves political acts that produce and reproduce the infrastructures of urban regions.

- “politicization of infrastructure” (ibid.) involves the understanding of how infrastructure policies and planning are linked to “the co-evolution of cities and technical networks in a global context” (McFarlane and Rutherford 2008: 365).
• The politicization of infrastructures therefore includes the politicization of the people in the in-between city around issues of transportation, infrastructure, and connectivity on the basis of their own experienced needs of mobility and access.
Thanks!

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