

Planetary Urbanisation with or without Cities

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Abstract

In order to analyse the different kinds of global urbanization and to explore the challenge beneath it, the author describes the three phases of City History. The first city grew from the farming surplus and their destiny was tied to the farming economy. The rise of the capitalism in 16th century call for a new era. The City became mainly places of market trade. The industrial revolution was the third milestone, which we are just leaving now entering in the globalization. The author lists the five urban shapes: the slum, the megapolis, the world-sized city, the gated community, and the small and medium city. He also notices the existence of diffusing urban base on each continent. The challenges are numerous and highly tangled. The author suggests to combine the four main questions that every human being asks themselves about, the social question, the urban question, the knowledge question and the environmental question. I then conclude by opening a few leads for an ecological urbanization on various scales.

Keywords: Global Urbanization, City History, Megapolis, World City, Gated Community

By 2030, planet Earth will have achieved its urban revolution. In other words, 8.5 billion inhabitants, of which about three billion are 'poor' people, will be 'urbanised' ... Asia will account for almost five billion individuals, predominantly in China and India. Africa will reach about billion and half, Latin America more than 700 million, North America, more than 360 million, Europe will border on 550 million, and the former Soviet Union, 340 million. Urban society 'values' will then be embedded as much in the city as in the country, and farming communities will aspire to the *middle* class city lifestyle so lauded in soap operas. In conflict-torn Africa, refugee camps will continue to forge themselves into makeshift cities. In Asia, farmers, as in the previous century, will try their luck by migrating to large cities. The urban population of the United States will settle in the *sunbelt*, while in Europe it will hold on resolutely to a rural idyll within cities, where a false sense of nature is created by the edge city. The private automobile will continue to be a key condition for mobility — a fundamental value of urban society — because it is safe, comfortable, flexible and provides all mod cons. Indeed, cars are becoming real extensions of workplaces, plugged to all telecommunication networks; radio controls turn the heating on in your domotic house, switch the oven on, and run a bath at the desired temperature. Cars now offer children viewing screens and video games. The virtual and the real are blending into one reality with ever-increasing ease. It would be presumptuous at this stage to outline an oil-related geopolitical forecast for 2030 or to measure the scale of pollution related to widespread automobile ownership. Similarly, what can be said about warnings of climate change? About cities now distant from the sea, having to equip themselves with a harbour? About winter sport resorts considering new attractions for lack of snow? About temperate zones becoming rainy and palm trees in Geneva or Bordeaux no longer being an exotic feature? The tourism

industry, which is predicting about two billion tourists per year from 2020 — namely one in four ‘earthlings’ — is embracing the meteorological map regardless of bankruptcy, unemployment and abandoned industrial sites.

There are countless scenarios, disastrous or not, whose accuracy depends largely on the elements taken into consideration as well as their uncanny combinations. In terms of forecasting, one thing is relatively certain and that is the element of surprise, the unexpected. Who could have foreseen the edge-city in the United States, urban scattering in Europe, large urban aggregates and zoning in Asia, so berated elsewhere? A few social norms, such as the family unit (even if recomposed...) or religion (not yet entirely privatised...), are holding their ground much better than asserted by specialists. Along the same lines, one might mention certain collective or individual behaviours that have endured despite their predicted disappearance. In this aspect, we need to observe world developments with all possible discrepancies, overlaps, oppositions, resistance, and do so with the understanding that the pace of change will vary widely across the board. But before exploring the planet’s urban future, it seems appropriate to briefly describe the turbulent epic of cities.

A Three-phase History of Cities

Historians agree on the origins of the ‘urban phenomenon’, its geographical location, predominantly in river valleys, and the earliest examples (about 8000 years BC, for the first archaeological sites). Originally, ‘cities’, as we now coin them, emerged from the Neolithic Revolution which paved the way for farming and animal breeding, namely the domestication of some plants and animal species. Populations of hunter-gatherers, each at their own pace, settled and gradually took up agriculture, which, if the harvest was good, yielded a surplus

of farm produce to be sold. An unprecedented social organisation ensued, whereby trade flourished at crossroads or on river and sea routes, based on an increasingly complex social and technical division of labour. The city materialised as a set of buildings and the heart of military, religious and economic power, where these routes intersected.

There has been much debate about the elements that together define the term 'city': fortifications, craftsmen, high population density, a grid pattern or radioconcentric layout, roads, etc. In fact, it seems that Egyptian 'cities' had no fortifications, while the word for 'city' in Chinese, Greek or Russian for example, also means 'citadel', 'great wall' or 'fort'. Similarly, some of these cities had strong traditions of craftsmanship, present and active, while others settled for travelling merchants who provided goods made elsewhere. One thing seems certain that the 'city' has never existed on its own. It is therefore necessary to view the 'urban phenomenon' not in the singular but in the plural, and to talk about networks of 'cities' with specific temporalities, and structures that are typical of their surrounding rural hinterland. In other words, the common denominator of this urbanisation process is the formation of urban units with defining features that organise themselves differently and develop on their own terms.

No two cities have the same history. However, the first cities can be dated to approximately 10,000 years old, which in view of our planet's timeline, as well as the various animal and plant species, constitutes a rather short history: Jericho (around -7800 BC), Catal Hüyük (-6000), Egypt (-2600), Harappa (-2000), China (-1500), black Africa (-300), Mexico's Olmecs (-800), etc. Therefore, for a long period of time, Earth was chiefly populated by nomads who coexisted — knowingly or not — with semi-nomads and settlers, of whom only a tiny fraction resided in cities... The population of these cities varied widely and

usually numbered two to three thousand souls. Only a handful of cities were densely populated: Babylon, at its peak (-1730/-1690) may have held more than 200,000 people, Rome reached one million inhabitants during the second century AD, while populations in Baghdad as well as Byzantium and Chang'an amounted to more than 800,000 in the eighth century. These cities marched to glory before declining and sometimes disappearing altogether from map and memory. With the opening of new maritime routes after the discovery of America and the shaping of new geopolitical entities at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the capitalist world economy spread worldwide, and created new cities or pumped life into some to the detriment of others that had until then been wealthy and envied.

From 1492 onwards, Europe shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, new harbours prospered from distant trade — often slave trade — while others toppled over. Asia came into contact with Africa and Europe via the Near East and the Middle East. A new unstable hierarchy of cities took shape, renewing itself periodically according to alliances between colonial powers, the dissemination of technical progress, economic growth, migrations, etc. Fernand Braudel demonstrates well how 'world cities' have competed with each other and experienced diverse fates. Venice declined to the benefit of Cordoba, which relinquished its lead to Amsterdam, which in turn bowed down before London, etc. London, the capital of the empire on which, admittedly, 'the sun never set' saw its population expand from over 500,000 inhabitants in the early seventeenth century to two million in 1845, and seven million in 1910.

This spectacular demographic shift was driven by the Industrial Revolution, the third great wave in the world's path to urbanisation. The mechanisation of agriculture, the spread of mechanical transportation, the multiplication of industries equipped with machine tools all increased trade. Improved health and

hygiene secured population growth, fostered migratory movements (rural exodus and immigration), redefined the rules of the economic game and overhauled social and therefore urban morphologies. The modern city, in all its technical glory, is mapped by never-ending flows of varying kinds. This is what sets it apart from previous cities which, in the simplest terms, sheltered: the military (garrison city), the priesthood (Episcopal city), students (university city), commodities (market city)... Henceforth, the 'modern' city, which sprang from industry and mechanised transport, the steam machine and electrification, was shaken up by the endless movement of capital and workers, manufactured goods and services, rumours and news, desire and sex, fear and hope.

We are still living in this third phase. It is characterised not only by urbanisation in its demographic sense — namely when urban populations outnumber rural populations, which has been the case in industrial countries since the 1900/1910s — but also by an 'urbanisation of lifestyles'. The latter introduced and mainstreamed 'the spirit of the city' across all geographical areas and each of us has been affected. Urban 'behaviours', be they emotional, sexual, sartorial, dietary, religious or cultural take precedence over 'rural' values, and are adopted and adapted. The dissemination of the urban model, first propelled by industrial countries, is now being relayed by the globalisation of capitalist economy and the internationalisation of new information and communication technologies (NICTs).

In sum, the first phase is the creation of cities sustained by agricultural surplus. The second phase corresponds to the globalisation of capitalism and of trade cities connected to the transcontinental network. The third one begins with industrialisation and supports the expansion of the modern world, which bears witness to the process of urbanisation across continents — primarily in industrial countries and then in the third world, with or without industrialisation

— and the scheduled and irreversible fading out of peasantry at varying speed according to regions. This latest form of urbanisation is paired with a multiplication of millionaire cities (11 in 1900, 80 in 1950, 276 in 1990, 370 in 2000, and presumably 550 in 2015) and the emergence of gigantic megalopolises in excess of ten million inhabitants (2 in 1950 and 18 in 2000).¹⁾

This third phase also brings a shift from the city to the urban. In effect, historical cities spill out of their administrative borders and scatter into sprawling urban developments. The quest for a residential lifestyle, the quality of road systems, new temporalities of urban daily life and the difficulties in finding affordable accommodation in the city centre have paved the way for urban spreading; an uncontrollable jungle of concrete and greenery. Admittedly, some cities still exist — and we all know and appreciate them — as well as some suburban towns, but they are overwhelmed by the urban, this ‘something’ that took shape after both a city era and the city area, what Italians call *città diffusa* and Germans *Zwischenstadt*. Therefore, periurban development is history; this notion is now obsolete as the centre is no longer central and periphery no longer encircles but is encircled.

The urban varies according to the history of different urbanisation processes: here it eats into the landscape, blends into the forest, mirrors the meandering of the river and there it latches onto collective equipment or a shopping centre or even a motorway hub. Here it drapes the territory in a thousand folds, and there it lands like a chequered tablecloth on a bistro table. The spread of developed land has linked up, even if sometimes tenuously, cities that until now had been clearly demarcated. This urban development does not come down to

1) In relation to the history of cities in three phases, you may read: Lewis Mumford, *La Cité à travers l'histoire*, French translation (Seuil, 1964); Arnold Toynbee, *Les villes dans l'histoire*, French translation (Payot, 1972) and Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XV^e-XVIII^e siècle* (Armand Colin, 1967-1979).

simply the spatial form of urbanisation, it also puts into question the political representation produced by city-dwellers that are geographically scattered, as well as the self-identity of a fragmented place, sometimes dominated by one city with a powerful footprint. It also results from time management, related to the transformation of lifestyles, and changes impacting family and labour.

Five Forms of Urbanisation and Five Questions

Although our planet is now fully urbanised, the shape this takes varies widely. One may categorise five main forms of human establishments: the slum, the megacity, the global city, the residential enclave, and the medium or intermediate city. Let us stop for a moment in each of them. Since fifty per cent of people living in the city are slum-dwellers, it is impossible to ignore them, particularly as they sometimes shape a culture that is specific to them. Squats, illegal occupation of land, precarious and uncomfortable constructions, hovels far from technical networks or access roads to the big city: slums shelter new migrants who come to ‘make it’ in the city. There, they find entire ‘countries’ which introduce them to city life and help them find jobs within the incredible informal economy.

Slums are not a new phenomenon. It is fundamental to study them geologically, as each ‘layer’ corresponds to a particular migration, and countless endeavours to bail oneself out. Usually the oldest shacks are the sturdiest. Year after year, their ‘owners’ equip and embellish them. They have given hope of finding any social housing and have come to terms with it by staying in a neighbourhood where they have family and friends and benefit from a system of mutual help. The most recent layers are identified by huts made of rush, branches and jute bags, or rusty metal sheeting. They are sometimes rented to

an inhabitant from a cinder block hut. For years, governments wanted to eradicate slums, by destroying the vulnerable shelters with bulldozers or letting fire spread, fires that were not always accidental... But just as soon as a slum has been destroyed, it grows back somewhere else, identical, nestled on the side of a hill, in the hollow of a valley. It belongs to the 'real' city. It clings on for dear life, stands firm and attempts to create an infrastructure around it, whether legal or not.

The priority issue is land ownership. It is necessary to protect slum-dwellers by granting them a sanitised piece of land and encouraging them to build a house where they feel at home, according to their resources. Additionally, a slum-adapted urbanism should be trialled through pilot programmes supported by NGOs and national or international institutions, along with grassroots committees. Many initiatives should be publicised, not to serve as references, let alone transposable models, but to sharpen the local debate. The multi-millionaire megalopolises of the South are teeming with illegal slums that border tourist areas, large shopping centres — which belong to transnational companies — as well as private high-security property complexes. These megalopolises continue to spread out onto arable land, alongside motorways and railway tracks, swallowing up small towns and villages. Those who dwell at the edge of these huge conurbations and cannot afford already scarce public transportation are confined to their homes and survive by working, for the most fortunate, in caretaking, gardening, health clubs and leisure resorts for the wealthy, as well as in numerous private housing estates. This territorially engraved economic disparity does not seem the least bit disconcerting. Sporadic movements of dissent are soon quenched by the army and none of these groups seem to organise themselves into a genuine political force.

Among the thirty-odd megalopolises with more than ten million inhabitants

(though collecting and comparing statistics is difficult here...), only four of them have sprung from two of the richest countries, Japan and the United States: Tokyo takes first place of this ranking chart with close to 26 million, New York is eighth with 18 million, Los Angeles, fourteenth with 15 million, Osaka, twenty-fourth with 11 million. Mumbai, Lagos, Dacca, Paulo, Karachi, Mexico are storming ahead and facing colossal problems with water supply, waste treatment, traffic jams and accommodation, all of which somehow do not hinder a disorganised, singular economic momentum, ranging from the most rudimentary activities (manufactured goods) to the most sophisticated (cutting-edge technologies).

Nevertheless, these megalopolises of the South do not compete with European and North American urban regions which occasionally yield an 'urban gross domestic product' that is much higher than the standard gross domestic product. Surprisingly, a study conducted in 1990 showed that Tokyo's GDP matched up to that of Great-Britain's, New York's GDP was higher than Brazil's, and Paris' GDP exceeded that of India. The ranking chart of the world's most populated cities differs from that of cities producing the most wealth. It is all the more striking when one observes the performances of 'global cities', to use the phrase coined by Saskia Sassen. Thus Frankfurt and Milan, small agglomerations in terms of population density, stand out economically to the point of resembling 'global cities' such as Tokyo, New York or London. But what do we understand by 'global cities'? These are thriving urban territories with formidably efficient infrastructures, garnering leading banking and financial industries, universities and research teams, laboratories, news agencies, communication companies, lawyers, chartered accountants and legal experts, transnational company head offices, intangible industries etc. Within these 'global cities', the *jet society* and a 'floating' population of immigrants ready to take any job under

any condition rub shoulders but lead separate lives... In these times of a globalised society that favours the chosen few, others, who by choice or constraint, remain on the sidelines, are left to live in specific temporalities. As a result, the standardisation of behaviour (dietary, sartorial, residential, communicational, professional, emotional etc.) set by urbanisation does not spread irreversibly but entails mixing, rejection, often striking combinations that protect the world from a deadly cultural homogenisation.

'Global cities' lead to a denationalisation of production and wealth distribution; a denationalisation moving beyond the framework of the nation-state. 'Global cities' are more attuned to the globalisation of capitalisation than the ambitions and strategies of their nation-state, from which they dissociate themselves. This is a slowly emerging trend that will soon establish itself and seep into the cultural domain. In the heart of 'global cities', in the uptown suburbs of megacities, in the vicinity of slums, a new residential product is starting to attract the interest of a well-to-do clientele: the residential enclave. Conceived in London in 1743, during the creation of *Leicester Square*, the urban condominium, not solely limited to real estate, aims to privatise, not only dwellings and their outbuildings but also access routes and gardens. It is worth mentioning a successful Parisian version: the villa, a large allotment served by a private central access road. As early as 1831 in New York, then Boston a few years later, the United States have familiarised themselves with *Common Interest Developments* (CIDs).

The current *gated communities* are a legitimate legacy of residential enclaves. Be they individual homes concealed in a country-style environment or luxurious apartments and downtown condominiums, what matters is the careful selection of its dwellers and the enhanced high-security provided by these ensembles. In these 'supervised residencies', the club effect is paramount: these are people

sharing the same status, the same culture, willingly abiding by the same rules. There is a particularly wide range of *gated communities* to suit all budgets and for all community- and identity-based 'idiosyncrasies'. In Los Angeles, some only welcome the Asian community, in *Suncity*, close to Phoenix, inhabitants must be over fifty-five. Liberalism allows this diversity in the knowledge that all residents will get their money's worth. Healthcare, paramedic care, boutiques, sports facilities, quality of accommodation, pool size, etc. ultimately depend on purchase price. 'Residential enclaves' are mushrooming all over the world in Cairo, Istanbul, Moscow, Warsaw, Rome, Toulouse or Dijon, Mumbai, Rio, Mexico... No 'urban condition' specialist had contemplated such proliferation, which alters the private/public partnership and privatises — in other words impounds — a portion of networks and equipment, until now collectively managed. It no longer comes as a surprise to see a neighbourhood association purchasing the road on which members' homes are built.

What had always been accessible and free can no longer be relied upon, thus upsetting a whole way of life: urban living is becoming discriminatory and cohabitation selective. The city-dweller is giving way to the consumer, who wants what money can buy. Does the concept of a shared city already belong to the past? The danger is tangible. Fortunately, intermediate cities are still full of life, provided that they link up and tap into various networks. Increasingly, planetary urbanisation is separating location from flow patterns and seems to favour the latter. A number of people dream of an 'urbanism built on connections' and imagine the 'city' as a technical hub — high-speed trains, airports, motorways, hotels, leisure centres, shops — which companies would plug into, before relocating.

Broadly, five prerequisites meet the many challenges posed by urbanisation: 'good' land occupation, given the expansion of urban areas and the reduction

of cultivated areas, and its legal transposition (land security, in particular for slum-dwellers); ‘good’ mobility or means of travel in a world faced with oil shortages, the multiplication of routine mobility (mass tourism, shopping, sports, etc.) and greenhouse gas emissions; ‘good’ minimal urban comfort, by prioritising a reasoned de-growth of consumer goods; ‘good’ governance that requires the invention of new democratic practices, and the end of ‘sleep democracy’ (I vote where I sleep) and finally, ‘good’ habitability, the interactions between ourselves and the others, or how each of us constructs one’s own physical living space and builds one’s home here on Earth.

Clearly, these five forms of urbanisation are not mutually exclusive and easily hybridize themselves, intermesh, become inextricably linked.²⁾ They translate the *urban issue*, one of the four issues that ‘earthlings’ have to solve at the onset of the twenty-first century. Again, in simple terms, let us define them as follows: the social issue, gradually imposing itself with the expansion of the wage system in countries that have opted for mass production based on the machine tool and a technical division of labour related to industrialisation. The *urban issue* resulting from rural flight, housing shortages for the majority, the proliferation of slums, hygiene requirements, difficulties in building composite, heterogeneous cities socially, economically and culturally. The *communicational issue*, which manifests itself with the development of NICTs and specific forms of control, manipulation and exclusion. Finally, the *environmental issue*, a concern for all, both North and South, rich and poor, men and women, young and old.

Admittedly, these four issues emerged chronologically from the middle of the

2) About the five forms of urbanisation please refer to: Thierry Paquot, *Terre urbaine. Cinq défis pour le devenir urbain de la planète* (La Découverte, 2006), large bibliography with theme-based commentary; Mike Davis, *Le pire des mondes possibles. De l’explosion urbaine au bidonville global*, French translation (La Découverte, 2006); Saskia Sassen, *La Ville globale. New York, Londres, Tokyo*, French translation (Descartes & Cie, 1996) and *Ghettos de riches, tour du monde des enclaves résidentielles sécurisées*, under the supervision of Thierry Paquot (Perrin, 2009).

nineteenth century to the present day but have cumulated each other instead of succeeding one another over time. This clearly illustrates their impact. They appear with more or less intensity here and there, but on a planetary scale, though they first came into existence in the Western and industrialised world. They require a mix of local solutions and universal contributions, which shows how intricate it is to formulate and implement them. The balance between these four issues varies according to situations and no case resembles another, in spite of appearances... They are so inextricably linked that it is increasingly unfeasible to address them separately, especially since their nature evolves as they intermingle. Thus the 'traditional' *social issue*, which in the past could be solved through welfare state incentives following negotiations between social partners, now finds itself in an entirely different context (retreat of trade-unions, disappearance of state interventionism...) and other processes, resulting from other issues and their specificities.

Besides, these issues need to be addressed jointly, both on a local and planetary level. Instruments, references, modalities, actions, legislations and recommendations are all different but marching to the same tune. On a local level, it is essential to maintain the autonomy of inhabitants — with the widespread use of direct democracy for operating institutions (schools, healthcare, transport, public services etc.) — as well as to maintain the support given to shared initiatives (self construction and renovation of dwellings, shared gardens etc.). On a planetary level, the harmonisation of programmes will take precedence — with civil disobedience as a legal means of alerting officials of their disaffection with those represented. Thus city *policy* will evolve into cities *policies*, honouring both *the spirit of the city* — urban life, city-dwelling status, gratuitousness, accessibility — and *public debate*. Needless to say, there will be major impediments and numerous opponents but the urban future of

humankind and the world is at stake.

Ecological Urbanisation: What Form(s) of Urbanism?

No country, no society, can escape ecological sensibility, which will demand a reconciliation of location and flow patterns by redefining new territories with discontinuous borders, and new productive, cultural and existential rationales. It would be presumptuous to suggest a one-size-fits-all body of urbanistic knowledge. Nevertheless, in response to all too rare attempts to devise an ‘alternative city’, a few de-growth and ecological innovations are breaking through such as the Italian *Slow Food* movement launched in Italy in 1986 by Carlo Petrini, which rapidly became *Slow Life* and spurred *Cittàslow* (or *Slow Cities*). Yet another example in the United States is that of *New Urbanism* — at least Peter Calthorpe’s version — some *Smart Growth* actions and the *Slow Growth Movement*. Let us also highlight the network of *Transition towns* in Great Britain, from ‘permaculture’ (a contraction of *permanent culture*), devised in 1973 in response to the oil crisis and influenced by ‘zero growth’ advocates; other examples might be some of the ‘eco-neighbourhoods’ in Europe (yet, here again, one needs to be cautious as there is an ‘ecologically correct’ type of urbanism, that has more to do with communication than real convictions...). Of course, the analyses and suggestions put forward by the authors and practitioners of these movements diverge on many levels and it seems absurd to pigeonhole them in the same category, e.g. ‘urban growth objectors’, particularly in ‘third world’ countries (even though this term is endangered), where innovations are often linked to a rigorously defined social movement — the fight to upgrade a slum or to claim property rights — a non-governmental organisation experimenting with a constructive process, the action of a

charismatic leader.³⁾

This all the more so since it is necessary to reflect on various solutions given the plurality of the five forms of urbanisation operating across the world. Each of these urban ‘geotypes’ — through the activities they harbour, the populations they bring together, the power and counter-powers they engender — will not start de-growing under the same circumstances or within the same timeframe. It would be futile to elaborate a charter of the ‘happy city’ that is nondescript, a charter based on a set of universally valid, overarching principles that would guide the reconfiguration and transformation of current urban aggregates. Any urbanistic intervention can only be unique as it is custom-made, unlike the architectural and urban standardisation induced and sustained by the globalisation of legal and administrative procedures, the construction industry, major architecture agencies, accounting firms and ‘models’ disseminated by specialised journals.

To counter these powerful, seemingly-irreversible processes of homogenisation, I would like to suggest three paths to ecological urbanism, which will steer ongoing urbanisation and correct ‘urbanistic errors’ resting upon a productivist and consumerist economy in which oil is the driving force. I will take the liberty to put forward the following: chronotopic urbanism, sensory urbanism and participatory urbanism: the need to look after places depending on their temporal use and seasonal rhythms (day is not night, Monday is not Tuesday, summer is not winter...); the prioritisation of an architecture, landscape and urbanism, which afford the five senses and four elements in the West or five in the East, the greatest respect and the most delightful combinations; lastly, involvement of inhabitants in design and completion, by creating the conditions for a form of participation that is not consensual but responsible. Additionally,

3) To investigate further alternative forms of urbanism: “La ville autrement”, *Alternatives Économiques*, Hors-série n°39 (June 2009), under the supervision of Nairi Nahapétian and Thierry Paquot, and Thierry Paquot, *L’urbanisme c’est notre affaire!* (Nantes: L’Atalante, 2010).

such paths will lead to a reversible, recyclable, reusable urbanism etc.

We see it all around us, *home-making* is an inherent feature of mankind, this readiness to be open to the world and the others. Earth is home to Humans and all forms of Life. Cities provide opportunities for generous urban living, something which non-cities — towers, *gated communities*, large ensembles, urban sprawling — continuously undermine. Protecting the Earth while reinventing cities demands deep reflection, ideas and convictions. Are we excited about HEQ standards or ecotaxes? No, we take action only to make our world a more welcoming, harmonious and habitable place. Though this appears to be more a dream than a reasonable expectation, let us dream.

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