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The Concepts of the Ideal Futuristic Cities

Industrialization has put a dynamic and complex weight in city planning. As structures, mainly political and social, change over time, so does the notion of the ideal cities or communities. The trend of a world that can more easily connect both tangibly and intangibly also has its impact on how city planners oversee their design. It can be almost deduced that modern urbanization and globalization are the main driving forces or priorities that facilitate the ideal communities of the future.

Ebenezer Howard's idea of Garden Communities or more properly known as Garden Cities are one of the most influential concepts in city planning (Altman & Chemers, 1980). One of the most central cultural values in Howard's concept is that the ideal community should be a blend of rural and urban life. The countryside, in the form of greenery, parks, and agricultural areas, is to be close at hand. But people should also have easy access to schools, shopping, industry and government (Altman & Chemers, 1980). In other words, these circular city gardens are consisting of self-sufficient communities surrounded by greenbelts with planned proportionate areas in agriculture, housing, commerce and industry (Audiopedia, 2014).

Redefining the town and countryside as magnets, the people as needles, and man's socio-economic desires as attraction, Howard realized the theory of The Three Magnets, introducing the third alternative; the Town-Country Magnet (Howard, 1902). The Town- Country offers; high wages, social opportunities, and places of amusements, healthy living conditions, low rents, and large parks (Howard, 1902). Howard believed that the Town-Country would enhance the enjoyment of human society and the beauty of nature simultaneously (Fishman, 1982).

To achieve the socio-economic aspects of the Town-Country, the ideal city would run by communal land ownership, whereby, the rent would be the main source of revenue, employed by municipality (governing body) in the creation and maintenance of public amenities, old age pensions, and accident insurance (Howard, 1902). The Garden City was to be built from scratch on agricultural land, which had low ecological value, thereby increasing the value of the land, so that it could generate significant revenue through rent for municipality (Howard, 1902). Due to the attracting concept of balance and order, the principles of the Garden city were applied to various

developments worldwide and in most cases, it has been misconceived as the development of suburbs.

The evolution of Howard's garden city, addressing cultural and environmental issues and certain dialectic processes are the futuristic cities Columbia, Habitat, and Hexahedron. These urban-planned city types have their own similarities and differences. Columbia is a horizontal, spread-out community; Habitat and

Hexahedron are vertical communities. Columbia has a low population density; Habitat and Hexahedron are high-density settings. Furthermore, Columbia and, to some extent, Habitat bring nature into the city; Hexahedron keeps the city and the natural environment sharply' separated (Altman & Chemers, 1980).

In spite of these differences, these design concepts share several philosophical and cultural assumptions. For example, all three approaches focus on the individual human and the family as central to city design. Congruent with present-day Western values, the worth of the individual is salient, and all designs are geared to the satisfaction of individual needs, desires, opportunities for growth, and freedom of choice. In addition, the focus is on ordinary people, not emperors, kings, priests, or high-status persons. These futuristic city designs are intended to help ordinary people live happily, grow personally, and achieve their individual potentials. As described in other chapters, this has not always been an explicit goal of city design in other cultures or throughout history. What guided the development of many cities was religious, political, and economic institutions, or agents of these institutions. But in the three futuristic concepts examined here, it is the average citizen who is at the center of the process (Altman & Chemers, 1980).

Second, the three planning approaches are similar in their aspiration to incorporate and make available to people both the natural environment and the built environment. Although their particular design solutions vary, they all adopt a perspective that the well-being of people depends in part on access to natural environments. Columbia emphasizes the landscaped natural environment in the form of gardens, lawns, recreation areas, and parks. Habitat also includes these but does not exclude the wilderness. Hexahedron, while idealizing both the natural environment and the built environment, keeps them sharply separate from each other, although both are readily available to people. Thus, Columbia blends the natural and built environments, Hexahedron keeps them apart, and Habitat does a little of both (Altman & Chemers, 1980).

Third, these futuristic designs all create "total communities," where people can live, work, and participate in leisure and cultural activities. These designs imply that the ideal city should provide

such services to all its inhabitants, and one can almost be born, live, and die in such communities (Altman & Chemers, 1980).

In conclusion, the ideal urbanized city is not homogeneous as it seems for everyone. Several factors, both physical and social, affecting how a city should be planned such as culture, physical environment, state morphology and population density are so varied between cities around the world. The idea of a model so perfect to produce exactly the same images and consequences of an ideal city globally is simply unrealistic. The ideal cities of Columbia, Habitat, and Hexahedron are bounded by geo-cultural definitions. These three types can be effective depending on the place it would be applied. In the end, what matters for an ideal city is for it to have the environmental stability, economic success, political orderliness and social harmony.

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