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An analysis of Masdar City's communication strategy

Using speech act theory to go beyond the corporate façade

Personal research - TRP

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1. Introduction

Masdar City, the eco urban project currently taking place in Abu Dhabi periphery, is located around seventeen kilometers from Abu Dhabi city centre, between the Abu Dhabi International Airport and Yas Island.[1] The eco quarter is planned to cover an area of more than seven square kilometers in the periphery of Abu Dhabi and it is planned to accommodate ninety thousand people, forty thousand living there and the fifty thousand as daily commuters.

Abu Dhabi is the capital of one of the seven emirates of the United Arab Emirates, which are located in the Gulf Region. The Gulf Region, in particular the United Arab Emirates, is in the course of a spectacular urbanization, since the fifties, a changing moment for the Emirates because of the beginning of oil and natural gas exploitation. The discovery and the exploitation of the Emirate's oil property is the economic fulcrum of this metropolitan growth. During this period, little coastal towns rapidly changed to urbanized cities in a short lapse of time.[2] As said in the EPFL lapa study book; "The substantial growth of oil revenues during the 1950s triggered a rapid transformation of the small traditional and mostly coastal towns into modern multifaceted cities."[3] Such an impressive urbanization of the region is due to the large amount of money they started to earn after the offshore oil concessions.[4]

Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the two most important cities of the region, are new cities, not older than 30 years; build on the desert 'blank slate' in a really short lapse of time. This rapid growth lead Akram Belkaïd, who is an independent journalist, to state that, "A city like Dubai, which has tripled its land mass in 10 years, could legitimately be considered as a new town itself, (…)."[5] Such a characteristic gives to the Emirates an image of 'New World' to colonize, similar to other periods of colonization yet this time under the cloak of "investment" - where every construction project is possible thanks to the cultural atmosphere of big oil money.

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[1] Yas Island is the location of Yas Marina Circuit, the formula One Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, inaugurated in May 2007.

[2] Pictures from the fifties (in Heard-Bey's book) show images of little coastal villages and nowadays the landscape is all covered with big cities as Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The contrast between the situation in the fifties and the actual urban situation is impressively strong.

[3] EPFL lapa (2010), page 31.

[4] Oil concessions: An exclusive license granted by a host country to explore and develop oil.
Abu Dhabi, the Emirate where Masdar City is taking place, is politically more powerful than the other emirates, because the ruler of Abu Dhabi is also the president of UAE. Regarding oil and gas properties, it is the second country after Quatar, concerning amount of property, worldwide. In the chart "Oil and Gas in GDP," (EPFL lapa, 2010 page 35) Quatar and Abu Dhabi have the highest amount of Oil and Gas (in GDP). David Reiche, professor of Political Studies at the American University of Beirut, writes in is article: "Abu Dhabi's prosperity is founded on its abundant hydro- carbon resources, which generate around 70% of the emirate's gross domestic product (GDP), (…) The emirate owns 95% of the United Arab Emirates oil resources." (Reiche (2009), page 1)

[5] Belkaïd (2008), page 2.

The economy of the United Arab Emirates is still very oil dependent and it characterizes the Emirate energy's culture; a fossil fuel consumption well above the world average; based on oil, natural gas and coal utilization.[6] Such an important consumption of energies is represented for example in the massive utilization of air conditioning, and in the car friendly urban planning, not making possible to utilize other transportation than the car. Big amount of energy is also employed to make possible projects as acclimatized beaches, ski slope in Dubai, Ice Park in the desert and several others, demanding important amount of energies considering the desert climate conditions.

As a result of wealth, in Abu Dhabi and Dubai,[7] several spectacular urban projects, constructions and new buildings are mushrooming the space, expanding cities toward the desert. Huge urban projects are currently promoted, for example Saadiyat Island–Island of Happiness and the Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi and Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world in Dubai. These urban projects are related to a spectacle culture, giving these projects characteristics of primacy and superlatives, as the *tallest* building, the *first* ski slope in the desert and in Masdar City's case the "world's *first* carbon neutral" city.[8]

Masdar City, the eco urban project, is presenting the same characteristic of others urban projects about dimension, primacy and superlatives. In fact, Masdar Project is described in official presentation as the "world's *first* carbon neutral, zero-waste city""[9] and with slogan as "Masdar City offers the *highest* quality of life with the *lowest* environmental footprint."[10] Masdar Project differentiates itself from others urban projects about values; through its promotion of the ecological engagement of the project. In the project presentation, concepts linked to sustainable development are frequently mentioned. However, it is not clear how the project takes such indicators into consideration.[11] Such values sets, related to the environmental movement, originated in the occidental society, are caricaturized in such a large ecological project, as said in the project presentation, Masdar City is "the first world zero

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[6] The UAE are at the 11th place in the rank, for the oil consumption per capita by country, with 82.174 bbl/day per 1'000 people in 2006. United States are at the 23th place with 68.672 bbl/day per 1'000 people in 2007 and Switzerland is at the 54th place with 32.417 bbl/day per 1'000 people in 2007 (http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/ene_oil_con_percap-energy-oil-consumption-per-capita#source)

[7] Abu Dhabi and Dubaï wealth comes from difference sources. In Abu Dhabi case the wealth is linked to the oil properties; Reiche writes: "Abu Dhabi's prosperity is founded on its abundant hydro- carbon resources, which generate around 70% of the emirate's gross domestic product (GDP), (…) The emirate owns 95% of the United Arab Emirates oil resources." (Reiche 2009, page 378) In Dubai the wealth is principally generated in the finance services and constructions.

[8] Superlatives adjectives define these projects and characterize the discourse build around urban projects, characterizing the communication strategy.

[9] ADFEC (2009), *Today source for tomorrow energy*, page 5.

[10] ADFEC (2009), *Today source for tomorrow energy*, page 11.

[11] In the evolution of the project and its presentation, they abandoned the term of ecological footprint; they are now more frequently using 'low environmental impact'.

waste/zero car/ zero emission city" and it will have "the lowest environmental footprint". As a matter of fact, in the Gulf Region, a sort of 'caricature' of occidental society is visible in different project from the Dubaï-Disneylandisation to such a large eco-urban project as Masdar City.

The Abu Dhabi economy remains oil dependent and the current green energy global movement has motivated the Abu Dhabi government to think about an economic diversification in the energy field, planning an eco city completely based on new energies research and testing in the eco city. In fact, in 2006 Abu Dhabi's Government decided that an economy diversification and an engagement concerning ecological problematic should be planned as a challenge for the 21st century and they decided to plan Masdar City. The continuing demands of new energies and new technologies make an economic diversification plan based on green technology a viable economic plan. The economic diversification has the principal goal of keeping Abu Dhabi's leadership position in the energy field.

David Reiche, professor of Political Studies at the American University of Beirut, writes about the strategy diversification and the resulting benefits: "GCC countries would gain another important benefit from such an ecological transformation process: they would prepare themselves for the post-oil age. Their energy infrastructure would be ready for an era when domestic oil and natural gas are no longer available."[12] Such a goal is clearly presented in Masdar Project's official presentation: "The goal is the establishment of an entirely new economic sector within Abu Dhabi, which will assist economic diversification and the development of a knowledge-based industry, while enhancing Abu Dhabi existing record of environmental stewardship and its contribution to the global community."[13]

As Reiche says elsewhere in his article, "some see climate change negotiations - and the technical assistance that could come with it – as an opportunity."[14] The movement for environmental protection has therefore become a business opportunity for Abu Dhabi to remain a leader in the energies market. But with its climatic condition and culture of massive energy consumption, Abu Dhabi might seem not the best place to build an ecological city. At first glance, the Masdar Project, a 'zero consumption' city located in the oil-richest emirate, could generate an image of a paradox. Here enters the communication risk of a "misunderstanding" of the project – as yet another business opportunity in the land of luxurious oil consumption -

[12] Reiche (2009), p. 2.
[13] ADFEC (2009), *Today source for tomorrow energy*, page 4.
[14] Reiche (2009), page 5, cites Desai (2004).

and the subsequent necessity of a communication strategy that builds an environmental discourse around Masdar City.

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (ADFEC), the company behind Masdar, presents the urban project by means of a sophisticated and costly communications campaign; the communication aspect of the project is really relevant. The company uses advertisements, web sites, press releases, and several financial engagements with others companies and with local news paper (The National) to propagate its discourse, based on values sets linked to business culture and ecological values. These two principal values sets and their appropriation are the driving forces of the project promotion. It is evident that the project's promotion fits to a corporate culture linked itself to the current global energy culture, which is swallowing up green energy opportunities of the emerging energy market.

The importance of a controlled communication policy with a positive and attractive image is, for Masdar City, a financial necessity. Slogans like: "One day all cities will be built like this" - it is the central slogan of the communication campaign, but yet the city is still almost entirely a construction site. [15] This is an example of the blurring of the line between reality and fiction, truth and psychological persuasion, which is prevalent throughout the campaign.

I have decided to focus my analysis, based on speech act theory, on slogans as; "One day all cities will be built like this" and "Masdar City offers the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint", in the intention to better understand the project, keeping into consideration the author intention, in this case ADFEC, and the context where this slogan are taking place. This paper intends to answer to the following questions:

Thesis Questions: *How is Masdar City's communication strategy project a pre-determined value set borrowed from occidental sustainable development AND what sense, from an occidental perspective, can we give this project that goes beyond its communication strategy?*

The communication strategy and the discourse built around the project needs to be analyzed according to a precise methodology. It is important to establish a methodology of the type 'discourse analysis' to highlight certain aspects of the project that will remain hidden without an analysis of this type. I choose to follow 'speech act theory' to analyze ADFEC

[15] The construction of Masdar City is organized in seven phases; the first one being the completion of Masdar Institute of Science and Technology (MIST). The communication project is following the phases' schema; "One day all cities will be built like this" is a slogan from the first phase, currently in conclusion. Despite that our analysis will be focus on this slogan to a large extend. Nowadays "the reality of future energy" is the central slogan of the ADFEC communication campaign.

communication strategy and more precisely their slogans. In Speech act theory the principal idea is the distinction of different acts that a slogan entails; in this sense it is important to understand which intentions actors have in delivering precisely chosen slogans.

2. Speech Act Theory

I have chosen to use the speech act theory, founded by the philosopher of language John Langshaw Austin, for this analysis. It is necessary to follow a methodology of the type 'discourse analyses' taken from either linguistics or philosophy of language, to analyze the 'corporate communication' of Masdar. Masdar's discourse is filled of strong statements, often charged with values taken directly from Western culture. We shall first examine the general context of speech act theory. Then we shall look at the principal concept of the speech acts methodology to understand the basic logical operation. After taking into consideration such concepts, I will explain how the speech act theory is a good candidate for daily communication analysis. Such a simple analysis shall give foundations to extend speech acts to 'communication' in the corporate, above-mentioned sense. For the Masdar websites, brochures and videos take their full signification in their proper linguistic context.

Traditionally, philosophy of language deals with, in general, the meaning of words. Austin's speech act theory offered a totally novel approach in the mid-20th Century to this view of philosophy of language. Its analysis is not only focused on meaning of words in themselves, isolated from their context, but takes the context and the intention of the author or *non*-linguistic factors, into consideration. In his book about speech act theory, "How to Do Things With Words", Austin writes:

> (…) For some years we have been realizing more and more clearly that the occasion of utterance matters seriously, and that the words used are in some extend to be 'explained' by the 'context' in which they are designed to be or have actually been spoken in a linguistic interchange.[16]

The speech act theory is less concerned with 'meaning' of the linguistic expression, but offers a descriptive analysis of what happens when words are used and what is the speaker's aim in using such words.

Speech act theory is first considered as a theory about daily communication between persons, between speakers and listeners – it is an analysis of 'utterances'. When we are discussing any form of 'communication' – according to speech act theory – we are analyzing 'utterances'. In the philosophy of language, an 'utterance' refers not only to the vocal action

[16] Austin (1962), page 100.

but also to any "uninterrupted chain of spoken or written language" [17] and according to speech act theory "the phrase 'speech act' should be taken as a generic term for any sort of language use, oral or otherwise." [18]

The first step, according to Austin, is to isolate the fact that sometimes the act of speaking, claiming or uttering is also at the same time an act of doing. Austin writes:

> The uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as "just", saying something.[19]

Therefore according to Austin, beyond the act of utterance always is an action. A person utters something and does something at the same moment. The fact of 'doing something' mostly refers to the fact that the 'saying' has an influence on the audience.

2.1. The three speech acts

According to Austin it is necessary to distinguish between three different acts included in each utterance; first, the locutionary act or the act *to* say something:

> We first distinguished a group of things we do in saying something, which together we summed up by saying we perform a *locutionary* act, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense.[20]

The locutionary act is the simple fact of putting together words or forming a sentence with a certain sense. Again, Austin makes the important distinction between traditional 'meaning' and a new 'meaning' that takes the context of the utterance into account as seen in the next speech act.

Speech act theory says that the utterance itself is not only to say a series of words that make sense together, but it also implies two others 'acts'. The second is "the performance of an 'illocutionary' act i.e. performance of an act *in* saying something." [21]

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[17] Pearsall J. & others (2006), *Oxford English reference dictionary.*
[18] Bach, Speech Acts, page 2.
[19] Austin (1962), page 5.
[20] Austin (1962), page 105.
[21] Austin (1962), page 99.

> Second, we said that we also perform *illocutionary acts* such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, &c., i.e. utterance which have a certain (conventional) force. [22]

Taking into account the 'illocutionary' act of the utterance or its 'illocutionary' force means to include not only the immediate sense of the sentence, the one that results from the words syntax, but also the context of the situation.

Including the context is to understand words, charged of 'conventions', in the real world. By context we mean, simply, the situation in which the utterance has been spoken, written, or signed, as well as received. This novel sense of 'meaning', for Austin, does not come from words themselves but from the context they are wrapped up in. Austin, speaking about illocutionary act, writes that what I do in saying something is a conventional act – understood in its context trough convention; "the illocutionary act is a conventional act: an act done as conforming to a convention."[23] It is the constraint of social conventions that often lead the illocutionary force onto the third and last act – perlocutionary.

The third act, included in the utterance, is the perlocutionary act, the performance of an act *by* saying something:

> Thirdly, we may also perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring and even, say, surprising or misleading.[24]

The main difference of the perlocutionary act compared to the other two, in my interpretation, is that it is no longer a semantic interpretation of words but a psychological one – it is the effect words have on an audience. Austin writes about the distinction of the perlocutionary acts:

> Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feeling, thoughts, or action of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other person (…). We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a perlocutionary act (…).[25]

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[22] Austin (1962), page105.
[23] Austin (1962), page 105. Here we could reproach Austin for not making the distinction between a linguistic convention (i.e. putting the verb after the subject) and a social convention. We assume he intends the latter convention and will hereafter mean 'social convention' for 'convention'.
[24] Austin (1962), page 109.
[25] Austin (1962), page 101.

This is an essential point because it takes into account the fact that utterances influence an audience. While this may seem obvious, it is a mechanism that has far too often been ignored in discourse analysis. It is especially important for our purposes considering that corporate communication places a lot of importance on the impact that the message or the image, constructed around the corporation, has on the public.

2.2. An example from everyday life

I shall further explain the difference between the three acts illustrating a simple daily situation. For example, when a salesperson announces: "In ten minutes the shop's doors will close!" he is performing a locutionary act; reporting that in ten minutes they will be closing the shop's door. The sentence's traditional 'meaning' comes from the individual words and the sense we give them when put together in a certain way. On the locutionary level, we *only* understand that the physical door of the shop will be closed in a period of ten minutes.

The illocutionary acts takes into account the context and so the meaning of the sentence goes beyond the simple fact that shop's door is closing. The utterance, as illocutionary speech act, is informing costumers about the closure of the store or to warn them of the stores eminent closure. The force of the sentence, distinct from the individual words strung together, is in its context – it is getting late; people are still in the store, etc. This is how people "do things with words."

The perlocutionary acts is the psychological effect that the speech acts has on costumers. In this case the act to say something produces a reaction on the audience, for example the fact that costumers quicken their shopping's time. An utterance includes a perlocutionary force of having the aim to cause a certain reaction in the audience. Therefore the salesperson is performing the three levels of speech acts in uttering some words. The distinction between the three acts allows us to interpret the intention of the speaker, the utterance's context and the effect that it has on the public.

3. Methodology

I shall now examine the project from a communications point of view. By 'communications point of view' I mean the strategy established by the Masdar Company over the last couple of years to present the project to the public and to decision makers through the different media outlets available. 'Communication' or the 'act to communicate' is, in its most simple form, the action of conveying information. The information that the Masdar Company delivers is precisely chosen to transmit a certain message to the public. The analysis of such an aspect of the project necessitates a formal methodology. In the following chapter I shall explain by what means I intend to make this analysis.

3.1. From speech acts in daily life to corporate communication

This brief overview of speech act theory should give the basic concepts to build the methodology to analyze the communication strategy of Masdar City's case study. We need to analyze the intentions of the communication strategy. The theory of speech acts raises the important point that language is loaded with intentions, often not immediately related to the words themselves.

Now that the general lines of speech act theory have been sketched, we can explain how to extend the before mentioned concepts from daily life to 'corporate' communication. It will be important to elucidate the different acts (locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary) in corporate statements in an attempt to understand the intention of the speaker and the effect on the audience.

What do we mean by 'corporate communication'? A satisfactory definition cannot be given without examples and a detailed analysis of these examples – this is what the current work sets out to do in its integrity. But a succinct definition could be: the messages conveyed by a corporate entity (institution, business, government), to portray a pre-defined image. Perhaps more important than the message in corporate communication are the means. Everytime we open a magazine, a web page or turn on the televesion, we see how messages are transmitted by mass media: television spots, newspaper ads, corporate web sites, and social media outlets. Corporate communication should not be confused with, but does include, advertising.

Corporate communication often uses strong statements to present or promote subjects as conceived by communication specialists. These communicators are good at manipulating

statements. We shall show how this manipulation of language and facts can be analyzed using speech act theory. For these specialists are well trained in using locutionary acts that have strong illocutionary or perlocutionary forces. Often the locutionary act is quite simple – the simpler the better – but the effects on public are often managed to a professional degree. Reference

3.2. The 'spin' and intentional ambiguity of corporate communication

In corporate communication, reality is often misrepresented because the monetary interests of the company are involved – the description of reality is often distorted and does not always fit with the real state of the situation. This is the famous communication 'spin' on a given situation. This spin plays on intentional ambiguities to obtain desired psychological effects. Norman Fairclough, professor of linguistics at Lancaster University, speaks about ambiguity in mass media texts:

> One area of social life where hybridity has received particularly intense attention is media - the text of mass media can be seen as instantiating the blurring of boundaries of various sorts: fact and fiction, news and entertainment, drama and documentary, and so forth.[26]

It is important to recognize the blurring of these different boundaries. The theory of speech acts as applied to corporate communication is a rigorous linguistic tool to help us draw the line between fact and fiction. It will prove to be a good methodology to distinguish between the different possible intentional speech acts of authors and the effects that such utterances have on the public.

3.3. Conclusion to methodology

Taking into account the context of an utterance is an important point of the speech act theory. The contextualization will help to understand the ambiguity of an utterance and the intention of the author. It permits to understand both, what is said in the utterance and what goes unsaid. Distinguishing the ambiguity of the communication situation gives a better overview and a deeper understanding of the project's sense.

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[26] Fairclough (2009), page 35, cites: Mc Luhan (1964) and Silverstone (1999).

Throughout this paper, speech act theory will allow us to understand how Masdar Company has borrowed certain occidental values, as sustainability for example, to present the project and to give it credibility. Such values seem to build the base of the project, but with a deeper analysis, looking at the entire context, it is evident that such values are often empty of social awareness.

4. Analysis I: "One day all cities will be built like this"

First of all, a choice must be made among all of the different communication artefacts that comprise a corporate communication strategy. We chose to keep in consideration official text presentation, from web site and brochures, giving more attention to slogans. The ultimate goal of such an analysis is to describe the communication discourse as a separate but contingent element of the project in hopes of better understanding the urban planning project in its totality.

I have chosen to analyze the ADFEC communication strategy and more precisely their slogans, using the 'speech act theory'. Speech act theory allows for a rigorous distinction between the different linguistic meanings or levels of understanding of a statement. For example, the actual delivery of a slogan is a speech act in as much as it is a *locutionary act* - the simple act of putting together words in a way that makes sense. The slogan also implies an *illocutionary act* - the act of informing people of how wonderful this city will be. There is also the *perlocutionary act*, the act of having a psychological influence on the audience through using words.[27]

It is also important to underline that the majority of Masdar City's communication statements imply that the city already exists - but in reality the city is merely a construction site. [28] Such ambiguity is voluntary and has the aim to give a more reassuring description even if it differs from the real estate of the project. We could characterize the following analysis as a combination of speech act theory as applied to communication strategies as well as an uncovering of certain intentional ambiguities.

4.1. The slogan

In Masdar City's official project presentation statements are recurrent. The statement: "One day all cities will be built like this" is one of the central slogans of the project and it is a good example of the company's communication strategy.

The slogan on its face value, or the locutionary act of this utterance, has a simple meaning at first glance. However, the sense of the entire slogan goes beyond the simple 'meaning' of words forming it, if we take into account the context of the slogan and the possible author

[27] Concepts as: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act are from the speech act theory – they will be explained in the methodology chapter (see chapter 4. Methodology).
[28] Recently, the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology campus has opened; it is the only standing complex on the site (Article: Khaleej Times Online, 10th October 2010, *Masdar City: Practicing sustainable campus life*).

aims. Taking into account such variables, we can interpret it in different ways. To understand what the company aims to communicate we have to consider their intention and place it in Masdar's context. We shall illustrate the different acts that the central slogan contains:

	Locutionary act	**Illocutionary act**	**Perlocutionary act**
Daily communication	In ten minutes the shop's door will close!	I inform you (costumers) that in ten minutes you should be out of the shop.	Encourage people to go to the cash register.
ADFEC Slogan	One day all cities will be built like this.	We are building the exemplary "green" city in the world.	Convince people to invest in Masdar Project.

The above schema shows that an utterance represents several speech acts - the locutionary, the illocutionary and the perlocutionary – and gives a wide range of analysis for a given statement.

4.1.1. Three acts in "One day all Cities will be built like this"

"One day all cities will be built like this" is a good example of the style of Masdar's communication strategy.

The locutionary act

The statement can be divided into four sentence fragments: 'one day', 'all cities', 'will be built', and 'like this.'

> '**One day'**: the sentence fragment determines the temporal dimension of the statement and in this form it determines an uncertain time in the future, in other words: sooner or later. 'One' is a determinate qualifier, qualifying 'day.' The combination of the words 'one' and 'day' determine a particular moment, 'one day', but do not specify an exact date.[29]

[29] The term 'one day' is a good example of how one does something with words beyond their individual meaning. As an expression, it no longer derives its meaning uniquely from the words but from convention and context.

‘**all cities’**: The phrase refers to the subject of the sentence. The determiner ‘all’, next to the subject ‘cities’, establishes that the statement is referring to the whole quantity of cities of the world, not specifying characteristics as, location, dimensions of the city, climate conditions, or other parameters that would define more precisely ‘city’. Generally speaking, the word ‘city’ refers to a large town normally offering all services every city has in order to sustain a large population.

‘will be built’: the verb ‘will be’ expresses the state of an inevitable event. In this sentence fragment the inevitable event is the action to build cities.

‘**like this’**: the word ‘like’ when added to nouns means: to have the same characteristics or qualities than an object or thing or to be similar. In this case the object or thing is defined with the pronoun ‘this’.

The analysis of words, or the analysis of the locutionary act, considers words with their own sense. This analysis allows us to take a step back from the statement and the impression that we have at first glance. The analysis of the locutionary act is the starting point for the analysis of the other two acts.

The illocutionary act

To consider the context and the intention signifies considering the illocutionary act that the statement represents. Taking into account the context of Masdar City helps to understand the motivation of words choice, and so the intentional action that stays beyond and what the author, ultimately ADFEC, intends to do with this choice of words.

The temporal dimension, determined with the phrase ‘one day’, is vague. Through its conventional use as an expression, ‘one day’ could be paraphrased as ‘in the future but the date is not known.’ It is imaginable that ADFEC’s communication choice of an undetermined temporal noun is to avoid all the possibility of error of prediction, and so to avoid the possibility of criticism. The company’s illocutionary act gives the audience the idea that it will happen, but they are not taking the risk to say something more precise – maybe to not lose credibility if the plan will not fit with the reality of the facts. But it is more realistic to use an undetermined temporal noun because of the unknown evolution of every project. They choose to use ‘one day’ and not ‘in ten years’, which is much more undetermined. In this sense they aim to assure

the audience about the future happening of Masdar Project without emphasising on the proposed construction date.

The sentence fragment 'all cities' shows how the company aims to have an influence on a global scale, and that ADFEC intends to convince that their eco-plan is an example for every future city, without exception. The simple aim to give the 'green' example hides another goal. The company fixes in the statement fixes the possibility to export the project from Masdar location to another in the world and to build it in the same manner. The exportation of Masdar Project seems to relate to an idea of 'colonization' of others places around the world with the same project. The possibility to export the project in several places also relates to the idea of a 'worldwide uniformity' similar to supermarket chains or corporations that install their branch offices all around the globe. In Masdar City case the point of the localisation context is eventually more delicate because of the environmental and sustainable dimension.

The phrase 'all cities', and the utilisation of the word 'all' it is a sign of the absolutism of the sentence. They are not only saying that it is an example to take, but it is an example for every city that will be built in the future. They are also delivering an idea of 'city', in the formula 'Masdar City', when in reality Masdar's future population, 50'000 people, will represent only 5.5% of Abu Dhabi population. A more appropriate word to name Masdar would be 'neighbourhood'. This nomination is present in some presentation's text, but not in the big slogans.

In using the verb 'will be built' the company is saying that they have no doubt about the fact that all cities will be built like Masdar City. They are not saying that it is possible or imaginable; they are affirming that other cities like Masdar will exist. In this case too, they are delivering the idea of Masdar as the exemplary city.[30] Another verb as 'thought', 'conceived' will be more appropriate to fit to the variety of cases of cities in a sustainable way.

'Like this' refers to Masdar City, in the sense that: "all cities will be built like Masdar City". Using this form it implies that the object 'this' or, in this case, Masdar City, exists. The phrase 'like this' refers to the fact than a future city will be conceived like Masdar City or in a similar way. We could think that the project is already accomplished and functional, in reading

[30] Knowing that the building industry is an important cause of CO2 emissions, the statement should be reformulates to fit to sustainable values taking a clear position about the problematic of CO2 emissions. For example, it will be more important to say: "One day all cities will be conceived like this!" This sentence's version leaves open the possibility to transform and think in a sustainable way the existent infrastructure and not only to build the city. For example, an existent neighborhood can be transformed to achieve sustainable values. For example the neighborhood Vauban in Freiburg im Breisgau was conceived in 1996 on the site of a former French military base. Twelve barracks were transformed into apartment buildings, others buildings were added to provide housing to 5'000 people in total. It is a good example of a site's transformation developing a sustainable-based eco-neighborhood. It is not always necessary to build the eco-quarter from nothing like in Masdar City's case.

the slogan, when in reality the situation is more complicated and the eco- neighbourhood is far from being finished. ADFEC appears to have the intention of making the public believe that Masdar City is already finished.

'Now under construction' is written in little white size on the advertisement page;[31] it is almost invisible besides the colorfully computer treated image of Masdar City's street view. It is not an indifferent choice of the company to write it in little size and in white color. The company clearly aims to make the message almost invisible. To have a respectful relation with the audience ADFEC is obliged to say that the city is at this moment under construction. For the company it is better, to make the message not much visible and that the public does not pay attention to this status information.

In releasing the slogan, ADFEC aims to transmit a message. The statement informs the audience of the fact that the future cities will be build like Masdar City eco-neighbourhood or "We (the Company) inform you (audience) that one day all the future cities will be build like Masdar City" or "We inform you that we are building the exemplary city for every future cities." The fact to inform the audience about such idea shows the attitude of the company vis-à-vis the public. In fact it shows how the company believes or pretends to believe that Masdar is the exemplary city for the future generation on a global scale.

We could also formulate the statement as an imperative: "Everybody must build all cities like this one!" ADFEC aims to give a template for future cities. The imperative tone of the illocutionary act shows the Company's act of ordering and in this sense they are placing themselves in a leader's position vis-à-vis the world. The slogan, taken as an imperative, also gives an absolutist image of the company and subsequently the Abu Dhabi government. ADFEC is making a forceful statement about what will happen in the future, not only for what concern their region, but also for 'all cities'. By founding a company around Masdar City[32], the gov-

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[31] See Attachment, page i.

[32] Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company or ADFEC is the general organization, under the name Mumbadala Company or Masdar, supporting Masdar Project. ADFEC, a 'multifaceted company' (masdar.ae) is a government-owned company; "driven by the Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, a wholly owned company of the government of Abu Dhabi through the Mubadala Development Company." (Masdar (2009), *Today source for tomorrow energy*, page 3) The Mubadala Development Company has the mandate to diversify Abu Dhabi's economy. Board members are people who are or were, into the past, involved in oil and gas industry or in business management. For example, Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, the Masdar's chairman, is an important businessman; beginning is career in Abu Dhabi Oil National Corporation, the fourth largest oil company, with access to oil and gas reserves. ADFEC is not only implicated in Masdar Project, but it is also financially implicated in new energy projects in other nations. For example, ADFEC is one of the associated companies involved in a big solar project in Spain, called the Torresol Energy ventures. Besides that, ADFEC is involved in different parallel events. For example, the company is the main organizer of the World Future Energy Summit and the European Future Energy Summit. Events like these invite companies, engaged in new energies, from all over the world, to sell and buy new technologies and principally find important partnerships with others companies. These summits are more similar to a new energy fair than to a place where people exchange ideas about environmental problems. The company is also involved in mass media. ADFEC is the principal associate of the CNN's transmission, Earth's Frontiers, about renewable energy solution around the world. Such

ernment is able to act quickly in a region where government bureaucracy is notoriously bogged down as well as communicate from behind the corporate name. The public tends to more easily accept absolutist and imperative statements from a corporation, who is expected to do anything to make a profit and thrive in an open economy, but becomes wary quickly when a government uses similar strategies. It is no surprise then that the extremely close relationship between the Abu Dhabi "democratic" monarchic government and the Masdar City administration and finance is kept out of the brochures and advertisements.

The statement "One day all cities will be built like this" is strongly charged to convince people from around the globe about the pragmatism of Masdar Project. The aim to convince people has the goal to make people believe in the project, a really important point for the project's popularity. The final goal is to involve into Masdar Project business companies and researchers to improve the economic and scientific domains.

The perlocutionary act

The impact that the campaign has on the public is where the slogan takes its full, intentional meaning. The statement "One day all cities will be built like this" has different effects on the audience depending on how the person perceives the project or on which aspect people are more attentive.

Potential investors in the project are supposed to be impressed about the exclusivity and the primacy of the project, and maybe they should be. They may be attracted by the fact that Masdar Project is exemplary for every future city, for if true, by investing their money in a city's technology that could be exported around the world, their business is going to thrive beyond the fossil fuel based economic limits. The slogan gives the impression of investing in the future, in a reality born from science fiction.

Indeed, the futuristic ecological project taking place on the desert's 'blank slate', a place where it is possible to invest in unimaginable new technologies, does seem like science fiction. But the fact that it is actually in construction, with a first phase already completed, makes it much more attractive for possible investors by giving credibility to the project. By investing in

collaborations probably mean significant investment of money for ADFEC. Collaborations like this one are really important to create strong relation of collaboration with others companies.

science and giving a futuristic appearance to the project, the Emirates are trying to pass from science fiction to science fact.

Possible investors may be persuaded by the slogan that they are making a good choice for their business. In the advertisement this effect is reinforced by the text below the advertisement: "(…) to learn how partnering with us can transform your business".[33] It is clear that people could be attracted by the possibility to invest in Masdar Project also because of the 'free tax zone' state and the liberty of testing new technologies on the site.[34] In this sense the green city is taking an aspect of a green 'gated community' - on one hand because the economic free tax aspect and on the other hand because of the elitist population. This sense of security in a region such as the Gulf is in itself, an attraction for a certain group of people.

The attraction to the project is not the only effect; one other possible point of view can be doubt about the project's viability and global success. Making people believe that the city is already finished by using ambiguous words as 'all cities will be built like this,' delivering images of an 'operable' city when it is not the case can create doubt in people. It seems that ADFEC needs to construct an artificial façade that does not fit to the real state of the project. When a project needs a façade image, the audience can suspect that they have something to hide and start doubting the real development of the project. This is one of the unintended consequences of the communication strategy.

4.1.2. Visual Communication

The visual dimension of the advertisement is an important aspect of the communication strategy because it gives additional support to the slogan "One day all cities will be built like this."

One possible methodology for a visual communication analysis is 'compositional interpretation' as explained by Gillian Rose, a British geographer as:

> "… a method that offers a way of looking very carefully at the content and form of images. (…) 'Composition' refers to the structure of an image: how all its elements combine together (...)."[35]

and

[33] See Attachement, page i.
[34] Masdar first phase has been to build the Masdar Institute of Science and Technologies and to find business and scientific partners. After this phase the main goal is to find the best technological solution to achieve Masdar's ecological goals. In the advertisement is written, "Organizations and institutions from around the world are coming here to pioneer solutions to the global energy challenge." (See Attachment, page i)
[35] Rose (2005), p.70.

> "The 'compositional interpretation' claims to look at an image for 'what they are', rather than for, (…) what they do or how they were or are used. (…)"[36]

It is implied that an image is composed of several elements in a thought-out combination and it is important to take all of them into consideration during the analysis. Such elements are principally: the content, the colors, the spatial organization and the light. As exemplified in Gillian Rose's book, "(…) the notion of composition refers to all these elements in combination."[37] All the elements should be taken into account because all of them are important for the image's content. To analyze such elements in a rigorous manner it is important to firstly distinguish them, analyze them and then look at the totality of the analyzed image.

An analysis of an image that follows the 'compositional interpretation' is, above all, a description of the image. Gillian Rose writes about this initial approach to image's analysis;

> "(This methodology) is very useful as a first stage of getting to grips with an image that is new to you, and it remains useful as a way of describing the visual impact of an image. (…) 'compositional interpretation' may also begin to say something an image's possible effects on a spectator."[38]

In this sense we can then relate elements of the image analysis to the slogan: "One day all cities will be built like this," understanding which are the image's effects on the audience as a part of the perlocutionary act of the slogan.

The image is computer-generated and represents an artist's vision of a street in the future Masdar City. [39] The content of the image is a lively street where people seem to be enjoying their time. The population in the city is composed of different types of persons, locals and occidentals, of different ages and both sexes. Representing both target cultures is a way to get the attention of a wide public and to create the psychological projection of living in Masdar City. Even if the population in the image is composed of people from different cultures, they are all from the same affluent class.

The fact that the people in the image are affluent locals or occidentals is a sign of the project's elitism. The characteristic of elitism corresponds to the project's official texts presentation, as with: "Masdar City will be as great to live in as any world-class city. It just hap-

[36] Rose (2007), p.36.
[37] Rose (2007), page 40.
[38] Rose (2007), p.57.
[39] See Attachment, page i.

pens to be green as well."[40] The utilization of words as 'great' or 'world-class city' refer to a certain standard of life and to the characteristics of primacy and superlatives that several Emirate's urban projects presents. It is a general tendency of the region to construct such important projects dedicated principally to high social class of people.[41] Here we find a coherent message as expressed in both text and image.

The content looks like one that we could find in a holiday brochure. It gives the audience a sense of vacation and the idea of a paradisiacal place where people can go to relax. In the street there are palm trees and most of the occidental people walking around are wearing shorts and sandals. The city in the image looks clean, everything is operable and nothing seems to be under construction. The image has a goal similar to the slogan "One day all cities will be build like this." [42]; it is to make believe the audience of the current operability of Masdar City. The image, as well the slogan, could lead the audience to believe that Masdar City is finished to be construct. In reality, only the first functioning set of buildings comprising the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology has been inaugurated in October 2010. The image aims to assure the general public of Masdar City's existence and realisation.

The colors of the advertisement are bright colours, and lighting is an important aspect. Colors and light have the potential of seduction, referring to the model of advertisement's images and suggesting a strategy of attraction. In Joannès book, about publicity, it is written; "Plus la communication tend vers la publicité, plus elle insiste sur les effets sensoriels et émotionels des couleurs"[43]. In this sense communication based on the publicity model has deeper effect on people because it reaches more emotional levels.

The light of the image is mostly artificial, coming from inside of buildings; street's lamp and the interactive plan of the city and it characterizes the bights colors of the image. The light as the effect to emphasize determinates point of the city as in this case the impression of the predominance of high tech materials. The low amount of sunlight is also due to the architectural structure of the buildings-high structures and high-density building, protecting the desert city from the high amount of daily sunlight.

The architecture of the city is also characterised by high tech materials such as solar panels covering buildings' facades and roofs. In this sense, they aim to show a high tech image of the city to attract people, mostly from the scientific research's domain. Another im-

[40] ADFEC (2008), *One day all cities will be built like this*, p. 24.
[41] Such as financial investors and scientists.
[42] See Attachment: page i.
[43] Joannès (2005), page 89.

portant point about the Masdar City planning is the pedestrian friend characteristic, indeed there is no car in the city and all the people is walking around. Such characteristic gives the public a sensation of peace and security; beside an important environmental friendly quality.

In Masdar's official presentation, we often find computer-generated images; the company released several images of an 'operable' Masdar City and it is difficult to find real picture of the site.[44] To release computer-generated images and to not release actual pictures of the site is part of the communication strategy. Such approach suggests the construction of a façade's images that avoids confronting the real state of the project; it fits to current standard communication strategies where the finished product is unveiled at the end. It would be refreshing to change this formula and show the real development of Masdar's construction site and even lend some credibility to the project.

The image that ADFEC releases for the project is a question of reputation; the picture is part of the project's quality label. In releasing an image of a shiny, high tech, lively and operable city, ADFEC aims to reassure the audience about the project future functioning.

Characteristics as artificial lights, bright colours and cleanliness make the street in the image look like more of a shopping arcade than a real city. A certain audience could be appeal to this type of city because of a sentiment of security and paradisiacal image of the eco-neighbourhood. The high tech aspect might also result very attractive for a scientific audience that see in the project a futuristic city where ever seen technologies are setting up. On another point of view, a sentiment of cold indifference might be an effect of these polished computer-generated images. The city might result too impersonal and aseptic to make some people want to live there. It is in this way that all the elements come together and compose the image, producing a determinate effect on the public.

4.2 Conclusion to first analysis

The slogan's structure and words composing it show how the ADFEC aims to make the project model for all future cities. In this sense, the final idea is that it is possible to export Masdar Project as an exemplary one for 'all cities'. Some characteristics of the image that goes with the slogan, as the fact that it could resemble to a shopping arcade, sustain the idea of a city that is possible to export in other location.

[44] See Attachments, pages i, iv and v.

The slogan has an allure of prediction because of the time dimension, it is a generalisation over the totality of cities and has the imperative tone of the statement. ADFEC is here taking a leader position not only in the fact that they are building the exemplary 'green city', but also in the fact they are predicting what will happen in the future.

Words, composing the slogan, are showing a certain ambiguity as the utilization of the form 'like this'. The form 'like this' leaves open the possibility of interpretation that the project is already finished.[45] Furthermore, it is not clear on which levels others cities would have similar characteristics; it is not clear if it is about environment, luxury or new technologies and if the three are all taken into account. It is a move to leave the interpretation to the audience that will keep the project's side in which they are interested. ADFEC aims to diversify and enlarge the possible audience interested in the project and reputedly engaged in Masdar City. The current state of the project is left aside in spite of slogans and images that leave the possibility for the audience to interpret and imagine Masdar Project.

[45] The first functioning building, Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, was inaugurated in October 2010 (Article: Khaleej Times Online, 10th October 2010, *Masdar City: Practicing sustainable campus life*).

5. Analysis II: "Exploring Masdar City"

5.1. Introduction

Masdar Company has recently produced a brochure called "Exploring Masdar City" in the form of a guided city tour. [46] The brochure has an allure of a tourist brochure of a holiday location and is divided in 2 sections: section 1 "Masdar City tour" is a presentation of Masdar City in twenty points located on the Masdar City plan; [47] section 2 is titled 'pilot projects' and presents some of the current projects and companies that are involved. I shall focus my analysis on the introductory text of section one.[48]

In this chapter I shall look at the evolution of the communication strategy in analyzing the brochure "Exploring Masdar City" produced for the opening of Masdar Institute of Science and Technology (MIST). Although the basic ideas that Masdar Company wants to communicate are similar to the first project presentations, this brochure is more sober than past ones and strong slogans are rare. I shall analyze the evolution of slogans comparing two similar statements; one from the beginning of the project and the most current one.

5.2. Masdar City – the presentation

"Exploring Masdar City" is a brochure intended for visitors to Masdar City – following the opening of the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology the company intended to welcome numerous visitors that will come on the site, previously closed to the public. Now that the site is open the need for a brochure that gives a realistic image of the site is obvious.

The presentation's text is divided in seven sections, "seven overriding characteristics"[49] that define Masdar City's sustainability efforts. These sections are: 'Optimally oriented,' 'Integrated,' low rise - high density,' 'Vibrant urban realm,' 'Pedestrian friendly,' 'High quality life,' and 'Convenient public transport'. I concentrate my attention on the section "High quality of life."

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[46] ADFEC (2010), *Exploring Masdar City*.
[47] ADFEC (2010), *Exploring Masdar City*, page 5. See Attachment, page iii.
[48] ADFEC (2010), *Exploring Masdar City*, pages 1-5.See Attachments pages ii and iii.
[49] ADFEC (2010), *Exploring Masdar City*, page 2. See Attachments page ii.

5.3. A "High quality of life"

In the section titled "High quality of life" of Masdar City's presentation, the principal idea is that Masdar City is based on sustainable values and at the same time provides the highest quality of life to people that will live there:

> High quality of life: Masdar City is designed to provide the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental impact (…)[50]

The locutionary act

The first step of the analysis is to define the principal words that are composing the slogan or the idea by dividing the statement into several fragments. The sentences' fragments are: 'Masdar City is designed to provide', 'highest quality of life' and 'lowest environmental impact'.

> **'Masdar City is designed to provide'**
> 'Masdar City': It is the subject of the sentence.
> 'is designed to provide': The verb of the sentence subject is in the passive simple present form of the infinite verb to design. The meaning of the verb is: do or plan something with a specific purpose in mind. In this case the subject is designed to make available for use. The verb 'provide' normally refers to services.
> **'Highest quality of life'**: object of the sentence the thing that is provided.
> 'highest': it is the superlative form of the adjective meaning great or greater than normal, in this case about in quality. Something that is absolutely favorable to quality.
> 'quality of life': Can be taken as an expression together. With quality we normally mean the general excellence of standard or level of something, here the standard of living.
> **'Lowest environmental impact'**
> 'lowest': it is the superlative form of the adjective meaning the absolute minimum possible amount,
> 'environmental impact'': the effect or influence that the human activity has on the natural world. The natural world can be considering as a whole or a particular geographical area.

[50] ADFEC (2010), *Exploring Masdar City*, page 2. See Attachment, page ii.

It is interesting to see that in an official brochure from 2009[51] the same slogan appears but with some significant differences. The slogan from 2009 is: "Masdar City offers the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint"[52].

> **'Masdar City offers'**
>
> 'Offers': the verb is in present simple form, third single person. With offer we mean to proffer or present something to someone to accept or reject as so desired.
>
> 'footprint': the impression left by a foot or shoe on the ground or a surface. In the environmental science domain, the term means: the impact on environment of human activity[53] in terms of pollution, damage to ecosystems, and depletion of natural resources.

The illocutionary act

Let us now consider the two versions of the statement from an illocutionary perspective:

> "Masdar City is designed to provide the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental impact"

and

> "Masdar City offers the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint"

I shall take into account the context of these slogans and the author's intention in using some precise words and in changing two of them.

'Masdar City is designed to provide' is the first sentence fragment. In saying that Masdar Company says that the city is created and planned to supply services, as every city aims to do,

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[51] ADFEC (2009), *Today source for tomorrow energy*.

[52] ADFEC (2009), *Today source for tomorrow energy*, page 11.

[53] The Ecological Footprint Indicator, elaborated by the Global Footprint Network, is enjoying a large success in the domain of ecological initiatives by playing an apparent monitoring role. Yet, the Ecological Footprint Indicator is lacking in methodology and in its application values. For example, the Indicator defines the earth biocapacity as the total of area biologically productive land and water. The total productive surface groups five sorts of surfaces: cropland, grazing land, forest, fishing land and built-up land. The surface's planet is standardized assigning a global average value of biocapacity to each surface type. The indicator establishes a "blanket principle"; the global productive surfaces considered in the ecological Footprint calculation, estimated of 13.4 billion hectares in 2005, are conceived as presenting similar ecological characteristics and the considered diversification are limited. For example only for cropland is utilized an extended form of calculation, that considers yields local factors. Besides that, according to the methodology, built-up land biocapacity is equal to 0.08 gha (global hectares pro capita) and the value is the same for his ecological print,(page 14 national footprint account), therefore the ecological deficit is void. Following the reasoning, constructing buildings does not induce an environmental damage, a doubtful affirmation. Such a statement is an example of the indicator's methodology frailty. Exemplify by Piguet F.P., Blanc I., Corbière-Nicollier T, Erkman S., (2010).

to people that aim to live or work there. While in the slogan from 2009 "Masdar City offers the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint" the verb is in the present simple form, a more direct formula than the passive form of 'is designed to provide'. The present simple form of the verb 'offers' fixes the subject Masdar City as an active entity that has something to give. On the 2010 version, Masdar City is considered as an entity that has been planned 'to provide' something and not as an active entity. This difference shows a change in the attitude of the communication strategy; if the first verb shows an attitude of self-assurance and straightforwardness, the second one shows a reorganization in a direction of a more modest attitude. In the 2010 version, Masdars Company promises to make available something, as 'quality of life', in planning the ecological project.

When using the verb 'offer', a verb that usually refers to products, they make a commodity out of 'quality of life'. In this case, it is really important for the company to sustain the idea to sell a quality Masdar product. Currently, the verb is 'provide', which normally refers to services. In the second version of the statement 'quality of life' is considered more as a service that every city aims to provide and is less concerned as the selling of a product.

Masdar Company promises to give the 'highest quality of life' to people who live or will live there. Such an idea of quality of life is recurrent in the project's presentation and it represents a central idea of the project's sales pitch.

> (…) Masdar City will itself demonstrate that much higher levels of sustainability than previously imagined are achievable, even while providing a high-quality living and work environment.[54]

and

> Masdar City will be as great to live in as any world-class city. It just happens to be green as well. (…) The environmental performance of Masdar City is one of the key design principles, but it is as important to the creators that it also provides an enviable quality of life.[55]

and

[54] ADFEC (2010), *What is Masdar?*, page 12.
[55] ADFEC (2008), *One day all cities will be built like this*, page 24.

> The initiative makes ecological footprint reduction practical for residents to achieve – without sacrificing the comfort of the modern urban lifestyle.[56]

Looking at brochures and images of Masdar City it is clear that the idea of quality is accompanied with an aim to achieve a luxury status.

Masdar's playground is reserved for *highest* classes of people that will live in the *most* luxurious ecological apartments without the guilty feeling of spoiling the earth – now that is luxury. The communication act promises luxurious life style in the ecological future city as written in the brochure: "Masdar City will be as great to live in as any world-class city."[57] Masdar Company sustains that the 'highest quality of life' comes by with the 'lowest environmental impact'. The superlative form of the two adjectives 'highest' and 'lowest' shows how the company promises the exclusivity of the project to interested people. In saying that the project has the 'highest quality' and the 'lowest environmental impact'[58], the company shows an absolutist attitude, as in the project's denomination: Masdar City is the first absolute 'green city', zero waste - zero carbon - zero car city.

In putting these two main characteristics as 'highest quality' and the 'lowest environmental impact', the company aims to enlarge the possible audience. On one hand, they aim to gain access to the highest social class of people who could bring wealth and reputation to the project. On the other hand, they are looking for qualified people such as scientists, researchers or intellectuals who will approve the project on the conceptual level as a sustainable one and thus give ideological currency to the project. The project appears to be dedicated most of all to an elite of rich and intellectual people, than to the global population.[59]

Furthermore, a change in denomination of the environmental dimension of the project from 'lowest environmental footprint' to 'lowest environmental impact' can be remarked. The most recent version is vague and it does not refer to a precise sustainable value. Masdar Company is now more careful in using a vague definition of the environmental dimension. The

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[56] ADFEC (2010), *Why is Masdar sustainable?*, page 5.

[57] People from high economic classes will have the possibility to live in Masdar's luxurious apartments, contrary to workers that are now on the construction site.

[58] In the precedent slogan they speak about the 'lowest environmental footprint' and now they are not referring to the ecological indicator anymore. They avoid the indicator, even if one of the project's goals remains to reduce the Abu Dhabi Ecological Footprint. The reduction of Abu Dhabi Ecological Footprint is presented in official presentations as a big ecological challenge seeing the actual position of the United Arab Emirates having the world's highest average Ecological Footprint. Masdar city is one of One Planet Living's then projects and it pretend to be "the most ambitious in terms of its carbon footprint reduction goals."(Masdar (2010),*Why is Masdar City sustainable?*, page5). Such goals seem to be no more central in the last project's presentation.

[59] This element of reflection is further developed in the chapter's section The perlocutionary act. I developed this reflection in the perlocutionary act's section, or the act of having a psychological influence on the audience, because the feeling of belonging to a specific class has an important psychological component.

Company takes distance from a concept as the 'environmental footprint'; they are not taking the risk that the project would not fit pre-established values. The move from a defined, although lacking in rigorous criteria, term to a more general one is again an act of ambiguity.

The perlocutionary act

The statement "Masdar City is designed to provide the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental impact" has a particular effect on the world of investment and people that aim to invest in the project. These persons are most likely to be influenced by the part of the statement where the Masdar Company promises them a city where they can find the 'highest quality of life'. The advertisement's effect on investors will likely be that they are attracted by the exclusivity of the project and it is intended that they will feel unique if they decide to invest in such an elitist project.

The statement has also an impact on people more interested on the project's environmental engagement and its reference to ecological values. These persons are interested in the conceptual side of the project. In the project's presentation the sustainable principle is often mentioned and the project is planned to respect the sustainable concept in its totality: on the environmental, economic and social dimension.

One of the possible effects on this audience is the questioning about pairing up sustainable living and the luxury of the city. The fact that the luxurious city is dedicated to people from the highest social class could be seen as a weak point for the sustainable concept, notably on the social level. The resulting question is: Does the Masdar Project respect all the variables composing the sustainable concept?[60] In the One Planet Living listing principle about sustainability, principle number nine is: "Equity and local economy: Creating bioregional economies that support fair employment, inclusive communities and international fair trade."[61] It seems difficult to believe that such a luxury project can house a diversity of population fitting to a model of inclusive communities. Masdar City will most likely be inhabited by an elite group of people that can afford the price of habitation or have something to do in the research plan of the project. Masdar Project is clearly lacking as an inclusive community in view of the elitist

[60] "(…) sustainable development may be seen as "economic growth that is ecologically sustainable and satisfies the essential needs of the underclass" (Eckholm 1982) or as " a continuing process of mediation among social, economic and environmental needs which results in positive socioeconomic change that does not undermine the ecological and social system upon which communities and society are dependent" (Carley and Christie 1993)" Wilbanks (1994), page 542 and 543.
[61] Web site: oneplanetliving.org

and luxury state of the city.[62] Such insistence on luxury could incite a critical negative reaction from people more attentive to the sustainable/social aspects of the project.

View the vagueness about which means are used to achieve the lowest environmental aspect; the audience may also be uncertain about the project's viability and completion, keeping the sustainable value as a central goal. The slogan's evolution presents a first warning about changes in the ecological value set; in fact, it presents the shift from 'lowest environmental footprint' to 'lowest environmental impact', a more vague definition of the project's environmental dimension. This should surely raise some eyebrows.

5.4. Conclusion to the second analysis

The slogan's evolution shows a change in the Masdar Company's attitude and a strategic shift. In the first slogan, the verb 'offer' demonstrates a commercial attitude, giving to the 'quality of life' the contours of a product. In the second statement the verb 'is designed to provide' is more appropriate to Masdar City's situation, referring to the 'quality of life' as composed of services. The environmental concept undergoes an important change passing to 'lowest environmental footprint' to 'lowest environmental impact'. It is a sign of the Company taking distance from values that have precise parameters.

The superlative form of the adjectives is present in the two versions of the slogan. The Masdar Company aims to keep the exclusive image of the project at the forefront of its message. The exclusivity is attractive for a certain type of person, but it could result in others who are more engaged in the sustainable problematic.

A negative reaction from the Western world can be expected, and indeed the project has come under some social criticism in the region and abroad. Abu Dhabi government recently reacted to this problem by investing billions of dollars in new housing for laborers.

> The Municipality of Abu Dhabi City has urged companies to expedite the relocation of their workers to custom-built areas and cities designated for workers' housing. (…) The move is part of the municipality's campaign to improve general living conditions of workers

[62] The social level of the project is objectionable because of his elitism; it is also true that an environmental friendly life style is still elitist in the actual occidental world. Life style as for example: organic food, no car utilization towards public transportation in some cities is more expensive and habitation's characteristics based on new energies are still difficult to afford for all the social class of people.

> by providing decent, humane and safe accommodations, a municipality spokesman said in a statement.[63]

By the end of 2010, almost 300'000 workers have been transferred into new housing out of town.[64] Such an engagement by Abu Dhabi's government is proof of the fact that there are some points where they have to invest if they want to be rigorous about 'sustainability' in both its ecological and social meaning. The 'new housing for laborers' action, however, looks more like a patch than a real *mise en question* about workers' conditions or the world economy in general.

[63] Gulf News, *Abu Dhabi asks firms to fall in line on workers' housing*, 5 August 2010, gulfnews.com.
[64] idem.

6. Conclusion

Speech act theory has allowed us to approach Masdar's communication strategy in a rigorous way and flesh out some of its more salient concepts. The objective of this approach is to try to understand the communication act itself, principally analyzing slogans, taking into consideration the author intentions and the effect that slogans have on audiences as well as placing the communication act in its context.

In this regard it has been possible to analyze ADFEC's intentions behind the glossy communication façade and, in an enlightening way, the project itself. We have attempted to look beyond the intentionally ambiguous communication artifacts, such as carefully tailored slogans and corporate computer renderings of the future city, to bring out into the open the message behind the message: "Invest now, either intellectually or financially, on our side in the international space race for sustainability, and you will have a long-term return on your investment." ADFEC employs a business model of communication to attract as many as possible investors for Masdar Project financial and intellectual capital. ADFEC aims to attract not only business but also researchers and scientists to improve the quality of Masdar Institute of Science and Technology's team.

The lack of information transparency could and maybe should incite suspicion from environmentalists, but as well as from possible investors. ADFEC could improve its communication strategy by emphasizing the concrete activities Masdar Institute of Science and Technology (MIST). According to Reem Al Orfali, Regional Affairs Supervisor at MIST, students nowadays living on the campus are living a sustainable lifestyle experiment where their energy and water consumption is strictly monitored. Students do not have access to air conditioning nor 100% free use of water resources.[65] The strict monitoring is a necessity in any desert city that aims to achieve the 'zero carbon/zero waste/ zero cars' characteristics. That is the reality of a sustainable city in a desert, regardless of current technical advances.

But in the end, the imposed ecological life style in the MIST campus might very well be a communication danger. It could scare away the class of people that Masdar aims to attract. It is no secret that some among the wealthiest classes take pleasure in, from their privileged position on this planet, excessive resource consumption (need citation). One of the deepest

[65] Account from a phone interview with Reem Al Orfali, Regional Affairs Supervisor at MIST, November 2010.

rooted and often ignored principles of sustainability is the need to preserve resources for future generations, a fact that entails necessary sacrifices from the current generation.

But even if Masdar City is presented as a sustainable city without sacrifices – blindly utopist at best, purposely deceitful and opportunistic at worst,[66] its saving power may come from the new concepts and technologies developed, in what look more and more like an arms or 'space race' between nations, that may actually curb environmental abuse.[67] The impact that Masdar Project has on the audience is really differentiated depending on the interest these people have in the project. Masdar can seem attractive for people that aim to invest in such a futuristic project, in a place where limitations are not known. Masdar City is built on a 'blank slate' in the desert and it is a test bed for new technologies, so a diversity of technology is accepted to be test on the site. Persons with this vision of the project could think that science fiction is becoming reality, giving place to scientific fact. Masdar City may very well represent a working paradigm as a solution finder to the current environmental crisis, but its communication façade does not properly present this aspect. Instead, Masdar City is presented as a turnkey solution for modern guilt-free living instead of a testing ground for technical solutions that have yet to be developed. In this sense, Masdar City is an experiment in urban planning, starting with the research university first, then implementing technologies developed and tested there into the residential and commercial sectors.

Masdar City is a symptom of the new global energy market heading in the direction of green technologies because of the necessity to find solutions to oil depletion but desirous to keep the same standard of life that is, for now, synonymous with high energy consumption. Yet, such a high standard of living always comes with a price, even if the purely environmental costs are reduced. Masdar City is a symptom of a global economical model of social class polarization; where the elitist city is build by a labor class that will not live there. This polarization is also observable in others spectacular urban projects, directly consecrated to elites, and constructed by a severely underpaid labor class, not able to afford the access to these sites.

Masdar City aims to maintain an elitist characteristic to attract a precise group of people as investors and scientist or people from highest classes, which are able to invest in the project with money or new technology ideas. In the region is evident the separation between

[66] See Attachments, page vi.
[67] Exemplified in the article: Osnos (April 21, 2009), *Green-Tech Space Race*, The New Yorker.

labor class, living in the "new housing for laborers",[68] and highest class, living in luxurious apartments. By creating an ecological 'gated community' in the desert, dedicated to an elite group, principally made for scientists and investors, Masdar City points towards a more global trend of urban planning; gated residential communities (need citation – is this true?). To justify such a financially important project, ADFEC highlights the technical and the environmental sides of the project in an attempt to make the public blindly accept the project.

One example is the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the building is designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel and it's called with the Parisian name of the famous Museum le Louvre, with an agreement between the French Minister of Culture and the president of Abu Dhabi's tourism authority. The museum planning, overseen by the new International Agency for French Museum, "as a universal museum, it will include art from all eras and regions, including Islamic art".[69] Such a project fits to Abu Dhabi's cultural program as said in the same New York Time's article, "The project's cultural components include a Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a maritime museum and a performing arts center as well as the Louvre Abu Dhabi." The appropriation of occidental values in the region is well exemplified in the cultural project of the Louvre Museum. Another similar project is the educational one of the University Paris Sorbonne in Abu Dhabi (PSUAD). The university officially opened in 2011 and it has been conceived on the same principle of agreement between France and Abu Dhabi.[70]

Another example comes from amusement culture such as the sky slope in Dubai, or the Ice Park in Ras al Khaimah. These are cultural spaces reflecting a side of the occidental life style that was not presents in the Arab tradition before. One of the reasons of such a westernization of the region is to attract people to come live in the region and to contribute to the Gulf Region economy. The region needs highly educated people to facilitate the regions opening up to the Western economic system. The diversification of their economy is part of this model, and by attracting the right sort of people to the region, Masdar City fulfils its role perfectly. By appropriating occidental ecological values and embodying them in one project, the Abu Dhabi government is making an a cultural decision to add Masdar to the list of attractive amneities in the region.

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[68] See at 5.4. Conclusion to the second analysis. Source: Gulf News, *Abu Dhabi asks firms to fall in line on workers' housing*, 5 August 2010, www.gulfnews.com.
[69] New York Times, "The Louvre's Art: Priceless. The Louvre's Name: Expensive," March 7, 2007.
[70] The National, "Sorbonne officially opens in Abu Dhabi," February 14 , 2011

Masdar City is a representation of a pre-established idea of future city, where new technologies and luxury meet up in the ecological neighborhood. The idea to build a city on the 'blank slate' of the desert with such strong technological characteristic is similar to projects of historic utopias. Yet it lacks a fundamental element of sustainability, for to build the city in the desert, from zero, when at the same time it will be more important to improve the existing city and to invest money on what already exists. The aim to build another city gives the imagine of leaving the rest of the city to develop by itself, along the same, non-sustainable, lines as before. It is much more easy to concentrate energies and money on an empty space, where it is also possible to build a gated city. In fact in Masdar City it is possible to do whatever we want and it seems economically more interesting than to think about real solutions for a better development of the actual Abu Dhabi. It appears obvious that Masdar City's sustainable characteristics coming to us from the communication project hope to lend the project credibility and legitimacy in the current global situation where energies issues are important, when in fact, it is simply yet another economic development project in a region where "sustainability" signifies something quite different from what we usually take it to mean.

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7. Image Annex

i. Image from Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company's brochure (January 2010).

ii. Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010), *EXPLORING MASDAR CITY*, pp. 2 and 3.

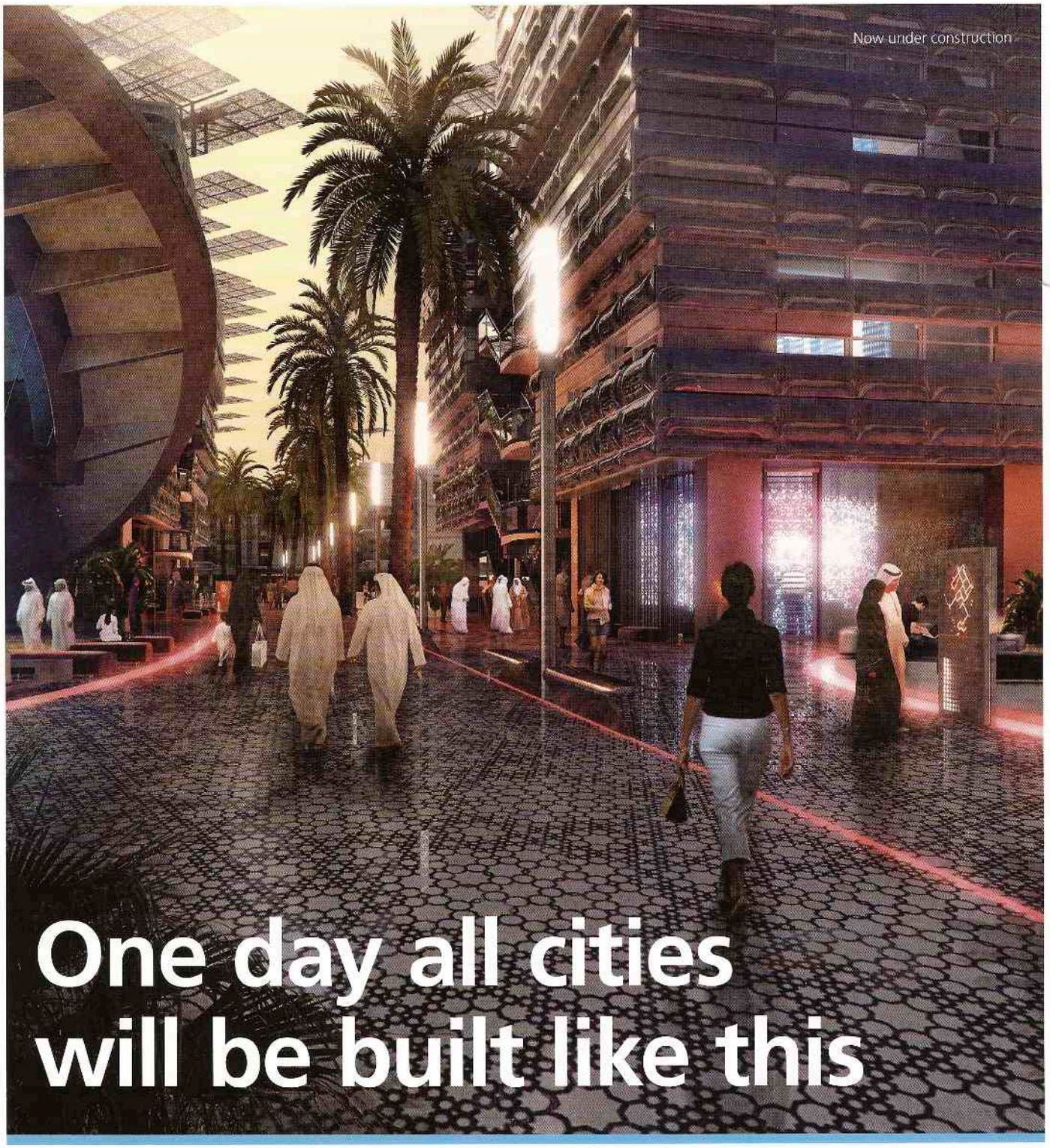
iii. Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010), *EXPLORING MASDAR CITY*, pp. 4 and 5.

iv. Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010), *What is Masdar?*, page 13.

v. Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010).

vi. Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010), *Why is Masdar City sustainable?*, page 22.

vii. Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010), *Why is Masdar City sustainable?*, page 23.



Masdar City is an emerging clean technology hub in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Organisations and institutions from around the world are coming here to pioneer solutions to the global energy challenge. IRENA have selected Masdar City for their new global headquarters, Masdar Institute of Science and Technology are collaborating with MIT, and global businesses including GE and BASF have chosen to locate at Masdar City. With access to key international markets, funding and investment, and a skilled, specialist talent pool, Masdar City creates an environment where innovation and entrepreneurialism flourish.

MASDAR CITY مدينة مصدر

To learn how partnering with us can transform your business and change the world, email joinus@masdarcity.ae or visit us online at www.masdarcity.ae

Image from a brochure of Masdar City (January 2010).

In order to achieve the city's goal of being one of the most sustainable cities in the world – as well as a great place to live and work – every aspect of the city's urban planning and architecture must be approached with sustainability in mind.

More specifically, design should seek to facilitate energy generation where applicable (such as the angling and shape of roofs) and reduced consumption of electricity and water. As a result, seven overriding characteristics define Masdar City:

Optimally oriented: The city and street grid are oriented on a southeast-northwest axis, thereby providing some shading at the street level throughout the day, minimising thermal gain on building walls and facilitating the flow of cooling breezes through the city.

Integrated: There are no separate zones for industry or culture. The university and traditional business elements are embedded in the heart of the community, as are entertainment and leisure facilities. Residents and commuters living and working here will find everything they need close at hand.

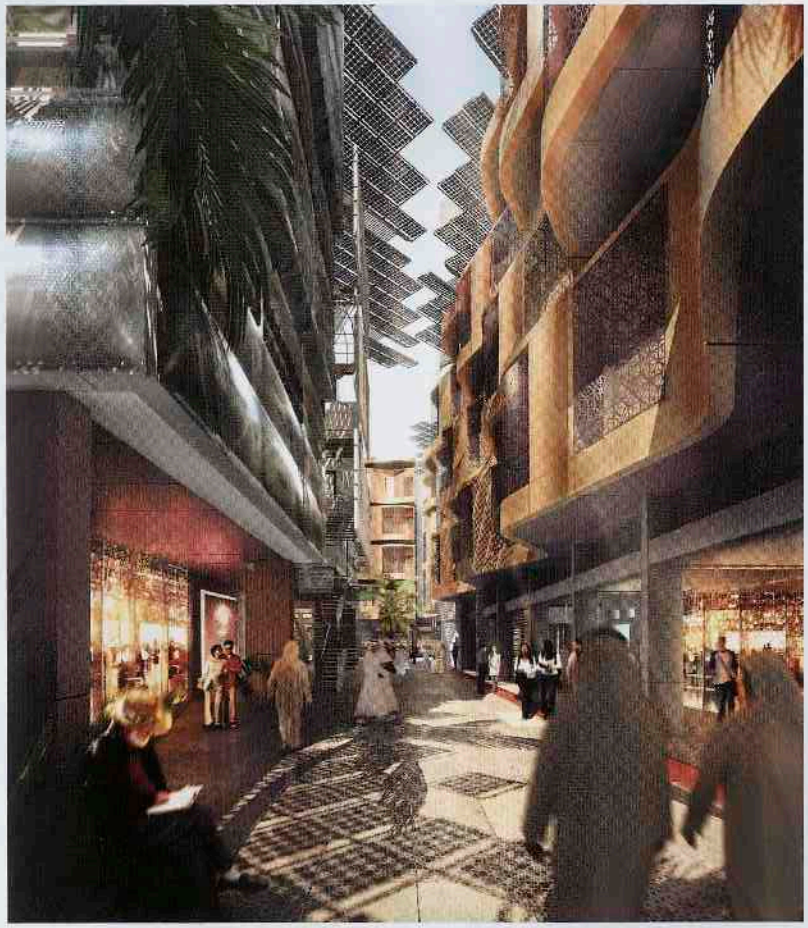
Low rise, high density: These two elements are central to a low-energy urban community for a variety of reasons, including lower energy use on transportation (both between and within buildings) and reduced heating/cooling loads.

Vibrant urban realm: Public spaces are as important as the buildings in Masdar City, with a variety of tactics used to activate these space. As a result, the city is a place where streets and squares facilitate interaction and engagement with fellow residents, commuters and visitors.

Pedestrian friendly: A pedestrian city on the pedestrian level of the street allows buildings to be closer together, thereby providing greater overshading and a cooler street environment.

High quality of life: Masdar City is designed to provide the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental impact, in part to demonstrate that environmentally responsible living does not imply hardship.

Convenient public transportation: Whether through the PRT network that is undergoing pilot testing, other possible intra-city transportation options, or the Abu Dhabi light rail and metro systems, Masdar City is designed to be comfortably and easily reached and traversed by public transportation.



A computer generated image of a public street within the Masdar Institute neighbourhood.

Traditional Arabian City Design

The city's master planners, took inspiration from traditional Arabian city planning. Not only does this indigenous design incorporate numerous strategies to address the desert climate, but it also is characterised by relatively low overall energy consumption. That's because traditional Arabian cities are compact and densely populated. They are also socially diverse places where people live and work in the same environs, and feature lively and enjoyable public spaces.

Environmental Pyramid*

As this simple pyramid shows, the biggest environmental gains come from the least financial investment: the city's orientation and form. This is equally true of the buildings. In the middle of the pyramid is building performance optimisation, with tools such as responsive shading and maximising the use of natural lighting and ventilation. At the top, where you have active controls such as heat recovery and photovoltaics, you spend the most money with the lowest (relative) returns. Given this, designers concentrated on the lower two tiers of the pyramid first, thereby reducing a large amount of energy demand with little cost, and only then focused on the active controls because they are the most expensive.

*Courtesy of Foster + Partners

Facts on Masdar City

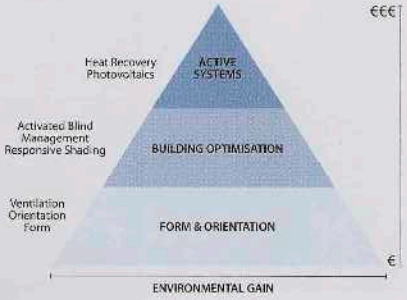
Area of development
5.5 square kilometres

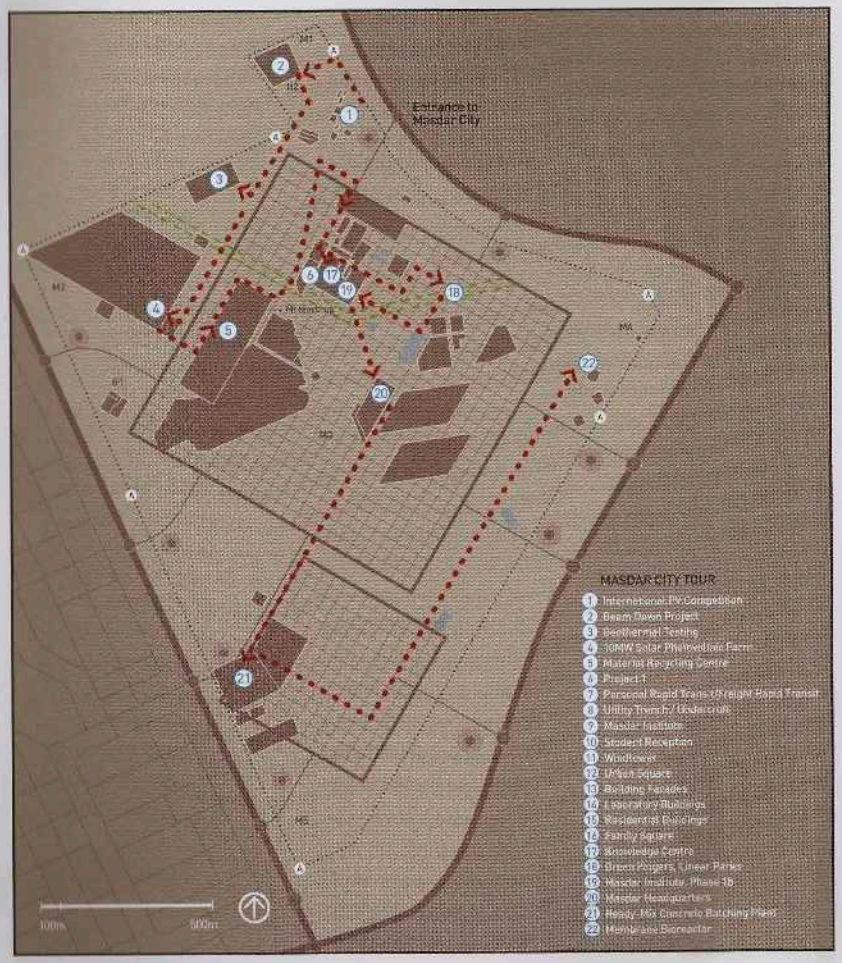
City Footprint
50% of total site area

Population density
130-160 people/hectare

Building heights
Average height 4-6 floors
Maximum height 40 metres

Street width
Central Spine: 24.2 metres
Main streets maximum: 10.5 metres
Secondary streets: 8.5 metres

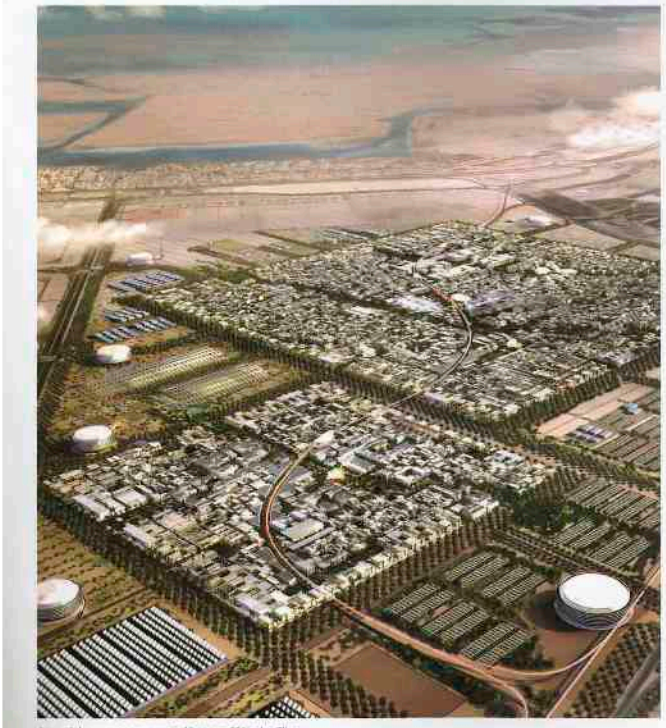






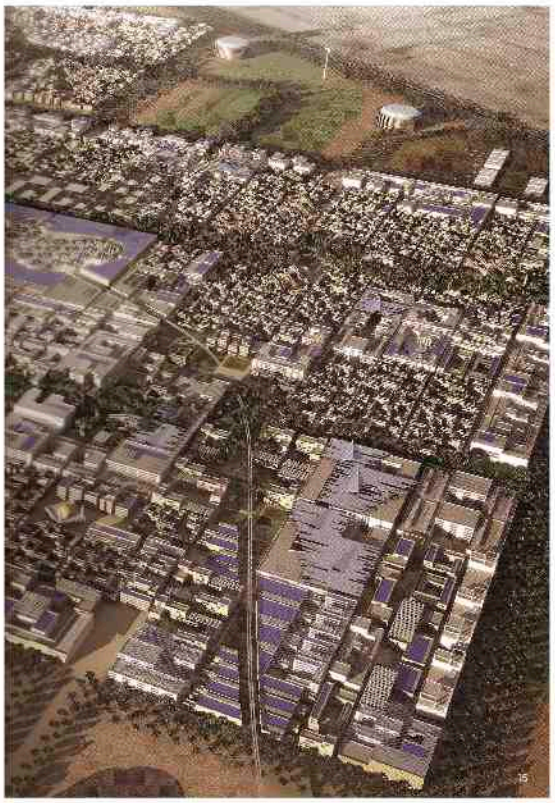
A computer generated image showing the interior courtyard of an office building in Masdar City.

13

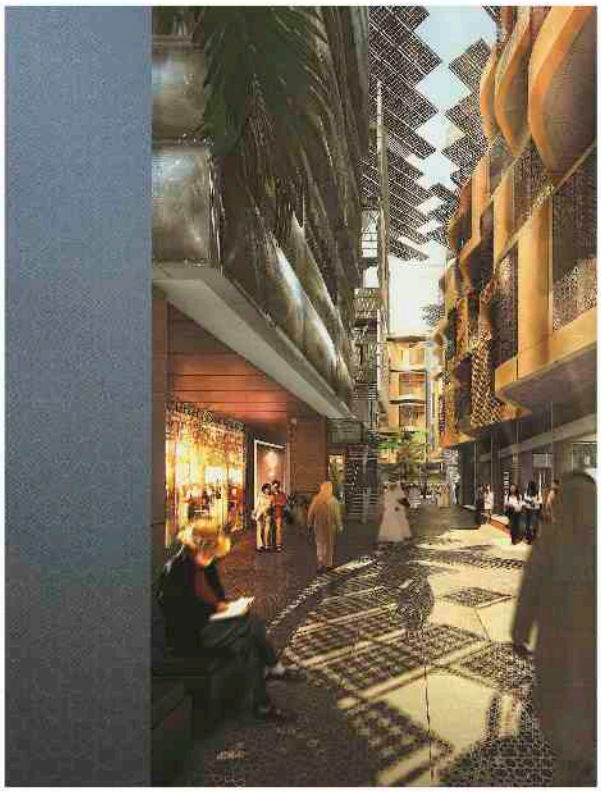


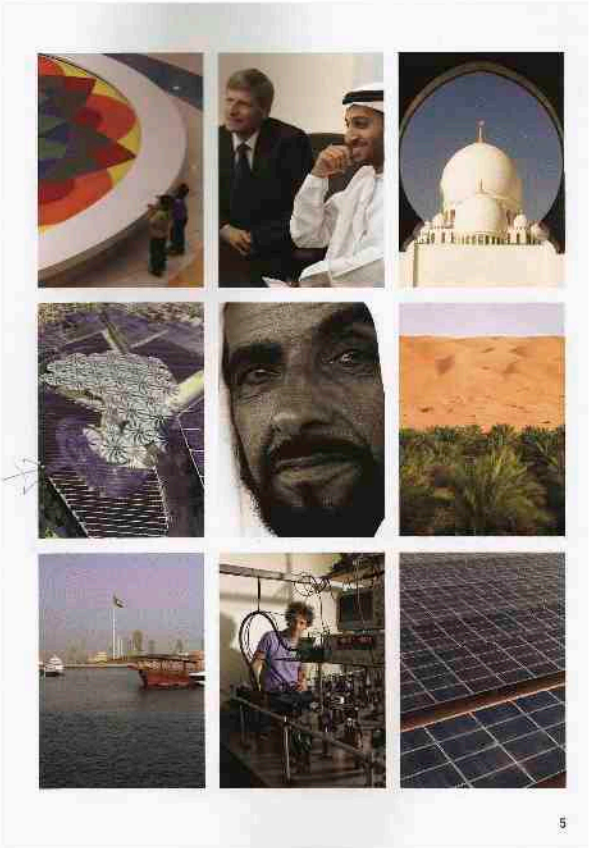
An aerial computer generated image of Masdar City.

7



15





5

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010),
Imagines up-left and down-left: *What is the masdar institute of Science and Technology?*, page 7and 3.
imagines up-right and down right: *What is Masdar?*, page 15 and 5.

Quality of life

Masdar City is being designed to provide a quality of life to rival that of any world-class city and to be uncompromisingly sustainable as well. Why? Because one of Masdar City's objectives is to demonstrate that environmentally responsible living should not imply hardship.

The Masdar City Centre will showcase the best of global sustainable retail in an urban context, including extensive High Street retailing anchored by a shopping centre complex, supermarkets and food outlets.

One of the most appealing aspects of the city will be the absence of vehicle traffic and the ease of moving through the city, whether it is on the pleasant landscaped walkways or the automated, private, efficient and comfortable Personal Rapid Transport vehicles.

The environmental performance of Masdar City is one of the key design principles, but it is as important to the creators that it also provides an enviable quality of life. Environmentally responsible living doesn't need to come hand-in-hand with hardship.

Life in Masdar City won't be about water shortages or a lack of resources. It will be about enjoying pleasant public spaces or cultural events with your family, walking to work, shopping or eating out, secure in the knowledge that you aren't taking any more of the Earth's resources that you need.



Computer generated image of a residential unit's interior, being constructed as part of Phase 1.



Computer generated image of residential units.

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (2010), *WHY IS MASDAR SUSTAINABLE?*, page23.