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Abstract

The future is commonly acknowledged as an important theme to investigate and discuss for the benefit of society, whereas we can at the same time acknowledge how current public discourse in our contemporary societies only offers poor, stereotyped and often negative visions of future.

The paper reframes the evolution of attitudes towards the future in our recent history through technological positivism, acknowledgment of a complex and unknowable future, emphasis on marketing reactivity in place of anticipation, increased development of dystopic visions of threatening unsustainable future. It reviews the current situation where the future is omnipresent in media stressing its poor, uniformed, technology-driven form lacking of creative imagining, accessible and attractive envisioning and rich public deliberation. The authors then build on a series of recent sustainable visioning activities (i.e. public cultural exhibition, digital interactive media, foresight visualisations for public authorities, projection exercises involving youths in schools and universities, etc.) to show how emerging practices involving designers' skills to generate participative visioning processes result in concrete forms of anticipation accessible to all publics and likely to enable both formal deliberative processes and informal social conversations on the future at societal level as well as empowerment of citizens in education for responsible living and democracy.

INTRODUCTION

> We need to know where we are going. We need to have
> vision. And that vision has to be articulated, it has to be socially
> shared, and discussed, and formulated.
> (Meadows, 1994)

We generally agree quoting Seneque that "To the person who does not know where he wants to go there is no favourable wind.". We can at the same time acknowledge how public discourse in our contemporary societies is only offering poor, stereotyped and often negative visions of future unlikely to support forward-looking social conversation.

To begin with, here are some of the main steps that contributed to build our current perception of the future. With the scientific and the industrial revolution, society began to evolve at an accelerated pace. Before modern times, future was predictable as a quasi reproduction of the past only with slow and minor changes occurring progressively over a historical rhythm. With the increased evolution brought by continuous technological progress, the future became more and more significantly different from the past and synonymous with improvement and better life. At the same time societal change, continuously accelerated through combinations of technological innovations, began to blur the perspectives of evolution in all sectors and the understanding of the future on the basis of technological evolution (Cazes, 1986).

The 1960's marked the passage from the vision of a future oriented by technological positivism to the acknowledgment that the future is complex and unknowable. This fundamental change leads to two different and opposite attitudes in front of the complexity of the future in contemporary society: on one hand, the acknowledgment that societal evolution is too complex to be accurately predicted. Only the development of a quick reactivity allows economic actors to face the versatility of the on-going evolutions. On the other hand the future is often a missing dimension in education (Hicks cited in Wayman, 2009).

Citizens have been even systematically "untrained" to imaginatively build and share visions because of our very pragmatic, rational and scientific-oriented western training and education (Meadows, 1994). Foresight methodologies and futures studies developed as an attempt to overcome the complexity of future thinking and professionalization of forward-looking activities made future only accessible to dedicated experts.

Finally in the last decades, the future has been increasingly dominated by awareness raising campaigns on environmental concerns and so-called grand challenges fed by continuous diffusion of dystopic visions of threatening unsustainable futures.

This short and simplified review of the evolution of attitudes towards the future in our recent history in the western world is an attempt to better understand how the current discourse on future seems to emerge as a mix of persistence from the previous ones listed above.

Let's try to describe what the perception of the future is made of for mainstream citizens nowadays.

The future in the media is omnipresent as a marketing argument and mainly based on reminiscence of technological positivism. Opposing this techno-driven future, long-term visions are mostly populated by the raise of environmental concerns and wicked societal problems depicting for the first generation in history a future that is likely not to be an improvement from the past situation. Beyond the dialectic between technological hope and unsustainable degradation, mainstream discourse on the future in the media is rather poor and uniformed lacking of visions to debate, creative imagining and disruptive perspectives. Moreover, the general acknowledgment that the future is unknowable and reserved to experts induces that it is hardly debated by a large share of the population accessing only partial information and stereotyped visions on future challenges and opportunities. This situation calls for creative imagining, accessible envisioning processes and evolution towards richer and wider public deliberation as a necessary condition for democracy.

METHODOLOGY AND KEY CONCEPTS

A series of interaction exercises carried out within the last 10 years by the authors in different professional contexts at Strategic Design Scenarios will be reported hereafter as cases of different participative forward looking methodologies and activities. Those cases are building on two key concepts that will be clarified in this section. They are an attempt to overcome the democratic deficit of our societies – especially at EU level – (A. Follesdal, 2006) in particular when talking about foresight:

- Stakeholders engagement in forward looking activities
The engagement of stakeholders ensures the legitimacy of decision-making processes. In particular it ensures that the voices of those who may be affected by the decision are heard and possibly taken into account.
Forward-looking activities are preparatory activities mainly aiming at informing decision-making processes. Stakeholders are described as "persons or groups who are directly or indirectly affected by a project as well as those who may have interests in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively" (IFC, 2007, page 10). Stakeholders – and to an extent, citizens – are therefore legitimate to take part on "equal terms" with experts and politicians (Olsen, 2003) to foresight and future studies likely to affect their conditions in the future. The definition of expertise is therefore becoming broader (Cuhls K., 2003) and widens the spectrum of potential participants to future discussion processes.
The cases of different participative forward looking methodologies and activities presented hereafter in this section explore practical solutions to engage stakeholders in forward-looking activities.

- **Expression of visions in explicit everyday practices and end-users terms**

To ensure a qualitative and wider stakeholder engagement, studies (and in particular here, future studies exploring challenges likely to affect these stakeholders), should be more systematically communicated "in a format and language that is readily understandable and tailored to the target stakeholder groups" (IFC, 2007, page 29, Stakeholder engagement). The level of the technical details, the "foresight jargon", the cultural sensitivity, the literacy levels, the capabilities of the various stakeholders should be carefully taken into account to ensure the accessibility of the future study and offer a greater opportunity for stakeholders to be informed properly and therefore to be able to contribute in the most pertinent way.

Beyond making the foresight understandable and reachable by everyone, foresight studies tend to result in generic description of futures and policy recommendations. They often end-up in visions or scenarios that do not express explicitly the consequences of those scenarios for the end-user. They do not respond to the question: what is it really going to change for me in concrete terms? The forward-looking activities are not, consequently, actionable for stakeholders. The cases of different participative forward-looking activities presented hereafter propose different approaches through narrative forms and visualisation processes to enable stakeholders to project themselves within those scenarios, experience and express their views on the different futures envisioned.

This deficit of democracy in forward-looking activities is therefore partly related to a lack of accessibility between these forward-looking activities and stakeholders. In the different cases presented hereafter the interaction exercises are showing different attempts to reduce this gap.

On the one hand they explore different approaches and methods to organise participative foresight involving any stakeholders and in particular laymen to input as experts of daily living and

Core strategy is to enhance the quality and accessibility of (urban) places in order to reduce the needs and desire of mobility.

Eco-renovation as a new social norm...
Core strategy is to leverage on low-energy housing as a new norm to stimulate and enable massive refurbishment of existing housing stock

co-design the visions that may orient – in one way of another – their future. On the other hand, they aim at producing explicit envisioning. Through the means of visualizations and narratives, they aim at providing different settings where citizens can experience the alternative futures and effectively express their own choice between them.

CORPUS Workshops

The context of the first case is the CORPUS European research project (funded under FP7) developed between 2010 and 2013. CORPUS intended to develop a knowledge-brokering platform on sustainable consumption and production between scientists and policy makers based on a series of off-line interaction exercises and online knowledge sharing processes. In particular a series of 3 workshops focusing critical consumption areas respectively of food, mobility and housing explored the potential of collaborative scenario building as a knowledge brokering approach. The workshops consisted of around 40 European scientists and policy makers developing during one day a shared understanding of the strategic context, building together visions of desirable and possible sustainable futures and backcasting a shared agenda of research and actions.

The forward looking methodology in which we are interested here is the initial step of these 3 workshops organized as an internal exhibition suggesting a sustainable society in the horizon 2030 (Jégou & all, 2013). The aim was to facilitate and speed-up the engagement of participants joining the workshop, from different professional and socio-cultural contexts in Europe, into the forward looking exercise.

These light exhibitions consist each of 30 posters presenting a panorama of different possible sustainable visions of food, mobility and housing. These visions result from previous steps of the CORPUS project involving the same groups of participants.

◀ Figure 1: Forward-looking workshops starting with the opening of an immersive and provocative exhibition which depicts visions from 2030 on sustainable food, mobility and housing in the framework of the CORPUS research project.

Family Take Away
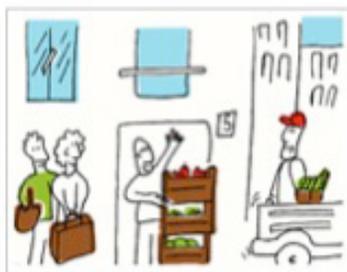
Food Purchase Group

Food Atelier

Clothing Care services
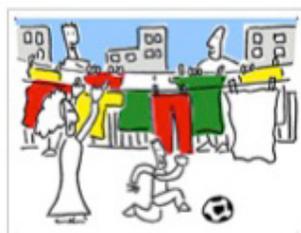

Energy Coach Services

Urban Garden

Local Organic Canteen

Vegetable Bag Subscription

Urban Composting Atelier

Laundry on the Rooftop

The kick-off of the workshops consists in an informal opening of the exhibition set up in the workshop room (see Figure 1). Participants were encouraged during a 30 minutes visit to tag the posters with their comments and discuss them with others. Then, the following steps of the workshops took place within the same exhibition setting so that participants could find stimulation when looking for ideas, refer to the visions to discuss their views and support their discussions throughout the course of the workshop.

Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles online survey

The context of the second case is the setting of the online Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles launched by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Swedish Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles (UNEP, 2011). More than 8000 young adults ranging from 18 to 35 years old from 20 countries took part to the study asking them to express what a more sustainable way of living could be like starting from their current context and experience. The survey was translated in 10 languages and contributions were collected and analysed by an international network of 45 partner organizations, including the International Association of Universities, 28 universities and higher education institutions, research centres and experts, civil society organizations, communications agencies and youth groups.

The projective approach in which we are interested in is the particular setting of the survey. Asking youth worldwide to react and comment on sustainable lifestyles was pointed as a difficulty, i.e. most of these youth had a very vague idea of what sustainable lifestyles could be inducing the risk of getting only generic and superficial answers and finally flat results for the survey. In order to overcome this problem and stimulate the online interactions with the questionnaires, nine scenarios proposing visions of sustainable lifestyles were used as an invitation for reactions and comments.

◀ Figure 2: Extracts from a selection of 9 scenarios suggesting sustainable ways of living were included in the survey in order to feed youths understanding of sustainable lifestyles with examples and prompt their reactions.

The 'scenarios' depict a range of sustainable solutions for food, mobility and housekeeping based on the work done with students from 16 different design schools across the world within the 'Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles' previous worldwide network project supported by UNEP and the Swedish Taskforce. Each scenario includes social, institutional and/or technical innovations (e.g. urban gardens, car sharing and farmers markets) likely to affect everyday life in a sustainable way. It was presented in a short animated narrative based on comic-stripe style drawings to facilitate its readability from any culture (Figure 2).

Sustainable Everyday interactive exhibitions

The third case is based on a travelling exhibition entitled Sustainable Everyday (Quotidiano Sostenibile) developed and first inaugurated at the Triennale di Milano in 2003 (Manzini & Jégou, 2003). The exhibition was then set up in various venues in Belgium, Italy, India, France, Netherlands Canada and Japan until 2010. The exhibition presents a series of 18 short video clips showing different and more sustainable ways of living.

The particular design process of the scenarios presented in the exhibition is the forward-looking approach we want to focus on here. A collaborative process was organized to progressively co-design the sustainable scenarios with different samples of their potential users. At the beginning, a small group of 8 families in Brussels, Milan, Chicago and Hong Kong were involved online to develop the sustainable solutions initiated by the design team, to progressively refine them and to present them in the form of 18 short self-explanatory video-clips. The first venue of the exhibition in Milan was then designed as a follow-up and enlargement of this collaborative design process.

Figure 3: Visitors using bar-code tickets interact with the proposed set of visions and formed their own combination, their personal sustainable way of living.

	Nathalie	Janko	Erik	Mia	Hamed	Joseph	Veronique	Elena

family like service
Foot Bus
Home Laundry
Micro Nurseries
Family Take Away

community housing
Party Place
Open Handyshop
Washing Restaurant
Kid House

extended home
Multi User Laundry
Collective Rooms
Co-Housing
Car Sharing

elective communities
Neighbourhood Library
Kids Clothing Chain
Active Shopping List
Living Cook Book

service club
Shopping Club
Wood Atelier
Green Gardening
Second Hand Atelier

direct network access
Regional Market
Country Meal
Product Time Sharing
E-Stop

FAMILY TAKE-AWAY

dinner is prepared for the family and for some extra singles living in the neighbourhood

portions will be picked-up by students or delivered to elderly people nearby

more people are living off the same family kitchen equipment

At the entrance, visitors were given bar-code tickets (Figure 3) and used them to choose along the visit of the exhibition between the different sustainable solutions expressed in the 18 video-clips. At the end of the visit each visitor had formed his/her personal sustainable way of living through his/her own combination of single solutions. The different combinations were then displayed and commented to each visitor. They were then recorded in a database enriched with each new venue of the exhibition in a different socio-cultural context worldwide and discussed on the sustainable-everyday-project.net platform. The complete collaborative forward-looking process on sustainable living was then based on a mix of off-line interactions with users in the suite of travelling exhibitions and online animation of discussions.

Collaborative Services social innovation based design

In this case, the particular sustainable forward-looking process is a series of workshops held in design schools worldwide and building on social innovation to co-design new and more sustainable ways of living.
This series of workshops first took place within the EMUDE research project at European scale and then within the Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles follow-up project supported by UNEP, UN-DESA and the Swedish Taskforce on Sustainable Lifestyles in Brazil, China, India and Africa between 2004 and 2009. A similar workshop process was held in local design schools in 25 cities of the participating countries. Students were involved in finding and investigating cases of social innovation in their cities and documenting them through pictures and interviews.
The projective activity we are interested in here consists of the design exercise organized to infer collaborative services from the collected cases of social innovation. All participating students were prompted to select from their different socio-cultural

◄ Figure 4: The scenario is presented through a matrix showing different categories of Collaborative Services inspired by social innovations and different profiles of users likely to adopt them.

standpoints the social initiatives that suggested new and more promising sustainable ways of living.

Then, they develop the underlying solutions as new forms of services delivered in a participative way. In particular they orient their design action in order to make new services more accessible and desirable to a larger share of the population while keeping or reinforcing their sustainable qualities. The complete process in the different schools generate an articulated scenario based on a large range of collaborative services that address all dimensions of daily living and depict new forms of society based on services largely co-produced by the people who benefit from these services by encouraging sharing of resources, mutual help and in general more sustainable results (Figure 4). This scenario of sustainable collaborative services elaborated from grassroots creativity worldwide was then presented through a series of articulated story-boards showing bits of life integrating these collaborative services developed for different population profiles (Jégou & Manzini, 2008).

Disruptive Imaginings mashup workshop

The context of the fifth case is the Disruptive Imaginings retreat that took place in Canada in June 2014 and focused on bringing together experts and practitioners from the three fields of sustainability, future(s) and art(s). Twenty international participants working at different levels and organizations (professors, consultants, artists, curators, futurists, etc.) shared a full week to imagine and experiment with ways of building capacity for imaginative foresight and world making as well as engaging people in immersive experiences of sustainable futures.

The forward-looking methodology in which we are interested here is an experimental scenario mashup workshop held within

◀ Figure 5a: The Disruptive Imaginings scenario mashup workshop builds on the mixing of different sources and natures of foresight materials.

the Disruptive Imaginings retreat which aimed at involving all participants in a collaborative scenario building process. As stated above, most of the experts involved had some expertise on forward-looking activities whether directly in the foresight discipline or indirectly involved in the production of research, professional studies or intellectual work on future implications of Grand Challenges. They also represent an extensive background of knowledge and experiences in vision, scenario or foresight exercises built in different areas and contexts, generic or sector specific (i.e. food, mobility, energy, etc.), worldwide or geographically localised and at various levels (local, regional, national, European). The aim of the scenario mashup workshop was then to organize a mixing process between all these different partial conjectures on the future available through the participants – to literally mash them up – to generate tentative meta-scenarios.

Technically, visions issued from the different scenarios were printed on separate cards and spread on the floor in order to allow participants to choose, pick, re-combine and mix the pieces (Figure 5b). The purpose was to build on the richness and variety of the experiences available, to foster the strategic conversation on the future and to possibly obtain more accurate and pertinent visions to be debated. The very fact that inputs came from different sources following different aims allowed participants to step back from overly focused and sometimes narrow visioning processes and to consider the issues from many different technological, social, economical, sustainable, etc. contexts. The visions that emerged from that exercise lacked maturation due to the time constraints and the experimental character of the workshop, but it confirmed the interest of a mash-up process in order to build more articulated and hopefully less naïve conjectures.

◀ Figure 5b: The different foresight materials were presented on a large series of single cards spread on the floor in order to reach more articulated and accurate visions to debate within the Disruptive Imaginings workshop.

5. COMPÉTENCES

(handwritten notes)

MODALITÉS

1. MÉTIER

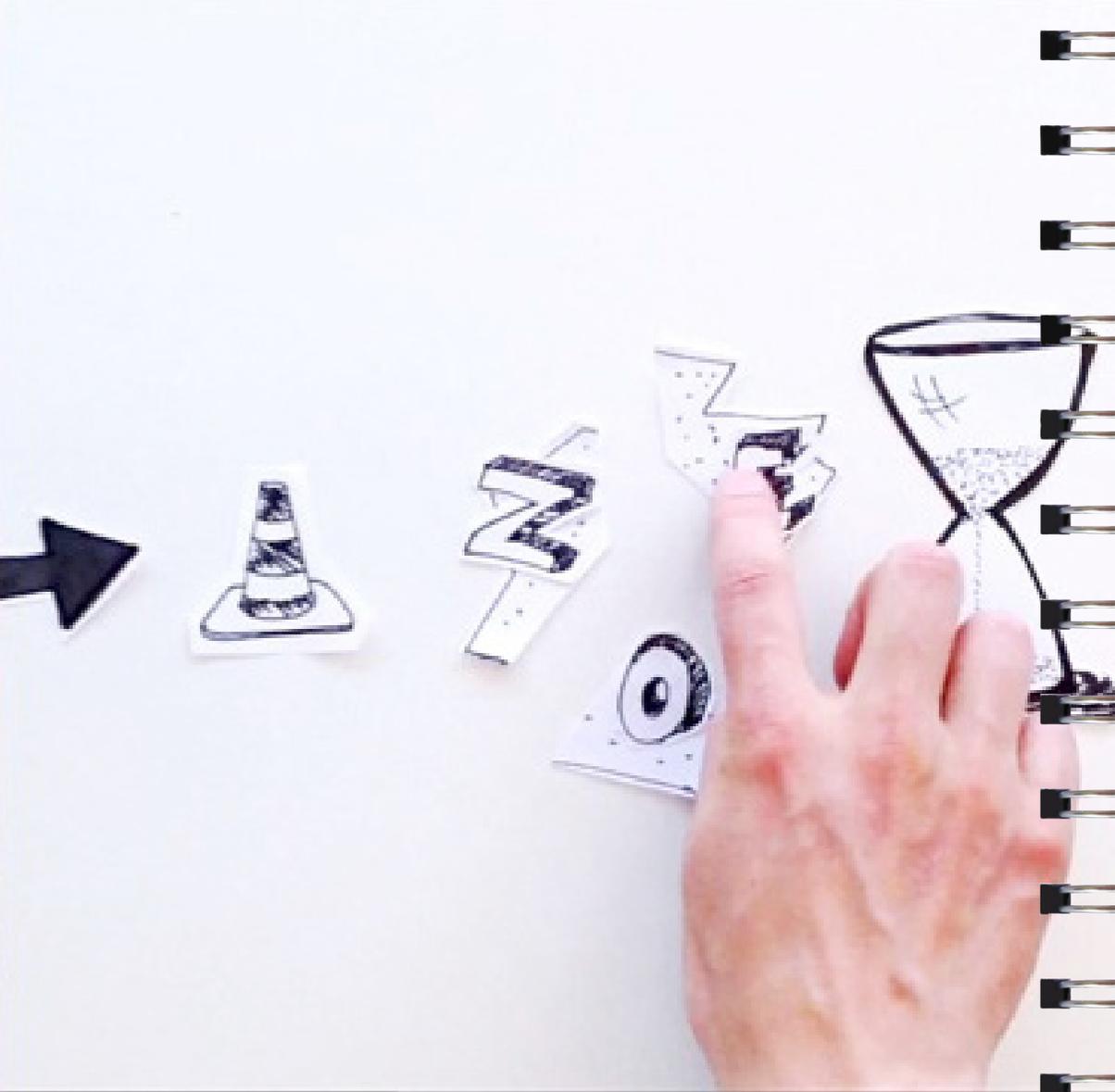5. COMPÉTENCES

ACTIVITÉS

New skills for sustainable living workshops

The sixth case takes place in the context of the PERL (Partnership for Education and Research for Responsible Living) international network focusing on consumer citizenship, education for sustainable consumption, social innovation and sustainable lifestyles. In particular, one of the PERL workgroup was focusing on: new skills for sustainable living. This workgroup's activities intend to investigate sustainable living starting from the necessary skills: initial basic skills on which primary education is based (i.e. collaboration instead of competition) to enable the emergence of sustainable citizens and life-long learning skills to facilitate the development of green jobs and the greening of professional competences in all professional sectors.

The forward-looking methodology that interests us here is a series of workshops held in different professional arenas and aiming at debating the possible evolutions of jobs towards the emergence of a more sustainable society. Concretely each workshop gathers between 10 to 15 professionals in different hosting institutions such as a public administration, a non-profit or a business organisation to work together for half a day. Participants are first familiarized with Grand Challenges at the horizon of 2030-2050 and with sustainable scenarios hypothesis drawn from recent research projects including SPREAD. Then, a series of specific challenges derived from main sustainable challenges and focused on the particular professional area they are working on are presented and shared with the group. Then, subgroups work and try inferring from these particular challenges the possible responses likely to emerge from their professional sector: evolution of professional skills to align sustainable requirements, new jobs profiles emerging to tackle sustainable issues, etc.

Each workshop ends with the creation of a series of updated professional skills or new profession profiles (Figure 6). These new sustainable professions are presented as a patchwork of

Figure 6: New skills for sustainable living workshop process involving interactions between participants with cardboard blocks presenting futures challenges and already existing visions in order to build their own vision of new job profiles and professional skills.

current, updated and new sustainable skills and visualized as a form of Archimboldo picturing the new professional as a collage of sustainable competences.

Agenda 21 VISIONS+21 workshops

Our seventh case is the Rio+20 and after: Agenda 21 of tomorrow task force set-up by the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Lodging together with the National Agenda 21 Committee and sectorial associations to envision and outline possible evolution of the Agenda 21. The aim of this foresight exercise was to question the principles emerged from the World Summit in 1992 and to propose scenarios of adaptation of local governance towards local sustainable transformations. SDS supported the organization of the participative and creative scenarios building process through a progressive process including strategic mapping, projective challenges, video sketching, and backcasting steps with a group of about 30 experts working with Agenda 21 at local or national levels. Three future scenarios presented through video animations were built collectively and covered different aspects of Agenda 21: citizen engagement, societal activities (Engagements 21), the right to experiment in terms of policy and governance (Democities 21) and hybrid task-forces of public-private-citizen partnerships (Pact 21).

The particular forward-looking methodology that interests us here is the development of a toolbox that was co-designed as a follow-up kit to enable local Agenda 21 to perform a similar range of creative and projective exercises within their own context (Figure 7). The toolbox was then tried out and refined within a series of 5 territorial experimentations in France.

The VISIONS+21 toolbox ended up being co-designed with its potential users and civil servants (especially Agenda 21

◀ Figure 7: The VISIONS+21 toolbox co-design with local Agenda 21 coordinators and local sustainable development experts to stimulate through a series of simple collective exercises, visioning activities at territorial level.

coordinators) and disseminated through a national training process to allow them to facilitate local visioning exercises. This project evolved from an initial group of experts (about 30) and reached out, through the 5 territorial experimentations, to more than 100 stakeholders from diverse sectors (city authorities, departmental, regional and national ones, private sector, NGOs, etc.).

Cité du Design story-telling process

The eighth case takes place in Saint-Etienne, a medium-sized town in the Rhône-Alpes region hosting in 2008 the Biennale Internationale du Design, a fair that has established itself, over the last ten years, as one of the major design events in France. The city and surrounding metropolitan decided to follow this trend and create a permanent institution, called la Cité du Design, including research and design facilities, a design school and exhibition halls in order to boost the struggling local social and economical fabric and promote Saint-Etienne as a major capital of design. Beyond the construction and refurbishment of an industrial infrastructure to host the new institution, a debate was needed to define the functionalities and living systems of the new institution (Jégou, 2010).

The forward-looking activity we are looking at here is based on a large participative story-telling process. Multi-stakeholders ranging from the city council, the cultural institutions of the region, the design community, local and national industrialists as well as inhabitants and shopkeepers from the very neighbourhood were asked to tell short stories on how they imagine their daily living with the future Cité du Design. The over 150 collected stories were re-combined into 40 stories presented as a booklet and turned into a series of short animated video-sketches constituting a true collective projection (Figure

◀ Figure 8: A collective story-telling process involving stakeholders in the city of Saint-Etienne and beyond allow to co-produce and agree on a collective projection defining the basis for the new Cité du Design institution.

8). The shared vision was then used to define the specifications of the macro-service and largely communicated to the multiple audiences of the Cité du Design.

SPREAD scenarios

The ninth and last case is part of the SPREAD Sustainable lifestyles 2050 FP7 European research project running from 2011 to 2012. The SPREAD project intended to develop a social platform and to identify research and policy needs for sustainable lifestyles. Various stakeholders from business, research, policy and civil society explored four aspects of sustainable lifestyles: moving, living, consuming and society. This process resulted in four scenarios: Empathetic Communities, Governing the Commons, Local Loops and Singular Super Champion (Rijnhout & Goicoechea, 2013).

The interesting forward-looking approach here is the originality of the way the four scenarios were presented. Each one was showcased in a 5 minutes 'video clip' giving the 'spirit' of each of the SPREAD scenarios and serving as teasers for the complete scenario reports. The videos were built like short telenovelas, a feuilleton that shows "bits of daily life" in a narrative way with only one or two characters having apparent mundane discussions but within a daily "future" sustainable lifestyle set (Figure 9). The short and visual formats of those video clips reach a wider audience and help "incarnating" the scenarios with a day-to-day language and setting.

The sustainable lifestyles aspects are not shown as the front content but as a more disguised element incorporating in the background themes like technology-driven daily life, collaborative ways of living, locally-centred lifestyles or sustainable excellence and efficiency. The four telenovela-like clips are contrasted but complementary and are an invitation for discussion and reaction

◄ Figure 9: The different sustainable scenarios that emerged from the SPREAD research project were presented in the form of telenovelas-like short video clips in order to picture the resulting changes of lifestyles at family everyday level.
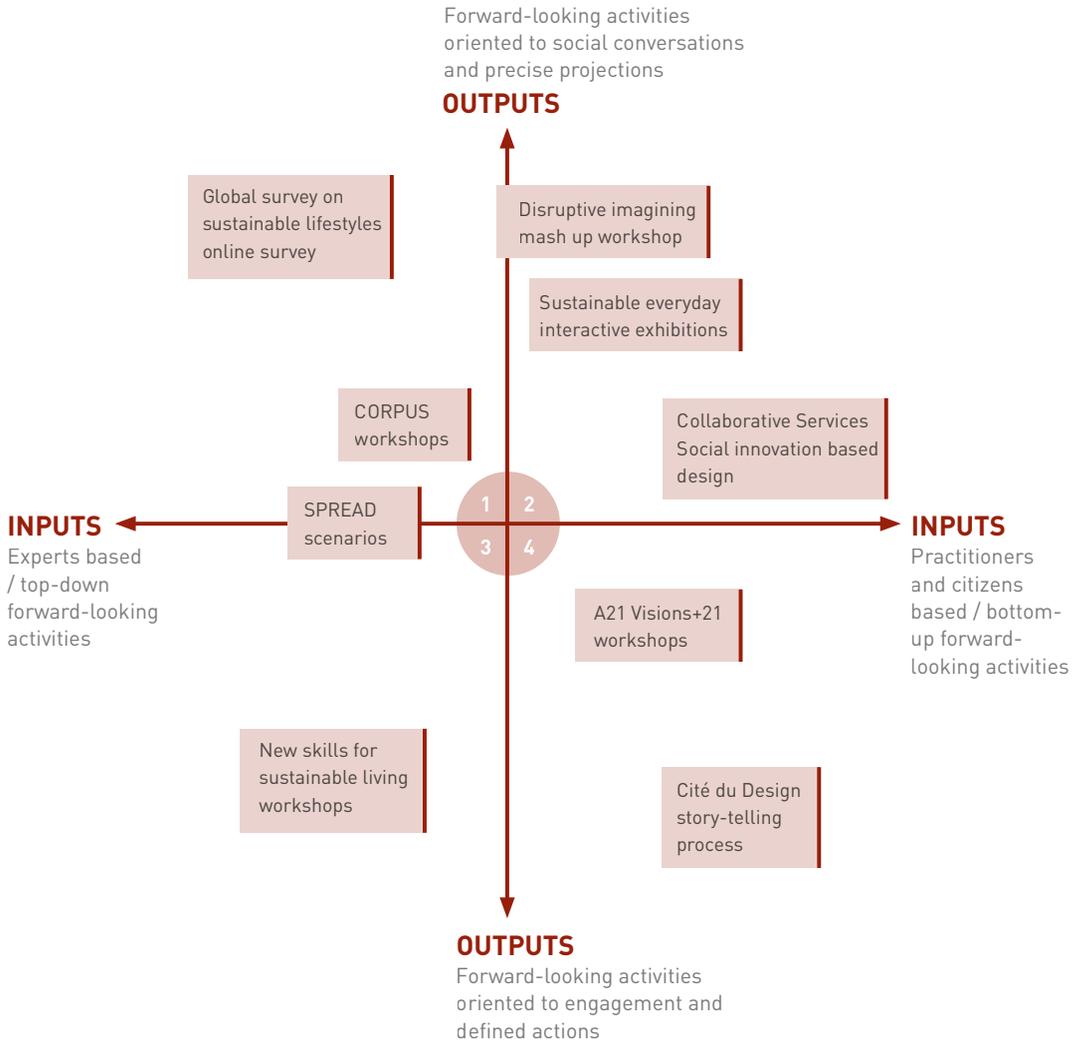
in the same way soap operas provoke family and relatives conversations. It also allows taking the scenarios out of the hands of the experts and to share them with a wider audience.

The selection of nine interaction exercises reported above is the result of independent research projects. They are also linked one to the other by the fact that they have been developed in the same professional framework of the Strategic Design Scenarios consultancy. They therefore build on each other. Although they generally don't relate to each other, they inspire and influence each other. They develop as a larger and iterative participative forward-looking process.

In the first half of this loop process, groups of diverse stakeholders in collaboration with Strategic Design Scenarios share their knowledge and expectations to build scenarios of a desirable sustainable society. Then, in the second half of this loop process, the outputs of their work, the possible new sustainable ways of living they invent are used as stimulation inputs to kick-start a new loop and further explorations of sustainable ways of living and societies. For instance several of the forward-looking exercises presented focus on the question of food. In each of these cases, the question of getting more healthy and quality food in the future emerges from different points of view: sustainable food policy making in the 2.1. CORPUS workshops build on the interaction with youths in the 2.2. Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles online survey, which was building on investigation of social innovation by households in 2.4. Collaborative Services social innovation based design, etc.

The different projects and studies engaging various stakeholder groups capitalise over years. They blur between the various iterative loops processes, cross-fertilize, mutually enrich and generate more complex and articulated visions of sustainable society.

Forward-looking activities
oriented to social conversations
and precise projections

OUTPUTS

Global survey on
sustainable lifestyles
online survey

Disruptive imagining
mash up workshop

Sustainable everyday
interactive exhibitions

CORPUS
workshops

Collaborative Services
Social innovation based
design

INPUTS

Experts based
/ top-down
forward-looking
activities

SPREAD
scenarios

| 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |

INPUTS

Practitioners
and citizens
based / bottom-
up forward-
looking activities

A21 Visions+21
workshops

New skills for
sustainable living
workshops

Cité du Design
story-telling
process

OUTPUTS

Forward-looking activities
oriented to engagement and
defined actions

3. RESULTS

These series of cases of forward-looking interaction exercise as introduced in the section 2, tends on the one hand to explore different approaches to organise participative foresight involving stakeholders to co-design future visions. On the other hand they aim at producing explicit envisioning where citizens can experience and assess between alternative futures.

This suggests 2 different axes along which this selection of forward-looking cases could be mapped. These 2 axes are presented below in the Figure 10 :

- A first axis describes the inputs of the forward-looking activity: the inputs is either top-down and driven by the work of a small number of sustainability foresight experts or bottom-up and based on aggregation of experiences from a larger number of stakeholders or citizens.

- A second axis describes the outputs of the forward-looking activities: the outputs is either oriented to stimulate more reflexion, engagement and social conversations based on the sustainable visions or aimed at triggering more concrete projections and defined actions.

The scheme showed in Figure 10 is the combination of 2 axes that includes the input (the origins of material used to stimulate the interaction) and the output (the purpose of the result generated). It describes 4 quadrants representing 4 characteristic typologies of forward-looking interaction exercises where the cases presented in the previous paragraph can be mapped.

The scheme showed in Figure 10 is the combination of 2 axes

◄ Figure 10: Mapping of the selection of cases of forward-looking activities according 2 axes: input origins of material used to initiate the forward-looking activity and output purpose of the result generated.

that includes the input (the origins of material used to stimulate the interaction) and the output (the purpose of the result generated). It describes 4 quadrants representing 4 characteristic typologies of forward-looking interaction exercises where the cases presented in the previous paragraph can be mapped.

Quadrant 1: Loading the future buffer…

The first quadrant describes forward-looking exercises where available knowledge on future challenges, existing scenarios and promising solutions are shared between foresight experts in order to emulate more reflections on the future in order to generate more precise projection or to stimulate social conversation and debates.

In the "CORPUS workshops case" participants were specialized and very knowledgeable experts or practitioners in their respective fields and local contexts but lacking from an integrated understanding on sustainable living all over Europe. Stakeholders take part to a forward-looking exercise with their socio-cultural and professional points of view and bias. The main issue is then to bridge the knowledge between the participating experts and to support them in forming together a shared and richer vision of the future.

It's even more the case for laymen who often react on the basis of a very partial knowledge and thoughts on the topic. Youths worldwide involved in the case of the Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles (2.2) had very little or partial in-sights on what sustainable lifestyles in their own living contexts could be and needed suggestions and ideas prior to take part to the survey.

There is therefore a need to 'load participants' buffer with food for thought in order to kick-off an imaginative visioning process, and enable a richer deliberation among them.

Quadrant 2: Co-inventing discontinuities

The second quadrant describes forward-looking exercises where the expert community input is very limited and a wider collaborative field process that includes civil society and citizens is required to generate visions.

In the Sustainable Everyday case (2.3), the purpose was primarily to use a travelling exhibition as a pretext for triggering social conversation between visitors on sustainable everyday life in different socio-cultural contexts worldwide and generate new promising sustainable solutions (products, services, neighbourhood infrastructures) beyond the established experts' knowledge. In the Collaborative services case (2.4), a large Europe-wide investigation of social innovation helped to uncover the entire emerging new arena of collaborative consumption and shared economy. Finally in the Disruptive Imaginings case (2.5), the initial knowledge of the participating foresight experts was not low but the purpose of the workshop was to go beyond their single knowledge and to cross-fertilize each other with the multiple experiences and the different forward-looking studies everyone has conducted over the last decade and to generate experimental scenarios building approach and to combine the most promising ones.

In all 3 examples of this quadrant, the visualized scenarios generated along the process both trigger and catalyse a forward-looking activity among participants and present the advanced vision emerging from their interaction.

Quadrant 3: Translate and catalyse new meanings

The third quadrant describes forward-looking exercises aiming at combining the current expert community knowledge on sustainable living or to translate it from an area of expertise to

another in order to facilitate the implementation of scenarios, the definition of precise and concrete solutions and the involvement of stakeholders on the field.

In the New skills for sustainable living case (2.6), the workshops built on existing knowledge and assumptions on sustainable lifestyles generated in previous foresight projects to translate them from the user to the provider point of view. They stimulate the generation of new professions and jobs likely to generate and enable the sustainable lifestyles considered at start. In the SPREAD case (2.9), telenovelas-style short videos picturing different sustainable ways of living allowed to support the dissemination of the scenarios that emerged from the SPREAD research project beyond the researcher community and mainstream. They use a popular TV format to suggest and trigger behaviour change towards sustainable ways of living.

In both cases presented in this quadrant, the visualization material generated embody the outputs of the forward-looking exercises and make them more concrete and tangible in order to stimulate their implementation by the stakeholders involved.

Quadrant 4: Securing engagement

The fourth and last quadrant is focussing on forward-looking exercises that aim at facilitating the appropriation and local adaption of visions towards stakeholders engagement and implementation of solutions.

In the the Visions+21 toolbox case (2.7), the issue is less to invent or explore the future rather than reviewing broad scenarios emerging from foresight activities at national or European level. The tools from the toolbox question and engage local stakeholders (i.e. citizens, municipalities, companies, non-

profits, etc.) to produce their own vision adapted to the local territory and catalyse their commitment to collaborate for its implementation. In the Cité du Design case (2.8), a large story-telling process among local population and local stakeholders has allowed building a collective projection and a common understanding bridging divergences prior to agreeing collectively on a shared program for this new public institution.

In the cases reported in this quadrant, the participative generation of visions by a large number of stakeholders aims at both generating their own personalized vision or adapt it to the local context and so doing, catalyse these stakeholders to take immediate concrete actions and implement the visions that emerged.
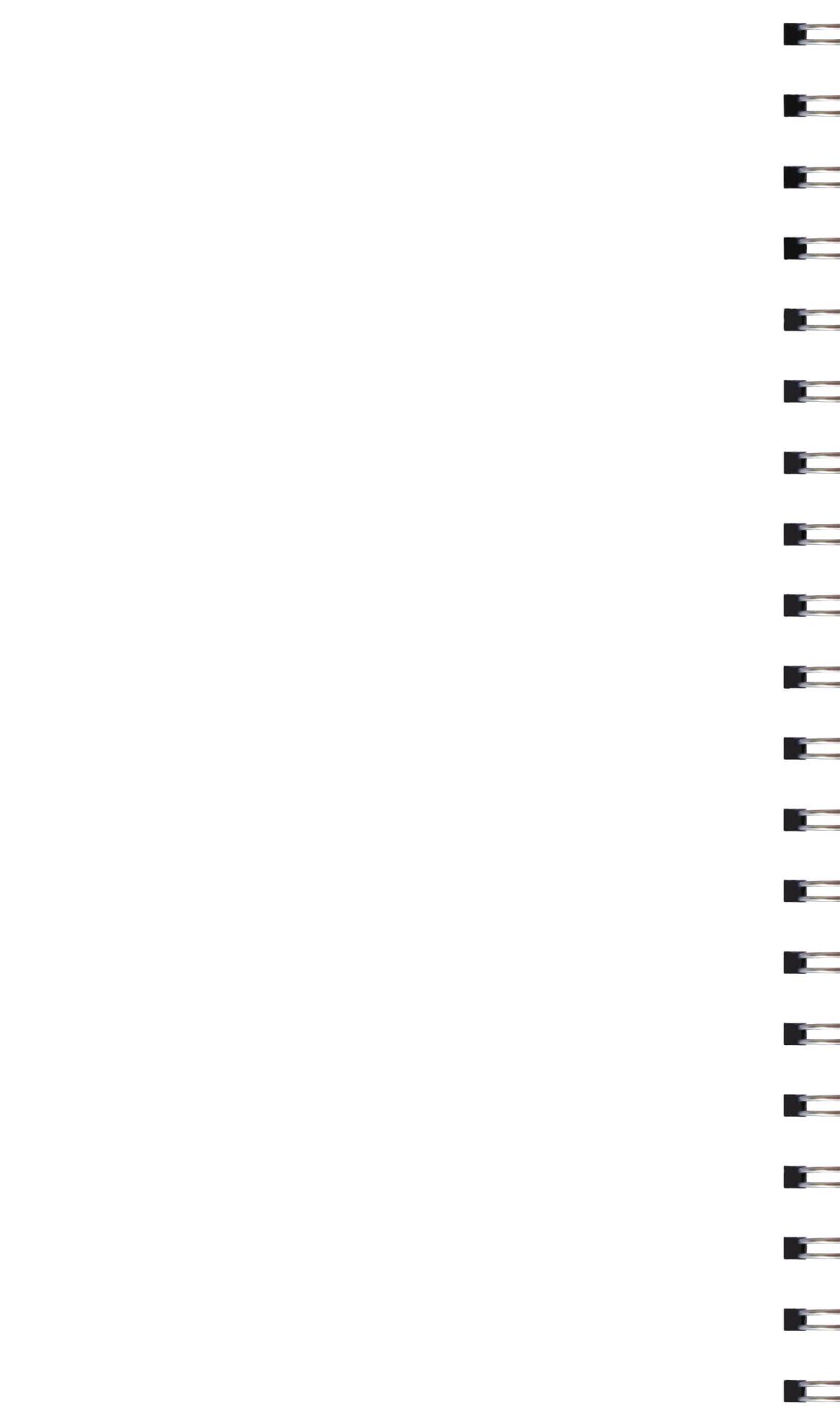
4. CONCLUSION

The classification of the 9 cases of forward-looking exercises along the nature of inputs they are based on and the purpose of the output generated will be discussed in the conclusion. In particular 2 aspects of the initial hypothesis of the paper focusing on envisioning as an enabling tool for social empowerment and democracy will be presented:
- the challenge of making the discourses on the future visible and accessible to support democratic social conversations.
- the promotion of envisioning as a daily life, personal and societal activity to support social empowerment;

Future visualisations to support democratic social conversations

All examples described in part 2 are presenting different forms of visualizations of the proposed scenarios and visions. These visualization techniques derived from designer skills projecting conceptual visions into a range of new products, services and infrastructures. They simulate the interaction between the resulting new material environment and potential users. A number of iterative loops characteristics of design approaches allow mutual adaptation between users and the designed environment.

The resulting participative visioning processes provide concrete forms of anticipation accessible to all stakeholders. Moreover they show along the first axis in Figure 10, tentative integrations of top-down expert-driven forward-looking researches with more bottom-up stakeholder and citizen-based envisioning processes. So doing, they constitute forms of mediation readable both by professional experts and laymen. They facilitate the debate on

the future between each other and in general they assume a brokering effect between stakeholders in society. When pointing desirable scenarios and plausible solutions they also facilitate the engagement of stakeholders.

## Daily life envisioning for social empowerment

Forward-looking activities are traditionally located in the top-left part of the scheme Figure 10 consisting of expert-based studies and aiming at questioning grand challenges at societal level. Moving from top-left quadrant to bottom-right one, forward-looking activities are more based on stakeholders and citizens experiences and oriented to foster the same stakeholders and citizens to engage and take action. They tend to feed from daily life and feedback in daily life.

Moreover, the use of daily life scenes as a mean to express, communicate and share discourses on the future make them not only more understandable but also meaningful and actionable in daily life. Beyond policy making, forward-looking activities are then addressing a new posture at daily living level. The same anticipation and foresight tools make sense to support social conversation at local level, help individual actors to question and orient their action. People's images of the future affect actions in the present, as people either try to adapt to what they see coming, or to act in a way that creates the future they wish for (Schreiner & Sjøberg, 2004).

In a fast-moving environment, families, citizens prior to making personal choices (i.e. changing job, orienting kids' education, moving to another location on the territory, etc.) could question their future options in the light of different personal scenarios. The role of the futurist, then, is to encourage people to explore alternative futures and to construct images of the future. And in so doing, people become more competent, effective and

responsible actors, both in their personal lives and in their organizational and societal roles (Bell cited in Kicker D, 2009). Daily life envisioning emerges then as a determinant asset for social empowerment towards responsible living.
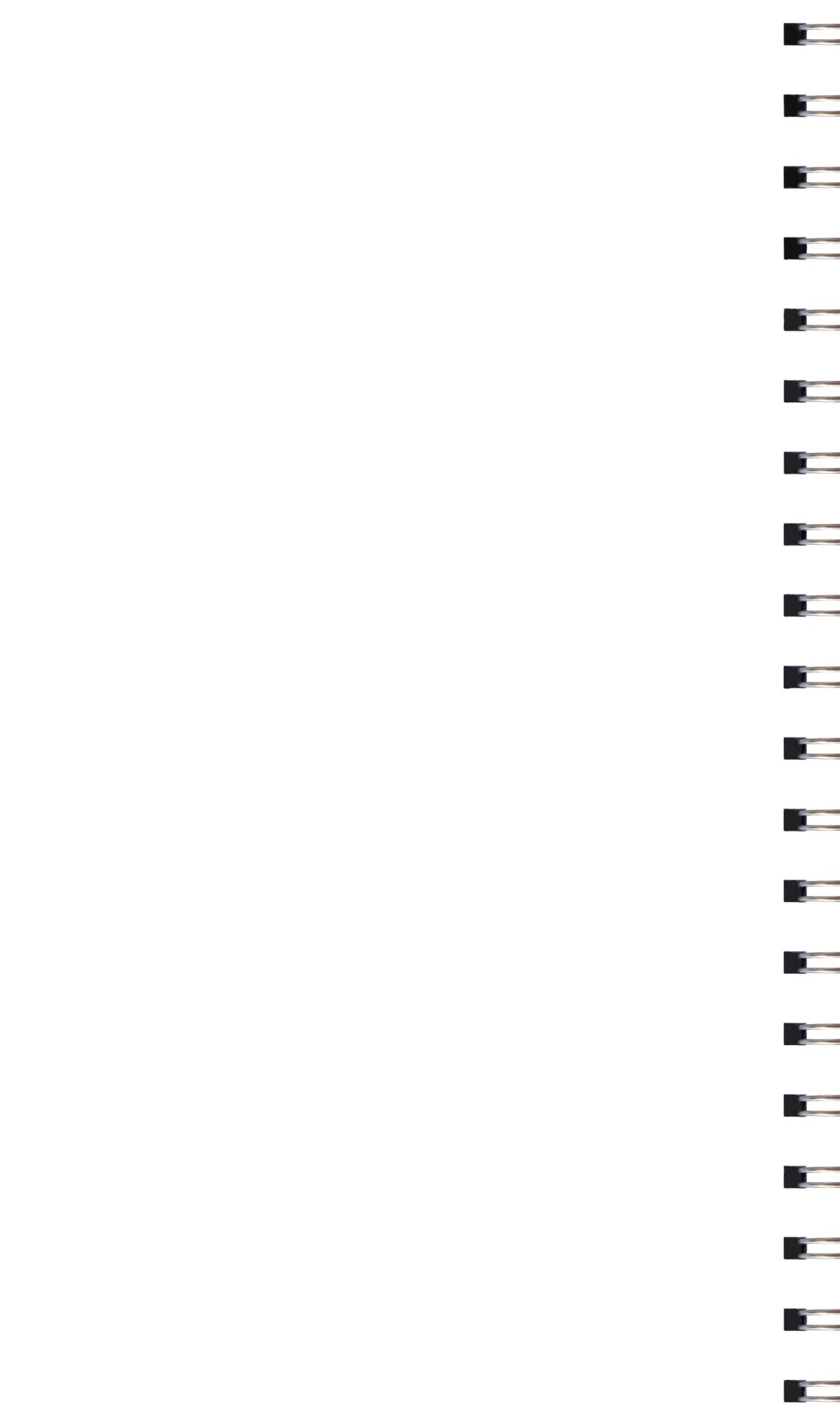
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