'Creating futures that would otherwise not be' – Reflections on the Greater Helsinki Vision process and the making of metropolitan regions

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Abstract

In 2007, the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 ideas competition was held and attracted international interest, with more than one hundred submissions, out of which ultimately nine were chosen as winners. The ideas competition was a voluntary joint effort of the fourteen municipalities composing the Greater Helsinki Area. In principle, the competition can be understood as the shared effort to create 'futures that would otherwise not be' (Albrechts). One possible future is actually the formation of a metropolitan region in Finland, which does not yet exist, at least in any formal sense. Even though it does not yet exist, the making of a metropolis is high on the agenda of many actors in Finland. This article explores the how and why of this competition, the results, the implications and its complications. For that purpose, it will develop a framework to understand the situation, addressing the particularities of the Finnish territory and policy. It will present and comment on the Greater Helsinki Vision competition and also its follow-up process. After this, the article will also reflect on the current academic and planning debate regarding metropolitan regions, their existence and function, and their ambivalences for societal and territorial development. The final conclusions will look into theoretical aspects of 'vision making', post-modern planning, and how a territorial response capacity can be shaped to create different futures.

Introduction

In the 'urban millennium' (UN Habitat, 2006, 2009), a strong urbanisation process is underway in Finland. Whereas in other western European countries the percentage of people living in an urban environment already varies between 80 and 90 per cent, in Finland the figure is around 66 per cent at present (European Environment Agency, 2006). Statistics Finland predicts, however, that the urban population in Finland will increase considerably by 2030. Thus, a rapid and extensive urbanisation process is expected to continue in Finland with the particular target of the metropolitan region around Helsinki. Not surprisingly, such growth expectations were also one major motivation for the fourteen municipalities of the Greater Helsinki Region to invite entries for a vision competition, asking for the entries to provide amongst other things living space for an additional 700,000 inhabitants (Jury, 2007).

Beyond this competition, we can in general speak about a 'metropolitan period' in Finland, as the metropolitan region that forms around the Finnish capital Helsinki has generally become an object of interest. The discussions address the form as an individual spatial object, its part in the national urban system, its function as a policy and strategy object, and often as the object of desires such as to be competitive with other parts of the world. Obviously, thereby, they reflect general academic and policy debates (see Hall & Pain, 2006; see Massey, 2005, on the quality of the object; see Salet, Thornley, & Kreukels, 2003, providing strategy examples at a European scale; see Soja & Kanai, 2007, discussing systems and hierarchies).

Looking at all of this and at the same time abstracting the applied level, sometimes one is reminded of the 'transitional object' [1] which, from an actor perspective, helps mediate between inside and outside worlds. Many of the aspects in the discussion of the modern metropolis outlined above can be captured as 'transitional', i.e., mediating between the internal world of the individual actor, the institutional arenas which produce policies and strategies, and an outside world, which produces mainly diffuse challenges. Moreover, the transitional quality of the metropolis applies to the world of social actions, for instance, organising governance; the world of locations and spatial structures, trying to accommodate and form the nested actor geographies; and in a temporal sense, with an infinite state. In fact, looking at the policy debate, and therefore putting the individual actor into the centre, the metropolis becomes almost a true 'transitional object', providing a safe ground for strategy formulation in times where traditional knowledge of urban forms only inappropriately captures the ongoing developments, especially the formation of large-

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[1] Donald Woods Winnicott (1896–1971) introduced the concepts of transitional objects and transitional experience in reference to a particular developmental sequence. By 'transition' Winnicott means an intermediate developmental phase between the psychic and external reality. In this 'transitional space' we can find the 'transitional object'.

scale metropolitan regions. Looking from that perspective, the metropolis is not simply a new existing territorial form but the result of the preferences and intentions of actors who create the metropolis in different variants.

Within a multi-level governance system, at an aggregate level, the metropolis is sometimes also the instrument that helps sustain the pains of austerity policies, implanted on urban societies for the best of reasons to enhance success and to maintain the growth dynamics, especially in the context of scarce public resources. This is a debate that is not only vivid at the European level regarding regional development (CEC, 2008; EC & DG REGIONAL POLICY, 2007; Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, 2007) but also in national contexts (Knieling, 2009).

The dynamics of this process are frequently discussed as largely resulting from globalisation processes, often not further specified, on the basis of a technology-driven 'informationalisation' of the economy and society (for an extensive overview of globalisation, see Brenner & Keil, 2006; Buck, Gordon, Harding, & Turok, 2005; Castells, 2002). In times of globalisation especially the larger agglomerations and in particular the metropolitan regions gain importance as strategic objects (Jonas & Ward, 2007). They are concentrations of political and economic control functions, of specialised services and advanced infrastructure systems of an internationally important order. They are also the nodal points in national and international communication systems distributing people, goods, capital and in particular new ideas (Taylor, 2004). This 'linking quality' is an idea that has long accompanied the discussion of the metropolis. The metropolis constitutes very dense structures in terms of transactions and institutions comprising nested geographies of actors and institutions (from a 'futurist' and systems perspective, for instance, Meier, 1968; from an institutional economics perspective, for instance, Ostrom, Tiebout, & Warren, 1961). At the end of the article, we will use the institutional perspective to discuss some conclusions on the Greater Helsinki Vision.

Against such a background, the example of the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 provides a good example of these twists and turns regarding the 'metropolis' and the attempts to shape possible futures. The ideas competition was held in 2007 and received international interest with more than one hundred submissions, out of which ultimately nine were chosen as winners. The ideas competition was a voluntary joint effort of the fourteen municipalities composing the Grater Helsinki Area. In principle, the shared effort attempted to create a future 'that would otherwise not be' (Albrechts). Three years later, one possible future is actually the formation of a metropolitan region in Finland, which does not yet exist at least in any formal sense. But even though it does not yet exist, the making of a metropolis is high on the agenda of many actors in Finland.

The following article will explore the how and why of this competition, the results, the implications and its complications. For that purpose, in a first part it will develop a framework to understand the situation, addressing the particularities of the Finnish territory and policy. Thereafter, the article will present and comment on the Greater Helsinki Vision competition and also its follow-up process. This section will be followed by a first set of reflections regarding vision making. The final conclusions will look into theoretical aspects of 'vision making' and how a territorial response capacity can be shaped to 'create better worlds'. This section will also reflect on the current academic and planning debate regarding metropolitan regions, their existence and function, and their ambivalences for societal and territorial development.

Frameworks – Finnish territory and policy

One of the central arguments in favour of the metropolis is a product of the formulation of national policy frameworks. A question like, 'How can Finland develop as a whole by making better use of the motor, Helsinki?' (OECD 2003) is raised to construct a distinct policy framework. Finland is not unique in this respect among European countries (Germany, UK), or compared with recent planning discussions in the USA (Regional Plan Association, 2007), all of which address the possible role of metropolitan regions from a larger national policy context. The particular policy dimension frequently relates to the issue of whether a new level in the urban or regional typology is needed for policy formulation. Before addressing the metropolitan region in Finland, the article will therefore first characterise the existing Finnish framework. For an outsider, such an attempt can be made from two perspectives:

According to communal perception, Finland has the largest population concentration above 60 degrees latitude. Nowhere else you can find a fairly homogenous concentration of five million people. The homogeneity is guaranteed by a 'tricky' language which shares roots with a small language group called 'Finno-Ugrian', whose speakers are sprinkled across the vast north-eastern Eurasian territory. Finland, as a modern European state, was constituted only in 1917 after turbulent revolutionary times [2]. The Finnish Army, during the Second World War, fought in two winter wars against both Russia and Germany for independence, a fact which still today confers national pride and identity. The very same situation put Finland, during the Cold War period, into a state of 'Finlandisation', i.e., suspended between the East and West (in global, not just European, terms). Even in 2007 this special state of mind was still visible, as the then new defence minister, in a public speech in the USA, spoke about three imminent security problems for Finland, listing 'Russia, Russia, Russia' [3].

The particular relation with Russia is also important from an economic perspective. In the 1990s Finland was hit by a deep economic crisis following the breakdown of the USSR. On the positive side the telecommunications giant Nokia arose from the crisis and afterwards went from success to success. The latter characterises the ambitious Finland of today: A small but excellent nation with the ambition to be a world-leading cradle of advanced telecommunication products and services, innovative and economically successful. This kind of programme inspires all government action, from massive spending on R&D and a

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[2] A short and multi-faceted overview on Finland is provided by Laura Kolbe et al. (2008).

[3] Minister of Defence Jyri Häkämies, speaking at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington. Häkämies added that Finland is privileged to be located in one of the most secure corners of the world. However, he added that Finland's geographical location also brings three main security policy challenges: 'Russia, Russia, and Russia'. HS 6.9.2007.

university education system that is still 'free of charge' for students, combined with ambitious policy agendas that see Finland as a modern state. Efficiency, effectiveness, pragmatism, ambition and determination could be used finally to characterise this state, or rather the politicians and administrators representing 'the' state.

The second perspective could start from modern Europe, emphasise that Finland with five million inhabitants has the nineteenth smallest population in Europe, spread across the fifth largest national territory in Europe (Eurostat), so small a population and so vast a territory that the famous Objective 6 category (1994–1999) (Eskelinen & NN, 2010) of the ERDF regulations applied to Finland easily. As recently as the 1950s the country was still more agrarian than industrialised. It was and still is tucked away in the north-eastern pocket of Europe, at the border with Russia, pretty much isolated; surrounded on two sides by the Baltic Sea and the Finnish Gulf, cutting it off the European mainland, and in the north by mountains sealing it off from the northern seas. The land connection with Sweden or Norway is a quite under-developed area, which was nicely covered by the novel (and film) *Popular Music from Vittula* (Niemi, 2004). Hard lands and hard life, captured painstakingly well in various films by Kaurismäki, make even the spectator feel abandoned, hopeless, and generally desperate [4]. The largest city is the capital Helsinki, with about six hundred thousand inhabitants, actually quite a small capital by European standards. The functional urban area around Helsinki doubles the population, so that it enters at the bottom of lists of metropolitan spaces (OECD, 2006) [5]. Outstanding economic functions are in particular presented by Nokia, and companies in the forest and paper industries, like Stora Enso, or the elevator and escalator producer Kone. In some respects Finland is a global player and one of the hubs in the Baltic Sea, with Stockholm as the major economic player and Copenhagen as the important gateway to the Baltic. This account is incomplete as, last but not least, at the end of the Finnish Gulf nestles the metropolis of St Petersburg, with a population of five million, the second most important city of modern Russia. This second perspective could therefore present the picture of a small state or economic territory at the European periphery. Finland is stable and comparatively dynamic but, as a common saying goes, if Nokia has a cold, the country is down with 'flu'. Especially in the field of ICT and R&D the role of this company is very dominating

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[4] Understanding Finland through films by Mika or Aki Kaurismäki is tricky, of course. Both artists celebrate a particular view of the dark and depressed side of the society. Take, e.g., the 2006 movie *Lights in the dusk*, the last instalment of Aki Kaurismäki's *Finland* trilogy, which takes an actual showpiece of Helsinki urban development, the 1990s Ruoholahti waterfront development, as the back cloth for a drama of individual isolation, gullibility,and betrayal, but also – in the end – a bit of hope, found in the mud of a construction site! (Ache, 2007b).

[5] The OECD starts, for instance, from one million inhabitants in the functional urban area.

(Veugelers et al., 2009), for instance, accounting for almost half of all R&D expenditure in the country in 2006.

These are the views of outsiders, which certainly only capture a part of the internal perceptions. The argument here is that Finland finds itself positioned between those two polarities. A third point of view provided by the outlined sketch is that it can be used also to characterise spatial policies, in particular with a view towards the relation between rural and urban. The following parts of this section will do so by (1) outlining important 'cultural features' and elements of the general political context, (2) outlining policy developments relevant for the 'metropolis', (3) focusing on municipalities and especially the case of Helsinki, and (4) by providing a first interim conclusion.

The Finnish soul 'creeps' for nature: 'The Finn has hidden in the forest for such a long time, that the forest is actually inside the Finn' (to quote a Finnish novelist, Tamminen, 2005). The modern expression of this hideaway is the summer cottage. There are about five hundred thousand summer houses in Finland [6]; practically every third family (1.45 million, representing 75 % of the population in 2009) owns one, and they are increasingly larger in size and with more elaborate standards. Alvar Aalto, the architectural *Übervater* in Finland, used his summer house as an experimental house to test his architectural concepts (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2008) [7]. There is even a word that captures that relation, *mökkihöperö*, denoting a state of mind after having been away in the summer retreat (the *mökki*) for too long. This mode of living has a strong foundation in Finnish society and has an impact on the perception of a 'metropolitan' space as, in the public perception, the latter equals high density and being made from 'concrete'. Parties and politicians have clear links either with the rural or the urban, for instance, the Suomen Keskusta party of the previous Prime Minister Matty Vanhanen relies more on a rural constituency; in fact the entire current government is closer to 'rural' than to 'urban' issues. There are public debates about the appropriate style of living, which saw, for instance, Prime Minister Vanhanen speak publicly about his preferred habitation style, i.e., in the forest and in a detached house (2004). In the end, Finland with its very low population density and relatively high economic standards can afford this 'luxury of space' – the motto of the 24th AESOP Annual Conference that was held in 2010 in Helsinki.

Not surprisingly, a particular awareness and governmental policy towards the 'metropolis' was absent until the year 2003, when a 'territorial review' on Helsinki as a Metropolitan Region was published (OECD, 2003).

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[6] Statistics Finland provides a very interesting web page on the issue of 'summer houses', with maps indicating the distribution of those summer homes in Finland, which demonstrates a larger concentration in the southern areas, with higher population density, see http://www.stat.fi/tup/suomi90/kesakuu_en.html.

[7] See http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/experimentalhouse/index.html.

Before that, national policy looked more towards regional divisions (Andersson, 2008), amongst other interests with the intention of keeping the vast territory adjacent to the long border with Russia occupied. A regional industrial modernisation policy worked with all the currencies that regional science had to offer, including clusters, regional innovation systems, and centres of expertise (Sotarauta, 2009). The latest regional policy turn applies a combination of ideas of 'competitiveness and cohesion', which follows current European policy objectives as formulated in the framework regulations of the ERDF (Antikainen, 2009; EC, 2005).

In the summary section of the OECD territorial review, Helsinki was seen as an 'intermediate urban centre' with an immediate challenge of its marginalisation in the north east corner of the European Union (OECD, 2003, pp 10-11). Intermediate relates in part to questions of size: 'A well-managed and better co-ordinated Greater Helsinki Region of more than 1.5 million could be a response to the question of size within the so-called competition between urban regions' (OECD, 2003, p 11). The report also established a link between urbanisation, i.e., the importance of Helsinki, and the national policy project of a strong information and communication (ITC) society, or rather a ' technology' country (OECD, 2003, p 11). This finds its political opposition from rural Finns, who have a great lack of trust towards Helsinki. The social-spatial differentiation, when taken into an extrapolation of visible trends, 'poses significant threats to integrated governance and social cohesion in the region' (OECD, 2003, p 12). In combination, for the OECD the question finally arises: 'How can Finland develop as a whole by making better use of the motor, Helsinki?' (OECD, 2003, p 21).

Reading between the lines, the government is asked to take the role of pushing the otherwise independent municipalities [8] into 'loose' forms of contractual multi-annual agreements, binding the activities of the cities together. Several priority fields are identified, such as housing, or avoiding the 'secession of the rich'. The development and implementation of a regional strategy for a coherent and balanced economic development with a focus on the quality of the environment was seen as another field. However, at the centre the issue was formulated as: 'To attract and retain a balanced labor pool, industry sectors, such as IT, will require increased regional co-operation in matters of tax rates, housing, transportation, culture, education, etc.' (OECD, 2003, p 19). What also became visible with the OECD report and the discussion following from it was a general turn towards a more economic approach to regional and local strategy making and planning (Haila, 2006; Haila & Le Galès, 2005; Mäenpää, 2005).

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[8] The independence being also one product of the crisis, where across the board cut backs of administrative costs had happened but at the same time the municipalities gained more freedom to do as they saw fit.

One immediate consequence of the OECD territorial outlook was the so-called *Alanen* report from 2003, an elaborate proposal by Jussi-Pekka Alanen, a high-ranking civil servant, for possible new administrative and political structures of the metropolitan region. The report and the actions following from the expert statement constitute an informative episode in the making of metropolitan policies, which will be looked at now in more detail [9].

Just after the publication of the OECD territorial review, in 2003 the Ministry of the Interior appointed Jussi-Pekka Alanen to prepare a proposal for regional administration and cooperation in the Helsinki region. The central government was interested to bring forward a new legislative proposal on the basis of the report. Alanen suggested that the already existing councils [10] of East Uusimaa and Uusimaa, which divide the metropolitan region into two parts, should be merged and regional decision making should be addressed by the new unified provincial authority. As an informal instrument, Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen, Kirkkonummi and Sipoo should establish a cooperation committee with the mayors of the municipalities preparing the agendas. The existing cooperation between the so-called 'Kuuma' municipalities in Central Uusimaa and the Helsinki Metropolitan area should be strengthened. Finally, in terms of policy fields, land use, housing, traffic and public transportation systems should be decided regionally.

Figure 1 Various delineations existing in Helsinki Metropolitan Region – Greater Helsinki Region

At the time the report was presented, it faced almost unanimous rejection from many sides. Though, in general, regional cooperation was considered important, the proposed administrative changes were not very welcome. Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa did not agree on any of the proposals, except the idea of merging Uusimaa and East Uusimaa counties. The municipalities in Central Uusimaa approved the need for regional administration and arranging it as a form of provincial federation to avoid extra and parallel administration. However, the Council of East Uusimaa and the municipalities in the region did not approve the idea of joining the two councils, but approved the cooperation among municipalities within the two regions as a kind of transborder cooperation. The Council of Uusimaa disapproved of the regional administration as unnecessary, but agreed on increasing the responsibility of the council.

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[9] I would like to thank Anna Nurmi, a student assistant, for the in-depth documentation of this and other documents on metropolitan policies in Finland.

[10] Which are responsible for regional planning issues, e.g., land-use coordination.

The governmental departments supported the idea of strengthening the cooperation crossing the municipal borders, by legislative means, if needed. YTV [11], a regional special purpose association with responsibility for waste treatment among other things, commented that it was already operating in a wider area and that cooperation should be intensified. On the side of quasi private actors, Culminatum Ltd, an interest organisation for economic promotion, and the universities [12] considered regional cooperation to be an important part of enhancing the innovation capacities in the region. The trade and business organisations strongly supported the strengthening of decision making that would be effective across municipal borders. Also most of the trade unions approved the proposals. Kuntaliitto, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, emphasised that the cooperation should be voluntary only.

Geographic perimeters are very important in the context of the metropolitan region [13]. If a regional administration were to be founded, it would also need to consider, for instance, that Vihti, Hyvinkää and Sipoo expressed their wish to cooperate with municipalities outside the new defined region. The relationship between central government and the new region is also affected by a new structure. It was therefore proposed to establish a ministerial cooperation committee and delegate the decision-making power into the regions. This again was supposed to be done with one region only, emphasising a possible merger between Uusimaa and East Uusimaa [14].

Figure 2 Timeline of important policy events regarding the metropolis

The above episode characterises the situation regarding the metropolis quite well. Whereas a variety of activities can be observed, which try somehow to anchor the metropolitan space, there are also conflicting issues. Looking more towards the actual period, a recent example was provided by the annexation of parts of the territory of Sipoo, a smaller city bordering Helsinki to the east. Helsinki had bought plots in the neighbouring city of Sipoo that were earmarked for new housing projects. Sipoo, a municipality which in cultural terms is more characterised as being on the Swedish-Finnish side, protested strongly against these plans. The case was taken to court and finally the government had to decide and confirmed the annexation of the plots.

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[11] YTV was changed and reorganised to form HSY in 2010. It brings together the waterworks of Espoo, Helsinki, Kauniainen and Vantaa, as well as the waste management services and the regional and environmental information services provided by the previous Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (YTV).

[12] Helsinki has three major universities with more than 60,000 students in total.

[13] There are actually a number of competing terminologies describing the region; Greater Helsinki Region, Helsinki Metropolitan Area, or Capital City Region.

[14] This decision was taken and the merger became effective on 1 January 2011.

In 2011, the situation is still pending with respect to finding a new organisational model, especially regarding the political decision-making basis, i.e., who has a say at the regional level, and how the different and probably conflicting views are resolved [15]. At the same time, the voluntary cooperation, particularly in the field of land-use, housing and transport, continues. At the time of writing another 'letter of intent' has been formulated which is to be mutually signed between the municipalities of the region and the national government.

Reading across the above section, at least between 2003 and 2007 an Advisory Committee for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (*Helsingin seudun neuvottelukunta*) was established at ministerial level and with representatives of various municipalities. At the level of the core municipalities, i.e., Helsinki, Espoo, Kauniainen and Vantaa, the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Advisory Board (*Pääkaupunkinseudun neuvottelukunta*) was established in 2004. This is a direct response to the proposals tabled after publication of the OECD report. Here, the mayors of the main cities discuss issues of a 'strategic' importance. Finally, there is the Helsinki Region Cooperation Assembly (*Helsingin seudun ytheistyökokous*) bringing together the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen; [Neloset] Kirkkonummi, Vihti, Sipoo, Hyvinkää; and [Kuuma] Nurmijärvi, Tuusula, Kerava, Järvenpää, Mäntsälä, Pornainen. Since 2005, this has prepared, at the regional level, a land use, housing and transport implementation programme. It was also the Helsinki Region Cooperation Assembly, amongst others, that called for the international ideas competition, Greater Helsinki Vision 2050.

Figure 3 Overview Table on Visions

There is another aspect relevant to the following reflections on the Greater Helsinki vision competition. Many of the abovementioned institutions developed their own visions and other strategic documents over the recent past (see Figure 3), in part also parallel to the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050. In terms of the time horizon, at the time of writing, the farthest looking perspective projects to 2050 (in addition to GHV 2050, the METKA and MAL strategy). Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 and the follow-up project are a municipal

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[15] One perspective is the number of municipalities, fourteen or twenty one, that will be integrated. The number as such is not an issue, when comparing the situation in the Greater Helsinki Region with, e.g., London (about forty boroughs) or Ile de France (more than three hundred municipalities). More important is the element of having a clearly visible decision-making body standing for regional issues and having clearly delineated responsibilities.

initiative, whereas METKA is an initiative of various regional institutions and infrastructure operators [16]. It therefore also goes beyond the smaller defined perimeters of the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 and includes the area of Lahti and other third-tier cities in the hinterland of Helsinki. With Lahti a city is incorporated which was already considered as part of the metropolis by the abovementioned OECD report.

The strategies and visions do have different qualities. There are altogether three visions 'proper'; the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050, PKS2025 and Visio. The first (see also further below) might be considered the most comprehensive and also ambitious vision. PKS2025, the future vision for the metropolitan area for 2025, which originates from 2003 and was developed under the auspices of YTV, tries to assess the growth of population and employment and its effects on regional land use by 2025. Visio, by the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Advisory Board, is certainly much more a political statement with a stronger resonance in economic issues than anything else, as the main vision statement demonstrates: 'Helsinki metropolitan region is an evolving business and innovation centre in science, art, creativity and learning ability, whose success brings well-being for its residents and for the whole of Finland. The metropolitan area is developing as an integrated functional area, which is close to the natural environment and where is good to live, learn, work and try.' Many other documents relate to more narrowly defined issues including straightforward land-use plans, traffic systems, competitiveness strategies, and of course strategies towards a more sustainable development (in the METKA case, a combination of land-use and sustainability issues).

The UTU35 [17] document develops a set of scenarios which outline expectations of future developments in fields like regional economy, administration, population and migration, housing, transport, environment. They also outline aims for the regional and municipal spatial structure. Scenario titles read as follows: 'Future Lite', 'Bridge Over Troubled Water', 'Brussels Calls the Shots', 'To The Max', and indicate, at least when judging from the chosen wording, a deliberate break with more sober or technical-administrative approaches, as the examples below also demonstrate (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Scenario 1 – Future Lite

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[16] The Regional Councils of Uusimaa, Itä-Uusimaa, Kanta-Häme, Päijät-Häme and Kymenlaakso, the Finnish Rail Administration, the Finnish Road Administration, the Ministry of the Environment, the Regional Environment Centres of Uusimaa and Häme, the Regional Centre Programme for the Economic Area of Hyvinkää and the South Finland Regional Alliance.

[17] This document brings together various regional bodies and Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (YTV) including the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Kauniainen, Vantaa, Kerava and Kirkkonummi.

The scenario extracted in Figure 4 calls for some comment. The scenario is certainly very positive in assuming that by 2020 a World Parliament with more efficient decision-making processes has been established. However, the 'six country group' within the European Union is a more realistic feature, e.g., looking at the current developments within European Union Structural Policy as an indicator. Here the Baltic Sea Region Strategy (EC, 2009) is a step towards new macro-regional approaches developing integrated strategies for functionally integrated regions. The Twin City of Helsinki-Tallinn is a very 'active' scenario (Demos Helsinki, 2009) in part promoted by the Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio. The twin city has taken a step further towards realisation with the discussion of building a railway tunnel between the two cities. The political conflicts between young 'liberal' and old 'conservative' parts of the society are undoubtfully a feature that will shape the future until 2035.

In the end, all the listed scenarios show an overlap in terms of the functionally integrated metropolitan space around Helsinki. Helsinki has 'primacy', but – and this is important to notice – it is not alone. Municipalities are very strong players in Finland (348 towns and cities arranged in nineteen regions and the Aland Islands). They are basically responsible for all services. The general mandate of municipal authorities includes basic administrative functions, such as land-use planning, education and cultural services, health care, social welfare, environmental protection, public housing, building control, fire and rescue services, civil defence, as well as air and noise-pollution control. The municipalities have an independent tax base (in particular income tax and property tax). A legally binding land-use plan (the equivalent of a 'local plan' – see Commin, http://commin.org/en/commin/) restricts, for instance, the regional plan which is in formal planning terms superior to the local level. The strong position of local authorities was further emphasised during the recession in the 1990s with the idea of allowing a pro-active policy at local levels. As said above, the METKA project operates on the basis of an extended regional setting, including the city of Lahti, the sixth largest city in Finland, with about two hundred thousand inhabitants. However, in terms of concentration and density Helsinki is the only city that can be compared to other larger towns in Europe [18]

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[18] Overall the urban system in Finland is characterised as balanced but it is also fairly small and provides services to just above five million inhabitants. The issue of demographic change is very relevant. To be prepared for the major demographic and economical changes, in 2006 the Ministry of the Interior launched the PARAS project. The overall intention is to restructure public services in regard to required standards and qualities of living, in particular in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and availability of services (health care and social services) and possible technological advancement in service delivery. The Ministry established an inter-ministerial working group, a secretariat and working groups to support the process. By 2009, most of the municipalities should have decided already about their PARAS projects – in the end a set of mergers between neighbouring (sometimes not directly, in which case the issue might be more that of 'kindred spirits') municipalities. Following that, in the Capital City Region of Helsinki, a heated discussion about mergers arose – with the result that Vantaa and Helsinki are seriously exploring a merger (with a study on the way); whereas Espoo stands apart (with another study on the way, proving the point of competitiveness without merger).

(Hanell & Neubauer, 2005). Helsinki has about six hundred thousand inhabitants. Its direct neighbour (and competitor) Espoo, with about two hundred thousand inhabitants, is the largest municipality (territory) but the inhabitants are distributed across the entire territory. Kauniainen is the smallest municipality, with about nine thousand inhabitants. Finally Vantaa, with about one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, is the next largest city in the conurbation. The main positive population development is happening outside the core city of Helsinki in a typical core-hinterland pattern, or 'urban sprawl'. The urban sprawl, or rather the lack of means to harness it, has been addressed by a report of the European Environment Agency which criticised the functional urban region around Helsinki as a negative example in terms of counteracting sprawl (European Environment Agency, 2006).

To conclude this section, an initiative like the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 obtains its role from the elements outlined above. Following on from recent analysis (e.g. Hall & Pain, 2006; Nordregio (Lead Partner), 2005; Taylor, 2004; World Bank, 2009) all the modern elements of society depend in the end on concentration and agglomeration. The French urban researcher Pierre Veltz (2004) postulates in his scenarios on the Information and Communication Society (following Castells) that metropolitan spaces are the adequate 'ecosystems' of advanced technology and economy. Starting from here and emphasising again the striving of Finland to be a modern nation state in that particular field, a degree of 'metropolitanisation' might help.

Size is not always an issue. In the most recent ESPON project round, the issue of secondary growth poles is raised, looking into questions of growth 'ex-cathedral', i.e., referring to cathedrals in the desert. From the perspective of European economic geography, with the strong Pentagon, the Helsinki Metropolitan region might constitute one such secondary growth pole. It is without doubt part of a very important sub-region (again from a EU geography point of view), including St Petersburg and Tallinn.

Finally, the activities which become visible on the institutional and actor side not only demonstrate protagonist and antagonist behaviour in the policy-making process but they also create at the same time a blurred array of multi-actor and multi-level institutional structures, or in the words of institutional theory (Koestler, 1973; Ostrom, 2005), the events rendered an action situation comprised of several 'holons', i.e., nested sub-assemblies of part–whole units in complex adaptive systems. In addition, the action situation has both a deeper dimension – alluding to national government action and intentions – and a shallow dimension that is the practical level of cooperation between existing institutions. These are aspects to which we will return in the concluding section of this article.

Greater Helsinki Vision competition and follow-up process

The idea for the Greater Helsinki Vision competition matured during 2006. The exact conditions for its coming into being remain obscure to an outsider, but certainly the previous vice-deputy mayor [19] for city planning, and his ambition, played an important role. He wished to leave a legacy that points to the increasing importance of long-term and regional thinking, with the obvious core being Helsinki. There might also be the dimension of a subtle contradiction between that very same deputy mayor and the city planning department of Helsinki for which he was responsible, and between these two and all other cities of the capital region. In all media debate, the primacy of Helsinki and the very self-conscious action on the part of a planning department with three hundred specialists is at times a point for unease. An additional hidden agenda towards that end might be characterised as managing by 'irritation' or 'shock', i.e., the competition was considered as being a challenge to the dominant institution [20]. Leaving those political dimensions aside, which nevertheless provide important motives for the individual but also the institution for which the individual acts [21] (Rhodes, 2007), we turn to the evolution of policy outlined in the previous section. The Greater Helsinki Vision ideas competition can also be interpreted as an active attempt to shape the metropolis, in a voluntary cooperation between the fourteen municipalities and with a focus on the development of a vision and, following from that, shared regional issues, in particular regarding future land-use and planning. In the following section, first we will look at results obtained from the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 ideas competition. This will be followed by an overview of the so-called 'follow-up process'. Both parts provide interesting observations towards the 'materiality' of the metropolis, expressed in professional views but also in the orientations of participant actors coming from the region. At the end, the overall results will be briefly commented upon.

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[19] From observation, the previous mayor had primacy over all other actors. After his retirement, his successor initiated the follow-up process to continue the work on a shared vision.

[20] Which was largely ignored, judging in hindsight the continuous absence from the process and that the institution separately invited discussions of the results.

[21] The distinction between the individual and institution is delicate, as Rhodes, for instance, describes (2007, p 18): 'Patterns of governance arise as the contingent products of diverse actions and political struggles informed by the beliefs of agents as they arise in the context of traditions. This approach focuses on beliefs and ideas, on the games people play, and on the role of both in the explaining how the practices of network governance change.'

Greater Helsinki Vision 2050

In 2006 the international ideas competition 'Greater Helsinki Vision 2050' (henceforth GHV 2050) was announced jointly by the region's fourteen municipalities [22], in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and the Finnish Association of Architects. The aim of GHV 2050 was to create a joint vision for the sustainable development of land use, housing and transport. The basic assumption of the brief was a rate of population growth similar to that in recent years, leading to an estimated 1.8 million inhabitants by 2050. Altogether 109 entries were submitted by the deadline in 2007. Out of these, nine entries received an award, which was presented in December 2007.

The winning entries were; Emerald (Finland, first place), Boundary Strips (Germany, joint second place), Towards City 2.0 (Finland, joint second place) and Holistic Uniqueness (Germany, joint second place), and Metroscape (Germany, purchases), Orlando (Italy, purchases), (R)evolver (Finland, purchases), Line TM (Switzerland, purchases) and Thirdlife (Netherlands, purchases). Together these nine contributions provided a comprehensive collection of ideas, viewed by the jury as stepping stones towards the regional vision.

Following the jury protocol, which was published (Jury, 2007), the competition assignment proved to be difficult. In keeping with the nature of a competition of ideas, the spectrum of the entries was broad and the emphases notably varied. Producing the planning documents requested in the competition programme proved challenging, as can be seen by the exceptionally high number of rejected entries [23]. A small number of the entries actually succeeded in addressing all the goals listed in the competition programme or fully taking into account all the aspects of the assignment. In most entries, the chosen perspective was narrower than that sought in the brief.

By approaching the winning entries from a perspective of how professional planners nowadays identify the most pressing challenges and also the most immediate responses, the following comprehensive reading of the material and also procedural dimensions of the metropolis, could be provided:

At a very general level, the entries discuss scenarios for the region, its global status and economic competitiveness. In more detail, they study different models for the regional spatial structure, propose sustainable transport and residential solutions and explore new models of governance and cooperation.

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[22] Equivalent to the Helsinki Region Cooperation Assembly, see Figure 1.

[23] In all, 23 out of 109 submissions were disqualified for ignoring the technical specifications which were provided in the brief and followed established standards of SAFA, the Finnish Association of Architects.

The winning entry, Emerald [24], was strongly concerned with the question of the 'urban form' of the metropolitan space. The team developed an urban programme along several dimensions, from building programmes to infrastructure systems to green spaces.

Boundary Strips [25], Holistic Uniqueness [26], and City 2.0 [27], the joint second-prize winners, stand for a new definition of the relation between nature and urban fabric (with Boundary Strips concentrating very much on the development of 'edges' [28]), a conceptualisation of different functional urban spaces (like the case of the 'global-localis', beyond a simple acceleration point and trying to define/refine physically the global in the local), or beyond built form as a 'social silicon valley' (City 2.0) with the attempt to create a 'super diversity' fully employing citizens and their creative potential. The latter was actually the most interestingly developed contribution from a smaller group of similar concepts, which as such were underrepresented in an otherwise clearly 'urbanistic' approach towards the competition task.

The purchases category brought together proposals which, for instance, applied branding strategies based on complex tool boxes consisting of spatial typologies, community functions, and events (Third Life[29]). Metroscape[30] worked with proposals concentrating the freezing of urban sprawl, again with the help of toolkits (urban programmes) and processes (decision making and control). The control of these actions remained entirely with the municipalities of the metro-region, which retained the right of planning, but which were bound by a predefined set of 'space programmes' operating with different typologies. Revolver[31] looked inside the metropolitan space, trying to develop a strategy for in-fill development, further densification, and further concentration on existing growth corridors. Last but not least, infrastructure systems were looked at in terms of their 'binding' power for the metropolitan region. One needs to understand that the entire region is very much car dependent, thus proposals on how to extend

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[24] A team of more than twenty persons from WSP Finland Ltd, an international consultancy.

[25] A team consisting of two persons from au25, a German architecture consultancy.

[26] A team consisting of four persons from Cityförster, Germany.

[27] A team consisting of seven persons, bringing together NOW architects and DEMOS Helsinki consultancies.

[28] The 'edges' are defined as the borderlines where urban and the nature 'scapes' meet. This line is particularly important in the Finnish context and culture, given the 'love for nature' – or as a Finnish poet Tamminen described it: 'The forest is inside the Finn' (see above).

[29] A team consisting of seventeen persons, organised by DN Urbland (Netherlands).

[30] A team of eight persons from HCU, Germany.

[31] A team of six persons, organised by EDGE Laboratory (TUT, Finland).

railways and metros were particularly invited. Orlando [32] developed a large backbone structure for the city region with the intersections of different transport infrastructures plus urban structures extrapolated to 'Synapses', a kind of third space providing complex opportunity structures for the various stakeholders, i.e., citizens, but also industry. Outside-the-box thinking was provided by Line TM [33] contribution, a very bold statement clearly linking the metropolitan region with the other European regions and Russia by means of a 400-metre wide band city [34], a kind of endless city between Stockholm, Helsinki, St Petersburg, Tallinn and Riga. The backbone of this idea is formed by a high-speed railway system [35]. Linking the five million inhabitants of St Petersburg with the southern Finnish metropolitan spaces is certainly credible.

Looking across all entries, not only the winning contributions, several elements worthy of particular attention can be highlighted [36]: the weighting of general framework conditions, addressing future operating environments; the relation to the global scale, thus how 'glo-calization' (Swyngedouw, 1992) is interpreted. Another set of elements can be read as more practical: metropolitan spatial structures and residential solutions; mobility issues; the metropolitan economy; metropolitan governance and cooperation.

In terms of the future operating environment and underlying assumptions of the visions, central megatrends relevant for metropolitan planning were considered to be; climate change, ageing population, the rise of health and environmental awareness, ethical consumer behaviour, diversification and individualisation of lifestyles, change in the nature of paid employment, and an increase in work-based mobility.

The broader geographic positioning of the metropolitan area, interpreted as the Greater Helsinki Region, was an important part of the competition assignment. Its position as a part of Europe was mentioned as a starting point in many entries, but this seldom had direct or indirect effects on the solutions proposed in the entry. The means for positioning were mainly seen to be various development corridors founded on transport connections and infrastructure, whose development strategies were seen to guide the growth of the city area. Particular emphasis was laid on the connections in the directions of Tallinn, Turku, Stockholm

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[32] A team of six persons from TSPOON, Italy.

[33] A team of three persons from ALICE, Switzerland.

[34] Those concepts are of course not entirely new and were in particular present in the heyday of modernism as, for instance, with Russian Planners or as epitomised by Ettore Sottsass – Trassenstadt (track city).

[35] A high-speed link between Helsinki and St Petersburg is already under construction, allowing a three-hour trip from Helsinki to St Petersburg (not including the time for border control though).

[36] This section draws on the Jury Protocol, which was mainly prepared by Trevor Harris and Helka-Liisa Hentilä, and to which the author also contributed (Jury, 2007).

and St Petersburg. While the vicinity of the main railway line was seen in many entries as a significant direction for growth, initiatives for broader developmental zones toward the north (e.g. Hämeenlinna, Tampere or Lahti) were for the most part lacking. Many entries proposed a train tunnel or bridge to Tallinn, or a Turku–Helsinki–St Petersburg high-speed rail line. However, the effects, possibilities and possible multi-scalar governance problems of these new cross-border transport networks were outlined in only a few of the entries. The global role proposed for the Helsinki region was most often that of a hub for flights to and from Asia. The rise of St Petersburg and the whole of Russia was also seen as a possibility – the metropolitan area was even positioned in some cases as an idyllic, safe and clean living environment forming part of the St Petersburg commuter area. In most cases, however, the role was seen to be that of a self-sustained city region belonging to the group of Global Top 50 Cities[37], with its basis in ICT, logistics and travel, and its main attraction its natural environment.

A comment needs to be added to this view of the metropolitan region as an 'island' in the north-eastern corner of Europe. This perspective comes quite close to scenarios which have been developed outside the competition, in the ESPON research programme [38] and which envision an enhanced Europe-wide core-periphery pattern with a sub-regional element around the Finnish Gulf.

Strategies of 'branding' very frequently formed the basis for giving the metropolitan area a 'form', either by emphasising the identity and character of different parts of the area, thus striving for a complementary regional whole, or a given fully encompassing theme of urban planning applied throughout the region [39]. On the other hand, and without a doubt the most repeatedly occurring model for regional structure, was the so-called finger model [40] complementing the current structure, where growth proliferated along existing main routes, and where the Helsinki city centre was defined as a regional hub according to its current role. As counterparts for existing fingers, off-shore extensions to the sea, featuring artificial islands

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[37] Though in purely quantitative and statistical terms Helsinki metropolitan regions can, for instance, be found in the OECD league table of metropolitan regions just at the bottom of the list (74/78), (OECD, 2006)

[38] See www.espon.eu , ESPON project 3.2 on spatial scenarios (ESPON 3.2 Project, 2007).

[39] Branding seems to be a very pervasive strategy, for instance, in the city of Helsinki, which tries to 'brand' new housing developments in a combination of top quality design and exact expectations of future user groups. See, as an example, the new Strategic Spatial Plan of Helsinki (City Planning Department & City of Helsinki, 2009).

[40] The 'finger model' was developed for the city of Copenhagen already in the late 1940s as a metaphor to guide the overall structure of Copenhagen – though nowadays the four-plus-one fingers have changed to five-plus-one, see (Miljöministeriet, 2007; Vejre, Primdahl, & Brandt, 2007). A very impressive application of the finger model can also be found in the city of Chicago, where it was applied in the 1960s.

or pontoon-based floating residential areas, were also proposed as a way of complementing the city's current incomplete circular form.

Applying the goal of sustainable development to the proposed urban form proved challenging for many contributions. This was reflected in issues such as scale problems in adjacent areas intended for walking, the multiplication of the entire region's built surface area and network of routes, and the forceful construction of nature areas. A wide variety of solutions were offered as the recipe for a sustainable city: organically growing village-like communities; garden city-type self-sufficient communities relying on rail transport; modernist, nature area-based tower block cities; suburb-type field like areas enabling continued and open growth; as well as modifications of traditional city centres alive with 24-hour urbanism.

A qualitative factor for residential and living environments was seen in many entries to be contact with nature or water. Living by or near water was emphasised. The entries featured various modifications of waterfront living, from landfill islands, off-shore living and floating housing to waterfront areas filled with tower blocks and terrace houses. An increased diversity of living environments was emphasised and considered necessary for attracting residents in the future. In housing block solutions the most rewarding solutions were those with varied scales and intimate series of spaces. The proposed housing types predominantly emphasised high-rise. Only a few entries developed models based on small-scale houses which is, at least at the moment, favoured by residents and in its current form causes the dispersal of communal structure.

In terms of mobility, one highly irritating element across many contributions was the vision of a continued private car dependency, though the propositions mostly focused on converting their power source or fuel type to a more environmentally viable one (electricity or bio-fuel). The introduction of road tolls and car share policies was also proposed. For non-vehicular traffic, common goals were the placement of residential and workplace areas so that stations and the connected regional concentration of services would be within bicycling or walking distance. This principle of proximity has led to the development of new forms of strip-like typologies of urban space along railway lines. In some entries, the assumption was that, in the future, environmental awareness will make living even more local, reducing overall mobility. One way of encouraging residents toward more environmentally conscious means of transportation could be a so-called 'climate bonus card', where a consistent preference for mass transit would bring various benefits such as free fares. The message relayed in nearly all propositions, however, was that the increase in the amount of traffic and subsequent problems can only become manageable through extensive investment in a rail transport-based transport network and the restriction of private car transport.

Overall, the contributions analyse the economy of GHV 2050 along traditional dimensions (services, production, and agriculture – no mining or primary industry) and work with variants of cluster concepts. Innovation, knowledge and people play a major role in this system, providing the main competitive economic advantage of GHV 2050. The notion of a 'social silicon valley' (City 2.0) is not different in this respect, but binds the already mentioned elements together under a challenging label [41]. The same contribution alludes to 'commons' (on the difficulties of how to govern the commons, see Ostrom, 2005), which exercise a steering function for economic activities and as such are suspending market mechanisms, which might generate entirely new products or services. Here is potential for the definition of niches, but the concept itself needs to be further explicated to that end.

On the basis of the competition results, a strong message was the need for new initiatives in the metropolitan area in terms of organising and providing practical tools for regional governance and planning of land use. It was considered beneficial for the region's future that municipal borders are either completely removed or at least that inter-municipal cooperation is strengthened, especially regarding the planning of land use. The entries had given quite detailed thought to the names and organisation of different cooperative bodies, all the way to their logos. Various regional electronic databanks, guide books, and collaborative forums were proposed in order to promote activity, market the region, and facilitate planning. Increasing open citizen participation was believed to increase the region's appeal, ensure sustainable development, and strengthen residential roots

One last element needs particular mention: In terms of expressed visions, Helsinki is simply understood as a successful metropolis of a small to medium scale with one to three million inhabitants, which succeeds in particular due to its soft location factors, i.e., quality of life, innovation and people. The composition of the geography starts in most contributions with the city or city region, extends gradually towards the Finnish city region system, and continues with Baltic cooperation networks. The latter are composed mainly by St Petersburg and Tallinn, followed by 'other' Baltic cities starting with Stockholm. This geography is constituted as a 'communication' network, as in particular expressed through high-speed railway connections, which will take over from air travel; this goes even beyond Russia to Beijing in China.

In one case only (Holistic Uniqueness) is the dimension of 'peripherality' addressed, but it is immediately remedied by a network of Baltic cities. In another case (Metroscape), cities like Helsinki are seen as a new layer of globally present metropolises of a smaller scale, which compete against the other mega-

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[41] Silicon Valley in California, as the epitome of an innovation-driven new economic development model, has attracted a number of various and sometimes highly critical reviews since the 1980s, referring to its dependence on the US defence budget or warfare ('star wars'), exploitation of migrant workers, or environmental pollution.

metropolises in particular on the basis of the better quality of life offered. The competition perspective alludes to the global economic system but does not raise nor provide answers to questions like the actual importance of 'quality of life' factors in the localisation decision-making process of globally acting companies. The contributions do not provide any further hints to a possible pattern of growth centres and peripheries at a European scale, nor to further differentiations between various cities along size and function. To develop this further, one needs to assess the future development of the economic geography in Europe, as the economy is the main vector driving differentiation (Storper, 2010), and the various niches, which cities, standing for their composite urban economy, can capture in such a broader context.

In a first summary therefore, the results of GHV 2050 had a strong focus on spatial organisation. Space matters (ESPON CU et al., 2006; Sayer, 1985) – from two different perspectives, one regarding the principal spatial constitution of society, the other the utility function that spatial organisation has for the economic competition project – which is not exactly surprising, of course, when looking at the professional field from which competition entries came. However, no particular new 'form' of the metropolitan region was proposed, with the sole exception of Line TM. The notable exception being, though, that the size question was pragmatically answered as 'small is beautiful', Helsinki competing with a better quality of life against larger metropolitan regions. There were quite diverse propositions which might best be captured under the phrase or discussion of 'decentral concentration'. The urban design approach clearly dominated, creating various forms of spatiality which accommodate social processes. Only one contribution actually started from the 'community level' and attempted to shape the space with social networks and with a communal spirit. In addition, in most cases this was seen as a non-frictional venture; the urban regional society seems to exist without conflict and to be more ideal driven, largely ignoring the critical perspectives on divided cities (Davis, 2006; Sandercock, 1998, 2003).

Follow-up phase to GHV 2050 competition: Helsinki Region 2050 (2008)

After the competition, a follow-up project was launched to analyse the proposals, evaluate the prize-winning contributions, involve the views of the public and recommend how to proceed with the vision process. This was needed as with the jury decision, in the end there was no single or unitary vision that resulted from the GHV 2050 competition, but there had been many interventions and ideas. Within a period of about one year after the competition decision, several steps were taken; deeper analysis of winning entries, a workshop with experts, and communication with the public.

At the start of that period, the price winners were critically analysed across individual contributions. The standard procedure after a competition would be to work with just one of the proposals. However, the jury emphasised that it was only across all entries, or in synergy between the many ideas, that solutions for the formation of a metropolitan space of the future can be developed. Towards that end, a team [42] analysed, structured and re-structured elements found in the individual contributions, identifying, for instance, more than two hundred and fifty 'ideas' within all winning entries.

One element discussed for this step was, however, what constitutes an 'idea' [43] within a contribution. Many criteria were applied for that purpose, starting from the competition guidelines, continuing with the visible ideas, but also trying to identify deeper or more abstract levels. Some of the criteria applied include: the visible general focus; the general urban development model; visible background assumptions; the elaboration of twelve pre-defined development zones; development of new building types; new interpretations of existing types; proposals regarding dense town-house concepts; notions related to flexibility and possibility for incremental realization; the positioning of the Greater Helsinki region at the global, European and Baltic scales; aspects of structural integrity of the region's built and green environment; the effectiveness, clarity and quality of transportation networks [44]; economic infrastructure; and last but not least the quality of living and working environments. The first set of criteria obviously relate to the overall spatial development model applied in the contribution and the interaction with existing planning proposals, at least as far as could be assessed by the groups. The second set look into building typologies and the application of these, for instance, with a view to providing sustainable new housing for an expansive growth model. The third aspect relates to the general positioning of the metropolitan region in a wider spatial context. The last group of arguments finally addressed almost typical sector planning dimensions.

Beyond that structuring work, the question was asked how an idea contributes to the solution of more general problems. The team accordingly tried to identify ideas having a synergy, i.e., providing positive support for wished-for states of society, and providing a potential answer to wider societal problems which

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[42] Mikko Mälkki and Paasi Mäenpää, two researchers at YTK, worked on this very difficult task and deserve a high appreciation for the results.

[43] Etymologically, for instance, the Greek origin of idea comprises the meaning 'to see' and 'to know'. In modern English one says, 'I see what you mean', when 'I see' is equivalent to 'I understand'. The philosophy of 'ideas' starts with Plato, for whom 'idea' was actually more a signifier, highlighting shared properties of observations. See Wiener, 1968.

[44] The transportation solutions and the quality of the living environment were, in addition, assessed by external experts in short statements.

are already visible today. The latter aspect was even further emphasised during the workshop where societal challenges of the future were presented, for which we already today have to define answers. Using an iterative process the original contributions were organised into thematic 'Ideas Flocks' (see Figure 5). These formed the material for the workshops, in which city officials, the nine prize-winning teams, other planning experts and members of the public assessed the proposals in the light of social and pending environmental challenges. The vision material and the ideas with most potential were compiled into a final report which acts as a basis for the continuation of the vision process.

Figure 5 Ideas Flocks

The eight themes of the idea flocks were: land-use planning, public transport and personal mobility; quality in dense cities; relationship of nature and living; diversification of lifestyles and planning; towards sustainability – planning, incentives and regulations; environments for business and innovation; added value through intra-regional division of roles; metropolitan governance and planning.

The two themes of land-use planning, public transport and personal mobility (1) and metropolitan governance and planning (8) will be further used to highlight the content dimensions of ideas and flocks. The material comes mainly from documentation provided for the workshop (WSP, Demos & YTK, 2008).

Under the first theme of land-use planning, public transport and personal mobility, entries proposed different regional scenarios. A commonly agreed principle is increasing building density near railway stations. Challenging topics in any scenario include avoiding unnecessary investment in railways and the related need to increase the density of existing built-up areas. Instead of focusing on the transport system itself, the focus should rather be citizens' personal mobility needs and the coordination of different transport modes. A whole range of services and techno-social innovations can reduce the demand for travel. It is important to develop a low-carbon urban culture through spatial and temporal integration of uses and by revealing the consequences of everyday mobility choices.

The first resulting idea (1.1) used is that of 'boundary strips', the title of the corresponding entry:

> The entry *Boundary Strips* proposes a new type of settlement model for Greater Helsinki. Very big areas of open space, with a diameter up to 10–15 km, are surrounded **by narrow urban structures, so-called 'boundary strips'**. With the green areas encircled by them, they form a new spatial system of protected open areas. The breadth of the 'boundary strips' is 250–500

m. There are several models according to which the built structure in strips can be organized. In general, the pattern and design aim at **maximizing the edge between the built and the green area**. The strips are surrounded by **a public transport system which is connected with the regional public transportation network**. A 'knot' (the connection to public transportation system) is always within walking distance of 5 minutes. Each 'boundary strip' can be realized either in one step or in successive steps. The density and character can vary according to the surrounding areas.

The second theme, on metropolitan governance and strategic planning – alliances and agreements, focused on an important task of the continuation work of the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 ideas competition, that of envisioning processes and institutional structures of metropolitan governance.

The first resulting idea was 'City Cells' (8.1): Metropolitan governance can be established through different institutional structures and processes. As the term governance often implies, the new structures and processes combine state and private initiatives as well as public and private sources. 'City 2.0' adds one dimension to the new governance setting by introducing basic democratic features. These are combined with strong positive leadership (open mayor) features but also with regional citizen assemblies. The idea, as proposed by the entry *Towards City 2.0* is: The social innovation system of the Helsinki Metropolitan Region implies a new kind local government. At the core are the citizens and their communities. Local administration supports their plans and motivation to create new tools for improving their well-being. This support is channelled through the 'city-cells', i.e., *arrondissements* or neighbourhoods that consist of 10,000 to 25,000 inhabitants. The support can be money, expert services or space. At the top is the mayor of the metropolitan area.

As said above, both of these ideas flocks are exemplary for the approach used to extract further elements from the competition entries and to prepare them as elements for the workshop. The first reveals details of the material proposals developed for the competition. One can argue whether the precise proposal promotes a more intensive or extensive spatial development model, the 'boundary strips' certainly have a level of ambiguity in that respect. However, the issue of 'love for nature' is also interestingly covered by that particular contribution. The second example is an interpretation of the participation models for the metropolis, though the basic democratic cells of 10,000–25n000 inhabitants are a huge scale jump when comparing this, for instance, with older concepts of 'planning cells' (Dienel, 1978), and are mainly possible on the basis of new social technologies (Keen, 2007). As can be seen from the overview in Figure 5, more such flocks and ideas were scripted for the workshop, which was the second part of the continuation process.

Expert Workshop [45]

The expert workshop of the continuation process was the second element looking at the selection of ideas and trying to generate or evaluate the results of the GHV 2050 competition. Ultimately, the workshop with actors was supposed to elaborate elements for a regional vision. Again, an iterative process was applied for that purpose. First a role-play session helped participants to break with inherited traditional views and to 'identify' with a new setting; i.e., take on the view point of a metropolitan citizen. In the second round, participants acted in their professional role to work with and assess the ideas flocks which had been provided by the preparation group.

To further explain the working process, in the following paragraphs the work process of the group on 'metropolitan governance and strategic planning' will be looked at. That group was composed of one moderator and six members from different planning institutions and with different functions. First, they had to choose a role character to interrelate with a different future living environment [46]. The results were documented, using image decks and other descriptors highlighting good and bad developments in a quite general way. Those mental maps were ultimately discussed in a group session.

Looking at the results of the first role-playing part, societal issues [47] have been prevalent with role characters. Issues range from strong individualistic orientations, between splendid isolation and elective affinity, to truly mixed, diversified multi-cultural societies. These life worlds find an expression in spatially diversified situations [48], providing the opportunity for encounter, like 'third spaces' [49]. These notions however also see a metro-identity evolving amongst the citizens. This diversified society is an active society that uses new participation technologies [50] and shapes arenas for citizens' debate and decision making.

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[45] A kind of 'thick' description will be applied here, which can be considered a first attempt at interpretation – and which needs more work. That however, can only be done once the process continues.

[46] More precisely as a lay person or professional, as a Finn or migrant, and identifying with certain aspects of the new life.

[47] *With this and the following foot notes (to note 54) annotations from the discussion will be provided.* Societal issues were: Tolerance, understanding, pro-activeness; Individualism; Multiculturalism; Mixture, diversity; Unity, belonging/solidarity; Multicultural dense city (climate refugees integrated).

[48] Space is mixture of everything plus diversity; dense centres and landscapes and different settings.

[49] The term 'third space' denotes a space in between or combining characteristics of standard places, like work, leisure etc.

[50] With the following general characteristics: reliable and transparent decision making system, web based, wireless networks.

Citizens are eager to participate and contribute; in part citizens even become shareholders of entrepreneurial activities. At the level of the region a well operating governance system[51] has been established, again using new technologies for participation but also more and consequent binding forces to achieve shared goals, for which a separate tax on income should be available also. This includes well paid and also well equipped governance managers. Economic [52] issues are also seen as important, focusing on 'green' aspects [53] like wind energy production and co-operatives as legal entrepreneurial form. Shortage of workforce, or rather the need for immigration, was formulated as a challenge, too. Growth friendliness is seen as a pre-condition in competitive times, based strongly on advanced technology and good, multiple network links. Overall, the model is rather seen as one of the service economy (universities as leading zero-carbon consultants), including new social services (service cells). Zero-carbon-emission living style is seen in general as wishful scenario.

This brief summary of the discussion deserves some additional comments. A first remark relates to the 'governance model', which is seen as coming from 'somewhere' and as superimposed. Moreover in some comments the central government is seen as an actor actually implementing the new governance model [54]. The elements of governance are participation, but also enforcement and resource allocation, which are following though not explicitly mentioning aspects of subsidiarity [55]. However, despite participation there is also a call for a 'master mind' which is conducting governance but not unbound. That powerful person, also at one point called the 'Tsar', alluding to some historic interlude in Finland's history and the making of Helsinki as the capital, will find itself in a constant situation of checks and balances. Secondly, another striking element is that of 'growth friendliness' but triangulated as 'economic growth, environmental sustainability, social cohesion'. The three elements are anything but without conflict, as we can see from the current discussion about climate change. Thirdly, alluding to the 'boundedness' of the capacities of human foresight, the group brought up amongst other things the question of the degree to which the

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[51] Strong metropolitan governance, reliable, transparent; Regional cooperation with binding planning competences; Regional plan for wind energy.

[52] Positive attitude to growth; Investment friendly culture of communities; Enough employees also from other countries.

[53] Zero-carbon emission lifestyle; Local and regional food production.

[54] The new governance model will take an institutional form based, for instance, on existing democratic structures etc., so actually the intention is to establish something more solid compared with the usual understanding of 'governance' which often resembles a muddling-through process. Every actor has a feeling for the need of some extra and new political and institutional structures.

[55] Subsidiarity is a rule for action: assigning responsibilities and resources to the closest appropriate level to solve a 'problem'. Formulated for instance in the 1931 *Encyclica Quadragesimo anno*.

future is more like the past? Despite a possible general precaution, this latter aspect also expresses the additional interesting dimension of 'anchoring' the future in the past. The transition process shall be comprehensible and manageable at an individual level, thus slowing down, for instance, global processes and anchoring them. This has the additional dimension of being all but without conflict! As a matter of fact, conflicts were basically absent from the discussions. Taking the next 'path breaking' step is in any case difficult, but depends very much on the attitude of actors and learning capacities (Malecki & Oinas, 1999). Neuman and Hull (2009) speak of governance as learning but also 'un-learning' processes, including issues that have been addressed as 'path dependency in the innovation literature (Nauwelaers, 2001). The workshop itself can be considered a 'learning event' in that respect.

Returning to the workshop again, in terms of 'new' topics the group work process resulted in a list of items which were considered as positive new developments captured in several mottos: Teamwork not in a hurry – creating the slow city; Fresh and clean food – building local/regional production; Sharing time in places outside home – in favour of third spaces; Electronic voting system on regular basis – swift decision making; Smaller service units – providing social services for elderly and families; Founding of wind-energy co-operatives (Osuuskunta); Creating a metro-Identity; Universities as leading zero-carbon consultants at global scale [56]; Establish arenas for basic democratic exchanges; [or simply] Find governance managers.

Again by way of comment, this list can be reordered in terms of: creating better, i.e., slow, clean, social, local living environments; creating a sustainable economy, e.g., wind-energy cooperatives; giving more voice to citizens, using for instance e-voting or creating 'arenas' [57]; creating a metro-identity, which so far in negative conclusion is nonexistent; but also finding 'governance managers'. In addition to the dimensions mentioned before, these mottos are clearly of a 'human scale', i.e., very centred on the individual life-world situation, though a vague idea of a metro-identity was expressed. The idea related to governance managers is ultimately transferring the momentum for change of the current decision and cooperation patterns to a kind of 'deus ex machina', someone who is clearing outside the existing fuzzy situation and establishes a new rationale and a new momentum.

In the second part of the workshop, participants had to become familiar with the entries and ideas, try to 'evaluate' the ideas in comparison with future challenges, find out the most promising elements to develop a future for the region, discuss the elements and solutions towards an integrated vision, and provide

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[56] This is actually not a motto, but universities are generally considered the bearers of hope. See also the listed results from the role-play part.

[57] Working with professionals, this comment had the additional dimension that the participants were aware of the theoretical literature, in particular the work by Patsy Healey (2002).

opinions and comments from an expert point of view, thus at the end returning to their role in the real world. For sure it was a very complex task, but most of the participants had extensive experience with such working environments and techniques. The future challenges [58] were formulated as: facing a multicultural society, finding a new work-life balance, heading to the low-carbon society, confronting the multiplication of lifestyles and values, improving the quality of the environment, and strengthening global competitiveness.

To provide a more detailed insight into the results of this working process, the group working on metropolitan governance and strategic planning will be further documented [59]. To repeat, a starting point for all groups has been a set of 'ideas flocks' which were considered most appropriate for the theme of the group. In the case of the group working on 'metropolitan governance and strategic planning', the card deck comprised eight ideas altogether (See Figures). The group discussed those idea cards against the defined set of future challenges, trying to identify synergy or detrimental effects.

Start Placing Figures 6-13 here and comment text next to it

8.1 City-Cells were seen as contributing to the development and formation of the multicultural society. Secondary effects were also discussed for lifestyle and planning, and the work-life balance. The experts had a clear view that Finland and the metropolitan region are *facing a multi-cultural society.* With resulting *questions of identity, integration of newcomers, and safe neighbourhoods* [60]. The notion of *lifestyles,* interpreted here as urban and outward looking, and an acceptance of the *multicultural society* were

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[58] Formulated by one of the winning teams, DEMOS&NOW architects, who were responsible for City 2.0.

[59] From the group work brief: 'An important task of the continuation work of the Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 ideas competition is to envision processes and institutional structures of metropolitan governance. Not only in Finland the "metropolitan region" is a new and experimental unit beyond cities or regions. Collecting best practices from other countries is important to feed discussions between Helsinki region's cities and other actors. Any strategic initiative or plan for the region needs wide and long-term commitment. A key question is how to produce this common vision!'.

[60] The situation in Finland provides interesting perspectives on those issues: The country is demographically small and dependent on further inwards migration. As yet, the percentage of foreign population is quite small (3% for the country, 9% for Helsinki). However, the idea of migration is one of 'managed migration', i.e., a rather selective process (Ache et al., 2008). Individual safety in the home is a big issue for the wealthier, though the actual rate of crime is quite low.

considered *more important as tool for integration* [61]. A general *support to citizens* will mean that *people can and* – ultimately - *will work towards improvements of the environment. (emphasis added)*

There was also a question of administration, focusing on the role of the *mayor*. The mayor is usually understood as a *mediator between state and neighbourhood and local politics.* In a *consensual society*, where *traditionally more people are in policy,* certainly *more discussion is needed* – but that might also hamper action, at least immediate action.

8.2. Metroscape Toolkit was seen to have effects on many societal issues, but mainly on low-carbon society, lifestyle and planning, competitiveness, and quality environment. Secondary effects were seen for multicultural society and work-life balance. A better coordinated planning and decision making process in terms of land use and distribution of functions was considered having an *impact everywhere* but *most in competitiveness* [62]. Establishing a 'decentral' pattern *gives freedom to think about different lifestyles, but also low-emission society.* The toolkit itself was seen as remedying urban sprawl and to *contribute to*/achieve a *low-carbon society*.

Three ideas cards (8.3, 8.5, 8.6) had a clear instrumental character or were based on juridical or legal prescriptions, with the intention to enforce or at least to support the enforcement of 'real' changes.

8.3 Design-based, infrastructure-based and policy-based planning was seen as mainly contributing to the quality of the environment. The experts simply read this idea as a *good description of a way to plan good environment*. The two ideas, 8.5 and 8.6 Addition to legislation, building and neighbourhoods, were seen as very similar and having an effect especially for achieving the low-carbon society but also towards competitiveness.

8.7 Zero Emission Towns (ZET) were seen to contribute to the achievement of a low-carbon society but also towards competitiveness. In terms of governance and strategy the connection with ZET was seen either in *incentives needed* but *also new companies needed* a s*trong link with legislation*. Of course climate change or *global warming* was also perceived as *threat and potential for competition; it must be faced now and can establish new potential for competitiveness.*

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[61] This is an interesting aspect. For instance, the city of Helsinki runs a policy of distributing migrant populations across the city scape. What is considered as 'integration' might of course also deprive migrants of other opportunity structures, for instance, resulting from co-habitation, a kind of 'opportunity space' which helps to accommodate 'difference' (Vranken, 2008).

[62] There was a strong conviction that competition over allocation should be avoided.

8.8 Landscape Strategy was considered to be beneficial for lifestyle and planning and for quality of environment issues. Secondary effects were seen across all other societal challenges: *climate change; clear structure, regional frameworks needed; competitiveness; social equity; combined with ownership question (land) – pride to own and keep; rational arguments (flooding, rainfall, sea level rising); green fields need to be kept open for food production*. This more 'thematic' idea works with different visions, thus applying directly a soft planning approach and linking this in particular with existing features of the natural environment.

One idea that was not considered relevant for the specific task of the group was 8.4 Private Public Infrastructure development. One interpretation is that the example chosen to document the governance relation in the production of infrastructures was Line_TM, which looks inside-out and positions GHV at the trans-national scale.

The workshop was also intended to create additional ideas, which in the current case were not created. Instead, the group highlighted two aspects as particular points for further discussion: The challenge to design cooperation as such; and as a second aspect, the question who might be the 'champion' for all strategies? This reflects on one hand the conviction of group members, that all these various strategies and aims need an outstanding figure to take responsibility and thus returning to discussions on the role of the mayor on day one; in short a mayor, who represents the metropolitan region but who is also 'framed' by other actors. The aspect of framing or 'binding' is a sign of the Finnish society, with its short 'societal' distances, and also the Finnish definition of a mayor, who is one player amongst others. Despite being the popular face for and the champion of policies, this personality should also be embedded in the usual structures of local and regional policy making. However, this person is only conceivable against the background of a strongly formulated government policy for the metropolitan region.

Figure 14 Matrix of ideas cards and societal challenges

[Comment: the graphic presentation was introduced after the workshop]

In terms of immediate 'effectiveness' the ideas Metroscape (8.2) and Landscape Strategy (8.8), including extended effects, were considered as most important. Metroscape (8.2) was understood as an effective way to design strategies in particular to harness the urban sprawl which is likely to continue in the region. Landscape Strategy (8.8) was seen as another strategy in particular to keep options for future

developments. Both strategies extend into other areas, but especially the challenges resulting for planning from a multitude of lifestyles and also from multi-cultural societies, among other things remedying segregation, were seen as fields for important potential positive impacts extending from the ideas Metroscape (8.2) and Landscape Strategy (8.8). Metroscape (8.2) was however criticised in the sense of being 'naïve', meaning that the spatial strategy, especially the micro cores, is not appropriate for the spatial structure of the region and for the main drivers behind this structure, i.e,. the preferences of citizens. Both ideas were also considered important for increasing the competitiveness of the region by helping to develop a brand or trademark and for securing the quality of the environment. The latter aspect comes quite naturally when looking at the constituent elements of the ideas Metroscape (8.2) and Landscape Strategy (8.8).

As a general comment, group members had difficulties allocating the ideas to exact societal changes. All members agreed that many of the ideas had qualities reaching across several societal changes and also multiple effects. The allocation of ideas to societal changes in the end followed primary effects in a core field (see also Figure 14). Discussing and commenting on the results further, all participants of that group have institutional backgrounds within the region. Inhabited cultures and standards are clearly framing the discussions, thereby 'producing contingent products of diverse actions informed by the beliefs of agents as they arise in the context of traditions' (Rhodes, 2007, p 18). The time frame for the exercise was actually far too short, for instance, to shape an 'authentic dialogue' (Innes & Booher, 1999), especially with a view towards more adaptive features. However, the exercise as such established a common language and relationships between participants, and some creativity was also stimulated. In addition, what needs to be emphasised is the interesting discussion focusing on the 'mayor'. On the one hand, the wish was expressed to achieve better and higher participation and to give citizens a voice in defining the future of the region, while on the other hand, at the same time participants were convinced that 'someone' must be a 'champion'. But this person, and it is definitely a person not an institution, must be framed if not harnessed by existing codes of conduct. As said, the working group on metropolitan governance and strategic planning stands as *pars pro toto* and demonstrates the working process and working results. To repeat, the work with the rich set of thoughts that were found in the competition contributions and the attempt to come to a shared assessment were intended to result in a further approximation to a possible vision.

Across all eight working groups the workshops also developed a series of images, or rather nine viewpoints of the regional metropolitan vision. Those viewpoints will be briefly documented in the next sections, before commenting on the content and possible implications. The new viewpoints are a combination of two elements, one being a very brief scenario sketch with general assumptions towards society, the second providing design principles for the development of the metropolitan space.

Figure 15 Workshop results: Viewpoints and design principles

Scenario Sketch	Design Principles
A unified urban structure	
Regional areas co-operate in generating a vision of overall land use, housing and transport, defining the future development of community structures, the transportation system and principles of complementary building. The region is developed according to sustainable principles, by e.g. increasing building density, supplementing existing structures and containing urban sprawl.	A unified urban structure: The community is interconnected in a polycentric settlement structure. Redevelopment gravitates towards good public transport services. The reliance on travel and passenger car traffic decreases. A compact city structure promotes walking, cycling and public transport. Urban sprawl is contained and large green belt areas remain intact. Before making new initial investments, existing structures are rejuvenated. Operations that can be carried out gradually and that support each other are preferred.
Public transport and personal mobility	
Regional public transport is improved by development of the network and by hybridization, e.g. transverse connections and improved co-ordination of different modes of transport. Public transport and bicycle and pedestrian traffic are subsidised, in order to make them genuinely attractive alternatives to passenger car traffic.	Public transport and personal mobility: A dense, polycentric urban structure promotes walking, cycling and public transport. Walking, cycling and public transport offer a genuine alternative to passenger car traffic. Public transport is an attractive option: comfortable, convenient, well coordinated and low cost. Services connected to transport increase its popularity. Transport infrastructure development is based on good coordination of land-use and transport planning.
An energy- and material-efficient metropolitan region	
An eco-efficient region that supports the environmentally-friendly practices of its residents and other operators is	An energy and material efficient metropolitan region: Efficient use of materials and energy is

created – encouraging the choice of environmentally friendly options rather than unsustainable ones. Information on different alternatives and their environmental impacts is easily available.	achieved as a result of firm actions on the part of society and the responsible attitudes of individuals and communities. Bold actions are undertaken as a preventive measure, rather than crisis management. Self-sufficiency in food and energy production is increased. Ecological choices are easy to make and to implement in everyday life. Consumption focuses on services, rather than goods. The Helsinki region emerges as a global forerunner of responsible welfare.
New forms and locations for production and labour	
The development of self-sufficient districts and communities creates local clusters, centres and pilot projects. These in turn encourage the creation of new business models, associated with e.g. low-carbon emissions and new local and virtual services. Investments are made in the development of high-speed rail connections, and the internationally attractive business areas based around them.	New forms and locations of/for production and labour: A strong, service-based society supports flexible lifestyle management. Small local units offer equality of services to a greater variety of people. Job development takes more account of family, social life and leisure time. Neighbourhood and district centres linking work and other aspects of life offer opportunities for social interaction, networking and learning. A high-speed rail service connects the Helsinki region to mainland Europe and Russia.
The relationship between nature and habitation	
The region invests in establishing and maintaining high-quality public areas, as well as new concepts for green belt areas, e.g. developing green areas as a platform for a practical ecological lifestyle.	The relationship between nature and habitation: Boundary zones between green and urban areas are developed for active use within the urban structure. Green areas will provide opportunities for activities, services and social interaction -> areas for collective city life. Production and consumer demands come together in an ecological context within green areas. A regional landscape strategy ensures that the diversity, sustainability and special characteristics of

	the landscape and environment are taken into account in all planning decisions.
An increasingly dense urban framework with mixed functions	
Common principles on urban density, complementary building, the blending of functions and the control of rural area development are set for the whole region.	An increasingly dense urban framework with mixed functions: The density of the urban structure is higher around public transport hubs. Sufficient high-quality public spaces, meeting places and green areas are preserved within the dense framework. Parallel services and facilities and high population density increase the flexibility of the urban structure and reduce the need to travel. Prior to initial investments, the use of existing structures is intensified, and mixed use of areas increased.
The diversification of life-styles	
Diversity and specialisation are encouraged to emerge as regional resources. Spaces and tools to support diversity and a sense of community are created.	The diversification of life-styles: Planning skills for handling and valuing variety and diversity are further developed. Individualism is counterbalanced by the strengthening of new forms of family and a sense of community. An ecological, low-carbon lifestyle becomes a normal part of everyday life. New channels are created for communities and individuals to participate in developing the region. New public spaces offer platforms for various functions and the opportunity for contact between different groups of people, promoting social interaction and a sense of community. The provision of 'Third Places': places for social interaction and activities. Multi-purpose local working areas.
Added value through an intraregional division of functions	

Each regional district has its own distinct profile. Thoughtfully allocated roles reinforce each other and strengthen the image and competitive resources of the whole region.	Added value through intraregional division of functions: Municipalities and centres develop their specific territorial capital, which becomes a regional resource. Regional sectors are connected by public transport, creating an accessible, interconnected, polycentric regional structure. Population growth gravitates towards the centres, thereby supporting diverse services. 'Metropolitan Citizenship' and a recognisable metropolitan profile form the basis for regional cooperation.
Metropolitan governance and strategic planning	
The municipalities of the Helsinki region cooperate across sector and regional boundaries, in planning e.g. municipal land use, transport systems, public services, economic life, energy and tourism. This is supported by the creation of effective models, tools and channels for administration and cooperation.	Metropolitan governance and strategic planning: Strong regional leadership and reliable, transparent administration. Common goals, strategies and visions. Genuinely forward-looking, broad regional planning. Administration favouring diverse implementation and utilising local assets. Broad citizen participation in decision-making and implementation. Increasing neighbourhood democracy accelerates decision-making.

The overall conclusions emphasise that the future resources of the region lie in the deployment of locality and pluralism. Possibilities for this should be created by providing suitable premises and tools for participation, resident initiatives and communal encounters. One theme that attracted much attention was the renaissance of public spaces and locally-produced services, which for their part support communality. The ecological functionality of the environment, distribution of information and appropriate education are all important factors in the creation of a natural, ecological way of living. As the population grows and the settlement structure continues to expand, emphasis must always be placed on the control of sprawl, mixing uses and versatile infill construction. A well established polycentric, networked structure will reduce travel needs and increase the self-sufficiency of the region's sub-areas. A compact urban structure supports public transport and cycle and pedestrian traffic. Many parties, both public and private, residents and

communities, need to take action in order to implement the vision. Support for experiments and smooth cooperation across municipal and departmental borders are prerequisites for its success.

The quasi-official communiqué after the expert workshop (WSP et al., 2008) places much emphasis on the communication function of the vision. One important aim of the vision is to bring together the views of decision makers, experts and the public on the future of the region, thereby committing everyone to the implementation of the joint vision in their operations. Another aim would be to demonstrate future objectives to the international community, thus strengthening the positive image of the region. Communicating the vision and committing all parties to it will be a long-term project, requiring continuous dialogue and input into publicity. In the Finnish context of strong municipal autonomy, the competition and its follow-up project are singular achievements. It is unique for municipalities within such a large region to engage in serious discussions about their common interests and future strategies. Political decision-makers need to act on the results and direct the future phases of the vision process.

The next steps will be the new regional and traffic systems plans, both of which will be thematically linked with GHV. The vision will also form the background for the agreements between the region's municipalities and the national government, concerning mid-term objectives of housing and investment in infrastructure. These processes will solidify the consequences of the vision in different areas, including the central 'metropolis' (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa), towns along the main rail line and the surrounding rural municipalities.

The Greater Helsinki Vision 2050 is a continuing process. In collaboration with planning professionals and the wider public, the region's municipalities have defined the strategic tools for the implementation of the vision, the principles of a common will. These principles will inform both local and international parties not only about the objectives of GHV 2050 but also about the means of implementation. The process has in fact begun to facilitate new ways of thinking and cooperation.

Most of the GHV 2050 competition and follow-up process was clearly an expert exercise, except one part of the follow-up project which created web-pages offering the possibility for public participation. These pages (www.helsinginseutu2050.fi) introduced the competition and the prize-winning ideas forming the basis of the vision, through themed articles and the idea cards. Ninety comments on developing the vision were received. In addition to this, public feedback was collected via three open citizen workshops. Participants were able to comment on the development of the region and to put forward their thoughts on the follow-up process. Some one hundred and fifty participants attended the workshops. Their average age was around fifty years. Citizen responses were strongly in favour of development of public transport, especially rail transport. With rising energy prices and growing concerns about climate change, many saw public

transport as the only viable alternative. Reinforcing a sense of neighbourhood community was also viewed as important. Many emphasised the possibility of working closer to home. Securing the natural environment and recreational areas was seen as an important means of retaining the quality and functionality of residential areas.

By way of conclusion, this particular step of the workshop condensed the different elements, in particular the individual perceptions regarding future life worlds, the subsequent professional assessment of competition ideas against future challenges, with viewpoints on how to manage the change process with the help of consensual principles. What becomes clear is the overwhelming 'sustainability' perspective, the overly peaceful society, the society that wants and is 'doing good'. Again the scenario is void of any conflicts, social as well as others. For the latter it is in particular interesting to read that economic opportunities will be created in full reconciliation with aspects of sustainability. Remaining in the same field, the model of the service society is favoured over other activities, largely ignoring for instance issues of material production and where this is going to happen. Last, the metropolitan region is a combination of leadership and broad citizen participation. It is a field of mutual cooperative behaviour, seemingly more attuned towards 'other regarding' preferences [63] (Ostrom, 2005).

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[63] The term 'other regarding' preferences can be understood as behaviour that is not only guided by a selfish attitude.

Reflections on vision making

Now, after having documented and partly commented on the various results of the competition and the follow-up process, this section will reflect on the instrument of vision making. It will look into formal procedural aspects, into the quality of the vision, including a discussion of the chosen time horizon, on the processing of the competition entries with their contributions to the vision, and on the relation between vision and strategy.

The **instrument** to create a vision for Greater Helsinki was clearly placed outside all existing processes at the time of its inception [64]. Furthermore, it took the form of an urban design competition which, in strict formal terms, had pretty standard structures and procedures, with a jury, a working group, with defined quality criteria and more. The supervision for this was done by SAFA, the Finnish architectural association [65]. The jury marginally deviated from standards in the prize nomination, by merging the prize money for the second and third places to award four prizes altogether. It also changed standard procedures by emphasising that actually all nine entries which were finally selected, including the purchases category, should be considered as a repository to create and shape the future vision. As the protocol says:

> The jury recommends that following the announcement of the competition results, all the municipalities in the competition region must immediately initiate a common visionary and strategy process identifying and emphasizing comprehensive land use and catalysts for change within the joint metropolitan area, utilizing the awarded entries and calling for cooperation with their authors. (Jury, 2007, pp., p 15)

Hence, in strictly diagnostic terms, there was no single vision but an appeal to continue to co-create a vision in a common vision and strategy process. One of the immediate actions was taken in the form of the continuation workshop. Beyond that, as will be further discussed below, the central appeal for immediate activities has actually taken many different forms and used different arenas.

Looking at GHV 2050 and the **actor structures** involved, one certainly needs to ask, 'A vision by whom?'. The first main contributing group is of course the planning professions, as the competition entrants and later on as partners in the seminars and workshops. The immediate outcomes of the GHV 2050 can be understood as explorations into the built forms of the future metropolis. They represent wishful thinking

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[64] The process itself has consumed approximately 750,000 Euro so far – a considerable sum for drafting a 'vision' (though much less than was spent for the Greater Paris exercise).

[65] SAFA is by defined standards a supervisor of all design and planning competitions. This way, professional standards shall be guaranteed. One might also say, this way professional stakeholders keep control over the process.

scenarios drawn by planning experts. The visions that resulted from the competition had as such very complex textures. However, they also had to respect crucial local planning projects, in fact, these were more of a bounded character. Next to the immediate producers of visions, the other group of experts came from regional planning and related administrations, fewer from the political field, i.e., deputy mayors at the intersection between policy and administration. Both expert groups constituted for a short period of time a multi-lateral cooperation exercise outside existing planning structures. The initial impulse came from a political person, the former mayor responsible for planning in Helsinki, whose intention was to challenge existing concepts and models. A comparatively small world, not much affected by non-expert views or by lay people [66].

The **quality or materiality of the visions** provides interesting insights, too. Of course, from a competition entry the commissioning party expects 'particular' interpretations not common views, as the overall intention is to generate new ideas. The particularities expressed itself in a dominating attention towards the dominance of physical form. What is striking but then again explainable is the idea of creating a spatial structure that might 'contain' all possible twists and bends regarding the unforeseeable future of the metropolis! Can we build a single container or shape a super structure [67] for what we are expecting from the future or in the future to happen? To which general extent can such a container be designed; which flexible parts does it require; and at last, which un-built, not physically pre-defined parts does it need? This does not mean that we shall not discuss urban density or dimensions of sustainability, like energy efficient buildings etc. But there are limits to the urban design approach and the provision of container spaces (c.f. Läpple, 1991).

A further interesting dimension is the time frame or **time horizon** that is under consideration, i.e., the year 2050 and how the original competition entries but also the follow-up process responded to that. The year 2050 sounds quite distant in the future, forty-three years from the competition end date seems like a lot. However, given that the average time span for a generation is about thirty years, actors are left with slightly more than one generation to grow into the new vision, not to speak about substantially changing the course of events. Compared with that, the general perception among the competition entries was quite positive and projected a basically problem-free path into the future. Looking at the events in 2009 and 2010, i.e., the crisis in the banking sector and the challenging situation for the Eurozone, it is obvious that

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[66] But this is not yet implying, following George Bernard Shaw (*The Doctor's Dilemma*, 1911), that the process was a 'conspiracy against laity'.

[67] Not to the same extent as Yona Friedman suggested in the 1960s with his 'mega structures', in principle a three-dimensional infrastructure to accommodate human activities in space (Eaton, 2002).

this was probably too optimistic. The economic crisis also demonstrated the vulnerability of nation states or even supra-national institutions like the European Union and had an immediate impact on policies and caused setbacks on projects.

Leaving the global economic crisis and political responses aside and turning towards the regional level, at the time of writing in 2010, the question of **an institutional structure**, like the introduction of a metropolitan level institution with political and decision-making power that can support a vision, is still open in the Greater Helsinki Region. In addition, a coordinated land-use strategy that follows concepts discussed for the vision and binds together municipal and government activities, which as a **planning instrument** takes the particular form of an accord, is still in the making and faces the election of a new Finnish government in 2011. In terms of **existing planning instruments** and processes, which could support the vision, a planning process like a master plan is revised about every ten years. For the vision exercise, we easily talk about three to four major planning periods altogether.

As has been emphasised, the entries largely focused on a physical **container space**. Looking into the physical structures, the average replacement quota for residential buildings in the metropolitan area is between one and two per cent annually (Statistics Finland), composed of the construction of new building stock and replacing in part existing buildings. Turnover rates for office buildings are shorter nowadays. However, infrastructure certainly involves long-term projects and investments. The recent case of building a new harbour in Helsinki was scheduled for 1990–2010, a period of twenty years. One of the more exotic ideas in the GHV 2050 competition, the building of artificial islands between Finland and Estonia, combined for instance with the building of a tunnel between Helsinki and Tallinn, is certainly of a similar magnitude. The Channel Tunnel between the UK and France took in the end twenty-two years until finalisation and operation, not to speak of the overall time of repeated attempts from the first inception of the idea to actually undertaking the construction.

Some entries expected a very positive and active support of their vision from **social innovations**. Looking for instance into service innovations, from an ex-post perspective after successful product innovations, the time spans over the past two hundred years was about twenty-five to thirty years to introduce for instance the credit card (Röbke, 2002). Such innovations speed up obviously and might have also wider implications in the end, as we can see from the 'history' of the internet. The World Wide Web started as an expert protocol in 1974, and had to wait until 1994 until a web browser opened it for use by lay people. The first economic bubble imploded six years later, when the hailed internet business and dotcom boom crashed in 2000. Finally, an idea like Web 2.0, the reference point of the City 2.0 contribution, only started quite

recently in 2004 and is in the making, judging from social network activities. Social innovations are hard to come by.

All in all, this implies that 2050 is actually a fairly early event horizon. Compared with that, an overly positive expectation of the workings of such a complex enterprise like shaping a new Greater Helsinki Region was prominent in the contributions, but this was also expected. Planning is also the 'mobilization of hope' (Hillier & Healey, 2008b) and planners certainly have a 'bias for hope' (Friedmann, 2002). A strong vision can organise hope and give people and actors a strong impulse to take a responsible step forward and to re-adjust existing policies and practices. The metropolis, as an idea in itself, can become the carrier of such a vision. In any case, the vision needs supportive structures and processes, setting deadlines or defining milestones that also help keep the region on track of the vision. The question remains, however, whether there is actually a systematic under-estimation of time frames needed to achieve the intended state of things? [68] This is particularly relevant at the time when a vision is broken down into a strategy and actors as well as institutions need to show commitment.

A last set of comments relates to the **processing of ideas** found in the entries, which was applied for the continuation process. Why, for instance, deconstruct the competition entries and generate more than two hundred separate ideas? Why not leave the entries untouched, each as an integrated composition, and follow the intentions of the original inventors? First of all, there was obviously the appeal of the jury to utilise the potentials of all the winning entries. One way of doing this is to provide a critical reading and re-composition of individual elements. When looking across the individual contributions, it was certainly worth exploring the potentials of all winning entries, with a view towards similarities and possible synergies, to enhance the appeal and also the reach of individual contributions. Several 'good' intentions were linked with that exercise. One was to create ownership on the side of participants. Through the process of deconstructing and active participant-centred reconstruction in the follow-up workshop, experts had the opportunity to explore the vision elements further and attempt to compose a shared vision; in principle, it was a communicative approach, trying to grasp central intentions and to validate critically the vision elements from an expert point of view. This obviously included the respective backgrounds of actors and institutions.

However, were there not any conflicts in ideas or rather in the principal concepts framing the ideas? This dimension cannot be answered, as the perspective for the deconstruction and reconstruction was to

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[68] Not something we can properly answer at the moment, but which is clearly worth looking into further, following e.g. the examples provided in the assessment of large-scale projects (Altshuler & Luberoff, 2003; Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, & Rothengatter, 2003), where the authors are generally pessimistic, for instance, about the outcomes of mega-projects.

enforce synergy. In hindsight, one might certainly look into possibly conflicting ideas, searching for more challenging oppositions and therefore also more radical solutions, which have the capacity to break inherited patterns. A last point regarding possible conflicts needs to address the list of twelve anchor projects, mainly development zones, defined by and found in the participating municipalities, which were provided in the competition brief and exercised a 'binding' power for the visions. This can be seen from the overview plans with a scale of 1:100 000, in which all those development zones left visible imprints (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 Structural lay outs of the metropolis

In the sense of 'from vision to action', i.e., in terms of a continuation and **further strategies**, at the time of writing two regional planning exercises at least refer to the GHV 2050 as one point for orientation. These are the new regional plan that integrates Eastern and Western Uusimaa and a transport plan operated by the new regional transport authority, HSL. The regional plan mainly addresses the issue of land-use and tries to assess several possible scenarios, mainly to avoid further sprawl effectively and evoke a more concentrated development pattern (Uudenmaan Liitto, 2010). The transport plan does the same by looking at the main railway connections at a regional level and prepares a coming Helsinki Region Transport System Plan (HSL Helsinki Region Transport, 2010). Furthermore, as mentioned above, a kind of accord is under construction which will bind the municipalities and the central government with a 'letter of intent' to coordinate closely aims and objectives related to land-use, housing and transport. The main intention is that the government will use this in future budgetary decisions and thus provide financial support for particular projects.

Of course, a vision is not a strategy, but it is usually considered as a starting point for that. The workshop that continued the vision competition can be seen as a possible moderating event in that respect but the main issue was to form the already mentioned 'ownership' on the side of expert practitioners and administrators. The hope is certainly that the vision will stimulate the 'mind-sets' of those actors and achieve an effect through that channel. Such an interpretation is loosely based on the idea of 'govern-mentality' (Foucault) or the co-evolving communities of practice (Rhodes, 2007). A vision is neither a 'blue print' nor a kind of 'mould' that will be applied to the metropolitan region. As has been shown, neither is there a direct instrument in the planning system that might translate the vision into actions. On the contrary, it is a continuous process which has periods of higher and lower activity, using the various existing planning instruments at municipal or also regional level. It will be interesting to observe further how

strategies are currently evolving in the region and whether an 'implicit' effect of the vision can be detected, in the end constituting a kind of 'emergent' strategy (Mintzberg, 1994). In that context, an interesting observation is the co-evolution of many 'visions', which was introduced at the beginning. A kind of 'visionary field' emanates from various institutions and actors. In part those visions respond to agreed functions and perform specific tasks. In other parts they can be considered 'free format', stretching the existing administrative and political horizons. In one sense, this outward looking exercise has a learning function and shows that regional actors prepare for coming challenges. In another sense, they constitute a competitive situation, as many different institutions are working with overlapping regional delineations. The totality of these visions can be seen finally as the application of distributed intelligence, striving to make sense of future developments. The very final element stems from the institutional structure, does it mean that in the end the only possible solution can be found in a unitary metropolitan institution? The following section will look into those aspects for a final conclusion.

Discussion and conclusions

This final section will discuss the presentation so far and attempt to draw some overall conclusions. What can be learned from such a vision process, in terms of planning practice and in terms of the metropolis?

In terms of evolving planning practice, a number of dimensions have been listed in the previous sections that result from such an exercise: the competition setting; the quality of an informal instrument; the intention to create ownership by experts; the attempt to create an accord on the basis of a vision; but also the coexistence of many visions, including that of planning experts and that of politicians. A particular element that needs to be addressed further is the possible institutional structures of the metropolis. The research on metropolitan regions, even if in our case it is only of a 'pocket size' (Haila & Le Galès, 2005; Schulman, 2000), elaborates on different institutional structures and administrative boundaries, either matching or not matching the integrated metropolitan region. As can be seen from Figure 17 (OECD, 2006, p194), the arrangements for metropolitan spaces show a wide variety, from informal structures to single or multi-purpose authorities, from new metropolitan government to unified or amalgamated entities. It is also interesting to note the section on 'specific disadvantages' and the intersection with 'metropolitan government': The 'democratic costs' are at least points of concern to the OECD. However, at the end of this section we will address this from a citizen's point of view.

Figure 17 Metropolitan co-operation arrangements

Table 3.4. Main purposes of a selection of metropolitan co-operative arrangements

| | Informal co-operation networks (association/ platform/metropolitan conferences) | Metropolitan authority/agency | | Metropolitan government | Amalgamation | Tax-base sharing and redistributive grants |
		Single-purpose	Multi-purpose			
Examples	Regio Randstad (Platform) Lyon Urban Region, Council of Stockholm Mälar Region, Bilbao 30 – Metropolitana, Torino Internazionale (Associations) Regional conference (Rhine-Ruhr)	Many US cities Mexico City (large number of sectoral agencies) Athens transport agency	Montreal Metropolitan Community Greater Vancouver District Urban and Agglomeration Communties in France	Greater London Authority Stuggart Verband Association Portland Communidad de Madrid and Region Ile-de-France (Paris) as existing regional governments	Montreal, Toronto Busan/Seoul in the 1950s Madrid in the 1960s Melbourne in the 1990s	Minneapolis Saint-Paul Stockholm County Some municipalities within Paris Ile-de-France Busan/Seoul
Administrative boundaries	No change	Possible creation of a new layer		Building on a regional tier or creation of a new regional tier with an elected body	Disappearance of municipalities. Possible creation of sub-local units	No change
Economies of scale (cost saving)	No	For one public service only	For certain public services only	For certain public service only Expected (??)	Expected (??)	No
Sharing of public services	No	Yes, for one public service only	Yes, for certain public services only	Yes, for certain public services only	Common	In a limited way
Specific advantage	Great flexibility. Might provide impetus for further co-operation	Cost saving for a particular service Better management of a metropolitan function	Idem to single-purpose + Integration and co-ordination of sectoral policies	Integration and co-ordination of certain sectoral policies	No fiscal disparities Stronger political power One decision centre Better equalisation of costs	Reduce fiscal disparities Still allow some variety
Specific disadvantage	Does not tackle issues such as territorial spillover/negative externalities/equity Weak implementation capacity	Emergence of sectoral constituencies	Emergence of the funding and legitimacy issues	Democratic cost	Lack of creative diversity Democratic cost	Separate the costs and benefits of local public services
Long term strategic vision	Yes, in many cases	Yes, in many cases for economic development agency but risk of avoiding the multi-sectoral aspects or urban development	In some cases only	Yes, will depend on the administrative boundaries of the new structure	Yes, will depend on the administrative boundaries of the new structure	No

Note: This table provides a typology of metropolitan governance arrangements previously discussed according to the different objectives that calls for horizontal co-operation. This typology is not exhaustive. The selections of different options that it includes are not mutually exclusive, as some metropolitan regions combine several options (e.g., Montreal experienced an amalgamation of 27 municipalities whilst a multi-sectoral agency was created at the wider metropolitan level).

For the current argument, it is also interesting to see in Figure 17 the row on long-term strategic vision. The element of having or not having a vision is at least present in the overview. The academic discussion here

takes an even stronger stance, as the presence or absence of a vision is considered as one binding if not essential element in the strategy formation process.

> What has changed today is the complexity and scale of the mega-city region, and its multiple intersections with virtual spaces and flows of globalization. This complexity and scale not only has clouded our image of the city (even as it has reinforced its centrality), but also has clouded our very ability to construct an image of the city region. This of course has direct consequences for the ability to govern one. *If we cannot imagine, then we cannot manage.* (Neuman & Hull, 2009, emphasis added)

As has been shown using the example of the GHV 2050 process, developing a vision is resorting to a soft instrument to steer the otherwise distributed planning action in a setting of partly cooperating, partly competing institutional actors. The exercise of 'imagining' or 'en-visioning' had a boundary spanning element, and at least attempted to change the course of events, not to speak of breaking path dependency. The material and normative aspects of the vision provided sufficient space for interpretation. The latter is also due to the principal fuzziness of their material character (de Roo & Porter, 2007). However, the fuzziness contributed to the communication function, in both the expert face-to-face communication settings but also beyond that in terms of a wider communicative or symbolic setting. Following system theory (Luhmann, 1998) that communication function is very important to create *autopoietic* [69] self-adjusting systems.

Of course, this list of arguments is incomplete and requires further research and refinement, which will be done as the next steps. However, the Greater Helsinki Region is not the only case where such exercises have happened over the recent past, and those exercises provide some preliminary *prima facie* evidence (Brizzi & Giaconia, 2009): 'Milan 2030' attempted to create an 'open space as the main resource to act upon to ensure democracy'; 'Zaragoza 2014' wanted to keep momentum by using the *ExPo Landscapes* 2014 as an experimental continuation of *ExPo* 2008; 'Belgrade 2021' provides an 'open space for visions'; 'Turin 2011' applied a communication plan utilising amongst other elements 'images, stories, narratives'; 'Bologna 2015' works with 'seven cities' and focuses on habitability; and finally 'Paris 2100' is considered a general 'consultation' exercise. Actors in metropolitan spaces are obviously experimenting with many similar processes and try to utilise the various potentials or capacities provided by such vision exercises.

In terms of a revised planning practice, and now not only drawing on the immediate experience of the Greater Helsinki Vision competition but integrating wider conceptual considerations coming, for instance

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[69] Following the thoughts of H.R. Maturana and F. Varela, who use this notion to describe self-adaptive systems.

from innovation studies and especially from work on the 'local innovative milieu' (Ache, 2000; Camagni, 1991), what we propose here is a model approach, which can integrate all those elements and attempts to create a *territorial response capacity* (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Territorial response capacity

The argument here goes that complex planning settings or environments with many 'wicked' problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) require an approach which is capable of reflecting and accommodating such challenges. Whereas, for instance, van den Berg, Braun and van der Meer (1997a, 1997b) spoke about an organising capacity which mainly focuses on structures, the proposal in this article tries to establish a procedural approach, allowing the co-evolution of practices (Healey, 2002; Rhodes, 1997, 2007). This ultimately also depends on some institutional structures, but they are not fixed in one super structure (Ostrom et al., 1961) [70]. On the contrary, a modular idea prevails, keeping the institutional structure flexible and responsive, and also providing different forms of knowledge and resources. The availability of certain functions, which can be provided by existing institutions, public or private, is more important. In planning theory this finds a reflection: 'Can we develop theories and practices of *provisional agnostic pragmatism* which rely less on closure and more on discovery, which reveal potentialities and opportunities and which work with differences and ambiguities?' (Hillier & Healey, 2008a, vol. 3, xii, referring to Ploeger & Engberg, emphasis added).

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[70] Vincent Ostrom called this 'public organization in gargantua', where gargantua denotes the envisioned large-scale metropolitan regions. 'However, gargantua with its single dominant centre of decision-making, is apt to become a victim of the complexity of its own hierarchical or bureaucratic structure. Its complex channels of communication may make its administration unresponsive to many of the more localized public interests in the community.' (Ostrom et al. 1961, p. 837) The interest of both Vincent and Elenor Ostrom is to explore the provision of public goods and services or the management of commons. Reflecting on such writings and concepts, we have similar dimensions in front of us, interpreting metropolitan planning as a still mainly public service aiming at the management of a 'commons' and developing for that purpose a 'preferred state of community affairs'. In Vincent Ostrom's assessment from the 1960s, the scale problem for public organisation was discussed using as criteria the dimensions control, efficiency, political representation, and self-determination – which can of course be in conflict with each other.

The functions which constitute a territorial response capacity have been chosen with a similar interest, i.e., they also have interest to explore and reveal potentialities or opportunities. For further explanation, the GHV 2050 process can be interpreted using the individual elements of a territorial response capacity [71].

'Expertise': Each of the competition entries provided a select set of expert views towards urban design, planning instruments and processes, infrastructure and construction; they also tried to develop a 'system view' on those elements. However, the 'system' dimension was less well developed. Inter-disciplinary teams with an even greater diversity would probably have been more beneficial towards that end.

'Foresight': The entire exercise was looking into the future, and also included some factual assessments, e.g., regarding population growth. However, more detailed views and assessments would have been better for the exercise. The contributions had more of a 'speculative' and less of an 'analytical' character [72]. During the follow-up workshop, another important element was introduced by looking at 'future challenges', trying to identify the source and nature of coming conflicts in terms of the environment, social questions, and more.

'Norms'[73]: Some normative views were already set at the beginning, in particular in terms of sustainability. Contributors also set norms, e.g., defining principles of basic participatory democracy. In the workshops those normative elements were also discussed, starting with the reflections on challenges. One particularly relevant issue was the multi-cultural society, though of course that in itself is not a norm but more a field of different perceptions. Last, the normative side of the exercise continued with discussions about the 'binding quality' of the vision. In any case the intention of that part of the cycle is to establish a discussion of existing norms and the provision of next generation norms that can define qualities of what should be achieved. In this respect GHV and follow-up were a first step only [74].

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[71] In the context of climate change, similar elements are linked to the concept of resilience, like self-organisation, critical thresholds, and feedback mechanisms. See, for instance, http://sub.resilientcities.org/content/.

[72] The systems maps of the future land-use project in the UK (The Government Office for Science, 2010) demonstrate that those assessments can be very detailed and comprehensive.

[73] Norms are a complicated issue in planning theory, see, for instance, the various perspectives developed in Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2002).

[74] What also became obvious is the dominance of sustainable views and ambitions. The discussion and public perception can be seen as quite 'normed' in that respect. The economic perspectives, the export base, the services society – achieving all simultaneously might indeed pose a problem difficult to reconcile.

'Strategy': On the way to strategy of course decisions have to be made, amongst others about 'risky bets'. If the idea of 'emergent' strategies (Mintzberg, 1994) [75] is correct, then we also need to consider individual episodes that make a strategy. The GHV competition for a vision can be seen as an impulse for strategy development at an inter-municipal level.

Another element with a meta-function is that of governance [76]. What is needed in that respect is of course a forum that develops such models or can provide checks and balances, at least with a view towards the larger vision and its cohesion. The GHV 2050 project, especially the continuation workshops, spoke about those elements in a wide variety, but frequently the overall idea was subsumed under the notion of 'governance'. Participants of the workshop were concerned about the right form of cooperation, the necessary institutional and procedural structures. In terms of the scale of governance (Gualini, 2006), every actor taking part acknowledged the fact that there are issues that can be labelled 'metropolitan' and therefore require some form of cooperative action and resources. And, referring back to the 'agnostic pragmatism', no real antagonistic behaviour was obvious during the process which was basically conflict free. But now, almost three years later, some form of antagonistic behaviour is visible. Mergers and other forms of joining up municipalities are under discussion, where cities assess their options by looking into the advantages or disadvantages of the proposed new institutional structures, and not all actors subscribe to the option of a metropolitan merger.

Some general features of the territorial response capacity have not yet been addressed, for instance, the aspect of mutual learning or the provision of resources, be it financial or of another kind, like knowledge embedded in institutions and individuals. They became visible in the descriptions in previous sections.

After this discussion of the territorial response capacity, another point considers our understanding of the 'metropolis'. Somehow the object of such reflections manages to escape our attempts to capture it. It seems that our existing set of categories, theories or concepts is insufficient. The metropolis has probably much more of a transitional quality (Ache, 2007a) than anything else, as the current case study shows: It is

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[75] Mintzberg develops his arguments for companies, not for planning. He is actually quite distinct about the different roles acquired in the strategic planning exercise: Planners are not the strategy makers – they are the managers. In his view, planners prepare strategy making (providing analysis, alternatives) and programme the strategy, after a guiding vision has been found. Interpreting this for spatial planning purposes, the role of politicians is superior to planners.

[76] In terms of institutional publications (for instance, UN ECE, 2008; World Bank, 2009; OECD, 2006) governance stands for creating a higher capacity in general, and from giving voice to people (UN ECE) to making things happen in support of economic wellbeing (OECD) in particular. The issue of 'managing' large urban regions is equally present in the literature, with e.g. 'checklists' for the case of threshold countries (McGill, 2001).

a blurred definitional array, allowing for agreement or accordance and frequently operates on the basis of a 'perceived similarity' between collective actors.

A cogent institutional structure is not to be expected, reflecting actually the many problems that constitute the multi-dimensional and time sensitive set of problems or challenges that both come with the metropolis and for which the metropolis constitutes the solution. Too many functions would need to be integrated in a single institutional structure and would need to come as a resource from the same institutional structure. A matrix model is probably more apt to provide that functionality. In procedural terms and in terms of decision-making processes the links can be established through flexible functional relations regulated through resources and controlled in implementation, accomplished by a formative assessment and not an ex-post evaluation. A possible and positive way forward can be found in the experiences of the German international building exhibitions (Ache et al., 1992). This experiment was called, with reference to the existing planning theory literature, 'incrementalism with perspective' (Hutter, 2006). Hillier (2007) calls it strategic navigation in multi-planar settings. Whichever variant, the main issue that stands out is finding the right balance between fixed and flexible forms of responses, between more normative or more tolerant approaches.

This brings us back to the institutional perspective which offers some insights into motivations and outcomes; however, this is only a first approach that deserves further explorations. Looking at the overall process and resulting activities of the GHV 2050 case from a deeper institutional perspective (Ostrom, 2005), the case can be read as a nested action situation, in which composite or collective actors try to establish a strategy, and also an organisation, with the ultimate aim to manage a common pool resource, the metropolitan region. The basic situation is asymmetric in the sense of powers and likely benefits distributed between the fourteen municipalities, where one has primacy. The nested action situation also has what institutional theory calls a deep level, in the sense that collective choices or even constitutional choices are at stake, meaning that a principal new quality of rules is under construction and behaviours are changed at a deeper level, a very complex and challenging setting altogether. This is why some aspects of the case not surprisingly show features of a level-shifting strategy, i.e., the call for the government to intervene pushes the entire strategy to a higher level of decision making.

The latter point, the appeal to government, has been answered already. The Council of State launched a report and held a debate on the future of metropolitan policies and structures in November 2010. It is not stated directly in the report, but there is a threat of state intervention in terms of the cooperation between municipalities. The Minister for Housing made it clear that if cooperation is to evolve on a voluntary basis, it should be done rather soon and with the aim of concluding the issue before the elections in 2011. The

minister did not want to say anything about coercive measures by the state, but he remarked that during the past decades nothing would have happened regarding the structures of the Helsinki region, if the state had not applied pressure to the municipalities (Jokinen, 2010).

The political institution of the national government introduces at a meta-level the question of how prepared Finnish society is to accept this development towards a 'metropolis', an object so detrimentally different from the preferred nice and cosy life style in the garden city. The metropolis is an object often portrayed as made of 'concrete', density, encounter with the 'alien' other, noise, interference, challenging if not 'anti-social' behaviour, in the perspective of some a Helsinki-Babylon.

As mentioned earlier in this article, the government of Finland runs ambitious development projects like the realisation of the 'information and communication society', which are accepted on a societal basis. This has already changed Finnish society deeply. A metropolitan policy will be closely connected to the issue of the information and communication society and will have to contribute actively towards this change. In fact, according to Castells (2002), the metropolis resembles the nodal point in spaces of flows which constitute the new geography of the information and communication society. In other words, can Finland afford not to promote a metropolitan region, or not have the buzz and creativity and conflict that a large concentration of diverse lifestyles and 'cosmopolites' keep in stock?

There might be a conflict between government and citizens at that point which will be interesting to look into further. The metropolis requires a new '*civitas*' which means the citizen comes into focus as a central actor in the entire system. In a statistical approximation, geographical Europe has about five metropolitan regions of more than five million inhabitants, seventy larger than one million, and about 650 metropolitan regions with between 500,000 and one million inhabitants, though they are not equally distributed across the European space (Wiechmann, 2009). GHV 2050 and the other examples mentioned here are attempts to shape life worlds which are relevant for a very large population segment in Europe. If the hypothesis of the collective actor city (Le Galès, 2002) [77] is appropriate, then we need to include the various citizens as actors, too. An issue linked to this is that of identity or loyalty in an actually very open or porous situation, with reference to the transitional quality of the metropolis, and how the relationships between citizens and sovereign entities are constituted in negotiated and renegotiated processes (Paasi, 2003). With the help of a vision and matching symbols, we could build the metropolis as an imagined community (Appadurai,

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[77] Le Galès quotes the Italian author Pichierri (1997) and his model of the collective actor: 1. Common interests within the city, and those perceived as such, 2. Collective decision-making, 3. Internal and external representation, 4. Integrating mechanisms, and 5. Capactiy for innovation.

1996). Without that aspect of forming a community and identity, as is demonstrated in various European projects (Barreiro, 2010), the entire process will certainly be hampered.

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