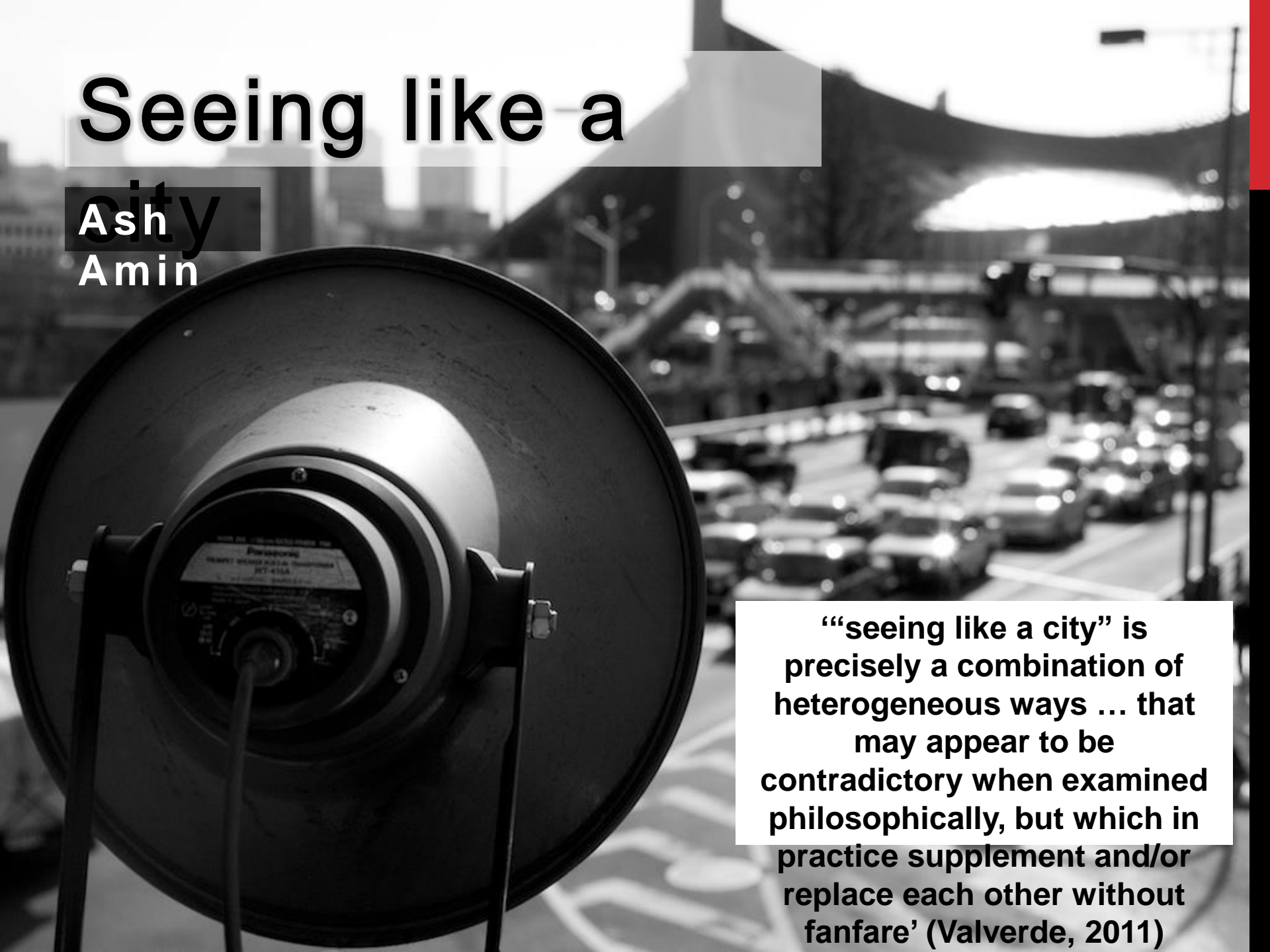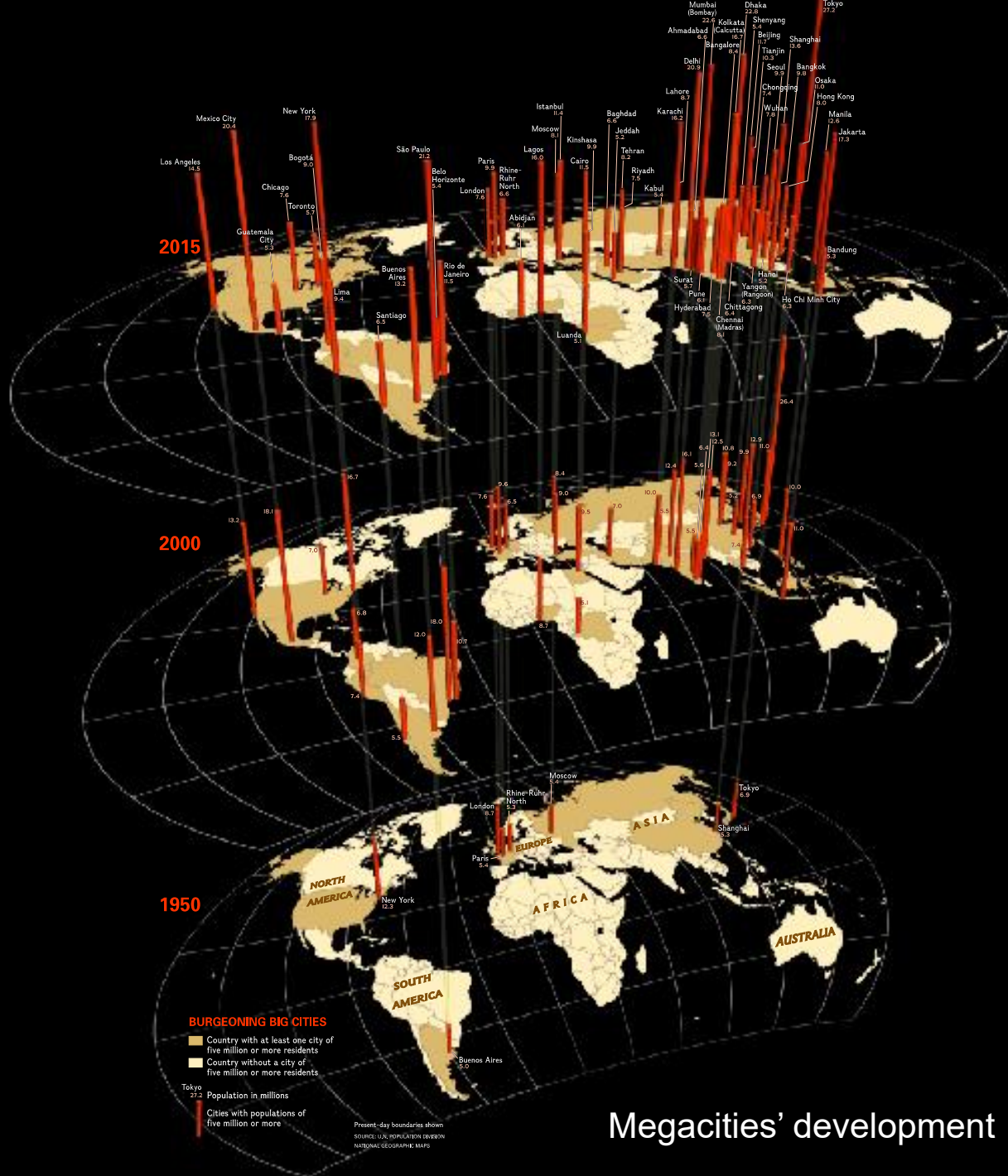# Seeing like a city

Ash Amin

'"seeing like a city" is precisely a combination of heterogeneous ways … that may appear to be contradictory when examined philosophically, but which in practice supplement and/or replace each other without fanfare' (Valverde, 2011)

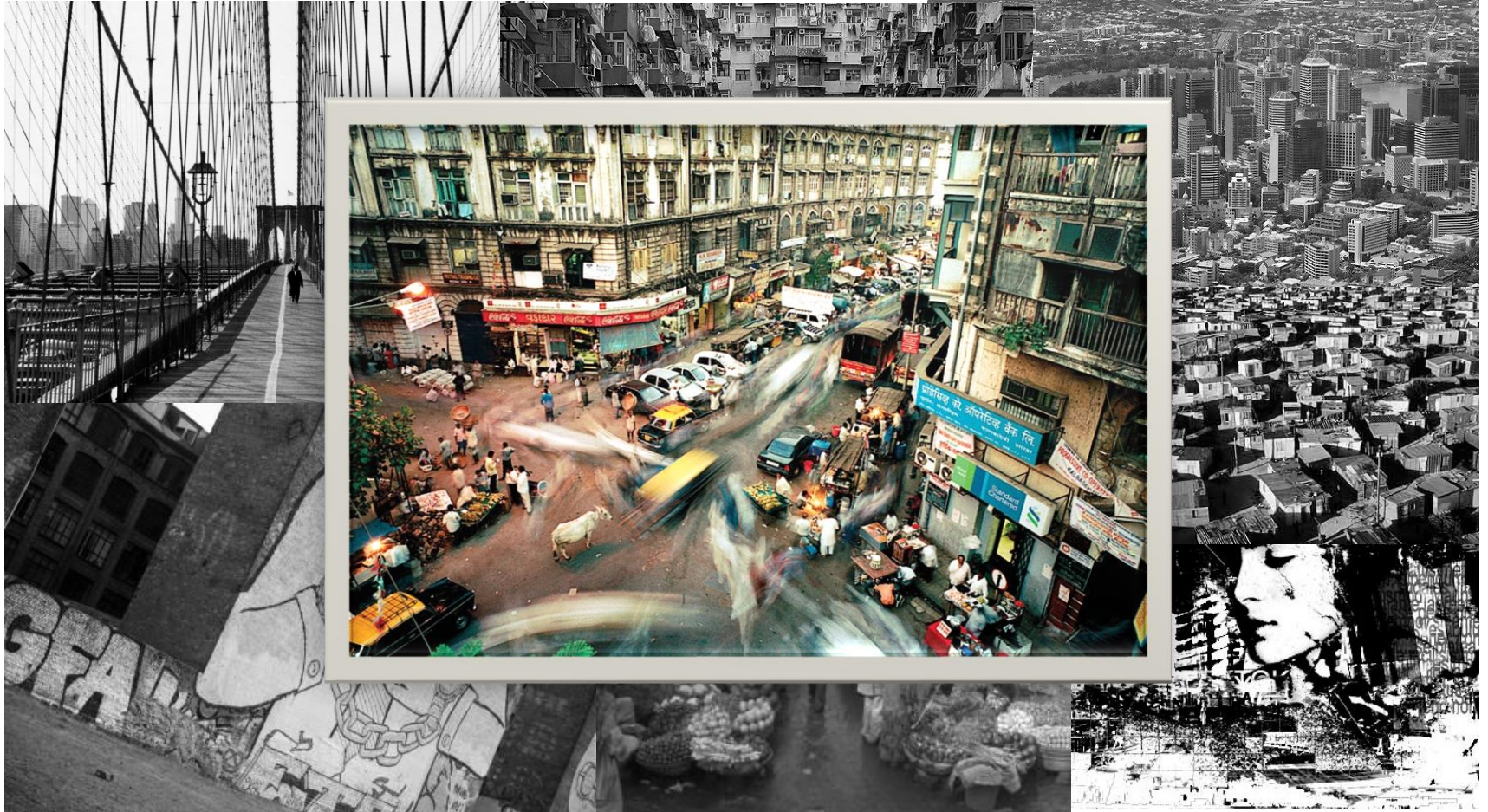# URBAN WORLD

Megacities' development

'our geopolitical future … will be determined in good part through 20 or so strategic worldwide urban networks'
(Sassen, 2012)

- 600 cities generate 60% global GDP
- Immense nodal power
- 80% of urban population in cities of the Global South by 2030
- 75% of CO_2 emissions from cities
- Limited municipal

UNDERSTANDING THE CITY

Is urban centrality the product of local agglomeration and nodal power in global networks?

THE CITY AS MACHINE AND ECOLOGY

The city as an assemblage of hybrid actor-networks, socio-technical systems and immersive habitats that drive urban centrality

KNOWING THE CITY

City of networks and sentient habitats relies on plural and hybrid intelligence

ALGORITHMIC INTELLIGENCE

"we find ourselves on the cusp of a near-future city capable of reflexively monitoring its environment and our behaviour within it, becoming an active agent in the organization of everyday life"
(Shepard, 2011)

HABITAT INTELLIGENCE

In cities, "environments engage their users" (Degen and Rose, 2012) as sentient habitats, with diverse non-human entities involved in shaping human capabilities and propensities

Spirit worlds

Pirated technologies

Sentient environments

CRAFT INTELLIGENCE

"It's 2030. Governments are poor and in hock to big banks. The urban poor and the impoverished urban middle classes in rich countries have had to scramble to survive. Bit by bit they have inserted a self-made urban political economy into the larger national/global economy of their countries. It is partial, but it works […] People rotate just about everything – including daily cooking – at whatever level that works – a cluster of homes, the block, the neighborhood. People need each other to
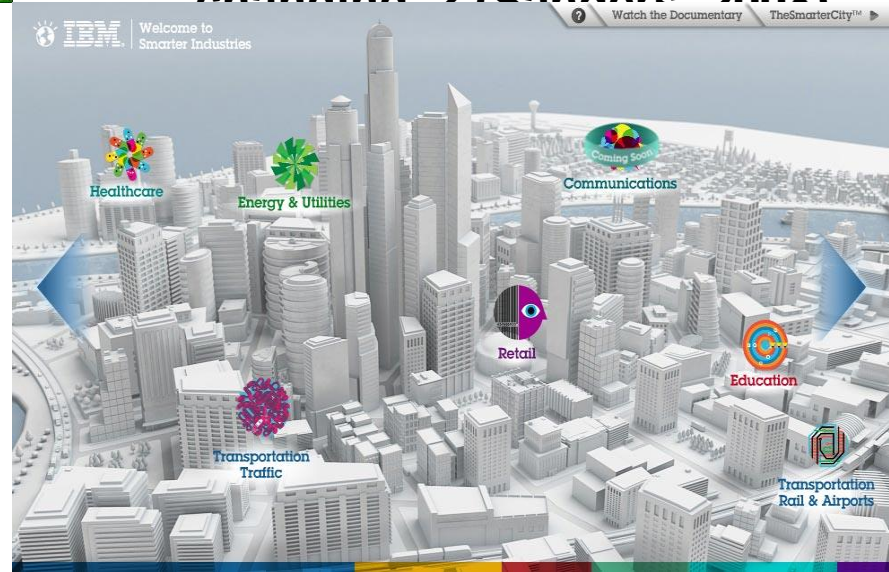
KNOWLEDGE GOVERNANCE: TECHNO-INTELLIGENCE?

Masdar city, Abu Dhabi

What methodology to capture "cities as complex adaptive systems, organized and coherent entities in which physical conditions, decisions, perceptions, and the social order are constantly changing"? (Sanders, 2008)

Complexity science, relying on ubiquitous data, non-linear methods, and advanced modelling technologies to simulate dynamic urban change?

GOVERNANCE:
CONNECTIVE
INTELLIGENCE

**Distributed expertise
Open planning
Counter-intelligence
Material, archival and
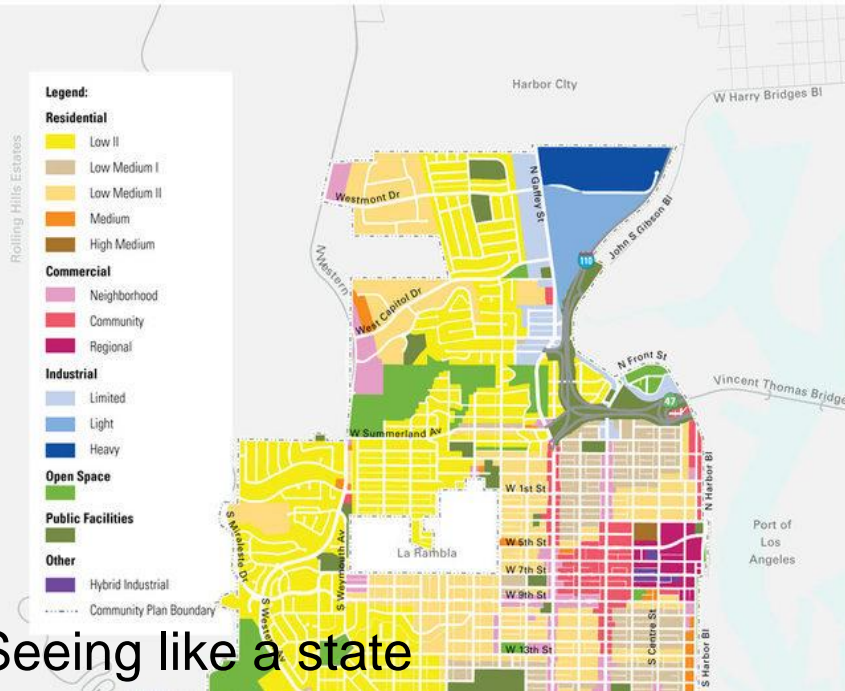symbolic knowledge**

Storytelling

Memory and archive

Symbolic
representations

Seeing like a state

SEEING LIKE A CITY

A politics of material culture: public goods, infrastructures, maintenance and repair, enabling bureaucracy

A politics of smart habitats, lay expertise and enabling environments

Seeing like a city