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ARTICLE

Can Vision Motivate Planning Action?

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Introduction

Many planning exercises today begin with visioning or they express a vision at some stage. There are jurisdictions that actually require a vision statement in plans. There are no exact agreed-upon definitions, but generally a *vision* describes a desired future and can take a simple form or can require an entire, complex document to describe. However, there has been very little critical study or follow-up evaluation of plans to establish the efficacy of visions and to examine visioning from either a practice or theoretical perspective. Do visions actually exert a motivating influence? Here we preview the results from what may be among the first attempts to conduct controlled experimentation aimed at understanding whether and how visions have their intended effects in planning. The experiments focused on how visions are communicated and acted upon and draw on a number of theories and approaches from organizational psychology.

Official plans at all levels of many organizations and governments call for the expression of a vision. In some planning jurisdictions, for example in the UK, vision statements can be a statutory requirement (Roberts, 1996; Peel & Lloyd, 2005). Very few planners have not heard of these words, but what do the terms vision and visioning really mean, where did they originate, do they actually help us reach planning goals, and if so, how do they work?

Here we set out first to describe briefly when and how visioning came into planning practice and what are its roots. Next we will explain what planners seem to be doing when they undertake visioning and create visions and we will describe some of the problems that appear to be occurring in practice. We will then provide some theoretical analysis that might help explain how vision and visioning function as motivating stimuli in planning. For a better understanding of the roots of visioning practice, and for analytical approaches, we will look to the fields of social and organizational psychology. Finally we will outline the results from what may be among the first attempts to conduct controlled experimentation on visioning in the planning milieu. The experiments focused on how visions are communicated by presenters and engaged by members of the community receiving the communication. This work shows that seemingly minor variations in what is presented in a vision can have a demonstrable

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impact on the motivation of participants. This implies that careful attention to what is included in visions and the visioning processes can be expected to improve outcomes in significant ways. These insights are intended to help planning practitioners carry out more effective visioning and to find better ways of achieving their goals.

What is Visioning and Why do Planners do it?

There are no exact, universally agreed upon definitions for the terms vision and visioning. In 1999 Shipley and Newkirk surveyed a wide range of planning documents and literature from several countries and outlined 10 different nuances for each of the terms vision and visioning. All were used relatively indiscriminately, that is without cognizance that their meanings varied considerably. There were cited cases where writers used the words vision or visioning several times in the same planning documents or even in the same paragraph, each time with a different meaning.

Nevertheless, we can say that in the most generally usage, and for our purposes here, a vision in planning is a statement of a desired or even idealized future state and/or the image or picture of that goal (Strange & Mumford, 2005). These statements range from one sentence to entire, relatively complex documents. Visioning, on the other hand, is generally seen as the process of arriving at a consensual vision. This is often undertaken as a participative, community based activity sometimes seeking the involvement of virtually the entire population (City of Vancouver, 2005). Visioning is also used as an approach for engaging more select groups such as politicians or community leaders. The process takes place in a wide range of settings ranging from individual agencies such as university departments, companies and NGOs, all the way to local governments and even at the regional or international levels (Nadin, 2002).

Where did this practice originate and on what logic, tradition, or theory is it based. When an article entitled 'Visions of things to come,' appeared in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* in 1993 (Klein *et al.*), it talked about visioning as a 'new' approach that promised to revolutionize planning for the better. At the time the term was indeed relatively novel. There was a remarkable progression from the time in the mid-1980s when visioning was completely absent from the planning lexicon until the point in the mid-1990s when many of the articles in US, Canadian, UK and Australian planning journal issues featured visioning (Shipley & Newkirk, 1998).

The word vision was a slightly different matter. Iconic planning personages from Baron Haussmann and Ildefons Cerdá through Ebenezer Howard and Frank Lloyd Wright and up to Jane Jacobs, have often been referred to as visionaries (Ward, 2002). They have commonly been seen as figures possessing vision, in the sense of a clear and vivid picture of the kind of future they wanted to see and were advocating. So the concept of a visionary plan, such as Howard's famous schematic diagram of the Garden City, was well established in the planning *gestalt* from the early part of the twentieth century. However, until the 1980s this concept of the visionary was strictly associated with individuals possessing special insight and creativity. They stood in the tradition of religious visionaries whose special

gifts were considered to be divinely inspired (Shipley, 2000, 2002). It is a fairly long jump from that idea to visioning as participatory community planning.

It is true that the idea of fostering community involvement in planning had been growing steadily from its beginnings in the popular social ferment of the 1960s when Jane Jacobs set out a kind of manifesto about why ordinary people should have a say in the shaping of the places where they live (1961). This was reinforced by the work of the Marxist urban thinkers in France such as Lefebvre and Castells (Ward, 2002) and various theories about how best to involve people in planning developed in America from Davidoff (1965), Forester (1982) through to Innes (1996) and Healey (1998) in the UK. This work has continued in Australia, the US and Canada through the writings of Sandercock (1998).

Where then did the notion of visioning as a form of public participation in planning come from? What few planners realize is that across the disciplinary divide, over in the field of business management and organizational psychology, quite different ideas had been developing through the same middle years of the twentieth century. The concept of vision was being discussed, but it was seen quite clearly as a function of leadership and not as a component of participative plan making. One can follow the trajectory of growing interest in visionary leadership: *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (Katz & Kahn, 1978); *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (Kouzes & Posner, 1987); 'From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision' (Bass, 1990) and *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (Collins & Porras, 2000). Vision is featured in the earlier books but actually becomes part of the title in the later works. Strange and Mumford (2005) have documented the growing theoretical, experimental and field research literature that has attempted to understanding visionary leadership and the importance of vision as a means for leaders to motivate followers, employees and colleagues.

Since there is virtually no recognition or citation of this business management and organizational behaviour literature in the writing of planning theorists or practitioners through the 1970s, 1980s or 1990s, the existence of this field of research in those disciplines still does not explain the import of the notion of visioning into planning. What was available to planners were a series of popular books and instructional videos by people like Peters and Waterman, *In Search of Excellence* (1982); Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (1992) and Stephen Covey's admonitions about achieving personal success through vision (1996). All of these well known communications both appear to have drawn heavily on the more scholarly work that preceded them and clearly influenced the practice of many people in private business and public administration. They are often the sources of inspiration cited by planning practitioners when asked about their models for visioning (Shipley *et al.*, 2004).

The notions of vision as an inspirational factor in corporate leadership apparently melded with the ideals of public participation in the hands of well meaning and energetic planners (including those in the public sector and their private consultants) who had learned about the visionary Ebenezer Howard in their planning texts and had read a Peter Senge book or seen a Stephen Covey video. Notwithstanding the fact that the practice of visioning in planning had virtually no

theoretical basis or observed track record—keeping in mind that Peters and Waterman and the others had reported primarily on the success of visionary leaders in corporations—the idea of participative visioning in planning took off (Shipley, 2000). Beginning in places like Chattanooga, Tennessee, taking root in communities like Hamilton, Ontario and prospering as far away as Sydney, Australia, visioning exercises, where whole communities were invited to participate in the creation of a vision that would inspire future planning, were in full swing by the mid-1990s.

These efforts led to some books that were well thought out and more or less set out systems for visioning in planning. *A Guide to Community Visioning* was published in 1993 (Oregon Chapter of the APA) and *The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook* appeared in 1997 (Okubo). Such books are generally step-by-step manuals that suggest beginning with an environmental scan or stocktaking of the challenges facing a community, an invitation to imagine an ideal or desired future—the vision—followed by the formulation of a plan to achieve the desired goals. The order of steps and the emphasis varies but the pattern is similar in these and other comparable works. It is universally accepted by those promoting and engaging in visioning that both the process and the vision statements will have a motivating effect.

If there is any doubt that visioning is significant factor in planning today we have only to turn to Peel and Lloyd's account of current events in Scotland. They report that, 'the recent allocation of £90 million as part of the Building Better Cities Growth Fund required Scotland's six principal cities to prepare a city-vision. This was based on the perceived necessity of shared visions in providing a clear framework to guide development' (2005, p. 1).

Some might say that there is really no difference between these vision-based plans and the old style strategic, structural or official plans. A plan is a plan. As for visioning, some have held that it is simply anther name for participation. With all of the thought, effort and genuine aspiration that have gone into visioning, however, it is likely a mistake to simply dismiss these concepts. In its essence visioning does represent a different approach to planning than existed before the end of the last century. What then is that essence?

To a large degree the plans of the city makers, infrastructure builders and housers of the early and mid-twentieth century were seen as solutions to problems. In the years after 1945, it was thought that, 'when combined with wider reforms, especially in housing and social welfare, urban planning could provide the physical basis for a better life' (Ward, 2002, p. 395). If the problem was traffic congestion then the solution was more and more expressways. For run down housing, slum clearance was the solution. A return to the notion of thinking about what the end result of a plan would look like was certainly appealing. Creating an ideal world rather than just dealing with the current dilemmas was attractive, but letting brilliant designers loose to impose their visions was also problematic after the experiences with urban renewal and expressway building. If there were going to be plans based on pictures of the desired future, then ordinary people and planners under the influence of Jacobs, Davidoff, Forester and Healey wanted to be part of dreaming up those futures. How exactly these good ideas were going to lead to truly inspirational and motivating urban plans was not clear.

What are the Problems with Visioning?

In spite of over 20 years of visioning and plans with a stated vision there has been very little follow-up evaluation of results or critical study of the efficacy of visions and visioning. In the last half dozen years, enough difficulty and discontent has manifested itself to cause researchers to begin a serious evaluation of visioning. In the late 1990s Amy Helling examined visioning projects being conducted in the US state of Georgia. She scrutinized the process being used and offered some helpful guidelines (1998a) and at the same time conducted research on the differences in motivation when employees were either given time off to participate in visioning or did it on their own time (1998b).

In the UK, William Neill was also beginning to ask harder questions than had previously been posed about vision-based planning in his article, 'Whose City? Can a Place Vision for Belfast Avoid the Issue of Identity? (1999). Bickerstaff and Walker (2005) have been even more critical in their look at 'Shared Vision, Unholy Alliance: Power, Governance and Deliberative Process in Local Transport Planning'.

An appraisal of five plans, presented to the public as visions, was undertaken in the southern Canadian region of Waterloo in 2004 (Shipley *et al.*). The survey of these participants in visioning exercises revealed that half of those involved felt that their efforts in participating would have little or no impact on actual decision making. When visioning as a means of engaging visible minority groups in planning in Vancouver was examined, it was observed that unless the participants actually see changes in their communities they are unlikely to be satisfied with the visioning process (Lee Uyesugi & Shipley, 2005). There are still somewhat uncritical reports of visioning successes in planning (Enlow, 2003; Krasnow, 2003) but, more often now, accounts of problems with visioning are appearing.

The Need for a Theoretical Basis for Visioning

We are, therefore, faced with the question: Are visions and visioning processes efficacious in planning, and if so, in what respects and under what conditions? In order to answer this question, empirically, we must specify its terms: What do we mean by efficacious, what are the pertinent respects and what are the conditions?

A key function of theory is to supply a connection needed here, from such a broad question, to a set of specific research operations that bear on the question. Thus, we have begun to develop a theoretical analysis of visioning in community change. The communities that we have in mind initially are the neighbourhoods, towns and cities that are commonly the focus of planning activities. The theory is also intended to be applicable to other large and complex groups such as members of a business organization or university.

We use the term *theoretical analysis* instead of *theory* both to acknowledge our early stage in theorizing and also because even if the theory is ever complete, being a social and psychological theory it will never have the precision of the archetypal theories such as chemistry and physics (Meehl, 1978). Nevertheless, theorizing has proved highly useful in social and behavioural science (Kaplan, 1964) and thus seems suited for addressing the tough questions surrounding vision and visioning.

The outcome or endpoint that our theoretical analysis seeks to explain is *personal action to promote a vision*. This endpoint is listed near the bottom of Table 1, implying that the concepts or constructs above it in the table are some of its antecedents. This concept or construct makes sense as the key endpoint if what we mean by *efficacious* visions or visioning processes are ones that have this ultimate effect of inducing people to act on behalf of the vision. The categories and examples in Table 1 for personal action (such as 'voluntary donations'), as for other major concepts in the table, are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

Drawing on an existing 'theory of reasoned action' (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and related social psychological theory (Bandura, 1986), personal action of this kind is closely tied to attitude and motivation, appearing in Table 1 immediately above personal action.

Motivation is an internal state that leaders or other agents of change seek to inculcate, so that people will have a propensity to act in ways to bring about the end state described in a vision. However, motivation often is regarded as so deeply internal that it resists direct measurement and, within a theoretical scheme like ours, functions instead as a conceptual bridge between action and more measurable psychological states. As noted by Weiner (2000), 'many motivational psychologists impose higher-order thought processes to account for action' (p. 314).

TABLE 1. Theoretical concepts for analyzing motivational effects of visions

Communications Model Constructs
Message Content (e.g. a vision statement)
Message Source (e.g. leaders vs. peers; experts vs. non-experts)
Message Channel (e.g. written documents, speeches, videos etc.)
Message Target
Interests, preferences, values of audience members
Intellectual capacities (background knowledge, cognitive styles or abilities) of audience
Affect
Feeling states such as happiness, sadness, pride and disgust
Attitude
Evaluation of the vision's idealized end state and the means for getting to that end state
Beliefs about consequences of the end state for me personally and for my community
Beliefs about consequences of the means to the vision's end state (means such as disrupting physical spaces or routines, or undergoing other changes en route to the vision)
Motivation
A propensity to act in ways that will bring about a desired end state
Personal Action to Promote a Vision
Financial Contribution
Voluntary Donations
Support for Mandatory Taxes or Fees
Behavioural Involvement
Volunteer Work
Soliciting Other People's Support
Voting, coalition-joining or other political behaviour

Accordingly, we propose that motivation follows from the thought processes ('cognitive' processes in psychological terminology) subsumed under the construct of *attitude* (shown above motivation in Table 1). As stated by Petty *et al.* (1997), 'Attitudes have been defined in a variety of ways, but at the core is the notion of evaluation' (p. 611). Evaluation, in turn, stems partly from beliefs about personal consequences of the focus or 'object' of the attitude—in this analysis, a vision statement or presentation. Thus, a fundamental question in the mind of a person who receives a visionary presentation is: Will I be better off if this vision comes to pass? Similarly, the person's evaluation can take into account whether the vision's consequences will be favourable for his or her family, community, organization or society.

So far, our theoretical analysis implies that a vision should instil positive attitudes toward the vision, as a basis of motivation to promote the vision. What determines these attitudes?

When attitudes can be formed or changed as a result of informative or persuasive communications, as in most any context where a vision is in play, the *communications model constructs* from the field of communication studies become pertinent (Smith *et al.*, 1946; Shannon & Weaver, 1949). These constructs distinguish among a message's content, source, channel and target.

The *content* of a vision-relevant message (including the presentation of the vision itself) will bear directly on evaluation of the vision, when either favourable or unfavourable consequences of the vision are communicated and corresponding beliefs are acquired or changed. The message's *source* can influence attitudes in various ways, including when beliefs about consequences are held more strongly because of source credibility. The *channel* of the communication also can have various effects, several of which are reflected in Table 1. For example, a channel can require a high level of information processing (as with a complex, written document) and this could interact with the *target* factor of audience members' intellectual capacities. Or, a channel could either magnify or attenuate experiences of affect that occur with exposure to the visionary message, as when people find it either boring or stimulating to receive information through the channel.

Target factors, which include the audience members' interests, preferences and values, have been the focus of a good deal of previous analyses of psychological factors in effects of visions. Several writers have pointed to the idealized nature of the future state described in a vision (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Emery & Purser, 1996; Collins & Porras, 2000). To say this end state is idealized is to suggest that it aligns with values that most people place on beauty, harmony with nature, respect for people and other living things, integrity and other worthy goals or ends. Exemplifying this view of visions, Baum *et al.* (1998) called an organizational vision 'an ideal that represents or reflects the shared values to which the organization should aspire' (p. 44).

Thus, in terms of Table 1, we theorize that a key factor in a vision's potency to motivate action is whether its content is congruent with the personal values of the target audience. For example, a vision of community development might entail 'modernization'. Audience members' attitudes toward this vision will turn, in part, on their individual preferences or values connected with modernization.

The construct of *affect* is included as a further, major determinant of attitude (Albarracín *et al.*, 2005). Affective experiences include general happiness (or the opposite) and other feeling states and moods. We favour the more general term 'affect' over the more familiar term 'emotion,' because the latter can involve substantial intensity, a triggering event, or other special attributes or conditions, depending on the emotion theory invoked. Moreover it is affect and not emotion that has been considered by other theorists to be connected with attitude (Weiss, 2002).

In contrast to an attitude, which concerns a specific object or event, an affect may lack a specific referent (Berkowitz, 2000). Nevertheless, there can be important reciprocal influences among affect, evaluation, motivation and action (Albarracín *et al.*, 2005). For example, a visionary presentation may not only inform but also excite audience members. As a consequence, audience members may hold more favourable evaluations of (attitudes toward) the vision, perhaps as a halo or self-perception (Bem, 1967) effect (i.e. the visionary presentation made me feel good so it must be a good vision).

We will now describe an empirical test that we conducted concerning a prevalent assumption in past literature—the assumption that visions motivate through their connection to audience members' values (as discussed earlier in connection with message target factors). Then we will describe a study that focuses on the centrality of attitude in vision-related motivational processes and the origins of attitude in affect and cognition (specifically, beliefs about consequences of the vision's end state). We note that although there is some precedent for empirical research, related to our hypotheses, from the field of management (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Berson *et al.*, 2001), no one has examined these ideas in a planning or community development context.

Experimental Method

At first glance it would seem to be ideal to test our theoretical ideas in connection with actual visioning processes that occur in communities. Studies in that context would be conducted with exactly the kinds of people and the kinds of vision-related activities that the research aims to illuminate and to be applicable to. However, any researcher who tries to do this will soon encounter daunting barriers. The research situation here is like that of the study of existing versus improved medical treatments. It is considered unethical to withhold a treatment believed to be efficacious. Likewise, withholding participative visioning in a real-life setting for purposes of research would be controversial given the prevalent beliefs about visioning as described earlier. The larger problem is that the community is generally involved a whole, so it may be impossible to divide the community into comparison groups that would be exposed to different 'treatments' corresponding to some of the key, potential causal variables in vision and visioning efficacy. In addition, people actually involved in a visioning process or in receiving communications about a proposed vision are not likely to agree to answer the extensive questionnaires or to undergo other forms of measurement capable of tracking the cognitive and

motivational processes that could explain effects of variations in visions and visioning procedures.

These barriers certainly may be worth pushing against at some point, and we hope our research will provide a starting point for subsequent field studies. Field experiments in other disciplines, such as community-based health promotion interventions (Farquhar *et al.*, 1977), may also point to relevant approaches and concepts for effective field research. However, in our early stages of theory development we chose to conduct 'laboratory' experiments that allow random assignment of participants to appropriate comparison groups. Research in more controlled settings also allows extensive measurement of responses to visions and visioning procedures. These features of the design maximize 'internal' validity—the capacity to validly assign causes to effects.

Of course the disadvantage of maximizing internal validity is possible compromising of 'external' validity—the applicability of laboratory findings to other populations and settings.

However, several aspects of our studies address these latter concerns about being able to generalize findings from our artificially created settings to natural settings. One key feature of our procedures is the use of community or social issues that have personal relevance to the participants. Personal relevance should engage both community and socially relevant values commonly promoted by visions. Our studies involved university students taking a planning course who viewed a presentation about visions for a bicycle-friendly environment surrounding the university in one case and a new public transit system in the second case. Another feature of our studies is that their mode of presentation, or 'channel' in communication terms, closely resembles that of real-world presentations as might be expected from a practitioner following the Oregon (1993) visioning approach. For example, in the study using the vision of bicycle lanes and paths, we produced a seven-minute videotape similar to what might be produced in an actual community to describe and argue for community change of this kind. Another feature of the studies is that they went beyond simple presentation of a vision and involved participants in 'visioning' in the sense of soliciting their input to develop the vision and/or to develop a plan for implementing the vision.

We have conducted two experiments so far that involved similar protocols but had somewhat different measures. In both studies, university students first watched a videotape that described a vision of environmentally friendly and otherwise socially desirable changes in the community: Specifically, these changes entailed bicycle path and lane expansion in the first study, and light rail transit introduction in the second. In these studies we particularly sought to mirror some of the circumstances that planners face, such as how visions are initially presented and how audience members' input about the vision is solicited. We will describe the procedures and sketch the main findings of these studies that illustrate how we have tested the key ideas in our theoretical analysis. We present the findings in terms of the two broad questions that prompted the way the studies were designed, conducted, analysed and interpreted: do visions draw support through their connection to community values, and do emotional and rational reactions explain support for visions?

Do Visions Draw Support Through Their Connection to Community Values?

Participants in the first experiment were first-year undergraduate planning and environmental studies students, all of whom were taking a course in professional communications. Involvement in the experiment was designed to introduce the students to methods of experimentation with communications theory as well as the importance of testing hypotheses about communication. Participation was mandatory as a part of the class and was worth 5% of the term mark. Students could choose not to have data from their participation included in the study but very few exercised this option. Usable data ultimately were obtained from 101 students.

For a procedure lasting approximately three hours, the students were divided randomly into four groups. In the first phase, all watched a seven minute video. The video consisted of moving and still images, with narration, to present a vision for a new and improved bicycle path system for the university campus and surrounding city. There were two slightly different versions of the video. They were identical except for approximately nine seconds at the end of one version, in which the values associated with the bicycle path vision were explicitly stated. The values promoted by the bicycle paths were implicit in both versions of the video, when the narration concerned air pollution reduction, safety and the other benefits of the proposed bicycle path system. However, in one version, these values were made explicit in a summary statement by the narrator: 'To sum it up, there are six primary benefits to implement bike paths: it's safe, it's convenient, it's economical, it promotes the environment, it promotes the appreciation for the outdoors, and raises the quality of life overall'. Closing images, narration, music and credits then concluded both videotapes. Each of the two versions (*implicit values* and *explicit values*) was seen by two groups of approximately 25 students.

If the connection between a vision and its implied values are the source of motivation to promote a vision, then measures of this motivation or support for the vision should be higher when this connection is made explicit, as it was in the explicit values videos. However, our design included another way of looking for evidence of the effect of the values promoted by the vision.

After viewing the videotapes, as the second phase of the procedure, half of the groups were instructed to form pairs and discuss whether and how the vision described in the video promoted what they would value in community improvement. Without stating the values, a sheet of instructions directed the discussion toward: 'What values were inherent or embedded in the presentation? In what order, starting with the most important, would you place those values? Do you share these values?'

The remaining groups were instructed to hold a different kind of discussion, concerning how to get started to implement the vision. Their discussions were supposed to cover: 'The main factors influencing the route designs, the primary physical obstacles to be overcome and the best source of funding for the project'.

We considered this variable, *nature of discussion* (concerning values promoted by the vision vs. how to implement the vision) to provide a challenging test for the notion that values are the source of motivation to promote a vision, because the

activity of discussing *how* to implement a desirable vision could also have favourable motivational impact. Nevertheless we were interested in the comparison between these conditions because they correspond with issues for planners designing a participative visioning process. In particular, should the perceived benefits of the initial vision be explored and, perhaps, solidified before engaging community members in 'rolling up their sleeves' to participate in finding solutions to challenges of vision implementation?

Thus, the various conditions were balanced or crossed to form a 2×2 factorial design (Explicitness of values $\times$ Nature of discussion) with all participants randomly assigned to one of four classrooms as they arrived for class at the usual lecture hall (see Figure 1).

In the third and final phase of the procedure, all participants in all conditions were asked to write a communications plan to promote the vision. The rationale for this phase was partly to make their total experience of participation in the study coherent and relevant, given the context of a course on communications in planning. A short outline of instructions for generating the plan indicated that four main aspects of communication should be considered: the source, the message or content of the communication, the channel and the target or audience.

Finally the students completed a questionnaire which, overall, was designed to measure outcomes such as extent of motivation to promote the vision and action to promote the vision. The questionnaire also addressed possible explanations for, or mediators of effects of the conditions on these outcomes.

Evidence for the Impact of a Vision's Connection to Values

The first finding in support of an effect of value content of the vision on promotion of the vision was seen in answers to the question: 'How much would you be willing to have added onto your tuition, per term, to support the bicycle path initiative?' (This question was followed by '$ _____'). The mean obtained

Value Salience / *Nature of Discussion*	**Values Explicit**	**Values Implicit**
Values Discussion	Group 1	Group 2
Implementation Discussion	Group 3	Group 4

FIGURE 1. Experimental design for the study concerning bicycle paths.

responses in the four experimental conditions are given numerically and pictorially in Figure 2.

It appears from the figure that the vision was promoted the most, in terms of dollar contribution offered for bicycle paths, in the single condition in which the presentation of the vision made the values explicit, *and* participants were directed to discuss values instead of solutions to problems in vision implementation. These results indicate that particulars of the presentation and the following discussion interacted, or combined synergistically, to produce this effect on promotion of the vision.

Further support for the motivational role of values was seen in analysis of a question which asked participants: 'How energetically did you, personally, approach the work assigned in tonight's task?' Participants who had seen the explicit values video provided significantly higher ratings of this energy or effort in producing a communication plan to promote the vision (as described earlier). In this instance, as shown in Figure 3, participants in *both* of the conditions

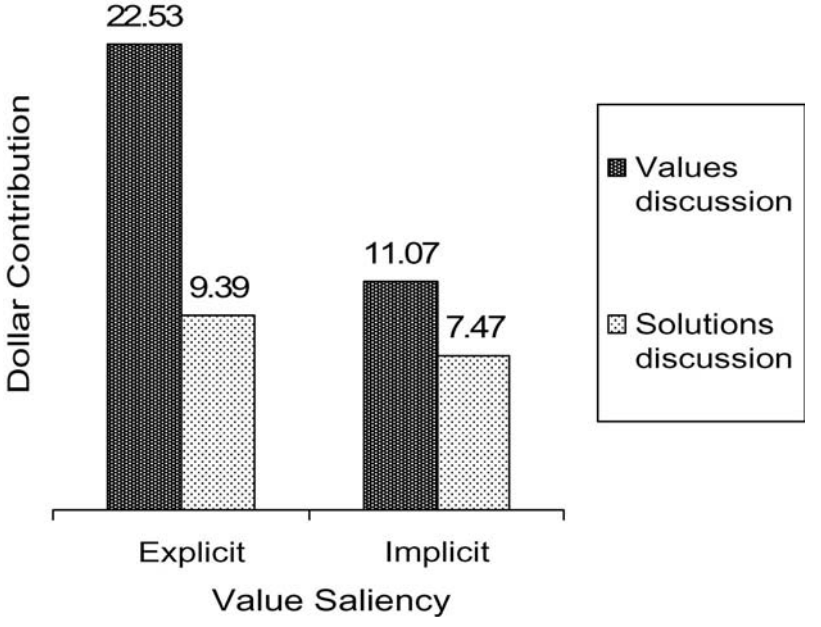

FIGURE 2. Dollar contribution offered by participants in support of the vision, in relation to value saliency in the presentation and nature of discussion after the presentation of the vision. Mean contribution amounts in dollars for each condition appear above the condition's bar. Statistical analyses recommended by Bobko (1986) were conducted in support of this interpretation, and the pattern required for inferring a synergistic or interactive effect of value saliency and type of discussion was obtained in these analyses. Specifically, the *F*-ratio from a one-way analysis of variance for all four groups yielded solid statistical significance among the groups overall, $F(3, 97) = 3.56$, $p < .02$, but a similar analysis excluding the synergistically high group did not, $F(2, 77) = 0.24$, $p = .79$. (That is, in the remaining three groups showed essentially equal contribution levels, so the significant difference among all four groups is attributable to the one that spiked up.)

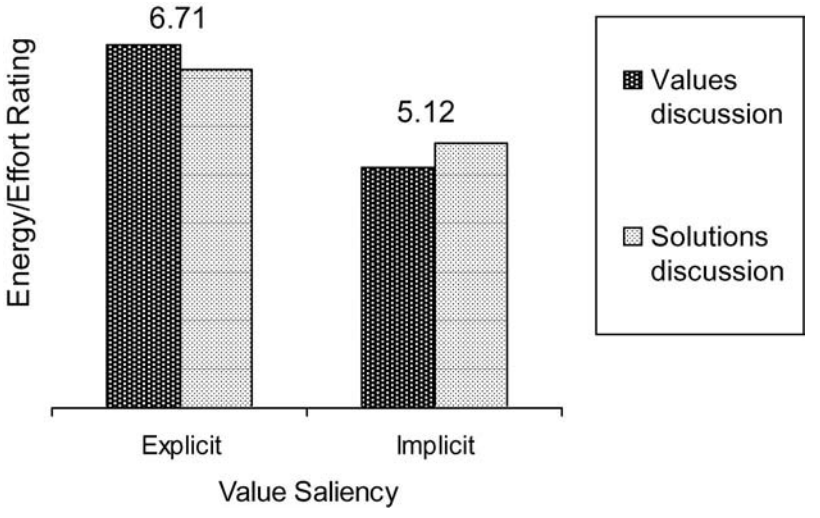

FIGURE 3. Ratings by participants of how energetically they worked in the experimental session, in relation to value saliency in the presentation and nature of discussion after the presentation of the vision. Mean values on the 9-point rating scale (1 – 9) are given for each pair of conditions that was effectively merged in the statistical analysis because of lack of significant difference in findings for the two kinds of discussion conditions. The corresponding statistical test – of the main effect for the implicit versus explicit values content in a two-way analysis of variance – yielded a high level of statistical significance, $F(1, 99) = 24.39$, $p < .001$. This finding and the absence of other statistical effects (i.e. absence of a main effect of the nature of discussion factor and of any interaction between the two factors) implies that the conditions with adjacent bars in the figure are effectively equivalent, and thus the mean values that we have shown in the figure are for averages of two conditions each (combined explicit conditions versus implicit conditions).

exposed to the explicit values message provided higher ratings of energy and effort. That is, no synergistic effect was seen between the factors of the experimental design for this indicator of motivation to promote the vision; making the values explicit appeared to be more energizing regardless of the nature of the discussion.

Not shown in a figure are additional findings paralleling and extending these findings. Another question asked: 'On a scale of 1 – 5, how would you rate your communication plan? (5 = best)'. Again there was a statistically significant 'main effect', $F(1, 98) = 4.58$, $p = .035$, of value saliency, with higher ratings given in the two conditions with an explicit statement of values. The average rating from the two explicit conditions was 4.1 while the average for the implicit conditions was 3.7. These latter findings suggest that the energizing effect of the explicit value presentation manifested itself in a higher quality work product on behalf of the vision.

We next sought to corroborate the ratings of energy and quality of work on the communication plan by looking at their correspondence with ratings by independent or external judges or raters of the plans. Following the experiment, peer raters and members of the research team rated each plan in terms of the

apparent effort that went into producing it, and the creativity exhibited by the plan. Each communication plan was rated by either one or two evaluators and their scores were averaged when applicable. The evaluators were blind to the experimental conditions. For ratings of energy, results mirrored those of participants, with these ratings in the two explicit value conditions significantly exceeding (by *F*-test in analysis of variance) those in the implicit value conditions. The pattern was the same for ratings of creativity of the plans. Thus the differences in motivation (effort) and performance between the explicit and implicit conditions seen with participants were not illusory (e.g. merely reflecting emotional or affective enthusiasm) but were evident to external observers when they rated the participants' products.

One immediate question is why one indicator of support for the vision appeared to require two kinds of bolstering of the values content of the message (explicitness and discussion of values, in the case of the financial contribution) while the other indicators showed an effect of value explicitness alone and no effect of the discussion type. Although this is a question for future research, an immediate speculation is that spending of money in support of vision for community improvement requires an especially high level of motivation and attitudinal support, a level obtained by the combination of the two ways of bolstering salience of values upheld by the vision.

This question about differences among findings of the first study should not be allowed to overshadow the consistency of findings in supporting our predictions about values and visions. Participants showed more enthusiasm, more agreement to provide financial support and more effective behaviour to promote a vision of community change when worthy ends (values) sought in the vision were more salient in how the vision was presented and/or in how it was engaged in post-presentation discussion by participants.

In some of our further research we have begun to look in more detail at psychological processes that could explain these effects. Again, as a starting point for our theorizing about these underlying processes, we turned to the fields of organizational psychology and organizational behaviour, particularly the area of leadership where analyses of vision and visioning have been developed.

One guiding idea has been that visionary appeals seek to engage both the 'hearts and minds' of community members. Or, in the language of theoretical and applied psychology, both emotional or affective factors, as well as rational or cognitive factors may influence motivation to promote a vision and resultant behaviour on its behalf. We studied these factors by varying the presentation of a vision in ways intended to activate or to vary *affect* and *cognition*, and then by measuring these variables along with indicators of attitudinal, motivational and behavioural support for the vision. Figure 4 provides an orienting scheme that incorporates these variables.

Do Affective and Cognitive Reactions Explain Support for Visions?

In the second study that we conducted, the procedure again began by presenting a video to undergraduates in planning and environmental studies. This was a vision of a completely new light rail transit (LRT) system connecting the university and

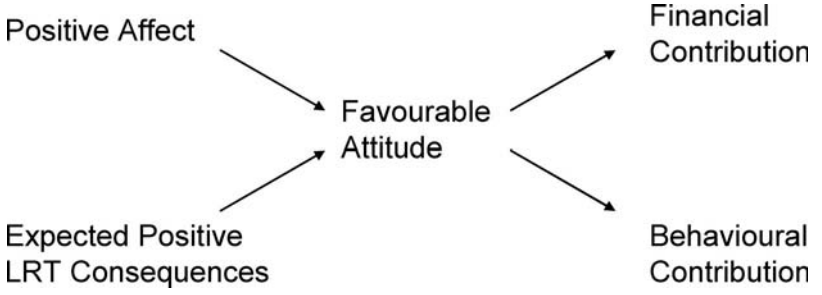

FIGURE 4. Data-based model of influencing factors for extent of promoting a vision for community development.

the surrounding region spanning perhaps 30 kilometres and inhabited by 450,000 people. Again the video contained various still and moving images with narration. Like the video in the other study, it began and ended with credits and had a reasonably professional look. The two versions of the video were once again identical except that in one, the values or worthy ends sought through LRT implementation were merely stated, while in the second, these values were both stated and explained. In both case the three worthy ends were *integration with nature*, *cleanliness* and *varied lifestyle*. At various, appropriate points in the presentation the narrator would state in both video tapes that one or another of these ends would be served by LRT implementation and a phrase would appear on the video screen such as 'Light Rail Transit: Integrated with Nature'. However, in the video with further elaboration, the 'how' of achieving this end was expanded upon. For example, at one point in both tapes, still and video images of trains and transit stations appeared. In one version the narrator said:

> One of the main complaints about public transit is that it can be dirty, discouraging potential riders. The Light Rail Transit system recognizes this, and is committed to providing a clean environment in its stations, transit cars, and building exteriors. By providing the necessary facilities for riders to keep the stations and transit cars clean, and hiring cleaning staff who provide immediate service for spills or other accidents, and also providing frequent maintenance, the Light Rail Transit system will provide one of the cleanest ways to travel—a system you will feel equally at ease in wearing your jeans or your finest clothes.

In the other video the same images appeared, but instead of narration, viewers heard soft background, 'new age' music for the same amount of time with no words spoken or displayed.

After viewing one video or the other, participants completed questionnaires and produced communication plans for the LRT vision, paralleling the earlier procedure. The questionnaire included measures corresponding to the affective and cognitive variables that we had hypothesized would show influences on vision support.

A measure of affect that is widely used in psychological studies is the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), consisting of 20 terms such as 'excited' and 'interested'. Participants are instructed to indicate to what extent they feel (e.g. interested) at the present moment, and then they rate each item on a 5-point scale. The sum of the ratings of the 10 positive terms was used as the variable corresponding to Positive Affect when we analysed data in accordance with Figure 4.

A cognitive variable that is central to motivation in many psychological theories of motivation concerns the expected consequences of an event or behaviour. For example, consider a woman who wants to do something about hunger in her community. According to theory (e.g. social learning theory; Bandura, 1986), if that woman believes she can make a difference by volunteering at a soup kitchen, this belief makes it more likely she will take this action. Further, she might *not* act in another way, such as political action to address hunger, if she believes that the political system is unresponsive and unwieldy.

Accordingly, we measured expected positive LRT consequences by including on our post-video questionnaire several items such as, 'The Light Rail Transit system will promote cleanliness' and 'The Light Rail Transit system will be integrated with nature'. The sum of participants' ratings of agreement with these statements provided their scores for this variable.

Although we expected these variables to predict and influence measures of promoting the vision, such as financial contribution as in the previous study, we theorized that attitude toward the envisioned change (LRT implementation) would mediate between affect and cognition on the one hand, and behaviour on the other. Particularly pertinent here is the theory of reasoned action, an early statement of which appears in Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), although many other analyses of attitude and behaviour (see Olson & Zanna, 1993) place attitude *between* beliefs (such as expected consequences) and behaviour. From this perspective, the attitude is an integration of information and feelings about the 'object', in this case, about implementation of LRT in the research participants' community. Consequently we measured attitudes toward LRT implementation, by obtaining ratings of participants' agreement with statements such as, 'I would enjoy using the Light Rail Transit system' and 'I think the Light Rail Transit system is very interesting'.

Finally, we asked participants whether they would be willing to promote the vision that had been presented of LRT, first as financial contribution (top right in Figure 4) and then in terms of several ways they might contribute to efforts to bring LRT to their community. For the measure of financial contribution, participants were asked, 'How much would you be willing to have added onto your tuition, per term, to support the construction and maintenance of a Light Rail Transit station-stop at the University of Waterloo'. For the measure of behavioural contribution, a page of the post-exercise questionnaire contained a list of possible actions such as, 'Go to a town council meeting with a student group to lobby for government action supporting the Light Rail Transit system' and 'Write an e-mail to regional councillors describing how the Light Rail Transit system would benefit you'. For purposes of data analysis, higher values on this variable corresponded with increased self-rated likelihood that they would engage in these behaviours.

We have used structural equation modelling (Kline, 2005), path analysis (Davis, 1985) and moderated multiple regression analysis (Jaccard & Turisi, 2003) to examine how the variables in Figure 4 are associated with one another. In these analyses our primary interest lies in whether these associations are consistent with the theory-based, causal ordering of variables shown in the figure. The many details of these analyses will be provided in a separate article (Michela *et al.*, 2006). We can summarize findings of these analyses here with the declaration 'yes', the associations (correlations) among the variables are quite consistent with the structure shown in the figure. For example, correlations among variables connected directly to one another by an arrow are higher than correlations between variables on the far left and far right of the figure. In addition, when statistical parameters of a structural equation model were estimated in a manner consistent with the figure, findings indicated that the paths (arrows) from one variable to another shown in Figure 4 were sizable and usually statistically significant, individually.

Thus this analysis, which combined data from participants in both conditions, indicates that after receiving a presentation of a vision for LRT community development, attitudes toward LRT were influenced by affect (emotions or feelings) and cognition (expected consequences), and these attitudes, in turn, influenced inclinations to promote the vision either financially or behaviourally.

The implication of these findings will not be surprising to leaders, whether in communities, organizations, or nations: greater promotion of the vision can be expected by engaging both the hearts *and* minds of community members toward favourable changes in attitudes.

Some of our analyses also have pointed to differences in the strengths of particular influences within the model in Figure 4, depending upon whether participants viewed the videotaped presentation with no elaboration versus some elaboration of how LRT implementation would yield the valued ends that were stated in both presentations. In essence, we have uncovered some evidence that the pathway to attitude that starts with positive affect is relatively more prominent in the absence of elaboration, and the pathway that starts with expected consequences is relatively more prominent with elaboration of how LRT would produce these consequences. It was of interest also that in the elaboration-present condition there was significantly greater belief that the positive consequences of LRT implementation would occur with LRT implementation. This was to be expected because these elaborations told the *how* of these consequences. However, the levels of attitudes and behaviours themselves did not differ consistently between the conditions.

The implications of these findings involving differences between experimental conditions are less immediately apparent, but seem worth trying to work out. Overall they suggest that presentations of visions can be designed to favour either affectively based attitude change or cognitively based attitude change. However, if the point of participative visioning is to be inclusive and otherwise democratic with community members, the more reasoned, cognitive basis for resulting attitudes and behaviours should be sought by using the corresponding procedures for visioning.

Implications for Practice

Kurt Lewin, one of the founders of the social psychological tradition behind the theories used in our research, said: 'There is nothing so practical as a good theory' (Marrow, 1969). Practitioners should take note.

For example, our nascent theory holds that the connection of values to a vision's ends is a key basis for the motivating effect of a visionary presentation. On this basis we were able to predict that a mere nine-second difference between two seven-minute videotaped presentations would result in measurable and statistically significant differences in the outputs of those groups when they were engaged in a planning exercise. The first lesson for practice, therefore, is that the bases of influence from visions and visioning should be conceptualized ahead of time, and actions to formulate, communicate and otherwise develop and promote a vision should be shaped as precisely as possible to conform to one's conceptual/theoretical assumptions. This should translate into better training for planning practitioners who undertake visioning exercises and more scrutiny of the credentials of consultants hired to conduct visioning workshops and planning sessions.

A second lesson is that the processes of formulating, communicating and otherwise shepherding a vision should keep salient the connection between the ends sought in the vision and the values held by community members. This recommendation, which follows directly from findings in the first study described here, certainly resonates with a body of research in organizational psychology which stresses the same point (Roe & Ester, 1999; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). These writers go so far as to maintain that values are the most important factor in encouraging members of organizations to willingly follow their leaders. Perhaps just as important, these researchers state that values provide the measures for evaluating the outcomes of action. In this regard practitioners should be clear when they are talking to citizens engaged in visioning that values are separate and distinct from visions and the two should not be conflated.

The third lesson comes when we take into account that there was not only a greater motivational impact resulting from value-reinforced vision statements (Figure 3) but that there may have been a synergistic effect when a subsequent discussion about the vision focused on the values supported by the vision (Figure 2). Participants in the groups that discussed values as well as those who discussed problem solving were also invited to add to or modify the vision. However, that opportunity to modify the vision seems to have had its most important effect when it was coupled with initially hearing a summary of the values in the vision and when those values were discussed instead of discussing problem solving for implementation. The lesson is that the practitioner should not be too quick to engage the community in 'rolling up their sleeves' to tackle the many challenges of implementing significant community change. Instead, motivation to accomplish this change should be fully developed first, as by encouraging people to see the connection between the vision's ends and their own values. The flip side of this lesson is that just any sort of discussion of a vision may not be helpful. We can speculate that the highlighting of potential

difficulties of achieving a vision takes away from the power of that vision to be motivational. Those problems do need to be recognized, articulated and solved at some stage, but our findings do imply the need for a carefully thought out sequence.

The final lesson is that visionary presentations and visioning processes should engage both the hearts and minds of community members, because both affect and cognition—that is emotion and reason were seen to influence attitude toward a vision. Although we indicated that this point may be obvious to many effective leaders, it is not obvious to others. For example, some perspectives in marketing and in political science would favour or emphasize the affective (i.e. emotional) pathway to attitude change (the top-left arrow in Figure 4) under the assumption that attention and other information processing is likely to be minimal for most people for matters as complex as those involved in significant community change. This approach is also implied by some planning practitioners when they focus on the good feelings generated by visioning exercises.

Comments and Conclusions

For academics in the planning field, this article has, implicitly, offered a vision for conceptual analysis and research on visioning. In this vision, writers and other analysts make their theoretical assumptions about visions and visioning explicit and fully reasoned. Then they undertake empirical tests of these assumptions in field studies or experiments, and in their advice to planning practitioners they take account of the validated theories and facts acquired in research.

We further envision that a maximally democratic, even emancipatory visioning process should be the net effect of this theorizing and researching. For example, a visioning process that truly engages people in examining the connection of the vision's ends to their values could, in some cases, lead to rejection of the vision, as it should if the connection is weak, or worse. In addition, in findings concerning variations in presenting a vision, we have seen there are benefits to spelling out the *hows* of achieving a vision's ends. Articulating these *hows* can provide community members with more opportunities to make their own, informed judgements. There was some suggestion in the second study that there may be some emotion-based (or affect-based) processes that could be harnessed by planners to influence attitudes to be more favourable towards a vision. However, the articulation and investigation of these processes in the public domain seems, on balance, to be more helpful to democracy than the alternative of leaving analysis in the hands of leaders.

For practicing planners, this study joins others in advising circumspection in claims about what visioning can accomplish or where it fits into planning practice. We don't really know yet whether visioning *works*, because instances of its alleged effects have not been examined in experiments that hold constant the skill of the planner, the inclinations of the community and many other factors that might explain 'successes' attributed to visioning. Nevertheless, the results of our studies to date offer hope that aspects of vision and visioning can be designed in ways to maximize community member satisfaction and buy-in.

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