Chapter 1
Strategic Planning as Governance of Long-Lasting Transformative Practices

Louis Albrechts

Abstract This chapter argues that new conceptual infrastructures and transformative practices are needed to cope with contemporary environmental and societal challenges. It reflects first on the nature and characteristics of transformative practices that construct images/visions of a preferred innovative structural outcome and opportunities for their implementation. The chapter then deals with the political-economic context and proposes envisioning as a learning process, discussing (among other things) transformative triggers and the power of visions in complex planning contexts. This is followed by a brief description of two cases, Hasselt and Antwerp, which are relevant in terms of transformative actions and visions. Finally, it provides ingredients for more radical strategic planning as the governance of collective affairs, which requires planners to cultivate activist modes of planning and to be more than navigators keeping the ship on course.

Keywords Transformative practices • Strategic planning • Visions

1.1 Introduction

In her book *Collaborative Planning*, Patsy Healey (1997b) understood planning as a governance activity occurring in complex and dynamic institutional environments, shaped by wider economic, social, and environmental forces that structure, but do not determine, specific interactions. By "governance" she meant the processes by which societies and social groups manage their collective affairs (see Healey 2003: 104). Before we can focus on these processes, we have to reflect on the major problems, challenges, and potentials our Western societies, Western cities, and city regions in particular are facing. The challenges are huge and include growing complexity (rise of new technologies, changes in production processes, crisis of representative democracy, diversity, globalization of culture, and the economy), increasing concern about the rapid and apparently random course of development,

L. Albrechts (✉)

Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning, Catholic University of Leuven,
Leuven, Belgium
e-mail: louis.albrechts@kuleuven.be

the problems of fragmentation, population aging, the dramatic increase in interest (at all scales, from local to global) in environmental issues, the long-standing quest for better coordination (both horizontal and vertical), the returned emphasis on the need for long-term thinking, and the aim to return to a more realistic and effective method. Secchi and Viganò (2011) frame the current condition of cities all over the world as a new urban question that arises in connection with globalizing markets and financial systems. There is a growing awareness that a number of planning concepts (compact cities, livable cities, creative cities, multicultural cities, fair cities, just cities, smart cities) cannot be achieved solely through physical hard planning. There is also awareness of the fact that (in addition to traditional land use regulation, urban maintenance, production, and management of services) governments are being called upon to respond to new demands and to adopt a more entrepreneurial style of planning in order to enhance city and regional competitiveness. This implies abandoning bureaucratic approaches and involving skills and resources that are external to the traditional administrative apparatus. All these developments and challenges serve to expand the agenda. I am fully aware that the problems and challenges are constantly changing and hence resistant to description in terms of fixed categories (see also Chia 1999: 211). To cope with the developments, challenges, and opportunities (see also Sager 2013; Allmendinger and Haughton 2010), planning is in desperate need of a critical debate (which questions the political and economic processes of which existing planning approaches are an integral part (see Sager 2013: xviii)) and a search for new ideas (see Allmendinger and Haughton 2010: 328). This in line with the call by Secchi and Viganò (2011) for new infrastructures: new principles and theories that can act as guides for finding reliable solutions to complex problems related to growing social inequalities, the environmental crisis, and the right to mobility. Which theories, principles, and practices are up to dealing with the (structural) challenges ahead? A growing amount of literature (Healey 1997a, 2006, 2007; Albrechts 2004, 2013, 2014; Albrechts and Balducci 2013; Motte 2006; Balducci et al. 2011) and an increasing number of practices, all over the world, seem to suggest that strategic spatial planning may be considered a possible approach that can deal with the challenges and embed structural change. Despite a certain popularity of strategic spatial planning (see Metzger 2012: 781), one cannot be blind to the critical appraisal of strategic planning. The reviews (see Albrechts 2014) focus on very different registers of the strategic spatial planning approach. Some are related to the ontology and epistemology of strategic planning. Questions are raised on how (and to what extent) the shift from a Euclidian concept of stable entities toward a non-Euclidian concept of many space-time geographies (see Friedmann 1993: 482; Graham and Healey 1999) is reflected in strategic spatial planning. How are the different types of knowledge (tacit/experiential knowledge of local communities versus traditional scientific knowledge) relevant to a relational strategic planning, reflected in strategic plans and actions based on these plans? Economic-political ideological reviews draw a link between the rise of strategic

spatial planning and the strengthened neoliberal political climate (see Olesen 2011, 2012; Olesen and Richardson 2012; Cerreta et al. 2010). They fear that the ideal of strategic spatial planning could be easily used to favor the most aggressive neoliberal models of urban and regional development (Cerreta et al. 2010: x; see also Olesen 2011; Sager 2013), and questions are raised as to whether strategic spatial planning practices are able to resist the hegemonic discourses of neoliberalism (see Olesen 2011, 2012). Others attack the militaristic and corporate terminology (see Leal de Oliveira 2000; Adonis Barbieri 2008) of strategic planning. Lastly, there are those who focus on the implementation of the theory in practice, asking whether actually existing practices of strategic spatial planning really follow in line with its normative grounding (see Allmendinger and Haughton 2009, 2010; Newman 2008).

This chapter argues that new conceptual infrastructures and transformative practices are needed to cope with the continuing and unabated pace of change driven by the (structural) developments and challenges. Therefore it starts by considering the nature and characteristics of transformative practices. Secondly, it deals with the political-economic context. Thirdly, it proposes envisioning as a learning process and deals briefly with two cases (the towns of Hasselt and Antwerp). Finally, it provides ingredients for a more radical strategic planning as a contribution to the discussion for new ideas and new conceptual infrastructures. The chapter relies on a selective review of planning literature and the author's experience in practice.

1.2 Transformative Practices: Nature and Characteristics

The transformative agenda is a modern term for structural change that has been discussed by many in the past in the context of planning theory (see Ozbekhan 1969; Schon 1971; Etzioni 1971; Friedmann 1987). Transformative practices focus on the structural problems in society, construct images/visions of a preferred outcome, and how to implement the images/visions. Transformative practices simply refuse to accept that the current way of doing things is necessarily the best way. They break free from concepts, structures, and ideas that only persist because of the process of continuity. It is precisely the discontinuity that forces cities and regions outside the usual boundaries of reasonableness (see de Bono 1992). Transformative practices take decision-makers, planners, institutions, and citizens out of their comfort zones (see also Kotter 1996) and compel them to confront their key beliefs, to challenge conventional wisdom, and to look at the prospects of new ideas and breaking out of the box. Beliefs and expectations matter just as much as reality. Transformative practices must be imagined as being radically and structurally different from the present reality. They focus on new concepts and new ways of thinking that change the way resources are (re)used, (re)distributed, and (re)allocated and the way regulatory powers are exercised. In this way transformative practices become the activity

whereby (taking into account structural constraints) that-which-might-become is imposed on that-which-is, and it is imposed for the purpose of changing what-is into what-might-become. Becoming privileges change over persistence and novelty over continuity (Chia 2002: 866). This means a shift from an ontology of being, which privileges outcome and end-state, toward an ontology of becoming, in which actions, movement, relationships, process, and emergence are emphasized (Chia 1995: 601, 1999: 215). So I argue to think in terms of the heterogeneous becoming of institutional transformation, the otherness of institutional outcomes, and the immanent continuity of institutional traces (Albrechts 2010). The transformative invents, or creates, practices – in relation to the context and to the social and cultural values to which a particular city is historically committed – as something new, instead of a solution reached as a result of existing trends.

A number of strong manifestos for structural change have been drawn up (see Albrechts 2005a, b), for reconsidering the absolute faith in economic growth (Misham 1967; Hamilton 2004), for living interculturally (Landry 2000; Sandercock 1998, 2003), for reacting against existing and persistent inequalities (Harvey 2000), and for creating a more sustainable society (Sachs and Esteva 2003). In order to (even partially) implement these manifestos, society needs to mobilize all the necessary resources in such a way that these new ideas develop the power to travel and translate into an array of practice arenas. They have to transform these arenas, rather than merely being absorbed into them. The ideas and ways of thinking that accumulate sufficient power to become routinized may then sediment down into the cultural ground, which sustains ongoing processes and feeds into new processes (Hajer 1995; Albrechts and Liévois 2004; Healey 2005: 147–148, 2006: 532). Until a change truly sticks through its institutionalization into the structure, systems, social norms, shared values, and, most of all, culture, new strategies remain fragile and subject to regression as soon as the stimuli associated with a change effort are removed (Kotter 1996, 2008; Albrechts 1999). Real transformation takes time and dedication and therefore risks losing momentum if there are no short-term goals to meet and actions to celebrate (see Kotter 1996, 2008). Most people will not go on the long march unless they see compelling evidence that the process is producing acceptable results within reasonable periods of time. Indeed, short-term results can build the credibility needed to sustain efforts over the long haul and help to test a vision against actual conditions (see Kotter 1996; Kotter and Rathgeber 2005), but we may not maximize short-term results at the expense of the future. Transformative change rarely occurs in instant revolutions. It is change that actually evolves in many small ways (see Hamdi 2004) to produce an emergent pattern, which, retrospectively, comes together and becomes evident in what history may then describe as a transformative moment (Chia 1999: 212; Healey 2005: 158, 2006: 541).

Transformative processes must be placed within a specific context (economic, social, cultural, and political, as well as in terms of the power structure), place, time, and scale regarding specific issues that are of interest and within a particular combination of actors. This context provides the setting for the process, but it also takes form and undergoes changes in the process. Transformative processes must

be rooted in an understanding of the basic processes and constraints that shape places. This must be done fully recognizing the conditions of power, inequality, and diversity. Who benefits from a transformative practice remains a basic question to be asked.

1.3 Political-Economic Context

Recently, a number of authors have argued that strategic planning practices have taken a neoliberal turn. They even link the rise of strategic spatial planning with a strengthened neoliberal political climate (see Olesen 2011, 2012; Olesen and Richardson 2012; Cerreta et al. 2010). They believe that the ideal of strategic spatial planning could be easily used to favor the most aggressive neoliberal models of urban and regional development (Cerreta et al. 2010: x; see also Olesen 2011). As neoliberalism assumes that socio-spatial problems have a market solution (see Peck and Tickel 2002; Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Purcell 2009), its aim was and is to depoliticize the economy (Friedmann 1992: 83) and to subordinate everything to the economic realm and to the sovereignty of the market (Mouffe 2005: 92). In many cities, urban revitalization is presented as an (the?) opportunity to change economic hierarchies and functions within the urban region, creating new jobs and strengthening the city's position in the urban division of labor. Planners and local authorities are lured to adopt a more proactive and entrepreneurial approach aimed at identifying market opportunities and assisting private investors in taking advantage of them (see Harvey 1989; Peck and Tickel 2002; Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Purcell 2009). A democratic deficit emerges as a central element of the neoliberal approach (Purcell 2009:144; Swyngedouw et al. 2002: 573).

Neoliberal policies attempt to create competitive cities and regions by generating investments in major cities and urban regions (Olesen and Richardson 2012: 1692; Swyngedouw et al. 2002). Such investments (projects) have become a key component of a neoliberal shift from distributive policies, welfare considerations, and direct service provision toward more market-oriented and market-dependent approaches aimed at pursuing economic promotion and competitive restructuring (see Swyngedouw et al. 2002: 572). Questions have to be raised whether strategic spatial planning practices are able to resist the hegemonic discourses of neoliberalism (see Olesen 2011, 2012). Everyday practice proves that it is enormously difficult to enact, by sheer force, the structural changes that are needed to tackle the problems and challenges our society is facing today. So the challenge seems to be to look for ways to help citizens, politicians, planners, and civil society as a whole to discuss and reflect upon the challenges, opportunities, and the new conceptual infrastructures and transformative practices needed. We have to be aware that we cannot confront complex dynamic realities with a language designed for simple static problems (Senge 1990). Hence there is the need for ways of thinking and for tools and instruments that help society cope with change in a dynamic environment (see also Winch 1998).

1.4   Envisioning as a Learning Process for Transformative Practices

Envisioning is the process by which individuals (or preferably groups) develop visions of future states regarding them, their organization and their city, that are sufficiently clear and powerful to arouse and sustain the actions necessary for (parts of) these visions to become a reality (see Goodstein et al. 1993). The term "visions" refers to images of possible futures with some implicit or explicit commentary on why civil society should try to build these futures. Visions or frames of reference are not just out there, waiting to be discovered – on the contrary, we have to construct them. This is not a linear but rather a dialectic (backcasting and forecasting) process. Visions themselves may not be seen as static descriptions of futures. They must comprehend and portray the dynamic nature of development, structural constraints, and changing challenges and contexts. Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily degenerate into a list of confusing, inconsistent, and time-consuming projects that move in very diverse and often incompatible directions or else go nowhere at all (Kotter 1996). In a change process, a vision serves several purposes. It points, in a very specific way, to the critical issues and challenges ahead, creating a sense of urgency among as many actors as possible (Kotter 2008). It astonishes and confronts our most deeply ingrained beliefs about what is important and why (see Hames 2007). It fights complacency (Kotter 1996, 2008; Kotter and Rathgeber 2005) and reveals how things can be different and truly better by shifting the unthinkable into the realm of the possible (see Hames 2007). It motivates actors to take action in a specific direction and it helps to frame the actions of different actors. It allows interdependent actors to work with some degree of autonomy and yet not trip over each other. The actors involved will only make sacrifices when they truly believe that a transformation is possible or feasible and that the potential benefits of change are attractive (Kotter 1996). It must become clear to the citizens, politicians, and planners how specific policies, behavior, and attitudes help. The vision describes what a city may look like in the future and it must appeal to the long-term interests of the actors – and the less privileged as well – who have a stake in the city. The ambition expressed in the vision needs to be high enough that it cannot be accomplished through business as usual (Kotter 2008). It must comprise realistic but at the same time daring strategies or actions. Therefore the vision must be focused, but also flexible, in order to allow alternative responses in the light of changing conditions. A vision must be sufficiently clear and easy to understand and communicate. This does not mean that its basis is not solid or that it is not backed by relevant information and analytically sound thinking. Effective visions seem to be rooted in sensible values that resonate deeply with civil society. The process very much involves getting in touch with who we are and what we care about (see also Kotter 1996). Envisioning does not claim to eliminate uncertainty through the making of predictions – it seeks instead to work as well as possible within the context of uncertainty and to enable the actors to open up the spectrum of possibilities. Envisioning is, above all, a state of mind (imagination and

anticipation) that leads to behavior (hope and will) (see Godet 2001: 8). In the final analysis, we must come back to what "is" if we want to present ideas and concepts that are solid, workable, and of testable value. To have to these ideas, we need both the solidity of the analysis and the creativity of the design of alternative futures. Since envisioning is also the journey and not just the destination, and as visions are so central to transformation and so all-invasive, envisioning cannot be confined to a single actor or institution in the process. The values and images of what a society wants to achieve are not generated in isolation, but are socially constructed and are given meaning and validated by the traditions of belief and practice. They are reviewed, reconstructed, and invented through collective experience (see Ozbekhan 1969 but also Elchardus et al. 2000: 24; Foucault 1980: 11; Hillier 1999). Indeed, the individual self is only a by-product of perpetually shifting constellations of relations, never a fundamental stable unity in its own right (Chia 2003: 969). This implies that the objects that society engages with are not things, but are more an interconnecting set of shifting relations in which action is undertaken based on an awareness of divergent understandings (e.g., different professional codes or local norms) and not only on the identification and use of material assets (Chia and Holt 2006: 649). Therefore I consider envisioning to be a collective process that concerns futures for which a wide variety of actors are themselves responsible. This means their visions are more than wish lists – they involve commitment to the realization of visions through practice (Friedmann 1987). Visions provide actors with views of the future that can be shared, a clear sense of direction, a mobilization of energy, and a sense of being engaged in something important (see Goodstein et al. 1993). One main challenge in this respect is how to shift a what's-in-it-for-me culture to one of civic-mindedness, which sees the current challenges as opportunities. The use of relevant cases could be helpful in this respect. The first case presented here draws on the development of creative transport planning, on creative local governance, and on the role of a key person – a champion, in the terminology of Bryson (1995), which allows for structural change. The second case draws on the use of images as instruments to reveal the characteristics and quality of the city of Antwerp and its possible futures.

1.5 Broadening the Scope of Places

1.5.1 Creative Governance in Tackling a Transport Problem (See Albrechts 2005b)

Hasselt, a regional city in the Northeast of Belgium, is a major commercial and service center with a population of 69,000. Like many cities, it has suffered from the mounting costs of externalities caused by automobile travel, e.g., accidents, traffic jams, and environmental problems. These externalities have had a negative impact on the livability and appeal of the city. Combined with other factors, they

have resulted in a decreasing number of inhabitants. In the 1990s, the new local government (a coalition of socialists, greens, and conservatives with a charismatic new mayor) was placed in a dilemma: to build a third ring road or to completely reverse the existing transport policy. The socialist party organized meetings with local residents. In these meetings local traffic proved to be an important issue. In the meantime, a temporary free shuttle bus service was introduced to compensate citizens for the nuisance caused by major local roadworks. This shuttle proved an enormous success. Although the intense discussions of the 1970s (see Bologna) about free public transport were on the decline and even seemed to be disappearing, the mayor launched the pioneering idea of introducing free public transport for citizens and visitors alike in the entire urban area. This places the problem within a broader relational perspective than simply the internal travel patterns of the city's own citizens. This was just one action within the context of 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 would make the construction of the third ring road unnecessary and that the first ring road could even be rebuilt. 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 company for this loss. The savings resulting from not constructing the third ring road would 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 the car lanes and improved the facilities for cyclists and pedestrians (a 9 m wide pedestrian area bordered by a double row of trees), which considerably improved the livability and overall quality of the urban environment. The results between mid-1997 (when the scheme was introduced) and 2002 have been mixed. On the one hand, there has been an astonishing 1200 % increase in the numbers of public transport passengers and an increase in the number of bus routes from one to nine. On the other hand, the numbers of cyclists have decreased. However, the most important results have been the strengthening of the social tissue and the fact that the elderly became more mobile, that the discourse on public transport turned very positive, and that the extreme right-wing party has not gained a foothold in the city council (in sharp contrast with other similar cities).

In this case, a problem (major road congestion) has been turned into an asset, i.e., free public transport. The problem of congestion was viewed from a different perspective. Indeed, instead of the traditional engineering logic of "more traffic = more roads," the logic of the pedestrians, of the elderly, of public transport, and of the overall livability of the city was introduced. The mayor thought of a solution – free public transport – that no one else had thought of. The costs of constructing a third ring road were turned into net benefits, despite the subsidies paid to the transport company. The mayor enhanced the livability of the city by linking it to the traffic problem. This strengthened social and political capital as citizens and local politicians took more pride in their city, which became a best practice case, attracting visitors from all over the world, including governments, students,

all kinds of specialists in transport, etc. This case also illustrates the impact of a leading person. Although the context was not very innovative (a traditional socialist party and an equally 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. A change in the coalition after the 2012 local elections in a harsh neoliberal context provoked a shift in the city's policy on mobility.

1.5.2 Imagining the City: Antwerp

Antwerp, with 450,000 inhabitants, is the largest city in Belgium. Other than the official, more strategic planning-oriented approach, the city draws its inspiration (equally and even more intensively) from an approach that emerged within the architectural/urbanism discipline on land use regulation and a new generation of strategic (mainly urban) projects, which applies to the revival of run-down parts of cities and regions, such as the French "Projet de Ville," in particular (see Secchi 1986; Motte 1994; Masboungi and De Gravelaine 2002). In addition to traditional sectoral and technical knowledge, design operations provide a specific and original body of knowledge (see Viganò 2010). In this approach urban design, as an instrument to analyze and to read places, uses images and representations to reveal the qualities of existing spaces and places and their possible futures. The active creation of images became a key component of the planning culture in Antwerp.

In their book *Antwerp*: *Territory of a New Modernity*, Secchi and Viganò (2009) – the authors of the Antwerp structure plan – introduce the idea of the image as a forceful synthesizing tool for understanding and designing urban space. The image in their interpretation relates to the human capacity of understanding and imagination and to human presence and consciousness, suggestive knowledge conveying, and projecting quality. In this way they are simple keys to a collective imagination and memory. Secchi and Viganò construct images (water city, eco city, rail city, harbor city, porous city, villages and metropolis, and megacity) for Antwerp as part of different performative practices in which interpretations and strategic choices about the city are being made.

Secchi and Viganò (2011) zoom in on the porosity concept in Antwerp to illustrate the complexity of the city. This concept holds an interesting innovative perspective for interpreting the interaction between morphology and societal dynamics. It refers to the built and non-built environment, to different social groups, and to the different morphologies of the city. Porosity regards different ways in which different city users (not only human but natural as well) use urban space and move within the city. Porosity is not a static condition: it is related to different phenomena that can modify the way urban space reacts, over time, to practices and movement, pressure, and abandonment. It is part of a renewed concept of mobility, which weaves together the social and physical dimensions. The image

of a porous city reflects a permeable and accessible city, where many central places are endowed with their own recognizable identities, disseminated throughout the city and connected by a capillary infrastructure network, the lower network, by a network of shopping streets, and by surface public transport. The image of the porous city can be used as a stimulus for local renovation, to enhance the public domain. It also deals with the relationship and the sharing of public and private space (see Secchi and Viganò 2009). The generic policies in Antwerp regarding the porous city focus on the creation of infrastructure and facilities for conviviality and sociability, guaranteeing the quality of life and work in the city by maintaining a sufficient amount of open space in high-density areas, by reusing vacant areas and empty buildings and by creating a micro-fabric of links for bicycles and pedestrians, and by maintaining a social and functional mixture that can be differentiated in the various neighborhoods. All this contributes to a strategy for the construction of urban space. As a spatial plan, the official structure plan in Antwerp focuses mainly on the spatial (say physical) aspects of porosity. This may lead to an incomplete understanding of space – hence the challenge to expand and enrich the concept of porosity with a sociocultural dimension and consider this dimension as an integral part of the concept. Related concepts such as permeability, connectivity, and accessibility have a potential in this respect. Permeability could go beyond the link with the geometry of the city and refer to permeability for different cultures, social groups, where accessibility could not only focus on the real possibility of moving from one point to another but also on the real possibility of moving socially and economically. Connectivity could not only be linked to physical barriers but also to social, economic, and cultural barriers. Permeability, connectivity, and accessibility acknowledge the existence of barriers and aim to overcome them. Moreover, opening the concept of porosity toward the sociocultural provides an opportunity to reconnect planning in Antwerp to the long-standing social tradition of the city.

The two cases illustrate that breaking out of the box and the use of images are instrumental to broaden the scope of possible futures and strengthen the quality of a city. This is in line with the introduction, where I argued that planning needs to look for new ideas that are up to dealing with the challenges ahead and add to new conceptual infrastructures. In the next paragraph, I reflect on what this means for strategic planning and for planners.

1.6 What Does This Mean for (Strategic) Planning and Planners?

It implies a type of strategic planning that provides direction without destination and movement without prediction, tackles problems, raises awareness, unravels and resists the influence of international neoliberal ideologies on planning theory and planning practices in cities, meets challenges, broadens the scope of the possible

(see Zizek 1999: 199 about the art of the impossible; Hillier 2007), encourages hopes and dreams, appeals to values (equity, social justice), provides a frame for decisions, and challenges existing knowledge, conventional wisdom, and practices (see also Hillier 2002, 2007; Brand and Gaffikin 2007; Healey 2010; Metzger 2012). It needs an arena, i.e., a space of deliberative opportunities in Forester's (2010) terms, an open dialogue in which a plurality of interests and demands, opinions, images, conflicts, different values, and power relationships are addressed. In these arenas actors may reflect on who they are and what they want and in this way articulate their identities, their traditions, and their values.

1.6.1 Strategic Planning as Governance of Collective Affairs

If we reflect upon the city in which we live our life, we will be able to discover layers of stakes (Healey 1997b: 69, 91–92, 2006: 542) that consist of existing but perhaps unconscious interests in the fate of our city. Hence comes the plea for strategies that treat urban territory not just as a container in which things happen, but as a complex mixture of nodes and networks and places and flows, in which multiple relations, activities, and values coexist, interact, combine, conflict, oppress, and generate creative synergy (Healey 2007: 1). A challenge in contemporary governance – and by extension in planning – consists in the dialectic between movements that seek democratization, collective decision-making, and empowerment of citizens on the one hand and the established institutions and structures that seek to reabsorb such demands into a distributive framework on the other (see Young 1990: 90). It entails a political struggle between different visions of justice: justice as distribution – presuming a consumer-oriented, possessively individualist conception of people – and justice as enablement and empowerment, presuming a more active conception of people (Young 1990: 15–38). A crucial element in this respect is the way in which people are excluded or included in planning processes and the way the relationship between people, technologies of government, and norms of self-rule (Roy 2009) is organized. If concerns of some groups in society (especially the weak groups) cannot be tackled within the preconceived level of government, new practices will have to be invented. Problematically, a broad range of these relationships is being compressed into a one-fits-all concept of citizen participation, which does not seem to provide the deeply sought equal and reciprocal relationship between the state and (all) citizens. So, for strategic planning to be successful, a key task is to explore who has a stake in an issue. The question concerning who is to be considered a stakeholder in a particular context or situation is not only an epistemological challenge but also a fundamentally ontological issue (Metzger 2012: 782). Therefore strategic planning looks for an arena, a platform that organizes the relationship between (all) actors in a more open and equitable way and where actors can articulate their identities, their traditions, and their values. In different contexts and in different intellectual traditions, this search led to a

coproduction approach and engagement between the state and (all) citizens that were more likely to be successful (for references see Albrechts 2013), with citizens as a part of action, not its object (Friedmann 2005), and as a combination of a needs-based and rights-based approach (Albrechts 2013). In a world where actors are interdependent and have a (implicit) reason to engage with each other, coproduction is considered as an engine of change that may make a difference between systems working and failing. This assumes that transformative potential lies in the very multiplicity of tensions and stresses of the relational complexity of coproduction processes, creating all kinds of fissures and cracks which can be opened up to create and enlarge moments of opportunity for new ideas (Healey 1997b, 2006: 540) and new conceptual infrastructures.

Coproduction is constructed as an inclusive and multivocal arena, grounded in a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of urban and regional relations (see Healey 2006: 541) where value systems can be articulated, where local and scientific knowledge can be combined on an equal base, where shared strategic conviction can grow, and where conflicts are reframed in a less antagonistic manner. It recognizes that knowledge is always partial and sometimes partisan and that the search for enhanced knowledge is endless rather than exhaustive (Brand and Gaffikin 2007: 293). It is inclusionary (for those in and outside the system) and intentional to secure political influence and to change the status quo with specific projects and policies. It provides an interaction between the delivery of public goods (strategies, policies, projects) and building strong, resilient, mutually supportive communities, i.e., coproduction as a political strategy. In a coproductive form of governance, deliberation takes place through a lot of face-to-face interaction in real time (see Friedmann 1993: 482). Face-to-face dialogue (see Legacy 2010: 2706) allows to acknowledge the role of the emotional and the personal dimension, expressed in the narrative that allows the whole person to be present in negotiations and deliberations (Sandercock 2000: 6). The dialogic process is itself transformative in the relations among the participants, creating a "sensing together" rather than the conventional consensus, whereby antagonism can be domesticated into agonism (Hillier 2002: 289). Only under such conditions can policy be designed, not for citizens but by citizens in their role as policy users (see Brand and Gaffikin 2007: 290). Using coproduction in a strategic planning process offers alternatives, stimulates critical reflection, is noncoercive, and is capable of reflecting particular experiences with more universal principles (equity, social justice) and issues (sustainable development, spatial quality) (see Brand and Gaffikin 2007 294). Coproduction as a central concept embodies a social science perspective (see also Cahn 2000: 29) and strengthens the socio-spatial character of the strategic planning process. It is looked upon as a process of becoming, with outcomes which must be well informed, just, and fair. In this way coproduction is part of a much broader shift that is emerging across all the sectors and most obviously in those fractures between and in public and private.

As an alternative for institutionalized and taken-for-granted practices and routines, the added value of incorporating coproduction (conceived as a political strategy) for the selection of problems, discussing of evidence, of strategies, of

justice or fairness, and of the nature and scope of desired outcomes, is that it is conceived as a learning process, which permits a plurality of problem definitions, ambitions, and ways to achieve it for those inside and outside the system. Coproduction introduces into the neighborhood, city, or region new identities and practices that disturb established histories. In this way coproduction may strengthen the local organization base of citizens – more specifically the urban poor – and increase their capacity to negotiate successfully with the state (see Mitlin 2008: 340) and other powerful actors. In its own politicization, it may have the capacity to hold a mirror to the process of neoliberalization revealing its real character, scope, and consequences (see Peck and Tickel 2002: 400). It is focused on developing socio-spatial imaginations that reinvent modernism's activist commitments to the construction of places and to the construction of an inclusionary governance system. In this way it includes not only the views of the most articulate or powerful but also the views of those who have been systematically excluded by structural inequalities of class, gender, and religion (Sandercock 1998: 65), and as a learning process, it gains an emancipatory potential. This implies that strategic planning may not be locked within the interstices of the state and the powerful actors in society (Friedmann 2011). Coproduction requires a change to the status quo and is conceived as a creative task of generating collective becomings underwritten by a democratizing ethos (see Metzger 2012: 794), and there are no technical rules and norms according to which coproduction processes are to be conducted (see Roy 2003, 2009; Mitlin 2008; Watson 2011). With strategic planning, as conceived here, people are being asked to construct their own governance institutions (see Healey 1997b: 209). Good governance is possible only if institutions are allowed some margin for self-governance of a form appropriate to their particular tasks, within a framework of financial and other reporting (ONeill 2002: 58). As classical institutions are still endowed with substantial powers, it is clear that redistributive policies also need to be framed in more general redistribution and regulatory policies at higher-scale levels (see also Swyngedouw et al. 2002).

1.6.2   Impact for Planners

Because strategic planning is not only instrumental, it may not be reduced to a set of neutral procedures. The implicit responsibility of strategic planners can no longer simply be to be efficient or to function smoothly as a neutral means for obtaining given and presumably well-defined ends. The normative dimension inscribed in strategic spatial planning is of an ethical nature, as it always refers to values (equity, social justice) and specific practices (see also Healey 2010 for the crucial normative foundation of strategic spatial planning). Without the normative, we risk adopting a pernicious relativism where anything goes (see Ogilvy 2002; Metzger 2012: 793).

    The second case draws on the creation of images as contextual, conscious, and purposive actions to represent values and meanings for the future of a city. This provoked a shift from analysis, which seeks to discover a place that might exist,

toward design (in its broadest sense), which creates a place that would not otherwise exist. This is similar to Habermas' (1996) idea of knowing (understanding the challenges and the options available) and steering (the capacity to take action to deal with the challenges).

Strategic planners have an active but not a dominant role in a planning process (see Metzger 2012). As active generators of conditions of collective becoming (Metzger 2012: 793), they must be more than navigators keeping the ship on course and they are necessarily involved with formulating that course. In this line of reasoning, they are not just looking for existing articulated interests – they are actively involved in broadening the scope of the possible and in articulating and bringing to the table the interests that can be of a collectivity that may yet become (Metzger 2012: 794). This implies an activist mode of planning (see Sager 2011, 2013 for an overview of activist modes of planning). For planners working in the system (government planners), an equity type of planning (Krumholz and Forester 1990) open to local knowledge and where citizens and the disadvantaged become an equal part of the action seems suited. For planners working outside the system (NGOs, community organizations), only a radical type of planning (for references see Sandercock 1998: 97–104) makes it possible to work for structural transformation of systemic inequalities. In this way strategic planning is undoubtedly a political process.

1.7   Epilogue

The two cases discussed above make it clear that creativity, breaking out of the box, the use of different languages, and logics are instrumental in broadening the scope of possibilities. Strategic spatial planning in this chapter is not looked upon as the ultimate model, neither as a panacea for all challenges and all problems, nor as a new ideology preaching a new world order. It is not meant as a substitute but as a complement for other planning tools (statutory planning, urban design). It is presented as a method for creating and steering a (range of) better future(s) for a place (see also Ogilvy 2002). Its focus on becoming produces quite a different picture compared to traditional planning in terms of plans (strategies versus master plans or land use plans), type of planning (providing a framework and a justification for specific actions versus technical/legal regulation), type of governance (government-led versus government-led but negotiated form of governance), and content (vision and actual actions that accept the full complexity of a place while focusing on local assets, socio-spatial quality, a fair distribution of the joys, and burdens).

As illustrated in the Hasselt case, planning is not just a contingent response to wider forces but is also an active force in enabling change. It also shows that planning cannot be theorized as though its approaches and practices were neutral with respect to class, gender, age, race, and ethnicity (Albrechts 2002; Sandercock 1998). The Antwerp case makes it clear that combining an urbanist discourse with a more social planning discourse deepens the scope of some concepts. The recent

evolution in Hasselt illustrates that the capacity of a spatial planning system to deliver the desired outcomes is dependent not only on the legal-political system itself but also on the conditions underlying it (see Olesen and Richardson 2012: 1690; see also Needham 2000 for success factors). These conditions, including political, societal, cultural, and professional attitudes toward spatial planning (in terms of planning content and process) and the political will on the part of the institutions involved in setting the process in motion (and in keeping it going, which is much more difficult), affect the ability of planning systems to implement the chosen strategies.

A strategic spatial planning process based on coproduction acknowledges that some forms of strategic spatial planning may tend, in the long term, to reinforce the current status quo because they seek to resolve conflict, eliminate exclusion, and neutralize power relations rather than embracing them as the very terrain of social mobilization (see Purcell 2009: 155). Therefore it is necessary to mobilize sufficient discursive counterpower to challenge prevailing powers and to go beyond the recycling of established discourses, concepts, and practices.

Because the values, interests, views, ideas, and policies from actors are different, strategic spatial planning involves choices and hence it inevitably works in a context of conflicts, clashes between the different actors. As most strategic planning processes are non-statutory processes, questions are raised about the legitimacy of such processes.

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