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THE
CREATIVE
CITY

A TOOLKIT FOR URBAN INNOVATORS

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The New Thinking

Uncreative Urbanism

City managers want good solutions to their problems, but barriers to action always emerge. These underlying obstacles must be removed before we can build a creative environment. Most are generated by bureaucratic mentalities – from which the private and voluntary sector is not immune – and the rigidity of professional disciplines; the individual has control over only some of these.

In cities, formulaic responses thoughtlessly repeat what has gone before. Issues are approached from narrow perspectives and fail to capture reality. Solutions are driven by manageable financial calculation with no room for insight and potential. Uncreative urban acts are all around us in spite of the best practice exceptions and, as a result, mainstream town planning interventions tend to disappoint. People seem fearful of discussing what quality and 21st-century urbanism is or could be.

BARRIERS TO CREATIVITY, HUDDERSFIELD, UK

I once asked a group of officials in Huddersfield whether they were creative. In unison they answered: 'yes'. When I asked why this personal creativity was not visible in the town for which they had collective responsibility, they said: 'At home, in my own surroundings, I feel more in control of my destiny. I can shape my life and aspirations and as I become stimulated ideas and connections emerge. When I focus on my work, my world view narrows; as I enter the office world of procedures, administrative systems and hierarchies my creativity somehow disappears.'

Abuse by Sectional Interests

Lack of creativity by people whose job it is to plan cities is only part of the problem; in many countries far greater is the random abuse of the urban environment through lack of regulation or the power to enforce it. In the new democracies of Eastern Europe, in particular, building, signage, noise or pollution control systems are neither strong nor incorruptible enough to create coherent urban landscapes. Companies like Coca-Cola or Marlboro provide incentives for shops to carry their logo so plain streets in places like Sofia or Cracow now have an uncontrolled garish look that draws nothing from their own cultures. A high-rise building is punched into a traditional street pattern; a bright late-night disco beams its pulsating lasers across the Nevsky Prospekt in St Petersburg. Residents and visitors immediately know a questionable deal or a challenge to the law has taken place.

Lack of Effort and Thoughtlessness

Out of town shopping centres are usually formulaic, lack local distinctiveness, have no real public space. They rarely retain natural features; the mix of shops is predictable; opportunities are rarely taken to integrate public buildings such as an arts centre or a library. Distinctiveness is key, for although cities draw from each others' experiences the danger is that pioneering cities around the world quickly become textbook case studies for city officials. Cities then tend to adopt generic models of success without taking into account the local characteristics and conditions that contributed to those successes. The result is a homogenous pastiche of buildings – aquariums, convention centers, museums, shops and restaurants – that prove to be remarkably similar the world over (see *Urban Age*, Winter 1999).

Public space is too often the left-over of planning. It is rare to see a network of spaces creating alternative walking routes as in Barcelona, Rome or Munich. In Munich the generation of a more pleasant environment has created higher property values which have contributed to the costs of underground car parking: most cities make do with cheap, surface car parks that depress values and people. Roads and intersections are part of public space and in the core of Los Angeles it represents a staggering 60 per cent of the space used, while elsewhere in the city it represents over 30 per cent, yet the Los Angeles road engineers don't seem to realise this. Conversely, Stuttgart's inner ring road illustrates the impact of good planting, while in the summer of 2000 the 'Peripherarock' festival

closed Paris' main ring road to allow the segregated communities on both sides to re-engage again through rock concerts and community events.

Lighting is more than mere brightness: it shapes atmosphere, acts as a guide and a pathway and creates the conditions for safety. Whilst the strategic lighting of monuments has improved substantially in Lyon, Melbourne, Glasgow or Vienna, lighting is still not used creatively. The character of each urban area is varied; lighting should reflect the distinctiveness thematically. The 'Luci d'artista' programme in Turin in the winter of 1998 used astronomy as an overarching theme to tell stories. Solutions are available: if an urban area is unsafe, what about lighting routes through darker walkways; if an urban park is worrisome at night what about foliage and undergrowth lighting?

Formula Thinking

City marketing is concerned with identity and distinctiveness, yet common formulae emerge from urban publicity. Cities always find a way of saying they are central. Birmingham implies it is as central as Frankfurt – one of Europe's largest transport hubs and the seat of the European Central Bank. Does it make sense to say you are central when you are not? A string of cities along the former fault-line between East and West Europe project themselves as gateways: Helsinki, Berlin, Warsaw, Cracow, Prague, Vienna, Budapest. Equally every city is the festival city. Finally, the surrounding area has beautiful nature. The imagery reflects these themes: greenery, steel and glass offices, a high-tech industrial estate outside the centre, a golf course, a photo of a cafe area with many people milling around. If you replaced one city name by another you would not know the difference. Little reference is made to genius loci. Exceptions do exist: Palermo subtly highlights its Arab heritage while Naples has appointed an *assessorato all' identita*, a councillor for urban identity.

The Importance of Genius Loci

Promoting local distinctiveness can be difficult. In Liverpool, people appreciated the character of the place, its creativity and rebelliousness while outsiders liked that eccentricity, in a framework of security: city marketers emphasized either one or the other. If Liverpool is 'in your face' there is a feeling that Leicester is a dull place where ideas could come to die. The city marketing task is to show that, under the surface, the city is diverse and vibrant, but

that is not immediately readable or dramatic. This calls for 'iconic communication' grasping and conveying complexity. The same applies to festivals which need deep meanings and local creativity, but tourism promotion can damage what makes a city attractive by pushing out local identity. York has softened its tourism impact through simple low cost means to handle crowds: a town crier draws people away from busy areas, while coach parties are given different maps to explore the town, sponsored by retailers. There is a need to broaden the talent base for marketing and to bring in historians, anthropologists, cultural geographers, etc who can think more deeply and originally. The place-marketing world is dominated by product specialists, who have good tips or formulas, yet rarely understand the complexity of the city.

Under-exploiting Assets

Urban entry points like airports, bus and train stations are not used to celebrate the adventure of arrival or homecoming as they once did. Urban rivers – from the Thames in London to the Tiber in Rome and in the extreme case of the channelled Dimbovita river in Bucharest rarely contribute to urban life. Why are buildings such as underused churches not rethought to include inputs from a secular point of view? Why is nature not used as a beautifier of roads and simultaneously a barrier as in the Ruhr? Why is there still insufficient social participation when the evidence of its effectiveness is fully documented?

Erasing Memory

We continue to erase memory – a particularly pointless form of urban vandalism. Memory is undervalued though it helps the anchoring process, it can be tapped as a creative resource, it triggers ideas, it helps make connections. Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, among many examples, realized at the last moment, probably too late, that they had erased practically every historic quarter from sight even as they created fake versions of their past in urban fun parks. In Berlin there are few surviving remnants of the Wall, and though locals may have wanted to forget, other solutions could have been found rather than the 'cancelling strategy' whose over-riding theme was the erasure of any memory of the GDR.

The Inner Logic of Uncreative Ideas

Power and Political Will

There are many incentives and regulatory structures which affect city life over which city authorities have no remit. In most cases they cannot determine taxation rates and fiscal structures; they cannot, for example, institute a tax break for innovation or an ecological tax reform. They usually have no power to determine the nature of the overall school curriculum which may have an effect on fostering the creative imagination; they do not normally have the authority to set their own legally binding standards for environmental control, building or materials; they may not have the power to determine the programme for larger roads in a city, which tends to fall to a regional authority; they cannot determine levels of expenditure in public transport provision that goes beyond city boundaries, such as rail. Cities are not islands with the power to shape their own futures. The degree of their control, however, depends on the country's structure: the more federal a country – as say the US, Germany or Italy – the more likely larger cities are able to determine their fate. German Länder can veto national legislation they do not like; Italy's new regions can levy income and transport taxes. Under the Scandinavian 'free commune' system, communities big and small can 'opt out' of central government oversight and run their own affairs.

Accountability as Liability

Incorporating creativity into city management is problematic as cities are run by public officials who are accountable to electorates. Being accountable slows down the pace of response to problems, which tends to be faster in private enterprise. A radical democratic approach to accountability could turn this potential liability into an asset by creating new channels for a flow of creative ideas from the grassroots to city government. This happens rarely and in a limited way, because politicians and officers are afraid of raising public expectations which then cannot be met with adequate resources. They may also be afraid that this process will lead to their legitimacy being questioned and to the emergence of alternative power structures.

Bureaucratic Proceduralism

The functions controlled by cities require complex regulations, including planning permissions, licences, by-laws and traffic restric-

tions which govern city life to ensure the civilized co-existence of competing interests for the common good. It is a slow and difficult process to adapt these systems of control to changing circumstances, especially when strategic working is still not the norm. Bureaucratic proceduralism often pervades city organizations, preventing the identification and exploitation of endogenous creative potential. Curtailed by rules, municipal managers are often unable to make full use of creative talent so there is a search for new forms of organizational working, including forms of intrapreneurship, segmenting organizations into task forces or setting up public–private partnerships to bypass restrictions and encourage inventiveness. As city governments are forced to slim down and shed inessential functions they are sometimes enabled to think and act strategically.

Reactive not Proactive

The cliché 'If it ain't broke don't fix it' may have some truth, but it does more harm than good in modern cities. Where issues are addressed only reactively they are already problems if not crises, and responses are defined by the problems themselves, so we are forced to deal with yesterday's problem not tomorrow's opportunity. The pace of urban change demands that policy-makers be forward-looking, proactive and address issues which are not yet problematic. Trends need monitoring accurately to detect little changes that may become significant in the future.

Short-termism and the Need for Glamour

The short-term logic of politicians, time-limited agencies or partnerships is aimed chiefly at quick and visible results rather than longer term solutions. There is a tendency to go for flagship projects like the Grand Projets in Paris or festival events to suggest that something is happening. While these can motivate, celebrate achievement or create momentum, a city's competitive position may benefit more from a simple training programme or new partnerships with the private and non-governmental organization (NGO) sectors. The urban strategist has to find ways of making such low-profile projects visible.

Power and Patronage

Networks of patronage and long-established élites can reduce access to power and information, and limit creativity by excluding people who may have much to contribute. Every country has élite facilities whose members slide easily into positions of responsibil-

ity, but innovative talent may come from anywhere, including less well-regarded areas of higher education. New universities may be more creative because they want to make a name for themselves or have less to lose. Peter Hall's analysis of innovative cities shows how outsider cities cut off from the mainstream are often the most innovative – Los Angeles, Memphis or Detroit, Glasgow or Manchester at different periods in their lives. He also notes the significance of the outsider – the immigrant or radical – in pushing cities forward.

Inadequate Training
Urban professionals often have access only to training which is too narrow to make creative connections. This is as true for town planners, steeped in the disciplines of land use and development control, as it is for engineers, librarians, leisure managers and environmental health officers. Neither professions nor city management have yet fully understood the open and flexible dynamics of tomorrow's cities nor the importance of 'urban software' such as identity, social development or network dynamics.

Professional Self-justification
The internal languages of different professions makes communication with outsiders difficult and constrains their thinking. The self-protective systems by which professions justify their actions cannot always stand up to more holistic perspectives. Traffic engineers, for instance, have stressed the need for blank visual environments so as not to distract motorists using major roads in urban areas without considering the effect of such degraded environments on generating graffiti, crime or even accidents caused by boredom. The balanced solution taking all risks and costs into account requires multiple perspectives. If creativity is to flourish across disciplines, between professionals and with the community at large a common language is necessary.

Lack of Integration
Planning still centres on land use issues rather than the social dynamics of cities. It is easier to plan within a controlling, rather than a developmental or permissive paradigm, but it is the latter which is essential now. Despite the emphasis on 'joined up thinking' planning remains insufficiently integrated with economics, social or cultural affairs, environmental matters or aesthetics, to the detriment of all our cities.

Entrenched in Stereotypes

Contemporary complexities prevent simple control, forcing us instead into partnership and joint action. But even a combined effort is unlikely to be successful if its thinking is hampered by stereotypes about the inefficiency of the public sector, the rapaciousness of business or the unprofessionalism of NGOs. Each sector has its own domain of operation, purposes and values but, these are also changing: a voluntary group may be entrepreneurial, a private company may be public spirited. In all sectors, the same key principles operate: effectiveness – the achievement of stated aims; efficiency – the maximization of results; economy – the best use of resources, time and energy; equity – the fair conduct of work; excellence – the achievement of quality in work (Matarasso, 1993, p 41). But their meaning will vary in different sectors. Efficiency is not simply speed or rate of profit, but effectiveness of purpose. Profit is often seen as the purpose of business but many companies would prioritize longevity, influence, market share or fair trading more highly. Profit is simply another term for value: for Oxfam, saving lives is the benchmark.

Cooperation in Word not Deed

There is a self-evident need for local authorities and universities to collaborate to soften the blow of economic change, yet how many universities are closely involved in identifying local needs, arresting decline, getting involved with local manufacturers and bringing them into the new world? How many local authorities plan with universities to create targeted courses that relate to local needs? Yet the kind of links established between Stanford, local entrepreneurs and venture capital is what made Silicon Valley. The need for partnerships is a mantra of the age, but how much do they really deliver?

A Restricted View of Motivation

Because urban leaders so often have little faith in people or their motivation, they have little confidence in what might be achieved. We need to get beyond the incentives paradigm and develop approaches which recognize some of the other reasons we have for action. Successful societies with the 'greatest economic dynamism and viable social cohesion are the ones where a culture of high trust enables individuals ... to take personal responsibility but also to sustain long-term co-operative relations in trading with and employing people who are strangers to them' (Perri 6 Missionary Government, *Demos Quarterly*, 1995). So crime will not be

reduced by tinkering with sentencing policy, but through public re-engagement; environmental or health improvements through lifestyle changes.

The Dynamics of Capital

Capital restrictions inexorably push out low value uses from the city. Changes in land use from lower to higher values – typically from light industrial or artisanal use to offices – decreases diversity and creates monotonous urbanism. The ability to build upwards, when allowed, becomes a license to print money, and only rarely are air rights or other land use changes costed and the value returned to the community. There are quirky exceptions, by-laws and traditions which can curtail this impregnable logic, but these are continually challenged. The observant can identify these easily as they determine the look of the city: in Washington there are no skyscrapers because nothing is allowed to be higher than the Capitol, so the city spreads laterally. Melbourne has sought to control the height of its Victorian street patterns pushing skyscrapers into the courtyards within the grid blocks; so pedestrians walk along Victorian streets, yet the skyline is of a cosmopolitan 21st-century city.

The workings of capital produce tension between reducing cost and increasing value and quality. This assessment shapes the built environment where there is a constant temptation to focus on short-term profits by reducing quality rather than generating longer term value. Governments can create incentives to enhance quality, for instance by greening a building and blending it into the natural landscape or by creating a car park that looks like a piece of art. These would pay for themselves if buildings were not valued in isolation. This requires doing 'context evaluations' of real cost and benefits going beyond the project itself. The real cost of dealing with graffiti or crime generated through lack of consultation and low quality, badly designed environments should be calculated.

INNOVATIVE THINKING FOR CHANGING CITIES

This section falls into two parts: the first looks at overarching issues impacting on fresh thinking while the second outlines the characteristics and qualities of the new thinking. There are opportunities arising from the social, technological, economic and political transitions noted and from new conceptual approaches. New thinking is

a precondition to recognizing and exploiting creative possibilities. The new thinking is a strategic tool and self-reinforcing mechanism through which people can find their own tactical solutions. It adapts the best of what we have, and adds to it. To maximize the potential of re-thinking it is essential to understand different types of thinking and action, such as the usefulness of different levels of abstraction, forms of communication, like the narrative and the iconic, and the deeper difference between ends and means or strategy and tactics.

The Foundations of New Thinking

Developing Coping Capacity

The idea that the future will resemble the past is long gone. Our capacity to cope is stretched when so many key ideas and ways of doing things are changing at once. We need new skills well beyond new technological literacy, including new approaches to thinking. People cope with the opportunities of change much better than the responsibilities. They cope well with some localized and personalized aspects, adapting to things like e-mail easily. People cope less well with structural aspects of change and at times do not even address them. These are intrinsically more difficult, but it is only structural responses that will create stable solutions.

For example, the funding of pensions is based on the concept of many younger people paying their current pension contributions now. What happens when the demographic pyramid is about to reverse? This fact has been known for at least a decade, yet the response remains limited. Another example is the emerging world water crisis caused by urban growth which contains the seeds for future warfare. Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, has grown from 160,000 people to 1.5 million in 30 years and ground water supplies are about to disappear. The crisis was predictable.

New thinking can help find responses, but it is inhibited by the mass of information cascading over us. The city itself is an incredible information source that can lead to sensory overload. This is why attention – the capacity to concentrate, listen and absorb – is increasingly seen as a factor of production like labour, capital and creativity. We need to know what information is for and remember that technology is an enhancer, a means rather than the end. We need filters, interpreters, decoders – not only in a technological sense, but also people who help sort, catalogue and discard – superlibrarians with judgement. Physical environments can help filter too when there is the right balance of places for reflection.

Understanding Mindset, Mindflows and Mindshifts

Managing the potential of cities will require a re-assessment of how we think and learn, of what we learn, of intelligences harnessed, of the types of information used and disregarded. It will demand new criteria to discriminate, judge and filter information and a broader perspective which embodies a more inclusive sense of possible resources and more free-flowing, lateral and creative thought processes in problem-solving. How can this come about? A changed mindset, rethought principles and new ways of thinking and generating ideas are the cornerstones. What is a mindflow, mindset and mindshift?

Mindflow is the mind in operation. The mind is locked into certain patterns for good reasons. It uses familiar thought processes, concepts, connections and interpretations as a means of filtering and coping with the world. The environment or context determines what is seen, what is interpreted and what meaning is implied. For example, when someone asks in English: 'What does S-I-L-K spell? The answer given is: 'Silk'. When one asks as question two: 'What do cows drink?' most people say, 'Milk!' Another example is the optical illusion of the combined picture of a young girl and an old woman. Beforehand one half of a group is shown the young girl, the other half the old woman. When combined into one picture it is rare for any one individual to see the image they did not see at first, as it is etched into his or her memory. The brain hears what it expects to hear; sees what it expects to see and discards what does not fit in. This is called 'contextual pre-conditioning', and it is especially powerful because it operates below the level of conscious awareness.

The same is true of more complicated thought processes. Someone with specialist training will look at a problem in a particular way due to that training and has vested interests in perpetuating current practices. A land use planner or traffic engineer will not want to be told that his or her discipline might become a less relevant way of solving urban problems and will fight to maintain the importance of that discipline. People will not relax and become creatively open if the result of such an exercise changes the authority of their profession. The creativity focus can be seen as dangerous and threatening. Power configurations are likely to change, say in local authorities, as those who can apply the new methods of thinking or organizing may improve their own status. Narrowly focused sector specialists will be reduced to a pair of

technical hands unless they adapt and see their own specialisms in more flexible ways.

A mindset is the order within which people structure their worlds and how they make choices, both practical and idealistic, based on values, philosophy, traditions and aspirations. Mindset is an accustomed, convenient way of thinking and a guide to decision-making. It not only determines how individuals act in their own small, local world, but also how they think and act on an ever encompassing stage. Mindset is the settled summary of prejudices and priorities and the rationalizations we give to them.

A changed mindset is a re-rationalization of a person's behaviour as people like their behaviour to be coherent – at least to themselves. The crucial issue is how to get urban decision-makers at every level and those outside public structures who want to make an impact on their city to change their approach systematically – not piece by piece.

A mindshift is the process whereby the way one thinks of one's position, function and core ideas is dramatically re-assessed and changed. At its best it is based on the capacity to be open-minded enough to allow this change to occur. At times this happens through reflective observation of the wider world. At others, possibly more often, it occurs through external circumstance and is forced upon individuals and groups as when a crisis – say a dictator going too far – simply makes the need for democratic procedures more apparent. Alternatively an environmental disaster may immediately and with a sense of urgency create an awareness of sustainability – rather like a 'eureka effect'.

Changing Mindsets

Changing a mindset is difficult, unsettling and potentially frightening. Transformative effects happen to differing degrees: by direct experience, by seeing things work and fail and through conceptual knowledge. The most powerful means is the direct experience of having to change behaviour, for instance by running an urban community development project according to sustainability principles. It provides the tangible experience to understand, to learn and to relate. By understanding directly a person internalizes learning and is able to repeat this learning in different contexts – it thus becomes replicable. Visiting an example of urban creative best practice provides indirect experience and is not quite as powerful. It can still have an impact though, especially if the project is based on different principles – eg using Internet technology as a means of

empowerment and job creation. Conceptual knowledge derived by reading books or teaching at school conveys yet another under-standing of city life and represents a powerful force when, by realigning thinking, it reshapes actions. Is education working to these ends? Are young people given enough opportunity to share in the experiences of others, to experience workplaces, to see diverse living conditions, to raise awareness of other environments? Only then will they understand their urban world.

Changing Behaviour

There are six ways to change behaviour and mindset:

1 to coerce through force or regulation;
2 to induce through payment or incentives;
3 to convince through argument;
4 to con, fool or trick people;
5 to seduce – an odd combination of the voluntary and involun-tary; and, finally,
6 to create and publicize aspirational models.

The urban decision-maker convinced of the need for creative change needs to plan a strategy of influence to change mindsets. Should it be bottom up or top down, given that directly experienced changed behaviour provides the greatest opportunities? It is not as straight-forward as it sounds and is likely to be a combination of all persuasive devices, that takes into account immediate, short- and long-term impact. The most difficult and slowest way of changing a mindset is by argument, yet it is the most enduring and effective.

Applications of New Thinking

The new thinking should impact on policy at three levels: the conceptual, the discipline-based and implementation levels. The first is aimed at reconceptualizing how we view cities as a whole and involves paradigm shifts in thinking. It is concerned with re-assessing the concepts and ideas that inform action, and is much the most important as it determines how problems are conceived and handled at other levels. The idea of conceiving the city as an organism rather than a machine is an example. It shifts policy from a concentration on physical infrastructure towards urban dynamics and the overall well-being and health of the people, implying a systemic approach to urban problems. It is embedded in the notion of the 'sustainable city' – a notion which was itself a paradigm shift

when it first emerged in the mid-1970s as a response to the Club of Rome report on *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al, 1972). Another example would be re-conceiving transport as accessibility instead of mobility; this originally laid the foundation for the pedestrianization schemes of the 1970s. This level of thinking is concerned with changing mindsets and creating mindshifts.

Thinking about policy at the discipline level involves reviewing existing policies in known fields, such as transport, the environment, economic development or social services and considering the efficacy of existing models and ways of addressing problems. For example, in transport there may have been an emphasis on car transport, which might need to shift to a hybrid model combining the benefits of public and private transport. Or it might mean rethinking local authority departments away from titles like social services to community development, signalling a shift from the idea of the 'citizen as victim' to the 'citizen as potential', which has a far more positive focus.

Thinking afresh about policy implementation involves reviewing the detailed mechanisms to expedite policy, such as the financial arrangements or planning codes to encourage and direct development into certain directions. This might include considering how grant regimes are set up and to whom they are targeted; or what incentive structures such as tax rebates or fiscal encouragements are created or the nature of local plans and the priorities they highlight.

The Characteristics of the New Thinking

Integrated Approaches and Boundary Blurring
Box-like, bi-polar and compartmentalized thinking cannot generate the solutions to future urban issues. The greater the number of perspectives applied to a problem the more imaginatively it will be approached. To look at issues from many angles at different levels, depths of analysis and uncovering the assumptions of different disciplines will facilitate an understanding of how ingrained mistakes are made. This is not to deny the value of our existing specialist knowledge. The technical skills of an engineer or physical planner will remain essential, but to solve most urban problems they will need to be integrated with other skills, especially in the human and social sciences. Knowledge of history, anthropology, cultures, psychology has been lost in urban affairs. A traffic or zoning issue is never only about cars or land use. If transport planners had had a better understanding of psychology or culture or of the ideas of mental

geography, they would have been more careful about building urban motorways with routes that scorch their ways through communities. The crime and social problems that ensue are then picked up by others who try to re-create some coherence for inhabitants.

We travel with a weight of history attuned to bi-polar thinking and are often sceptical of integrated, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary thinking. The bi-polar world looks for a trade-off, not win–win solutions. The 19th and 20th centuries saw a trend towards increasing specialization and hierarchies of knowledge with the result that we know more about less. We have neglected the connections between disciplines, the patterns and dynamics between parts and their self-sustaining system ecologies. This thinking is based on circularity and sustainability, where an input creates an output, which in turn becomes an input for a new cycle: in this pattern everything comes back in some form. This contrasts strongly with our overarching logic of linearity and the simplistic notion of inevitable progression which makes it difficult to grasp pervading patterns or contradictions that govern urban dynamics. For example, more motorways often lead to more cars and more congestion while restricting mobility can sometimes increase accessibility. We find it impossible to say what are the synergies between culture, economic development and environmental sustainability or how traffic and movement affect urban psychology. A further danger of the separation of knowledge is that a common language for urban discourse disappears so urban problem-solvers cannot talk to each other. When the capacity to communicate goes, a crisis point has been reached.

Looking at the effects of the globalization of cultures we can identify challenges to the unified canon of knowledge in many fields and a blurring of intellectual boundaries; and – often – imaginative recombinations. Valuing the worth of other disciplines is key. In multi-disciplinary planning several fields are brought together maintaining the integrity of each domain whilst taking into account lessons from other fields. Yet that is only the first step. Interdisciplinary planning, in contrast, truly interweaves forms of knowledge and creates innovative concepts and ideas through crossovers. In the process each discipline is changed and enriched by a broader perspective. For example if a mixed team generates a recycling project using unemployed people within a voluntary group structure, it has multiple impacts: the focus is environmental, it uses unemployed labour and is thus economically sustainable; because it works within a voluntary organization structure it may be more

FROM NATO AMMUNITION DUMP TO HORSE PARADISE: IMAGINATIVE CONVERSION FEEDING OFF AN AREA'S TRADITION, TWISTEDEN, GERMANY

The NATO ammunition site Twisteden near Kevelaer in Nord-Rhein Westfalen, Germany, was closed in 1994, resulting in the loss of 196 local jobs and the soldiers' purchasing power in the local community. In 1995 the conversion into a Horse Park and Mushroom Cultivation Centre started. The site consisted of 370 acres, of which 160 were wooded, with 350 bunkers built out of reinforced concrete, and living quarters and administrative buildings. Returned to the community, the local authority encouraged innovative solutions.

Because the cost of bunker demolition would have exceeded the benefits of any alternative use, the idea of tearing down the 165 square metre bunkers was rejected. A solution had to be found that would convert the bunkers to some use without destroying them and their utility to the community.

One idea was storage use, another was mushroom cultivation. Yet neither was commercially viable on their own. An entrepreneur, Heinz Verreith, aware of the regions' horse racing traditions, detected a market gap as there was a lack of optimal training grounds. The dump was close to race tracks and serene enough for even the most highly strung horses.

Reuse of the site began in 1995 and the existing infrastructure of roads and paths eased reconstruction. Inside the wooded area a 1,300 metre race track was built. The former 6 km watch way became the jogging track for stamina training. The soldiers' former barracks were transformed into residential areas for trainers and staff, 110 bunkers have been converted to stables for 450 horses, 60 bunkers are used for mushroom cultivation and another 50 for storage. A veterinary hospital and restaurant have been built.

One hundred and thirty jobs, mostly local, have been created and another 190 are in the pipeline. The arrival of the horses has regenerated local agriculture. Neighbouring farmers provide horse feed and straw, retaining jobs in the primary sector. The hospitality industry has benefited from the influx of tourists who visit the park.

Source: Adapted from Elena Florin/Economic Development Abroad, Washington

empowering; and, by developing management skills, it has social and ultimately economic impacts. The integration embedded in the Emscher Park project which turned a weakness into a strength is another example. An area left degraded by former industrialization became a research and development zone precisely to invent the solutions to that degradation. Here the integration involves primary research in universities, product development in commercial laboratories, pilot projects in recycled buildings to maintain a sense of history and new forms of housing built on ecological principles.

It may not be easy for urban professionals to accept the loss of status implied in integrated thinking and planning. Technical, scientific and finance disciplines tend to have higher status compared to those like social affairs which involve people. In future the demand for urban leadership which combines an understanding of communication, social dynamics and networking with a grasp of finance and planning will reverse some of these conventions.

The recognition that the logic of scientific method cannot alone solve urban problems is a watershed: we shall need to link it with imagination, intuition, holistic thinking and experimentation. The strength of the creative imagination is 'the capacity to think of things as being possibly so, it is an intentional act of mind, it is the source of invention, novelty, and generativity ... it is not distinct from rationality but is rather a capacity that greatly enriches rational thinking' (Kearney, 1988). Looking for alternative views is a sophisticated form of rationality, something to be valued rather than feared. The different forms of knowledge need not be incompatible: they can spark off each other. The modern era associated with the rise of scientific rationality, 'was marked by a powerful obsession to impose a thoroughly rationalized order onto the world, an order that would efface all traces of the ambivalence that characterized earlier modes of life' (Clarke, 1997). This ambivalence encapsulates many solutions to urban problems by valuing connection and cooperation.

Changing Metaphors: From Machine to Organism

Images and metaphors can have immense power, conditioning our mindset, structuring our thinking and the propositions we come up with. A machine mindset comes up with mechanical solutions, whereas one based on biology is more likely to come up with self-sustaining ideas for a city. The primary metaphor that characterizes the new thinking is that of the city as a living organism. It represents a paradigm shift in how cities are viewed, focusing us on balance,

interdependence and interactivity within a sustainable whole. It contrasts with the modernist metaphor of the city as machine, and has implications as it shifts the focus onto health, well-being and people as well as the lived experience of cities rather than infrastructure, buildings and place. This biological image has far greater resonance, interpretative power and problem-solving capacity.

The city as machine is an authoritarian image reflecting a closed system with controlled and measurable causes and effects with little room for humans. Machine images have had a profound influence on how we think about organization, city planning, design, architecture and urban society. It betrays the assumption that someone must always be in charge, directing the machine, but the conditions for machine-like organizations no longer hold. Systems cannot be kept closed. A machine is inflexible, built for one function (Greenhalgh et al, 1998).

The organic metaphor, the city as body, is a better organizing principle and offers a new language for urban discussion: the bones might correspond to the topography; the arteries and sinews to roads, rail and paths; the intestines to water services; the nervous system to communication and electricity and so on. It is useful since it highlights the concept of a variable state of health. So a heart attack might be traffic gridlock where everything stops running and the blood stops flowing. Uncontrolled population growth might be seen as a tumour. The organic metaphor suggests a way of looking at cities in terms of diagnosis, prescription and cure.

Diagnosis suggests a health check, measuring the urban pulse and defining what problems exist. Its conclusion may be 'the city has a metabolic crisis and has reached the limits of its capacity for growth'. As a consequence the city cannot fulfil its purpose, role and potential – it is becoming dysfunctional. As we cannot see the interconnectedness – given our mindset – there is the danger of systems breakdown. Historically the city grew organically, meeting needs and supplying needs for others, but with a degree of self-regulation. With uncontrolled population growth, a massive strain is put on the system leading to economic, environmental and social breakdown. There are too many people in many cities and not enough resources, but like a malignant tumour the dynamics cannot be contained. As Herbie Girardet points out, the voracious demands of the city machine are 'beginning to outstrip the capacity of the planet'. Girardet argues for a shift to circular thinking with cities reconnecting inputs and outputs so that every waste output is re-used as an input. If recycling is integral and waste a potential

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HAWKS AS PIGEON PREDATORS: LETTING NATURE CONTROL POLLUTION, WOKING, UK

In Woking in the UK, like many towns over the world, pigeons cause considerable environmental degradation, their acidic droppings showering buildings, accelerating decay. Pigeons are also perceived as a nuisance by many townsfolk, causing inconvenience and anxiety. They have been cited as an attributable factor to the increased success of indoor malls and the deterioration of main shopping streets. Many towns conduct regular pigeon culls, yet for many people this is unacceptably cruel. A novel alternative has been developed in Woking. George, a Harris hawk, and his mate, Harriet, are used by Woking Borough Council to frighten away pigeons. The hawks rarely catch any pigeons, but their presence has greatly reduced pigeon presence and the associated problems. Main shopping streets are much cleaner, money has been saved from cleaning pigeon faeces, and the hawks themselves have attracted people into the town as a minor tourist attraction. A similar scheme has been introduced to London Transport's Northfield Depot. Managers realized they were spending more money cleaning pigeon faeces than repairing trains. Since the regular introduction of a 'fleet' of Harris hawks two years ago, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been saved.

Source: Global Ideas Bank

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asset, cities can provide their own resources and reduce their environmental impact (Girardet, 1992a).

Following diagnosis we can looking at prescription. Is amputation the right remedy, perhaps by cutting up cities into urban villages? Or do we need medication? We may advocate the establishment of sensitive management of resources, more efficient use of roads, better design, pollution controls and tax incentives, but such responses cannot provide the answer on their own. These basic conditions of urban function are vital but they are only a starting point. The human aspects which might effect a cure may be helping people fulfil their potential or encouraging imaginative and sustainable ideas. Looking at the city from a sustainability point of view provides a basic redefinition of the problem and possible solutions. (see Kevin Lynch's work and especially *Good City Form*, 1981.)

Enriching Concepts

Expanding our concepts of key terms like capital, assets, time and sustainability can help us to rethink urban development, perhaps by translating a concept that works in one area to another. Capital, for example, is conventionally applied only to financial resources, relating to money flows and assets such as cash, jewellery or land. Its value lies in its convertibility, so that it can achieve goals by purchase. If we see capital as one of a complex of assets that sustain or contribute to peoples' livelihoods, the focus shifts to the broader resource base governing people's survival. Financial capital becomes only one asset among many, including human, social, physical, natural and cultural capital. Human capital includes people skills, talent and health, while social capital includes people's networks and connections, their membership of groups, their relationships of trust that facilitate cooperation, reduce transaction costs and provide informal safety nets. Social capital enhances economic efficiency by facilitating the development and sharing of knowledge and helping innovation. Natural capital are resources from water to air to minerals, while physical capital is the built infrastructure. Cultural capital is the system of beliefs that holds a society together and their transmission mechanisms – the cultural institutions. Economics shape the dominant value system and by expressing social or cultural issues in these terms it gives them new legitimacy and metaphoric power. Yet quantifying the qualities expressed in these various forms of capital is a task for the new thinking (Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, Department for International Development, London, 1999, was helpful for definitions).

Time seems like an anchor to everything we do; a set of fixed, regular points shadowing our activities and giving them order. Yet our concept of time is culturally specific and linked to economic formations. Time in the 21st century is different from pre-industrial or industrial time and our thinking about time as a resource needs to adapt. In the pre-industrial period, time followed nature and was essentially cyclical; in the industrial period, it was monitored against the clock or railway timetable. It required uniformity and the creation of time zones to facilitate trade. Industrial time was linear, regular and it standardized everything. If the seasonal clock could not meet the demands of the industrial era, we should not assume that concepts forged to meet industrial needs will serve the fluid pattern of post-industrial urban life. We always need reliable rhythms to balance the need for flexibility, but how we

THE CREATIVE USE OF TIME: OVERCOMING SLACK PERIODS IN RESTAURANTS, HONG KONG

Eating quickly or slowly may not be good for your health. The prices in the Kowloon Hotel, Hong Kong, change depending on the time of the day. To maximize the use of slack times prices change each hour from $12.50 at 11pm to $33.00 at 7 pm. Clever eaters even take two meals in one, eating a late lunch and an early supper together. Hostesses punch time cards for guests, some of whom will spend hours eating, as they arrive. The idea has increased turnover by 30 per cent since the promotion began.

In Tokyo Tohtenko, by contrast, diners pay 35 cents per minute with a record of four minutes for one meal. The Tohtenko has spawned imitators. Many eat as fast as possible and a typical meal may take 12 minutes, costing $4.00 rather than $15.00 in a regular restaurant.

Source: Peter Hadfield, *USA Today*, November 1998

conceive and organize time in a global world is far from clear (see 'The Time Squeeze', *Demos Quarterly*, 1995).

One time change allows instantaneous communication across time zones, creating 24-hour markets, shopping, work and leisure. Urban life's multiple stimulations makes time feel as if it is crowding in on us. The new mental geography is unsettling. Too much information is packed into too little mental space compacting time. Mobility condenses time further, making us feel it physically as our bodies adapt with difficulty. Faraway places feel nearer because it takes less time to get there: for Londoners, Paris is nearer than Cornwall.

Time is an economic commodity, a form of capital which we cannot afford to waste in getting to work through the urban sprawl. It is also personal and felt, and reflects the other divisions in society, as many of the poorest people have the most time to kill, while the better-off feel they have no time in which to enjoy their wealth. As the emphasis shifts from wealth to well-being the capacity to use time well rather than merely fill it becomes paramount. The new rhythms of post-industrial time may come to include the right to time and an associated responsibility to use it.

Sustainability is the central concept of our age, it represents a new lens through which to interpret the world. It forces us to think

about the effects of our legacy, and opens up the concept of inter-generational equity. It implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and fundamentally affects our concept of urban development. It is a richer concept that needs to be stretched beyond environmentalism to reconfigure conceptions of psychology, economics or culture. It should infuse the new thinking and allow the identification of sustainable forms of creativity.

The notion of creativity and sustainability may seem to be at odds. Sustainability shapes creative endeavour by stressing the need to test consequences and resilience in the face of external shocks. It extends into other areas as well: economic sustainability addresses the need to maintain an income stream over time, or the need for economic development initiatives to tackle issues such as crime, lack of confidence or inadequate educational facilities. Social sustainability demands that social exclusion is minimized and social equity enhanced, highlighting the need to ensure real participation by local communities. Institutional sustainability demands that structures can perform over a long time period.

Political sustainability is less often considered but projects depend on political commitment or tolerance for their long-term viability. Conceptual sustainability focuses on the need for activities to be internally and externally consistent to succeed over time, partly to help win political support, but more importantly to achieve the outcomes anticipated. Cultural sustainability highlights the fact that activities must take account of the cultural context, how people live and the values which inform the patterns of their lives. Finally, we should not forget emotional sustainability. We do all sorts of things for emotional reasons which we may scarcely be aware of: for example the sustainability of teaching depends at least as much on encouraging the positive feelings of those entering or in the profession, as on the remuneration offered (Francois Matarasso helped to clarify this point). What makes happiness is not higher income and at whatever level of development we prefer a sense of well-being to being well-off with its allied need for developed consumerism (see Argyle, 1987).

Enriching Intelligence
Western societies have tended to value some forms of intelligence – particularly scientific–linguistic – over others, so that the belief that there is only one intelligent form of cognition has seeped into the fabric of our institutions. This linear thinking breaks every-

thing down into component parts, arguing that logical reasoning is the only sound basis for decision-making. New knowledge is constructed on that restricted foundation and becomes caught in its own inner logic, so that organizations self-select people who exemplify the same thinking they already have access to. The value of this form of thinking often blinds us to other forms, and to the people who use them, which operate through unexpected connection, simultaneity and flexibility.

Education systems have been slow to recognize the validity of multiple intelligences in the curriculum (Gardner, 1993). Compared to cognitive–linguistic skills, other forms of intelligence – spatial, visual, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, personal, psychological and interpersonal – remain marginalized. The written word is vital but there are vast unused resources which we can tap into. For every goal there is an appropriate set of intelligences to be applied, and others whose use would limit possibilities. We can only solve the city's problems creatively if we apply different understandings, perspectives and interpretative keys.

Different cultures and periods favour some blends of intelligences over others. During the early industrialization era, learning reflected the machine image of the age and valued rote learning. More industrialized and post-industrial societies value logical-mathematical, linguistic and intra-personal forms. In an age of creativity all forms of intelligence need bringing into the picture as sources of inspiration and vehicles for expression of thought, information and theory. A drawing can express a thought, a piece of music may echo a political sentiment or a film might expound a vision. The new communications media are forcing us to recognize the role these intelligences already play: we should be making more active use of them.

We also need to rethink when and where we learn. The pace of change has weakened the notion of fixed life-stages and linear life development. The model of life as composing just three periods – education, work and retirement – with supporting social and economic structures is passing. Now we recognize the need for lifelong learning, where learning occurs in a repeating cycle to help us adapt to new circumstances. This challenges the monopoly of traditional education service providers: opportunities for learning are increasingly varied – obvious, surprising but increasingly informal whether at home, at work, in libraries, universities or even hybrid situations.

URBAN POOR ELDERLY HEALTH WORKERS, MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Elderly people rarely figure in the urban agendas of metropolitan cities. In Manila there are more than 200 groups responding to the needs of street children, while elderly people are virtually ignored. In this context, the 'Coalition of Services of the Elderly' (COSE) have set up an innovative project. Each 'squatter community' of Manila delegates two elderly people to become 'Community Gerontologists' (CGs). For three days they are trained by a doctor, dentist and nurse with an emphasis on ailment prevention for elderly people. 'Armed' with a medical kit containing a thermometer, blood pressure and sugar monitoring instruments, basic dental examination tools and common medicines, CGs work as a valuable and low cost interface between professional medical staff and sceptical communities. Regular monitoring ensures they maintain and develop their skills, communities are healthier and ownership/agency remains to a large extent with local elderly people.

Source: Habitat

This has also brought new talents into play, as people from much more diverse cultural and demographic backgrounds begin to play a part. The self-resourced University of the Third Age for the over-50s has presented a serious challenge to entrenched discrimination on the grounds of age. Whilst retirement may become a more porous concept, has it gone far enough in giving value to the diversity of experience? If these human resources are underestimated, cities are failing to tap into all their talent and are also creating costs in an increasingly ageing society. There is much imaginative work to be done that shows how one can both revalue older people as well as broaden our assessment of the potential of the young.

Enriching Communication

Understanding the distinction between forms of communication – especially the narrative and iconic – is important. Narrative communication is concerned with creating arguments; it takes time and promotes reflection. Its 'band width' is wide as its scope is exploratory and linked to critical thinking; it is 'low density' in the sense of building understanding piece by piece. It is about creating meaning. Iconic communication by contrast has a narrow 'band

width' and highly focused purpose; it is 'high density' because it seeks to 'squash meaning' into a tight time frame, creating high impact by encouraging symbolic actions that make what is being projected feel significant. A typical form of iconic communication is the promotional material of the charity Action Aid which does not aim to explain the causes of a situation but simply to trigger a response, expressed financially – now.

The challenge of creative urban initiatives is to embed narrative qualities and deeper, principled understandings within projects which have iconic power. Emblematic initiatives can leapfrog learning and avoid lengthy explicatory narratives through the force of their idea and symbolism. In this context visionary leaders, emblematic best practice projects and the work of campaigners, radicals and risk takers are all paramount. For example, the Calcutta-based PUBLIC (People United for Better Living in Cities) enhances living conditions through its direct action campaigns on litter, public transport and saving cultural heritage.

The decision to create the first directly elected mayor for London had huge iconic quality. It symbolized not just the creation of a leader committed to the city but a break with tradition and a new start. Another idea with iconic quality was that of Common Ground, who suggested creating new river-based songs for London, involving all communities along the river. The river divides and joins Londoners. Such a participatory event would change how they felt about London, enable people to meet and link with cultural and political regeneration, preparing the ground for addressing other tangible problems of London having enhanced commitment, civic pride and motivation. The Helsinki Forces of Light project, outlined in detail later, has similar qualities given the significance of light in Finland..

The idea of zero tolerance initiated in New York to combat crime is equally iconic. Everybody knows immediately the power of the word 'zero'. It is a packed phrase and people know what it means and what is expected without complex explanations: linked to the word 'tolerance' it provided psychological comfort.

Identifying the iconic trigger – whether light, a song or even a word like zero – is the most difficult aspect as communication needs to relate to the place, its traditions and identity. The cultural resources model described later is one approach to identifying these triggers. In an age where attention span is at a premium identifying projects that within them embody principled, fresh ideas yet can be communicated iconically is the challenge of the creative city. Iconic

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REVERSING ROLES: STREET CHILDREN TRAINING THE POLICE, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Police trainees in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa are learning to manage situations involving street children through workshops with young people from Adugna Community Dance Theatre. Adugna is part of the Gemini Street Symphony Youth Programme which works to improve the lives of street children in Addis Ababa through training in film and dance skills for community development and personal empowerment. The relationship between police and street children has traditionally been hostile, fuelled by perceptions of police brutality. The dance workshops use dance as a metaphor to explore and challenge issues of violence and the attitudes of those in authority. They create a safe environment in which street children can question police views and learn to understand the work of the police, and correspondingly offers police cadets an opportunity to hear the views of street children and learn to avoid strategies which may tolerate the brutalization of street children.

Source: Adugna Community Dance Theatre/Gem TV, project reports 1999. Andrew Coggins, Street Symphony Support Operation, 20 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6 2TJ. Tel: 0171 736 0909 E-mail: apc555@aol.com

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communication, if not leavened by an understanding and acceptance of deeper principles, can be dangerous and can turn into manipulation and propaganda. (I am grateful to Tom Burke for highlighting these distinctions.)

Creating Cooperative Space

Integrated thinking depends on increasing respect, empathy and the understanding of collective goals. There are many routes to success so respect for difference and alternative viewpoints and a willingness to change one's own mind are essential. There are many ways to be a creative city. There are different ways of running a museum, a restaurant or internet service and difference can be a competitive advantage. An atmosphere which respects different contributions encourages ideas and maximizes potential. It creates an arena for dialogue and a space for common action. But that depends on being able to value difference without demanding that anyone should abandon their own core values – unfortunately not a characteristic

of most political debate. Since it is easier for people trained in dialogue to operate in this cooperative space, teaching participation techniques should be part of new thinking strategies.

Respect fosters curiosity and the courage to take risks, and develops an attitude disposed to seeing solutions rather than problems. For example, emotional, psychological and aesthetic intelligence is underrated as a skill in management and policy-making – indeed most managers would not even know what they are – yet a person with these skills often makes a team work better. What counts is what works appropriately. Being creatively critical can help test arguments and risks while avoiding the caution that comes with fear of personal criticism. But creative criticism should come with proposed alternatives. Licensing experiment and valuing alternative views gives people permission to think afresh and explore, conceptually and practically, leading to pilot projects that can be mainstreamed. It encourages people away from black and white alternatives, when the solution may be to use parts of different alternatives.

Widening Rights

The new thinking needs a system for making choices, discriminating and judging, but what is its underlying basis? Surely it is the recognition of our interdependence in a shared humanity – one earth that predominantly lives in cities. But what universalities and lasting values can we derive from this understanding of mutual dependence to provide anchorage, where certain things are incontrovertible, at least for a time?

At heart the principles relate to human rights: freedom of conscience, expression and religion – an acceptance of cultural diversity. Yet the United Nations (UN) charter model inevitably focuses on the individual: how might it help us to negotiate urban life? Most developed societies have accepted that the weaker of their members – children, the disabled, elderly and so on – are entitled to public support, and are not to be discriminated against. These and other rights are being extended into other areas, for example the concept of a right to clean air and water is developing. Are there other issues which, if conceived as rights, would affect our hierarchy of priorities and our decision-making? Our understanding of our rights changes from time to time, and is always subject to political negotiation between interested groups, but the concept can be powerful. We should not feel that rights are always univer-

sal: what is a right in one place may not be somewhere else. Cities can grant their citizens *de facto* rights – for example, as many have done through codes of service standards or Citizens' Charters – which they do not enjoy elsewhere, thus gaining a competitive advantage.

The New Simplicity: A Focus on Ethos
It is a self-fulfilling truism to say that the world has become more complex, but we can choose whether to feed that complexity or to work towards simplicity in the way in which we plan, design or even discuss the future of the city. A knowledge economy, once we understand its rules, need not appear more complex than an industrial one: its confusing detail then fits into clearer patterns. The mass of information available through the media and Internet perplexes too, but once filtered and ordered, it disentangles and streamlines.

The replacement of firm belief systems by frameworks like postmodernism with its focus on relative value might lead us to feel that anything goes, except making judgements. Yet we do make value judgements which guide our choices and actions, and so make complexity intelligible. We prefer certain forms of expression, social goals, styles of living, concepts of integrity and purpose. The reassertion of fundamentalist belief systems or the range of beliefs generally referred to as 'New Age' are other ways of making life easier to grasp.

It is possible to simplify without being simplistic or making shallow judgements. The new thinking with its focus on holistic approaches is a route to appreciating complexity, because it involves the capacity to hold apparent opposites in mind. This might mean combining openness with rigour or being simultaneously focused and flexible. By honing in on underlying logics, principles, rules and systems, complexity can be reduced to comprehensible essentials. If we are firm on values, disorder achieves a focus through an ethical framework. The notion of ethos helps recreate coherence, which Geoff Mulgan summarizing Norman Strauss' ideas encapsulates well:

> *An ethos is a unifying vision that brings together a set of clearly comprehensible principles and a narrative account of what ... is to be achieved. Ethos is a tool for the regeneration of coherence. This is the first task of any organization. ... It requires self-understanding and that of its operating environment.*

> *It demands skills for the higher order integration of what may seem to be conflicting information and incompatible interest groups. ... Its response to a new situation is relatively easy to see when it has such an ethos. Its response is relatively predictable and its principles are transparent to everyone. ... Having defined an ethos a government has a very powerful tool: a guide to priorities and resources, a common identity and purpose that binds people together. .. Ethos is a decision making tool .. when new problems arise they do not have to be considered from scratch. Ethos is a variety or complexity reducing tool ... that links the visionary and the practical. ... There are three layers that need to be coherent ... the meta or grand strategy of ethos, vision, ethics and transformation; the core strategy of management, control, rules, budgets, initiatives and monitoring, the base strategy of routine, repetitive operations* (Mulgan, 1995).

A strong ethos for the new urban leadership should focus on civic creativity. The word civic is not normally associated with creativity and we do not think of applying creativity to public purposes such as economic development or combating racism. This ethos should embed itself in the genius loci, chime with its culture and an assessment of the potential of its cultural resources. In this way the ethos is both grounded and aspirational.

Leadership as a Renewable Resource

Leadership needs to be treated as a renewable, developable resource. The process starts with the recognition that boundaries are blurred, admitting we do not know everything even in our specialist fields. A culture that sees this as a strength has far more resilience, honesty and need not operate on bluff. Partnership is thus essential. 'Creating a culture for leadership involves saluting those who have done extraordinary things and bidding them farewell, so that stepping down forms part of the norm. This is a pre-condition to preserve long-term commitment, to a vision, a goal, and a strategic plan. ... A community that creates that kind of leadership builds civic capacity – an infrastructure as essential as roads and sewers. Civic capacity buttresses community in time of stress and allows it to take bold new actions' (McNulty, 1996).

De-personalizing leadership is important, because it ensures that good ideas – which are essentially strategic opportunities – are part of a common agenda rather than the expression of a single person. It allows a good idea to have many parents, and allows for adoption without difficulty. Institutionalizing leadership helps it endure, but involves planning for burn-out, retirement, even death. It implies a process for training new leaders and there must be leadership opportunities for young people to develop new skills, to usher out older leaders and honour them for their contribution while the community moves ahead with a new leadership.

Leaders in business, civic organizations, culture, volunteer bodies or the professions typically play collective roles in their community as well as in their jobs. They become its unofficial trustees when they see they cannot focus solely on a single issue, but must deal with the related concerns of their community. Unfortunately, in many cases leaders are selected from old, traditional power structures, which might represent the past rather than the true diversity of tomorrow's city (see McNulty, 1994).

Re-assessing Evaluation and Success

The new thinking demands that monitoring, evaluation and judgement on success and failure be re-assessed wholesale. Continuous and built-in evaluation is necessary to ensure creativity runs throughout project processes. Evaluation encourages reflexive learning and continuously revitalizes thinking. It is the capacity to absorb and gain knowledge, to build on the experiences of past lessons and to have a full and active awareness of what is going. In order to be effective and efficient, learning requires evaluation based on both divergent, generative or convergent as well as analytical and critical thinking.

Success or failure tend to come together; only very rarely is a project successful in all respects. The seeds of success lie in failure and vice-versa and we can learn from both through continuous feedback. People believe they can avoid failure by following best practices, yet this is often unreflective imitation without considering the context. Who decides how to assess success or failure is crucial. The limitations of simple financial calculus have already become apparent. To speak of people in the creative city as the most valued asset is one thing, but: 'accounting systems have not caught up with the shift that is needed. They have not moved from measuring only the use of financial capital to measuring the building of human capital. Within corporations financial measures can

swamp other measures of performance and value and claim dispro-
portionate time and attention' (Rose Moss-Kanter from a speech at
the Commerce Labor Department summit on the Future of the
Workplace, Washington, 1993). Generic headline indicators like
urban versions of GNP are poor indicators of urban health, focused
as they are on short-term profits or narrow definitions of urban
dynamics rather than the long-term capabilities of a city.

Yet crucially, as David Yankelovich, the renowned American
pollster, put it: 'The first step is to measure whatever can be easily
measured. This is okay as far as it goes. The second step is to disre-
gard that which can't be measured or give it an arbitrary value.
This is artificial and misleading. The third step is to presume what
can't be measured isn't really important. This is blindness. The
fourth step is to say that what can't be easily measured really
doesn't exist. This is suicide!'

What are the Benefits of the New Thinking?

Applying this style of thinking opens a richer range of possibilities
and a wider resource base of ideas with which to work. It allows
policy-makers to research and map with a greater chance of discover-
ing the uniqueness and specialness of a place rather than merely seeing
a partial picture of problems and opportunities. It is a much more
effective way of working within and beyond the organization and
provides the opportunity to make mistakes without being damned. It
provides a constructive working environment with people more
involved and responsible connecting with a wider network of organi-
zations and residents. It thus makes the city more competitive.

IMAGINE A CITY

During the Amsterdam Summer School we imagine a place that
sounds like an urban utopia, fulfilling most of our dreams about
how we want our cities to be. We know it exists in the mass of
urban best practices around the world, but we can't see this utopia
because the imaginative solutions are not in one place. The urban
dystopia by contrast – congestion, pollution, unease and soulless-
ness – feels only too present.

Common Concerns
Because of your age, interests and background your own utopia

may differ in details, but some aspects are likely to remain constant – a decent livelihood, somewhere comfortable to live, access to facilities. There is a growing understanding that we need to live more sustainably. Most of us agree that cities should have clear identities and a sense of community, that they should be distinctive and true to themselves. We would concede that participation and involvement in decision-making increases motivation, commitment and civic pride, but how many would take that so far as to accept that fairer distribution of resources and power leads to a decrease in crime and social stress? And who would take issue with the need for cities to be vital and vibrant – economically, socially and culturally?

Movement

What might this mean? Let us consider movement around the city. We are wedded to our cars, convenience overriding hassle, cost and pollution. Alternatives seem forced, prescriptive, expensive. Can we imagine an approach to transport and land use which encourages us to reduce car travel willingly? One that makes us want to return to walking or cycling for enjoyment, where public transport is a pleasure and the use of 'para-transit', like shared cars, is normal?

Perhaps we could, with the right combination of policies and action, such as:

- extending user-friendly public transport;
- a 20-hour service at very frequent daytime intervals and guaranteed evening intervals;
- stops within easy walking radius;
- traffic calming in residential areas, but extending over time to all areas of the city or developing 'No Car' residential zones;
- integrating public transport so you can move seamlessly from one form to the next;
- upgrading the quality of the train, bus, tram and bicycle experience and giving priority to them, creating communication systems that deliver new routes and connections through the city;
- a parking regime that gradually reduces public car parking spaces in central and inner areas with priority to residents and short-stay parkers;
- park-and-ride at the periphery with a choice of public transport or bicycles;

- pedestrianizing central areas, with defined exceptions for quiet non-polluting public transport (trams, electric buses); even extending pedestrianization with people movers in hilly cities;
- creating noise protection zones, especially at night, with concessions for 'quiet trucks';
- shifting car transport to main roads;
- offering discounts or incentives, such as negotiating with employees – perhaps first in the public sector – to give up parking spaces in return for free public transport and bicycle facilities (shelters, showers, etc);
- creating computerized control systems and selective vehicle detection at traffic signals;
- and for those bold enough, raising extra tax revenue to pay for public transport investments.

Beyond a Fantasy?

It sounds like a fantasy – easily proposed but impossible to implement. Yet everything proposed is already accepted common-sense in different European cities: just not all in the same place. In Basle, Zurich, Freiburg and Strasbourg most of this has been achieved and individual car use and energy consumption has declined sharply – even as the economy has expanded. In The Netherlands – The Hague, Groningen, Delft, Amsterdam – and in Copenhagen, Vienna and Bologna, similar initiatives have taken root because of a combination of public sector vision, initiative and consistent purpose, campaigning by pressure groups and finally private sector support. Resistant public opinion is being turned round by success: in Zurich, by 1987 61 per cent were in favour of drastic car reduction measures.

Taming the car has not made these places dull, slow-paced and uninspiring. It has not blunted their wealth creation capacity or the edge of their urban creativity. The car – 'the great connector' – has ultimately, in cities at least, restricted communication and human contact. Cities that encourage walking, the chance encounter and face to face contact foster creativity, wealth and well-being.

The car is the most visible symbol of the city, but our ideal contemporary city has similar creative solutions for energy saving or waste emissions: regular energy audits; district heating islands with co-generation of power; tariffs to discourage profligate users; the raising of standards to cut energy and subsidizing the purchase of energy saving devices; help for ecological housing cooperatives. Cities like Saarbrücken, Frankfurt and Helsinki are at the forefront here.

Corporatively Creative

What about creating the conditions for an urban utopia beyond the environmental domain? There are companies who have accepted a responsibility to the society in which they operate, companies who are:

- promoting racial integration;
- identifying educational and work opportunities for street children;
- creating employment for disabled people to foster independent living and change attitudes;
- improving training for the hard-to-employ, adopting local schools, providing local scholarships, mentoring schemes or using company premises as a training ground;
- helping the unemployed set up shadow companies within a safe company umbrella;
- finding innovative means of avoiding redundancies such as job rotation and job sharing;
- fostering initiatives to help the regeneration of deprived areas;
- linking business to fair trade practices to give producers a fair deal;
- undertaking ethical auditing – an annual ethical accounting statement.

All these and more practices are already in place among businesses like Body Shop, Levi Strauss, 3M, Sparekassen Nordjylland in Denmark, Ahlers in Antwerp, ABN, AMRO, Neckelmann, Quelle, Hewlett Packard, MacDonalds, Piaggio, Starbucks, Thomson CSF, Zanussi, the Grameen Bank and South Shore Bank. They are also some of the most successful in their field as technological and product innovators. As Giovanni Agnelli, Fiat and Piaggio's former chairman notes: 'I cannot accept that the ultimate scope of an enterprise is profit. Of course, it is an essential part but I am also convinced that the role of industry is to improve society' (see European Business Network for Social Cohesion, 1996).

Seeing Through the Eyes of ...

There are inventive initiatives to get new faces involved in planning and decision-making, with benefits for social sustainability. Women, the elderly, disabled people and children have been involved in urban planning through projects such as the 'Children

as Planners' initiative in Kitee and Helsinki in Finland, Rouen and Locarno, Frauen Werk Stadt in Vienna, the Burgerziekenhuis Hospital, Amsterdam, Open Sesame in Liverpool or the senior citizens product label in Utrecht. Seeing the city through the eyes of different groups is crucial as a means of empowerment, and as a way of gaining an insight into different perspectives.

Urban planning remains largely in the hands of middle-aged men, whose ideas of need and priority are conditioned by who they are. The simple creative step of involving children not only gains a commitment for their own environment but develops civic pride and ownership. Taking a women's perspective has highlighted issues traditional planning tends to neglect: play areas, accessibility, spaces for social interaction, attention to lighting and safety, apartment interiors, etc.

Cultural Pride Through Inspiration

A culturally rich place would have a critical mass of cultural activity from one-off festivals to organizations that regularly create work. Architecture would mix the old and new in an urban environment visually at ease with its contrasts. Such an approach, with creativity at its core, enriches identity, distinctiveness and confidence. In doing so it reinforces and adapts for modern purposes the characteristics of a place, its traditions, myths and history. It fosters cultural sustainability by recognizing the values and norms of different social or cultural groups.

Common Ground's local distinctiveness programme in the UK is a good example: it includes developing local parish maps to rediscover places and the reintroduction of 'Apple Day' in 60 British towns. Helsinki's Festival of Light draws on winter traditions to overcome darkness; Berlin's Multikulti programme sought to integrate immigrant groups by stressing there are '35 ways of being a Berliner' and strengthen social cohesion, intercultural and intergenerational understanding. Bologna's holistic youth programme has transformed old youth clubs into creative industrial centres using the arts to build life skills and employability. Building-based projects which exemplify this culturally sensitive yet imaginative approach include the revived Pei Pyramid in Paris, the rebuilding of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria or the re-use of a Baptist Chapel such as the District 6 Museum in Cape Town to celebrate the community violently forced out into townships under apartheid.

Ideas out of Nowhere?

Taken together the examples sound utopian. Wherever you go leaders seem to appear out of nowhere, if conditions are right: here an entrepreneur, there a city official and there a mother driven into action by personal experience. Creativity thrives in every area, in every discipline; almost any urban problem has been responded to by an imaginative solution somewhere.

If best practice were gathered in one place, our 'dream city' would exist – perhaps. So a basic question is posed: Why, if a city is able to develop a working best practice in one sphere, and if it is well-aware of best practice elsewhere, can it not develop similar imaginative solutions across the range of urban concerns? What is the block to creativity, where is the resistance to taking up innovative solutions? Is it a result of a power play within bureaucracies? Is it intrinsic short-sightedness and narrow-mindedness of so much economic logic based on capital? Is it to do with individuals? Is it to do with organizations? Is it to do with how organizations interact? Is it that cities only have a certain quotient of creativity? But why are some places more creative than others? What makes a creative milieu where it is possible to have and to implement ideas?

Seeing urban creativity from a vertiginous vantage point packed and swarming with potential one must be struck by the power of the obstacles put in front of innovations – the power of entrenched interests, economic, social, political; the laming qualities of fossilized, closed mindsets; a lack of a culture of risk-taking. As a consequence there is a lack of mutual learning between citizens, projects and cities and the quality of urban life continues to atrophy.

So the central question is how do cities become more creative and innovative? How can they implement new ideas and anchor them in reality? What are the pre-conditions? How do cities sustain imaginative processes? How do they establish an operating environment that fosters joint learning, growth and fulfilment within and between organizations? How, in short, can we bring into being a 'creative city' across all the dimensions of urban life?