

# THE THIRD SOUTH-SOUTH FORUM ON SUSTAINABILITY

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## Delirious New World:

### Static City and the Engineering of Collective Spaces of Otherness

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#### Static City, a research question

The purpose of our research is very much straight forward. First we begin with 2 base premises: (i) Earth with every living beings in it is facing possible scenario of total extinction as cause of continuous ecological destruction; where at the epicentrum of it all, we believe that human being as the only 'active' living-agent in the whole ecosystem is solely responsible for this catastrophe. However just like in the case of the 'eye of the storm' the population at large are presumably still deceives by the utopia that saying 'everything is ok'. (ii) Meanwhile the human world has also inevitably evolved into urban-realm with cultural impacts that is already effecting each and every part of its society. Thus all the wrongdoings that had been done by the human culture is very much reflected to its urban way of life.

Today the urban culture is not about geographical size. As a kind of consumption gauge, urbanism means the whole active fulfillment-chain of collective libidinal needs as well as multilateral satisficing wants. The human cities might occupy only a small portion of the Earth. But it is through this such small geographical scale where the fate of the rest of the planet is determined. Other more 'passive' beings living on much larger geographies are only 'reactively' contributing to the destruction of the planet. Other beings only acts to adapt. We humans were never intendedly adapting to nature. We were always aiming to conquer it. And we had undeniably failed that cause.

Meanwhile, in the past decades human knowledge over cities had expanded throughout 2 distinctive states of the art. In one hand numerous sophisticated fields of engineering had invented the likes of stronger yet lighter materials, effective energy producing techniques, faster ways of data processing and transmitting, energy efficient transportation modes, etc. – to forge the creation of Smart City. But how does these high-end technologies performed economically? Are they affordable enough to be implemented at large on the cities of the emerging economy where almost 4 billion of world's urban population resides? In the other hand the incoming postindustrial reality had also brought serious attention over recycle urbanism to deal with shrinking agglomeration. A condition that; again, are far from the reality experienced by the common majority living in the ever growing emerging cities.

Human civilization is a paradox. Naturally progress over one thing would means degradation on the other. The viability of renewable resources that exist only in scarce availability; for example, is critically in no different sense than its non-renewable counterpart. Similarly; reversible climate change that takes

centuries to complete, might as well be categorized as its opposite truth – the irreversible circle. Catastrophic turmoil were generated when generations after generations of human being failed to see these paradoxes, only to be deceived by what seems to be the ever-growing (economic) progress. Spaceship Earth has indeed reaches its limit.

Philosophically to search for synthesis of certain hypothesis is to look into its anti-thesis. Hence with the full awareness to earth's utilization limit; our urban theoretical contribution does not lend its hands on exploring other means of productive exploitation. In contrast to the development of city's advance energy harvesting technology or highly mobile center/sprawl linkage research trends; *Static City* introduces experimental techniques to achieve clear periphery distinction over sectoral hyper densitification in form of more effective mix/cross-programmatic infrastructure syntax and more efficient inter/cross-sectoral transportation system. So instead of searching for new technology or method in fulfilling human being's never-ending energy and resource hunger, *Static City* aims to project some sort of control mechanism that would limit consumption demand and ultimately create new culture of more equally distributed urban way of life.

### **Static City, a manifesto**

1. The world is changing. The Earth is crumbling. And if the world is confined as Mother Nature and human being; then the destruction of the planet will also means the downfall of the human civilization. However through science and history, it is rational enough to imagine that even the extinction of the millions years old humankind will not bring total annihilation to the billions years old Earth. It is the human world that needs to be save, not necessary the planet itself. Because even after worst case scenario of human extinction happened, nature will most likely find its way. To heal itself, and finally move on with or without the presence of human civilization (Ecological premise).
2. Human civilization is a paradox. Naturally progress over one entity would always means degradation on the other. Catastrophic turmoil was generated when generations after generations of human being failed to see this paradox, only to be deceived by what they believed to be the ever-growing (economic) progress. Progress are engineered to enhance competitiveness. Competition will not exist when there is no more habitat to live in. However superior or inferior nation, group of nations, race... are, we are all living on a single Spaceship Earth (Economic premise).
3. Spaceship Earth as hosting entity (nature) is actually limitless. What limit it has is its ability to support living condition for its occupants (humankind). Living condition that is essential to all human regardless to their race, gender, nationality, religion, social status... Hence in the breach of ecological collapse; this condition can only be achieved through a state of common sovereignty and prosperity, a state where all human shall be –equally aware and able- to make radical change (Political premise).

4. Radical change is what required for humankind to survive, for the question that our generation must answer today is definitely not exclusively ecological one nor, it is politically or economically secluded. It is about all the –ism- there is combined. Despite of its name, Static City theory is not just another traditionally blind-folded urbanism talks. Its Hypothesis touches diverse dimensions of human civilization –spreading from discussing macro/micro economic performance to the Political Economy remapping of new(est) world order- to philosophically tackle specific urban disorders as attempt to solve problems right in the heart where almost three quarter of humankind lives.

#### **Static City, further reading**

Also available in the Global University portal:

Swadiansa, E. (2012b). "From Urban Studies to Urban Architecture: Critiques on the Use of Eurocentric Theories in Shaping the Emerging Cities" In Kudhori, D., & Kamini, Y. (ed). *Towards a Sustainable Ecology: Global Challenges and Local Responses in Africa and Asia*. Published in 5 countries; Beijing: OCHSPA Alliance, Malang: UB Press, Paris: GRIC Le Havre Universite, Tokyo: OISCA International, Casablanca: Africa Challenge. Pp. 235-43. ISBN: 978-602-203-274-8.