

FUTURES BULLETIN

Editorial

The window of a new year is now open. According to most of the futurists' chats, 2009 might be a memorable year, for the worse or the best. For the WFSF, this will be the time to choose a new Executive Team.

Since the conference in Trollhättan last summer, we have worked to provide you with the outputs of the GA's decisions. Our Director, Rakesh KAPOOR, is putting the membership management on new tracks, and a new website system to manage directly your membership will soon be available. We are also preparing the next General Assembly and, of course, the elections. In the coming months the process you already know will begin (for details go to pages 3-4). You will have to choose a new President and nine Executive Board members according to criteria specified in the WFSF Constitution.

The next GA. The transfer of "power" will take place in June 2009. In order to alleviate the cost of this transfer, this GA will take place in Alsace, a French region on the east border with Germany and Switzerland. If you intend to participate, please let us know as soon as possible. The online registration, the same as last year will be open very soon.

The elections. Inside this issue you will find two Calls for Nominations. The first is dedicated to the choice of nominees for the EB and Presidency. The second one is a call for the "refreshment" of our list of Fellows. This process is very important as the President must be chosen from among the fellows.

I am glad to welcome Roger CALDWELL, USA, as a new EB member, in replacement of Richard SLAUGHTER who has resigned. Roger was part of the team of the "refreshing process" with Ruben NELSON last year, and will work again on it with Ruben in coming months.

Thank you to all the contributors to this new issue of the FB under Ela's competent direction. I wish you all a very Happy and Optimistic New Year!

Fabienne GOUX-BAUDIMENT

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SECTION 1 - COMMUNITY HOUSE

MEMBERS



Toekomst(EN) – Avenir(S) – A documentary in production [Maya VAN LEEMPUT]

In the summer of 2008 I entered a competition organised by the RTBF - *Radio Télévision Belge de la Communauté française*- and the VAF - *Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds*. It was the first time in Belgium that the national broadcasting organisation for one language community (Francophone) and a subsidising body for audio-visual production for the other (Flemish), joined forces. For their 'To be or not to .be' project, they were looking for proposals for documentaries to be included in a six part series about Belgium. The documentary I proposed was selected from 114 entries for the second round of the competition. After further development of the production dossier with the young non-fiction production house *FilmNatie*, it was among the final six that will be produced and aired for the series before the end of the year.



Our story starts with a picnic attended by everyone who appears in the film. There, one of our contributors explains that when the children of today will be grandparents, their circumstances will be determined in part by the political form the Belgian nation takes by then. However, while this issue deserves attention, too often we forget it presents only one of many possible points of interest on futures in Belgium. We set out to explore some of the other possible topics with a handful of contributors from a range of different fields.

The guiding questions for 'Toekomst(EN) – Avenir(S)' are: *Who in Belgium has an explicit future-orientation in his/her work? Who uses images of futures in their daily practice? Where does future-oriented work take place in this country? What images of futures do these individuals and organizations propose?*



All conversation partners, from policy advisors, researchers and scientists, to activists and artists, introduce their specialisation, explain the futures orientation of their work, elaborate on possible futures they imagine and send us to a location in our country where we might 'catch a glimpse of one of those possible futures'. We are sent on from one place where the futures become visible to the next, from one Belgium futures thinker to another. To help us gather a consistent collection of statements about possible futures, we ask contributors to discuss one or two type(s) of scenario(s) from the choice of Jim DATOR'S four generic alternative scenarios.



The narrative closes at a festival entitled 'The Game is Up – Ten days to save the world' in the *Arts Centre Vooruit* (Ghent). This is not like the endpoint in a treasure hunt, there is no single *the* future that appears from what our contributors discuss but a kaleidoscope of images of the futures that exist and may develop in Belgium.

Photography: Bram GOOTS

I would enjoy hearing from anyone interested in the project. You can contact me at: Maya VAN LEEMPUT @ maya@reelfutures.net.

Welcoming New Members

The Institute for Futures Studies, Sweden [Joakim PALME]



www.framtidsstudier.se

The first government organisation in Sweden dedicated to futures studies was the Secretariat for Futures Studies, established in 1973, which functioned as a complementary section to the Prime Minister's Office. In 1980, the secretariat became a unit of the Council for Planning and Coordination of Research, and in 1987, it was reorganised into an independent research foundation, the Institute for Futures Studies. Today, the institute's finances come from government funds and external grants from public and private financiers. The Swedish government appoints its board of directors.

In the 1970s and 80s Swedish futures studies developed towards being an open and democratic tool, perhaps more so than in other countries. Publicly funded futures studies became a forum for social and political debate. In many ways, this affected the institute's methods, which are still part of our identity and working practices.

The fifth research program that has been active from 2005 to 2008 is ending, and we are now drafting a new program for the next four years. In 2009, we will launch four new research areas: meta-studies of futures studies, finance of the welfare state, integration and pluralism in the multicultural society, and development and causes of social exclusion in society and its effects. This focus does not exclude natural science forecasting or technology foresight, but for a small research organisation with limited funds, this outline presents a reasonable compromise.

Demographics and public policy change has been a hallmark of our research, and our approach to multidisciplinary studies including sociology, economics, political science and history has proven fruitful. The forthcoming research programme will safeguard the skills and perspectives developed over the past years. However, just as there are good reasons to preserve continuity of established research areas, there are also good reasons to broaden our horizon and bring in new and fresh ideas. Therefore, we will in the coming years deepen our international perspective by greater collaboration with researchers and policy analysts abroad, in which meta-studies of futures studies will be one exciting point of departure.

FEDERATION

IN

EB and Executive Elections 2009 [Fabienne GOUX-BAUDIMENT]

The outgoing Executive Board now calls for the Nominations for President and nine other members of the WFSF Executive Board.

Nomination procedure

Any registered members of the Federation whose name is listed in the 2009 WFSF Membership Directory (on the website) has the right to nominate candidates for the designated positions and subsequently vote for them.

Candidates for the function of President must be nominated from among

the Fellows (the list of Fellows will be available on the website from 1st March 2009).

Candidates to be nominated for the Executive Board must have been financial (paid) members of the WFSF for at least four consecutive years. The deadline for nominations is 21st March 2009.

In order to become eligible as a candidate for President, a nominee must have his/her name listed in the nomination form of at least ten financial (paid) members.

It is recommended that the members try to balance their nomination for the candidates for the Executive Board to the best of their ability according to the following principles stated in the Constitution:

- No more than six of the nine members, other than the President, may represent one gender.
- At least three of the eleven must be from non-OECD countries and at least three from OECD countries.

In addition it is strongly recommended that members assure themselves that nominated candidates for the Executive Board are both willing and able to carry out and sustain the active workload that comes with this role.

Voting procedure

After the nomination process is finalised by the auditor and a certified note is sent to the President after 21st March 2009. The candidates will be officially informed of their candidacy and registered for voting by the Director. The candidates will then be requested to submit their statement of vision as stipulated by the Constitution. These will be published in the April 2009 issue of the Futures Bulletin.

The Director will then conduct a ballot by sending to each member a voting form with instructions. Ballot papers will be sent out with the April 2009 issue of the Futures Bulletin. Members will have until 15th May 2009 to return the completed ballot forms to the Federation's auditor either by post or electronic mail.

Call for Nominations for WFSF Fellows [Fabienne GOUX-BAUDIMENT]

This is a CALL FOR NOMINATIONS for WFSF FELLOWS.

It has been several years since we solicited nominations for Fellow status. This is an honorary title and the constitution specifies the process:

Members of the Federation may be nominated as Fellows in recognition of their contributions to the field of futures studies and/or to the work of the Federation, if

- *they are recognised in the futures studies field as active professionals,*
- *they have made an original contribution to the knowledge base of futures studies, and if*
- *they have been members of the Federation for at least five consecutive years.*

Applications for fellow status are considered by the Executive Board upon receipt of a written application, an endorsement by two existing Fellows, and a full curriculum vitae.

You may apply directly yourself or if you believe a person should apply for Fellow status, please contact them and recommend they submit an application. For purposes of becoming fellows, representatives of the Institutional Members have full rights and duties of Member of the Federation.

Applications should be sent to president.wfsf@gmail.com with "Fellow application" as the title of the email. The application should indicate you have met the general requirements, and include the names of the two existing fellows that are willing to support the application and a full curriculum vitae. The membership fees for Fellows are the same as regular members. A listing of current fellows will be posted on the WFSF website before the end of February.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 7th March 2009.

NEW RELEASES



Scenario Planning [Vahid V. MOTLAGH]

Scenario Planning, a Farsi reference book, was just published by the Institute for International Energy Studies, a think tank affiliated to the I.R. IRAN Petroleum Ministry.

In this newly published Farsi book, the authors: Aziz ALIZADEH, Vahid Vahidi MOTLAGH, and Amir NAZEMI in the first part review the history, presumptions, and foundations of futures studies, most of which are based on works of Wendell BELL, Jim DATOR, and Richard SLAUGHTER.

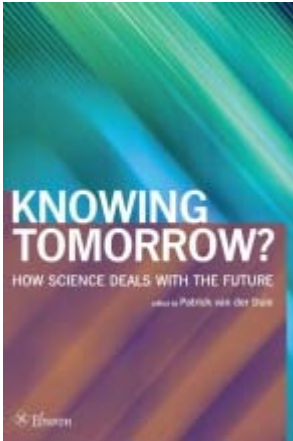
In the next part they focus on the identification of key dimensions of scenario planning as they have appeared chiefly in the pioneering works of KAHN, VAN DER HEIJDEN, SCHWARTZ, WACK, SLOCUM, FULTON, MASON, INAYATULLAH, FAHEY, RINGLAND, SHOEMKER, RATCLIFFE, DEWAR, RANDALL, DAMMERS, HUSS, HORTON, LIST, STEINMÜLLER, VAN NOTTEN, GODET, and ROUBELAT.

The book looks at variables that ought to be considered before starting a new project, especially in order to provide strategic intelligence. Some of these variables belong to the general class of objectives, for example learning vs. planning, competitor focused vs. environment focused vs. organization focused. Others belong to the general class of approaches such as normative vs. explorative, qualitative vs. quantitative, intuition-based vs. data-based etc. Finally, policy analysts have to deal with the context specific variables, for instance, organization cultures which can be classified into leader-driven, plan-driven, and evidence-driven organizations.

The Farsi-speaking readers can obtain a rich knowledge base of these variables so that they can develop skills and capabilities and learn how to design and run scenario planning exercises. The authors also review a number of case studies such as GSG, Air Force 2025, NIC Global Trends, and Shell scenarios to provide examples of scenario planning projects.

The book aims to help Farsi-speaking readers choose from the common approaches to scenario planning (ex. GBN, ABP, CLA, & RDM) according to their needs, objectives, resources and context specific variables.

Knowing tomorrow. How science deals with the future? [Patrick VAN DER DUIN]



Ed. Patrick VAN DER DUIN

The overwhelming majority of books on futures research are about what the future will or could be or about how to look to the future (although the first category exceeds by far the second one). But the increasing importance of futures research makes it both interesting and necessary to look at its scientific foundations. Since futures research is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary, *Knowing tomorrow* looks at how the concept of the future (or futures) is being addressed in various scientific disciplines, such as psychology, philosophy, economics, geography, and astronomy. In doing this, more knowledge is gained about the specific role the future plays in other more classical sciences, allowing futures research to position itself better vis-à-vis other sciences and make its added value clearer.

In Chapter 2 Dr Peter HAYWARD, of Swinburne University of Technology, discusses how the future is dealt with in the science of psychology. He investigates how individuals “perceive the future”. HAYWARD takes an evolutionary approach to development of the brain and its ‘forward-looking’-functions and focuses on ‘future thought’.

The role of the future in sociology is the topic of Chapter 3 written by Professor Eleonora Barbieri MASINI. She adopts a human and social perspective to futures research. She regards futures research as a social science, which includes the issues of values and choices, thereby making it necessary to include a philosophical and ethical perspective. Given that that looking to the future and building a vision of the future is intimately connected with *change* it follows that value choices are inescapable and thus an important topic of futures research.

The role of the future in the economic science is the topic of Chapter 4. Dr Cornelius HAZEU goes into how economists give the future a place in their thinking. HAZEU does not only look at the future in economic theory but also in economic policy since both are intimately linked in the economic science. It shows that economists acknowledge the uncertain nature of the future but that does not make them turn their back on the future. Rather, they try to give the unpredictable future a place in their thinking and reasoning by focusing on ‘if-then’ reasoning based on pre-defined assumptions and looking to the plausibility and probability of their economic models.

The question what philosophers say about the concept of future is discussed in Chapter 5 by Dr Joseph VOROS of Swinburne University of Technology. He focuses not on philosophy in general, but describes the methodological foundations of futures research which are subsequently based on philosophical views. VOROS clearly describes what consequences changing methodological paradigms have for doing futures research.

That even historians care about the future is illustrated in Chapter 6 by Professor Sohail INAYATULLAH (Tamkang University). He focuses on macrohistorians, by which he refers to those historians who study the history of social systems to find ‘laws of social change’. Certain laws do not only aim at describing or explaining the historical rise and fall of civilizations, but by their macro-nature become capable of outlining the (possible) future of civilization of culture. In essence, these theories seem to become a-historical, which makes them, in theory, suitable as

'theories of the future'. However, as INAYATULLAH asserts, the difference between a futurologist and a macro-historian is that the former focuses on the individual ability (and wish) to shape the future while the second puts emphasis on the structural (macro) circumstances in which individuals create the future.

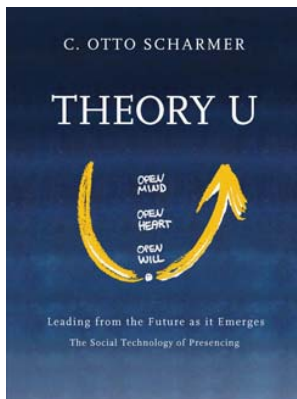
In Chapter 7 Dr Ela KRAWCZYK describes the role that future plays in geography, focusing on spatial and urban planning. It is shown that urban planning by nature touches upon issues to do with the future. As soon as geographers started to think about change the concept of time and with it the future were introduced. KRAWCZYK provides a clear historical account of how geographers have looked to the future, showing a shift from a 'blueprint' - future towards a more open future containing different alternatives.

Graham MAY (Future Skills) discusses the future in relation to natural phenomena such as climate and subjects like sustainability in Chapter 8. His historical account of what we now call 'sustainability' makes a clear change from an implicit towards an explicit future. That is to say, thinking about the future of our planet is also a tool to set the agenda and to try to make the necessary adjustments in how we deal with life on earth. MAY illustrates that the value of looking to future is only measured by assessing the accuracy of predictions by stressing that many authors of alarming environmental reports hope and pray that their predictions will not come true.

How a rather modern science such as the science of management copes with the future is the topic of Chapter 9, written by Dr Patrick VAN DER DUIN and Dr Erik DEN HARTIGH (both Delft University of Technology). The focus is on strategy and innovation. They very much view the future from the perspective of the manager or entrepreneur, who not only thinks about the future in terms of strategy and innovation but who has an underlying attitude towards business environment. The view on the business and the assumed or believed capability of shaping their businesses are directly influencing their attitude towards strategy and innovation and thereby to the future.

Which role the future plays in astronomy, perhaps the mother of all (natural) sciences, is described by Dr Dap HARTMANN (Delft University of Technology) in Chapter 10. Based on the observation that astronomers are looking at the past, he shows that for astronomy and physics these historical data are vital in predicting the future. He also shows that the extraordinary scales of distance and time with regard to astronomical topics provide a different perspective on time as well as the future.

Professor Alan PORTER (GeorgiaTech University) in Chapter 11 assesses the role that the future currently plays in different sciences. By using very modern bibliometric techniques, he 'measures' how large a role 'futures research' plays in scientific literature. It shows that publications in the field of 'Future-oriented Technology Analysis' (as PORTER calls it) are increasing, that the U.S produces the most publications in this field, and that FTA literature "centres in the 'Quantitative Applications'" area.



Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges - The Social Technology of Presencing

C. Otto SCHARMER

SOL (The Society for Organizational Learning):
 Cambridge/MA.

Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges
 [Paolo RONCHETTI]

In this book, Otto SCHARMER invites us to see the world in new ways. We are living in a time with intense conflicts and massive institutional deficiencies, a time characterized by painful endings and hopeful beginnings – both in societies and on a global level. It is a time in which it feels as if something is changing deeply and dying, while something else “wants to be born”. This is the viewpoint of Otto SCHARMER in his recent work about leading from the future as it emerges. The crisis of our time cannot be reduced to a single leader or country. The crisis of our time consists of the fact that previously dominating social structures and mindsets are dying – and we have to develop something new to take over.

SCHARMER suggests a new social technology concerning transformational changes, which will allow leaders to better deal with the challenges they are facing. The statement “leading from the future as it emerges” reveals that the author sees two different sources of learning: namely learning from experiences of the past and learning from the future, as it emerges, that is as it gradually unfolds and reaches the surface. This is a very important consideration and an integral part of the new mindset, which the new social technology, Theory U, represents.

To activate this vital potential as a leader three preconditions are necessary: an open mind, an open heart, and an open will. The Open Mind – in the adage of “think outside the box” – is a known claim for change, even if more often difficult to achieve. However the Open Heart touches definitely new sounds and grounds in the organization and change discourse. Open Will ultimately means the “letting go” of the patterns of the past, needs “seeing with fresh eyes” and “sensing from the field” what is and what could be.

SCHARMER describes these three stages of openness as new intelligences which every leader has to nurture and cultivate like precise instruments helping to create the best possible future. Leadership, he says, “in its essence is the capacity to shift the inner place from which we operate” and “leaders who understand how can build the capacity of their systems to operate differently and release themselves from the exterior determination”. This leads eventually, says SCHARMER, to a “shift from sensing exterior causation to sensing something collective that is emerging from within”.

What makes the book enjoyable is the precise pattern of using one model (the simple U) – and applying this in a variety of settings, directions, and stages, e.g.: communication, knowledge, systems and social fields, relationship models, individual and organizational actions, space and much more. The book stands out as a striking and promising interpretation of the society and presents a mindset that has a potential to replace the industrial era. Finally it formulates social insights and methods, which will help to develop the societies and companies of the future. Generations of social- and leadership scientists will build on this gigantic and epoch-making contribution that C. Otto SCHARMER has set forth in Theory U.

SECTION 2 - FUTURES RIDE (PAPERS)

Is there a link between Constructivism, Chaos Theory and Scenario Planning?

By Aziz ALIZADEH

Aziz ALIZADEH is an individual futurist lives in Tehran, the capital of Iran. He can be contacted at: aziz.alizadeh@gmail.com.

Abstract

This article has two main parts. In the first part, it describes constructivism in detail as the philosophical stance that scenario planning professionals take in their organizational research. In the second part, considering the importance of mental models, it tries to use the concepts of the chaos theory for examining the emergence of mental models in individuals and organizations.

Introduction

There is an increasing interest in using scenario planning by organizations to help to adapt to the constantly changing environment. Despite the fact that many different methods of scenario development and planning have been described by many individuals and corporations, few attempts have been made to explain the philosophical stances that everyone who newly entered to the scenario planning world must be familiar with. Also, however methodologies of scenario developing and planning have been discussed in broader context, deeper knowledge of the nature of scenarios, scenario planning and cognitive constructs of organization such as mental models still are few. The focus of this article is on appropriate philosophical stance of scenario planning practitioners and using the concepts of chaos theory for getting better understanding of the nature of scenarios and a scenario planning process. Before discussing to above issues, the importance of theories in knowledge acquiring and clear definition of understanding is discussed.

Theories and Understanding

Theories and theory building are essential for the advancement of knowledge. The building-block of science is theory. New data results lead to new theories, and theories create experiments that are designed to test them, resulting in new data. These cyclic processes propel science forward. Theories are being developed to satisfy a very human need to "order the experienced worlds" (DUBIN, 1978) and differentiate science from common sense (REYNOLDS, 1971). Theories are derived from the experiences of people and analyzed using reasoning. Without theories data collected would be regarded as "miscellany of observations" (KAPLAN, 1969). Despite that in some parts of scientific literature, there is no consensus on what constitutes a theory, but there is no doubt that good theories are practical.

One good definition of theory is offered by STRAUSS and CORBIN (1998). According to their definition, theory is:

"A set of well developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena..... the statement of relationship explains who, what, when, why, how and with what consequences an event occurs."

WACKER (1998) believes that theories can be used as framework for analysis, as means to further the field of research and provide an explanation, a reliable and accurate prediction and a different way of understanding of the phenomena under observation (DUBIN, 1978).

In brief, theories provide ways of thinking about and looking at world around us. The terms and concepts that make our theories are instruments which help us to organize our experience and

facilitate our understanding of the world and any phenomena that we are dealing with in specific context. It is explained that theories facilitate understanding, however, what is the understanding? And what does it mean, when people claim that they have understood something?

According to SUNDERLAND'S explanation (1990), "understanding" can be looked at from two different angles, as noun or as verb. From the first perspective, understanding refers to a thing that a person possess (John has a broad understanding of a guitar). In this definition of understanding, it is regarded as mental image or picture that can be recalled at will and can be used for explaining of what has happened and what will happen. However, WITTGENSTEIN argues that to have an understanding is not to have an image/picture in mind. Rather, it is to be able to do something about that phenomena such as performing it, commenting upon it, draw a diagram or picture of it or answer questions about it. A good example of this type of understanding is ability to use language.

Looking at understanding as verb refers to it as a process. Understanding is a process and not just a possession of mental image/picture or facts. From this perspective understanding involves visualization or sense making process. A major achievement of sense making is a clear understanding of phenomena or developing new tools for better seeing (SUNDERLANDS, 1990) - better seeing, not only by eyes, but mostly by minds.

From this part it was realized that theory is essential for knowledge creation and facilitating of understanding, in both meanings, that has close relation to sense making in particular context. Understanding resulted from theory or theory development is very sensitive to context of the observed phenomena which will be used for prediction of occurrence of phenomena in the future and also a perspective that has been taken in the seeing of the mentioned phenomena.

In the next sections of the paper, improving the understanding of scenario planning by providing insights from chaos theory and constructivism will be discussed.

Constructivism and Constructionism

Constructionism is mainly an educational theory. It proposed that knowledge is not something that is transmitted from teacher to students, but it's constructed by the mind of a student or a learner (GUAST, 2003).

Constructionism is the epistemological perspective that proposed all knowledge or all meaning reality is congruent upon human practices which are being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world. This knowledge develops and is transmitted within a social context (CROTTY, 1998). Constructionism sees an interdependent relationship between objects in the world and consciousness. It asserts that no object can be adequately described in isolation from the conscious being experiencing it and also any experience cannot be described in isolation from its object (CROTTY, 1998). Therefore, within objects or the world that is independent of consciousness, meaning cannot be found. In general terms, all things depend upon human being for their meanings. From other perspective, objects are not completely irrelevant to the meanings that are made about them. Despite that context gives a different meanings to the some object, but object itself with its particularities, participates in the meanings made about it. Constructionism accepts multiple interpretations of an object/phenomena which none of them can be referred to as true or valid (CROTTY, 1998). This multiple interpretation is playing very important role in succession in scenario planning.

There is a distinction between constructionism and constructivism. Constructivism emphasize that one individual's meaning is as valid and worthy of respect as other individual's meaning. Constructivism is a model of how learning takes place (COBERN, 1993). The basic idea of constructivism which many people refer to it as trivial constructivism can be expressed as follows (COBERN, 1993):

"Knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received from the environment".

If the above statement is true and everyone actively constructs knowledge, then some questions arise, such as:

- Is the constructed knowledge of different persons that were in the same environment equal?
- How people with different mental models, different experience and past, construct the same knowledge?
- How do they communicate their knowledge with each other?
- How past knowledge could actively construct new knowledge?

These questions resulted in further advancing of the trivial constructivism to radical constructivism. Radical constructivism asserts that knowing is a dynamic adaptation process towards viable interpretations of experience (QUAST, 2003). Main argument of radical constructivists is that "cognition is adaptive and serves the organization of the experiential world, not the discovery of ontological reality" (WHEATLEY, 1991).

Both trivial and radical constructivisms do not say anything about the effects of environment on learning or knowledge creation. To address these problems, critical constructivism was developed. Critical constructivism is in agreement with relativism of radical constructivism and just looks at constructivism within social and cultural environment. One thing is common in three types of constructivism that have been discussed earlier and that is "in the world of continuous experiencing, imposing an order to incoming experiences is carrying out by mental constructs that have been created from past experiences". These mental constructs in the literature of cognitive science are called mental models. If the new incoming information or experience does not fit with any of the mental models then new ground for new mental model will be placed. From this point of view it can be explained that every person in the face of any situation generates many mental models and incoming information/experience cause limitation on activated models. It means that some of the models eliminated from the list and others remaining on it will be the base of the knowledge which is going to be constructed (QUAST, 2003).

There is an important issue here and that is "according to which criteria a person or subject choose right model for constructing knowledge". These criteria arise from different cognitive patterns within person or subject's mind or from different cognitive patterns of different persons. Second part of above criteria is a fundamental part of social constructivism. Social constructivism asserts that knowledge is a product of social processes of communication and conversation (QUAST, 2003). Language plays an important role here.

Summarising this part, it can be said that according to constructivism knowledge is constructed rather than received and learning is a creative process. Also from constructionism it can be explained that learning process takes place both inside the brain of learner and during the interaction of a learner with social worlds. More importantly constructivism and constructionism both confirm the possibility of alternative epistemologies.

Chaos Theory

The roots of chaos theory come from the study of nonlinear dynamic systems. Nonlinear dynamic system is defined as a system in which the relationships between time-dependent variables of that system are nonlinear (THIETART, 1995). In non linear systems small change can have big effects and outcomes are subject to high level of unpredictability and uncertainty (QUAST, 2003). Chaos theory serves an explanation of the behaviour of the system which can be modelled by deterministic nonlinear equations. In these systems output of one calculation, in the feedback manner, will be the input to the next one.

Fractal Phenomena

The idea of a fractal or fractality was first introduced by British mathematician MANDELBROT in 1977 (MANDELBROT, 1977, 1983). In his introduction, MANDELBROT defined fractal as an entity with characteristics that are simultaneously apparent at many scales of focus. If a structure has fractality, it has feature or characteristic of self similarity. In looking at a structure with feature of fractality, at one level of magnification the structure appears to be similar to a viewer as at any

other level. James GLEICK (1987) who brought the topic of chaos from specific scientific field to the streamline of general knowledge has particular stance about fractal. According to his definition, "fractal is a way of seeing infinity". Because fractal is a way of seeing the whole within the whole, within the whole. It is clear that in many cases uses of the chaos theory have been metaphorical or model based.

Fractal metaphor has been used in many contexts. For instance, THIETART and FORGUES (1995) proposed that fractals in the organizational context would similarly imply a scale invariance of phenomena in organizations.

Fractal and Levels of Analysis/Inspection

By referring to organizational research it can be claimed that, many levels of analysis in this type of research are done without directly addressing the possibility of extrapolating phenomena occurring at one level of analysis to other levels of analysis (FABIAN & BLACK, 2001). Chaos theory has given us a theoretical understanding that we can expect to see whole embedded in its parts. Fractal metaphor conceptualizes units of analysis as patterned and this self-regenerating pattern links multiple levels of analysis (FABIAN & BLACK, 2001). In the metaphorical sense, fractal function is a virtual structure that captures many characteristics and dimensions simultaneously (LEVICK & KUHN, 2007). These dimensions and characteristics may comprise the individual, local, regional, national, and global in a single snapshot. By taking this perspective we can view individual and units within the organization as representative of larger whole. From this point groups, committees, sub-committees, departments are not only distinct subsystems within a hierarchy but they are also fractal in nature that may represent the whole system in one snapshot (FABIAN & BLACK, 2001). This is why scenario practitioners have to train their own mind to see reality multilayered and multifaceted (WATSON, 2008).

Words and Stories as Organizational/Social Fractals

This part of paper is mostly adopted from FABIAN & BLACK and HINRICHS research about development of coherence in strategic logic in an organization by using fractal metaphor. In order to apply fractal view to organizations, FABIAN & BLACK (2000) proposed elemental mechanisms which by their own constant iteration nature create the patterns of activity in the whole structure of organization. These patterns could be examined across levels of analysis that were explained in the previous section. For describing how coherent strategic logic emerges in organizations, FABIAN, BLACK and HINRICHS refer to the use of language. They argue that strategic logic and values drive word choices. Shared values and coherent strategic logic emerges after many iterations of use. This strategic logic acts like a framework for sense-making of the organizational members (Figure 1).

We can summarize above argument - for any organization the language of interpretation available to its members, determines the limits of possibility space for that organization. Within that language their reality will be constructed. Furthermore, the word choice is a tool for decision makers in organization that by using that chosen words they create and shape contexts in which appropriate forms of activities will emerge. Word choice in use delimits possibility space (LISSACK, 1999). It is clear that words alone do not mean anything. Words for implying meaning need a context and one of the most common ways to do so is through stories. Stories and storytelling are main ways of sense-making, communicating and creating shared values within the social systems. Members of organization in order to understand what they do and what they expect from other members to do, are using storytelling and listening to other people's stories. Roger SCHANK (1995) argues that storytelling and understanding is functionally the same thing. We can equate understanding with sense-making. To have a sense of their beliefs and knowing what they think, people need to talk and create stories, referring to famous phrase describing sense-making "how can I know what I think, until I see what I said".

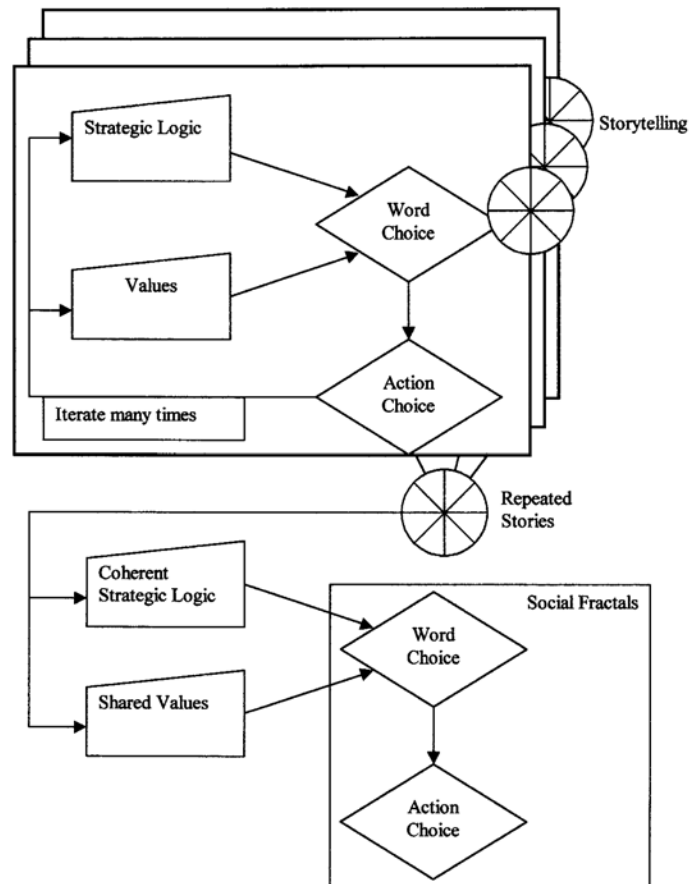


Figure 1: Model of social fractal development (Adopted from FABIAN *et. al*, 2000)

For conclusion of this part, it can be proposed that a individual member of social system/organization consciously chooses words and creates stories from those words. If these stories distribute across all levels of social system and iterate many times then they will form coherent strategic logics which act as worldviews or mental models of that social system. It should be emphasized that iterated stories alone are not enough for mapping the worldviews, mental models or strategic logics, but actions of whole social system must be considered and those stories that mentioned actions are based on should be considered. By using scenario planning literature, these strategic logics, worldviews and mental models can be called building blocks of social system's "official future". When a scenario planner is trying to help any social system to plan for its future, he or she must carefully look at the stories describing the assumptions that the management team have about the future based on their observable actions (RANDAL & ERTEL, 2005). These assumptions are embedded in the strategic logic of system which are described above.

Attractors

Attractors explain global patterns of behaviour of any system. There are few types of attractors such as point attractors, cycle attractors and strange attractors. Strange attractor is the main concern of this article. According to definition by STACEY *et. al*, (2000):

"Strange attractors are reflected in patterns of behaviour (that is, shapes in space or movement over time) which are never exactly repeated but are always similar to each other. A strange attractor has distinctive shape, or cyclical movement, but that shape or movement is much more complicated than a single point or a regular cycle. Strange attractors are paradoxically regular and irregular, stable and unstable, at the same time. They are neither equilibrium nor random state, rather, an intertwining of both at the same time."

When any system follows a path according to a strange attractor it does not appear to be predictable. System follows a path which remains in attractor and the path is determined by attractor's structure. One of the most famous strange attractor is Edward LORENZ'S attractor. Its shape is like a butterfly (Figure 2).

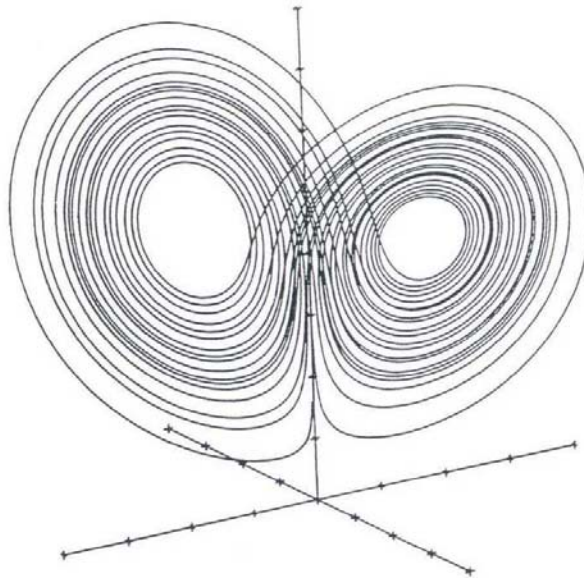


Figure 2: Edward LORENZ'S attractor

We can say that strange attractor represent the possibilities of space for any systems. Despite that it is very hard or impossible to predict the next state of system in any future time, but by looking at attractor, the extent of system's variation could be understood. With determining the strange attractor of any system, the range of the changes which that system could face in the future can be imagined.

Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is one the favourite methods of future studies. SLAUGHTER (1993) argues that future study is the art of construction of alternative futures in the forms of scenarios. It has been originated and introduced for military planning in Rand Corporation by Herman KAHN during 1950s and its application was extended by other institutions such as Hudson Institute, Royal Dutch Shell, SRI-International and Global Business Network (GBN) to business world. There are many text books and articles about different approaches of developing scenarios for companies (WACK, 1985a, 1985b, SCHWARTZ, 1991, VAN DER HEIJDEN, 1997, FAHEY & RANDALL, 1998, RINGLAND, 1998, GODET, 2001, OGILVY, 2002, VAN DER HEIJDEN *et.al*, 2002, WILSON & RALSTON, 2006, VAN DER HEIJDEN & SHARPE, 2007), government's agencies (NIC, 2004) and non-profit organizations (FULTON, 2004).

Scenario planning is a structured process of contemplating about the fundamental uncertainty of the situation. This fundamental uncertainty is the main source of critical information. In the new global conditions of overwhelming information (Signals & Noises), scenario planning helps the decision makers to focus their attention. KLEIN *et.al* (2007) believes that anticipatory thinking includes active attention management — focusing attention on likely sources of critical information. Scenario planning tries to show that even if decision makers or members of organization know where to focus, they still suffer from their prejudgments, preconceptions and biases. It has some assumptions and believes that no one can have complete understanding of the world. Man's understanding is always partial, because his/her thinking is coloured by training and experience. Those experiences and the knowledge that human acquire, according to constructivism, is the mental construct that is determining how man sees the reality of the world. This phenomena and

imperfect knowledge acquisition is valid for organizations as well. Mary Catherine BATESON (1992) pointed out this phenomenon very well in the Nissan Report. She says that an organization usually "acts not in response to external reality but in response to an internally constructed version of that reality after it had passed through a series of filters". Therefore one of the main outputs of successful scenario planning is fitting the perception of organization's members to external reality. This could be done by looking at the future and the past from different perspectives and questioning implicit assumptions that people have about the future. Scenario planning helps people to question their assumptions and rethink the way of operating under uncertainty. After this process, participants in scenario planning project will see the future more clearly than they otherwise would. According to WACK, scenarios serve two purposes: (a) to anticipate and understand risk and (b) to discover strategic options of which the individual were previously unaware of.

The past has great influence on the way that people look at the future. Every member in organization has its own understanding of the past, and they possess different memories of the past, consequently, they see a different present and a different future. SCHWARTZ (1992) argues that "every scenario is based on different understanding of the past". Scenario planning encompasses this cognitive disorder and provides a neutral space for discussion of these different understanding of issues until consensus on the key issues is achieved. Scenarios shows how different understanding of the past cause different interpretations of the driving forces of change which in turn lead to different possible futures. By setting up several scenarios, the possibility space of any organization will be determined. In this context, possibility space is the summation of possibilities for action perceived by an observer (an individual or an organization). According to LISSACK & ROOS (1997), "the possibility space of the organization is constrained by the language of interpretation available to it and its members — for it is in that language that their reality will be constructed". They define organizations as "system of language".

Seeing Scenario Planning Through the Chaos Theory Lens

Scenario planning assumes that there is not only one sequential path to the future but interaction of many driving forces can produce different outcomes. Driving forces are the key factors that will determine the outcome of the scenario being created (SCHWARTZ, 1991). Like physicists that study initial conditions of a system, scenario planners scan the driving forces. Small changes in the key factors that interact as driving forces will produce different scenarios. In the chaos theory literature, this is known as "butterfly effect" and different futures or scenarios might be analogous to different "attractors".

The possibility space that is achieved by a set of scenarios can be explained by the strange attractor metaphor. This strange attractor or possibility space is the extension that future of organization is likely to unfold to. Every alternative future that organization can face in the future is one particular part in the boundary of strange attractor. In the successful scenario planning project, scenarios must be developed in the way that encompasses all attractors that a system (organization) can be attracted to (STALEY, 2002). MURRAY & KITCHEN (2004) have made good relationship between organizations mental models to the metaphor of attractor. They have defined the mental model of a system as a conception of relationships between elements of the organization's strategy (i.e. growth or overtaken the rival) in a linear cause and effect or feedback loops manner and link this mental model to a new attractor. The result of these relationships will be seeing the attractor emerging as the map of a view of how the system will behave. MURRAY & KITCHEN (2004) propose two kinds of mental models or attractors, one is the case that members of organization construct shared mental model intentionally as the future that they want to achieve for their own profit, and in the second type, they do not have control on the environment and new attractor emerges from the broader context (i.e. by actions of competitors) and they must adapt to it. In the section of social fractal, it was explained that by determining of the word choices and stories that members of organization are telling to each other, values that they share and eventually actions that they choose, we could develop an understanding of that organization's coherent strategic logic. This coherent strategic logic can be analogous to mental model or attractor that MURRAY & KITCHEN have proposed. Also, in the scenario planning literature, this strategic logic is known as the "official future". The stories or

scenarios that members of organization create as their mental model or new attractor have dissipative structures (CHERMACK, 2004). Dissipative structures like living systems are both open and closed; they are structurally open but organizationally closed. Despite that scenarios have plot and structure but authors of the scenarios are not limited in the event they have created in the story. They are conceptually open in terms on the imagined events in the story (CHERMACK, 2004). Another property of scenarios that can be explained by chaos theory concepts is autopoietic property. Autopoietic systems are those that produce and are being produced by nothing other than themselves. When we see an organization as a system of language, then, its members produce the stories and acting upon them and those actions and stories are making organization itself (CHERMACK, 2004). If we refer to MURRAY & KITCHEN work (2004), it can be discuss that building new mental model (new attractor) which will end up to constructing new future, only can emerge from interaction of different group in organization in the domain of their strategic conversations. This emergence of new mental model (new attractor) follows a self organized procedure. One result of this self organization is the knowledge that is based on constructed shared mental model which provides common understanding of the interaction of the organization with its environment. It can be said that chaos theory as a metaphorical model for explaining the phenomena is very suitable for acquiring deeper knowledge about scenarios and the process of scenario planning.

Conclusion

The building blocks of acquiring knowledge about the nature of scenarios and scenario planning were discussed along with the constructivism and constructivistic epistemology as the major philosophical foundation for scenario planning practitioners. Constructivism emphasizes that everybody in organization has his/her own private versions of reality which may or may not fit with the real world. These versions of reality are built by person and are not absorbed passively from the environment. The model of reality that a person constructs is a mental model that determines the way that person sees the surrounding environment. In order to provide a better understanding of mental models, chaos theory's concepts were used. By referring to LISSACK & ROOS definition of organization as "system of language", the importance of words, word choice, story and storytelling of organization's members were discussed. The words and the stories that those words embedded in, that are being told by members of organization, were considered as social fractal which emerge as mental model of organization. This mental model is forming organization's window to the future, known as "official future" in the scenario planning literature. The emphasis was placed on only those stories (included words that have been chosen) that are bases of observable actions of organization's members. The useful concepts like, fractal, attractor, self organization, dissipative structure, butterfly effect and autopoiesis were used to explain and improve the understanding of the nature of scenarios and scenario planning. Conceptualization of scenarios and scenario planning by using chaos theory's concept can help scenario planners to understand the requirements for organizations to fit their mental models with the reality or realities that they are going to face.

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SECTION 3 - FUTURES STUDIES IN THE WORLD

Switzerland

4th European Futurists Conference in Lucerne [Natalie DIAN]

A personal account by Natalie DIAN, Director, Visionscentret Framtidsbygget (The Vision Center for Futures Creation) Sweden.



Two days of lectures and networking, with all the inherent impressions and stimulations, left me feeling as if more time had passed. Having never been to a strictly European gathering, I was looking forward to discovering more about the "European" perspective and European futurism. Could I discern a European perspective above and beyond that I get from media?

Regarding the European perspective, I discovered that this conference included looking outward as much as inward. The first four speakers fell under the heading BRIC 2018 "Emerging Countries Reshaping the World". BRIC stands for Brazil, Russia, India and China. My general impression was that most of what the speakers said was a revision of the current situation and even future oriented material was more extrapolatory with a firm base in the current linear, mechanical, market oriented paradigm, formally recognized as an unchanging given. Only in the presentation of Brazil by Rosa ALEGRIA, founder of Perspektiva, was a new paradigm mentioned, exemplified by renovation of the GNP to include currently non-monitory productive sectors such as care giving (children and parents), volunteering, do-it-yourself, bartering, home based production, preservation of natural recourses etc. Rosa acknowledged Hazel HENDERSON for her thinking on this subject.



In the section on global threats, the subjects of war, illicit economy, water crisis and energy were discussed. In the evening, we heard Dr. Aubrey D. N. D. DE GREY from the Methuselah Foundation who presented a scenario of not only longer, but healthier older age, "A True Cure for Human Aging". We know that much work is being done on aging, but there is still much to be learned. Dr. DE GREY presented the research strategy he is following that could lead to longer and healthier life. The subject was approached in such a way that got me creating personal scenarios of what living to 100 or 150 in relatively good health might mean. I left the table muttering to myself "that was weird, that was weird!" Weird could be translated as a feeling of being totally out of my own reality and possessed with the ability to see how many of today's ideas of the future play out. What would I do with all those years and how would I be able to support myself? How would the world be with so many healthy, but older (wiser?) people? Not able to handle these questions in the moment I resorted to "weird". If acoustics and planning would have allowed, a round table discussion could have been very interesting. By the way, my longing for small discussion groups was validated by several participants. I think the time has come conference leaders!



Tuesday mornings first sessions had to do with the future of life styles and what *Europeans Expect from the Future of Europe 2030* based upon research done in 9 different European countries (Russia being considered a European country in this context), using survey method. Questions were asked about Europe in 2030 in the following areas: work, rich/poor relationships, education, security, family, environment, consumption and integration. The results of this study have been made into a book entitled



Future Expectations for Europe with comments by 19 futurists. The presentations were just a taste of what appears in this study published by Stiftung für Zukunftsfragen, underwritten by British American Tobacco.

I have to admit to missing two lectures on the subject of Innovation in favor of personal networking. Innovation is a sad little word, co-opted by fundamental market economic forces that link it with growth and bottom line. In some conference in the near future I would like to hear a discussion of innovation and social entrepreneurship as it relates to a new, sustainable paradigm.

What was not discussed was the conjunction of problem areas, overpopulation and economic crisis. I don't feel the consequences of these two trends are discussed as often as is necessary these days. If we go toward lower population growth, what are the consequences for the existing, growth based economy, or for a sustainable economy? Since I don't go to every conference nor read all of the voluminous articles and books I am sure to have missed a lot, but sitting here it appears to be the elephant in the room.

There is one last thought crystallized for me from this conference. Actually, it has been on my mind for some time. Leaving aside personal competencies, why are some futurists economically viable and others not? The closing presentation at the conference was meant to inspire us. It was based upon predicting futurists much like Yeats in "The Futurist" by James P. OTHMER. It is the predicting futurist who most often gets the jobs the big money lectures and media attention, while the academic futurists (who carry out present research with an eye to the future) come in second. Educating futurists, those who teach the futures studies processes, come in third (much like teachers everywhere). The short-term reality of most businesses means that a quick, two-hour lecture can be rationalized (the predicting futurist), even financing specific research (academic futurist) can be related to the bottom line, but building futures competence and the ability to do in-house futures studies takes time, and as we all know, time is money. I hope members of the World Futures Studies Federation will join me in making these distinctions clear to students, general audiences and the media. None is better than the other, they are different and we should be articulating the difference.

To round up, the conference was well run, elegant, convenient and filled with interesting people. I was glad to meet up with old colleagues and meet new ones. Whether you go to learn, to network or to understand how others are thinking you will find something at European Futurist Conferences.



Hungary

40th Anniversary of Futures Studies in Hungary

[Erzsébet NOVÁKY]

Erzsébet NOVÁKY is a Master Teacher and Head of the Futures Studies Department, Corvinus University of Budapest and the President of Committee on Futures Research at the 9th Section of Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

In 2008 we celebrated the 40-year jubilee of institutionalized Futures Studies in Hungary. The first step in teaching Futures in Hungary was made in September of 1968, the same year when the Club of Rome was established, a research seminar on Futures Research started by Dr. Prof.

Géza KOVÁCS, Head of the Department of National Economic Planning on the predecessor in title of Corvinus University of Budapest, the Karl Marx University of Economic Sciences.

Futures Research as an initiative at a Hungarian university was definitely a novelty in many senses and it had a great impact on other territories, as Futures Studies brought in new approaches, and connected teaching and research in a specific way. The initiative also influenced other research institutions and universities to become involved with Futures, mainly via students of Géza KOVÁCS. That is one of the main reasons why his research centre is known in Hungary and all over the world as the cradle of Futures Studies in Hungary.

The program of *40th Anniversary of Futures Studies in Hungary* had the following stages.

1. The Committee on Futures Research at the 9th Section of Hungarian Academy of Sciences greeted Dr. Prof. Géza KOVÁCS, founder of the Hungarian Futures Studies on his 80th birthday on 11th April 2008. Erzsébet NOVÁKY, the president of the committee presented his professional work and his main publications. The session emphasized that Géza KOVÁCS was not just a futurist, but also a planner and developer of the education.

2. At the Corvinus University of Budapest Dr. Prof. Géza KOVÁCS and Hungarian Futures Studies were celebrated at a ceremony on 21st April 2008. The leaders of the university, Géza KOVÁCS's associates and workmates, former students and followers gave speeches, emphasizing his role in establishing the Hungarian school of Futures Studies and setting up a new scientific discipline, his wisdom and greatness. The compilation on Prof. Géza KOVÁCS up to his 80th birthday, edited by Erzsébet NOVÁKY and Helga VEIGL contains the description of his main works and stages of life, the greeting speeches of the two ceremony and photos of him. The compilation is available in Hungarian online: www.uni-corvinus.hu/jkut.

3. The annually organised Futures Forest Camp in the village Kétbodony (situated in the Cserhát region of Hungary) was held between 1st and 3rd May 2008. The participants were futurists and young people - futurists to be, who discussed the results and actual questions of Futures Studies through lectures and workshops, and shaped the future in the spirit of the anniversary.

4. Section of Economics and Law of Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) has dealt with the past, present and future of Hungarian Futures Studies on a two day conference on 13th and 14th November 2008 under the frame of Celebration of Hungarian Science. Topic of the 7th Hungarian (Jubilee) Futures Studies Conference: "*Role of Futures Studies in the 21st century. Development of Futures Studies and interconnections with other disciplines.*" The conference was held in the spirit of interdisciplinarity. Representatives of Scientific Sections at HAS shared their views on the future of their research field and the connections to Futures Studies, for example role of technology integration in shaping regions, relation of Earth Science and Futures Studies, future of Hungarian language and new situation of global foods supply. We appraised the results and pitfalls of Futures Studies at the conference, and we remembered the early days of the Club of Rome. Experts who are professional futurists, nearly 40 people, gave an insight into the current results of the research. Lectures presented on a very wide range of topics, just to mention a few of them:

role of globalization in the Futures Studies of the 21st century, national cultural strategy, assessing and managing new technologies, possibilities of forecasting institutional changes, future of grape and wine, prospective tendencies of crime, digital gap and e-admission, moreover renewal of regional development, human-centric explanation of change in eco-physic approach, short term macroeconomic future of Hungary and the expounding of weak signals.

5. The colleagues from the Futures Studies Department of the Corvinus University in Budapest organised a "Future-Afternoon" on 15th November 2008 at the university for high-school students as future decision makers to deepen their knowledge on the future. Erzsébet NOVÁKY, the Head of the Department made an introductory presentation about the world of Futures Studies, Helga VEIGL research assistant presented the institutions of futurists and the method of Future Wheel. The participants created three Future Wheels in small groups with a facilitator. The afternoon ended with a "Book-Club", facilitated by Szandra VÉGH, demonstrator of the department. After reading a Hungarian novel we have discussed it within the concept of future orientation and consciousness: the students demonstrated their capacity in thinking in complexity and at multiple time levels. This program allowed the dialogue on the foremost problems and its possible solutions between teachers, parents, youth and futurists.

6. Beyond that we have commemorated the life of Hungarian Futures Studies on every forum, where Futures Studies was accepted and supported, and where we have found opportunity to hand down the spirituality of this grounded discipline which is not widely studied but still very important. First of all it was Dr. Mihály SIMAI's greeting on the occasion of Dr. Prof. Géza KOVÁCS's 80th birthday (Közgazdasági Szemle, July-August 2008) and furthermore the talks and interviews in the media (e.g. Hetek Országos Közéleti Hetilap, 168 óra, Figyelő, Közgazdász, MTA Honlap, HVG, Klubrádió, Helyi Téma, Echo-Tv).

7. Students are given even more detailed information on the last 40 years of Hungarian Futures Studies, the results achieved and the outlook in the frame of subjects held by Futures Studies Department.

We look ahead for the next 40 years of Futures Studies. We hope that this discipline could be part of all people lives and we will perform other relevant future tasks that raise the future orientation of the students and future decision makers. We dedicated our lives for this!

Global



Built Environment Foresight project [Ela Krawczyk]

The project initiated and conducted by The Futures Academy at Dublin Institute of Technology in collaboration with the RICS Foundation commenced in the autumn of 2007. It aims to explore complexity, uncertainty and change in the built environment using futures methods to produce a global property prospective for sustainable development specifically addressing the question of corporate responsible behaviour in the real estate industry.

The study looks at three spheres of influence: Europe, Asia-Pacific and America. The first report discussing general changes in the built environment and the future of real estate industry in Europe and Asia-Pacific will be published in spring 2009 at The Futures Academy website: www.thefuturesacademy.ie.

SECTION 4 - CALLS FOR PAPERS & EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Contributions to the Futures Bulletin welcomed!

We are inviting all members to contribute to the content of the Futures Bulletin by sending us your papers, news about changes in your and your community life, info about new books, reports, conferences that you have attended and you will attend and any other things that you would like to share with your fellow futurists.

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<http://www.wfsf.org>



The **FUTURE OF THE CONSUMER SOCIETY** conference is a continuation of the series of conferences organised by Finland Futures Research Centre and Finland Futures Academy. It will cover two subjects: consumption and futures research methods.

Consumption is becoming a key issue in the debate on creating a sustainable future. In particular, the world-wide spread of extremely resource-intensive lifestyles and economic practices has become one of the most important challenges we face.

Futures studies is ideally placed to help face this challenge as it includes tools for describing possible, probable, and desirable variations of the present that are both social and "natural". Furthermore, by examining a variety of possibilities we can come closer to choosing and shaping the future, rather than merely predicting it. Thus, futures studies offers valuable tools for understanding and guiding consumer society.

The conference will bring together the best futures studies experts in the scientific community to interact with corporate representatives and policymakers. Together they will develop images of alternative futures. The goal of the conference is to assist decision-makers by providing them with the tools to gain a better understanding of the potential consequences of present and future decisions.

The deadline for submitting the abstract is **February 1, 2009**. Please submit the abstract via an electronic form on the conference web pages: <http://www.futuresconference.fi/2009/>

WorldFuture
2009 Innovation and Creativity in a Complex World

July 17-19, 2009 • Chicago Hilton • Chicago, Illinois
Professional Members' Forum: July 20, 2009

TOPICS: Technology, education, health, business issues, families and communities, work trends, social change, the environment, global perspectives, futures research, government and politics, and much, much more.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Table-top displays, free career counselling by professionals, a bookstore with a large selection of future-oriented titles, and meet-the-author sessions. Professional pre-conference courses on a wide variety of subjects.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES: A complimentary welcoming reception, two keynote luncheons, group business meetings, reserved networking areas throughout the meeting, and more.