

When Scenario Planning Turns Eristic

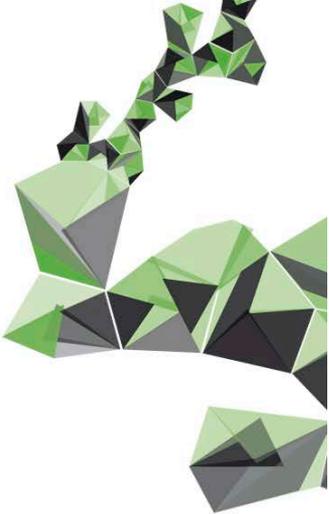


The Reification of the Future in the 'Local Government of the Future' program

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Contemporary concerns with the future

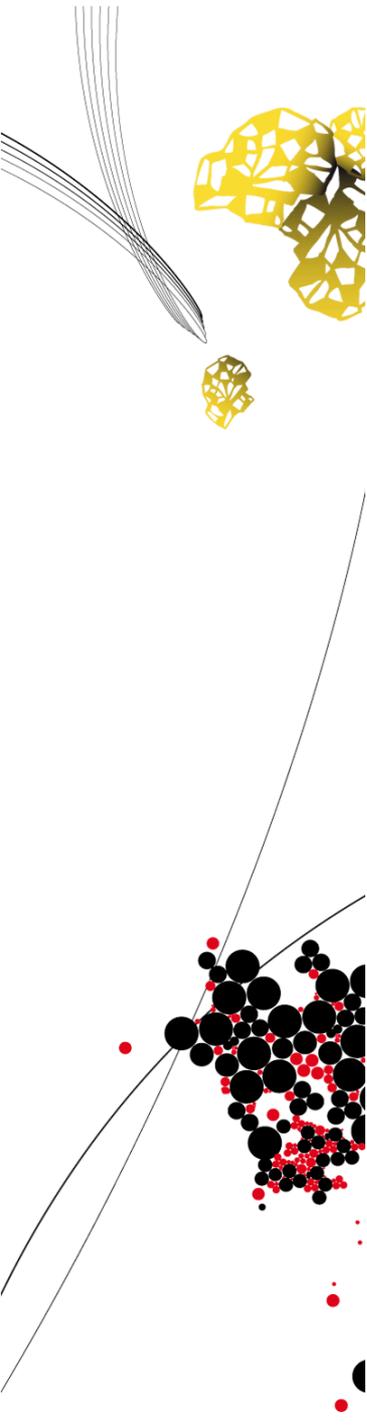
- Background: the great transformation
 - Radical uncertainty and complexity
 - Popularization of scenario planning
 - Strategic decision making
- The future of the welfare state
- NL context: the transformation of the social domain (2015-) after the transitions (decentralizations)
 - the ‘Local Government of the Future’ program (2014-) (Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations)
 - Scenario planning initiatives (two key scenario planning publications (*2014 and 2015*))





The origins and developments of scenario planning

- Drama
 - Scenario is a script
 - Imagination of possible, plausible and desirable worlds
- Rand Corporation (Herman Kahn) in 1940s
 - Calculation of probable worlds ('closed futures')
- Royal Dutch/Shell (Pierre Wack) in 1970s
 - 'Half open futures'
- Scenario planning and the policy process in 1990s
 - Scenario planning and the 'shift in governance'
 - Scenario planning stakeholder participation



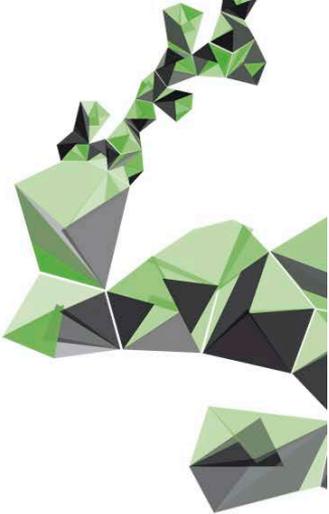
The power-knowledge nexus of scenario planning

- Scenario planning and contradictions
 - Multi-stakeholder frames, imaginaries and ideologies
 - Calculative methods versus literary methods
 - Closed futures (probable) versus open futures (possible, plausible and desirable)
- Possible, plausible and desirable worlds: future unfolds as drama (ruptures of current trends)
 - Open futures: a sense of wonder, awe, radical amazement
- Scenario planning as a dialectical process
 - Critique, negation, transcendence



'Scenario planning' as a colonizing practice

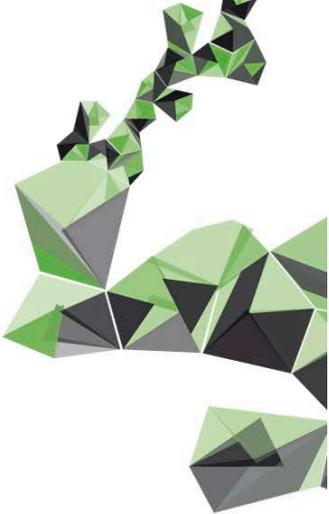
- Scenario planning and the established power constellation
 - Bringing history to an end
- The future as a site of strife
 - Climate change policies
 - 'The climate change denial campaign'
 - The story of Michael Mann
- Royal Dutch/Shell and scenario planning
 - The future of oil
 - Enacting neoliberalism (rule of big firm power)
- 'Scenario planning': closing the future (The future is 'ours'. But who is 'we'?)



The 'Local Governments of the Future' program: three colonization issues

- The social domain of 2030: colonization issue 1
 - A future of less government
 - Continuation of neoliberal discourse (1980s)
 - 'New social contract'
 - Self-responsibility
 - Decentralization of tasks
- S

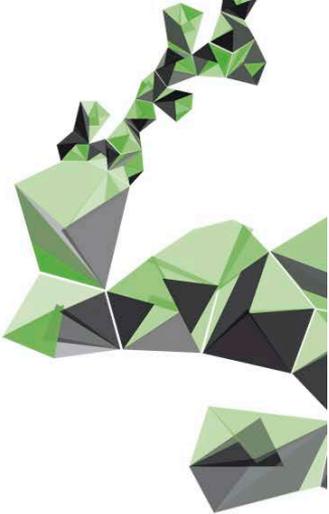




The 'Local Governments of the Future' program: three colonization issues

- The social domain of 2030: colonization issue 2
 - A future of more austerity
 - Financial management imaginary
 - Limiting generosity
 - 'financial unsustainability of the welfare state'
 - 'holding the purse strings' slogan
 - financial self-responsibility





The 'Local Governments of the Future' program: three colonization issues

- The social domain of 2030: colonization issue 3
 - A future of technological progress
 - 'digital citizen' and 'digital government'
 - Technological progress as salvation
 - 'users must learn to trust technology'
 - 'technology offers more freedom'
 - 'e-health' reduces costs
 - 'successful in innovations in the field of digital economy, fintech and digital health'
 - Technological bluff





Concluding remarks

- ‘Local government of the future’: scenario planning?
 - Critique, negation and transcendence?
- Colonization of the future:
 - Selected trends are catalogued and listed as unambiguous necessary developments
 - Reification of the future