

Trespassing and possibilism: two keywords to orientate in the current crisis

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The process of transformation of the economy, society, space and institutions has been dealt with usually looking at each of them separately or in couples (eg.: the impact of economic change on society, of social change on the urban space, etc.).

This paper holds that today, in a situation of transition, it is important to look at these processes of transformation simultaneously, to trespass disciplinary boundaries, to understand the co-evolution that they do produce reciprocally and to understand the direction of the multiple relations between them.

In the paper therefore I try to describe some of the most relevant changes in the economy linked to the pervasive process of digitalisation, from new manufacturing to the platform economy, trying to understand the impact of these changes on society, space and institutions. Then I look to societal change with the demographic challenge, the polarisation process and the management of migration fluxes with their feed back on the economy, on spatial change and on the shattering of institutions. Finally in turn I look at urban and spatial transformations and to the institutional adaptation.

The hypothesis that I propose for the discussion is that (urban) space and institutions in the last 30 years, have been playing only a passive role producing resistance to changes which have been guided by a non regulated economy and by a suffering society.

This led to phenomena of hyper urbanisation and to the climate change.

The question I propose is if it is possible to reverse the direction of this relation and to start from the physical space and from institutions to deal with a number of problems that the current state of relations is producing. In this perspective the approach of Hirschmanian possibilism looks promising.