

Leena Helenius-Mäki, MSc
Research Unit for Urban and Regional Development Studies
University of Tampere

Theme City or Gated Community - Images of Future Cities

- *“Did you ever happen to see a city resembling this one?”*, Kublai asked Marco Polo, extending his bearded hand from beneath the silken canopy of the imperial barge, to point to the bridges arching over canals, the princely palaces whose marble doorsteps were immersed in the water, the bustle of light craft zigzagging, driven by long oars, the boats unloading baskets of vegetables at the market squares, the balconies, platforms, domes, campaniles, island gardens glowing green in the lagoon’s grayness.

- *“No, sire,”* Marco answered, *“I should never have imagined a city like this could exist.”*

Italo Calvino: Invisible Cities

Introduction

The future of cities has been in the focus of discussion ever since the foundation of the first city. In this discussion, the interest has focused on creating better and better cities, according to each age. The form and contents of the future city have depended upon creators of images. Political, ideological or religious conceptions and other intentions have labelled images constructed to serve the best interest of the city. Different kinds of alternative images have thus been built of the same city.

The societal discussion of the twenty-first century about the alternative futures of Finnish cities often reduces their number to two: a small town or a large city, a balanced or a polarised city development, a withering or a competitive city. Finnish cities’ images of the future can thus be crystallised in two alternatives: 1) a flourishing centre of growth that has reached a position in the international competition aided by high technology, and 2) a small, withering municipality with its upside-down population pyramid.

The future of cities is determined by several different, often uncertain alternatives, which can be formed by uncontrolled circumstances of the general societal development, such as economic crises, wars, natural disasters, or political changes. They may result from changes in the economy, in social structure, or in the division of labour in the public sector. Or they may be images resulting from strategic city planning and co-operation.

The aim of this article is to present different, already perceived or predicted images affecting the formation of future cities. The concept of “future image” will be used of these

future city images hereafter throughout the article. The future images are chosen according to each city's qualities and types of entity. These future images are global and they qualify for implementation in the Finland of tomorrow.

Some of the future images of cities have a long history of development or philosophy. In those cases, the history is presented briefly. There may be different implementation plans or sub-models included in the future images, but presenting them, as well as presenting any criticism of future images, is not possible in the scope of this article. Different future images in themselves may derive from the very criticism or from the fear that the some other future image might come true. Or they are formed out of the desire to prepare for balancing a one-sided or inhuman dimension of some specific future image. The goal of this article is to present the main features and characteristics of the future images and to shed light on their ideological foundation.

The current literature on future cities is mainly American. The focus of European research on cities or on the future does not lie on variable and multidimensional analysis of the future development of cities, especially as far as small towns are concerned. African or Asian literature on the issue has not been available in English.

The Development of Society

It is the development of societies that has the strongest effect on future images of cities. Image marketing and image-based communication have formed a kind of image society (Karvonen, 1997). Marketing and competition are linked to this image society. The purpose of marketing is to yield profit and to ensure one's position in the field of competition. Following the trends of society, cities have been forced to accept marketing and the rules of competition in their shift towards the image society.

The roles of societal image creators have changed through the shift to the image society. In the past, state authorities were responsible for the construction of societal images. For example, wars and other national trials had an integrating influence in constructing a national identity and forming an image of a desirable state of the nation and activity of its citizens. (Zukin, 1995, pp.10–11). Since the 1980s, markets, companies, and other commercial institutions have had the responsibility for the creation of images. Thus images are created and modified through stories and dreams (Jensen, 1999). In this development, the nature of images has changed: they do not create national sagas anymore but commercialized, material goals and dreams.

In the public sector, it has been emphasised that the significance of images results from increasing marketing, profit responsibility, and decreasing protectionism. The authorities responsible for city development have been forced to develop city image marketing and to

construct attractive image campaigns. Provinces, municipalities, social welfare and public services in general have had made image studies made on themselves (e.g. Anttiroiko, 1992; Lehtonen, 1990; Sihvo, 1990).

In city marketing, attempts have been made to define the roles of cities – including their special qualities, strengths and potentials – to distinguish them from each other. It is a matter of creating significant differences in a world that no longer has significant differences (Gottdiener, 1997; Hall, 1998; Zukin, 1991). Mitchell (1994, pp. 2–4) claims that the problem of the twenty-first century is just that of image. Cultures and societies are subordinated and manipulated by images, visual stimulation, stereotypes, illusions, copies, re-interpretations, imitations, and fantasies.

Concrete societal changes are universal: city structures decentralise, city centres change, suburbs become segregated, cities and regions compete with each other, and cities attract more and more people. These changes in cities can be seen in magazines and in movies; the problems of segregation in Los Angeles are in nature the same as the problems in Finnish suburbs – it is the proportions of the problems that make the difference here. Also, these changes automatically affect the formation of the future city.

Another possibility is to try to affect these changes by strategic planning and actions. According to Richard Knight (quoted by Hanson 1995, p. 141), the prevailing global economy provides opportunities to the formation of the “intentional city” (see also Short, 1996). Earlier cities were formed along big roads or waterways or in their crossroads “by chance”. According to Allardt (1972, p. 309), cities were formed in the junctions of traffic and commerce. The ones that had the most beneficial geographical positions grew and became big. An intentional city is constructed on the basis of a certain image: strategic planning has a great influence on what is going to happen to the city and to how it will develop. It is a matter of choice: who does what, to whom and why?

The À-la-carte City

The slogan for the à-la-carte city is “To make a city – on his own” (Fishman, 1995, p. 131). Each individual has his own milieu; he moves in certain areas at certain times (Short, 1996, pp. 254–261). Along with global communications, people’s consciousness of the existing cities and of their supplies has grown. This increased consciousness affects people’s new ability to perceive and estimate the world and their place in it. One’s way of life has become not only the symbol of success, but also that of failure. (Baldwin, 1995, pp. 30–31).

On an individual level, the city is formed by three crossing networks that represent three different milieu categories in cities. These three networks were defined by Fishman (1995,

p. 130) as follows: 1) household network, 2) consumption network, and 3) network of production. The household network consists of individuals' private lives that take different forms: a couple with no children, a single person, a divorced person, a single-parent family, a widowed person, a couple whose children have moved away, a blended family, or several individuals living together in a commune.

Different family relationships with the private lives they include have an influence on the forms of living in cities, for example. Single people can decide themselves how and where to lead their lives. A family of several persons seeks a milieu that best responds to all of its members' wishes and needs. Retirement homes and service homes constitute the end of the life span for many couples or single people needing help at old age.

The consumption network is composed of malls, shops, supermarkets, entertainment, restaurants, training centres, sports facilities, and other possibilities linked to spare time, such as holiday apartments (Baldwin, 1995, p. 131). The consumption network is formed according to people's personal preferences as well as to their need for action. The network of production includes the employment of the family and the suppliers of the goods and products they consume (ibid.).

The balance between the networks depends on their value in the total network of an individual. If the consumption network is strong enough, it guarantees a wide product range in special shops, a large-scale supply, and stable shops, for example. If within the network of production something happens that results in unemployment in a household, it affects the functioning of other networks. These three networks form the city structure that an individual uses.

The city structures used by various individuals have an influence not only on the constitutional, but also on the functional form of the city. For example, a city can be constructed according to a specific model of a theme city; a passionate golfer moves to a golf-oriented community or city, or at least tries to shorten the distance to the nearest green. Or, the city can be formed on the idea of a city with gates: a family that has enough resources can move to the living area they want. And, at the same time, choose their neighbours. The idea of the *à-la-carte* city provides an opportunity to realise in practise a functionally planned city based on social-city ideology, for example, or a city maintained by a religious group.

One of the questions that have to be brought up is that of reversing the idea of the *à-la-carte* city. If the city is formed according to a considered, purposeful model, can it choose its own inhabitants, for example, by practicing a selective housing policy, by maintaining certain quality and price levels and by constructing elitistic free-time services and possibilities to attract the desired group of inhabitants?

Six Future Images of Cities

In city studies, the different expectations and threats of the future have generated proposals for better city models (ecological city, community city) as well as scenarios for new or reformed functions of cities (consumption city, high-tech city, theme city) determined by the recent development or new forms of cities (e-city, gated community). In this article, six ideas of the future of cities are presented. They are the theme city, the urban village, the gated community, the multicultural city, the e-city, and the ecological city.

More future images than the six ones presented in this article can be found in international literature. Some examples of these are the consumption city, the company city, the innovative city, the high-tech city, the entertainment city, the car city, the community city, the slum city, and the free trade city. In science fiction, one can find plans of space cities, hovering cities, cities of violence and state-sized metropolises, starting from the early beginning of city development and ending to the distant future.

Future images are not mutually exclusive: it is possible to construct one common city on the basis of different images. For example, a theme city can simultaneously be an urban village, an ecological city, a gated community, and an e-city.¹ Different future images may be realised by themselves, without planning, within the same city. They can also be realised partly so that a city can resemble a certain future image in some of its qualities and some other image in other aspects.

The Theme City

A theme city is constructed around a certain issue, theme or function. All functions of the city are directed to maintain this specific theme culture. The form of a theme city may be linked to the theme (Disney city, Lego city, Wild West city, Christmas city, cities of religious groups) or to the circumstances (city of old people, floating city, city of lepers). In a broad sense, all future images included in this article are theme cities. They all are constructed according to a certain character or type.

¹ The Disney town Celebration is mainly constructed on the principle of a theme city but also meets the demands set for an urban village or for a gated community.

Theme cities have been studied by American researchers Zukin (1991) and Gottdiener (1997) among others. The idea of a theme city is best realised as an intentional city, facilitated by the recent global economy. Zukin (1991) has studied how former metal industry cities turned into culture and consumption cities. Gottdiener (1997) has clarified the connection between a theme-based environment and consumption, and how a theme city is constructed, by using Las Vegas and the Walt Disney Company as examples.

Celebration, a theme town that the Walt Disney Company built, was opened to the public on 4 July 1996, on the Independence Day of the USA. It is located in Florida, within a five-minute drive from Disney World. The idea of a Disney city was first generated by Walt Disney himself in the 1960s: "I don't believe that people anywhere in the world have a challenge more important than to find the resolution on the problems of communities."

Celebration is everything that the world of Walt Disney can offer. The town is clean, neat, whole and of high quality like the Disney theme parks all around the world. According to Barber (1997), Celebration is constructed following the principles of an entertainment centre: an environment that resembles cartoons, a safe and conscious adventure, a substitute history, a homogeneous selection and a simulated ethnicity are all added to the living milieu of people. Celebration was built as a prototype, model and example of a well-functioning future city. It has a classless comprehension school, a seminar of its own for its teachers, a hospital of its own, as well as standard commercial services including malls, theatres, a golf green with 18 holes, tennis courts, hiking paths, recreation areas, and a yacht club, for example. In addition, the city uses high technology for its services; among the companies Celebration cooperates with is AT&T. It offers an intranet of its own to facilitate communication between its inhabitants and service suppliers.

The cities run by religious groups can be included in theme cities. For example, Mormons and people from Amish congregations have built their own towns to maintain their religious cultures. Their own living milieu releases them from things and phenomena that they want to exclude from their everyday life.

The town of lepers is generated by two practical needs: the need of protection and the need to exist even when ill. The non-leper population wants to protect itself from the infection and the lepers from the rejection and scorn of others. These towns enable the lepers to have a life after having become infected: a life that is isolated but nevertheless social. As a special group, the patients form a new community where the conditions set by the disease and the world outside are accepted. In this article, leprosy represents any infectious, fatal disease.

The theme city idea aims to attract more inhabitants, sources of livelihood, tourists, or all of them. A theme city can be small or big in population. The theme may be a part of the city entity, a feature that the city is known for. The old industrial cities that have constructed a new image as theme cities of culture and consumption, as studied by Zukin (1991), can be included in this group. The theme city proper is entirely built or modified following the theme. In this case, the structures and functions that support the theme are crucial. Wolfsburg, the Volkswagen city situated in Germany, for example, does not only have a VW factory, but also an Autostadt theme park and its own sausage factory. The VW theme can be found all over the city: in its structure, employment, and activity.

In order to offer a base for constructing extensive facilities for inhabitants, companies as well as tourists, the theme should be comprehensive enough, like Walt Disney, Lego, or Christmas. It has to be solid enough to make people interested in it in order for them to act on it. The theme of Celebration was so powerful in its attractiveness that people had to queue up for residence in the city as soon as they found out about the decision to build a Disney city (Zukin 1991, p. 51). A theme city built for tourists has to be able to attract them all year round in order to ensure the profitability of the means of livelihood based on the theme. Therefore, the familiarity of the chosen theme is important for a large population.

Urjala represents an example of a small municipality reaching for the idea of a theme city by using a well-known Finnish theme. In 2001, a four-year EU project called "*Väinö Linna Urjalan vetovoimatekijänä*" [Väinö Linna as an attraction in Urjala] was started there. The main purpose of the project is to increase the degree of awareness of both Urjala and Väinö Linna among Finnish people. It aims to enrich the programme of the literary event "*Pentinkulman päivät*" and to extend its audience base. In addition, it also aims to develop the municipality's marketing and raise its degree of internationality.

Väinö Linna is one of the Finnish national authors, thanks to his main works "*The Unknown Soldier*" and the "*Under the Northern Star*" trilogy. This is why the familiarity of the theme chosen by Urjala can be described as nationwide. The Väinö Linna theme may be strong enough to attract people's attention for some time in the near future. In this respect, however, the role of the municipality of Urjala is not on safe ground. For example, people inspired by a personality cult do not visit Urjala anymore, because Väinö Linna himself is not alive anymore. Moreover, people tend to associate the name Väinö Linna rather with Tampere than with Urjala, because the author is buried in Tampere. How the main themes running through Linna's production - the Civil War and the Winter War of Finland - will carry into the future is uncertain. In the Euro-Finnish thinking, they may represent the carrying themes of national identity, or a piece of distant history.

At the moment, the Väänö Linna theme in Urjala is supported only by a summer event, literature weekend in winter, and a Väänö Linna route in Pentinkulma, a village in Urjala where the author was born. Moreover, Urjala lacks support functions that would be strong enough to maintain the theme all year round and to have an influence on the means of livelihood in the municipality. However, the point is that Urjala tries to construct its future by itself, even if it had to rely on the Väänö Linna theme to do it.

It is more typical of Finnish municipal marketing and communications to "theme" a municipality as a certain type than to practice actual theme-city thinking. Several cities and municipalities are marketed with slogans like "unspoilt nature", "clean waters", "safe living environment", "landscapes of forests and lakes", "original countryside", "city of industry, commerce and culture" and "strong cultural heritage or cultural activity". The problem is that advertising an area by using general slogans does not differ from marketing in other areas.

The point in marketing a municipality according to a theme is to find personal content that in some respect distinguishes one region from another. In communication via the Internet, the municipality of Joutseno stands out. The first words on its homepage² are:

"In weddings and festive occasions they behave decently. Severe crimes have not been committed, there are no vicious people, or those with bad manners, and the Christian harmony prevails between spouses." (A statement by the clergy on the inhabitants of Joutseno, published in an episcopal inspection in 1812).

The "St John's parish" theme has Christian humour that stands out as a positive and impressive example among the homepages of other Finnish municipalities. Thus humour is one of the mental resources of Joutseno.

The Urban Village

An urban village refers to a small town unit. A city, a network of cities, or a city area is formed of several urban villages. The urban village can also be called a multcentred city, a decentralised, post-urban, neo-urban, or techno-urban city model. There are several possibilities as to the names but, in this article, the term "urban village" is used to describe a small unit of a city.

Lewis Mumford was not among the first inventors of urban village cities but defines the urban village as

² www.joutseno.fi (obtained 10 January 2002)

“...a new type of poly-nucleated city, in which a cluster of communities, adequately spaced and bounded, shall do duty for the badly organized mass city” (1938, p. 489).

Mumford (1949, p. 407) continues by arguing that twenty that kind of cities in an area whose environment and resources have been planned in keeping with their purpose will enjoy all the advantages that a metropolis can offer without having to suffer from the disadvantages of it; namely the capital tied up in unprofitable commodities and skyrocketed lot prices, which slow down the entire process of adaptation to new demands.

The future model of an urban village has been generated along with the development of suburbs and suburban cities since the 1950s. Generally, suburbs are born around cities. In Finland, however, compact clusters of blocks have also been built in some small rural municipalities, where these clusters have later changed into an often-problematic suburb of the municipality. In the future model, suburbs will turn into smaller autonomous towns or districts that are communal in nature.

The theme of community is linked to the urban village, which means that people work together, co-operate, and have an influence on the state of their community, for example. The formation of the urban village on the micro level is linked to everyday life in the streets, shops, parks, and other public spaces. The right to be in these places, to use them, and to have a feeling of owning them together with the community generates solidarity. (Zukin, 1995, p. 11).

The idea of community is linked to friendship, to solidarity, and to the feeling of belonging to a group. Along with urbanisation, people have become alienated from the communities of their natural relatives and neighbours. Their relatives often live far away or at least in another region. Neighbours change, they are avoided, acquaintances are experienced to be useless or difficult to make, and strange people are not trusted. Nowadays, the significance of communities is mainly learnt from the daily broadcast community-based drama series or soap operas on TV.

The need to attach people tighter to their communities and society defends the idea of the urban village. Earlier, when those who had become socially excluded and who has withdrawn from society mostly came from lower social classes. In 1980, well-paid young adults also joined the group of the alienated. In the USA, they found an idol in Patrick Bateman, the principal character in the novel *American Psycho* written by Bret Easton Ellis. Bateman lives hating his life and life in general, in the middle of prosperity.

Patrick Bateman alienates himself from society because he has become a misanthrope. He is a barbarian that deliberately is – on a conscious level – a monster. The reason for his separation from the community is random – he wants to avoid, to deny, the emptiness of

his miserable life. Moral insensibility and blindness are characteristic of Bateman. In the book, the lack of reflection of the main character on his own actions reveals the reason for the actions performed, blinded by contemporary economic failures. The mental “killing” of things is one of the routines of everyday life. The monotony of his life, the repeating events, and the growing demands of economic success put Bateman under a great pressure. At some point, this pressure becomes unbearable and leads to the blending of his public and hidden identity. Finally, Bateman fears most the situation in which something natural and real could come to exist between people, spontaneous contacts that surpass the tautological patterns of behaviour and thinking.

American Psycho refers to a welfare state, to New York where wealth, success and structural violence intertwine. Although the story does not represent reality, it alienates, forces the reader to look at the actions of its characters as a series of images, surfaces, and elements. The only passion in it is the rage to repeat all events again and again, in different variations. The painful image of a yuppie jogging on his own running mat in his living room with his TV set making background noise because there are neither friends to spend time with nor a place to work out with them has raised the question of the seriousness of the incoherence that has been troubling the past two or three generations in the USA. (Baldwin, 1995, p. 31).

On the level of image marketing, the possibility to attain sociality and close relationships by owning a product has been used to promote sales for a long time. In the 1980s, there was a commercial of the Rexona soap on Finnish television that used a phrase “There is always room for the user of Rexona”. On Madison Avenue, New York, beer was advertised with the slogan “Miller Time” and McDonalds’ Big Mac hamburgers with “Food, Folks and Fun”. (Baldwin, 1995, p. 30). These advertisements reflect the image of the existence of attainable warm friendships or communities.

The cornerstones of city life in the Disney town Celebration are community, education, health, technology, and place. Celebration was built to respond to the needs of its 20,000 inhabitants, which number it reached in 1999. Celebration aims to have the desirable qualities of small American towns: a quarter-mile walk everywhere, a downtown with stores and homes, and a high population density that facilitates interaction with one’s neighbourhood. The prime assets of Celebration are the “scale of citizens” and “human resources”.

Celebration is considered to be an experiment of how a certain kind of small and safe community satisfies people to the extent that they are ready to pay 20-30 percent more than the average price level to live in the town. The present inhabitants say they moved there because the town reminded them of the place they grew up in or of the place where their grandparents used to live. (Edmonds, 1997).

According to the future image of the urban village, the basic units of cities in the future will be quite small, depending on the situation, country, and continent. In Europe, the urban villages would have 3,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. In the USA, their sizes would vary from 10,000 to 40,000 inhabitants. The urban villages would form a network of towns, town regions, or a town close to the main centre of a city. In the future, the surface area of a region growing around an American city would be 3,300 to 5,000 km² at the maximum; at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was about 160 km² (Fishman, 1995, p. 120).

Urban villages are not copies of each other in their size or qualities but they will reflect dissimilarity, multiculturalism, and originality. The influencing factors are above all the age, education, employment and family structures of the population. Secondly, the ideological principals or common goals of communities affect the contents of urban villages. Thirdly, the means of living, their location, versatility and circulation have an influence on urban villages. Fourth, the social activity and activity taking place in communities reflects the resources available in each urban village. Social activity generates from inhabitants themselves or from city administration. From the viewpoint of urban villages, their inhabitants' spontaneous activity and participation are most desirable.

The future image of the urban village was partly born from the interpretation of real urbanisation and partly from the fear that the future societal development would add to people's loneliness and alienation. According to Barber (1997), the purpose of the urban village is to resolve the problems troubling cities – drugs, violence, fear, overpopulation, poverty, and traffic jams – by forming small communities that are specific, autonomous areas of cities.

The Gated Community

In arts as well as in science, gated communities have been presented in connection with images of future cities. Gated communities are mainly cities or districts of wealthy white middle-class people. There are controlled spaces of consumption, streets, theme parks and gated areas of residence (see e.g. Andersson, 1998; Gottdiener, 1997; Lehtonen, 1999; Zukin, 1995).

In American cities, the polarisation of society manifests itself in the gated city space and residential areas. Today there are approximately 8 million Americans living in gated communities, in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Chicago, New York and Miami, for example. Since people are looking for safety against increased urban problems, gated communities have become popular in new suburban areas as well as in more traditional city areas. (Ilmonen, 2000; p. 25). Completely gated living areas with armed guards became common in the USA as well as in Russia in 2000.

What gated communities have in common is that they have set certain conditions for people moving in. These can concern the social class, income level, age or family structure of the inhabitants. The novel “*Stepford wives*” by Ira Levin, based on which Bryan Forbes directed a film with the same title, has often been used as an example of a community where a man has to make a sacrifice concerning his wife in order to become an inhabitant of the town.

The Disney town Celebration does not set actual conditions for moving in, but every inhabitant has to sign the Declaration of Covenants. By doing this, they commit themselves to observing the rules of the town, including the following: the maximum number of persons sleeping in the same bedroom is two, any disturbing cat or dog can be taken away from their owners, each family is allowed to arrange a garage sale only once a year, no parking of boats or caravans in front of houses is allowed, and inhabitants have to commit themselves to living in Celebration for nine months a year. In addition, the inhabitants are given detailed instructions on the kinds of flowers and bushes that may be planted in gardens and on how tall the fences are allowed to be. The town has its own security guards that complete the department of county sheriff, and security cameras at every corner. Although there is no inhabitant selection process in Celebration, the town resembles a gated community due to its rules.

The first gated areas in the USA were villages of senior citizens or extremely rich people. Nowadays, some of them are still lifestyle communities of certain population groups, areas of pensioners, golf clubs, or new towns of suburban areas. Some of the gated areas are communities of high status, inhabited by the rich and famous or by successful professionals of different fields. But more and more gated areas become settled by people of the middle class or upper middle class. Barriers and barricades are used to form secure areas even in small-income regions. The reason for building up defences is the fear of crime and strangers. (Ilmonen, 2000, p. 25). According to Zukin (1995, pp. 2–3, 7), the fear itself has an influence on the generalisation of gated communities and private police forces. Also, the structural planning of safe (survival) public spaces is linked to this development. Zukin stresses that the acceptance of gated spaces and communities still increases the social and societal polarisation and problems causing fear. The reason for this is that gated communities reflect a selective decision over who is welcome and who is not.

The purpose of gated communities is to maintain a middle-class, conservative lifestyle that avoids pluralism. Although the gated communities built by private development companies are mainly meant to the “scared middle class” and therefore represent a questionable trend of city development accentuating inequality, they show the connection between a chosen lifestyle and a certain kind of city environment. (Raunio, 2000, p. 198).

Gated communities have become more common even in Finland. There was a headline in the daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* of 15 February 2001 that stated: “Rich people are isolating themselves behind security gates. A fenced and video-controlled residential area is under construction in western Espoo”. The article was about how security has become a prime asset in selling most expensive apartments in the Helsinki region. Expensive private apartments and housing corporations are being equipped with the latest security technology, cameras, private security guards, and strong fences. In the south-coast town of Sipoo, plans have been made by a Swedish developer to build a community of dozens of expensive houses that would have their own janitors to maintain security in the area. In the middle of the community, there would be a swimming pool, clubhouse, tennis court, and a playground for children.

In the Nordic welfare states, the phenomena of isolation will spread due to the increasing income differences and the weakening social security. The inhabitants of Malmö, Sweden, have hired a private security company to maintain public order in town, and some single proposals have been made in every Nordic country’s wealthy city districts to separate them from the city proper. For example, in Finland, the inhabitants of the Lauttasaari district have been proposing to separate from the Helsinki metropolitan area on the basis that the tax incomes the city receives do not return in sufficient amounts to the area. According to the most pessimistic estimates, the exodus of wealthy inhabitants is expected to take place in Western societies in the future. The rich elite and the middle class will dissociate themselves from maintaining social services and institutions. (Ilmonen, 2000, p. 26).

The Multicultural City

In Finland, the future image of a multicultural city has chiefly been dealt with in the sphere of education science and social sciences (e.g. Askola-Vehvilä, 1996; Boulding, 1990; Taidekasvatus, 1998; Väливаara, 1996): how people coming from different cultures adapt to co-operate with each other, how to arrange multicultural activities in practise, and so on. Torsti Kirvelä (1998) has studied the need for internationalisation and cultural pluralism in the future Finland, especially on the level of municipalities. The aspect of multiculturalism has been included in this article because of its actuality. It is a phenomenon that is becoming ever more general in the global economical system. While Finns seek jobs abroad, foreign professionals are encouraged to move to Finland.

A multicultural city means a city with a variety of subcultures (Giddens, 1997, p. 23). On a conceptual level, multiculturalism is often linked to different nationalities, but it cannot be limited to only one sub-culture (Kellner, 1995, p. 96). A sub-culture in this context means ethnic, ideological, sexual, gender, social, cultural, radical, anarchist, etc., groups.

Consequently, multiculturalism means plurality of perspectives: versatility of aspects, opinions and images, alternative ways of thinking and different values and norms.

Kobayashi (1993) has studied multiculturalism in Canada. According to him, multiculturalism shows on three levels. First, on the demographic level or on the level of ethnocultural variety. Second, on the level of symbols, on which it is noticed and promoted in accordance to official principals of action. Third, on the structural level, on which legislation forms the basis for social change. Inter- and intra-level contradictions are revealed in everyday life: clashes between races, differences in the legal rights to services and economic aid, racism, etc. According to Kobayashi (*ibid.*, p. 224), multiculturalism as a principal of action combats conflicts by turning versatility and equality into social values.

In cities, there are, for example, many ethnical groups that have settled down to certain districts, such as China Town or Little Italy in New York. These groups have formed a small town resembling their cultural heritage inside the surrounding city. According to Giddens (1997, p. 23), in London, for example, ethnical groups co-exist, each one of them in its own area with its own life style; in Sydney, there is a district for homosexuals. Young people living in communities often represent ideological groups whose ideologies focus either on anarchism, punk, environmental activism, nature preservation, or on radicalism. Also, religious groups form their own communes or villages for their members.

In Finland, multiculturalism has become a focus of discussion on the arrival of refugees. It is chiefly linked to different nationalities and races. Other cultures and nationalities have been tolerated and accepted best as part of the Finnish urban society in the form of ethnical restaurants, artists and athletes.

The gradually increasing subcultures formed by different groups with a message are also linked with multiculturalism in Finland. Sub-cultural groups like anti-fascist organisations, skinheads, Friends of the Earth, and animal activists, for example, are tolerated and left in peace on the condition that they do not disturb society too much. For example, actions of animal activists are tolerated as long as they do not include vandalism (e.g. attacks on fur farms).

In the Finnish city structure, multiculturalism manifests itself in the placement of foreigners in certain districts. Lauste, a suburb in Turku, was brought to the fore in newspapers in the fall 2000 due to a study on the connection between immigrants and occurred violent events. Multiculturalism has raised its head in the form of violence in almost every country. Violence puts pressure on the authorities, public institutions, administration, parties and alike from the side of the minorities wanting society to respond to their individual needs (Zukin, 1995, p. 2).

In studies on multiculturalism, society is interpreted by employing the concepts of power and opposition; the different forms of oppression are often linked to it. The value of multiculturalism is measured by its ability to promote freedom, democracy and individualism (Kellner, 1995, p. 94). This shows especially in the times of global crisis when different cultures clash both on an ideological and a concrete level. People living in multicultural cities still have to be able to co-operate – as inhabitants of the city – despite their opposite ideological interests.

Short (1996), on the other hand, links multiculturalism particularly with culture: “Come to the multicultural city and experience the rich combination of different life styles!” The positive side of multiculturalism represents a pluralistic dream of various different ethnical groups enriching each other’s experiences without conflicts. Also Zukin (1995, p. 1) stresses the role of culture as a source and core of multiculturalism. Culture stands for locality and identity, for who belongs to this place, to this city.

The definition of the multicultural city remains too narrow if the concept is considered to concern only different nationalities and groups. Multiculturalism can be extended to mean even different actor groups in the city: for example, companies, visitors, institutions, and education centres. All of these groups have their own cultures and subcultures that the authorities and decision-makers of the city have to serve to encourage them to stay in the region. To avoid conflicts, versatility requires consideration, not only from city inhabitants, but also on the operational level of the city.

Hanson (1995, p. 140) proposes that, in constructing a multicultural city, developers should act rationally on the local level, think globally, and understand how the new multicultural city functions. According to a manager of an American company, her firm “uses the city” as follows: there has to be a powerful educational system in the city, at least an appreciated university and other institutions of research; a good health care system; and a great variety of well-functioning public services, especially spare time and culture services. To a city like this she manages to attract the globally best workers. And this is only one aspect of the demands for the facilities the city should offer.

In the future, the multicultural city may find forms in which the members representing different cultures and their habits assimilate more easily to each other. There is no overlapping or role conflict of different nationalities anymore in strong multiculturalism, but each party has its strengths and duties in society.

The eCity

The possibilities that IT technology offers create the basis for developing the e-city. This city differs from other cities by its nature: it may be a purely electronic, invisible city - also

called the “virtual city” – whereas other cities are concrete, material. The forms and purposes of an e-city are many. On the one hand, it can be the electronic version of an existing city, created in order to provide information and official services to its inhabitants. In this case, the e-city completes other city models. On the other hand, it may be a city existing only electronically and having inhabitants all around the world.

In Finland, plans of e-cities have been presented in Kotka and Kouvola, for example, and experimented in the connection with housing fairs (Ylöjärvi) or in some residential areas (Pihlajisto, Helsinki). In December 2000, the City of Tampere launched the eTampere Programme aiming at creating better conditions for its citizens, companies and research to manage in the competitive global information society.

According to Baldwin (1995, p. 37), IT technology adds new dimensions to the city structure by making it looser. The new kind of city model based on IT and distance work is commercial by nature, a response to demand (Staffans and Horelli 1995, p. 166). Distance work enables companies and workers to settle down where they want. The online sales makes possible a city that is open around the clock, in which it is possible for the nerds hiding in their areas equipped with high technology to satisfy their daily needs at any time they desire (Mitchell, 1999).

Baldwin (op.cit., p. 37) does not believe that information networks would cause exclusion or create characters referred to as *coach potatoes*. He stresses that the increasing possibilities of distance add people’s desire to share and to be close to others. For example, information exchange and interactive material are linked to the plans of digital television along with the Internet. From the point of view of the services of the information society, the digital television is more equal than the computer since the television is so common.

According to Hintikka (1996, p. 3), the factors that characterise IT the most are networking, real time, updating, dynamism, bilateral communication – many-to-many or many-to-one interactivity, virtual environment, or knowledge as space, and intimacy.

The demands of participation and interaction are closely linked to the e-cities. This kind of virtual citizenship and city space has been studied and realised with the aid of IT all around the world since the 1970s (see e.g. Arterton, 1987; Barber, 1997; Becker, 2000; Keskinen, 1995a, 1995b; Toffler, 1971). These experiments are called “experiments of teledemocracy”. The greatest profit of teledemocracy benefits not only the inhabitants but also the development of the city.

There is no single accurate definition of the concept of teledemocracy. Teledemocracy means the possibilities of citizens to participate in the municipal decision-making by using information networks (Helenius-Mäki, 2000, p. 34). According to Arterton (1987, p. 14),

teledemocracy means using communication technology in order to promote the dissemination of political information and opinions between citizens and politicians. New possibilities to communicate on the Internet can be used either in a way that reinforces and supports citizens or to manipulate them (Barber, 1984, p. 274). The purpose of teledemocracy is to encourage citizens to participate. Participation requires the ability to communicate. Therefore, one of the main missions of teledemocracy is to facilitate the communication of inhabitants. Communication not only promotes the dissemination of information between participants, but also increases their abilities to manage information.

In the future, it will be possible for the inhabitants of municipalities to use online services in various ways. Municipal services, official forms and announcements are already now more and more often available on the Internet, where active inhabitants can read the minutes of the county council meeting, make an appointment with their dentists, or order a tax deduction card for themselves. Above all, the Internet will increase the possibilities of participation. Nowadays it is possible for active inhabitants in many municipalities to participate in local development through the electronic networks, including the issues of the needs of city planning, environmental policy, and location of services, and to participate in conversation on electronic forums. Successful experiments on teledemocracy, concerning local elections, for example, have been made especially in the USA (Sutela, 1997, p. 207.)

In his books *e-topia* (1999) and *City of bits* (1995), Mitchell discusses the new forms of cities: how the new e-city is breaking social barriers by placing people on the same square one. It is also breaking the demand of localisation or of being in a certain place, and facilitates the birth of a new kind of “soft city”. Hall (1998) also predicts the death of the demand of localisation and distance. Mitchell (1999, pp. 75–77) foresees a growing importance of the attractiveness of regions. Since the location of workplaces is not a condition for the location of residence, the freedom of choice will increase. The geographical location and centralisation will lose its significance along with the generalisation and increasing versatility of online services. Certain concrete qualities are required of the region or city in attaining this goal: 1) rapid and well-functioning logistics and traffic facilities and 2) a wide range of services, including the aspect of sustainable development. (Hall 1998; pp. 956-989.)

The Ecological City

The concept of ecological city includes other concepts: a city of sustainable development, a green city, an environmental city, an ecopolis, and an eco-city. In this model, the ecological city consists of its inhabitants, industry, public services, infrastructure and natural environment. The ecological city is based on sustainable development. This term is defined to be a new, holistic vision of the future, or the possibility and urgency to live

conserving life on Earth (Koskiaho, 1995, p. 74). An idea of a culturally, ecologically, socially and economically sustainable city is linked to this holistic vision. A culturally sustainable city guarantees a social quality of life for its inhabitants and communities. An ecologically sustainable city does not strain the nature, but uses healthy and recyclable materials. A socially sustainable city is based on well-functioning housing markets, on the formation of local communities and on the participation of citizens. And finally, the principles of the economically sustainable city are a rational city structure and location of functions, for example, that support public and light traffic and make every-saving choices (Lodenius, 1995, p. 147).

The ecological city stresses the relationship between city and nature. At the beginning of urbanisation, the city was considered to be the opposite of the countryside. The city was the place of culture, civilization and humane thinking (Hall, 1998; Lapintie, 1996; Mumford, 1949). In the traditional sense, the city represented non-nature. In the 1920s, the goal of city planning was a more equal and harmonic life together with the nature than what the acceleration of industrialisation had caused in cities in the twentieth century (Le Corbusier, 1924). The idea of an ecological city emerged at the end of the 1980s as the nature “conquered the city” (Lapintie, 1996, p. 17). The new concept followed the discussion about how cities should be humanised and democratised (Koskiaho, 1995; p. 77). By the twenty-first century, the pursuits of equality were brought to the level of social classes as well (Lapintie, 1996).

The visions of future concerning the development of cities have become the more topical the more and faster the cities grow and develop. According to the Worldwatch Institute (O’Meara, 1999, p. 147), only 160 million people, or a tenth of the world’s population at that time, were living in cities in the year 1900. After the year 2000, there are 3 billion people, or a half of the world’s population, living in city areas. In a hundred years, the number of city inhabitants has become twentyfold. Developing city environment conditions and reducing the strain on nature have been mentioned as a challenge for the twenty-first century. Among its crucial problems will be especially the supply and quality of water, city waste, traffic and logistics, the quality of dwelling areas, and the availability of services.

For example, the aim of developing better dwelling areas is to even out the differences between the quality of life of the rich and the poor. As early as 400 BC, Plato wrote: “every town, as small as it might be, is divided into the town of the rich and that of the poor”. This is true even today. The grouping of buildings determines the liveliness of the city. The tighter the city structure is, the more savings will be attained in community building and public traffic arrangements. In addition, it promotes the formation of an aesthetically more pleasant city. In the USA, some cities have started to promote green areas and the quality of houses under construction (ibid., p. 147, 160).

According to the Worldwatch Institute (*ibid.*, pp. 164–165), the biggest obstacle in restricting the growth of cities is the lack of money. Cities produce services with tax incomes and existing resources. The constantly increasing unemployment and poverty cause the city economy to show a deficit. A study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) revealed that most of the interviewed city managers considered creating new jobs to be their greatest challenge. The improvements in the city economy and the inhabitants' ability to pay taxes would also release funds to ensure the sustainable city development.

The other side of the ecological city is the activity of its inhabitants that resembles the activity in an urban village: people co-operate in order to construct a better community for themselves and others. The idea of an ecological city is linked to the one of citizen society, where mutual responsibility, participation, local community, solidarity, economical responsibility and “down-top” strategies represent the values of the organic community, among other things (Koskiaho, 1999).

The city is a kind of ecological civilization process. In the city, one learns patterns of behaviour and courtesy, since people live next to each other and interact with each other there daily. The city is also the cradle of citizenship. In the city, people learn to ask, give and receive, since they are taxpayers who give out of what they have. However, city dwellers are more than taxpayers – they are citizens. Thus citizens are people whose identities derive from the city, who make the city come alive, who construct meanings from what they have seen and experienced, and share these meanings with each other. (Kemmis, 1997).

According to Kemmis (1997), inhabitants of a good city become grateful for what they have received and respond by giving back. When they feel supported and taken care of, wanting to respond by supporting and taking care of their community, the essence of citizenship has been found. In this kind of community of citizenship, democracy works face-to-face and by learning to solve problems together. First, citizens start dealing with a small local issue and, after that has been fixed, turn to another. They go on like this, until the whole city finally becomes constructed the way it should be.

Also, the technological development is linked to the concept of ecological city: how the technological solutions decrease the strain on the environment; how the technological development promotes the use of renewable energy resources, ecological technohouses, ecological solutions in transport, etc. On the other hand, the influences of mobile IT on the environment and people's health are not yet known.

The ecological city is a coherent entity where ecological factors form a harmonic urban whole together with social, cultural and economical factors. In it, efforts are made to reduce the contradictions between the human being and the environment into relationships of communication and co-operation. (Koskiaho, 1995, pp. 76–77).

Sybrand Tjallingii has developed strategic frames for the ecological city (1994; Lapintie, 1996, p. 11). His “ecopolis model” consists of three themes: the “responsible city”, the “living city” and the “participating city”. The first two themes are linked to the ecological effort of considering the city as an ecosystem rather than as a mere object. In addition, they stress the ecological planning of areas and regions instead of solving single problems. The “participating city” is motivated by the kind of urbanisation in which the decision-making power is drawn more and more away from the inhabitants. According to this theme, involving the inhabitants in the environmental and city planning would promote even the realisation of the first two themes. Tjallingii considers the ecological city development to be a practical shift of strategies towards target-group thinking: it takes into account the various needs of people practicing a trade and leading different lifestyles.

The functionality of the ecological city has been experimented in Christianstad, Copenhagen, for example, as well as in certain communities and living areas in Finland. (Koskiaho, 1999; Lainevuori, 1995). Concrete ecological activities are linked to the ecological city: recycling, composting, vegetable gardens, and supporting biological cultivation. The main idea is to constantly cut down the exploitation of the environment, or to shorten the distance between production and consumers. Taking care of these activities is mostly the responsibility of the spontaneous participation of the inhabitants and the ecological city planning.

The structures of the ecological city are the responsibility of the strategic planning of cities (see Lainevuori, 1995; Schulman, 1995). The ecologicality of the administration and political activity depends on strategic planning, actors and voters of the city.

Why be prepared for the future?

- “And yet I have constructed in my mind a model of city from which all possible cities can be deduced,” Kublai said. “It contains everything corresponding to the norm. Since the cities that exist diverge in varying degree from the norm, I need only foresee the exceptions to the norm and calculate the most probable combinations.”

Italo Calvino: Invisible Cities

There is only a little research done on the images of future cities. The purpose of presenting these images is to extend the discussion on different alternatives. Preparing for

the future is about creating alternative images, estimating their suitability and considering their values.

The dreams and stories of the image society are about a battle of values. The images communicate choices of values or things that will be important in the future city, including a feeling of security, environment protection, cultural versatility, the functioning of electronic networks and online sales, and comfortable living areas. The visibility of the values shows in the structure and function of the city and thus promotes its status compared to other cities.

Shedding light upon the images of future cities offers alternatives for strategic city planning, inhabitants and societal discussion. Framing different models facilitates strategic development by clarifying the needs, desires and fears concerning the current and future inhabitants of the city. It gives answers to the questions like the following. What kind of obstacles do people have in settling down in certain kinds of areas? Who have the cities been planned for and by whom? Who chooses the leaders of the cities and who has the actual decision making power? What does the city offer for different population groups? And how does the city serve its (desired or non-desired) inhabitants?

In several future images, the issue of social and spontaneous participation of inhabitants has come up. Even in creating and assessing different choices, the participation of citizens plays an essential role. The inhabitants share the responsibility for the future for their own city. Some cities, such as Tampere, takes into account the opinions of inhabitants in the planning of the future, because it considers arousing wide discussion about the future of the city to be important.

People's ability to form images of the future and its possible events affects human behaviour, decision-making and choices. We look at the development of cities and society both consciously and unconsciously; in other words at polarisation, centralisation, new city types, possibilities, etc. We reflect our general and personal desires, possible future threats and fears in our dreams of the best lifestyle and the best dwelling.

The construction of a well-considered, purposeful city in Finland is not a utopian idea. Neither is modifying a municipality to respond to a certain purposeful city model. As the income differences grow, the demands coming from different user groups in cities change and often increase. Survival in the future may be about the specialisation of the cities. This specialisation is based either on the natural development of the city or on its planned content.

Several municipalities have had image surveys done. Based on these surveys, their current strengths and special qualities can be estimated. The story of the future city is emerges on

the basis of assessing the city's current situation, from a transformation in a new, desired direction. The future city will be flourishing and attractive and have personality – if the planning and constructing of it succeeds, and if the conditions are favourable.

- *“Cities also believe they are the work of the mind or of chance, but neither the one nor the other suffices to hold up their walls. You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours.”*

Italo Calvino: Invisible Cities

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