

Open Access Journal

Foreword

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My very first experience with AESOP happened during the second year of my PhD, when I was lucky enough to be selected for the PhD workshop in Seili Island, Finland. I remember that week of “confinement”, so to speak, in an island with a bunch of fellow students and mentors, as a turning point for my PhD. And I am referring not only to the specific inputs I received on my paper; but also to the possibility to share joys and frustrations of a starting academic life in a very horizontal environment, with students and senior researchers. That is why, when I was invited to join the 2018 PhD workshop, again in a northern island, Tjåro, Sweden, but this time as a mentor, I was both flattered and excited. I had the opportunity to contribute to the creation of a similar sense of sharing and academic exchange. Once again, the participation to the workshop was a turning point for my academic career. Indeed, I have learnt more than I can have thought – isn't this the main lesson to be learnt?

All of this to say that I am especially excited to introduce, on the behalf of the Editorial Board of *plNext*, this volume 8, which constitutes a new experience for the journal. The volume was guest-edited by Lina Berglund-Snodgrass, Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren and Lena Greinke, and is made up of a special section stemming from the AESOP 2018 PhD workshop (for further details, see the editorial). The topic of the workshop, in line with the main congress in Gothenburg, was “Making space for hope”, specifically declined around the ethical, activist and methodological implications of this endeavour. Based upon, this volume is an important contribution to the discussion on the politics of planning, and a rich conversation among scholars from different backgrounds and at different stages of their career.

We are extremely happy of this volume for another reason: the Editorial Board sees the cooperation with AESOP – which supports *plNext* both financially and academically – as a crucial component of its endeavour. By giving space and voice to one of the most important activities of AESOP, this volume constitutes another piece of this fruitful cooperation.