

#### Practical concern:

The many ways we use the future in practice

#### My concern:

The unfortunate ways we use the future in practice

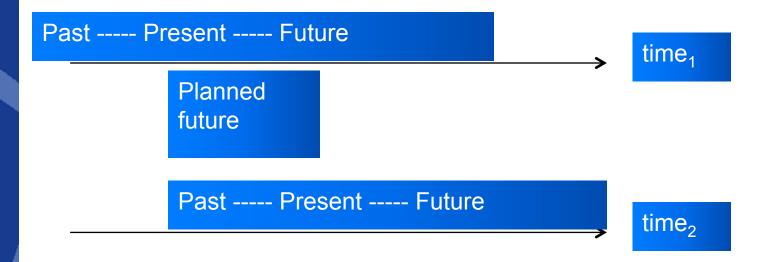
## The Future is Now! Planning in a World of Uncertainty and Ambiguity

Kristian Kreiner

ETH Forum Wohnungsbau 2013



### How the Future becomes Past by Being Promised





### The False Promise of an Attractive Future

Only an arrogant man would believe he could plan a city, only an unimaginative man would want to.

John Kay (2010). Obliquity. Why Our Goals Are Best Achieved Indirectly. P.178.

The future of cities, projects, organizations is an effect of

macro-behavior

Thomas C. Schelling (1978). *Micromotives and Macrobehavior* 



## The False Palse Attractive Fu

To think that you know the solution when you don't even understand the problem

Only an arrogant man would believe he could plan a city, only an unimaginative man would want to.

John Kay (2010). *Obliquity Achieved Indirectly*. P.17

The future of conganizations is a

Neglecting the resourcefulness of others and the potential for learning from experience

macro-behavior

Thomas C. Schelling (1978). *Micromotives and Macrobehavior* 



#### The Conditions for Planning

- Aspects of reality:
  - Complexity
  - Uncertainty
  - Ambiguity
- Alternative interpretations
  - Managerial inadequacy
  - Managerial conditions
- Alternative implications
  - Replace managers
  - New management strategies



### Projects as Complex Supra-Policies

- Courses of action / high order purpose / Projected future (Gilbert Ryle, Alfred Schütz)
- Inspiring, informing, governing the infra-action of thousands of variegated actors.
  - Flexibility
  - Opportunity-driven action
  - Non-exclusiveness



## Projects as Complex Supra-Policies

- Courses of act high order
   purpose / Proi Projects as organizational form or mental framework
- Inspiring, inform. mental frameworks infra-action of thousands of variegated actors.
  - Flexibility
  - Opportunity-driven action
  - Non-exclusiveness



# Case: Building the World's Most Accessible Office Building

- Making room for experimentation
- Motivating risk taking
- Making Stakeholders feel Safe
- Learning relevant lessons from experiential feedback



# Case: Building the World's Most Accessible Office Building

- Making root
- Motiv
   The future is clear
   The implications are unclear
   The success criteria ambiguous
- Making
- Learning relevant lessons from experiential feedback



## Conclusions: Plans as Myths and Tools

- Plans are mistakenly used as predictions/promises of the future
  - Accountability is problematic under real-world conditions
  - Our imaginations are real constraints
- Plans are an institutional necessity
  - We can treat them as myths
  - Or we treat them as inspiration: exploring potential implications