



Archipelago Urbanism

Hoganas, Southern Sweden

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Is there a connection between the monotony, the lack in diversity and the way the city was restructured through time?

Filling the voids with too much open space (first paradox), enclosed and monofunctional surfaces has determined an increase of the single's quality of life, but has also created more and more distance between people. The paradox is that this distance is inhabitable, and thus helps dispersion: it is more than physical distance, but space. Inhabitable space also needs to be maintained, and public budgets for investments and innovation end up lagging behind. A combination of excess of inhabitable space, and lack in investment ideas is keeping Hoganas away from innovation and confrontation. The understanding of its nature, an archipelago, can trigger new visions for the future of the city.

We describe the potential of imagining the new city as that of a Festival. In fact, it is made of parts, it is at a crossroad between city and country, urban, rural and marine-coastal, it has a diversity of potential development models, assets, and lifestyles. Like an archipelago, a festival is composed of semi-independent parts, that are kept apart by enough distance as to maintain their coherence, but not so much as to become separation. A festival has entails liveliness, intensity of use, as opposed to mere density. Intensity is embedded in mix of use through time, concentration, hybridization.

We proposed to adopt a flexible rule for development and growth together. Demographic growth should be accompanied by social diversity and intensification of activities in the existing urban fabric. Spatial growth, in terms of built surface, should thus be subdivided equally between infill and re-use on one side, and colonisation on the other. First, open spaces are always imagined as multifunctional, sometimes layered, systems. When intensity is very low, they can be abandoned for natural take over. Built surface will privilege diversity of population, mixing of use (or re-use) and introduction of new functions.

The new urban islands, are small festivals themselves.

Their basic structure is defined by a continuous open space, with one main road and a wider network of pedestrian open spaces, either leading to the island border or embracing the preexisting elements. Housing clusters are arranged along and around these open spaces; each cluster with different densities, typologies, social mix, relationship with the inner areas and borders. The design of open space is also used to provide ranging conditions of privacy and openness. The wider areas are occupied by higher density elements and scattered common facilities; few apartment buildings use these areas as entrance points. Buffer areas, defined by shrubs, bushes, gentle landforms, surround clusters, and constitute an inhabited threshold, introducing to more enclosed paces, such as semi-private courtyards; finally, private gardens are either articulated into wider spaces (with no rigid separation), or as to provide natural borders to the islands.

Workshops, ateliers, common utilities, deposits, covered parking lots occupy the areas with lower solar exposure, in order to intensify the use of ground floor areas. Roofs are colonized by greenhouses, kindergartens, common facilities.