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Parallel Session F
Planning & Policy Development for Creative Communities

ENHANCING CREATIVITY IN PLANNING: DYNAMIC VISIONING AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The paper argues that society as a whole and planning in particular need more creative responses to problems and challenges they face. As solutions/answers are not just 'out there', waiting to be discovered, we have to construct them. This is not a linear, but rather a dialectic (back casting and forecasting) process. Planning needs creativity to imagine and to construct (structurally) different futures. First the paper briefly analyses the Hasselt (Belgium) case as an example of creative transport planning and creative local governance. Then the paper questions the kind of planning creativity needs and looks for a systematic method. Within the construct of a 'new' strategic spatial planning the paper focuses on 'visioning', as a collective process. It involves a dynamic interaction between all the participants rather than a unidirectional flow. It taps the public's knowledge and creativity.

At its core, visioning is concerned with 'what should/ could be'. It breaks existing paradigms and forces citizens/politicians/planners to move outside their usual assumptions. It develops openness to new ideas and to understanding and accepting the need and the opportunity for change and calls for a new type of planning. Envisioning reveals how things can be different, how things could be truly better, how people can be innovative, how we can unlock the natural creativity of the citizens to improve our cities and regions, how we can legitimize these natural tendencies that are typically inhibited or suppressed by the daily demands of our governance systems. The final part of the paper touches briefly on some preconditions for creativity, on what creativity implies in terms of skills and attitudes of planners and how realistic the discourse is.

Keywords: *envisioning, creativity, strategic planning*

INTRODUCTION

The change of social, economic, cultural and political contexts, the pace of change, but also challenges of bureaucracy, inflexibility, lack of innovativeness inherent in traditional planning have brought forward the need for spatial planning systems and practices to "renew". Most spatial planning is sparked by recognizing that a place faces a problem, is otherwise inadequate or that challenges arise that need to be addressed. Without this, hardly political will or sense of urgency can be generated to drive change. Experience shows that it is much more difficult to generate or sustain change in successful situations where everything is seen to be satisfactory, which is why business has developed concepts such as total quality management, centered on the notion of continuous improvement as a means of generating challenges internally(see Landry, 2000). Places could learn from this concept and adapt it to their needs. Indeed if we keep emphasizing the

planning enterprise as a pure regulatory and problem solving practice it may lose its creative possibilities for structural change. I use the term structural change to describe those innovative changes which contribute to more sustainable, qualitative, just and open places.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on creativity in and for planning. What kind of creativity does planning need and what kind of planning does creativity need? As governance and planning are necessarily interlinked in society what kind of governance culture is needed to support creativity? How can planning become more innovative and more creative in its dealing with places? I focus mainly on four questions: first what kind of planning embeds the challenges of creativity and innovation in its approach? Second what "techniques" enable structural change in terms of creating possible and desirable futures? Third what type of governance has the capacity to strengthen creativity? Fourth what does this mean for planners in terms of attitudes, skills?

I start my reasoning not with an abstract idea of planning and governance but with concrete activities of citizens, politicians and planners. For this purpose I draw on one case to illustrate that creativity and creativity enhancing techniques can be applied. The case provide a leg up to a more continuous, creative, proactive, enabling, flexible and open planning and governance culture that provides focus, anticipates problems, sets new targets and generates its own challenges. Finally, I argue that this vision of planning and governance is not just a utopian dream.

CREATIVITY IN PRACTICE

Before embarking on a search for creativity in practice we have to know what we are looking for. Although there are numerous definitions of creativity for most of us it seems difficult to grasp its essence. In the context of this paper I define creativity as a -individual or preferably social-process that stimulates the ability to view problems, situations and challenges in new and different ways and to invent and develop original, imaginative futures as reaction to these problems, situations, and challenges. Ability focuses more on "how" to think instead of "what "to think (see Michalko, 2001, p.13).

I draw on a case that deals with the development of creative transport planning, ditto local governance and the role of a key person (a champion in the terminology of Bryson) that allows for structural change.

Creative Planning and Governance in tackling a transport problem
Hasselt, a regional city in the North-East of Belgium, is a major commercial and service centre with a population of 69,000 inhabitants. Like many cities it suffered from mounting costs of externalities caused by automobile travel: accidents, traffic jams, and environmental problems. These externalities had a negative impact on the liveability and the appeal of the city. Combined with other factors it resulted in a decreasing number of inhabitants. In the mid nineties the new local government (a coalition of socialists, the greens and conservatives) with a charismatic new mayor was placed in a dilemma: choosing for a third ring road or completely reverse the actual transport policy. The socialist party organised meetings with local residents. In these meetings local traffic proved to be an important issue. In the mean time a temporary free shuttle bus service was introduced to compensate citizens for the nuisance caused by major local road works. This shuttle proved to be an enormous success. Although the intense discussions of the 1970s (see Bologna) about free public transport was on the decline and even seemed to disappear, the mayor launched the pioneering idea to introduce free public transport for citizens and visitors (a broader relational perspective than just the internal travel patterns of its own citizens) for the entire urban area. This is just one action from a much larger strategy of 22 actions to be carried out in close cooperation with residents, companies, schools, public bodies etc. The reasoning behind the idea of free public transport was that a considerable shift from car to public transport makes the construction of the third ring road unnecessary and that the first ring road can even be built back. When, in discussions with the public transport company, the mayor found out that only 9% of the overall cost of public transport was covered by the sale of

tickets he immediately offered to compensate the Bus Company for this loss. The cost for the city is approximately 1% of its annual budget or 15 euro per inhabitant per year. The savings resulting from not constructing the third ring road more than offset the subsidies for transit services thus leading to a positive financial net effect. The radical reconstruction of the first ring road narrowed car lines and improved facilities for pedestrians -a nine meter wide pedestrian area bordered by a double row of trees-, cyclists and added considerably to the liveability and the overall quality of the urban environment. The results between mid 1997, when the scheme was introduced, and 2002 are mixed: on the one hand an astonishing increase by 1,200% of the number of public transport passengers and an increase of the number of bus routes from 1 to 9; on the other hand the number of cyclist decreased. But the most important results are the strengthening of the social tissue, the fact that the elderly became more mobile, that the discourse on public transport turned very positive and that the extreme right wing party did not gain a foothold in the city council, this in sharp contrast with other similar cities.

In this case a problem -major road works- was turned into an asset -free shuttle bus. The problem of congestion was looked upon from different perspectives. Indeed in stead of the traditional engineering logic "more traffic=more roads" the logics of the pedestrians, the elderly, public transport and the overall liveability of the city were introduced. The mayor thought of a solution -free public transport- no one else was thinking about. Costs -constructing a third ring road- were turned into net benefits despite the subsidies paid to the transport company. The liveability of the city was enhanced by linking it to the traffic problem. It enhanced social capital and political capital as citizens and local politicians pride upon "their" city as it became a best practice case attracting visitor -governments, students, all kinds of specialists in transport etc- from all over the world. The case also illustrates the impact of a leading person. Although the context was not very innovative (a traditional socialist party and an even so traditional engineer-led public works department) the mayor managed to make people think about new ideas and new solutions. The project resulted in a landslide election victory for the mayor and his party.

The question we have to address now is what kind of planning enables real creative change as reflected in the first case and avoid "distortion" and a "calculated" creativity as in the second case?

BACK TO THE FUTURE

A positivist view of planning assumes that the one best future follows automatically if the analytical and forecasting techniques are applied well. The same reasoning made modernist planners believe that the future can be predicted and controlled (see Ogilvy, 2002). Problems and challenges places are confronted with cannot be tackled and managed adequately with this old intellectual apparatus and mind-set. Consequently we have to reflect creatively and innovatively on the concepts and techniques we use and the logics we apply in tackling problems and challenges. We have to think afresh and, as it were, reinvent our places to secure a better future and to improve their quality. Therefore planning needs creativity to imagine (structurally) different futures, to bear on political decisions and their implementation. This implies that creativity is not limited to a particular stage of the planning process.

Reverse Thinking
The kind of creativity I have in mind is a creativity that simply refuses to accept that the current way is necessary the best way and breaks free from concepts, structures and ideas that are only there through the process of continuity. It is precisely discontinuity which forces us outside the usual boundaries of "reasonableness" (see de Bono, 1992). Discontinuity is at odds with a concept of the future as an extended present.

The challenge is to find a systematic method that provides a critical interpretation of existing reality, thinks creatively about possible futures, and how to get there. Indeed it is one thing to know where you want a place to go; it's another thing to get the place to move in that direction. Scenario building turns out to be an excellent tool for conceiving possible futures and how to get from here to there, what has to be changed first, and what next.

Scenario Building

A scenario can be defined as a narrative description of a possible state of affairs or development over time of a place. As a narrative, scenarios connect very well with a tradition of stories in planning (see Forester, 1989; Mandelbaum, 1991; Throgmorton, 1996; Sandercock, 1998, 2003). Scenario derives from the observation that, given the impossibility of knowing precisely how the future will play out, a good decision or strategy to adopt is one that plays out well across several possible futures. To find that "robust" strategy, scenarios are, essentially, specially constructed stories about the future, each one modelling a distinct, plausible place in which we might someday have/want to live and work. It is about making forces that push the future in different directions visible, so that if they do happen, the planner/politician/civil society will at least recognize them and may be better prepared to respond. It's about making better decisions today for the future. The technique seems particularly suited for visioning as it creates integrated images that articulate the shared hopes and aspirations of places (a geography of the unknown, see Albrechts, 2005); stimulate sectors, organisations, groups who might be networked and collaborative to network with others and find out how their joint future(s) might look like and describe a transition from the present to a future state. Hence the need to shift from analysis, that seeks to discover a place that might exist, towards design that creates a place that would not otherwise be. This is somehow in line with Habermas' knowing (understand challenges and options available) and steering (capacity to take action to deal with challenges) (Habermas, 1996). The steps required to deliver and to implement the wished-for spatial outcome vary according to the underlying structure. The visions are based on context, values, current drivers and trends. The importance of the context is illustrated by the fact that some words (spatial quality), concepts (urban containment, liveability) do mean quite different things (see also Hajer, 1995) in the two cases mentioned before. Scenarios augment understanding by helping to see what possible futures might look like. Scenarios help to think about how places/institutions will operate under a variety of future possibilities and enable decision-makers/civil society to detect and explore all or as many as possible alternative futures so as to clarify present actions and subsequent consequences. For Schwartz (1991, p.192) this is "rehearsing the future". Moreover scenarios are a way of understanding the dynamics at work shaping the future and are an attempt to identify the primary "driving forces" (social, economic, technological, cultural, political) at work in the present. Scenarios identify contingent decisions by exploring what places/institutions might do if certain circumstances arise and reflect on a series of "what if "stories. Some of the driving forces are fixed in the sense that they are completely outside our control and will play out in any narrative about the future. Therefore the "possible futures" must be placed within a specific context (economic, social, cultural, political, and power), place, time and scale regarding specific issues that are of interest and within a particular combination of actors. The context provides the setting for the process but also takes form, undergoes changes in the process.

With visioning we have to focus on "what ought to be". Without normative scenarios we risk adopting a pernicious relativism where anything goes (see Ogilvy, 2002). At the end we have to come back to what "is" to present ideas, concepts that are solid, workable and of testable value. To get to those ideas we need both, the solidity of the analysis and the creativity of the design of alternative futures. To avoid naïve utopian thinking all this must be rooted in an understanding of the basic processes that shape places. This must be done recognizing conditions of power, inequality and diversity. Whose vision is created remains a basic question to be asked.

Values and Judgments

Just as there are many traditions and collective practices, there are also many images of what communities want to achieve (see Weeks, 1993). The power constellation in a place determines what the problems and challenges of a place are and how they are addressed. The new mayor in Hasselt uses his authority to change the perception of the problem and challenges and how they are dealt with. The opportunities for implementing images are not equal. Some individuals and groups have more resources and more power, which allow them to pursue their images. Therefore power relations must be built into the conceptual framework of planning (Forester, 1989; Sager, 1994; Healey, 1997; Friedmann, 1998) and must be looked at in a given context, place, time and scale, regarding specific issues and particular combinations of actors.

The future must symbolize some good, quality, virtues that the present lacks. Speaking of quality, virtues, and values is a way of describing the sort of place we want to live in, or think we should live in. The futures result from judgment and choices formed with reference to the idea of desirability and betterment. A central concept of our age -sustainability- provides a new lens/focus through which we can provide substance to desirability and betterment. It is a rich concept that needs to be stretched beyond environmentalism to reconfigure conceptions of the economy, the social, the cultural, the political and the spatial. Our concept of sustainability cannot be imagined without an acknowledgment of a politics of difference (introduction of different logics in Hasselt) and spatial quality. This implies a clear statement against any notion of a purely quantitative growth approach (see Hamilton, 2003) and, in contrast the need for a "just" use of resources and social cohabitation. If we look at plans today most -not to say all- embrace some unspecified notion of sustainability but almost none questions growth as such.

The values and images of what a society wants to achieve must be discussed in the planning process (value rationality). Values and images are not generated in isolation but are socially constructed, given meaning and validated by traditions of belief and practice; they are reviewed, reconstructed and invented through collective experience (see Ozbekhan, 1969, but also Foucault, 1980, p.11; Hillier, 1999, 2002 and Elchardus et al., 2000, p.24). We must be aware of the impact on the social and psychological milieu of consumer society that teaches citizens how to think about themselves and their goals. Citizens' tastes, priorities and value systems are, to a large degree, manipulated by the very markets that are supposed to serve them (Hamilton, 2004, p.66). Within (and constrained by) this established frame of the market society, places and communities face the challenge to construct (or reject) and implement the discourses of cultural diversity, sustainability and place quality and subsequently to creatively transform their own functioning and practice. In the context of this paper the latter points to changes in governance referring to current and historical relations of dominance and oppression (Young, 1990). As planning and governance cannot be looked upon as separate, autonomous spheres within society I look, in the next session, for a type of governance that interlinks with the planning approach outlined above.

GOVERNANCE

There is a pervasive struggle in the terrain of governance between pluralistic democratic tendencies, which seek to acknowledge a wide range of actors in policy-making and techno-corporate tendencies. The latter seek to keep control over the management of a place using tools of technical analyses and management, following standardized rulebooks or recipes of conventional collaboration between government, major business organizations and trade unions (see Healey, 1997; Albrechts, 1999).

I argue that a feasible and efficient planning process should be centred on the elaboration of a mutual beneficial dialectic between top-down structural policies and bottom-up local uniqueness. This dialectic constitutes the bare essence of multi-level governance.

Pluralist and inter-culturalist places
Some politicians are reluctant to involve the public in decision-making, because it involves giving up some control, and people who hold power are usually not inclined to give it up or share it. In other places there is a tendency to involve major actors in the process. As spatial planning has almost no potential for concretizing strategies, relevant actors needed for their substantive contribution, their procedural competences and the role they might play in acceptance, in getting basic support and in providing (a kind of) legitimacy are getting involved. But planning, potentially, has an impact on and links to a very wide range of issues (from citizens with interests in a place to nature). These interests can be very diverse and conflicting. To overcome a commodified representation, nature must get a voice to reveal its intrinsic values (natural stability in ecosystems, biodiversity) as well as the more intangible cultural (aesthetic, symbolic) values (see also Sachs & Esteva, 2003; Hillier, 1999). Citizens must claim a role in the political system (see Mathews, 1994). Some citizens have the knowledge, the skills, the power and the networks through which they are able to influence or even steer planning proposals and policy

decisions. Others lack the means and the cultural codes to participate in the system. Their voice has hardly any impact on decisions. Class, gender, race and religion do matter in terms of whether citizens are included in the process (Young, 1990). Creating futures must be done under conditions of inequality and diversity. Any change has to deal with issues of power and resistance, the irreconcilability of certain forms of interests. This requires a democratic polity that can encompass the realities of difference, inequality, etc., (Huxley, 2000). The core is a democratic struggle for inclusiveness in democratic procedures, for transparency in government transactions, for accountability of the state and planners to the citizens for whom they work, for the right of citizens to be heard and to have a creative input in matters affecting their interests and concerns at different scale levels and for reducing or eliminating unequal power structures between social groups and classes (see also Friedman & Douglas, 1998). Pluralist democratic tendencies are developing in the wake of a crisis of representative democracy and a demand to transform the state in ways that will serve all of its citizens and especially the least powerful. Out of this shift towards a more hybrid democracy in some places a type of governance has emerged that expands practical democratic deliberations rather than restricts them, that encourages diverse citizens' voices rather than stifles them; that directs resources to basic needs rather than to narrow private gain. This type of approach uses public involvement to present real political opportunities, learning from action not only what works but also what matters. Through the involvement of citizens (and especially weak groups) in socially and politically relevant actions some degree of empowerment, ownership or acceptance is sought for these citizens (see Friedmann 1992.

Increased personal mobility has made places more mixed. This can be seen as a threat or an opportunity. On the one hand it can destabilize a place as migrants bring in habits, attitudes and skills alien to the original society, on the other it can enrich and stimulate possibilities by creating hybrids, crossovers and boundary blurring (Landry, 2000 p. 264). Places must be creative with mutual understanding between cultures and ideas of equity (this is nothing less than a claim to full citizenship see Sandercock, 2003 p.98). Inter-culturalism (Landry, 2000) builds bridges, helps foster cohesion and conciliation and produces something new out of the multi-cultural patchwork of places (Landry, 2000) so that views of a place of minority groups or otherwise socially excluded are taken into account and their ideas are brought to change planning, political decision-making and implementation.

Learning Processes
Society as a whole (as well citizens as politicians) feels uneasy to think beyond the short term, to reflect on multiple futures, and it takes an unconsciously deterministic view of events. How to convince citizens, politicians and planners that they can have meaningful choices and will not have to be a complete prisoner of circumstances? How to make different groups in a place aware that they are interdependent, -they share the same physical space, they may face similar problems- and that they cannot solve some problems on their own? How to make them aware that they may loose if they don't cooperate? How to convince them to consider the alternative to what they felt in their hart? Yet when the sustainability, quality and equity of places is at stake that is exactly what we may need to do: to imagine alternative futures to master change. Building scenarios can become a learning process if it looks in an open way to the future, if it integrates knowledge of what might happen with an understanding of the driving forces and a sense of what it means to a place and its citizens. The active participation in a collective action of scenario building may generate trust as participants in the process are likely to find -and why that is the case- that some scenarios present a future that certain would like to inhabit while others are considered highly undesirable. The process helps the participants to think more broadly about the future and its driving forces and to realize that their own actions may move a place towards a particular kind of future. The process allows participants to step away from entrenched positions and identify positive futures that they can work at creating. It allows for a high degree of ownership of the final product and illustrates that citizens do have a responsibility for the(ir) future. So the real test is, not whether one achieves the "conceived" future right, but whether anyone changed his/her behaviour because he/she saw the future differently (see also Schwartz, 1991).

Institutionalisation

Government systems for the development, control and regulation have often been fixed for a long time, yet are not fundamentally reviewed and adapted to changing circumstances. The life of the institutions seems often to be more important than what it does. Hence the need to view governance institutions not as a set of formal organizations and procedures established in law and "followed through", but as referring to norms, standards and mores of a society or social group, which shape both formal and informal ways of thinking and ways of acting (see Healey, 2004a p. 92). Also our notions of nature are inextricably entangled in different forms of social life (see Macnaghton & Urry, 1998). In some places the process of "discourse structuration" and its subsequent "institutionalisation" becomes perhaps more important than the plan as such (see the Hasselt case but also Albrechts, 1999, 2003a, b; Albrechts & Van den Broeck, 2004; Hajer, 1995). In this way new discourses may become institutionalised, embedded in norms, ways of doing things, attitudes and practices and provide a basis for structural change. From there a shared stock of values, knowledge, information, sensitivity, mutual understanding may spread and travel through an array of regional, provincial and local government arenas, sector departments and consultants. New approaches and new concepts can be sustainably embedded via institutionalization (see Healey, 1997, Gualini, 2001). But this takes time and dedication. Government may call upon this intellectual capital (Innes et al, 1994) when using its control function to re- frame ways of thinking.

Multi-level governance

A multi-level governance approach would offer the potential to tease out causal linkages between global, national, regional, metropolitan and local change, while also taking account of the highly diverse outcomes of such interactions The dialectic between shifts in institutional sovereignty towards supranational regulatory systems (in the Hasselt case the possible impact of European directives for deregulation of public transport) and the principle of subsidiarity, which entails the rooting of policy action in local initiatives and abilities, illustrates the embeddednes of place policy-making in multiple institutional domains and interaction arenas which blur the meaning of hierarchical settings in the development of policies (see Gualini, 2001).

The idea of multi-level governance is very well represented in the Hasselt case. Concern about traffic problems at the very local level are linked to the public works department at the level of the Flemish government (subsidies for the reconstruction of the first ring road), the public transport company (free public transport) and the overall city finances (reconstruction of the first ring road, no third ring road and compensation for loss Bus Company). Political and civil servants networks of their own making were very instrumental in this process. This highlights the tensions that occur between the well-known scale and related government structure of a nested hierarchy from large to small or from top to bottom and scale in terms of the reach of relationships in time and space (see Healey, 2004b; Albrechts & Liévois, 2004).

In a new governance culture the construction of arenas (who has to be involved, and what issues must be discussed), their timing (links to the strategic momentum), the definition of which arenas seem fixed and what issues in arenas seem fixed, the awareness that fixed may be relative in some contexts all need careful reflection and full attention.

IMPACT FOR PLANNERS

Planners for too long have just been (still are?) trained to react to problems and difficulties, and are focused on reproducing answers on the basis of similar problems encountered in the past. They ask "what have I been taught in planning school or work that will solve this problem?" Then they analytically select the most promising approach based on past experiences excluding all other approaches, and work in the clearly defined direction toward the solution of the problem. A change of this attitude is crucial for creativity. Planners must think productively (Michalko, 2001). Hence the need to challenge their "mental models" about places and lift the "blinders" that limit their creativity and resourcefulness can be used as a building block for designing, formulating structurally new concepts and discourses (see Schwartz, 1991). When confronted with a

problem planners have to ask themselves in how many different ways they can look at the problem, how can they rethink it, and how many different ways they can tackle it, instead of asking how they have been taught to solve it (see the Hasselt case). Planners must be able to grasp the momentum and they must try to come up with many different responses, some of which are unconventional, and possibly unique (see Michalko, 2001 p.2). Hence planners need a mind-set that is willing to explore new concepts, new ideas and to look for alternatives (to the settlement hierarchy, to a clear division between town and country). Alternatives mean structurally different futures and not just variations on the same theme. That means that the planner must look for an agenda (see Friedmann, 1987, p.389 for transformative theory and Sandercock, 2003 pp 157-179 for transformative practices). This takes decision-makers, planners and citizens out of their comfort zones and compels them to confront the key-beliefs, to challenge conventional wisdom, and to look at the prospects of "breaking-out-of-the-box".

Preconditions for creativity
The preconditions below may not be looked upon in a linear way, they clearly interrelate.

In planning systems and governance structures a climate conducive to new ideas must be created. Planners need to think beyond customary job descriptions, traditional government structures, to address problems in new ways, and to accept that the past is no blue print for how to go forward. Governments and planners need to trust the creativity of residents, they must acknowledge that there are multiple publics and that planning and governance in a new multi-cultural era requires a new kind of multicultural literacy and a new kind of democratic politics, more participative, more deliberative, more agonistic. In order to build trust and confidence in the planning, decision-making and implementation process, an adequate and timely response is required to serious significant problems being faced by the community, seen as social entities of citizens who are engaged with their place (see free shuttle bus in Hasselt as answer to hindrance by local road works). Creativity in the long-term perspective is important and possible as long as it is combined with creativity in short-term actions. This combination of long-term perspective with short-term actions allows the community to react almost immediately to certain urgent problems with a clear perspective as to where it is going and what the likely impacts of decisions are. It also promotes the building of trust, understanding and confidence in the process and between the actors. This means that we need a vision that embodies what is willed (this is the long-term strategy), concrete actions in response to the everyday problems, and longer-term actions for the realization of possible futures.

Planning is not an abstract analytical concept but a concrete socio-historical practice, which is indivisibly part of social reality. As such, planning is in politics (it is about making choices), and cannot escape politics (it must make values and ethics transparent) but is not politics (it does not make the ultimate decisions). Since planning actions are clear proof that they are not only instrumental, the implicit responsibility of planners can no longer simply be to "be efficient", to function smoothly as neutral means of obtaining given and presumably well-defined ends. Planners must be more than navigators keeping their ship on course. They are necessarily involved with formulating that course (see also Forester, 1989). To give power to the range of images in a planning process requires the capacity to listen, not just for an expression of material interest, but for what people care about, including the rage felt by many who have grown up in a world of prejudice and exclusion, of being outside, being "the other" (Forester, 1989, Healey, 1997). Forester (1989) stresses that planners must use the power available to them to anticipate and to counter the efforts of interests that threaten to make a mockery of a democratic planning process by misusing their power. It must be clear that planners can (and do) use their power also in the opposite way.

How to enhance creativity?
Landry (2000) and Michalko (2001) teach us that to create original ideas and creative solutions we must use appropriate techniques. For Michalko (2001) these techniques vary from seeing what no one else is seeing to thinking what no one else is thinking. The first category involves knowing how to see and making thoughts visible. The second category involves: thinking fluently, making novel combinations, connected the unconnected, looking at the other side,

looking in other worlds, finding what you are not looking for and awakening the collaborative spirit. The first category brings us to look at problems, challenges from different perspectives: the perspectives of the elderly, youngsters, women, shopkeepers, business people etc. Turn a problem -e.g. a cost- into an asset. Moreover offering the actors a possibility to express themselves in more than one language and communicative form (writing, oral, drawing, maps, music) could help to remove barriers for creativity when taking part in debates and decisions about places. The second category is about generating new and more ideas (using brainstorming), combining and recombining of ideas, images, thoughts into different combinations and focusing on the collective intelligence of a group as being larger than the intelligence of an individual. All these techniques match very well with the nature of scenarios.

EPILOGUE

The development of a planning and governance culture with the qualities summarised above is a demanding ambition for politicians, civil servants, citizens and planners. Are they a utopian dream? Are they feasible? I start to answer these questions by quoting a story Clive Hamilton (2004, p. 240) tells in his provocative book "Growth Fetish". It is about a black South African he met shortly after the fall of white rule. This man told him that he and his comrades had always feared the white government and system of apartheid as an enormous powerful and nearly unbeatable force. As the system began to crumble in the early 1990s he began to see the regime as more like "The Wizard of Oz". When Dorothy first met the Wizard she quakes before a towering dark figure with a booming voice. But after a time she peeks behind a curtain to see a frail old man pedalling a machine that creates the illusion of a huge and terrifying wizard. Although The Wizard of Oz is good-natured Hamilton (2004, p. 240) concludes out of this story that nothing is inevitable and no power is invincible.

So what kinds of "powers" need to be addressed? Anxiety about the "other" strengthens right-wing, anti-immigrant parties in most European cities (see Albrechts, 2003; Sandercock, 2003). There is growing evidence that the current pattern of material consumption is environmentally unsustainable and that more economic growth and more technology will not solve this problem (see Mishan, 1967; Sachs & Esteva, 2003; Hamilton, 2004). For Hamilton (2004) growth fetishism and the predominantly market-led society lie at the hart of these ills. Concepts of sustainability and multi-cultural society applauded in many government reports cannot be achieved with more market (Sachs & Esteva, 2003; Hamilton, 2004), by extrapolating the past and the present, by simply relying on economic growth (Mishan, 1967; Hamilton, 2004), by keeping to vested concepts, discourses and practices. As society is not a prisoner of its past and does have a responsibility for the future it is doomed to find alternatives, to study the forces of change and look for means and instruments to make this change happen. This means that we need to structurally transform our attitudes to the natural environment and our relationships with others (especially "the other"). This needs structural reforms in power relationships to tackle the overpowering dominance of the market and institutional reform. There are strong manifestos for change, for reconsidering the absolute faith in economic growth (Mishan, 1967; Hamilton, 2004), for living inter-culturally (Landry, 2000; Sandercock, 1998, 2003), and for a more sustainable society (Sachs & Esteva, 2003). What can planning and planners contribute in this respect? Planners have to grasp the momentum; they have to lure citizens and politicians outside the comfort and familiarity of their traditional mindset, concepts and mode of operation. They have to explore with them a set of distinctive, plausible and sustainable (in the broadest sense) futures that could unfold. This demands creativity and a thorough understanding and analysis of the driving forces of change and of what might be. Hence the need for a type of planning that embraces creativity and critical analysis. This kind of planning is very much concerned with "possibilities", and "what ought to be". In creativity there is a dimension of "new", a dimension of bringing something into being and a dimension of values.

I come now back to my four initial questions. First, I presented a planning approach that avoids two traps planning is usually confronted with: the trap of linearity and the trap of being stuck in regulations. This planning approach combines, behind creativity the strategic force of reverse thinking with a critical analysis of the driving forces at work in present. It constructs "better"

futures for overcoming the resistance of the established powers in the realization of desired outcomes. Second, scenarios match seamless with our planning approach. They have the potential to open up the minds of people and can serve as learning devices for rehearsing qualitative and sustainable futures and how to get there. Third, the proposed governance culture opts for a more hybrid mode of democracy open to diversity and structural change embedded in norms, attitudes and practices. This culture makes it possible for ideas, concepts and discourses to travel to other departments, consultants, agencies, political levels, citizens' associations etc. Fourth, the plea for a transformative agenda challenges existing knowledge, conventional wisdom and practices, attitudes and skills of planners.

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