Why Connectivity is Destiny
Parag Khanna

It’s time to reimagine how life is organized on Earth...

...Connectivity, not geography, is destiny.

The Global Connectivity Revolution

Skeletal System → **Transportation**

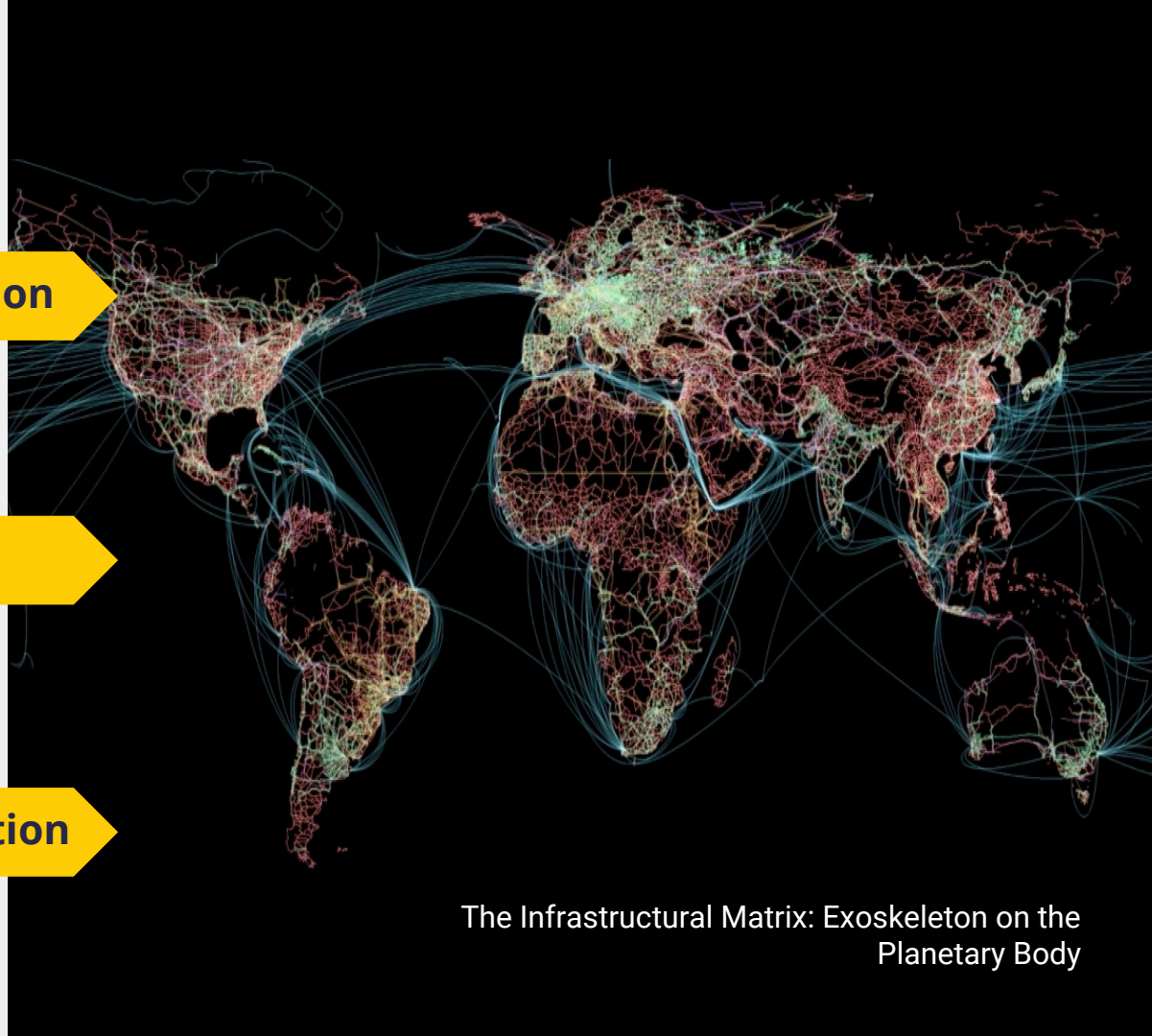
Highways, railways, bridges, tunnels, airports, seaports

Vascular System → **Energy**

Oil & gas pipelines and refineries, electricity grids and power plants

Nervous System → **Communication**

Internet cables, satellites, data centers



The Infrastructural Matrix: Exoskeleton on the Planetary Body

Connectivity: The Most Revolutionary Force of the 21st Century

“Geography is destiny”
Is this ancient adage obsolete?

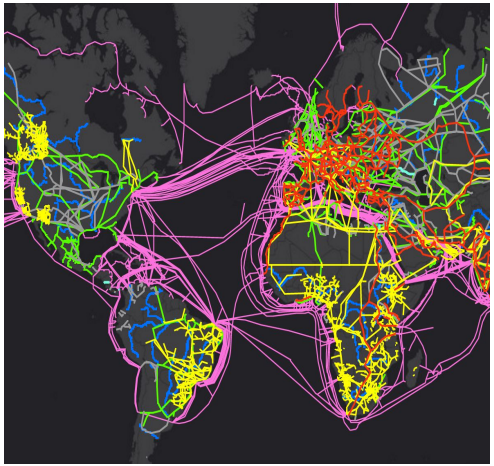
Arc of History
Connectivity as meta-pattern

Paradigm Shift:
Connectivity > Division

Cartographic Evolution

Natural Geography

Political Geography



Functional Geography

“What we build today will last centuries.” - *Santiago Calatrava*

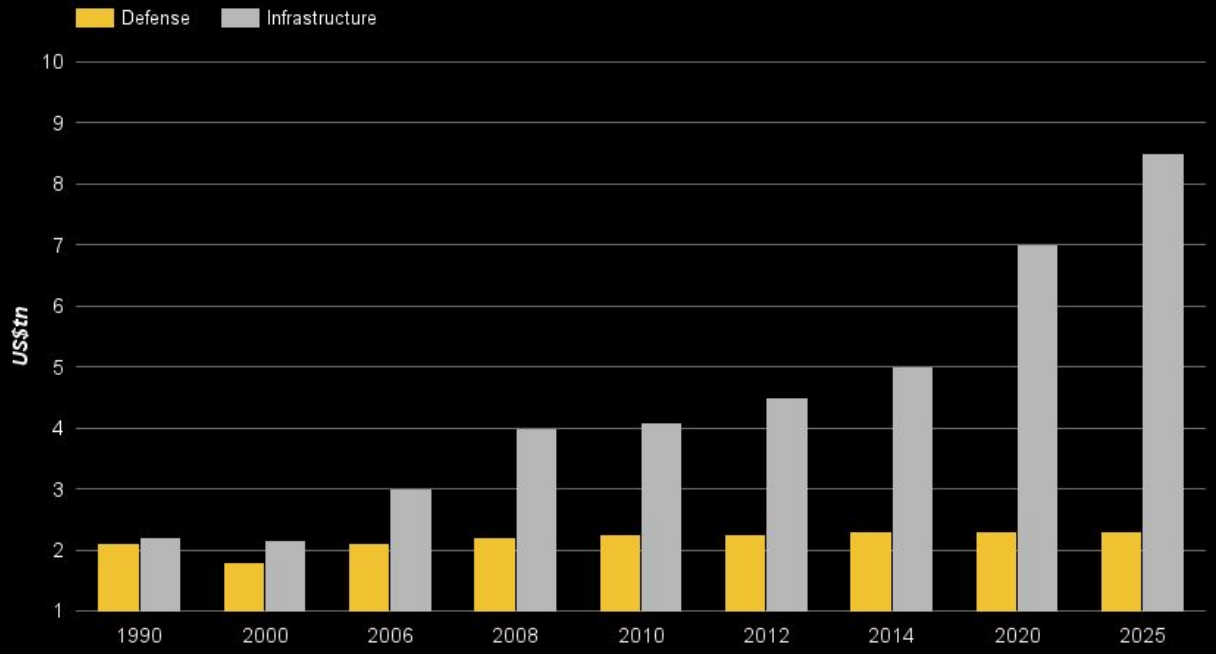
Bridges to Everywhere: Infrastructure Growth

19th and early 20th Centuries
American phase: Industrial revolution to World War I

Great Wars and Resurrection
European phase: Keynes to *Wirtschaftswunder*

Rise of the East
Asian Tigers to China & Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Roads to the Future: Infrastructure Spending



We will build more infrastructure in the next 40 years than in the past 4000.

We should spend $1 trillion on the basic infrastructure needs of every 1 billion people.

From Westphalian World (1648) to Supply Chain World (1989)

End of the Cold War

+

Capital Market Expansion

+

Deregulation and Privatization

+

Infrastructure Build-out

+

Communications Revolution

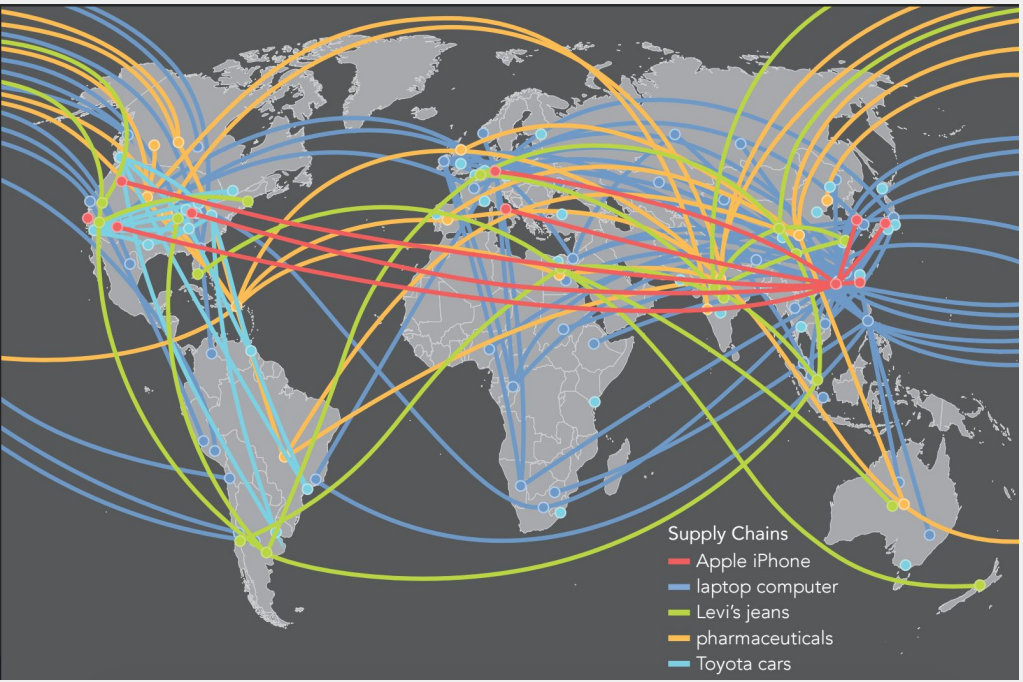
=

Total Globalization

- Treaty of Westphalia (1648) to Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989)
- 1989: World Wide Web (WWW)
- Supply chains are the original World Wide Webs: Not things but a global system of transactions

Beyond “Hyper-globalization” versus “End of globalization”: Capacity > Volume

The Most Powerful Law of History: Supply and Demand



Trading atoms and bits: "Where" are complex global value chains? Things are "Made Everywhere"

Towards the Supply Chain World:

Free markets (*Adam Smith*)

\+

Comparative advantage (*David Ricardo*)

\+

Division of labor (*Émile Durkheim*)

\+

IoT/Big Data/AI (*Ray Kurzweil*)

=

"Perfect Capitalism" (*Michio Kaku*)

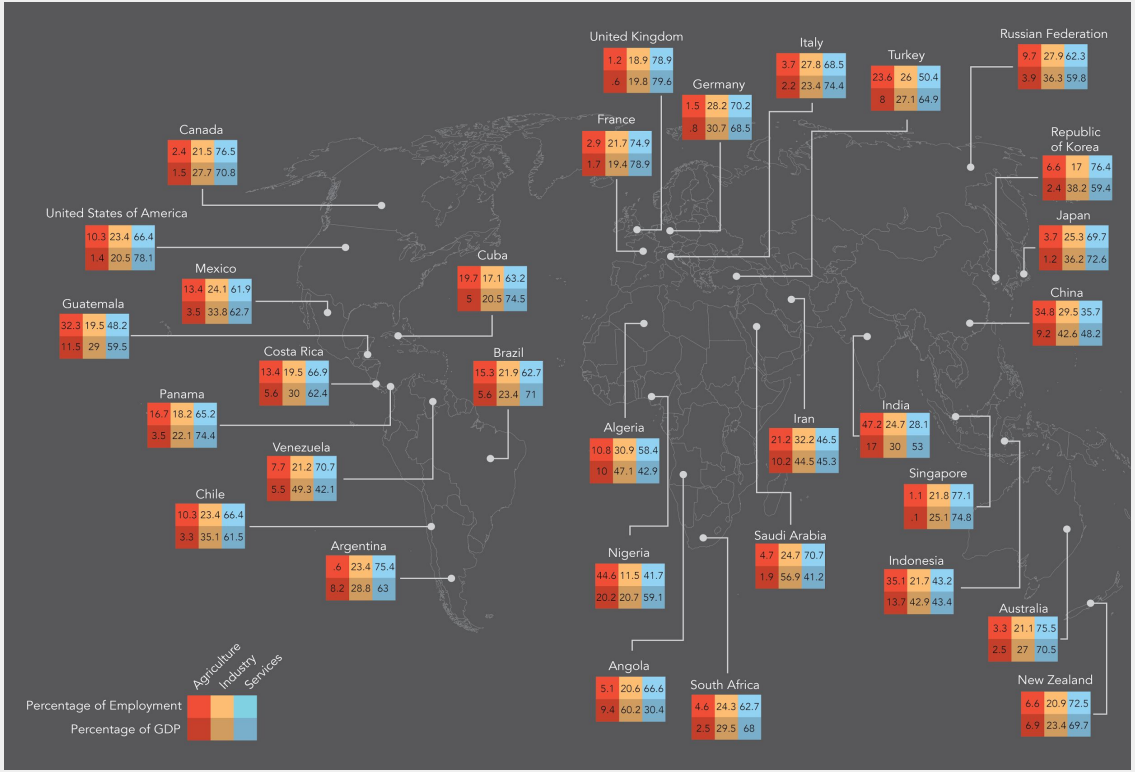
- Supply of anything can meet demand for anything
- Perpetual optimization of land, labor & capital for production
- Inefficiency is the enemy
- Connectivity is a currency of power

What circuit do you belong to?

International circuits over nationality *(Sassen)*: Manufacturing, energy, finance, technology

Synchronized industries rise and fall in tandem: Financial crisis (2008), manufacturing demand shock (2009), commodities collapse (2014)

The circuit as identity: Networks of professional belonging - and mobility

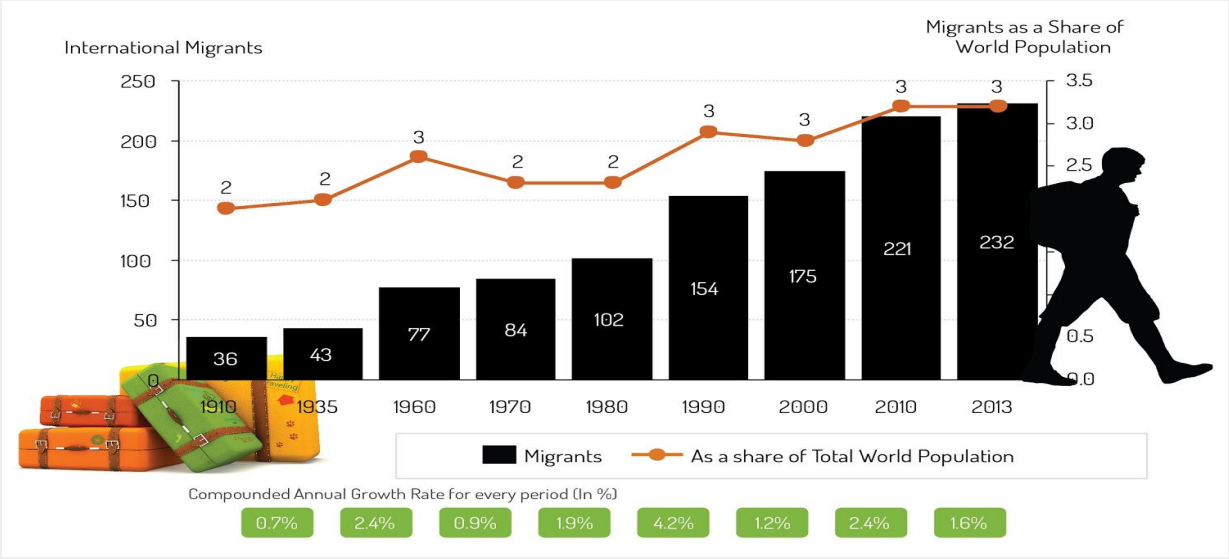


The Independent Republic of the Supply Chain

Connectivity: A human impulse

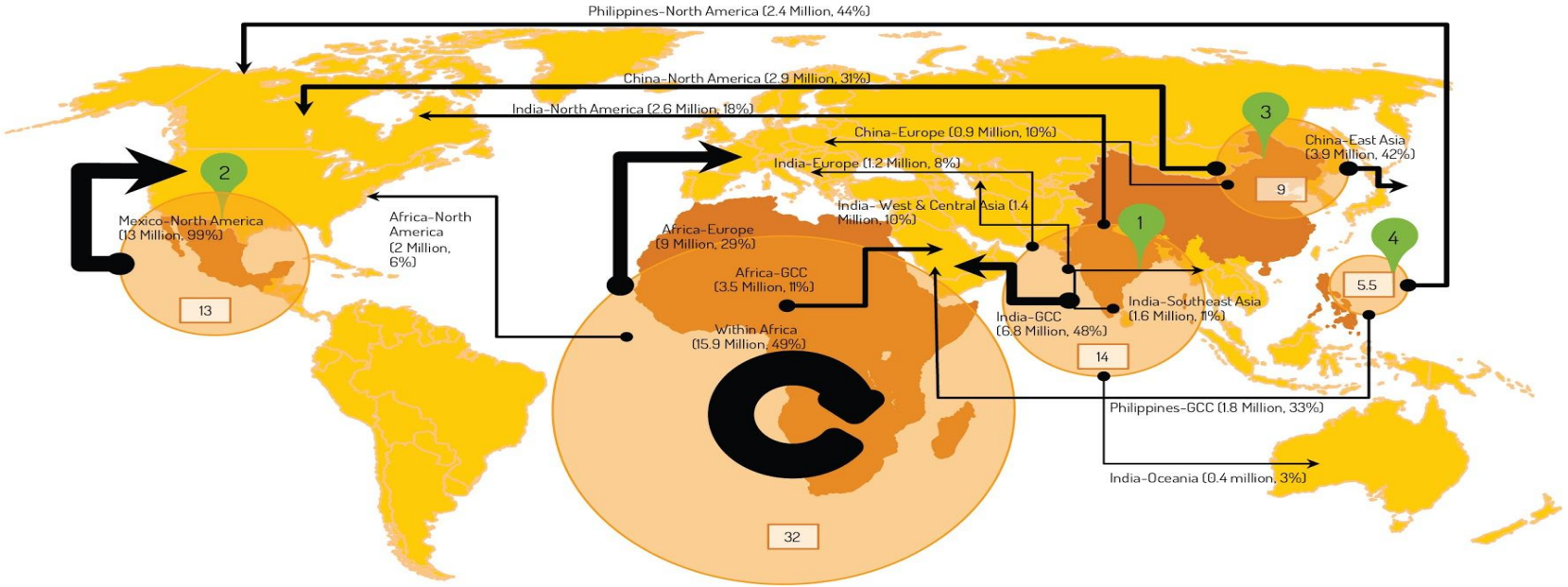
Urbanization: A proxy for the search for connectivity

Global Migrant Horde: Expats, refugees, laborers, students



More than one billion border crossings per year and rising fast

Migration Routes and Remittances

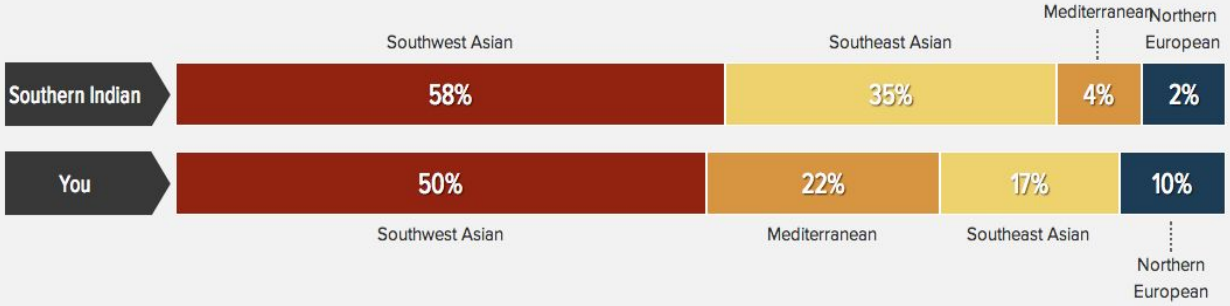


- Mobility as a human right
- Enabling permanent migrants: Global visa/passport
- Global citizens and citizenship arbitrage

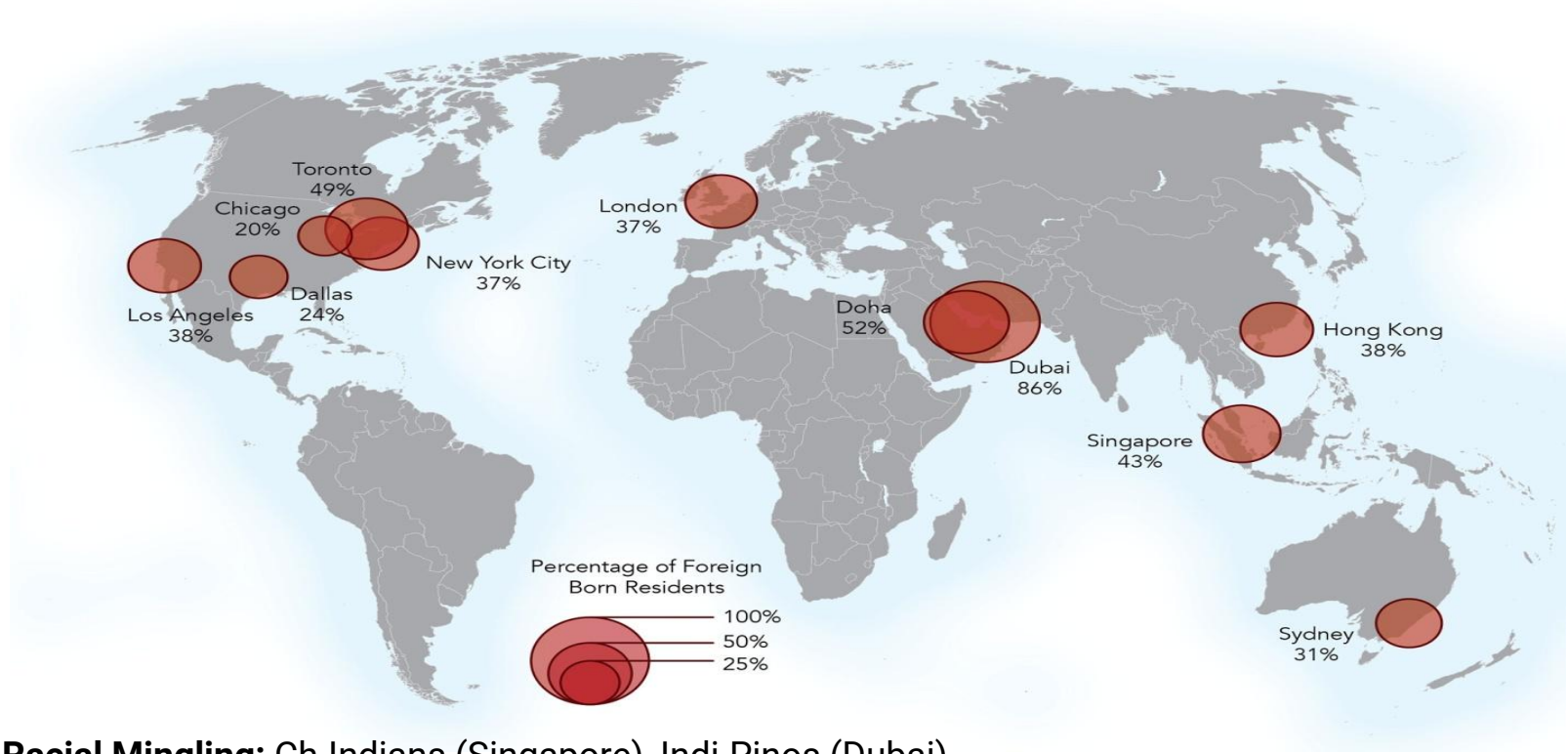
The Great Genetic Dilution

NatGeo's *Genotype 2.0* Project: 60,000 years of genetic collisions

- **"Demography is destiny":** Toward a global mongrel civilization
- **Europe's ironic fate:** End of the nation-state and the assimilation imperative
- **China:** Imperial nation-state and global dilution

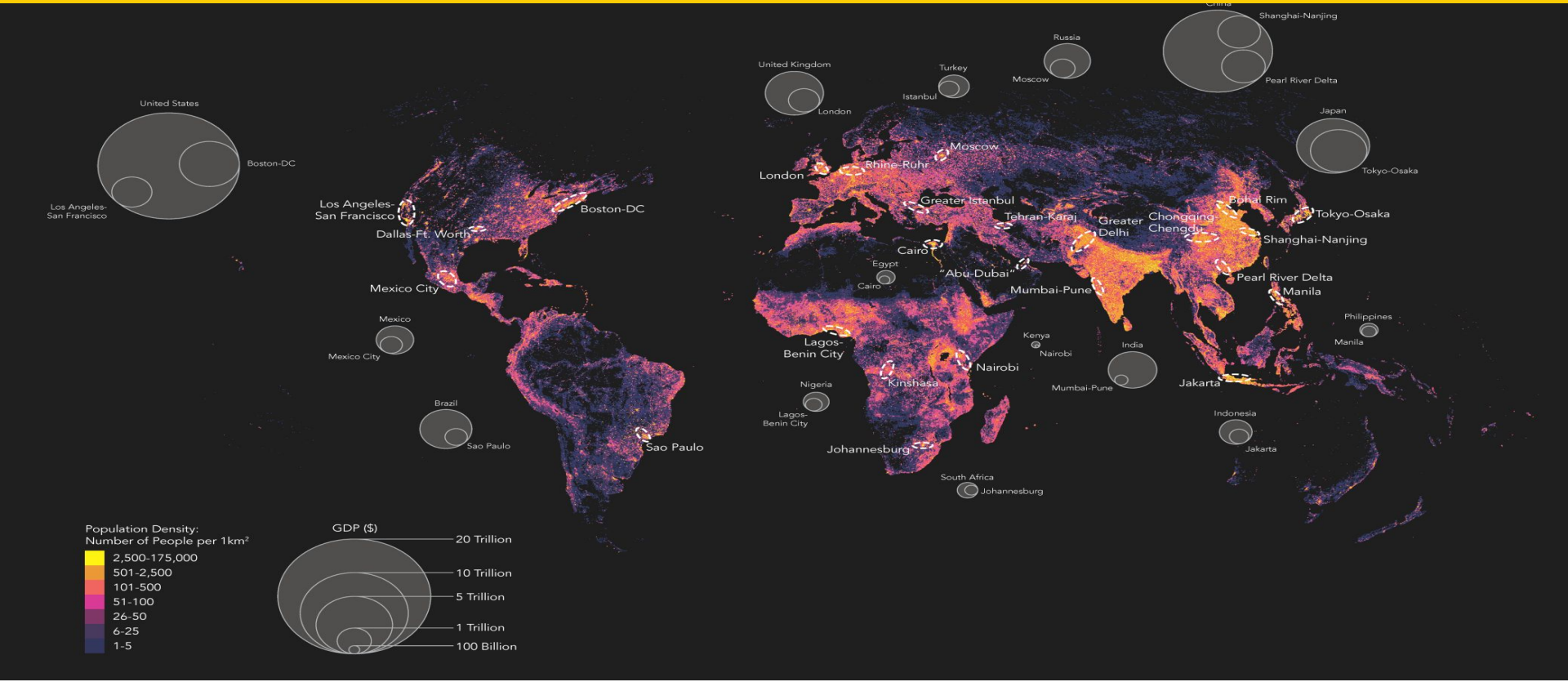


All Great Global Cities are Melting Pots

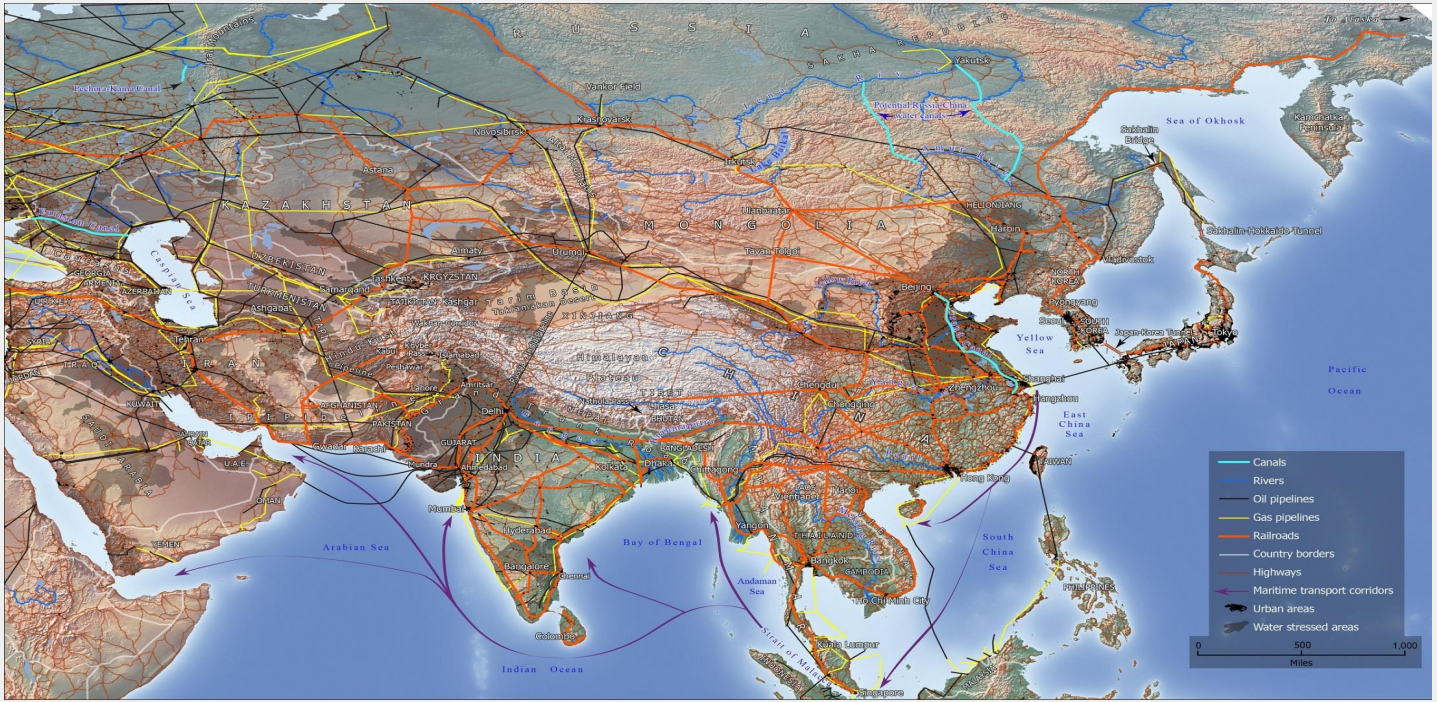


- **Racial Mingling:** Ch-Indians (Singapore), Indi-Pinos (Dubai)
- **From Nationalism to Civicism:** Cumulative not exclusive identities

Planetary Urbanization: Megacity Archipelagos Define Humanity

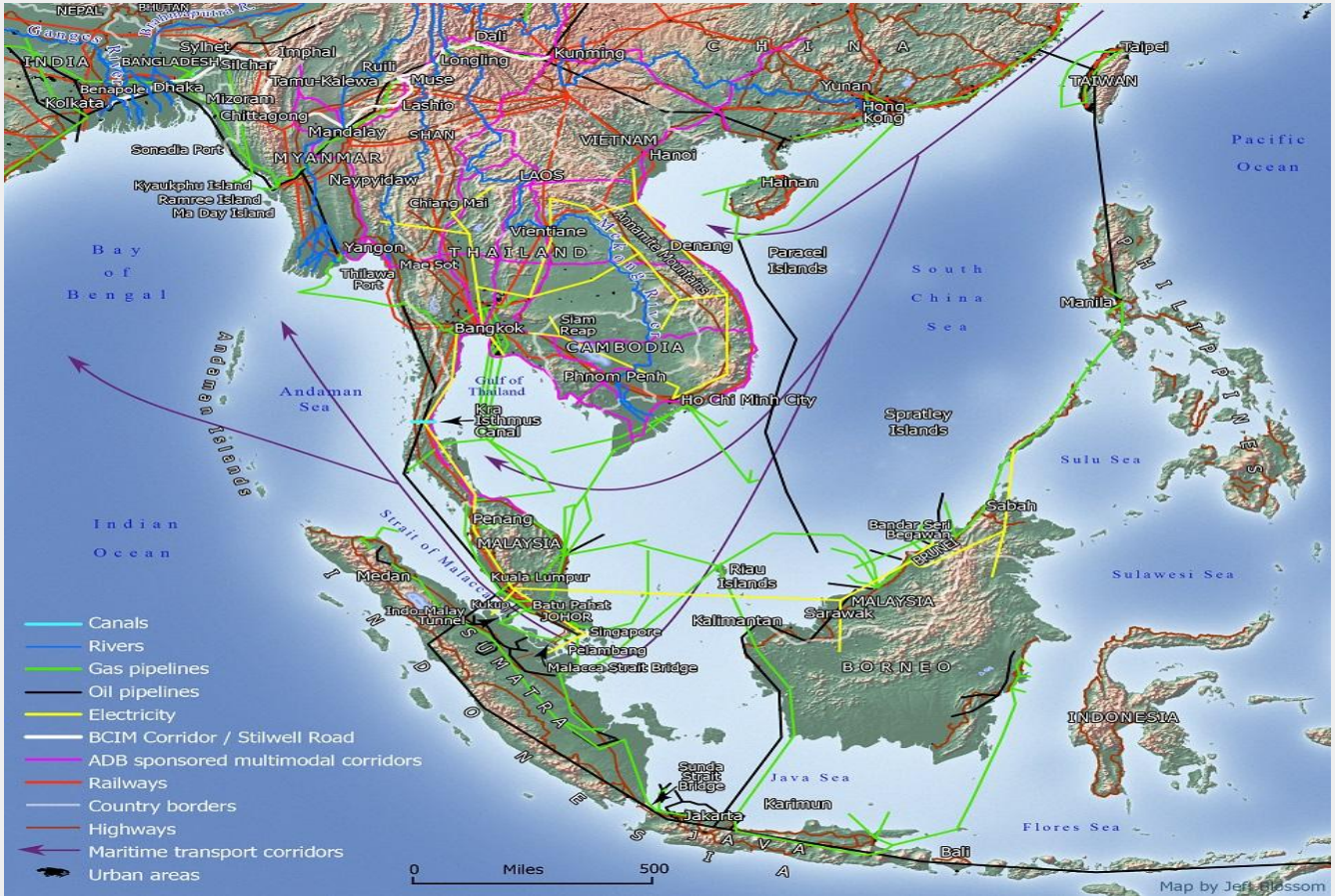


East Meets West: Eurasia's Iron Silk Roads



- AIIB and the Compression of Eurasian Space: China Becomes a Two-Ocean Power
- "Iron Silk Roads" win the "New Great Game" (over Iran)
- Infrastructure as extended sovereignty: Scenic and resource-rich passageways: "Sino-Siberia," "Mine-Golia", "Stans", NK

Pax Aseana: How to Grow From Billions to Trillions

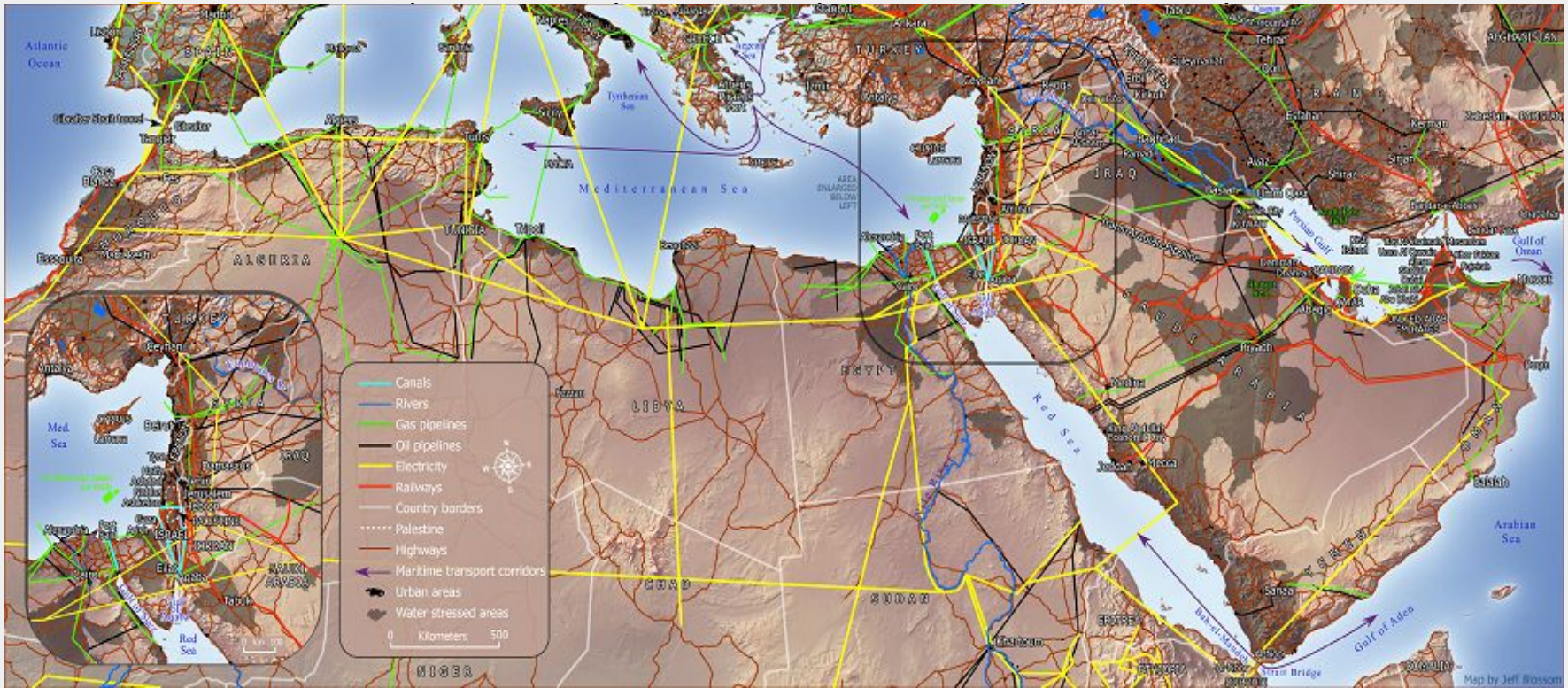


Africa: From Devolution to *Pax Africana*

- Secessionism and devolution: More states to come?
- Aggregation in sub-regions: East Africa as the continent's "Benalux"
- Pan-African connectivity: Continental infrastructure, free trade, open migration

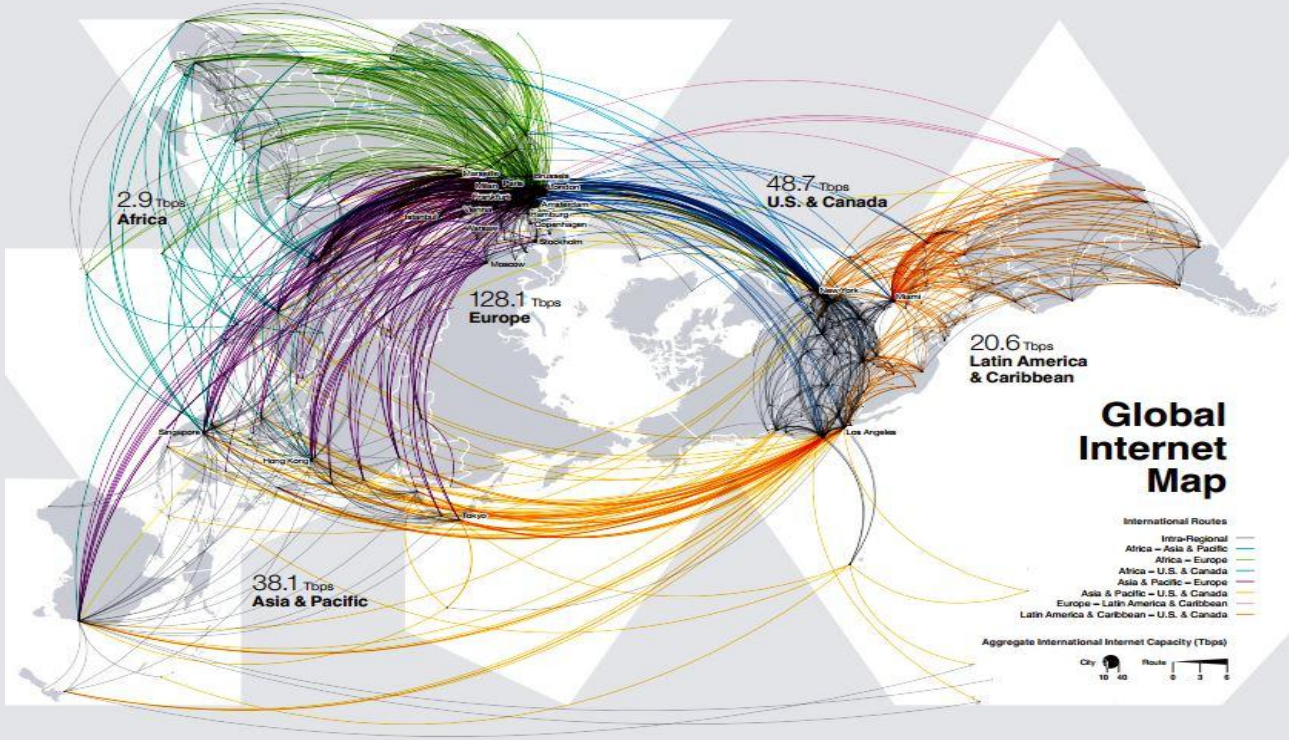
From Sykes-Picot to *Pax Arabia*

- A century of borders: Post-colonial collapse
- Connecting ancient cities: The new pan-Arabism



More Connectivity, Faster Speeds

- Invisible Infrastructure: $4T telecom spending (to 2020) on more cables, faster speeds
- Europe: Highest density; fastest speeds; broadest global reach
- Accelerated growth in global services trade



A New Moral Compass: Towards a Global Society

Beyond anti-globalization, anti-capitalism, anti-technology: More access > divides

Global utilitarianism (*Rawls*): From “bad” inequality to “good” inequality (*Milanovic*)

The “First Globals”: Gen-Y & Gen-Z as a historical *tabula rasa*

Connectivity as an impulse

Unity over nationality (e.g. anti-Brexit, N/S Korea)

Human rights: Connectivity, mobility, political openness

Sustainability

Inter-generational equity

Services (renting/sharing) over goods (owning/keeping)

Global Evolution: From Connectivity to Resilience

No more chokepoints:

Competitive connectivity builds pathways for supply to meet demand

Ring-fencing volatility: Ukraine, Iraq, Libya, South China Sea

Abundance and Stability:

From “peak oil” to “gas glut”

US oil sales to China

Toward Antifragility (*Taleb*)

War is an event; networking building is a process

THANK YOU!

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