# NEW URBAN FORMS
IMMIGRATION IN NETWORK SOCIETIES

Eugenia Tsagkaraki

**7 Gadilon Street, 11142 Athens, Greece, eugenia_tsangaraki@yahoo.com,
eugenia.tsangaraki@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT: The present analysis approaches the ways in which collective identity is constituted, through the model of multitudes, proving that, the way of multitude construction, shares an abundance of common characteristics with the way that collective identity is constructed. The two cases are often identified with each other and construct one another. The multitude produces collective identities and collective identities shape the form of multitude. Both models change in effect the image of the cityscape and can be used to understand in depth the spatial variations resulting from migrant populations' inhabitance.
KEYWORDS: immigration, integration, network society, new urban culture, identity, multitude
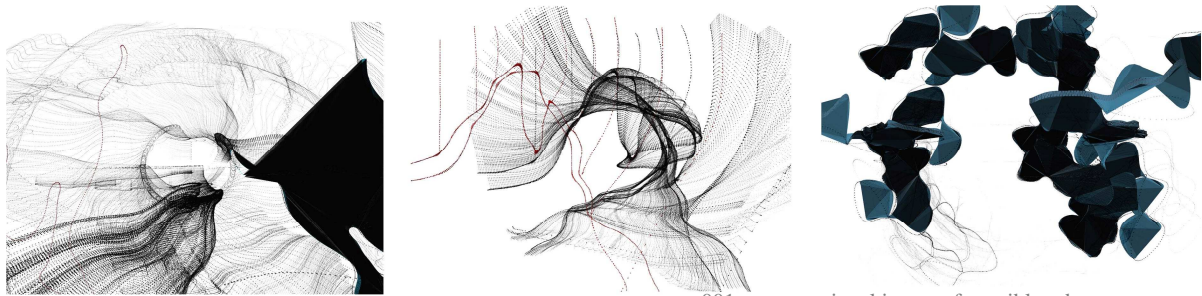
001: computational image of possible urban structures

All social processes have substantial spatial components, which in one way or another are materialized, and thus rendered empirically observable, in physical places, in particular cities and regions. As Manuel Castells mentions *"there is no theory of space that is not an integral part of general social theory"* [1]. In such a perspective, space is constituted by social relations and transformed along with them, following the logic of network, since such a model embodies an exceptionally large number of variations, persons with different backgrounds, ways of life and aspirations. The relations that these persons form, shape the way in which they move in the city, the way they use it and subsequently alter it and vice versa. The way of experiencing the city depends equally on the elements of the environment itself, and to the individual as a unique personality and a collective personality. This line of thoughts raises questions concerning the mechanism of identity formation and whether different identities, suitably organized and connected can produce space that would express their own needs, their right to the city, but also include this space in a wider picture of the city, meaning the picture of the current multicultural metropolis.

The present work concentrates on the significance of identity and its' formation through the network system and the concept of multitudes, in the way they are often defined by social and economic science.

1 CATALYST: THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

The claims of the city residents are expressed in urban space, sometimes through innovative measures and others through moderate measures, always however aiming to conquer an urban space that suits them. These types of claims are the expression of their right to the city. The right to live in it in their own terms and let the city become the image of their own needs. Although the right to the city is indefeasible, it is very often violated so much for the permanent/legal resident of the city as for its minorities, national or not. Main factors of abstraction of this right are mainly politics, economy and urban planning.

At this point we are going to concentrate more on the factor of urban planning since space can influence the most our lives, not only as a social structure but also as built environment. The well planned city allows the free expression in it. The city of barriers, causes fear and creates feelings of insecurity and reserve. The feeling of belonging disappears and life receives a procedural character of temporariness. In other words the resident is deprived both of the right to the city, and the right to claim equally his wishes. There is no need however to raise walls in order to remove the right to the city. It is enough to define in a clear way where one can be, and where not, where one belongs and where not. And this is done through urban planning.

Since the right to the city is constantly offended, the residents get organized and they extend their social relations aiming to the recuperation of this right. *"The right to city is not only the right to everything that already exists in it, but the right to be able to make the city become something radically different"* [2]. It is the catalyst of construction of communicational networks, social networks/movements and, as we will explain further, collective identities. Therefore, in order to better comprehend the way in which these social relations take shape while living together in the city and how they find ways of expression through the production and claim of urban space, we need to we make in this point a short report to the significance of networks as we meet them in the work of Manuel Castells, combining them at the same with the model of multitudes as they are discussed nowadays and of course the construction of identity, inside this "network" society.

2 ABOUT NETWORKS AND MULTITUDES

Networks emerge as the fundamental form of organization for the sovereign social activities and find their expression through social movements. The foundation material of this rearrangement is the space of flows [3], which cuts into pieces physical space, proposing a new logic of organization in which geography is simply one of the parameters, sometimes with and others without social importance. "The network", according to Castells, "constitutes a system from interlinked nodes, where each node, in a general approach, is the point where curves intersect"[4]. Actually the significance of each node alters, depending on its system of report, but nevertheless, forms always networks which organize virtually all sectors of social life. The networks are forms of organization with duration. What gives them their identity is the creation of certain patterns. For this reason partial and brief relations are not enough to create a network. A bidirectional relation between nodes and actions exists therefore where the one does not precede the other.

Connecting the significance of the networks to sociological matters, we can see each shaped relation between the subjects of local or super-local communities, as a network and the subjects as nodes of this network. Nevertheless the network constitutes a structure of relations where all subjects act according to a certain objective and express a common wish. In other words they share the same collective identity.

The way in which the network is altered is directly connected to its internal configuration, its identity. In other words the way in which the network changes in time, reflects its history, which is the history of all of its members and not the reflecting desire of one person. After all having an individual on the top of the network's power structure, instead of a common idea or objective, destroys the meaning of the network. We should not confuse however the existence of a common objective and history with the complete resemblance of subjects which are included in a network. The network is not based on the significance of homogeneity but on the idea of diversity.

Often, in order to clarify the significance of the network and to use this model for the description of social structures, scientists as Fritjof Capra, approaches the terms of swarms (biotechnological term) and multitudes (political/social term). These approaches, helps us to explain, on city scale, the way in which groups of individuals are organized in urban social movements to claim their rights. We can say however that, although the definition of network helps us to explain the local and super-local relations that take place between individuals (mainly those that are found in distance), in order to conceive the teleology of the network, it would be more useful to turn to the model of multitudes, since it is organized based on the notion of common purpose.

Analyzing therefore, the significance of multitudes, we meet the definition of Eugene Thacker, for whom the crowd constitutes a *"multiplicity of uniquenesses"* [5]. Opposed to the mass, multitudes do not constitute a whole, they can however be considered as forms with internal organization. More precisely,

they constitute a representative of self-organization. *"Networks provides information(…)multitudes changes it"* [6], and turns it into "space".

This definition of multitudes helps us to comprehend the organization of people in groups with common interests and consequently the motive force of social movements. It pushes us to seek deeper to the way they are constituted, and the significance of collective identity that emerges from within them. After all, individual and collective identity is what shapes the way of inhabiting the city and consequently the residents' claims for public space and the recognition of their particular identity.
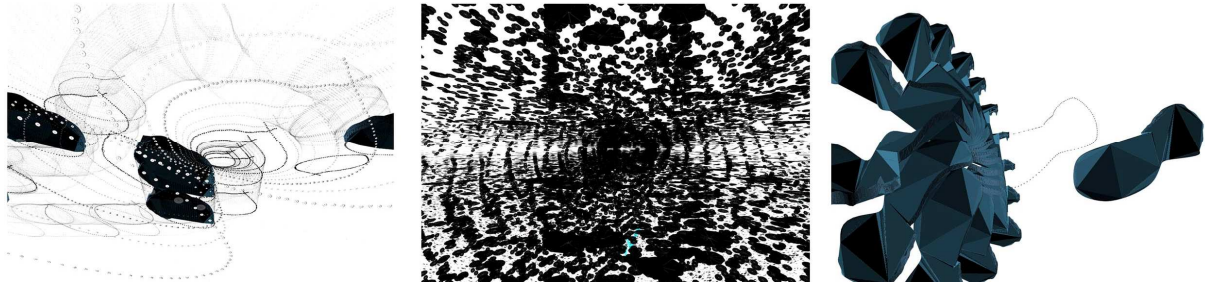
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3 CONSTRUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The significance of identity, as Richard Jenkins mentions, concerns *"the ways according to which individuals and collectivities are distinguished by other individuals or collectivities, in their social relations"*[7]. The last decades of the 20th century brought the issue of identity to the center of discussions, because of the existence of minorities that are determined by national, racial and religious characteristics in almost all western societies, and their claim of spatial rights. Each group creates its identity through a process of parallel actions between "the self'" and "the other". The rise and consolidation of an identity in a social space has always importance and repercussions, since it marks the existence of a group seeking its differentiation from the others and puts forward demands and objectives. Action and identity constitute aspects of the same matter, meaning that each form of collective action requires an identity through which the subjects are self-determined, seek to be acknowledged by others as a group, and achieve their goals. Thus, when we speak of identities, we approach the meaning of collective action, the relations of power that characterize it, as well as the institutional frame in which it is developed.

The way in which collective identity is constituted, is neither simple nor unidimensional. It begins obviously from the constitution of the primary identity of the individual that concerns its corporal undoubted characteristics, as the origin and the sex, and is followed by the constitution of its individual identity, through the acceptance and comprehension of the environment in which one grows. The nature of the latter however, which is incarnated in individuality and does not have meaning outside the world of other persons, presents differences in its constitution when we speak about minorities and marginalized groups. In these cases, together with the real identity, virtual identity of the individual is constructed and constitutes an integral part of the mental perception of others for the marginalized individuals. This process was named by the Goffman *"stigmatization"*. Of course, even if the stigmatization becomes more easily perceptible when we examine the marginal groups, by definition, it also applies from the side of the marginalized individuals towards those having the so called "politically acceptable characteristics".

Continuing our line of thoughts and approaching once more time the theory of Jenkins, *"the individuals are unique and various, but individuality is constituted socially"*[8]. It is clear therefore that the identity of each individual, as that of the multitude, is under permanent changes depending on time and space. Thus an integral part of the identity construction is the mobility and interconnection of individuals and multitudes *"Most people do not live their life attached in a community. They move between different communities, with limited engagement to each other. Their life spreads in ecumenical space: it combines bonds (in distance) with parallel activity in the households, in the neighborhoods and in the working places "*[9]. Even characteristics that would appear stable at first glance, as the concept of nationality, are determined procedurally and they arise from the duration and expression of give and take. As Barth mentions

"national collectiveness is independent from the individuals that compose it" and "a national group can survive despite the fact that individuals during their life might change national identities" [10].

In the same complicated, but in its substance subconscious, shaping of identity, results the constitution of collective identity which does not constitute nothing more than the process of multitude construction. According to Jenkins, there are two different types of collectiveness and consequently two different types of determination of collective identity. *"According to the first, the members of a collectivity can determine themselves as follows: they know who (and what) they are. According to the second the members might ignore that they belong to a collectiveness or even ignore its existence altogether. In the first case the collectiveness exists to the extent that it is recognized by its members, in the second, it is constituted through its recognition by exterior observers "*[11]. Let's remind at this point that multitudes are shaped by different individuals which might share no other common characteristic but the sense of common purpose. We are referring to unique individuals and not individuals with common identity, individuals with different individual identities and a common collective identity, that share a common trait, accepting the variation of other.

Application of this model and connection between collective identity and multitude can be found nowadays during the examination of social movements that represent a social form of multitudes.

Social movements combine three types of claims: program, identity and substance. On one part the claims of identity suggest that the members of these social movements, as claimants of some good, constitute a single force that should be taken into consideration. On the other hand, the claims of substance, suggest that bonds and resemblances exist with other political individuals, as excluded minorities, suitably constituted groups of citizens or faithful supporters of the state.

In short, it becomes obvious that each social movement contains constitutional similarities with multitudes. It is based on the uniqueness of its members, it depends on the environment which the members of the movement are called to alter (and vice versa), depend on space and time. This of course does not mean that, in order to constitute a social movement, physical presence of its members is required. Social movements and multitudes act based on common aim and not essentially space.

4 TO CONCLUDE

This analysis approached the ways in which collective identity is constituted, using the model of multitudes, proving that the way multitudes are constituted shares an abundance of common characteristics, with the way collective identities are constituted. In many cases the two phenomena are identified with each other and define one another. Multitudes shape collective identities and organized individuals shape the environment they live in. This relation has proven to be in effect during the formation of social movements, while its intense character becomes even more obvious when we examine social movements of wide scale and appeal. Especially those pursuing the right to the city in the most intense manner, as social movements in favor of immigrant populations and minorities.

These observations raise more questions than the ones we tried to answer, concerning mainly the conquest of the right to the city and the production of space, as an outcome of the collective identities' pursuits. Nevertheless in order to answer such questions, the approach that was attempted here is essential and integral part of a wider research in regard to the social shaping of the cityscape and the integration of different collective and individual identities in it.

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