

## Co-creating collective imagination. How to produce thought-images for urban reframing?

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**Abstract:** This paper situates epistemological challenges of community-based practices and social innovation research within the perspective of urban transitions. It explores characteristics of innovative, contextualized and generative planning stories. Insights about transformative imaginaries are distilled from an explorative case of reframing urban challenges by thought-images. Planning – as a critical discipline co-creating and supporting explorative paths towards a sustainable future – cares about approaches that can deal with community building for change. This implies an expanded language of planning. Decisive dimensions and characteristics of such a language, and how to build it, can be learned from ‘concept grants’ serving urban policy in Flanders. These grants serve multidisciplinary teams to reframe inchoate situations conceptually, to root those concepts into ongoing and new local processes, and to prepare for implementation. Collective re-framing makes stakeholders ‘see’ the potentials of a unique situation. They can feel how new collaborative coalitions can lead to effective change. They can imagine a different future and the capacities needed to bring it into reach. They incorporate imaging a thought-image while collectively creating, testing, refining and actualizing it.

**Keywords:** Co-creation, urban policy, reframing, thought-image

### Introduction

This paper situates epistemological challenges of community-based practices and social innovation research within the perspective of urban transitions. It explores characteristics of innovative, contextualized and generative planning stories. Insights about transformative imaginaries can be taken from an explorative case of reframing by thought-images.

### On transforming the language of planning

#### *Community development versus challenges*

Actual challenges demand substantial transitions. All over the world climate change, migration, uneven development and many related issues are put on the agenda tenaciously. Pressure from scientific and grassroots communities are increasing. Although political will to change is expressed discursively, it is hardly found in action mode. Finding effective answers to all those challenges is a complicated endeavor. The interplay amongst physical, social and mental dimensions is of a complex nature. Climate, eco-systemic, and socio-economic challenges need to be tackled in a systematic and integrated way. Ambitions and programs ought to be global; actions and interventions need to be local in order to effectively change, show and ‘sell’ the ideas behind. To realize this, many social and economic sectors, policy domains and disciplines have to be involved and interrelated. In Flanders, a recently created, expert-based Panel for Climate Change and Sustainability (*Panel*



*voor klimaat en duurzaamheid*) listed ingredients for the urgently needed systemic transition in order to tackle climate change and ecosystem crisis. These ingredients cover multi-level governance, nature and open space, industry, housing and spatial planning, mobility, energy, food, production and consumption, science and innovation, integrative and transversely, community building (Klimaatpanel, 2019). Worldwide it is only one out of many reports, declarations, programs and agreements for a drastic transition. But it serves the purpose to stress a crucial aspect in terms of activation and success: active community development. In the report this is framed as a combination of citizenship, coproduction, and deliberation. It implies mental shifts, empowering communication, deliberative and co-productive democracy. Although listed in the report as the last ingredient in a cocktail of actions and interventions, it should be considered to be the keystone: the one stone of an arch, which finishes the construction, consolidates its strength and symbolizes its meaning.

### *Re-conceptualizing planning language*

Today, active community development is an opportunity and a task for planners. We know that spatial planners are able to identify and articulate multi-faced challenges within a complex socio-spatial context. We expect that they are prepared to articulate socio-spatial transformations dealing with such challenges, to the benefit of concrete people and places. This implies involving stakeholders within processes of collective learning, defining together combinations of goals and means for the implementation of priority transformations. This means working for and with people and places as components of an integrated socio-ecological system (Segers, 2016). As a critical discipline, co-creating and supporting explorative paths towards a sustainable future, planning cares about community development/engagement for change. To that end, planning is building up an expanding body of approaches (ideas, practices, attitudes), taking into account physical, social and temporal contexts. These approaches are evidently change-oriented.

Leonie Sandercock stresses that stories are of essential nature in planning, and qualifies crucial factors: organizing hope, negotiating fear and mediating memories (Sandercock, 2003). Indeed, the challenges ahead of us demand drastic changes. No-one knows their precise nature and impact. Such changes of existing socio-spatial regimes inevitably will meet resistance, inspired by fear for (drastic) change. Overcoming this resistance implies an expanded language of planning (Sandercock, 2003: 221). Evidently this language should acknowledge not only knowledge, but also emotions such as desire, anxiety, relief, etcetera. Stakeholders need to be convinced that improvement is possible. Moreover, they have to believe that their engagement matters and will contribute to change. Thus stories need to be able to express rational as well as imaginative dimensions.

### *A language for collective imagination*

Like a language, stories need to be shared in order to be productive. Effecting complicated changes, such as building cities and developing regions, asks for an adherence to shared myths (Harari, 2018). Such shared stories enable large groups to plan and implement complex tasks, by collaborating in a flexible way, adapting to circumstances (Harari, 2018: 46). Collective imagination, as a concept, encompasses all this. “In every community or group of people exists a *collective imagination*, i.e. a set of symbols, customs or memories that have specific meaning to it and common to all the people who are part of it.” (Wiki Didactic, 2015). Examples are dominant religions, their holy stories, values, symbols and history to the extent they are well known.

Imagination is essential. In order to initiate change, planning stories need to allow actors to create a world that looks different from the world that exists. *Imagination* is often linked to creativity. It is the capacity to represent (an image of) something which is not present (Arendt, 2016: 242). Scholarly articulations of Arendt’s conception of imagination include: “the capacity to represent the perspectives of other people in our mind, the capacity to represent in our mind an object that is not present, and the capacity to imagine a new reality in place of the one that exists” (Tyner, 2017: 523). ‘*To imagine*’ thus stands for the process of (re)calling impressions and experiences of objects, persons or situations, and of creating new ones in the mind’s eye. We use the term ‘*imagining*’ for the act of creating mental ‘*images*’. The term ‘*imaging*’ stands for ‘idea formation’, the “actual

durational experience of mapping, drawing, modeling, and making as a generative sequence in creative thinking” (Corner, 1999: 246). The resulting constructed concrete objects or representations can be called ‘pictures’. Creating and representing new futures, as essential processes of innovative urban renewal projects, thus are very much depending on imagination.

While imagination is essential, a collective dimension is crucial. Transition thrives on effective changes of behavior by many actors. Urban transformation is city-making, which always implies interventions of many actors in public spaces. To push for a mental and behavioral shift of local actors is one thing; to redirect their different perspectives along a similar line of flight is much more difficult a commission. Whenever their imagination is a collective imagination, it will perform better in the service of urban transformation. Co-oriented imaginations and imaging will contribute to the coherence of interventions. The way we imagine our environment is decisive for the way we see it, conceptualize it and make it (Corner, 1999). Therefore this collective dimension of imagination is crucial, and needs to be taken care of. According to Arendt (political) judgment and action rely on a collective dimension. Imagination is instrumental in mobilizing the capacity of *sensus communis*. This sense – the effect of reflection on the mind – links an actor’s judgment to opinions of others (Arendt, 2016), by subjecting his ideas to the possible judgment of others (Tyner, 2017: 523). Reflecting on the imagination of other actors’ opinions is called ‘enlarged thinking’. Arendt’s *sensus communis* enables such ‘enlarged thinking’ which is the condition for a just judgment, constructed relatively unbiased via imagination and reflection (Schreurs, 2019).

In any real process of urban transformation, three questions are on the collective agenda: What do we want? What can we want? What will we do? These questions imply the need for a three-fold capacity: cultural imagination, designerly research and political decision-making (Brugmans, 2016). Those capacities energize innovative, reframing ideas, produced by imaginations of many and diverse actors. ‘Imaginaries’ – imagined representations of the future (Hajer, 2016: 78) – play a decisive role in reframing as a prerequisite for potential transformations. Maarten Hajer coins such a transformative vision as ‘*thought-image*’: a shared perspective on the world, which enables common practices, together with a commonly supported feeling of justice and goal-orientation (Hajer, 2016: 78). Similar to ‘eidetic operations’ (Corner, 1999), thought-images share the aim to create a connecting dimension by means of a collective imagination covering thinking, feeling and making.

#### *Explorative research into thought-images*

Summarizing: making community development the corner stone of a transformative planning approach, implies the need for constructing an expanded language, mobilizing stories that serve and (re-)produce a collective imagination of thought-images as imaginaries of an alternative world. We now understand what collective imagination is and why it is of crucial importance. The next question is: how can it be produced or stimulated? This raises new questions: Which kinds of thought-images are able to express clearly the meaning and ambitions of transformations aimed-at? Which actors can imagine such alternatives? Which imagining and imaging can help to translate thought-images of change into effective implementation?

We consider these as guiding questions in our explorative research for the characteristics of transformative thought-images, as well as for their meaning and importance. This research will be approached by analyzing a case. An illustrative demonstration can be found in cases of ‘concept grant’, used as an instrument of Flanders’ Urban Policy. Why? As will become clear in the next section, there are three important arguments. Processes initiated by Urban Policy administration are oriented to urban change (Loeckx, 2009). More specifically, concept grants have urban reframing as a main goal. Finally such reframing is combining triple characteristic: innovative concepts, action and implementation-oriented, anchorage in local processes (Schreurs, 2018). A transformative ambition, a conceptual focus and implementation at the horizon seem to be excellent starting points for an exploration into transformative thought-images. We first explain the approach of concept grants and its context. Next we focus on one specific good practice in order to learn how collective imagination is

coproduced in practice. The final section concludes on characteristics of structure and sharing of thought-images.

## **Learning from Urban Policy concept grants**

### *Urban renewal as capacity building*

Announced as ‘White Paper’, as a visionary document preceding concrete goals and actions, the book *The Century of the City; City republics and grid cities* (Boudry *et al.*, 2005) marked a decisive turn in Flanders’ urban renewal. The new approach can be marked as project-based co-production. Renewal of the city hardware was thought of as an alternative for direct support for soft interventions within deprived neighborhoods. As such it was controversial. Years after the start of this new urban policy, critical voices were still being raised, but concrete results and shifts in focus made discussions gradually more nuanced and productive. Amongst the most important shifts we consider: more attention being paid to social aspects of sustainability and development, and a more explicit focus on citizen participation. The responsible administration in Flanders, the then newly founded Team Urban Policy (part of the Agency of Home Affairs of the Flemish Government), was inspired by multidisciplinary reflection. This led to amending a pure project-based approach (Loeckx, 2009). A multidisciplinary jury judged, using clear and coherent criteria for ambitious qualities. Co-production had to involve not only local government and private developers, but also a broad scope of stakeholders and designers. An important goal of the new approach was to use co-production of urban renewal projects for local capacity-building in favor of directing complex projects. One can argue that this succeeded quite well, as can be judged from a growing number of speech-making projects and processes (Loeckx, 2009; Cherroud) (one of which will be discussed at length).

### *Urban Policy instruments*

An appealing instrument, created by the Urban Policy Team is the *project subsidy*. It can be awarded to 35 Flemish cities if the following conditions are met: socio-spatial qualities, co-creation and direction by the local government. This subsidy is meant to contribute decisively to investments in innovative urban renewal projects, which have to function as a lever for a neighborhood’s potential and to increase its living qualities in a meaningful way (VLAAMS STEDENBELEID). Key-aspects that need attention are: a sharp project-definition, capacities needed to translate this into effective realization, relevant development-coalitions and processes (Loeckx, 2009).

Apart from this project-subsidy, a concept grant is made available by the Team Urban Policy. The subsidy is meant for hiring expert assistance from a multidisciplinary professional team. The award includes support from a Direction Team of experienced professionals and academics. The main goals are similar to those of the project-subsidy: to contribute to community-shared innovative and sustainable answers to crucial challenges, seen from an urban perspective. A specific goal is to stimulate capacity building on how local governments can play a directing role when the situation (conditions and opportunities) for renewal are still unclear or even inchoate. Such conditions need innovative (re-)framing. Therefore the instrument is geared to develop concepts which help to simultaneously diagnose, test and discuss alternative futures and means for implementation. Concepts result in new perspectives on possible and feasible change-trajectories. Depending on case and context, the contours of these concepts can be an inspiring project-definition, a visionary brief, a program for a civic debate, a set of urban manuals... The history of the tool concept grant displays an evolution from designerly exploring possible spatial interventions, towards primarily socio-spatial inquiring into possible answers to social challenges, starting from concrete places and crucial coalitions. Concept grants thus play a double role: locus for conceptualizing local urban transformations, and breeding-ground for continuous re-conceptualizing urban renewal. These are favorable prerequisites for analyzing a case of transformative thought-images produced co-creatively.

## Learning from a case: from coal track to multi-productive trajectory

With Peter Murphy's endeavor to explore the social foundations of imagination and its collective expressions (Murphy, 2012) in mind, this section analyzes a case, illuminating problem and context, conceptual re-framing by innovative metaphors, and the co-creative process.

### *Need, demand, desire*

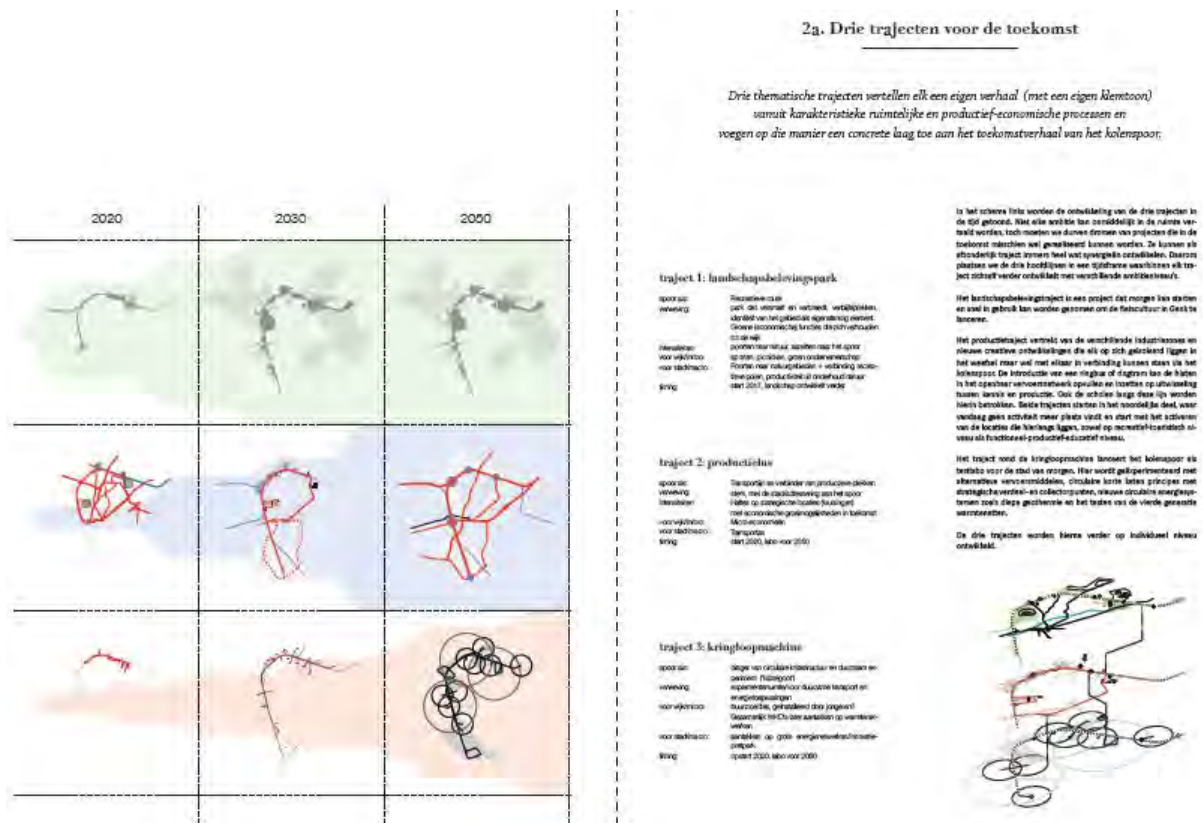
Two years ago a concept grant labelled 'Multi-productive coal track' ('*Multiproductief Kolenspoor*') reported on its hope-giving results (plusofficearchitects *et al.*, 2016). The study starts from an *objet trouvé*: an old railway track formerly interconnecting three mining sites and a harbor. The railway track is used-up and still functioning only very partly. Thus futures-to-be-found for that infrastructure, should be useful and concrete. Most important however, the re-conceptualized track should serve as a catalyst for the future of the whole city of Genk. This former coalmining city is in need of new development perspectives urgently. Indeed, after the closing down of its coalmines in 1987, its next major economic motor, a huge FORD-automobile company plant, also left the local scene in 2014. A multi-disciplinary team of urban designers (Plusoffice), landscape architects (DELVA), and socio-spatial experts (Social Spaces - University of Hasselt) was invited to figure out how this mono-functional infrastructure could function as a multi-productive network. This resulted in an inquiry of the potentialities of diverse productive scenarios, as well as their transduction into concrete coalitions, prepared for realizations. Its explicit ambition was to build upon existing initiatives and actors, and to scale those up towards an innovative multi-productive socio-economic model.

At the moment the process of the concept grant started, it was impossible to clearly articulate the question 'which future suits Genk-in-crisis best?' The majority of the population still fell rather at ease due to an active branding by the city government, as a creative hub with a shared spirit, driven by an imaginative verb: 'to Genk'. The important underlying question – How can we think, develop and secure Genk's future? – was rather formulated as hope by the local council: 'The coal track together with the adjacent old mining sites seems to have capacities to function as a structural basis for future urban developments' (CITY OF GENK, 2014). Hope expresses desires; desire is the result of a 'lack', originated from the imploded mining industry and the empty FORD-factories. As we know, it is quite hard to articulate desires clearly. Expecting that an imaging\_concept study would meaningfully contribute to such an articulation – content-wise and in terms of process – was not farfetched.

### *Moving, connecting, collecting*

In line with these expectations, the multidisciplinary task-force tried to reframe the 'space' of the old coal track. The physical space is a linear trace through the landscape, sometimes a cut-through, sometimes elevated, filled with remnants of the former use, limited by expanding adjacent occupations, heavily fragmenting the landscape. Although out of sight and out of heart for most inhabitants, this space is also a mental trace connecting the industrial past, the present-in-crisis and the hopeful future. Research, reflections and discussions with stakeholders (city councilors, administrations, civil society, economic actors, experts) were synthesized in three scenarios for 'thematic trajectories': Experiential Green Belt (*Landschapsbelevingspark*), Production Loop (*Productielus*) and Recycle-machine (*Kringloopmachine*) (as represented in Figure 1). Partly inspired by historical and contextual opportunities, but soaked with a 'next economy' philosophy (Ruimte Vlaanderen *et al.*, 2016), these verbal images for a multi-faceted re-use of the track-space, express how the decrepit track could strengthen local resilience. It could enable recreational access to a beautiful undulating landscape of small creek valleys. Inner- and intercity connectivity for innovative modes of transport could be improved, thus helping to reduce the now excessive regional car-mobility. Alternative energy-concepts, based on circularity instead of (the former) extraction, could strengthen the weakened economic tissue. The capacity of these verbal images to tell a

'both/and'-story, is strong. The coal track indeed plays similar roles for all three: catalyst, carrier and expression. As a track, it suggests the idea of trajectory, the memory of movement, the hint to economy. Without the factual space of the former infrastructure, connections between experiential landscapes, a multi-functional collector of circular initiatives, and a short connector between loci of production and consumption, would be impossible to realize. As embodiment of movement, collection and connection, the track is a strong symbol of a multi-productive network. The track, itself part of a network, incorporates a network of a different kind: the three trajectories meet and interlink within the same space, and make the different functions – connect, collect, move – produce together more than one track could produce on its own.

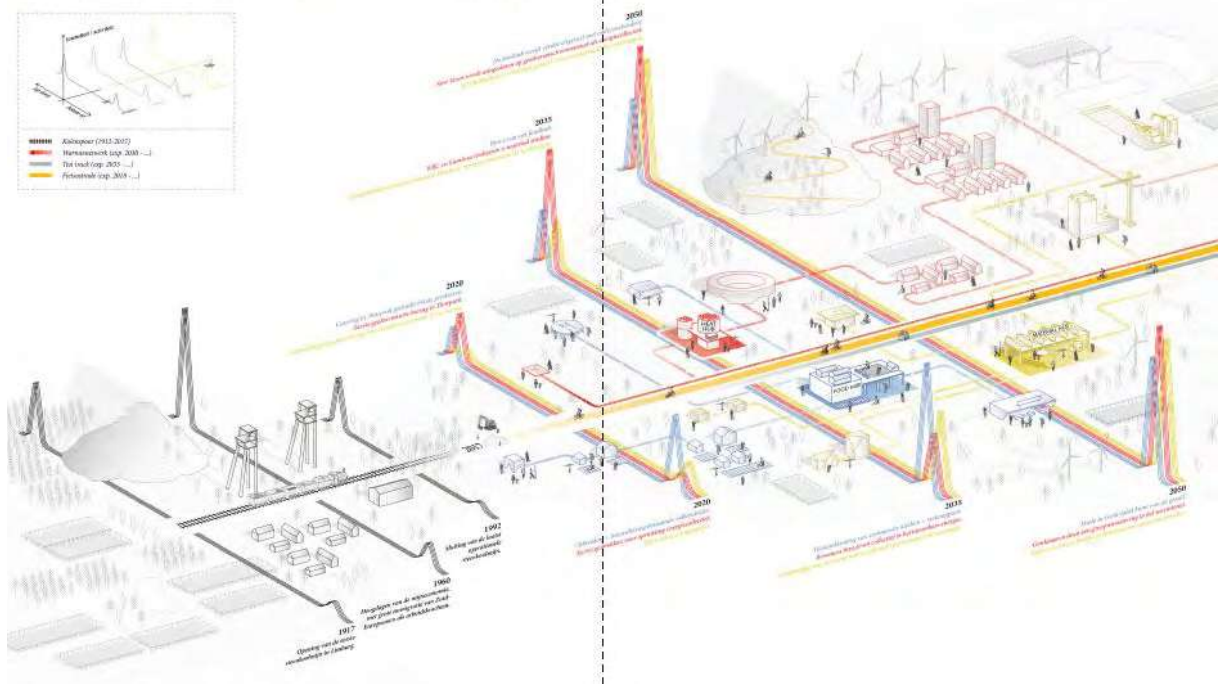


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Figure 1: a typical page from the final report, representing the three trajectories (right hand side) and how those might evolve over time (left hand side)

Expanding the inquiry into promising new ‘trajectories’ for the old infrastructure, the metaphor of a railway track and its stations is mobilized as a generator for further elaboration. Starting from existing actors and activities, the conceptual multi-productive ‘network’ will connect three kinds of workstations: hosting food, materials and energy. Analogous to railway stations which allow crossing over between track and place, these workstations are meant to functioning as open hubs that connect and interrelate: products with producers and consumers, small start-ups with large, vested players, formal and informal economies, places and flows, but also – and primarily – the three trajectories amongst each other. Trajectories and workstations together will create an expanding metabolism for the future city (cf. Figure 2 with a scheme of evolving networks and activities).

## Van monofunctioneel tot multiproductief

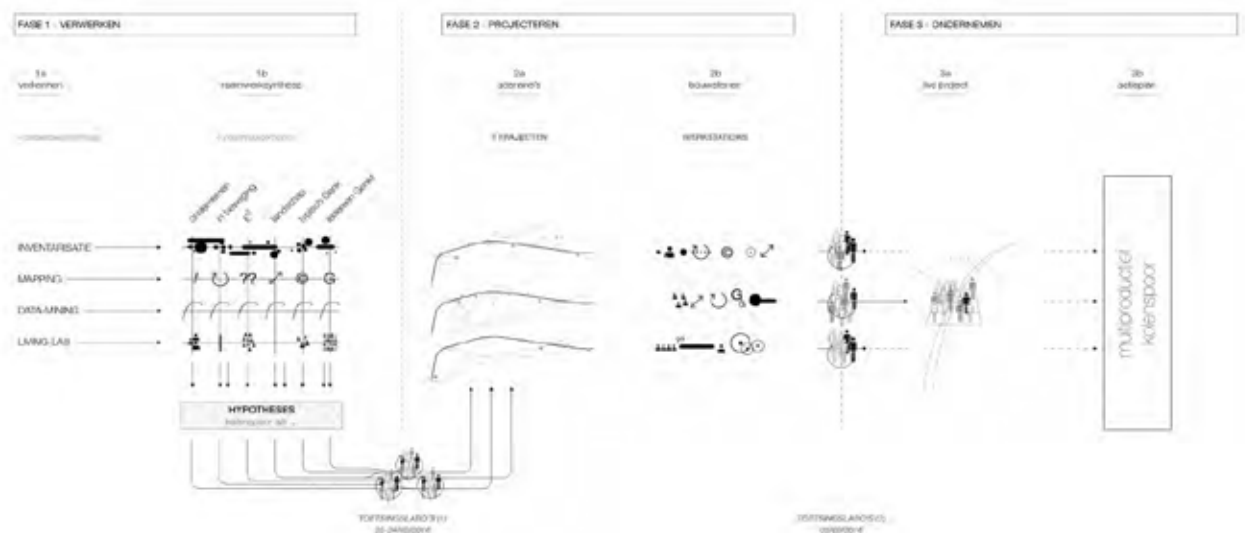


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Figure 2: Idealized possible evolution of three coinciding trajectories and workstations, projected on the space of the former coal track, being instrumental to an evolving metabolism which is fed by formal and informal activities, becoming more intensive over time.

### *Imagine, develop, test*

The process of the inquiry is structured into three phases (as schematized in Figure 3). ‘Processing’ (*Verwerken*) of multi-various data collected by fieldwork and desk-top research, means analyzing inventories (of study reports, plans, projects, actors), data-mining focusing on productive structures, mapping of physical and social phenomena, and experiences from an existing living lab exploring local capacities. ‘Projecting’ (*Projecteren*) synthesized six preliminary hypotheses concerning the future of the coal track into three trajectories (as thematic scenarios for the future) and three workstations (as building blocks for those scenarios). Finally an ‘entrepreneurial’ phase (*Ondernemen*) brought these concepts to the level of live tests and action plans, performed by preliminary coalitions.



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Figure 3: Three phases of the concept grant process (processing, projecting, undertaking) interrelated by two sets of test-labs.

These three stages are interrelated by two sets of test-labs (*Toetsingslabo's*). These serve to bring the hypotheses together – conceptually in trajectories and workstations, literally by stitching patches into a quilt (as can be seen in Figure 4) – discuss and reformulate these, in order to be tested with and by already engaged and interested stakeholders. The first test-labs resulted in the thematic trajectories already mentioned. As ‘what if’-scenario’s they were appreciated for their capacity to link and to integrate. Imagining the future coal track as workstations on a multi-productive trajectory worked as an invitation to project diverse initiatives onto and nearby the track space. As such many actors could be identified and stimulated to participate and meet, to think collectively and to design collaboratively. The second set of test-labs developed the workstations as concrete emanations of alternative socio-spatial futures of the coal track. Stakeholders from the urban productive community collectively re-conceptualized, developed and tested the hypotheses about the workstations against possible and feasible coalitions (mixture of small and large players), territorial distribution (concentrated or dispersed connectivity), intensity of connectedness to the track (adjacent or as window of a distant company seat). Combinations of diversities were always an important and explicit goal, because aiming at a robust platform for concrete initiatives. Actions were considered as a route towards governance of the coal track, but even more to excite and to inspire local entrepreneurs.



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Figure 4: A test-lab taking place in the living lab ‘The Other Market’, co-producing a carpet visualizing trajectories and workstations.

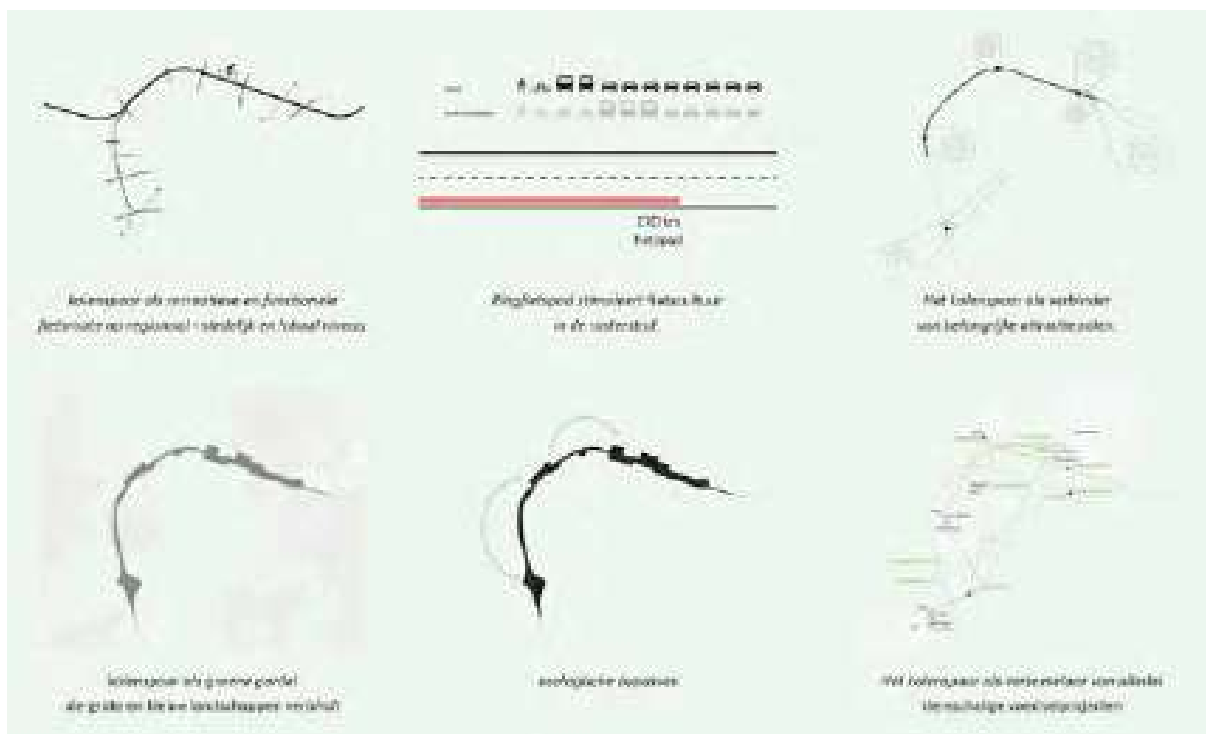


## Co-creation for co-orientation

### *The imaging structure of a thought-image*

The collective imaging of three trajectories and their workstations results in a complicated but productive thought-image. The catchy titles (the themes) attract attention. They imagine a possible future, dealing with present issues, building on assets from the past. The given labels (Experiential Green Belt, Production Loop, Recycle-machine) sound strangely familiar: common language uncommonly used. As such, these offer holds for specific ideas and reactions, but also invite (re-)interpretation. Thus they open an arena for suggestions, reflections, discussions, considerations... and organize group discussions.

Graphically the content of the themes is suggested by means of multiple small schemes and diagrams. Those schemes are imaging different sectors and related aspects. The Experiential Green Belt is for instance elaborated into six drawings (Figure 5). Each can be read as a story which adds meaning to the theme, c.q. the larger story. This helps to imagine one trajectory as multiple possible trajectories. Thus the drawings actualize the multi-productive aspect of the trajectory once more. Additionally, the drawings play with similarity and dissimilarity. Within the six stories of the Experiential Green Belt, functionally and affectively a cluster can be discerned composed of 'small-scale', 'recreation', 'bicycle culture', 'green belt', 'landscape', 'ecology', while 'attraction pole', 'food-project', 'cycle infrastructure' rather seem to belong to different sectoral domains. At the same time these more technical terms prepare the soft green belt to couple with the two other trajectories/themes, thus reinforcing the multi-productive mission.

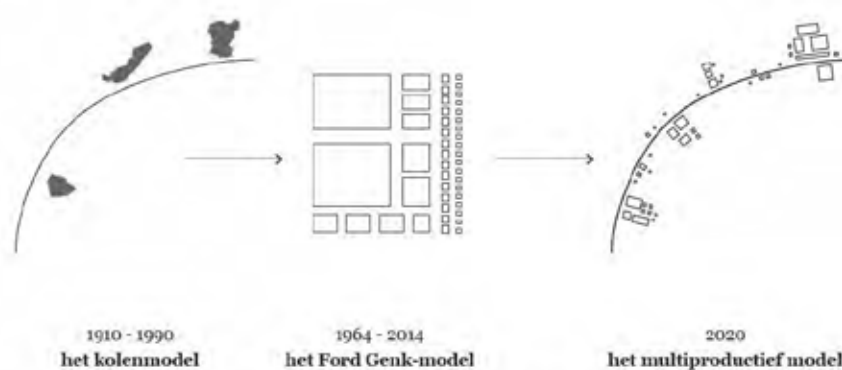


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Figure 5: Six schemes imaging the rich content of the trajectory *Experiential Green Belt*.

Together, the three trajectories and their work stations produce a multiplicity of imaginative ideas. The combination of catchy but intriguing titles, rather simple schemes and diagrams, as well as concise phrases offers a thought-image which is accessible and recallable, and thus easy to share and to distribute. This format of 'thought-image', combining *inscriptio* (titles), *pictura* (pictures) and *subscriptio* (captions), is well suited for

conveying critical, transformative content (Richter, 2007), in this case an alternative socio-economic model for the city (cfr. Figure 6). This format also helps to grasp essential meanings, without the need to name those explicitly (and thus reducing the meaning more often than not). The ideas produced and the way of representing those is similar to what James Corner calls “an aesthetics of invisibility, a perception of essences. Speech, verbal description, gestures, and other rhetorical figures conjure up such otherwise invisible images, allowing one to see an idea.” (Corner, 1999: 247). Paraphrasing Corner, we state that “imaging, understood as idea formation” is integral to the conception and practice of the thought-image produced. The ‘multi-productive coal track’ is a crucial imagination for a transformational turn. This ‘multi-productive coal track’ is also a collective imagination. The focus on the coal track as connecting and collecting public domain, is appealing to many and diverse stakeholders. The overlap of several trajectories on one track adds arguments such as efficiency, feasibility, cooperation, intensity... which are valuable for different city-makers. Moreover, thematic associations with the bucolic regional landscape, the heroic historical production-capacity, and the promising new recycling machine touch affective registers and thus the readiness to act.



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Figure 6: Three schemes representing the search for alternative socio-economic model, underlying the collective story of imaging a transformative thought-image for the coal track.

### Sharing thought-images

While thought-images are crucial instruments to change a regime (Hajer, 2016), they need to be shared in order to be productive in a context of spatial planning. The concepts developed to frame the coal track as a multi-productive network, possess characteristics that will help: articulated representation, appealing to ratio and affect, and a critical attitude inspire many stakeholders. This seems to be confirmed by the number of stakeholders and more importantly by their participatory intensity. The fact that the mayor asked the multidisciplinary team to produce a note which could explain the thought-image during a talk in an elevator, is a strong indication that the local government is strongly supporting the idea of sharing. The idea of a multi-productive network also helps imagining the concept of ‘grid city’ (*Rasterstad*) which is the shared dominant socio-spatial concept for the future development of the whole city. This confrontation of a general, city-wide concept and a pre-proposal for projects invites citizen to debate these views of the future.

Institutional links between the concept grant and broader planning initiatives result in even more occasions to help share this thought-image. The timing was for instance perfectly attuned to a sub-process of the Spatial Policy Plan Flanders (*Beleidsplan Ruimte Vlaanderen – BRV*), which started in 2014, and to which the concept study contributes concreteness, tangible scale and assessments of stakeholders. Next, as a follow-up, of this *relance* of the BRV, a regional strategic project was mounted and approved for funding, while the city of Genk and the province of Limburg activate and co-coordinate its work. The results of the concept study were also

displayed at the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR 2016), primarily reaching peers. On top of this, most of these initiatives connect in one way or another to a so-called territorial development project (T.OP) for the province of Limburg, which researches the assets of space in terms of regional socio-economic development.

The most concrete occasions to share opinions are structurally linked to the co-creation process of the concept grant. The imaging-process and the twofold intermittent design and deliberation in ‘test-labs’ happened in collaboration with the living lab ‘The Other Market’ (*De Andere Markt*). Already functioning before the concept-study, this organization is networked well locally. Thus it could, and still can, identify, activate and connect diverse groups, over a longer period of time. During the concept study, the living lab opened up this network, amongst other things by the collective making of a tapestry, imaging the three thematic trajectories and workstations, and using this as a medium of collective participatory design (as seen in Figure 4).

## Coda

It would be arrogant to state that choices for new futures of the coal track are secured and that necessary changes of behavior are guaranteed. They are not. Nevertheless one can observe many signs of sympathy and interest of inhabitants and stakeholders: the mayor asking for a promotion-note which can help sharing the thought-image; the aldermen engaging in inter-sectoral deliberations during the process; stakeholders already exploring potential coalitions during the test-labs and the making of an action program; new contacts being established and routes for cooperation being explored; coalitions becoming already active, e.g. in launching a food-cooperative; effective coproduction of collective mock-ups that pre-figure future workstations. It is clear that this imaginative process of concept grant is hitting the imagination of many. The collective re-framing makes stakeholders ‘see’ the potentials of a unique new public space. They can feel how new collaborative coalitions can lead to effective change. They can imagine a different future and the capacities needed to bring it into reach. They incorporate imaging a thought-image while collectively creating, testing, refining and actualizing it.

Whether this thought-image will be able to generate more and more enthusiasm, whether more stakeholders will be prepared to share their engagement, whether all will be or stay motivated to evolve into the same direction, whether inspiration will stay ahead of transpiration... is not certain at all. But without doubt, the contours of the desire to act became imaginable. Behavioral change obtained a lively line of flight.

## Acknowledgements

As a member of the ‘direction team’ installed by Flanders’ Urban Policy Administration, I like to express my gratitude to my colleagues of the Team and to the multidisciplinary team of experts who have been working on the concepts study *Multiproductief Kolenspoor Genk*. Our many discussions have contributed in a significant way to the ideas in this paper.

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