WHAT KIND OF A FUTURE FOR (SPATIAL) PLANNING?

A Western European Perspective.

Prof Louis Albrechts, Dept. City and Regional Planning, KU Leuven, Belguim

Beplannning aan die begin van die derde millenium het te doen met 'n veranderde wêreld as die een waarin die denkwyse van die professie gevorm is. Die beplanning wat ons geleer het is vandag minder relevant, daar die amptelike retoriek handel oor privatisering, deregulering en kompetisie in 'n globale wêreld (Friedman, 1997). Hierdie artikel wys op die dimensies van 'n nuwe beplanning wat benodig word vir hierdie eise. Die fokus val op die houdings/kwaliteite wat beplanners benodig om die Westerse Wêreld se uitdagings te hanteer en sensitief te wees vir billikheid enregverdigheid. Sleuteldenkrigtings met in agneming van die ontwikkelings= gang van die gemeenskap word uit gelig. Soos die ontwikkelings-gang 'n invloed uitoefen op die vraag na ruimte, ligging en die karakter van plekke, word gekyk na die ruimtelike invloed op stedelike en plattelandse areas. Kortliks word gekyk na die reaksie van beplanning en beplanners op hierdie ontwikkelingsgang van die gemeenskap.

Ruimtelike beplanning gaan oor die daarstel van werklike en prosedurele raamwerke en beginsels wat die ligging en kwaliteit van ontwikkeling en fisiese infrastruktuur beinvloed. Dit bevat 'n stel beheer meganismes in die skepping, ontwikkeling, implementering en monitering strategiëe, planne, beleid en projekte asook vir die regulering van van die ligging , tyd, tipe, en vorm van ontwikkeling (Healey, 1997). Hierdie praktyke word nie net gevorm deur die dinamiek van ekonomiese verhouding en ontwikklinge nie, maar ook die kulturele voortbring van begrippe soos geslag, ras, etnisiteit, fisisese vermoëns en ouderdoms-verdeling. Beplanning en die beplanner is nie neutraal in hierdie verband nie. In die eerste plek speel die beplanner die rol van skeidsregter en besluit wie wat kry, wanner en hoe. In die tweede plek moet die beplanner dit duidelik stel namens wie hy praat en wie hy verteenwoordig.

Hierdie artikel is vanuit 'n Wes-Europese perspektief asook die ondervinding van die outeur in 'n beplanningspraktyk geskryf.

Introduction

Planning at the start of the third millennium deals with a completely different world from the one in which many of the basic ways of thought of the profession were founded. The old planning which we learned in school seems somehow less relevant today, when so much of the official rhetoric is of privatisation, deregulation and competitiveness in a "global" world (Friedmann, 1997).
This article outlines some of the dimensions of a new planning called for by these trends. The focus is on attitudes/qualities, planners need to possess in order to cope with the challenges and developments the Western World is faced with and to be more sensitive to issues of equity and social justice. Some key trends with respect to the evolution in society are identified. As these trends do have an impact on the demands for space, location and characteristics of places, their spatial impacts on urban areas and rural areas are touched upon. The responses planning and the planner gave to these trends the last three decades are very briefly mentioned.

Spatial planning is about setting substantive and procedural frameworks and principles to guide the location and quality of development and physical infrastructure. It consists of a set of governance practices for conceiving, developing, implementing and monitoring strategies, plans, policies and projects, and for regulating the location, timing, type and form of development (Healey, 1997). These practices are not just shaped by the dynamics of economic relations and development also by in the cultural production of conceptions of gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability and age division. Planning and the planner are not neutral in this respect. In the first place the planner plays the role of referee determining who gets what, when and how. In the second place the planner has to make clear who he speaks for and who he works for.

This article is biased to the extent that it is written from a Western European perspective and also from the accumulated experience of the author's professional planning practice.

1 KEY TRENDS

The spatial articulation of human activities has greatly expanded over the past decades intensifying conflicts over the use of space. For (spatial) planning it is essential to understand the basic processes that affect the development and use of space. Moreover there is a need for critical thinking about socio-spatial processes, for how to understand these processes historically, culturally, institutionally.

11. General trends

The ongoing structural, interrelated economic macro-processes constitute the realm of changing forms of spatial organisation:

- The globalisation of economic activities on a world scale (Sassen, 1991; Amin & Thrift, 1994; Amin, 1994; Storper, 1997);
- The consolidation of a regional, national and multinational division of labour, resulting from the increasing 'footlooseness' of investment strategies (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989);
- The emphasis on processes of rationalisation and intensification (often by means of technological process innovations), frequently resulting in negative regional labour market balances (Storper, 1997);
- A dismantling of once-powerful industrial centres linked with a changing spatial occupation pattern (Hudson, 1994);
- The accelerated industrialisation of several Third World countries (Castells, 1996);
- The tertiarisation of economic activity, leading to a new problematic, characterised by an unequal spatial structure with respect to both labour functions and qualifications (Martinelli, 1989);
- A shift in state policies from a Keynesian 'subsidy-state' to an 'entrepreneurial state', accompanied by economic and social deregulation (Harvey, 1989);
- A tendency toward 'flexibility' in social, economic and regulatory affairs, related with a recomposition of capital/labour and capital/capital relations. This is equally reflected in current 'localist' policies and increasing inter-local or inter-regional competition in a nevertheless internationally organised economy (Tödtling, 1994);
- The rapid internationalisation of the financial industry into a worldwide network of transactions (Sassen, 1991).

1.2. Western-European trends

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- In the past decades Western Europe went through a sharp decline in birth rates and a decrease in mortality. The proportion of persons over 65 years increased. The ageing of the population has severe impacts on the available labour force and on health and social services that need to be provided (European Commission, 1991, 1994).
- Migration due to disparities (economic, living conditions...) between countries, regions, cities and the rural areas. Interregional and international migration critically affects the demographic situation of regions and countries and hence the future of the European spatial structure. Political decisions on international migration and on social exclusion or inclusion will have an important impact on the magnitude and direction of migration. Differences in histories, cultures and needs have an impact on social life and (urban) space (Champion, 1989).
- In all European countries the average household size has fallen dramatically. Average household size also varies between countries, between regions, between cities and rural areas. Besides the decline in birth rates and the growing proportion of elderly, the reduction in marriages, the increase of divorces and hence single or one-parent households are important social economic reasons. Smaller households give rise to new life-styles (European Commission, 1991, 1994).
- The increasing internationalisation and spatial division of labour has increased the personal mobility and the volume of goods transport. This growth goes hand in hand with an explosion of road traffic (truck and car) and a decline (at least in relative terms) of railways and other ways of collective transport (European Commission, 1991, 1994).
- The emergence of new democratic practices. Society needs new consensus producing practices to replace the double arrangements of parliamentary democracy supported by corporatist practices (Edelenbos & Monnikhof, 1998; Friedmann & Douglas, 1998).
- A growing sensitivity and respectfulness for the value of difference and cultural diversity (Sandercock, 1998) .
- Emergence of and conflicts over environmental threats. Emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO2), nitrogen oxides (NOx), together with water and soil pollution, the disposal of solid wastes and increasing land consumption per capita are more and more considered to be at odds with local environmental qualities (European Commission, 1991, 1994).

2. SPATIAL IMPACTS

2.1 *Spatial impacts on urban areas*

The urban areas in E urope will be co-determined by the trends described above. Some likely impacts for cities are (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989; Kunzmann & Wegener, 1991; European Commission, 1991, 1994; Kunzmann, 1996):

- In the field of population, the decline of birth rates and the ageing of the population confront cities with serious problems of inter-generational adjustment and public service provision.
- Interregional and international migration from peripheral to core regions and from the South of Europe to the North present difficult problems especially for target and gateway cities in prosperous regions.
- Smaller households, a growing cultural diversity, new lifestyles transform social networks, neighbourhood relations, location and mobility patterns in cities. Cities have to respond by planning for multiple publics, by providing new services and new forms of housing policy, land management and transport planning.
- The restructuring of the economy, specifically the reorganisation of production and distribution and the internationalisation of markets increase the competition between cities and regions and foster innovation and creativeness, but may aggravate disparities. Liberalisation of economies enhances individual prosperity but may also deepen social tensions and inequality. Deregulation and privatisation intend to generate new and more efficient services, but may endanger public service provision in cities.
- Rapid technological change in

transport and communications stimulate personal mobility and goods movement - primarily on roads; this makes the provision of public transport in cities more difficult; the growth in high-speed rail and air transport contribute to the polarisation between cities in core and in peripheral regions. Problems of environment and resources, in particular transport-generated air and noise pollution, waste disposal, the need for energy conservation and urban sprawl will affect cities in all European countries.

- High levels of long-term unemployment, widening income differentials, growing disparities in educational skill levels and inadequate amenities, increasing differences in health and life expectancy, rising crime rates... are manifestations of increasing social instability in most large cities. These symptoms tend to be associated in many areas with large numbers of immigrants and/or ethnic minorities. Fancy inner-city renovations (as in Lille, Barcelona, Bilbao, Rotterdam...) are used to improve the competitive position with respect to the spatial division of consumption (or to seduce the private sector to invest in the inner city). The competition will often be at the expense of the local population. Behind the mask of many successful projects lie some serious social and economic problems and in many cities they take geographical shape in the form of a dual city of inner city regeneration and a surrounding sea of increasing impoverishment. Traditional agglomerations became major problem areas themselves (urban decay, unemployment, fiscal crisis, etc.) (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989).

2.2 Spatial impacts on rural areas

There are significant differences between the process of development in those rural areas which are continuing to lose population and in some cases are under threat of becoming deserted and those areas close to large cities which are generally subject to strong dynamic forces (urbanization, tourist activities...).

As a result of the European Common Agricultural Policy and the GATT-negotiations, more agricultural land will be taken out of use resulting in fewer farmers and in more land becoming available for other purposes (nature, leisure, housing, industry, etc.). The important functional changes taking place in the rural areas constitute a clear source of conflict. It is, therefore, important to examine the territorial impacts of these changes on rural areas. New developments also provide great opportunities for a policy that focuses on using the potentialities and on improving the quality of rural areas. Hence an integrated spatial strategy will be necessary for rural areas (Albrechts, 1996).

An essential feature of rural development is (usually) a change in land use, one which (often) influences the economic, political, socio-cultural and spatial relations surrounding particular pieces of land. The discrete social demands and the tendency for capital to become 'fixed' in land have produced a series of segmented land development markets oriented towards different sectors of production and consumption. The key rural land-development processes are constituted within the following markets: agriculture, forestry, industry, houses, and leisure. The relationships between these sectors are constantly changing. For instance in the current period the interests of agriculture no longer occupy an unquestioned leading position as they have done over much of the countryside during the post-war period. There are growing and more widespread pressures for the conversion of farmland to other uses, bringing agricultural land into the decision-making process of the planning system (Murdoch & Marsden, 1994).

There is little reason to expect that the developments as witnessed in the past decades will stop. In addition to the ongoing loss of rural areas to urbanization, agricultural developments (scaling-up, intensification...) nourish the fear that increasingly larger areas will be dominated by one or several crops, that small-scale landscapes will virtually disappear and that the environment will continually degrade by manure surpluses and intensive use of pesticides and fertilizers (Murdoch & Marsden, 1994).

These developments provide challenges and opportunities for urban and rural spatial policy. An integrated spatial strategy will be necessary for both areas.

It is useful to point out that these trends are not pre-determined by 'natural laws' that make them inevitable. Without exception, they are the products of socio-economic processes, political decisions and individual human behaviour and hence open to change and learning. However, given the stability of political structures and behavioural patterns, but also the growing awareness for social exclusion and for the need to protect the environment, it is useful to take account of these trends as a possible, and with some caveats also most likely, framework of urban and rural development in Europe in the 2000s.

In the past traditional land use plans used regulatory tools such as zoning. They provided - in theory at least - a framework and basic rules to handle different claims on space. However, economic and social change has undermined the bases upon which these land use plans were negotiated. These plans are mostly passive plans not directed at implementation as such. Such a plan is looked upon in the first place as a criterion, into which several initiatives can be projected. Apparently these plans produced more or less homogeneous zones. In many of these plans there is no mention of an explicit time horizon, of action-programmes, instruments, priorities, budget making (Albrechts, 1992).

One has to overcome the persist ent tendency in planning thought and practice to separate the understanding of urban and rural change from the processes of governance through which communities can collectively address their common dilemmas about what is happening to their localities. The challenge we face is to develop the governance processes through which to manage the conflicts we have (Healey, 1997) and the development of trajectories,

which seek to realise the potentialities and aims at consensus building between various groups.

If spatial planning is ever going to be effective, it will have to interfere purposefully with the determinants of the developments and challenges described above. The next sections is an attempt to pull together a series of characteristics, qualities, attitudes planning and the planners need to possess in order to deal with these developments.

3. HOW DID PLANNING AND THE PLANNERS REACT?

In the 1960s spatial planners believed in a future in which problems could be tamed and humanity liberated from the constraints of scarcity and greed. The legitimating of planning as a political process to guide the forces, which determine the development of a community/locality in a socially acceptable direction, began to fall apart (Albrechts 1991, 1999).

In the 1980s t he State has become more ideologically conservative and more subservient to the needs and demands of capital. Planning was often considered to be an irritating hindrance to individual freedom and to the functioning of the free market economy or even to be structurally incompatible with them. The retreat from strategic planning in the eighties was fuelled not only by the neo-conservative disdain for planning but also by postmodernist scepticism which both "tend to view that progress, if it happens, cannot be planned" (Healey 1991).

In the past thirty years we had (and to some extend we still have) passionate debates and considerable - even irreconcilable - differences between procedural and substantial planners, between rational and political planners, between advocate planners and technicians, between planners for 'big business' and for 'ordinary people', between modernist and post-modernist planners, between designers and planners...

In the 1990s a new enthusiasm for strategic spatial planning seemed to emerge in some countries in Western Europe and in the European Union (Europe 2000, Europe 2000+, European Spatial Development Perspective). The reasons for supporting spatial planning may be quite different. Indeed some see spatial planning as an instrument to alleviate the harsh sector policy, others use it to support economic integration, still others hope to reach a better tuning of the spatial policies of different spatial entities (localities, regions...) (Albrechts, 1997).

One reason for this E uropean enthusiasm is the increasing sense that urban areas across Europe are in competition with each other for private investment and public subsidy. Another reason is the growing concern over the consequences of rapid, and apparently random development. This concern coincides with, and fuels, the dramatic interest in environmental issues with some sets of converts: the NIMBY lobby, who appreciate that the planning system is the only device for fending off unwelcome development, big business, which calls for more infrastructure planning and greater certainty about its operating environment (Breheny, 1991), nature conservation which calls for more protection of natural areas... (see also Faludi & Van der Valk, 1994).

This new enthusiasm for spatial planning is not universal. In Eastern Europe 'planning' is seen as part of the old regime and the search is for ways of developing markets. There is much need in this part of Europe to identify a new form of spatial planning for 2000 free of associations with centralized economic planning.

4 NEW PLANNING ATTITUDES

4.1. *Setting the context*

There are different areas of innovation in planning thought and practice responding to the above-mentioned problems and challenges. As long as planning was understood as a solely technical activity, planners did not openly have to bother with the ethical implications of their work. In our society, the society of risks as Beck (1988) puts it; the noun 'technical' functions as a synonym for not having to bother about ethical implications. Even in the choosing of goals or the choosing of the 'optimal' or most efficient means for achieving 'desired' objectives, planning was not considered to be political. However, even if one adopts this view, it does not eliminate the responsibility of planners to deal with the ethical issues inherent in the actions they undertake. Responsibility can never be abdicated. According to our view planning is essentially political (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989; Albrechts, 1991). Planners' actions help to determine who gets what, when and how. So the mere question is not whether planning reflects politics, but whose politics it reflects. For whom does the planner speak? Who does the planner work for? What is the planners' conception of justice, of citizenship?

Planning is indivisibly part of social reality. In that sense planning cannot only be instrumental. The implicit responsibility of planners can no longer simply be to 'be efficient', to function smoothly as neutral means to given and presumably well defined ends. Planners are more than navigators who keep their ship on course . They are necessarily involved with formulating that course (Forester, 1989). Rather than being a neutral eunuch, the planner him or herself is a strong partisan for certain outcomes as opposed to others, for the interest of some groups over others, for some styles of governance, for some conceptions of justice, some patterns of future development and so on (Forester 1989).

The planner has to be aware that power and oppression are reproduced not just in the economic relations of capitalist production, but as well in the cultural production of conceptions of gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability and age divisions. A consequence of this plurality of groups and of fracturing forces is that contemporary social orders and localities are often described as 'fragmented', reflecting a change from a 'modern' period of shared objectives, to a post-'modern' time of lifestyle diversity and the celebration of difference (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989; Young, 1990; Albrechts, 1991; Harvey,

1996). But these differences are not just benign qualities. They reflect a complex playing out of multiple structuring forces (Healey, 1997b).

Planning has to focus on the pursuit of welfare and social justice more than on economic growth, it has to be concerned with those outside the 'loop' of economic prosperity, but also with those deprived of choices and opportunities because of race, gender, culture, age...Planning must empower man and woman to ensure their participation in decisions that affect their lives and enable them to build their strengths and assets.

Against this background eight significant characteristics or qualities are selected with which our future planners need to be armed with. These characteristics, qualities have to be read in view of the type of planning just described. They are by no means universally accepted but they are increasingly being seen as key issues in a certain planning thought and practice. Indeed if planning wants to play a (major) role in the next decade, then planning has to be at once pro-active, collaborative, integrative in its approach, international in its orientation, political in its attitude towards (traditionally unchallenged) power structures, normative in purpose, innovative in its search for solutions and entrepreneurial in scope (Albrechts, 1993; Friedmann, 1993; Healey & Piccinato, 1995; Healey, 1997b; Friedmann, 1998; Albrechts, 1999; Albrechts, Forthcoming).

4.2. Characteristics

4.2.1. *Pro-active planning*

It involves a shift from a form of planning focused on the regulation of private development to a form of spatial development strategy which seeks to work through the interests and strategies of community bodies, of land owners, developers, companies, intermediary agencies... This approach works not by directing what the various parties should do but by framing the activities of the actors and stakeholders in an effort to help achieve shared concerns about environmental changes.

4.2.2. *Collaborative planning*

This new emphasis on inter-agency working and on public-private community partnerships puts the spotlight on the processes of collaboration. The work of developing strategies and following policies through into action is done through 'talk, and discussion', rather than through technical analysis and that in this communicative work arguments are constructed which create meaning and directions which then act to frame the subsequent strategies and interests of those who acknowledge the strategy. People learn about each other, about different points of view and come to reflect on their own point of view. In this way, a store of mutual understanding is built up, a sort of 'social and intellectual capital' (Innes, 1996), which can be drawn upon when dealing with subsequent issues. A consensus may be ratified in a 'collective (spatial) agreement'. These agreements presuppose strong pressure groups. A major advantage of this way of working is that if the actors reach an agreement they - almost automatically - will introduce their part of the agreement into their own behaviour, their action programmes and into the programming and budgeting for the institutional actors so that the content of the agreement will be implemented. This procedure proved to be extremely successful with collective (labour) agreements (Albrechts et alii, 2000).

Consensus building does not mean to speak by means of a language common to all or to create such a language and to reach agreement. Consensus building has to let human plurality to unfold and to respect the different world-views and multiple truths. The planner has to be able to act as a mediator between his or her own world-view and all the other world-views concerned as well as between the different world-views he/she has to bring in communication with each other. The planner must be able to assemble the conflicts and inconsistencies and to alter the balance of power in the advantage of the people she or he works with, speaks and acts for (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989; Forester, 1989; Albrechts, 1991).

Consensus building needs human and interpersonal skills . It cannot and may not lead to populism or to bad planning (technically wrong, internally inconsistent or contradictory...).

4.2.3. *Integrative in its approach*

Authorities are blamed for urban decay, for the use and abuse of rural land, for the daily traffic jams... Rarely is a link drawn between all these issues (Albrechts, 1999). Again and again it seems that other sectors, other interest groups and other administrations are at stake. Nonetheless the authorities gradually realise that all these problems reveal structural shortcomings in (or a complete lack of) the overall framework.

The distinctive contribution of spatial planning is to interlink social, economic , environmental... dimensions of issues to do with changes in urban and rural areas. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. Therefore, there is a need for a thread that binds the components together, a substantial frame of reference that allows dealing with often-contradictory sector demands. This makes of planning a discipline in its own right. Using planning as an integrative mechanism is one of the strongholds of the planning profession and must be strengthened.

4.2.4. *International in its orientation*

The process of internationalisation of regional economics and the creation of politico-economic 'leitbilder' such as the Single European Market accelerate the internationalisation process. These processes produce new patterns of advantage and disadvantage among urban areas and rural areas.

As mentioned in the key tendencies more and more problems have an international dimension and can only be tackled at a supra-national (NAFTA, European Union, Benelux...) level. Concentrated production processes are splitting into separate production phases, each of which looks for the most suitable location (Amin & Thrift, 1994; Amin, 1997). Parallel to the globalisation of the economy, globalisation of culture has led to an unprecedented range and dissemination of culture and

information. Within an individual lifestyle, everyone can take advantage of this to map out a course of life based on choice of career, location of home and work, type of family, type of housing and leisure activities. Knowledge of the international forces, which cause, influence or determine the process of internationalisation, is thus essential for planners working at local, regional or national levels of government or in the private sector, in international consultancy or development. In the future planners, even those working exclusively at a local level, will have to relate local policies and development problems to international development and prospects.

Moreover planning at a supra-national level may help to cope with the growing international competition between localities.

4.2.5. *Political in its attitude*

In the intense competition between localities less suitable places must be content with second-rate economic activities or be relevated to the sidelines of economic development. But also in the housing, culture and mobility field a gap can develop. Those who are unable or unwilling to join in must rely on the remains of surrogates for traditional values, collective identities, hospitable spaces and suitable transport means (Albrechts & Swyngedouw, 1989).

Planning is not an abstract analytical concept but a concrete socio-historical practice, which is indivisibly part of social reality. The planner lives in a political world whose characteristics are often at odds with the planners' ideology of reason. The structural processes that shape social reality affect the planner.

Especially in the eighties some planning professionals, academics and many politicians defended the thesis that planning cannot and may not intervene in the process of economic development, assuming that the economic factors (capital, labour, management) tend to develop either spontaneously or via the mediation of limited state intervention toward an optimal state of affairs.

Holding the view that economic processes shape to a large extend the socio-economic and spatial fabric, there isn't any legitimate reason to support planning actions which do not interfere with the very conditions that determine the existing patterns that can restructure that socio-economic and spatial pattern.

Since planning, in the authors' view, is primordially aimed at inducing structural changes, the planner's political role comprises a contribution not only to the understanding of space-forming processes, but also to the substantiation of changes and to the mobilisation of the social forces necessary to realize proposed policies. In this respect, the planner could act as mobiliser and initiator of change and, simultaneously perform the function of a catalyst around which a number of initiatives and processes of change can germinate and gain momentum. Besides lobbying and negotiation the active search for the necessary support (including building alliances) and means to realise the various projects constitutes a major (political) planning task (Albrechts, 1999).

4.2.6. *Normative in purpose*

Planning is not just about how things are but how things ought to be. Planning is considered as a means of (structural) change (Ozbekhan, 1969; Jantsch, 1970; De Jouvenel, 1964).

Structural change implies putting forward an image of the state of the planning object, which is more desirable than its present state. It is obvious that planners need to have a good understanding of how spatial processes work before imposing on them a normative structure or mediate among the interests affected.

The normative orientation of planning reflects the capacity to be involved, to take part in the creation of a future for society. At the same time this orientation recalls clearly the enormous responsibility of society to take actively part in the construction of its own future. This future transcends more feasibility and results from judgments and choices formed with reference to the ideas of 'desirable' and 'betterment'. The point of planning becomes to change the present to fit the image for a 'desirable' future rather than to project its present into a conception of the future, which is derived from the logical vectors that happened to inhere to it. This needs institutional conditions that make it possible for all to participate in decision-making and to express their feelings, experience, and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen (Young, 1990).

The failure of planning to keep its promises reflected in these images a.o. To guarantee a more balanced growth pattern, a more equal distribution of welfare, and a more fair and democratic society... provoked major discontent. Very soon critical questions were raised concerning the gap between this approach and the actual (political-economical) functioning of society. It is clear that one has to avoid the rather naive, utopian and non successful way some of these concepts were implemented in the past (mainly the sixties and early seventies) and that one must take full advantage of the criticism that was formulated and the evolution planning went through in the seventies and eighties.

4.2.7. *Innovative in searching for solutions*

The planner needs the skill, the innovative and creative ability to design certain social choices as an answer to problems and challenges posed (Ozbekhan, 1969; Albrechts, 1993). He or she has to be able to make use of the attributes of places, to know how to enhance the qualities of places, how he or she wants places to evolve and to embody these choices in a coherent proposal within a given social structure and to evaluate the repercussions of the projects on a number of related domains, on society as a whole, on different groups and on different localities. A design-oriented approach seems appropriate in this respect. Design not only in its traditional meaning (design of a house, urban design...) but also in terms of the design of alternative configurations that somehow possess reality and represent a structural and creative solution to the problems.

4.2.8. *Entrepreneurial in scope*

Since planning is becoming increasingly action-oriented other skills and qualifications will play a key role in the planners professional toolkit. Planning has to think about implementing strategies right from the beginning. Without the orientation towards implementation planning becomes meaningless. Traditional planning practice has hardly any possibilities to concretise this action-oriented strategy. Indeed the technical skills, as well as the power to allocate sufficient means to implement proposed actions, are usually spread over a number of diverse sectors, actors and departments making a more integrated approach a somewhat difficult task. Moreover one has to acknowledge that the public sector does not have the resources to implement all actions, and that anyway, other actors may be better placed to work out what is needed.

One has to be aware of the fact that a shift to entrepreneurialism implies some level of inter-local competition (Harvey, 1989). To the degree that inter-local competition is played in a more open way, it will almost certainly operate as an 'external coercive power' over individual localities to bring them closer into line with the discipline and logic of the conditions set by the market (Esser and Hirsch, 1989). Most local governments have the feeling they have no option, given the coercive laws of competition, except to keep ahead of the game thus engendering leap-frogging innovations in life styles, cultural forms, products and services mixes, even institutional and political forms if they are to survive. The competition between localities in the cutthroat game of seeking to convince investors that they have the best location may easily turn into an exhaustive struggle for survival, which will often be at the expense of the local population. Competition seems not to operate as the beneficial hidden hand but as an external coercive law forcing the lowest common denominator of social responsibility and welfare provision within a competitively organized locality system (Harvey, 1989). The planner must and can play an active and important role in this regard. In the entrepreneurial approach planning and the planner intervene more directly in the spatial fabric. This implies negotiation with all the parties involved taking into account existing power structures between and within groups, as well as plurality and diversity between and within these groups. From this perspective planning could provide context and focus for ethical issues, social justice, development processes, regeneration and strategies for sustainable development. The planner can act as a bridge for instance between public and private domains, between knowledge and action. Furthermore the planner can establish contacts between firms, financial sources, knowledge centres and the people.

5. EPILOGUE

Using the type of planning just described is of course no guarantee for success (in terms of a more qualitative - spatially and socially - output or a more democratic planning). This 'new' spatial planning seems to provide a workable tool to reach a better tuning of sector policies and all kinds of spatial demands. It could act as mobilising instrument for soft sectors and weak groups in society and as initiator of new ideas perform the function of a catalyst around which a number of initiatives and processes of change can germinate and gain momentum (Albrechts, 1999). Experiences from planning practices show that implementing these characteristics/qualities one ends up with a kind of planning that is more open and sensitive to the problems touched upon in the first part of this paper (Albrechts, 1999).

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