

Hansje Brinker, take your finger away!

Ideas on a planning paradigm for future times

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Rob Roggema, MSc

Manager strategy, Province of Groningen, the
Netherlands
PhD, Spatial Sciences, Department of Planning,
University of Groningen, the Netherlands

+31 50 316 4651

+31 6 150 68 207

r.roggema@provinciegroningen.nl

orro.orro@gmail.com

www.provinciegroningen.nl

www.orro.nl

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1. 'Houston, we have a problem'

And suddenly the world is in shock: Katrina¹ shows us how vulnerable our western built society is. And we, the western world, thought we could not be touched in our habitat. Storms and hurricanes usually damage other, poorer people and countries. And when it hits us the impact on our western living areas is oversee-able. What is more: this flood is not the result of a direct terrorist attack by humans nor a complete natural disaster like an earthquake, but the result of a slow growing process of climate change, which everyone predicts, but for which apparently no one is capable of taking appropriate measurements. Suddenly, a sleeping problem, recognized by everyone, gives us a wake up call: Living areas are entering new climate zones, humans are influencing climatic systems and we are not able to adapt soon enough. The Dutch secretary of State in Water-management, Melanie Schultz van Haegen puts it like this²: 'We are not prepared to a natural disaster anymore'

plaatje newweek/VK new Orleans

fig 1. New Orleans after Katrina, Newsweek, September 2005

Main reason is, I presume, that we try to use old fashioned working methods and old ways of political decision making to solve new kinds of problems. Problems that are interfering fundamentally in our lives and cannot be solved by money alone. Changes in our daily environmental situation require new approaches, as one-dimensional world problems like poverty in Africa or Aids, how important they might be in themselves, can be solved by known approaches (the success of these approaches can also be doubted): sending money and organise the aid. But if an Eskimo suddenly lives in the Sahara a big wallet and food droppings are of no use. If he does not change his way of living fundamentally, at least he should take of his coat, he is going to die. The same goes for cities, regions and societies.

I think that we are heading towards a new societal system, facing new challenges. A future in which problems become multi-complex and a new planning paradigm is needed to cope with this future. In which people, at least our children and new generations, learnt

¹ Newsweek, September 1 2005; Vrij Nederland, September 10 2005; Volkskrant September 17 2005

² Intermediar, September 22 2005

to think in parallel functioning systems at the same time (the windows in the computer screen), multi-complex you can call it. We no longer understand the complete system, because it turns out to be too complex. Instead, we know about parts in the system and their relation to the whole. Thanks to internet, these parts can be connected to each other to complete new and original systems. Focussing on those elements, that might change the system in a desirable direction might give us the opportunity to cope with the new Katrina's of the future. This focussing requires thinking beyond the average³. People who are more unique than others will have bigger opportunities and will deliver better contributions. Survival of the a-typical-st. New working methods and a new way of (political) decision making, replacing the old power-based compromise searching system, need to be developed and sustained. It will have to fit better to future times and demands.

Learning from Katrina does not mean pointing at the mistakes made and which politician is responsible for it, but thinking about adaptive rules, needed in new and changing circumstances. Entering a new climate zone is not just another day at the office, but should rather be compared with entering space.

In this paper I would like to stress that developments in the dynamics of our environment can be connected to an historical development in planning.

As a consequence of this I will try to define what might happen in the future: what kind of environment we are entering and how we can cope with that in a new planning paradigm.

We are standing for fundamental changes in our habitat, due to changes in our climate system. Problems we are standing for do have a multi-complex nature. Try to solve them with contemporary patterns in politics will fail.

It is no longer possible for anyone to overview the whole picture, the dynamic of our environment is multi-complex, with many people interfering in many problems and discussions, acting in many different networks, physically and virtually.

It is proven that in city planning (nor in other fields) it is not possible to predict what will happen in the future. For sure, something else than predicted shall happen.

Anticipating on the adaptive power of urban and regional systems we should focus on creating the right impulses that will influence the future shape and functioning of an area. I call it swarm-planning.

To find excellent solutions we need to support the creative elite and the weird unworldly-like people so the away-from-the-average can come up with bright solutions.

The future is bright.

³ Jonas Ridderstråle & Kjell Nordström, *Karaoke Capitalism*, 2004

2. Don't look back in anger

In the history of Dutch spatial planning up till now, one can see a clear sequence. Every period in time is making use of its own parameters to cope with planning matters. Often this specific way is governed by trends and developments in society. Is it possible to describe the connection between spatial planning and the dynamics of the 'environment' (society, relationship between the government and the people)? And furthermore, is a future relationship between them and a future way of planning, thinkable?

I will first describe the different phases the spatial planning went through and relate them to the environmental situation. After that I will try to describe the current situation, its problems and try to determine the future developments and the way we should or could anticipate to that.

End 19th - beginning 20th century⁴

In the beginning there was not much planning to do. Developments went slowly, a natural balance between establishment and ordinary people existed and decisions were made by a small group of people, the elite. Most of the things just went on and developments were dependent on coincidental apparent individuals or little groups. It might be called a placid, randomised environment: *"The simplest type of environmental texture is that in which goals and noxiants ('goods' and 'bads') are relatively unchanging in themselves and randomly distributed"⁵.*

Ordinary people had to work hard and worked a lot of hours each day, holidays did not exist; they did not have any time to worry about any political decision. Circumstances they lived in got worse after the industrialisation. A lot of people came to the cities to work there and lived in miserable situations. Planning was individually organised: poor people built their little houses where they wanted and close together (comparable with the slums or the unsustainable shadow cities⁶ we know in developing countries nowadays), people who could afford it build larger houses on the better spots or even second villa's outside the city. There was a clearly marked border between the city, often walled, and the countryside. As cities became larger and diseases became big problems a natural urge for regulations came up. In this period for the first time comprehensive planning started. A good example is the Baronielaan in Breda, where an early project developer built a whole street at once.

⁴ Periods based on: prof ir. S.J. van Emden in Stedebouw in Nederland, 1985

⁵ Emery & Trist, 1965

⁶ Robert Neuwirth, Shadow Cities, 2005

1920-1950

In this period the balance between establishment and the ordinary people stayed more or less the same. But the urge to make plans and regulations (Housing law 1901, Education law 1904 and others) to cope with the problems of the cities (pollution, diseases) grew. It was a clear society, in which the elite made the decisions and the ordinary people still had to work. In this period, not only laws were made by the elite also the first urban designs were initiated by the same elite. A city like The Hague hired Berlage as its 'city build master' and he drew a plan for the whole area of The Hague. A plan of which we can see the results in the city up till now. The plans for diverse Garden Cities like Vreewijk in Rotterdam were made in this period also. After World War II the rebuilding of the Netherlands had to take place and this required a central planning system to house all the people. The typical row-houses of the fifties can be found in almost every village and city around the country.

The planning was top-down, the government decided what was good and bad for the people, designed and realised the urban design. The plans were constructed and calculated and based on the best available techniques. It was centrally planned by the government which was convinced they knew the best solution. It gave room to all kind of visions and futurists. With a little fantasy the Grand Projets of Mitterand can be placed in this planning tradition. The common design principle is to construct an end-image of the future harmonious world on paper (ref. the song by Wim Sonneveld, Langs het tuinpad van mijn vader).

So the environment was still stable and clear but the efforts were not completely randomised anymore. They were focussed on those areas where the urban designs should be realised. It might be called a placid, clustered environment: *"... which can be characterized in terms of clustering: goals and noxiants are not randomly distributed but hang together in certain ways"*⁷.

1960-1970

In the sixties and seventies a democratic transformation took place. The existing power balances in which a certain elite held the power and the rest had to obey was broken down, sometimes through radical demonstrations (Maagdenhuis-riots, squatter-riots). Power needed to be shared by everybody, through all layers of the society. In urban planning this change took place as well. The centrally planned rebuilding

⁷ Emery & Trist, 1965

programmes after WWII led in the ultimate phase to top down planned areas with high rise buildings.

The most visible one undoubtedly is the Bijlmer area. At first successful, because of its enormous spatial houses and modern transport system, later on it became the ghetto of Amsterdam, where only minority groups, poor people and illegal refugees lived. Neighbourhoods like Amsterdam West were built, problem areas of today.

In this phase the government (and enterprises) started using scenario planning. They learnt that the future is difficult to predict and that end image planning (a fixed picture of the future) for sure showed the wrong future. To cope with this, scenario planning was introduced, to show us several possible futures. Every scenario has to tell the logical story and has to be consistent. Still, every scenario was built from a technical calculating point of view. They were not really discuss future needs, aims and ambitions in society. It was just a coherent possibility based on certain premises.

Based on the scenario's several images could be developed and a desirable future could be chosen. From that point on the planning machine could continue its work. The chosen future could be realised. In fact, still a central planning machinery.

The environment became more complex, but the field of urban planning was not touched really. The turbulence was more or less happening outside the planning-profession. The first troubles finding solutions in the old way could be seen, but were not yet leading to a new way of urban planning. Might it be called the disturbed-reactive environment (?): *"it is an environment in which there is more than one organisation of the same kind; The existence of a number of similar organisations now becomes the dominant characteristic"*⁸.

1980-1990

In this period the democratisation of the urban planning process took place. Power balances between different layers in society were broadened to the field of urban planning: there were violent protests against the new urban plan for the Nieuwmarkt in Amsterdam. The balance between groups was of a completely different kind. Everyone who had a certain interest, or not even that, could deliberate about the future situation somewhere. In this phase influence by speech was formalised in laws and parties were talking endlessly

⁸ Emery & Trist, 1965

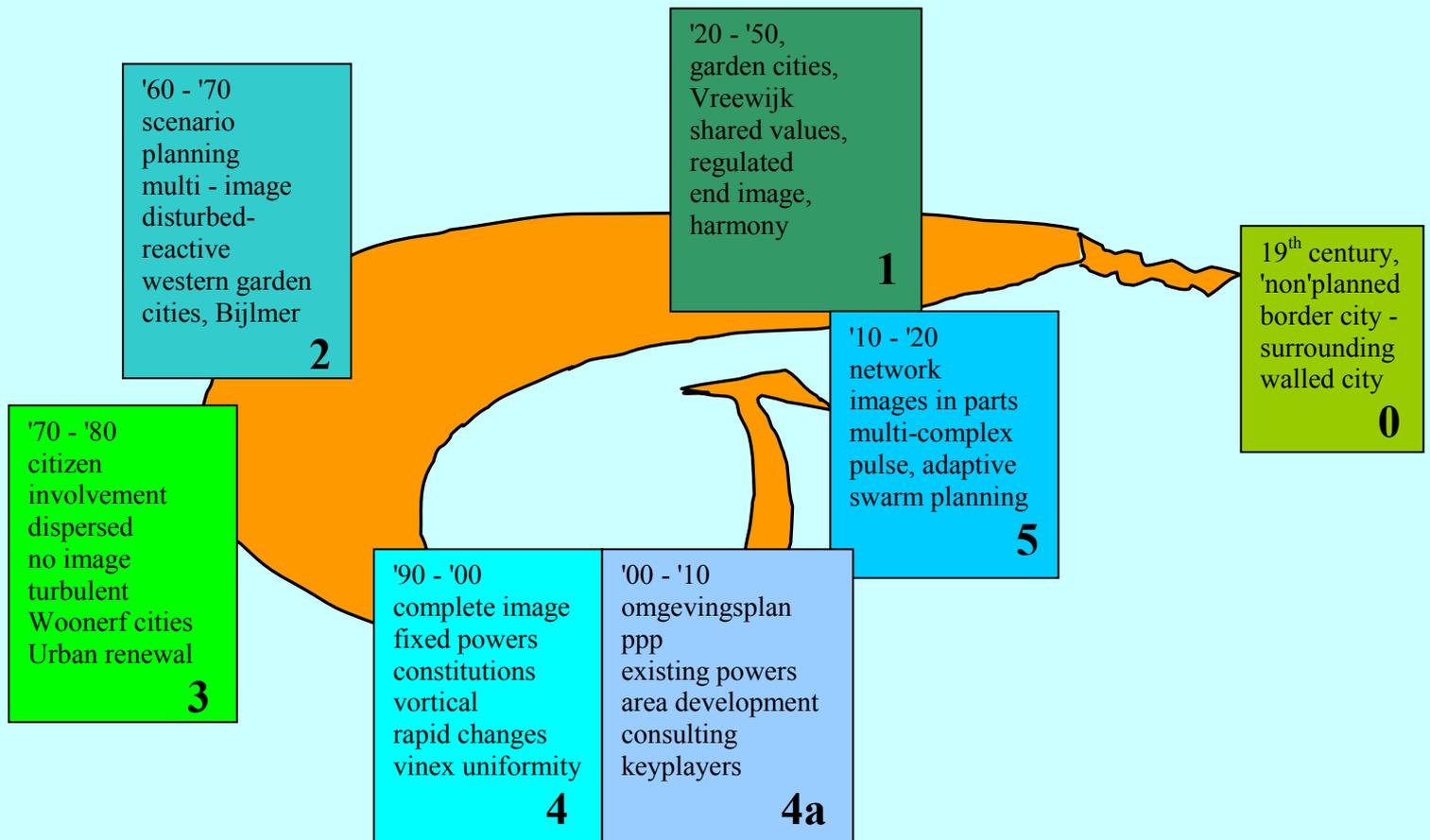


Fig. 1 The Spiral of Planning (Roggema, 2005)

about the colour of the flowers in the nearest flower pot. Designs were drawn to shape the exact environment the people asked for. The famous Bloemkool-neighbourhoods were planned and realised. Everyone in the Netherlands knows these areas: if you don't live there, you get lost. If you live in one of them you can find your way in every other example in the country: as a result you might find yourself in someone else's house, thinking you are in your own.

This bottom-up process of making everyone happy is at this time more important than giving areas certain identities or designing an urban plan of a certain quality. A lot of talking had to be done, because everyone could and should give his opinion about the future of an area. This talking often led to a chaotic planning process and a dispersed image. A lot of meetings had to be created to reach a common decision. Politicians became talking machines, always looking for the compromise next door, trying to please as many people as possible. To reach solutions they had to talk till they died, at least to late at night or the next morning.

An environment that consisted of a lot of different and contrasting opinions, that all had to be taken seriously, but sometimes could not be united. Could it be called a turbulent environment: *"the dynamic*

properties arise not simply from the interaction of the component organisations, but also from the ground itself. The 'ground' is in motion"⁹.

3. Where are we now, 1990-2010?

I believe that in the current time real problems cannot be solved due to existing structures, the inability to change those systems, the strong habit of the existing systems to reproduce themselves, repetitive patterns of working methods, well known and accepted political behaviour and power based systems.

Nowadays we can see a society at drift, insecure about its future, not in balance anymore. A fixed political and societal system, not really able to connect with the demands of today.

In the Nineties the central governance of planning continued or was having a revival: The central government decides in which locations developments are and are not to take place (VINEX-agreements). The amount of houses is set, the location is set, a lot of extra demands are set. The only thing that is not regulated is the colour and architecture of the building. Within the Vinex-location one can see a basic quality of housing combined with a rich expression of urban patterns and identity-valued architecture.

To enrich the quality of the urban planning governments started to work together with other parties to realise projects. The central director (the government) invites parties to co-operate in a specific project. One is working together in content, process and realisation. Main aim is to reach a compromise about the content, the responsibilities, the investments and the realisation of a project. These public-private partnerships are still focussed on specific locations, with a given programme and a minimal result. The urban plan should give a complete image about the future of living in this spot. More people and parties are involved in this kind of planning. It is called environmental planning or area oriented planning. During the planning process agreements about the different roles and responsibilities of parties are made. It can be called the planning variant of 'Polderen': talk till you reach a compromise.

The environment starts to become too complex to handle. Therefore not everyone is included in the process: only key players, people on strategic functions and other 'powerful' men. This might be called a vortical environment (?): "*... the prevalence of stalemate, polarisation and monothematic dogmatism leads to a frozen or a clinched order of connectedness as well as*

⁹ Emery & Trist, 1965

*that of unevenly dynamic turbulent conditions*¹⁰. In this situation certain unwritten rules guide the participants. An underlying agreement that fixes the existing power balance leads to repetitive processes, the continuation of similar solutions and ongoing non-transparent decision making. For others, not involved in the process: citizens, members of the city-council, parliament or other market parties or pressure groups, the process is non-transparent nor reachable.

Some problems occur:

1. The government still sets rules and is director, which leads to power orientated behaviour instead of goal orientated behaviour
2. It leads to fixed power constellations, not only inside a ruling political elite but also outside it: a new conglomerate of 'important' people within a certain network: the new elite
3. Focussing on the commonly defined and most easy-to-solve problems, not necessarily the main problems to be solved
4. Not making use of specific qualities of people, not focussing on a unique contribution, i.e. away from the average

My main assumption is: we face new type of problems: multi complex ones. They lead to disasters indirectly, not as a direct result of an action. For example: certain behaviour leads to increasing use of energy, which leads to global heating, which leads to a warmer Atlantic Ocean, which leads to more intense hurricanes, which leads to a flood in New Orleans, which was build on a risky spot: below sea level only protected by weak dikes or levees. At the same time the economic value was not high enough, therefore direct help or anticipative protection did not take place. The result: poor black people were the main victims. This whole chain of successive interactions and effects can not be solved with one great measurement.

The fixed set of political constellations does not have the power nor the insight to anticipate coming complex difficulties or put the multi-complex issues at the top of the agenda. Income politics, war or travel to the moon (one dimensional, single-complex issues) are more important. Even in the weeks after Katrina the focus was on one dimensional problems: rebuilding the city, let the people go back as soon as possible (where they can wait for the next hurricane season) and the game to blame others. Instead, all the money to rebuild could also be used to create an adaptive plan: create extra security in case of floods and build a new city on a safer spot.

So the real problem cannot be solved due to existing structures, the inability to change those systems, the strong habit of the existing systems to reproduce

¹⁰ Babüroğlu, 1988

themselves, repetitive patterns of working methods, well known political behaviour and power based systems.

Another trend is visible in the 'televoting' about the issues of real concern. What started as a harmless and profitable (for the telephone companies) way of letting the public choose by SMS the winning song in a song contest, the next idol or the man of the match, became rapidly a new order: all the people can vote for the best way the money can be divided and prioritised in the governments estimate¹¹. The same can be found in the way the Social Agenda¹² is constructed or the way how in The Copenhagen consensus¹³ the most important problems of our time were selected: Most votes count. As a result of that the problems that are most easily solved are chosen¹⁴, and not necessarily the major challenges of the future.

¹¹ Netwerk, 19-9-05, 'third Monday in September'

¹² The Social Agenda, Volkskrant, September/October 2005

¹³ The Copenhagen Concensus, 2004

¹⁴ Copenhagen consensus, 2004, The 'Social Agenda', Volkskrant, September/October 2005

4. Where are we heading, 2010-2020?

Our common future

1. In the (near) future our environment becomes multi-complex: we can see and know, thanks to media, television and internet, everything. This flood of information is so much, that no one can overview it all. Even the president of the USA takes his decisions on fragments of the whole. This was more or less the same in the past, but then no one had access to all the information. Then, decisions were made that had impact on that part of the world that could be overviewed. Now, decisions are made with an impact on the whole world, but are based on fragments information of the whole. In the future we have to understand that we cannot overview the whole and that it is unwise to take decisions for the whole world. Better take decisions for specific parts that might influence the rest.

2. Future problems are multi-complex as well. They occur as a single, sometimes heavy, problem, but are the result of a complex series of interactions, influencing each other. The exact relation and effects of these interactions are not 'overviewable' by anyone. Try to do so and one should prepare for failure.

3. Future generations (our children) grow up with the windows standard: work and think from the early years on in different, parallel and invisible windows. The way old generations learned to write from left to right, future generations learn to think in more layers at the same time and know about the connections between them. Their brains will adapt to these new conditions and demands. A shift towards multi-layered thinking will happen.

4. Network organisations are becoming successful. Because interactions between parties and individuals lead to better solutions for complex problems than existing organisations are reaching. People in old-fashioned become more and more dissatisfied with the effort they can make.

5. Specialistic, bright and extraordinary contributions to parts of problems can change the whole. It is proven that overall solutions to world problems not works out the way they were planned. Traditional political & ideological systems like communism or, more recently, market capitalism fail in a bigger or smaller way to do so. Instead, small and bright ideas can change the way we live. Look for instance at the influence mobile phones do have on our lives.

The reactive present

In current times the way of acting is reactive.

1. Action is often taken too late due to slow decision making. Therefore anticipating on expected situations is hard.

2. The view on solving problems is often single-complex. Nowadays our political-societal system is looking at problems in a one dimensional way, but future problems are multi-complex ones. This divergence is probably the reason that adaptation is not successful. If the political decision and answer to sea level rising is the heightening of the dikes a single-complex solution is proposed to a multi-complex problem.

3. The existing and well-known political systems are the standard. We know how these systems work, everyone agrees on continuing to use them and the same group of people makes use of them. The output of these systems are average solutions and proposals. People inside this arena are immune to signals from outside. The average, trying to find compromises, tend to create the average, instead of innovative and original solutions. These systems tend to reproduce themselves and become even stronger systems when threatened. This threatening is necessary in case of serious trouble, which multi-complex problems are most of the time.

4. The existing way of solving problems, or should we say reaching agreements, is making it hardly possible to solve major problems. Because the focus is on finding the single-complex solution, even if multi-complex problems occur.

5. There is an increasing impossibility to overview the whole picture. As a result of that people often react on developments instead of anticipate or adapt to it. On the other hand people focus on a certain slide of information, to base a complete future on: the start of new problems.

Future conditions ask for new ways of solving problems. There is a misfit between the present way of working (often single-complex) and the required way of the future (multi-complex): we continue to use old behaviour and work-methods to handle future problems.

Upwards the skyscraper of complexity¹⁵

To cope with the diversion between present and future it is needed to reach higher levels of order. Complex systems might give answers and opportunities to create a future that is adaptive and able to anticipate on multi-complex problems. A higher level of order is needed for two reasons:

1. Changes in our habitat are a multi-complex problem in itself. Because human influence on global warming and climate change leads indirectly and in unpredictable ways is leading to these changes.

Due to global warming our existing and well known climate zones are moving across earth. This means that the existing concentrations of urbanisation are entering

¹⁵ Mitchell Waldrop, Complexity, 1992

other climate zones. In other words: the Sahara reaches Spain and Madrid is positioned in a desert-environment. Two possible ways can be distinguished. The first one is to make urban settlements mobile. Especially cities, towns and regions in endangered areas can be transferred to safer locations. This seems not really practical, but nowadays is sometimes necessary (New Orleans, Houston, 2005).

The second way is to adapt to future changes. A new or changing habitat requires adaptation of our habits, values, traditions, planning concepts, decision making systems etcetera. By doing so laws (and religions) will change and effect the economic and technical system and the organisation of social relations. This gives society the ability to anticipate to future developments¹⁶.

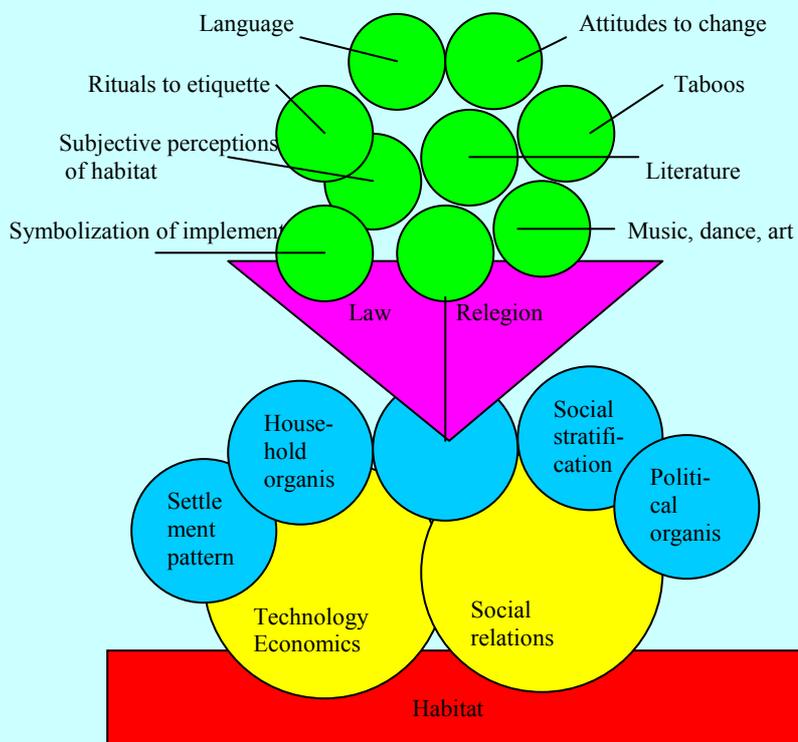


Fig. 3 Hierarchy of cultural adaptations and adjustments, Cohen, 1968

2. If the multi complex environment occurs, the regional and urban systems should react to that new circumstances. The best way to do so, is to look at the regional-urban system as a complex, adaptive and self-organising system. The city reaches a higher level of order by adapting and incorporating future developments¹⁷. Off course, the city or the region stays the same but changes at the same time as it adapts to these changes and influences. More history, more layers and more stories are put together, which enriches the city and makes it more flexible to upcoming changes.

¹⁶ Cohen, Man in adaptation, 1968

¹⁷ Mitchell Waldrop, Complexity, 1992

Every try to think of the regional urban system as a fixed future image, complete and forever is going to fail. The next step in planning will be swarm-planning, in which impulses, small but essential will form the patterns added to the exiting ones. In this particular way adaptation to the multi-complex environment is reachable, instead of a failing transformation strategy.

Conditions

To establish a situation that combines the needs and challenges of the future a couple of conditions might be helpful.

1. Break the dike of constitutions.

The existing 'dike of constitutions', which consists of the old 'business as usual' parties with their own rules, procedures and power coalitions, is protecting itself. All attempts to solve real issues by the existing system seem to fail. Even worse: holding on to structures and patterns of today will cause any attempt to fail. This protecting dike desires a breakthrough.

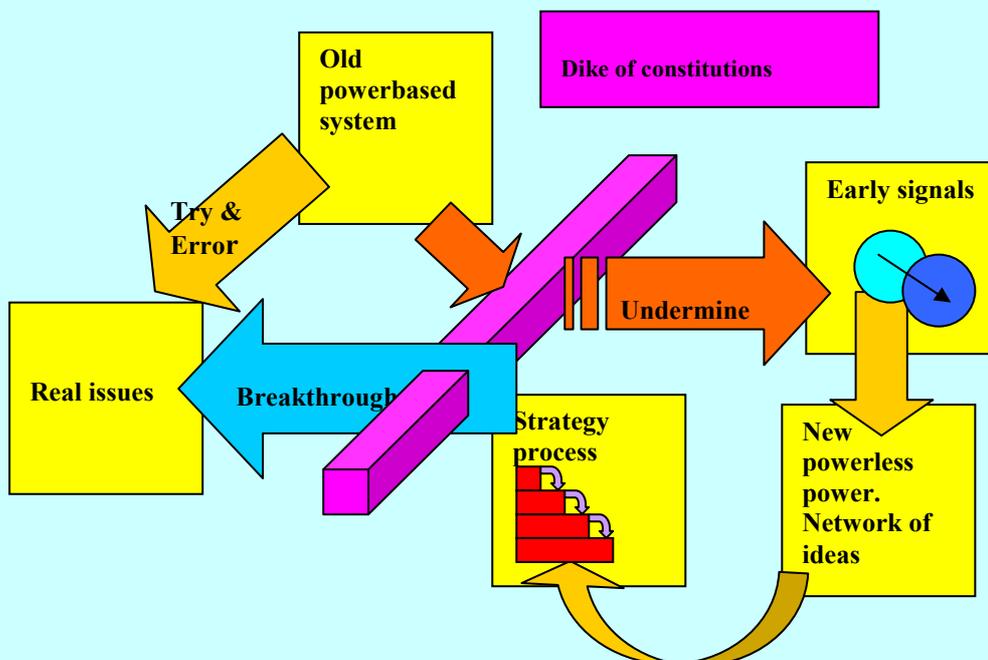


fig 4. the dike of constitutions, Roggema, June 2005

2. Establish a powerless power

To reach this breakthrough a powerless power should be created or organised. This network of people is not driven by power, thus it is not necessary to talk about compromises. The power of ideas that will contribute solutions to common felt problems is after reaching the optimal or maximal results. For a certain group of people, during a certain time a specific issue requires action. Depending on the circumstances a specific process is designed, leading to the best results. The value of cooperating people is measured by their contribution to this specific issue. Old ideas and

solutions for new problems are less valuable than original ideas, away from the average. To discover the momentum and necessity of a required action and to define the issue, a sharp ear and eye to early signals in different fields of the society is helpful. At this very moment a lot of early signals can be seen in Dutch society.

<i>Politics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap between the people and the politics (rate of attendance to elections, Political killings, Dutch (and French) 'No' against European constitution, Prime Minister is seen as a caricature) • The message does not reach the people it is meant for. People have different needs: more cooperation, more own responsibility, no government as a father figure. • Anti-globalists & Live8
<i>Economics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shift in economic importance towards countries like India and China is on its way (Aromar Revi, Ben Tichelaar, article Robeco-strategist 'Jaap van Duijn, The Netherlands a little bit lost the way, Volkskrant, 3july05). • We're moving to a knowledge-economy, but the education-system is not able to deliver the amount and the quality of people. We can not meet the Chinese production in this field: up to 3.4 million graduates each year (Ben Tichelaar). • The next transfer of jobs to 'development countries' will be in knowledge intensive sectors. See the ICT developments in India. • It helps to focus and specialise like India in ICT but the right choices have to be made
<i>Demographics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of the percentage elderly people and the non-productive part of the people • Individualism
<i>Social & society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of tension and segregation between 'Dutch' and 'foreigners' whoever that may be • Stronger connection with one-issue parties on theme or subject, for instance the Waddencommunity • Pay for bad feelings in membership or donations to charity, pay and you are free, is it the concern 'real'?
<i>Balance between work & private life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance shifts to quality of life instead of working a lot • People also search a higher quality in their job (in content and/or emotional) • Emancipation of daddy: He wants to partly take care of the kids but does not dare, due to old codes.
<i>Organisations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy becomes less accepted (contra trend of more strict rules in organisations: Mair) • Increase of temporary, goal or problem-oriented, co-operations • Networking becomes more important than structure in organisations
<i>Media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shift towards urban & inclusion (Welcome at you, a new & the most successful radio station of today (article: 'Beyond drama', Volkskrant 3july05). Not prescribed by the program director or the central government what's on, but listeners arrange that themselves. • Extremely many different cultures and subcultures. And have a right to exist • Internet makes the world smaller but also more anonymus and unsafe. Everyone can have different identities. • Everyone has and shares all the knowledge there is. The point is which value individuals can add and which connections you can make: which new knowledge can be produced. • Huge platitudes and commercialism • Private lifes become public
<i>Changing roles of parties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Church to government to market • From follow to contribute to take initiative
<i>Security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the streets, in your house, in relations (internet) • In climate change: possible protection against severe storms, heat & drought, heavy rainfall and floods • Dependable on supplies from other countries

fig 5. Early signals, Roggema, June 2005

3. *Organise network systems*¹⁸

This network of ideas needs to be organised. The connections between the participants are most important. Some key factors of this network-organisation can be defined. Knowledge is free available to all participants and there is no hierarchy or a natural one.

This network of ideas is very flexible and adaptive to new issues or insights. The network is working above and through the existing structures and institutions, the participants gain energy from it and the network is driven by a common goal, formulated by the participants.

People sharing the network are concerned, are sharing and creating new knowledge, have their own personal development and a collective responsibility.

The people joining the network of ideas are working together spontaneously, communicate with others, search the dialogue, inspire, think and reflect and share ideas.

4. *Specialise the extraordinary*

If the multi-complex world indeed becomes too big to overview, people automatically do have to focus on a specific area of interest and a particular element of the whole. People focussing and specialising come up with original and creative solutions, that differ from the ordinary. Ridderstråle and Nordström¹⁹ argue that these people are adding value to organisations and become major contributors to economic development.

On the other hand future problems become also multi-complex, as discussed before (chapter 3). To find solutions for those problems we should influence the system by giving the right impulses at the right time. If we look at a regional and urban system as a self-organising and adaptive one, this system will reach a new, higher level, of order²⁰. At this higher level the regional-urban system can adapt much easier to multi-complex problems. We need then to think of the exceptional intelligent and smart impulses and look after the connection between them, in order to move the system in the desirable direction. To find those smart impulses we can learn from the laws of nature. A swarm birds is transforming constantly, probably directed by a couple very simple rules. For example: always follow the bird in front of you, keep maximum 10 centimetres distance to the bird in front of you and a maximum of 10 centimetres to the birds at your left and right. Never look at the bird above and under you. To find these kind of simple rules that will describe the transformation necessary, away from the average people are essential. These simple rules differ with each new project or problem and with any new circumstance.

¹⁸ Roobeek, Management in Action, Proposal, Province of Groningen, September 2005

¹⁹ Jonas Ridderstråle & Kjell Nordström, Karaoke Capitalism, 2004

²⁰ Mitchell Waldrop, Complexity, 1992

5. A new planning paradigm

If our environment becomes more and more multi-complex and if climate change becomes our major threat and if our current political system is not able to step beyond its own existence, a breakthrough will be necessary and is inevitable at the same time. The early signals are visible and an innovation shift is on its way. From a planning point of view it is just logical that a next step in history has to be made.

The shift that is taking place can be described as an innovation shift. The standard of a paternalizing government with strong and set procedures and rules becomes inert. Creativity and new solutions are almost impossible in the old fixed mindsets of the leaders of it. The focus on technique as the solving base for every problem reaches its limits. The shift leads us to a new arena. In here the exceptional and imaginary creativity are the main values. Fixed rules or procedures are decreased to a minimum. The role the government is playing is still important but much smaller than it used to be: stimulating the raise of ideas on specific elements of multi-complex problems and guiding a network-based organisation in which the idea-creating processes are embedded. In this new era there is more space for small, innovative companies, which are able to operate flexible, react directly to not yet clear impulses and have distinguished brilliant skills in solving problems in a creative way.

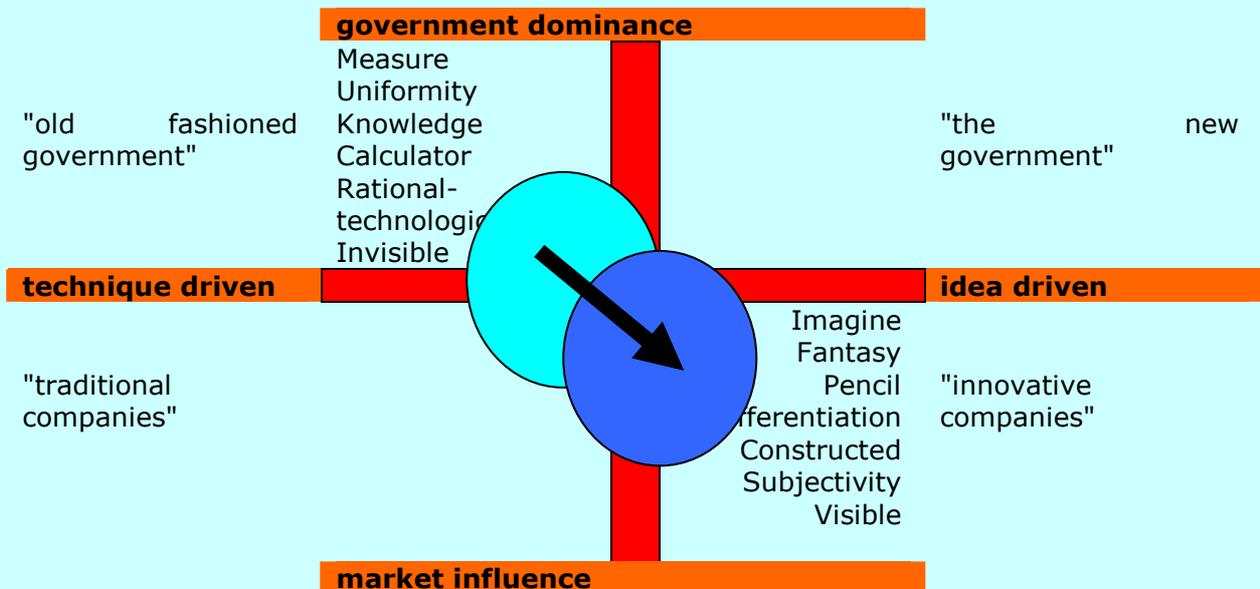


fig 6. Innovation shift, Roggema, June 2005

The new planning paradigm has to react on the described changing environment. This paradigm has, at

least, three characteristics: swarm, eclecticism and love. The regional scale is the playing field of the future.

*Swarm-planning*²¹

To step out of the known planning paradigm in which always a complete, field-filling, design has been made, a new planning method has to react and adapt to certain, smaller and nevertheless important impulses. Elements of the multi-complex environment that will change history in the region. Look at the region as a swarm of starlings, constantly reorganising itself, reshaping itself. New forms will originate and in the meanwhile the swarm stays the same swarm. This adaptation power, well known in nature, could be used in planning. Give the region a certain pulse at a certain time and the (self-organising) system will adapt to this and reshape itself. The choice of pulses will decide on the success. Research has to be done here, because we do not know yet a lot about these connections. Which individual and combination of pulses will lead to the desired future? And which support and govern the right direction. The hypothesis is that to take care of the right pulses at the right time (i.e. in time) regions become stronger as a system and will be more sustainable, better prepared on environmental changes and will be safer.

New eclecticism

The approach not to control everything in planning and try to make comprehensive designs opens the door to new eclecticism. Use design elements and design principles from many different contexts and putting them together in a complete new and unique way, will create a new concept: a more complex world arises.

These design principles might look like adding new buildings, adding incidents, co incidents by surprise, functioning as a 'shock-therapy' for the region. In the region networks might be combined, layers are put over each other, new buildings can be built on each other or on infrastructural networks.

The combination of buildings, networks, infrastructure, green zones, water-networks etcetera, will lead to more interactions and more complex structures. The result of this is that the region is enriched and becomes a more firm base for future developments, risks as well as challenges. The creative city²² needs those complex and rich environment, where new unplanned interactions take place to emerge to a creative and economic growth.

Visible love marks

The needs of people will change in the future. The demands used to be directed by food and a roof over one's head, but as people reach a more developed state, their demands are moving towards the 'quality of life'.

²¹ Dany Jacobs & Rob Roggema, term invented during searching conversation, September 2005

²² Richard Florida, The flight of the creative class, 2005

After a period in which the 'experience-economy' was leading (a holiday without any experience was no holiday), in the near future a 'good feeling' becomes more important.

This feeling can be arranged to add 'touchables' to products. The love and emotion of customers is leading in positioning and developing brands. These lovemarks are defined as products that touch you (just hit me, baby!)²³.

The good feeling can also be purchased by making invisible aspects of life visible. For instance energy, sustainability or safety can be integrated in beautiful and comfortable designed environments²⁴, in living areas, cities and regions. An energy design, for instance, can be a hidden technical system or an environment where light, warmth and comfort are shown. The safe region can be designed like a technical protection system with a risk operation manual, but also as an inspiring area where storms, flooding and global warming add specific qualities like living areas at the higher safer spots, biking challenges against the wind, extra water and recreation space or sunset boulevards where you did expect it the least. Let's make things visible. In order to understand the power of nature, the changing conditions in our environment and to be prepared for the future.

Regional scale

The most appropriate scale at which the planning paradigm can be applied is the regional level. The boundaries of the region, then, are given by the natural system. A coherent area where cause and effect of changes take place.

Often, this is not possible on a national level, because on this level national politicians have to weigh one issue against another. The famous polder-compromise leads to an optimal result on national scale, but sub-optimal results for different regions. To what kind of drama this may lead Katrina tells us.

The local scale is also not the right level, because individual interests (of making money, of protecting his power position, etcetera) define outcomes. They may not be the best, nor the safest, for everyone in the region.

Thirdly, in the Netherlands the deregulation of policy takes place. Not all can be settled on a national level, the regions in the country should take their responsibilities and formulate policies for their own region. That regional planning will be necessary is evident.

And finally, in the future network systems, like transportation and information infrastructure, energy- and food-chains or social networks, become more important. To design and plan these networks in a

²³ Kevin Roberts, Volkskrant, September 10 2005

²⁴ Rob Roggema, New strategies for energy-inclusive design in Energy Valley, Green Cities Conference, San Fransisco, June 2005

coherent way, the regional scale is the logical level at which networks are connected, come together and can be overviewed.

*Strategic steps*²⁵

In a new planning paradigm not only a new method, an appropriate scale nor love will lead to the best solutions. Without strategic thinking on how to reach ones goals no solution will reach any final decision nor execution. A couple of steps in a cascade of a strategy process are essential within the new planning paradigm.

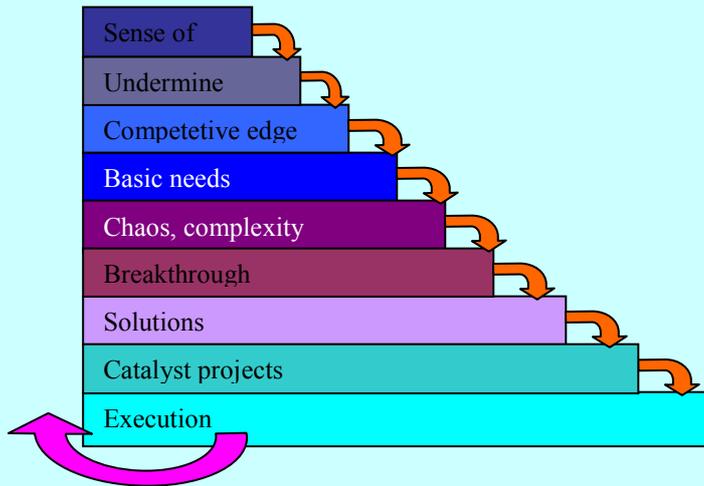


fig 7. The cascade of strategy, Roggema 2005

1. The sense of urgency has to be clear. That new ways of solution finding are necessary is completely clear as we remember the pictures of Katrina's acts in New Orleans and if we imagine this can happen in a lot of regions in the world.
2. The basic needs have to be defined. These needs more and more go towards a safe, comfortable and beautiful place to live.
3. Some kind of chaos or crisis has to be introduced. During this (short) chaotic period of time no one really know what is going on and the brightest ones can claim the best solution for a problem everyone is feeling.
4. The competitive edge has to be sharp. To contribute ideas and solutions that really add value to the process one's specialised skills need to be as far as possible away from the average.
5. A breakthrough is reached at the moment that original and unexpected patterns in co-operation are introduced. When smart people push the solutions in times of chaos in a direction, perfectly fitting in the basic needs. The way Bono became a interlocutor to Bush²⁶.

²⁵ Rob Roggema, Tour de la Stratégie, Province of Groningen, 2005

²⁶ Live 8, Bono&Bush

6. Work together in network-based and temporary organisations at those parts and elements that might give the regional system the right impulses
7. Take care of the execution, best done by create some catalyst projects.

6. The future is bright!

Whatever the future might bring, adaptation of mankind to new circumstances will survive. We do not know how rapid this adaptation will take place and if it is quick enough to prevent regions from more catastrophes like Katrina.

The focus has to lay on:

1. Give bright and exceptional, sometimes weird, people enough space to come up with brilliant solutions;
2. Step out of the fixed patterns of the exiting political arena;
3. Define the challenge of the future, not the problems of today;
4. Do not try to make designs that solve every existing and future problem;
5. Start on time, not at the moment the problem is too close to handle;
6. Connect to people's deepest desires: safety, beauty, comfort and no worries on their children's future²⁷;
7. Make it visible, do not write it all down in too heavy reports.

The future can be delightful, bright and clear. With smart and bright people. Finding the best and the brightest solutions, making the most beautiful and brightest designs.

²⁷ Rob Roggema, New Strategies for energy-inclusive design in Energy Valley, Green Cities Conference, San Fransisco, June 2005

Appendix: The legend of Hans Brinker

The Hero of Haarlem

Many years ago, there lived in Haarlem, one of the principal cities of Holland, a sunny-haired boy of gentle disposition. His father was a *sluicer*, that is, a man whose business it was to open and close the sluices, or large oaken gates, that are placed at regular distances across the entrances of the canals, to regulate the amount of water that shall flow into them.

The sluicer raises the gates more or less according to the quantity of water required, and closes them carefully at night, in order to avoid all possible danger of an oversupply running into the canal, or the water would soon overflow it and inundate the surrounding country. As a great portion of Holland is lower than the level of the sea, the waters are kept from flooding the land only by means of strong dikes, or barriers, and by means of these sluices, which are often strained to the utmost by the pressure of the rising tides. Even the little children in Holland know that constant watchfulness is required to keep the rivers and ocean from overwhelming the country, and that a moment's neglect of the sluicer's duty may bring ruin and death to all.

[...]

One lovely autumn afternoon, when the boy was about eight years old, he obtained his parents' consent to carry some cakes to a blind man who lived out in the country, on the other side of the dike. The little fellow started on his errand with a light heart, and having spent an hour with his grateful old friend, he bade him farewell and started on his homeward walk.

Trudging stoutly along the canal, he noticed how the autumn rains had swollen the waters. Even while humming his careless, childish song, he thought of his father's brave old gates and felt glad of their strength, for, thought he, 'If *they* gave way, where would Father and Mother be? These pretty fields would all be covered with the angry waters - Father always calls them the *angry* waters. I suppose he thinks they are mad at him for keeping them out so long.' And with these thoughts just flitting across his brain, the little fellow stooped to pick the pretty flowers that grew along his way. Sometimes he stopped to throw some feathery seed ball in the air and watch it as it floated away; sometimes he listened to the stealthy rustling of a rabbit, speeding through the grass, but oftener he smiled as he recalled the happy light he had seen arise on the weary, listening face of his blind old friend.

[...]

Suddenly the boy looked around him in dismay. He had not noticed that the sun was setting. Now he saw that his long shadow on the grass had vanished. It was growing dark, he was still some

distance from home, and in a lonely ravine, where even the blue flowers had turned to gray. He quickened his footsteps and, with a beating heart recalled many a nursery tale of children belated in dreary forests. Just as he was bracing himself for a run, he was startled by the sound of trickling water. Whence did it come? He looked up and saw a small hole in the dike through which a tiny stream was flowing. Any child in Holland will shudder at the thought of a *leak in the dike!* The boy understood the danger at a glance. That little hole, if the water were allowed to trickle through, would soon be a large one, and a terrible inundation would be the result.

Quick as a flash, he saw his duty. Throwing away his flowers, the boy clambered up the heights until he reached the hole. His chubby little finger was thrust in, almost before he knew it. The flowing was stopped! Ah! he thought, with a chuckle of boyish delight, the angry waters must stay back now! Haarlem shall not be drowned while I am here!

This was all very well at first, but the night was falling rapidly. Chill vapors filled the air. Our little hero began to tremble with cold and dread. He shouted loudly; he screamed, 'Come here! come here!' but no one came. The cold grew more intense, a numbness, commencing in the tired little finger, crept over his hand and arm, and soon his whole body was filled with pain. He shouted again, 'Will no one come? Mother! Mother!' Alas, his mother, good, practical soul, had already locked the doors and had fully resolved to scold him on the morrow for spending the night with blind Jansen without her permission. He tried to whistle. Perhaps some straggling boy might heed the signal, but his teeth chattered so, it was impossible. Then he called on God for help. And the answer came, through a holy resolution: 'I will stay here till morning.'

[...]

The midnight moon looked down upon that small, solitary form, sitting upon a stone, halfway up the dike. His head was bent but he was not asleep, for every now and then one restless hand rubbed feebly the outstretched arm that seemed fastened to the dike - and often the pale, tearful face turned quickly at some real or fancied sounds.

How can we know the sufferings of that long and fearful watch - what falterings of purpose, what childish terrors came over the boy as he thought of the warm little bed at home, of his parents, his brothers and sisters, then looked into the cold, dreary night! If he drew away that tiny finger, the angry waters, grown angrier still, would rush forth, and never stop until they had swept over the town. No, he would hold it there till daylight - if he lived! He was not very sure of living. What did this strange buzzing mean? And then the knives that seemed pricking and piercing him from head to foot? He was not certain now that he could draw his finger away, even if he wished to.

At daybreak a clergyman, returning from the bedside of a sick parishioner, thought he heard groans as he walked along on the top of the dike. Bending, he saw, far down on the side, a child apparently writhing with pain.

'In the name of wonder, boy,' he exclaimed, 'what are you doing there?'

'I am keeping the water from running out,' was the simple answer of the little hero. 'Tell them to come quick.'

It is needless to add that they did come quickly.

The legend of the brave Dutch boy - by others thought to be named Hans Brinker - who supposedly put his finger in the dyke to prevent a flood, was actually a literary invention by the American writer [Mary Elizabeth Mapes Dodge](#) (1831-1905), who was born in New York.