2

Platform City People

David Murakami Wood

In the course of my research on what I am now thinking about as the transition from smart cities to platform cities, I almost immediately began to ask what the characteristics of the proposed *platform citizens*, the humans who will live in these places, were. There has been writing on "smart citizens" and much of this takes a normative stance, even when critical. On the one hand, many such pieces argue for the displacement or supplementing of the concept of the "smart city" with that of the "smart citizen," in other words as a form of empowerment or bottom-up development or even as a way of ameliorating the potential negative and technocentric effects of smart city development (see e.g. Cardullo and Kitchin 2019; Powell 2021, for critical takes on this genre). On the other hand, some approaches to smart citizenship have taken an integrative approach, considering what people, suitably educated, can add to the smart city, in other words how they can become part of this vision of smart urbanism or smart governance more broadly (e.g. Noveck 2015).

However, the aim of this preliminary and somewhat experimental intervention is not a normative one but is at once empirical and theoretical. I want to concentrate on the way in which the proposed inhabitants of platform cities are imagined by the developers and promotors of these cities, in other words how the developers understand the "nature" of the inhabitants of their specific kind of these neoliberal smart urban developments. I show that the envisaged inhabitants of such platform cities are a specific kind of human being, not humanity in general but platform city people who combine a technologically enabled class and political identity (property owning, entrepreneurial, libertarian) with generic environmental "goodness," that verges on an imagination of transhumanist speciation (data-driven, surveillant, robotic).

2.1 THE PLATFORM CITY

The concept of the platform city is my own and is not (yet) a general one. It is not the primary purpose of this chapter to describe platform cities in general; however, I do need to provide a brief outline of the concept and of the broader argument here.

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In the planetary age, emerging conjunctions of technology, surveillance, security, and urbanism are networking ordinary objects and infrastructures via the "Internet of Things," "... a global infrastructure for the Information Society ... interconnecting things based on ... interoperable information and communication technologies" (ITU 2012). Up until this point, the primary urban instantiation has been termed the "smart city" (Coletta et al. 2018; Hall et al. 2000; Marvin et al. 2015). The smart city is an "urban assemblage" (Venn 2006), characterized by "sociotechnical imaginaries" (Jasanoff and Kim 2015) of pervasive and seamless wireless networks and distributed sensor platforms from video surveillance to meteorological stations, monitoring flows from sewerage to traffic to criminal activities and providing information in real-time or in anticipation of risks. Surveillance and security are uneasy components of these visions, but smart cities are inevitably disciplinary structures (Vanolo 2014) or surveillance cities (Murakami Wood 2015), because technocentric management of urban flows structurally requires data *about* everything, including people, and simultaneously requires everything, including people, to also *be* data (Mattern 2021; cf. Kitchin 2014).

"Actually existing smart cities" (Shelton et al. 2015) have often been unimpressive and radically incomplete (Murakami Wood and Mackinnon 2019). An early project, Rio de Janeiro's IBM-sponsored Smart City control room, was lauded by then Mayor Eduardo Paes as giving him the ability to manage the city from anywhere (Murakami Wood 2013), but it has had little long-term impact on urban security in Rio. Studies of India's "hundred smart cities" policy have shown that the ambitious scheme is creating very different and not necessarily compatible official and subaltern imaginations of urban futures and concepts of citizenship. In other words, while the official aims may always have been overpromised, citizens themselves have attempted to harness the opportunities offered to generate their own realities (Datta 2018, 2019).

However, before and during the now almost 20-year history of smart cities, there have been pre-existing and parallel histories of other urban forms like Freeports, Charter Cities, Special Investment Zones or Enterprise Zones, leisure/tourist cities like Las Vegas or Dubai, exclusive cities from gated communities to massive projects like Brazil's Alphavilles (see e.g. Caldeira 2001; Davis and Monk 2008; Graham and Marvin 2001), to the whole recent history of police and military urbanism (Graham 2011). For precursors, one can look to Malaysia's 1990s-in-origin Multimedia Super Corridor (Bunnell 2002) consisting of the twin cities of Putraya (administration) and Cyberjaya (business), or the much cited South Korean business district of Songdo (Halpern et al. 2013), and, of course, Singapore, a city-state that has come to stand for a great deal in this new model (Calder 2016; Mahizhnan 1999), probably much more than its actual history can bear (Walton 2019). The more educated designers also look to the modernist *tabula rasa* ideology of Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin or Ville Radieuse, or Costa and Niemeyer's Brasilia, but stripped of the latter's mid-century socialism, which is portrayed now as a naïve post-war dream of a common

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humanity, lost following the neoliberal turn of the 1970s which admitted no other options but free-market capitalism (see Slobodian 2018).

In various ways these other histories have intersected with smart cities and are often considered as simply another aspect of the same phenomenon. What I am examining is one such convergence: billion-dollar projects for new cities or urban neighbourhoods that demonstrate characteristics of several of these ideal urban forms. These hybrids are corporate-oriented and neoliberal whether or not they are created or managed by corporations directly. These are what I term *platform cities* because they exist on a foundation with a specific kind of neoliberal capitalism, which has important implications for the place of democracy in relation to the economy, and to which I shall return later.

There are significant differences between these new platform cities, which I explore in other pieces, but what is equally striking are the shared material and ideological elements. Briefly, the first of these is a noticeable, sometimes advertised, degree of separation from the surrounding polity, varying from at least some kind of local economic, social, cultural, or political autonomy through to a full-blown city-state model. Singapore's "smart nation" or the leisure/investment metropolis of Dubai are of course the inspirations here, but there are many older examples or even those to be found in fiction that are cited by proponents. Singapore is a particular example to this latest wave of platform city developers, mainly for its politics rather than its technological aspects: the concept of an independent city-state appeals partly at least because it is free from the supposedly constrictive embrace of the extended territorial nation-state. However, it is also an example of the second shared element: a highly neoliberal conception of governance in which democracy is de-emphasized or even abandoned versus financial freedom and property rights, while remaining visibly multicultural. The third is the dependence upon almost total data extractivism and ubiquitous surveillance, underpinned by some kind of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The fourth and final shared element is a bland neoliberal globalist aesthetics, which at its most extreme verges on a neo-colonial presentation. This consists of smooth computer-generated visualizations, smiling putative, often white or racially ambiguous residents, starchitect master planners, and advisory boards consisting of the "usual suspects" from the trans-national ruling class in law, urban planning, finance, and consultancy.

2.2 WHO ARE THE PLATFORM CITY PEOPLE?

That final shared element leads to an obvious question around the implied "nature" of the inhabitants, in other words the identity and subjectivity not of "actually existing smart citizens" (Shelton and Lodato 2019) but of the proposed platform city people. For the remainder of this chapter, I will concentrate on the shared characteristics of the envisaged new inhabitants of these platform cities, platform city people, based on five cases, a corpus whose publicity documents, plans, and charters

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or constitutions (where appropriate) I have examined and analysed as part of a preliminary study for a much larger project examining platform cities in an age of planetary crisis and surveillance. I have not given specific references to each of these quotations or paraphrases here. These projects are at differing stages: some of these remain on the drawing board, some are in development or being built, some have experienced setbacks, some have failed but nevertheless remain as inspirations for further smart cities development.

1. Sidewalk Labs' failed Toronto Quayside development;
2. Nevada's at least temporarily derailed "Innovation Zones" plan;
3. The Próspera Platform, still proposed for development, in Honduras;
4. Saudi Arabia's massive in-construction NEOM project; and
5. Japan's Super City policy, which plans multiple new AI-driven urban developments.

In this chapter, I deployed a simple thematic analysis to uncover the power relations behind talk and text, and the genealogical roots of clusters of meaning and how they have developed over time. This section is framed around declarative sentences that begin, "Platform city people are . . .," each of which quotes a term or more that are used by at least one of the documents produced by the proposed cities or policies that I have been examining. These declarative sentences are followed by explanation that develops, in brief, some aspects of the broader discursive formation of which the particular discourse is part.

2.2.1 *Platform City People Are Entrepreneurs*

Within a context of "test-bed urbanism" (Halpern et al. 2013), platform city people are portrayed as innovative risk-takers. Developing Adam Smith, Michel Foucault (2008) described the subjectivity produced by neoliberalism as *homo oeconomicus*, a humanness not characterized by intelligence or wisdom but by their market relationships. The platform human is the cybernetic upgrade of *homo oeconomicus*, perfectly adapted for the intensified neoliberal capitalist mode of production filtered through technology based innovation or disruption. NEOM is explicit that "[r]esidents of NEOM will . . . embrace a culture of exploration [and] risk-taking . . ." (NEOM 2020). The platform human is not a fixed subject, but a relentless innovator and experimenter: as Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Alphabet, asked us to imagine prior to the Sidewalk Toronto experiment, "all the things you could do if someone would just give us a city and put us in charge" (Williams 2017). But the city and its inhabitants are also themselves the subjects of continuous experiment – part of what it means to be a risk-taker in this context is to take on the risk to oneself and to absorb risk *for* the platform. And, as we have seen with Sam Bankman-Fried and FTX (Roth 2022), large-scale financial failure is always imminent and precipitous in platform capitalist culture.

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2.2.2 *Platform City People Are Free*

As Slobodian (2018) shows, in the dominant "Geneva school" of neoliberalism, nation-states have always been seen as a hinderance to the creation of a true world economy, and high (or even any) taxation and regulation were presented as preventing innovation. The platform city has adopted this idea that the most innovative spaces have always been cities, and free and independent cities are the best. While none of the examples I have examined makes explicit reference to Paul Romer's "Charter City" model (Romer 2010), most do have some kind of charter or principles that set out their independence from the surrounding polity, particularly Próspera and the proposed Nevada Innovation Zones policy, but also NEOM, which claims that it will have "a progressive law compatible with international norms and conducive to economic growth" (NEOM 2020). It is a particular and peculiar Randian "freedom from" which enables the platform human to remove themselves from responsibility and consequences for those unnamed others outside, who are clearly seen as lesser humans, and indeed "freedom from government." It is notable in this context that the Próspera Platform also includes, on its "advisory team," Oliver Porter, the founder of Sandy Springs, in Georgia, USA, a city notable for being the first to incorporate a public–private partnership model and the closest extant US city to being a charter city (Klein 2007).

2.2.3 *Platform City People Are Leaders*

NEOM's (2020) website claims that "[a]s a hub for innovation, entrepreneurs, business leaders and companies will come to research, incubate and commercialize new technologies and enterprises in ground-breaking ways." The Próspera website (2022) claims that the city "enables entrepreneurs to solve problems structurally and responsibly" and, according to its charter, in the first place only people with "significant business, management or leadership experience" are eligible to stand for selection to the Council that will run the city. The fact that this conception of leadership serves to embed existing power, prejudices, and inequalities is not a bug, it is a feature. It replaces Plato's elitist utopian model of *The Republic*, of philosopher-kings with entrepreneur-kings or, as we shall see, proprietor-kings.

2.2.4 *Platform City People Are Tech Bros*

Platform cities are founded in techno-determinism: whatever is wrong now, there is a clear path to a better, more prosperous future through technology. While, in many cases, there is no specific reference of any requirement as to the profession of platform city people, technology is almost always clearly implied. When Dan

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Doctoroff, CEO of Sidewalk Toronto, the development that would be built "from the Internet, up," addressed the question of who would live in the new neighbourhood, and said with a smirk that "they won't all be tech bros," his implication was clearly the opposite, that the target of this development was indeed young men in the tech sector (Murakami Wood 2020, 96). Nevada's Innovation Zones policy attempted no such deception: the failed bill specified the exact kinds of corporations that would be allowed to create an Innovation Zone, those working in blockchain, autonomous technology, IoT, robotics, AI, wireless, biometrics, and renewables. The last area seems to have been added on to claim some small amount of eco-credibility faced with the mounting reports of the unsustainability of blockchain and cryptocurrencies, but the important thing is that it was clearly still a technology driven sector.

2.2.5 *Platform City People Are Data-driven*

Platform city people will find strength through data. Their bodies will be maintained with vigorous and carefully calibrated exercise, assessed through wearable technologies. They will sleep exactly the recommended amount and will wake at precisely the optimal time every day. In Japan's Super City proposals, all of this data from multiple bodily and environmental sensors will be collected for medical and unspecified "improvement" purposes. NEOM's Head of Technology and Digital, Joseph Bradley, argues that the city will collect and use "90% of available data" for the benefit of its inhabitants. This benefit will come, as we shall see, from the analysis of all that data by AI.

2.2.6 *Platform City People Are Frictionless*

As if Giles Deleuze's "Postscript on the societies of control" (1992) was an instruction manual, platform humans will operate in all ways as smoothed, modulated, and unhindered. Nothing will slow down their movements or transactions. Nothing will impede the flow of goods, ideas, or finance. Japan's Super Cities are envisaged as entirely cashless, running on some kind of blockchain-based virtual currency – although it is unclear exactly what or how. But the spice must flow. Próspera offers virtual citizenship and the ability to access the platform from anywhere in the world: one need not be in Próspera to be part of Próspera. Sidewalk Toronto tried to recombine this virtual friction-free flow with material seamlessness: promising total convenience and integration of transaction and delivery with all services as literal infrastructure: in a network of underground tunnels, where a ceaseless traffic of AI-driven autonomous delivery vehicles would ensure the inhabitants of the rabbit hutch-like, reduced-size apartments would always get what they wanted ideally – once the Google predictive marketing analytics were functioning perfectly – before they even knew they needed it.

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2.2.7 *Platform City People Are Private*

Ironically, the platform human is both totally known to the AI-driven systems that harvest and sort and sift their data and to those others they chose to be known to, but private and indeed unknowable to the vast majority of ordinary humanity and the authorities and governments who would wish to tax them or regulate them. Their dealings are closed, their tax records sealed, their transactions in offshore banks – indeed, the entire geopolitical point of any of these developments is for them to be "offshore." That kind of privacy is very important to the platform city person. In other words, drawing on Foucault (2007), this is an inclusive, enfolding biopolitical governmentality – for those inside.

2.2.8 *Platform City People Are Safe*

In ways that are both implicit and explicit, total safety is promised by all these platform cities. Clearly the "risk-taking" that is considered so essential to the personality of the platform human does not extend to their own lives and well-being. Platform city people are happy to be checked out, examined, identified, evaluated, and cleared. Platform city people are happy to be under surveillance "for their own good," and suspicious of those who resist surveillance. The platform city person is not a threat, a terrorist, a criminal, or even anti-social. Platform city people raise no flags, they have no suspicious data-points. Their internet search history is impeccable. Platform city people are smooth, bland, and unthreatening. Their friends and family are just like them. And, despite the libertarian rhetoric, "social credit" style "assessment with consequences" is hinted at in several schemes and is overt in Japan's Super City proposals where good deeds will be rewarded with payment in an internal blockchain-based currency. This is what Chris Gilliard and David Golumbia (2021) call "luxury surveillance" – inside there are only carrots, no sticks.

2.2.9 *Platform City People Are Secure*

In most of the plans, security is not usually overt: you will not find the multiple control rooms, drone swarms, and a special new private security force that NEOM will have in its promotional literature, rather in security industry publications, one can find references to Mohammed Bin Salman's billion-dollar investment in security for the linear city (Murakami Wood 2024). It was only implied that Nevada's Innovation Zones would have had a Sheriff's department since it is by virtue of being politically a "county," that an Innovation Zone has control over local police (Blockchain LLC 2021) – a Sheriff's Department in Nevada is the entirety of municipal police, not some lesser rural form.

But, in some cases, particularly in the case of Próspera, security is a named function of the city in Article X of its charter, and here there appear to be no limits

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in the charter to the defensive rights of the platform city. It can have police, security, and intelligence services and perhaps even an army; and, despite being inside Honduras, it can even request security assistance from other external nation-states. This is unusual not in the depth of the possible security that platform city people will enjoy but in the fact that it is so overt. Ostensibly "small government" platform cities mask increasingly distributed and networked technologies of security and governance. All platform cities are highly securitized in their conception, financially and socially exclusionary, implicitly racialized/eugenic in some cases, metaphorically and legally, if not physically, walled and gated. This is the other side of the interior biopolitical governmentality. For those people outside, platform city governmentality is pure necropolitics (Mbembe 2020): their security/policing objects are not the safe platform humans but those risky external and excluded others.

2.2.10 *Platform City People Are Colonists*

The platform city is portrayed as an explicit island of safety in an implicit world of chaos. Platform city people are portrayed like brave explorers in a twenty-first century version of European expansion. In the case of Próspera, the literal island of Roatan exists in one of the most violent nations in the world, Honduras. However, the natives are friendly! In fact, the local inhabitants will be "integrated," guaranteed jobs at 25 per cent above the local minimum wage, but they will not be residents, even as the city is built on their lands. It is clear that they are not happy about this, but not being platform city people, their views are discounted (MacDougall and Simpson 2021). This builds in the model operated by Singapore with its thousands of Malay and other day-labourers who cross the international border morning and night to support this marvel of smart capitalism but who are not allowed to live there; or the armies of temporary workers who constitute 90 per cent of the population of Dubai or Qatar but are entirely outwith its polity.

2.2.11 *Platform City People Are Property Owners*

A key element of the contract is what makes a platform human is their investment in the platform city. The platform human owns property and, given the Lockean worldview that underlies this system, it is this ownership that grants them rights. In contrast, the "locals" will be "willingly" incorporated (Próspera) or removed like nomadic desert people who currently inhabit the area proposed to become NEOM (Whitson and Alaoudh 2020) to be imprisoned or simply executed (AFP 2023). It is a return of the colonial doctrine of *terra nullius* (Fitzmaurice 2007) and the *tabula rasa*, or where this doctrine has already been applied with extreme prejudice, as in Nevada, US, the land owned by corporations seeking to become Innovation Zones

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was simply assumed to be "uninhabited" and owned entirely by the corporation. Indigenous people are already assumed to be extinct (cf. King 2013).

2.2.12 *Platform City People Are Multicultural*

The language of "multiculturalism" and "diversity" is ubiquitous in the brochures and websites of platform cities. But, like the swordsman, Inigo Montoya's much-memed remark from *The Princess Bride*, it does not mean what they think it means. Multiculturalism in platform cities is coded language. It means whiter, less brown, less black, less of whatever the local surrounding population consists of, and safely, blandly, international, educated, schooled in, aspiring to, and representing whiteness. It is not so much that platform city people are necessarily visibly white, but rather that the platform human strives toward whiteness as a "habit" of existence or a normative condition of being (c.f. Ahmed 2007). They are Kees van der Pijl's new "transnational ruling class" (Van der Pijl 2005) and they "embody an international ethos" (NEOM 2020): educated, mobile, groomed, comfortably multilingual, and expecting the world they inhabit to conform to their expectations.

2.2.13 *Platform City People Are Designed*

In the brochure-websites of Próspera and NEOM, the future platform human lives in spaces that conjure the images of the technologies they develop: their preferred environments are created by the best architects, *Starchitects* (Knox 2011), like Norman Foster (one of the original advisors to NEOM) and Zaha Hadid Associates (the official architects for Próspera), who will generate sleek, minimal, and weightless living spaces, composed of glass, bamboo, and natural wood in neutral and calming colours, materializing the promise of 1990s techno-utopian hype, like *Living on Thin Air* (Leadbeater 2000). It should also be noted that clutter and visual noise confuse surveillance cameras and biometric recognition technologies (for more on the affordances of modern architecture for surveillance, see Steiner and Veel 2011).

2.2.14 *Platform City People Are Sustainable*

Platform city people are carbon-neutral and live in communities designed to maximize technological innovation to work seamlessly and sustainably. They like John Kerry's May 2021 statement that 50% of reductions in greenhouse gasses will come from future technologies, because these are the technologies they are building, and they trust that they are the people who Kerry argued would not have to give up their quality of life to stop the climate crisis (see Murray 2021). They know they are not responsible for the unsustainable practices of lesser people. However, like

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multiculturalism, sustainability is another code and part of an aesthetic politics of marketing. Platform cities can be seen as a form "becoming war" (Bousquet et al. 2020): a mode of geopolitics and of emerging conflict. There is unshakeable belief that the platform economy is a clean economy, but its environmental effects are externalized to distant places and to the future, as the research on energy use of server farms and bitcoin mines has shown. Thus, "sustainability" is another marker of inclusion and exclusion between the clean, sustainable inside and the environmentally degraded, unliveable outside, and this division between islands of clean perfect cities with clean perfect humans and the "dumb, rude and dirty" old cities (SAP 2013) outside will become a key characteristic of the politics of the Anthropocene, if platform cities are allowed to proliferate.

2.2.15 *Platform City People Are "All Watched over by Machines of Loving Grace"*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a constant in platform city proposals. It was at the heart of what Google was proposing to do with all that data in Sidewalk Toronto, and the bet on which Google is staking its entire future (Eliot and Murakami Wood 2022). NEOM will be a "cognitive city" that will make "everyday life seamless through invisible AI-enabled infrastructure that continuously learns and predicts ways to make life easier for residents and businesses." Japan's Super Cities will be where "artificial intelligence, big data and other technologies are utilized to resolve social problems" (National Strategic Special Zones 2020). The language of "social physics" and the idea highly amenable to technocracy that social issues will be solved simply by collecting and analysing data rather than through qualitative, participatory democratic deliberation, is everywhere here – and Carlo Ratti, one of the key proponents of such thinking in quantified urbanism, was a member of the original advisory board of NEOM.

2.2.16 *Platform City People Are a New Species*

With their technologically integrated body and life, platform city people are almost the beginning of the transhumanist speciation of humanity, as was argued could be the result of current trajectories in tech development a decade ago (Stephan et al. 2012). They will separate themselves from less human beings; they are better than other human beings. They feel compassion for those that are being left behind, but evolution is inevitable. It was easy to be sceptical of such claims in 2012, despite the longstanding warnings from science-fictional portrayals of the same outcome from H. G. Wells' "Morlocks" and "Eloi" in *The Time Machine* (1895) to Paul J. McAuley's "Golden" in *Four Hundred Billion Stars* (1988) and its sequels. These basic building blocks for transhumanism should remind us of the longstanding connection between fascism and the celebration of the machine, and the speed of

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technological transformation that caused many Italian Futurists to join Mussolini in the 1920s (Berghaus 1996). Thus it was striking how, just a few years after 2012, one could see the juxtaposition of Israel rebranding itself as the "Start-up Nation"[1] while its Prime Minister, Netanyahu, was almost simultaneously arguing that the strong and adaptable survive and the weak are destined to be erased.[2] David Golumbia (2009; 2016) has made similar convincing observations about the right-wing politics of Bitcoin, indeed that such is the ultimate "cultural logic of computation" more generally. With the emergence of the so-called TESCREAL[3] cluster, an increasingly coherent ideological constellation embraced by platform capitalist CEOs like Elon Musk, we see neo-eugenicism with technological determinism, neoliberal economics and right-libertarian social policy would seem to provide the up-front or retrospective justification for many more authoritarian platform city initiatives.

2.2.17 *Platform City People Could Be Robots*

For platform city people, it is easier to imagine robot rights than the acknowledgment of human rights for the workers who support their exclusive lifestyle or for the rights of other living beings. The consultants' report for the NEOM plan included the idea that 50 per cent of the population of the proposed city would be robots (Scheck et al. 2019), building on a rather curious fascination with robots evidenced by the granting of Saudi citizenship to "Sophie," a rather limited conversation bot, when neither Saudi women nor immigrants have full citizenship rights in the kingdom (Hart 2018). Again, this links into the TESCREAL constellation, with philosopher, Nick Bostrom's "long termism" specifically advocating policy directions based on the alleged ethical imperative of maximizing the supposed future trillions of "humans" living as uploaded consciousnesses in machines far beyond our solar system.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Platform city people are the proposed inhabitants of a new world: a clean, safe, sustainable, technologically advanced, and inventive world of minimal government and maximum empowerment and support for entrepreneurialism and the enjoyment of ownership. The problem is that it is a niche world, an archipelago of enclaves that constitutes only a tiny proportion of a planet in crisis, and its biopolitical exclusivity and violently exclusionary necropolitical character are evidence

[1] Start-Up Nation Central, https://startupnationcentral.org/

[2] Prime Minister of Israel official Twitter account @IsraeliPM, August 29, 2018: https://twitter.com/IsraeliPM/status/1034849460344573952

[3] "TESCREAL" stands for Transhumanism, Extropianism, Singularitarianism, Cosmism, Realism, Effective Altruism, and Longtermism, and was coined by Timnit Gebru (c.f. Gebru and Torres 2024).

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not of a desire to deal with the crisis itself but rather to engage in what Mike Davis memorably described as "padding the bunker" (Davis 1999) – retreating to the childish denial of an unreal security enabled fantasy. This is the California ideology (Barbrook and Cameron 1996; Turner 2010) taken to even greater extremes. This new California ideology (Murakami Wood 2024) is most clearly expressed in the eugenic TESCREALity of Nick Bostrom, and Elon Musk would see such developments as a form of lifeboat for those most worth saving, who would be the basis for what they regard as the ultimate future of humanity. Their stance is that we should abandon any hopes for real material developments that would benefit the vast majority of actually existing human beings and those in the foreseeable future, like social and environmental justice, if they imperil their imaginary science-fictional future universe. The point here is not even to consider what "we" might lose in this transition, rather to draw attention to this fracturing of any possibility of a collective "we" as it relates to humanity in the present and the concentration on a winnowed, broadly white, supreme, selective "elite." Platform city people are, therefore, emblematic of a kind of imaginary of human eco-socio-technological future that anyone interested in an equitable and just world should oppose as vigorously as possible.

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