From the Metropolis Berlin to the Global City of London

The Augmentation of Progress

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11.12.2003

Comparative Paper

Final Draft, revised

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Berlin, the metropolis of the 1900s, set the foundations for the global city of London of the 20th century. It seems that globalization, a normal feature of social life by 2000, has in steadily quickening pace developed out of the classic modernity of 1900. Nevertheless it seems that the metropolis supported the importance of locality whereas the global city London makes globalization necessary. In how far can this statement be proved and what are the consequences of an augmentation of progress and increased technological improvement?

Trams and telephones, department stores and daily papers, symbolize the emergence of hectic mass culture in the early twentieth century Berlin. As a consequence of new technologies, discontinuity characterized people's "day to day" life. (Fritsche, P., 1996, p.). Today new situations and constant technological improvements are seen "as normal feature of social life". (Mc Grew, Anthony, 1993, p.67). In contrast to the "loss of inner security"(Georg Simmel) of many metropolitans, Londoners in the year 2000, living in the era of dynamic multi culture and a never ending technological progress, remain untouched and cool (London: A Global City). This reflects the fact that culture has adapted to the accelerating velocity and globalization during the twentieth century. The trend from the importance of locality toward global orientation is in a good way depicted in the variety of newspapers offered during the specific time. The creation of a local newspaper, a cultural guide for Berlin, was celebrated around 1900. Today, not only a large number of ordinary local newspapers and event guides but a variety of international magazines and papers exist. They reflect the city's cultural and ethnic patchwork. Coexisting on relatively small space, every minority has an impact on the other and origins and distinctive ethnic particularities are hard to be traced back. London of 2000 becomes a global city with an hybrid society without distinctive cultural habits. Instead of being a host to the world like London, classical modern Berlin attracted people from all parts of Germany: If we talk of globalization of the city in 2000, we may talk of nationalization of the city in 1900. (London: A Global City).

   In 1900, technology also provided the background for new cultural developments. New technologies and population growth led to a reduced number of working hours in Berlin around the 1900s and workers were initially confronted with spare time. Cafés, theatres, galleries, cinemas and sport arenas gained widespread popularity and led the way to mass or popular culture. The spending of leisure time developed a "(…) modern sense of 'way of life' " (Blackbourn, D., 2003, p.293). Also in London in the year 2000 cafés and restaurants remain significant. In contrast to what they embodied in Berlin, now they are both, places to spend leisure time and to exchange information, "(…) they are as much part of the City's

currency as money"(London: A Global City). While places like cafés or restaurants remained as oasis in the hectic and impersonal world of 1900, in 2000 competition can not be excluded from any place anymore.(London: A Global City).

When talking about newspapers or café culture that mark the generations differently, one cannot leave out other aspects of technology that gave the impulse to the mentioned changes. Generally spoken, technologies have been introduced to reach or manage things in less time, to increase productivity and to gain more money. This tendency has even increased in the course of the twentieth century. Today's complex and fast telecommunication networks and internet is based on initial telecommunication inventions of the 1900s. Transportation was revolutionized for the first time around 1900 when Heinrich Heine expressed both amazement and confusion about the new velocity of transport: "Space is killed by railways and we are left with space alone". Thus, greater distances could be overcome in less time, this tendency of time-space compression further increased during the course of the twentieth century. Today, plane traffic and the acceleration of speed of other forms of transportation provide an rapid interconnection of the whole world. Thus we cannot only communicate but travel and negotiate on a global scale. It regarded standard and necessary to be interconnected, especially for a city like "London [reigning] supreme in Europe as financial city ", (Thrift,N. 1998,) where people rely on globalization for success and rank and where "money, capital, people and information flow into it and out again, providing it with an enormous sphere of influence (…)" (London: A Global City). The importance of the interconnection of the world for London is emphasized by present cultural key elements stressing that "finance victory [only] goes to the most well informed" (Thrift, N., 1998) whereas "today's culture [judges only] in terms of what gives immediate pleasure and makes money" (Thompson, K., 1993, p.232). It seems that in present London, money is the key to success and can replace any human acknowledgement, and in order to have money, globalization is compulsory.

To conclude, it needs to be stressed that today's transportation networks and communication systems derive from the technological developments of around 1900. Those inventions were introduced to cover more space in less time, primary to be able to compete on the market and to increase income. Those tendencies have become critical until today. Nevertheless it is important to remark that the technological changes throughout the century have led to a new and unrestricted way of life, not dependent on locality anymore. The augmentation of progress cannot, at the end, simply be seen as only a fastening or shrinking of the world. The

consequence of the latter is that, whereas in the Berlin of 1900 the people increasingly concentrated on the local aspects of the city itself, today contradictory tendencies develop. People do not only depend on local aspects anymore, the city itself, as a multicultural patchwork, requires acting on a global scale: locality is substituted with globality.

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