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vision for society

"...a sustainable city is one in which the conditions under which I live make it possible that my children and the children of my children will live under the same conditions. It's a very personal matter. It's not an abstract utopian ideology." (Castells, 2000)

I AM CITY

I AM CITY

A Citizen's In-Between and Across [G]localities as Cornerstones for Present-Day Human-Scaled Urbanism.

What would be a driving principle for a near-future city's bill of urban rights (i.e. Hudson, 2010) and its consecutive planning; a principle *within* or rather one *beyond* the cravings of one individual?

An answer to this inquiry manifests itself when one's planning could be driven by a faceted premise where 'measurable' units of city-life could ideally be found within a design considering "glocal" communities. (Ilman, 2002) Facets could be found via or within the amount of productions, events or programs derived from creativity or from persistent innovative dynamics, from within its application, from its number of applicants participating, etc. Abstractly, such facets could be found where, in an observable degree, a related mechanism and pattern unfolds. In addition to this main premise this text shall introduce two consequential facets as secondary yet essential principles in laying a foundation towards our vision of a near-future ideal city: what is the substance if 'I' (the ideal citizen) can theoretically be anywhere if 'I' am not fluidly supportive and supported? How can the praxis of such multi-locality and fluidity be sustained?

BEING HERE WHILE BECOMING THERE.

All Cities Become Me, Therefore I Associate.

The concept of the "glocal"—combining 'the within' and 'the beyond'; combining the local and the global—summarizes a strategy to resolve the above-mentioned tension (i.e. a principle *within* or rather one *beyond* the cravings of one individual) in regards to community. (Khondker, 2004) Surely, solutions can and shall here be touched in regards to matters supportive of community: city and architectural matters involving the "Polis" and their inherent implications. The glocalized sensibility and sensitivity within urban design shall be one where the single citizen, his circles and surrounding institutions, his frequented places, his routes taken, or any type of connecting nodes, maintain complex "*interpersonal social networks that combine extensive local and long-distance interactions.*" (Wellman, 1999, 2002) The explored potential for a solution—or better, for an innovation—shall be one where the ideal city is obviously seen as a local entity (with its local complexities) within a larger global setting (and the associated responsibilities, rights, and global complexities). As such we can speak of an overlapping of scale: a local framework within a global network, where each can influence the other. The echo of the small can produce amplitude on a wider scale, while applying a zoom-in enriches and deepens the general guidelines. It shall be a design that considers the locality of space (i.e. its associated human fixation, fixtures, forms and functions, its definitions and physicality, etc) as well as those beyond such definition of locality (the augmented, the virtual, etc). This going-beyond shall be in form, function, community, identity, interaction, responsibility, etc. The latter implies the individual no longer is just part of the singular community but rather of the multitude of communities in various sizes and localizations [i.e. presence and telepresence (Boddington, 2000)].

It also implies one is "here and now" in social context while one is harmonically self-controlled in a multitude of identities, spaces and times. This could be realized for instance (in all simplicity here), by means of facilitating avatars or pseudonyms (i.e. usernames, 'tags', etc) across time(-zones), across spaces. To enable glocality of urban communities the design for each community takes global, or larger encompassing principles into account while not losing track of the micro-needs of the individuals in a community. These communities can be provided with such spaces that they practically become nomadic whilst also being enabled to maintain roots with their city areas of preference as well as the city at large. The execution of the plan shall involve the physical in augmented or virtual continuations or superimposition of the city. It is important to the co-authors that this shall not be obligatory for its citizens but rather *facilitating*. Nor shall it be in replacement or

superposition of the established values of what city, society and "Polis" might be. The city's presumed singular identity and its singular public space as well as its singular administration; as we traditionally know it, shall be augmented (again, not necessarily replaced).

The same authors are thus convinced the ideal city of the 21st century is not necessarily of one place, one presence, one tradition, and so on. But rather, this city does not necessarily target a defined coordinate on a map. Understanding the city in this manner, enables its planner via mechanisms such as superimposition to overlay ANY city with its own requirements in consideration of its existing specificities (physical, cultural, traditions, heritage...) not with the intent to homogenize them but to support these specificities as idiosyncrasy, uniqueness and plurality of the city's, of communal and of individual's identities, aura as well as the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical spaces. Additionally the idea of the city becomes one where a conglomeration of shifting and sharing communities constitute cities which in themselves are fluid entities within larger structures in a somewhat *Version 2* concept of Ebenezer Howard's *Social City* (Howard, 1902). Simultaneously present-day initiatives do lean towards this vision as well; such as NYC's CUSP or MIT's open source software (but some such initiatives seem rather techno-centric; something the writers here wish to consider but wish to do so carefully). (URLs, Retrieved February 2013).

FLUIDLY PAST CITY SYNAPSES

I Associate Therefore I Become

As 'conglomeration' was mentioned in the conclusion of the previous section the text will look into its related concept a bit further in detail here. "Conglomeration" and various other mechanisms of association have been collected within our second yet crucial premise of our vision for society. For the purpose of this essay we shall label and bend these collected mechanisms as "fluidities." Such 'fluidities' encompass various areas. Each could be delved into on separate occasions that are, however, beyond the scope of this text. One can imagine a manner with which urban processes could either be interrupted/interruptive, discrete (i.e. a car next to a car, next to another...) or rather connected, uninterrupted, etc. The word 'fluidities' seemed appropriate.

One can, for instance, consider transportation, or rather the questioning of the discrete and forms that lack 'fluidity'. Hereby one can think of automobiles with their resulting congestion, air and noise pollutants. Its system is rather clumsy, unaesthetic yet dominating. Another example of those fluidities could be associated with psychology, identity and communication by individuals, and communities. Specifically, this would revert back to the point mentioned previously in regards to avatars, or other means for fluid communal identity or self-image. These mechanisms could offer city planning a resource for consideration of a fluidly coming and going of individuals rather than a plan prescribing fixed parameters (the private sphere, the public one, those units connecting and sustaining those spheres, etc).

AUGMENTATIONS AS CATALYSTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

I Become Therefore I Sustain

To apply one's ideal (as a planning professional or as a prospective citizen-of-one's-own-making) one might quickly stumble upon a self-built wall realizing the inadequacies of one's shadowy dream cave, let alone the territory one envisions to roam, beyond that dwelling, into a blinding complexity of the city at large. One's intended ideal might quickly turn into a potential ad infinitum modding (i.e. a never-ending warping from planning into accretion). At the other end of the spectrum, it might rather turn into a complacency with the stasis of self-inflicted lack of space and defunct functions. This all the while one might have ignored such matters as maximization, human psychology or other. If something needs such infinite changes then the practical meaning of 'ideal' becomes burdensome (to say the least). Contrary to running into this problem, the idea of "ideal" should be revolutionized to be workable and sustainable. Perhaps such ideal-related sustainability simply lies in the fact of a form of perpetual modding. To address the ever so slight changes in an individual's outlook on life (or other more physical changes one goes through). That might lead to one individual's city. Now, similarly, one can extrapolate this to a larger community and to multitudes thereof.

The augmentation or layering—or whichever action-word one feels at home in—might indeed be a step closer to an answer why something planned, or structured, or built does not seem sustainable (i.e. sustainable as a belief, as a system, etc). It seems to be a common believe sustainability is only inherent to the materials, resources or systems used. It is believed the deviations or entropy are due to that what is not sustainable. However, just like someone might outgrow a piece of clothing, or even a believe, such lack or loss of sustainability might also be due to the individual himself: a human 'is' not, but rather a human being (not to mention other life forms, or complex associations amongst individuals) is in 'becoming' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1973). In addition, a city is a struggle between forms of being and neighborhoods of becoming. The struggle could lead to the fluidities of the urban. The struggle is not ideal yet is essential. It is the organic element within a larger complexity of the material city. Thus it is in flux. Hence, to have that what is in flux fit in an ideally accommodating city, it would have to be one that is adaptive; one that is flexible, one that must be complex perhaps by augmentations of various types.

Any ideal is in stark opposition of change; if it had to change it would mean it was not ideal to begin with. This is rather a truism. Hence, if ever, Thomas More's concept of the ideal city is no longer applicable; i.e. 'Ou-topos'. (British Library, URL. 2013). in fact the mere obsession with the ideal is counterproductive. it is not humane; it is not in tune with the complex systems of life. An ideal is but a shadow. Life on the other hand is light and highlights opportunities within found imperfections. Albeit a most complex human achievement as the city is one, it is only a simple derivative of the complexities of life-in-action. A planning thereof implies an almost inevitable over-simplification or over-generalization of what is needed to accommodate such complexity (even in its already reduced form). Even (some of) the faculty of Leuphana agree: *"the city of the future is a place where the only certain thing is uncertainty. Where the only stable thing is continuous flux, where the truth can be found in contradiction and paradoxes"* (Leuphana Digital URL, 2013). To the co-authors it follows that glocality, augmentations, fluidities and a revised yet more social view on sustainability might be in support of a radical yet practically implementable plan for an "ideal" city (across cities) for the 21st century.

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