



**SAKO MUSTERD & WILLEM SALET (EDS.)**

# **Amsterdam Human Capital**

**AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS**

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# Foreword

Amsterdam is undergoing a process of gradual but profound urban transformation.

As an important node of national and international culture and trade, Amsterdam's inner city is arguably the most urban of Dutch city centers. This area contained the highest concentrations of specialized professional skills and economic expertise, was the leading center of culture and education, and the cradle of multicultural cosmopolitanism in the Netherlands. Although this convergence of urban qualities can still be found in the inner city (i.e. it has retained its vitality), the actual meaning of urbanism or "urbanity" no longer coincides with this particular area. Over the past twenty years, many offices and specialized economic activities moved to new functional centers on the urban periphery (or even further). In addition, urban residences are spreading outwards and becoming more differentiated at the regional or metropolitan level of scale. Many other urban activities have decentralized as well. Meanwhile, the inner city is adapting itself to a more niche market by focusing on, for example, culture and particular segments of the housing market. The familiar "inner-city urbanism" is transforming into a sort of metropolitan "network urbanism."

This transformation is not unique to Amsterdam. Most of the major conurbations in Europe and North America are coping with similar challenges. But the historic conditions, the paths of dependency and the particular conditions are different everywhere. This book examines how the urban/metropolitan transformation is taking shape under the particular conditions of the Amsterdam conurbation. How do economic, social and cultural processes affect this new metropolitan configuration of space and institutions? Naturally, this book also addresses the intriguing question what new urban identities might develop in such changing historical conditions of space and place.

The issue of metropolitan transformation currently lies at the heart of international research on urban and regional development and governance, and the international comparative perspective is reflected in the contributions to this book. International comparisons, however, usually focus on particular aspects of urban growth. By focusing this collection on one particular region, we sought to cover a wider range of perspectives on metropolitan dynamics. The book deals with both the spatial and economic aspects and the cultural, political, and institutional potentials of development. We are proud to say that all of the contributions were written by senior researchers at

the Amsterdam study centre for the Metropolitan Environment (AME). The AME is the research institute for urban development and spatial planning at the *Universiteit van Amsterdam*. The AME brings together more than seventy researchers from a variety of scientific disciplines to study urban issues in social and economic geography, urban history, urban and regional planning, sociology, and political science. With our explicitly eclectic and comprehensive approach, we hope to enrich the current scientific and political debates on the metropolitan laboratory.

The editors thank all persons that assisted in the achievement of the book, in particular Annemarie Maarse who closely inspected all chapters.

*Amsterdam, January 2003*

*The editors*

# I. INTRODUCTION



# I.1 • The Emergence of the Regional City

## *Spatial Configuration and Institutional Dynamics*

*Sako Musterd and Willem Salet*

### **The Core Theme: From City to Urban Region**

During its long history Amsterdam has developed into a city on a human scale, whose dynamism and vitality are due to the various colors of its inhabitants and those passing through. Given the make-up of its population and its cultural diversity it is more accurate to describe Amsterdam as an international center of “subculture” than a center of “distinction.” Remarkably, the historic city center, which with its extensive system of canals is going to be nominated as one of the major inner-city “monuments of cultural heritage” on UNESCO’s world list, has somehow never been turned into a museum. The city center remains the scene where a variety of activities jostle for position, and where a great deal of cultural and economic intercourse takes place alongside a striking amount of residential use. This latter feature in particular (just under 100,000 people live in the historic center, ranging from students and Bohemians to, of course, the affluent and the exclusive occupants of canal-side residences) guarantees the authenticity and innovative drive of the activities in this highly-frequented area. The old city center has avoided being taken over entirely by the people who pass through it, although they do of course leave their mark.

The ratio of jobs to resident workforce in the center is about one to one, a unique phenomenon internationally. Usually far more of the urban core is set aside for businesses, offices and shops, but people actually live in Amsterdam’s center. It goes without saying that these rough figures conceal a good deal of dynamics, but they do underscore the liveability of its center. The foundation for this unusual demographic pattern was in fact laid down during the Golden Age of the seventeenth century, when the commercial elite decided to set up shop in the heart of the city, thus giving the pattern of urban development a mixed residential and commercial character for a long time to come. On the European continent, this preference on the part of the bourgeois elite for living in inner cities was not uncommon – e.g. in thirteenth-century Italy (see Benevolo 1993); later on, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Haussmann’s restructuring of Paris gave a fresh international impetus to making inner cities suitable *inter alia* for bourgeois living – but rarely did one find the ratio of workforce to jobs mentioned above. The contrary, on the other hand, is by no means exceptional internationally. The urban history of Britain and the United States provides striking examples of the historical tendency of the urban elites to turn their backs on the noise of the

city and live in safe residential areas in rural surroundings (Thompson 1982; Fishman 1987). The centers of these cities are entirely dominated by commercial functions; living there has traditionally been a marginal activity. Amsterdam does not fall into this category, and the few modest historical attempts to push it in that direction were all aborted at a fairly early stage. Five centuries after the creation of the canal city, central Amsterdam is still an example par excellence of a counterbalance to the Central Business District.

In recent decades the long-term evolution of the major centers, in which the urban core was taken for granted as the focal point for international contacts and day-to-day activities in the region, has taken on a brand new dimension. There is a lot of new urban development on the edge of the traditional city, and the original city is no longer the exclusive focus of urban activity. On a smaller scale, there has long been a trend towards urban development outside the central city, but in the last two decades the process has accelerated enormously. The question is, what new identities will develop in such changing historical conditions of space and place (Gunn and Morris 2002). In international terms, Amsterdam is not alone here: like most other traditional major centers in Europe it is struggling with the question of how the present-day disjointed city can develop fresh cohesion and identity (Ascher 1995; Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000). This question is the central theme of this book. What does the transition from a major historical center to a new urban formation at a regional or metropolitan level involve? The rise of the regional city is a complex process, in which multifarious aspects of content, urban form, and function play major roles. It is not so much an enlargement of an old photograph as the formation of a substantially different urban constellation in which new relationships have to grow between diverse and highly changeable functional networks of land use and the new territorial concentration of the regional city. Many spatial innovations are appearing, both in the nature of urban expansion and in the changes of the functional relationships between urban activities.

The transitions are usually not smooth, however. This undoubtedly has something to do with the institutionalization of social and cultural values in the past, which can produce inertia in an era of change, as well as physical limitations. The question, then, is not only how the physical patterns of urbanism change (infrastructure, the siting of new residential and working areas, etc.) but also how ideas on the significance of “urban space” evolve. There can be inertia factors here, not only social and cultural but also economic or administrative, and the fascinating question is how such institutional conditions can change (Salet 2002). Currently, many new cities are functioning far from optimally in their new regional constellation, and this is certainly true of Amsterdam as well. Although the urban laboratory is moving on all sides, people seem to have difficulty adjusting communications and networks to the new situation. The general public and the politicians are not sufficiently aware of the fresh opportunities and challenges at the various geographical levels of scale. It is also evidently a complicated business getting to know the new opportunities of local positions and interpreting them in today’s global society. What existing qualities can we use and strengthen in the competitive area to tie new economic activity to the region, and how can we link

these goals with other regional needs? Whereas people used to identify strongly with their cities and other local communities, the question now is, are there new regional identities developing, and if so, what are they? What new socio-geographical patterns are forming at the regional level; who are the winners and who are the losers? Is it even possible to develop new regional visions that can serve as a common framework for plans and other public and private initiatives, or is the institutional fragmentation of value systems and interests too great? What specifically ties people and organizations to their regions if the considerations that motivate them are increasingly less purely territorial?

This book focuses on these themes and questions, based on an examination of the development of Amsterdam into a regional city. We would stress that, although the book is a case study of Amsterdam and thus talks a lot about that city, the context is an international one. The reflections on urban trends in practice are illustrated by examples from the knowledge acquired in the international research programmes of the Amsterdam study centre for the Metropolitan Environment (AME). The book can thus also be seen as a discussion of a number of relevant themes at the heart of the present-day literature on urban dynamics, e.g. the development of new urban forms and functions; the significance of structures that have grown historically to the current urban development; the conditions for attracting new urban economies; the new manifestations of socio-geographical inequality; and the changing political and administrative territorial landscapes, and the opportunities afforded by metropolitan governance.

The discussions of these themes are organized from two perspectives. The first is the temporal angle. The city is first examined retrospectively; the second part of the book considers a number of contemporary issues affecting the city; the last part looks at the urbanism of the future. The second angle is intertwined with the first, it accentuates certain themes: economy, infrastructure and environment; social issues in a geographical setting; and political and institutional dilemmas regarding the regional transformation of spatial patterns mentioned above. Taken together, the essays provide an understanding of how the functioning of Amsterdam as a regional city is developing and of the main urban development processes. The book concludes in an exploratory mood, with some possible scenarios for the future of regional Amsterdam and an epilogue that sums up the main dilemmas of regional Amsterdam.

Below, we briefly describe the main themes of the book, followed by a brief impression of the content of each essay.

## **From City to Urban Region**

The present-day city by no means has the same territorially confined form that it had a hundred years ago. Few will dispute that the focus of urban activities nowadays needs to be defined at a regional level. It is here that we see the contours of the urban region, strongly influenced, of course, by its past. The quality of the city depends partly on what has been developed there in the past. The present transition from city to regional city does not usually take place in a controlled manner, according to a predetermined



plan; rather the emergent region is the geographical expression of more or less self-contained social and economic processes, such as those taking place in housing, labor, transport and various other markets. It is no easy matter marking out the territorial boundaries of the new urban region. What we have, in effect, is a variety of functional spatial networks working at different scale levels, giving rise to new agglomerations or concentrations. Despite the capricious nature of this geographical restructuring and the international content of geographical relationships in various markets, the transition to new regional forms is unmistakable. This is not only a transition in terms of form (an expanding urban area with the associated communications); effectively what we have is, above all, a genuinely expanded functional cohesion in the larger territories. Housing markets are actually operating at the level of the city region, as are the labor markets. Also, “urban facilities such as health care, education, and culture” and “recreational markets” have seen their reach increasing.

Nevertheless, behind all these tendencies towards increasing scale there lurks a multiplicity of geographical selections. Amsterdam has seen a regionalization of its housing market, for instance, but the results at present in the subsidized rented sector are completely different from those in the owner-occupied sector. The geography of the rented sector is still largely concentrated in the city of Amsterdam, whereas the owner-occupied sector is spread throughout the region. Similarly, the labor market has become entirely regionalized, with the result that people changing jobs within the region do not generally see this as a reason to move, as the demand for accessibility has also become regionalized. The geographical distribution of types of employment and levels of education within the region, however, is again very uneven. The process of regionalization entails a large number of geographical selections, sometimes promoted in a considered, deliberate manner, but in most cases based on unintentional and more or less coincidental results of the play of forces within the geographical domain in question. Without fostering the illusion that regional development should take place according to a predetermined plan, or even subscribing to the desirability of this, the current form regionalization is taking raises a host of questions that require a better balance between developments.

In most economic markets the geographical effect of decisions can sometimes be difficult to trace and influence at a regional level. Economic decisions on the geographical behavior of businesses (decisions on the location of new offices, or decisions to expand or merge) are not taken within the framework of regional area policy but in industry within the margins of conditions in international markets. Nor are these companies or chains of companies indifferent to differences in regional characteristics and regional institutions: these are important frameworks of orientation for international companies. It is here, at the interface of territorial qualities and functional spatial networks, that the main challenges and opportunities for the development of new regional cities lie. Are the new city regions in a position to take advantage of the meeting points of territorial and functional land use as catalysts for innovation, or do retarding factors that currently hamper such synergies have the upper hand?

It is very important to the functioning of urban regions, and to those involved in this, to realize that the rise of the urban region does not simply imply the enlargement of the old city or urban district. It is no longer a question of further expansion of the monocentric city or the monocentric urban district, in which the hierarchy of places is strictly indicated, the largest core also being the entity with the most urban functions and having the highest level of each function. This pattern fits in with classic hierarchical urban models which, in effect, date from the time when agriculture was still the dominant economic sector. Today's regional city is much more of a polycentric whole. The cores are less hierarchically related to one another than they used to be. The patterns of interaction in the two models differ considerably: whereas the monocentric city had a mainly radial pattern of interaction, with the main and densest flows to and from the core city, in the non-hierarchical polycentric model we find far more criss-cross movements between the local centers of the urban region. Even in Amsterdam, with its radial history par excellence, the dominance of the central core is currently diminishing rapidly, if indeed there is now any such dominance (see e.g. Bontje 2001).

The new urban region has thus far not grown into an enormous "urban field" of scattered "individual points" as Friedmann and Miller noted in the spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright in the middle of the suburbanizing sixties in the United States (Wright 1958; Friedmann and Miller 1965). The majority of interactions between parts of urban areas still takes place within relatively compact urban regions. As regards the relationships between urban activities, e.g. movement from residential to working areas, the scale level of the "Randstad" (the western conurbation that includes Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, and The Hague), or more recently the "Delta Metropolis", these are at present more fiction than reality, whatever such metaphors may suggest. We are seeing more criss-cross relationships springing up within the urban regions, however, and the boundaries of the region are not "cast in stone" but, on the contrary, are permeable: what seems to be developing are overlapping functional regions that are at present relatively compact, with permeable boundaries.

## **Infrastructure**

It goes without saying that the change in urban structure and functional relationships calls for a modified transport infrastructure, but this is easier said than done. A proper response in the area of communications in fact requires a full understanding of, and consensus on, the nature of the urban dynamic, and above all a realistic estimation of the opportunities for development in the years to come. Transport infrastructure does not merely accommodate the growth that has already taken place but also provides an important jumping-off point for the possible planning of future geographical developments. Particularly important is the question of how the developing pattern of multi-centered urban nodes relates to the planning of the infrastructure. The strategic planning dilemmas relate to whether new multi-centered hierarchies of urban nodes will evolve in the current competition between developing sub-centers, or whether planning will tend, American-style, towards a continuing spread without many new

urban concentrations. In these strategic considerations, infrastructure is not just a tool, it can also play a guiding role in conjunction with places that are undergoing rapid development. Public transport in particular, through its network of international, national, and supraregional communications, creates new hierarchical transport positions which in theory could correspond to the new evolving pattern of urban nodes. In practice, however, this relationship is not yet particularly well developed.

Also, regarding the dominance, indeed over-dominance, of road traffic in intraregional movements, there are opportunities in theory for the hierarchization of traffic movements through the construction of new parkways, toll roads, and motorways, thus providing fresh opportunities for regional planning. The present structure of the road network, however, is already so intricate and fragmented that it is much more difficult to organize a new spatial structure and combat the tendency towards further geographical spread in this way (Le Clercq 1996). Nonetheless here too we see fascinating challenges. For regional Amsterdam the question is whether such strategic questions of planning and infrastructure can be studied as they relate to one another: this is not the case at present. The reality would even seem to be lagging behind the spatial dynamics that have already taken effect at a regional level. It sometimes seems as if the regional planners and the transport operators are not making enough effort to find out about the changes taking place in urban areas; this impression may, however, also be due to the fact that many links are very difficult to change by their very nature. The dominant public transport system is in any event still mainly radial, whereas the new jobs tend to be concentrated in office developments on the urban periphery.

Two themes emphatically require more discussion. Firstly, the current strategic policy debate on prioritizing investments in road infrastructure and public transport is not backed up by a sufficient understanding of actual movement patterns. There is a tendency to assign the highest priority to interregional links, whereas the main demand is within these regions. Given the regional nature of the current urbanization processes, the main demand is at the intraregional level of the North Wing of the Randstad, and at the level of the South Wing, but the strategic planning debate in the Netherlands seems to be neglecting this level, apparently preferring to optimize the transport infrastructure at the level of the Randstad as a whole. As already indicated, this scale level is oversized as regards the movements of day-to-day commuter traffic (the majority of movements). The occupation patterns of urbanization and the associated movements that take place over relatively short distances in threaded chains of urbanization. The majority of commuter movements still take place over relatively short distances. The tailbacks on the trunk roads are thus caused not by the flow of traffic from one urban region to another but in reality consist of short, threaded flows between cores in the polycentric urban region. An investment strategy geared to an intricate system of public transport within the urban region is therefore probably a better option.

The same regional reality is also the input to a debate on the business philosophy of public transport operators. This too needs to be oriented much more towards the urban regions. The National Railways give absolute priority to intercity services, neglect-

ing urban regional transport, while 85% of commuter movements take place within the regional city. Urban regional services could have a far higher frequency and occupancy if they were geared toward actual needs. Where reliable (because frequent) public transport is available, far more people use it, as is now being realized within the boundaries of the City of Amsterdam. An important question is whether a much more efficient organization of public transport at the urban regional level should not be put in place, as has been done in other countries. In effect, both themes (road traffic and public transport) imply that a stricter separation will be needed between (a) infrastructure to accommodate through traffic efficiently (with few stops/stations) and (b) a frequent, fine mazed infrastructure to meet the intraregional needs. Strategic dilemmas of this kind in the transport sector suggest the possible reintroduction of hierarchy in the transport sector. It goes without saying that, as already indicated, the strategic planning questions (the development of new urban nodes, housing, and office developments and the creation of green nature and recreation areas) are inextricably linked with this.

### **The Economic Conditions for the Regional City**

The literature on planning economics over the past fifteen years has devoted a good deal of attention to the significance of the concept of economic functional space. Economic behavior cannot be properly understood as manifestations of urban or regional activity but need to be understood primarily as a “space of flows,” as an expression of functional networks (Castells 1996). In an era of internationalization, globalization, and telecommunication the flows between businesses and cities (especially information flows) are far more important, it is said, than the geographical decisions made within territorial regions. The attention to economic flows and functional networks has certainly produced a lot of relevant insights: particularly striking is the understanding of the creation of new hierarchical relationships in the various international networks. Interestingly, the restructuring of the global economy would seem to be placing some regions in a very favorable position, while others are falling outside the new hierarchical networks. Within the regions as well, the restructuring of the international economy is leaving selective traces of development (see e.g. “splintering urbanism” Graham and Marvin 2001; and Swyngedouw and Baeten 2001). Particularly crucial for regional Amsterdam is its relatively favorable position at the international sub-top level of the financial and business network economy, its international role in aviation and the striking position of its subculture in the international networks of the “creative economy.” The importance of being sited in economic networks of this kind is grossly exaggerated, however, if this would be to suggest that businesses no longer should have any regional ties, that they should have become footloose enterprises, indifferent to specific regional qualities. The qualities of the regional city have considerable significance for the development of residents and companies. The revaluation of the importance of regional qualities is amply confirmed in the recent literature on institutional economics (Storper 1997). In reality the importance of place in

the development of companies and individual households is becoming more important, not less important. If some qualities, such as ICT infrastructure, are available in virtually all of the urban regions, other qualities take on more distinguishing power (the availability of specially trained skilled workers, refined supply and delivery networks, and traditional economic experience in certain areas).

The key question is how this functional position and these territorial qualities can strengthen one another and bring about synergy in the new regional city. What typifies the position of regional Amsterdam is the fact that the characteristics of the “hard” economy and the “soft” cultural aspects are producing an interesting cross-fertilization: a climate that is attractive to creative knowledge workers (youthful talent) is probably the decisive factor in the development of ICT, for instance. If international companies are to locate their headquarters in a particular place it is important that financial and marketing expertise are available as well as cultural economies. This draws the hard economy closer to the soft social and cultural sectors: suddenly stock exchanges begin having more to do with breeding grounds than we might have thought. So if the regional economy is to develop well it is not enough to develop a good physical infrastructure and accommodate new office developments in a well-considered manner; it is also important that the creative economy is able to flourish in an urban climate. What seems to be particularly important in the current economic and cultural era is for cities to be able to show identities that attract youthful and creative talent. Factors such as culture and social climate, tolerance, diversity and “urban climate” are thus becoming increasingly important.

International research shows that urban areas that have an international climate and provide space for creativity, that are tolerant and ethnically and socially diverse, are among the fastest-growing cities in economic terms. They are the ones able to attract a lot of talent by virtue of these very qualities. Indicative of these cities is the large proportion of homosexuals, a large Bohemian population (artists, writers, directors, painters, etc.), a large proportion of immigrants and general “diversity.” In the US and Canada, cities like San Francisco, Boston, New York, and Toronto have profiles of this kind, and they enjoy sharp growth in their cultural economies. While in Europe, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Prague, and Rome are among the creative cities. It is there that we find ethnic and social diversity, large numbers of Bohemians and many higher education courses. This type of urban environment contains ideal places for the economic laboratory and for knowledge-intensive companies such as Shell Laboratories, Philips, and Cisco, (see also Zukin 1995; Florida and Gates 2001; and Stedenbouw en Ruimtelijke Ordening 2002). A strong creative economy creates not only favorable conditions for other economic sectors, it also has a growing economic importance of its own. Many products and services are “constructs” or even “imagination,” but a shared “imagination” can become a reality for those who respond to them. Here we should consider not only such things as fashion, media (cinema, music, games), or culture in the narrow sense but as entire constructed lifestyles (Bridget Jones, *Sex and the City* or *Friends*). These lifestyles, which touch all areas of life and production, are to a large extent brought to life by art, culture, and the media. Regional cities that have the best cre-

dentials in this sector again are the “creative cities,” with their populations who are able to generate creative ventures and have the organizations that are able to pick up on the creative vehicles, develop them, and market them worldwide.

Until recently the desirable qualities of urbanism and population diversity (many tolerant, innovation-minded inhabitants, who are considered creative and come from a wide variety of backgrounds were mostly found in the core city of the urban region. Nowadays, we have to look at the regional city as a whole. In the case of Amsterdam, for instance, the city center and the nineteenth-century belt around it are rapidly losing their breeding-ground character. The pressure on the central city is so great that “marginal activities” are being pushed out, with the result that a lot of breeding grounds and alternative start-up areas are moving to other cities (for instance The Hague and Rotterdam). One of the key points in regional economic policy, then, is to allow new breeding grounds to develop, scattered throughout the urban region: there are still a few antiquated industrial areas that lend themselves to this kind of development, as well as some outdated office terrains and new “residual areas.” The question is whether new urban nodes such as those developing at new hierarchical public transport and road network interfaces can respond fully to the requirements of the creative economy; so far the new urban nodes have largely experienced monofunctional development, and there is a considerable scope for the quality of varied urbanism to become more significant at these nodes.

### **Contrasting Identities and the Issue of Regional Governance**

The rise of the polycentric urban region is producing a situation where not all of the relevant interaction takes place within the biggest city; other cores in the region can develop their own strong positions. We are also seeing old traditional central cores that no longer consist of a single entity with one predominant center. Here specialization and differentiation have occurred within the old cores. Many old core cities have developed various important economic and cultural centers, and they are no longer socially homogeneous. New development which can be described as urban is now taking place under its own steam outside the cities, and this tendency has been very pronounced in the Amsterdam region. Various new internationally-oriented economic focal points are developing around the economic magnet of Schiphol Airport. Flower exports are concentrated around the international auctions in Aalsmeer; the media industry is no longer confined to its traditional home in Hilversum but has recently spread to Almere and the center of Amsterdam. The financial sector has regrouped along Amsterdam’s South Axis. The various urban residential areas too are now highly scattered throughout the region, the largest and most striking example being the new town of Almere, which is set to grow into a town with a population of 400,000 over the next thirty years.

On closer inspection of these many cores in the new urban region we find that individual identities are being developed to some extent, but this process is only happening in dribs and drabs. There is as yet no truly regional philosophy or complementarity

developing, by which the collection of cores could together form a strong region. Instead we find competition for the same functions, and most cores with an ambition to grow are displaying mainly copycat behavior. In the field of economics, there is very little specialization and only in some areas, plus there have only been a few attempts to embed them culturally, socially, and physically. The capital's cosmopolitan cultural elite is internationally oriented but not that closely involved within the region. Cultural development in the region is still remarkably monocentric, while the city's social and physical tissue has also changed. At this stage of urban transformation there is no tangible evidence that an urban regional identity is evolving.

If we are to develop a coherent vision of the future of the regional city, however, we need to know what identities we want to develop and where. This calls for a good understanding of our territorial strengths and a willingness to take advantage of them. It also requires patience. The stratification that has developed historically, that has made cities and in the long run the new regions so interesting, simply takes time to grow, it cannot be forced. Young cores in the urban region are lagging behind the old cores in this respect, though they can make up for this with other qualities, such as more space and new facilities, or the ability unhampered by history to develop entirely new development concepts. Is there then, perhaps, the scope here for brand new cultural landscapes? Or should we just continue to look for these mainly in the old, familiar centers of the old core cities?

It is important to note that the institutional normative structure if anything displays even more inertia than the physical structure. Established norms of urbanism and positions that have been won are not easily relinquished, partly because of identities that have evolved but also because of political and administrative relationships that have developed here. There is no administrative structure to respond actively to the new metropolitan dynamics, so new urban realities may have to deal with outdated administrative structures and local bodies for some time to come. But here too it is essential to pursue dynamic change. This does not necessarily mean that the traditional administrative territories have to be enlarged through administrative reform, or that all the administrative entities need to be turned upside down. We do, however, need to create the right conditions, through "metropolitan governance," for a new urban-region development vision to develop. The initiative need not necessarily come from the municipal or provincial authorities; the main thing, it would seem, is for regional attention to be consolidated in such a way that individual communities are no longer able to define their positions in terms of purely local interests.

## **Amsterdam Human Capital: Contents**

We return to the themes outlined here in the ensuing chapters. After this introductory section, the book is comprised of the following three sections:

1. Amsterdam in Retrospect;
2. The Current State: Dilemmas and Perspectives;
3. Prospects of Urbanity: New Cultural Identities.

Finally, an epilogue by the editors will conclude the book. The sections are described below.

## **Amsterdam in Retrospect**

The next section describes the historical high points and major changes in urban life that give depth to Amsterdam's current existence. *Geert Mak* discusses five historic episodes illustrating the most ambitious utopias of the ambitious bourgeoisie in the struggle with water, mud, and social decay. The dikes in the fourteenth century marked the first victory over water, providing the conditions the city needed to become a trading center. The second episode, in the seventeenth century, produced the entire ring of canals. In the next stage, urban expansion was expressed in terms of grand residences, demarcating the canals and the surrounding districts. The city exploded at the end of the nineteenth century: on the one hand the bourgeois ideal was extended into grand suburbs (for the happy few), on the other, the housing shortage gave rise to such "revolutionary districts" as the Pijp and the Kinkerbuurt. The expansion plan in the early 1930s then laid the foundation for Berlage's Amsterdam South, a successful district for the middle and upper classes. The final sizeable intervention Mak discusses is the 1960s modern high-rise district, the Bijlmermeer, and the ideals behind its development. In the next essay, *Michiel Wagenaar* concentrates on the social changes that occurred around 1919 when the liberal period finally ended and gave way to a period of public housing that was to last until well after the Second World War. The liberal period was at its height between 1880 and 1920. Private enterprise was dominant and many prestigious edifices were completed: the big hotels, the theatres and museums, Central Station, the stock exchange and some grand residential districts such as the one around the Plantage. After that, the role of government increased considerably and a good deal of attention was devoted to the shortage of public housing. This was the period when the municipal housing authority, joined gradually by the housing corporations, left an increasingly strong mark on urban Amsterdam, with striking, but sometimes onesidedly residential districts. The historic change that occurred around 1920 marked an important political and cultural dilemma that currently has the city in its grasp again, as *Rob van Engelsdorp Gastelaars* argues towards the end of the book. *Henk Schmal* continues the historical analysis with a study of the first developments of suburbanization in the area around Amsterdam in 1850. At that time, and until well into the twentieth century, suburban living was restricted to the happy few. And yet, it was in this period that highly characteristic areas on the edge of and outside the city were built, in particular in the Gooi and the dunes, which have their own special significance as striking urban landscapes in today's metropolitan environment. Schmal also considers the part played by public transport in the early period of suburban development. *Pieter Terhorst* and *Jacques van de Ven*, meanwhile, look at the restructuring of the economy of central Amsterdam in two post-war phases from the point of view of a "regime analysis." The first phase was the development of a typical Central Business District: interestingly, in Amsterdam this trend took shape within



the framework of the historic buildings. In the second phase, starting at the end of the sixties, the economic function of the old city center was increasingly geared to the cultural economy: tourism, shopping, leisure, and specific services. In conjunction with the increased construction of housing, this has set the city center of Amsterdam on a completely new course.

## **The Current State: Dilemmas and Perspectives**

The following section gives an integrated diagnosis of the current transformation process, from traditional territorial city to burgeoning metropolitan urbanism. The first group of authors discuss the dilemmas in the economic, infrastructural, and environmental development of the metropolis; while the second group consider the social aspects of segregation, migration and residential areas, including the position of the homeless. This section concludes with a discussion of the political (electoral) and institutional developments and options.

### *A. Economy, Infrastructure and Environment*

The metropolitan economy is now so intertwined with the region as a whole that municipal boundaries have completely lost their significance in this context, notes *Pieter Tordoir* at the beginning of his discussion of the development of the city economy. *Tordoir* regards the metropolitan economy as a highly diversified complex of specialized activity clusters whereby the combined influence of external scale, scope, and network economies enables a spatial-economic equilibrium at a high level of local resource costs. In its rich historical period, Amsterdam rose high up on the ladder of the world's metropolitan economies, but nowadays an urban economy at the scale of the Randstad can only reach the sub-top level in the international arena. The most important and internationally most substantial complex is the distribution complex, with the Randstad's main ports of Schiphol Airport and Rotterdam Seaport. The managerial complex, with its international headquarters in the service economy, is relatively highly developed in the Amsterdam region, and this also applies to the third complex, the consumption-oriented cultural economy. The main challenge for the metropolitan economy is to optimize the subtle interrelationships. *Luca Bertolini*, *Loek Kapoen* and *Frank le Clercq*, meanwhile, deal with the spatial concepts of transport and land use, again at a regional level. The focuses of mobility have moved from the city, with its traditional radial transport patterns, to a regional network in which new tangential links are planned. The main challenge is to develop transport concepts capable of linking the concentrated residential and working areas throughout the region efficiently. This is not just a question of mobility but also of the new spatial structuring of regional settlements in a multi-centred constellation. *Maarten Wolsink* analyses the current developments in some urban economic facilities in the light of recent trends towards the liberalization and privatization of public utilities. As examples of strategic spatial and environmental infrastructures, he discusses the liberalization of the waste management and electricity sectors. There is now very little public control over the elec-

tricity supply, and recently the authorities have lost their familiar tools for influencing economic conditions and environmental policy. When it comes to waste management, however, local authorities could gain possible new means of control via the demand side of the market. As a counterbalance to the economic processes, *Marijke van Schendelen* discusses the development of green areas in the Amsterdam region, while also looking at how policies concerning water, green areas and recreation are institutionally embedded. Interestingly, the Municipality of Amsterdam and the Province of North Holland have entered into numerous contractual arrangements with other administrative bodies and the private sector.

### *B. Segregation, Social Mobility and the Social Profile of Amsterdam and the Region*

The second group of authors consider the social development of Amsterdam and its suburban environs. *Sako Musterd* and *Wim Ostendorf* probe the degree of segregation, both at the level of the districts within the city of Amsterdam and by comparing Amsterdam with the surrounding region. Based on a brief international comparison, there is relatively little income-based segregation at either of these levels. In this respect the social structure of Amsterdam and its environs is more balanced than that of the urban areas of many other countries, mainly because of the levelling tendency of the Dutch welfare state. There is more segregation based on ethnic background, however, and this has slightly increased during the past ten years (unlike income-based segregation, which has decreased). Segregation is then examined in terms of various demographic parameters. *Cees Cortie* looks at the social mobility of various groups of immigrants in Amsterdam and environs. People from Surinam and the Antilles display their process of migration to the city and how they climb the housing ladder to the public sections of the suburbs. People from Morocco and Turkey, who come from less skilled backgrounds, do not yet have this mobility in the housing market. Among immigrant sections of the population there is both a tendency towards suburbanization and a tendency towards gentrification in districts of the city. *Lia Karsten* examines the specific qualities of public areas for a category of city dwellers who are under-represented in terms of research and municipal policy, the city's over 100,000 children. She finds that children live scattered selectively throughout the city and region. Public areas and recreational facilities in the day-to-day environment are such that urban children remain dependent on guidance in many respects for longer than children elsewhere (the "back seat generation"). *Leon Deben*, closes this section by charting the developments relating to a specific group at the bottom of the housing market, the homeless population. He carried out a number of systematic censuses and also looked at the use of public areas. Homelessness is currently concentrated in the city center, although recently some forms of homelessness have arisen in the young urban centers of Bijlmermeer and even Schiphol and Almere.

### *C. Political and Electoral Developments and Institutional Dilemmas*

*Rinus Deurloo*, *Sjoerd de Vos* and *Herman van der Wusten* begin this section by examining political participation by the Amsterdam region electorate by comparing voting patterns

in Amsterdam with those in Almere. We are struck by the fact that the division between the urban left and the more moderate and right-wing votes in the suburbs, often noted in American geographical research, is now beginning to manifest itself in Dutch urban areas. The researchers also show the trends in voting patterns in communities where large numbers of immigrants live. *Willem Salet* and *Martin de Jong* explore possible paths that strategic regional planning could take by using methods of regional governance, following the administrative failure to create city provinces. They first analyse the tendencies towards geographical disengagement and the mismatches between administrative boundaries and the scale on which the dynamics of spatial development take place. According to the authors there is no point in trying to match social dynamics through administrative reform. They explore various options for forming flexible coalitions based on strengthening the pillars of domestic administration (the municipalities and provinces), discussing the opportunities afforded here by regional governance.

### **Prospects of Urbanity: New Cultural Identities**

The next section opens with an essay by *Rob van Engelsdorp Gastelaars* that was mentioned earlier. He explores the possible “landscapes of power” in the political and cultural climate of the capital and its environs. He notes that the architecture of those in power has to a large extent moved away from Amsterdam during the past century. Taking historical analyses as a starting point, much prestigious architecture was developed by private enterprise in Amsterdam’s inner city during the liberal period from 1880 to 1920; after this the emphasis was on public housing and compact developments. From the beginning of the last century the better-off sections of the population, or some of them, gradually moved to the suburbs. Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars explores possible scenarios for the future on the scale of a regional Amsterdam inspired again by a liberal culture. *Robert Kloosterman* explores the position of immigrants in Amsterdam’s multicultural society. Particularly striking are the increased business opportunities for immigrants. Whereas immigrants traditionally directed their entrepreneurship toward catering and retailing sectors, which have been stagnant since 1994, the sharpest increase is now in the post-industrial sectors of production and personnel services. The general change in the economy and position of Amsterdam provides a brand new opportunity structure for immigrant entrepreneurship. *Gertjan Dijkink* and *Virginie Mamadouh* explore the legitimacy of government that is faced with increasing indifference and disinterest on the part of the populace. The attempts at government reorganization are far removed from ordinary people, and referendums in particular reveal the populace’s discontent. On the other hand, there are new movements that seem to support the identification of the population with their place of residence. *Dijkink* and *Mamadouh* explore the possible influences of the digital city, urban planning focus groups, the regional media, and campaign groups on the development of regional identity.

The book concludes with an epilogue by the editors which touches upon a number of major dilemmas and contentious issues regarding the development of regional Amsterdam. They also indicate what kind of contribution the essays make to the current debate.

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## **2. AMSTERDAM IN RETROSPECT**



## 2.1 • Amsterdam as the “Compleat Citie” *A City Plan Read in Five Episodes*

**Geert Mak**

### **The Battle Against the Mud: The First Fortifications**

Amsterdam is an eternal battle between man and nature. Not the nature of spectacular rock formations, wild rivers or the furious sea, but the dullest nature there is: sucking, sopping mud. In fact, Amsterdam was built, and still stands, in the middle of a peat bog. In the Middle Ages, its people were repeatedly able to put off building a city wall because the treachery of the surrounding land plus a couple of cannons along the supply routes were regarded as a sufficient deterrent against any attack. To this day, civil engineers are constrained in their ability to realize their plans. They must still consider the proto-IJ, for example, which is a deep, muddy trough in which no solid bed is encountered for dozens of metres below the surface. And the ground is constantly shifting. Whenever an underground car park or metro tunnel is built in Amsterdam, unexpected subterranean movements can occur far away from the actual work.

Amsterdam has therefore long been dominated not by the “polder model,” but by the “mud model.” During excavations of the remains of a 13th-century smithy on the Nieuwendijk, it was possible to trace in the strata how the artisan’s family had to raise its floors almost every couple of years as they kept sinking into the saturated bog. In those days, Amsterdam consisted of little more than a row of simple huts along the Nieuwendijk and what is now the Kalverstraat – a dike village along the broad Amstel River, less than 25 meters wide and intersected by a dam.

Expansion occurred quite rapidly. Sections of the Amstel were constantly being reclaimed and new houses built on them. And so the dike became a street – although its original profile can still be discerned, for example in the passageway under the C&A building between the Nieuwendijk and the Damrak. Whilst the foundations for a commercial building on Rokin were being laid, part of the original riverbank was discovered. This clearly reveals how the early pioneers accomplished the first expansions of the city: with mud, turf, and lots and lots of the rubbish discarded by the earliest inhabitants themselves. Until well into the 14th century, Amsterdam was no more than five minutes wide and a quarter of an hour long, from what is now the Oudezijds Voorburgwal to the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal, and from the Victoria Hotel to the Spui and the Grimburgwal.

The first systematic expansion took place in approximately 1380. Two new “ram-



part” canals were dug along the eastern and western flanks of the city: the Oudezijds Achterburgwal and the Nieuwezijds Achterburgwal, now the Spuistraat. At the same time, the stretches of marshland between them were stabilized and raised using tens of thousands of cubic metres of clay. Further expansion followed. In 1425, a new canal was carved out to the east – what would eventually become the Geldersekaade and the Kloveniersburgwal. In 1450, the Singel followed on the western side.

It must have been a grim battle against the mud during that first great sprawling expansion of the nascent city, especially with the primitive means then available. In those days, with at most 4000 inhabitants, Amsterdam was no more than a large village. From the map we can clearly see the strategy of those early Amsterdammers. Originally, they simply made the most of the natural features available to them: the river, the dam, the natural harbor it created at the mouth of the river, the raised riverbanks which became dikes. But gradually the work began to take on an impetus of its own, work worthy of a city: the first quays and manmade canals, the first sluices to control water levels. But the framework of the city remained, as the urban planners Casper van der Hoeven and Jos Louwe once put it, “casually laid over the natural features” (Van der Hoeve and Louwe 1985, 156). Even important public buildings receive little extra space or special prominence on the medieval street plan. The town hall stands unpretentiously between the merchants’ houses on “die Plaetse,” on the Dam. The Oude Kerk and Nieuwe Kerk rise from a tangle of tiny streets, huge edifices which the city barely seemed able to support. Even here in the Low Countries, the planned city is still a long way off.

## The Ring of Canals

There survives an Amsterdam cityscape from just over a century later. In the autumn of 1564, a group of dissatisfied burghers had petitioned the Spanish regent in Brussels, Margaret of Parma, about complaints that included flooding and the “foul stink” of the *burgwal* canals. On 12 June, the lawyers Christiaan de Waert, member of the Great Council of Mechlin, and Arnoud Sasbout, member of the Provincial Council of Holland, made an inspection tour of the city on behalf of the regent. Their findings were meticulously noted.

Virtually all of the shoring was missing from the southern ends of the Oudezijds Voorburgwal and Oudezijds Achterburgwal. The mean houses and monasteries there stood close to water level on the sodden land. The inspectors also noted increasing crowding in the city. Rents and land prices were constantly being forced up: “Inflation and increases in prices,” according to the petition, “are caused by the smallness of the space and the intensive building within the city boundaries, and by the great numbers of all sorts of people who come from foreign lands to live here, to carry on trade or in other ways to conduct a business.” Many of the newcomers therefore resorted to “the making of dwellings” outside the city walls. According to the complainants, these included, “Many laborers, who are there in great numbers and who are not in a position to pay the high rents for the houses within the city.”

What the complainants and the inspectors were observing were the first repercussions of the sudden expansion of the Dutch cities at the end of the 16th century. Enkhuizen tripled in area, and Rotterdam doubled. In size Amsterdam was not much bigger in 1570 than it had been in 1450, but its population had increased sevenfold to some 30,000. By 1600, the figure had reached 50,000. In 1620, it was more than 88,000 and in 1640, 139,000. The city's population had tripled within a single generation. Many of the immigrants came from the overpopulated countryside, particularly from Gelderland and Friesland. Others, especially those from the Southern Netherlands, were seeking a safe haven after years of war and persecution.

From the end of the 16th century, Amsterdam's city fathers were therefore constantly busy with expansion projects, large and small. Between 1578 and 1586, a new fortification was dug around the city, from the IJ to the Amstel along the line of what is now the Herengracht. Between 1592 and 1610, a number of islands were created on the eastern side of the city, primarily for the shipbuilding industry: Kattenburg, Uilenburg, Marken and Rapenburg in the IJ, and Vlooienburg – the area now occupied by the Stopera complex – in the Amstel.

But for a long time the city did not dare to attempt large-scale expansion. This reluctance, which also occurred in other Dutch cities, was all due to the high cost of land in this marshy region. Expansion projects required gigantic amounts of investment and entailed huge risks. Then there was the influence of the rapacious landlords and the land speculators – not a few of whom were magistrates. They had every interest in maintaining the prevailing housing shortage for as long as possible (Taverne 1918: 115).

It was not until 1610 that Amsterdam's city government first began to study an expansion plan befitting the scale and wealth of the young metropolis. From the outset, city carpenter Hendrick Jacobszoon Staets envisaged extensive growth in every direction, with the whole project surrounded by impressive fortifications. Three "working" islands would be created in the western IJ: Bickerseiland, Realeneiland and Prinseneiland. Adjacent to them would come a large new district that would house workers, craftsmen, and small traders – what would later become known as the Jordaan.

The most spectacular part of the plan was the so-called *grachtengordel*, the belt of canals which would give Amsterdam its distinctive "half-moon" layout. The broad canals were originally intended as transportation arteries in this city dominated by water. The markets and warehouses along them would always be within easy reach of the port by barge and lighter. Streets were narrow, few and far between, and totally subordinate to the waterways. In short, in the words of contemporary city historian, Michiel Wagenaar, the canal belt was "the best conceivable infrastructure for making the city a perfect circulation machine."

But there was more. The earliest of the Amsterdam canals were former defensive works which had been transformed into residential canals as the city expanded beyond them. In the new plan, several canals were designed specifically to be lived along. The plots beside them were generously proportioned; their tone would be set by the

*nouveaux riches* of the Dutch Golden Age. The good life was assured along the Herengracht and Keizersgracht by a profusion of by-laws: noisy and smelly businesses were prohibited, gardens were protected, new buildings were subject to all kinds of regulations. Conveniently, the new plan also provided a perfect excuse to sweep away the clutter of shacks, workshops, kitchen gardens, pigsties, tanneries, mills, and sheds around the edge of the city. No longer was development limited by natural conditions, as it had been in 1380. Here nature was bent entirely to the will of the city carpenter, the military engineer, and the surveyor – the first true urban planners.

The canal system was built in phases, starting in 1613, and swept like a giant windshield wiper from west to east. Originally only the stretches between the Brouwersgracht and the Leidsegracht were developed. Once all the plots along these had been developed, it was decided in 1657 to extend the canals to the Amstel. Finally, in 1675, the sections to the east of the Amstel were dug. Because the city's economy had by then slumped, few private merchants' homes were built here. Instead, a couple of large charitable institutions were built, with the rest of the area within the city wall becoming a sort of pleasure garden, the Plantage.

Today, the canal belt forms a unified entity of great architectural beauty, one of the finest monuments in Europe. But some scholars question whether the original planners of 1613 had such a visionary idea in mind. After extensive archival research and comparison with practices elsewhere in the Republic, Ed Taverne even concluded that there was barely any overall architectural concept at all behind the construction of the canal belt. "In a sense," he wrote, "it is amazing that Amsterdam in the 17th century actually never had a fully-fledged expansion plan." Many other authors, Dutch and foreign, have echoed him in this opinion (Taverne 1978, 147 et seq.).

The original 1613 plans for the expansion have been lost, so we can only guess at the intentions of Staets and his colleagues. This we must do utilizing only a handful of city maps, the city government's resolutions in the four years of planning, and sketchy reports of the debates preceding those decisions. Taverne concludes that between 1609 and 1613 only a fortification plan was discussed, following the standard rules of the day for such works. This is not illogical. The Dutch Republic was involved in an on-off war with Spain at the time, and its military commander, Prince Maurice, had a significant say in the plans. This was also standard practice in the case of other city expansions of the day in the Republic. Until the summer of 1613, only the fortification plan had been decided upon. The rest of the new area, with its canals, streets, squares and residential properties, still had to be designed.

Ed Taverne and others argue that the shape of the canal belt was determined largely by practical considerations. Its semicircular shape best suited military requirements and, moreover, gave the city a natural connection to the IJ. Meanwhile, the then regent-merchants were mainly concerned with creating an attractive residential area for themselves and their descendants. Despite its size, the new district for the ordinary folk, the Jordaan, was treated as an afterthought. It was simply "tacked on" to the canal belt, with its streets and canals following the original pattern of the drainage ditches in the polder on which it was built. This, incidentally, explains the unusually sharp

street corners where the Jordaan and the *grachtengordel* meet along the Prinsengracht.

However extensive the new collective project, Taverne claims it did not represent a reorganization of the entire city. "The orderly, mathematical cohesion of the roads and canal system in the canal belt, with the extremely generous proportions of its waterways, quays, streets and plots of land, contrasts sharply with the method of straightening and widening existing paths and ditches used elsewhere" (Taverne 1978, 173).

Also striking is the absence of grand squares and edifices comparable with those being built in other European cities. Despite the immense wealth of the city, it confined itself to basic facilities with but a few embellishments: a handful of churches, a couple of marketplaces. Everything must have its use, because a merchant never squanders his capital. Jacob van Campen's grandiose Town Hall on the Dam was tolerated as the exception which proved the rule. But even that building was packed with implicit and explicit exhortations against pride and ostentation.

## The Ideal City?

Has anyone in Amsterdam ever dared to strive for a "compleat citie"? The answer to that question is crucial to the three remaining episodes in this concise history.

Amsterdam, wrote David Olsen, "is sooner the last great medieval city than the first great modern city: sooner the successor to Venice and Florence than the precursor of Manchester and Chicago." In the Greco-Roman tradition, the city served as the model of order, of what really counted in life. During the Middle Ages, cities were first and foremost a response to practical military and economic necessities. "The appearance of the medieval city reflected the need for defence and the need to earn money" Olsen notes. A town hall and a couple of churches provided some civic prestige, but the standard building was the tall private house devoted to commerce and manufacturing.

According to Olsen, the new belt of canals was already an anachronism when it was built in the 17th century. To him it highlights the conservatism of the Amsterdam merchants, who rarely started anything new. In a certain sense he is right. The Amsterdam canal house, for example, does indeed date from the Middle Ages but was still very much the order of the day in the 18th century. The way the city was governed – by a corporation whose members were recruited from the leading mercantile families – had also changed little since the 14th century. Nor was its renowned tolerance based upon modern ideas – it was primarily driven by the pragmatic necessities of trade.

But in his analysis, Olsen underestimates the modernity of 17th-century Amsterdam – a modernity which in fact went hand in hand with the conservatism he rightly mentions, and which to this day confuses visitors. The problem with Dutch history, as the British historian, J.L. Price correctly states, is that the nation reached its zenith virtually as soon as it was created. The anticlimax arrived just a few decades later, and ever since it has clouded people's views of the so-called Golden Age.

The history of the Netherlands, and that of Amsterdam in particular, reminds us then of the life of a writer who produces his best book in his youth. Everything that comes after is overshadowed by that huge, one-off success, which actually leaves people

at a complete loss. The Amsterdam regent-merchants may have been cautious in some respects, but within a few years they transformed their city into a highly efficient commercial machine, one unprecedented in the world up until then. This, in turn, made it possible to carry out unprecedented projects, ranging from the creation of the Dutch East India Company – the world’s first multinational – to the pumping mills used to drain the Beemster polder, another technology in which Holland was ahead of its time. The Netherlands of the 17th century was, according to Price, a small advance outpost of capitalism in a Europe which remained, for the most part, essentially medieval.

Take a look some time at the group portraits of prosperous Amsterdam burghers in the *Schuttersgalerij*, the Militia Gallery, of the Amsterdam Historical Museum. The oldest painting, from 1533, shows militia squadron H: seventeen rustic men all dressed in the same black clothing, their hair cut short, a kind of wide French beret on each head, pious denizens of city, neighborhood and family. Residents, indeed, of a medieval Amsterdam.

But then look at the portraits of their great-grandchildren, the men responsible for the expansion of 1613: self-assured, colorfully and flamboyantly dressed in extravagant ruffles and hats, individualistic, focused entirely upon the *fare bella figura* of the Italian Renaissance. Their view of the world, their global trading system, their literature, their interest in science, their ideal of the *mercator sapiens*, whatever their own mentality, it was definitely not medieval. The euphoria would pass within a few decades, certainly, but everything indicates that the prevailing spirit in the Amsterdam of 1613 was extremely dynamic, unorthodox even, and certainly not “conservative, if not reactionary” as Olsen supposes.

For some, in fact, the open and relatively tolerant Amsterdam of the late Middle Ages was already a dream, a utopia, a window on a brighter future. Everyone projected their ideas onto it. In 1535, having taken power in Münster, the Anabaptists also tried to proclaim their thousand-year Kingdom of Zion in Amsterdam. For persecuted Jews, the city was the Jerusalem of the North. And the Dutch Calvinists made the same comparison – they liked to call themselves “children of Israel,” the lost tribe of Abraham, creators of the new promised land.

It seems almost impossible that such dreams did not play a role in the city designs of the Golden Age. Unlike Taverne and Olsen, the city historian, Boudewijn Bakker, therefore claims that the beauty and order of the Amsterdam canals did not happen by chance. Clearly, there were some masterful hands at work; men who had an ideal city in mind for Amsterdam, a “compleat citie” as the classics called it, one based upon the divine harmony which was reflected in the dimensions of man and nature.

Once again, nothing survives of the deliberations surrounding the 1610 plan. But Bakker’s arguments are strong. In the first place, Amsterdam’s military engineers and surveyors were perfectly aware of Renaissance ideas regarding the shape of the ideal city. Countless designs for such a *città ideale* were published in Italy between 1450 and 1650, all of which harked back to the writings of the Roman architect Vitruvius. His aesthetics of the circle and the square were combined with the new techniques being

introduced by the builders of fortifications, who, beginning in the 16th century, had to find an answer to the development of gunpowder artillery. Instead of walls and towers, protection was now sought in carefully measured ramparts and bastions.

People were busy drawing up such plans across Europe. Amsterdam was no exception. As early as 1542-43, the Italian Donato de' Boni Pellizuoli drew a plan for the fortification of the city. Nothing ever came of it. The writer of the standard work *Della architettura militare* ("On Military Architecture" 1599), Francesco de Marchi, also visited Amsterdam. This is apparent from one of his maps. And his book also contains a schematic drawing of an "ideal" radial city on a river, which shows clear traits of Amsterdam's later expansion.

Bakker, moreover, points out that these ideas fell on fertile ground in the Netherlands. There was a long-established tradition here of draining polders and building new towns following geometrical patterns. See, for example, the layouts of the new polder landscapes in the Beemster (1610) and Watergraafsmeer (1629). The first treatise on town planning in the Dutch language, *Van de oirdeningh der steden* ("On the Ordering of Cities" 1600) by Simon Stevin, combined the work of the Italian theoreticians with this home-grown tradition (Taverne 1978: 35 et seq.; Bakker 1995: 86 et seq.).

One crucial feature in all these designs was the notion of symmetry, or "equilateralness" as Stevin called it. This symmetry, writes Bakker, must have fascinated the designers and builders of the Renaissance, from the aesthetic point of view as much as anything. "It goes against my heart," Prince Maurice once told Stevin when he was forced to deviate from "equilateralness" in the building of a fortress – although the Prince had no explanation for this emotional response.

Bakker illustrates his article with several little-known preliminary designs for the 1610 expansion of Amsterdam. When these are placed next to the ideal plans produced by Vitruvius, De Marchi, and others, the similarities are remarkable. According to Bakker, the main canals are clearly modelled on the system of broken concentric rings in the Vitruvian radial city. So not only was accessibility important, aesthetic aspects as well. Contemporary sources speak of the canals being constructed at enormous cost "for the amenity of the ships and the ornamentation of this city." In September 1614, just before construction of the Keizersgracht was to begin, a plan was discussed to scrap it and instead build an attractive, tree-lined boulevard along the lines of the Voorhout in The Hague. Here again, symmetry played an important part.

The same maps also show that already in 1610 the conditions were consciously and far-sightedly being created for the later expansions of the city, in 1657 and 1675. These were seamless extensions of the earlier works. To take just one example, this is the only way to explain the remarkable break in the ramparts near the Leidsegracht which features on city maps between 1620 and 1664. For years this flagrant breach of the symmetrical ideal – it must have broken Prince Maurice's heart – made the city difficult to defend. It can never have been intended as a permanent solution. On the contrary, the city authorities probably expected to be able to extend the ramparts very quickly, otherwise they would never have dared to take such a huge military risk. The Council of Amsterdam was no suicide squad.

From the succession of plans alone, it becomes crystal clear that we are looking at a single concept, formulated between 1610 and 1612 and then carried out during the Golden Age. There can be no question of a medieval chaos, as Taverne and Olsen suggest.

The Jordaan remained the Jordaan, because reconstruction of the whole district would have been too costly and time-consuming due to the complicated pattern of property ownership. But even here the canals and their side streets are not laid out randomly but in seven parallel rows, at fixed distances from one another and following a clear mathematical pattern. “With much deliberation and despite the enormous problems presented by an expansion of the city on this scale, city carpenter Staets, city surveyor Sinck and the Board of Administrators succeeded in creating a harmonious layout,” concludes Boudewijn Bakker. The belt of canals they were building refers to both the organically-developed medieval city center and the Renaissance model of the radial city. The Jordaan, on the other hand, is laid out on a grid pattern drawn straight from native Dutch tradition. In addition, the designers relied upon mathematically derived 16th-century military design practice. “From these three elements,” says Bakker, “an entirely new, coherent and harmonious city was constructed, which in layout terms meant that Amsterdam would remain the most modern city in Europe until well into the 19th century.”

We can therefore only do real justice to the design of the canal belt if we view it in the political and social context of the Netherlands, and in particular Amsterdam, compared with the rest of Europe. Price compares the stories told by foreigners who had visited the young Dutch Republic with those of modern-day Europeans seeing America for the first time. Everything is familiar, and yet strangely different, disorienting even: the political debate, the “abhorrent” level of religious tolerance, the unprecedented degree of urbanization, and the new humanism in a Europe which at the time remained conservative through and through.

It was in this atmosphere of instant wealth and style, mixed with Dutch obstinacy, that the design of the canal belt was conceived. Amsterdam had to become a modern city, but still everything remained encircled by that old enemy, mud. Elsewhere in Europe, the baroque city was in the ascendant, with its straight boulevards and clear lines of sight. Here a peculiar variation on the theme was created.

In most European cities, traffic increased steadily from the 16th century thanks to the mass introduction of the spoked wheel. Amsterdam, as has been mentioned, remained a typical water-dominated city. Coaches and carriages often had a hard time negotiating the muddy Dutch roads, but there existed an excellent and comfortable waterborne transportation system consisting of regular ferries and horse-drawn barge services. There was little military need for broad, straight avenues in this unmilitaristic nation. Nor were kings, big palaces and clear lines of sight popular in this hotbed of republicanism.

So Amsterdam built boulevards of its own devising, along which the bourgeoisie could parade. Avenues of water which, instead of running in straight lines, made a gentle curve so that new vistas and tableaux constantly appeared. At its heart, 17th-centu-

ry Amsterdam remained a combination of a dike city and a canal city, two familiar phenomena in the Low Countries. But here the canal city developed into a monument in its own right. One without a single great palace, but instead a collection of many hundreds of little palaces. A “compleat citie” indeed, yet one not for a monarch or a royal court but for a thoroughly republican bourgeoisie.

## The Early Urban Expansion

A normal city lives in several periods at once. Anyone standing on the Campo di Fiori in Rome can see them all: fragments of ancient Roman columns, medieval walls, Renaissance façades, the corner of a baroque boulevard, in the distance the 20th-century breaking through. All reasserting this kind of a city’s will to survive through the ages.

In Amsterdam, though, there is virtually nowhere where you will see such a view. Here there exists a constant tension between the vitality of the city and the museum piece that is its old center. Down through the centuries, the half-visionary and half-cautious, half-progressive and half-miserly nature of Amsterdam has left its traces. Never did an absolute monarch wield the power and money here to impose his own vision, to smash through the established property and power structures, to force through an undiluted plan. Consensus ruled here. So the entire old city is full of visions destroyed in committee, of glories made banal by economy, of brilliant ideas and ghastly concessions.

The increasing anger of former-mayor, Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, about the handling of the 1613 plan speaks volumes. Hooft, a famous Dutch poet and writer, was a Renaissance man *par excellence*, and he must have been consumed with sorrow at the many missed opportunities. In 1615, he observed, “My lords have thus far proceeded with this work as if in a labyrinth, without being able to arrive at any result” (Taverne 1978: 157).

He denounced the way in which speculation and uncontrolled construction were tolerated, but his resistance was not solely of a technical nature. For him these were just as importantly symptoms of the cliques being formed amongst the regents, who were primarily out for money and sinecures.

History repeated itself during the next great wave of expansion, two and a half centuries later. Once again immigration and population growth forced the city into action. After years of stagnation, between 1850 and 1900 the number of people living in the city more than doubled, from 221,000 to 511,000. Again there was an uncontrolled proliferation of homes, small businesses, and speculative property outside the city. Again, initially there was great hesitation about doing anything. When city engineer J.G. van Niftrik advised the mayor and aldermen in 1864 to “devise a plan for the enlargement of the city,” they responded with a shrug of the shoulders. Property interests remained sacred, so that the implementation of any plan would inevitably encounter huge legal as well as physical problems. Or, as one city councillor put it: “It remains puzzling how the Corporation can proceed so long as it cannot behave like a



Prefect of the Seine” – a reference to Baron Haussmann, who had been given virtual *carte blanche* by Emperor Napoleon III to sweep away medieval Paris.

Originally, new development was mainly confined to the “reserve space” still available to the city, along the line of the old, now demolished city walls – the Marnixstraat and Weteringschans – and in the Plantage. Artis Zoo is the last remnant of the much larger recreation park which once dominated this area. For the elite, a district of spacious villas was built adjacent to the new Vondelpark.

For the average Amsterdammer, however, more ambitious measures were needed. The pressure imposed by the population explosion was becoming too much – at one point the Jordaan became the most densely populated district in Europe. Moreover, the whole nature of the transportation system changed during the 19th century. The role of the barge and sailing ship was taken over by the railways. Even in the Netherlands, more and more passengers and freight were being transported over land. If Amsterdam was not to be left behind, it would have to transform from a city of water into one of land. When municipal tolls were abolished in 1866, the last reason for a clear, physical city boundary disappeared with them. Amsterdam could at last break out of its 17th-century walls.

The first plan was already on the table. One of the most visionary Amsterdammers of the time was the Jewish doctor, Samuel Sarphati, founder of the Amstel Hotel and initiator of the Paleis voor Volksvlijt (Palace of People’s Industry), a sort of Crystal Palace which stood on what is now the site of the Nederlandsche Bank until it was destroyed by fire in 1929. Sarphati wanted to build two extensive villa developments on either side of the Amstel, with grand parks, gardens and boulevards in the Parisian style. Behind them he planned spacious middle-class and working-class districts. The whole would create a magnificent entry to the city from the Amstel side. In 1862, Sarphati was granted a concession to develop the area, but in 1865 the project foundered due to lack of funds. Sarphati died in 1866.

In the same year city engineer Van Niftrik was given permission to design a large-scale city expansion project. He drew inspiration from 17th-century Amsterdam, from Haussmann’s boulevards, from the English suburbs and from German industrial and housing belts. The result was a 19th-century version of the “complete citie.”

“It can only be called remarkable that a handful of administrators and officials succeeded, despite all the complications, setbacks and obstructions, in bringing such an ambitious, costly, and lengthy project to such a convincing conclusion,” wrote Boudewijn Bakker of the plan implemented by Staets and his colleagues. Two hundred and fifty years later, the “complications, setbacks, and obstructions” would prove too much for Van Niftrik. His plan was voted down by the City Council. This time, the utopia remained just that. Ten years later came a new plan, this one jointly from the hands of Van Niftrik and the new Director of Public Works, J. Kalff. This time the pair stuck carefully to the main outline of the existing land divisions. “Narrow building plots, narrow streets, little public open space,” is how Michiel Wagenaar (1990, 252) sums up this “free-market plan” (today the Pijp). “The term ‘compulsory purchase’ did not feature in it.” Moreover, the developers were regularly granted dispensations if the

line of a street or depth of a plot did not suit them. "The proposed street plan was no more than a guideline."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the builders did not even bother to take the trouble to raise the boggy ground with a layer of sand. They built directly on the polder surface – which is why here and there one suddenly experiences a drop of half a meter. Elsewhere, jobs were botched using wood which was too thin and cement which was too sandy. There was hardly any money for public gardens. "People's love of pennies is greater than their love of parks," argued mayor Den Tex to the City Council in 1877.

The result was a series of interminable streets which looked sad and dilapidated within just a few years. "What do you feel?" asked the *Amsterdamsche Studentenalmanak* in 1882 about these new districts. "You want to turn on your heel, don't you, and run away?"

The modern map of the city still betrays how the planners and city councillors of the time were running around "as if in a labyrinth." Look at an aerial photograph of the Pijp, for example, and you can see how various plans and ideas – spacious, visionary, cheap – collide with one another like crashing ice floes, with the Albert Cuypstraat and Gerard Doustraat as conspicuous fault lines through the whole (Van der Hoeve and Louwe 1985, 95). On the Oosteinde and Westeinde, as well as immediately off the Amstel, remnants of Sarphati's grand plan remain discernible. To the north of the Albert Cuypstraat survives a portion of Van Niftrik's original, ambitious plan. To the south, around the Sarphatipark, we see the cramped plots of the Kalff Plan. The Museumplein, finally – where two sections of the city hinge, as it were, around the canal belt – is one big, creaking compromise: a strange space which never acquired the personality of a public square. The town-planning problem encountered here was not solved but simply passed down to future generations. And they have never really succeeded in solving it either.

Strikingly, all these operations left the 17th-century city center virtually untouched. Some buildings were demolished and canals filled in, but that was about all. Whereas the centers of other European cities – Brussels, Vienna, Paris, London – were given a comprehensive makeover, the Staets Plan remained intact. That is very much due to a bit of luck: the salvation of 17th-century Amsterdam lay in part in the fact that 19th-century Amsterdam was as poor as a church mouse. It simply did not have the cash for large-scale demolition and rebuilding.

But there was also the fact that the elite remained loyal to the area. They appreciated the harmony, and even at this time, they were proud of it. Filling in the main canals never seriously occurred to anybody – especially once the water quality improved considerably at the end of the 19th century and one of the main drawbacks of the canal belt, the summer stink, was eliminated. Moreover, around the turn of the century a powerful middle-class lobby emerged which was largely able to prevent any further destruction of the old city.

The fact that Amsterdam was not a true capital city undoubtedly contributed to the survival of the old center, too. There was no huge government apparatus to stamp its mark upon it, and no Haussmann was given an opportunity to sweep away the lot.

## The Face of Modernity

In his standard work, *Good City Form*, Kevin Lynch identifies three value systems which at different times have shaped the history of urban planning: the cosmic, in which the city mirrors the order of a higher universe; the mechanistic, in which the city is viewed as a machine, an assembly of interchangeable components; and the organic, in which the city is regarded as an ecosystem, a system of balances, a dynamic chaos. All three value systems can be seen, in successive periods, on the 20th-century map of Amsterdam.

The city brought its boggy surroundings reasonably under control after the turn of the century – although a considerable section of an area built in the 1920s, the Indiſche Buurt, had to be demolished in about 1990 because the buildings were being sucked into the sinking ground. The problems of property rights, old land divisions and cynical speculation had been brought to end when the 1902 Housing Act made it much easier to make compulsory purchases of undeveloped land.

Making plans even became compulsory in the Netherlands: every local authority with more than 10,000 residents had to have an enlargement plan. Moreover, in 1896, the City of Amsterdam bought up as much land as it could, which it then leased out. The power of government to control new development in the city was thus considerably increased.

Our city map shows the consequences. During and immediately after the First World War, social housing was built on a fairly large scale in Amsterdam-Noord and Watergraafsmeer, based upon Ebenezer Howard's "garden city" principle. These were urban neighborhoods with a rural character: low-rise housing, curved streets, gardens and lots of greenery. Betondorp – the "concrete village" in Watergraafsmeer – served as a laboratory for research into new, efficient forms of construction.

One striking point about these developments is their distance from the city center. Thanks to the coming of the bicycle and the tram, working-class districts no longer had to be within walking distance of work. The greater distances which the average Amsterdammer could now travel enabled the urban planners to break free from the constraints of the old city.

The greatest expansion plan was devised for the south side of the city. Its designer was Hendrik Petrus Berlage, who had previously designed the Koopmansbeurs, the commodities exchange on the Damrak which today bears his name. As a socialist, his visionary architecture was a means to an end. His new city would give shape to a future, communal culture of citizens and workers.

At the same time he strived for monumentalism, which he valued as much as attractiveness. "Most foreigners can proudly show the stranger their 'new city'," he had written in 1883. "In Amsterdam, it is better not to take them beyond the former encircling canal [the boundary of the old city – GM]." By this he meant that at least the old center of Amsterdam possessed a picturesque charm. But in his view, monumentalism was a quality of a higher order, the "product of the study of the laws of beauty."

In some ways Berlage thought like a Renaissance master builder. He wanted to em-

body the “powerful social ethos” of his time, as city historian Richter Roegholt calls it, in an ambitious residential environment. In so doing, everything had to submit to the Plan of the Master Builder, the mediator between the higher values and dimensions of the universe and the reality of streets and buildings.

His first plan, from 1905, looked rather park-like, with plenty of water, greenery and attractive footpaths. It was rejected by the State for technical reasons. His second plan in 1917 was largely implemented. It stands out immediately on any city map: an independent system of streets and boulevards devised separately from the concentric form of the rest of the city, based upon a triangle starting from the Victorieplein and two pentagons centering around the Beethovenstraat and the Olympiaplein.

The plan was intended as a mirror image of the canals of old Amsterdam, which were, wrote Berlage, “monumental in their construction, picturesque in their detail.” Both aspects played a major part in his city plans, too – although the accent in 1905 was placed more upon the picturesque, while in 1917 it was more upon the monumental.

Berlage dismissed the confinement and cosiness of the old Dutch cities out of hand. According to him, these often lacked any form of monumentalism. And for Berlage their picturesque qualities were only acceptable when combined with monumentalism. In the past that had arisen out of religious ideals, modern monumentalism should express the ideal of the equality of all men.

According to some authors, including Francis Freankel (1976, 49), Berlage was clearly influenced by the concept of *la città ideale*, the cosmic city. He placed the emphasis in his design upon straight lines and geometrical relationships. With this mathematical order, he wanted to create a new unity, something which had been lost with the rise of free, “bourgeois” forms. He repeated the pattern of concentric rings from the old city in his new plan, but this time in the form of regular polygons.

He planned for large public squares at all the intersections, with prominent buildings acting as markers. He wanted to create several centers, so that his city would not close in around a single focus. And his plan had a clear third dimension: he was constantly playing with the height of his streets and monuments. He also sought new centers. The new Amsterdam-Zuid station was supposed to play an important part in this, as a “reflection” of Centraal Station.

Little came of this last ambition. The Minervalaan was intended as a broad and busy shopping boulevard, the link between the new station and a square at the junction of the Apollolaan, where Berlage planned a huge Academy of Arts. That site is now occupied by the Hilton Amsterdam hotel. The Minervalaan has become an avenue for elderly ladies, and where the great railway station should have stood there is now a small public garden, a motorway viaduct and a chaotic bicycle shed.

“The City of Amsterdam demonstrates an avant-gardist ‘patricide’ in the shape of her ‘enlargement,’ the process of her modernization and expansion in three rough phases,” wrote the cultural philosopher, René Boomkens, at the end of the 20th century. Around 1920, the city’s expansion plans became more and more dominated by, in Boomkens’ words, an “adolescent modernism which wanted to break radically with the city of its fathers.”

The Berlage Plan was still of “the fathers,” focusing as it did upon quasi-religious monuments and mirroring historical precedents. In practice, however, it was actually built by the young, imaginative architects of the Amsterdam School. This was a generation inspired by expressionism and art deco, and it rather rejected the “cultivated carpenter” Berlage. Their designs were presented to the Municipal Planning Committee which, thanks to the leasing policy, wielded great power. Housing developers were only allowed to work with renowned architects. For the first time, these developers designed entire street frontages as a single unit rather than a collection of individual façades. The result was the exact opposite of the crumbling, barely habitable Pijp. This was the neighborhood of the new age.

Amsterdam-Zuid was a success from the outset, and it remains so to this day. But little came of Berlage’s hopes of a mixed population. Instead it became a real middle-class, and above all elite, district. This was undoubtedly due to its location: via the Museumplein, one arrived almost immediately in the “best” part of the canal belt. Unlike on the eastern and western sides of the city, there was no working-class district like the Jordaan between the new Zuid and the old center (Taverne 1978, 281). Berlage’s plan was also ready for a new era. He had begun to realize that he was designing for the 20th century and so, for example, totally bore in mind the explosive growth of a new mode of transport, the car. And finally, his plan was quite simply a good one: well thought-out in every aspect, and pleasant to live in. It was no longer based upon Vitruvian lines, but it was imbued with a similar feeling for order and harmony. And, like Staets, Berlage had the bureaucratic tide in his favor: the “complications, setbacks and obstructions” were surmountable this time.

Even whilst Berlage’s Zuid was still under construction, a new school began to emerge in town planning. Berlage’s notions, and those of the Amsterdam School, were increasingly being questioned. Neither effort nor money were spared to produce attractive street frontages and façades – but, as one critic wrote, these homes were not built to fulfil their function: to be lived in. A generation began to appear which no longer regarded architectural style as the most important factor, but rather the purpose of the buildings (Bolte et al 1981, 87). It was influenced by the young Le Corbusier in France and by Das Bauhaus in Germany. In the Netherlands, a similar avant-garde movement appeared, De Stijl, which included artists like Mondriaan, Van der Leek and Van Doesburg, who were driven by the idea that the divided world of capitalism and socialism could literally be rebuilt, reconstructed. Their creed was soberness and functionalism, their ideal of beauty lay in the clear forms of the technique itself (Boomkens 1998, 140).

These architects and designers were soon given their chance. In 1921, the area administered by the City of Amsterdam was quadrupled, from 4,395 to 17,455 hectares. In the same year, a city council dominated by Social Democrats came to power. And in 1928, it took the plunge. It was decided to produce the ultimate plan for the future of the city right up to the year 2000. As far as possible, forecasts were made of future needs. (For example, it was believed that the exact size of the average Amsterdam family in 1961 would be 3.43 persons. The city’s population in 2000 was estimated at be-

tween 900,000 and 1.1 million.) After Berlage's cultural socialism, scientific socialism was now setting the tone.

The General Expansion Plan (Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan, AUP) was presented in 1934. It soon acquired international fame, because never before had such a plan been compiled so systematically and based upon so much research. Its creator, Cornelis van Eesteren, had a scale model of the entire city built in the attic of the City Hall. Here, on an overhead walkway, he would spend entire days with his visitors, philosophizing about the urban tissue beneath their feet (Roegholt 2001). He no longer viewed the "compleat citie" as an aesthetic composition. Rather, for him it was a complicated machine for living and working in, a system of functions, three of which were critical: living, working, and leisure. A fourth, transport, linked the first three. The functions were strictly separated from one another. Residential districts were situated some distance from the centers of work, with leisure areas between them. Also new was the construction in so-called "strips" of – again functional – housing blocks, sleek structures of iron, concrete, glass and light. Living was prioritized throughout; in the interiors of the blocks, in the light in the living rooms, in the functionalism of the kitchens.

At the same time, new phenomena like "holidays" and "free time" were beginning to enter the consciousness of Amsterdammers. So the compilers of the AUP took the concept of recreation extremely seriously for the first time. An entirely new "forest park," the Amsterdamse Bos, was included in the plan. At the heart of the new residential districts was to be an artificial lake, what would later become the Sloterplass; at the same time, this would also act as a cheap source of the vast quantities of sand needed to tame the mud.

Nothing came of all this forecasting, however. First, the Second World War broke out, and after that, the massive housing shortage led to the hasty construction of many low-quality homes. Nevertheless, the AUP remained the main guiding force for the planners right up to the creation of the suburb of Buitenveldert in the 1960s.

So, the mark left by Van Eesteren and his colleagues on the map of Amsterdam is also not an inconsiderable one. His great residential areas, consisting largely of box-like blocks of flats, are clearly visible. Interesting in this respect is their relationship with the green belt surrounding the city. In the AUP, nature is no longer swept away like an enemy but instead once again readmitted to the city. This it does in the form of a sort of enormous wedge. In 1915, in his book *Cities in Evolution*, Patrick Geddes had called for an expansion of the overlap between the urban and the rural using a city model in which the countryside could continue to encroach into the developed area; the "finger city" or "lobe city" in other words. The AUP applied this theory consistently in practice, as a result of which the polder landscape remains within easy reach of most city-dwellers. In Amsterdam, even now, you do not have to cycle far to reach nature (Emeis 1983, 115; Van der Hoeven and Louwe 1985, 195).

To use Kevin Lynch's terminology, the planners behind the AUP clearly took a mechanistic view of the city. The zenith of this vision – and at the same time its Waterloo – was the Bijlmer, designed in the 1960s. Unhindered by labyrinths, complications and obstructions, the city at last felt free to create the ultimate utopia; the "city of future,"

as it was quite literally described. Amsterdam had acquired new land on an old polder, the Bijlmermeer. Here it planned to crown the tradition of urban design, from Staets to Berlage to Van Eesteren, which had brought it international renown. Following the example of Le Corbusier, it would create here the perfect compensation for the unnatural existence of the city-dweller: spacious, sunny high-rise homes for a happy family life amidst a green, park-like landscape in which to relax and play. Here, at last, was Marxist socialism at work.

On the scale models, the honeycomb pattern of ten-storey ribbons looked wonderful and futuristic, as it also does on the map of Amsterdam. But on the ground, the “city of the future” turned out very differently. From the completion of the very first blocks, in 1970, there were problems. In part this was due to the fact that a city sometimes changes faster than its planners could have foreseen. For example, very different groups moved in than had been envisaged. Those who came were mainly immigrants, with very few people from the old working-class districts, while a high percentage of the new inhabitants were the poor and unemployed. The parking garages and the long, spartan walkways designed in the relatively safe 1960s had by the turn of the decade turned into breeding grounds for crime.

But the scheme also soon displayed serious problems which could have been foreseen. The Amsterdam planners had been hypnotized by their own past successes. As a result, to quote Richter Roegholt, a city for the 1980s was designed “based upon ideas dating from the 1920s” (Roegholt 1993, 271). Nobody ever considered the fact that most people no longer wanted to live in highrises. There was never any serious research into the wishes of the potential inhabitants. Those for whom the district was originally intended instead migrated en masse to the affordable suburban family homes being built in large numbers at the same time.

In short, the Bijlmer was a serious case of “groupthink”: the product of a small group of modern regents who considered themselves all-powerful. According to the urban planner Maarten Menzel, who has since reconstructed the decision-making process surrounding the Bijlmer scheme, the Amsterdam planners – mainly senior officials in the Department of Public Works – formed a “closed circuit of professionals,” people “who were only willing to consider information from outside if it squared with their own ideas” and who were driven by an “illusion of consensus and invulnerability.”

Within ten years of the district’s completion, many of its homes were empty. After just 25 years the first blocks of flats would be demolished to make way for large-scale redevelopment. Thus did nature prove stronger than mechanics, man more complex than the map.

At the end of the 20th century, Amsterdam began a new phase in her struggle against the encircling mud. Once again, land was to be wrested from the water. In the IJsselmeer, beyond the IJ, a number of large, artificial islands were to be ingeniously raised. In planning this IJburg development, a new course was charted – one in which Kevin Lynch might well recognize his “organic” value system. And on the banks of the IJ itself, east of the center, an authentic piece of city proper – complete with streets and

canals – would be created for the first time since Berlage. It seemed as if a way was being sought back to the city as a city, to that unpredictable concentration of human dynamics at which one can only keep wondering.

## NOTE

1. Van der Valk (pp. 472 et seq.) also acknowledges that “virtually no street was built in accordance with the original plan.” But he believes that the plan worked very satisfactorily for 30 years as a guideline in day-to-day decisionmaking. And that was precisely the intention of the then councillors. They wanted no more. They were not yet ready for the type of plans which form a precise blueprint of the final situation.

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## 2.2 • Between Civic Pride and Mass Society

### *Amsterdam in Retrospect*

*Michiel Wagenaar*

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Paris became the role model for European capitals. Many cities followed its example. Amsterdammers – who were equally impressed by the monumental townscape of the French capital – did not succeed in emulating Paris, mainly because of political, legal, and financial reasons. Laissez-faire politics and the consequent absence of public interventions in its townscape were compensated for by an outburst of civic pride between 1870 and 1914, providing Amsterdam with the facilities that still ensure its leading role as a cultural and intellectual center. In 1918, Amsterdam and the Netherlands adopted a collectivist approach to society. Health care, education, and solving the city’s housing problems began playing dominant roles in the “welfare capital.” In this egalitarian climate, there was no room for monumental townscapes.

#### **Lost Glory**

In the nineteenth century, Amsterdam faced unprecedented losses of both power and prestige. Its economic position, which once enabled it to control the Republic of the United Provinces, was shattered. The Napoleonic years had dealt a second blow with the introduction of direct rule, which transformed the Republic, with its near-autonomous cities, into a centralized kingdom and reduced Amsterdam to the ranks of a mere municipality. The House of Orange, now elevated to royal status, decided to establish both the governmental functions and the royal court in The Hague. Their presence, in addition to the chiefs of staff, foreign diplomats and the high courts of justice, saw The Hague grow at a faster rate than anywhere else in the Netherlands. Its concentration of private fortunes attracted a great number of servants, artisans, shopkeepers, and artists.

That Amsterdam was given the title of statutory capital was poor recompense. The city lacked almost every asset usually considered a capital’s natural prerogative. It lacked the consuming power of wealthy residents that helped to make The Hague into an elegant, attractive community. It was denied the preferential treatment that was instrumental in transforming Paris and Brussels into the role models for the modern capital. “Amsterdam has to provide its own means of support,” bemoaned a local ob-

server in 1877, “whereas the nation demands it to play the role of largest city, of national center, while denying her the seat of government and court residence” (Wagenaar 1998, 149).

In those years, Amsterdam underwent a strong economic recovery. The opening of the North Sea Canal (1876) finally unlocked its port, which for decades had been inaccessible to large vessels. This new sea link, itself a response to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, proved vital for trade with the Dutch East Indies. No other city in the Netherlands benefited from this colony as much as Amsterdam.

The first signs of recovery became evident in the 1860s, when Amsterdam’s population passed the peak level of 1795. Citizens who wanted to see the upgrading of this sleepy, anachronistic city that compared so unfavorably with other European capitals, greeted the recovery with enthusiasm. The time had finally come to transform Amsterdam into the peer of such European capitals as Brussels and Budapest, which eagerly followed the example set by Paris, where Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann radically intervened in the urban fabric. During the 17 years of his rule (1853-1870), the French capital was subject to the largest urban renewal project Europe had ever experienced.

## The Mother of All Capitals

To relieve the late-medieval core from crippling traffic congestion, Haussmann cut new arteries through the dense urban fabric. Below their surface the Prefect of the Seine created a modern sanitary infrastructure, including running water and an efficient sewage system. The wide-scale introduction of gas light brought Paris the honorary title of *cit  lumiere*. The creation of new arteries was instrumental in the clearance of slums. Haussmann carefully projected the new streets to destroy as many overcrowded *il ts insalubres* as possible.

He thus succeeded in removing both slums and their underclass residents from the center of Paris. They were banned to the *banlieue*, where they were invisible to the admirers of Paris who rarely paid a visit to the dreary landscape outside the ramparts. It was part of the embellishment scheme which together with road improvement and civic engineering turned Paris into the role model for all capitals. Almost every new boulevard was conceived as an axis, guiding the eyes of the visitor to monuments of prestige and grandeur. Thus, the Avenue des Champs Elys es opened a magnificent vista on the Arc de Triomphe, hitherto an isolated testimony to the Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century that stood utterly lost in space. By creating Place d’Etoile, Haussmann highlighted the Arch by creating a panorama visible from several directions (for a more elaborate version of Haussmann’s interventions, see Wagenaar 2000a, 9-13).

A visit to the French capital was a stunning experience. Foreigners were impressed not just by the city’s overwhelming monumentality, however. What contributed to the effect was that Haussmann had adapted the spatial ingredients that hitherto had been the prerogatives of the court, clergy, and aristocracy to a thoroughly bourgeois environment. His boulevards, squares and parks served as a stage for the display of bour-

geois opulence. The *flaneur* and *boulevardier* took possession of the elegant new streets. The café terrace was introduced as a result of Haussmann's interventions, as Richard Sennett observes (1976, 216).

Dutch and British visitors were equally impressed by this awe-inspiring townscape that offered both monumental panoramas and an elegant stage for leisure and display. The contrast with their own capital cities could not be more dramatic. London – nerve centre of the world's leading industrial and financial economy and seat of the largest colonial empire ever – failed to impress as a capital city. Its townscape was a cacophony of architectural styles, building volumes and heights, resulting from an utter lack of coordination and planning control. Although plagued by traffic congestion worse than Paris when Haussmann came to power, interventions in the infrastructure remained modest and insufficient. They were thwarted by the nation's dominant liberal, laissez-faire ideology.

London was denied the preferential treatment that on the Continent was often seen as the natural prerogative of the national capital. As a contemporary observed, such might be usual "... in a highly centralized country, like France, where, in fact, Paris is everything and the rest of the nation is nothing in comparison with it – it would hardly be tolerated in England, where we pride ourselves on making every place pay for its own improvements" (quoted in Dyos 1982, 85-86). And thus, infrastructural interventions or urban embellishment were dependent on the consent of local rate payers, who at the same time formed the local constituency and elected the local council.

As a result, the local budget was modest. Haussmann spent four times as much on improvement schemes during his 17-year rule than the Metropolitan Board of Works did during its 34 years of operation (Sutcliffe 1979, 71-88). What finally obstructed the Board's work was the liberal's reticent attitude towards compulsory purchase. Street improvements which involved the clearance of private properties were thus seriously hampered. Each expropriation involved long legal procedures, while indemnities were based on market prices. In the case of London, these prices could be astronomical.

As a result, London failed to use traffic improvement as a tool for slum clearance. By 1900 its center was surrounded by a horseshoe of overcrowded tenements. "It has spread three-quarters round London: soon the two arms it has thrust towards the West will snap together like a vice: a ring ... will completely encircle the Imperial City," Charles Masterman wrote in *The Heart of Empire* (1901) (quoted in Wagenaar 1998, 130).

Masterman's pessimistic prophecy seemed realistic now that middle-class households massively abandoned the central areas for the quiet, safe, and green suburban havens on London's fringe. A dense network of local railway lines brought commuting within reach of both office workers and skilled laborers with a regular job. Slum landlords took over their once decent properties to rent them to the underclass of migrants and the destitute poor that flooded this dynamic city. One family per room was not an unusual situation.

At first sight, Amsterdam presented a completely different image. Its slow recovery from decades of stagnation and decline was in sharp contrast to London's dynamic economy. There was no lack of slums in Amsterdam, however. Working-class housing

in mews and courts, built when Amsterdam was one of Europe's most prosperous and largest cities (in 1750, it ranked fourth after London, Paris and Naples), was now in a state of serious decay. Landlords vainly seeking tenants eventually abandoned their property or demolished it, in order to avoid having to pay property taxes. The city's numerous bridges and quays were in a bad state of repair. Its canals were reduced to stagnant cesspools, producing an almost unbearable odor during the summer months (Diederiks, 1982).

The signs of economic progress were almost completely lacking. Foreigners looked in vain for any modern industry with its smoking chimneys. Instead, they were surprised to see the hundreds of windmills on Amsterdam's city walls, offering a view of times gone by (Wagenaar 1990, 133 ff.).

In the 1860s, many hoped that Amsterdam would finally awake from its century-long sleep. Nearby Brussels had demonstrated how an age-old city center could be remodelled to become a *petit Paris*. At the same time, however, few continental European nations were as dedicated to classical laissez-faire liberalism as the Netherlands. Would Amsterdam encounter similar political obstacles to urban reform as London was facing?

## The Search for a Representative Capital

It was not only the convincing image that Paris offered; there were other reasons to emulate the *grands travaux* as well. Amsterdam's inner city suffered from increasing traffic congestion. The problem would grow worse, contemporaries feared, when the new Central Station opened. Its location at the edge of the urban core attracted offices, banks, and insurance companies. Hotels, restaurants, and department stores competed for a location close to the new station, anticipating a massive increase in the number of visitors to Amsterdam. Added to this, the revival of Amsterdam's port with the opening of the North Sea Canal generated even more traffic.

Amsterdam, many opinion leaders stated, would have to cut new arteries and boulevards through its historic center. From the 1860s onwards, a cascade of private plans suggested numerous cuttings. Although all of these plans first noted the necessity of traffic improvement, many continued to underline that these cuttings would also be instrumental in demolishing as many slums as possible, and thus make way for the construction of impressive facades. As in Paris, only a tiny minority opposed the destruction of historic buildings.

However impressive some of the sketches might look and however widely accepted the need to intervene in the inadequate road system, none of the private plans were realized. The main reason for their failure was the lack of funding.

As traffic congestion worsened and the center suffered from decreasing accessibility from the newly developed fringe areas, pressure mounted on the local council to intervene. But politicians were hesitant to act. A few minor cuttings in the 1870s proved to be excessively expensive. When the council finally agreed to cut a major new artery

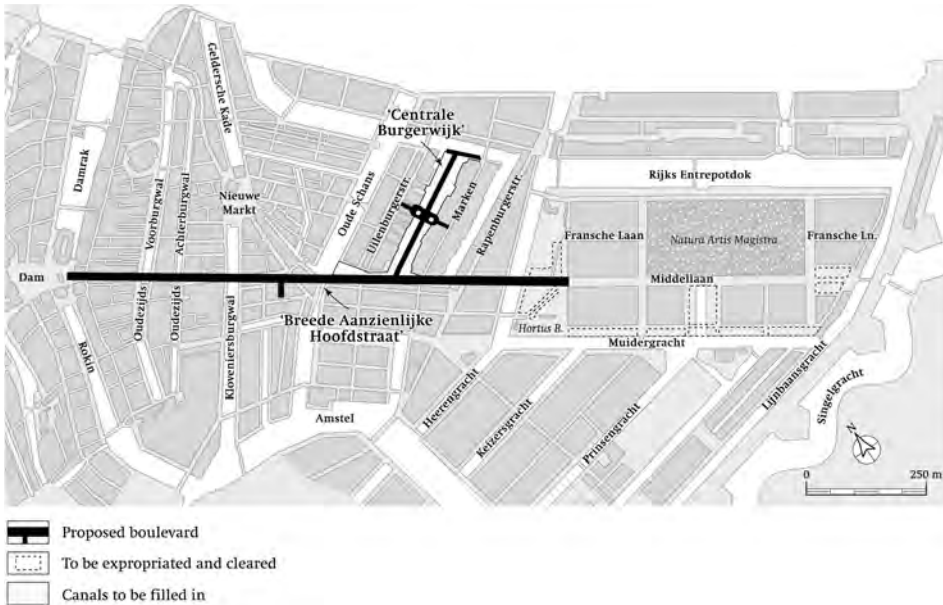


Figure 1. The 1866 plan of C. Outshoorn and J.L. Kuinders to widen Halssteeg, clear the old Jewish Quarter (one of the city’s worst slums) and create a new boulevard from Dam Square to the eastern urban fringe. After widening the street and cutting the new artery, the authors suggested constructing a glass-domed passage to accommodate prestigious shops, cafes, and brasseries. They thought this would allow the new artery to compete with the Rue de Rivoli in Paris and similar streets in Brussels. Lack of funding and problems with the compulsory purchase of bordering properties caused the plan to be abandoned (adapted from Wagenaar, 1998).

to the western urban fringe, it took almost ten years to complete – and the costs were astronomical. And although the new artery (Raadhuisstraat) proved effective in reducing congestion, as a new boulevard it could not compare with Haussmann’s creations. The facades facing the new artery were a far cry from the strict neo-classical monumentality that made Paris so impressive. Poor Amsterdam lacked both the funds and the legal tools to realize such embellishment schemes.

Meanwhile, pressure on the local housing market increased as Amsterdam’s economic revival attracted a growing number of migrants. Once again, private developers came up with extension schemes that promised modern, elegant urban quarters outside the city walls. Ambitious plans for a new southern quarter were proposed by Samuel Sarphati, one of the progressive citizens who were bent on restoring the city’s leading role in the nation. Its design was clearly inspired by the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* style. Axiality and proportion dominated the plans, offering broad views of prestigious new buildings such as his local version of London’s famous Crystal Palace. This “Palais de l’Industrie” was actually realized (1863), as were the two housing blocks facing it, with their symmetrical, classicist facades. At the opening ceremony, Amsterdam’s mayor

stated that this new development might eventually lead to a street to equal the Rue de Rivoli in Paris.

Many shared his hope. Sarphati succeeded in building Amsterdam's first modern hotel on the banks of the Amstel river. Private builders bought land opposite the hotel, an area which showed the promise to develop into a prestigious residential district.

Sarphati's most ambitious plans lay outside the old fortifications. Two exclusive upper-class areas were planned for both banks of the Amstel. Their layout – a *place d'étoile* – was clearly influenced by French classicist urban design. This also applied to the middle-class and working-class districts.

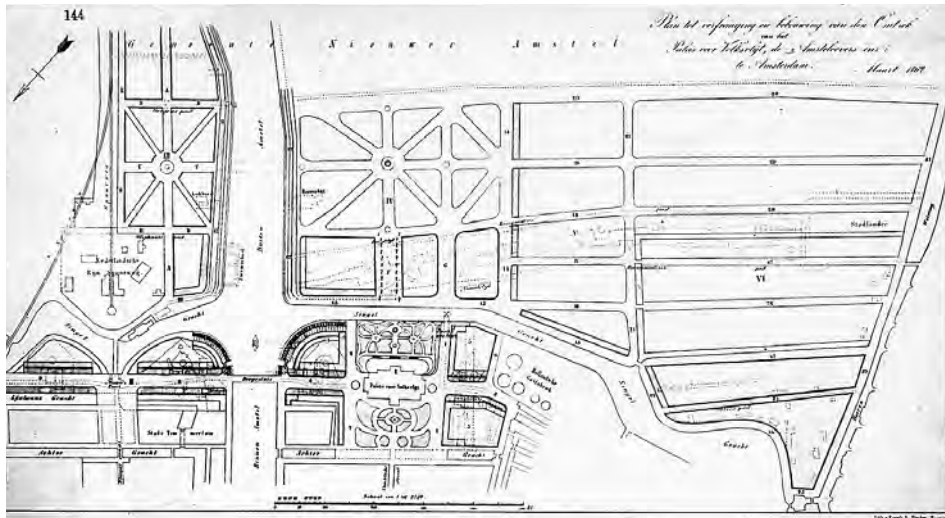


Figure 2. Samuel Sarphati's 1862 plan for a southern extension of Amsterdam (with the bottom of the map facing north)

But these ambitious plans ended in utter failure. Sarphati needed amounts of funding not only to purchase the land, but also to maintain its status as long as it was vacant. Sarphati hoped that upper-class Amsterdammers would leave their homes along the canals now that commercial developers in the historic core were turning residences into banks, hotels, and offices. But the formation of the central business district progressed at a much slower pace than he expected. Also, due to a total lack of planning and coordination, there were other up-market properties developed in other parts of the city, seriously competing with Sarphati's plans. Thus, Sarphati miscalculated the demand for his expensive projects on Amsterdam's southern fringe.

After his death in 1866, Sarphati's land company abandoned the prestigious design. In its place came high-density housing blocks with small, straight streets. This area – nicknamed de Pijp (the Pipe) – became the exclusive domain of speculative developers. They catered to the needs of private landlords, who preferred to invest in lower-middle-class housing, for which there was an overwhelming demand. Their aim was to enjoy a

constant source of income. This sector of the housing market knew no vacancies.

Within a few years, the Pijp was characterized by speculative building, monotonous streets and merciless landlords, increasingly demonized by Amsterdam's opinion leaders. Soon, almost the whole of the nineteenth-century belt was called the "funeral wreath" that threatened to suffocate Amsterdam's famous canal belt, which had clearly been the result of superior urban planning.

However, although devoted to the principles of free market property development, members of Amsterdam's local council began to feel uneasy about the total lack of planning control on the city's fringes. They foresaw that this chaos would in time present a formidable obstacle to the construction of an adequate road network, while the ramshackle quality of residential development here posed a sanitary threat and thus a health hazard.

A majority of councillors ordered the city architect, J.G. van Niftrik, to prepare an all-encompassing town plan that would put an end to the building chaos. In 1867, he presented his plan. Its aesthetic qualities were praised. Once again, the design clearly showed the imprint of French *beaux arts* town planning, with a grand radiating *place d'étoile* at its heart, destined for upper-class villas, and surrounded by geometrically laid-out middle-class neighborhoods. They acted as buffers for working-class areas at both ends of the belt. The rigid residential segregation proposed by Van Niftrik was seen as another attractive feature of the plan. But soon after this wave of enthusiasm, the first critical debates in the city council revealed the major obstacles to town planning and urban interventions in this period

How, one councillor asked, was this plan to be imposed on private landowners? How could the city force them to accept both parcelling and the strict zoning as proposed by van Niftrik?



Figure 3.  
J.G. van Niftrik's  
1867 extension plan  
for Amsterdam



Several politicians pointed out that this plan could be realized only if the city of Amsterdam were to own the land on which it was projected.

To achieve that aim it had to apply for permission to carry out mass expropriation. Just as in the United Kingdom, however, compulsory purchase in the Netherlands was no easy affair. The Law on Compulsory Purchase required that both Houses of Parliament test each proposal on whether it unequivocally served the common good. Only then could it take the form of an act of Parliament. It seemed unlikely that Parliament would pass such an act. But even if it had honored the appeal, it would have cost the city a fortune. The Law on Compulsory Purchase clearly stated that compensation had to correspond to market prices. Amsterdam, with the highest debts of all cities in the Netherlands, could not afford to pay that price.

One councillor aptly summarized the difference between the Netherlands and France, remarking that "... it remains a mystery how local administration must operate to enforce this plan as long as it cannot act as a certain Prefect of the Seine" (Wagenaar 1990, 251). He did not need to mention Haussmann's name. Everybody understood perfectly well that he was referring to the man who had been given almost plenipotentiary powers by his master, Emperor Napoleon III. At Haussmann's request the French laws on compulsory purchase were given an extremely relaxed interpretation. Sometimes the Emperor resorted to imperial decrees if matters took too long. Just as important, the French capital was given a kind of preferential treatment that Amsterdam could only dream of. The *grands travaux* cost a fortune. Without adequate funding, Haussmann could never have realized his program in such a short period of time.

Such preferential treatment was unheard of in the Netherlands. Just as in the United Kingdom, every town or city had to pay for its own improvements. The electoral system required that a member of parliament put the interests of his constituency before anything else. Extra funding for the capital would have met with fierce opposition. Not even The Hague was granted extra money to embellish the city in a manner appropriate for a seat of government and royal residence. Thus, local politicians, opinion leaders, and architects had to bow their heads to the harsh reality of *laissez-faire* speculative development. Van Niftrik's proposal was rejected.

In 1877, a new, "realistic" town plan, produced by Van Niftrik's superior, J. Kalf, was accepted. It provided no more than global indications of main streets and circular roads. The word "expropriation" was not mentioned, while embellishment schemes were avoided. It was meant as an instrument to negotiate with the powerful land companies. Often, at their request, extra streets were permitted in order to realize higher building densities. Open spaces within housing blocks were reduced to a minimum (Van der Valk 1989).

The result was a free market townscape that gave little reason for enthusiasm. Upgrading Amsterdam to a model European capital was out of the question. But that did not exclude piecemeal improvements. From the 1870s onwards, civic pride increasingly aimed at paying tribute to the arts and sciences, compensating, as it were, for the lack of a convincing monumental townscape.

## The Republic of Amsterdam

One of the most successful manifestations of civic pride was the creation of a new park (the Vondelpark) on the city's western fringe. The initiators all belonged to the financial and commercial elite. United in the "Park Committee", they launched their first appeal for donations in 1864. In their manifesto they took advantage of the prevalent feelings of wounded local pride. It opened with: "It is only within her walls that Amsterdam may be called one of Europe's most attractive and picturesque cities. But the surrounding area does not deserve such praise. It cannot compare with other cities, even in our own country. The Hague and Haarlem boast elegant parks. Compared to them, Amsterdam has nothing to offer."

The first request for gifts was successful. What certainly helped was that the Park Committee also appealed to the dominant laissez-faire political outlook of the time. They concluded their first manifesto with a remarkable tribute to liberalism. "On the Continent, many States spend vast amounts of public money to embellish their cities. In England, as a rule, everything that serves the public is paid for by the public itself. The Netherlands follows the English example, where citizens, keen on their freedom, often create major improvements on their own, without calling upon State support." (Wagenaar 1990, 269)

What proved most instrumental in the completion of the Vondelpark was the financial strategy followed by the members of the Committee. They had bought much more land than was needed for the park and, as it reached completion, they sold bordering properties at a substantial profit as residential building plots.

Buyers had to agree to strict building codes. The construction of working-class housing was forbidden. Contractors were compelled to install modern equipment, such as state-of-the-art sewage and drainage systems. Workshops, warehouses, and factories were, of course, ruled out. Despite all these rules and restrictions, the sale of building plots proved very profitable. The Vondelpark was opened in 1877, and is a lasting monument to the public spirit. The bordering quarters became the only fashionable area outside old Amsterdam.

This bourgeois residential enclave hosted many more civic initiatives, which in their turn further enhanced the attraction of the new neighborhood. The new national gallery (the *Rijksmuseum*), which was financed with gifts from all over the country, opened in 1885. Its gateway offered a wide view of the new residential area and the work on the new *Concertgebouw* (Concert Hall). In 1888, the Concert Hall opened its doors. Again, financial and commercial circles in the capital took the initiative. Both the *Concertgebouw* and its orchestra were financed without a penny of taxpayer's money. Soon after its opening it succeeded in becoming one of Europe's leading temples of music. Several times, contemporary composers like Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss chose the *Concertgebouw* for the first public performance of their work.

In 1894 the new Municipal Museum (the *Stedelijk Museum*) opened. The name is misleading. Although the city council did contribute to the building costs, the museum could not have been realized without substantial private donations. Just as important-

ly, its collection was furnished by wealthy patrons of the arts. They felt that leading painters such as Van Gogh and Breitner were out of place in the *Rijksmuseum*. Thus, the *Stedelijk Museum* developed a reputation as the Netherlands' leading modern art gallery – a reputation it has maintained ever since.

During its “Second Golden Age,” Amsterdam saw many more demonstrations of civic dedication to the arts (Bank 2000, 237-262). But science was not left out. Many felt that a self-respecting capital should manifest its devotion to scientific progress.

Prominent citizens lobbied the central government to allow the capital to have its own university. In 1877, after fierce rows in parliament, they got their way. But Amsterdam had to finance its university out of its own pocket. As well as financial support, the council donated the venerable City Library. Its impressive collection of rare books and maps, once the pride of the *mercator sapiens* (learned merchant), now received the title of University Library. The Botanical Gardens, founded in the seventeenth century to provide medicinal herbs and to cultivate tropical plants, was also elevated to an academic level.

But the greatest rewards were reaped from its investment in new laboratories. The costs were staggering. Critics, both in the local press and on the city council, remarked that Amsterdam could hardly bear the burden of its own university and should apply for state funding. (De Rooy 1992, 9 ff.). The city remained loyal to its university, however, and to science as well. Some 25 years later Amsterdam had its finest hour. In 1902, Pieter Zeeman became the Nobel laureate for physics, followed in 1910 by his colleague Van der Waals.

In 1927, the University of Amsterdam celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. In his opening speech, the Dean looked back on 50 successful years. One of the dignitaries present was the Minister of Education, whose office had defended the University's peculiar position in the past. “I express our gratitude for that support,” the Dean said. “Amsterdam is not used to being treated generously by the national government and the houses of parliament” (Van Athenaeum etc. 1927, 165).

With these words, the Dean aptly summarized the feelings of many fellow citizens. That Amsterdam had regained a prominent position as a dynamic capital, with a booming economy, a flourishing cultural life and an internationally valued university was, so they felt, very much the result of their own efforts. Unlike London, Amsterdam rarely enjoyed royal patronage of the arts and sciences. More often than not, government and Parliament alike rejected requests for state support. The press in the rest of the country gladly responded to deep-seated feelings of fear and disgust for the capital, with its allegedly arrogant attitude resulting from its age-old domination over the Dutch Republic.

### **From Private to Public Amenities**

By the turn of the century, the almost 25 years of “civic pride” had produced impressive results. Amsterdam had firmly established its position as a center of the arts and sciences, one unmatched by any other city – including The Hague. But unlike Paris,

Brussels, and Budapest, it lacked the means to highlight the temples of arts and science in a monumental urban scenography.

As a result of its revival, Amsterdam's urban landscape had changed profoundly. Old canals had been filled in to facilitate the circulation of the ever-increasing traffic. It proved an inexpensive alternative to the cutting of new boulevards through the urban fabric. The new arteries, particularly those emanating from Central Station, had a magnetic attraction to commercial land users. Walking from Central Station to Dam Square, visitors were welcomed by a collage of new buildings. On their way, their eyes were drawn to Berlage's new Municipal Exchange, which was soon joined by the new Stock Exchange. A little further on, the shop windows of the huge department stores tempted the visitor. The first cinemas appeared along this axis, along with modern cafés and restaurants. One after another, stately seventeenth- and eighteenth-century premises were demolished to make way for commercial property development. Between 1870 and 1925, the central area lost 30 percent of its residential dwellings (Wagenaar 2000b, 23). No new building resembled any other building. Their facades displayed a cacophony of styles. The new hotels and department stores occupied large sites. Their volume and height paid no respect to the small, steep, traditional townhouses they bordered. Dam Square, the heart of the city, became a battlefield of styles and building volumes.

Amsterdam's dynamic economy increasingly transformed its once picturesque inner city into a free market townscape, pockmarked with slums. Even its famous canal belt was under attack from commercial developers.

For those who sought refuge from its increasingly unattractive residential environment, the nineteenth-century belt had little to offer. The Vondelpark area certainly was an exception to the poor quality of the new neighborhoods. But quality housing was not only rare, it was also extremely expensive, as was the city as a whole. Amsterdam had the nation's highest tax burden, which forced up wages and prices.

The suburban communities in Gooi and Kennemerland were the only real alternatives to Amsterdam, as an increasing number of its citizens discovered. Both areas offered natural beauty along with low land prices, low taxes and cheap labor costs in the building trades. Now that both of these regions were linked to Amsterdam by a dense rail and tram network, their attraction increased considerably.

As yet, suburbanization in both areas remained modest, as Henk Schmal's contribution to this book makes clear. The communities surrounding Amsterdam attracted far greater numbers. They changed from agrarian villages into middle-class tax havens, increasingly eroding Amsterdam's fiscal base. Two successive annexations (in 1896 and 1921) put an end to this tax evasion strategy. Gooi and Kennemerland were out of reach, however. During the twentieth century they continued to skim off Amsterdam's wealth.

On the eve of the First World War, Amsterdam clearly showed the imprint of some 60 years of liberal, *laissez-faire* rule. Neither national government nor the municipality played a significant role in the provision of housing, in town planning, architecture or heritage conservation. Although opinion leaders bemoaned the loss of so many an-

cient premises in the old center, and criticized the freedom that commercial developers enjoyed to extract maximum profits from their property, there was no legal tool to stop them. The right of the owner to do with his property as he saw fit remained sacrosanct. As a consequence, there was no barrier to the transformation of Amsterdam's city center into a central business district.

The provision of housing was essentially left to the free market. There were no significant restrictions on speculative builders. The nineteenth-century belt saw an explosive growth of new housing. It strengthened liberal politicians in their belief in the blessings of the "trickling-down" mechanism. In due time, working-class families would leave the overcrowded slums in the old city and settle on the fringes, where housing of a higher standard would become available.

Although many deplored the aesthetic results of *laissez-faire* urban growth, the planned city was seen as a luxury, provided by private developers as an extra attraction to upper-class residential areas. Amsterdam's Vondelpark and Willemspark aptly illustrate this vision.

Improving one's housing conditions was seen as a private affair, as was social improvement in general. But this vision came under attack as the results of the free market increasingly disappointed contemporary critics. In Amsterdam, the "radical" liberals, who came to power in the 1890s, municipalized the private utilities. Thus, the privately owned water company, gas and electricity works and transport company were all brought into municipal hands. "Shareholder value" was seen as incompatible with the public good.

The introduction of collective provisions for private needs on the local level was followed by a similar process on the national level. The 1901 Housing Act heralded the advent of the welfare state. With it, Parliament accepted that a free housing market was unable to provide decent dwellings for the lower classes. What made the Act truly remarkable, however, was that it provided communities such as Amsterdam with the legal instruments to realize properly planned extension areas. If such a plan was approved, it allowed the city to expropriate the expansion area, although it had to pay the market value of the properties expropriated. Therefore, many communities were reluctant to use this instrument. But Amsterdam, with no more than two socialist representatives on its local council, almost immediately commissioned the nation's leading progressive architect, Hendrik Petrus Berlage, to develop an urban design for its southern extension area.

Although it took until 1917 before Berlage's final plan was accepted, it marked the arrival of the local welfare state as few other events had. From 1918 onwards, after a landslide socialist victory at the local elections, Amsterdam became the nation's leading laboratory for the collectivist approach. Coalitions between socialists and corporatist confessional parties were to dominate the local political arena for the next 75 years.

## The Welfare Capital

While socializing the means of production – including banks and insurance companies – took a prominent place in socialist rhetoric, everyday politics aimed at the provision of collective consumption. Revolutionary aldermen like Monne de Miranda developed plans for the complete socialization of the retail sector. Shopkeepers would become extinct, he said, meeting the same inevitable historical fate as feudal nobility (De Liagre Böhl 2000). These and similar plans all failed. But the provision of housing in carefully planned new extension areas proved a great success.

The key to that success lay in Amsterdam's resolute implementation of the new Housing Act. After approval of Berlage's plan for the southern extension area, the city applied for its complete expropriation, despite the staggering compensation costs. Thus, Amsterdam could impose Berlage's impressive design on the newly acquired land. What was more, it could now exercise complete control over the building process. As a ground landlord, it could dictate dwelling plans, building volume and the quality of amenities, and thus influence the social composition of the new quarter. For financial reasons it had to accept the fact that most contractors were working for private developers.

But irrespective of tenure, both private landlords and public housing associations were subject to very strict building regulations. This became dramatically visible in the facades along the new streets. Unlike in the past, the official Aesthetics Board now demanded that building developers integrate their design as part of a street facade.



Figure 4. H.P. Berlage's second version of Amsterdam's southern extension plan (1917)

They were obliged to conform to the architecture of the Amsterdam School, an exuberantly expressionist movement that broke away from the eclectic tradition of the previous century. It was remarkable that even public housing associations – working-class cooperatives to which the ruling socialists felt sympathetic – were repeatedly denied the right to contract their preferred architect if he did not accept the canon of the Amsterdam School.

Thus the distinction between expensive, privately rented apartments and low-budget public housing was made invisible. Whereas in the nineteenth century an abundance of ornament was a clear statement of a building's status and as a result indicated the high income of its tenants, such distinctions were absent in the new neighborhoods. Even differences in location – which during the nineteenth century had been instrumental in producing high- or low-quality housing – were levelled. Plots facing parks or located on the Amstel river or other waterways benefited from a broader panorama in this densely built city, which almost always automatically triggered the speculative contractor to build upper-class housing. However, this mechanism was ruled out in these collectivist urban designs.

The visual results were remarkable. The southern extension area, with its monumental, un-Dutch layout, displayed an unprecedented unity of style, building height and construction materials. Architects no longer designed individual houses but housing blocks, of which apartments were but a constituent part. Order and regularity were dominant features. During the nineteenth century, speculative builders often included commercial space on the ground level to maximize rents for the private landlord. As a result, streets in the nineteenth century belt were literally scattered with retail outlets, cafés, and workshops. With the almost unlimited and unregulated opening hours, all this helped to produce a very busy street life.

But planners and officials saw this as yet another undesirable outcome of *laissez-faire* urban development. In the new quarters, all neighborhood facilities were concentrated in squares or at the corners of a housing block. The new southern areas demonstrated an almost religious dedication to total planning control. From new bridges to mail boxes, electrical distribution equipment and litter bins, everything down to the smallest detail was designed according to the Amsterdam School's aesthetic criteria. Thus, the new quarter truly deserved the title of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

The contrast with the past could not be more dramatic. Even in the city's famous seventeenth-century canal belt area, one of the rare examples of expropriation to create an attractive urban environment, building developers were free to choose the facade of their choice. Each house differed from its neighbor in building volume and iconographic programme. Individualism reigned supreme. The results were, at best, picturesque – a qualification Berlage reserved for the Canal Belt, while vehemently denying the aesthetic value of the nineteenth-century belt. But monumentality, the architect stated, is the highest form of art, to which the layout of the southern extension contributed in no small way.

## The Triumph of Modernism

However much the city fathers and a growing number of visitors admired this area, there was increasing criticism of the rigidity of supervision maintained by the Aesthetics Board. Liberal politicians questioned the municipality's right to judge in matters of taste, which they saw as an individual and thus subjective preference.

The dictate of the Amsterdam School met with vociferous criticism from professional architects as well. The modernist movement in particular, with its devotion to "form follows function," ridiculed the exuberant and costly facades, to which the dwelling plan was subservient, resulting in bizarre and impractical residences. It was an outrage – complained one of the leading modernist architects, J.J.P. Oud – that a Labor-controlled municipality wasted public money on an urban design and architecture that served no other purpose than visual beauty (for an exhaustive essay on the Amsterdam School, see Stieber 1998). They increasingly convinced local politicians that it was time for a change. It came in 1928, when the city established the new Planning Department. Its program was utterly functionalist, claiming that scientific planning and modernist architecture were far superior to Berlage's "city beautiful."

A thorough analysis of the four main urban functions (residential, economic, recreational, transport) was to produce Amsterdam's new master plan. Isolated expansion schemes were seen as useless now that positivist, empirical research had finally unveiled the functioning of the city as a whole.

The result, the General Extension Plan, was approved by the local council in 1935. It encompassed most of the areas annexed in 1921. Rigid separation of functions created vast residential areas in the west and south of Amsterdam, while port-related manufacturing and warehousing were exclusively located along the North Sea Canal. Business was to expand unhampered in the city center. The resulting loss of residential space was to be compensated for in the building program.

Although essentially a town plan, it was clear from the start that its architectural implementation would be uncompromisingly modernist. The traditional housing block, enclosing private or common gardens, was seen as inferior to upper-deck-access flats, which guaranteed optimal daylight and fresh air to every single dwelling. Aesthetics, implying ornamentation, were seen as irrelevant. Gabled roofs were avoided. The flat roof – the ultimate symbol of modernist architecture – was rationally superior.

Realization of this ambitious scheme had to wait till the end of the war. After 1945, rebuilding the devastated economy took top priority. But from the 1950s onwards, Amsterdam triggered an unprecedented building boom. In the western garden cities (a misleading name compared to their British counterparts, given the prevalence of multi-storey estates and occasional tower blocks), public housing led the way. Whereas in the years between the two wars private housing had accounted for almost 70 percent of all new construction, the situation was now completely reversed. Even in well-off Buitenveldert (on the southern fringe), the share of public housing amounted to 38 percent.

Few other Western European capitals matched these figures, with Stockholm being



one of the few exceptions. No one foresaw that 30 to 40 years later, when the Netherlands returned to a more market-oriented economy, these well-planned, publicly owned residential areas would become the single most formidable challenge to urban renewal and regeneration.

## The Unimposing Capital

Although embedded in socialist politics, Berlage's design for the southern extension plan was Amsterdam's last attempt at monumentality. Admittedly, it lacked references to state power and grandeur, and was aesthetics *pur sang*. Yet it gave Amsterdam the only impressive urban area in the Netherlands.

After 1945, such artistic design was traded in for Modernism, which better suited the city's role as "welfare capital," and aesthetic values were considered as totally irrelevant. Town planning and architecture of the "Grand Manner" were ridiculed as old-fashioned and un-Dutch. Modernism seemed ideally suited as the architectural carrier for Amsterdam's collectivist housing strategy.

From an international perspective, the switch to such a housing strategy (with Modernism as its natural ally) was not unique. Stockholm opted for a similar course. Like Amsterdam, it gave up any attempt to impress as Sweden's capital, although unlike the Dutch capital it at least could boast an awe-inspiring royal and military complex dating from its absolutist eighteenth-century past (Andersson 1998). Stockholm's metro, which linked its satellite communities would in due time become the "inspiring" example on which was based the Bijlmermeer – Amsterdam's ultimate functionalist public housing area from the late 1960s.

London followed a similar course. The arrival of the welfare state led to massive clearing of Victorian terraces in the "horseshoe of poverty" that surrounded the city. High-rise estates and upper-deck-access flats replaced the nineteenth-century "slums". As in Stockholm, Labour governments in the UK made massive use of satellite towns as an additional solution to housing needs. And like Stockholm and Amsterdam, it seemed as though they had given up any attempt to turn London into a monumental capital. Quite the opposite. Both the City and the West End increasingly showed a "free market townscape," with a cacophony of building styles, building heights and building volumes. The destruction of both the Georgian and the Victorian legacy continued unimpeded (Olsen 1979).

Paris, however, continued its role as the nation's showcase, even after France finally opted for the welfare state in the 1960s. Remarkably enough, embellishment of the capital continued irrespective of the political orientation of the president. Right-wing presidents felt just as obliged to add to its glory as their socialist counterparts, as François Mitterand demonstrated during his term in office. However dedicated to the collectivist strategy he might have been, he adorned the capital with more new parks (as well as a new arch and opera) than all his post-war predecessors put together.

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## 2.3 • The Historical Roots of the Daily Urban System

*Henk Schmal*

### **Introduction**

During the second half of the 19th century, urban activities became ever more independent from the urban area and became dispersed over a large, traditionally rural area surrounding the city. The acceleration in the development of the residential elements of this process is usually attributed to factors such as a poor quality of life in the cities, rising affluence and substantially improved transportation connections. In Amsterdam, the affluent were the first group in a position to leave the city and did so in rising numbers that were disconcerting to municipal authorities. City council member and President of the Amsterdamsche Bank, F.S. van Nierop, for example, calculated that the taxable income of the taxpayers that moved away between 1885 and 1891 exceeded 12.5 million guilders, while that of newcomers amounted to a mere 7.5 million. “The city’s loss of 5 million in taxable income over the past six years is an ominous sign,” remarked Van Nierop (1893, 209).

Many were to reiterate the city council member’s laments over time. This process of the rich fleeing that he mentioned was long considered a characteristic of the city. Even nowadays, those entering the city tend to be younger, less educated and less affluent, while each year the older, better educated and more affluent leave. After all, the city and its wealth of facilities foster development. Or, as Van Nierop stated: “The indigent wash up during high tide, and the affluent are washed away during low tide” (1905, 216).

This remark also correlates with the general impression of residential suburbanization, which is usually depicted as an ecological process involving migration by the affluent from the urban centers to the more scenic parts of the surrounding countryside. Advances in transport technology brought about the exodus of the affluent, who could settle in picturesque country estates without having to sever their professional ties with the city. The question remains, however, as to whether the time-space and cost-space convergences – according to the chrono-geographic terminology of Janelle, Parkes, and Thrift – may be considered adequate for spatial expansion of the daily urban system. The term “daily urban system” denotes the central city and the surrounding area, where many residents work in the city every day. All kinds of restrictions that do not directly concern the actual means of transport and those inherent in affluence

may impede coherent development of the means of transport and the spatial expansion of the daily urban system (De Pater and Schmal 1982).

This contribution reviews the development of Amsterdam's daily urban system between 1880 and 1940 and examines how important trains and trams were in this process.

In the first section I will briefly discuss expectations among contemporaries in the Netherlands and abroad around 1900 regarding the potential of trains and trams with respect to urban development. Afterwards, I will describe the expansion of the daily urban system by examining whether and in what measure the new means of transport could be and were indeed used.

## **Trains and Trams as Solutions to the Urban Crisis**

Although streets in city centers during the 19th century were filled with horses and carriages, most people reached their destinations on foot. Lack of adequate public transport limited the range of virtually all regular activities. Only once new means of transport were introduced and existing ones improved did dispersal across a larger area become possible for the rapidly growing population. At the time, suburbanization opportunities were frequently noted but used locally in several different ways. In many places citification seriously complicated life in the city centers. Moreover, housing needs rose substantially, because of closely related demographic and economic growth. The spatial proximity required for many activities was conducive to greater densification. The quality of life deteriorated rapidly in many cities. Many local and national reports in the Netherlands and abroad mentioned that the majority of the population lived in dilapidated, unsanitary accommodations. The quest for a solution included repeated attempts to benefit from the opportunities provided by various modes of transport. Their use was expected to help resolve the crisis afflicting many cities. Rising mobility might make the difference in overcoming the existing urban spatial network with its drawbacks and creating new conditions for generating other attributes. Max Weber (1899) regarded a good communications network as "one of the most and perhaps the most important means for providing the urban population with affordable and more comfortable living arrangements in the modern city" (Nieboer 1908, 38, op. cit.). The potential benefits of a good tram and/or railway network for the city were widely acknowledged. The *Electrical Engineer* of 1894 also indicated that European cities were overpopulated, unhealthy and relatively expensive, especially for the working classes. It suggested "... spreading out the population into the older and newer suburbs with their pure air and their wholesome surroundings" (Mckay 1976, 207, op. cit.).

Well before 1900, efforts were made around London to interest people in living in the outlying areas, at least by making transportation as inexpensive as possible. In 1864, special rates for workers were introduced on a few lines to encourage them to travel and thus to fulfill a necessary condition for suburbanization. Nevertheless, such measures were exceptional. Measures to accommodate short trips and rush-hour con-

gestion were deemed unprofitable. Objections were even based on the argument that the lines with “penny fares” would become unsuitable for “regular” passenger traffic. Later proposals to introduce “workmen’s passes” were rejected on the grounds that allowing the lower classes to penetrate everywhere would be dangerous. In fact, the railway companies and people in a position to influence them showed hardly any interest in transport for the ordinary man. The result was that the working class still had to live near the place where the jobs were located (Kellett 1979, pp. 376-382).

Around 1900, when electric trams replaced the slow and costly horse-drawn trolleys and revolutionized public transport, far more efforts were made to benefit from the opportunities provided by this means of transport for living on the outskirts or in the suburbs. “Cheap and rapid transit is the only cure for the working-class housing problem,” reported the Sanitary Committee in England in 1904 (Kellett 1979, 359, op. cit.). The tram became a popular means of transport. In many places the number of passengers transported rose spectacularly within a few years, networks expanded rapidly, and the means of transport proved conducive to the spatial development of major cities and their surroundings (Mckay 1976, 173-184; 216-219, Jackson 1973, 25-32). “Electric tramways did indeed open up large areas for new residential construction and thereby greatly facilitate socially desirable decentralization” (Mckay 1976, 219). “We are unanimous to the effect that congested districts have been relieved and that tramways have promoted the development of outlying areas for workmen’s and middle-class houses” (Sellon 1905, 968).

In Belgium workers travelled at reduced rates along the dense network of national and local railways at the end of the 19th century. According to Vandervelde (1910, 151-155), the measure provided workers with greater freedom to decide where they lived. “By enabling workers and servants to live 20 or 30 kilometers from where they work, local railways have helped reduce the pressure on the cities, provide labour and lower its cost. They have also been conducive to populating rural areas and have led to better housing conditions, an inexpensive food supply, and good health and moral standards among the working class.” “Every morning and evening the local lines transport thousands of workers from and to the countryside at such low rates that a worker’s railway pass for a distance of 25 kilometers reduces the cost of each journey to a quarter of the normal rate.” This description reflected the situation on the eve of World War I (Buurtspoorwegen 1934, 45).

In addition to being able to travel at low rates, Belgian workers were eligible to obtain mortgages fairly easily. From 1889 onward, the Rijksspaarbanken (state savings banks) were involved in the effort to encourage residential construction for workers (Drucker 1898, 458).

Thanks largely to the low rates on the railways and local trains with their extensive networks (Belgium had the densest railway network in the world at that time), few obstacles remained to building houses along the periphery, where inexpensive building sites were in ample supply. Accordingly, the expansion of the daily urban system around a few major cities in Belgium predated World War I.

The opportunities that trains and trams provided for urban development in the

overcrowded cities in countries neighboring the Netherlands were widely recognized and used in some cases before the turn of the century.

In the Netherlands, the opportunities of trains and trams for urban development elicited widespread interest as well. By 1883, Sanders (1883, 7) noted the potential of a regional tramway network: "... Generally, trams make the countryside more attractive for habitation. They are particularly useful near major cities, however, as their highly decentralizing effect will have a major impact both on planning and construction of the cities and on the customs of the inhabitants. A broad range of residents will be able to move from their expensive homes in Amsterdam to inexpensive cottages outside the city thanks to the construction of outbound tramways; small businessmen and civil servants unable to afford a train pass will be able to move to Haarlem, Hilversum or Bussum without quitting their jobs in the city thanks to the cheaper tram passes; although riding the tram remains beyond the means of workers, this will change over time, and they, too, will be able to move out of the city." In 1893, a pamphlet was published that advocated the establishment of a residential community (Tetterode 1893) in the Gooi, connected to the city by railway for workers employed in Amsterdam. This early version of a suburb never materialized. A decade later, a report appeared in *De Locomotief* (1904, 1-2) about the 13th general meeting of the Union internationale de tramways et chemins de fer d'intérêt local (international league of tramways and local railways), which convened in Vienna and addressed "the close link between a good traffic system and the housing issue (since the low rates and rapid speed of displacement have all but eliminated distances); the coincidental public health; the expansion of the major cities, which averts congestion at certain points". Contemporaries such as Drucker (1898) and Nieboer noted the opportunities provided by trams and trains as well. Nieboer advocated a dense network of inexpensive trams "... to minimize the loss of time and money associated with the increasingly necessary separation between the population's places of home and work. But trams are also powerful instruments for improving housing conditions. Especially because they promote the development of the inner cities [and] bring people out of the congested inner cities toward the periphery" (Nieboer 1908, 41). Minister C. Lely also noted the opportunities that the new means of transport provided for urban development, when he stated before the Lower House in 1907 that it would "enable both industrial expansion to the countryside and settlement of the more and less affluent in the countryside and consequently reduce the massive arrival of new inhabitants in the cities" (quoted in Van Hulzen 1983, 53-54).

Basically, around 1900 many people in the Netherlands and abroad invoked the opportunities that the new means of transport offered all city dwellers to escape the crowded city and find new accommodations amid scenic, healthy surroundings.

## **1900: Suburbanization Without Commuting**

The temporary or permanent departure of a considerable number of Amsterdam's residents in the 19th century was not a new phenomenon. In the 17th and 18th centuries many affluent Amsterdam families spent the summer months outside the city in ac-

commodations ranging from farmsteads with a few simple adjustments to elegant country estates. Obviously, only the very wealthy could afford such country residences. They often owned a place outside the city along the Amstel, the Vecht or in 's-Graveland. In the second half of the 18th century people became disenchanted with the flat areas full of waterways and sought out hilly regions, where the different altitudes made for a more varied landscape. This change in taste led to a mass exodus from the riverside resorts. Elsewhere, existing country estates were transformed, such as 's-Graveland. Following the economic recession under the Napoleonic occupation, Kennemerland, the Gooi, the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the Veluwezoom (including Arnhem) became popular settlement sites for the Amsterdam elite. Accessibility was one of the factors determining the location of new country estates. In the second quarter of the 19th century many country estates arose on the Heuvelrug along the newly paved road from De Bilt to Arnhem, and the Stichtse Lustwarande was established there. Country estates were also built between 's-Graveland and Hilversum along the road paved in 1826.

After 1860, the construction of a comprehensive railway network made paved roads less important for reaching many places outside Amsterdam. Henceforth, the locations of new estates depended largely on railway stations. The opening of the Oosterspoorlijn from Amsterdam to Amersfoort in 1874 made an enormous difference. Prince Henry, the son of King William II, who had inherited Soestdijk Palace and the adjacent grounds, had willingly ceded land for the construction of the railway, on the condition that a station be built in Baarn, and that most trains stop there on their way to and from Amsterdam. Although spending the summer in the countryside was already popular before 1874, the opening of the railway line greatly promoted additional development. Speculators perceived the towns along the railway that had stations (e.g. Bussum, Hilversum and Baarn) as major development opportunities. They took the same view of those on the other side of Amsterdam, from where railway lines were built toward Heemstede, Zandvoort and Bloemendaal. Obtaining approval for construction sites, however, was a very gradual process. Often, the same owners had managed the properties for centuries and refused to sell their land. In Baarn, for example, speculators began to acquire substantial numbers of construction sites only in 1879, when Prince Henry's heirs sold large sections of the property following his death. Nor did the sale of lots for building cottages proceed smoothly in all cases, especially not on sites further away from the railway.

### **Het Spiegel: A Residential Area in the Gooi**

Until well into the nineteenth century, Het Spiegel was part of the Bussumer eng, the common fields of the community of Bussum, where construction lots alternated with oak timberlands. In the early nineteenth century, many wealthy people purchased land there, probably because of the opportunities for dredging sand. Following the construction of the railway and the opening of the station at Naarden-Bussum, Het Spiegel became a suitable location for building cottages. In 1876, the Amsterdam project developer P.J. Loman and J.H. Biegel of Bussum established the Nieuw Bussum building company, which built



many of the cottages in Het Spiegel, a residential neighborhood behind the station. The board members and many of the shareholders were from Amsterdam. Upon allocating construction lots, the firm prohibited the building of cafés, factories, or workers' homes or other premises or structures that might mar the surroundings.

One of the first projects was a hotel. Potential buyers stayed at this deluxe resort hotel to stake out the area, contemplate purchases and move in while their cottage was under construction. In addition to accommodating prospective buyers, the hotel served as a community center for residents of Het Spiegel. The choral society met at the hotel, and the adjacent reception hall hosted theater performances. The hotel was also the headquarters of the Ouder Ons Society.

Others managed the lots in the neighborhood as well. Around 1870, for example, G.A. Gritter from Amsterdam purchased a large tract of land, where he cleared a country road and lined it with elms and pines and built spacious mansions alongside it. The project was so successful that he had a second road built in 1875 where he intended to put up residences as well. Speculation and land management thrived in Het Spiegel. Within a few years the price of land skyrocketed from NLG 0.25 to NLG 2.25 per square meter.

Since various parties owned the land, and several construction firms operated virtually independently of each other here, the plans developed for Het Spiegel were less than synchronized. The operators quickly understood that the lack of cohesion would complicate successful management. In 1879,



Figure 1. Design Gooiland, building scheme of “Oud-Bussum” in the northern part of Het Spiegel, designed by L. H. Koolhoven, ca. 1900

Source: Library of the Wageningen University, Department of Special Collections.

J.H. Biegel tried to solve the problem by establishing the *Vereeniging tot verfraaiing der Gemeente Bussum*, which was dedicated to “improving public roads belonging to the town of Bussum, beautifying public squares and sites in the village and even the surroundings, planting groups of trees, sections of shrubs, placing flower beds and other ornaments, making pergolas and paths through the woodlands (subject to permission from the owners), setting up children’s playgrounds, placing benches and small tents at scenic spots, etc.” One of the association’s first tasks was to improve the road system in *Het Spiegel*. A few main roads were built, along which the operators involved in the association put up several cottages to attract new developers.

*Het Spiegel* was intended as an attractive residential area that could hold a candle to any of those in the surroundings or the city. Efforts to make residential areas more appealing increased in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Major competition arose, both between speculators working in the same community and between different communities.

Most of the residences built before 1900 in *Het Spiegel* are spacious and are located on large lots. After the turn of the century, considerably more modest homes were built on smaller lots. Until 1935 most of the construction in *Het Spiegel* consisted of new residences. Toward the end of this period, many were two-family cottages on small lots. After 1935 land redistribution and densification were the main construction operations in *Het Spiegel*. Many homes were torn down between 1955 and 1965. Deluxe apartment blocks were built in their place. In the 1970s and 80s, the demolition operations continued. Lots were reallocated in many cases and filled with bungalows and contemporary cottages.

Around 1880, several communities in the Gooi and Kennemerland started to expand. At first their growth was only partially attributable to suburbanization of people employed in Amsterdam. Communities such as Baarn and Bloemendaal became popular holiday and recreation sites in the final decades of the 19th century. In addition to day visitors, both communities accommodated extended summer guests, including a substantial share from the Dutch capital. A few Amsterdam residents even settled permanently in the attractive towns on the sand. Local servants from elsewhere accounted for the overwhelming majority of the immigrants (Schmal 1983, 101). The occupations of the well-to-do inhabitants of the estates reveal that most did not necessarily have frequent ties with the city. Most of those residing on the estates in a village like Baarn had come from Amsterdam: 49 of the 86 listed in the local register between 1874 and 1880 and at least 56 of the 110 listed for 1889 (Hoekveld 1964, 214, 217). Remarkably, many of those arriving in Baarn had been born in Amsterdam but had moved to communities in Gelderland (Arnhem, Rheden) or the southern part of the Heuvelrug (Driebergen, Zeist), and then moved again from these communities to Baarn. Apparently, quite a few people from Amsterdam who previously owned country estates far away from the city decided to spend their summers in Baarn (which was considerably closer to the city) once the railway to Amersfoort opened. The inhabitants of estates in Baarn (as well as in Bloemendaal) included many businessmen (stockbrokers, bankers, and merchants), professors, judges, officers, lawyers, and engineers. Several others had no occupation, including many widows and persons of independent means (Hoekveld 1964, 109; Venema-Wildeboer 1982, 43 ff.). The occupations and ages of the inhabitants of es-

tates reveal that the appeal of the countryside was not just limited to people of independent means in the 19th century.

Examining the connections to the capital proves that the growth of the communities in the Gooi and Kennemerland did not give rise to much commuting. Rail and tramways hardly catered to commuters, as manifested by railway pass sales, though they thrived in many other countries, they remained low in the Netherlands and were not encouraged by the state before 1900. Demand for railway passes appears to have been low. Moreover, travel time was fairly long, trains ran infrequently, and their departure and arrival times were often highly inconvenient for commuters (Van Nierop 1905, 201, 202; Wagenaar 1982, 346). For these reasons, residents of the more distant growing suburban communities rarely commuted to Amsterdam.

The attractive sandy areas drew the Amsterdam elite only during the summer months. Residents visited each other, organized private balls and garden parties, viewed each other's greenhouses, arranged music recitals and lectures in the evenings, and met at private societies. They did everything possible to continue the life they had led in Amsterdam in the countryside. In the winter, the country estates and residential areas were a desolate sight. The accommodations stood empty, and the windows were covered with straw mats. Most residents returned to their city houses. At the end of the 19th century, lifestyles were more like those in the 18th century than in the modern era. Thus, the daily urban system hardly extended beyond the urban area adjacent to Amsterdam.

Even though only a small share of Amsterdam's well-to-do residents moved to the countryside, the municipality found this trend unfortunate and disconcerting. The authorities took various measures to stem the exodus of the affluent.

## **Curtailing the Exodus**

The temporary and permanent departure of wealthy Amsterdam residents to the countryside was sufficient in size to concern local politicians before 1900. As noted above, some asserted that the trend reduced tax revenues considerably. Various efforts were made to compensate for this loss and offset the differences in local taxes. One measure was annexation: many inhabitants of Nieuwer-Amstel and Sloten, who resided just across the city limits in premises constructed over the previous decades thus had their status as full-fledged Amsterdam residents restored in 1896. In 1921, another large surrounding area was added to Amsterdam as well.

Another measure concerned the commuter tax, which was introduced in 1897. Commuters were subject to municipal income tax where they "were present for over ninety days at an office, place of work, or other permanent institution or place of employment" (Van Assendelft de Coningh 1897, 80). They were required to pay one third of the municipal income tax due in their town of employment. This assessment applied in the towns where the commuters worked, and the amount depended on the rates in these communities. In their communities of residence, commuters simply paid the local assessment due. This system underwent thorough revision in 1929. Municipal in-

come taxes were replaced by state income taxes, which were allocated to the communities according to a distribution code. As a result, the commuter tax was discontinued as well. By the 1920s, the number of commuters in Amsterdam, which had been less than a thousand before 1900 according to local income tax statistics, exceeded ten thousand. Although the information available does not enable a collective comparison of communities, local tax rates varied considerably between communities. In many cases, decisions to migrate must have been based in part on the different tax rates. On 22 November 1902, the *Handelsblad* published calculations indicating that despite the local taxes due in Baarn, Bloemendaal and Bussum, the commuter tax for Amsterdam and the cost of a railway pass, commuters paid less than Amsterdam residents did. In the 1920s, efforts to curtail the tax benefits of living in bedroom suburbs had yet to achieve their objective, and the savings continued to be touted to lure potential migrants (Wagenaar 1982, 346). Local tax differences caused problems in communities outside the Amsterdam region as well (Visser 1925, 129).

Other measures intended to dissuade affluent Amsterdam residents from leaving included initiatives to provide the capital with the same attributes available to the communities on the sand. In his plan of 1905, Berlage repeatedly highlighted the significance of greenery, arguing that if Amsterdam “featured picturesque scenes and fine walks, it would not only retain its population but would attract new residents as well.”

Others were more cautious about the changes. Van Nierop submitted that “even if Berlage’s *Amsterdamsche Woud* approximates the *Haarlemmer Hout* or the *Haagsche Bosch*, the well-to-do will not settle in the capital *en masse*, nor will the exodus of affluent commuters diminish substantially. Amsterdam lacks the scenic surroundings that might promote such settlement” (Van Nierop 1905, 209, 210).

Amsterdam’s efforts were only moderately successful. Rising affluence, improvement of the existing means of transport, and the introduction of new ones (e.g. bicycles and automobiles) increasingly enabled people to escape the city, which they did in ever greater numbers over the decades that followed.

## **Spatial Expansion and Public Transport**

In what measure did the local authorities use the opportunities that trams and trains offered to resolve the urban housing crisis around 1900? While they appear to have taken some measures to this effect locally, they did not do so regionally.

During the final decades of the 19th century, when the horse-drawn trolley was in use, this rather slow and primitive means of transport did not benefit all citizens. Managed by the private *Amsterdamsche Omnibus Maatschappij* (AOM), its fares of 12 and later 10 cents were simply too expensive. Sanders asserted that “... traffic has peaked with the current tramlines and rates” (Sanders 1890, 7). The passengers consisted primarily of the “upper ten thousand,” as was apparent from the tramlines: most ran in and to the districts where the more affluent citizens were overrepresented. The time of the first morning departures was yet another sign that the working class did not ride

horse-drawn trolleys. In the 1880s and 90s, the first trolleys departed at eight o'clock in the morning on weekdays (Van Santen 1905), which was much too late for workers, who almost all started work between 6 and 8 a.m. The idea was that by reducing the rates, expanding the trolley network, and introducing inexpensive "early-bird" rides it would make trolleys affordable and practical for all of Amsterdam's citizens.

Trams were democratized as a means of public transport after the City of Amsterdam took over the local tram firm. The municipal authorities were highly critical of the private tram operator. Local officials believed that the AOM was not adding tramlines fast enough to keep pace with urban expansion. The firm was loath to jeopardize its excellent profits by risky investments. In 1900, the AOM lost its concession, and the tram firm became subject to municipal control. Within a few years the routes were electrified and extended, fares were reduced, and "early-bird" rides were introduced at special low rates on a few of the lines. These measures increased the capacity and speed of public transport, while the low fares made the system affordable to a substantial portion of the population. As a result, trams were a means of mass displacement well before World War I. Workers could move to the outskirts and work anywhere in the city.

This opportunity was not available supra-locally, since city trams did not run beyond the city limits. There, the network's construction and operation remained in private hands. The Amsterdam municipal authorities refused to allow regional tramlines into the city center. Because of their policy, access to the city center did not improve much for those coming from outside the city. Their position also discouraged people employed in the inner city from moving outside.

Some firms operating inter-local trams, however, responded to more than simply the increased demand for transport. The first inter-local tram connections were intended largely for recreational transport and improved access to the countryside. Their recreational function continued to figure prominently in subsequent extensions. Moreover, myriad initiatives during the 1900s were intended to expand the potential urban and suburban area through the construction of tramlines. The construction of the tramline between Amsterdam and Haarlem illustrates this practice: the first concessionaires covered a considerably larger area in the neighboring community of Sloten between the city limits and Sloterdijk than was necessary to build a tramline. The mission statement of the *Electrische Spoorweg Maatschappij* (ESM), which resulted from the initiatives of the original concessionaires in 1903, revealed that the ESM aimed to operate the tramline, as well as manage and sell properties located near the line. But most of the profits were made by the concessionaires. In 1902 they bought a number of "farmland" parcels and in 1903 they sold most of their parcels as "building" parcels to the ESM (Schmal 1982, 7). Of course for a much higher price.

In 1898, two Haarlem architects drew up plans for a tramway in Kennemerland and applied for permission to build an electric tramline from Amsterdam via Aerdenhout to Zandvoort. Upon obtaining the concession, however, they transferred it to the *Eerste Electrische Tramwegmaatschappij* (ENET). Both architects subsequently invested all their energies into constructing residences along the site where the tramway was planned (Venema-Wildeboer 1982, 74).

The endeavour, however, was not successful. The Crailoo Maatschappij tot Exploitatie van Bouwterreinen in the Gooi, for example, tried to connect Crailoo (where the firm intended to build a residential area) to the Naarden-Bussum station. On 28 October 1904 the Centrale Tramweg Maatschappij was established for this purpose. Purchasing sites around the Naarden-Bussum station proved so complicated that none of the various routes planned ever materialized. Interest in their construction dwindled. By 1911, the society informed the Ministry of Public Works and Water Management that it had decided not to run or operate these lines and was withdrawing its application for a concession.

The regional tramline from Amsterdam to the Gooi was not yet suitable for commuter traffic. Shortly after 1900, the trip was still far too time-consuming. The Laren-Naarden-Amsterdam journey took over two hours in 1905 (Van Santen 1905). The tramline continued to transport recreational travellers. Nonetheless, construction of the regional tramline coincided with the urban development and population growth at the edge of the city. Watergraafsmeer, the first community where the Gooische Stoomtram stopped after Amsterdam, started growing rapidly in 1901. The village of Sloten, where the tram to Haarlem stopped, began really growing in 1907. The zones along the two tramways were especially popular sites for residential construction just outside the city. The efforts to derive maximum benefit from the advantageous location of the sites relative to Amsterdam culminated in the middle-class dwellings built alongside the two tramways. The migration figures and the opening of local services first along the line between Sloterdijk and Amsterdam and then between Diemerbrug and Amsterdam to relieve the pressure on through traffic indicate that many commuters settled here (Engel 1972, 14; Schmal 1982, 14).

## **Outward bound: A Selective Trend**

In the early decades of the twentieth century, extensive use appears to have been made of the opportunities provided by trams and trains. Sales of permanent and weekly passes for the HIJSM increased. Migration to selected suburbs was high, as it also was to a few towns in the Gooi and Kennemerland. This trend, combined with the spectacular rise in the number of people subject to the Amsterdam commuter tax, suggests a mass exodus from the city in the 1920s.

After 1900, the towns on the sand expanded into so-called villadoms. Increasingly, country estates changed from temporary summer abodes (their main purpose before 1900) into permanent residences. These towns became ever more middle class, especially after World War I. The change is apparent from the decline in per capita income among the residents of these communities. In addition, the homes built during these decades were clearly less lavish.

Besides the towns of Baarn, Hilversum, and Bussum in the Gooi and Bloemendaal and Heemstede in Kennemerland (which were already growing rapidly before 1900), places such as Laren, Blaricum, and Huizen and the villages of Badhoevedorp and Diemen closer to Amsterdam became bedroom suburbs. The average for net annual de-

partures to bedroom suburbs, which was less than 1,000 in the period 1900-1920, rose to 2,000 in the 1920s and to 2,500 to 3,000 in the 1930s. Amsterdam's municipal authorities remained concerned about the exodus of the largely well-to-do residents. Their departure deprived local businesses of a public with a great deal of purchasing power and deprived the city of many residents who were involved in various social causes. In 1938, in an effort to reverse the trend, a new advertising campaign emphasized that Amsterdam was not expensive and had much to offer culture-loving urbanites. The initiative is not believed to have had a significant impact on the exodus from the city. Most of those who left were less interested in reducing their cost of living than in purchasing a single-family home in a scenic setting, which almost by definition required moving to a surrounding area. The overwhelming majority of the new houses in Amsterdam were flats. The few single-family homes built were beyond the means of most residents.

In the Gooi and Kennemerland private entrepreneurs built residences for the well-to-do rather than for the working class. The original owners of the sites designated for construction – frequently the proprietors of vast country estates – did their best to have an influence on the types of homes to be built. They tried to “keep out the riffraff” through easements at the time they sold the land. The practice was intended to maintain the value of the remainder of the country estate.

Many local authorities prohibited the construction of new homes for working class people. They, too, benefited from excluding workers, especially those employed in other towns. The Housing Act of 1901 increased the tendency of building homes for the working class to meet local needs. Local authorities were the only parties entitled to intervene in the process of residential construction. During the first few decades of the Housing Act, the municipal trend was consistently regarded as a local problem (Bakker Schut 1944, 103).

Finally, residential construction developers favored building homes for the more affluent, as such homes were the most profitable. The result consisted of rather homogeneous residential areas that accommodated the wealthier population groups around or in immediate proximity to various suburban stations and alongside a few tramlines.

This situation obviously doomed plans to build suburbs for Amsterdam's working class further outside the city. In 1905, for example, the Gooi was proposed as the site for a suburb for Amsterdam residents. This area was selected both because of the excellent and inexpensive opportunities for residential construction on the sandy soil and because of the fresh air in the forest and on the heath (Bruinwold Riedel 1906). But it was only in the 1920s, however, that suburbs began to figure in the expansion plans for Amsterdam. Alderman of Public Housing, S.R. de Miranda, was a particularly strong advocate of this new form of residential construction. He and his top official, the director of the Housing Service, A. Keppler, believed that suburbs would enable the working class to live in single-family homes. The activities of the suburbs committee formed in 1923 culminated in a final report listing several suitable locations for developing suburbs, mostly at some distance from the city. In a minority report De Miranda recommended a suburb in the Gooi, equidistant from the centers of Hilversum, Bussum, and Laren.

This Gooistad would have a population of 50,000 and was to consist entirely of low-rise accommodations with a density of about forty homes per hectare. Representatives of the Gooi communities took an instant dislike to this idea. They declined to serve on the suburbs committee to avoid giving the impression that they approved of this kind of construction. The communities formed the Centrale schoonheidscommissie voor het Gooi (central beautification committee for the Gooi), which argued unanimously that the amount of space required rendered a suburb undesirable in the Gooi and would jeopardize the natural beauty of the area. The suburbs committee was divided as well. The Depression eventually prevented the implementation of the plans. In the Amsterdams Uitbreidingsplan (Amsterdam expansion plan, AUP 1934), urban expansion was based on the idea of a central city. According to the AUP report, the multitude of closely related groups of businesses complicated decentralized expansion. Plus decentralization was not even deemed as necessary, considering the modest projections for population growth. Thus the idea of building satellite towns and suburbs far away from the city to accommodate the urban expansion was dismissed. Residential developments arose within Amsterdam's city limits. Settlements built far from the inner city (by the prevailing standards of the time) and therefore on inexpensive sites, such as Oostzaan and Watergraafsmeer, were immensely popular.

Nonetheless, the substantial rise in the number of railway passes and workmen's cards issued by the HIJSM in the early decades of the 20th century suggests that the working class joined the suburbanizing drive. The availability of inexpensive transport passes did indeed open up a considerable area around Amsterdam to the working class, albeit subject to various restrictions. Examining the Third Class workmen's cards issued by the HIJSM reveals that far more were sold to individuals commuting from Amsterdam to suburban destinations than vice versa (Schmal 1983, 106). This was attributable in part to the residential construction activities in selected towns in the Gooi during this period, which employed many casual workers. Moreover, many Amsterdam shopkeepers opened branches in the suburbs, which also gave rise to – temporarily – commutes to the Gooi.

The housekeeping staff of well-to-do former residents of Amsterdam also accounted for the surplus of outward bound workmen's cards issued. In some cases these servants continued to live in the capital. In addition, many inexpensive passes were issued for early-morning trains to the industrial areas in the Zaanstreek and IJmond. The railway company thus enabled workers to follow employment opportunities throughout the region. Rather than moving each time they changed jobs, they were able to continue living in the city. This did not suburbanize their domicile by any means. Clustering homes for the working class in the city and arranging easy access to jobs throughout the region actually promoted the further concentration of working-class habitation during this period.

Only after 1960, with the "exodus" to other communities in full swing, did the working class follow suit and join the mass trek out of Amsterdam. But they had already discovered the Gooi's areas of natural beauty in the wake of their elite predecessors. From the 1920s onward, when bicycles became the universal means of transport, many resi-



dents of the densely populated city districts went on nature hikes through the Gooi. Increasingly, they spent the weekend in these natural surroundings. They soon replaced their primitive tents of earlier years with tent homes, like those at the Fransche Kamp near Bussum. By 1925, there were commuter camps (Mulder 1974, 16). Breadwinners commuted back and forth to the city, while their families lived at the campground as well as on weekends, bank holidays and vacations. Camping on the grounds of the Gooi nature reserve – which now accommodates the third generation of holiday goers – became a new lifestyle in the countryside.

After the elite settled permanently in the towns outside the city on the attractive sandy soil shortly after 1900, a large middle-class contingent followed suit during the 1920s and 30s. The result was a considerable expansion of the daily urban system for a selective cross-section of Amsterdam's population. Simultaneously, however, the trend heightened the contrast between Amsterdam and the surrounding area with respect to the social-economic status of the residents.

## Conclusion

Advances in transportation technology and the ways that people benefited from opportunities were long the cause for contradictory spatial developments in the residential patterns of different social-economic groups.

Notwithstanding all the needs and opportunities mentioned, the suburbanization of people working in the city remained socially selective in the first half of the 20th century. A different pattern prevailed in Belgium, where suburbanization was already widespread among all segments of the population prior to World War I. Private residential construction initiatives and the Housing Act designed to accommodate local authorities greatly influenced spatial development in the urban district of Amsterdam. Shortly after 1900, the introduction of inexpensive workmen's cards considerably expanded the geographic range of the employment market for the city's working-class residents but did not substantially suburbanize their domicile. No significant amount of new housing was available for this group until after 1910 and then exclusively inside the city. Otherwise, they had to purchase homes previously inhabited by others. Improved access to transportation was therefore more likely to promote the concentration of the working class.

Conversely, considerable suburban residential areas became available to the more affluent after 1900. Private residential construction initiatives largely reflected the opportunities provided by the existing rail infrastructure. Most transport companies were virtually indifferent toward residential construction: their main purpose was to satisfy established transport needs. In some very rare instances, private entrepreneurs actually built railways themselves to benefit directly from the value added to the adjacent tracts of land. Private entrepreneurs and local authorities dedicated their residential construction efforts exclusively to the more affluent classes. As a consequence, homogeneous districts were built surrounding selected suburban stations and alongside a few regional tramlines.

During the first half of the 20th century, the cultural threshold of suburbanization dropped exceedingly slowly. The means of adequate and reasonably-priced public transport for coping with the crisis identified in the city at the end of the 19th century were few and far between. Only locally did policy – in conjunction with the provisions of the Housing Act – reflect any specific orientation. The spatial development described for Amsterdam thus deviated from the general trend in neighboring countries. There, massive numbers crossed the city limits before World War I, thanks in part to supra-local tramway systems. Because of the extended focus of much of Amsterdam's housing development program on the city's less affluent population groups, the share of owner-occupied and free-market rental homes remains below the national average even among the current housing stock. Correcting this imbalance will be difficult and will require the overhaul of the current housing stock. Moreover, individuals and local authorities in the region will need to abandon their ongoing requirements for aspiring suburbanites with respect to economic ties and income.

Expanding the daily urban system certainly makes sense based on chronology and cost convergences gathered from chrono-geography studies (De Pater and Schmal 1982). To some extent, however, natural certainties explain the countless variations in spatial development revealed by comparing cities. Moreover, the study of Amsterdam reveals that careful analysis of the major actors is needed to fully understand local trends.

Amsterdam's daily urban system has grown substantially over the past 150 years. In 1850, it extended to the area just outside the city walls. Nowadays, the city's sphere of influence comprises towns in the Veluwe and throughout the Randstad. Initially, only the well-to-do could afford to expand their horizon beyond the city. Over the years residences outside the city became affordable for the less affluent. Development of new means of transport, ranging from trams and trains to bicycles, buses, and cars, and improved transport performance made it possible for people to live outside the city where they worked. Over time, most of these means of transport became affordable to a larger share of the population. Changes in the region's relative location with respect to Amsterdam enabled a new spatial structure. The potential that remains for expanding Amsterdam's daily urban system is questionable. Further expansion would entail greater distances and would consequently increase commuting times and fuel consumption. The more dispersed and decompressed the city becomes, the greater the dependence on the means of transport the city will become. Coexistence based on urban deconcentration will not work optimally if traffic congestion and exorbitant petrol prices restrict mobility. This situation will irrevocably instigate a search for alternative means of transport, changes in place of employment or residence, recreational activities in one's immediate surroundings, inhibition of suburbanization, additional dispersal of employment and rehabilitation and denser habitation of the old inner city. In short, the result may very well be adapted and possibly even reduced daily urban systems.

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## 2.4 • The Economic Restructuring of the Historic City Center

*Pieter Terhorst and Jacques van de Ven*

### **Introduction**

Since the end of World War II Amsterdam's historic city center has undergone two distinct rounds of urban restructuring. First came the decline in population, manufacturing industries, trade and transportation, which was accompanied by the growth of producer and consumer services that are associated with a classic central business district (CBD). Partly this process involved a restructuring of the built environment and partly it came about within the existing building stock. The second, ongoing round, which started during the late 1960s, saw the decline of traditional producer services while the tourism and leisure industries, specialized shops, and the general population have grown. It has largely taken place in a more or less fixed built environment.

We aim to show that the restructuring of Amsterdam's historic city center is an outcome of an integral economic process that includes economic as well extra-economic forces. Also, we hope to show how the restructuring of the historic city center has been shaped and mediated by successive local institutional regimes in and through which the two rounds of restructuring have taken place.

A local institutional regime is made up of various institutional spaces. By an institutional space we mean the specific geographical area over which an institution is constituted and has effective reach or influence (Martin 2000, 87). We can define a hierarchy of institutional spaces ranging from supra-national institutional spaces (e.g. internationally agreed-upon rules concerning competition, trade, and monetary relations) through national institutional spaces (electoral systems, tax systems, welfare states, etc.) to local institutional spaces (local state structures, locally specific legal arrangements and other local social or economic traditions and conventions). These institutional spaces are nested, which means that their combination, interaction, and mode of articulation vary from place to place and from period to period (Boyer and Rogers Hollingsworth 1997). Thus, as we move from one area or one period to another, not only may the specifics of institutional nestedness change, but so too may the interactions within that ensemble. This is why local institutional regimes are historically and geographically specific.

## Two Rounds of Restructuring the Historic City Center

When Amsterdam's urban-industrial growth took off in around 1870, the city was still contained within the present-day historic city center. About 225,000 inhabitants lived and worked in this area, which covers just eight square kilometres. Ever since then, Amsterdam's historic city center has been involved in a continuous process of restructuring. The first round, which started in the late nineteenth century, was very similar to that of most other Western cities. It involved a relative (and later, absolute) decline in population, manufacturing industries, crafts, wholesale, and storage on the one hand, and a growth of producer and consumer services that are associated with a classical CBD on the other hand (e.g. department stores, shops, banks, business services, public administration, and hotels). The second, ongoing round, which started in the late 1960s, sounds somewhat less familiar. The majority of traditional producer services have declined, and the tourism and leisure industries, specialized shops and the population have grown. Population growth is partly the result of public-housing urban renewal that mainly occurred in the 1980s and is partly the outcome of the conversion of offices, lofts, and warehouses into condominiums for a gentrifying class. And with the exception of financial services, universities, public administration and culture, the general scale of all of the firms has declined. As in-depth research shows, the latter trend indicates a growing diversification. Thus, Amsterdam's historic city center has become not only a consuming place, but also a more diversified one (see Bergh and Keers 1981; Van Duren 1995).

Urban restructuring often involves a restructuring of buildings and street patterns; that is, a change of economic functions is accompanied by the replacement of old buildings and street patterns with new ones. The built environment is, so to speak, adapted to the pressure of land-use change. It usually takes a long time before old buildings are replaced by new ones because the capital invested in the buildings prevents the realization of potential ground rents and provokes a gap between actual and potential ground rents (see Smith 1979; 1982). How long it takes before old buildings are replaced by new ones depends on the speed at which potential ground rents rise and the value of buildings depreciates. Old buildings will not be demolished until the potential ground rent is high enough to compensate for the amortization of the not fully depreciated value of the buildings and the costs of demolishing them. Thus, the faster the value of buildings depreciates and the more rapidly potential ground rents rise, the sooner old buildings can be demolished.

Urban restructuring can, of course, also take place within existing buildings and street patterns. In the short term, this happens more often than not. Buildings can, after all, be used in a variety of ways, with various adaptations. If adaptations are necessary, buildings can be used to serve other functions if the total price of the land and the buildings exceeds the old price by at least the building cost of adaptation. In the extreme case that buildings and street patterns are designated as landmarks, the built environment remains frozen. Buildings cannot be demolished and only minor adaptations will be permitted. In that case, the process of urban restructuring has to adapt

itself to the fixity of the built environment instead of the other way around. This means that the demand for land in preservation districts cannot be fully realized, as a result of which demand has to be shifted elsewhere. This will equalize actual and potential land rents in those places, and provoke a relative decline of actual land rents, the more so because their accessibility will decline over the course of time because the existing infrastructure is also frozen. This does not necessarily mean that real estate prices will decline in preservation districts because, after all, real estate prices are made up of land prices *and* building prices. And whereas land prices will show relative declines, building prices will show sharp increases in preservation districts because monuments are “positional goods,” which cannot be reproduced elsewhere (Hirsch 1977).

### *The First Round of Urban Restructuring and the Restructuring-Generated Crisis (1945-1974)*

The first round of restructuring came about partly within the existing building stock and partly involved a restructuring of the built environment. A significant part of the building stock in Amsterdam’s historic city center was constructed in the period 1850-1940, either after older structures had been demolished or on empty plots or on land reclaimed from the water (as occurred in the case of the construction of Amsterdam’s Central Station and Berlage’s Stock Exchange). Moreover, in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, a number of canals were filled in so they could be used for traffic arteries and, in some cases, to improve public health (see, for a detailed analysis, Wagenaar 1990). And since World War II, a number of areas have been reconstructed.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these changes, Amsterdam’s historic city center has largely survived the pressure of modernization. Although it may now seem obvious to preserve such a historic place, this is contrary to expectations because in capitalist property markets, developers and land and buildings owners are not very sensitive to the argument that old buildings are a valuable cultural heritage, certainly not in an era of modernism. And in this era of modernism, politicians and planners were much less concerned with history than they are nowadays. In the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the demolition of buildings that we would now consider of “historical interest” was welcomed rather than regretted because it was seen as “progress” or “modernization.”<sup>2</sup>

Why has Amsterdam’s historic city center largely survived the pressure of modernization? First of all, Amsterdam was a stagnating city during most of the nineteenth century. For a long time it followed the dead-end path of trade capitalism, and industrialization only took off around 1870 (the same applies to the Netherlands in general). And although Amsterdam is the largest city in the Netherlands, it has never had a primate city status like London and Paris. The pattern of Dutch urban growth has been diffused rather than concentrated in one or a few cities, which is why the size of the other Dutch cities has been much more similar than might be expected on the basis of the rank size rule. Moreover, the size of Amsterdam’s historic city center is relatively large for a medium-sized city, too large to be completely filled up with a “modern” CBD be-



fore the Great Depression. And during the Great Depression and World War II the growth of Amsterdam's CBD stagnated altogether. In addition, the size of Dutch firms was relatively small in the pre-Fordist era and thus could easily be accommodated in historic buildings. For all these reasons, the pressure on Amsterdam's property market in the historic city center was only moderate until World War II. Real estate rents and prices were remarkably stable in the period 1877-1940 (Wagenaar 1990, 180-184; Kruyt 1974, 161-198), which is why dwellings were not completely replaced by offices and shops before World War II.

In the post-war period, however, the pressure on the historic city center increased greatly and property prices rose sharply. But even during that period, the variety of property prices was very large. Buildings along the main arteries and the main canals were much more expensive than those in the side streets and alleys (Kruijt 1974, 161-198). All this suggests that the CBD has never been able to "colonize" the historic city center as a whole, and that there was already a highly varied land-use mix at the onset of the second round of restructuring.

The first round of restructuring was not the outcome of "pure," self-regulating market forces. On the contrary. It was a highly socially regulated process, even during the nineteenth century (which is left out of consideration here; see Terhorst and Van de Ven 1997, 230-263). The first round of restructuring was the outcome of a capital-labor accord at the local level that was formalized in the so-called General Extension Plan of 1935, a plan that was a blueprint for the city's spatial development till the year 2000. The major point of that accord was that the Social Democratic party (which has been the largest party in Amsterdam ever since the introduction of general suffrage, although it has never had an absolute majority) was allowed to realize social, low-density rental housing in garden-like environments, and capital was offered industrial sites, port areas and infrastructure on the city's territory as well as ample room to maneuver in the historic city center. It was implicitly agreed that the 1896 municipal leasehold land policy would be continued. All this facilitated a planned deconcentration of population and a migration of goods-processing industries out of the historic city center. The forging of the pre-war capital-labor accord at the local level was facilitated by the city's large territorial size (which had increased by 400 percent since the annexation of 1921) and by the large-scale reform of the central-local financial relations in 1929. Amsterdam's territory was large enough to accommodate industrial sites, port areas and infrastructure for future economic growth as well as low-density housing. And, in combination with more fiscal centralization after 1929, it made the city less vulnerable to suburban competition.

The economic crisis of the 1930s followed by World War II meant that realization of the General Extension Plan had to be postponed. After the War, however, the local capital-labor accord was strengthened by a national capital-labor accord. Its main point was a policy of low wages to which the labor unions agreed in exchange for extending the welfare state. Given the situation of an enormous housing shortage, wages could only be kept low by a policy of tight rent control that was accompanied with subsidies for new housing construction (in the 1940s and 1950s, 80 percent of all Dutch housing

construction was public housing; in Amsterdam, this figure was as high as 95 percent). An extended system of rent control and allocation of vacant dwellings according to need (“queuing”) paralleled these measures. New construction was rationed by the central state among municipalities (roughly according to their size). These policies enabled the Amsterdam Social Democrats to fully realize their social housing policy on leasehold land. Large numbers of social-rental dwellings were constructed on green field sites that had been acquired after the annexation of 1921. This hardly changed the composition of the population, however, because suburbanization was strongly curbed until 1964.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the decision to fight the housing shortage with all the available means, limited capital’s room to maneuver in the effort to transform Amsterdam’s historic city center into a CBD. Evicting tenants, converting dwellings into offices or shops, and demolishing dwellings for urban reconstruction were all strongly contested politically.

In the 1960s, the rate of economic growth accelerated and the labor market tightened. This meant the end of the capital-labor accords at the national as well local level. Real wages rose rapidly, which fuelled housing demand and induced mass motorization, whereas Amsterdam’s territory was increasingly being built over. The scarcity of large building sites posed a serious threat to its housing policy. Although the housing shortage was greater than ever, it was no longer possible to contain the process of urban restructuring within the city’s boundaries (despite another annexation, that of the Bijlmermeer area in 1966). Moreover, the pressure on the historic city center had become so great that proposals to transform parts of it into an “American-style” CBD were given serious consideration. Some canals were to be filled-in and converted into streets while the Jordaan – today a picturesque, gentrified neighborhood with many restaurants and small shops – was to be demolished to make room for large-scale office construction. All this would have reduced the housing stock, but both proposals were rejected as “too drastic.” So, a few years later, the city of Amsterdam drew up a new, comprehensive plan for the metropolitan region as a whole. The historic city center would become Amsterdam’s “real” CBD while surrounding inner-city neighborhoods would be thinned out and upgraded. Evicted households would have to move to new towns that were to be connected to the CBD by metro lines. This plan received wide support from the city council but, unexpectedly, generated enormous mass protests and violent riots in the early 1970s. The driving force behind the resistance was the baby-boom generation, which had aligned itself with the various urban social movements, which were struggling for a “liveable” city on a “human scale” (see, for an elaborate analysis, Mamadouh 1992). Although the preservation of Dutch culture was not their main argument, the struggle by the urban social movements to preserve historical street patterns played a strategic role in their effort to ban cars and office construction from their neighborhoods. Narrow streets were perceived as more suitable for pedestrians and bicyclists than cars and thus unsuitable for offices. In the end, the urban social activists won the intense political struggle for Amsterdam’s historic city center. All the reconstruction plans were withdrawn and replaced by a social policy of urban renewal (no displacement). Upon completion of the first metro line, further ex-

tensions were cancelled. The destruction of the character of the Nieuwmarkt area was mitigated by a careful and expensive restoration with lots of public housing and small shops that fit in well with the city's historic landscape.

These deep conflicts marked the end of the first round of restructuring and led to the acceleration of the second one. Although the protests and riots happened during the oil crisis of 1973, they should be interpreted as a restructuring-generated crisis rather than as a crisis-generated restructuring (see, for both concepts, Soja 2000). Meanwhile, Amsterdam's crisis-generated restructuring began in earnest in the 1980s.

### *The Second Round of Urban Restructuring*

The second round of urban restructuring began in 1974 and mostly took place in a more or less fixed built environment, and was combined with the urban renewal of social housing (in 2000, 35 percent of the housing stock in the historic city center was social-rental housing and 45 percent was private rental housing; the remaining 20 percent was owner-occupied).

The preservation of the built environment has been crucially important to the development of Amsterdam's historic city center. It has provoked large-scale gentrification and the development of large leisure and tourism industries. Amsterdam now has 7,600 official monuments, that is, buildings that may not be demolished and are subject to government control regarding physical changes as well as their use. Besides some lofts, churches, bridges, and a palace, the overwhelming majority of the monuments were originally built as dwellings. Most of the buildings along the canals were constructed as spacious homes for the ruling merchant class during the country's Golden Age. Over 10 percent of all buildings in Amsterdam's historic city center are monuments. This is in itself a large proportion, but the impact of these monuments on the built environment as a whole is even larger than that figure suggests. Monuments are scattered throughout the historic city center, and nearly every block has a few. It is therefore no wonder that land-use plans and zoning ordinances have been very conservative regarding the overall appearance of the historic urban landscape, including non-listed buildings and street patterns. Recently, Amsterdam's historic city center was listed as a Historical Preservation District. This means that non-listed buildings and the public domain have become subject to even stricter forms of political control than before. Amsterdam's policy to preserve the historic character of non-listed buildings is now equally important as those concerning listed monuments. Many buildings constructed before World War II fit well into the historic urban landscape, and most people, whether they be locals or tourists, generally see only the overall appearance of Amsterdam's urban landscape.

As a result of all these preservation policies, the built environment of Amsterdam's historic city center – streets and canals included – is more or less frozen. We say “more or less” because the city has often been flexible in making compromises on adaptations of monuments as long as the original appearance of the facades is maintained (and many new structures have been built behind old facades). The frozen built environment has had a major impact on the area's land-use mix. First, historic buildings are of

ten too small for large offices and shops, and the fragmented ownership structure makes it hard to combine two or more buildings. In addition, the center's historic street patterns make them nearly inaccessible by car. This is why Amsterdam's historic center has become an attractive place for small-scale activities insensitive to time pressure, like leisure and "fun" shopping. Secondly, the fact that the buildings in the historic city center vary widely as regards size, quality, and location (main streets versus side streets and alleys) is contrary to the notions of a homogenized land use and has provoked variety. Thirdly, a historic city landscape offers good opportunities for higher-class households to distinguish themselves from others and to accumulate "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1979). The same applies to specialized firms, like antique shops, second-hand bookshops, *haute cuisine* restaurants and other niche-market firms that are very sensitive to an exclusive built environment. Fourthly, the preservation policy has severely limited maneuverability of land-use zoning in the historic city center. As a result, the market has largely shaped land-use changes there. This sounds somewhat paradoxical, especially because Amsterdam is one of the most planned cities in the world.

For a better understanding, it is helpful to make an analytical distinction between two types of land-use planning. The first aims to preserve historic buildings and street patterns, whereas the second aims to protect or to stimulate a specific sort of land use at a specific density in a territorially bounded area that cannot be realized in a "free" market. To put it simply, offices in area A, housing in area B, shops in area C, leisure in area D, etc. This implies that land and building markets are territorially segmented. As in all segmented markets, each segment of the property market works more or less independently of the others. If, for instance, demand for offices in area A rises, rents will go up, without affecting housing rents in area B. But the preservation of the built environment (the first type of planning) conflicts with a territorial segmentation of the property market (the second type of planning) in a dynamic urban economy. For instance, if offices are only allowed in one sector and there are many vacancies, prices have to decline leading to the establishment of less profitable office-based firms. But less profitable firms are seldom able to pay for the high costs of maintaining monuments. In the long run, this may lead to their falling into disrepair. Thus, a strict territorial segmentation of the property market eventually leads to buildings that should be preserved from falling into disrepair.

Given the political priority of physical preservation over strict zoning ordinances, most types of land use have been accepted in the historic city center on condition that the buildings' exteriors are respected. It is thus the interplay between the freezing of the built environment and market dynamics that has resulted in an attractive milieu for small firms and an extremely varied land-use mix. Paradoxically, the freezing of the built environment has unintentionally stimulated the rise of a flexible leisure economy in Amsterdam's historic city center.

One zoning ordinance of the 1980s in particular has had a great impact on the second round of urban restructuring. Due to the housing shortage, it is permitted to convert buildings into housing units, but not the other way around. Thus, there is a unilateral relationship between the housing market and all other real estate sub-markets

in the historic city center, in that residents can outbid offices, shops, etc. but not vice versa. This means that the booming housing market in the historic city center has dominated all the other real estate sub-markets for the last 20 years. Consequently, housing prices have governed the real estate market in the area. Ever since the 1980s, lofts and offices have been displaced by owner-occupied apartments, and only in some exceptional cases by private rental and public housing (the Entrepôtdok is a good example of the latter). Why is it that owner-occupiers have been able to outbid offices? First, the freezing of the built environment has meant that Amsterdam's historic city center has lost its attractiveness for most office-based companies. To prevent firms from leaving the city altogether, the municipality developed alternative sites for modern office parks with excellent motorway access within the city limits. Secondly, the City of Amsterdam has pursued a large scale public housing policy. In the period 1945-1985, 90 percent of all new construction was public housing. As a result, aspiring homeowners had little choice: they could either move to suburbia or resort to the intricate process of loft or office conversion in the historic city center. Thirdly, the fact that owner-occupiers are entitled to generous tax credits in the Netherlands has greatly contributed to the residents outbidding companies for the offices and lofts. This has further stimulated the process of condo conversion (see Van de Ven et al 1991). This mechanism has been particularly intense in the historic city center because monuments are "positional goods," which means that their supply elasticity is zero. On the other hand, the conversion of low-income rental housing into owner-occupied housing was illegal as long as the system of rent control was in place – which is why there are still a lot of low-income households in Amsterdam's historic city center, despite the high speed of the gentrification process. But, as already mentioned, most gentrifiers live in converted lofts or offices. It is characteristic of Amsterdam's historic city center that widespread gentrification did not cause large-scale displacement. Gentrification and social housing construction went hand in hand and, even more remarkably, often on the same street or block. It is thus no wonder that foreign observers notice the egalitarian character of Amsterdam (Fainstein 2000).

## **Explaining the Restructuring-Generated Crisis and the Switch to the Second Round**

Why was there a restructuring-generated crisis, and why was there a switch to this second round of restructuring? Or, more precisely, how did the urban social movements manage to succeed in blocking the first round of restructuring, which led, in turn, to the second round? First of all, well-educated young baby boomers were the driving force behind this struggle. Therefore, this struggle for a more human and liveable city was intimately interwoven with the battle against authoritarianism, with the women's liberation movement, with the environmental movement and more freedom concerning the issues of sex and drugs. Thus, the urban social movements were struggling for a post-materialist culture and more collective consumption (at the very least because the majority of them still belonged to the lowest income households). This cul-

tural shift was actually occurring in all other Western countries, but most intensely in the Netherlands. The Netherlands made the second fastest shift from a materialist to a post-materialist culture after Sweden (see Inglehart 1977). It was during a relatively short period of time that the very conformist and traditional Dutch society evolved into a modern and open one. But the process involved fierce intergenerational conflicts.

The power of the urban social movements was first and foremost the unintended outcome of pillarization and depillarization. For a very long time, Dutch Protestants and Catholics (along with social democrats and liberals) were organized in “pillars.” These were self-contained *non-territorial* communities. Each camp had its own parties, unions, mass media, sport clubs, and controlled its “own” semi-private organizations (schools, hospitals, public housing corporations) that provided public goods that were financed by the central state. In the 1960s, however, a process of depillarization set in. Church attendance and religion-based voting declined, Catholic and Protestant associations and parties disappeared or merged, the ties between interest groups and parties loosened, and elite control over society and within the various associations became diminished. Depillarization fueled a further outgrowth of the welfare state because it had altered the former cooperative relationship between the leaders of the pillars into a more competitive one. And, more importantly, the leaders of the pillars (including the socialist one) could no longer control the rank and file, who demanded a radical democratization of industrial relations and more welfare state services. All this fueled the rise of the urban social movements. And although they took the lead in the depillarization process, their power was paradoxically based on pillarization itself. First, like all the religious groups of old, baby boomers claimed the right to live their own lives and enjoy “their own” public goods and services as financed by the central state (Zahn 1989). Secondly, the power of urban social movements can, in part, be attributed to the sheer size of the Dutch baby-boom generation, which was larger here than in most other European countries because religious groups were involved in a fierce “birth rate competition” until the early 1960s (Van Heek 1954; Verduin 1977, 23-24).

There is no doubt that these processes were stronger in Amsterdam than in the country as a whole. Because of rising subsidies for higher education, a growing number of baby boomers moved to the city. Amsterdam is the largest center for higher education in the Netherlands. Thus, it became the primary battleground where the young intellectual avant-garde collided head-on with the authoritarian representatives of local politics. The avant-garde demanded the right to perform social experiments in a wide range of issues. In this context, Dutch drug policy is a case in point. The baby-boom generation managed to broker a semi-legal compromise on the use and sale of soft drugs in the mid-1970s.

After a while, the expansion of the young generation in Amsterdam found its own momentum. It stimulated the rise of all kinds of amenities in which a youth culture could flourish: music clubs, cafés and – last but not least – “coffee shops” where one could freely purchase hash and marihuana. All this greatly reinforced the worldwide image of Amsterdam as a center of the youth counterculture. And the more suburbanization progressed on, the more the oldest parts of Amsterdam’s housing stock with its

small and cheap dwellings were opened up to younger households. When inner-city renewal began, a new type of subsidized social housing was created for young single persons.

The political power of the urban social movements was largely dependent on the specific structure of the Dutch state. On the one hand, pillarization fueled functional fragmentation. But on the other hand, it stimulated territorial consolidation<sup>4</sup> and a rather extreme fiscal centralization (see, for an elaborate analysis, Terhorst and Van de Ven 1997, 2001). As we have already mentioned, the territorial size of the city of Amsterdam is relatively largely due to the various annexations, and central-local financial relations became ever more centralized during the period 1929–1989. During the heyday of Dutch fiscal centralization (the 1980s), local taxes made up only 6 percent of the revenues of Dutch municipalities, while general and specific grants comprised 32 percent and 62 percent, respectively. The dependence of Dutch municipalities on grants from the central state applies *a fortiori* to the city of Amsterdam, which had a special status (a so-called Article 12 status) in the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s.

The specific structure of the Dutch state is of crucial importance in explaining the transition from the first to the second round. It also helps explain how leftist local politicians forged a non-growth alliance concerning the historic city center and realized their political aims. A more liveable and humane historic city center coupled with social-housing urban renewal was to have very little adverse affect on the local tax base. The prioritizing of a local distributional policy to an urban growth policy was aided by the fact that the post-war national capital-labor accord was over by the late 1960s, early 1970s. Dutch corporatism had grown fairly “immobile” during the economic crisis of the 1970s (see Visser and Hemerijck 1997). There was a great deal of “concertation without consensus” and labor unions became ever more militant in their struggle for a radical democratization of industrial relations and more redistributive policies. The latter favored a big city like Amsterdam because general and specific grants (and tax deductions for renovating monuments) had increased in the 1970s. All this strongly favored the switch from the first to the second round of restructuring.

In addition, Dutch capital is mostly organized along sectoral (neo-corporatist) lines at the national level rather than along territorial lines, which is why local businesses were too weak to prevent the switch to the second round of restructuring. There are no American-like urban growth coalitions in the Netherlands (Terhorst and Van de Ven 1995). The fact that offices were *de facto* excluded from Amsterdam’s historic city center was not an insurmountable problem for the growth of the city’s service sector. Thanks to its large size, the city was able to offer excellent alternatives to offices along its ring roads.

### **The Crisis-Generated Restructuring of Amsterdam’s Historic City Center**

In the mid-1970s (i.e. right after the commencement of the second round), the process of restructuring slowed down and the historic city center found itself facing a crisis. The “old” CBD service industries were on the decline and the growth rates of the “new”

industries such as tourism and leisure had dropped. The gentrification process also faltered during this period because of a stagnation of wage increases and extremely high interest rates on mortgages. Only social-housing urban renewal managed to find its stride in the early 1980s. Things began to change, however, around the mid-1980s when gentrification began to expand again. Gentrification acted as a trigger for the tourism and leisure industries that have boomed till the economic recession of 2002. As we shall argue below, the evolution of the crisis-generated restructuring has been the outcome of the interaction of political-economic processes at various spatial scales: local, urban, national, and international. This applies not only to the evolution of tourism and leisure, but also to gentrification.

The growth of Amsterdam's tourism industry in the 1960s was largely based on a booming global economy and the city's development into a youth center. Amsterdam became a hippie center, like Copenhagen, Berlin, and San Francisco. A growing number of backpackers traveled to Amsterdam and many of them slept in cheap hostels, "sleep-ins" and – until the early 1970s – under the stars (in the "magical" Vondelpark). The unofficial legalization (toleration) of the use and sale of soft drugs led to a dramatic increase in drug tourism, particularly from Britain and Germany. The growth of backpackers and drug tourists turned out to be a disadvantage for Amsterdam's tourist industry in the late 1970s and the 1980s. First, backpackers were not, generally speaking, big spenders and they demanded cheap tourist facilities. Secondly, many baby boomers who had first visited Amsterdam in the late 1960s or early 1970s and then returned to the city 10 years later for a sentimental journey, were disappointed because the hippie atmosphere had gone. Thirdly, backpackers, drugs tourists and the growing army of drug addicts crowded out middle-class and higher-class tourists. As a result, Amsterdam ended up in a crisis of representation. No wonder the Amsterdam Tourist Board (VVV) – an umbrella organization of 1,200 Amsterdam tourist firms – complained loudly about the city's bad image.

However, the growing number of low-budget tourists was not the real cause of the stagnating tourism and leisure industries; it had more to do with a stagnating world economy<sup>5</sup> and with the fact that Amsterdam was a city in crisis with a declining population, large-scale unemployment, a sky-rocketing number of people on welfare, growing crime rates associated with drug dealing, and cutbacks in the public infrastructure. In addition, the privately owned buildings along the main canals were poorly maintained, graffiti was everywhere and dirty streets were the rule rather than the exception. And last but not least, the tourism and leisure industries suffered from "Baumol's disease," which means that, if wages rise at a similar rate in all economic sectors (as happened in the Netherlands), then prices rise faster in sectors that show a lower than average growth of labor productivity (Baumol 1967). Moreover, the high Dutch taxes and social security contributions as well as the way the latter were levied left the tourism and leisure industries at a distinct disadvantage economically.

These arguments suggest that the crisis of Amsterdam's historic city center was, in fact, the result not only of an urban crisis but also of the national economic crisis of the late 1970s, which hit the Netherlands more severely than most other European coun-



tries. The country suffered from the “Dutch disease,” meaning that a national economy is locked into a specific development path that increasingly causes economic problems from which it is difficult to escape (see Auty 1993). In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Netherlands had a structural trade surplus thanks to the export of natural gas. As a semi-OPEC country, the Dutch guilder appreciated as a result of which the profits in other export sectors eroded significantly. This state of affairs was sustainable in the short term because the social consequences of increasing unemployment could be financed from the generous revenues of state royalties on gas. In the long term, however, the level of unemployment became so high that the already high social security contributions had to be raised even further. This contributed strongly to the decreasing profitability of the various export industries, in particular Amsterdam’s tourism and leisure industries.

In the early 1980s, a growing consensus among capital, labor, and the state agreed that the high social security contributions and taxes were the Achilles heel of the Dutch economy. Dutch corporatism – which had become “immobile” – was then revitalized and transformed into “responsive corporatism,” largely allowing the “social partners” and the state to follow a coherent strategy of flexible crisis adjustment (Hemerijck and Visser 1997). Capital and labor reached an accord “in the shadow of the state” (the Wassenaar Accord of 1982). With the central state in the background, labor unions agreed to refrain from making wage demands (high unemployment forced their card) in exchange for modest job redistribution efforts. Although welfare-state reforms were seen as inevitable, there was a broad consensus that the welfare state should not be demolished Thatcher-style. National policy encouraged spending cuts on public consumption and the salaries of state employees. And to invigorate the market sector, the processes of deregulation, privatization of state-owned companies, and administrative decentralization were launched. Moreover, the labor market gained flexibility. All this resulted in declining budgetary deficits, lower social security contributions and taxes, and a moderate rate of economic growth in the 1980s.

The aforementioned national economic growth policy was strongly interwoven with an urban growth policy that was based on a strong cooperation between the central state and the large cities. In the 1980s, local finances were adversely affected by the reduction of state grants. Dutch cities were forced to start a process of crisis-generated restructuring, that is, to make a modest switch from a welfare-state city policy to an urban pro-growth policy (even though they are still more inclined to keep the welfare state alive than those in many other European countries). As Rotterdam had done earlier, Amsterdam could no longer consent to the central state’s new towns policy and tried to stop population overspill by a policy of densification within the city’s borders (the compact city). A few years later, the central state joined these initiatives and began to pursue a national urban pro-growth policy (for more, see Terhorst and Van de Ven, 1995). Population decline had to be reversed at all costs and more room was given to the construction of expensive, private-rental and owner-occupied housing. All this was accompanied by the politics of local boosterism and city marketing. Amsterdam, for instance, lobbied for the 1992 Olympic Games and started PR campaigns to change its

bad image as an unsafe, dirty city. It also began to support private initiatives to organize festivals and events, the majority of which are held in the historic city center. The growing number of festivals and events has greatly strengthened the position of Amsterdam's historic city center as a consuming place.

In the late 1980s, Amsterdam's economy recovered slowly, but unemployment remained very high in many parts of the city. Coupled with the rapid rise of well-educated, young double-income households, the freezing of welfare payments had produced a situation described as the "dual city." As the process of gentrification reached full speed in the historic city center, a number of newer neighborhoods were rapidly becoming impoverished. Since gentrification in the historic city center happened mainly through the conversion of lofts and offices, its population not only became more affluent but also increased in size. This caused a rapid increase in services that are associated with gentrification, that is, all kinds of conspicuous consumption including restaurants, trendy bars, exclusive shops, antique dealers, and art galleries. As a result, these gentrified areas became ever more attractive to middle-class tourists and day trippers, which has stimulated the further growth of cultural, leisure, and shopping facilities which, in turn, have made the historic city center an even more attractive place to live, and so on. Consequently, gentrification and the growing number of festivals have been the main triggers of the historic city center's transformation into a "place for fun" (Student Research Group 1998).

The rise of consumer services in the historic city center has also been stimulated by the national policy of wage moderation and labor-market flexibilization. Relatively cheap, part-time labor can nowadays be hired and fired more easily than in the 1970s and the 1980s. The large student population of Amsterdam has functioned not only as a reservoir of cheap and flexible labor, but also as a workforce that has a good cultural feeling for the demands of foreign tourists.

Since the early 1990s, the Netherlands has reaped the benefits of its national economic growth policy. Budgetary deficits declined to zero in the late 1990s, the tax burden has been significantly reduced, the growth of wages has been modest, and the labor market has become much more flexible. All this has enabled the country to benefit from a booming world economy. Since the early 1990s, Dutch economic growth rates have been much higher than those in the rest of the EU. And because the Netherlands has begun to follow a labor-intensive growth path, the Dutch job machine has been running at a higher speed than in most other European countries. Within a relatively short period of time, the traditional situation of families with one breadwinner became one of double-income households. Given rising real household incomes and the generous system of tax credits for homeowners in combination with relatively low real mortgage rates, the Dutch owner-occupied housing market is booming and thus further stimulating the gentrification of Amsterdam's historic city center. Housing prices in the historic city center have increased at a faster rate than elsewhere in the Netherlands (Middelhoven 2000). Consequently, real estate agents and housing developers can now more easily outbid office firms than they could before.

The mix of national economic growth policies and urban growth policies has re-

sulted in a high rate of economic growth in the Amsterdam region (i.e. the city of Amsterdam and adjacent municipalities). In fact, the growth rate of the Amsterdam region has been higher than that of the Netherlands since 1995. And, even more surprisingly, the city's rate of economic growth has been higher than that of adjacent municipalities for the last two years (SEO 2000). All this has boosted the demand for consumer services in the historic city center. Since the mid-1990s, the historic city centre has strengthened its position vis-à-vis regional centers.<sup>6</sup>

The development of Amsterdam's historic city center into a consuming place has been driven not only by increasing expenditures of the growing local population, but also by those of tourists and day trippers. The increase in demand for consumer services by tourists and day trippers was significantly higher than that of the local population in the 1990s (Van der Vegt et al 2000, 29). Large-scale gentrification has undoubtedly improved the bad image of Amsterdam. Since the late 1980s, middle-class and higher-class tourists and day trippers have rediscovered the city. This does not mean necessarily that they are only interested in "high" culture and higher-class amenities. Their activity patterns are much more varied. Many of them, for instance, visit a coffee shop. The same applies to young backpackers who still visit the city in great numbers. These upscale visitors not only go to coffee shops, but also to museums and other cultural facilities. Moreover, not all young backpackers are low-budget tourists as was the case in the 1960s. Many are fairly affluent and consider a backpack merely a lifestyle symbol. Thus the activity patterns of various kinds of tourists overlap much more than is often assumed (Student Research Group 1999). The fact that Amsterdam has become an attractive tourist destination for extremely diverse groups is certainly associated with its wide mix of leisure facilities. The "city of culture" is also the place "to let it hang all out." Drugs, sex, and fun are offered next to Rembrandt, Golden Age architecture, and cultural events.

## Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion we have argued that the evolution of the economic landscape of Amsterdam's historic city center can only be understood by paying due attention to the various social institutions on which its economic activities depend and through which they are shaped. Urban restructuring cannot be explained by referring only to purely economic theories, but has to be understood as being enmeshed in wider structures of social, economic and political rules, procedures and conventions. In other words, the restructuring of Amsterdam's historic city center has been a highly socially regulated economic process.

Processes of social regulation are not only the intended result of a deliberate strategy, but also the product of unintended consequences of intentional action. In this paper we have shown that unintended consequences of intentional action played an important role in the second round of restructuring. The development of Amsterdam's historic city center into a place of leisure and tourism has hardly anything to do with a coherent pro-tourist strategy. The preservation of Amsterdam's cultural heritage and

Dutch libertarian soft-drugs policies have been pursued for reasons other than to stimulate leisure and tourism in the historic center. The city also allowed the conversion of lofts, offices and other buildings into housing units. But since this was largely done in the private sector, it opened the historic center up to gentrifiers even though gentrification was not an explicit goal of city center policies in the 1980s and early 1990s. On the contrary, the city itself was engaged in a social housing policy that was interested in a renewal of the old housing stock without subsequent displacement. All this has unintentionally resulted in a unique mix of people and functions in the historic city center that is widely appreciated by visitors.

The processes of social regulation that have shaped the restructuring of Amsterdam's historic city center have operated not only at the local level, but also at the national and international level. The specific Dutch central-local relationships have enabled the urban social movements to block a radical reconstruction of the historic city center and helped the city of Amsterdam to realize its own preservation policy. Strong fiscal centralization and Amsterdam's large territorial size have enabled its smooth restructuring. We have also shown the importance of other processes of social regulation on the national and international level. Wage and tax policies, the influence of exchange rate regimes, a more flexible labor market, the state's housing and urban policies, Dutch libertarian drugs policies – they have all contributed to the development of Amsterdam's historic city center as a consuming place.

## NOTES

1. The former Jewish neighborhood of Kattenburg/Uilenburg/Wittenburg, Haarlemmer Houttuinen, Frederiksplein, and parts of Rembrandtplein.
2. Protests were only raised by the "Bond van Heemschut," an organization that had since its inception in the late nineteenth century focused on the protection of the Dutch cultural heritage.
3. Till the mid-1960s, the average income of the Amsterdam population was higher than the Dutch average (see CBS 1983).
4. The number of Dutch municipalities has declined by 50 percent since 1918 due to annexations and mergers. Territorial consolidation has also been realized through the new towns policy.
5. The growth pattern of Amsterdam's tourism industry is highly correlated to the development of the global economy (see Muskens 1997).
6. Only in Amsterdam are some of the stores open every Sunday.

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### **3. THE CURRENT STATE: DILEMMAS AND PERSPECTIVES**



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## 3.1 • The Randstad: The Creation of a Metropolitan Economy

*Pieter Tordoir*

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will discuss the future scenarios for the spatial and economic development of the Randstad (the highly urbanized western part of the Netherlands). During the past 50 years, this region of six million inhabitants, four major urban centers and 20 medium-sized cities within an area the size of the Ile de France evolved into an increasingly undifferentiated patchwork of daily urban systems, structured by the sprawl of business and new towns along highway axes. There is increasing pressure from high economic and population growth and congestion, particularly in the northern wing of the Randstad, which includes the two overlapping commuter fields of Amsterdam and Utrecht. Because of land scarcity and a rising awareness of environmental issues, the Dutch planning tradition of low-density urban development has become increasingly irrelevant.

The new challenge is for sustainable urban development, where the accommodation of at least a million new inhabitants and jobs in the next 25 years must be combined with higher land-use intensities, a significant modal shift to public transportation, and a substantial increase in the quality and diversity of the natural environment and the quality of life in the region.<sup>1</sup> Some of these goals may be reached simultaneously by concentrating development in high-density nodes that provide a critical mass for improved mass transit systems, rendering an alternative for car-dependent commuters. Furthermore, a gradual integration of the various daily urban systems may benefit the quality and diversity of economic, social, natural, and cultural local environments within the polynuclear urban field. The catchword for this planning ambition is the creation of a “Delta Metropolis,” which will involve a highly complex mixture of private and public investment and regulation. The knowledge base for this type of complex urban planning and development is growing, but a cornerstone for the success of the new planning policy has been altogether neglected: the economic base. This base is the subject of this chapter, which regards the past, present, and possible futures of the Randstad region economy and the possible support it may provide for the spatial development ambitions discussed above.

The thesis put forward here is that the planning objectives for the Randstad can only be achieved if the economic structure gains a truly and internationally competitive

metropolitan character, where the high costs of sustainable, high-density and high-quality urban development are matched by high productivity and the value added by the urban economy. This should involve spiralling agglomeration economies, widening and diversifying markets, subsequent increases in quality, the specialization of productive resources and business activities, and the reinvestment of resulting profits in the capacity and quality of local resources.

Is such a “metropolitanization” scenario viable for the Randstad economy?<sup>2</sup> There are many uncertainties. The Randstad can only partially be characterized as a metropolitan-style economy. It is unknown whether such an economy can be “made” by policy. Even if the spatial economy starts to take the desired turns, the road will contain numerous pitfalls. Excessive costs of advanced transportation links might impede any further investment along the way. More generally, an imbalance between investment costs and benefits will cause a downward spiral of price inflation, investment failures and, eventually, stagnation. Cities can easily tip the fine balance between agglomeration economies and agglomeration diseconomies the wrong way. Price, density, and congestion levels and average commuting times common for cities like London and Paris may be socially unacceptable to the Dutch. The accommodation of economic and spatial market growth without transport congestion will be difficult, and will require a doubling of public transport capacity in the next 25 years. And, finally, the market for a metropolitan-style economy may be a zero-sum game in Western Europe, in which case the Randstad will have to win its market share in high value-added activities from London and other nearby competitors.

Nonetheless, because of the sharply increasing scarcity of land, the congestion, the ageing population and the rising demand for a higher quality of life and a better environment, the Randstad has no option but to develop an economy that can bear the ensuing financial burden. In order to keep inflation at bay and international competitiveness above par, productivity levels, which have for a decade been at a standstill in the Netherlands,<sup>3</sup> have to find a structural growth path in the coming decades. Productivity can basically be stimulated in three ways: by innovation, by firm-internal economies of scale, and by external economies. The first two are traditionally the focus of economic development policy, and the third should become a new focus for economic policy. Spatial structure and limitations should become levers for external economies and productivity growth, and not a burden. This, in a nutshell, is the economic challenge for the Randstad.

In this chapter, the conditions for a metropolitan-style economic and spatial development plan in the Randstad are discussed on the basis of urban and spatial economic theory on the one hand and historical and contemporary evidence on the other. The next section presents a concise overview of the economic history and current development issues of the conurbation, put in the wider geopolitical context of economic networks and urban structures in Western Europe. In a subsequent section, a discussion of mainstream agglomeration theory is followed by new theoretical concepts for advanced metropolitan functions and economies. After a crude assessment of the Rand-

stad economy in these terms, I conclude with preliminary policy recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## Lessons from Economic History

The origins and futures of metropolitan economies must first of all be understood in the context of geopolitical trends and the intermediation of states and trading blocks in the formation of international trade zones. Metropolitan economies are connected to global markets and are highly dependent on the free movement of capital, labor and entrepreneurial talent. The metropolis harbors entrepreneurial communities from many nations with which it maintains economic and cultural links. Metropolitan economies are “the world in a city” – a global village *avant la lettre*, a local arena for the global network economy – where trade links are forged and managed. Global and local networks are thus juxtaposed in the metropolis,<sup>4</sup> in which the state level has an intriguing role. Ever since states started to determine conditions for trade and migration, metropolitan fortunes have been related to changes in political geography. The rise and fall of Amsterdam in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a telling example.

In Europe, the disintermediation of the state is highly significant for the European urban system and the future of the Randstad economy. The responsibility for the spatially unrestricted conditions of an open economy, such as monetary and legal systems, is gradually shifting from the national to the EU level. Many economic conditions and resources are restricted to the urban and regional level, however, including markets for land, housing and labor, basic education, local infrastructure, and the qualities of the social, cultural, and natural environment. They therefore demand coordinated development and regulation at the regional level. European integration thus leads naturally towards a “Europe of the regions,” where everyone benefits from the level playing field of an unrestricted market but where actual regional competitiveness for investment mostly depends on the local capability of sustained area-specific productive resources. Thus, within the EU we see increasing regional divisions of labor and resources specialization, and urban network formation at the international level. For metropolitan economies, the opportunities can only increase. But so will the competition. Since the local resource base is becoming less a matter of natural advantages and more a result of collective human action, local and regional ingenuity will decide economic fortunes. Efficient urban planning is a crucial element of this kind of ingenuity.

In the Netherlands, the international and local levels have always been closely juxtaposed. For most economic activities, the national level is not a significant market limitation; the Dutch economy depends greatly on localized activities with either regional or international supply and demand markets. Two cornerstones of the Dutch economy – the port of Rotterdam and Schiphol airport – are good examples in this respect. In a way, the disintermediation of states brings the Randstad region back to the geopolitical situations of the late Middle Ages, when economic and cultural develop-

ment was triggered by geographically extended networks of trading cities. The juxtaposition of favorable local conditions and global trading networks created prolonged economic growth and prosperity in the Low Countries during the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century and made Amsterdam the second largest and wealthiest city in the world.<sup>5</sup> This “Golden Age” resulted from three related conditions that were skillfully exploited at the time: networks, local diversification, and immigration. Sea and inland waterways connected Amsterdam with other continents and the European mainland. Advances in shipping technology, navigation, finance, and management all stimulated the opening up of global trading routes, where the city was the main hub for transfer, warehousing, trade, and value adding. Local waterways formed an ingenious urban transportation system and connected the city with a ring of urban centers within a day’s safe travel. In this way, the region could combine the fruits of an international and a regional division of labor. Amsterdam and satellite centers such as Haarlem and Leiden formed a diversified and integrated conurbation. But perhaps most important of all, Amsterdam profited from the unrest and xenophobic developments in the rest of Europe. Immigrants were welcomed by the free city of Amsterdam – provided they had the competencies and entrepreneurial spirit the economy needed. The city became a truly cosmopolitan environment. Even by today’s standards, it had an advanced metropolitan economy. The rise of powerful nations in Europe in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century hampered the further growth of the mercantile network that had created the wealth of this metropolitan system. The small Dutch nation could not supply an extensive national hinterland market for her cities as a surrogate for international networks that were cut off by the rising power of neighbor states. Thus, for centuries economic development lagged behind in Holland, until international trading conditions improved as a result of the rise of liberalism in the late nineteenth century. In the meantime, the capital cities in neighboring states – such as London, Paris, and later Berlin – thrived because states provided them with extended national hinterlands.

Nation building started late in the Netherlands. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Dutch state could circumvent its size and power disadvantages by adopting an industrialization policy for relatively footloose manufacturing based on low labor and land costs, and by leveraging the geographical advantage of the Rhine delta for international port activities. Ever since, this economic policy of low cost competition, international specialization, and physical infrastructure development has been the fundamental national development regime.

Some international distribution functions were regained by the new policy regime in the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. Amsterdam saw a revival at the turn of the twentieth century thanks to the construction of a new canal to the North Sea and the subsequent influx of manufacturing. The city kept a diversified service economy and developed as a second-tier European center for advanced services, mainly because of the construction of a remarkably efficient airport in the early 1960s. Rotterdam profited fully from its position on the Rhine delta and developed a specialized economy of bulk transportation and chemical industries, based on large-scale port de-

velopment and extensive land reclamation. Thus, the new round of urban growth in Holland was mainly based on distributive activities. A development of a truly large and diversified metropolitan economy was never envisaged, however, because of the necessity of a low-cost development strategy. Nevertheless, this strategy became rather successful. Particularly after the Second World War, when international trade and investment boomed, the policy regime – helped first by the US Marshall Plan and later by natural gas exploitation – was the driving force behind the country’s move from a rather backward to an advanced economic position. Congestion and resources scarcity could be avoided by new land development and labor productivity growth. From the 1960s to the 1980s, Dutch spatial planning and regional economic policy was instrumental in preventing congestion in large cities and redirecting growth to less congested parts. In this respect, spatial planning followed the general Dutch development regime, the “polder model.” At the turn of the twenty-first century, however, after a decade of high growth levels, this regime has been exhausted.

Because of its economic success, the Netherlands is less able to sustain a policy of low resource costs. Labor is now in short supply, as is land for urban development. House and office prices have skyrocketed in recent years, as has traffic congestion in the urbanized parts of the country. The traditional policy responses of further industrialization and concomitant productivity growth, and large-scale land development, are no longer economically viable and do not fit in with the political ambition of sustainable growth. Thus, the once valuable low-cost development strategy has to be replaced by a differentiation strategy, to the detriment of land-extensive and low-cost economic and urban development and to the benefit of high value-added activities, high land productivity and rents, particularly in the Randstad. This can be done by the creation of local and regional external effects, leading towards a more metropolitan-style economy. In this respect, the Golden Age will have to be reinvented in Holland. Let us discuss the basic economic mechanisms involved.

## **Towards a Theory of Metropolitan Economics**

A metropolitan economy is not just the economy of a very large city. Not all large cities have the wide range of highly specialized activities characteristic of a metropolitan economy. In Western Europe, London and Paris indisputably have this character, but the German Ruhr Area does not, notwithstanding its five million inhabitants. Nor can the Randstad economy be characterized as metropolitan, although in some respects it is. A metropolitan economy is a highly diversified complex of specialized activity clusters where the combined influence of external scale, scope, and network economies enables a spatial-economic equilibrium at a high level of local resource costs.

Metropolitan agglomeration is by itself not a superior form of spatial economic organization. If it were, all activities would tend to cluster in metropolitan agglomerations. The metropolitan environment is superior for a particular set of economic functions, notably advanced managerial and financial functions, international transportation, and advanced creative services. Thus, metropolitan environments are a spe-

cific milieu in the spatial division of labor in the modern network economy.<sup>6</sup>

The mainstream theory of spatial agglomeration is only of limited use in explaining the economic functions of metropolitan environments. Nor can it throw much light on its spatial conditions, including the efficiency of monocentric versus polycentric urban organization. Following a short presentation of mainstream agglomeration theory, I will present some new perspectives that might provide better explanations for metropolitan development policy.

### *Agglomeration Economies: Localization*

Until recently, spatial phenomena such as agglomeration were ignored in mainstream economics because the underlying increasing returns to scale do not fit into the neo-classical equilibrium models. The productivity gains of efficient spatial organization have seldom been much of a subject for economic policy either. In the Netherlands and elsewhere, regional economic policy has mainly been inspired by macro- and micro-equilibrium theory. Urban structure was not part of this focus. However, this is changing with the work of Krugman and his collaborators, who have tried to fit external economies and increasing returns to scale into equilibrium models.<sup>7</sup> The basic theory he uses goes back to the classical economist, Alfred Marshall, who was interested in external scale economies and the ensuing spatial clustering of industries.<sup>8</sup>

External scale economies benefit a firm accruing from the organization of resources and activities in the firm's local environment. The beneficiary firm is a free rider on these environmental influences. These benefits can be classified into pools of traded inputs and non-traded inputs, and spillovers. The classic example of a traded input advantage is the large and specialized local labor pool. The pool gives both individual firms and jobseekers flexibility and a bargaining position, provided there are many others both on the local supply and local demand side. All of the involved parties maintain an efficient, "deep" market for special labor. Today, labor markets provide a major reason for agglomeration. The pool mechanism is relevant for every specialized traded input, however, from transport to ICT consulting. For non-traded inputs, the benefits of agglomeration are even more obvious. These inputs have the character of collective goods and services, subject to scale advantages. If usage demands spatial proximity, agglomeration will result. An example of this is the access road needed by a firm, but only affordable if that firm can find others to share its costs. Scale-sensitive or indivisible specialized resources, such as ports and stock exchanges, can only be maintained by a concentration of specialist users. Finally, agglomeration springs from spillover effects. The classic example is the information that "goes around" in a local concentration of specialist firms. News, ideas, and best practices held by one firm are often first learned by its neighbor in the same industry. To keep in close contact with cutting edge developments in computer technology, firms should relocate to Silicon Valley. The same holds true for finance and the City of London. For flowers, move to Aalsmeer, south of Amsterdam. Recent theories about clustering effects in the economy, ranging from Porter's well-known "diamond" concept to sophisticated modelling in industrial and spatial economics, are almost always an elaboration of these three

types of external scale effects.<sup>9</sup> When proximity plays a role, these three effects result in localized economies. They also lead to the agglomeration of an industry in a specialized environment and they help explain interregional and international trade, though they only partially explain the role of the metropolitan environment.

The behavioral school of economic geography explored the role of information in economic agglomeration in more depth. According to economic behavior theory, going back to Schumpeter, the efficiency of markets, innovation, and other fundamentals of economic organization and growth depend on the organization and accessibility of information and knowledge. For the behavioral school, the rational nature of the economic man, and his subsequent behavior, are bound by what he can know. The geographers Allan Pred and John Goddard, translated this principle into the role of the local environment. They looked at the way economically valuable information circulates in space, and found face-to-face contacts to be its main medium. The more valuable information is for economic behavior, the more important physical proximity will be. Central business districts (CBDs) are thus an arena for linkages between leading actors in information- and knowledge-intensive services, including corporate headquarters and advanced financial and business services. This role of the CBD has not changed much despite recent revolutions in communication technology. Even in the telecommunications and Internet sector, the most advanced commercial and creative activities are geographically highly clustered in just a few main centers, such as the “Silicon Alley” business district in Lower Manhattan. Face-to-face exchanges thus explain the concentration of advanced managerial, financial business services, but these centers are not typical of a metropolitan environment, although they are rather ubiquitous among large cities in general.<sup>10</sup>

### *Metropolitan Economies: Urbanization and Networks*

The external scale and proximity effects discussed lead mostly to localization economies because they explain local and regional economic clustering and specialization. For large cities, the information linkage effect will entail some specialization in more or less advanced office activities. The metropolitan economic environment, however, is characterized by a wide variety of specialized activities. This diversity arises from two additional types of external economies, apart from the external scale effects discussed above: external economies of scope (urbanization economies) and network economies.

Urbanization economies are the geographical pendant of economies of scope in business organization. They arise when firms are able to change technologies, suppliers, demand markets, and resources without high changeover costs, or when firms equalize market fluctuations and maintain efficient capacity use by operating in various and unrelated supply and demand markets.<sup>11</sup> In this vein, firms can circumvent the risks of scale and specialization. The trick is to combine scale with scope. This will depend both on firm-dependent competencies and the firm’s repertoire of strategies, and on favorable resource conditions in the regional environment. The variety of external resources should match the variety in the firm’s repertoire. Local markets and



resources should not only support scale economies but also allow easy market entrance and exit, since low switching costs for suppliers, labor and other resources are essential for economies of scope.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the business environment should have a range of efficient, “deep” input markets and other resources, which can only develop on the basis of a range of large demand markets. This mutually reinforcing interaction between the variety and size of demand markets and the variety and size of supply markets is one of the secrets of economic growth and innovation, by the way. Whenever physical proximity is relevant for market information, market transactions, and switches between markets, diversified metropolitan environments have an advantage. Only this kind of an environment can cater to variety and depth in resource markets without the pitfall of oligopolistic or monopsonic conditions often found in small markets.

Physical proximity is a relative concept in this respect; really relevant are the costs of physical access and of the formation and maintenance of linkages. The geographical structure of physical networks for the transportation of people, goods and information strongly influences the location behavior of firms and consumers. In this respect, the third and final category of the benefits of a metropolitan environment comes to the foreground: extensive network economies. As with scale effects, textbook economics ignores network effects since ubiquitous accessibility is a prerequisite for efficient micro-economic equilibrium. In reality, ubiquitous access is extremely costly and inefficient, since networks are subject to network economies, which increase the returns of scale and scope.<sup>13</sup> Most transportation lines and their points of entry, physical or virtual (e.g. optical fiber broadband cables), are subject to increasing returns to capacity, provided capacity is efficiently used. The latter demands market capture, which in turn calls for a dendrite geographical feeder network following the geographical extension of the market. The combination of three factors – benefits of scale in main lines and exchanges, the need for a geographical scope for feeder links, and the hierarchical (urban) structure most markets assume – explains the hub-and-spoke structure in any complex transportation network. This structure can be compared to the vascular system of any large mammal, which has ring structures for high-speed and high-capacity circulation and dendrite structures for the feeding of smaller, dispersed or eccentric functions. Locations unlocked by high-capacity lines and exchanges – such as airport and seaport hubs or multiple highway interchanges – benefit most from the ensuing economies. Thus, a certain place (a business center, a demand pool) can derive a comparative advantage based on its relative position in a network, depending on the way in which technical scale and scope effects work out spatially for the network involved. But there is more. Localization and urbanization effects, and network effects, mutually reinforce each other. For example, the agglomeration of management consulting, springing from a high local density of valuable information and leading clients, will be reinforced if there is an airline hub with quick access to a wide range of markets. This position widens the market for the consultants considerably, resulting in further agglomeration.<sup>14</sup> This further agglomeration stimulates demand for the local hub, the advantageous position and productivity of which, subject to increasing returns to

scale, will be further reinforced. Metropolitan environments benefit not only from a strategic position in external linkage systems with network economies, but also from internal grids for which the same network economies are relevant, albeit on a smaller geographical scale. Thus, we see that metropolitan transportation grids do not have the nuclear web structure typical of medium-sized cities, but a polycentric and vascular hub-and-spoke structure.

Mutual reinforcement of localization, urbanization, and network effects, leading to high productivity and extensive comparative advantages, are typical of an efficient metropolitan economy. Moreover, advantageous network positions, combined with large transport markets, may provide a scope for competing network suppliers, resulting in further efficiency and flexibility advantages. Having two airports or seaports is better than having just one. Having two seaports is often unacknowledged as an advantage for the Randstad region, for example.

The mechanisms discussed above have major implications for the specific spatial structure of the ensuing metropolitan agglomeration. The interaction of localization, urbanization, and network effects will always entail a polycentric structure.<sup>15</sup> First of all, the diversity of specialized activities demands a diversity of specialized production and consumption environments within the metropolitan area. Congestion and other negative external effects will prevent a crunching of these environments into one center. Technical scale effects within metropolitan transportation grids will result in a system of high-capacity links and feeder links. Main links enable interconnection of dispersed specialized centers and thus allow urbanization economies in a polynuclear structure. Polycentric development, enabled by internal network economies, allows a metropolitan environment to evade high levels of congestion. Provided local high-speed travel is cost-efficient, main links enable congested centers to spin off new centers elsewhere down the line. Manhattan is a fine example of this mechanism: downtown is connected with midtown by a bundle of fast and competing subway lines. Two geographical centers can thus function as a whole, with less congestion. Further deconcentration along the way will eventually result in a ring structure of business centers, such as Boulevard Peripherique in Paris, the Chicago Loop and the Amsterdam motorway ring.

Thus, metropolitan agglomeration results in polycentric structures, but there is no opposite causation. The polycentric ring structure of the Randstad will by itself not stimulate the combination of mechanisms leading to a metropolitan-style economic structure with a high level of land productivity. Nor will large-scale investment in metropolitan-style vascular infrastructure grids stimulate such a development. This follows from a comparative analysis of travel times and commuting patterns in Greater London as well as in the Randstad region, with counterintuitive results (see Figures 1 and 2) (Tordoir and Drost forthcoming). Average travel time per mile is lower in the Randstad region than in Greater London. An hour's drive covers a larger market in the Randstad. Nonetheless, London is a fully integrated labor market with commuter links from any borough to almost any other borough, whereas the Randstad has four separate, star-shaped commuter patterns surrounding the four main cities. Commut-

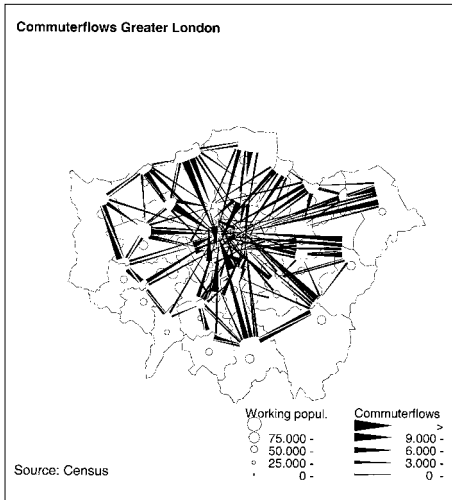


Figure 1. Commuter fields in London

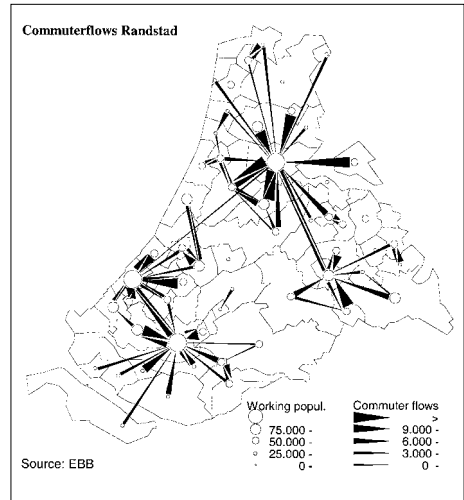


Figure 2. Commuter fields in the Randstad

ing over larger distances and between the main cities is rare. The labor market of the Randstad is compartmentalized and thus less efficient than London’s unified market, notwithstanding a better physical accessibility in the Randstad. How is this possible? Clearly, other factors play a role.

*A Strategic Triangle: Advanced Distribution, Coordination and Creation*

Earlier, I stated that the metropolitan environment is not economically superior per se, but that it is superior for a particular set of advanced functions in the division of labor. Three functions stand out in this respect: advanced distributive services, coordinating activities, and creative services. Each of these functions might thrive on its own in non-metropolitan, specialized environments such as seaports, industrial centers, or university towns, respectively. Within the metropolitan environment, however, the three functions are closely interconnected, provided their development level is advanced. The ensuing synergy is one of the secrets of metropolitan-style growth, high land and labor productivity, and economic, social, and cultural innovation.

The strategic function of distribution services – transportation of people, goods and information, and wholesale trade – follows from the paramount role of dendritic external and internal networks for the metropolitan economy. Advanced distribution services operate these complex networks and their exchanges, and coordinate and channel flows in order to maintain optimal economies of scale and scope, and efficient demand levels. Due to the technical complexity of networks and flow coordination, and to the value of scale and scope efficiencies, the distributive services concerned have an advanced and specialized nature. Moreover, since transport networks are often extensive land users and metropolitan land is dear, metropolitan distribution must achieve high land productivity. This necessitates advanced logistical con-

cepts and a highly efficient layout and utilization level of local infrastructure. A fine example of advanced logistics is the “just-in-time delivery” principle, invented by distributors in large Japanese cities to evade the high local land costs of stock and warehousing. Distributors in Japanese and other Asian large cities with high land prices, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, apply vertical warehousing and order-picking systems. An example of this highly efficient infrastructure layout is the complex for passenger transfer, leisure, and shopping at Schiphol Airport. Efficient flow coordination and infrastructure capacity utilization can also be achieved by implementing intelligent information systems such as the tracking of goods or advanced travel information. Again, innovations in this respect often originate in high-density metropolitan environments, notably in Southeast Asia. Sophistication in distribution services also calls for advanced coordination competencies and creativity. In these respects, advanced distribution services may profit from advanced managerial and creative business services in the environment.

In the research literature on urban economic systems, particular emphasis is put on the role of advanced managerial activities and producer services for large urban centers (Daniels 1991, Taylor and Walker 1999, Taylor and Walker 2000). In the critical literature, the role of “world cities” as controlling, dominating centers in the global economy is emphasized.<sup>16</sup> The sociologist Manuel Castells refers in this respect to an arising “space of flows,” wherein the global network of highly interconnected financial and corporate centers form a globally extended, polycentric business district with a common culture. This analysis points to the concentration of internationally coordinating functions in metropolitan environments. Most relevant in this respect are top-managerial activities, international investment and security services, economic information processing and analysis, and collective economic and political coordination by international professional and business associations, and intergovernmental institutions. These various services are more or less interconnected, with face-to-face contacts as the main medium. The ensuing effects on urban structure were discussed earlier. Yet, this analysis captures only part of the role of metropolitan environments for international economic coordination. Less noticeable in the research literature, but sensed by contemporary chroniclers like Robert Kaplan,<sup>17</sup> is the fundamental role of the metropolis as a cosmopolitan arena for the forging of economic, social, cultural and intellectual links in world society. In the second section of this chapter, I propose that links between different parts of the world are often locally forged in this arena. The world’s metropolises are all characterized by communities from many parts of the world. New York houses the largest community of Europeans outside Europe. The same goes for Los Angeles with Central Americans and Southeast Asians, for London with North Americans and people from South Asia and the Middle East, and for Paris with communities from the Francophone world. It is no coincidence that New York and London are the main business centers in the North Atlantic trade block, just as Los Angeles is for the Pacific Basin and Paris is for trade between Europe and Africa. A cosmopolitan environment is vital for this function. Although many European and North American cities house migrant labor communities, it is particularly the entrepreneurial and cul-

tural elite, responsible for coordinating activities, which finds its expatriate home in the metropolis. This elite finds the best of preferred amenities, including international educational facilities, preferred food, clothing and restaurants, cultural and social facilities, international bookshops, etc. in the metropolis. The cosmopolitan environment caters to social mixing and economic networking arenas such as international business clubs, top cultural centers and top universities. The ensuing cosmopolitan atmosphere is far from the cold and undefined “international” environment of any large airport or CBD. It gives the metropolis the feel of being truly a global village, giving it special qualities for inhabitants and visitors alike. These “soft” qualities are mostly overlooked both by research and by developers of international business centers. Their importance is increasing, however. Both advanced corporate and financial services and the “soft” cosmopolitan factors are strongly connected to a third strategic function in the metropolitan economy: advanced creative services.

Advanced creative services (including creative marketing and advertising services), content providers for specialized and mass media (including the Internet), authors and publishers of specialized knowledge and information, and industrial and fashion designers, are highly concentrated in metropolitan environments (Scott 200). London, New York, Los Angeles, and Milan are the world’s hotspots for these kinds of services. In some respects, Amsterdam can be included on this list. There are two reasons why this type of advanced services is so highly concentrated in so few global centers. First of all, local external effects are strong for these kinds of activities, which is particularly due to the strong information spillover effects. Creative services is all about picking up ideas. Unlike any other industry, this spillover effect is not limited to knowledge circulation within the creative services industry. A main source for information and ideas in creative services is the local environment. The liberal and cosmopolitan big city environment is where new fashions, lifestyles, etc. tend to start, where creative entrepreneurs pick up their ideas from the street and where they find a market willing to try out their ideas. There is also a strong labor pool effect, since creative services require highly specialized labor. The creative professions are specific in character and highly international in scope. They pool in cosmopolitan city centers. Apart from these external effects, the market for advanced creative services is concentrated in metropolitan environments. Corporate headquarters – particularly in the media and communication industries, specialist intermediary industries, and consumer goods and services – supply the main market. For these industries, metropolitan environments and advanced creative services are antennae for new trends in the global village.

### **The Randstad: An Assessment**

Amsterdam once had all the characteristics of a metropolitan economy, even when measured by the modern standards and functions presented in the preceding section. At present, some of these characteristics still exist, notably a strong international distribution network, some international financial services and some specialized creative services. During the past 100 or so years, the city has managed to keep a second-or-

der position in the European hierarchy of urban centers. The city's airport has developed a global hub function in the last 30 years, attracting a cluster of advanced international distributive activities. The city is clearly the main center for coordinating activities in the country (see Map 3) and the headquarters of some of the world's top banks. During the past decade, the city developed a new and internationally pronounced strength in content provision for the media and ICT sectors. Because of the growth of airport-related distribution, advanced producer services and the ICT sector, the Amsterdam region experienced high economic growth levels over the past decade. Nonetheless, the city and urban region has not regained some of the essential metropolitan characteristics it once lost. Most important among these is the cosmopolitan environment that attracted entrepreneurial talent from all parts of the developed world during the Golden Age. Although the city has maintained a cosmopolitan feel, this is nowadays mainly thanks to the nature of its consumer services and liberal consumption culture, and to the language abilities of the population. It is less based on strategic economic activities and it does not attract the world's top entrepreneurial and cultural talent. Nonetheless, the city does supply the main cosmopolitan "living room" for the Dutch economy and cultural world.

Compared to the Amsterdam region, the Rotterdam region (The Rijnmond) has a more specialized economic structure. The Rotterdam regional economy is highly dependent on port activities and an extended complex of bulk process manufacturing. The port hosts a range of large-scale international distribution services and some specialized coordinating activities, including insurance and trading services, which have both operational activities and headquarters in the region. Basically, the international competitive position of the distribution and related manufacturing complexes in the region is strong, because the resources upon which these activities are based are natural and "deep" because capital outlays are extensive. The Rhine basin location of the complex will not lose its relevance over the subsequent decades. Nonetheless, the Rotterdam region has a major problem. Heavy competition from competing port cities in Europe is narrowing profit margins. Because of the combination of low value-added activities and steep productivity increases, the port complex is shedding labor, which cannot easily be absorbed by other, non-related sectors because of the specialized nature of the urban and regional economy. The region lacks the benefits of diversity in this respect. Sectors with high labor demand are mainly located in the north wing of the Randstad. The economic structure of the nearby city of The Hague does not help much in this respect, because The Hague also is relatively weak in services with high labor demand. Like Rotterdam, The Hague has a specialization based on a "natural" resource: the seat of national government. Thus, the economy is highly specialized in non-profit coordinating services, including intergovernmental functions, notably in the legal sphere. Non-profit services are at least as of this time not a growth sector, however. Still, the situation is not dramatic, however, because the government sector entails some advanced commercial services, notably in the communications sector, that do show job growth. Nonetheless, for a decade now, employment growth in the south wing has been notably less than job growth in the north wing. This might be a re-

sult of significant differences in unemployment figures within the Randstad region, because the region is anything but an integrated labor market. This is one sign that the region is not (yet) a metropolitan economic environment. Another important sign is the lack of the high densities, land productivity and land rents common to metropolitan environments. The latter sign is particularly relevant for policy since a considerable increase in land productivity, and urban density is now a prime goal of development policy.

The lack of integrated markets for labor, business facilities, housing, and consumer facilities in the Randstad region limits market efficiencies and keeps the development of external localization and urbanization economies at a certain level. For the most important among these markets – the labor market – comparative data do exist. Measured by commuter linkages, labor markets in the Randstad are geographically compartmentalized into overlapping daily urban systems in and around the four main urban centers (Drost 2001, Bontje 2000). These markets do not come anywhere near the market size of resources in Europe's metropolitan regions, as a comparison of commuter linkages in the Randstad and London reveals (see Figures 1 and 2).

For example, the ICT sector in the northern wing relies on a labor pool of 50,000 persons. In London, the ICT labor pool is ten times larger. The labor market in the north wing is expanding, however, due to economic growth and the slowly expanding commuter fields. The region is gradually developing into an integrated market for 3 million inhabitants and 1.5 million jobs. Although large by national standards, this labor market is medium sized by European standards.

Markets for advanced services inputs are not integrated at the Randstad level. A survey among advanced producer services shows that their market areas follow commuter fields, with the exception of services located in the Amsterdam region, which serves the entire Randstad area due to the above average level of specialization of producer services (Tordoir 1991).

Because of spatial compartmentalization and the ensuing limits to spatial integration of resources, the diversity of economic specializations in the conurbation does not provide a basis for extensive urbanization economies. Thus, although the Randstad can be characterized as a highly diversified economy, this is of less value for individual economic sectors than it could be if tradable and non-tradable resources were spatially more integrated and mobile. Put differently, economic complementarities in the region are passive, not active. Many specializations within the region have a specific local background, with little stimulation from developments in other cities within the conurbation. The distributive sector provides exceptions to the rule, however. Exceptions to this rule are also provided by the economy of the north wing of the Randstad. This wing seems to be developing some characteristics of a metropolitan environment. It is not yet the case, however, and it will not happen unless major spatial and infrastructure obstacles are removed in the coming decades.

To analyze the relation between urban development and specialized distribution, coordinating and creative services, the nationwide spatial employment distribution

and relative local specializations for each of the three clusters were recently surveyed.<sup>18</sup> The results are telling.

Advanced and specialized distribution services are highly concentrated in the two largest agglomerations – Amsterdam and Rotterdam – and in a network of highly specialized transportation centers in the country that is connected via the main ports of Schiphol and Rijnmond. Thus, the Randstad is not only a diversified hub for advanced distribution, but also part of a nationwide and internationally extensive grid of specialized distribution nodes. Distribution-related activities extend over stretched national and international corridors that follow the main highway axes. If the Randstad area and its corridor-formed extensions has one specialized economic function at the European scale, it is distribution.

The survey shows that coordinating activities are highly concentrated in the main urban centers, as could be expected. Within the Randstad region, specialization in coordinating services is particularly strong in Amsterdam, while much less so in Rotterdam and The Hague. Outside the Randstad, only a few urban centers show any specialization in coordinating activity. This pattern is confirmed by the distribution of headquarters of Dutch top-100 corporations. Weighted by their total world employment size, the Amsterdam urban region accommodates half of all Dutch corporate headquarter activities.

Table 1. Spatial distribution of headquarters, Dutch top-100 corporations (world employment)

	Amsterdam		Utrecht		Rotterdam		The Hague		Non-Randstad	
	center	ring	center	ring	center	ring	center	ring	urban	non-urban
Establishments	18	15	7	6	12	4	6	4	10	16
Weighted by employment size	29	21	9	3	16	1	8	2	7	3

Source: Compedium 2000, *Het Financieele Dagblad*

The national spatial distribution of advanced creative services is even more skewed. Within the Randstad, these services are highly concentrated in the “banana” overlapping Amsterdam and Utrecht. Besides these two cities, creative services also find high-valued office environments in the wooded, upper-middle-class suburban area of the Gooi, between these two cities. In this area, there is a high concentration of mass media enterprises, for example. The position of the southern wing is remarkably weak. Outside the Randstad, only three other urban centers in the countryside specialize in creative services: Den Bosch, Eindhoven, and Groningen.

We can conclude from this analysis that the combination of specialization in advanced distribution functions, coordination, and advanced creative services is present only in the northern wing of the Randstad. The north wing seems to harbor the vital ingredients required to develop a full metropolitan-style economy. Because of its eco-



conomic structure, the north wing might reap more benefits from external effects and might be more resistant to high land and labor market pressures than any other region in the country. This might explain why the north wing currently shows by far the largest increase in gross regional product and employment in the country. With increasing pressure on resources, a metropolitanized economy becomes superior (Ministerie van Economische Zaken 2001).

### Some Policy Conclusions

In the Randstad, the classic Dutch policy regime of moderated resource costs and low-density land development is reaching its limits because of the pressure of economic growth and population increase and the rising call for sustainable growth, the conservation of open land and natural values. Part of the solution to the ensuing dilemmas lies in the development of a metropolitan-style economic structure and environment that can combine high land productivity with international competitiveness, and can bear high urban densities and the high costs of infrastructure provision. This requires a new policy regime that integrates economic development with spatial and infrastructure planning, stimulates positive external effects and generates high labor and land productivity. This regime should principally be focused on the structure and functioning of daily urban systems, the spatial containers that include the bulk of traffic flows and markets for frequently used resources (land, labor, facilities) and services. One aim of this policy is the efficient use of urban resources, in particular land and physical infrastructure. Another is the gradual spatial extension of markets for land, housing, labor, facilities, and amenities, and thus the extension of daily urban systems, since economic and spatial productivity, differentiation, and quality are mostly determined by the extent of the markets and their ensuing systemic efficiencies and divisions of labor.<sup>19</sup>

The transportation infrastructure, as it is related to land-use patterns and spatial market structures, provides a key for this integrated policy. The spatial extent and efficiency of daily urban systems is strongly determined by market access and thus by the structure and capacity of infrastructure grids. Without integration with infrastructure development, land-use regulation is a weak instrument. This generic development policy should be supplemented by specific policies that stimulate the development of three strategic activity clusters – advanced distributive services, coordination activities, and creative services – since these form the backbone of a high-productivity metropolitan economy. Finally, international migration and culture policy will play a role, aimed at the development of a cosmopolitan cultural environment and quality of life.

Before addressing policy implementation in the case of the Randstad, we have to establish why this conurbation, and not some other spatial configuration, provides the optimal playground for development policy. The Randstad is not an integrated urban system, but consists of four daily urban systems that overlap mainly between Utrecht and Amsterdam in the north and Rotterdam and The Hague in the south. In the first

instance, these north and south wings are more logical subjects for policy than the Randstad as a whole. If development policy does not align with the actual spatial expansion of these daily urban systems, investments in infrastructure and other urban resources will fail due to overstretch and demand failure. On the other hand, policy should not only follow incremental market developments but also steer the expansion process with an eye to the pros and cons of long-term outcomes. Time, and the phasing in of policy, is important.

The expansion of daily urban systems is a slow, evolutionary process, driven by market forces, economic growth and technological development, but it is facilitated and spatially conducted by the outlay of collective resources, particularly the transportation system.<sup>20</sup> The urban system benefits from expansion in two ways. Capacity enlargement of resources, including the labor pool and housing stock, eases inflationary pressure on urban growth and provides more efficient markets. These are the benefits of relatively short-term and incremental development policies. Secondly, expansion may entail spatial inclusion of new types of resources and environments in the system, adding to its diversity, versatility, and synergy potential. Whether the latter fruits can be plucked depends mainly on the spatial structure and direction of the expansion process in the longer run. This direction is strongly influenced by the evolving structure of the infrastructure grid. Apart from short-term capacity development within and directly around a daily urban system, policymakers should therefore take a long-term perspective on possible spatial development configurations in the wider regional environment of the system. There is much to say for the Randstad as an optimal regional environment in this respect.

The gradual inclusion of the various yet unrelated daily systems within this region, each having different sets of resources and environments, will yield a level of economic synergy and productivity that cannot be achieved by any other spatial configuration. Combined, the various urban systems within the Randstad provide an array of environments for each of the strategic economic clusters discussed in this paper. Moreover, the horseshoe shape of the conurbation provides an excellent ground pattern for an efficient metropolitan infrastructure network. All this calls for inward expansion and integration of the conurbation. The physical space for inward expansion is limited, however, due to the protection of the “Green Heart” of the conurbation. Outward expansion is also necessary, since not all of the necessary urban capacity increases can be achieved by intensifying existing urban land use. Inward integration, land-use intensification and outward expansion are thus three keys of the long-term Randstad policy project. In the shorter term, the focus should be on the development of the two wings, but policy should be implemented there with an eye to the long-term perspective of Randstad-wide integration. The phasing in of development, and following and ‘steering’ evolution patterns, is the key.

I shall conclude with some remarks about policy for the north wing. This wing encompasses the daily urban systems of greater Amsterdam and Utrecht, which overlap in the suburbanized areas of the Gooi and the new polder city of Almere. Greater Amsterdam provides an international cultural and business environment; Utrecht forms

a national hub. Combined, the urban systems have the characteristics of a metropolitan economy in its infant stage, due to the size and diversity of the wing. Its economic value is indicated by the highest economic and employment growth levels and land rent increases in the country. High-density spatial development will be relatively easy to attain, since this runs parallel, and not counter, to actual market demand. Nonetheless, land-use intensification must be complemented by spatial expansion, since not all urban functions can bear the costs of intensification. Most important is the expansion of the labor supply. A further shift of the economic structure towards a relatively labor-intensive advanced services economy will require 300,000 extra workers in the coming 20 years. Extensive expansion of the north-wing labor market is only possible in the new town of Almere. This necessitates both a considerable expansion of this city and a significant capacity increase of its connections within the north wing.

Much more is needed, however. Intensification of urban land use and market integration within the north wing call for changes in the capacity, modal structure, and spatial outlay of the regional infrastructure grid in general, combined with and propelled by the development of high-density nodes. Up till now, the highway system has been the leading facilitator of the expansion and integration of the north wing. Public transportation is a loose collection of lines connecting mostly older, low-growth nodes (such as inner cities), whereas the highway system connects high-growth locations alongside urban motorway rings and expanding edge cities such as Almere and Haarlemmermeer. Traffic growth is most pronounced in the tangential interconnections between these rings and edge cities. Any modal shift towards public transportation should thus involve, first, the development of new tangential public lines interconnecting the growth areas, and second, the integration of public and private transportation (so-called chain mobility). A new main artery for public transportation should interconnect the Schiphol area with Almere, and Almere with Amersfoort and Utrecht. The challenge is huge. To achieve market efficiencies and local land rents that are comparable with those in the London area, the capacity of the mass transit grids must be increased fivefold. Metropolitan market integration will require decades of investment. This may only be sustained by unorthodox finance and taxation systems, in which land rents are ploughed back into infrastructure investment.<sup>21</sup>

High-capacity transit systems are a necessary but insufficient condition for the development of an economically synergetic system of high-density urban nodes. Incremental market forces will not assist in shaping a synergetic system of relatively specialized centers if planning policies within the urban network are not fully integrated in order to avoid cost competition and the “prisoner dilemma” when developments are non-incremental. Lack of alignment in urban planning among local authorities, which are rather autonomous in the Netherlands, has created a patchwork urban development pattern.

The services employment shift and the development of high-density centers should not distract attention from basic economic sectors that, although being extensive land users, will nonetheless remain a foundation for the economic fortunes of the Randstad. Particularly the seaport and airport functions and related activities are vital for

the global connectivity of the regional economy. Without concomitant growth of these land-extensive functions, land-intensive metropolitan development is futile.

Urban development policy should concern more than just the hardware of the spatial economic system and the software of advanced services and specialized labor. Without the creation of a truly cosmopolitan environment, large cities will be unable to attract and retain the international talent and entrepreneurship needed for metropolitan economic functions in the world economy. Cosmopolitan environments are particularly essential for advanced and internationally oriented coordination and creative services. At present, only some parts of Amsterdam and (arguably) The Hague have cosmopolitan levels of local services and international (and multicultural) qualities of life. Can a cosmopolitan environment be created and stimulated? I surmise that urban culture policy plays a major role in this respect – something which is hardly acknowledged by urban planners and economists. In general, the essential characteristics of cosmopolitan environments should be better understood, particularly in the Netherlands, which has little tradition in this respect.

Finally, a question of overriding importance and complexity, which is not addressed here, concerns the institutional framework for the policies recommended above. I am fully aware that actual institutional conditions will impede much of the strategy discussed above. In other words, that institutional conditions will have to be realigned. To discuss the implications would take at least another chapter, however.

## NOTES

1. Ministerie van VROM (2001) *Vijfde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening* (Fifth White Paper on Spatial Planning) (2001).
2. Signs of spiralling cost inflation are already visible in the Randstad. Dutch price inflation in 2001 exceeded 5%, the highest level in the EU. Construction costs in the Randstad increased by 15% in that year.
3. The “Dutch Miracle” – the high economic growth and sharp reduction of unemployment during the 1994-2001 period – was not a result of technological progress and productivity, but mainly of capacity increases and moderated resource costs, notably for labor (mainly due to women entering the labor market).
4. In this respect, the concept of “glocal” has been coined to indicate the close relationship between local and global networks in the economy. See Schwyngedouw (1992) and Brenner (1998).
5. See Fernand Braudel’s classic study of civilization and capitalism in the 15th to 18th centuries (1984).
6. The concept of *milieux*, coined by the French school of economic geography, emphasizes the active interaction between business development and the local and regional environment. See Aydalot 1984.
7. Krugman, (1991, 1998); Duranton and Puga (2000); Anas, Arnott, and Small (1998).

8. Marshall (1917). The interest in economic clusters and their geographical structure is far from being as new as is sometimes claimed.
9. For cluster theory see Porter (1990, 1998). For agglomeration theory see Gleaser (1998) and Quigley (1998).
10. Tordoir in Daniels (1991).
11. For the value and organization of economies of scope in industrial economics, see Teece (1989). The value of economic diversity for urban economic growth was first indicated by Jacobs (1968).
12. An additional benefit of easy switching between a range of input markets is that each of these markets will become more efficient than would be the case without switching.
13. For the impact of networks on urban development, see Graham (2000) and Graham and Marvin (2000).
14. Manhattan agglomerates over a third of all US management consultants. See Tordoir 1991.
15. Comparison of mono- and polynuclear urban structures is currently an important research subject. See Lambooy (1998); Kloosterman and Musterd (2001); Kloosterman and Lambregts (2001); Batty (2001).
16. Noteworthy accounts of the role of cities in global information networks include Castells (1989, 1996) and Sassen (1991).
17. See Kaplan's majestic description of contemporary urban America (1996).
18. The results of this survey will be published in the course of 2002 by the Vereniging Deltametropool, Delft.
19. This is the famous principle of Adam Smith (1934/1776).
20. For a theoretical explanation of the evolution of daily urban systems, see Tordoir, 2001.
21. In the Ile de France region, the development of a mass transit grid (the RER system) was partly financed by a special regional tax, the Versement Transport. See Nyfer (2001).

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## 3.2 • Transport and Land Use Concepts for the Emerging Urban Region

*Luca Bertolini, Frank le Clercq and Loek Kapoen*

### **Introduction**

The Amsterdam region is evolving into a polycentric system, where urban functions are distributed among several connected centers. The central question in this paper is how can future developments in the transportation systems help lead this evolution along the desired ‘multimodal’ and ‘multicentric’ path? First we will characterize and interpret the emergence of a polycentric Amsterdam, particularly from the point of view of the relationship between the development of transportation systems and the development of urban structure. Then – after clarifying what and why we consider the desired evolution path – we will show how certain configurations of the transportation systems could have an impact on both the urban structure and its use and perception by residents, workers and visitors.

### **The Development of Amsterdam’s Urban Structure in Relation to the Development of its Transportation Systems**

#### *A Brief Account of the Process*

Historically, Amsterdam has developed in a radial manner. Its famous canals – which once served as channels along which freight was moved to the warehouses (now the well-known canal houses) – have given Amsterdam’s city center its characteristic belt-type structure. From the center, canals extended into the surrounding countryside to offer food-logistical links. The city’s first housing extensions in the industrial era were constructed in the period 1850-1930, again in a belt-wise manner around the city core. Radial roads from the city center to these and to neighboring cities cut through these areas. These roads also accommodated the first mode of public transport – the tram –, which at first was horse-drawn, but was soon thereafter electrified.

Railway lines were constructed simultaneously. For this purpose, new rights of way needed to be created or streets to be taken over, often with a dramatic impact on existing neighborhoods. The train system, too, was of a radial nature, as its purpose was to link the economic center of Amsterdam to other important cities in the Netherlands and abroad. Amsterdam’s Central Station was built very close to the city center (it is located just half a kilometer from Dam Square – the historical heart of the city) and close



to the harbor area. Later on, two more deliberate planning actions, accompanied by a major railway network innovation, shaped and conditioned today's city structure.

The first planning action was the design and acceptance of a spatial plan for the development of Amsterdam, the AUP (Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan; General Extension Plan) of 1935. In this plan, the ground was laid for Amsterdam's finger- or lobe-wise expansion. What was envisaged as a way to provide space for more housing was not just another belt of extension, but a radial type of development. Amsterdam West, in two lobes, and Amsterdam Buitenveldert to the south were part of this original plan. Two lobes in Amsterdam North, the extension of Buitenveldert into Amstelveen and the southeast extension (the Bijlmermeer) were added later.

From a transport system perspective, these lobes allowed the introduction of radial lines. The idea was to give the future residents of the new residential areas access to both the city center and the surrounding open spaces. Access to the city center (for working and shopping) would be by tram and bicycle, and to the surrounding green wedges (for recreation) by foot and bicycle (the latest city extension – the Bijlmermeer, in the southeast – also follows this philosophy, but it is instead served by a metro line, constructed partly below and partly above ground). Finally, also as part of the AUP, room was reserved for a freight rail line circumventing the older parts of the city in order to provide access to port areas planned for the western part of the city.

The second prominent planning action was the planning of the national highway system, the structural concept of which was established in 1966 in the Second Report on Physical Planning in the Netherlands. The idea was to develop a grid of highways covering the entire country with various degrees of accessibility and spacing proportional to population density. Highways were no longer to be routed from city center to city center, but around cities in order to allow traffic to bypass them. Tangential city bypasses were thus created, forming ring roads around cities. In this way, Amsterdam's established radial street pattern was supplemented by very fast, high-standard highways that connected the various radials at five and (as a half ring) ten kilometers from the city center (see Figure 1). These highways were started in the late 1970s and have now been completed, effectively supplanting the old radial road network, which in places, however, does still survive.

Thirdly and finally, there has been a major innovation in the structure of the railway network. This was built in the nineteenth century to connect the four main cities of the Randstad to the rest of the Netherlands, and these cities and the port of Rotterdam to Germany and Belgium. For a long time, the original shape remained unchanged. More recently, with implementation starting in the late 1970s, an important change in its configuration occurred in order to allow connection with Schiphol Airport, located to the west of Amsterdam. This meant building a new branch of the main line between Amsterdam and The Hague through the airport, and connecting the airport with the east and north of the country via a link running along the southern edge of Amsterdam. In the near future, a direct connection with Utrecht and the south of the country along the same southern urban edge will be realized. For Amsterdam this has meant that a tangential, and increasingly important rail network has been super-

imposed on the original radial network (see Figure 1). This railway ring was already projected in the AUP, but as a freight line giving access to the newly planned harbor areas west of the city. Crucially, virtually all the most important activity subcenters have developed at the intersection of these national railway lines and the highway ring. In the second half of the 1990s, a metro line running alongside the western and southern ring was opened to mutually connect them, further consolidating this emerging development corridor (see Figure 1).

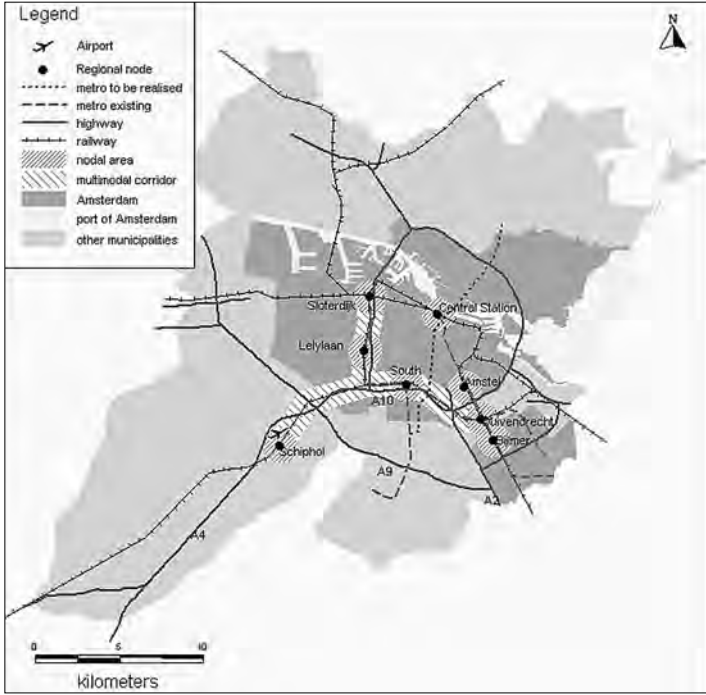


Figure 1

*An Interpretation of the Process*

The development process as briefly evoked at the close of the previous section seems “natural”: a city deconcentrating to sites with good access to highways (because of the increasing importance of the private automobile) followed by an extension of the local public transport network there. Planning decisions, though, are not that natural and not even that logical. Other decisions could have led to other kinds of city structures. This can be understood, for instance, by looking at the structure of a city like Stockholm, which has been set up according to the same principles as Amsterdam: finger-wise city extensions reaching out along radial public transport lines. Unlike Amsterdam, however, Stockholm has reinforced its lobe-structure, and today the fingers stretch out far into the region. The city center is still very strong though: the subcenters are far more remote than the ones of Amsterdam, and thus less competitive with it.

It is thus important to acknowledge the way development has occurred. We will illustrate the way Amsterdam has grown by analyzing the string of decisions which led to the pattern of subcenters as it exists today.

Traditionally, employment was located in the very center of Amsterdam. Therefore, expansion room for larger offices was sought close to the city center, that is, in the residential belt dating from the end of the nineteenth century. The idea was to replace the old built-up areas with new offices, while offering new housing in satellite towns outside Amsterdam. This was the urban renewal approach of the 1960s. The plans were published in the second report on Amsterdam's inner city area. They were supplemented by a plan for the construction of a mass transit system, that is, a metropolitan rail network. On the edge of new metro radials and a metro ring, circumventing the historic city, three inner city subcenters would be developed.

These plans met with a lot of public opposition, originating from alternative views on urban renewal, which thought that rather than relocating residents, houses should be renovated and returned to their original function as housing in these urban renewal areas. These opinions were strengthened by the bad experiences surrounding the demolition of houses that were to make room for city arterials.

The second report on Amsterdam's inner city was not approved by the city council. The growing tertiary sector had no alternative but to look for space elsewhere. They found it at the intersection of the radials with the new national tangential highway on the west side of Amsterdam. One of the first sectors to move there was the fashion industry. At the end of the 1960s, the fashion industry was evicted from its premises, which were then demolished to make room for an access road for the newly built IJ Tunnel, close to the city center. Others followed. Only ten years later (in 1978) was this trend of locating on the edge of the city acknowledged in the part of the structure plan that dealt with Amsterdam's economic development. In that plan, several locations were designated as new sites for the rapidly expanding office sector, as there was hardly any room (or permission) to build new offices in the older parts of the city. The new sites offered particularly good access by both car and public transport.

It was not only offices that were leaving the older and poorly accessible parts of the inner city though; other space-consuming functions such as hospitals, the RAI exhibition and trade center, the Free University and various departments of the University of Amsterdam were also leaving. A true migration had started gradually filling up the subcenters between the old city and the newly planned extensions as part of the AUP. These subcenters are more or less located in between the residential areas in the central parts of Amsterdam and areas in its city extensions and the satellite towns and other cities outside of Amsterdam.

The post-1978 period can be characterized by competitions between subcenters and between subcenters and the city center. The development of and competition between the subcenters occurred after the completion of both the highway ring (A10) and the railway ring. The proximity to Schiphol Airport is a very important factor in this evolution.

The first subcenter was, as mentioned, the Fashion Center. It is located at the junc-

tion of radial tramline no. 1 and the first part of the highway ring. Nearby, in Amsterdam West, at the intersection of other radial tramlines, is another concentration of offices, which includes the headquarters of Elsevier publishing and that of a major labor union.

Three other subcenters were established in, respectively, Amsterdam Southeast, Amsterdam South and Sloterdijk, an area near the western harbor (see Figure 1). Amsterdam Southeast is located on the rail line and the A2 highway connecting Amsterdam to Utrecht. From the beginning it has had direct access to Schiphol Airport via the second (half-)ring road (the A9). Amsterdam South only became important when a rail link was opened to Schiphol (it was later extended to The Hague), next to the highway ring already in place at that point. Sloterdijk became important when the rail line to Schiphol from Amsterdam Central Station was routed via Sloterdijk. This area received extra attention when in 1984 it became a “teleport center,” that is, a site well equipped with facilities to run information and communication businesses.

The growth of each of the subcenters has fluctuated. Right now, Amsterdam Southeast is the most well-developed, accommodating not only offices but also a mixture of facilities, such as a shopping mall, a stadium, a multiplex cinema, a music hall, etc. Sloterdijk lags behind, and Amsterdam South is seen as the new center for the headquarters of major Dutch international banks (ABN AMRO, ING). It is close to Schiphol Airport and will become a hub at all levels of public transport.

Further enhancing this picture of far-fetched polycentrism, two other developments deserve mention: the (at least partly) failed attempt at planning a new office site closer to the historic city center on the waterfront of the IJ river, and the booming, spontaneous rise of employment activities near Schiphol airport.

As businesses (including such important sectors as the financial sector) continue to leave the inner city, there are also efforts to try and stem the tide by providing space for large-scale offices there as well. The IJ waterfront, near Central Station, has been identified as a suitable site. An attempt was made at the beginning of the 1990s to rapidly develop this site as a public-private partnership. This failed, however, as it would have taken about ten years to get the necessary infrastructure into place. Since then, also the Amsterdam city government has concentrated on large-scale headquarter developments along the ring, especially in Amsterdam South. In the meantime, the area along the IJ has been developing with a different mixture: more housing, cultural and tourist facilities, and fewer and yet more varied sorts of businesses (i.e., no front offices).

Most of the growth in the regional employment of the last decade has occurred in or close to Schiphol Airport, which is located in Haarlemmermeer, a municipality adjacent to Amsterdam. This is an area close to where highways intersect and is situated on the rail line that runs from Amsterdam to The Hague and Rotterdam in the very heart of the Randstad. It is thus a real nodal and hub area at all levels of transport: global via the airport, European via the airport and high-speed train, national via train, regional via a light transport link (which is under construction) and locally as a hub of regional bus lines. This area – as an airport city – and Amsterdam South – as an urban site, also

know as the 'South Axis' – are the main competitors in accommodating top of the market employment growth in the Amsterdam region.

In the next section, the spatial-functional configuration of the region resulting from these developments will be described through a series of snapshots of emerging land-use patterns.

### Centers and Subcenters in the Amsterdam Region: an Interlude in Pictures

The distribution and intensity of land use provides some indication of the development patterns in an urban region. Next to the places where people live and work, the location of regional and larger local facilities follow in importance. These include shopping centers, hospitals, and tourist attractions.

The population density of a neighborhood gives an indication of the distribution and intensity of the residential function. Population densities in the region have been determined on the basis of statistical data on neighborhoods (see Figure 2). The highest densities (>100 inhabitants/ha) occur in the older districts of Amsterdam. There is a somewhat lower density in the post-war neighborhoods of Amsterdam and in the cores of surrounding centers. The low densities in the adjacent municipalities are partly due to the fact that many of these areas still have an agricultural function. Major residential developments (not accounted for in the figure) are currently taking place along the southern waterfront.



Figure 2

As far as employment is concerned the biggest concentrations are in the area within the highway ring, in Amsterdam Southeast, Zaanstad (to the northwest of Amsterdam) and around Schiphol Airport (see Figure 3). The areas with the highest development dynamics are the airport, Amsterdam Southeast, and the areas around the southern stretch of the expressway ring (the South Axis).

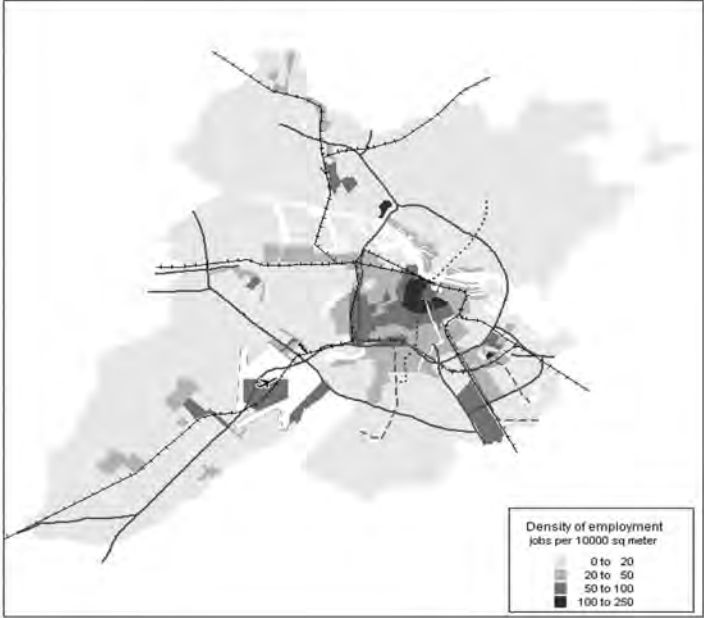


Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 4 provides an indication of the intensity of land use, as far as living and working are concerned. The user-space index combines population and employment density. A polycentric pattern is clearly visible, with the highest indices in the older districts of Amsterdam, several areas within the city ring, Amsterdam Southeast, the airport and in some parts of the surrounding municipalities.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the most important facilities in the region. The biggest concentration of shops and tourist attractions still occurs in the historic center of Amsterdam. Within Amsterdam there are however a number of subcenters with supralocal significance. In Amsterdam Southeast for instance, major shopping and leisure activity developments are presently being built in the vicinity of the already existing shopping center, the new Amsterdam ArenA stadium, and the railway station.

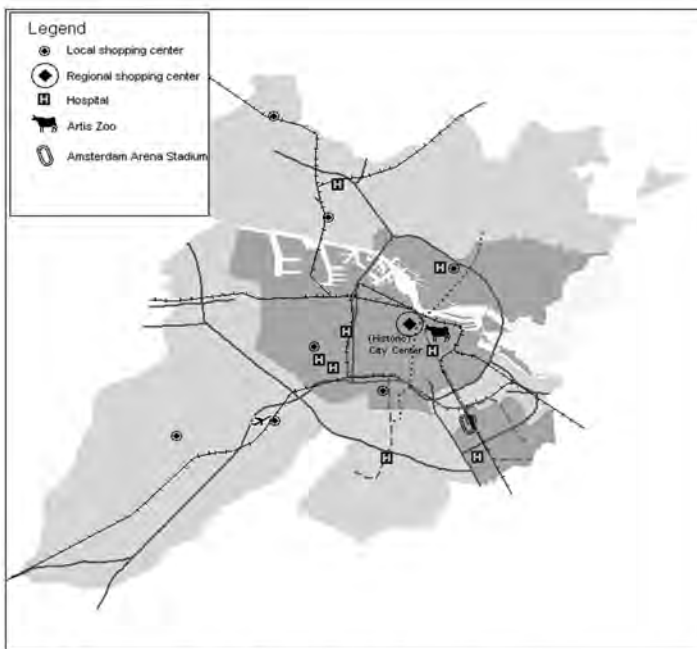


Figure 5

In the following section the developments in Amsterdam discussed so far will be set against developments in other world cities in order to better appreciate the specificities of the transportation and spatial planning challenges facing Amsterdam. The question of how to achieve sustainable mobility patterns, or avoid “automobile dependency,” will be a central issue running through this discussion. This will lead to the identification of a desired evolution path for Amsterdam and the region.

## The Future Relationship between Transport and Urban Development

### *Cities and Transport: the International Context*

In cities throughout the industrialized world, private motorized transport plays an es-

sential and, in many respects, irreplaceable role. However, concern about its negative effects, particularly in densely populated urban areas, is mounting, making ways to “overcome automobile dependency” in cities (Newman and Kenworthy 1999) a key challenge. The most promising approaches seem to be those that, although recognizing the importance of automobiles (and trucks), also incorporate effective, targeted policies to fight their negative effects. This is also the emerging philosophy in the Netherlands and Amsterdam (see, for example, VROMraad 1999). Central to these approaches is the fine-tuning of transport and land-use developments in order to enhance the specific advantages of different transport modes. In practice, this typically means requiring urban-regional land-use policies to stimulate the use of alternatives to the car, namely, collective transport modes and non-motorized modes.

Cervero (1998) distinguishes three ways in which collective transport and urban-regional land-use patterns could reinforce each other:

1. The “adaptive city,” where a spatial structure is developed that can be optimally served by a collective transport system. Examples cited by Cervero (1998) in Europe include Stockholm and Copenhagen; examples in Asia include Tokyo and Singapore. The examples show that the model can be successful in very different institutional contexts (e.g. private-oriented Tokyo and public-oriented Singapore). An interesting difference between the European and the Asian examples is the morphology. The European examples entail a star-shaped spatial structure with a strong central city and secondary living and working concentrations along railway corridors. In the Asian examples, a radial structure is combined with a circular one (already in place in Tokyo and under development in Singapore), with urban centers of roughly the same size consolidating at the intersections between the two (see Figure 6). It is intriguing to note that both the Stockholm and Copenhagen model are under increasing pressure from continuous urban decentralization trends and the accompanying crisscross mobility flows, while both Tokyo and Singapore seem to provide a more resilient configuration for anchoring urban decentralization to collective transport systems.
2. A second type is “adaptive transit,” where a collective transport system is developed that can optimally serve a relatively diffused spatial structure. Examples in Cervero are Karlsruhe, Adelaide and Mexico City. Each represents a quite different solution: Karlsruhe has flexible and integrated train, tram and light-rail networks, Adelaide has a well-performing busway (“O-bahn”) corridor, and Mexico City has highly complementary public rail and private paratransit services. All show how innovative collective transport concepts can successfully match a relatively spread-out urban development pattern.
3. The third type – the “hybrid city” – combines characteristics of the first and the second type. Examples discussed by Cervero are Munich, Ottawa and Curitiba. In all cases a relatively dense core in which most jobs are concentrated is combined with a relatively diffused, mostly residential periphery. Accordingly, linear and more or less branched collective transport backbones are combined with lighter feeder



and/or tangential collective transport services. Both rail-based (Munich) and bus-based (Ottawa, Curitiba) backbone systems appear successful. Essential in all cases is the high degree of complementarity between the different components of the transport system, and the equally high degree of matching by land-use strategies. It is in this respect interesting to note that, in response to continuing decentralization trends, in both Munich and Ottawa secondary employment centers are currently being developed at main transport interchanges outside the core.

European adaptive city  
(Stockholm, Copenhagen)

Asian adaptive city  
(Tokyo, Singapore)

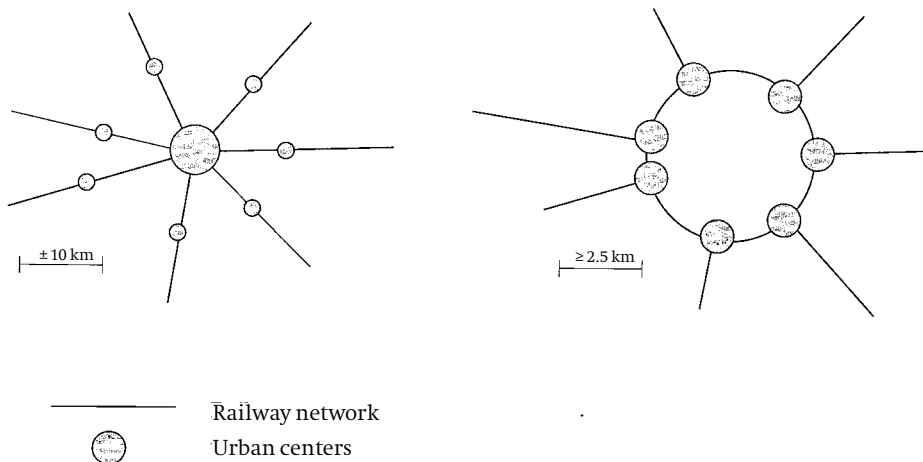


Figure 6

### *Amsterdam as a multimodal, multicentric city*

How can the historic and the current evolution of Amsterdam, as discussed in the previous sections, be positioned vis-à-vis Cervero's (1998) conceptual framework? And what are the implications for the challenges ahead? In many ways Amsterdam's lobe structure is similar to the development along radial railway corridors of such cities as Stockholm and Copenhagen, but there are important differences. A crucial one is the spatial scale of the lobes/corridors, which, as mentioned in the first section, is much smaller in Amsterdam. Also, the concentration of development around stations, with the highest densities close to the node, has not had the same emphasis in Amsterdam. What in Stockholm and Copenhagen is a regional-scale strategy consistently pursued throughout the entire second half of the twentieth century, in Amsterdam is a

much more urban-scale strategy, with greater ambiguities in both space and time.

There are various explanations for this. Some have been discussed in the first section. A further, important one is the fact that Amsterdam is part of a wider, polycentric spatial system (the 'Randstad') in which many urban centers of comparable size are located within relatively short distances. For instance, between the four biggest centers of the Randstad – Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht (each with between 250,000 and 750,000 inhabitants) – distances never exceed 80 km and are often much shorter (e.g. the distance between Rotterdam and The Hague is about 25 km, that between Utrecht and Amsterdam about 40 km). Distances between the edges of the four big cities or to important secondary centers (e.g. Leiden, Haarlem or Delft, each of which has more than 100,000 inhabitants) are even shorter. This places Amsterdam in a multicentric regional field whose functional interconnections have been continuously growing, not least because distances travelled have been increasing (the national average is now more than 30 km per day per person). This reality is visualized, albeit on a negative note, by the daily reports of ever worsening traffic jams on highways in the Randstad, and of increasing delays on the equally congested Randstad train network. This picture starkly contrasts with the comparatively low and decreasing traffic pressure *within* urban centers.

The institutional context has further reinforced the historical polycentricity of the Randstad. In Dutch transport and land-use planning, the two main actors are the national and the municipal government. There is no strong actor at the urban-regional level. The national government produces generic land-use guidelines for the whole country, while municipalities have a strong degree of autonomy in interpreting them. This is a quite different reality from that of the Stockholm and Copenhagen areas, where – even in the absence of a formal or strong metropolitan authority – the central city has had a decisive influence in orientating regional development choices. The workings of a broader field of institutional forces in the Randstad, as well as the dominant role of the national government in transport provision, can be also traced back in the evolution of the main transportation networks – the highway and the railway – as described in earlier sections. In particular, there it was shown how a largely local government-designed radial structure later had national government-designed tangential highway and railway structures superimposed on it.

The position of the Amsterdam highway ring road in the national highway system is particularly important: the southern stretch in particular has direct connections with the international airport and the rest of the Randstad and the country, much more so than the historic city center. Intriguingly, this may be increasingly true also for accessibility by rail. In particular, high-speed train links to Germany and Belgium will use the southern railway ring and have a station on it, possibly bypassing Amsterdam's Central Station. The superior accessibility of the ring – and particularly of its southern, multimodal segment – combines with another crucial factor: the relative availability of land for development, due to the provisions for recreational, transport and other large-scale functions made in the AUP. This combination of factors has proved, as shown in sections one and two, explosive: areas around the southern highway and rail-

way ring, and extending to the airport, are showing the highest transformation dynamics of the entire agglomeration.

The resulting picture is intriguing. Amsterdam, which is only an approximation of the star-shaped European version of the “adaptive” city, has – uniquely on the continent – features of the Asian version of it, as found in Tokyo and Singapore. These cities combine a radial and a tangential collective transport structure, with the main concentrations of urban activities at the intersections between the two systems (see Figure 6). This fact is intriguing because, as mentioned, the Asian model appears much more capable of anchoring urban decentralization processes than the European one. Not surprisingly, a major challenge to European adaptive cities is to develop a transport and land-use strategy to cope with the reality of crisscross mobility flows (see e.g. Hall and Ward 1998; see also the discussion of the European examples in Cervero 1998).

There is, however, an important distinction to be made with respect to the Asian, but also other European examples. European cities, including Amsterdam, tend to be much more car-dependent than Asian cities of comparable wealth, such as Tokyo, Singapore and Hong Kong (all the data below are from Kenworthy and Laube 1999): for instance, in 1990 European cities registered an average of 4,519 private passenger vehicle kilometers per capita against 1,487 in Asian cities. Again in 1990, European cities had an average share of public transport in all motorized transport of 22.6 percent as opposed to 64.1 percent in Asian cities, and of 38.8 percent as opposed to 59.6 percent as far as home-to-work trips are concerned. Amsterdam is no exception. Indeed, it has an even lower share of collective transport than many other European cities (with 25 percent, a European low in home-to-work trips). This, however, is not so much because of greater car use, but because of a unique feature of the transport system in Amsterdam and the Netherlands: the role of the bicycle. With an astonishing 35 percent, Amsterdam is by far the city in the representative international, world-wide sample of Kenworthy and Laube (1999) with the highest share of commuters using non-motorized modes, mainly thanks to the bicycle. By comparison, the European average is 8.5 percent, and the average in Singapore (the Asian wealthy city with the highest share of non-motorized modes) is 22.5 percent.

The specificity of the mobility patterns of Amsterdam – higher car use than Asian cities, higher share of non-motorized modes than anywhere else – means that a *multimodal* perspective (which includes *both* walking, the bike, the car *and* collective transport) is needed. Such a perspective shows, for instance, how the bicycle and local collective transport are competitors within Amsterdam, but also how there is a strong complementarity between the bicycle and the regional train. A policy implication of this is for example that in Amsterdam, any transit-oriented regional development strategy should have as one of its central concerns the quality of the interchange and the degree of complementarity between bike and regional railways, particularly at the origin side of trips. A multimodal perspective also helps to explain why it is especially the locations combining excellent accessibility by car and by train – i.e. the multimodal corridors in Figure 1 – that are developing the most rapidly. These locations

would have to be central components of a transit-oriented regional development strategy, particularly at the destination side of trips.

In such a multimodal strategy, which recognizes the interwovenness of different networks and scales, next to “adaptive city” also “adaptive transit” and “hybrid city” types of solutions as reviewed by Cervero (1998) and summed up above may have a role (e.g. the combination of backbone collective transport infrastructure and lighter services with a feeder function and/or park-and-ride facilities typical of hybrid cities). A crucial question in this respect – and one to which a definitive answer has not been given yet – is where to locate these interchange facilities: at the edge of the urban core, or further away? Current, rather unsuccessful experiments are of the first kind. Perhaps locations closer to the origin of trips would be more successful. Secondly, adaptive transit systems (e.g. the light-rail in Karlsruhe) may have a role, for instance in the rapidly but rather diffusely urbanizing areas in between the existing urban centers. One such system – a busway called the “Zuidtangent” – has recently been opened, to connect intensively developing areas south of the agglomeration and including the airport.

The multimodal perspective sketched above shows that the urban mobility issue, certainly in Amsterdam, has no simple or single solution. Furthermore, the evolution described in previous sections, shows that the task of accommodating mobility should not be separated from the broader one of developing places, as transport policy can have great impacts on land-use developments, certainly on the long term. The challenge seems that of fine-tuning accessibility and other features of each specific location so that a variety of complementary environments for living, working and other activities are made available to both the permanent and the temporary inhabitants of the Amsterdam region. This will be elaborated upon in the conclusions.

## Conclusions

For a long time, transport policy in Amsterdam has been characterized by the often contradictory aims of evenly distributing accessibility across the city and – since the 1970s – of mitigating the negative effects of car use. The paradox has been perhaps strongest in the city center, which was to be afforded the highest accessibility from the region and beyond, but also to be spared the growing number of moving and parked cars. This policy was mirrored, on the land-use side, by the equally contradictory aims of maintaining and developing high-level functions in the core while preserving its historical urban fabric. The attitude towards decentralizing tendencies has been long ambiguous: there have long been ad hoc reactions, but no incorporation into a new strategy.

The emerging, diverse activity and accessibility patterns described in this chapter suggest a new direction for transport and land-use policy in Amsterdam. Emerging differentiation of locational conditions, particularly accessibility, should not be denied or countered but understood and built upon. Two sorts of urban centers are developing: dynamic subcenters at nodal zones enjoying exceptional accessibility by both car and public transport, and the old city center, where accessibility by car is lower. If its

lower accessibility by car puts the city center (and other historic centers in the region) at a disadvantage, at the same time it greatly contributes to creating the conditions for the development of a unique urban environment. Certain kinds of living and working environments may profit from the specific, “deviating” accessibility mix of the core. Activities in the ACE (arts, culture, entertainment) cluster are for instance thriving there. The high share of non-motorized modes can be said to be even a factor in the high degree of conviviality of the public space in the city center. The greatest challenge in this respect is perhaps to identify the level of regional accessibility, including by car (and truck), the city center still needs in order to maintain its vitality and not become the exclusive domain of tourists and other sorts of “city users” (following a “Venice scenario”).

Locations along the ring road provide direct access to the region via regional/inter-regional both public and private transportation networks. This is matched by a relative abundance of space. Accordingly, they constitute an opportunity for developers – one that can be very competitive with existing locations, particularly those in the inner city. A carefully combined development trajectory of the two sorts of locations (i.e. in the center and along the ring) is thus required in order to avoid the cannibalization of existing activity clusters (e.g. shopping, entertainment and education in the city center). Secondly, even though current developments show that areas along the ring road can indeed be extremely useful as locations for expanding activities, especially offices, they also show that creating a full-fledged, diverse working and living environment there remains a daunting urban planning and design task. Achieving this constitutes a related challenge.

A third issue is how to coordinate the development of activities at specific locations in the face of far-reaching changes in the hierarchy of the infrastructure networks. Examples of the latter are the planned up- and downgrading of highway sections, the development of a new regional public transportation network, the connection to the international high-speed train network, and – in the longer term – possibly the development of a Maglev (magnetic levitation train) interregional system or the relocation of the airport. All these infrastructure developments will cause major shifts in the accessibility of specific locations, which will directly affect their development potential and will need to be dealt with.

Finally, next to these different sorts of evolving urban centers, there is a “rest” where locations also have their specific accessibility qualities. Possibly the best way to characterize these places relative to the old and new urban centers is their being “slower”. They have a lower accessibility but also less congestion, and a different pace. For many these can be very popular places to live and work in – on one crucial condition: that they are protected from the negative impact of the transport flows often just passing *through* them.

A multiform Amsterdam is emerging, where the accessibility differentials created by transportation networks combine with other locational features to create a diversity of urban environments. Rather than denying these differences, transport and land-use policy should capitalize on the specific features of each location and address the four challenges mentioned in these conclusions. By doing so, a multicentric, multi-

modal Amsterdam can be developed, where alternatives to the car can get a chance, while the positive contributions of the automobile are also recognized. Making this diversity truly accessible to the people living and working in or visiting the urban region however, requires a radical improvement of the transport systems connecting the different locations. Possibly the most urgent tasks in this respect are managing mounting congestion of the highway system and developing a high-quality collective system on the urban-regional scale.

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## 3.3 • Utilities as Tools for Shaping the City

### *Waste Management and Power Supply*

*Maarten Wolsink*

#### **Introduction**

Large, complex networks provide goods and services. Today, these networks fully cover the industrialized countries, even though they started out as local networks in cities. Utilities provide some of the goods and services that serve the basic needs of households and commerce. For example, electricity supply and drinking water are usually referred to as utility sectors. In terms of economic analysis, these functions used to be regarded as “natural monopolies” and therefore were run as public services. Besides these natural monopolies, some other services were for a very long time also provided by utilities. Public utilities were also found in housing, transport and communication sectors. The authorities that managed these huge infrastructures were often public bodies.

Nowadays, a wave of liberalization is washing over these public sectors. As a result of developing technologies and changing management visions, crucial services are not necessarily provided by public agencies. These developments also reflect changed visions on the purpose of utility functions and the way they can be used to manage the city and shape society. Nevertheless, these changes are still being extensively debated. In May 2002, for example, a referendum was held in Amsterdam on the issue of the independence of the Gemeente Vervoer Bedrijf (GVB). This public transport company which operates the city’s tram, bus and metro network, is still a municipal agency and 66% voted against independence, probably because most voters feared that this was one more step towards privatization.

The transformation of some utilities into private or hybrid sectors that in the past were considered public bodies, will be described here. We will focus on two sectors in which the municipal authorities have been dominant for about a century. The fact that local authorities have lost part of their influence in managing the public services is shaping some conditions for sustainable development within the city.

Economists used to distinguish certain sectors as natural monopolies, because of the large investments needed for the physical infrastructure (Foreman-Peck and Millward 1994: 11). These sectors were supposed to serve the general interest of the citizens and the economy, and were determined to be unprofitable for competing private companies. Generally, the investments were needed to build large, expensive networks,



like railways or the electricity grid. Competing companies operating parallel networks would create inefficiency.

Although the economic theory considered these activities as natural monopolies – and therefore as activities that should be public – history shows that most of them started out as private initiatives. This applies, for example, to the US (Paul-Simon 1993), where many utilities remain private or semi-private. In most European countries, including the Netherlands, the utilities became publicly owned and managed companies. This first development from private to public illustrates the instrumental thinking regarding utility functions, as these were considered tools in shaping the city and pushing economic development.

## **From Private to Public Waste Management**

The urbanization of the nineteenth century was partly the result of new possibilities for technical services, while simultaneously creating a good basis for the commercial provision of these services (Ausubel and Herman 1988). Many utility functions emerged in cities, long before they were extended to the rest of the country. A greater need for these utilities was recognized within the cities, although it is debatable whether this need was collective or rooted in private interests. According to De Swaan (1987), compulsory structures of utility functions are the result of a process of collectivization. He describes the collectivization of care-taking activities by the state as a civilizing process. Collective facilities, consisting of hardware (infrastructure) and software (organizations), were created for the provision of collective goods such as energy and water. His explanation for the collectivization of these goods is that they had qualities that were important for the wealthy (e.g. environmental hygiene). In the cities, pollution and malnutrition led to disease, which interfered with the availability of workers for the production process. It also resulted in epidemics that formed a direct threat not only to the working-class but also to the wealthy. The concentration of poverty and the overcrowding in lower-class districts posed a threat in the form of a lack of hygiene and safety. For this reason in particular, sewerage, waste collecting, and drinking water became public tasks. It was public bodies, with the abilities to enforce cooperation and to charge levies for the services, that took charge of these collective arrangements, mostly as a result of the activities of well-organized pressure groups.

De Swaan's vision concerning the collectivization of utility functions may be challenged, however. Systems for waste removal had already existed in several cities for centuries. The tasks of removing waste and selling manure and compost were leased in most municipalities to foundations for the poor, or occasionally to foundations set up to provide the unemployed with work. The systematic approach to waste removal from a general interest perspective started in the mid-nineteenth century. Amsterdam was among the very first cities to establish a waste management system. There were private initiatives in Amsterdam and these were mainly taken for reasons of hygiene, for example the waste removal concession of the medical doctor, Dr. Samuel Sarphati (1847).

The increasing concentration of population created epidemics and problems of hy-

giene, and a social movement comprised mainly of doctors – called the “hygienists” – emerged. In Amsterdam, this movement was linked to the crucial role of the water supply from the canals. The hygienists stressed the causal relationship between epidemics and general living conditions. Their movement was primarily idealistic – though based on professional knowledge – and they acted as a pressure group that tried to force the authorities to take measures by means of influencing public opinion (Van Zon 1986). At the time, waste consisted mainly of feces, which had economic value when mixed with other biologically degradable components. Existing private initiatives concentrated on this economic value. In Amsterdam, Sarphati had to compete with a company called *Amsterdamse Landbouw-en Mestcompagnie* (Amsterdam Agriculture and Manure Company). This private company had a license to dredge the canals, into which much of the waste and feces were dumped. Because the supply of water – including drinking water – came from the canals, the hygienists wanted to put a stop to this practice. They simultaneously stressed the importance of not dumping waste into the canals and of building a new infrastructure for drinking water supply. Eventually, Amsterdam became the first city in the Netherlands with water mains, which were built in 1854 with British capital and know-how. The water was collected in a drainage canal in the sand dunes near Haarlem and transported through a pipe to Amsterdam.

The quality of manure and compost produced from the waste was generally poor. Its economic value was not particularly high and the manure companies were not very reliable. The waste removal system started by Sarphati and his companions concentrated on removing feces in barrels. Solid waste removal concentrated on the waste lying in the streets. In the last decades of the century, municipalities discontinued the leasing agreements and licenses. Van Zon (1986) stresses that they were forced by the idealistic hygienist movement to make waste removal a public and municipal task. Again for hygienic reasons, municipal waste removal services started a system that was set up to prevent people from dumping waste on streets and in canals. The next step was a general system for solid waste removal, beyond the barrel system. Finally, the entire waste management function in Amsterdam (in 1880) as well as in other cities became a public service. The ideological view of hygienic conditions from a health perspective soon broadened to a view in which waste removal was considered a natural public function as part of shaping a livable urban environment.

## **From Private Investors to Public Electricity Utilities**

When and by whom the first electricity in the Netherlands was supplied is unclear, but it was not in Amsterdam. Some claim that it was the *Nederlandse Electriciteits Maatschappij (NEM)* that started electricity generation on 19 December 1883 in Rotterdam (De Goey 1991). Others say that it was an immigrant engineer with his company named “*Systeem de Kothinsky*” who obtained a license in 1884 from the City of Rotterdam to supply electricity from a boat with generators to a construction site in the Wine Harbor. In any case, other private companies soon followed, because generating elec-

tricity and supplying it concentrated on places where special local demand promised profits. A private company near Rotterdam built the first central power station in 1886. At the time, electricity was not seen as a public good by the authorities. On the contrary, municipalities – which feared possible competition as gas was the current source for lighting – openly frustrated several private initiatives to set up a public supply. The light system was based on the supply of gas, which was a very profitable activity for most municipalities, including Amsterdam. The local gas companies had been in the hands of the municipalities from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In some cities, private gas plants produced gas from coal and coke. In most cities, however, the authorities supplied gas to small businesses and households. They protected this profitable activity and did not hesitate to use their powers to defeat any competition (Kooy 1986).

The NEM was founded by nine investors. One of them was Adolf Krasnapolsky, who had already started to generate his own electricity for his restaurant on Warmoesstraat in the very center of Amsterdam. The company requested a permit in 1882 to establish a few lines to supply some nearby properties. However, the mayor and aldermen refused to issue a permit, as they did with several other requests in the following years, so as to protect the supply of so-called city gas by the municipal gas company.

Generating techniques developed rapidly; in particular the emergence of alternating current techniques led to the development of larger grids. Soon the City of Amsterdam had to back down under pressure from private investors. The first permit to establish a small grid in Amsterdam (in a block between the Kalverstraat and Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal) was issued in 1888 to a company named NV Electra. The permits for block grids, however, were time limited, because the City had the idea that this type of service might become as profitable as supplying gas. Because of this temporary limitation, other private investors – including Krasnapolsky's NEM – refused to build a grid. Electra remained the only company and it soon received a concession to supply electricity throughout the city. This led to the first alternating current power station in the Netherlands, which started generating electricity in 1892.

The factor that persuaded municipal authorities to generate their own electricity was the stimulating effect it might have on other sectors. In Rotterdam, the significance of power in the harbor triggered the actions of the municipal authorities. In Amsterdam, the possibility of replacing the horse-drawn public transport was the main reason for starting public electricity generation. The City decided to electrify all 50 km of rail tracks in 1900 and for that purpose a new central power station was built and managed by the City. The competition with Electra was considered undesirable. In 1913, the City of Amsterdam ended the concession, took over all the clients and Electra's grid, and established the Gemeente-Electriciteitswerken (Municipal Electricity works), maintaining a local public monopoly on the electricity supply.

At the turn of the century, the number of individual consumers grew rapidly and municipalities began to realize that electricity could be a profitable activity (Van den Noort 1990). Municipalities that recognized the importance of electricity stimulated the development of small local networks and the linking of consumers to the grid. In

the following decades the dependency on electricity increased rapidly and the number of local and regional networks grew. These local networks were public, and the former private companies were taken over by the local authorities. As with waste management, the entire chain of electricity supply functions was subject to a process of municipalization. As mentioned in an oblique remark, this had already happened with the local gas companies. This was in line with the development in other Western European countries, such as the UK (Foreman-Peck and Millward 1994). Unlike waste removal, however, it was not primarily the utility character of the energy services that was decisive in the municipalization process. Revenues were a crucial factor, as well as the new possibilities the utilities offered for stimulating economic activity and shaping the urban environment.

### **Municipal Waste Management within a National Framework**

Soon after the era of municipalization, a series of scale increases and interventions by national authorities took place. With waste disposal, the scale issue arose very quickly because the opportunities for manure and compost sales were decreasing. Ironically, the economic value of waste decreased partly because another service had been established for hygienic reasons. In 1872, sewers were introduced in a small part of Amsterdam. At first, this development was slow, as a system of pneumatically driven sewage system had been chosen. This system, as proposed by the engineer Liernur, was problematic, but sewerage became more important when a system of flushing linked to the drinking water system was introduced. The quality of the composition of waste as fertilizer decreased as the amount of solid waste increased and sewage systems were built. Furthermore, demand for organic material decreased strongly at the end of the century when artificial fertilizer became readily available. Small, private enterprises disappeared and finally the only option for composting became the Vuilafvoer Maatschappij (VAM). The government founded this company for large-scale composting in 1929, as a sort of development aid for the poor province of Drenthe. The VAM has expanded over the years and is still nationally significant in the waste removal sector. Today it also processes other materials and it recently built a large incinerator for household waste.

The residual – a growing proportion of solid waste – was mainly landfilled. A large number of small landfills were created for that purpose. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Amsterdam needed a larger disposal site and decided to landfill the Naardermeer, a lake near the city. A new movement of mainly biologists protested fiercely and started a campaign to prevent the use of the Naardermeer for waste disposal. This typical “LULU” conflict (locally unwanted land use) was one of the first cases in which general environmental values were defended by civilians against spatial developments proposed by authorities, something that became very common in the second half of the 20th century (Wolsink 1994). Eventually, the campaign in 1904 resulted in a new organization that bought the lake, which became the first natural reserve of the Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurmonumenten (Union for the Conservation of Natural Monuments). The birth of this (still the largest) Dutch environmental

organization for the first time showed that significance of waste was not limited to the hygienic aspect of the human environment. The public perception of local risks and wider environmental issues linked to waste facilities became textbook examples of rising environmental awareness and the conflict character of facility siting that desperate authorities nowadays often try to dispose of as “nimby-ism” (McAvoy 1999; Devilee 2002).

After World War II, the amount of solid waste started to grow very rapidly as a result of increasing consumption and the increased use of materials. The diversity of waste increased because of new materials, particularly synthetics. It caused a shift from primarily waste removal to waste management, including collection, processing, transport, and disposal. The emergence of new, significant functions within the waste chain created options for new private interests in waste management. Private enterprise started to deal with specific components of waste that could be recovered and sold at a profit. These companies could concentrate only on the profitable aspects of the waste stream and on functions that generated economically feasible revenues. Because of this “cherry picking,” the role of the municipalities was reduced to those functions that were considered unprofitable.

### **Semi-Public Energy Sector**

In the 1920s, provincial utilities started to electrify rural areas. Simultaneously, there began a gradual shift towards national power planning and a partial integration with gas. In 1920, most of the 33 private and 167 local gas utilities were producing gas themselves. The local networks distributed more than 200 different qualities of gas, but this number decreased in the following decades. A few large industries (steel, mining) started to transport “distance gas,” a secondary product, in some regions and there the local gas companies became distributors only (Tellegen et al 1996). Later in the 1950s, municipalities throughout the northeastern parts of the country were supplied with natural gas, derived from various small fields, to distribute to consumers. The production of gas was in the hands of the Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij (NAM), a joint venture of Shell and Exxon. The exclusive right to drill in the northern and eastern parts of the Netherlands was granted in 1933 to the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij (now Royal Dutch Shell). Nobody ever thought the commercial exploitation of natural gas would be important, but it later became the major consequence of this move. The Staatsgasbedrijf (State Gas Company) was founded to carry out the large-scale transport of natural gas from the numerous small fields.

In 1959, one of the world’s largest natural gas fields was found in Groningen (a northern province). In 1963, the government abandoned all coal-based gas production and a national grid for natural gas was created. Production stayed with the NAM, but half of the profit went to the state. The other side of the deal was that the NAM got 50 percent of the Gasunie, a new company created for the transport and large-scale supply of gas. It established a full national monopoly by taking over the networks of the Staatsgasbedrijf and all the regional networks for “distance gas.” The local companies had

gradually lost their production function and the result was a separation of production and transport from distribution and supply. During these decades many gas utilities merged with local or regional power utilities, which in Amsterdam resulted in the Gemeente Energie Bedrijf (GEB).

The semi-public Gasunie held a legal monopoly on transport, as the gas produced by others was compulsorily delivered to it. Distributors remained the utilities, which were governed by provinces and municipalities. Compared to the electricity supply companies, most gas suppliers were rather small. Most utilities still owned power plants and these power-producing utilities cooperated in the Samenwerkende Electriciteits Producenten (SEP; Cooperating Electricity Producers) in managing the high-voltage electricity network. The national organization SEP did not generate power itself, as it could only coordinate production.

### **Strong Policy Connections**

In the decades following World War II, there was a strong belief in the power of the policy that used utilities as its tools. Expanding waste utilities were supposed to handle the rapidly growing waste streams effectively, while energy supply was considered a key factor in economic growth. The Social Democrats in particular believed this and tended towards state intervention. In the 1960s, Den Uyl, the former Amsterdam alderman, became minister of Economic Affairs. Den Uyl tried to enhance state intervention in energy production in his proposed Continental Shelf Mining Act. Locally – particularly in Amsterdam, a town dominated by social democratic administrators – waste and energy were also considered strong policy tools. Effective, cheap energy supplies and efficient waste removal were tools for creating favorable conditions for the establishment of new businesses.

The policy objectives shifted in the early 1970s. Environmental issues appeared on the agenda, and this changed the perspectives on waste and energy policy. Waste management became a top priority in the new policy domain of environmental issues, a trend that was accompanied by a scale increase in the waste planning system. Initially the Ministry of Health and Environment (1972) was in charge of waste, but since 1984 the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environmental Management has been responsible for it. The objective changed from providing cheap and reliable waste removal to achieving environmentally sound disposal, and was accompanied by a critical view on the growth of waste streams.

Under the administration of Economic Affairs, energy policy remained a primarily economic policy domain. Here environmental issues were overshadowed by the energy crises. The first energy crisis influenced Dutch energy policy, because the country was boycotted by Arab oil states for several months in 1973. The electricity sector, which was almost doubling its output every ten years, suddenly had to reconsider its position within society. The 1974 Energy Policy Memorandum sketched three targets: more efficient energy use, more economic exploitation of resources, and the reduction of external dependence. The establishment of new, large-scale power plants became a matter of

discussion. Although the Energy Policy Memorandum announced three new nuclear power plants, nuclear energy was no longer acceptable to the public. The use of oil had to be reduced because it had left the country too dependent on other countries, gas was considered a strategic reserve and coal was criticized mainly for its environmental impact. Hence, the establishment of new power plants came under pressure.

Since 1960, the demand had increased by over 7 percent, but after 1973 it dropped to less than 3 percent. This was not the result of efficiency, but because of the economic recession that followed the energy crisis. High energy prices had a strong social impact, which became an issue in local policy in Amsterdam. Inefficient energy consumption created income problems as many residents saw their energy bill rise quickly, particularly in the nineteenth-century districts, which had high unemployment rates and a high dependency on social security. Energy saving policies with insulation and improved installations for block heating became an important part of municipal housing activities. The GEB was an important tool and was involved in many urban renewal projects.

### **Policy Loses Control**

Strong tension between national and local policy levels emerged. While the objectives within the energy and the waste sector deviated, scales of planning increased. At first this ran parallel to scale increases in technology that created economies of scale. Many small, uncontrolled and old-fashioned waste dumps were closed in favor of larger, more sophisticated landfills. Then a shift from landfill to incineration was established in the 1980s. Local and regional waste utilities were eager to create long-term access to waste disposal capacity, but the planning of that capacity was legally given to the provinces. Furthermore, the new, large waste facilities suffered from growing public opposition at the local level. There was a long struggle in Amsterdam over an incinerator that was finally built in the western industrial and harbor zone. Environmental policy had its first small successes in starting up some separate collection activities linked to waste processing instead of disposal.

Private investors tried to find profitable activities in separate collection and recycling. Most of these were local companies (e.g. Icova in Amsterdam) with mainly business customers. However, they also acquired contracts with municipalities for separate household waste collection. These systems did not include door-to-door removal, but mostly involved street containers to which citizens could bring waste components like glass or paper. Obviously these activities focused only on components that were profitable. However, the markets appeared very unstable and the reliability of these activities was generally low, while the private waste companies' commitment to the environment was often dubious. Mistrust was created by the many conflicts over permits for waste processing plants, a generally low commitment to the environmental conditions set in these permits, and various large waste disposal scandals. Nevertheless, waste management became more diverse and private enterprises were successful in cherry picking in the waste market.

In the power supply sector, the planning of large generating capacity also created struggles over the type and location of new plants. Strong differences emerged between the objectives of local and national energy policy, particularly among the proponents of strong public influence over the sector, such as the Social Democrats. Nationally they were in favor of national government planning in the energy sector and they supported organizational scale increases. However, the proposed concentration and national planning conflicted with the rejection of nuclear power, a top priority in their program (Wolsink 1985). This particularly large-scale technology, demanding strong state control, would be supported by the concentration and state intervention the Social Democrats favored. Local social democratic authorities, among those in the City of Amsterdam, recognized that contradiction and questioned the need for concentration and scale increases. They wanted to maintain control over their utilities. The discussion on concentration started by the government confirmed a trend of gas company mergers and mergers of gas and power utilities (CoCoNut 1980). In Amsterdam the relatively large GEB was able to survive. Furthermore, regional and local authorities wanted to secure the generating capacity of their own utilities. As the growth in demand dropped, a large surplus of generating capacity developed in the 1980s and building new generating capacity became more difficult for reasons of environmental impact. This is similar to the difficulties in decision making on other infrastructure facilities such as waste incinerators (Wolsink 1994). Amsterdam had its own conflict over the building of a new coal-fired power plant on the Hemweg in the western harbor zone.

The disintegration of policy objectives was reinforced by the developments in technology and the energy market. Large-scale power generation was at its peak in 1983, as the amount of electricity generated by private actors for their own use (supplying others was illegal) was at its lowest level (4 percent). From that moment, self-generating activities started to increase, because new small-scale techniques – in particular combined heat and power – were becoming cost-effective. However, with the emergence of the new phenomenon of managing efficient demand, the feasibility of these systems was not only just a matter of effective generation.

## **Demand-Side Management**

Originally, demand-side management (DSM) referred to activities engaged in by utilities to change the time of demand for electricity. This was primarily economically motivated, because balancing supply and demand was still part of supply-oriented management. Time-of-day tariffs were intended to increase power sales at night and weekends to improve the utilization of installed capacity. In Amsterdam, the City neglected this intention, as it forced the GEB in 1983 to discard time-of-day tariffs in favor of a slight overall price reduction for all households as part of its income policy. This intervention was contrary to the mainstream developments of the diversification of services and prices, and of reducing the need for building new power plants.

Later, environmental benefits became a goal and the scope of DSM was expanded either by associating environmental objectives with it or by including activities which



might reduce electricity demand. Now, the activities of utilities can also include the environmentally motivated stimulation of consumer demand for electricity produced from renewables (“green” electricity). Similarly in the drinking water and waste sector there has been diversification of services and the scope of DSM activities is growing (Van Vliet 2002).

DSM should be considered all of the activities which have the following features: supply-demand balancing, intervening “beyond the meter,” consumer auditing and advice, and all kinds of demand reduction, exceeding regulations and standards (Prindle 1991). Therefore, DSM measures are all of the activities performed by supply-side organizations (environmentally or economically motivated) directed at shaping consumer demand for utility services. Within the waste sector, activities directed at separated collection and public campaigning about how to limit the amount of waste are also DSM.

It is important to realize what services are actually provided to customers, as for an optimal environmental performance the definition of these services may need to be changed. For instance, in the electricity sector the service provided to customers can be seen as “supply of electricity.” However, customers in fact need “energy services” such as motion, sound, vision, heat etc., rather than of electricity per se. Similarly, they need services helpful for managing their waste substances such as tools for separation, reuse, and discarding waste, rather than waste removal per se. Helpful tools in the shift to energy and waste services are “smart meters,” which can do a lot more than simply count.

The environmental impact of waste management has become dependent on the quality of the services offered to the customers. Similarly, to improve the environmental performance of the electricity sector, the question is how to optimize energy services provided rather than a question of how to optimize electricity supply. The latter question was a rather simple one until the early 1980s. The emergence of new power generating technology that meant high diversification in scales, and the diversification in waste collection, processing, and disposal techniques required totally new systems of provision.

While private enterprise and competition already existed for particular waste services, the new electricity provision act of 1989 introduced some competition in the power sector. The act included an organizational separation of large-scale electricity production from electricity distribution, including small-scale generation (less than 25 MW).

## **Liberalization**

The separation of the production of electricity from its distribution may be considered a first significant step towards liberalizing the electricity market. The Amsterdam GEB was split up into an electricity and gas distributor, and a power production company. The City of Amsterdam still held the shares of both and still tried to use them for its own policies. The system included a few incentives for competition among producers

and between producers and distributors. The creation of new generating capacities was stimulated and new combined heat and power systems fueled by gas were developed. Many of these were larger than 25 MW and were built by joint ventures of the new distributors and private companies. This new capacity was more efficient both financially and environmentally, but resulted in a surplus capacity of large-scale generation. The costs of the capacity surplus were spread out over the entire sector, so that the captive consumers ended up paying the costs. The system that combined central planning with incentives for competition appeared unstable. Economic and political pressure grew, because in some countries a process of privatization had already started. The UK was the European trendsetter during the Thatcher era, mainly for ideological reasons. Soon other countries (e.g. Norway) followed suit, with more emphasis on liberalizing markets. As a result, the EU Electricity Directive required liberalization of the power sectors in all member states.

When liberalization is discussed, often the introduction of competition is what is meant. In fact, however, the liberalization process can involve many more organizational changes. Attention is focused particularly on certain organizational changes, which appeared to be crucial in the developments within the waste and electricity sectors of several industrialized nations. Some core elements in the waste sector appeared to be significant for the impact on waste reduction among households and these are all elements included in the privatization and liberalization discussion (De Jong and Wolsink 1997). The first is vertical separation, meaning the separation of functions (Table 1) in the chain of services. The second is horizontal separation of different parts of the waste market. The market for biodegradable waste could be separated, for example, or a separate market for packing waste could be created as has been done in Germany. The third element is the potential withdrawal of public bodies from market functions. This is a matter that has to be distinguished from public involvement in the fourth core element, the regulation and attribution of the responsibility for efficient management and waste reduction.

Similar distinctions can be made in the electricity sector. Slingerland (1999) concluded that liberalization involves the following organizational changes:

- A change in market structure, specifically the introduction of competition between the existing utilities and allowing parties other than the traditional utilities to enter the competitive market (third-party access).
- A change in the vertical structure of utility sectors. In its simplest form, this means an administrative unbundling of utility functions, which will become competitive, from those that will remain a "natural" monopoly. In its most drastic form, this can be a complete organizational unbundling, having all utility functions (Table 1) performed by different organizations.
- A change in ownership; in practice, often the privatization of formerly public utilities.

The changing context within which energy supply and waste companies have to operate after liberalization has large consequences for local governments. Their control

over the energy and waste utilities has significantly changed. However, there is no full understanding of the impact of the changed contexts, and hence policy has become increasingly disconnected from an analysis of the regulatory and commercial pressures that occur in privatized and partially liberalized markets (Guy and Marvin 1996). The situation in Amsterdam is no exception.

Table 1. Functions in the electricity and waste chains

Electricity			Waste	
<i>Function</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>		<i>Function</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
Generation	Power station		Disposal	Landfills, incinerators
Transmission	High-voltage network	Regulation	Processing	Recovery plants
Distribution	Low-voltage grid		Transport	Shipping
Supply	Connection, meters		Collection	Removal system & containers; meters
DSM of Consumption	Smart meter & tariff system		Source separation	Separation tools & tariff system

## Functions in Utility Sectors

While utilities originally managed the entire chain of electricity supply and waste management, the different stages within these chains are now separate economic activities. Hence, the utility character of the services or the companies involved has become less obvious. The utility used to be the municipal energy company (GEB) that covered all functions from electricity generation to supply and metering, and the Gemeentelijke Dienst Afvalverwerking (GDA) that was responsible for everything from removal to disposal. Since these functions may be carried out now by different organizations, it is better to speak of utility sectors.

Utility sectors should be regarded as systems of provision: collective, socio-material systems – including the set of institutional actors, their interrelations, and the technological networks in use – which provide services to customers (Fine and Leopold 1993). “Functions” in utility sectors are defined as tasks that have to be performed to provide services to consumers. For instance, before energy services can be provided to consumers in the electricity sector, the following functions have to be carried out: supply of primary energy sources to electricity generators, generation of electricity, high-voltage transmission, low-voltage distribution, supply to consumers, and some effort to manage electricity demand. These functions can be performed by separate, unbundled organizations or by integrated organizations. The chain of five more or less comparable market functions in the electricity and waste sectors is presented in Table 1.

A crucial fact is that public as well as private enterprises may perform all distinguishable functions, because basically there are markets for all these functions. The only exception is the management of the grid. When organizationally separated from the other functions, transmission and distribution networks are the only parts that may still be considered a natural monopoly. The high-voltage network will remain state owned, as was decided in 2000. The local distribution grid, however, remains in the hands of the utility that keeps a territorial link this way, even though it is no longer a public company. It gives them a strong strategic position in the local supply market, as their competitors in local supply must use their grid.

Territorial links between companies supplying energy or waste services to customers are no longer self-evident. We see “splintering” networks now, whereas once they were clearly geographically determined (Guy et al 1997). Hence, the connection between utilities and local policy is eroding. After the era of scale increases and the growing influence of national policy, liberalization is leaving local policy even further behind. Privatized utilities have started to concentrate on profitable activities (cherry picking). After full liberalization, utilities can no longer be considered tools for local policy-making (Marvin et al 1999b). Nevertheless, the current situation is not the same for energy and waste, as can be illustrated by the developments in Amsterdam.

## **Policy in Amsterdam**

The ongoing process of liberalization had large consequences for the Amsterdam GEB. In anticipation of the 1989 Electricity Act, a large number of mergers were carried out. The production function became organized on a large scale when the number of companies in the country decreased from fifteen in 1986 to four in 1989. The production branch of the GEB merged with its counterparts in North Holland and Utrecht. In 1999, this company (UNA) was sold to Reliant, an American power company with a not entirely undisputed reputation.

A little later, many mergers were carried out in the distribution and supply functions as well. In 1989, there were still more than 40 distributors. The Amsterdam GEB, separated from production, changed its name to EBA (Energie Bedrijf Amsterdam). However, a few years later, it could no longer survive on its own and merged with the provincial electricity company and some local gas distributors in the province of North Holland. A scale increase in energy supply also occurred in the rest of the country. The former provincial energy utilities of Gelderland and Friesland, for example, merged as Nuon, a company that became very active in taking over other activities in the Netherlands as well as abroad. It also merged with Energie Noord-West, the company that included the former EBA. Nuon is now one of the four main energy distributors in the Netherlands. The shares held by municipalities and provinces will be privatized, so eventually Amsterdam will lose its control over the energy supply in the city.

All these privatization steps were in line with new EU regulations, although there are ongoing discussions about the relation between privatization and liberalization in the Netherlands. Amsterdam can no longer use the energy supplier for its own poli-

cies. The city's attractiveness as regards setting up business is no longer supported by a publicly controlled energy infrastructure. The same applies to local social and environmental policy. In practice, this means that the City of Amsterdam has to negotiate with many partners about the energy infrastructure of new residential areas. In principle, it is not inevitable that Amsterdam will have to deal with Nuon. The idea is that the market for captive consumers like households will be free in 2004 as it is already for the small segment of so called green electricity. Nevertheless, since Nuon still owns the local infrastructure it has a strategic position. In most new residential areas such as the large VINEX locations (e.g. the new district of IJburg), the authorities still involve their "own" utility in the planning stages, although other companies might opt for the supply of energy in these areas. Actually, the individual household will only get to choose the supplier of energy. The decisions about the infrastructure (e.g. the local low-voltage grid and the local gas network) are addressed in the planning phase. Such decisions may result in a district heating network, or only an electricity grid minus a local gas network with consequences that will be felt by the individual customers.

Whereas policy and energy supply are almost completely disconnected, waste is a different story. Within the waste sector, organizational scale increases are still going on. The planning of waste management – and particularly of the processing and disposal infrastructure – is shifting from the regional towards the national level, while private waste companies operate on an international scale. Local and regional authorities play their part in national policy, because their organizations are important members of the Waste Management Council. Although the legal obligations for planning have shifted to higher levels, the responsibility for the collection function and an environmentally sound disposal system remains at the local level. In many municipalities, private enterprise is contracted to carry out various services for municipalities; sometimes these are privatized municipal waste agencies. In Amsterdam, the public utility for waste collection, GDA, still exists, but private companies may be contracted for specific services.

There is a remarkable difference in the power sector at the level of generation when it is compared to disposal in the waste sector. Whereas fully privatized production companies own large power stations, large incinerators are mainly owned by public utilities. Investments in this infrastructure are enormous. Private waste companies consider the financial risks unacceptable because it would take too long to recover the cost. As a consequence, municipalities bear the long-term risks of these expensive facilities. Shareholders of incinerators are mainly large municipalities, and the GDA exploits its incinerator in the western harbor area of Amsterdam. Contracts between collectors of smaller municipalities and disposers, or between collectors and processors, are meant mainly to pass the risks of investments on to the contractors. So-called put-or-pay contracts are often used, in which a period is set during which a collector has to supply a certain amount of waste against a set price. A supply of less waste leads to extra costs, which is why such contracts conflict strongly with waste reduction. Hence, the captive consumers of the municipal waste collection systems carry the financial burden of expensive waste disposal. Private companies are not captive consumers and the waste

companies they contract are able to negotiate with the disposers (Wolsink and De Jong 2001). Because the incinerators need to utilize their full capacity, the incineration rates on the short-term market are very low compared to the rates in long-term contracts.

Furthermore, local authorities are involved in DSM. The decisions regarding the implementation of different source separation systems are taken by the municipalities. They have to implement national policy, for example, since 1994, the legal obligation to separately collect biodegradable waste. Some less coercive policy measures are part of covenants and of implementation agreements within the Waste Management Council, mainly concerning other waste components. In Amsterdam, the decentralized boroughs take decisions about waste collection systems and DSM. As a consequence the waste removal and waste separation infrastructure varies from one part of the city to another. The trend is towards discarding traditional door-to-door collection and introducing new systems, such as large underground containers for districts with many apartments. Sometimes this offers more opportunities for waste separation, as apartments usually show low participation levels in waste separation, but at the same time it often means a decrease in overall waste services for financial reasons.

### **Further Diversification: Public or Profitable Perspective?**

In the near future, the tendency to diversify services and to splinter networks will continue. There are new technologies that may be implemented and some of them, including options for small-scale energy generation, may even be on the scale of individual households. For example, photovoltaic electricity generation with PV equipment installed on rooftops. Nuon is involved in demonstration projects, and one of these is in the new residential district of Nieuw Sloten in Amsterdam. One of the issues there is why people who buy a new house would accept solar power installations on their rooftop that are owned and managed by an energy company (Van Mierlo and Sprengers 1995). Although these installations are managed by the energy supplier, this solar power technique can easily be applied on an individual scale or on the level of residential blocks. This would make customers less dependent on the supplier. Other promising techniques that may be applied on a small scale are heat pumps, fuel cells, and micro-power stations.

The application of these techniques will emphasize the significance of fine-tuning between demand and supply from the grid. In the future, DSM will offer consumers the opportunity to be more efficient in their consumption and their individual production. It will reduce costs as well as the environmental impact. DSM when organized by the supplier, however, will be supply-oriented. The connection between power supply and information technology creates large opportunities for smart metering, a very helpful tool in DSM. All opportunities involve the increased diversification of services. It offers diverse and flexible services for the individual customer, and also opportunities for diversification between groups of customers. Hence, a smart meter is not a neutral device. Several social forces are shaping the meters, as they may support very different interests (Marvin et al 1999a).

Smart meters include developments such as pre-paid smart cards that can also carry information about the consumer. These are particularly interesting for the suppliers in low-income districts, because they prevent payment problems, as demonstrated in the UK. Another example is the meter that can be read continuously from a distance, using cable, computer and even satellite technology. ENW Amsterdam held the first smart metering experiment in the residential sector in the Netherlands. Smart meters with remote monitoring and a display were installed in 250 households for a behavioral experiment. Substantial energy conservation was found in the groups where the remote monitor was used in combination with a differentiated tariff system. There was a net decrease in electricity consumption for all rates, but significant load shifts could not be established (Uitzinger et al 1995). While load shifts are very interesting for the supplier, decreased consumption may be environmentally sound but not particularly interesting for suppliers. Hence, the utility did not opt to carry out further experiments.

The smart meter carries a potential danger, as the developments in the UK show (Marvin et al 1999a). It could provide consumers with useful information concerning their consumption pattern and could help them manage their total energy household. In the near future that may include individual production by PV, fuel cells, and heat pumps. As the meters are usually installed by the utilities, they obviously serve the purpose of managing the demand for a more profitable supply. An example of that perspective can be found in the development of the smart card. Prepayment devices using cards are usually more expensive for the consumer. However, they are usually used in low-income households, whereas smart meters offering interesting services to the consumer are found mainly in the wealthier parts of the cities. It is this kind of differentiation that is in the interest of the suppliers, but it should also alarm the authorities because of the possible social consequences.

Within the waste sector, smart metering is not as common. Nevertheless, there have been some developments here as well. Municipalities occasionally experiment with economic instruments. Basic micro-economic theory suggests that charges based on waste volume will contribute to waste reduction, and there are options for waste management systems that include such tariffs (Reschovsky and Stone 1994). In the Netherlands, waste reduction was achieved in most of the 16 experiments held in the second half of the 1990s (Zelle and Van der Zwaan 1997). The most effective and most sophisticated systems included sensors at the collection containers and meters on the garbage trucks. The effects of differentiated rates are not always clear, however, and undesirable side effects such as illegal dumping or “waste tourism” (putting bags in containers of others, like in neighboring cities, employers etc.) might occur. There are suggestions that the motivation of citizens to separate waste and to reuse and recycle could be damaged by economic incentives (Thøgersen 1996). Experiments with varying waste collection tariffs in the Netherlands show that the reductions achieved are paired with side effects. The growing tendency of stopping door-to-door collection is another trend that may affect the motivation of the consumer to handle waste in a proper way, resulting in a less reliable and less environmentally sound collection system. When that happens

in waste management, an effect similar to that in electricity supply can be seen. In 1992 the first proposals for discarding separate collection were done in some Amsterdam districts, because of poor compost quality from underground containers.

The current development is one of splintering networks with local policy more and more disconnected from the utility services, and rapidly developing communication and control techniques applied by profit-seeking enterprises. The essence of this development is that utility sectors are becoming infrastructure networks that consist of vast collectives of social and technological actors (Graham and Marvin 2001). This is part of splintering urbanism and whether that will be a favorable development for the city from a social and environmental point of view will depend on our ability to develop new policy scenarios that regulate the new utility sectors. From that perspective, the main trend does not favor social and environmental values. In most policy discourses, liberalization is usually called deregulation, although most studies on the development of the new markets indicate that for a properly working market, we certainly do not need less regulation but instead different kinds of regulation. An example is the proper definition of so called green electricity that must be strictly enforced by a regulator. At the present time, there is a strong tendency among electricity suppliers to define power generated by waste incineration as “green” (Wolsink and De Jong 2001). Probably the liberalized and privatized systems of provision need more and stricter regulation of a kind that is not comprehensive in its aims and targets, but a regulating system that focuses on market conditions and on checks and balances.

In all of the countries that have taken steps that are supposed to be part of liberalization, new agencies are established, generally indicated as the “regulator.” In the Netherlands, an agency of the Ministry of Economic Affairs has been transformed to the Dienst uitvoering en Toezicht Elektriciteitswet (DTE, Agency for the Execution and Supervision Power Bill). Officially DTE is the regulator, but the regulations it should be supervising and its own powers turn out to be very limited. It is still a very small organization compared to regulators of the power sector in other liberalized electricity markets, like OFFER (UK), PER (California), or NVE (Norway) that have several hundreds of employees whereas DTE has only a few dozen. Regulation regarding creating and sustaining reliability in the power supply system is almost nonexistent (Huygen 1999). Within the waste sector, there is no independent regulator for the market, as the basic idea is still that the involvement of authorities in parts of the market is enough to protect the public interest.

Liberalization is too often entangled with deregulation. Experiences with steps towards privatization in the transport sector have triggered a new political discussion on these issues. The referendum on the independence of the Amsterdam public transport agency is an example, but the discussion also includes the power sector. In the meantime, the emphasis on deregulation and privatization has removed a strong instrument from the city to maintain control over its development and this is probably largely irreversible.



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## 3.4 • Regional Greenbelts and the Problem of Institutional Fragmentation

*Marijke van Schendelen*

### **Introduction**

The flourishing economy of the Amsterdam region has caused enormous pressure on the land market. Both the city and its extended region are attracting large numbers of new people and businesses. Old residential areas are being restructured and dilapidated industrial sites are being renovated. Open space in the city is under pressure. And rural areas surrounding the city are being targeted as locations for new housing projects, industrial zones, and other urban functions. Infrastructure is encroaching on the open landscape in the form of new regional links. In the Amsterdam region, the potential offered by rural areas seems to be one of the factors contributing to increasing prosperity.

But that very same prosperity means that the people of Amsterdam are setting higher standards for their own living environment. The modern citizen expects not only a larger home and a more spacious office, but also extensive recreational opportunities in and around the city. These, however, are not naturally guaranteed; they require administrative effort. This article investigates the tensions involved, based upon a study of the historical development of the “green structure” in Amsterdam. It outlines the visions of land use which have shaped that structure down through the years, and the financial, administrative, and legal instruments used. Finally, it touches upon the future value of the regional “green vision” and the importance of the need to adapt the instruments being used.

### **The Design of the Green City**

#### *Institutionalizing Green*

Regulation in the growth of Amsterdam has always been colored by the importance of “green” amenities in and around the city. This was already evident during the Golden Age in the form of the public regulation of gardens attached to the premium housing blocks along the city canals, and in the creation of private pleasure gardens along the Amstel and Vecht rivers, in new polders such as the Watergraafsmeer and the Beemster and along the inland side of the coastal dunes. During the 19th century, economic growth led to the creation of the Plantage district – the “plantation,” including the

Hortus Botanicus (botanical garden) and Artis zoo – as well as a number of parks just outside the old city.

The enjoyment of fresh air and nature went hand in hand with a new-found cultural appreciation of their biological aspects. Just as in Great Britain, the United States and Germany, this interest was soon institutionalized in the Netherlands. The foundation at the Koningszaal in Artis in 1905 of the *Vereniging tot behoud van Natuurmonumenten* (the “Association for the Preservation of Natural Monuments”) an institution analogous with the English National Trust and the German *Naturschutz*, is symbolic of this. Today, thanks to its acquisition of vast tracts of land, *Natuurmonumenten* is one of the wealthiest organizations in the Netherlands. Natural history has become an essential component in the education of the Dutch people. More than anyone, the schoolteachers J.P. Thijsse and E. Heimans, made sure that an interest in nature was awakened in working-class Amsterdam children. Tadpoles in the classroom, the school garden, annual outings to Artis, and holiday camps in the dunes generated great appreciation amongst many young Amsterdammers for the natural world around them.

The founders of *Natuurmonumenten* and proponents of good natural history education were also, together with the municipal administrators, very active in planning the city and the countryside around it. The City of Amsterdam had long owned much of the land outside the old defensive fortifications, which made the creation of Sarphatipark, Westerpark and Oosterpark around 1880 fairly straightforward. Together with the Vondelpark – which had been opened privately by C.P. van Eeghen in 1864, the costs of which were recouped from the sale of land for luxury homes around it – these parks landscaped in the English style added immensely to the attractiveness of urban living. The Leasehold Resolution passed in 1896 by Amsterdam City Council, building upon the opportunities created by the 1874 Compulsory Purchase Act, created the financial scope for the later construction of a whole range of public amenities – including parks and gardens (Delfgaauw 1934, 20 ff.; Slot 1996, 31; Van der Valk 1989, 138).

The 1901 Housing Act and the Health Act of the same year made specific reference to the importance of air and space in the new urban areas for reasons of public health. The new legislation imposed basic requirements for gardens, both public and private, and canals as well as the adequate natural lighting of homes. According to a majority in the National Assembly, a true city should be provided with parks, although this was not included as a requirement in the Housing Act. In an extensive 1908 series of articles on “the parks question” in the *Handelsblad* newspaper, Thijsse drew attention to the need for urban parks – a call which eventually, in the 1930s, led to the creation of the Amsterdamse Bos country park.

The public debate about the future shape of Dutch cities was dominated by two schools of thought. One was that championed by engineers trained at Delft Technical University and was based upon German ideas. The other was influenced by Ebenezer Howard and the Garden Cities Movement, which struck a particular chord with social-liberal and social-democratic politicians. The objective was to let Amsterdam evolve into a “green and pleasant” city of avenues, parks, public gardens, and garden suburbs.

The 1901 Housing Act provided the legislative and financial framework for achieving this. As well as the sections devoted to urban planning, crucially the legislation also contained financial clauses designed by the Minister and economist N.G. Pierson. Under these the State would provide financial guarantees to local authorities and to so-called “authorized institutions” – meaning housing corporations – in the form of loans so that they could actually create the spacious and green new housing districts provided for in the Act. These financial inducements were used as a tool to enable the funding of “public green” as part of urban expansion plans. Spacious residential districts with plenty of air and light, plus private and public gardens, canals, and parks soon formed the basic component of the many new developments being planned in the Netherlands. A recognition that “public green” was a basic requirement in the city was thus institutionalized.

### *The Metropolitan Region as a Framework*

Despite large-scale annexations of surrounding boroughs by Amsterdam in 1896 and 1921 – as a result of which the city increased many times in size – by the early 1920s the issue of whether the metropolitan region would soon reach the level at which urban development was determined was firmly on the agenda. This debate was promoted by the International Town Planning Congress held in Amsterdam in 1924, at which the city-hinterland relationship – and with it the importance of regional green structures for the urban resident – was a central issue. Developments in land use in London, Berlin, New York, Ruhr Valley, Brussels and other regions were discussed by the international delegates, enabling F.M. Wibaut, H.P. Berlage, D. Hudig, H. Cleyndert and other prominent local and national figures in the field to exchange views with Ebenezer Howard, R. Unwin, P. Abercrombie, F. Schumacher and some 400 others.

Three models for growth were addressed at the Congress: concentric expansion, the development of “satellite towns” at some distance from the core city and the evolution of the “finger city.” The latter vision – propounded by the Belgian Raymond Verwilghen and by Vincent Hubbard of Harvard University, and inspired by Patrick Geddes and the expansion plan for Greater Berlin as an example of a “finger city” – was particularly well received. The finger city offered room for urban development, while at the same time this model allowed for parks and recreational amenities to be created even in the heart of the city, along, for example, streams and rivers (Van Schendelen 1997, 155 ff.).

The satellite model championed by Unwin and Howard, with a core city surrounded by garden towns, was criticized by Berlage, Wibaut and others who preferred urban development over decentralization. M.J.W. Roegholt also regarded it as too artificial, since it did not reflect economic reality. Echoing Geddes, he called for an economic-geographical approach in which concentration and compactness would serve urban economic development whilst links with the countryside could be clearly created thanks to the finger-city model.

A debate about administrative structure followed. In fact, there were actually only two options: further annexations by the central city or a regional expansion plan

based on general overall guidelines but leaving independent local authorities in the region free to define the details as they saw fit. Roegholt, however, came up with a third option: establishment of a public corporation between the provincial and local-government levels. This would handle what needed to be arranged at the regional level, particularly bearing in mind the interests of the smaller boroughs, whilst continuing to allow the individual local authorities to operate autonomously within their own boundaries. In the conclusions of the Amsterdam International Town Planning Congress, which were formulated at the initiative of P. Bakker Schut, Head of City Development for The Hague, the true urbanists seemed to come off worst. Preference eventually went to (a) some decentralization of urban areas, (b) limitation of built-up areas by surrounding them with green belts to prevent endless “seas” of housing, and (c) close cooperation between local authorities (Roegholt 1925, 228).

After various proposals for satellite towns in the region had been rejected – including De Miranda’s famous plan for a garden city in the Gooi area – Amsterdam itself eventually chose to make the best of a bad job by deciding in 1935, after much debate, to adopt the General Expansion Plan (AUP). This would extend the city itself with garden suburbs, and placed great store in the “finger city” model: green areas would be drawn as much as possible into the city itself.

### **Space for Nature in the City and the Region**

The subject matter of the 1924 International Town Planning Congress in Amsterdam seems to have lost none of its topicality. This also applies to Cleyndert’s contribution to the event. The international grain merchant, who had studied the conservation policy which had led to the creation of national parks in the United States, demanded attention for the continuing decline in natural areas. He distinguished between three categories of such decline: the reduction in recreational areas, encroachments upon the beauty of the natural landscape and the loss of “virgin” zones of importance to science and the natural balance. To end this process, he proposed a coordinated series of measures in which the government would play a key role. Cleyndert’s efforts resulted in a series of official committees being established in the Netherlands immediately after the Congress. Their portfolios included the Natural Monuments Act, recreational zones, preservation of natural beauty during development, the landscape of the Zuiderzee polders and regional planning (Van der Valk 1982, 51-63).

These activities eventually resulted in the importance of “natural space” being recognized at the regional and national levels. Above all, protection of the landscape demanded a national strategy if building development were not to harm its remaining natural beauty irreversibly. It was partly for this reason that Cleyndert and Hudig also favored Functionalism – they saw that a rational and effective approach to development would leave room for nature both within and outside the cities. The establishment in 1941 of the National Plan Board, the forerunner of today’s State Planning Service, provided a framework for their vision. However, the Second World War and the difficult period of reconstruction following meant that it would be some years be-

fore Cleyndert's and Hudig's policy would be put into effect.

This does not mean that there were not many natural and recreational areas available to the people of Amsterdam during the 1930s. The so-called "Regional Map" in the 1934 AUP shows not only the Amsterdamse Bos, then under construction, but also the coastal Waterleidingduinen and Kennemerduinen dunes, the Westeinder Plassen and Loosdrechtse Plassen lakes, the Gooi area of course, and the banks of the Amstel, Waver and Vecht rivers. In other words, all those areas and routes which had been enjoyed for centuries, had been painted by Rembrandt and others, and had been popularized by Thijsse, Heimans and Nescio. These nature reserves and leisure areas were easily accessible thanks to the rail and tram networks – although many an Amsterdammer made no bones about taking a stiff walk out to them. To protect them all, the AUP stressed the importance of a regional program to prevent their general fragmentation. The local authorities in the Gooi region were also praised for jointly commissioning a plan from the Central Planning Committee – founded by an Amsterdammer who had moved to the local village of Laren, Henri Polak, and now enthusiastically carried on by architect, W.M. Dudok – which pointed to the paramount importance of preserving natural beauty. This resulted in an agreement under which the province of Noord-Holland and the City of Amsterdam also made a significant financial contribution to the implementation alongside the local authorities in the Gooi (*Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan, Nota van Toelichting*, Amsterdam 1934, 21 and Map B).

As well as the agreements at government level, there were also private initiatives to provide recreational space in the Amsterdam region for citydwellers. Alongside the holiday homes and villas built for the wealthy elite in the Gooi and the dunes, chalet complexes in Bakkum, along the North Sea beaches and – again – in the Gooi, at "De Fransche Kamp," offered ordinary Amsterdam residents a chance to take a summer break away from the city. Children's camps for pale city youngsters were organized in the dunes and on the heaths. Housing corporations, employers, political parties, churches, and charities all made an effort to offer their tenants, staff, members, or beneficiaries a summer break which would bring them closer to nature and allow them to rest far from the busy, noisy and, of course, sinful city.

The countryside around Amsterdam was not just a refuge for those in search of recreation. The AUP also addressed its agricultural functions. The farming and market gardening areas around the city were crucial to the harmonious development of Amsterdam. Large areas to the west of the city were allocated for intensive market gardening, whilst the rural Waterland district was to maintain its traditional role as a source of milk for the Amsterdam population, as would the water meadows to the south of the city. And the continuing importance of wide open rural spaces was stressed (AUP 1, 69) in the context of urban development: "The more the city increases in size and significance, the more its inhabitants become townspeople for whom contact with the countryside, being in free nature, becomes a rarer and rarer experience." But, "It is of inestimable value for the Amsterdam of today that its residents can still be genuinely 'outdoors' within a relatively short distance of their homes." (AUP 1, 69)

But space for nature and recreation was needed within the city boundaries, too. It



wasn't just the open spaces of the "Boschpark" (the Amsterdamse Bos), the Nieuwe Meer and Waterland, however. Consideration was also given to local parks and public gardens, playing fields and recreation grounds, watersports facilities, allotments, and school gardens. The banks of the Amstel and the IJ were brought into the equation, bikepaths, and footpaths were planned. The AUP endeavored to create sufficient recreational provision for the entire population of Amsterdam. Prescriptive standards were set in relation to use of space per inhabitant and accessibility by age category, so as to achieve a balanced spread of recreational amenities. A distance of 400 meters between home and a park was set as the maximum acceptable for mothers with babies or young children and senior citizens. It was grudgingly accepted that the existing 1934 city did not meet this "pram range" requirement.

The General Expansion Plan appeared to have broad public support when adopted by the Amsterdam City Council in 1935. Heavily inspired by Geddes' views as expressed in *Civics as Applied Sociology*, both its vision of a "finger city" and its scientific justification guaranteed that. Because of the efforts of the senior municipal officials C. van Eesteren, L.S.P. Scheffer, and T. van Lohuizen, the plan gained international renown thanks in part to its unique nature. Research, planning, and implementation were all in the hands of the local government, in contrast with what was standard practice elsewhere. In that respect the AUP outshone even the famous 1929 Regional Plan for the New York area, which was also produced by noted planners but which proved impossible to implement because of the political complexities involved, and perhaps also suffered from its regional character (Geddes 1905; Giedion 1978, 804).

## The Green Region as a Phenomenon of Prosperity

### *"Buffers" and "Stars" in the Metropolitan Region*

Dutch postwar prosperity led not only to huge pressures on the housing market but also to the rise of mass recreation, which more than ever necessitated planned facilities. In the 1966 Second Memorandum on Land Use in the Netherlands (*Tweede Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening*), two strategies were presented. On the one hand, the national government believed that Waterland, the Gooi and other attractive cultural landscapes should also have a recreational function, which could be reinforced by active care and small-scale amenities. So-called "spatial yield" was deemed to be important, and could be achieved through differentiation in recreational opportunities and increased accessibility – for example, by opening country estates to the public. On the other hand, so-called "green stars" with a specific recreational function would be created close to the big cities. Those in the Amsterdam region, Het Twiske and the Spaarnwoude recreation zone, also act as geographical buffers preventing uninterrupted metropolitan growth. In a direct continuation of prewar ideas, the Dutch planning community was afraid of urban agglomerations forming under mass pressure. The "satellite" model was revived, and now hailed as the ideal. The metropolitan region should be structured harmoniously according to a hierarchy of "nodes," from small to large – from village to growth hub to city. The "finger" model of the core city would continue to guar-

antee direct contact between its residents and the surrounding countryside. No new body was deemed necessary to administer the metropolitan region. The instrument of the regional plan, combined with bilateral agreements, should ensure the implementation of metropolitan policy.

The creation and layout of the “green stars” was greatly inspired by the Amsterdamse Bos, and hence indirectly by English neo-romantic landscaping. For their administration, so-called “Recreation Boards” were opted for. These were formed jointly by the Province and the local authorities concerned, under the terms of the Joint Administrative Arrangements Act. There was no dispute at the time that the original, predominantly arable, landscape of the Twiske Polder and the Houtrak Polder was unsuitable: the English country park remained the reference framework for recreational activities. Now, 30 years later, these polders have become much-loved recreation areas to which whole families go for a Sunday picnic and a swim, and where large numbers of cyclists and joggers keep fit. Criticisms have been raised, though, about the high cost of their construction and maintenance, which has now resulted in a debate about their full or partial privatization. Criticism has also been levelled at their uniform layout along classical but static lines, and about the amount of road traffic the “green stars” generate at peak periods. These recreation areas are too far out of the city for a lot of people to cycle to, and public transport to and from them is generally scarce.

In creating Amsterdam’s garden suburbs, it proved possible to combine utility with recreation. The sand extraction pits dug to feed the construction of nearby housing developments were subsequently turned into lakes forming the centerpieces of local recreation zones: Sloterplass in Amsterdam Nieuw-West and Gaasperplas in Amsterdam-Zuidoost, for example. Amsterdam’s strategic participation in the Floriade horticultural exhibition held every ten years has also provided the city with new parks after the event’s closure. Legacies of past Floriades include the Amstelpark and the Gaasperpark, and the Haarlemmermeer site of Floriade 2002 is set to follow suit.

### *The Battle for a Green City*

The broad acceptance of a green metropolitan region had major repercussions for the old city. Despite the presence of some fine parks in the 19th-century development belt, residents of the area demanded more open spaces in their neighborhoods. The observation made in the 1934 General Expansion Plan that public parks and gardens were scarce in the old city and the 19th-century belt – in other words, in all those residential districts built prior to the passing of the 1901 Housing Act – became a political issue in about 1970. Under the 1974 Amsterdam Structural Plan, the old city should accommodate not only urban functions but also its local residents. Following conflict and then consultation with local people during the regeneration of the Dapperbuurt, the Kinkerbuurt, the Jordaan and the Western and Eastern Islands, small parks, public gardens and collective private gardens were created. Even before the regeneration and renovations were implemented, many residents took their own initiatives in the form of pavement gardens and architectural advice. All these improvements to the inner-city environment have made an enormous contribution to the reassessment of the old

city over the past 25 years, and persuaded many a resident to abandon their dreams of moving to the suburbs. From a political perspective, the 1976 Urbanization Memorandum and the 1983 Third Memorandum on Land Use reflected a similar reassessment of the urban environment at national-government level. Another Amsterdam Structural Plan, *The City Central*, drawn up in 1985, did not confine its attention to the areas undergoing urban regeneration – a process which was now in full swing – but also covered the expansion zones created under the Housing Act, both before and after the war. Several of the prewar districts concerned were in need of renovation in the architectural sense, but their overall structure was not challenged. Indeed, they came to be appreciated anew. Now that the homes in the garden suburbs of Amsterdam-Noord and Betondorp and in the Amsterdam Style districts of Oud-Zuid and Oud-West have been brought up to today's standards, these areas are better-loved than ever. Their heavily “green” structure, consisting of public gardens and squares linked by attractive tree-lined avenues and with a good ratio of private gardens to public open spaces, has been given a new impetus by a process of renovation which has remained faithful to the original design. It is surprising to realise that the town planning ideals of the early years of the 20th century have lost none of their validity.

This outcome led to a critical review of the results of the 1935 General Expansion Plan during the 1980s. Because of the austere way in which it was put into effect during the postwar reconstruction period, the original principles of light, air, and plenty of space certainly did not always produce exciting living environments. Opportunities were sought to increase density. *The City Central* regarded this form of “filling in” not only as a way to alleviate housing shortages but also as an opportunity to reinforce the social and urban structure of the city. But not everyone agreed. The residents of those districts which were to be “filled in” were in an uproar, as were the users of allotment complexes threatened with elimination or displacement and sports clubs that stood to lose their pitches. The renewed appreciation of the city intensified the battle for space in it, with postwar green amenities in the frontline. At the height of the struggle, in about 1990, no open space seemed safe – especially when even the edges of the Vondelpark, a very symbol of the city and perhaps even the nation, appeared to have become negotiable if enough money was put on the table.

### *National Green Policy*

The rising interest in nature and the environment during the 1970s also meant a change of direction for the countryside. National attention after the war had originally focused entirely on agricultural production. This led to the accelerated reclamation of “waste” land and to the 1954 Land Consolidation Act. The powerful “Green Front” headed by such figures like S. Mansholt led an onslaught on what wildlife and natural beauty remained. In response, conservationists like Cleyndert, the biologist, V. Westhoff, and the landscape architect, J.T.P. Bijhouwer, called for a new conceptual framework at the interface between planning, agriculture, and nature conservation. The new terms “landscape plan,” “landscape care,” and “landscape nursing” reflected what should be happening in the countryside, quite apart from the creation of nature

reserves. It was also argued that land consolidation should be used to create more space for recreation and nature conservation. The conservationists at first made little headway, particularly when it came to safeguarding cultural landscapes. What purchases they did make were regarded not only as “natural gems” but also used for recreational purposes (Van der Windt 1995, 130-134).

In the 1970s, however, the wind changed. The three “Green Memoranda” published in 1975 as far as national policy was concerned, were decisive. They appeared in the wake of the Orientation Memorandum on Land Use, which was in fact the first part of the 1973 Third Memorandum on Land Use (*Derde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening*). The Orientation Memorandum proposed that national parks and protected areas of outstanding natural beauty be established in the Netherlands (*Oriënteringsnota* 1973, 59-68). In developing rural areas, a balance needed to be sought which reflected both the economics of land use and an appreciation of the landscape in biological and ecological terms. The three Green Memoranda developed the policy into concrete plans for national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and so-called “Relationship Memorandum areas.” The land in the new national parks was purchased or expropriated outright to be managed solely for the purposes of nature conservation. The 1968 Nature Conservation Act also made it possible for the government to subsidize the purchase and maintenance of conservation areas by private persons or organisations (*Nota Landelijke Gebieden* 1977, 112-122). This meant that agricultural land with the status of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or in a “Relationship Memorandum Area” could be managed by farmers whilst preserving its natural beauty and gaining in natural value. The intention was that management agreements with farmers would guarantee the continued existence of valuable cultural landscapes like Waterland and the Limburg Hills, with management and reserve areas being created which would eventually be turned over to conservation bodies. Coordination and implementation became an important task for the provinces, which thus extended and reinforced their interest in nature and natural beauty.

## Claims on Green Areas in the Amsterdam Region

### *Agricultural Land as a Basis for Nature and Recreation*

Nature and “green” have today become inherent elements of our culture. They also provide recreation for citydwellers and the countryside surrounding Amsterdam has become the subject of the following claims: the conservation of valuable cultural landscapes, in particular water meadows; space for “ecological infrastructure” and respect for Bird Guideline and Habitat Guideline areas; water storage; and recognition of the “Belvedere Memorandum” areas and UNESCO World Heritage Sites. And all these have to be combined with agricultural uses (*Vijfde Nota* Map 22, *Noordvleugelconferentie* 2001, 11). Moreover, there are other claims being made upon green areas in compensation for urban development elsewhere. The various visions and objectives threaten to almost inevitably lead to extensive fragmentation in control, strategy, and management with regard to rural areas, when in fact a strong institutional framework is required to

counterbalance “urban” claims upon them in the form of new housing developments, industrial estates, and transport infrastructure.

Valuable parts of the landscape in the Amsterdam region have long been the subject of institutional control within the framework of the Joint Administrative Arrangements Act. Under this act, not only do various levels of government have a say in them, but also non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like the regional farmers’ association WLTO, *Natuurmonumenten*, the Forestry Commission, the Noord-Holland Land Conservancy and the Netherlands Association of Recreation Enterprises (RECRON). The status of Waterland – which includes the rural parts of Amsterdam-Noord – as a “Valuable Cultural Landscape” (WCL Zone) means not only that it is recognized as an important agricultural landscape but also that the necessary funds are available to maintain and reinforce its character, and to make it more accessible to citydwellers for recreational purposes. For example, the parties which make up the Waterland Conservancy under the terms of the Joint Administrative Arrangements Act not only provide financial and organizational support to the agricultural association which farms the land but also create cyclepaths and canoeing routes through it. Marginal agricultural land is withdrawn as much as possible from production and transformed into nature reserves. The Amstelland Green Zone to the southeast of Amsterdam has similar objectives. Since 1980, the provincial and local authorities here have been working within the framework of the Joint Administrative Arrangements Act to arrange and manage the area in such a way that recreational functions, agriculture and nature coexist harmoniously. There is also broad cooperation with other interested parties. For example, the Amstelland Green Zone is participating in the restoration of the historic Wester-Amstel country estate and the Gaaspermolen windmill, both of which are to have public functions. Several old orchards are also being maintained (*Nieuwsbrief Groengebied Amstelland*, June 2001).

The growing interest in ecological processes – which, since 1990, have been an important aspect of the Natural Environment Policy Plan and in 1991 were also incorporated into the supplement to the Fourth Memorandum on Land Use as an official policy objective – has meant a shift from merely creating and maintaining nature reserves to establishing “ecological link zones.” One example of these is the so-called “Nature Arc,” which connects the waters of the IJmeer with the Rondehoep polder. Here, the Amstelland Green Zone is working closely with the Amstelland Planning Authority. As well as supplying money to build wildlife passages under motorways and railways, the Green Zone is subsidizing ecologically-aware management by owners of reedlands and other natural habitats in agricultural areas. This focused policy serves to protect and encourage particular wildlife species, and where necessary includes specific management and design measures to stimulate conservation, recovery and development. Hand in hand with landscape policy, which concentrates upon cultural and historic value and human experience, ecological policy targets certain characteristic species typical of the selected areas.

Unlike earlier recreation zones such as the Amsterdamse Bos, Het Twiske and Spaarnwoude, Waterland and Amstelland are characterized by the fact that the agri-

culture-based scenery with its many historic elements forms the basis for the range of new recreational amenities gratefully used by city residents. It is therefore little wonder that, although the province has actual management responsibility for these areas, the City of Amsterdam is heavily involved both administratively and financially in their development and maintenance. Also typical is that, compared with earlier decades, not only are static points considered – be they locations for human recreation or the habitats of plants and animals – but increasingly also flows. That is, both people's movements from A to B and the migratory patterns of water shrews, butterflies, and amphibians. Not surprisingly, then, the "Nature Arc" now forms part of the Provincial Ecological Infrastructure of Noord-Holland.

### *Green Areas as Compensation for Urbanization*

A detailed "green plan" has also been drawn up for the area to the south-west of Amsterdam. The "Haarlemmermeer Greener Framework Plan" is a strategy distilled from a series of policy agreements between the Dutch State, the provinces of Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland, the Haarlemmermeer local authority and those of several surrounding districts, the local water conservancies, and Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. In fact, the Framework Plan is a combination of three separate programs: the "Haarlemmermeer West Strategic Green Project," covering 1600 hectares and instigated in 1994 by the State as part of the Green Space Structural Scheme; "Mainport and Green," which involves the creation of 450 hectares of new green space to compensate for development at Schiphol Airport as part of the Schiphol Core Planning Decree; and the so-called "Green Axis," an ecological and recreational link zone between Amstelland and Spaarnwoude being created under the Natural Environment Policy Plan. Once again, management is in the hands of the Province of Noord-Holland. The objectives of the plan as a whole are to preserve this area as open space by setting a limit to the process of urbanisation on the southern side of Amsterdam, to compensate for the negative environmental effects of the airport's continuing growth, and to create regional recreational routes and ecological links between the various large-scale green areas in southern Noord-Holland. One final crucial element in the Framework Plan is integrated water management for the Haarlemmermeer Polder.

Although both the objectives and the administrative and financial arrangements of the green policy seemed to have been clearly defined with the adoption of the Natural Environment Policy Plan in 1990 and the Green Space Structural Scheme in 1994 – with the creation, for example, of a "Green Fund" – in practice things went far less smoothly. According to the official buyers at the Countryside Agency (*Het Parool*, 18 August 2001), land purchases for green zones and nature reserves throughout the Randstad conurbation – and certainly in Haarlemmermeer – have run into trouble. Amicable transactions have been made increasingly difficult by the increasing pressure on space and the consequent price increases and land speculation. It remains to be seen how far the ambitious growth plans in the Amsterdam region can progress without the authorities resorting to the instrument of compulsory purchase. And it is curious to note that the new green areas which are urgently needed to compensate for the neg-

ative environmental effects of intensive urbanization and increasing mobility are themselves being threatened by that same pressure to urbanize (*Raamplan Haarlemmermeér Groen, Beleidsnota Provincie Noord-Holland, Haarlem 2000*).

A similar problem is occurring within the context of the so-called “ROM-IJmeer” project, an attempt to achieve an integrated approach to planning and environmental issues. To offset the impact on nature and the environment of the new IJburg district being built on artificial islands in the IJmeer, the government and a number of conservation organisations have agreed compensatory measures. These include wildlife development projects in front of and behind the dikes on the Waterland and Muiden shores, as well as nature reserves and recreation areas in IJburg itself. However, it is now feared that the IJburg plans in particular could be endangered as a result of the enormous development and construction costs of the new district. The civil engineering specifications of the individual IJburg construction projects may well include a creative “cross-pollination” between a vision of urban planning and the development of a “natural” environment, but ultimately it is the financial and economic viability of the plans which is likely to prove decisive. The IJmeer conservation plans have also been delayed, despite being legally enshrined in zoning plans, land-use plans, the Birds Guideline and the Habitat Guideline. For example, the Kinselmeer lake in Waterland now has the status of a nature reserve despite being surrounded by a number of illegal – but long tolerated – permanent campsites. Their users are not intending to move out and leave the area to the wildlife without a fight (*Natuurontwikkelingsfonds IJmeer, Voortgangsrapportage 2000, Haarlem 2001*). All in all, this seems to show that the instrument of compensation is quite a vulnerable one, and can only be used with difficulty against the process it is designed to combat – the pressure to urbanize.

### *Cultural and Historical Interests as Elements of Scenic Value*

There is yet another important pillar upon which the recreation policy of the Amsterdam region rests. The unique historical value of the Beemster polder and of the Amsterdam Defence Line has resulted in both of them being placed on UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Sites. In fact, the two overlap: five of the Defense Line’s 42 fortifications are in the Beemster. Preserving their cultural and historical character also serves two other objectives. One is recreational: keeping the two sites as intact as possible increases their appeal to citydwellers as leisure destinations. The other, which applies particularly to the Defense Line, is their potential inclusion in modern water-management systems. Researchers are currently investigating whether the old flood zones could in the future be adapted for permanent or temporary water storage. But it should be noted that, despite their international recognition, the legal protection of neither area is watertight. Plans to extend the Port of Amsterdam and other forms of pressure to urbanize could still prevail, even though the importance of the notion of cultural heritage to the living environment is officially acknowledged and – under the so-called Belvédère Memorandum of 1999 – the Dutch State has allocated substantial funding to preserve that heritage along with nature and recreation as effectively as possible within the Amsterdam regional context. Nor is it only the Beemster and the Amsterdam De-

fense Line which are highly valued for their cultural and historical value. Even leaving aside urban Amsterdam, the same applies to such places as the river Zaan, Marken and the Noord-Holland Canal. And to the south of the city, the polder De Ronde Hoep, the Drecht and the Amstel, and the “floating gardens” of Aalsmeer and Kudelstaart can be added to the list – as can the fortifications of the New Holland Water Line, which have recently been elevated to the status of a National Project (*De cultuurhistorie van Waterland en Zaanstreek, inclusief Beemster en Schermer, Provincie Noord-Holland*, Haarlem 2001; and *De cultuurhistorie van Meerlanden en Amsterdam, Provincie Noord-Holland*, Haarlem 2001).

A number of areas of cultural and historical significance have already been incorporated into administrative and legal frameworks such as the “Waterland Valuable Cultural Landscape,” the Amstelland Green Zone and the “Green Heartland.” The Belvédère Memorandum – in which sites and areas of cultural and historic value are placed in a broader context and which proposes an active conservation and development policy for them – seems to provide additional protection. In the Amsterdam region, the monuments covered are Waterland, the Amsterdam Defense Line, the Beemster, and the New Holland Water Line.

### *Amsterdam’s Scenic Vision*

Within Amsterdam, too, an ideal vision is being developed in the form of the “green infrastructure” proposals. These were set out in the 1996 Structural Plan, and also form an integral part of its 2002 successor. The principle underlying them is that, compared with other urban areas of the Netherlands, the Amsterdam region has only a limited capacity for recreational activities. The calls for a “finger” or “wedge” structure within the municipal boundaries which have in practice formed the basis for all urban expansion since 1935 are retained, and the great value of the city’s various parks and a number of green “recreational routes” is of course acknowledged. But it is also clear that the many urban developments being discussed simultaneously in the city could seriously encroach upon the green infrastructure. It is suggested that denser urbanization in fact requires a different, more qualitative vision of the existing green infrastructure in the city. And it is also regarded as important that the edges of Amsterdam be transformed from fragmented and disorganized fringe areas into high-value recreational landscapes based upon an integrated vision – although this has yet to be developed. There are also calls for a new management structure for the green areas on the edges of the city and for an integrated organizational and financial approach to them. In this respect, structures like that of the Amsterdamse Bos and the Amstelland Green Zone are cited as examples. Naturally, the green infrastructure also needs to be embedded within the administrative and legal framework of regional, structural and zoning plans. Any building should do no more than support the “green functions.” As for the investment needed, the city has the Amsterdam Green Fund and would also hope to attract subsidies from other government sources. It is also hoped that it might achieve “win-win” situations by, for example, locating possible commercial building along the new Westrandweg on the western edge of the city in such a way that space is left over to create a modern recreational landscape which could link the residents of Amsterdam-



West with Spaarnwoude and even the coastal Kennemerduinen dunes (Van Zoest, J. 2001).

To what extent this “green dream” might be combined with a “blue dream” is not immediately clear. The Amsterdam Water Plan, which calls water “Amsterdam’s blue gold” and is one of the basic building blocks of the latest structural plan, does not provide any direct answer. But, alongside purely functional matters like inland shipping routes and the importance of reservoirs, it also mentions the recreational importance of water. It states that the scenic and natural value of water can be reinforced by extending the existing network of waterways and connecting them with ecological and recreational link zones. A number of green areas are explicitly named as temporary reservoirs. Particularly in low-lying polders like Buikslotermeer, Watergraafsmeer, and Amsterdam Southeast, space for water storage is being sought in green areas (*Waterplan Amsterdam 2001*).

## Vision and Policy Adjustment

### *Towards a Regional Vision*

If we look at the municipal and regional visions of green space and recreation, the impression gained is one of fragmentation. Most of the parks in Amsterdam itself are cherished, but the green which exists to counterbalance the city’s “lobe structure” is very gradually changing in function. The transition from city to metropolitan region requires a coherent regional vision of the “green structure,” the question being to what extent the lobe structure is applicable and preservable on that scale. At first sight, there does appear to exist some potential. Zaanstad, West Amsterdam-Halfweg, Buitenveldert-Amstelveen, and Amsterdam Southeast-Diemen can be regarded as urbanized lobes which could provide the framework for a solid regional green structure, providing and even reinforcing the benefits which have been posited since the 1920s – that is, the importance of citydwellers having some place within reach where they can be “outdoors.”

Another possible variant is analogous with the development of the London and Paris agglomerations. There, the original park-like edges of the city were enclosed by new urban development and absorbed into the agglomeration as city parks. This also seems to be happening to the Amsterdamse Bos, which is now enclosed as the old marketgardening area to the south of it is developed for housing. Connections can be established between different park areas by creating “green-blue” routes or zones between them; these would not only have ecological significance but in particular could be used as recreational cycling or walking routes. But the character and design of such areas does change. Former agricultural land is transformed into park landscapes with a high recreational value. Efforts may be made to keep linear elements such as rivers, canals and dikes as visible as possible, but these continue to be threatened with fragmentation by the fact that the infrastructure frequently cuts across them or they are obscured by buildings.

In the London and Paris regions, “green belts” further outside the city also provide a

recreational counterweight. For the Amsterdam region a similar development would mean that – as well as the nearby regional recreational zones such as the Gooi, the North Sea dunes and beaches, and the lakes of Vinkeveen and Loosdrecht, all of which are already under enormous pressure – more distant areas such as parts of the “Green Heart” and central Noord-Holland would have to be given a recreational function. The importance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status confirmed for both of these areas in the Fifth Memorandum on Land Use and the legal status given such areas by the so-called “green contours” regulations gains additional significance in this light. So, design considerations at this “higher” level are important as are infrastructural requirements. The accessibility of these areas, particularly by public transport, is an essential precondition. This means bringing them within easy reach of railway and metro stations.

The lack of vision is combined with a lack of research into the wishes of visitors and users at the regional level, as originally initiated by Geddes and followed up by Van Lohuizen and many subsequent generations of policy researchers. Of greater importance seems to be the financial feasibility of acquiring residual areas which are not immediately interesting for other urban functions, combined with a previously defined natural status of certain regional elements. But these two aspects alone do not create a geographical structure which is accessible to recreation-seeking Amsterdammers.

### *The Administrative and Financial Structure*

A vision of land use needs to be established within an administrative and legal framework. An attempt in 1995 to give the Amsterdam region the status of a metropolitan province, which might have somewhat streamlined the tangle of arrangements between various local authorities, failed. Nor was the “green vision” presented in the Amsterdam Regional Structural Plan a shining example of clarity. In fact, it simply presented a collection of the existing and potential new green areas in the region, without adding any geographical or strategic administrative vision. Yet again, it is the province and the state which are trying to define the regional framework. For the province it is the Noord-Holland South Regional Plan which is the preferred instrument; this was adopted in 2002 and incorporates the Amsterdam Structural Plan entitled *Choosing Urbanity*. The Regional Plan emphasizes that, alongside existing green elements, a geographical structure needs to be created for the future. In practice, a forward-looking consensus needs to be reached at the regional level about the missing links. The policy memorandum *A Green-Blue Vision for Noord-Holland South* is supposed to provide a basis for this but in fact does not present a coherent picture, either in geographical or in strategic administrative terms (*Structuurplan Amsterdam 2001; Groenblauwe Visie 2001*).

At a higher level, the “contour policy” as proposed in the Fifth Memorandum on Land Use is decisive. This retains existing nature and recreation zones, with the debate centering on the transformation of agricultural land into new urban expansion zones. Again, though, there is no geographical vision with respect to green space and recreation.

The acquisition of land also presents problems. Because of the general lack of ade-

quate funds, compulsory purchase has never yet been used in respect to land intended for recreational purposes. Yet amicable transactions are becoming more and more difficult to agree as landowners seek more lucrative ways to dispose of their property. As far as areas currently used for farming are concerned, the addition of recreational functions often provides the best solution for both agriculture and the citydweller. It seems perfectly possible to create recreational routes and locations through basically straightforward actions as part of the planning process. Waterland and Amstelland are excellent examples of this.

The suggestion that “red for green” could be a useful strategy at the regional level is misleading. At the municipal level it is of course possible, and even usual, to redistribute “red” income to create “green” amenities. As a major city, Amsterdam has been able to create some impressive parks in this way. But smaller districts by definition have more limited resources, which means that the development of a new housing estate is at most only likely to generate green space at the neighborhood level. The scale of a regional green structure requires a regional land policy – something which has been discussed at length but is still far from being realized.

The current working relationships within the context of the Joint Administrative Arrangements Act – which take the form of Recreation Boards and Land Conservancies – therefore remain the basis for any results. This despite the fact that local authorities often represent conflicting interests. Whilst a recreation board in which it participates is lobbying for the recreational use of a particular piece of land, the same local authority could be negotiating with project developers about alternative plans.

The money to create, maintain, and manage green space is pooled from the “green funds” held by various layers of government and from private sources such as *Natuurmonumenten* and the Forestry Commission – needless to say, after plenty of negotiation and tension. This can and must be done more effectively. The often contradictory interests within the broad “green” and recreational sector – different perspectives on the ecological value of an area, the value of farming, the need for water storage and the combination of rural functions – only leads to that sector as a whole being weakened in the face of powerful urban interests. Moreover, different and sometimes almost contradictory visions of the countryside can result in very divergent standpoints about the accessibility of an area. The heavy emphasis placed by *Natuurmonumenten* upon ecological values frequently results in an area being closed to everyone but biologists. Likewise, there are still farmers who do not want citydwellers intruding onto their land. Drawing some distinction between direct use of the local infrastructure of cyclepaths, footpaths, and waterways and indirect use in the form of visual enjoyment of agricultural and natural scenery, plus some degree of internal zoning of recreational landscapes, offers a possible solution in this respect. This makes the rural part of the metropolitan region a clear part of the citydweller’s recreational domain, one which will only be valued to the full if he or she can actually enter it. Moreover, from a political point of view such appreciation is essential.

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## 3.5 • Understanding Segregation in the Metropolitan Area of Amsterdam

*Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf*

### **Introduction**

A few years ago, in a paper entitled “The changing distribution of incomes in Dutch cities: myth and reality” (Musterd and Ostendorf 1998) we analyzed the development of segregation within the city of Amsterdam and – in a second phase – also analyzed the segregation between Amsterdam and the remaining part of the metropolitan area. We dealt with several dimensions of segregation. Among our findings:

- Segregation with respect to income is lower than with respect to ethnicity and even with respect to age; this holds true within Amsterdam as well as between Amsterdam and the remaining part of the metropolitan area;
- Segregation with respect to income is not really increasing, while segregation with respect to ethnicity and type of household appeared to be becoming more pronounced between Amsterdam and the remaining part of the metropolitan area.

These findings appeared to be quite different from the assumptions in the ongoing political debate in the Netherlands. Therefore, the results were even more critically approached than usual. Two types of comments were given. These were related not to our theoretical interpretation but to the empirical data. The first refers to the application of data that were predominantly collected at the municipal level; no integrated regional analysis could be performed at that time. Secondly, a lack of data only allowed for the presentation of some preliminary results.

These comments encouraged us to try to extend and improve the analysis. Therefore, in this contribution we will analyse the socio-demographic, socio-cultural and socio-economic segregation of the population within the entire metropolitan area of Amsterdam, and present recent information on these spatial inequalities. We will make an effort to interpret the dynamics that are encountered, referring to theoretical debates that have been developing over the past decades. In Section 2, we will elaborate on the dimensions of segregation that appear to be recurring and why; we will also pay special attention to the question at what geographical level(s) segregation should be addressed. In Section 3, the focus will be on the theoretical debate about the conditions for segregation. Old and new theoretical considerations will be briefly discussed and theoretically linked to the segregation processes. Both sections 2 and 3 will focus

on the segregation issue from an international perspective. In Section 4, we will present empirical data on segregation. We will leave the international scope and focus on the analysis of segregation in the metropolitan area of Amsterdam. Finally, in Section 5, we will present some conclusions.

### **Segregation: Dimensions and Geographic Scale**

A substantial share of the urban social change debate consists of views on and visions regarding spatial inequality. Extreme forms have been addressed, such as the heritage of the apartheid regimes in South African cities (Christopher 1994) and the persistent separation of Protestants and Catholics in Belfast and other cities in Northern Ireland (Boal 1998), the residential isolation of the poor from the rich in mega-cities, such as São Paulo, Brazil, and the processes of estrangement and exclusion that can be found in hyper-ghettos in American cities (Massey and Denton 1993).

However, much more moderate forms of inequality have also been recurrently addressed; and this resulted in the “segregation issue” being put high on political agendas. Studies with such titles as “Divided cities” (Fainstein et al 1992) and “Towards undivided cities” (Musterd et al 1999) reveal that the socio-spatial inequality issue exists in cities in states with and without a liberal regime and with or without institutionalized apartheid histories. Among these states are Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and France.

The fact that spatial inequality is on the agenda is without doubt related to the immigration processes that occurred over the past four decades with regard to these countries (and several other rich Western countries). They have experienced the immigration of a large number of people originating from various countries. Mediterranean, Asian, or African labor migrants and their families, economic refugees, political refugees, and inhabitants of former colonies were the dominant contributors to these flows. These influxes were not without impact on the respective housing markets, labor markets, and social relations in cities in the countries of destination. Resentment developed, especially where the immigration process was relatively sudden and voluminous. The inequality issue became a socio-cultural, or even ethnic, segregation issue.

The social inequality debate was not confined to socio-cultural differences, though. Because of a serious concern about social polarization in urban societies – or perhaps in order to address the ethnic issue indirectly – the socio-economic dimension of spatial inequality was also given a high position on political agendas, particularly in countries with a strong social democratic tradition. Politicians’ fear that social ghettos would develop seems to have been the driving force.

Thus, two dimensions of segregation received and still receive frequent attention. However, efforts to understand the spatial distributions of the urban population cannot be successful without also considering the socio-demographic inequality dimension. In fact, perhaps the best strategy to understand segregation processes is to focus the attention on the multidimensional lifestyle differentiation, in which elements of

people's socio-economic, demographic and socio-cultural positions are considered simultaneously. Unfortunately, data combining these three dimensions are hard to obtain. However, in this contribution we will also look at socio-demographic segregation.

The political attention to socio-cultural and socio-economic segregation is – as said – clearly related to integration objectives. Most politicians desire the rapid integration of those who are not yet entirely integrated into urban society. That is, after politicians became aware that the immigration processes we referred to had to be regarded as events with a permanent character (also in the sense that many immigrants would permanently remain in the country of destination), they tended to formulate various forms of integration policies. The fear that cultural – and political – “worlds apart” would develop was often the impetus behind their policy aims.

These integration objectives and associated social participation objectives were also the vehicles to formulate policies aimed at improving the conditions of the less well-off socio-economic sections of urban society. Specific aims to reduce social polarization and to integrate the poor into the rich society were formulated.

In the integration efforts in both the socio-cultural and socio-economic domains, special attention is given to the spatial dimension, since many believe that it is specifically spatial segregation that reduces the opportunities to integrate into and fully participate in society. It is assumed that the spatial concentration of a certain cultural group, or the spatial concentration of poor inhabitants in certain districts of the metropolitan area, will reduce the opportunities to realize the upward social mobility of those individuals who live in these concentrations. The assumption is that a neighborhood effect exists, which can have a negative impact on the participation of inhabitants in society.

As far as the geographical scale is concerned, it may be argued that a metropolitan level seems to be the most appropriate one on which to present the various dimensions of segregation, since housing markets and labor markets operate on that level. Spatial sorting processes, the outcomes of choices and constraints, occur at that scale. In all contexts where suburbanization processes have developed, segregation has to be measured at the metropolitan level. However, there may be good reasons not to focus on that scale only. Sometimes data are not available for the complete metropolitan region, but only for a part, such as the central city. It can also be interesting to find out if the real differences are between the central city and the suburbs, or whether there are real differences within these zones too. This situation occurs in metropolitan areas that have experienced substantial gentrification processes. Then, the inner city will be characterized by districts that are inhabited by the relatively better off, and by districts which are characterized by predominance of the relatively poor, not seldom immigrant households. Also, when the immigrant flows tend to be directed toward the central city of a metropolitan area, and the central city is still attractive for other categories of households (e.g. students, urban-oriented small households, etc.), a certain duality may develop within the central city. In such situations it makes sense to focus attention on the differentiation within the inner city, too.

With regard to suburban areas, similar developments may occur. Suburban areas



are not homogeneous per se. In Europe, several examples can be given of planned new town developments in which substantial numbers of dwellings were built in suburban environments intended for households with a low and or moderate income. These somewhat poorer areas contrast with luxury residential districts elsewhere in the suburban environment. By implication, the internal differentiation within the suburban zones may be large as well. Thus, in these contexts, it would also make sense to study the level of segregation within the suburbs. In situations in which the central city collects all poor households and the suburban area the better off ones, the metropolitan level is the one to consider; in situations in which there is substantial differentiation within the central city because of gentrification processes (these situations can be found in many cities all over the world) and/or within suburban areas (in many European cities), the analysis of segregation within each of the areas also makes sense. In the Netherlands, the latter situation can be found (Musterd and Ostendorf 1991; Meulenbelt 1997). Significant levels of socio-cultural and socio-economic segregation can be found both in the central city and in the suburban zones. Since the overall distribution has resulted in a relative concentration (but not exclusively) of low-income households and immigrant households in the central cities, many segregation studies carried out in the Netherlands have focused on the differentiation within the central city.

However, since some politicians persist in their ideas that all urban problems (poverty, concentrations of insufficiently integrated immigrants, etc.) accumulate in the central cities and hardly anywhere else, and since empirical criticism of intra-municipal analyses of socio-economic and socio-cultural inequality is also persistent, we will address the segregation issue in this contribution at the metropolitan level. We will present the results at that level, but will also refer to the levels of inequality found at the intra-municipal, central city level.

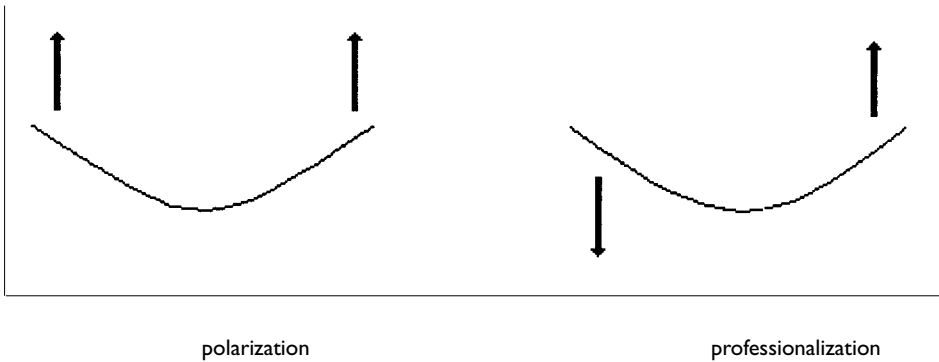
## Conditions for Segregation

There are multiple conditions that relate to segregation. The economic structure of a city and the kind of restructuring that is going on are regarded as being among the most powerful forces behind the social fragmentation and integration in the urban realm. But welfare state regimes and the occurring changes in these areas are also thought to be important. Other, related factors are frequently mentioned as well, such as the cultural dimensions, the historically grown and place-specific structures and the reinforcing effect of segregation itself. In this section, we will briefly refer to these conditions and link them to the expectations with regard to segregation in the Amsterdam metropolitan region.

Over the past decade, global economic restructuring has led to an increase of interconnectedness and internationalization of firms and economic processes, which is expressed in the rapid growth of flows of people, money and goods around the world. Among the characteristics of these changes are, on the one hand, a growth of the demand for services and thus of service jobs, for which often high-skilled labor is required. But on the other hand the global economic restructuring process brings un-

employment as well as a demand for low-skilled or unskilled jobs. The final result of the restructuring process is therefore an increase of social inequality and a polarized urban social structure (Sassen 1991). The social divisions are reflected in sharper socio-economic and ethnic spatial patterns. The expected outcomes of the dynamics are separate residential concentrations of wealthy people in gated communities and of poorer households in ghetto-like neighborhoods, and ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods.

However, Sassen's thesis that global restructuring creates social polarization (and, subsequently, social and ethnic spatial inequality,) has been strongly criticized. Several authors, in fact, did not find increasing polarization, but professionalization instead (Hamnett 1994). Scheme 1 shows an example of the theoretical difference between a polarization and a professionalization process. Professionalization was found by Hamnett to be the dominant trend in the Dutch Randstad. If professionalization is the dominant process, we must hypothesize that socio-spatial inequality will not necessarily increase because of global economic restructuring. We assume this situation fits the Dutch case.



Scheme 1. Theoretical social distributions

Others have argued that restructuring does not have to result in social polarization but instead produces mismatches (perhaps only temporary ones) between the demand and supply of labor. Subsequently, that could result in social polarization between the working poor and the working rich, and also in a contrast between the employed and the unemployed, the included versus the excluded. The extent to which the unemployed are really excluded also depends on other factors, notably the welfare regime. The Netherlands seems to have experienced mismatches which did not result in polarization.

However, other dimensions are also relevant. Several scholars have pointed out the differences in success (in society) of various categories of the population. Burgers and Musterd (2001) referred to the sociologist Waldinger, who wondered why Afro-Americans who live in the inner cities of American cities are often unemployed, while His-

panics and Asians with a similar combination of educational level and geographical location are not. He concludes that the mix of their cultural capital and the vacancies in the labor market also determines the position of immigrants in the labor market when they arrive in the country and city of destination. That may also partly explain the different employment position of some immigrant categories in the Netherlands.

Another important condition for segregation is the organization of the welfare state. Esping-Andersen (1990) shows that different types of welfare states have different labor market structures and experience different levels of participation in the labor market. Apparently, the global economy does not dictate the structure or the participation rate in the labor markets of the advanced economies. Therefore, the social consequences of globalization differ according to differences in institutional contexts. Some countries have developed very extensive welfare systems. Frequently, a substantial redistribution of the bargaining power was established. Progressive income taxes, the development of minimum wage levels, the provision of benefits in situations of old age, illness, unemployment and disability, systems of redistributing the costs and benefits in the sphere of housing (brick and mortar subsidies, individual rent subsidies) – all of these types of state involvement were included as part of the system of care in many countries.

Many support the idea that there is a relation between the extent to which the welfare states have developed their social security and welfare systems and the levels of social polarization, socio-spatial segregation and social exclusion in urban areas. In general, there is a belief that well-developed welfare states have thus far been largely successful in shielding certain population categories from social deprivation and isolation. The reduction of polarization is obvious when welfare provisions imply financial redistribution. We hypothesize that the Dutch welfare state – which is a combination of the corporatist model and the social democratic model – has resulted in substantial reductions of inequality and has also helped to weaken the relation between people's position in terms of income, housing and employment. Together that will also have contributed to reducing socio- and ethnic spatial inequality.

Apart from economic, cultural, and welfare state factors that affect social (ethnic and perhaps also lifestyle) divisions, we must also point at the historically grown social, cultural, economic, institutional and physical structures that impact upon the divisions discussed here. Since globalization processes tend to homogenize the world to some extent, and accessibility becomes a less important factor in location decisions from that point of view, the relatively unique, historically grown place-specific characteristics will become relatively more important factors in location decisions of people and firms. Economic and social development may be predominantly triggered by these place-specific social, cultural, economic, and political structures, which to some extent will be interrelated and result in fairly unique “local models” (e.g. the now famous “Dutch polder model” which includes a model of governance in which consensus-building is extremely important). Consequently, the “place-specificity” thesis can be interpreted as a divergence thesis. Each location, each city will show its own place-specific characteristics and may be able to use these characteristics to attract certain

economic activities. The differentiating effects of local specificity may also result in dissimilar social structures. We estimate that the “culture of equality” that seems to characterize the Netherlands as it developed after the Second World War, will again have helped to reduce spatial inequality.

One factor related to the idea that historical structures are relevant is the assumption that socio-spatial or ethnic segregation patterns of the population that were developed in the past are a potential cause of ongoing social problems of individual households in cities. However, much thinking seems to be inspired by images and perceptions that originate from specific but relatively extreme cases (i.e. certain cities in the US) where social polarization and social and ethnic segregation have reached very high levels. In those circumstances, segregation may easily become a factor in its own right. However, as stated earlier, we have to bear in mind that the ethnic and socio-economic spatial segregation of the population in US cities is generally more rigid than that of many other Western cities, particularly European ones. Although the continental European so-called redistributing welfare states – which are different in social, political, and ethnic-cultural terms as well – have produced cities that are only moderately segregated in the first place, it is questionable whether these moderately segregated areas have any negative effect on social integration or exclusion processes at all. Western countries should not be treated as though they were similar. Of course, this applies to the states within Europe as well. Scarce information on neighborhood effects in Amsterdam, based on empirical research, leads to serious doubts (Ostendorf et al 2001).

What can be learned from this elaboration is that social (and ethnic or other) inequality is not the inevitable result of globalization and economic restructuring. In some places it is, in others it is not. Local conditions, both institutional and historically grown, as well as “cultural” factors may produce fairly different social inequality situations and a variety of socio-spatial patterns in cities. With regard to the Netherlands, and particularly with regard to Dutch cities, based on earlier studies as well as on the theoretical exercise we presented, we hypothesize that the segregation levels in Dutch metropolitan regions such as Amsterdam will not be very large, nor will segregation be increasing rapidly. In the section to follow, we will present some analyses that may support our hypothesis.

### **Segregation at the Metropolitan Level: Some Facts**

Segregation can be expressed through indices (measures) and via maps. We will use both. An index forms a good basis for comparison, but does not reveal the spatial pattern; above we discussed the importance of spatial patterns, especially with respect to the uniform or heterogeneous character of urban and suburban areas. While there are many types of indices that can be applied to express inequality or unevenness, the most commonly used one is the index of dissimilarity (ID), that is, the percentage of the category that has to move to another neighborhood in order to reach equal distribution (i.e. no segregation) of the category over the area under study. Thus, the ID ex-

presses the spatial inequality of the distribution of a population category relative to another population category and runs from 0 (no segregation) to 100 (absolute segregation). If the second population category consists of the “rest of the population” (the “other”), the index is labeled index of segregation (IS). To present a frame of reference, we provide the average IS of blacks versus the rest in seven US cities (Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Baltimore, Miami). In 1980, the IS turned out to be 81. The calculation was based on census tracts data (Massey and Denton 1993).

Maps can also be constructed in various ways. Absolute figures, various relative figures, dynamics and many other things may be shown. If thematic maps are presented the spatial scale is of great importance. We will mainly present maps in which we focus on the metropolitan area and use data at the municipal level, except for the central city. If data are available for urban districts (“boroughs”) within the central city, we will use these urban district data and put them in one data file together with the municipal data of surrounding municipalities within the same metropolitan area. The average size of the boroughs is approximately the same as the average size of surrounding municipalities. In each map we will present the recent process (relative change), the recent pattern (the position of a spatial unit relative to the entire metropolitan area) and – if helpful – some additional information.

The indices of segregation that could be calculated for Amsterdam for each of the three dimensions we have discussed, while applying the combined municipal and borough data, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Segregation index for the metropolitan area of Amsterdam; urban districts within Amsterdam, municipalities in the rest of the region, per year

	1994	1996	1997	1999	2000
<i>Socio-cultural</i>					
Immigrants /				28	27
Turks and Moroccans	40	42	42	42	
<i>Socio-demographic</i>					
Single-person household	24	25			
Couple without children <18 yr.	15	15			
Couple with children <18 yr.	18	18			
Age 0-19	12	12	12	12	
Age 20-40	13	12	12	12	
Age 40-64	7	6	6	6	
Age 65+	16	16	16	16	
<i>Socio-economic</i>					
Lowest quintile	6	7			
Highest quintile	23	22			

The general messages to be gathered from the table above are firstly, the relative stability of the spatial inequality at the metropolitan level and secondly, the relatively moderate or even low levels of segregation. The highest levels of segregation occur with regard to the socio-cultural dimension. Moderate to low levels of segregation occur in the socio-demographic domain. In metropolitan Amsterdam, single-person households are the most likely to live a segregated existence. Moderate levels are also present in the socio-economic spheres, where the better-off households appear to be more separated from the rest than, say, the less well-off households. The less well-off households are already highly mixed with other households, as is corroborated by other studies (Ostendorf et al 2001), but nonetheless the Dutch Big City Policy aims to help these lower-income categories by providing housing in “mixed” neighborhoods.

In the following sections, we will discuss these findings in some detail and present additional information. Where possible, comparable information with regard to other Dutch cities will also be provided.

### *Socio-Cultural Inequality*

Over the past four decades, Dutch cities – with Amsterdam leading the way – have experienced a rapid and voluminous influx of immigrants from various origins. By 1998, some 44% of the Amsterdam population could be labeled first, second or third generation immigrants (if immigrants from industrialized countries are excluded, the figure is 34%). Guest workers dominated the immigration figures during the 1960s and 1970s. The first settled in lodging houses in the inner city, followed by areas where the share of private rental housing is high. Today the majority of so-called ethnic immigrants, currently including post-colonial immigrants and asylum seekers, have gained access to the social housing, mostly in post-war neighborhoods.

The shifting pattern from the core of the city to the newer neighborhoods and from private to public housing has been extensively dealt with in earlier work by the authors (Musterd and Ostendorf 1996). While the patterns have changed enormously over the past three decades, the IS scores have remained more or less constant. Thus, the various processes never resulted in large ethnic concentrations. Recent micro-level research aimed at debunking the idea of ethnic ghettos in Amsterdam used the data of 18,000 postcode areas to show that there are many small so-called ethnic concentration areas. Clear concentrations (i.e. four standard deviations above the mean and showing at least 1% of the total population in that category) of Turkish and of Moroccan inhabitants in Amsterdam were indeed found (only partially overlapping with each other), but in 1999, these concentrations did not reveal any noticeable dominance. The share of Turks in the Turkish concentration areas did not surpass 21%. The share of Moroccans in Moroccan concentration areas never surpassed 29%. Furthermore, only a third of all Turks and Moroccans lived in such concentrations (Deurloo and Musterd 2001). Thus, the majority of the population in ethnic concentrations consists of other people, and the majority of the category involved lives elsewhere. These findings are in accordance with the moderate level of segregation we found. Within the city of Amsterdam,

the IS for Turks and Moroccans (measured at the neighborhood level) is 42. That figure does not differ from the stable figure of 42 at the metropolitan level, as shown in Table 1. The fact that there are no growing spatial concentrations (other than can be ascribed to the total rise of the share in the metropolitan population) supports the idea that the spatial processes we discussed may be regarded as an expression of the upward social mobility of the population category involved. The shifts they experienced went hand in hand with an improvement of their housing situation, especially with regard to the quality of the dwellings. We assume that the residential careers of at least part of these immigrants will already have extended to the suburbs as well. The recent increase of immigrants of non-Dutch origin in suburban municipalities such as Almere and Diemen is larger than that of Amsterdam. The development of the share of non-Dutch in the population of the central city of the metropolitan area, as shown in Figure 1, also suggests some convergence between city (still housing the majority of the non-Dutch) and suburbs as far as the socio-cultural dimension is concerned.



Figure 1. Change (in percent) in the proportion of non-Dutch residents in the four metropolitan areas, 1989-1999 (1989 year of reference)

As is shown, similar processes have occurred in the other metropolitan areas (Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht). We must add, however, that the reduction of the share of non-Dutch in the central cities must be partially ascribed to the fact that many people succeed in obtaining Dutch nationality. However, this phenomenon in itself is an expression of cultural integration.

### *Socio-Demographic Inequality*

The demographic structure of the metropolitan area also does not reveal rigid cleavages between population and household categories. There are differences concerning the locations of various categories, but again these are not absolute. Figure 2, which shows the share of single-person households, provides an example of that argument.

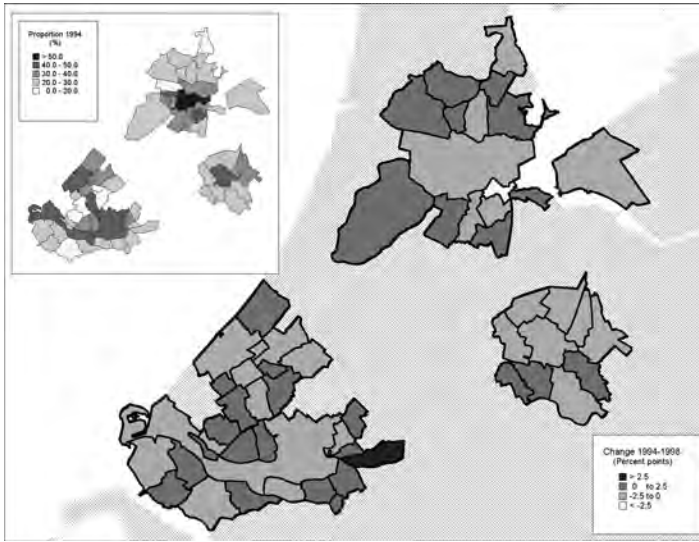


Figure 2.  
Change (in percent) in the proportion of single-person households per municipality or borough in the four metropolitan areas, 1994–1998 (comparison at the local level; 1994 including boroughs year of reference)

Although there are clear concentration areas, such as the inner city and adjacent neighborhoods in Amsterdam, where the share of single-person households reaches levels of almost 70%, there are also many other areas that reach substantial percentages. The process of individualization has caused the share of single-person households to increase rapidly everywhere. This is revealing a more general shift in the household composition. Together this has contributed to the overall moderate level of segregation, as is expressed by the moderate IS scores.

Also, the IS scores per age category suggest only minor differences between districts or municipalities within the metropolitan areas as far as age is concerned. There are some remarkable patterns, however (Figure 3).

First, we can see that there is some development as far as the share of people aged 0-19 and people aged 65+ in the various metropolitan area districts is concerned. Among other things, an association with the evolving residential pattern of immigrant settlement can be seen. The shift of immigrants in Amsterdam towards the post-war areas in the western sections of the city runs parallel with an increase in the area's share of the children. It is a well-known fact that the birth rate of immigrants is still much higher than that of the autochthones. The increase in the proportion of young people in these areas obviously coincides with a similar reduction in former relative concentrations elsewhere in the metropolitan area. In addition, Dutch families are scarce in the city; most of them live in suburbs. Coinciding with this is the fact that the "student" cities such as Utrecht and Amsterdam have a low population of 0-19 year-olds and relatively few elderly people, especially compared to The Hague and Rotterdam. The share of single-person households, however, does not seem to vary much. The proportion of older people (65+) in the central cities seems to indicate that the bigger cities are less appealing to old people. Central cities have become more the domain of the young and of immigrants, while Dutch families and older people seem to avoid the city as a place to live.



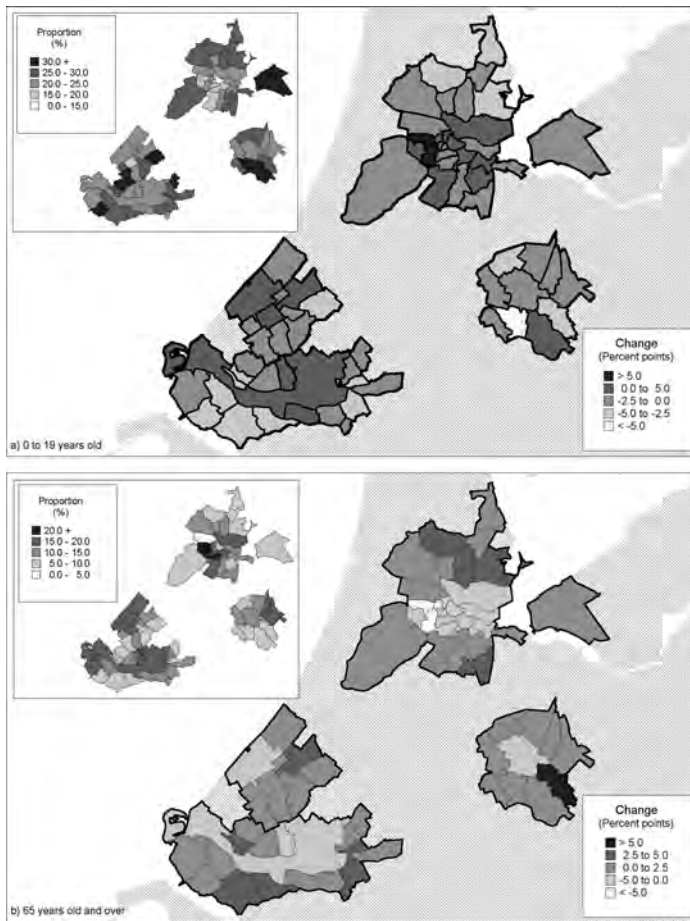


Figure 3. Change (in percent) in the proportion of (a) 0- to 19-year-olds and (b) those 65 or above per municipality or borough of the four metropolitan areas, 1989-1999 (1989 year of reference)

### *Socio-Economic Inequality*

The socio-economic dimension is often regarded as the most important one. Governments and politicians tend to put the improvement of these socio-economic indices at the top of their agendas. In some contexts, their aim is also to reduce social inequality and/or socio-spatial inequality. There is a fairly widespread notion that social polarization as well as the spatial expression of that process are increasing steadily. These processes would imply that the central city of the metropolitan area is losing ground in the sense that it is becoming less and less affluent, while the surrounding municipalities are getting richer and richer. The central city might also experience increased levels of inequality because of gentrification processes that develop parallel to impoverishment. These hypotheses have resulted from discussions about increasing polarization caused by economic restructuring processes. The biggest worry is that the resulting sharper segregated structure will have negative effects in terms of upward social mobility opportunities. Living in a concentration of poor people might result in

too many negative examples and might prevent people from getting a job because of stigmatization of the area that is involved or because of negative socialization processes.

But, can these hypotheses be supported with empirical data about Dutch metropolitan areas such as Amsterdam? Several contradictory processes influence the social and spatial outcomes. We have already noticed that immigrants from non-industrialized countries tend to settle in the larger cities; we can add to that the fact that in the Dutch urban situation those who finish their educations, and get a job and are beginning to set up a family and/or a household frequently have to look elsewhere for opportunities, generally outside the central city and in surrounding suburbs. We also mentioned the gentrification processes that result in the upgrading of certain urbanized neighborhoods in the city. These processes – suburbanization, immigration, and gentrification – may result in an increase of socio-spatial segregation both at the metropolitan level and within the central city. Simultaneously, however, the Netherlands is well-known for its safety nets and redistribution policy measures, and for reducing social inequality in general; these may well have had the desired counter-balancing effects. Furthermore, central cities have some very special characteristics that clearly fit the requirements of today’s economic development. Dutch central cities, especially those with only a modest history of manufacturing (such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague) but with a rich history in trade, traffic and culture, are well suited for the new consumption- and trade-oriented economic activities (culture and service related industries, for example). That may have brought new activities to the central cities, with all kinds of resulting positive effects.

In short, there are positive and negative forces that contribute to the socio-spatial composition of the city and the metropolitan area. That is sufficient reason to take a closer look at the actual empirical data. The IS data of Table 1 reveal that in Amsterdam the poor are not spatially isolated; neither are the rich, although some spatial segregation is associated with the relatively higher scores. If we study the maps of social inequality (Figure 4), the overall picture is that of a relatively poor central city and a relatively rich surrounding suburban area.

Table 2. Difference between the average total income per earner of the population of the central city and of the urban region (minus central city), 1974-1998

	1974	1984	1989	1994	1996	1998
Amsterdam	-15.8%	-16.7%	-15.7%	-18.8%	-18.7%	-16.8%
Rotterdam	-10.1%	-15.9%	-15.5%	-18.2%	-17.1%	-16.4%
Den Haag	-10.3%	-11.7%	-11.2%	-11.7%	-16.0%	-14.2%
Utrecht	-13.2%	-17.2%	-18.9%	-21.0%	-18.9%	-18.1%

Source: CBS, adapted by the authors

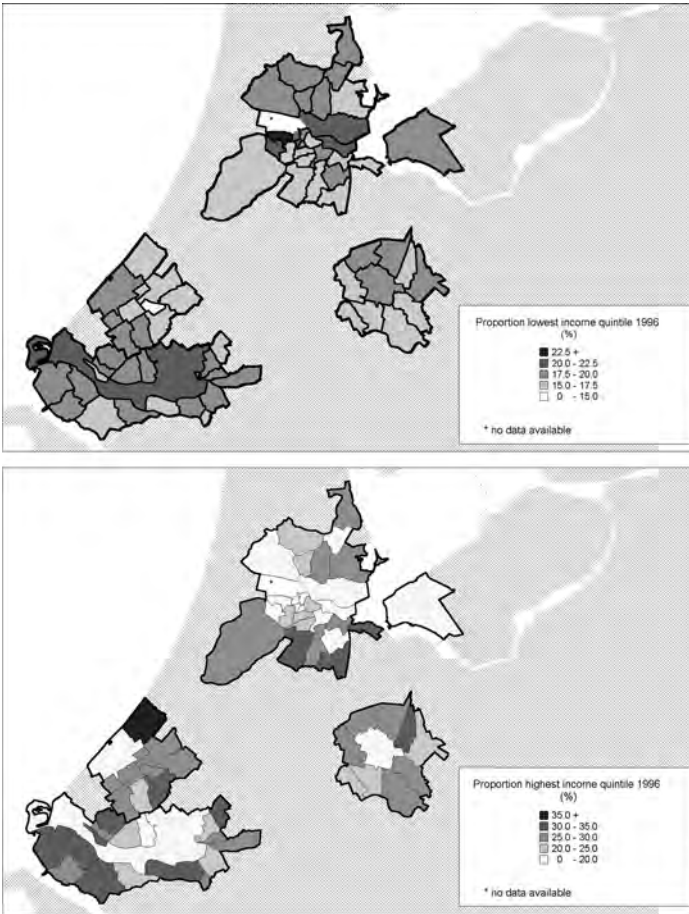


Figure 4.  
Proportion of  
income earners  
belonging to the (a)  
lowest and (b)  
highest income  
quintiles

However, the process that is occurring cannot be labeled as a general increase of socio-spatial inequality or as an impoverishment of the inner city. An important factor in this regard is which years are compared. All structural and cyclical dynamics will be reflected in the relative social positions at a certain point in time. Therefore, if we compare 1989 with 1998 the process may generally be regarded as one of a losing city and winning suburbs (measured in terms of disposable income); but if we compare 1994 with 1998 we would be talking about a winning city and losing suburbs. Table 2 provides information about the city-suburb differences in terms of disposable incomes in the metropolitan areas of Amsterdam and the other cities over a longer period of time. The negative position of the central city, which developed during the large waves of suburbanization of the 1960s and 1970s, has remained relatively stable since, but has actually been showing some recovery in recent years. That recovery parallels the rapid reduction of unemployment levels of the central city (in Amsterdam, the figure was only 6% in 1999, as opposed to 12% in 1996) and also the booming economy around the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The conclusion must be that the central cities in the Netherlands are not continuously losing their position. Moreover, there is another interesting phenomenon: the separation of the poor from other income categories is only modest, as the IS in Table 1 shows. Moreover, this will be a function of moderate social inequality in general. The moderate spatial separation of the poor can be illustrated in various ways. One way is to take a closer look at the income distributions of the poorest urban districts of the city (boroughs). In Figure 5, recent data are presented. It is clear that almost similar shares of households with incomes in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> income quintiles accompany the lowest (1<sup>st</sup>) income quintile.

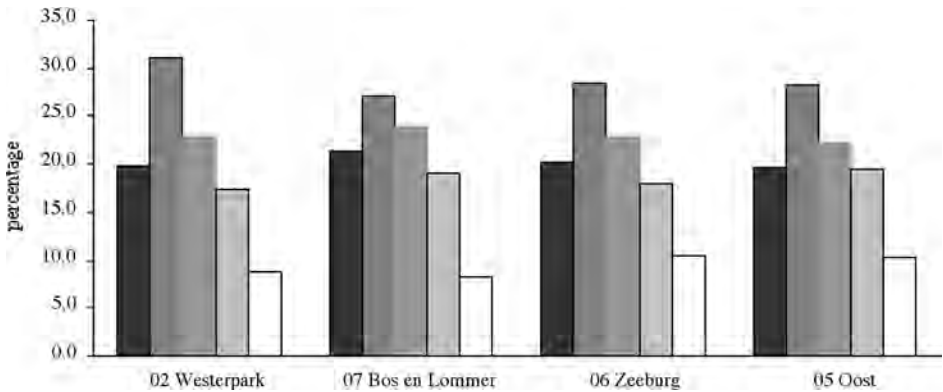


Figure 5. Income distribution of the four poorest urban districts (boroughs) of Amsterdam (with the lowest share in the fourth and fifth income quintile categories), 1998

In earlier research, we also used a narrower definition of “poor” people. In a representative sample of the Amsterdam population, we found that only 4.5% of the population 18 years and older could be labeled as under-educated, unemployed without a partner with a job. There turned out to be only very few small pockets of poverty and none of these had more than 20% levels of poverty (Ostendorf et al 2001).

## Conclusion

Over the past decade – and certainly over the past few years – there was clearly what may be called a significant increase in attention paid to the problems related to segregation and inequality. Concepts such as socio-spatial segregation, urban underclass, social exclusion, social polarization, and deprivation became fashionable. However, we should not forget that many comments and texts are hardly more than an expression of fear and a reflection of the predominant discourse that may well conceal a lack of understanding. In the Netherlands, scientists and politicians have for some decades now expressed the fact that they fear future increases in ethnic and socio-economic segregation.

Dutch research projects, however, repeatedly produce empirical data on the development of segregation patterns. The stability of the segregation levels continues to be revealed. Sometimes the spatial picture appears to be changing, but the level of segregation hardly ever does. It appears to be persistently low. Most of the analyses, however, were aimed at understanding segregation at the local level of central cities in metropolitan areas. In this paper we have presented a closer examination of new regional data on spatial inequality by extending the analysis from the city to the entire metropolitan region, and by looking at all three dimensions of social segregation in order to find out to what extent this could result in new findings. But like earlier research we found that the level of segregation in Dutch metropolitan regions remains moderate and does not appear to be increasing. Of the three dimensions, socio-economic segregation is the lowest, while socio-cultural segregation is the highest. The segregation of people with low incomes is especially low; much lower than the segregation of people with higher incomes. This finding again causes doubts regarding the strategy of the Big City Policy in the Netherlands, which is intended to help lower income categories by offering housing in “mixed” neighborhoods, because they apparently to a large degree already live in “mixed” neighborhoods.

Thus, there is reason to reduce the level of rhetoric related to the scientific and societal debates regarding segregation. Amsterdam, and the other cities and their metropolitan areas, are still urban areas with relatively moderate levels of ethnic, demographic, and social segregation. Although there are obvious differences between districts and areas within the metropolitan area, the overall picture is one of moderate levels of ethnic, demographic, and social inequalities, which is reflected in equally moderate spatial inequalities. State intervention and redistribution, moderate social inequality in general and relatively successful integration processes have apparently balanced out the counterforces of the economic restructuring, gentrification, and suburbanization processes. Welfare state characteristics and local history may be regarded as the most important factors behind these results. More market involvement in an increasing number of domains will probably result in somewhat sharper divisions once the ethnic, household, and social inequality also increases. But thus far, this has not happened.

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## 3.6 • The Metropolitan Population

### *Origin and Mobility*

Cees Cortie

#### **Abstract**

Cities are known for their continuously changing groups of residents. Some people spend their entire lives in the same neighborhood. Others settle there, relocate within the neighborhood and then move away. All of the residents are deeply concerned with their residential environment to match their social careers with respect to both economic and cultural characteristics, which are closely related to the origins of the residents. This established ecological vision underlies the present study about the mobility of eight population categories in the Amsterdam region between 1988 and 2000. The results correspond largely with the ideas of Burgess et al, although Amsterdam is neither a classic example of a liberal capitalist city nor is it in a period of industrialization. The study also demonstrates that examining only the central city (without the suburbs) and comparing distribution patterns over time leads upward mobility to be seriously underestimated.

#### **Introduction**

Like all cities with a wealth of international relations, Amsterdam attracts people every year from all corners of the world in search of an existence and a suitable place to live. They come from very different origins and consequently differ with respect to their opportunities and needs. Japanese and German managers seconded by their firms for a few years and refugees from Somalia and spouses from Morocco are all seeking a place in the Amsterdam arena. In addition, young Dutch people move here to complete their educations and find their first jobs, partners and homes. Amsterdam is thus a specific environment for those of various origins to enrich their lives over a certain period. MacKenzie (1926) labeled these long-term processes as mobility rather than fluidity, which denotes the daily pattern of activities. Interest in this subject is longstanding and is based on the classic principle established in *The Growth of the City*: “In the expansion of the city a process of distribution takes place which sifts and sorts and relocates individuals and groups by residence and occupation.” In this renowned research proposal, Burgess (1925) expressed ideas that have retained their value because they call attention to important relations between the characteristics of new and



longstanding residents and their residential environment. Some seventy years later, Short (1996, 180) summarized them as follows:

Most of the migrants to the city had little money and limited resources. Their first move was to the inner city, where the cheapest housing could be found. As they gained a firmer foothold in the urban economy they moved further out to the more expensive housing. ... The older-established residential groups lived further out while the more recent arrivals have the poorest housing in the city. This is still a useful generalization through which to understand the relationship between housing and length of residence by social group for many cities in the world. It is not a universal model. It applies to cities with poor migrant groups and a private housing market in which housing quality is a function of income.

According to this interpretation, Burgess's ideas do not really apply to cities like Amsterdam, where the private housing market is not dominant. Whether this is indeed the case remains to be seen.

The scope of this analysis has been deliberately expanded beyond migrants from less developed regions. This decision arises not only from social considerations that figure in urban development. In world capitals like Amsterdam, this is probably increasingly true, considering the growth of international relations. But there is also an academic reason. Virtually no systematic research is available on environments where people settle and relocation patterns to other residential environments by people from diverse cultural origins. To what extent are specific paths or types of spatial mobility identifiable? Can types be distilled from the cultural origins of the migrants, who are helpful to understand these paths? Settlement and the subsequent moves should obviously be analyzed as processes, rather than as consecutive situations. "No study of expansion (of the city) as a process has yet been made..." (Burgess 1925). Three quarters of a century later, the majority of these studies still consists of descriptions of patterns of spatial disadvantage of ethnic groups, expressed largely through segregation indexes.

Some of the aforementioned relations merit a more detailed description. First, the social-economic position of families was directly linked with the quality of the neighborhood where they lived. Following upward socio-economic mobility, they usually move to newer, more attractive residential surroundings. In the highly industrialized United States from the early twentieth century onward, this entailed an exodus from the congested industrial areas and overcrowded residential areas to the more peaceful, spacious suburbs. This image is now eroding in two respects. First, many of the residents and units moving out are no longer traditional families with children. Second, many inner cities are no longer busy production centers and have been partially transformed into residential and consumption areas since deindustrialization. The trek of inhabitants from one residential environment to another need not result from rising affluence alone. Cultural differences that arise through origins may come into play as well. Walter Firey (1945), for example, demonstrated the significance of culture for the elite in maintaining Beacon Hill in Boston, a neighborhood that the upper ten consid-

er the embodiment of this city's great English tradition. Even then, not all population categories regarded the suburbs as the Promised Land in the hierarchy of residential environments.

Although Firey criticized the Chicago School's overly economic approach, they did however distinguish residential environments according to cultural differences. These districts were largely named after the origins of their residents: Little Italy, Little Sicily, Ghetto, Greektown, Chinatown. Such neighborhoods often served as gateways where newcomers found support among their countrymen. This made the transition easier and helped them find provisional accommodations and jobs. These residential environments were rather closed societies with specific local characteristics. This idea of a closed society of poorly educated immigrants exercising internal social control is not very popular among politicians and planners in the Netherlands or among their counterparts in other modern countries, contrary to the district idea supported for the native lower classes and upper middle-class. Burgess, however, considered the ghetto of German Jews as the stepping-stone to Germany and on to the Promised Land beyond, culminating in the suburbs. Upward socio-economic mobility required erasing cultural differences to make way for the culture of the new country. This process may span one or several generations, while the need for a suitable residential environment depends on the stage of one's life as well.

The question also arises as to whether in the current global society certain cultural differences can persist without jeopardizing socio-economic advancement. At any rate, English, as the dominant world language, increasingly controls communication, although other cultural attributes (e.g. music, dance, architecture, cooking) can even be beneficial. The next question is whether different cultural domains can emerge in the urban structure as well. The emancipation of primarily young, upwardly mobile professionals (yuppies), for example, revived the charm of living in "authentic" city districts for certain groups with high incomes (Cortie and Van de Ven 1981), and the affluent have a discerning appreciation of posh districts and suburbs (De Wijs-Mulkens 1999).

Social geographers can thus explore social mobility in a city from at least two angles. While the significance of socio-economic position is the primary focus, cultural attributes are relevant as well.

In and around Amsterdam, there are very few residential environments associated solely with the origins or cultural background of their residents. Immigration numbers were not high enough, and the newcomers were just too similar to those already settled there. There is no Little Friesland or Little East Indies, and Chinatown covers barely one hundred square meters while the Jewish Quarter did not survive World War II. The images are more stereotypical: the working-class North, the posh South, the gentrified city center and the Bijlmer ghetto.

The socio-economic approach does enable a clear classification of residential areas and residents. The procedure, which I will describe briefly, basically entails exploring the changing relations among residents and residential environments based on relocation trends; it is known as voting with one's feet. The following questions will be an-

swered and will concern both the origins of the residents and the nature and attractiveness of their residential environments.

- How likely are migrants of different origins to settle in certain types of residential environments? To which types do they subsequently relocate?
- In what measure do their patterns of settlement and subsequent relocations indicate upward social-economic mobility among the different population groups?
- Does such upward mobility concern specific types according to their stage in life?
- What kind of changes emerge during the investigation period?

All the empirical material comes from O+S Amsterdam (the Amsterdam Bureau for Research and Statistics) and the CBS (National Bureau of Statistics).

## **The Amsterdam Context**

Amsterdam has long consisted of attractive and less attractive residential areas (Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars and Wagenaar 1985). This distribution is based on longstanding ecological principles: attractive residential districts are as far away as possible from activities that cause pollution, danger and noise. In Amsterdam these areas were primarily the eastern and western dockyards and sites across the IJ (North). Generally, most of the city center and sections of Amsterdam South have been privately owned since they were built and are designed as attractive professional environments for living and working. The West, East and North of Amsterdam were developed largely after World War II under a socialist municipal administration that focused almost exclusively on the public sector. In the private sector, ageing residential areas appear less likely to be filtered down than in the public sector.

The quality of a residential environment therefore does not appear to improve in a centrifugal pattern in Amsterdam. Aside from the political reason stated above, the city center was built during the affluence of the Golden Age, which was followed by an extended period of stagnation.

Arriving at Central Station, the visitor is immediately immersed in a city of the Baroque Age. Wonderful tall and narrow brick mansions with picturesque gables mirror in scores of canals. The streets are bustling with pedestrians and cyclists, many of them of exotic descents. Much of the traffic is by streetcar. The only metropolis in the western world where such an extensive old city center has been preserved is Venice – partly for the same reason, the canals, and for a long time the fact that it was so difficult to build houses higher than four storeys. (Claval 2000, 59).

Nonetheless, the city center appeared to be heading for the same fate as many American cities during the 1960s. In the wake of industrialization came city formation, construction of urban roadways and neglect of residential neighborhoods, combined with the arrival of poorly educated guest laborers from Turkey and Morocco (Van Amersfoort and Cortie 1973; Cortie 1975). In the 1970s, however, these people moved

out of their boarding houses in the city center and the Old South, in part because they had started families or had brought them over (Cortie and Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars 1983). They relocated to largely renovated districts along the East and West ends of the city center, while the original residents passed away or moved away with their children to the new towns. A few years later the immigrants or their children's families moved to districts such as Geuzenveld/Slotermeer (Cortie 1994), which made large sections of the outlying western districts of Amsterdam considerably less attractive. In keeping with the general expansion plan for Amsterdam to benefit the skilled working classes, these areas were virtually inaccessible to unskilled non-Dutch residents. The rapid rise in affluence, however, caused massive suburbanization, which allowed the unskilled immigrants to benefit from the now vacant dwellings. Moreover, Amsterdam residents of Dutch origin took little interest in the Bijlmer district built according to the principles of Le Corbusier. In this case, new was not synonymous with attractive, and the district largely accommodated immigrants from Surinam.

During the same period, the discontinuation of the city formation combined with the emancipation of the young (1960s) and the rise of international services restored the appeal of the Amsterdam city center as a living environment for specific groups and as a center for all kinds of alternative forms of culture and entertainment. Young urban professionals, for example, took an interest in the dilapidated residential and industrial district of the Jordaan and turned it into the first yuppie district in the Netherlands. Some of the immigrants from developed countries preferred the city center or Amsterdam South (Cortie and Van de Ven 1981).

The historical distribution comprising the appealing but expensive sector in the South thus remained unchanged after World War II. In many cases, new housing was not considered more attractive than old housing.

The distribution by type of residential environment selected for the empirical section reflects the above historical sketch, with regard to political boundaries related to the available statistical data. Overall, this distribution conveys images recognizable to authorities and residents as the city center, the Southeast (Bijlmermeer) and the North. The same holds true for the breakdown of the region surrounding Amsterdam. Based on the 1971 census (Engelsdorp Gastelaars et al 1980), most of these towns were still regarded as rural, poor or stagnating countryside communities in central districts: Zeevang, Waterland, Wormerland, Landsmeer, Oostzaan, Ouder-Amstel, Aalsmeer, Beemster, Edam-Volendam. With respect to urban development, these towns have a residential environment more akin to villages, although most residents work elsewhere in the service sector, and no longer in agriculture or locally (Droogh et al 1991).

Within the ROA (regional area of Amsterdam), Amstelveen is the prototype of the private old suburb and abounds with high-level employment. The Haarlemmermeer is a new version of this variety that also includes Uithoorn and Diemen. As one of the oldest industrial centers, Zaanstad has areas for residence and employment, although the level is not as high as those in Amstelveen. Almere and Purmerend are the public suburbs in the region and offer relatively little employment.

Unlike Amsterdam, much of the housing in the area is owner occupied. This difference increased during the period examined. In addition, new housing development declined throughout the area and reduced Amsterdam's share in housing production.

## **Elaboration of the Research Question**

Research on the type of residential environment raises very specific questions, such as what kinds of Dutch neighborhoods (residential environments) are likely to have immigrant residents in a city like Amsterdam, and does the distribution pattern of groups of different origins differ from that of Dutch people? How likely are they to settle and subsequently move on to residential environments with a high concentration of people of the same origins?

The questions regarding the behavior of these groups are more specific in the socio-economic approach. In accordance with Burgess, this exercise is designed to interpret origins as cultural data relevant for the socio-economic and consequently the spatial career of the category concerned. This requires translating the current classifications of residents by origin into categories reflecting their opportunities for upward social mobility. Burgess (1925, 56-57) emphasizes the position of the new residents in the labor market, which derives from the economic structure of the country of origin. "The immigrant from rural communities in Europe and America seldom brings with him economic skill of any great value in our industrial, commercial, or professional life." In the present Dutch context, the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute NIDI use similar indicators: command of Dutch, level of education and relation to the labor market (Erf and Tesser 2001). In addition to the residents, the residential areas need to be classified especially in terms of their attractiveness to determine the extent to which Amsterdam residents of different origins improve their residential environment or achieve socio-economic advancement. In keeping with the sources discussed above, attractiveness is defined according to socio-economic rather than physical characteristics. Income per resident will serve as the indicator and will be based on data published by the Inland Revenue Service. Individuals, rather than households, have been selected as research units, on the grounds that households change as a result of migration processes. This is also part of the reason why the household characteristic is not properly registered. Stage of life is approximated by age based on a much-used classification system to facilitate comparisons. Three classes of attractiveness have been identified. The central class comprises the 10 percent of all incomes immediately below and the 10 percent of those immediately above the average for all residents of the City of Amsterdam for that year. This allows the neighborhood combinations and municipalities to shift to a different class during the research period.

Changes in the relations between residents and their residential environment are generally explored according to three steps: settlement, relocation within the city and

departure from the city. This last displacement, provided it takes place within the city's suburban area, should be regarded as an alternative to moving within the city. Moves outside the area are irrelevant for this research, as the subsistence base is usually the underlying factor rather than quality of life. The suburban area is therefore restricted to the ROA (regional area of Amsterdam, see Figure 1).

### Population Distribution by Type of Residential Environment

Except for Short, few will be surprised that the various population groups are distributed so unevenly throughout the city of Amsterdam.

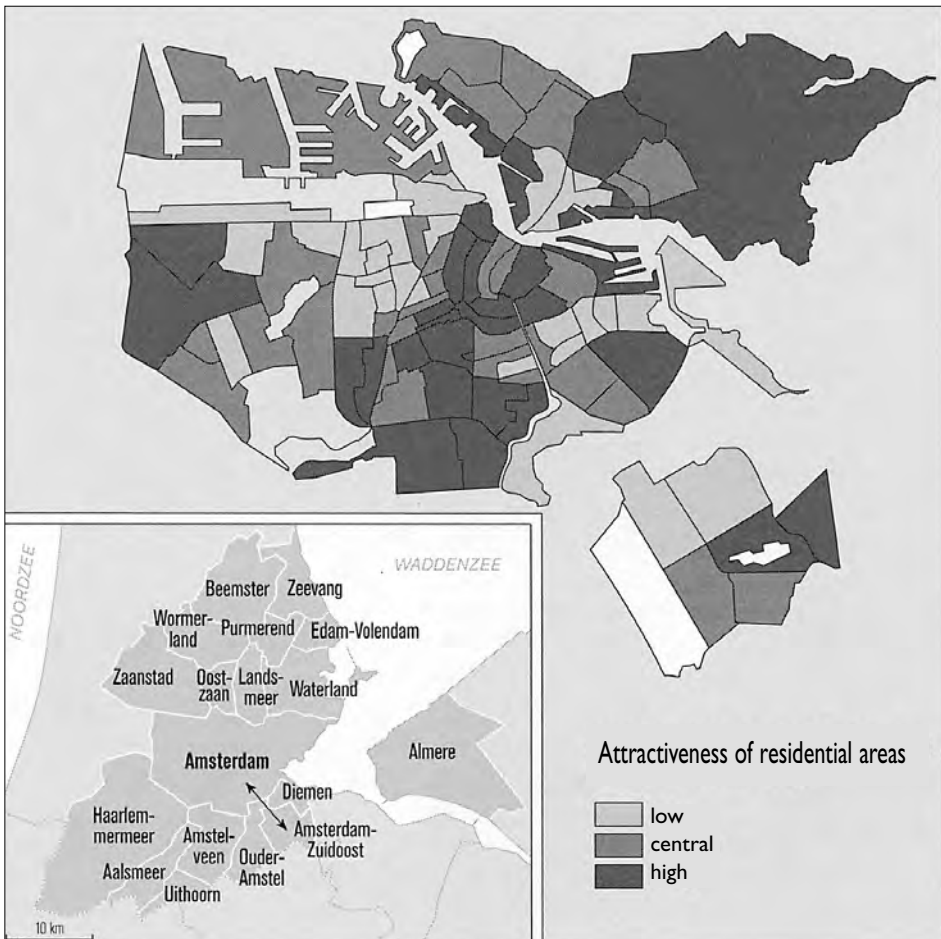


Figure 1. ROA (map)

Table 1. Population distribution by origins and type of residential environment (2000, in percentages)

Origin	City center	South	North	South-east	New	Other	Total
Turkey	2	7	11	2	1	77	18,088
Morocco	2	8	9	2	2	76	32,601
Surinam	3	7	10	38	5	36	66,085
Antilles	5	8	8	48	4	26	10,605
Non-ind. nations	9	13	12	22	3	42	25,841
Southern Europe	11	20	9	7	5	48	11,458
Industrialized nations	24	28	5	7	5	31	27,300
Netherlands	12	20	13	8	6	41	544,562
Total	11	18	12	11	6	43	734,540

People from Turkey and Morocco are concentrated in the parts of Amsterdam other than the city center, South, the new districts and Southeast. People from Surinam and the Antilles, as well as from the other – less developed – countries are concentrated in Southeast. People from industrialized (i.e. developed) nations and to a lesser degree from the Netherlands and Southern Europe, however, are highly overrepresented in the city center and South. This group is more dispersed, with more Dutch people in the North and somewhat more Southern Europeans in other sections of Amsterdam. What are the main reasons for this difference in distribution? In the discussion of the context, the city center and South were identified as the posh, private and expensive residential areas. Financial means are probably the decisive indicator. The division between immigrants from Turkey and Morocco versus those from Surinam and the Antilles is due primarily to the social housing supply at the time people from each group settled in Amsterdam. Following their massive arrival around 1975, Surinamese people became concentrated in the newly built Bijlmer (Southeast), which had been deemed unattractive by Amsterdam's middle-class.

### *Settlement in Amsterdam*

Settlement patterns for 2000 are full of discrepancies as well. Compared with the average, which is heavily influenced by people of Dutch origins, Moroccans and Turks settle largely in other sections, Surinamese and Antilleans in Southeast and persons from industrial nations largely in the city center and South. Dutch people are also more likely to settle in the South and the city center, although far less so than immigrants from highly developed (i.e. industrialized) nations. On the other hand, Dutch people born and raised here are more likely than this group to settle in the North and other sections of Amsterdam. Settlers from Southern Europe and non-industrialized nations are in the middle. They are less likely than Moroccans and Turks to settle elsewhere in Am-

sterdam, less likely than Surinamese and Antilleans to settle in Southeast and less likely than immigrants from the industrialized nations to settle in the city center and South. Generally, the first settlement by type corresponds closely with the residential distribution by type.

Table 2. Residential environment and initial settlement in Amsterdam (2000, in percentages)

Origin	City center	South	North	South-east	New	Other	Total
Turkey	6	10	8	3	2	71	1,018
Morocco	4	8	9	5	1	73	1,443
Surinam	4	6	9	42	3	35	2,704
Antilles	4	5	7	51	2	31	1,412
Non-ind. Nations	11	15	10	19	2	43	4,657
Southern Europe	21	22	5	5	3	45	1,041
Industrialized nations	27	32	3	7	3	28	4,882
Netherlands	14	21	7	9	5	44	22,658
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>39,815</b>

The main difference is that the city center, South and Southeast attracted more settlers than their share of residents. They are a gateway, especially for those settling from Turkey, the industrialized nations, and Southern Europe. Remarkably, fewer people from Turkey and Morocco settle in other sections of Amsterdam compared with the resident population.

The final question that arises in this part of the analysis concerns the role of relocations in increasing the concentration of residents of a specific origin. We will examine the relevant data for 2000.

### *Concentration through Migration?*

Here, we will consider relocations within the city of Amsterdam from one type of residential environment to another, between the city and its suburbs (ROA) and, beyond the residential and employment area, the migration with the rest of the Netherlands and the world.

In 2000 the concentration areas of people of Turkish and Moroccan origins have a small migration surplus from abroad, which resulted largely from the ongoing relations with their countries of origin. Bringing over a partner from one's country of origin remains a common practice.

Surinamese, Antilleans and people from non-industrialized nations have very different patterns of migration. All of these groups have a relatively high settlement surplus with respect to their country of origin. Among the Surinamese, however, the massive trek to the suburbs yields a net surplus of departures from their concentration



Table 3. Net migration for each concentration area per 1,000 residents of this area (2000)

Origins	Concentration area	Amsterdam	Suburbs	Netherlands	Abroad	Total
Turkey	Other sections of Amsterdam	0	0	0	1	1
Morocco	Other sections of Amsterdam	0	0	0	2	2
Surinam	Southeast	0	-4	0	3	-1
Antilles	Southeast	-1	-1	-1	3	1
Non-industrial. nat.	Southeast	0	0	1	5	6
Southern Europe	South	0	0	0	0	0
Industrialized nations	City center	-2	0	0	6	5
Netherlands	South	9	-13	-3	-2	-8

area in Southeast. While Antilleans are emulating this exodus to some extent, the positive balance of those settling from non-industrialized nations continues to increase this group of origin in Southeast.

People from industrialized nations have the highest foreign migration surplus for their concentration in the city center. Although they move to other parts of Amsterdam relatively frequently (especially Amsterdam South), their migration surplus with respect to their concentration area is almost as large as that of people from non-industrialized nations.

Unlike the residents from Southern Europe, the Dutch have experienced considerable changes with respect to their concentration area in South. While many Amsterdam residents settle there, still more move to the suburbs, and their departure surplus to places elsewhere in the Netherlands and abroad is substantial as well.

The main observations from this preliminary summary analysis of the consequences of relocations for the concentration of groups of origin reveal large discrepancies. Other than in the concentration areas of residents from Morocco, Turkey, Surinam, and the Antilles, the major increase consists of residents from industrialized and non-industrialized nations. Relations with the country of origin remain decisive, except for the Surinamese.

The pattern among the Dutch is unique and highly diversified with a strong prevalence of concentration within the city and especially of suburbanization from their concentration area.

The following section will contribute several suggestions for interpreting spatial mobility inside the Amsterdam region.

## Origins and Socio-Economic Mobility

### *Distribution*

Overall, the population groups identified appear to live in the residential area according to their cultural background (Table 4).

Table 4. Distribution pattern\* of the Amsterdam population based on attractiveness of the residential area 1988-2000

Origin	1988	1992	1996	2000
Turkey	-49	-52	-50	-51
Morocco	-41	-46	-46	-47
Surinam	-38	-39	-44	-44
Antilles	-34	-37	-35	-40
Non-industrial. nations		-24	-17	-21
Southern Europe	-14	-11	- 4	0
Industrialized nations		+25	+33	+46
Netherlands	+ 8	+12	+14	+ 9

\* The mobility index reflects the percentage points of a population group that would need to move to more (-) or less (+) attractive residential areas to achieve the municipal average.

Amsterdam residents originating from Turkey and Morocco are so likely to live in unattractive neighborhood combinations that about half would need to move to a more attractive residential environment to achieve the average residential environment for Amsterdam. The situation is nearly the same for immigrants from Surinam and the Antilles. People from less developed countries and Southern Europe require far less upward mobility to reach the average. Regarding residents from less developed countries, this situation confirms the previously presumed “positive” selection. Immigrants whose cultural characteristics are the most suitable in global respects are the most likely to live in attractive residential surroundings on average, not the Dutch people. They would thus need considerable downward mobility for their distribution to be origin-blind. Comparing the four measurement years, however, suggests that differences between the groups are increasing somewhat, as the Amsterdam residents from industrialized nations and Southern Europe improve their circumstances.

Many studies conclude after comparing two or more file samples that spatial polarization is deepening. This conclusion is premature, however, because individual spatial mobility has not been traced. Such research is especially important for groups with a highly dynamic composition due to continuous addition of new members. This process is comparable to a school where the constant arrival of foreign students reduces the share of Dutch-speaking students (general pattern). The students already

present, however, improve their command of the language during their school careers (individual process). Residential and employment mobility advance over the years as well. Young adults living on their own for the first time generally live in less attractive neighborhoods than their parents. This pattern will have a negative impact on the score of a population group comprising many young adults starting off. Considering the respective stages of life of the groups is therefore important.

### *Settlement in Amsterdam*

The settlement of newcomers largely reflects origins as well. On average, immigrants from Surinam and the Antilles settle in even less attractive areas than Turks and Moroccans. Their low income forces all of them to settle in unattractive neighborhoods. They are allocated homes based on their stage of life, especially household composition. Arrivals from Surinam and the Antilles may be more likely at a disadvantage on the housing market, especially young, singles. I will deal with the importance of stage of life in more detail below.

While the trend in the research period is hardly linear, it definitely does not suggest that the gap is narrowing between the groups at the “bottom” and those at the “top”.

Table 5. Settlement in Amsterdam based on attractiveness of the residential area (mobility index)

Origin	1988	1992	1996	2000
Turkey	-48	-45	-51	-48
Morocco	-40	-43	-54	-50
Surinam	-43	-41	-58	-54
Antilles	-49	-40	-53	-58
Non-industr. nations	-25	-21	-35	-19
Southern Europe	+ 3	- 2	+ 7	+16
Industrialized nations	+31	+34	+49	+46
Netherlands	+15	+20	+13	+ 8

+: settle more in attractive residential areas

The trend is relatively unfavorable for immigrants from the Antilles and Surinam, while the figures keep improving for those from industrialized nations and Southern Europe. Are the arrivals from these countries an increasingly homogeneous group of well-educated employees of multinationals temporarily based in booming Amsterdam? No signs of advancement are indicated for the Dutch themselves. Perhaps they include many young single individuals who aim to complete their education and then move elsewhere. With respect to both income and stage of life, they are low on the social housing ladder. This assumption ties in with the idea that the school analogy is especially true for Dutch people settling in Amsterdam. Differences in arrivals at the “top end” thus require a stage of life analysis as well.

Basically, the gap is widening between arrivals from various developed and less-de-

veloped nations. Dutch people who settle in Amsterdam are losing ground as well, possibly because of their – progressively – specific selection.

*Socio-Economic Mobility*

Table 6 reviews spatial mobility over the four measurement years. This score reflects the number of relocations to more or to less attractive residential environments and assigns one point to each progression of one class. The total points are then divided by the number of Amsterdam residents in the corresponding population category. This procedure is based on the same principle as the one applied in calculating the figures in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 6. Mobility of Amsterdam residents following moves within the city (Mo) and departure (Ex) to the ROA (per 1,000 residents)

Origin	1988			1992			1996			2000		
	Mo	Ex	Tot	Mo	Ex	Tot	Mo	Ex	Tot	Mo	Ex	Tot
Turkey	0	1	2	- 9	1	- 8	-5	1	-4	1	3	4
Morocco	- 1	1	0	1	2	3	-4	3	-2	1	2	3
Surinam	1	4	5	6	9	15	0	12	13	3	12	14
Antilles	-13	6	-7	7	14	20	-2	9	7	2	13	15
Non-industr.nations				-12	13	1	-1	10	9	-1	7	6
Southern Europe	- 3	2	0	2	9	11	-1	5	4	0	6	7
Industr.nations				- 7	9	2	-1	2	1	-5	2	-2
Netherlands	1	3	4	11	10	21	4	16	20	2	7	9
Total	1	3	4	1	9	10	1	12	13	0	7	7

The result leads to the following conclusions. Spatial mobility does not fully reflect the cultural potential of the Amsterdam population groups, if upward spatial mobility is assumed to be the highest for the group with the greatest cultural potential. People from developed (i.e. industrial) nations manifest virtually no upward mobility. They consolidate their places in the most attractive residential environments and stay there.

Mobility among people of Turkish or Moroccan origin keeps dropping further below the average until 2000. While some improvement is apparent for 2000, their mobility remains below average. Surinamese and Antilleans, however, consistently score above average and even had the best mobility figures of all groups in 2000.

Amsterdam residents from non-industrialized nations scored slightly below average, but better than foreign guest workers and their children. This might confirm the assumption that the migrants from less developed countries represent a strong positive selection, and that a brain drain is under way from these countries. Amsterdam

residents from the former Caribbean colonies of the Netherlands achieved the highest mobility and consequently attest to the importance of an appropriate cultural background.

Entirely in keeping with the cultural background thesis, Amsterdam residents of Dutch origin achieve the highest social mobility virtually every year.

Upward spatial mobility within the city of Amsterdam is not particularly high for any single year. This is understandable, as major changes in the relationship between neighborhood combinations are unlikely to occur over a twelve-year period as far as the quality of the residential environment is concerned. Moreover, the moves within the city are not a closed system in which all relocations within the city would yield a mobility of zero. People also settle in and move out of the city, just as there are births and deaths. These changes explain the minor systematic deviations from zero (which are systematic in a positive sense). Nonetheless, substantial differences exist between the groups of origin and indicate shifts in neighborhood combinations. The process merits further study.

Among all groups, suburbanization is the leading factor underlying upward spatial mobility. Overall:

- Initial settlement and distribution by attractiveness of residential environment is virtually identical among people from less developed countries. Surinamese and Antilleans, however, manifest far more social and spatial mobility than Turks and Moroccans, although their massive settlement in the Netherlands took place later. This difference in development is largely attributable to differences in cultural origins.
- Among the Amsterdam residents from developed countries, people from the industrialized nations are more likely to settle and live in attractive residential areas than people of Dutch origin are. Unlike the Dutch, however, they do not improve their residential environment through relocations.

I will conclude the empirical section by briefly addressing the influence of stage of life on mobility. The material for this analysis is not perfect, as it indicates only the ages of the individuals. Reliable information regarding the required household composition prior to and following the move is unavailable. In addition, we have used only data from 2000, as the analysis of all four measurement points would require too much space.

#### *Distribution According to Stage of Life*

The differences in age distribution are substantial. Moroccan and Turkish residents comprise a far larger share of children and young adults of marriageable age than residents from developed and especially industrialized countries. Their age breakdown is thus most comparable to that of classic immigrants. Accordingly, many members of this group do not earn incomes, which explains their low average income and their tendency to live in unattractive neighborhoods.

Dutch people have few children and comprise a very large share of the senior citi-

Table 7. The population in 2000 by age (percentages)

Origin	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Total
Turkey	30	21	22	12	8	8	16,088
Morocco	32	23	19	11	7	7	32,601
Surinam	24	15	17	21	13	11	66,085
Antilles	23	16	18	20	15	9	10,605
Non-industr.nations	22	15	34	19	7	4	25,841
Southern Europe	13	10	29	18	14	15	11,485
Industrialized nations	13	8	34	24	13	7	27,300
Netherlands	13	11	22	18	14	23	544,562
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>734,540</b>

zens, but the same share of 25-34 year olds as the Moroccan and Turkish immigrants. However contrary to the Moroccans and Turks, many of this Dutch age group live alone or with a partner. Amsterdam residents from industrialized countries consist largely of people in their thirties and forties without children. Most people at this stage of life have advanced in their careers. Those settling at the “top end” thus reflect major differences in stage of life, which, in turn, affects the attractiveness of the environment in which they live.

### *Stage of Life and Spatial Mobility*

Below we will illustrate the importance of stage of life for four groups of Amsterdam residents. In addition to major differences in spatial mobility, one significant similarity prevails: families with young children move to more attractive residential areas.

Table 8. Stage of life and spatial mobility (per 1,000) in 2000

Age	Morocco	Surinam	Industrialized nations	Netherlands
0-14	5	5	2	21
15-24	4	17	-6	4
25-34	-1	32	-3	8
35-44	5	16	-3	9
45-54	-1	8	-2	6
55+	4	9	-2	8
Average	3	15	-2	9

Among the Dutch, families with children are especially likely to move to more attractive residential environments. The traditional mobility described in American sources thus often coincides with the trek to the suburbs in Amsterdam as well. Surinamese people follow the same course. Among Moroccans, preliminary signs of modern Western spatial mobility are apparent, although having children still appears to be an obstacle to achieving positive social and spatial mobility for this group. Among Amsterdam residents from developed countries, people in their twenties manifest substantial negative mobility. Note that their parents are the most likely to live in attractive areas.

### **Concluding remarks**

This article deals primarily with the longstanding question whether the origin of immigrants influences their socio-spatial mobility. The theoretical background is the statement that “new” employment imposes cultural demands that people meet depending on the economic structure of their area of origin. Burgess (1925) formulated this statement during the industrialization of Chicago.

At least two other elements merit consideration in this question as well. First, not only immigrants from economically backward areas are relevant to this research because the growth of international relations also leads to migration flows between developed countries. Second, many selection mechanisms come into play in the countries of origin and settlement alike and underlie the differences in the characteristics of migrants. The recruitment of guest workers from less developed countries in the 1960s versus that of computer experts in the 1990s is a well-known example.

The Amsterdam region is a suitable modern arena for the examination of this longstanding question. The deindustrialization of the 1970s was followed by a major transition toward service industries and economic growth since the 1980s. While Amsterdam is also a city “with poor migrant groups,” it is not a city with “a private housing market in which housing quality is a function of income” (Short 1996). Several surrounding communities, especially old and new suburbs and the countryside, meet this last criterion.

The findings are tentative and primarily serve to encourage additional research on the processes covered in this contribution.

- At the time of settlement in Amsterdam, the selection seems based primarily on the economic position of the country of origin. Migrants from less developed countries end up in the least attractive residential environments. This correlation is not fully applicable, however, as immigrants from “non-industrialized countries” are far less likely to settle in the least attractive residential environments. Remarkable differences exist at the “top end” as well, especially between Dutch arrivals and those from industrialized nations. Here, stage of life is a major factor, along with a considerable difference in income or capital. This last characteristic also appears decisive for differences in residential environment between the “bottom end” and the “top

end.” After all, people with incomes below a certain level live in social housing.

- After settlement, opportunities for social mobility depend on whether an individual qualifies for employment in the Amsterdam region’s sophisticated international sector. Here, the political system is virtually irrelevant. The government-regulated educational system will achieve an impact only over the long term (Gramberg 2000). People from Surinam and the Antilles are prime examples of the advancement to the suburban Promised Land (albeit to the cheaper public sections) associated with the traditional stages of life. They have the required cultural attributes. Upward social and spatial mobility is also emerging among people from Turkey and Morocco although to a lesser degree. Still, they lag considerably behind people from other less developed (i.e. non-industrialized) nations that have already penetrated the old and new suburbs, as well as the city center and the South districts of Amsterdam.
- People of Dutch origin manifest strong traditional upward mobility, both through their increasing trek toward the new (private) suburbs and toward the more modern urban sections (gentrification). Today the core growth areas appear to be losing their attractive appeal but have been equally important for Amsterdam residents of Dutch origin in moving to a more attractive residential environment as they have been for Amsterdam residents from less developed countries today. Amsterdam residents of Dutch origin are typically widely distributed by stage of life, unlike the Amsterdam residents from developed countries, who tend to be so at a later stage in life. When members of this category move, they are more likely than their Dutch counterparts to settle in the more attractive urban (city center, South) and suburban (old and new suburbs) sections.
- Finally, discussions about a socio-spatial dichotomy are worthwhile only when based on processes at the relevant spatial level. Had the analysis merely compared distribution or settlement patterns, it would have incorrectly suggested that upward mobility is virtually nonexistent. This would also have been the case if the research had concerned only the city of Amsterdam.

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## 3.7 • Amsterdam Human Capital: What About Children?

*Lia Karsten*

### **Introduction**

In this book about Amsterdam and its inhabitants, spatial developments, social problems, and political issues it is logical, necessary and interesting to also pay attention to the position of its youngest citizens. Children make up a considerable part of Amsterdam's population. Their numbers certainly justify some attention. In addition, the study of children's geographies is a further step in the development of the geography of households (Vijgen and Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars 1992). Households cannot be considered as homogenous boxes. The processes of emancipation contribute to the recognition of the different positions of men and women, and adults and youngsters in a family household. In many respects, children's daily activities, their needs and opinions are different from those of their parents. Children form a unit of analysis in their own right.

The specific position young citizens have can be highlighted in different ways, but is best characterized by the mutual relationship between dependency and growth. On the one hand, children are dependent on adults – parents, teachers, and neighbors, as well as urban policymakers and politicians. On the other hand, they are continually engaged in a process of growing up and assuming their own responsibilities. They are constantly building on the construction of their individual identities, and adults should respect and support that process.

One way of taking youth seriously is to make their position visible and to problematize the conditions under which children are growing up. Over the last decade, children's geographies have become a booming discipline in urban geography. In this respect, the founding of the international journal *Children's Geographies* (Routledge) can be considered as a landmark. While internationally, children's geographies is a fast expanding subject, in the Netherlands only a few studies in this new discipline have been carried out (for an overview, see Karsten et al 2001). In this chapter, fragmented research will be brought together as far as it is relevant to the Amsterdam situation.

This chapter starts by highlighting the changing position of children in Amsterdam, their daily activities and scale of life. First I will provide an insight into the numbers and backgrounds of the multicultural population of Amsterdam children. I will then highlight their daily activities: playing outside, club activities, and mobility. This

will lead to conclusions about differences: the spread of different types of time-space behavior over Amsterdam. I will end this chapter by taking a look at the future: what will the future of childhood in Amsterdam look like?

### Children’s Population in Amsterdam

Amsterdam has a population of over 700,000. Many of the city’s residents come from other parts of the world: in 1999, only 56 percent of Amsterdam’s residents had a Dutch mother and/or father. Families with children make up about onethird of the population: 22 percent live in two-parent households and 11 percent live in one-parent households (data: O + S Amsterdam).

Children (0-12 years) constitute 14 percent (101,793 children) of the Amsterdam population. Both the percentage and the number are expected to grow slowly in the near future. The distribution of the child population over the city is uneven (Figure 1): the farther from the center, the larger the child population. The most densely populated districts in terms of child population are Amsterdam Southeast, West, and North. These are also the urban neighborhoods where the majority of citizens are immigrants. As such, Dutch children living in Amsterdam form a minority, albeit the largest (36 percent of the 0-12 age category). Dutch families in Amsterdam continue to move out of the city and those who stay have few children. They live predominantly in Amsterdam South, Watergraafsmeer, and various new neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city. In addition, some centrally located restructured neighbourhoods have recently been transformed into enclaves of middle-class households with children (Karsten and Van Kempen 2001; Karsten and Blom 2002).

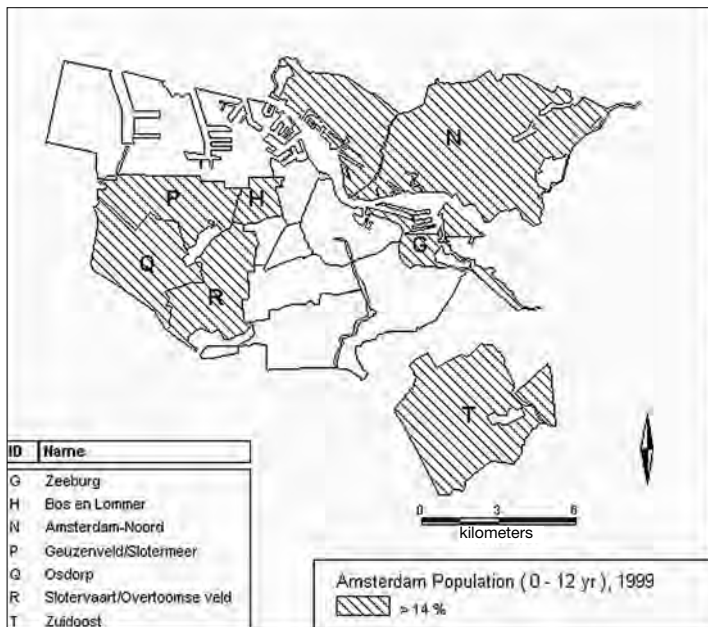


Figure 1. The Population of Amsterdam’s Children

Ethnicity and class are strongly linked in Amsterdam. The Amsterdam ethnic minorities mainly consist of lower-class families. There is only a very small (though growing) ethnic middle-class. Dutch Amsterdam children belong predominantly to the middle or upper-middle-class.

## **Amsterdam Children's Time-Space Behavior**

To describe children's daily lives, I will refer mainly to two studies: one by Van der Spek and Noyon (1993), the other by Wiggers, Kouwenberg and Karsten (1996). Van der Spek and Noyon did a survey of 126 parents (59 percent Dutch Amsterdam) with children aged 4 to 12 in the nineteenth-century neighborhood, Kinkerbuurt. Wiggers et al talked with 454 children (29 percent Dutch Amsterdam) aged 7 to 12, and 225 parents in five Amsterdam neighborhoods (Karsten 1998). What do Amsterdam children do after school, where and with whom?

### *Playing Outside*

Playing outside is still the most common activity among Amsterdam children: no other after-school activity has such a high participation rate. Wiggers et al (1996) found a mean of three to four times a week for Amsterdam children (7-12). However, there are large differences. Especially Dutch Amsterdam boys and girls and Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese Amsterdam boys frequently play outside. The group aged between 9 and 12 plays outdoors more often than the younger children do.

Where do Amsterdam children play? Playing outside appears to be a very local activity. Their own street, a playground in their own neighbourhood and the school playground are the most often mentioned. The two main arguments given for "choosing" a space to play are "Because my friends come here" (41 percent) and "Because it's close" (21 percent). Although the nearest location to play is not always favorable for Amsterdam children, playing outside is often done close to the home. This has much to do with the spontaneous character of playing outside and the relatively short periods available for playing on weekdays. If you're not sure whether your friends will be there, you're not going to travel long distances: it would take too much time and too much effort. Studies in other cities affirm the very local character of playing outside (Karsten et al 1998). That is not to say that Amsterdam children do not go on excursions: family outings to the Amsterdamse Bos (wood), Het Twiske (big recreation green area) and the North Sea beaches are quite common, although certainly not for all children and not on a daily or even a weekly basis.

Although playing outside is a common activity for many Amsterdam children, there is a large group of children who almost never go outside: between 24 (Wiggers et al 1996) and 44 (Van der Spek and Noyon 1993) percent play outside less than once a week. They live in neighborhoods with bad playing conditions. In old urban districts claims on space have grown: the density of cars, houses, and businesses has increased. Competition for urban space has grown intensely since the 1980s; this is apparent not only in the older central neighborhoods, but also in the newer ones. In Nieuw Sloten –

a residential area constructed at the end of the 1980s – not only is public space limited but also the spaces to play are scarce (Gramberg and Zuidema 1996; Van Kessel and Ottes 1995). In the Oostelijk Havengebied (the former Port District), which was developed in the 1990s, public space is even more constricted and there is hardly any space to play (Karsten and Blom 2002). Increasing claims on urban space and the trend reducing public space in newly built neighborhoods have negative influences on children's outdoor behavior.

But physical circumstances are not the only determining factor. Because of cultural norms, particularly Turkish and Moroccan Amsterdam girls do not play outside very often. After school they go home and are expected to stay there. In addition, children belonging to a minority group in a neighborhood often do not play with other children. This applies to migrant children in neighborhoods dominated by “white” children as well as to “white” children in neighborhoods with a majority of migrant children (Visser 1991; Karsten 1998). Power relations between groups of related (by kinship and friendship) children lie at the basis of this phenomenon of exclusion. All in all, it must be concluded that playing outside is not a matter of course for every child everywhere in Amsterdam.

### *Leisure Clubs*

Even in Amsterdam with its small percentage of middle-class families, more and more children are joining clubs. While in the 1960s children's participation in sporting clubs was about 25 percent, in the 1990s this figure had increased to over 50 percent (Heinemeijer and De Sitter 1964; Karsten 1998). However, this figure is below the Dutch mean. And on the whole, Amsterdam children do not join many clubs: only between 9 (Karsten 1998) and 22 (Van der Spek and Noyon 1993) percent are a member of two or more clubs. As one might expect, Dutch Amsterdam children are more likely to be members of more clubs (see also Karsten and Blom 2001).

In contrast to playing outside, children going to a club have to leave their neighborhood to participate, because not every neighborhood has its own sports fields or music school – in fact, far from it. Looking at the city as a whole, however, children's leisure domains are being scaled up in two different directions (Karsten, 2002). First, the open-air sports facilities are being sited nearer the city's outskirts. This outward locational push of open-air sports facilities already has a long history. After the Second World War with the realization of the AUP (Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan; General Extension Plan), large sports parks were created on the outskirts of the city. In the old Amsterdam neighborhoods, only a few sports parks have survived and with the restructuring of the old city there has been no provision for new ones. This means that many children growing up in Amsterdam have to travel large distances to reach their football, tennis, or horse-riding club.

Secondly, in the central parts of the city new cultural activities for children (e.g. children's theater) have been created. This development started in the 1970s and tends to cater to the cultural tastes of the middle-class. These cultural programs are organized in all-age spaces (e.g. concerts for children in the Concertgebouw – a place nor-

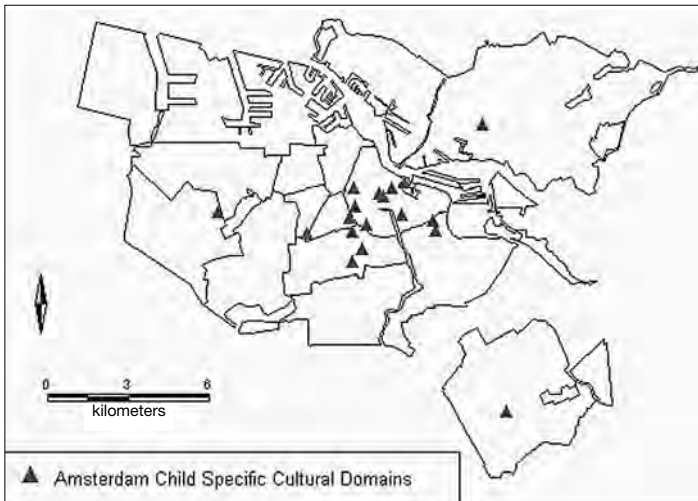


Figure 2.  
Child-specific  
Cultural Domains  
in Amsterdam

mally reserved for “grown-ups”) as well as in child-specific domains, such as restaurants specially for children to try out their culinary skills (Figure 2). In addition, new commercial domains ranging from children’s bookshops to children’s hairdressers have been established in the central parts of the city. All these new centrally located children’s domains reflect and contribute to the new children’s consumer culture (McKendrick et al 2000; Chin 1993) which is making its presence felt in Amsterdam.

But, as was mentioned earlier, intensive membership of clubs is not that common in Amsterdam. Over 40 percent of Amsterdam children are not a member of any children’s club. Some of these children may attend open activities organized by a neighborhood center, but they do not regularly leave their neighborhood to participate in leisure activities. Interestingly enough, the figure of 40 percent was also found by Heinemeijer and De Sitter in their 1960 study of children’s lives in Amsterdam. Not much seems to have changed since then. What is new, however, is the composition of the group of “unorganized” children: while in the 1960s these were Dutch lower-class children, today they are ethnic minority lower-class children, especially girls. A child’s class position continues to be the determining factor in their club activities.

### *Mobility*

What about children’s freedom of movement? Where are Amsterdam children allowed to go, and where are they allowed to go on their own? Many children spend the day in their own neighborhood: it’s where they go to school, where they play outside (or are kept inside the home) and where they meet their friends. Parents often do not want their children to leave the immediate vicinity of the home. Young children (under ten) are usually only allowed to play in their own street, and only when they grow older are they allowed to play on their own a few streets away. The pavement in front of the house is therefore the most popular (in the sense of the most often used) place to play. Playgrounds come second.

That very local character of playing outside is closely connected with parents' concerns about the well-being of their children. Van der Spek and Noyon conclude that over 40 percent of parents accompany their children to the playground. Wiggers et al (1996) also report a high percentage of parental supervision: 33 percent accompany their children. That makes playing outside a time-consuming activity for parents. Sometimes older children are responsible for keeping an eye on their younger siblings. The (perceived) lack of safety because of traffic and social dangers is the main reason for the reluctance to let children play on their own.

Table 1. Parents/adults accompanying children to school, friends, and clubs

Amsterdam	Playing outside	School	Friends	Clubs
Wiggers et al 1996	33%	15%	–	45%
Spek & Noyon 1993	42%	65%	62%	70%

The figures (Table 1) reflect the big role parents have in accompanying their children in Amsterdam, particularly when attending children's clubs. Girls enjoy less freedom of movement than boys. The higher figures Spek and Noyon found for the supervisory role of parents are probably related to the younger age groups they focused on. It is clear that age is an important determining factor in questions regarding children's freedom of movement. In general, the older the child, the higher his or her freedom of movement. The traditionally larger families of migrant citizens make surveillance by sisters/brothers more possible. This is one reason for the low figure (15 percent) found by Wiggers et al for parents' involvement in the daily trip to school. It is middle-class children who are most intensively accompanied through the public space. These are also the children – as we have seen – who participate most often in clubs.

### Amsterdam: A City of Differences

Abovementioned empirical findings make clear that Amsterdam children's time-space behavior is characterized by considerable differences (cf. Fincher and Jacobs, 1998). I will outline the different types of childhood in terms of space-time behavior, keeping with the literature where the "many childhoods" (Holloway and Valentine, 2000) are discussed.

We can no longer write about "children in general" – not even about "Amsterdam children in general." Statements such as "Children no longer play outside" or "The big city is bad for children" do not reflect reality enough. Diversity is great, as has also been made clear in several Dutch publications (Overview: Karsten et al 2001). On the continuum of the frequency of playing outside, three types of time-space behavior can be dis-

tinguished, and all three are present in contemporary Amsterdam: indoor children, the back-seat generation and outdoor children.

Amsterdam's children population is characterized by a rather large – perhaps the largest – group of indoor children. Figures indicate that 24 to 44 percent almost never play outside. These are mainly lower-class children who do not have other compensating activities in the form of club activities, either. They live predominantly in old, former working-class neighborhoods (e.g. Kinkerbuurt) and in the high-rise apartment complexes in the Bijlmermeer. They experience a sharp divide between house and neighborhood. Going outside means taking a risk because of the dangers posed by motorized traffic and antisocial behavior. Girls are overrepresented among these indoor children. Some groups of girls, particularly those with an Islamic background, are not at all allowed to explore the public domain on their own.

A second group of children can be labeled as the back-seat generation. These are mainly middle-class children with diverse daily lives. They play outside regularly, attend various clubs, and participate in all kinds of activities especially organized for their age group (films, concerts, etc.). Their time-space behavior is characterized by a high number of activities demarcated in time and space. Parents or other adults are an inevitable link in their daily lives. They serve as the accompanying adults not only through the public domain, but also in the choosing of “appropriate” activities and places. In Amsterdam, they make up only a minority of the children's population and they live predominantly in the mostly white, better-off neighbourhoods (Amsterdam South, Watergraafsmeer) and the recently restructured urban districts, such as the Oostelijk Havengebied (former Port District).

There is still a group of outdoor children in Amsterdam, even though they have often to deal with the poor quality of outdoor space. They play outside not only regularly but also for long periods of time. In my research, I met children – mostly boys but also groups of girls – who came to a playground directly after school and did not go home until six. They followed the same pattern almost every day. The vast majority of these intensive outdoor children did not have any other leisure activity like attending a club. They live near the big playgrounds (with soccer facilities) in the old neighborhoods and probably also in neighborhoods in Amsterdam West and North (no figures available).

Thus the nature of childhood varies across different contexts. The three different types distinguished here (more research will probably lead to more details) live in three different worlds. Segregation is related to the neighborhoods they live in, and to their various personal, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds (Karsten 1998).

When we include the daily scale on which each of the types lives, we see the following. For children belonging to the first and the third type, the neighborhood is the main locality where their daily lives unravel, and which they explore mainly on foot. It is here that they go to school, play outside (or are kept inside the home) and sometimes participate in a children's activity at the neighborhood center. However, interestingly enough, the scale of the neighborhood is not the only geographical scale they explore.



Many of these children have families and friends abroad. From time to time they travel all the way to Surinam, Morocco, or Turkey. They live simultaneously in a very local and in a very global manner, going beyond the urban and regional scale.

In contrast to the daily scales of life of indoor and outdoor children, the back seat generation explores the city as a whole. The relatively small group of Amsterdam middle-class children are escorted by their parents to many different activity places, such as clubs, cultural events, and sometimes schools and childcare facilities outside of their own neighborhood. For them the city of Amsterdam is an archipelago consisting of enclaves they regularly visit. There they meet other middle-class children, who move like themselves – accompanied by adults – from one children’s domain to another. In so doing, they are constructing their own urban field. For these children the neighborhood may still be a significant place to grow up in and in which to play outside, but they have significant others (places and friends) outside their own neighborhood (Karsten 2001).

### **Reflections on the Future of Childhood in Amsterdam**

Predicting the future is always difficult, if not impossible, but it may help to look at developments in other big European and American cities. It is amply documented in the literature that both parents and children judge general safety conditions (especially those in big cities) as minimal. As a consequence, playing outside has become less a matter of course and consequently children’s freedom of movement has been minimized. On a structural level, fulfilling children’s needs inside “safe” buildings is becoming more and more apparent.

The whole safety issue is widely discussed in the literature. Valentine (1996 and 1997) shows how parents are aware of all kinds of risks and possible dangers to children in public spaces. In the minds of parents, their children are “only kids, what do they know?” (1997: 69). The construction of the outside world as a “bad” place filled with unknown people (the image of the stranger as the danger) is constantly reinforced with “terror” talk. Not surprisingly, safety concerns are most vividly expressed when referring to growing up in cities. Katz (1993: p. 102) states that: “Fear, danger and children’s safety rattle around at the root of children’s geographies in urban settings.” Big cities are associated with chaos and traffic, concrete and asphalt, and – perhaps most importantly – anonymous relationships; in other words, they are not the ideal environment in which to bring up children (Lynch 1977; Ward 1978; Aitken 1998).

One of the consequences of parents perceiving lacks of safety is the later age at which children are allowed to play out of their parents’ sight (Huttenmoser 1995) and go to school and clubs on their own (Hillman et al 1990; Van der Spek and Noyon 1993; Karsten et al 1998a). The safety discourse is potentially powerful when it comes to parents deciding where to let their children play and whether to give them some sort of freedom of movement. Parents’ fear “produces public space as an adult space” (Valentine 1996: 206). Sibley (1995) concludes that home is increasingly becoming a haven which makes the border between private home and public outside even sharper.

Valentine and McKendrick (1997) consider the increase in children's participation in clubs as a trend related to the increase in the number of working mothers. They underline what has been analyzed by German authors (Adler and Adler 1994), who describe middle-class children hopping from one children's domain to another (school, club, child care facility). They interpret this as a means used by the middle-classes to collect cultural capital for their children (Zeihner and Zeihner 1984; Zinnecker 1995) – a phenomenon very comparable to the back-seat generation described earlier.

The main challenge for urban policymaking will be the (re) conquering of public space for children. Will the city pay more attention to children as small citizens with their own needs and desires? If no special efforts are made in this regard, Amsterdam will see a further decrease of playing outside, and children's freedom of movement will be even more restricted. One of the consequences is a further spatial institutionalization of Amsterdam childhood (Karsten 2002). The expected growth of all kinds of child care facilities and the development of primary schools towards a "brede school" (a sort of community school that supplies education, leisure and care in one building with long opening hours) contribute to this phenomenon. Childhood is becoming more and more physically segregated from adulthood. All three groups of children will be further marginalized in public space, if no measures are taken. The group of indoor children will become larger, but will also change character. They will no longer spend most of their free time inside their own homes, but inside other buildings which function as child care, after school care, and "brede school." The number of outdoor children will decrease and they, too, will become spatially enclosed in the same kinds of children's facilities. When the gentrification of Amsterdam continues, the back-seat generation will grow larger and continue their escorted trips through public space in order to attend the various privatized children's domains in Amsterdam.

Thus, the unique position, needs and vulnerability of children justifies specific attention in research and policymaking. So far, only a handful of studies on the daily lives of children in Amsterdam have been completed. We need new and more recent data, especially qualitative data about parents' and children's points of view. What do parents value as important for their children, and how do they evaluate their own neighborhood? How important is a safe neighborhood when deciding whether to stay in the city? What ideas do children have about the spatial conditions to grow up, the quality of streets and neighborhoods, their lack of daily freedom of movement and the tendency to accommodate children in "safe" buildings with adult supervisors? How do different groups of children experience today's segregated city, and what kind of images does each "imprisoned" group have of one another? Children's geographies – a rapidly growing discipline in the international research context – needs a firm injection at the University of Amsterdam. This could also help to inform policymakers, who are often blind to the specific needs of children and families.

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Fencing and sleeping-place Spui (above); sleeping-place Kadijksplein (below)



## 3.8 • Public Space and the Homeless in Amsterdam

*Leon Deben*

### **Background**

My research among residents of urban renewal areas, urban nomads, squatters, houseboat and caravan dwellers, and the homeless in Amsterdam began over thirty years ago. It was the end of the sixties, the era of grandiose plans for city-making and radical solutions to traffic problems. The city center was going to be opened up to provide space for shops and offices; living there was passé. The notion that society was something of our own making was at its height. There were no homeless people. And if there were, the director of the shelter knew them from the *vagrancy list*, and we didn't see them lying around in the streets. The directors of the shelters kept simple lists of names and met regularly to compare them and exchange information.

In the seventies, local residents and the municipal authorities almost came to blows. "Cleanup" – brazen demolition – was transformed into rehabilitation. The emphasis on cities as production areas gradually changed. During a host of on-going debates, a vision emerged in which the city was envisioned as more of a consumption area where people could also live. There was so much talk and discussion that housing construction almost came to a halt. There were lots of places for a homeless person to find shelter in those days, with neglected properties, large buildings taken over by squatters and empty warehouses and other buildings in abundance. The fight by activist groups such as De Sterke Arm (*The Strong Arm*) in the Dapperbuurt district – and the GAJ (*Joint Action Groups*) in the Jordaan – ended in 1978 and housing construction got under way again. As Jan Schaefer noted in Parliament, "You can't live in moonshine," and in his capacity as Alderman for Housing he stepped up output. Urban decay was halted, and the widelyheld pejorative notion of the city as a den of iniquity that dominated the sixties and seventies started to fade. The city was appreciated again and tourists and daytrippers flooded in. The city became a place for people to go out and enjoy themselves. Living in the city also lost its negative image. Old and new urbanites moved into houses in the 19th-century districts. Vagrants still found plenty of places to sleep, for example near Artis, on the Gevleweg, at the artschool, in the Eastern Docks or Westerdoksdijk. The four periods – of city-making and traffic control, campaigning and debate, homes and yet more homes, and lastly public space – are the background for this paper on the homeless and the use of urban public space. Re-

search, knowledge, and experience in Amsterdam are the threads running through it.

## Homelessness

In America, activists sounded the alarm about the increasing number of homeless in the late seventies. Mitch Snyder, a leading activist, estimated the number at 1 million. In 1982, he updated his estimate to between 2 and 3 million. By American standards homelessness in the early seventies was not a major problem: it played only a minor role in the public debate, and the administration saw no reason to research the extent of the problem and did not have figures with which to rebut Snyder's claim. In 1992, Richard White quoted Snyder looking back on his fight against homelessness: "Everybody said, 'we want a number...'. We got on the phone, we made a lot of calls, we talked to a lot of people, and we said, 'Okay, here are some numbers.' They have no meaning, no value." Nonetheless, Snyder rejected the result of the first census of the homeless carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), saying that the figures were far too low. Snyder subsequently commented: "If HUD's numbers were accepted... they would take some of the power away... some of our potential impact... and some of the resources we might have access to, because we're not talking about something that's measured in millions." There is still some controversy surrounding these figures in America. Activists still maintain that millions of Americans live and sleep rough. Richard White calls this *lying for justice* (White 1992).

In the Netherlands – Amsterdam in particular – lying for justice is not unknown in the homeless sphere. A minor dispute has been raging since 1990 among the initiated in the capital on the number of young vagrants. Rob Jezek, researcher and organizer of projects for the homeless, introduced a figure of 1,200 young vagrants, based on *Thuis op straat*, a fact-finding study into young vagrants in Amsterdam's city center by Dirk Korf and Helen Hoogenhout (1989). The number then appeared in City of Amsterdam publications as well as others. Anyone reading Korf's report, however, will discover that numbers are not mentioned at all.

The implementation of a policy on the homeless in the Netherlands was handed down from central government to the local authorities in 1989. At the same time, the number of homeless people in Amsterdam seemed to be rising sharply – at least the phenomenon was increasingly visible on the streets. In the early nineties, the City of Amsterdam decided to find out how many homeless people were living on the streets. Dorine Greshof and myself from the Urban Sociology Department at the University of Amsterdam suggested – based on the example of Peter Rossi in Chicago (Rossi 1989: Chapter 3) – going out and simply counting them. The City supported the idea. To begin with, the aid organizations, such as the Salvation Army and Hulp voor Onbehuisden (HVO), at first argued in favor of collecting data from key informers, but eventually agreed to a street census.

In our study we refer to the "homeless" rather than the "roofless and homeless," the umbrella term often used in the Netherlands. The distinction we make is between the

actual homeless, the residential homeless, and the potential homeless. The actual homeless sleep rough or in night shelters, the residential homeless in hostels and boarding centers – the latter category could also be referred to as “homeless” rather than “roofless.” The potential homeless, those living in marginal housing, form the reservoir: these are the people who live in the lowest forms of housing, seedy boarding houses or rented rooms, old caravans, ramshackle boats, houses due for demolition, and squats. In this paper, however, we are concerned solely with the first category, the actual homeless, people who sleep rough, nocturnal vagrants, people for whom the streets are home at night – not merrymaking bachelors from the provinces.

## Urban Public Space

Along with the new vision of the city – the consumer city – the neglect of public areas came sharply into focus in the nineties. In the era of urban renewal there was little time for it and little interest in it. Left-over spaces and nooks nobody knew what to do with were filled with benches or playground equipment for children, or left as waste land, or they became places for dog walkers or illegal car parks. The creation of the “Red Carpet” from Central Station to Muntplein and the improvement of Nieuwmarktplein heralded a new era, with Dam square as the provisional high point. The nineties saw an upsurge of interest in the city’s streets and squares, especially concerning their external appearance and beauty. It was as if something like the “City Beautiful” movement from the beginning of the twentieth century had been revived.

Firstly, there was renewed interest in the design and upkeep of public spaces as part of what has been called “urban revitalization.” A fight for control over urban public space has begun, and that the results are not to everyone’s satisfaction is obvious from the terms used in this connection by some people: “festivalization”, “theme parkization”, and “museumization.” Any self-respecting municipality has by now learned to pay particular attention to the design of squares, streets, and canals, and administrators travel the world over in search of inspirational examples. Public space is being used to tackle deprivation and local crime. Other developments are also placing pressure on public space. Thus, interest and use have increased not only at the “top-down” but also “bottom-up” level. In recent years, large areas of urban public space have been privatized or even “colonized” by interested parties. Alleys, passageways, small squares, and sections of streets or districts have been sealed off, with only selected residents allowed in. Many variations on this “domain-formation” can be seen.

At first sight there would not seem to be any reason for concern about public areas. At last people are showing an interest again in properly maintained and designed public space. If we take a close look at the changes, however, we also see developments that are making public space less public. The concern regarding the organization, upkeep, and supervision of public areas is coming at the expense of access, use, and comfort. On closer examination we find that street surveillance, the renewed interest in street layout and street furniture, do not necessarily encourage utilization of the public domain. The effect is often to exclude as well as include. Appropriate use, such as shop-



ping or walking, must be enabled and inappropriate use discouraged, prevented, and made difficult.

Urban public space is by definition freely accessible to everyone and available for many different purposes. The public domain comprises streets and squares, parks and courtyards, bridges and waterways. People can enter the public domain, use it to get from A to B, as a place to sit, meet people, do business, look around, without having to ask anyone's permission, as often and as long as they like, day and night, summer and winter, without distinction as to rich or poor, male or female, black or white. Anyone who looks at their actual experience will realize that this notion is an ideal: in practice some places are more public than others for some people and activities, and this can vary with time and from one culture to another (see Lofland 1973, 1998, 2000).

Public space is referred to as "democratic space," it is likened to the Greek *agora*, the place that is accessible to everyone and fit for all sorts of purposes: you can sit there and stay as often and as long as you like. These characteristics may relate to the central plaza of a city center, but they are equally applicable to the local park around the corner or the pavement in front of someone's home. This is also the site par excellence for the homeless, men and women who spend most of their day there. The privatization of public space by definition affects the public nature and essence of the city (Jos Gadet in a letter to the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper, 29 December 2001). In this researcher's opinion, exchange and diversity in the public domain are a guarantee of dynamism, tolerance, and integration. The homeless, the "others," are part of everyday life and are respected in their "otherness."

In this paper, I examine whether the essence of public space is coming under pressure from the plans for the refurbishment and management of the public domain as regards a particular category of users of public space, viz. the homeless. To what extent do the increased surveillance, the refurbishment and the upkeep of, and reduced access to, parts of the public domain change the essence of that domain as far as the homeless are concerned?

The use of public space by the homeless has become increasingly clear from the censuses we have carried out since 1995, which seem to have established a tradition in urban sociological research in Amsterdam. The other side of the city, the frayed edge, has been brought into focus via hard facts. At the same time, this is an example of research that has had policy applications and that has ramifications for other sectors such as welfare and the management and supervision of public space in the city. Who comes up with the figures, when, and on what basis? That is always the question. A precise definition is essential, and it is not easy to do research into a group of people who are here today, gone tomorrow, constantly changing, and living partly in seclusion. After discussing the definitions, the research done in recent years into the numbers of people sleeping rough in Amsterdam, their validity and pitfalls, I conclude by considering the changed relationship between this group of rough sleepers and ambulant and the use of public space in the city.

### *Are There Many?*

When a boarding house burns down or a homeless person dies, the first question journalists and administrators ask is: how many homeless people are there actually? When they discover that there are only rough estimates available they criticize the researchers for wasting reams of paper without having come up with the answer. “The homeless are an elusive lot” the press then proclaims (*de Volkskrant*, 24 January 1996). Policymakers want to know how many homeless there are so they can gauge the amount of welfare facilities required; they want to quantify social problems. Shelters can provide figures on their own occupancy, but they don’t have an overview. On top of this, aid organizations may use figures to influence policy. There is a need for reliable, objective figures. It is not easy to supply such figures for all the homeless in the Netherlands. Because of the system of measuring and recording and the definition of homelessness the number is not clear-cut, and direct experience and subjective impressions play a major role.

At the end of the eighties, there were many signs that the number of homeless sleeping rough was on the increase. The press devoted a good deal of attention to this, and aid workers in Amsterdam agreed: the number of homeless inside and outside the shelters was growing, the queues at the night shelters were longer than ever. Whether there were more was debatable, as we did not have any basis for comparison. In any event, we started seeing more of them. That was only to be expected: the more we tidy up the city the more we are struck by anything out of the ordinary.

The numbers affect substantial interests. Tens of millions of euros are sloshing around in the shelter system, and numbers play a vital role in gaining public funds. The debate on the subject has kept flaring up, especially since the implementation of policy on the homeless was handed down (see my *NRC Handelsblad* interview, 24 July 2001, “Koehandel met daklozencijfers” [Horse trading with figures on the homeless]). In a word, there is a lot of confusion about the numbers. The figures given for the young homeless in the Netherlands (and in Europe) are illustrative. Young people do not conform to the “vagrant” stereotype and remain to a large extent invisible. “We’re careful not to walk around in rags with a bottle in our hand,” they say. At night they do not crawl under a bush or lie in a stinking doorway. And yet a few years ago the newspaper *Het Parool* claimed that “the Netherlands has at least ten thousand street children.” The street children in an article a few years ago entitled “Street children in boxes in the Bijlmer” eventually turned out to be dogs. No doubt there are a lot of latch-key children in the Bijlmer who hang around the streets during the daytime, but there is still a world of difference between glue-sniffing street children in Mexico City and truants or latch-key children in the Bijlmer. In 1987 – proclaimed the Year of the Homeless by UNESCO – it was claimed, to the disbelief of many, that the Netherlands had over 200,000 homeless. There was substantial confusion, sensation, and fuss about the numbers.

The City of Amsterdam’s Welfare Department had a growing need to know how many people were sleeping rough. The number of times places in the shelters were used was fairly well-known: between 2,500 and 3,000 homeless slept at least once a year at the shelters of Hulp Voor Onbehuisden, Jellinek and the Salvation Army. This

covers the provision of basic housing for the homeless in the broad sense, ranging from night shelters to hostels and other sheltered accommodation. How many people were actually sleeping rough is something nobody knew for certain in the first half of the nineties, and we heard figures ranging from a few hundred to over a thousand. As already mentioned, following a certain amount of negotiation the City of Amsterdam at the end of 1994 commissioned a study from us.

### *The 1995 Census*

By the winter of 1995 everything was organized. In the early morning, between 6 am and 9 am, some fifty “censustakers” set off for the places in the city where we had information that a lot of homeless people were camping out: the city center, Zeeburg, and the Bijlmer high-rise flats. The census area was divided into smaller blocks where pairs of censustakers armed with flashlights, coffee, tobacco, and cake set out to find the homeless. Our preliminary survey showed that the city center, Zeeburg, and Amsterdam Southeast were the most untransparent areas, which could not be surveyed with the aid of key individuals. Osdorp and Watergraafsmeer, for instance, also had some homeless people sleeping in parks, gardens, and other places, but we knew about them and they could usually be counted on the fingers of one hand. In the city center and Zeeburg we found about 150-175 rough sleepers in 1995, and 50 “indoor rough sleepers” in sheds in Bijlmermeer. It should be noted here that it was winter (it was very cold and wet) and the Stoelenproject – a low-threshold shelter – at that time in De Ruyterkade, was open.

The results of the census were never *officially* reported, however. In an article in *de Volkskrant* in January 1996 we expressed our criticism of the controversy surrounding the numbers of homeless. Those concerned seized upon this interview to make noise. The aid organizations complained to their Alderman about the leak. In reality, they were nervous about what they saw as low numbers of rough sleepers: they were apparently afraid that the legitimacy of the public money granted to them could come into question if these figures were published. The responsible Alderman blew the whistle on the report at the request of the aid organizations. Tempers had become frayed, and the Alderman expressed a need for “calm” on the homeless front.

But the fleeting media obsession soon made way for realistic questions from the policymakers. The City knew from the draft report on the survey findings that the numbers would not be high, and the organizations realized that they would be in a stronger position if there were reliable figures. Without further ado the new Alderman gave the go-ahead for a fresh census in 1997 in and around the city center and the Vondelpark. The Bijlmer flats with its large number of sheds were such an unusual case that the Nieuw Amsterdam housing association commissioned a special study there: this area is not considered here.

The main aim of the census of rough sleepers was to create a point of reference, something we could refer to if the census was repeated in a few years’ time to find out whether there were more women, young people, foreigners, etc. on the streets. It can be seen as a kind of alarm: if the numbers increase there is something wrong

with the facilities being provided. It is the smoke alarm of the streets.

Two things are critical in a census: where and how to count, and how to avoid double-counting errors. Misses result in underestimation of the “problem,” double counting results in overestimation. There is only one way to avoid misses: search carefully and carry out a thorough preliminary research. We interviewed police officers (especially community police officers), supervisors from the municipal management organization, cleaners and gardeners, and we organized the censustakers carefully. We also rode around on our bicycles and used our eyes, talked to a lot of people, such as people walking their dogs or other walkers, anyone who knew a place used by the homeless to sleep. How can you prevent double-counting errors if you want to count several times and don’t want to miss anything? An officer at the Warmoesstraat police station (as it then was) understood precisely: “Oh, you’d like to ring them!” – but we were not dealing with homing pigeons. In 1995, we tried to avoid double-counting errors by making notes on the appearance of each homeless person in a kind of log book, including the pattern on the sleeping bag, the clothes *under* the coat and the *color* of his or her dog. The final result was a mishmash of hilarious descriptions which was not in the least helpful in distinguishing between one person and another. The description usually boiled down to “trainers, jogging suit, dark curly hair.” The only result was a cartoon in *de Volkskrant* showing three tramps all looking alike, with beards, and thick layers of clothing.

In 1995, we wanted not only to count rough sleepers but also to find out something about their backgrounds. A flyer asked them to go to the Stoelenproject at the Oostelijke Handelskade between 11 am and 2 pm, where pollsters would interview them in exchange for a “smoke” and lunch. Hardly anyone showed up, it didn’t work. We did notice during the census, however, that the ones that showed up did want to talk about their situation.

In 1997, we abolished the log book. From then on we detected double-counting errors by means of recognition by the censustakers and a name code assigned to the rough sleepers on the spot at night, consisting of the first two letters of the forename and surname and the year of birth: thus Jan Jansen born 1950 was noted as “JAJA50.” The censustakers also took a brief poll on the spot. The direct method proved effective: the vast majority of the subjects had an attitude of “fire away with your questions.” They were so keen to tell their stories that this occasionally put the census in jeopardy... Finally someone who would listen to them.

### *The 1997 and 1999 Censuses*

In 1997, we moved the census from the early morning to between 1 am and 4 am. By the early morning, a lot of the homeless had been “chased off” by the first cleaning teams. The censustakers familiarized themselves with the areas assigned to them in daylight so as not to be taken by surprise at night. They were given notes about their area regarding the places where someone had been found sleeping, a kind of checklist, then.

One census one night is a snapshot, and the question is whether it is representative

of a longer period: weather conditions or the amount of nightlife can affect the numbers considerably. In busy squares such as the Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein, for instance, no one sleeps rough there when the nightlife is in full swing. This is why we counted three times in one week for the first time in 1997, Monday night, Wednesday night and Friday night; while in 1999, the census got spread over a period of three weeks. This enabled us to apply a statistical method known as *capture/recapture* (Williams 1999). This method has its origin in ecology. Essentially what it amounts to is this: the researcher fishes several times in the same pond, marks the fish he catches and puts them back. If he keeps catching the same fish he can assume that the number of fish caught is approximately the total number of fish in the pond. If he keeps catching different fish the total number must be much higher than the number caught. Using the name codes and recognition of the homeless by the censustakers we were able to estimate how many people were sleeping rough over one week, two weeks, and three weeks. This neutralizes underestimates and overestimates resulting from the snapshot approach. The problem with the method is that it assumes a “closed fish pond” where the angler is always fishing the same population. Those who sleep rough do not do so all year round, however, so the group on the streets keeps changing. The “pond” of rough sleepers has an open connection with the sea, as it were. But by comparing them with the lists kept by the shelters we were able to keep this problem under control.

During the first night of the 1997 census a fresh obstacle arose, which had not been noticed in 1995. Groups of homeless people were found in the Wallen area, at Central Station, the town hall and the Magna Plaza shopping mall (behind the Royal Palace), who spent all night on the streets but did not sleep; they just hung around, standing, sitting, or walking. We refer to them here as *ambulants*. To begin with, the censustakers did not know exactly what to do with them. In hindsight, it turned out that most of them were drug addicts. The polls show – and this confirms how important it is not only to count but also to ask some questions – that these ambulants claim they sleep rough a large number of nights a year on average. I emphasize *claim*, as the reliability of answers in surveys of this kind is a problem, but with repeated queries this can be kept under control. The answers the ambulants gave were not that different from the rough sleepers, those found sleeping or lying down. In other words, anyone wanting to know how many people spend the night on the streets in Amsterdam has to include some of the ambulants in the census. In 1997, we began including ambulants who claimed they slept rough at least eight nights a year. To avoid arguments, we tightened this up in the estimates for 1999 and 2001; we only included ambulants who claimed to sleep rough at least one month a year.

In 1997, using our method, we calculated 200 homeless *per night* spent the night on the streets, 150 sleeping and 50 ambulant. The figure was almost the same in 1999, slightly lower in fact: about 190 homeless spent the night on the streets (this time slightly more ambulant than sleeping). But whether they were ambulant or sleeping was not so important; the rule of thumb remained that just under two hundred homeless spent the night on the streets in Amsterdam. Finally we had a good figure, a point of reference for rough sleepers, the actual homeless.

At the beginning of 2001, a fresh census was taken, with some 60 censustakers going out onto the streets on three nights spread out over three weeks in February. The 2001 census showed a marked decline in the number of rough sleepers and a slight decrease in the number of ambulants. As no surveys were carried out at the shelters (unlike in 1997 and 1999) we were unfortunately unable to make estimates for Amsterdam as a whole, and this conclusion only applies to the areas we included in the census: the city center, Zeeburg, and the Vondelpark.

### *The 2001 Census*

In 2001, we had effective name codes and well-informed community police officers who knew what they were talking about. For the first time in years the police seemed to have an understanding of the street life in the areas where they worked. There was a fresh problem, however which involved the possible effects of the chase-away policy in the city center, with Central Station now closed at night as well. Last year police and judicial action on rough sleepers and ambulants was stepped up sharply: this applied throughout the city but especially in the city center. It has been increasingly difficult for rough sleepers to hold their own in the city center in recent years. Under a municipal bylaw sleeping rough is a form of nuisance: it constitutes a criminal offense and is grounds for being chased away. In the final analysis, this policy has substantially reduced the number of sleeping places in the city center. This supposition was confirmed by the police in the preliminary survey. This “moving on” policy in the city center was almost certainly likely to reduce the numbers of homeless that we found on the streets in the 1997 and 1999 census area, but does it mean that there are actually fewer homeless people on the streets? In theory they probably moved to the outer areas of the city.

It is technically impossible to cover the entire city in a single census. There are so few homeless on the streets in large parts of Amsterdam that finding them would entail an enormous amount of work. The alternative, confining ourselves to the old census area, is not particularly enticing either, though, as we would find fewer rough sleepers, whereas the number has presumably not gone down in Amsterdam as a whole. We are concerned that, while the number may have declined in our census areas, in practice the problem has moved elsewhere. The same situation caused a major controversy between policymakers and aid workers in London last year.

We finally opted for a compromise, a precise repetition of the census in the old area (the city center, Zeeburg and the Vondelpark) supplemented by four areas where we also counted three times at night (Schiphol, Amsterdam South/WTC Station, Oosterpark, and Sarphatipark). We carried out a somewhat more general survey in the ring around the census area, where we watched out for sleeping places and sleepers during the daytime and in some cases also at night. This provided us with information on whether there had been a shift.

For years stories have been going around among aid workers and the homeless that a lot of homeless people sleep at Schiphol Airport. To check this, Schiphol was included as a separate area in 1999. On the three nights we counted between 15 and 20 people,

including 5 to 10 rough sleepers. Thus, the situation is not that bad, even if we missed some because Schiphol is a gigantic, intricate complex of shopping arcades, car parks, and station platforms. Even if there are twice as many homeless, the numbers are still not much cause for concern. But at the beginning of this year, the preliminary survey led us to surmise that there really are large numbers of homeless spending the night at Schiphol. This January, a homeless man known to us who had been staying at Schiphol for some time without hesitation pointed out some 40 or so homeless to us who, he said, regularly spent the night in the Arrivals and Departures halls. The Schiphol management has also let it be known in the press that large numbers of homeless regularly stayed at Schiphol. According to *Het Parool* of 27 July 2000 there were as many as 200 homeless regularly hanging around Schiphol. A television program broadcast on the IKON network estimated the figure downward to between 100 and 200.

At the end of January 2001, there was a small fire in one of the toilets in the Arrivals hall at Schiphol, causing substantial damage and inconvenience. Although initially unaware of the cause of the fire, the Schiphol management introduced a strict admission policy after it occurred: after midnight no admission without a ticket. Just before midnight the homeless – sleeping or sitting – are removed from the halls and station platforms. Schiphol is an attractive place to stay for some of them, as it is not only warm and dry; there are also lots of things to find there. Many travellers throw away their telephone cards, train tickets or even their weed (especially if they suddenly get scared as they are about to depart for the US), thus providing smart homeless people with something on the side. With a train ticket they can, for instance, legally make a round trip to Utrecht, Rotterdam, and The Hague (with coffee breaks) after midnight, then resume their sleep on returning to Schiphol around 4 a.m.

Despite Schiphol's strict removal policy at the time of the census (we now took the census slightly earlier), we found almost twice as many homeless at Schiphol as in 1999. Everything points to the conclusion that, before the fire, considerably more homeless were spending the night at Schiphol than in 1999 and that there are still people spending the night there. Where do they come from – the city center or other parts of the country? We asked the homeless in the regular census area of the city whether they had slept at Schiphol for at least two weeks in recent months: only 7% of the respondents said they had. The Amsterdam Municipal Health Department also concludes from other research that it is not possible, based on the data from Schiphol management and the police on 1998 to 2001, to say anything about what ties the rough sleepers at Schiphol have with Amsterdam. It would seem that the Municipality of Haarlemmermeer is responsible for taking care of them, but thus far it has referred the matter to Amsterdam.

A recently completed ethnographic survey of the remaining group of homeless at Schiphol indicates that there is a regular group of about 35 who sleep in and around Schiphol, along with a constantly changing group of 20 occasional sleepers. Only a small percentage of these homeless were sleeping in the city center of Amsterdam in 1997; in fact, it seems that they come from all parts of the country.

## The WTC

A distinctly new location for the homeless in 2001 is Amsterdam South/WTC Station and environs. In 1999, there were only a few homeless people sleeping there; in 2001, we counted 15, with the largest group in the waiting room on the station platform. Here again it is doubtful whether these are people who were sleeping in the city center of Amsterdam in 1999 or earlier. The surveys show that the majority of the sleepers are young Polish males who only remain in Amsterdam for a brief period of time. At night they sleep at the WTC Station, generally spending the daytime at Schiphol. It is striking, in fact, that since 1997 we keep discovering a small group of Eastern Europeans, predominantly Poles. In 1997, we found them around the former loading docks of the warehouses along the banks of the IJ in the Eastern Docks area; in 1999, under the Toronto Bridge, just across from the Amstel Hotel, and now at the WTC.

### *The Remainder of the City Center and its Immediate Vicinity*

Where else do we come across the homeless in the public domain? Where else have they been found? Since 1997, we have found *ambulants* at Central Station, in the Wallen area, and around Nieuwendijk. Since Central Station began its late-night closing policy in 1999, we have increasingly seen them in the Wallen area and around Nieuwmarkt. After the introduction of banning orders in 2001, there was a further shift towards Nieuwmarkt and environs. We found hardly any sleepers at Nieuwmarkt apart from the odd drunk sleeping it off on the cold Gaudi tiled benches at the top of Kloveniersburgwal. In Rembrandtplein too, we didn't find any rough sleepers apart from a drunk in the gardens. Leidseplein is far too busy. Both squares are kept under surveillance by the police (and the catering establishments). The Dam provides few facilities especially since the Peek & Cloppenburg arcade has become part of the store, the C&A arcade closes at night, and the corner building of the Rokin diamond area doesn't have doorways any more. It is also too busy around there.

Where do we find the *sleepers*, then? First, we need to distinguish between individuals, couples, and groups. The individual rough sleepers (and those sleeping as couples) are spread out over almost the entire city center; we do not find them in busy squares, nor in the parks (with the exception of the north end of the Vondelpark). In Oosterpark, for instance, where preliminary research had led us to expect rough sleepers, we found no more than two during the three nights of the census, and no one in the Sarphatipark. There are hardly any rough sleepers in the parks at night (except for the Vondelpark); the odd ones lying there usually have well-camouflaged spots.

Groups of sleepers are generally an exception in the Netherlands; this is also true of Amsterdam. In 1999, we found small groups at Frederiksplein, under the passage (now closed) under the Toronto Bridge, in the Stopera car park and behind Magna Plaza, at Schiphol and in the northern part of the Vondelpark. In the outer ring of Amsterdam in 2001, we found rough sleepers in the parking lot of the World Fashion Center, Westerpark, Amsterdam North (the former NDSM site) and along the railway line between Amstel Station and Muiderpoort Station. About the same number of people were



sleeping at these places in 1999. The main concentrations at the Fashion Center (10-15) and Amsterdam North (about 10) remain about the same and they comprise a hard core of regulars. Now that places have disappeared from the center, groups look for places in the surrounding area, in particular in the World Trade Center area and Schiphol. It may be that potential rough sleepers realize that new groups are not tolerated and now sleep alone or in pairs spread out over the outer ring of the city. However, according to the staff of the HVO's Mobile Service Center and the Salvation Army's "Soup Bus" there are no indications of this trend. Currently, there is no reason to conclude, based on observation and preliminary research, that sleepers who have gone from the city center have taken up residence in Amsterdam's outer ring – apart from the WTC and Schiphol – and we may conclude that the overall number has decreased considerably.

### *The Nature of the Homeless*

A census *on its own* is not the solution. Knowing *how many* homeless there are is not the same as taking effective action. The homeless comprise a highly diverse category. There are the recently homeless and the long-term homeless; the homeless include groups of addicts, mental patients, illegal immigrants, fortune hunters, and even people who have no clear problem other than the fact that they have nowhere to live. These categories are in turn made up of people from different ethnic backgrounds, men and women, old and young people. Anyone wishing to tackle homelessness needs to have some idea of the number but also, above all, of the *nature* of the homeless. Let me focus on two aspects, length of vagrancy and length of stay in Amsterdam.

Most rough sleepers have been vagrants for a long time. In 1997, almost half of them had been vagrants for over two years. In 2001, the proportion rose to over two-thirds (70%). The proportion of short-term vagrants (up to three months) remains the same, that of medium-term vagrants (three months to two years) is going down. The length of time rough sleepers in Amsterdam remain vagrants is constantly increasing. The number of "new" rough sleepers remains the same.

Now let us consider length of stay. Although only one in five rough sleepers was born in Amsterdam, a substantial majority of them have been living in Amsterdam for a long time. This is also true of the 25% originally from Surinam. As our surveys show again and again, Amsterdam is really not that much of a magnet for rough sleepers from the provinces or other parts of the world, which remains the main concern of aldermen.

The number of illegal immigrants among rough sleepers – despite the tightening-up of asylum policy – remains low and stable; perhaps it will increase in the years to come.

To sum up, the majority of rough sleepers have been living in Amsterdam for a long time, have been homeless for a long time and sleep on the streets a large number of nights in the year. About 10% are women, the average age has risen since 1999, from 38 to just under 39. About half are not receiving welfare benefits and again, about half of them do not take advantage of the homeless facilities provided in the city. There is a

kind of hard core of rough sleepers who may perhaps never leave the streets.

The number of people spending the night on the streets in Amsterdam is going down. The reduction is mainly among rough sleepers and to a lesser extent among ambulants. The figures show a marked decline in the number of rough sleepers: over a period of three weeks there were 203 rough sleepers in the city center of Amsterdam in 1997, 140 in 1999, and 97 in 2001. Thus, the 1997 figure has been almost halved. This reduction is largely due to the increasing amount of double-counting (yet another indication of a hard core).

The Amsterdam municipal authorities have set themselves the target of providing everyone sleeping on the streets even against their will with a roof over their head – a laudable aim in itself. In the case of the hard core, the question is whether they actually sleep rough against their will. One rough sleeper at the Maritime Museum said the shelters were too busy and crowded in the winter and he preferred to be outside although he did use them more in the summer. It is going to be a difficult job persuading people who have been living on the streets for a long time to live indoors again. The census would seem to offer an indication of the nature of the hard core of rough sleepers. Although the number of rough sleepers is going down, the proportion who claim to have become homeless as a result of drug addiction has gone up from 20% to 33% since 1997. Rough sleepers who are drug addicts have more difficulty coming off the streets than rough sleepers in general. This may be partly due to the organization of the aid services, which are still based on the old-fashioned idea that people only stay indoors at night to sleep.

### *Recent Changes in Public Space*

Thus far I have sketched a picture of a special group of users who spend time in public areas and have made them their home. The public domain is changing, however. As already mentioned, and as stated in many publications, the public domain is defined as democratic space, *the place that is open to everyone and available for all sorts of purposes: you can sit there and stay as long and as often as you like* (Whyte 1988, Heine-meijer, et al 1968; Lofland 1993; Oosterman 1993). The key question for us is: Is free access to public space as defined by various urban sociologists coming under increasing pressure? In other words, we ask ourselves to what extent the democratic element in public space is going to change as a result of the implicit and explicit disciplining and regulation associated with the refurbishment and management plans.

In recent years, public space has become less of an obvious place to stay for some users as a result of its design and organization. Some of the changes are minor, some of them major: for example, fitting benches with ugly brackets making it impossible to lie down, installing benches with no backs, and replacing seats at bus and tram stops with ledges for people to lean on. Sometimes administrators go for the easiest solution, removing all the seats so there is nowhere for people to sit. Replacing the old-fashioned wooden benches with perforated metal structures is now common practice. The beautifully designed, expensive one-and-a-half-seat benches near the Westerkerk church – which you cannot lie down on – are another example. Another solution could be to add

a few benches so that one or two sleeping homeless people are not conspicuous. The researcher (Whyte 1988) points out that the “public-friendliness” of a city can be gauged by the amount of seating facilities provided.

Physical solutions to prevent a particular use have always been around: the underside of the walls of the Royal Palace, for instance, are slanted to keep the riff-raff away.

Government bodies, businesses, users, and individual residents all nibble away at public space. Fear of strangers, the need to control, and selfishness fight for dominance. Residents are very inventive in screening off public space and in some ways privatizing and colonizing it for their own use, with hard and soft solutions, with planters, pavement gardens, fences, and benches. The justifiably growing interest in and concern for the organization, upkeep, and supervision of public space conflicts with general accessibility, use, and comfort. Officially, you can sit there and stay as often and as long as you like, but we are increasingly seeing appropriate use – e.g. shopping and walking – being enabled and inappropriate use – loafing, playing, skateboarding, sleeping or playing football – discouraged, prevented, and made difficult. These physical modifications affect not only the homeless but also young and old alike.

We note that four trends were increasingly apparent in 2001 (see Deben and Rings 1999). Firstly, existing bans are being emphatically tightened up and new ones introduced: no smoking on the station concourse, obligatory consumption every half-hour in catering establishments. This includes not only the restrictions on musicmaking and performances in certain streets and squares in Amsterdam but also a ban on sleeping in public areas. The 1999 police handbook, entitled *Streetwise*, also fits pattern.

Secondly, certain groups are being kept out via the redesign of the public domain and street furniture, using fences and barriers. Minor changes and modifications reduce user-friendliness – these may not be immediately noticeable to outsiders but they are inconvenient for those concerned. The ledges, sills, and fences intended to keep skateboarders out do not make life easier for wheelchairs and the users of walkers (Borden 1998; Brunt 1991).

Thirdly, lots of street surveillants have come on the scene. While this is quite understandable, at the same time it makes public areas less public. A host of new kinds of surveillants have appeared in the public domain, as nicely listed once in the *NRC Handelsblad*: caretakers, village watchmen, city watchmen (Amsterdam), night watchmen (Haarlem), flat watchmen (Bijlmer), park keepers (Amsterdam West), beach guards (Zandvoort), fire watchmen (Hoogezand-Sappemeer), community caretakers (Amstelveen, Amsterdam Westerpark), traffic supervisors (The Hague), security assistants (Rotterdam), prevention teams, teenager teams, neighborhood watches and district security officers, in addition to the various commercial security services such as Randon. A wave of surveillance has swept the Netherlands, but on closer inspection we find that they have taken over surveillance and enforcement from the police (and in some cases the social control by community and welfare workers), who do not get around to this as a result of cutbacks, reorganizations, and changes in attitudes.

Fourthly, there is a Dutch variation on the concept of zero tolerance imported from

America, as introduced by Rudolf Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, and Bratton, his Police Commissioner. In some places, their approach has been too easily copied by administrators in the Netherlands. Zero tolerance means that a prohibition sign or a few words are not enough; harsh measures that make themselves felt are seen as the only solution. The tit-for-tat policy is part of this. Public space – however contradictory it may sound – is increasingly being fenced off with ugly railings and monitored with 24-hour CCTVs (see Merry 1996; Davis 1992).

However understandable and logical these measures may seem, they are often conceived from a purely management or maintenance point of view. You can put up a fence, you can employ more surveillants, you can remove a bench, or you could install a few more, you could remove the fence at the Toronto Bridge to let walkers continue their walks along the Amstel again – cities such as Barcelona and Berlin are less up-tight in this respect.

## Conclusion

The tolerance of a city can be gauged from the amount of seating facilities provided. Amsterdam covers a relatively small area, the pavements are narrow, the pressure on public space is constantly increasing, the streets and squares are busier than ever, the list of applications for events in streets and squares is getting longer and longer. The hustle and bustle is increasingly regarded as a problem.

The increased interest in “better” public space makes “undesirable” aspects more conspicuous sooner. Thus the homeless sleeping rough, loafing junkies, and other groups who hang around are a major thorn in the sides for policymakers and designers, a stain on their beautifully designed new squares.

Measures to control urban public space will only increase as a result of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in the United States. It will be more difficult to criticize these processes and measures from any point of view other than security.

In the introduction, we questioned whether the essence of public space – free access – is coming under pressure as a result of the plans for refurbishment and the management of the public domain and whether, as a result, life is made more difficult for certain kinds of users of public space – in particular the homeless who sleep rough and live outdoors. The answer is yes. During the past decade the pressure has increased as a result of more surveillance, specific refurbishment, and the sealing-off of parts of the public domain. The characteristic of public space remains free access for all, and public order maintained on the spot by neutral guardians is a disappearing order (Gadet, *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 December 2001).

At the same time, however, we find that the number of rough sleepers in Amsterdam has decreased substantially as a result of more provision for the homeless and the physically debilitating effects of life on the streets. It makes sense to assume that the increased pressure in the public domain has been a factor in exchanging the streets for shelters and hostels, but this is currently only a hypothesis.

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## 3.9 • Voting in an Old and a New Town

*Rinus Deurloo, Sjoerd de Vos and Herman van der Wusten*

### **1. Introduction**

This paper compares the political preferences of the inhabitants of Amsterdam and Almere as they show up in four elections in 1994 and 1998. The sensational elections during 2002, including the apparently political murder of Pim Fortuyn, certainly affected the public climate in the country. The results of these municipal and parliamentary elections could not be analysed in this paper in any depth. At first sight, however, they do not seriously impair the conclusions drawn from the results of the earlier elections and we will on a few occasions refer to them.

The distance between Amsterdam and Almere is approximately ten kilometres by air, and 25 by road (see Figure 1). Yet the two towns are very different. Amsterdam's history dates back many centuries, whereas Almere was built only about 25 years ago. This age factor accounts in part for the considerable differences between the two towns in terms of metropolitan character. A "real" city is like a mosaic, composed of many different facets. Amsterdam with its very heterogeneous population, large variety of employers and many cultural and entertainment facilities fully deserves to be called a metropolis. This is where Almere still has a very long way to go. Therefore, we can first of all assume that the political preferences of the inhabitants of Amsterdam will have a more urban character than those of the residents of Almere.

However, the two towns are intimately interconnected. Almere originally served as an overspill town for Amsterdam and therefore has many residents who originally came from Amsterdam. Many of Almere's inhabitants are also linked to Amsterdam in every-day life. Employment is still quite scarce in Almere and so a large proportion of Almere's inhabitants work in Amsterdam or in the area. And those who fancy a "good night out" often head for Amsterdam to take advantage of the many possibilities the metropolis has to offer.

The fact that Almere is inhabited by many former residents of Amsterdam, that a considerable portion of Almere's inhabitants work in Amsterdam, and that entertainment and cultural life are strongly oriented towards Amsterdam raises the question of whether this involvement with Amsterdam might be the reason why the attitude and behavior of Almere residents as well as their political preferences have a strong Am-





Figure 1. Map of Amsterdam and Almere

sterdam character. Do Almere's inhabitants vote like Amsterdammers – that is, as real urbanites – or does the profile of local voting preferences demonstrate a more rural character?

In order to answer these questions, we will look at the results of the 1994 and 1998 elections. Two elections – one parliamentary and one council election – were held in both years. This paper will examine the results of these elections and describe a number of striking similarities and differences between Amsterdam and Almere. In order to do this we will look at the aggregate results in both places as well as at the spatial patterns in each of them. In the concluding section, we will examine whether similarities and differences are attributable to the link between Amsterdam and Almere, and/or to differences in the urban character of these two towns.

The substantial part of this paper is divided into four sections:

In Section 3, the Dutch political system including the main issues regarding the four elections will be discussed. A number of important changes occurred in national political relations, particularly in the first election year to be dealt with (1994). Firstly, support for the largest religious party – the CDA – was strongly reduced and for the first time a cabinet was formed without it; this cabinet was called the *Paarse Coalitie* (Purple Coalition). Secondly, we will deal with the sharp increase in votes for the extreme right in that election. Finally, we will consider the remarkable rise of parties whose political agenda was aimed chiefly at the interests of elderly citizens. In retrospect, the rise of the extreme right and of the parties for the elderly appear to be trivial incidents, as in later elections these political tendencies practically disappeared. How-

ever, these events are indicative of more general processes that are manifested in different guises as time goes on. The support for both the extreme right and the parties for the elderly indicate the inability of the main political parties to incorporate sizeable portions of the electorate. Both are indications of the withdrawal of voters exhibited in other Western societies, particularly in urban areas. The question is where these manifestations of withdrawal are strongest.

Section 4 provides an initial overview of the election results in the two municipalities in general terms. To what extent do the results correspond with or differ from the national picture?

Section 5 compares the voting behavior in both places as a whole regarding those aspects related to the urbanization level. For that purpose we will consider the turnout at the elections and the extent to which people voted for the extreme right. As voter turnout is an indication of political participation and involvement of the electorate in general, and voting for the extreme right implies disapproval of the present political order, taken together these two indicators provide some general information about the political attitude of the population. The SP (Socialist Party) and the parties for the elderly could also be considered to be operating on the margins of the electoral process and could also indicate dissatisfaction with the current political relations. In Section 5, we will restrict ourselves to working with the two examples of turnout and the extreme right.

The fourth and last substantial part of this paper (Section 6) deals with the election results for the individual polling districts of each town and how these relate to population characteristics. This analysis is intended to indicate where within urban areas we can find these manifestations of electoral withdrawal in particular, and to what extent the spatial patterns of voting are reflected in the same way in these two municipalities. First, we will examine whether there is a relation between the support for the various parties at the polling district level. Subsequently for both towns, we will examine the differences with respect to turnout percentages and support for the extreme right between individual polling districts. We will then examine whether these attitudes are connected to the socio-economic population characteristics of the neighborhood in which the polling district is located.

Finally (in Section 7), a short conclusion will be given. But first, Section 2 will provide some historical context for the Amsterdam-Almere comparison.

## **2. The Historical Context**

Amsterdam developed around a dam across the Amstel River. The first official record of Amsterdam dates back to 1275, but presumably Amsterdam already existed at the beginning of the thirteenth century and perhaps even before then. The town grew rapidly and developed into an important trading center. In the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic (i.e. the seventeenth century), Amsterdam was the center of the world economy, and the world's most modern city. It was built in a famous pattern of parallel canals structured around the city's core and closed off by a port area. As growth re-

sumed in the later part of the nineteenth century, the city's limits continued to expand and the population increased. In 1959, the population of the municipality of Amsterdam reached its all-time high: 870,000 persons.

After that, the number of inhabitants decreased – as a result of suburbanization – until the mid-1990s, when it gradually increased again, mainly as a result of immigrants settling there. Currently, its population numbers about 740,000 (Wintershoven 2001). Amsterdam is surrounded by a number of municipalities that form an integral part of the metropolitan area. However, in this paper we will limit our analyses to the municipality of Amsterdam. Compared to such metropolises as New York, Mexico City and Tokyo, Amsterdam is rather small, but it is the largest city in the Netherlands. And it is a “real city” in all kinds of ways. For example, it has a large variety of different cultural facilities, such as museums and theaters. There is a large supply of hotels, cafés, etc. and an abundance of entertainment facilities, such as cinemas and discotheques. The living standard of the inhabitants is very mixed and ranges from the very rich to those who are dependent on social security benefits. In certain parts of the city, one may admire beautiful houses lining a canal, whereas in other parts there are rather run-down neighborhoods. Amsterdam has many single- and two-person households (55 percent and 20 percent, respectively, on 1 January 2000), meaning that three-quarters of Amsterdam households are small. Only 15 percent of all households consist of two-parent families with children (Wintershoven 2001). The presence of universities and other institutions of higher education attract a considerable number of students. There are people from 171 different countries living in Amsterdam. Approximately 40 percent of the population is of foreign origin. In ethnic terms, this 40 percent forms a very heterogeneous population. Surinamese and Antillean inhabitants form important ethnic groups. In addition, Amsterdam has a considerable number of Moroccan and Turkish inhabitants, most of whom originally came to the Netherlands as foreign workers. Moreover, Amsterdam houses a large number of political refugees from non-industrial countries, who have sought asylum in the Netherlands in recent years (Schyns et al 2001).

Although the name “Almere” is much older than the name “Amsterdam” (as far back as 753, Bishop Bonifatius crossed a stretch of water named Almere to reach Friesland), Almere is a brand-new town. The decision to build it was taken by the national government in 1971 as a partial solution to the problem of space in the northern part of the Randstad (the urban agglomeration in the western part of the Netherlands). Almere is situated in a polder in the IJsselmeer (a large, shallow lake in the northern part of the country) that was drained in 1968. The first residents were welcomed to Almere as recently as 1976. Since then the town has grown at an unprecedented rate. For many years now, it has been the fastest growing town in the Netherlands with roughly 7,500 new residents each year. Almere was originally supposed to serve as an overspill town for Amsterdam, and until the mid-1980s, the majority of its new inhabitants did indeed come from Amsterdam. Since then, however, the influx from Amsterdam has been large but no longer predominant (Cortie and Ostendorf 1996). When the “new town” policy was changed into the “compact city” policy in the mid-1980s, and

the number of new residents in other “new towns” such as Lelystad and Purmerend declined considerably, Almere turned out to be an exception: it developed into a booming town (Cortie and Ostendorf 1996). At the time of this writing (2001) Almere has already exceeded the respectable number of 150,000 inhabitants and is the Netherlands’ eleventh largest city. By 2010, the number of inhabitants will have reached 200,000, and eventually – with 250,000 and possibly even 300,000 inhabitants – Almere will become the fourth largest city in the Netherlands. However, simply having a large number of inhabitants does not turn a town into a “real” city, and in the case of Almere there are a variety of reasons why it does not deserve that qualification just yet. For example, the opportunities for education, culture, and entertainment are very limited. Recent comparative research carried out by Nyfer University among the larger municipalities in the Netherlands, resulted in Almere ranking relatively low (27th) on the attractiveness index – an index which includes such aspects as culture, criminality, and infrastructure (Almere’s *Green Weekly*, 18 July 2001). And as the increase in employment cannot keep up with the increase in population, Almere is first and foremost a dormitory town. However, Almere is making efforts to gradually turn itself into a real city. Its new skyline has already been finalized on paper. The first row of houses in the town center has already been demolished in order to make room for a new, dazzling center. On the site of the business center – a location for which Almere proudly managed to acquire the status of World Trade Center – the first buildings are nearing completion. With the newly established Institute for Information Engineering, a training college for primary education, and the launching of various teaching programs by the University of Amsterdam, Almere has succeeded in developing an incipient higher-education sector. Additionally, Almere is trying to attract ICT businesses to the town.

Recently (April 2001), a joint Amsterdam-Almere report was published by the two town councils, in which it stated that Almere will again become Amsterdam’s growth center. Amsterdam has no more development possibilities because it is completely surrounded by a protected green belt. Almere is going to meet this demand. According to the report: “Almere is expected to build a considerable quantity of houses, so that the municipality can and will develop into a full-grown town” (Almere’s *Green Weekly*, 7 April 2001). With this, it is explicitly acknowledged, however, that it has not reached this status yet.

### **3. The Dutch Political System in the Mid-1990s**

Elections in the Netherlands take place according to the system of proportional representation with a very low threshold, often resulting in a considerable number of different parties winning seats in the Dutch Lower House (Tweede Kamer) or on municipal councils. In small municipalities, one party may obtain the majority of seats but in the council of the larger municipalities and in the national parliament this is rarely the case. Therefore, forming a national government or a municipal board of aldermen may be a complex task, as a coalition of several parties has to be established, and this usually involves a great deal of bargaining.

In the Netherlands, all inhabitants with Dutch nationality have the right to vote from the age of 18. Since 1985, immigrants who have been living in the Netherlands for longer than five years are allowed to participate in municipal council elections; however, unless they have obtained a Dutch passport, they are not allowed to vote in parliamentary elections.

Furthermore, Dutch citizens are not obliged to vote. Since compulsory voting was abolished in 1969, the turnout of city dwellers has been lower than the turnout of people from the countryside. Furthermore, the turnout at municipal council elections is lower than that at parliamentary elections.

At the time of the 1994 and 1998 elections, there were four large nationwide parties in the Netherlands which had governed the country in a ruling coalition at one time or another. The PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid; Labor Party) is a social-democratic party, programmatically slightly inclined towards the less privileged portions of the electorate. The VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie; People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) is a liberal party, programmatically slightly inclined towards the better-off portions of the electorate, preferring market economy to state intervention. In 1977, the CDA (Christen-Democratisch Appèl; Christian Democratic Appeal) started as a religious party, which resulted from the fusion of several Catholic and Protestant parties. Programmatically the party gives preference to voluntary, private institutional arrangements backed up by state funding over state intervention or a strict market economy. It puts great emphasis on the family as the basic societal unit. D'66 (Democraten '66; Democrats '66) was founded in 1966 with the objective of bringing about political change in the Netherlands in terms of a new line-up of parties, with more emphasis on direct participation and an interest in new technology. It continues a long-standing tradition of the liberal left, and is especially appealing to higher-educated young adults.

Undoubtedly the most important result of the 1994 elections was the formation of a completely new "purple" coalition. For a long time in the Netherlands, religious parties had played a key role in Dutch politics. Like its predecessors, the CDA was positioned in the middle of the political spectrum. As mentioned earlier, the Netherlands had to be governed by a coalition of several parties. But regardless of which party was dominant, the CDA and its predecessors were always needed to form a ruling coalition. At times there was a "left" coalition with the PvdA, and at other times a "right" coalition with the VVD. Thus, Christian politics was always at the center of power. To some – especially D66 – this was a thorn in the inside. D66 was a late, rather small entrant in the political arena. It shared with the CDA a position in the middle of the left-right scale. Most of the time D66 teamed up with the PvdA but it could never dominate coalition negotiations. However, in 1994 the political situation in the Netherlands changed in a spectacular fashion.

In the 1994 parliamentary elections, the CDA in particular but also the PvdA performed badly. The beginning of the 1990s was a time of economic recession and the leaders of the CDA disagreed on the direction the party should take, and this turned into an open conflict. As a result, the CDA lost 20 seats in 1994. Neither the combination

of the CDA and the PvdA nor that of the CDA and the VVD won a majority of seats; both potential coalitions needed the help of D66, which had gained considerable support. D66, however, only wanted to participate in a coalition with the PvdA and the VVD and now had the opportunity to get its way. Forced by these circumstances, a coalition government consisting of the PvdA, the VVD and D66 was formed after prolonged and hard negotiations. The “red” character of the PvdA and the “blue” color associated with the VVD led to this government being labeled the Purple Coalition. The coalition survived its entire four-year term of office. And although the major initiator of this government – D66 – suffered a considerable defeat in the 1998 elections, the Purple Coalition continued to govern. It melted down in the run-up to the fiercely contested parliamentary elections of 2002. The parties of the Purple Coalition were severely beaten. The list launched by Pim Fortuyn obtained 17%, a record result for a first-time participant in Dutch electoral history. CDA was a strong winner. It got 28% of the vote and became the largest party in parliament.

In addition to the four large parties mentioned above, several other nationwide parties are significant players in the political arena. GroenLinks (the Green Left), a leftist party, also attaches great importance to environmental issues. It is the result of a fairly recent merger of pacifists, communists, and Christian radicals, and – like the PvdA and the SP (Socialistische Partij; the Socialist Party) – it is especially inclined towards less-privileged groups. The SP is slightly smaller, and also somewhat more extreme in its rejection of the establishment.

Furthermore, in the last part of the twentieth century, the extreme right is again attracting a great deal of attention in Europe; the Netherlands has also seen several attempts to form an ultra-right-wing party. These parties are single-issue parties because they actually only have one real item on the agenda, in this case, the expulsion of immigrants and ethnic minorities from society. Their suggestion that the many problems European countries are suffering from are primarily caused by immigrants, attracts a considerable number of voters in many countries. Their rhetoric, style, and tactics indicate that they cater to an electorate that is strongly dissatisfied with the political system and is willing to support programs of radical change. In France, the Front National (National Front) won a considerable percentage of the votes in elections, although – due to the French voting system – it did not result in many seats. In Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium), and particularly in Antwerp, the Vlaams Blok (Flemish Block) has achieved considerable success. And in Austria, the FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreich) recently succeeded in getting into the government, despite protests from all other EU countries.

Against this background, the extreme right in the Netherlands has not achieved much success. Their existence after World War II first became apparent when the NVU (Nederlandse Volks-Unie; Dutch Popular Union) participated in the 1974 municipal council elections in The Hague and almost won a seat on the city council. In 1980, a small party named the CP (Centrumpartij; Central Party) emerged from a splinter group of the NVU, and after the 1982 parliamentary elections, Hans Janmaat, the party leader, made it into the Dutch Lower House. However, partly due to Janmaat’s gener-

al lack of charisma, the CP – the party was later renamed the CD (Centrum Democraten; Central Democrats) – was not very successful. The supporters of the CD mainly come from the larger towns, especially from the old industrial centres. In the 1990s, another, much smaller ultra-right party – CP86 (Centrumpartij 86; Central Party 86) – made a name for itself. This party was even more radical than the CD and has since been banned by the courts. The party had some support in the larger cities, but was never really significant in electoral terms.

These small, right-wing parties – especially the CD – obtained remarkably good results in the 1994 elections, with over 2.5 percent of the national vote (see Table 1). In municipal council elections they won 78 seats in 43 municipalities, and in the parliamentary elections, they won three seats – all for the CD – in the Dutch Lower House. However, in contrast to other European countries, where the extreme right still plays a role, the number of Dutch right extremist supporters rapidly declined again: in the 1998 elections, these parties obtained only 0.5 percent of the national vote – not even enough for one seat in the Dutch Lower House.

In addition, in the early 1990s some parties representing the interests of the elderly were launched. Like the parties for the extreme right, these, too, are single-issue parties. Their political agenda focuses on only one aspect of Dutch society, namely the interests of the elderly. These parties consider a decent old-age pension and good facilities in the field of medical treatment and care to be of paramount importance. In discussions about the position of the elderly in the Netherlands, quite frequently they refer to the role the current older generation played in the post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands. These parties for the elderly did not participate in the 1994 municipal council elections, but did make a surprisingly strong debut in the parliamentary elections held in that same year. They obtained 4.5 percent of the votes (see Table 1), which earned them seven parliamentary seats. The seats went to two different parties: the AOV (Algemeen Ouderen Verbond; General Elderly Alliance), which received six seats, and the Unie 55+ (Union 55+), which received one seat. This split is characteristic of these parties: there is disagreement about the way in which the interests of the elderly can best be served, and above all, who would be most capable of carrying serving those interests. It was not long before the consequences became apparent. Because they bickered in public and the AOV parliamentary fraction fell apart, these parties soon lost a great deal of sympathy. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, they only got one percent of the national vote. And because of the disunity among them, they did not obtain the corresponding seat in the Dutch Lower House, as the votes were distributed among a coalition of the AOV and Unie 55+ on the one hand, and a breakaway party called Senioren 2000 (Seniors 2000) on the other hand.

Finally, another interesting phenomenon of the political relations in the mid-1990s is the existence of so-called local parties. Until 2002 these parties had only participated in local elections (in 2002 they won 2 seats nationally in the end after they had first invited Pim Fortuyn as their leader and then split up again). The political agenda of the local parties is primarily aimed at local interests, which is often expressed in their name, such as *Leefbaar Amsterdam* (Liveable Amsterdam) and the *Almere Partij*

(Almere Party). Others are named after the person who heads the list of candidates, often a well-known person in the community, such as the Schimmelpennink Lijst (Schimmelpennink List) in Amsterdam. Nationwide, local parties attract a large number of voters: in the 1994 municipal council elections they obtained over one fifth of the votes cast, and in 1998 (when a record number of 750 local parties participated in council elections) almost a quarter of all votes (see Table 1). Local parties are especially significant in smaller communities.

#### 4. The Political Profile of Amsterdam and Almere

So what is the situation in Amsterdam and Almere regarding the electoral attraction of the three parties that make up the Purple Coalition, and of the opposition party (the CDA) and of the other parties? To what extent does the picture differ from the national picture? Table 1 – which presents the election results of Amsterdam and Almere (two parliamentary elections and two elections for the municipal council) – provides the answers. The table also includes the nationwide election results.

Table 1. Results of elections for the municipal council and for parliament in Amsterdam, Almere and nationwide in 1994 and 1998

Election	Municipal council 1994			Parliament 1994			Municipal council 1998			Parliament 1998		
	Amsterdam	Almere	Nationwide	Amsterdam	Almere	Nationwide	Amsterdam	Almere	Nationwide	Amsterdam	Almere	Nationwide
Parties												
PvdA	26.3	15.9	16.9	33.2	22.7	24.0	28.0	20.8	18.6	32.3	30.0	29.0
VVD	16.0	25.2	15.4	18.3	28.2	20.0	18.5	28.8	17.6	22.2	35.0	24.7
CDA	7.4	9.1	21.6	7.9	8.7	22.2	6.2	8.7	20.4	6.1	6.8	18.4
D66	15.9	23.2	11.0	17.7	22.1	15.5	8.4	11.5	5.6	14.3	11.1	9.0
Green Left	12.6	9.4	5.5	8.5	4.1	3.5	14.8	10.9	6.1	15.0	8.1	7.3
SP	2.2	–	2.0	1.5	0.9	1.3	7.1	–	3.3	4.5	3.0	3.5
Small Right	0.6	1.6	2.7	0.8	1.5	4.8	0.7	2.9	2.9	0.9	1.9	5.1
Extreme right	9.7	7.9	2.6	4.3	3.7	2.8	1.5	–	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.6
'Elderly' parties	–	–	–	5.1	6.2	4.5	2.9	3.7	0.4	1.3	1.4	1.0
Local parties	4.0	7.9	21.3	–	–	–	11.0	12.1	24.4	–	–	–
Other	5.3	–	0.9	2.5	1.9	1.4	0.9	0.6	0.3	2.5	2.1	1.5
Turnout	56.9	60.6	65.3	69.2	77.1	78.8	47.9	50.8	58.9	64.4	69.6	73.3



We will not go into all the results presented in Table 1, but restrict ourselves to a general observation of the larger parties (PvdA, VVD, CDA, D66) and the most conspicuous events (Purple Coalition and parties for the elderly) in the period considered. In the next section, the phenomenon of the extreme right and its rise will be discussed separately.

Together the three parties of the Purple Coalition have achieved a better result in the two towns – especially in Almere – than in the Netherlands as a whole. However, the distribution of the votes between the three parties differs considerably. The PvdA traditionally has many supporters in Amsterdam and has received a much larger percentage of the votes there than in the Netherlands as a whole. But in the 1998 parliamentary elections the situation was different, mainly due to strong competition from the Green Left and, to a lesser extent, the SP. In Almere, on the other hand, the PvdA obtained approximately the national percentage. The reverse picture applies to the VVD: in Amsterdam roughly the national percentage of votes cast, but in Almere a much better result. Only D66 has clearly obtained more than the national percentage of votes in both towns consistently, with Almere nearly always getting the highest percentage. All in all, the conclusion therefore has to be that the voting behavior of the population of Almere as regards the three parties of the Purple Coalition does not clearly reproduce the Amsterdam pattern. This reflects selectivity in the outmigration from Amsterdam, changes in electoral preferences depending on local context, and immigration in Almere from places other than Amsterdam in a combination that we cannot disentangle at the present stage.

In the current Dutch political relations there are considerable differences between urban and rural electorates (Ostendorf 1987). Regarding the established parties, in the city people have little sympathy for the CDA. The CDA vote is predominantly concentrated in the countryside. Therefore, it is to be expected that in both Amsterdam and Almere the CDA will obtain a considerably lower percentage of votes than in the Netherlands as a whole. This is confirmed by the results presented in Table 1. And, again as might be expected, the CDA share in Amsterdam is consistently below that of Almere. In council elections, when it concerns local issues, this applies to a greater extent than in the Dutch Lower House elections. Both observations reveal that in this respect the Almere electorate has more rural characteristics than the Amsterdam electorate.

How did the parties for the elderly do in Amsterdam and in Almere? Of course the electoral success of these parties depends above all on whether or not many older persons are living in a particular polling district. In addition, one has to appreciate that new parties have to attract voters with limited loyalties to existing parties. According to Table 1, their electoral history follows the pattern described in the previous paragraph: many votes were won in 1994 but only a few in 1998. But in both Amsterdam and Almere, the parties for the elderly come out somewhat stronger than in the Netherlands as a whole. So, in this respect both towns are showing a similar voting behavior. Regarding Almere, this is both remarkable and quite unexpected. After all, this community – as a fast-growing overspill town – has a relatively young population. Just look

at the percentage of older people among the electorate of the 1994 parliamentary elections. First, we will look only at people who definitely belong to the target group of the parties for the elderly, namely those aged 65 or above. In Amsterdam and in the Netherlands as a whole, they make up roughly 17 percent of the electorate; in Almere, however, only 11 percent. If we go by what the name of Unie 55+ implies and also include people aged 55-65, then the percentage of older people among the electorate increases to roughly 26 percent in Amsterdam, 29 percent in the whole of the Netherlands and 19 percent in Almere. In both cases the good results of the parties for the elderly in Almere compared to the results in Amsterdam and the national results are conspicuous. A spokesman for AOV/Unie 55+ in Almere ascribed the good result to an intensive election campaign, and to the notion that the party also attracted inhabitants under the age of 55 – who might have had their future interests in mind.

In the earlier discussion of CDA we pointed out the difference between the urban and the rural electorate. In the following section we will go into more detail about the aspect of urbanity in voting behavior in Amsterdam and Almere. Therefore, as mentioned in the introduction, we will consider turnout behavior and the extent to which people have voted for the extreme right as indicators of non-commitment and dissatisfaction with the present political reality.

## **5. Amsterdam and Almere: Two Urban Electorates?**

In general, urban voters feel less committed to the political establishment (Verba, Nie and Kim 1987). This translates in a lack of interest demonstrated by a small turnout percentage. It also results in a high level of consistent support for parties which oppose the current political establishment or which, because of the ideas put forward, are relegated to the margins. In the context of the studied elections there are different parties that may be considered to be in that position. This applies during 1994 and 1998 to the extreme right, and to the radical left party (the SP), and to the parties for the elderly and, during 2002, to the List Pim Fortuyn. We will look at the support for the extreme right here. Thus the question is: how urban are the Amsterdam and Almere electorates, considering turnout and support for the extreme right as an example of a marginal party?

In each of the four elections, the turnout percentages in both Almere and Amsterdam were below the national average. As far as this aspect is concerned both show a somewhat “urban” voting behavior. And for all four elections, less people voted in Amsterdam than in Almere (see the turnout percentages presented at the bottom of Table 1). Considering turnout percentages, Amsterdam – as might be expected – indeed exhibits more urbanity than Almere.

Concerning the second indicator (i.e. support for the extreme right), attention should first be drawn to the fact that in the Netherlands the extreme right is primarily a metropolitan phenomenon. This, among other things, is related to the fact that many immigrants live in the larger towns, so the presence of immigrants is most evident there. A study conducted about the 1994 elections in Amsterdam showed that the

extreme right has the highest number of supporters among the Dutch population in polling districts with relatively larger numbers Turkish and Moroccan inhabitants; i.e. population groups with an Islamic background (De Vos and Deurloo 1999).

That the extreme right mainly finds its supporters in urban areas also becomes apparent when the results of the 1994 Amsterdam municipal council elections are considered: percentage-wise, the extreme right had almost four times as many supporters in Amsterdam than in the Netherlands as a whole. Yet, in the subsequent parliamentary elections, a considerable number of Amsterdam's inhabitants had already lost their sympathy for the various parties of the extreme right, so that the percentage of their supporters was halved. One explanation put forward for such differences is that these elections are considered to be more important. In elections deemed less important, voters are assumed to be more willing to take a chance and to express their anger in the form of more extreme preferences. In first-order elections, voters are supposed to also consider the effect of their votes for eventual governing coalitions and thus refrain from extremist voting behavior (for differences between first- and second-order elections, see Van der Eijk 1995). In Almere too – especially in the 1994 municipal council elections – the extreme right obtained percentages far above the national percentage, despite the fact that the relative number of Turkish and Moroccan inhabitants is much lower than in Amsterdam. It seems that here is where the orientation of Almere towards Amsterdam comes to the surface after all; we will return to this aspect later on. By 1998, the only remaining party of the extreme right (the CD) had shrunk considerably – even in Amsterdam – although its percentage was still much higher than the national percentage. In Almere, the CD was banned from participating in the municipal council elections, and in the parliamentary elections the party's percentage dropped to a very low national percentage. Considering all four election results regarding support for the extreme right, the conclusion may be drawn that both Almere and Amsterdam vote in an urban way, and that Amsterdam, as is to be expected, votes “more urban” than Almere.

Incidentally, as a result of its notorious voting behavior (i.e. voting for the extreme right), Almere has had a bad image since its earliest days, before it was even a real municipality. In the 1983 municipal council elections, the CP obtained over nine percent of the votes in Almere, earning it two seats on the municipal council. For weeks, this fact gripped the attention of the large political parties. An article in a national newspaper suggested that apart from other reasons, the “escape from Amsterdam” or “Amsterdam” in general played a significant role for many CP voters in Almere (*de Volkskrant*, 1 October 1983). Donselaar and Van Praag (1983) also tried to find the explanation in the Amsterdam origins of the then inhabitants of Almere. This does not refer to a positive orientation towards Amsterdam, but to an aversion to what has been left behind.

## 6. The Spatial Fracturing of the Urban Electorate: Analyses on the Level of Neighborhood and Polling District

Low political interest expressed in small turnout figures and high support for marginal parties are not evenly distributed across the city, but are connected with parts of the electorate that are concentrated in certain neighborhoods and districts. In this section, we will look for the areas where this may be the case in Amsterdam and Almere.

Each of the various parties has its own electoral grassroots support. Because the population is not distributed evenly across town, the support for the parties across town varies considerably. With respect to each of the four elections in both Amsterdam and Almere, we have examined the relationship between support for the different parties on the polling district level. Each polling district has about 1,500 qualified voters. In 1998, Amsterdam had 476 polling districts and Almere 60. When a particular party has relatively many supporters in one particular polling district, does that mean that other parties are generally as strong in that particular polling district, or does it imply exactly the opposite? The analyses revealed a large number of strong and slightly weaker relationships. Here, we shall only discuss the most significant ones, without showing figures.

Some relationships are quite obvious. The three left-wing parties (PvdA, Green Left, SP) have positive correlations in both towns in all elections. If one of these parties is strong in one particular polling district, the other parties are generally also strong in that polling district. Also an obvious result: for all three left-wing parties there is the expected strongly negative relationship concerning the support for the VVD. After all, the VVD does not find its supporters in “low-status” working-class neighborhoods with high unemployment rates and lots of workers on disability – precisely some of the people who favor left-wing parties. The support for the CDA and that of the small religious parties – combined under the name Small Right – displays the same expected positive correlation.

Yet, there are also less obvious relationships. One striking result – which at first sight is unexpected – is the following. In both towns and in all elections for which the extreme right, the parties for the elderly and the SP ran, there are, without exception, positive correlations between their support. This is remarkable for three parties that are so different: the extreme right parties with their xenophobia, the parties for the elderly with their preoccupation with the interests of the elderly, and the SP, a party on the left of the political spectrum. The SP, incidentally, is somewhat of a black sheep among the parties of the left, with little appreciation for the political establishment. An inference can nevertheless be made as to the “common” character of these three parties. All are in opposition to the large, established parties, and thus against the existing political order. In a way, all three parties are protest parties. Dissatisfaction or deprivation in certain neighborhoods is often expressed by the residents of these areas voting for one of these three totally different protest parties. Therefore, this result supports our proposition that these parties are more or less interchangeable as indicators of urban voting behavior.

Another, less obvious phenomenon is that in all of the elections in both towns, the VVD, the CDA and D66 won high percentages of the votes in polling districts where the turnout was high, while the other parties obtained relatively many votes in the neighborhoods with a low turnout. The negative correlation with the turnout is strong especially for the PvdA. At first sight, this seems to contradict the widespread idea that the PvdA benefits from a high turnout. However, this contradiction is illusive. The PvdA obtains its votes mainly in low-income areas. The inhabitants of these areas often have little interest in politics or have lost faith in politics. This is why they only modestly participate in politics, and in elections often do not cast their votes. Had the turnout been high in these neighborhoods, the PvdA would have had a much higher percentage of the total vote.

We have already seen that the absence of compulsory voting leads to differences in turnout in the Netherlands. In Almere, for example, a larger part of the electorate goes to the polls than in Amsterdam. We have interpreted that as an expression of the capital's higher degree of urbanity. However, there are also considerable differences between the individual polling districts in Amsterdam and Almere with regard to the turnout. This section examines the spatial distribution of the turnout. Information about the turnout per polling district came from the municipalities of Almere and Amsterdam.



Figure 2.  
Turnout in the 1998  
parliamentary  
elections in  
Amsterdam

First we will examine the distribution of the turnout across polling districts, using the 1998 parliamentary elections as an example. Figure 2 shows this distribution for Amsterdam. The turnout varies greatly, namely from 22 percent to 87 percent. There is an obvious spatial pattern. Particularly in the center of Amsterdam and the connected, so-called South Axis, which runs at a slight angle towards the south of Amsterdam, the turnout is high. By Amsterdam standards, these are quite prosperous areas, dominated by native Dutch residents and immigrants from industrialized countries. A lower turnout was noted in less prosperous areas, such as in parts of the western and northern periphery of Amsterdam. These parts of Amsterdam have considerable concentrations of Turkish and Moroccan residents. But the lowest turnout was noted in South-east Amsterdam, which is somewhat isolated from the rest of the city and houses large concentrations of Surinamese and Antillean residents, and residents from other non-industrialized countries.

Referring to this map, the following remark is made by Schyns and colleagues (2001, 64): “At first sight it seems to be a question of a relation with income. In areas with a higher than average income level the turnout is high and reversely the turnout is low in areas with low-income level. The relation with income is not universal, though ... Evidently turnout is related rather to education than to income.”

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the turnout across Almere. The turnout varies



Figure 3. Turnout in the 1998 parliamentary elections in Almere

from 53 to 79 percent. The spatial pattern is not quite as clear as in Amsterdam. There is no manifestation of a clear systematic difference in the turnout between the three different parts that make up Almere: 1) Almere Haven, the oldest (1976) and almost completed part of Almere in the south, bordering the Gooimeer; 2) the centrally located and largest part, Almere Stad (construction was begun in 1980 and is still under development), and 3) Almere Buiten, which was planned to look more like a village and is located to the northeast of Almere in a more rural location; this part has been inhabited only since 1984 and it, too, is still under construction. At first sight it seems that also within each of these three parts, the polling districts with a high and a low turnout are jumbled together. Yet a vague pattern does emerge, according to which the oldest, most centrally located neighborhoods in each district have a lower turnout. In Almere Town, these were large parts of two neighborhoods with small, single-family houses. The turnout was also low in “low-status” neighborhoods. These are pretty monotonous, very densely built-up areas, with many cheaply built council flats dating back to the early days of Almere. In Almere Haven it includes an area with lots of terraced houses and a considerable number of medium-height blocks of flats, which were mainly built in the 1970s. The large majority of these buildings are rented houses, including low-rise buildings as well as flats. The district is characterized by a strong decline in social status between 1991 and 1998 (SCP 2001). Drug dealers and groups of youngsters hanging around on the streets make some inhabitants and shopkeepers feel insecure (Almere’s *Green Weekly*, 29 August 2001). We assume (but could not verify with certainty) that these areas are mainly inhabited by large numbers of former residents of Amsterdam.

As far as Almere Stad is concerned, the area we are particularly concerned with is Stedenwijk:

Stedenwijk, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Almere, wants to get rid of its negative reputation. A difficult task in an area where the involvement of the inhabitants is small and the diversity of people great ... It is the well-known story of so many Almere people. From a working-class quarter in Amsterdam, where it was getting more and more difficult to understand the neighbors, the Kok couple moved to Almere 20 years ago. Compared with the little house in Amsterdam the new dwelling in Stedenwijk Midden was a “real villa” and the neighborhood in one word was fantastic. Now, 20 years later, their Almere living environment seems to have changed into the Amsterdam quarter they had left behind. Members of the citizen committee of Stedenwijk Midden can only be surprised at the illegal refuse dumping, the inconvenience caused by youths, and the general deterioration of their neighborhood. “Those neighbors over there came to live here six months ago and then immediately hung a few rags over their windows. And they are still hanging there.” ... “The houses are much too tightly-packed and can’t be reached from the front or back by car. Who in the world builds something like this? I once mentioned it to the city council. They responded by saying that the district had purposely been built in this manner to make it resemble an

Amsterdam neighborhood a bit, like the Jordaan. What on earth put that into their heads?” According to the members of the citizen committee, the pauperization of the area is mainly due to the large diversity of inhabitants and their low degree of involvement with the social climate of the neighborhood. The complaints about the area have been recorded in the Stedenwijk Social Climate Covenant, which has also been signed by the city council and the police and has been concluded for the period 2001-2005 (Almere’s *Green Weekly*, 5 May 2001).

In the newer, more expensive neighborhoods on the edges of the three parts of Almere, the turnout is higher. These are neighborhoods that are presumably less dominated by former Amsterdammers (although this assumption could not be verified with certainty either). It may well be that the political involvement in Almere (i.e. whether or not people cast their vote) remains the same after people have moved to the new town: former Amsterdammers may display their “Amsterdam” non-voting behavior and people from elsewhere may display their old voting behavior, as well.

Instead of getting lost in further speculations, we had better ask ourselves whether the turnout is systematically and in a comprehensible way related to population characteristics that we can indeed determine. This can be done, not by polling districts but on the neighborhood level, as all kinds of related population data from the Wijk- en Buurtregister (District and Neighbourhood Register) of the CBS (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek; Central Statistics Agency) can be used. For this purpose, election data from the polling districts are gathered at neighborhood level. The analyses of all elections in both towns produce the same picture: a high turnout in prosperous areas, and a low turnout in working-class neighborhoods with high unemployment and many people on disability benefits, and a high percentage of foreign immigrants (i.e. “underprivileged” areas), where people demonstrate a lack of interest and trust in politics. These results completely correspond with what was expected. The respective correlations for both towns in the 1998 parliamentary elections are shown as examples in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation with turnout percentages in the 1998 parliamentary elections

	Turnout percentages
<b>Amsterdam</b>	
Percentage of high incomes	0.63
Percentage of unemployed + disabled	-0.68
Percentage of foreign immigrants	-0.76
<b>Almere</b>	
Percentage of high incomes	0.63
Percentage of unemployed + disabled	-0.51
Percentage of foreign immigrants	-0.74



How is the support for the extreme right distributed across the various sections of Amsterdam and Almere, and what are the related population characteristics? The data for each polling district comes once more from the municipalities of Amsterdam and Almere; the population characteristics data are again provided by the District and Neighborhood Register of the CBS.



Figure 4.  
Support for the extreme right in the 1994 council elections in Amsterdam

Figure 4 shows the distribution of support for the extreme right across the polling districts in the 1994 municipal council elections in Amsterdam (the election in which the extreme right had the largest number of supporters). This support varies from 1 to almost 26 percent. High percentages of extreme right support occurred primarily in the western and northern peripheral neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, these neighborhoods are inhabited by many Turkish and Moroccan people. In Amsterdam Southeast, which has a large number of Surinamese and Antillean people, no exceptionally high levels of support for the extreme right were found. Earlier, thoroughly conducted analyses on the polling district level in Amsterdam already revealed that support for the extreme right among Dutch citizens was especially high in areas with high concentrations of Turkish and Moroccan inhabitants; in other words, in areas with population groups that have an Islamic background and a language barrier. The presence of Surinamese and Antillean people, however, did not generate many votes for right-wing

parties. Presumably the fear of the Islamic backgrounds of the Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in close proximity and the language barrier encourages votes for the extreme right (De Vos and Deurloo 1999). Low scores are observed in the center and the connected South Axis, the more prosperous areas, where we have also found high turnouts.



Figure 5.  
Support for the extreme right in the 1994 council elections in Almere

Figure 5 shows the spatial distribution in the same elections in Almere. Here the support varies from 2 to almost 16 percent. Like the turnout results, there are no clear systematic differences between the three areas of Almere. The picture within each part is much more unstructured than what was encountered regarding the turnout. In Almere Buiten there seems to be a relationship with the age of the apartments: in older areas, where people have been residing for longer, the extreme right generally had greater support than in the newer areas, where people took up residence more recently. However, there is no such relationship in Almere Stad or Almere Haven.

In the same way as turnout was examined, research was carried out with respect to all elections in both towns on the neighborhood level concerning the relationship between the support for the extreme right and some socio-economic population characteristics listed in the District and Neighborhood Register of the CBS. The 1998 municipi-

pal council elections in Almere are not included here because no extreme right parties participated in them. The other elections all reveal the same picture: the extreme right has few supporters in prosperous areas, but lots in areas with high unemployment and many disabled workers, and in areas with many foreign immigrants – a result that corresponds with the expectations. As an example, the respective correlations for the 1994 municipal council elections for both cities are provided in Table 3. Incidentally, in 1998, when the support for the extreme right had dwindled considerably, the correlations with the percentage of immigrants were lower than in 1994. It is a pity that the information in the District and Neighborhood Register about immigrants has not been categorized into different ethnic groups. It is therefore impossible – with the present data on hand – to carry out a separate analysis of the relationship between the support for the extreme right and the presence of Turks and Moroccans on the one hand, and Surinamese and Antillean people on the other hand. To explain why people vote for the extreme right, it is crucial, in our opinion, to make that difference along ethnic lines.

Table 3. Correlation with the percentages of votes for the extreme right at the 1994 council elections

	Percentages of votes for the extreme right
<b>Amsterdam</b>	
Percentage of high incomes	-0.36
Percentage of unemployed and disabled	0.41
Percentage of foreign immigrants	0.23
<b>Almere</b>	
Percentage of high incomes	-0.32
Percentage of unemployed and disabled	0.67
Percentage of foreign immigrants	0.47

## 7. Conclusions

In this contribution, we have analyzed the voting behavior of the inhabitants of the old town of Amsterdam and the new town of Almere. The question was whether voting behavior would correspond because of the urban character of the two towns, or differ as a result of the difference in age and thus in urbanity level. Furthermore, many residents of Almere originally lived in Amsterdam, and many still work or spend their spare time there. The question was whether this connection would also affect their political choices.

Amsterdam and Almere share the profile of the “urban electorate voter,” which consists of little support for the CDA, much attraction to new or marginal parties, and a rather limited turnout. The relationships on the neighborhood level with respect to these points are also comparable in both municipalities.

Amsterdam and Almere differ in the relative preferences for parties that recruit a different type of socio-economic support. In Almere, there is more support for the VVD, and in Amsterdam there is more support for the PvdA. This is where the relatively new character of Almere and presumably also the selective migration from Amsterdam is expressed. The orientation towards Amsterdam has probably also led to the fact that in Almere the support for the extreme right – as a result of previous experiences in the “old town” – has always been greater than might have been thought based on the percentage of the local foreign population. Thus, the old ties with Amsterdam – albeit in a negative sense – still exist. However, the extreme right as it developed in the 1970s and 1980s has meanwhile practically vanished from both towns. The spatial patterns of voting preferences show once again that the categories of inhabitants in an old town are arranged in a different way than is the case in a newly constructed town like Almere.

Finally, from the analysis it appears that Amsterdam, as expected, has the most “political marginality” (or urbanity) in terms of turnout and support for marginal parties. However, this is less evident in the case of the parties for the elderly, it is not in line with Almere’s one time extra enthusiasm for the extreme right in 1983 and it is contradicted by the support for the List Pim Fortuyn in 2002 (higher than the national average in Almere, hardly at the national average in Amsterdam). Amsterdam is a real city, Almere is on its way.

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## 3.10 • Spatial Detachment and New Challenges of Metropolitan Governance

*Willem Salet and Martin de Jong*

### **The Lost Empire of the Territorial City**

In recent decades much has been written about the different manifestations of the “unfolded” city, where the boundaries no longer coincide with the historical territorial confines. In his recent work about the post-metropolis Los Angeles, Edward Soja stylizes the dominant discourses about the contemporary dilemmas facing major cities (Soja 1996 and 2000). He presents the following metaphors:

- the Cosmopolis: a major city that relies on international networks and connections;
- the Exopolis: an inner city abandoned by the white middle-class;
- the Carceral Archipelago: a city fragmented by the privatization of space and inaccessible to large segments of the population;
- the Simcity: a metropolis that has lost its identity and has become unrecognizable by emulating alien and non-historical examples.

American metropolises are not the only ones affected by this type of spatial disengagement; the problem exists in many parts of the world, albeit continuously in other, path-dependent and culturally dependent ways (Oncu and Weyland 1997; Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000).

Amsterdam’s position keeps changing as well. Here, the notion of urbanity is no longer exclusively associated with the adjacent territorial area of the original city. The nature and the activities of the different segments of the regional spatial subsystem no longer consist of concentric hierarchical relations between the city and the countryside. In fact, the city’s main economic functions – including financial trading and other services – regularly operate along main roads in or near Haarlemmermeer, Hoofddorp, Aalsmeer and the like, and often close to the economic magnet of Schiphol. While they remain in the Amsterdam region and its surroundings, they have avoided the major city itself. Housing markets, job markets and transportation markets have become regionalized as well. In the Netherlands urbanity has also *disengaged* itself from the original territory of the central city (Salet 1996). The same holds true for the domestic and international functional networks that outline their own spatial patterns. The trend has two major repercussions for the spatial strategic issues affecting the capital city.

For the first time, after nearly a century of explosive urban development, Amsterdam is not facing another *round of expansion*, with the elaboration of the new spatial structure plan until 2030. The City of Amsterdam evidently no longer represents the regions' epicenter. Instead, the main question is which particular qualities in Amsterdam's urban area need to be developed to remain optimally *connected* with the regional networks, where the new economic centers of gravity have emerged. The *inside-out* perspective that used to characterize the self-awareness in Amsterdam politics will need to make way for an *outside-in* strategy in the period ahead (Bertolini and Salet 2002).

2030

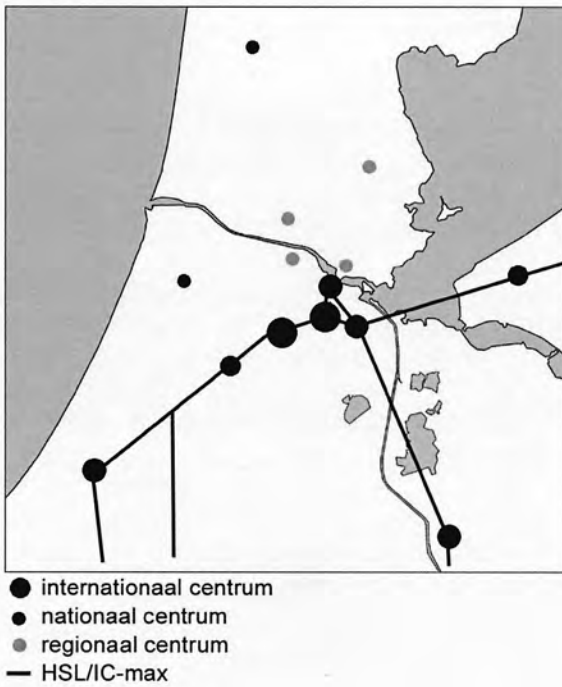


Figure 1:  
Economic centers  
of gravity in 2030

The borders of the new territorial and functional networks are capricious and dynamic. Establishing a new, territorially based urban identity at the regional level in the fragmented spatial context will be quite a challenge. After all, the process is far more complex than merely expanding the scale of the traditional city. On the one hand, the embryonic contours of possible new territorial entities are appearing at different territorial levels of scale, such as the “district,” the “region,” the “north wing of the Randstad,” or the “Randstad” itself. Moreover, the new scale has yet to crystallize in a convincing format, and public and private coalitions at the scales described above tend to compete with each other. On the other hand, the functional use of space has given rise to highly selective patterns that transect the rudimentary territorial demarcations.

The sub-markets for rental and owner-occupied housing, for example, are entirely different spatial arrangements within the region. Rental housing is concentrated inside the city and owner-occupied homes outside. In 1990, 92% of the housing stock in Amsterdam was still being rented, since then it has decreased to 86% in 2000 which is still extremely high. Most of the rented dwellings belong to the social sector. At the city-region level (ROA without Amsterdam) only 58% were rentals in 2000. In both territorial and functional respects, the use of space has therefore led to very irregular patterns.

This context raises the question of how the public and private activities that determine use of space may be coordinated. The government – with its relatively independent municipalities and provinces – is highly fragmented. Almere’s population, for example, remains heavily focused on Amsterdam for work and cultural activities. But “new town” Almere is located in a different province (Flevoland) from Amsterdam (North-Holland) and it also is not represented at the district-level in the inter-municipal association, the so-called Regionaal Orgaan Amsterdam (ROA), which aims to coordinate the policy for activities in and around Amsterdam. The fragmentation of the government into separate territorial and functional associations has been described from many different perspectives. This article explores the possible ways to govern the trend of spatial detachment in the Amsterdam metropolitan region. Should the public administration be regrouped regionally, for example as new regional administrative bodies or inter-community collaborative projects, or should the future administration of the Amsterdam region be based on functional arrangements for individual activities? Or should the efforts into territorial reform be dropped by focusing on new strategies of connecting different spheres of action (strategies of “governance” rather than “government”)? The changing distribution of responsibilities between the public and private sectors that has resulted from the liberalization of the supply of public services and the high hopes on private financing, and the acceptance of creative input from the private sector will figure in the process as well.

## **Nature and Causes of Spatial Disengagement**

The urban landscape reflects progressive *spatial disengagement*. Until two decades ago, urban and rural areas were clearly distinctive with respect to the spatial and cultural aspects of the activities in the two types of areas and the perceptual values associated with them. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the spatial attributes of the city in the Netherlands have become increasingly *intertwined* with those of the metropolitan areas surrounding them. The radius of action of its people and organizations has expanded enormously; their spatial department is no longer as bound to the familiar spatial demarcations, such as neighborhoods, cities, city districts, or distinctive agrarian areas. Territorial boundaries are therefore fading. Moreover, traditional activities in rural areas are becoming far more “urban” especially the state-of-the-art, export-oriented methods in current market gardening, agriculture, and greenhouse cultivation. Because the same urban-style activities are taking place beyond the city limits (brain parks, housing developments, regional shopping centers, auctions) and are identical



to those in the previous central city in form and content, these borders are increasingly perceived as artificial. After all, they no longer enclose unique activities. No longer can urbanity be interpreted as what happens within the original city limits. Sites that are highly urban in terms of their nature and measure of *interaction* are also widespread beyond these boundaries. In Amsterdam's immediate surroundings, for example, international industries are growing around international airport Schiphol, the flower auction complex is expanding in Aalsmeer and Uithoorn, and media companies and quality housing developments thrive in the Gooi area (Hilversum, Naarden, Bussum) and Almere.

Since the 1970s, the dispersion of urban activities has been driven by the increase in spatial consumption among affluent households and other urban space users. This pattern is now complemented by the mergers and scale expansions in the markets for offices, retail outlets and services, such as education and health care. The growing spatial needs and the corresponding access requirements have become ever more difficult to accommodate within the traditional city centers. Amsterdam was fortunate that in the first stage of urban expansion the ring road proved to be an attractive location for offices (due in part to its convenient access to Schiphol). Clearly, the combination of urban push and pull factors – especially accessibility, space, and the price and quality of public facilities – has altered spatial organisation considerably.

Other new trends – at least with respect to the intensity of their onset in the past decade – concern the rise in physical and social mobility. In addition to longer distances being bridged faster both through physical displacement and through the increase in electronic message transmissions, the social composition of households, labor markets, and housing markets is becoming more mobile as well. The traditional family structure no longer dominates the inner cities (Amsterdam exemplifies this pattern) and has undergone dramatic changes as well. The labor markets have become increasingly flexible and dynamic. Households now comprise multiple breadwinners, who change jobs more often in the current flexible labor market than in the past. The result is that displacements within urban regions have become more diversified and dispersed. The new crisscross patterns resemble the ones perceived in the United States in the 1960s (Friedman and Miller 1965). The difference is that in the Netherlands most commutes are less than 45 minutes (i.e. within the city region; displacements *between* different city regions, such as across the North and the South wings of the Randstad, are growing but are not yet very substantial). The final but by no means least significant explanation for the spatial detachment is that globalization of economic and cultural relationships has led to ever less locally determined margins for these activities that now depend on their *position* in national and international networks. Remarkably, the same dynamics occur with privatized and/or liberalized utilities and services, as soon as they appear in the international arena of take-overs and mergers and enter the foreign markets. Striking cases have taken place in sectors such as telecommunications, electricity, and international railways.

The trends described above have led space users to alter their conduct. They have become less attached to circumscribed territorial spaces, the spatial structure of areas

and their boundaries have changed, and identification of space users with spatial qualities has shifted from identification with complete areas to qualities of specific locations that become meaningful in far more spacious and largely functional networks. More has happened than simply a spatial scale expansion of the original city to the current urban region, which might evolve into a new city at a higher scale. The transformation of urbanity conceals processes that change the very nature of urbanity and stop this perception from overlapping perfectly with the perception of a certain territorial area. In other words, people's ties with the city of Amsterdam have weakened especially among those who have indeed turned their back on the city but they have not been replaced with identification with a district, a region, a province, a wing of the Randstad or even the Randstad. While opportunities are available for establishing a new regional urban identity, it will probably be far less comprehensive than the metaphorical identification of the citizens with their city in the past. Nor will possible new spatial identities emerge overnight. The respective progress of the regions in achieving new regional identification differs substantially between countries (Gualini 2001). The new metropolitan regions in the Netherlands do not appear to be very cohesive with respect to culture at the moment. In fact, the state of regional identification is currently in a vacuous state. The emergence of metropolitan regions in other countries where the spatial disengagement is more long-standing and more intense, as in Soja's United States, reveals that the new territorial entities and close attachments of the inhabitants need not result from the current transition process (Garreau 1992; Soja 1996). In these cases spatial disengagement does not appear to indicate the beginning of a transition process but seems to introduce another condition of urbanity.

## **Regional Forms of Government and their Dilemmas**

### *Strategies of Governance*

The question arises of which new forms of regional government coordination will operate effectively in this fragmented context. Many European countries are reinforcing their regional governments (the rise of "meso-government"), which are structured differently in each of the respective countries. Two-tier local governments are also quite common in metropolitan regions (Mény 1982 and 1990; Humes 1991; Sharpe 1993). Even the Dutch with their longstanding tradition of provinces and municipalities have long been interested in modernizing their urban and regional relationships. In recent decades, committees have issued many reports and recommendations, although no fundamental changes in the system have occurred yet. The longevity of the foundations established in the nineteenth century under the influence of the French occupation and German inspiration suggests at times that the modern Dutch government is unable to reorganize on its own merits, despite concerted efforts to this effect (De Jong 1998).

The new metropolitan spatial reality accommodates a wealth of different administrative demarcations (such as in the territorial respect, the municipality and provin-

cial boundaries) or the various city-regional demarcations of functional forms of organization (such as the regional organization of the police) or of social organizations (such as the areas served by the Chambers of Commerce). They comprise a multiplicity of non-contiguous demarcations at local, supra-local, and regional scales. In most of these associations, the scale of organization no longer corresponds with the practical manifestations of the relevant changes, which usually take place at a higher scale than the one at which the administrative associations are organized. These divergences have become more likely over the past fifteen years because of the social-economic trends and their spatial dynamics, as indicated above. Sometimes these boundaries are perceived as residues reminiscent of a period in which they had a functional significance. In other cases these borders convey balances of power that have emerged over time and – though possibly no longer functional – are difficult to change.

The demand for redrawing administrative boundaries will need to be adjusted according to the complexity of relationships from the outset by investigating the opportunities for coordinated regional action from the reality of *fragmented* associations that operate in a dynamic environment. Governments will need to operate in networks to coordinate the actions of public and private agents. The objective is to determine the basic positions for organizing networks of metropolitan government. Barlow has identified six strategies for dealing with fragmentation of regional government (Barlow 1991).

1. *A unitary form of government* for local and regional administrations with universal authority. In this case, municipalities would lose their autonomy or become subordinate to the metropolis. This option allows provinces to cede their authority to the new metropolitan government.
2. *Transfer of functions to higher authorities*. In this case the provinces and the State assume all government responsibilities that transcend the jurisdiction of the municipalities.
3. *Transfer of revenues from wealthier to poorer municipalities*. This may involve both direct transfers between municipalities and redistribution by the higher government level.
4. *Functional authorities with specific responsibilities*. These institutions may perform their sectoral tasks directly at the regional level. This functional administration may be delegated and established from various levels of government.
5. *Intermunicipal cooperation*. Municipalities may voluntarily establish regional institutions and assign them specific areas of authority or revoke them if necessary.
6. *Two-tier governments*. These are usually two-tier municipal governments (which are commonplace, for example, in Germany or France).

This distinction is based on the following four known principles of government organization:

1. *hierarchy* (unitary government (1))
2. *delegation* (rearrangement of authority (2) and (3) or of organisation (4))
3. *cooperation* (5) in being central
4. *autonomy* (ranking of administration with separate areas of authority (6)).

In some cases combinations of these principles will appear, as happens to be the case in regional Amsterdam. No ideal form of government exists that meets all of the community requirements and demands with respect to different sets of responsibilities (Smith 1987). Equally remarkably, Barlow's categorization locates all of the solutions within the scope of public administration. We will also need to consider private sector options ("private-led" metropolitan coordination), as well as possible associations between private and public sectors. The options described above will be covered consecutively in our analysis of the administrative dilemmas facing the Amsterdam metropolis.

### *The Hierarchical Course: Unitary Metropolitan Government*

While the legal democratic arguments of "legitimation" and "effective support for the public cause" are important in issues concerning administrative organization, the game of political power is based on "realistic" considerations as well. After all, reorganization is not a politically neutral exercise but is mainly a struggle in which parties champion various or diverging interests. Such is the case with the most ambitious kind of government reform: the establishment of a unitary metropolitan government. This option sometimes arises in international theoretical debates and is frequently instigated by social movements or corporate industry which favor an unambiguous government stand. In Western metropolitan practices, however, the unitary system can only very rarely be sustained over the long term. "Gross Berlin" and "Comunidad Madrid" are the historic examples in Europe (Salet, Thornley, and Kreukels 2002). Usually, municipalities and existing regional governments are unlikely to consent to a new form of metropolitan government at a higher level. Few organizations disband of their own accord, and whether checks and balances render an integrated regional mega-government desirable and effective is questionable. Such an option does not do justice to the interests and considerations within the regional metropolis. Even in the Netherlands, where the metropolitan regions surrounding Amsterdam and Rotterdam are relatively small compared with other countries, the option of "unitary government" is less than realistic.

The less ambitious subsystem of unitary government has proven more successful in practice. This includes small expansions through local boundary reform and the annexation of adjacent communities. In the 1970s, the United Kingdom enacted a municipal redivision that resulted in approximately 200 *urban districts*, while in Germany the number of *Gemeinden* dwindled from 24,000 to 8,000 over 25 years. In the Netherlands, too, the original number of 1,000 municipalities decreased by about half during this period (Salet 1994). Merging municipalities is therefore a realistic option. In Amsterdam, the strategy of small annexations has been fruitful on several occasions as well (Sloterdijk, Bijlmer) (Van der Veer 1997). Nonetheless, cross-metropolitan area governments were not formed in Amsterdam either. Another problem with the hierarchical annexation strategy (generally as a coalition between large cities and higher government) is that the politics of power in large cities polarizes the relationship with small adjacent municipalities for extended periods. The city of The Hague is presently

suffering these consequences. Following extended collaboration with the adjacent municipalities in the first stage, this city later proceeded with annexation. In doing so, the city has acquired additional land but has forfeited the credit painfully acquired in the region. The urban annexation strategy increases the asymmetric relationship between a major city and the smaller neighboring municipalities.

In the 1950s, metropolitan Toronto proved that other options were available. There, municipal convergences were supported by a strategy of annexation outside the boundaries of the core city. Instead of expanding the central city, the authorities combined suburbs. This foundation paved the way toward a balance between the central city and five extended suburbs that enabled cooperation with central Toronto in development policies (Barlow 1991; Bourne 1997). In this way the course of municipal redivision led to more intelligent solutions than merely expanding the central city.

#### *Delegation: Transfer of Policy Responsibilities and Organization*

Barlow also describes a few opportunities for coordinated action in the metropolis through policy-based rearrangements or delegation, for example by centralizing policy to benefit poor municipalities or municipalities with special problems. These solutions are widely applied in the Netherlands. By establishing the national welfare state, the Netherlands has become one of the most centralized states in Europe. The distribution pattern was crucial in the process. Especially in a small country, vast differences between municipalities with respect to social redistribution policies are not tolerated. The major cities, which had serious problems from the 1960s through the 1980s, claimed state support. Faced with deepening social problems, the cities increased their claims. Throughout the expansion of the welfare state, the lobby for the major cities (with Amsterdam and Rotterdam at the vanguard) was extremely effective with respect to all public facilities (social policy, education, health care, urban renewal and social housing developments, public transport). However, this political strategy became counterproductive when the central government started to cut spending in the 1980s. The “strands of gold,” as the state subsidies were known, suddenly turned into “strangulation wires.” Suddenly, the cities proved to have become excessively dependent on higher government and were insufficiently accountable because of the very minimal portion of their “own municipal revenues” (local taxes and other local income amounted to only about 7% of the total municipal revenues; the rest trickled down to the municipalities from higher government levels!) (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy 1992). The strategy of redistribution through higher government has still not been fully abandoned but has encountered serious obstacles since the early 1990s. In the meantime, the cities have regained their accountability and resilience: their own tax area has doubled in size in the past decade, and the economic position of Amsterdam and the other cities has improved significantly.

Establishing *functional organization forms* at regional levels is another way to delegate government. Internationally, this strategy is applied extensively in metropolitan areas in functional systems, such as in the United Kingdom and the United States, this method is dominant, while in other government systems functional government is

used successfully in regions, in particular with respect to public transport, for instance in Germany and France. This system of government entrusts implementation of public policy to relatively independent organisations under certain conditions. The policy activities concerned are largely sectoral and corporate. The lack of democracy in functional government and the question as to how functionally fragmented policy can be integrated are the frequent subjects of debate. On the other hand, functional government is virtually devoid of red tape (provided the right incentives are available), and this government is known for being relatively efficient. In the Netherlands as a whole, the use of functional forms of governance is quite common but in the Amsterdam region, this form of organization is relatively underused. State and local authorities rarely set up governments that operate at the regional level. Provinces have few steering tasks to delegate to separate functional organizations. Some private utility companies are presently being considered for privatization. Significant functional organizations include provincial district water boards, recreation boards, and nature boards. The province of North Holland is very active in these fields (see the chapter by Marijke van Schendelen in this volume).

Finally, the municipalities are authorized to implement municipal policy via functional organizations. In some cases this measure serves to solve strategically sensitive issues. Municipalities may establish a functional organization for joint management of an office park or industrial site. This procedure will avert pointless competition between municipalities about company sites. Due in part to the growing dependence on tax revenues from municipalities (and the resulting imminent competition), such trans-community partnerships are becoming more important. Regional land policy is another area where both the province and the collaborating municipalities are likely to launch several initiatives. Although public transportation does well internationally in terms of regional functional organisation, the conditions in and around Amsterdam are less than ideal. Fragmentation principles prevail here.

#### *Separate Government Strata with Autonomous Powers: Assessing the City Province*

The main effort to innovate regional government in the 1990s concerned the draft bill to introduce city provinces. In the Netherlands, this was the third major attempt to reorganize public government in the urban regions during the previous century. Again the exercise was unsuccessful. Still, the proposal for the intended city province came closer to being realized than all previous ones. The draft bill introduced a general framework for seven city regions in The Netherlands, that on the one hand allowed the *municipalities* to remain in existence in the city regions – Amsterdam even decided to introduce 16 new neighborhoods within its boundaries – and on the other hand created the opportunity to introduce a new *city province*. The idea was to have a metropolitan government in two layers with distinctive areas of authority: the city province and the municipalities. The authority of the original provinces was to be moved to the new city provinces in these urban areas. The new city provinces would also have to assume several strategic responsibilities from the municipalities. The incentives to introduce city provinces included state subsidies and the obligation to the municipalities to work to-

gether within that framework. Following bad experiences with previous structural government operations, the legislature decided against a blueprint involving the allocation of authority between city provinces and the concerned municipalities. Instead, the concerned institutions were invited to achieve a process of mutual consensus. But the interests were highly divergent. The cities wanted as much steering authority as possible at the city province level, with regard to both strategic projects and redistribution (between the poor city and the affluent suburban communities). The surrounding municipalities, however, wanted to reduce the city province's authority as far as possible and to increase autonomy for the municipalities.

The progress of the reform continued and for a long time appeared to be headed for success, in part as a result of the vast state subsidies to the nascent city province under the national urbanization policy. The downside of the procedural approach, however, was that governments had to reach so many compromises that no party was willing to support the outcome of the negotiations without reservation. Ironically, when Amsterdam's worried residents finally received an opportunity to share their views in a referendum in 1996, no true supporters of the political concept of the city province remained. Even the city government, which was among the project's originators, was unwilling to champion a city province that would have virtually no authority over strategic projects such as Schiphol or over regional redistribution policy. Amsterdam's population was faced with the prospect of small subcommunities on the one hand (Amsterdam would cease to exist as a municipality!), and a city province with no real steering authority on the other hand. The people of Amsterdam patently rejected the bill.

Thus, the spectacular operation never truly got off the ground. A complex situation has resulted. The city is now divided into 16 neighborhoods (to which the city center has been added recently as number 17). These semi-communities have an elected government but lack the power of independent municipalities. The Amsterdam city government does, however, have the authority to distribute funds among the neighborhoods and is competent to take on strategic projects of neighborhoods. In many respects, however, it relies on cooperation from the neighborhoods. Regionally, cooperation between municipalities is the foundation for municipal government. The city district government body (Regionaal Overleg Amsterdam) of the municipalities continues to operate as a residue of a "city province under development," albeit with the knowledge that the city province will no longer be established. In the meantime, the state subsidies have continued, although the municipalities work together far less closely. The provinces have resumed their former role as government intermediaries. While they have little power in the front yards of the major cities, the provinces have emerged from the abortive operation as the moral victors, as they were in danger of being torn apart when the city provinces were introduced.

The dynamics of urban planning have continued, and the new spatial policy involves government coordination in urban networks throughout the west of the Netherlands (a new initiative is aimed at reviving the Randstad, it is now called "Delta Metropolis"). The state has adopted this course in the recent plan of the Fifth Memo-

randum on Spatial Planning. While a corresponding government strategy has yet to emerge, this new policy will clearly cause additional complications for the metropolitan government.

The account indicates that the government in regional Amsterdam has become considerably more complex in the past decade. The government is more fragmented than before the beginning of the governance operation, while interest in new structural operations has disappeared for the time being. In retrospect, the government operation was based mainly on shared political power between the governments of the major cities and the central ministries of spatial planning and home affairs. Throughout the process, the other municipalities in the urban region feared that the major cities would try to use the city province for regional steering and redistribution at the expense of their own interests. The chief lesson to be learned from the failure of the government operation is that the cities have regarded themselves too much as *pivots*. The dominant policy perspective on the *compact city district* and the corresponding operation of *city provinces* was overly dedicated to a city-centered policy to make the municipalities in the surrounding region enthusiastic participants. The outside world flatly rejected all negotiations within the government. The second lesson arising from the abortive government reform is that the two central motives of cooperation and redistribution are difficult to combine. Cooperation in development policies is a voluntary measure by municipalities, whereas redistribution requires hierarchical decision-making. These two central regulatory principles continuously conflict with each other. Selecting one and accepting the consequences for the government seems more prudent.

## **Conclusion: Deliberate Strategies of Regional Governance**

The sections above clearly indicate that all government solutions will need to accommodate the vibrant dynamics of social-economic processes and their spatial ramifications in the regional Amsterdam metropolis, which is no longer circumscribed by fixed territorial boundaries. The city province idea was doomed for this reason alone. The social dynamics are fairly intense as well. We have already determined that the gravity of urban activities has expanded beyond the scale at which the city province was depicted barely five years ago. In the policy discussions preceding the Fifth Memorandum on Spatial Planning, two scales dominated that were intended to introduce cohesion to urban activities (initial memorandum for Spatial Planning 1999). One is the “network city” scale, which is expected to encompass most commutes in the coming period and to contain the strongest cohesion between residential and labor markets. This scale already extends beyond the one of the city province planned until recently. The second scale prevailing in most policy documents applies throughout the Randstad and comprises the four metropolitan regions in the west of the country. The four major cities have concentrated their lobby for new infrastructure investments on this scale (via the Delta Metropolis association). In addition to the two scales presented, spatial planning trends reflect a remarkable concentration of urban activities along



the international development axes that situate the Netherlands in Europe. The absence of elected government bodies along these constantly changing scales is no coincidence. Dynamic social processes do not conform to the government structures of municipalities and provinces established in the nineteenth century.

How do government systems cope with these dynamics? In a report on this issue, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Governmental Policy has concluded that efforts to have the government structure always match the changing social dynamics, are doomed. Adaptations to government organization will lag behind the societal trends, while the established government bodies forfeit their identity (Netherlands Scientific Council for Governmental Policy 1996). Forging municipalities and provinces into half-baked constellations is therefore unwise, as was the case with the *city provinces* figure. Nor has a firm stand been taken with respect to the introduction of the Amsterdam *neighborhoods*. While these subcommunities have a directly elected government, they are not true universal government bodies (no taxation authority, no right to establish partnership associations with other municipalities, no say in crucial projects that the central city takes on, etc.). The universal government bodies – the municipalities, the provinces, and the State – therefore deserve to be taken seriously and should not lose their authority in experimental innovation drives. Traditional government also needs to become more flexible to accommodate the dramatically stronger dynamics. The most prudent approach appears to involve regarding the institutional pillars of domestic government (the institutionalized municipalities and provinces) as a principle and reinforcing them to use their foundation to organize flexible responses to societal dynamics. Durable municipalities and provinces thus need to be reinforced to ensure a solid base that may be used to organize flexible responses across time and space. In this way, this same institutional structure can provide new responses in a decade if societal dynamics take a new turn.

According to this view, no new structural reform of the government order is under development, although several procedural requirements are being adapted. The size of the area of the municipalities and provinces can be adapted (*adaptation of scale*). Further, *policy competencies* of these bodies may be rearranged as well. Finally, municipalities and provinces can cope with societal dynamics by forming *flexible coalitions* (e.g. intergovernmental collaborative associations, the establishment of functional government forms, etc.). Institutional bodies adjust their responses to accommodate changing societal needs. Finally, *flexible networks* of governance can be combined with social initiatives. These strategic choices are substantiated below.

### *Adaptation of Scale*

The historical scale of the municipalities and provinces has been under pressure for some time because virtually all societal trends occur at a higher scale. Moreover, the new international constellation in Europe requires upward adjustments. Such scale adjustments, which entail the merger or redivision of municipalities or provinces, may benefit both local and provincial governments. First the *provinces*. At present, the Netherlands comprises 12 provinces, which are somewhat small for European regions

and almost all of them have serious problems with their internal government. While the rural Dutch provinces are functioning adequately, the more urban ones are unable to overcome the frontal power of the major cities and the city districts. The most problematic relationship is the one between the tiny province of Utrecht and the city of Utrecht, which in turn maintains close city-district ties with the adjacent municipalities. The province and the city district are so closely intertwined that the burden outweighs the mutual benefit. The new province of Flevoland, which is primarily agrarian and contains rapidly growing Almere as its only medium-sized city (the dynamics of this urban expansion are closely connected to Amsterdam), has not achieved a strong internal balance. Next, the two traditional provinces of North Holland and South Holland both comprise spacious green areas, pressure from urbanization, as well as the two largest city districts of the Netherlands, where the provinces have difficulty intervening from their current position. The option of redrawing the boundaries of these four provinces, yielding perhaps only two provinces in the end (e.g. a province for the North Wing of the Randstad and one for the South Wing of the Randstad), offers such wonderful prospects that the failure to explore this simple alternative thus far is astonishing (Interprovinciaal Overleg Committee Geelhoed 2002; Gualini and Salet 2002). Debates about the reorganization of domestic government keep becoming stuck in the much-trodden paths of the major cities. The political vanguard has hardly considered the role of the provinces, which perform mainly intermediary tasks and for this reason alone are not easily politicized. Still, this strategic choice is a prime option, considering the nature of the urban dynamics.

Elevating the scale is a realistic option for *local government* as well and has gradually been taking shape at this level for three decades. Nonetheless, municipal redivision faces a major dilemma that has been insufficiently considered thus far. The problem is whether to reinforce the asymmetric relationship between the central city and the municipalities in the urban surroundings through continuous additions to the city or to merge the municipalities adjacent to the central city to increase the distribution of power in the urban region. The current *asymmetric relationship* between municipalities in urban regions therefore requires additional reflection.

There are many grounds that justify expanding the scale of local government, but the measure of responsibility that a unitary government can handle reasonably is subject to an explicit upper limit as well. Excessive expansion of the scale of the municipality complicates retaining an awareness of popular sentiment and taking decisions that do justice to various local conditions. Larger cities therefore tend to entrust certain responsibilities within their area to offices inside the community (in the neighborhoods). With 740,000 inhabitants, Amsterdam might not yet have reached a size that would require the formal institution of an entirely new tier of government with 17 subcommunities. After all, Amsterdam is not that huge and difficult to govern (the municipal government justified the structural establishment of neighborhoods primarily for strategic and economic reasons; the step has yet to be elaborated as a system of government). Nonetheless, city size is a critical factor and needs to be taken seriously in expanding the scale of municipality boundaries. Around Amsterdam the markets

for labor, traffic and transportation, and housing have become more regionalized. The main issues that arise need to be handled forcefully by regional or inter-local government. At present, this steering involves coordinating the unambiguously dominant Amsterdam and several surrounding municipalities. The mere fact that this relationship is asymmetric has already made government coordination an ongoing source of conflict, armed peace, and continuous stalemates.

Instead, perhaps we should explore a strategy of municipal redivision that presumes that the relationships in the region – and thus the foundation for solid collaboration between municipalities – would benefit from merging and redistributing municipalities in the urban region to improve the balance between the city and the new power centers instead of constantly adding sections to the central city. Redrawing city limits to reduce the asymmetry between municipalities in the urban region and producing new, spread-out centers of local power establishes a sound foundation for municipalities to work together. Eventually, this inter-municipal cooperation might give rise to a second level of local government (like the ones that have proven successful in metropolitan regions in other countries, such as the *communautés urbaines* in France or the old Metro Toronto Region in Canada). More importantly, conditions need to be established that make municipal government feasible. These conditions are targeted by the inside-out strategy that has been applied repeatedly in the past and will be replaced by an outside-in strategy amid the current conditions of spatial disengagement. The familiar concepts for policy and government that surround the perspective of the central city appear more anachronistic than ever.

### *Rearrangement of Policy Competencies*

Coordination in the context of the fragmented metropolis may also benefit from entrusting certain areas of policy authority to the current governments. Provincial adaptation of policy authority should be considered according to the structure of the present system of government, where the measure of regional coordination depends largely on *cooperation* between municipalities and/or provinces. This *cooperation* principle enables customized solutions according to content, space, and time. The constituent municipalities, provinces, or state bodies have the power to determine whether joint solutions are pursued, at which places, and for how long. Societal demands for new answers are easily accommodated by the cooperation principle, which respects the autonomy of constituent bodies and is sufficiently flexible to conform to the societal dynamics.

The disadvantage of this model is that cooperation can be a very costly transaction. This model often entails separate organizations that operate at a distance from the democratically elected bodies. The municipalities and provinces set the procedural conditions themselves and can compensate for the lack of democracy in various ways. Finally, the cooperation model requires a basic willingness to cooperate. Policy issues that cannot be resolved this way are then quickly transferred to higher government for decisions. The government cooperation model is not always adequate with Nimby-type issues and redistribution issues.

The provinces should have sufficient policy competencies to offset these shortcomings in the cooperative model.

Finally, the provinces need to be better equipped than they have been in the past to take part in regional development projects. First, this requires adequate decision-making procedures for projects where the provinces run the interactive process. Provinces will also need their own arsenal of development instruments to catalyze decision-making about regional projects. The provinces are ideally situated for defining communication with European regional policy regarding the regions. Remarkably, the Dutch provinces with their long-standing tradition in this area now lag behind the zealous approach manifested by the new meso-governments elsewhere in Europe (France, Italy, and Spain).

### *Societal Networks*

In addition to public-public collaborative arrangements, many private and public-private associations and coalitions arrange their own version of regional coordination. They are most common with individual projects, largely property projects. Here, the strategic collaborative arrangement between public and private institutions like the ones in urban regions in many countries exists neither at the urban nor at the regional level. In the Netherlands, there are a few generic platforms, such as the “mayor’s conversations with economic and social groups” in Amsterdam. Most platforms however tend to be *informal and ad hoc*. Nonetheless, public-private initiatives for projects abound.

In addition, various policy sectors, such as public housing policy or policy for social services (e.g. education and health care or the provision of radio and television broadcasting associations) are traditionally based on mixed responsibilities. Social services are generally provided by private organizations supported by the central authorities in performing their public tasks. In this respect, the Dutch polder model of compromise has become internationally renowned. Within the respective policy sectors, government organizations and suppliers engage in extensive institutionalized consultation with the public sectors concerned. Lately the user organisations have become more involved in the different sectors. In the Netherlands, this “tripartite” model has emerged primarily at the central level and provides the basis for coordination by the regions in most policy sectors. The prevailing opinion is that the individual regional dimension of such associations needs to be reinforced in several areas, and that new grassroots initiatives will provide welcome innovation.

Finally, the potency of regional coordination that arises purely from private initiative merits investigation. In a period of changing government policy in which the authorities are inclined to replace their role of severe interventions in the past with conditioning or enabling activities, this dimension should not be underestimated. Regional emergence of new, obvious spatial contexts depends largely on spontaneous identities and the concentration of social interactions at the regional level. Government organizations can accommodate this trend but cannot manage the cultural transition of the old cities and villages into a new metropolitan configuration. At what

scale do housing associations operate to facilitate the turnover of households within their ranks? At what scale do the local or regional radio and television companies operate? And what about the local or regional daily press? And the chambers of commerce? At what scale do the office markets operate effectively? At what scale do cultural symbols and regional points of recognition and landmarks arise? Perhaps the government is not exclusively and not primarily decisive in determining the extent that actions between parties can be coordinated regionally (Putnam 2000). The cultural transition of cities and villages into regional metropolises will proceed in a coordinated manner only when given sufficient logical coherence and cohesion of social interactions, for which the government will need to devise appropriate responsive strategies.

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## **4. PROSPECTS OF URBANITY: NEW CULTURAL IDENTITIES?**





## 4.1 • Landscapes of Power in Amsterdam?

*Rob van Engelsdorp Gastelaars*

### **The Theme**

There has recently been much debate in the Netherlands, about the future “spatial design” of the country. These discussions have in part been stimulated by the national government, which for the fifth time since the end of the 1950s is preparing a policy document outlining the future shape of land use in the country. But they have also been fostered by the increasing media coverage in recent years of the new North American metropolitan landscape. This landscape is characterized by (1) an increasing deconcentration of urban residents and businesses into the hinterland of the old core cities; (2) an increasing differentiation between amenity clusters, leisure districts and employment zones, both within and outside the old core cities; (3) an increasing economic and geographical polarization within these expanding “urban fields,” between flourishing office centers and luxury residential areas at one end of the scale and decayed industrial areas and slums at the other; (4) an increasing tendency toward the formation of “enclaves” in the form of protected, socially-profiled local residential communities and amenity clusters and; (5) the increasing importance of design in the configuration of new residential areas and centers (Zukin 1991, 1995; Knox 1992; Soja 2000). In this respect, Zukin talks about a trend towards a polarized configuration of “landscapes of power,” characterized by increasing disparities in economic capacity and a matching cultural “packaging” between winning and losing clusters of land use (Zukin 1991). For the majority of Dutch observers, this trend presents such a frightening picture that government intervention is being demanded to prevent something of a similar nature occurring here. A minority, however, does believe that there are attractive aspects to this development – for example, a greater geographical diversity which has been sadly lacking in Dutch planning in the past.

The above in essence describes the theme of this paper. Amsterdam, or rather the Amsterdam region, is part of the Netherlands. To what extent is it conceivable that over the next few decades – for example, between now and 2030 – this region will evolve into a constellation of “landscapes of power,” both at the macro level through the creation of a polarized and internally economically powerful urban region and at the micro level through the formation of fortified, socially-profiled neighborhoods and

amenity centers within that region? In answering this question, two matters will be addressed in turn:

1. First, there will be a brief examination of the types of landscape found in the Amsterdam region in 2000, with specific comparisons between them and the North American landscapes of power. Although until recently it almost went without saying that differences in land-use structures between countries could be ascribed to the differences in their economic structures (Pred 1977), today it no longer seems useful to primarily attribute the singularity of the metropolitan land-use structure in the United States – when compared with the Netherlands, for example – to its particular domestic economic relationships. Over the past 30 years, the nature of economic developments in the post-industrial world has been far too international, and even global, at that. As a consequence, there are no longer that many real differences in economic structure between the Netherlands and the United States. On the other hand, political and administrative relationships – and with them such matters as the readiness of the government to intervene in strategic urban planning matters – until now have been fundamentally different in the United States compared to, for example, the Netherlands. Because of this, the specific characteristics of landscape-relevant relationships in the Amsterdam region as of 2000 will in this paper first and foremost be associated with the features of the political administrative system which is particular to Amsterdam and the Netherlands.
2. This will be followed by an appraisal of the likely types of land use to be found in the Amsterdam region in the future. The appraisal will take the form of a policy-centered projection (WRR 1980, 1983) and shall thus be based upon a recognizable connection between the future land-use relationships within the region and the structures of relevant political administrative systems – that is, those of the Municipality of Amsterdam and of the Netherlands as a whole.

The concept of the “political administrative system” plays a major role in both parts of the discussion. Here, this concept is defined as the specific set of temporally and geographically applicable rules which regulate the production of social and material reality (Terhorst et al 1997). In developing the concept, this paper will of course concentrate upon those rules which pertain to land use in the region concerned.

## **A Typology of Political Administrative Systems**

In order to understand the role of the Dutch political administrative system, at both the national level and the municipal one – in this case, specifically the City of Amsterdam – as far as land use and planning in the city and its surrounding region are concerned, reference is made to a series of studies conducted some years ago to explore possible policy influences over the future social and geographical structure of the Netherlands (WRR, 1980, 1983; Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars et al 1987). Carried out by or under the auspices of the *Nederlandse Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy), these studies made use of a

classification of types of political administrative systems, which is based on two factors. The first is the so-called “three currents” structure which dominated Dutch politics throughout the 20th century. Those currents were: the “liberal,” in the economic sense with “the market” as key player; the “confessional,” a Christian-led school of thought in which organizations and groups in the “social midfield” play a leading part; and the “socialist,” with “the state” as the main actor. The second dimension is based on different views of the most desirable institutional and organizational structure for the system. This identifies two such positions, which often cut right across the currents just described: the “technocratic” view, with a strong emphasis on the state’s responsibilities, and the “sociocratic,” which prioritizes the citizen’s own responsibilities.

As far as the issues of land use in the Dutch metropolitan regions that are covered by this paper are concerned, these two dimensions can be profiled as follows.

From the “liberal” perspective, the region is primarily viewed as a field within which people and companies can conduct their producing and consuming activities. Mobility, both in the form of daily movements and of relocation and changes of destination, is an entirely accepted phenomenon. This dynamic is regarded as a natural consequence of free-market forces. This is certainly true when it comes to planning strategy, and so the government should act with great caution. And if it does intervene, the main reason should be to support market forces.

From this point of view, there is little objection to the differentiation of land use by socio-economic level. A great emphasis is placed on the freedom of individual companies and households to act in accordance with their own needs and abilities when acquiring and using land and premises. As long as the market is respected, the evolution of specific business zones and amenity centers is quite acceptable. This means that even in rural areas it is relatively easy for new nodes of urban activity to appear. The same applies to the development of new residential environments, both in high-density urban form and more suburban in nature. A continuing increase in the use of land for urban purposes is therefore inevitable. After all, there is an ever-increasing demand for specific living, working, and recreation space for each resident, customer, or professional. Moreover, the continued growth in room for mobility must be assumed, due in part to the increased use of personal modes of transport.

Finally, in this vision there is little objection to the growing tendency by residents and entrepreneurs to create their own “domains” at the local level – that is, in the individual neighborhood, retail cluster, or leisure complex. This involves the social profiling of resident or visitor categories by such means as buyer screening, security measures to regulate physical access, and specific aspects of design. For example, the number of government-imposed rules concerning building methods and techniques are kept to a minimum.

The “confessional” viewpoint regards the region first and foremost as the geographical framework for organizing the daily existence of the Dutch population. In this re-

spect, it has a reasonable amount of confidence in market mechanisms, viewing them in principle as an efficient means of allocating resources. But because households and businesses find it difficult to calculate the full repercussions of their actions, there remains a significant role for mediating bodies. Nevertheless, supporters of this vision see little benefit in a government with *dirigiste* tendencies. Instead, the tensions between economic market interests and protecting types of land use deemed valuable for cultural and social purposes are primarily addressed by a wide range of consultative bodies established specifically to deal with them.

In this view, differentiation at the socio-economic level has both benefits and drawbacks. Naturally, unbridled intervention is not desired in matters which are primarily the responsibility of the various parties directly involved in the land, property, and housing markets. But at the same time those entities, communities, and networks which have long proven so culturally and socially beneficial in Dutch life – the church, the family, the small business, the agrarian class, the old class of tradespeople, the deep-rooted local community, and so on – must be protected against pressures upon their physical space. This means that the market as a system of distribution has to be “corrected.” One example of this is the protection of rural land against an “invasion” of urban categories of land use. Maintaining the social, cultural and, more recently, ecological, qualities of the countryside takes precedence. This respectively means preserving family farming as a way of life, the rural landscape as a thing of cultural value and nature as a gift of God managed by the farmer. A second example is keeping suburbanization under control, both to protect the small craft-based and service-providing family businesses in the city and to preserve the abundance of monuments in the old city centers.

In this perspective there are strong objections to the growing pressure to transform residential neighborhoods or amenity clusters into protected and socially-profiled domains. Such clustering could lead to individualization, a concentration upon the interest of one’s own group, a disregard for others, and an unwillingness to achieve balanced political decisions through dialogue. This means that a preference exists for balanced local communities in respect to socio-economic level, lifestyle and function, and for amenity centers which are attractive and accessible to all.

In the “socialist” vision, as well, the region is primarily regarded as a framework within which actual social relationships are played out at the level of everyday life. Within this regional framework, the fundamental equality of all participants in the social network must be advanced. This requires political intervention in order to obtain public control over crucial factors such as land, housing, public transport, educational facilities, and so on, at the expense of ownership rights.

From this perspective, spatial differentiation at the socio-economic level is out of place. In particular, free-market mechanisms have no part to play in the allocation and geographical distribution of homes and associated provisions. Intervention comes first through the even distribution of all day-to-day facilities across neighborhoods and in local residential nuclei. Secondly comes the concentration of workplaces and

various specialist, non-everyday facilities in centers which are easily reachable by and accessible to all. And a third essential strategy is the organization of residential areas in compact, densely-populated concentrations so that there is sufficient demand for all the facilities provided and those using them have to travel the shortest possible distance. As a corollary to this, the rural land around the cities must be kept as intact as possible, both to provide outdoor recreational areas which are accessible to all and to preserve scarce nature and protect the cultural landscape of the countryside.

Finally, in this view there is little or no scope for transforming residential neighborhoods, retail clusters or leisure complexes into protected or socially-profiled domains. This would inevitably lead to the exclusion of underprivileged residents and low-capital businesses – something which must be avoided at any cost. Neighborhoods with a balanced composition in terms of the social and economic position of their residents are, in this view, a precondition for an acceptable “spatial order.” Otherwise, equality in the sense of availability and access to basic amenities and contacts cannot be achieved (WRR 1980, 1983; Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars et al 1987).

The second distinction, that of the one between a “technocratic” and a “sociocratic” position with regard to the institutional design of the political administrative system, can be specified as follows in respect of land-use structures in the Netherlands.

The “technocratic” position is based on the notion that the government should play a directive role in social relationships. The political and economic vision is that of an active state positioned at the heart of society. Administrative tasks should be carried out as ably, as rationally, and as systematically as possible. The managerial and operational functions of the state are the center of attention. Its executive power comes first, complete with an extensive civil-service apparatus – particularly at the national level. Local authorities are primarily concerned with the implementation of national policy. Taxes are for the most part collected at the national level and then distributed to lower levels of government, such as local authorities, through specific grants and subsidies. In this technocratic vision, the creation of new local authorities by splitting off is virtually unthinkable. On the other hand, local-authority mergers designed to create more efficient executive bodies for state instructions are a frequent phenomenon.

By contrast, the “sociocratic” position is not based primarily upon planned management and emphatic action by the government. Instead, its role is seen more as a mediating one than a directing one. When problems need to be solved, trust is placed first and foremost in the self-regulating abilities of society itself. The government is expected to foster relationships which give full voice to all interests and outlooks, even minority ones. Consequently, this position is far more sympathetic than the technocratic to both the privatization of social tasks and the devolution of state duties to lower levels of government like the local authority. This kind of decentralization is also seen in the tax system, making local autonomy much greater than in the technocratic model. And the creation of new local authorities is quite conceivable, whereas mergers are highly unlikely (WRR 1983; Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars et al 1987; Terhorst et al 1997).

Combining all the options under each dimension – the three main currents in Dutch politics and the two contrasting positions with regard to the institutional design of the political administrative system – produces a total of six potential classifications for the political administrative systems in place in the Netherlands, both at the national level and at the subordinate municipal level in Amsterdam. Considering the typological sketch just drawn, two immediate observations can be made. First, the current political system in the United States – at both the national and municipal level and in terms of both its vision and its organization – best corresponds by far with what in Dutch terms would be defined as the “liberal-sociocratic” model. And, following on directly from that, it can be suggested that the question posed in the introduction to this paper about the potential evolution of Amsterdam’s “landscapes of power” – complete with protected and socially-profiled residential and amenity domains – in the Netherlands of 2030 could equally be interpreted as asking what the chances are of a liberal-sociocratic political and administrative system existing in Amsterdam and nationally by the year 2030.

### **The Current Amsterdam Landscape: Characteristics and History**

The period 1865-1914 was the first since the Golden Age of the 17th century in which the Netherlands and Amsterdam experienced systematic growth, both economic and demographic. Apart from the belated development of Dutch industry, this growth resulted in the revival of the West Netherlands delta as a seaport region. During this period, both the City of Amsterdam and the country as a whole were predominantly governed by economic liberals. Moreover, the political administrative system could be characterized as sociocratic. This was due both to the generally extremely detached attitude adopted by governments of the time regarding central management and to the still high degree of autonomy enjoyed by local authorities in raising and spending their own revenues. This was therefore a liberal-sociocratic period as far as the political system was concerned.

However, the years before 1900 can be described as much more liberal-sociocratic than the latter part of this period. Towards the end of the 19th century, even economic liberals began to call for local and national governments to play a more active role. Moreover, as a result of electoral reform, from 1900 onward they had to respond more than ever before to the demands of new political movements. At the national level, the most important of these was the confessionalist current. At the municipal level it was the socialists who set the tone. At both levels this shift was marked by a series of “social” laws and measures. Particularly worthy of mention nationally is the 1901 *Woningwet* (Housing Act), which introduced state-subsidized public housing. In Amsterdam, there were also such measures as the introduction of the municipal leasehold system in 1896, which was designed to tighten public control over the market for land, and the transformation between 1895 and 1900 of the city’s privately-owned gas, water, telephone and tram companies into municipal corporations. Nevertheless, even in Amsterdam the political administrative system remained essentially liberal during the

early years of the 20th century. For example, although the leasehold system would later be used mainly to stimulate the construction of social housing, at this stage it was employed solely as a means of “safeguarding development gains for the local treasury” (Terhorst et al 1997: 258; see also Van der Valk et al 1985; Van der Valk 1989; Wagenaar 1990).

How did this liberal-sociocratic system influence the shape of Amsterdam between 1875 and 1914? Were landscapes of power created during this period? The literature shows that the formation of such landscapes around 1900 would mainly result from (a) intensified central business district (CBD) formation, mainly at the expense of old mixed residential-workshop neighborhoods; and, (b) intensive processes of congregation and segregation in housing construction, resulting in sharp socio-spatial polarization by district with extremes of “goldcoasts” and slums. Both of these processes did indeed seem to occur in Amsterdam, albeit only to a moderate extent. For example, a CBD did form in the old inner city. But the intensity of this transformation was limited. For example, the old luxury houses along the city’s famous central canals continued to be used as homes by a section of the old Amsterdam mercantile patrician class. And even where CBD formation did occur, the demand for office space was clearly so limited that the old, pre-industrial low-rise skyline dominated by churchtowers virtually was not changed anywhere in the inner city. The small scale of the existing building stock was also largely maintained. This calm in development seems striking. After all, Amsterdam has traditionally been the financial and commercial center of the Netherlands. But a cause can be identified for this weak tendency towards CBD formation. According to the literature, it is mainly attributable to the low rate of industrialization in the Netherlands (Wagenaar 1990; Terhorst et al 1997).

A comparable development occurred in housing. Of the three luxury housing projects organized as private initiatives during this period – the Plantage development on the eastern edge of the inner city, the Sarphati Plan on its southeastern side and construction around the Vondelpark to its southwest – the first two failed almost completely due to a lack of demand. Only the third succeeded, but merely in reduced form. The demand for housing in the city during this period amongst the haute bourgeoisie appears to have been not strong enough. This resulted in most of the luxury houses originally planned for each project never actually being built. It is generally assumed that this lack of demand for luxury homes in the city was due in part to the fact that similar estates were being built in the sandy-soiled, wooded countryside around Amsterdam at the same time as these three projects, at much more reasonable prices and in considerably more attractive liberal-sociocratic conditions – in terms of both lower local taxation levels and the absence of nuisances like nearby stinking factories. It may also have been significant that, compared with some earlier cities, Amsterdam was not booming in economic terms and so did not have to accommodate a powerful and growing elite. Be that as it may, whilst Amsterdam did – like comparable, liberally governed cities elsewhere in Western Europe and in North America – develop a luxury-to-slum housing curve reflecting market conditions (Wagenaar 1990), because there was no



large-scale construction of new luxury mansions or villas, the contrasts in wealth visible on that curve in terms of landscapes of power remained relatively limited. Geographically, though, there is a recognizable landscape pattern. The luxury homes were virtually all concentrated in the southern part of the city, from the “Golden Bend” in the canal belt just to the south of the old inner city – and far removed from the stinking port – to the new villa neighborhoods around the Vondelpark. On the other hand, the city’s poorer residents were almost all concentrated in districts directly adjoining port and industrial zones – that is, those parts of East, West, and North Amsterdam on either side of the city docklands. Apart from the Vondelpark project, though, the really imposing luxury landscapes of power in the Amsterdam region were located at some distance from the city itself in the wealthy satellite suburbs, in the form of leafy neighborhoods of substantial houses. And, like the Vondelpark project, many of these already appeared to feature the characteristics typical of protected residential “domains”: private developers, screened and socially-profiled residents, partial physical protection of the neighborhood and its adjacent parkland, and regulations governing acceptable building methods and architecture (Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars 1980; Wagenaar 1990, 1998).

After the First World War (1914-1918), the political administrative system in the Netherlands was fundamentally changed. Due in part to the introduction of universal suffrage, the economic liberals entirely lost their political power. New political currents, some confessional in their outlook, others with a socialist viewpoint, assumed power. At the national level, it was the confessional tendency which had the upper hand. Every Dutch government between 1918 and 1995 included ministers representing Catholic or Protestant political parties. At the municipal level, it was the socialists who largely held the reins after 1918. Ever since then, virtually every City Executive in Amsterdam has been dominated by the Left, albeit always in coalition with others. This transition was accompanied by a gradual process of technocratization, in terms of both the growing range of activities brought into the public sector by administrations at both levels and the increasing centralization of the whole system of government. For example, strategic planning policy with regard to the major Dutch cities and their surrounding regions has been explicitly subject to national government guidance and coordination since the late 1950s. In short, the period between 1918 and 1995 – when the confessional parties found themselves unrepresented in a Dutch government for the first time since the end of the First World War, making way for the novelty of a socialist-liberal coalition and so also providing a convenient end date for this historical review – was one which can be characterized as increasingly “technocratic-confessional” at the national level and “technocratic-socialist” in Amsterdam. That period can also be subdivided into three phases, which are examined in turn below.

1. 1918-1940: municipal housing policy; implementation of Berlage’s “Plan for South Amsterdam.”
2. 1945-1970: postwar reconstruction; implementation of the “General Expansion Plan” (AUP).

3. 1970-1995: national “compact metropolis” policy; implementation of a policy of building new towns combined with urban renewal and, later, regeneration in the city itself.

During the first two of these phases, land-use planning in the city largely remained an autonomous local-authority task. From the 1960s onward, however, this was no longer the case and municipal responsibility was increasingly confined to implementing national policy.

In urban-planning terms, the years 1918-1940 represented an entirely new beginning. Not only was it a period of rent control and tenant protection against eviction, it was also one in which the city government started to exert strong control over virtually every aspect of town planning – technical, functional, and aesthetic alike. But there was only very intermittent attention to the economic aspects of land-use developments, such as the growing number of offices in Amsterdam. Councillors did on several occasions discuss the increasing number of conflicts in the city center between the slow but steady process of CBD formation – accompanied by rapidly growing traffic flows to, from, and within the area – and the vulnerable historic monuments there. But this was not a systematic or fundamental debate. The problem was viewed largely as one of traffic bottlenecks, and a solution was sought by filling in a number of canals (Nouwens et al 1985). Vastly greater was the amount of attention given in words and in deeds to housing in the city. As a result, the residential “1920-1940 Belt” features a number of characteristics which were given little or no consideration in earlier development. Firstly, the buildings have been kept deliberately compact. One of the reasons for this is to ensure a solid demand base for public transport. A system of enclosed blocks of flats is adhered to virtually throughout, with very few individual houses being built. Secondly, the belt is designed entirely on the principal that amenities should be located as near-by as possible for the residents. In other words, they are distributed evenly across all its neighborhoods rather than concentrated in one or more city centers. Thirdly, the zone is a good example of what is meant by a “socially-balanced” living environment. Right down to the level of individual neighborhoods, an attempt has been made to achieve as thorough a social integration as possible. A varied population is encouraged by alternating cheaper and more expensive rented housing complexes. Finally, the 1920-1940 Belt is an outstanding example of what design at the district level is capable of.

In this respect, one plan deserves particular mention – and indeed enjoys international fame. It is the “Plan for South Amsterdam” designed by Hendrik Petrus Berlage, which is also known as the “Berlage Plan” or “Plan Zuid.” This, in fact, originally dates from the time of the earlier, more liberal system. However, it was worked on over many years. An initial version was discussed and eventually rejected in 1906. It was followed by a period of intense discussion between politicians, town planners, architects, and other proponents of better living conditions in the city. But it was not until 1915 that a second Berlage Plan was tabled, and only in 1917 was it finally adopted. Evidently, the political climate had only now become ripe for the acceptance of such a plan so suited

to the aims of the Housing Act (Van der Valk et al 1985; Van der Valk 1989; Wagenaar 1990; Terhorst et al 1997). The Plan Zuid was implemented during the 1920s and 1930s, albeit in modified form here and there. All the practical characteristics of the resulting 1920-1940 Belt mentioned above can be found in the original plans. But on top of that it is an exceptionally fine design. The Amsterdam South developed during this period remains a superb architectural and planning whole, monumental in its overall execution and expressive in its detail. Moreover, it gives the district another important quality. Right from the earliest planning stages, and even more so in the version finally built, the Plan Zuid acknowledged the existing luxury housing in the southern part of the city. This district was in effect extended even further southwards. It was no longer in the same exact form, with villas surrounded by park-like grounds, but with residential blocks which – although not dissimilar architecturally to the blocks of cheaper rented flats built elsewhere under Plan Zuid – nevertheless contained more spacious homes. In short, whilst the existing “landscapes of power” from around the turn of the century are not actually enlarged, one specific aspect of them is copied with loving care in part from the more democratically-tinged corporatist urban landscape formed between 1918 and 1940: the living conditions of the wealthy South Amsterdam bourgeoisie. One reason for this was the local authority’s constant fear that prosperous townspeople would depart for the suburbs (Wagenaar 1990; Terhorst et al 1997).

Apart from restoring the damage caused by the Second World War to buildings and infrastructure in and around the city, the planning agenda was dominated by two issues between 1945 and 1970: (a) preparing Amsterdam for a new future as a center of industrial and service activity; and (b) implementing the *Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan Amsterdam* (General Expansion Plan for Amsterdam) in order to satisfy the growing need for new housing in the city, caused partly by the increased consumption of space per resident. Both objectives still seemed to be achievable within Amsterdam’s existing geographical boundaries, yet the local authority’s need for more space did begin to increase.

The first need arose out of a necessity which many experts thought applied to the Netherlands as a whole: that the nation would refocus itself economically. The two traditional pillars of the Dutch economy, agriculture and trade, could no longer prevent the country from sliding into impending stagnation. To overcome this, there were rapidly intensifying calls for Amsterdam to reorient itself around its seaport, as a focal point for capital-intensive industries with a connection to maritime commerce. By the end of the 1960s it was being claimed that an area of 40 square kilometers would be required to accommodate all the region’s port-based activities. (De Hen 1986; Terhorst et al 1997). In other words, for the first time in many years there appeared to be a clear urban-planning need based primarily upon economic factors. It must be remembered, though, that this was first and foremost a political need formulated by the government and largely derived from national economic forecasts formulated by state institutions. The first physical manifestation of this policy was the rapidly-constructed Western Docklands to the south of the North Sea Canal. Due to an almost total lack of

demand for land from port-based industries, however, in 1970 much of this area remained a vast wasteland.

In the same period, several specific planning reports covering the inner city and its developing CBD (*Gemeentebblad Amsterdam* 1955; *Gemeentebblad Amsterdam* 1968) were finally published. The gist of their analysis is much the same as that expressed, albeit in a more perfunctory way, in City Council meetings during the 1930s: that there was a growing clash between the inner city's expanding role as a CBD, including the consequent growth in traffic, and the historical quality of its existing buildings. The difference now was that the balance of power had shifted. During the 1960s a powerful citizens' lobby developed to protect the historic inner city. At the same time a movement of young students and artists, known as *Provo*, emerged with a strong political objection to the creation of a CBD and to the reduced quality of life in the inner city being caused by motor traffic. Very soon the viewpoints adopted by these new participants in the debate were now seldom if ever being contradicted in the press, and in the city a general mood developed which made it impossible to carry out any large-scale development in the old core (Nouwens et al 1985; Wagenaar 1990; Mamadouh 1992; Terhorst et al 1997; Rooijendijk 2000). The provisional compromise reached in this conflict had already become clear by the end of the 1960s. The inner city would remain more or less untouched, with new CBD functions being concentrated in new "central districts" just outside it – for example, to the southeast along the Wibautstraat. Unrestrained city development in the old inner city seems to have been definitively struck from the agenda at this time. There has been hardly any there since the late 1960s (Nouwens et al 1985; Rooijendijk 2000).

During the same period, however, implementation of the General Expansion Plan – which had been drawn up and approved in the late 1930s but then was delayed by the Second World War – continued apace. The characteristics of this construction project, concentrating mainly on urban expansion zones on the western, northern, and southern edges of the city, are in general terms much the same as those of the Plan Zuid: (a) as compact an urbanization as possible, albeit less dense than found in the Plan Zuid as a response to the increased need for space per person; (b) distribution of amenities and employment zones throughout the new districts and neighborhoods; (c) creation of a social mix in each district and neighborhood, in terms of both the socio-economic level and household composition; and (d) a clear attempt at harmonized design at district and neighborhood level, but this time in a functional and modernist style. In another respect, too, this belt of 1950s and 1960s development is the same as those from earlier periods. Once again the new housing and commercial districts to the south of the city are more spacious and luxurious than those to the west and north. And, as before, this echo of the landscapes of power created in around 1900 was defended by pointing to the need of providing homes in the city for the well-off in order to prevent suburbanization (AUP 1934a, 1934b).

Between 1970 and 1995, the State largely took over responsibility for coordinating the design of the metropolitan regions in the Netherlands. Its regional urban policy was

increasingly concentrated around four objectives. Economically, efforts were made to stimulate growth – particularly in the form of job creation – even in places where this would not occur naturally. Socially, planning efforts concentrated upon avoiding the creation of deprived residential areas characterized by poor living conditions, a lack of amenities and low social participation. Ecologically, the ideal was to keep built-up areas as compact as possible so as to protect nature and biodiversity in the surrounding areas and to promote the use of public transport. And culturally the aim was to maintain landscapes of cultural and historic value, be these city monuments or countryside, so as to preserve the identity of the region. In short, Dutch land-use planning at the regional level has been dominated for more than 30 years by efforts to achieve both “balance” in the distribution of population groups and activities across different parts of the environment and “modesty,” particularly in respect of restricting urban encroachment into rural areas. These values have become so embedded in Dutch planning culture that they are regarded by some researchers as symbolizing the existence of a “planning doctrine” here (Faludi et al 1990, 1994; Dieleman et al 1992).

The motivation behind the State’s regional approach is easily summarized. Little by little, urban land use was tending towards deconcentration to such an extent that a policy was required which encompassed both the cities themselves and their hinterlands. This both responded to the fact that those regions were gradually beginning to interact as a single metropolitan system and provided an effective way to try to draw a line between urban and rural land use where necessary. Largely outlined in the second and third *Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening (Reports on Land Use in the Netherlands)* (*Tweede Nota* 1966; *Derde Nota* 1976, 1977, 1978), during the 1970s and 1980s the resulting policy focused on channelling an unstoppable exodus of city dwellers and city-based companies into officially-designated “new towns.” Six of these were identified around Amsterdam, all about 20 to 30 kilometers from the city. For this reason, the policy of the time has been called “clustered deconcentration” (*Tweede Nota* 1966; Faludi et al 1990; Dieleman et al 1992). In the 1990s, a Fourth Report (*Vierde Nota* 1988, 1989, 1990) introduced an even stricter version of the same policy. This envisaged the relocation of urban households and businesses seeking more space to new developments either adjacent to the city proper or in any case to new towns no more than 10 to 15 kilometers from it. This strategy is therefore known nowadays as the “compact cities” policy. In the Amsterdam region there were no “detached” developments at all: the new zones were all located on the edge of the city. During both periods described above, the principal policy objective was to prevent fragmented deconcentration of metropolitan land use encroaching upon the surrounding countryside (Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars et al 1996).

The regional new towns strategy of the past 30 years has been accompanied within the cities themselves by a policy of regeneration. In the 1970s and 1980s, this was known as “urban renewal policy” and featured programs focusing mainly upon renovating the building stock in “downgraded” neighborhoods. These were mainly cheaply-built late 19th-century districts constructed during the liberal-sociocratic period. As far as their populations were concerned, the objective was to keep them in situ. “Build-

ing for the community” was therefore a widely-used slogan for renewal operations (Yap 1981; Schuiling 1985). But at the end of the 1980s, another policy made its entrance. Under the slogan “urban revitalisation,” the aim now became to introduce more expensive new owner-occupier housing into downgraded districts – this time neighborhoods in the more recent residential belts as well – so as to attract wealthier residents and thus achieve a better local social mix. Amsterdam participated extensively in both strategies (Van der Cammen et al 1996; Ministerie van VROM 1997; VROMraad 1999).

What sort of landscape do we encounter in and around Amsterdam today as a result of all these strategies implemented since the end of the 19th century? Four characteristics can be defined.

1. Bearing in mind the physical and morphological differentiation between its residential and commercial areas – the variations between areas in terms of building density, of housing and construction quality and of architecture, as well as those between the form of ownership and pricing level of the built environment – there actually are no real “landscapes of power” in the Amsterdam region, and certainly not in the city itself. That is to say, the parties involved in building housing and commercial premises were not allowed to achieve differentiation between them – which inevitably means economic polarization – based upon market relationships: the physical separation of well-located, spacious, attractively-designed and hence pricey property clusters from poorly-situated, more cramped, badly-designed and thus cheap ones. The cultural, ecological and above all social principles followed by the government since 1918 have had much too far-reaching an effect upon land-use planning in the region for that. Only a few leading economic institutions regarded by the government as essential to the city and the region – the Bank of the Netherlands, the head office of the ABN/AMRO Bank – have in recent decades managed to use that economic power to force their way into a prestigious Amsterdam location. In the 1960s, for example, the Bank of the Netherlands succeeded in establishing a high-rise banking complex on an attractive square in the inner city – the only office tower in the area. From a morphological point of view, the region can thus be described more as having a modest, balanced corporatist landscape derived from a mix of economic, social, ecological and cultural priorities than being a constellation of “landscapes of power” which vary widely in terms of prices, building quality, and architectural richness.
2. But as far as the actual functional and social use made of the homes and other buildings in the region is concerned, this – arguably “democratic” – order is far less evident. Despite all the good intentions of their providers, the majority of those who actually use the property constructed for them have long succeeded very ably in magnifying the differences in quality which do exist into a “league table” of desirable versus undesirable areas and hence creating more or less deprived districts. Variations in distance from the city, in dwelling type – flats or houses – and in the accessibility of city centers have led to recent new towns like Lelystad, urban expan-

sion zones like Bijlmermeer and urban renewal areas like the Indische Buurt being transformed, despite a large proportion of new development for the region, into “cumulative problem zones” complete with the high percentages of unemployment, ethnic minority residents with language problems, and unwaged households which that definition entails. In other words, despite the lack of any clear physical-morphological differentiation in architectural quality, a socio-economic curve can be observed within the region separating more and less successful neighborhoods in terms of the careers, prosperity, and status of their populations. Since this differentiation is unintended, however, it seems unjust to use the term “landscapes of power” to define it.

3. All this does not mean, though, that there are no deliberately-created “landscapes of power” at all to be found in the region. There most certainly are, albeit fragmentary ones. To begin with, for example, there are several “relics” from earlier periods which can quite unreservedly be called landscapes of power. Good examples are the luxury residential areas mentioned earlier, those built in and around the city in about 1900. Both the villas and mansions erected around the Vondelpark and the suburban parkland estates in places like Bloemendaal and Blaricum, some distance from Amsterdam, remain to this day extremely prestigious places to live and work, and are protected by public and private law as true “power-full” residential enclaves (Ostendorf 1988; De Haan 1990). Their residents and users thus seem to have succeeded consistently for a century now in resisting encroachment by other forms of land use and intervention by the government.
4. A second phenomenon which could be defined as a “landscape of power” should be regarded as a product of Dutch legislative loopholes. Luxurious environments again provide the best examples. In the city these are found in a number of centrally-situated, small-scale and until recently entirely run-down inner-city neighborhoods which have now been taken over by individual “gentrifiers” who themselves take on the physical renovation and improvement of their own homes and living environment. The exact equivalent in the rural hinterland is a series of what were until recently small poor villages lying in the peat-bog area between the main agglomerations of the western Dutch “Randstad” but have now been taken over by wealthy newcomers, most of them city dwellers in search of a romantic dream home in the countryside. Again, they have themselves restored or replaced their newly-acquired ruin and “gentrified” the locality. In both cases, entirely against original expectations and often in defiance of government intentions, these developments have resulted in attractive new living environments with clear “enclave” traits. They can thus be classified as new “landscapes of power” (De Wijs-Mulken 1999).

### **Amsterdam’s Future Landscape: Opportunities and Threats**

Down through the years, only one trend has consistently been regarded in Dutch land-use planning circles as a threat to the quality of life in the cities: the exodus of urban residents and activities to the suburban hinterland, in search of more room than the city

has to offer. Until recently this urge to deconcentration in urban land use was the only question planners needed to address. Recently, however, attention has also turned to a second development with potential consequences for the metropolitan relationships in the Netherlands: there has been a growing realization amongst Dutch planners that fundamental processes of urban concentration and sprawl are taking place, particularly at the international level. These are resulting in some countries and regions evolving into international concentration zones for urban land uses, whilst others decline in this respect. Not that such processes are anything new. They occurred in the Europe of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries as a repercussion of the increasing scale of long-distance international commerce. Northern Italy and the coastal regions of the Low Countries increasingly began to function as international trading hubs during that period, and as a result became urban concentration zones at the European level. And this international interaction has certainly not ended since. On the contrary, in the long run it is only expanding. Nevertheless, it was not until well into the 1980s that Dutch state planners began to look at these processes of urbanization on an international scale. It was only in the *Fourth Report on Land Use* in the Netherlands that a policy was introduced to reinforce the position of the western Dutch “mainports” – the Port of Rotterdam and Schiphol Airport – in the international distribution system for goods and people. In subsequent years, the globalization of economic traffic became a prominent topic in international literature, mainly because of the major impact of this development upon the chances of individual cities “upgrading” or “downgrading.” For this reason, the rest of this section will examine the opportunities and threats facing the future landscape of Amsterdam based upon two themes: (a) the increasing international integration of economic traffic and its potential consequences for the character and structure of the Amsterdam landscape; and (b) the ongoing deconcentration of urban land use and the possible repercussions for that same landscape.

The global exchange of goods, services, knowledge and capital is being deregulated at a rapid pace. Partly as a result of various technological developments in, for example, telecommunications and partly in the wake of a series of far-reaching institutional transformations – such as the continuing evolution of the common market within the European Union – the organizational scale of business activity is growing rapidly. In this context, the “footloose” nature of all kinds of economic activity is constantly increasing, international commerce is swelling dramatically, and the division of labor between nations and continents is growing. As a result, the competition between urban regions to attract new economic activity is more and more being conducted on the international stage. And there is an increasing use of international “league tables” to assess those regions on their quality as a location, based on everything from educational facilities to cultural provision.

Almost all recent studies into the potential of and opportunities facing different metropolitan regions on the international playing field home in on concepts like “urban network” or “metropolitan development zone.” Such phrases refer to the existence of collections of cities, with their surrounding regions, characterized by a specif



ic economic-activity profile and a particular degree of success as measured using such criteria as employment growth rates. Such development zones are usually broken down into so-called “hubs,” “nodes” or “centers”, denoting the traditionally important cores cities, and “corridors” along the routes connecting them. This is often where new forms of economic activity develop. The geographical extent of these development zones is certainly not unlimited. Places which are beyond easy reach of the core cities and their connecting corridors generally play little or no part in a zone’s dynamic. It is important for the purposes of this paper that plenty of studies have now appeared which, in attempting to classify the metropolitan regions within Europe in terms of their membership of and position within certain development zones, enable a reasonably reliable picture of where the Dutch metropolitan regions stand in Europe to be given here.

So what is their position? A large number of studies have concluded that a series of urban regions in the Netherlands, some in the “Randstad” and some in the east and south of the country, form part of Europe’s leading metropolitan core zone in terms of economic importance and growth: the so-called “Central Megalopolis,” also known as the “Blue Banana.” This stretches from southeast England through the Benelux and along the Rhine into Switzerland and then northern Italy. It contains both important decision-making and service centers, so-called “brainports” – including London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Cologne, Frankfurt, Munich, Zurich, and Milan – and major hubs in the distribution of goods and people, “mainports”: London and Frankfurt again, plus Rotterdam, Antwerp, and others. Characteristic of this core zone are the large number of multinational company and bank headquarters, the extent of ICT activity, the proliferation of universities and research institutes, the range of cultural and communications amenities and the number of international airports (Musterd et al 1992; Boomkens et al 1992).

What opportunities and threats does this situation present for the Amsterdam region over the coming decades? Two possible developments merit particular consideration. First, there is a constant danger of the Amsterdam cluster being spatially marginalized as a “mainport” region as a result of shifts in the flows of goods and people – for example, because a faster-growing economy elsewhere in Europe brings more traffic to airports other than Schiphol. Secondly, globalization is likely to be a growing threat to Amsterdam as a “brainport.” This development tends to encourage top-level central activities to congregate in fewer and fewer “supercenters” or “global cities,” with their concomitant decline in smaller cities.

Considering the position of the large cities, the creation in both Europe and North America of urban networks based on daily interaction and with a constantly expanding regional coverage represents the result of a process of deconcentration from the cities into the surrounding countryside which has been growing steadily in intensity for the past 100 years. Influenced particularly by constantly increasing prosperity since the 1950s and 1960s, the needs of residents for their own space keeps growing. At the same time, their dependence upon external facilities located close to home has

gradually fallen as they have become more and more mobile. As a result, the not-yet fully built-up rural hinterland of the cities has become more attractive as a living environment, particularly for families: there they find or can create the spacious home and garden they crave, whilst the potentially greater distances from work and the loss of certain amenities caused by a move out of the city are not regarded as an obstacle. This deconcentration meant that by 1970 the Netherlands could already be regarded as being divided into “daily urban systems,” supralocal in size, with work and amenities primarily concentrated in the core of the central cities and with the population increasingly settling outside those urban cores or even outside the cities themselves.

In hindsight, however, the formation of these monocentrically-structured urban regions during the 1960s simply seems to have been a “snapshot” in an ongoing process of deconcentration regarding the location of all types of urban land use in relation to the old city cores, and in the physical rearrangement of the increasing numbers of household and business types relative to one another. The deconcentration processes – which, after 1970, increasingly involved businesses and amenities as well as people – brought about the current evolution of employment nodes and amenity centers both at the edge of the city and in its suburban hinterland, whilst at the same time the old city cores are beginning to lose part of their scope and function. Meanwhile, “sorting” processes have resulted in this deconcentration being accompanied more and more by geographical congregation and segregation. The displacement systems in the areas concerned have also become less monocentrically organized and more complex. Moreover, the rise of new centers and nodes on the edges of cities or in their surrounding areas have meant that such movements are by no means any longer confined to clear regional boundaries. To put it another way, the monocentrically-structured regional daily urban systems which could be identified in various European countries as well as in North America during the late 1960s since appear to have become more and more intertwined into “urban fields” – that is, metropolitan agglomerations organized around many nodes, both old city centers and new focal points at city edges and in the suburbs, and many times greater in size than the former monocentric daily urban systems. In the Netherlands, these processes have thus far been fought fiercely by the government. Nevertheless, a tendency towards urban-field formation can be seen in many parts of the country. This is particularly the case in and around Amsterdam. It is particularly symptomized by the growing number of centers and hubs in the region (Musterd et al 1992; Boomkens et al 1997).

All this has presented planners in the Netherlands with a difficult choice. The majority believe that unconditional acceptance of the trend towards urban-field formation is fraught with danger. Objections to it are therefore coming from many angles. First, there is the threatening impact upon various forms of rural land use, with all the ecological and cultural objections that raises. Secondly, unchecked deconcentration of metropolitan land use would seem to undermine the ability to maintain a public-transport system. And thirdly, uncontrolled deconcentration of land users away from the big cities can lead to social decline within them – in part because it reduces the demand for all kinds of urban amenities which eventually would decrease, and in part,

because the deconcentration mainly involves the wealthier users of land and hence leads to urban impoverishment. Many believe that warding off the dangers of decline, in particular, requires the development of a creative land-use policy at the urban level over the coming years.

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of whether it is conceivable that by about the year 2030 the Amsterdam region will have evolved into a constellation of “landscapes of power.” It is fair to say that the city authorities are faced with a tough choice in this respect. After all, the socialist- and confessionalist-led technocratic metropolitan land-use policy in place in the Netherlands since the 1920s has resulted in the almost total disappearance of landscapes of power in and around Amsterdam, at least in terms of their physical manifestation in the urban landscape. Only a few fragments of such landscapes remain, remnants of an earlier period and mainly outside the city in the “leafy suburbs.” In fact, the current urban landscape in the Netherlands is better described as modest, balanced and corporatist, one in which the continual enforcement of social, cultural, and ecological quality standards has very effectively checked the physical expression of economic power.

On the other hand, the developments which will shape the Dutch city in the near future are primarily economic in nature. The spatial marginalization of that city will have to be avoided by improving airports and building high-speed rail links. Leading global economic organizations will only be retained or attracted by the development within or around these cities of top locations, for them and their employees, and by the creation of high-quality education and cultural provision. Impoverishment and decline in the cities are combated by making their living and business climate more attractive. In other words, it seems virtually inevitable that any policy designed to overcome the impending economic threats to quality of life in the cities will be accompanied by the development of landscapes of power. That is the dilemma facing the Dutch state and, in particular, the Municipality of Amsterdam.

In fact, there will hardly be any question of a choice on this matter in the Netherlands. The country’s current technocratic land-use policy, which very much considers social, cultural, and ecological quality criteria as well as economic factors, is broadly supported by a majority of the politicians, officials, and land-use planning professionals involved in it. The course of the debate thus far on the latest *Fifth Report on Land Use* clearly demonstrates that. Even with the *Report* still in production, the vast majority of Dutch parliamentarians – socialists, confessionalists, and social liberals alike – have made it clear that they believe physical compactness and sociospatial balance achieved by central government management should characterize the future organization of land use in this country. It is therefore assumed in this paper that the urban landscape of the Netherlands will, over the next few decades, continue to be shaped first and foremost by partly by socialists and partly by confessionalists inspired government-led technocratic policy, based to a large extent on social, cultural, and ecological principles.

Seen in the right, this study into the likelihood of landscapes of power existing in

and around the Amsterdam of 2030 can only conclude by presenting variants of the current Dutch government vision of urban and regional planning as forecasts for the Amsterdam regional landscape in 30 years time. Two such variants have been chosen. One is based on a “precise” version of the planning doctrine currently prevalent – that is, a corporatist landscape shaped entirely by compactness and by functional and social balance. The other envisages a more “pliable” version of that doctrine. This model varies from the first one in two significant ways. Firstly, as well as compact districts it also features the development of urban living and working districts with suburban densities, albeit as far as possible adjacent to existing settlements and only “clustered” within specified corridor-like metropolitan development zones in order to facilitate an effective public-transport system. The other difference in the second model is that it accepts the appearance of socio-economically and culturally profiled living and working environments, subject to the strict condition that no ghetto-like neighborhoods or clusters can be created. In both cases, these modifications to the “precise” model are intended to protect the competitive position of the Dutch metropolitan regions, and in particular that of Amsterdam, as locations for top-level activities within an ever more integrating European Union, both political and economic. As far as the scope of this paper is concerned, the most important point is that these two distinct models clearly differ in how conceivable they make the existence of landscapes of power in and around the Amsterdam of 2030, and what form those landscapes take. There is a greater likelihood of more or less “protected” living and amenity enclaves being created for specific groups of residents, companies or visitors under the “pliable” model than there is under the “precise” model. That compact, balanced vision allows hardly any opportunity for selective migration. This means that, considering both the physical form taken by urbanization and the socio-functional use to which the land is put, expressions of power differences – an accepted, moderate version of landscapes of power – are to be expected if the “pliable” model is implemented. The current plans for Amsterdam’s “Southern Axis” can be regarded as a harbinger of such a moderate power landscape. Things would be different under the “precise” model. It would simply not tolerate any landscapes of power. But even if that model were to be applied, especially at the two extremes of the wealth-poverty spectrum there would occur “avoidance behavior” towards the range of accommodation opportunities offered by the government. At the “rich” end of that spectrum, one example of such behavior might be constant invasions by wealthy homebuyers of physically and socially impoverished villages or city neighborhoods and their transformation by those private owner-occupiers into wealthy enclaves. At the other end of the scale, potential manifestations include the appearance of concentrations of houseboats in or around the city or the conversion of allotment sheds into housing.

To put it another way, even under this “precise” scenario unofficial, informal and fragmentary landscapes of power will appear – like a sort of frayed edge. And this is all the more likely given that, despite all the policies of the welfare state to encourage compactness, balance, and equalization, socio-economic and cultural differentiation in the Netherlands continues to grow.

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## 4.2 • Mixed Embeddedness and Post-Industrial Opportunity Structures

### *Trajectories of Migrant Entrepreneurship in Amsterdam*

**Robert Kloosterman**

#### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The ubiquitous process of globalization involves not just the cross-border integration of markets (products, inputs, capital, etc.), but also the long-distance movements of people. International migration is very much part and parcel of the emerging global mosaic of regional economies. Highly-skilled immigrants from developed economies move to places abroad where they can make the most of their specialized skills. Migrants from less-developed countries, many of them relatively lacking in educational qualifications, also flock to the advanced metropolitan areas that make up these regional economies. They have an impact on labor, housing, and product markets in these advanced urban economies. But they also affect these metropolitan areas in a more direct way by initiating economic activities as entrepreneurs. Last year, the American magazine, *Business Week*, devoted the cover article “Unsung Heroes” to the contribution these immigrant entrepreneurs from less-developed countries make to Western European economies by “creating thriving businesses and thousands of jobs” (*Business Week* 2000). Two of these unsung heroes in *Business Week* are based in Amsterdam: Rahma El Mouden, a Moroccan immigrant who started working as a housekeeper and now owns her own thriving firm, Multicultural Amsterdam Cleaners, which employs 75 workers, and Michael Frackers, the son of Indonesian immigrants who has started a software firm in Amsterdam.

Below, I take a closer look at these unsung heroes and others who have migrated from less-developed countries to the Netherlands and started businesses in Amsterdam. I will examine the relationship between immigrant entrepreneurship and trajectories of incorporation in the Dutch capital. To put it bluntly, is starting a business a viable step on the road towards upward social mobility for these immigrants from, for instance, Turkey, Surinam, and Morocco? This fairly straightforward question entails a whole series of other queries that highlight all kinds of aspects related to the resources and preferences of the immigrant entrepreneurs, and also necessitates complex investigations into the wider context where these entrepreneurs have to operate. The creation of firms is – as Patricia Thornton (1999, 20) has argued – “a context-de-



pendent, social and economic process.” Context obviously matters, not just the resources the nascent immigrant entrepreneurs have at their disposal (Razin and Light 1998).

The concept “mixed embeddedness” was specifically devised to deal with both sides of the equation – the supply side consisting of the would-be entrepreneurs and the demand side or the set of opportunities for starting a business – and their subsequent matching (Kloosterman, Van der Leun and Rath 1999). On the supply side, it is clearly relevant to explore how actors are embedded in all kinds of largely “ethnic” social networks. By exploring this relational embeddedness (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993), one can get a grip on how these entrepreneurs can use social capital to add significantly to their other resources. Moreover, one can also investigate how their particular embeddedness helps shape their preferences and hence influence their careers as entrepreneurs. There is, however, a world beyond that of these primary social relations. Entrepreneurs and their firms operate in markets. Immigrant entrepreneurs as actors have to deal with the time- and place-specific logic of these markets.

These markets themselves are neither self-evident nor suspended in a vacuum, but are created, shaped, and continually remolded by the wider politico-institutional and socio-economic framework (Rath 2000a; Kloosterman and Rath 2001). Concrete (“real”) markets are also embedded, albeit in a much more abstract sense than the relational embeddedness of the individual entrepreneurs (Engelen 2001; Kloosterman and Rath 2001). Trajectories of incorporation through entrepreneurship are, we contend, linked to the specific mixes of embeddedness on the relational and the market level. Therefore, it will not suffice to only look at the relational embeddedness, or to put it differently, to only focus on the actors that make up the supply side of the entrepreneurial market. We have to include the demand side or opportunity structure as well. Especially if one engages in comparative research, differences in opportunity structure have to be brought to the fore.

In this contribution – which is an integral part of the Mixed Embeddedness project – I focus on the opportunity structure in Amsterdam and how this local context affects immigrant entrepreneurs. In other words, this chapter deals with the more abstract part of mixed embeddedness: the opportunity structure and the openings in markets in Amsterdam. My aim is to show what the landscape of opportunities the actors face in the largest Dutch city looks like, how it is generated and how this affects their choices on the aggregate level of Amsterdam. Here, an attempt is made to come to grips with “macro-processes that are presumed to have an impact over and above the effects of any individual-level variables that are operating” (Blalock, quoted in Thornton 1999: 36) in a city.<sup>2</sup> As such, this contribution is part of an ongoing, ambitious research project.

The very general question about the impact of the opportunity structure is made more specific here by linking it to the rise of a post-industrial economy in Amsterdam, an urban economy clearly dominated by producer and consumer services.<sup>3</sup> The secular downward trend of non-agricultural self-employment in the advanced economies came to an end in 1970 (cf. Piore and Sabel 1984; Light and Rosenstein 1995). Changes on the demand side (e.g. fragmenting consumer markets, emphasis on innovation),

supply side (e.g. the rapid decreasing costs of computing power, trends of individualization, and entrepreneurship as self-expression) and changes in the regulatory framework (the ambitious program of deregulation) evidently favored small, flexible firms. Therefore, the main question here is: to what extent has this general shift also contributed to the rise in immigrant entrepreneurship in Amsterdam? Or are these immigrant entrepreneurs more dependent on opportunities created by other processes?

I start with a concise analytical framework of how opportunities may arise for immigrant entrepreneurs (Section 2). This is followed in Section 3 by a more general quantitative overview of immigrant entrepreneurship in the Netherlands and more specifically in Amsterdam since 1985. To put the case of Amsterdam into perspective, I also present data on the three other relatively large Randstad cities, namely Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. In Section 4, I give a more detailed analysis of the trends in four selected sectors – two representing the expanding post-industrial part of the urban economy, and two representing activities where immigrant entrepreneurs traditionally have set up shop. I conclude with some implications of the findings for the near future of immigrant entrepreneurship in Amsterdam (Section 6).

## **How Opportunities Arise for Immigrant Entrepreneurs**

To explore the question how openings for immigrant entrepreneurs come about from an analytical point of view, I will make two assumptions regarding the supply side of the immigrant entrepreneurs from less-developed countries. The first is that these nascent entrepreneurs will have only limited access to financial resources (even more limited than the indigenous population). They are, hence, dependent on openings in markets that require relatively little seed money. Secondly, I expect that, generally speaking, entrepreneurs from less-developed economies will also be lacking (or deemed to be lacking) in educational qualifications. This latter assumption is becoming less tenable with, firstly, the increases in the number of years of schooling of immigrants who were born outside the Netherlands and came with their parents at a young age to this country (the “one-and-a-half generation”). Secondly, the last two decades of the twentieth century saw a significant increase in the number of highly educated immigrants (asylum seekers) from such countries as Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. The assumption of, on average, a modest level of educational qualifications will be relaxed at a later stage. However, generally speaking, it still applies and many immigrant entrepreneurs cannot get access to opportunities for businesses that require substantial educational qualifications (e.g. accountancy or consultancy). Given these assumptions, I can theorize on how opportunities for immigrants who want to start a small firm may arise.

The first way is through structural changes in the economy. These changes can be captured under the general heading of the emergence of post-industrial societies (Sassen 1991; Scott 1998; Esping-Andersen 1999). This trajectory of the creation of openings is, of course, not limited to immigrant entrepreneurs but affects, in principle, all entrepreneurs and can be seen as the main force behind the end of the secular

decline of self-employment in advanced economies (OECD 2000). The continuing rise of the service sector – partly driven by processes of outsourcing by both firms and consumers – has created more openings for small businesses. Furthermore, shifts in advanced modes of production have contributed significantly to increasing the number of openings for small firms. These shifts in the direction of more flexible, network ways of production to cope with increasingly volatile markets are interrelated with a whole array of other changes.<sup>4</sup> Technological changes (e.g. the rapid decline in the costs of computing power), trends towards fragmentation of consumer markets and neo-liberal changes to the regulatory framework (especially deregulation and privatization regarding business start-ups) have also enhanced the opportunities for small firms.

This increase in the number of such openings is also related to the increasing importance of innovation. With intensifying competition, it is becoming very attractive for firms to position themselves in the first phase of the product life cycle. Innovation thus becomes crucial and small firms tend to be better at this. Combined, these interrelated changes in advanced economies have helped to erode the importance of economies of scale in specific economic activities. The demand sides of the entrepreneurial markets of these economic activities segments have, accordingly, become more accessible to nascent entrepreneurs who can command only limited financial resources (Kloosterman and Rath 2001). The opportunity structure in advanced economies, in other words, became more open to the self-employed and their small firms in the closing decades of the twentieth century in a very general sense.

The second way in which opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs may arise is not, analytically, directly linked to the post-industrial transition and the general revival of self-employment, and affects more specifically immigrant entrepreneurs or nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. One important, more specific way in which opportunities may arise for immigrant entrepreneurs is the emergence of “ethnic markets.” Demand in these markets is for specific ethnic products that are in one way or another linked to the region of origin (foodstuffs and perfumes, and also videotapes and audio cassettes from that area). These markets mostly arise from the articulation of “ethnic demand” as a consequence of the migration of sufficiently large numbers of specific groups of immigrants. The formation of spatially concentrated settlement of (mainly first-generation) immigrants in urban areas strongly contributes to the articulation of this demand. Immigrant entrepreneurs are usually much better positioned to benefit from these opportunities as they tend to have the required knowledge of products, suppliers and consumers. They have, moreover, the credibility to cater to these niche markets of co-ethnics. The selling of roti (a kind of unleavened bread) to a discerning Surinamese clientele in Amsterdam simply requires a Surinamese entrepreneur, as other people just cannot be trusted to make this delicate Surinamese staple food.

If these local ethnic markets dominated by a specific group (as entrepreneurs, employees and customers) become intertwined and cover more sectors (including parts of supply chains and the supporting services), an ethnic economy may emerge (cf. Light and Gould 2000). In this particular case, a wider set of opportunities for nascent entre-

preneurs belonging to this specific group is created. They are, however, also constrained as in the case of any “ethnic market.” These markets are captive markets, but captivity here is a double-edged sword. It attaches customers to the firms of their co-ethnics and helps in the difficult first phase. However, at a later stage, these same entrepreneurs may run up against the limits of these very markets (Ram et al 2000).

The third way in which opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs can emerge is also more specifically related to immigrant entrepreneurs, albeit less directly than through the trajectory of ethnic markets. I am referring to vacancy chain mechanisms whereby indigenous entrepreneurs (or already more established immigrant groups) exit from existing, neither very promising nor very profitable markets and are replaced by newcomers from abroad. This process is analogous to the invasion-and-succession models devised by the Chicago School to describe the changes in residential neighborhoods around the central business district. The vacancy chain trajectory, in contrast to both the post-industrial and the ethnic market trajectory, does not necessarily imply an expanding market. It can even happen within contracting markets as long as the number of those indigenous entrepreneurs who exit exceeds the decline of the number of openings in this specific market.<sup>5</sup>

These different trajectories of creation of opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs require different sets of resources and different strategies. They also imply rather distinct trajectories of incorporation and chances of upward social mobility. The first trajectory – the post-industrial one – relies more on heterogeneous social capital that enables the immigrant entrepreneur to link up with social networks of indigenous entrepreneurs (when starting a business in producer services) or with a broad clientele (e.g. in personal services). Surviving in these markets depends on both weak and strong ties with actors outside the entrepreneur’s own group. Strategies have to be aimed at this heterogeneity in terms of product range, employees, marketing, etc. This in itself also presupposes a certain amount of human capital. The other side of the coin is that these post-industrial markets are – by definition – structurally expanding and – again by definition – linked to more customized products (both services and goods). This implies that price competition can be relatively weak, because of the expansion and because of the ease of niche formation. These markets are, hence, very promising in terms of profits and chances to expand. Incorporation through entrepreneurship in these markets should, hence, be relatively attractive, but demanding in the sense of being contingent on a strong embeddedness in indigenous social networks.

Ethnic markets may also expand as a result of a continuous influx of these immigrants in combination with sticking to a distinct group identity that underpins these markets. They are, however, in principle more bounded than openings that emerge under the post-industrial trajectory. They also require a much more homogeneous social capital and this will, in the long run, impact on their particular path of incorporation. The entrepreneurs are, however, to some extent sheltered from competition, as other groups cannot easily enter these specific markets or niches.

The third trajectory – that of vacancy chains – requires not so much human or fi-

nancial as physical capital to be able to survive these highly price-competitive markets where almost anyone can enter and niches are hard to carve out. To survive the cut-throat competition that characterizes these low-threshold markets, they can apply social capital to deploy informal economic strategies, such as employing informal labor or evading taxes (e.g. undocumented workers). As long as entrepreneurs stay in these stagnating markets, their chances of upward mobility are very limited and they may become part of a lumpen bourgeoisie.

However, the boundaries between the different trajectories, though analytically clearly distinct, are certainly not watertight and not always easily distinguishable in concrete cases. They are evidently permeable and strategies for breaking out to new markets as described by Trevor Jones and colleagues (2000) and Ewald Engelen (2001) involve just that: switching from one, apparently less-promising trajectory to another. A Turkish baker in Amsterdam, for instance, may have bought his shop from a retiring indigenous baker (vacancy chain). At first, he will probably sell to mainly Turkish customers (ethnic niche). If, however, he is able to attract a wider clientele by broadening his range of bread and pastries (while maintaining his “exotic” outlook), he is attuning more to an expanding, typically post-industrial fragmented consumer market. Breaking-out in our view implies moving from one type of mixed embeddedness to another, including not just entering other markets but also a related shift to different forms of relational embeddedness.

The leading question here is to what extent each of these three trajectories of the creation opportunities have affected immigrant entrepreneurs in Amsterdam. More specifically, are they benefiting from the structural shift to a post-industrial society and, if so, how? Below, only a very preliminary answer can be given, as this question itself involves a multilevel analysis and this contribution is focused on data gathered on a national and one-digit sectoral level.

## **General Trends in Self-Employment in the Netherlands and in the Four Largest Cities**

By the late nineteenth century, the minimum efficient scale of firms had already started to increase, especially in the United States. Economies of scale (and scope) benefited ever-larger firms. This trend continued throughout much of the twentieth century and the number (and the share) of small firms and, concomitantly, self-employment declined in advanced economies. This secular downward trend in self-employment was, however, punctuated by brief rises when the economy went into a recession and workers could not find jobs and chose to set up their own firms. Self-employment, consequently, served as a kind of last-resort option, only chosen if one could not get a “proper” job. Self-employment and unemployment thus became positively related: when unemployment went up, so did self-employment. From this economic perspective, immigrant entrepreneurs could be seen as a special case of this relationship, as immigrants faced more or less permanent obstacles on the labor market because of their relatively limited formal education, because they lacked links with indigenous

social networks, and because they were the victims of outright discrimination. They were, in this view, strongly pushed towards self-employment.

Self-employment is, evidently, not just a matter of a push in a narrow economic sense (cf. Light and Rosenstein 1995). Specific immigrant groups – such as the Chinese and the Jews – have a particularly strong proclivity towards entrepreneurship and are highly likely to start a business anyway. If the composition of the immigrant population – the supply side – stays the same and the economic context did not matter, immigrant entrepreneurship would stay at the same level. If the opportunity structure at a specific place and time almost only presents openings for marginal, dead-end businesses, not many immigrants with a somewhat lower proclivity towards self-employment will be tempted unless the alternatives get even worse. If, however, better openings arise because of changes in the opportunity structure, then other immigrants will be encouraged to start a business as well. The proclivity towards entrepreneurship can certainly not be used to explain the changes in the level of self-employment of that particular group. The demand side of the entrepreneurial market should not be seen as the sole explanation for immigrant entrepreneurship, although shifts in the opportunity structure may certainly account for changes in both its level and its sectoral distribution. As Froschauer (2001) has shown, Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs who owned manufacturing businesses in Taiwan and moved to Canada intending to continue in this line of business, discovered that the actual opportunity structure in their country of settlement did not offer much scope for manufacturing. They stuck to their self-employment strategies but moved to the greener pastures of new lines of business.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the secular downward trend came to an end when economies of scale lost some of their clout in particular activities and gave way to economies of scope. Flexible, innovative small firms proved to be quite successful in, for instance, high-value added small-batch production as in the case of designer goods or such services as Internet publishing. In many advanced economies, the share of non-agricultural self-employed workers stabilized and in some countries (e.g. the UK and the Netherlands) it even rose. In the UK, it rose from 10.6 percent of the civilian employment in 1985 to 12.4 in 1994, and in the Netherlands from 8.4 percent in 1985 to 9.4 in 1994 (OECD 2000: 45).

The emergence of post-industrial ways of production has affected the opportunity structure with respect to two important dimensions, for indigenous and immigrant entrepreneurs alike. First, it has increased small firms' access to markets. Secondly, it has increased the growth potential. The erosion of the importance of economies of scale has opened up opportunities for an entire array of small businesses catering to expanding volatile, fragmented markets. This structural change in the opportunity structure implies that the general inverse – counter-cyclical – relationship between entrepreneurship and the economic cycle has come to an end. Instead of being a road one would only take if one could not get a job, self-employment has, in principle, become an attractive option in itself. On an aggregate level, we can nowadays observe a rise of both employment and self-employment. Not only has self-employment in a post-industrial era become more accessible, but – thanks to its increasing growth potential – it al-

so offers the promise of higher rewards than being employed, and setting up one's own business has become more attractive (cf. Piore and Sabel 1984; Scott 1998; Odake and Sawai 1999). In other words, the importance of the push towards self-employment because of unemployment has on an aggregate level significantly declined. Nowadays, the pull of self-employment has, generally speaking, become more important as nascent entrepreneurs can easily get a job and they will only opt for self-employment if this offers a promise of at least reasonable (and growing) profits.

Below, I will explore the relationship between self-employment, unemployment, and employment on a national level also, more specifically, for each of the four individual cities of the Mixed Embeddedness project. Before going into this investigation, I have to make some caveats with respect to the data. In the real world, data are never perfect, and the case presented below is certainly no exception to this. We have to confine ourselves to a breakdown on a one-digit level. In addition, we still lack data that combine specific immigrant groups and sectoral distribution. Furthermore, we do not have these quantitative data on second-generation immigrants as these are data provided by the chambers of commerce and they only register the country of birth.<sup>6</sup> This also implies that the fit between the data on entrepreneurs with those on the relevant labor force in the cities concerned is not completely correct. The latter include second-generation immigrants and, consequently, the share of immigrant entrepreneurs of the relevant labor force (e.g. Moroccans) is an underestimation, as second-generation entrepreneurs are not included. Moreover, consistent time series are in many cases not feasible as the data are incomplete or the way specific data are collected has changed. Still, the data presented below offer useful information on the trends and patterns of immigrant entrepreneurship in the four largest cities.

Table 1 presents data on both unemployment – the indicator of the economic push – and on self-employment, broken down for the four largest groups of immigrants from less-developed countries.<sup>7</sup> The “Dutch miracle” really did deliver in the 1990s. Without a serious dismantling of the Dutch welfare state, the Netherlands entered a phase of high rates of economic growth combined with strong job growth. This job growth even brought down the unemployment rates among the immigrant population. In a corporatist welfare state, as Esping-Andersen (1999) has argued, the crucial social divide is between those in the formal labor market and those outside it. Among these outsiders, immigrants from less-developed countries are clearly prominent. Their rates of unemployment in the second half of the 1980s were staggering (see Table 1). In 1997, the rates of unemployment among the four largest immigrant groups from less-developed countries were still considerably higher than those among the indigenous population, but – apart from the Antilleans – they had halved in about a decade. Although they were still way above that of the indigenous population, the decline was very significant. The Dutch miracle certainly affected the outsider population.

At the same time, the share of entrepreneurship rose among the indigenous and among the four largest groups of immigrants from less-developed countries. This rise in self-employment across the board coincided, therefore, with the substantial fall in unemployment. In other words, at a time when the main economic push to opt for self-

employment clearly subsided, many immigrants (and indigenous persons) started a business.

Table 1. Self-employment and unemployment by population group in the Netherlands, 1986/7, 1992, and 1997 as a percentage of the relevant labor force\*

		1986/7	1992	1997
<b>Moroccans</b>	Unemployed	42	31	21
	Self-employed	3.3	5	5.9
<b>Turks</b>	Unemployed	44	33	22
	Self-employed	4.4	7.8	12.2
<b>Surinamese</b>	Unemployed	27	15	14
	Self-employed	2	4.5	5.4
<b>Antilleans</b>	Unemployed	23	20	21
	Self-employed	2.9	4.6	6.3
<b>Indigenous</b>	Unemployed	13	4	5
	Self-employed**	8	8.9	10.1

\* The data on the self-employment of migrants are based on country of birth and, therefore, exclude those with immigrant parent(s) who were born here but who are nonetheless part of the minority groups as defined in official social policies.

\*\* These data on self-employment do not distinguish between immigrants and the indigenous population. As the impact of including immigrant self-employed on the total self-employment is, although rising, still quite small, I have opted for the total figure.

Source: Unemployment figures 1987: WRR (1989), *Allochtonenbeleid*. Den Haag: SDU: 105; unemployment 1992: CBS (1996), *Allochtonen in Nederland 1996*. Voorburg: CBS: 95; unemployment 1992: CBS (2000), *Allochtonen in Nederland 2000*. Voorburg: CBS: 81; self-employment 1986, 1992 and 1997: H. van den Tillaart en E. Poutsma (1998), *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen: 40.

The data presented above refer to the national level. We also have data on Amsterdam and the three other large cities. Figure 1 shows the trends in the self-employment of immigrants in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. These numbers refer to all immigrants from less-developed countries, that is, not just Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans, but also for instance Chinese, Africans, Eastern Europeans, and Latin Americans. They also include self-employed from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and the former Yugoslavia. This inclusion is a legacy from the times when these people from the western part of the Mediterranean came to the Netherlands as guest workers. Each of the four cities shows a near doubling of the absolute number of immigrant entrepreneurs between 1989 and 1997, the years when unemployment among immigrants sharply decreased. Amsterdam clearly stands out with a comparatively high number of self-employed immigrants. In 1997, the number of self-employed immigrants in Amsterdam was almost twice as high as in Rotterdam, whereas the total



labor force of immigrants from less-developed countries was only about 50 percent larger (CBS 2001).<sup>8</sup>

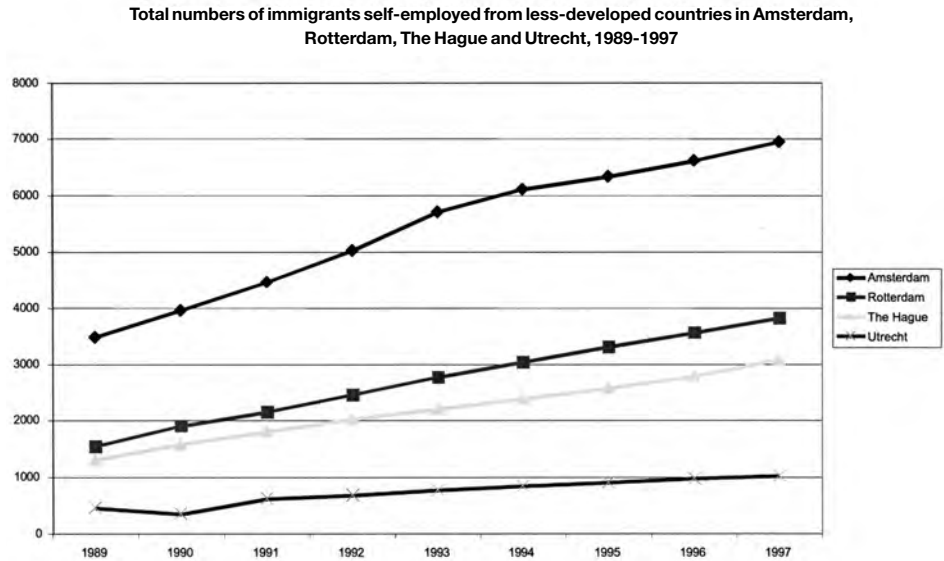


Figure 1. Source: H. van den Tillaart en E. Poutsma (1998) *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen: 186.

We still lack the data for longer time series that show the trends in self-employment and labor force by city by group. In Table 2, however, we have calculated a first, brief overview of the trends in self-employment, unemployment and net participation rates for immigrants from less-developed countries. We also do not at this time possess data on each of the four specific groups. Table 2 shows that the trends at the individual city level suggest a more refined view of the relationship between self-employment and the urban labor market for immigrants. Self-employment clearly rose in these years. Amsterdam, again, clearly leads in terms of the share of self-employed compared to the other three cities, and almost one in ten of the total immigrant population of Amsterdam is self-employed.

The trends in unemployment are somewhat ambiguous as they peaked in 1994, right after the brief recession of 1993. The decline in unemployment after that, however, was quite strong, but nonetheless there was no continuous decline in unemployment in this short period. The rate of net labor participation for immigrants from less-developed countries increased in this period (except for Rotterdam and Utrecht between 1992 and 1994). The fact that the rise in self-employment between 1992 and 1994, when unemployment rose, was stronger than in the following two years, seems

to indicate that the push factor of unemployment even reared its head in the 1990s. This may apply more to some groups than to others. Data on unemployment among the Surinamese in Amsterdam show a strong decline throughout the 1990s, while at the same time the number of self-employed strongly increased (cf. Kloosterman 2000b). For Turks and Moroccans, who face much higher barriers on the Dutch labor market, the push factor may still be important in driving them towards self-employment. These differences should eventually show up in diverging forms of mixed embeddedness.

Notwithstanding these important caveats, the long-term national trends clearly indicate the diminishing overall importance of the lack of employment opportunities. The general trends in the unemployment rates and in the net participation rates

Table 2. Self-employment, unemployment, and the net participation rate for immigrants from less-developed countries in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, 1992, 1994 and 1996 as a percentage of the relevant labor force\*

	1992	1994	1996
<b>Amsterdam</b>			
Share of self-employed	7.7	8.8	9.3
Rate of unemployment	28.9	30.4	27.5
Net rate of labor participation	41	43	45
<b>Rotterdam</b>			
Share of self-employed	6.6	7.9	8.3
Rate of unemployment	35.7	39.6	32.2
Net rate of labor participation	35	34	38
<b>The Hague</b>			
Share of self-employed	6.1	6.5	7.1
Rate of unemployment	20.5	22.4	20.4
Net rate of labor participation	41	45	46
<b>Utrecht</b>			
Share of self-employed	5.9	7.2	7.3
Rate of unemployment	25.4	30.5	19.3
Net rate of labor participation	41	39	45

\*The data on self-employment refer to the years as indicated, the data on unemployment and the net participation rates refer to 1991/1993, 1993/1995, and 1995/1997.

Source: Unemployment and net labor participation figures, CBS, Statline; self-employment: H. van den Tillaart and E. Poutsma (1998), *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen, 188-191.

obviously fall short of accounting for the observed continued rises in self-employment on both a national and a city level. In addition, each of the four largest groups of immigrants from less-developed countries showed marked increases in the number of the self-employed and they are responsible for the largest part of the general rise in self-employment among immigrants.<sup>9</sup> The increase, hence, cannot be traced back to the arrival on the scene of groups who showed a strong proclivity towards self-employment. These observations shift the focus from push factors to pull factors. In the next section, we will have a closer look at the shifts on the demand side of the entrepreneurial market.

### **A Closer Look at Four Sectors**

If immigrant entrepreneurs are not so much pushed as pulled towards self-employment, we would expect them to set up shop in markets that are characterized not only by low thresholds but also by a strong growth potential. In addition, we can expect that these immigrant entrepreneurs are less inclined to start businesses in stagnating markets where vacancy chain openings occur, given the fact that setting up shop there requires long hours of hard labor with the prospect of only meager profits, if any. Our data – as yet – do not allow a breakdown below the one-digit level, nor do they provide information on the sectoral distribution of the specific groups. So, what I can offer here is no more than a first indication of the extent to which the sectoral distribution has indeed shifted towards sectors with an obvious growth potential. This preliminary analysis will at a later stage be augmented with in-depth research on relevant trends in markets at a much finer level of aggregation. These market templates will bridge the gap between this more general overview and the actor-centered research of the Mixed Embeddedness project (cf. Van der Leun and Rusinovic 2001).

At this one-digit level of aggregation, two sectors stand out for their strong expansion in the Netherlands. These sectors are clearly linked to the more structural changes that constitute defining components of the emerging post-industrial profile in advanced economies: producer services and personal services. They are, moreover, very prominent in Amsterdam's economy (Van de Vegt et al 2001). The two more traditional sectors that we will take a look at are retailing, and restaurants and catering.

The first expanding sector is that of producer services. Outsourcing by firms is growing for various reasons. The process of production itself has become more complex and firms are increasingly relying on producer services in uncertain and highly competitive environments. These producer services can be found at the higher end of the market (in terms of added value) – e.g. consultancy and marketing – as well as at the lower end, for instance, catering and cleaning. Economies of scale are important but opportunities for small firms may arise at both ends of the distribution in young, innovative markets and in specific niche markets. Employment in this sector rose rapidly in advanced economies in the last two decades of the twentieth century, and here the Netherlands is certainly no exception.

**Absolute numbers of immigrants self-employed in producer services in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, 1989-1997**

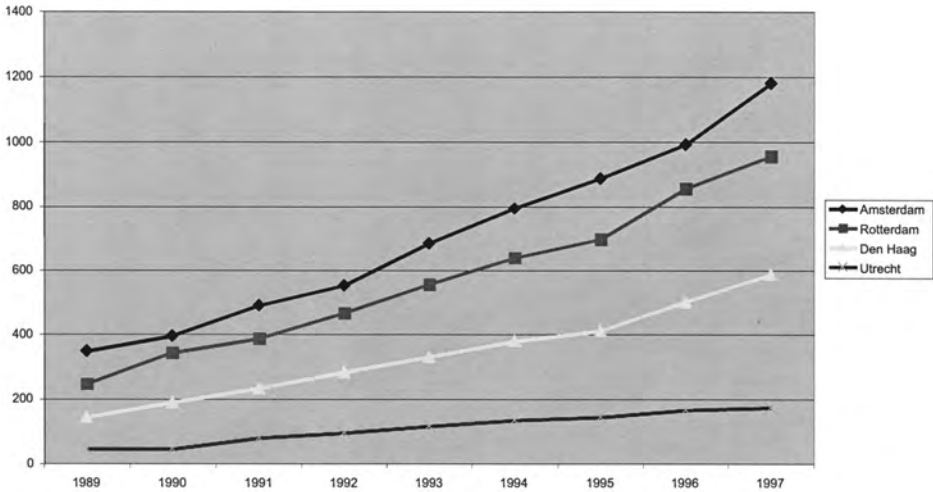


Figure 2. Source: Based on H. van den Tillaart en E. Poutsma (1998) *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen: 186.

Figure 2 shows the trends in absolute numbers of the self-employed from less-developed economies. In each of the four cities a strong, steady rise has occurred. Again Amsterdam clearly leads the pack in absolute numbers. Immigrants have obviously seized the opportunities this particular urban economy offered them when this sector was expanding at a rapid pace in the 1990s. Here we should expect either the post-industrial trajectory or, in the case of an emerging ethnic economy, specific ethnic niches where firms cater to the needs of other firms of co-ethnics. This latter trajectory is less likely than the former, as full-blown ethnic economies are hard to find in the Netherlands (although the Turks may constitute an exception). However, we should be aware that the rise of immigrant entrepreneurship may also generate a demand for specific producer services from co-ethnics.

Figure 3 shows the trends in another quintessential post-industrial sector, namely that of personal services. Not only firms but also households have increasingly opted for outsourcing. Two-earner households – which are now the rule rather than the exception in the Netherlands – have relatively little time and, given their financial resources, tend to commodify their social reproduction. In other words, they “buy” time by hiring cleaners, dog walkers, gardeners, and handy-persons. This sector is booming and, again, immigrants from less-developed countries are clearly benefiting from the

**Absolute numbers of self-employed immigrants from less-developed countries in personal services in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, 1989-1997**

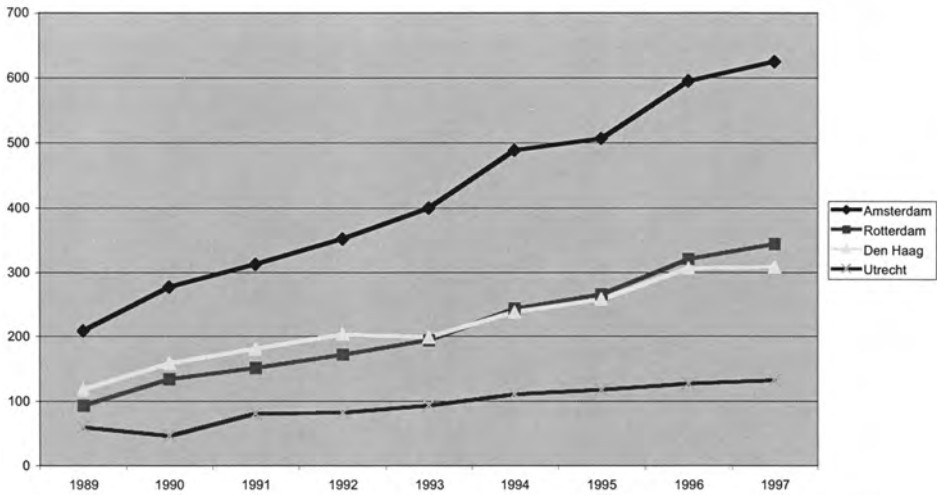


Figure 3. Source: H. van den Tillaart en E. Poutsma (1998) *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen: 186.

opportunities offered there. The growth potential of markets in this sector attracts them and the generally low thresholds of these markets make it possible for nascent entrepreneurs to start a business. Amsterdam particularly shows a strong growth in personal services. The explanation for this probably lies in the relatively high share of two-earner households in Amsterdam.

Immigrants are, hence, clearly becoming prominent in expanding sectors that can be linked to the emerging new urban economy in Amsterdam. However, immigrant businesses are traditionally found in such sectors as retailing, wholesaling, and restaurants and catering. The first of these sectors – retailing – has not undergone as strong an expansion as the two post-industrial services. Figure 4 shows the trends for self-employed immigrants, in retailing. In this sector, overall employment has stagnated in each of the four cities. This is where we would expect vacancy chain openings to occur at the lower end of the markets. In times of strong push, these openings will be tempting to those who cannot find proper employment. If jobs become much easier to get, then these kinds of markets will not exert much pull. Figure 4 seems to confirm these general expectations. The development of the number of immigrant self-employed in retailing in Amsterdam is a case in point: it rises until 1994, when unemployment really starts to go down among immigrants, and then falls. The other cities do not show such a clear pattern, although we do find a gradual deceleration of the growth in numbers of immigrant self-employed in retailing.

**Absolute numbers of self-employed immigrants from less-developed countries in retailing in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, 1989-1997**

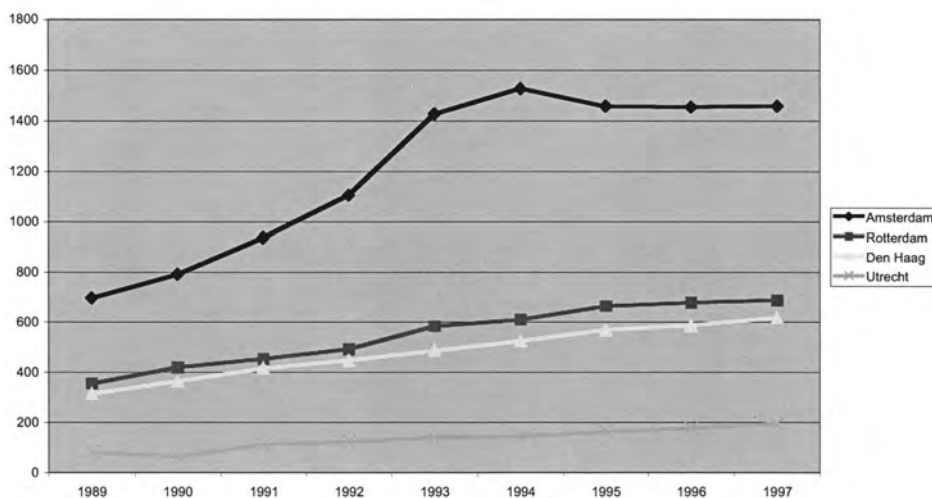


Figure 4. Source: H. van den Tillaart en E. Poutsma (1998) *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van alloctonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen: 186.

Restaurants and catering is another sector often known for its high share of immigrant entrepreneurs. In this sense, restaurants and catering comprise – just like retailing – a kind of “gateway sector” where immigrants can easily set up shop, partly by catering to co-ethnic customers. In this case, we are notably hampered by the limits of the one-digit breakdown. Part of this sector is very post-industrial in the sense that it serves the increasing demand of both firms and private households – in some cases at the very high end of the market. Part of this sector, however, is at the opposite end and consists of either vacancy chain businesses (e.g. snack bars and pizzerias) or confined ethnic niches (e.g. Turkish coffee houses). Data at this level do not allow us to distinguish between these two rather different kinds of markets. It is, however, safe to assume that most of the businesses of immigrant entrepreneurs from less-developed countries do not fall under the heading of the most luxurious businesses. Figure 5 shows the developments in this sector in the four largest cities.

Although the restaurant sector as a whole has been expanding, certain segments have been shrinking. This applies especially at the lower end where immigrants are prominent. The trends here indicate saturated markets. The growth – which was not very spectacular in the first place – has been stagnant in the four cities since 1994 when the pace of economic growth (especially in Amsterdam) strongly accelerated. It resembles, hence, the other traditional immigrant sector retailing in this respect. Just like retailing, openings in this sector seem to have been generated by vacancy chain processes.

**Absolute numbers of self-employed immigrants from less-developed countries in restaurants and catering in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, 1989-1997**

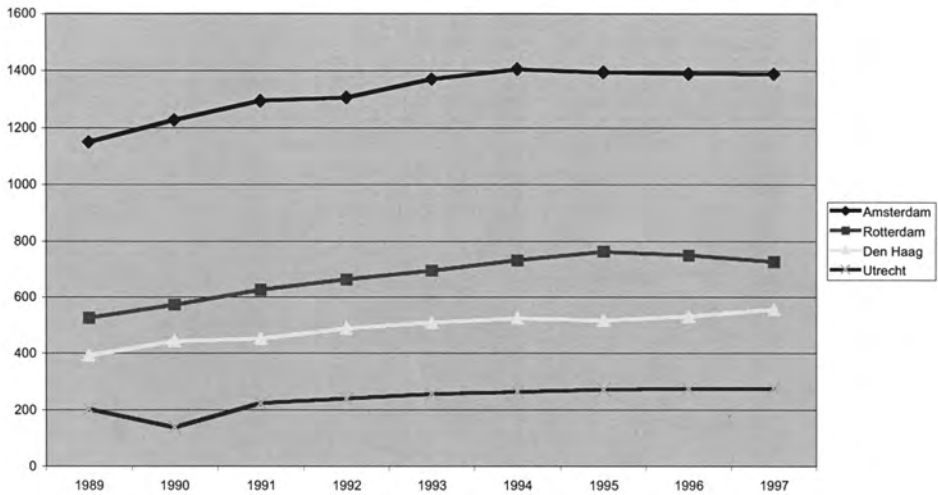


Figure 5. Source: H. van den Tillaart en E. Poutsma (1998) *Een factor van betekenis. Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. Nijmegen Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociale Wetenschappen: 186.

This more general quantitative investigation of the complex terrain of immigrant entrepreneurship has brought some salient patterns to the fore with significant differences between sectors and, moreover, also between cities. I will now turn to the wider implications of these findings.

## Conclusion

Advanced urban economies around the world are becoming more global in the sense of an intensification of economic and financial links, in the sense of the range of products hailing from almost anywhere, and also in their demographic make-up. This aspect of globalization concerns immigrants from other developed economies as well as newcomers from Third World countries looking for a better life. Amsterdam is no exception to this rule – as a tram ride or a walk down one of its shopping streets will demonstrate. Notwithstanding this obvious change with respect to only two decades ago, immigration is anything but a new phenomenon, especially in Amsterdam.

As in earlier centuries, many immigrants in Amsterdam try to take control of their own destiny by becoming entrepreneurs. In the 1980s, when unemployment rose rapidly among erstwhile guest workers and immigrants from former Dutch colonies, an increasing number of immigrants set up shop. The prolonged recession and its aftermath hit newcomers comparatively hard. The urban economy of Amsterdam, more-

over, was doing particularly badly (Kloosterman 1994). Immigrants were to a large extent pushed towards self-employment as they lacked access to jobs. The emphasis of the explanation fell on the supply side of the entrepreneurial market.

The “Dutch miracle” with its combination of strong economic and employment growth and the preservation of the welfare state changed this picture rather drastically. Amsterdam, with its historic orientation towards services, especially benefited from this resurgence, and its economy grew faster than the national average. At long last, the number of unemployed immigrants began to decrease. This diminished the push towards self-employment. Rates of self-employment among immigrants from less-developed countries, however, continually rose in the 1990s. This notable rise has to be explained by taking into account the shifts in the opportunity structure or demand side of the entrepreneurial market in Amsterdam and, to a lesser extent, also in Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht.

The recent growth of immigrant entrepreneurship in Amsterdam and the three other large cities is strongly concentrated in the post-industrial sectors of producer and personal services. The traditional mainstays of immigrant entrepreneurship – restaurants and retailing, where both vacancy chain openings and ethnic niches are the predominant drivers – are lagging behind. Since 1994, growth in these sectors has stagnated or even reversed at a time when the Dutch economy (including the four cities) was growing at a very rapid pace and labor shortages started to creep up everywhere. In other words, when the economic push of unemployment dwindled, these traditional sectors seemed to lose much of their attractiveness and nascent immigrants entrepreneurs were lured by the growth potential of the expanding services. These kinds of post-industrial markets, however, differ not just in their growth potential but also, I hypothesize, in their requirements with respect to their relational embeddedness – i.e. the kind of necessary social capital (more heterogeneous) and the strategies vis-à-vis suppliers and customers. This still has to be investigated at a much lower level than this quantitative overview.

The observed shift in the sectoral composition of immigrant entrepreneurs suggests that they are becoming more integrated into the urban economies and also that they are increasingly making a significant contribution with respect to employment and economic growth in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities. With, on the one hand, new groups of immigrants coming in, and, on the other, the continuing creation of openings for small-scale businesses in post-industrial Amsterdam it is perhaps only fair to begin to sing some praise for these unsung heroes.

## NOTES

1. This article is based on research undertaken in the framework of the research project Mixed Embeddedness. This multidisciplinary project is a collaboration between the University of Amsterdam (Department of Geography and Planning and the IMES) and the Erasmus University Rotterdam (Department of Sociology). I should



like to express my thanks to Tom Elfring, Ewald Engelen, Joanne van der Leun, Jan Rath and Katja Rusinovic, all of whom are members of the Mixed Embeddedness research team. I especially owe thanks to Harry Kloosterman and Michiel Wolf for their help in gathering the data.

This research project is partly funded by the Dutch Foundation for Scientific Research (NWO).

2. Another study, which is also part of the Mixed Embeddedness project, explores how these choices are made on the level of the individual actors themselves. In this study, Joanne van der Leun and Katja Rusinovic examined immigrant entrepreneurs in the producer services or B2B sector in Rotterdam and Utrecht focusing on the actors themselves in a specific sector based on extensive interviews.
3. In 2001, only 18 percent of the jobs were found in “goods-handling” sectors (construction, manufacturing, wholesale, and transport) and no less than 52 percent were found in producer and consumer services (Van de Vegt et al 2001, 69).
4. Cf. Manuel Castells (1996: 221): “... as networking and flexibility become characteristic of the new industrial organization, and as new technologies make it possible for small businesses to find market niches, we are witnessing a resurgence of self-employment and mixed employment status.”
5. See also Kloosterman 1996; Kloosterman and Van der Leun 1999 (forthcoming) and Kloosterman and Rath, 2001 for disentangling these trajectories.
6. The data on immigrant entrepreneurs were compiled by H. van den Tillaart, and E. Poutsma (1998) in their report to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Interior Affairs, *Een factor van betekenis; Zelfstandig ondernemerschap van allochtonen in Nederland*. The calculations presented here were undertaken on the basis of the data published in their report.
7. Because of a lack of data, more complete time series are not feasible.
8. These inter-urban differences will be investigated at a later stage in the Mixed Embeddedness project.
9. With one exception: the number of Turkish entrepreneurs in Amsterdam declined between 1992 and 1996 as a result of stricter controls on garment industry sweatshops. See Raes 2000 and Raes et al 2001.

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## 4.3 • Identity and Legitimacy in the Amsterdam Region

*Gertjan Dijkink and Virginie Mamadouh*

### **Introduction**

In the 1990s, certain critical voices on the relation between citizen and government started to sound alarmed. Taking low turnouts for the elections as their main starting point, they insisted on either “reinventing” government, decentralizing government, revitalizing political parties, changing the subject or system of elections, or simply “educating” the citizen. Although the problem concerns all administrative levels and divisions, the alarm is particularly prompted by the condition of the big cities, which indeed show lower levels of electoral participation than smaller cities or rural areas. One of the arguments was that some cities are too large for the provision of proper service standards and for the effective identification of the citizenry. This argument ignores the great social and ethnic variety in urban society and the special conditions leading to social exclusion. With respect to identification, Amsterdam nevertheless has put on some singular displays of attachment. In a referendum held in 1995 on a new metropolitan administrative structure, Amsterdam’s citizens voted vehemently against the idea of “their” city being broken up into a number of boroughs. Despite official reassurance, the proposed structure was perceived as an unacceptable loss of identity.

In this paper we will address the question of how important the city (the municipality) or any alternative territory is for the identity of local citizens and the legitimacy of diverse public authorities. One of the obvious instruments is assessment of turnouts at the elections for different administrative levels in the course of time. Elections, however, are not the only events that get people involved in public decision making in an area. Belief in the relevance of political parties for future decision making is dwindling, whereas interest in or anxiety about urban change remains undiminished or is even increasing. Action groups, schools, sports clubs, housing corporations, and neighborhood centers urge the citizen to participate, and the significance of the urban territory for various forms of recreation (boating, angling, fun shopping, allotments) integrate the citizen in varying ways with his/her environment. The ownership of cars has increased the range of action, but daunting traffic jams in the region (outside the city proper) also stimulate the interest in local resources. New meanings of the urban environment and possibilities for participation are constantly emerging.

What we emphasized above is primarily an action perspective on identification. It assumes that physical experiences and social contacts in a bounded area produce identification with that area. However, this approach overlooks two other important aspects: the symbolic and the institutional setting. Symbolic questions concern how easily we meet the city in language and images. Is Amsterdam a name that is threatened by a host of competitive linguistic distinctions appealing to the people? Are the images transmitted by the media meaningfully related to a recognizable spatial entity called Amsterdam? Are its citizens proud to use the name in presenting themselves to the world outside? Symbolic environments narrowly fit institutional environments. The Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi has stated that “territory-building” is essentially a matter of “institutionalization of regions.” Power-holding actors representing the territory (or similar units outside the territory) define and symbolize the spatial and social limits of membership, and create discourses and practices for inclusion and exclusion (Paasi 1997: 42-43). The presence of a discourse on the city and the coverage of a certain area in pictures will be substantially aided by the existence of a local TV station and press. But institutions also have a distinctive influence of their own in that they represent a certain authority or something that (in spite of the fashionable habit to denote them as “services”) produces obligations for the citizen. One needs a local authority to get married; one cannot live without the provision of such utilities as gas, water, and electricity; one has to pay local taxes, etc. Many of these institutions regularly write letters to citizens and in doing so they articulate a certain territorial authority and construct their identity.

Activity spaces, symbolic environments and institutions constitute a territorial unit and give it an emotional and political significance. Their change or lack of mutual reinforcement may create a legitimacy problem for local government (Meyer and Scott 1985) but their confluence does not necessarily warrant political legitimacy. On the other hand, we should not relapse into the historical fallacy of assuming that all current change implies disengagement from a previously sacred unity. In former centuries, the activity space of the wealthy Amsterdam merchants already encompassed the regional (second homes) and global scales (trade). They left the legacy of a cosmopolitan symbolic ambience, which, together with local patriotism, survived their decay. At the same time local communities challenged higher authorities particularly in the seventeenth-century working-class area, the Jordaan. This area – which is famous for its former passionate, almost Italian public life – experienced violent riots in 1886 and 1934. The neighborhood is now populated (gentrified) by many exponents of the young generation that in the 1960s rallied to the call of anarchist resistance against the state. Although it would be far-fetched to postulate a mechanism reproducing rebellion in Amsterdam through the ages, the absence of national government offices and consequently the absence of a large group of civil “servants” may have caused some overrepresentation in this city of those mildly skeptical about “the state.” The presence of many students and teachers at centers for higher education is of course another factor. Perhaps this all helped to stir up resistance in 1995 against “them” playing a trick on “us” by abolishing “our” city.

Of course it is impossible to put all of citizens' opinions in one box. Big cities are socially heterogeneous and it is quite probable that feelings of legitimacy and identification with a wider territory vary among neighborhoods or ethnic groups. In this chapter, however, we will not dwell extensively on differences between neighborhoods, but look at the conditions and institutions that are supposed to express and reinforce the citizen's involvement with the city. First, we will discuss turnouts at elections in Amsterdam for different government levels during the past decades. Do they reveal any special local problems with political legitimacy or deficiencies in involvement? We will then see what kind of new representative mechanisms have been introduced in Amsterdam (new administrative units and opinion polling instruments). Did they solve any of the problems found in answering the previous question? Thirdly, we will explore other aspects of civil society that maintain the political health of communities without them necessarily converging with the formal political organization of society.

There is a leitmotiv in this account: the question of a new regional level of government. Tampering with the structure of government, as advocates of metropolitan government do, may be quite defensible from the point of view of new functional economic relations in society, but does not necessarily reflect social experiences and needs for identification. Space as defined by the institutions, activities and symbols that penetrate the lifeworld of the citizen may be quite at variance with the more functional conception of space as used by planners, politicians and bureaucrats. This is what the rejection of the administrative reform of Amsterdam by its citizens revealed in such an embarrassing way.

## **The Legitimacy Crisis of Representative Democracy**

Since the abolition of compulsory voting in 1970, electoral participation has been on the decrease in the Netherlands. This applies especially to urban voters, like those in Amsterdam. Figures 1a and 1b present the turnout for the four main types of elections, measured as valid votes as a percentage of the registered electors.<sup>1</sup> The erosion of interest in the political system is observable for all directly elected bodies.

The immediate decrease in participation after the abolition of compulsory voting was followed by a stable period during the 1970s, but since 1989, turnout has dropped continuously (see Figure 1a). Participation depends on the type of elections: it is the highest for national elections (73-88 percent), and the lowest for European elections (30-58 percent). However, the ranking of the provincial and the municipal elections changes over time. Provincial elections had a higher turnout than local ones up to 1982, but since the mid-1980s municipal elections have had a higher turnout. Another difference between types of elections is that the decrease of participation in the European and the provincial elections has been continuous since the end of the 1970s, whereas participation in national and municipal elections fluctuates, with 1986 and 1994, respectively, scoring better than the preceding election. Finally the differences in turnout between the different types of elections are increasing over time, even if European elections and their dramatically low participation (less than 30 percent in

1999) are disregarded. The time graph of electoral participation in Amsterdam (Figure 1b) is very similar, with the noticeable distinction that the turnout is lower in Amsterdam than the national average and that the decrease is sharper, especially for the provincial elections.

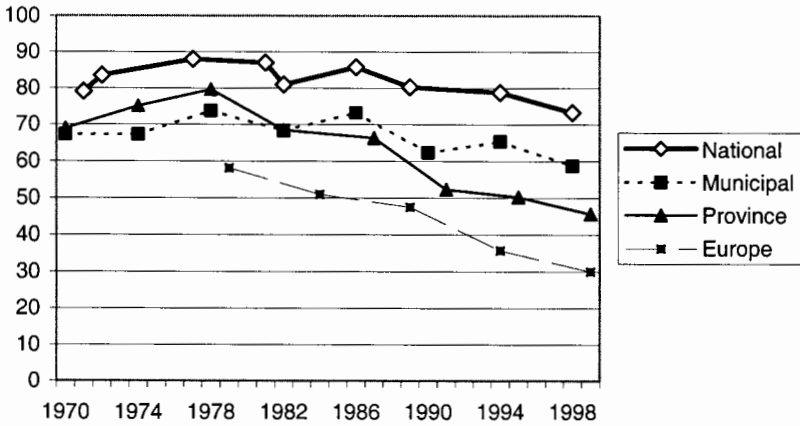


Figure 1a. Turnout for elections on four levels of governance in the Netherlands

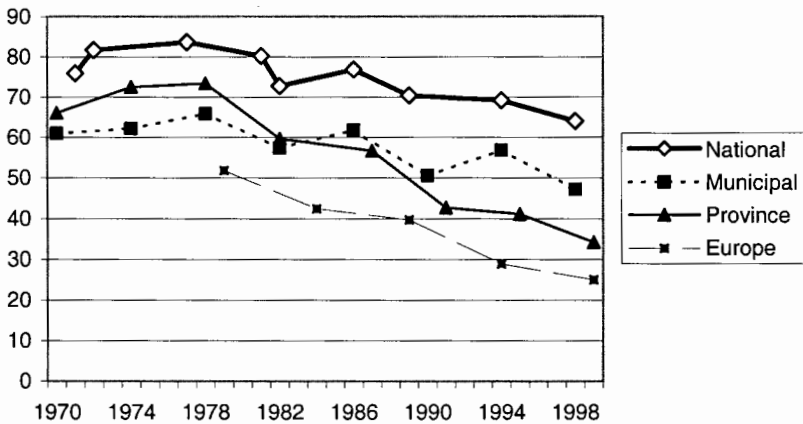


Figure 1b. Turnout for elections on four levels of governance in Amsterdam

Another indicator of the erosion of representative democracy is the diminishing involvement of citizens in political parties. Only a very limited number of Dutch citizens (less than 2 percent of the population) hold a party membership. Party membership increased in the 1950s (from 635,000 in 1950 to 731,000 in 1960), halved during the 1960s (to 393,000 in 1970), and has gone up and down ever since (430,000 in 1980, 343,000 in 1990, and 294,000 now) (*NRC Handelsblad* 27 January 2000, *Themabijlage Politieke Partijen*). Politicians and political scientists alike have perceived the decrease of political partic-

ipation as an indicator of the political system’s loss of legitimacy. The waning interest in electoral politics is, however, better explained as an ideological turn away from the grand ideologies of the beginning of the twentieth century and their ambitious program to control and design society. It coexists with a rise in grassroots mobilizations in new social movements, suggesting that citizens have not lost interest in politics but that the heyday of mass party politics is over.

Whether or not decreasing turnout is justly perceived as an expression of a lack of legitimacy and representativeness of the existing political institutions, it has led to institutional reforms aimed at restoring higher levels of political participation. In Amsterdam, several administrative and political reforms have been proposed and partly carried out for that purpose. We want to discuss three types of “innovation.” First, administrative reforms creating new political entities above and below the municipal level (e.g. devolution and metropolitan government); secondly, referenda; and thirdly, new procedures to enhance the participation of citizens in the decision-making process. We will then turn to other channels of participation and identification.

### Institutional Answers: New Political and Administrative Entities

#### *Sub-Municipal Government*

Devolution was carried out throughout the 1980s. The municipality was divided into boroughs (*stadsdelen*, literally “city portions”) initially with two large, clearly identifiable areas, Noord and Osdorp, in 1981. In 1990, 18 districts were established (see Figure 2). Sixteen of these were boroughs. The other two are governed directly by the city council: the inner city (*Binnenstad*) and the hardly populated harbor area (first known as *het havengebied*, now *Westpoort*). In April 2002, the inner city will become an autonomous borough with its own elected body.

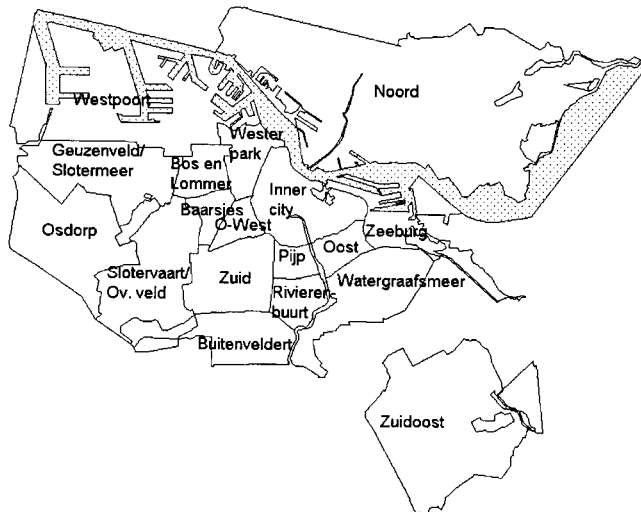


Figure 2. Devolution in Amsterdam, 1990



The devolution was both political and administrative: departments were decentralized and each borough is now governed by a directly elected borough council (*stadsdeelraad*). As such, the Amsterdam choice differs from the situation in the other large cities in the Netherlands: in Rotterdam there are borough councils but the administrative agencies remain centralized, and in The Hague administrative decentralization has been introduced without political devolution.

Boroughs are not equally identifiable as meaningful entities. Some of them clearly correspond to portions of the city with their own identity: Amsterdam-Noord encompasses the part of the city north of the IJ river, and Zuidoost the enclave in the south-east of the municipality separated from the rest of its territory by the municipalities of Ouder-Amstel and Diemen. This exclave was annexed in the 1960s and consists almost entirely of recent land developments. Other entities are clearly identified in the urban structure, such as the Binnenstad, or planned neighborhoods, such as Osdorp (the post-war extension to the west) and Buitenveldert (*ditto* to the south). Yet most of the other boroughs are much less clearly defined in terms of either their identity or their territory.

The naming of the city boroughs generally followed the existing usage by the population and urban services (such as the research and statistics department). Sometimes a borough did not get a proper name but was just labeled by the combination of two neighborhoods, for example Indische Buurt/Havengebied, which has since been renamed Zeeburg, a new denomination also created to underline the redevelopment of the former harbor into a residential area. Following the mergers of 1998, each consisting of the merger of two boroughs, three new boroughs emerged. One combined the names of the disappearing boroughs (Oost/Watergraafsmeer) while the other two chose a new name. For the merger of Zuid and De Pijp, the name Amsterdam Oud Zuid was chosen, while the merged Buitenveldert and Rivierenbuurt boroughs was called Zuideramstel, a new name with connotations of the former municipality annexed by Amsterdam in 1921, Nieuwer Amstel (compare also with the existing neighboring municipality Ouder-Amstel).

It is difficult to assess the importance of boroughs as political entities for the identity of Amsterdammers. Boroughs have different ways of promoting their identity. Apart from names, logos are very important. Most boroughs distribute a newsletter and have their own website.<sup>2</sup> Each of these websites has its own style, and some also put a strong emphasis on the borough as entity. Typically their URL is <www.boroughxxx.amsterdam.nl>, but two have their own domain name: <www.zeeburg.nl> and <www.oost-watergraafsmeer.nl>.

Another way of assessing the importance of boroughs is to look at the participation in borough elections. Do electors turn out to elect borough councilors? Borough elections were held in 1990 in most boroughs on the same day as the municipal elections, except for three boroughs (Watergraafsmeer, Buitenveldert, and Zuidoost) where they were held in 1991 together with the provincial elections. Subsequent elections were held together with the municipal elections in 1994 and in 1998.

Differences in turnout for borough elections cannot easily be interpreted as differ-

ences in legitimacy, because other factors influence electoral participation on this level. Nevertheless, the relative turnout, when compared to that at municipal elections on the same day, can give us some indication of the importance of the borough to its inhabitants, as compared to the municipality. The turnout for borough elections was higher than 90 percent of the turnout for municipal elections in each borough, except for the three borough elections held separately from the municipal elections.<sup>3</sup> In 1998 this percentage was the highest: 98 percent in Westerpark and Oud-West, 99 percent in most other boroughs, 100 percent in Zeeburg, and even slightly higher for the borough elections than for the municipal elections in Bos en Lommer and Amsterdam-Noord.

The evolution of electoral participation in borough elections suggests that this new form of local government is firmly institutionalized. However, the future of certain boroughs, especially the smaller ones in the western part of the city (Westerpark, Oud-West, De Baarsjes and Bos en Lommer) is still uncertain, and further mergers are anticipated. Also, the establishment of a borough for the inner city was for a long time a much-debated topic. At the beginning of 2000, the municipality started an institutionalized public debate.<sup>4</sup> Proponents argued for the autonomy of the district by pointing to the need for providing the inhabitants of the inner city with an equal opportunity to participate politically, while opponents referred to the specific functions and meaning of the inner city for the whole city to justify the direct control of the municipal council. The municipal council finally decided to establish a borough, a decision unsuccessfully challenged in a referendum in April 2001 and finally implemented in April 2002.

### *Regional Government*

Another important reform of the political and administrative make-up of the Amsterdam region was the attempt in the mid-1990s to establish a metropolitan government. Although it failed (or perhaps *because* it failed), it is an important episode in the history of the city. The debate about metropolitan government discloses key aspects of the importance of the city for its inhabitants.

Over the last century, the municipality of Amsterdam has incorporated parts of the urbanized region into the central municipality, and therefore considerably increased its area through a series of much disputed annexations (Van der Veer 1997). The last one was the annexation of the Bijlmermeer polder for new housing estates in 1966 (the enclave now known as Amsterdam Zuidoost). Because further annexations were deemed unacceptable to the adjacent municipalities, alternatives had to be sought to agglomeration government. In 1982, a memo for a city province was published, followed by a long process of negotiation in the 1980s both with the municipalities in the region and the state, which has to pass a law to make a city province possible. The central government was also considering other cases especially in the Rotterdam region and was a driving force in that regard (see the white papers *Bestuur op niveau*, BON 1, BON 2 and BON 3) (see Dijkink 1995).

In 1986, an instrument for regional consultation was established: the Regionaal Overleg Amsterdam. The participating municipalities agreed in 1991 to devolve more

tasks to the Regionaal Overleg Amsterdam (the so-called Almere Agreement) and on 30 June 1992, the platform was given a new name – Regionaal Orgaan Amsterdam (ROA) – to emphasize its institutionalization. In July 1994, the municipal council of Amsterdam agreed to divide the municipality into new municipalities and to form a city province. The new province was expected to be established at the beginning of 1998.

In administrative terms, the core idea of the project was the establishment of a new kind of agglomeration government under the label of *regiobestuur* (regional governance) or *stadsprovincie* (city province). It had three major consequences. The first was the radical shift of competencies between municipalities and province; the new agglomeration government was meant to be more powerful than the existing province. The new province would deal with transportation issues, regional economic interests, environmental policy, and housing. Consequently, the participating municipalities would become much weaker than the existing municipalities. Second, as a result of the establishment of the new city province, the existing province of North Holland would lose its economic and demographic heart.<sup>5</sup> Third, to avoid extremely skewed relations between the core city and the suburban municipalities within the new city province, the municipality of Amsterdam would be split into 11 small municipalities. These municipalities were intended to correspond with boroughs (*stadsdelen*) or mergers of such boroughs if they were considered too small to be a “vital” municipality. The dismantling of Amsterdam was seen as an expiatory sacrifice to reassure the other participating municipalities (15 in the autumn of 1994) that the new province would not be dominated by the municipality of Amsterdam and, in effect, a kind of clandestine annexation.

All of a sudden, the rather obscure and dull discussion about administrative reform became much livelier as Amsterdammers realized that their municipality was going to disappear. In the autumn of 1994, members of the section of the left wing party D66 (Democrats '66) in borough Zuid, including one municipal civil servant working at the PR department of City Hall (Bureau Bestuurscontact) took the initiative to organize a corrective referendum.<sup>6</sup> The Committee “Should Amsterdam remain Amsterdam???” (*Comité “Moet Amsterdam Amsterdam blijven???”*) was then established to collect the signatures required to hold a referendum. Eventually, the outcome of the referendum – which was held in May 1995 was unambiguous and is frequently referred to as an “Albanian victory”<sup>7</sup> since 93 percent of the voters voted against the council’s decision.

The public debate related to the referendum campaign revealed the relation between city and identity.<sup>8</sup> What is striking is the importance of the name as compared to the territorial dimension proper.<sup>9</sup>

“To begin with, the name doesn’t fit.”<sup>10</sup> “Change the name to Great Amsterdam,” was the advice of Amsterdam historian Richter Roegholt. ROA could be a soap, a football association or a soda, not a place one can identify with. Naming is a specific problem, because there is no name for the Amsterdam region. The few region names that are available are not suitable. The IJ river is a divide in that matter. The region called Waterland (presently a municipality) could include the part of the city north of the IJ,<sup>11</sup> while the



Illustration 1.  
 “Say no to the dissolution of Amsterdam” – Poster by Opland for the 1995 referendum campaign against the city province ROA. Opland (Rob Wout) is a political cartoonist that drew for many protest campaigns in the 1980s, such as those of the peace movement. (Source: Bles 1996)

region called Amstelland could include the part of city south of the IJ. IJmond (IJ Mouth) would be suitable to include the whole region, but it generally stands for IJmuiden and Beverwijk (which are on the North Sea). On the other hand, the Amsterdam region (*regio* Amsterdam, *gewest* Amsterdam) is not an established expression in Dutch. At the same time, the provincial identity is very weak. The province Noord-Holland adopted a provincial anthem at the end of February 2000, because all of the other provinces already had one. But the provincial feeling is non-existent in Amsterdam, although it may be more significant in the rural parts of the province (but then again not in the Gooi or on the island of Texel). Obviously the historical province of Holland, the Dutch core area, has a rich history but it is Dutch national history, not regional.

Amsterdam is primarily a feeling – Amsterdam is its inhabitants and they have ties with its name but also with its identity as a city. If the whole province were to be called Amsterdam, all the inhabitants of the province would become Amsterdammers and that would undermine the identification of the city dwellers. One would create different shades of Amsterdammer: full Amsterdammer in the inner city, half Amsterdammers in the former city, and provincial Amsterdammers (a contradiction in terms?). This brings us to another issue: which entity would be the successor to the Mu-

nicipality of Amsterdam – the new province, or the new municipality in the inner city? Which would become the capital city of the Netherlands? Which would become the owner of Rembrandt's *Nachtwacht*?

Most contributors to the public debate agreed that partition would mean the end of a 700-year-old city (journalist Geert Mak), thereby losing the soul of a city (Wibaut; see also Van Duijn 1996). This was vigorously opposed by means of lampooning the various features of partition, such as “dwarfing,” the balkanization of Amsterdam (political scientist Hans Daudt and human geographer Willem Heinemeijer in *Het Parool* 22 April 1995) or the de-suburbanization of Amsterdam (Geert Mak in *NRC Handelsblad*, 20 April 1995). The dismantlement of the city would deprive people of their identification with the place (sociologist Leon Deben). That the integrity of the city should be protected was also the main message of less influential contributors: “Amsterdam should stay,” “Just keep Amsterdam a city,” “I want to be and stay an Amsterdammer: I don't want to live in a village!”, “Keep Amsterdam intact, dammit! When asked where I live, I don't want to answer ‘in De Baarsjes’ or something similar!”<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly enough, borough borders were also defended with the prospect that they were going to be affected by the partition project. The planned transfer of Hoofddorppleinbuurt<sup>13</sup> from Zuid to De Baarsjes was attacked, while the Wijkopbouworgaan Spaarndammer- en Zeeheldenbuurt agitated against the abolition of Stadsdeelraad Westerpark and its merger into a new municipality Oud-West and demanded a borough referendum about this.<sup>14</sup> De Baarsjes also mobilized its inhabitants against the merger with Slotervaart/Overtoomse Veld.

In conclusion, the establishment of the city province was prevented because of the strong identification of Amsterdammers with their city and their municipality. Because the legitimacy of the reform was put to the vote in a referendum in Amsterdam, the new administrative layer did not get the opportunity to foster legitimacy and identification among Amsterdammers and other inhabitants of the region, so that we cannot assess whether it would have succeeded. Today the region still lacks political institutions able to do so. The ROA still exists as a regional body governed by the representatives of the 16 participating municipalities, but issues of legitimacy and identification remain unresolved (Kromhout 2001).

### **Institutional Answers: New Political Institutions**

Other institutional answers to the legitimacy crisis consist of the introduction of new political institutions such as the referendum and the indirect election of the mayor.<sup>15</sup>

The referendum is an instrument quite foreign to the Dutch political culture. Its introduction was one of the major institutional reforms the Democrats '66 (D66) party had been demanding since the party's creation in 1966. A law proposal to make referenda possible was rejected by the Senate, almost causing the fall of the government coalition of the Labor Party (PvdA), the rightwing liberals (VVD) and the leftwing liberals (D66). At the local level, local regulations allowing for referenda were adopted dur-

ing the past decade in several municipalities. In Amsterdam, this innovation was a reaction of Amsterdam politicians to the dramatically low turnout for the 1990 municipal elections (just above 50 percent; see Figure 1b). A commission formed by the mayor and the leaders of the local parties thought of it as a tool to bring citizens closer to politics (or vice versa).

The first referendum was held in March 1992, allowing the electorate to choose between two policy orientations regarding the traffic policy for the inner city. Two options were put to the vote: option A consisted of limiting car traffic in the way agreed upon by the municipal government, and option B was a proposal to more radically limit car traffic in that part of the city. A slight majority voted for option B.

In January 1994, the municipal council adopted a new regulation introducing another type of referendum: the corrective one. According to the new referendum regulation, citizens of Amsterdam were to be empowered to initiate a referendum to reject a decision made by the municipal council under certain conditions.<sup>16</sup> Two referenda were held in May 1995, two more in the spring of 1997 and one in the spring of 2001.<sup>17</sup> Oddly enough, the first one was about something that would eventually be decided at the national level, as the establishment of city provinces in Amsterdam and Rotterdam necessitated the adoption of a special national law.

Table 1. Turnout for and results of Amsterdam referenda

Year	Referendum	Turnout	Outcome
1992	Verkeersbeleid binnenstad (traffic policy for the inner city)	27.7%	option B
1995	Stadsprovincie (city province)	39.8%	decision rejected
1995	Weilandje DeVrije Geer (housing project in a meadow)	38.2%	decision rejected
1997	Ijburg (neighborhood to be built on reclaimed land)	40.1%	decision maintained
1997	Noord Zuid lijn (underground metro line)	22.0%	decision maintained
2001	Stadsdeel Binnenstad (the inner city as a borough)	22.5%	decision maintained

Source: Slot 1999 and O+S Amsterdam (<<http://www.onstat.amsterdam.nl/>>)

The turnout for the referenda has been much lower than for municipal elections (see Table 1). Referenda do not bring back the high level of electoral participation, but they certainly instigate a lively political debate about the issue put to the vote, as we have seen with the Stadsprovincie in the previous section, at least among the Amsterdammers who want to enter such a debate.

But the turnout differs greatly between the referenda, varying from 22 to 40 percent (see Table 1), which suggests that the issue put to the vote matters. Indeed the issues vary in terms of their locational relevance. Nonetheless, the turnout for a referendum about a small meadow in the west was high (probably because it was held on the same day as the one about the city province) while the one about the new underground

metro line (an issue of regional significance) was the lowest.

Turnout results are available for the boroughs. But for a valid comparison, we need to disregard the influence of other factors on participation. To do so we can compare the observed turnout for a referendum with the one expected on the basis of the turnout for the 1994 municipal elections. Turnouts for the four main referenda and the 1994 municipal elections strongly correlate with each other; this is especially true for the city province referendum and the 1994 municipal elections (with a correlation coefficient of .943).<sup>18</sup>

Simple regression analyses reveal in which boroughs turnout is higher or lower than expected. Each time, voter turnout was higher than expected in the inner city and Oud-West, while lower than expected in Bos en Lommer, Zuidoost and Buitenveldert (later Zuideramstel).<sup>19</sup> Figures 2a-e show standardized residuals for the five main referenda.<sup>20</sup> The issue at stake matters a lot. Turnout was much higher than expected in the inner city and the adjacent boroughs for the traffic policy for the inner city; in Osdorp and Slotervaart/Overtoomse Veld and De Baarsjes<sup>21</sup> for the city province; in boroughs adjoining the location of the planned neighborhood, especially in Amsterdam-Noord, Zeeburg, Watergraafsmeer, and the inner city, for IJburg; in boroughs affected by the construction of the new metro line (especially De Pijp, Amsterdam-Noord, Rivierenbuurt, and Zuid) for the metro; and in the inner city and Westerpark for the inner city borough.

The lengthy discussion about electing mayors (another point that has been raised by D66 since the mid-1960s) has not yet led to reform, but the idea remains high on the agenda, for example, in Amsterdam at the time of the nomination of a new mayor for 2001. In 2000, the research department of the municipality of Amsterdam commissioned an opinion poll to survey citizens' wishes concerning their new mayor. For most respondents, gender, ethnic background, and even party membership were not important. However, 56 percent of the respondents stated that the ideal candidate should be a "real" Amsterdammer. But this is still less important than looking great on TV (66 percent) and being an experienced politician or manager (82 percent).<sup>22</sup>

## **A Brief Outline of Civil Society (Alternative Democracy) in Amsterdam**

### *A Para-Political Framework of Interest Mediation*

Elections and referenda are not the only politically meaningful moments in the life of a citizen. There are different and perhaps even more satisfactory ways of experiencing one's membership of a community and contributing to a system of governance: supporting an interest or action group, writing a letter to the local newspaper, being a member of a school board, representing an ethnic minority on a municipal advisory council, etc. The definition of political participation can include such activities and one can judge communities according to the opportunities they offer their members to contribute in this way to governance. How rich is a community in terms of organizations and institutions that in some way influence its life and welfare? Does a local society facilitate the acquisition of the cognitive maps of the problems and issues at hand?

Referendum traffic policy inner city (1992)

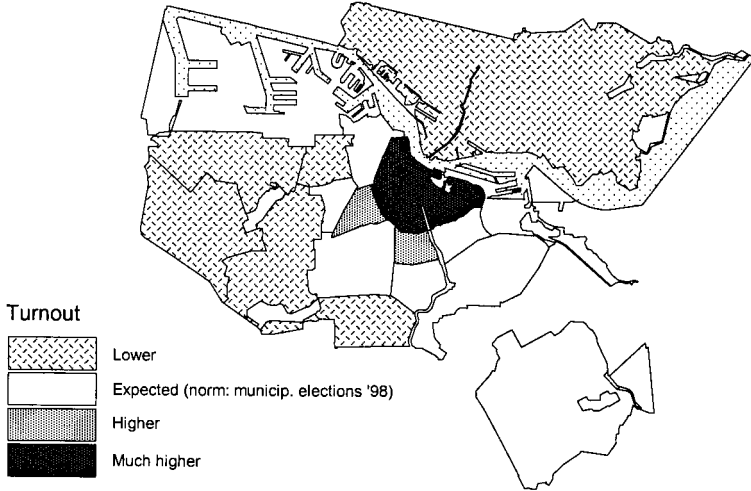


Figure 3a

Referendum city-province (1995)

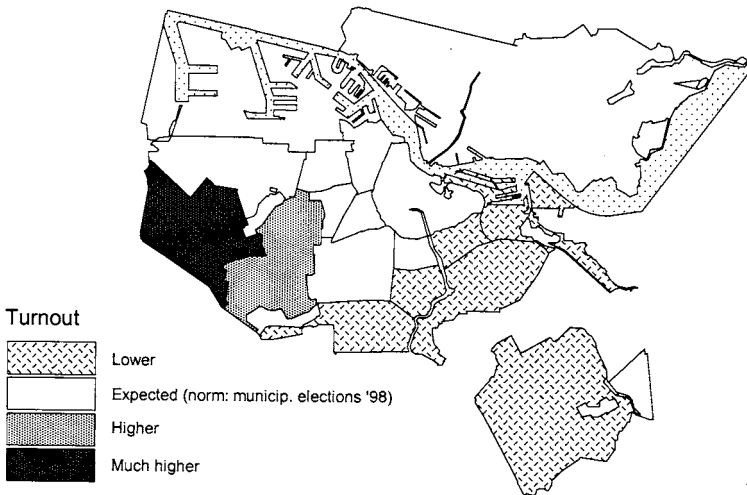


Figure 3b

In conclusion, we can say that the readability of an environment, the possibility of recognizing oneself in the discourses generated by an environment, is one way to assess the quality of democratic representation.

Let us see to what degree this framework can be applied to the city and region of Amsterdam and what it discloses about its representational qualities. In order to develop an idea of the people and organizations involved in the production of discourse, we could start with a comparative study of urban renewal programs in Amsterdam and



Referendum IJburg (1997)

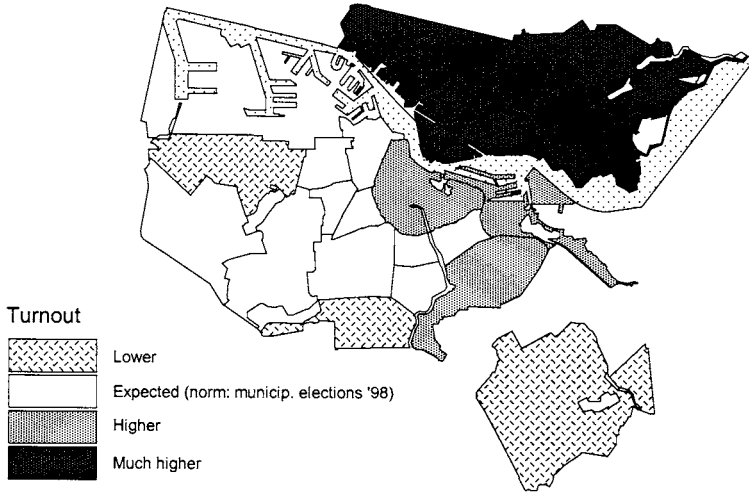


Figure 3c

Referendum North-South subway (1997)

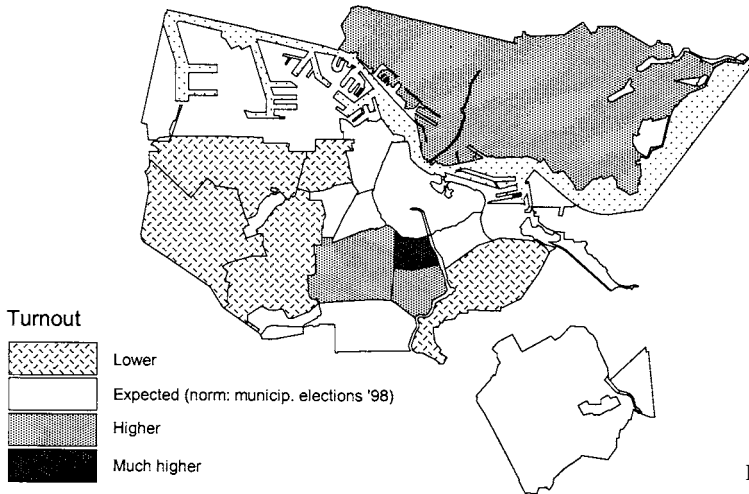


Figure 3d

The Hague (Ter Borg and Dijkink 1992, 1995). In this study, producers of discourse were identified on the basis of articles and arguments about Amsterdam's waterfront project on the "IJ boards" published in the daily *Het Parool* ("Amsterdam's" newspaper) between 1982 and 1990. The study revealed seven main groups in terms of number of arguments: representatives of political parties, action or interest groups, members of the municipal executive, business persons, experts, municipal advisory boards, and technical departments of the municipality. The analysis did not cover letters from

Referendum inner-city borough (2001)

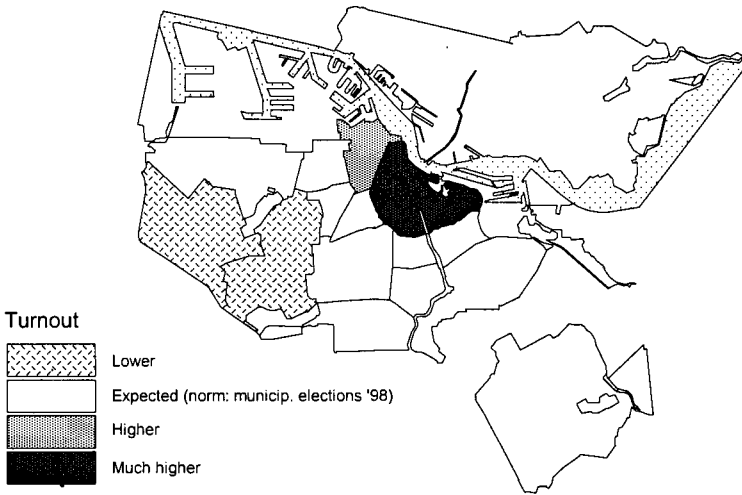


Figure 3e

readers, so that most authors (or voices) are associated with some kind of professional function as is usual when people appear in newspapers as the author of an article or are quoted. Of course, this does not rule out that many of them (e.g. action groups or experts) were also involved with Amsterdam as citizens. The almost complete absence of voices from the region (province) and the central government is one remarkable fact, even if we account for the local distribution of *Het Parool*. Another interesting fact (particularly in comparison with The Hague) is the large proportion of authors representing either action groups or some field of specialized knowledge. This suggests an important production of knowledge and concepts that cannot be easily connected with views from established political ideologies (or parties). Finally one can detect the presence of voices from the municipal offices in this discussion, which testifies to the relative openness of opinion production around an important city project where civil servants are not politically censored (somewhat in contrast to the anxious ways in which politicians themselves handled the subject; see Ter Borg and Dijkink 1995). These discussions occurred in the pre-Internet era and one can easily imagine what positive effects the availability of a digital medium would have had in this space of representation. In the light of the abundance of civil voices that tend to rise in order to interfere with political decisions (particularly since the 1960s), it is no surprise that Amsterdam was the cradle (1994) of Europe's first digital city, *De Digitale Stad*.

#### *Levels of Corporatist Interest Mediation*

If a local issue arouses a varied set of voices, the next question is how much this set can be explained as the product of a typical local infrastructure. To what extent is a bounded civil society or local political system capable of generating a rich variety of discourses? In the landscape of organizations that represent the citizen's concern about the

world, some of the most penetrating actions and voices focus on environmental quality or conservation. The Amsterdam Center for the Environment (*Amsterdams Milieucentrum*), a kind of umbrella organization for such groups, lists hundreds of them. As shown in Figure 2, more than half (57 percent) owe their existence to the fight for a particular local object like a park, neighborhood, or water area, 22 percent identify with some city-wide problem (e.g. pedestrians or birds) and the majority of the remaining groups are national organizations or local branches of such organizations. Only three percent can be identified with a regional goal or issue. This emphasizes the importance of the local level – particularly the sub-municipal level – for the commitment to policy issues. The national function of Amsterdam as capital has further advanced the growth and establishment of social movements with nationwide or international goals (e.g. Greenpeace, Amnesty International, the gay movement, etc.). Amsterdam has more offices of “new” social movements than any other large city in the Netherlands (183 compared to 100 in Utrecht – the city ranking second – and 72 in The Hague, the seat of national government; Albregts 2001). The flourishing of these movements seems unmistakably related to the kind of ambience produced by the presence of students and workers in institutes of higher education, although the quoted research also suggests that such people are not the key figures in smoothly running social movements. This means that the countercultural features of local social and political life can no longer be identified with specific classes, but is a politicization that may manifest itself in the most diverse types of people (Kriesi 1988).

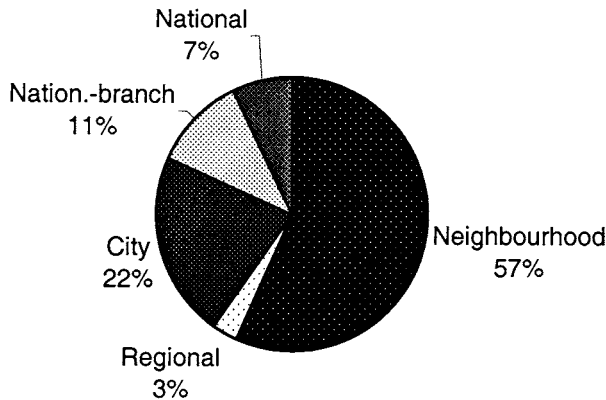


Figure 4. Environmental action groups (level of target)

All the more striking is the absence of a regional level of identification in these actions. This is again confirmed if we turn to the general list of organizations. The digital telephone directory lists more than 200 associations, firms, and organizations whose title includes the Dutch adjective “Amsterdams(e).”<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately there is no single name to denote the region to which Amsterdam belongs; one might venture the opinion that this region therefore does not exist. Each of the only available options for territorial names – Amstelland and Waterland – occurs 20-odd times. The latter is partic-

ularly favored in Amsterdam-Noord because it emphasizes local identity. Obviously Amstel (a river) is the most popular surrogate for a regional name in the rest of the city. Including its derivatives (e.g. Amstelkring, Amstelland, Amstelzicht, but excluding Amstelveen – a suburban town – and surnames) it occurs about 180 times. The number of hits for the name IJ (also a river) is only 19. Local initiatives in Amsterdam or its surroundings rarely end up in something that is called “regional.” The adjective “regional” is applied to such “arranged” things as the employment office, the police, the ROA, psychiatric services, and broadcasting organizations. It is no accident that these are services or offices organized from the outside or resulting from nationwide arrangements. If we compare this to the toponymical scene of Rotterdam, we find that the availability of the label Rijnmond (Rhine Mouth), which was first used for an administrative body, is a godsend (more than 90 records in the telephone directory).<sup>24</sup>

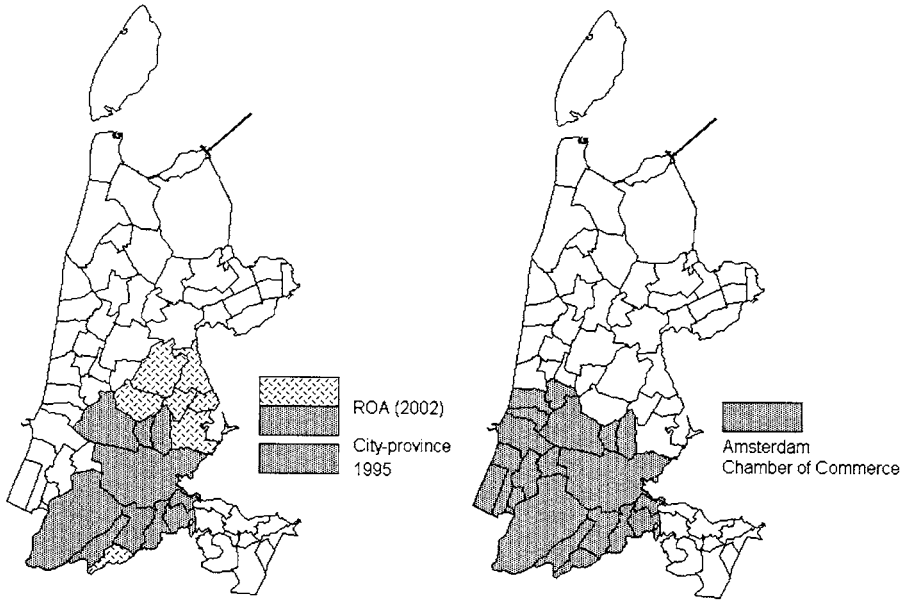


Figure 5. Territory of the ROA (left) and the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce and Industry

A somewhat different picture emerges, however, if we look at local business associations. The Chamber of Commerce of Amsterdam covers the major part of the northern wing of the Randstad: Amsterdam, its southern neighbors (including airport Schiphol) and all municipalities along the North Sea Canal to the coast (including Haarlem and IJmuiden) (see Map 3). So the adjective “regional” is appropriate here. This awareness of a regional interest among business people sharply diverges from the interest mediation and articulation among other citizen groupings of Amsterdam.

### *Advisory Boards and Participatory Democracy*

The municipal government has established a wide variety of advisory councils (17 of them) comprised of elected representatives of social groups and experts from outside the local government. Some councils with a broad representative function are the Urban Planning Advisory Board (50 members from different disciplines connected with design and the control of public space), the Advisory Board for the Elderly (18 representatives of different organizations of the elderly and health care), the Sport Council (representatives of different sports), the Emancipation Advisory Board (eight women from different sectors of local society) and four advisory boards with representatives from particular ethnic groups. Although the members of these boards are not accountable to the community, they constitute a continuously changing group of about 150 persons with an independent position and attitude vis-à-vis the government.

Apart from the standard procedures by which people can lodge complaints against projects and new rules (usually enacted at the administrative level of the boroughs), the city has experimented with Future Prospects (*Toekomstverkenningen Amsterdam*) in which an attempt was made to start a public debate about particular urban problems that should be solved in order to achieve certain Utopian goals. It was concluded in 1999 by a congress attended by 2,000 people. Similar procedures were used to generate ideas for the renewal of the derelict shipyard areas along the IJ in Amsterdam North (Roobeek and Mandersloot 1999). Apparently, utopian and aesthetic images have been discovered as appealing charms that stimulate the participation of larger and varied groups of people in these new forms of democracy.

### *The Media and Digital Cities*

Amsterdam has the good fortune of being served by a quality daily newspaper (*Het Parool*, since 1943) and by a local TV station (AT5, the leading local TV station in the Netherlands, since 1992); although the latter is commercial, it pays much attention to news as well as to political opinion in Amsterdam. For example, AT5 broadcasts a bi-weekly interview with the mayor of Amsterdam and special reports and debates about local politics. It aims at a regional audience (as far as inhabitants of the region are connected to the Amsterdam cable network) but its newsflashes and discussions mainly cover the city. Further, a local public broadcasting organization (SALTO, with five radio channels and two TV channels) offers broadcasting time to organizations that have a message for the public (e.g. action groups, artists, migrants, etc.).

De Digitale Stad (<[www.dds.nl](http://www.dds.nl)>) (DDS), originally strongly inspired by events in and about Amsterdam, gradually lost its place-boundedness and developed into an information and discussion site about a range of political and cultural subjects on the local and the international level. For a while, its logo was similar to the coat of arms of Amsterdam, the three crosses being substituted by the letters DDS. Different subjects were identified with “city squares,” and there were 30-odd sections about books, health, music, politics, elections and even the subject of death. A Freudian slip of the pen, which betrayed the origin of the site makers was “Governmental Square Regional,” which contained information on political issues in Amsterdam. DDS was obviously ge-

ographically located. But even apart from this fact, one could conclude – as our discussion about the referendum already revealed – that there is a natural resonance between local and national political issues in Amsterdam. DDS was therefore closely related to the city's political identity. Recently, the site was sold to an Internet service provider who eliminated the last traces of the political ideals of the olden days. On the neighborhood level, one may find the DDS flavor in the private initiative <www.buurt-online.nl> that covers more than 600 neighborhood webpages all over the country, including almost 70 from Amsterdam.

In 1998 the municipality initiated The Glass City, a project involving spending € 2,500,000 in the period 1998-2002 (including a newly established structural budget of € 227,000 per year) in order to improve and integrate electronic information services, most of them accessible via <www.amsterdam.nl>. It involves an information system for the public with addresses, names of municipal organizations and the texts of local regulations (PIGA), a system with information on policymaking like minutes of the councils and decisions (BISA) and a digital city (the actual website) that offers links to other important organizations and allows the distribution of news, political debates, and the collection of public opinion. An example of collecting public opinion was the discussion regarding a municipal white paper on drugs policy in 1997 (Flos 1998). The alderwoman, Jikkie van der Giessen, wrote personal introductions accompanied by her picture for each of the main subjects for debate inviting the visitors to complete a questionnaire. Over the course of three weeks, 1,750 persons visited the site and 232 questionnaires were completed. Many of the visitors had first-hand knowledge about the use of drugs, as a user, social worker, or someone facing the consequences. The information received was deemed quite useful. One may agree that such cases of interactive policymaking have the potential to make the implementation of intended policy quite concrete for city managers and politicians.

As for the administrative level covered by these systems, we must say that they fit, and even reinforce, the municipality and the borough as relevant units of action. [www.amsterdam.nl](http://www.amsterdam.nl) has incorporated the websites of all the boroughs but we cannot (February 2002) find any link to regional organizations<sup>25</sup> or the province of North Holland.

## **Conclusion: The Unbounded Community**

The identity of Amsterdam is in one way or another important to a lot of people. One has to accept this in order to understand why Amsterdammers voted so vehemently against the idea of breaking “their” city up into a number of boroughs. Yet, this identification with the city is not expressed in a high level of involvement with policy issues that concern the entire city or with the elections for the municipal council. Such important issues as the development of a new residential area in IJburg, the construction of a new north-south metro line or traffic policy in the inner city arouse significantly greater interest in boroughs directly affected by such developments than in other parts of the city. One is inclined to conclude that it is identification with the local neighborhood or special project rather than the territory of the city as a whole that is

at stake in Amsterdam. A similar conclusion could be drawn about the range of environmental organizations (new social movements) operating in Amsterdam, most of which focus on problems occurring at a level lower than the municipal one.

This is not to say that there are no strong feelings about the city as a social and cultural sphere. Such feelings can even be provoked by local geography. An actress once expressed her feelings about crossing the municipal boundary in these words: "When I cross the Utrecht bridge [by car] and enter the Rijnstraat, I get that feeling of freedom." (She certainly did not mean the Rijnstraat itself, a street so unassuming that it is hard to believe that it was ever designed as an access road to a national capital!) For many people, particularly those working in the artistic and intellectual fields, this quality of the city as a field of alternatives – or in the words of French psychiatrist Minkowski (1933), its *ampleur de la vie* (wideness of life) – is the most important characteristic of the city. For many groups, like immigrants from Surinam, Morocco and Turkey, the city provides the critical mass necessary to guarantee a viable subcultural way of life (provision of ethnic food, markets and cultural facilities). Since intellectuals, artists, immigrants, and those working in the financial sector strongly represent characteristics of the "unbounded community" (Scherzer 1992), the municipal government faces the challenge of facilitating ways of life that are significantly connected with the national and the transnational. It is the reality of Amsterdam as a location in a national and transnational space (a name in a network) that is more important in this perspective than the nature of the territory itself, although parts of it may have a strong symbolic value (inner city, Vondelpark, harbor area).

Activities are focused on the neighborhood level, but symbolic experiences seem to strengthen the image of the city as a whole. This is also the impression one is left with after "visiting" governments in the virtual world. On the Internet, Amsterdam emerges as a strong reality that seems to exist in a space that excludes all other administrative units. Only the boroughs are conspicuously present as extensions or limbs of the municipal body. Such symbolic encounters with the city are somewhat akin to institutional encounters in the real world. The main difference is that institutions have the power to impose themselves on the citizens either in reply to their requests or uninvited. In the twentieth century, one of the most penetrating institutional manifestations of the city of Amsterdam occurred via the urban planning office. Public housing projects sponsored by the city began to displace large groups of people from decaying inner-city areas (e.g. the Jordaan) to Betondorp ("Concrete village" in the newly acquired southeastern extensions) in the 1920s, from the decaying nineteenth-century working class areas to Slotermeer and Slotervaart (the new visionary extensions to the west of the city) in the 1950s, and from Amsterdam North to Osdorp (even more to the west) in the 1960s. Such movements extended the activity space of citizens and helped to psychologically appropriate new territory. But the large-scale activities of urban planners and housing corporations played their part by making the city very tangible as an institutional environment. This was perhaps one of the keys to the strong identification with the city during the first post-war decades.

Nowadays, letters received by Amsterdammers come from various, more ambigu-

ous levels. The municipality imposes itself by demanding a property tax. The borough issues letters about public works and regulations concerning public space. The provision of public utilities is a matter of private firms (NUON in Amsterdam) that have lost their former local identity altogether although the citizen can apply to a local office. The ROA (the proposed metropolitan authority) does not yet have any significant institution addressing the citizen. An exception may be the regional housing distribution system, which has been run since 2001 by the housing corporations in the ROA area and Almere.<sup>26</sup> However, this development hardly alleviates the housing problems of the Amsterdam citizen although it might contribute to a stronger regional feeling in the other municipalities. So, it is no surprise after all, that the launching of a regional authority as a new political arena, did not immediately result in a love affair.

A simple summary of our statement about activities, institutions, and symbols and their relation with space is presented in Table 2. It shows the different levels of political organization (national, regional, municipal, borough) and the degree to which the territorial units become a reality for the citizen (low, medium, high) and trends via the mechanisms of activity, institutionalization, and symbolization.

Table 2. Sources of identification in Amsterdam

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Symbolic</b>	<b>Institutional</b>
Europe	L+	L=	M+
<b>National</b>	L+	H=	H-
<b>Regional</b>	M+	L=	L-
<b>Municipal</b>	M+	H+	H-
<b>Borough</b>	H=	L=	M+

Level: **Low, Medium, High**

Trend: + increase, = no change, - decrease

Only an average value can be given for boroughs because (as for the symbolic dimension) some boroughs can claim a clear territorial identity (e.g. Amsterdam North) whereas others are a product of administrative demarcation. As regression data on the referendum turnouts suggest, living in some neighborhoods (e.g. the inner city) induces a greater sensibility to changes elsewhere in the city than living in more peripheral boroughs (e.g. Buitenveldert) does. This may be connected with the inevitable impact of changes from almost anywhere in the city on inner city life (the impossibility of activity closure) or with the symbolic identification of the inner city with the entire city (lack of symbolic closure).

A final conclusion regarding Table 2 is that in the local state (all levels below the central government), the municipal level dominates the symbolic dimension. This is the background for all the protests against the planned abolition of the city of Amsterdam. People can accept diverse territorial scales as possible sources for identification, but not the evaporation of the only unit that offers them a suitable name. Addresses are important, especially in the ways of life that today constitute what has been called a



“space of flows.” This does not eliminate the willingness of urban dwellers to identify with a wider regional scale – the area associated with the names Amstel and Waterland – if it could be clearly perceived as the operational environment of a visionary agency aiming at the enhancement of the quality of life and the creation of a metropolitan identity for all inhabitants of the region (somewhat reminiscent of the planning for urban extensions in twentieth-century Amsterdam). Democratic control of such an agency would continue to be felt as a problem, particularly by suburbanites fearing the dominance of the central city. However, maintaining local identities does not necessarily interfere with regional visions. Moreover, firms in the region are eager to adopt or maintain an Amsterdam identity. The current low-profile ROA should therefore be transformed into an agency that is better able to evoke challenging metropolitan futures, preferably by accounting for or unleashing local processes of identity construction.

## NOTES

1. In the Netherlands, everyone entitled to vote is automatically registered as an elector.
2. At the beginning of the year 2000, this was true of only four of them: Amsterdam-Noord, Amsterdam Oud Zuid, Oud-West, and Osdorp.
3. Watergraafsmeer, Buitenveldert, and Zuidoost in 1991.
4. See the website maintained by the municipality for this public hearing at <http://www.stadsgesprek.amsterdam.nl>.
5. Note that the capital city of the province is Haarlem, not Amsterdam.
6. For a diary of the campaign, see Bles 1996.
7. Notwithstanding that the Albanian type of election always “re-elected” the incumbent rulers!
8. One event coordinated by Beurs TV involved exchanges on the Internet and debates on the local television channel. Most contributions were still accessible in the spring of 2000 on the website De Digitale Stad (at <http://www.dds.nl>) including chronicles and selections of articles published in *Het Parool* and other newspapers, as well as speeches and a questions-and-answer section in which politicians (aldermen and councilors) and civil servants answered questions asked by the public. Unless otherwise mentioned, the contributions quoted below were found on this website. The website of the original De Digitale Stad has been erased by its commercial offshoot (same name, same URL).
9. Additional critiques dealt with the dysfunctioning of the agglomeration government, especially the increasing distance between citizen and government, the disenfranchisement of foreign residents, who have voting rights for municipal elections but not for provincial elections, and the competition between new municipalities.

10. Quotes refer to contributions to the debate on De Digitale Stad (see note 8) unless stated otherwise.
11. Indeed, inhabitants of Amsterdam-Noord are traditionally more oriented towards Purmerend and Zaandam than to the inner city (Donkers 1996).
12. Several contributions (see note 8).
13. The neighborhood is being upgraded. Zuid includes the most expensive residential locations in the city (the old Concertgebouwbuurt), while De Baarsjes is a decaying neighborhood with a high proportion of foreign residents.
14. See press release dated 10 November 1994 (section 5 at <<http://www.dds.nl/~beursth/roa/nieuws.htm>> available in the spring 2000).
15. The mayor is a civil servant installed by the Crown, although the position is political, and the municipal council is consulted during the nomination procedure.
16. Conditions pertain to the number of signatures necessary to hold a referendum as well as to the outcome of the referendum. Originally, the threshold was defined in terms of turnout (at least 60 percent of the valid votes at the previous municipal elections); in 1996, however, it was defined in terms of voters (a decision can be rejected if the number of voters against it amounts to at least 50 percent + 1 of the number of valid votes at the previous municipal elections).
17. Several initiatives to organize a referendum were unsuccessful for various reasons. These included referenda on the location of the *tippelzone* (an area where prostitutes meet their clients) on the Theemsweg, the privatization of the municipal cable network KTA, the traffic situation on Zeeburgerdijk in 1995, Ruigoord in 1996 and 1997, and parking policy in 2001.
18. The correlation coefficients between the turnout in the 17 boroughs (including the inner city) for the 1994 municipal elections and the other three referenda were .791 for IJburg, .744 for the underground metro line and .608 for the inner city traffic policy. The turnout for transport referenda correlates more with each other than with municipal elections (.746). The correlation coefficient between the turnout in the 14 boroughs (including the inner city) for the 1998 municipal elections and the 2001 referendum was .713.
19. The first two are the boroughs with very low turnout for municipal elections, while the third one has the highest participation rate in Amsterdam.
20. The class limits for the thematic maps are -.75, .75 and 1.
21. This is remarkable because the electorate of these boroughs has participated much less than expected in the other referenda.
22. *Het Parool*, special webpage at <<http://www.parool.nl/ps/burgemeesters>> (available in the spring of 2000).
23. The proper name "Amsterdam" occurs more than 1,500 times but is often used as an appendix to the name of an organization in order to indicate its Amsterdam branch and consequently is a sign of identification that differs from what we are aiming for in this context. However, a substantial number of these 1,500 records indeed represent the use of Amsterdam to indicate singularity (e.g. "Café Amsterdam").

24. The score for the adjective "Rotterdams(e)" is 121 and for the proper name Rotterdam 1,080; see also the preceding footnote.
25. The ROA does not have a website yet. With some perseverance one may discover, hidden amidst information on housing in the city proper, that there is a regional housing distribution system (run by regionally cooperating housing corporations of the ROA area and Almere) about which information can be accessed on a site called *woningnet*. It is perhaps significant that (February 2002) the link on the Amsterdam website is to <www.woningnet.nl> (covering a much wider area, including Utrecht) rather than <roa.woningnet.nl>.
26. See the preceding note.

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## **5. CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS**



# 5.1 • Strategic Dilemmas Facing the Amsterdam Region

*Sako Musterd and Willem Salet*

Looking back at this book's numerous contributions, by way of an epilogue, we would like to examine some of the major challenges highlighted by the current debate about the future of the Amsterdam region. The book reflects the overall spatial impact of economic, social, cultural, and institutional trends, extrapolating the line of history into the future. The material analyzed is highly complex and dynamic, by no means complete, and in many cases remaining open-ended. Even the contours of the "region to be" are in many respects uncertain. There are no solid definitions of the new metropolitan configuration which is taking shape at the regional level, nor of the scale of the regional city and the institutional framework. We shall attempt first to delineate the contours of the emergent region, including the uncertainties which exist about them, and then highlight a number of strategic dilemmas as a contribution to the metropolitan debate.

## **The New Contours**

The historical "*spatial configuration*" of the Amsterdam region is a textbook example of a radial city in which the regional links to the hierarchical urban center spread out like the spokes of a wheel. Urban expansion during much of the past century has followed the pattern of the "finger city" with new urban development concentrated along axes defined by the principal infrastructure and separated by "wedges" of green. This stereotypical geographical development has been influenced by a number of specific circumstances. Amsterdam is bounded to the north by an area of high natural value, Waterland, which is protected as green-belt land, and by the waters of the IJsselmeer. The partial reclamation of this body of water has comparatively recently provided a new natural direction for urban expansion, creating the towns of Almere and Lelystad. There are also a number of important nature reserves to the east and the south, whilst the noise of Schiphol Airport's flight paths also restricts potential expansion. This means that the rapid urban development in the direction of the airport is concentrated within a clearly defined area. Finally, to the west, development is limited in specific ways by protected dune landscapes. These conditions have contributed to the retention of a number of features of the morphological finger-city pattern, even in the current regional metropolis.



It is difficult, however, for radial models to absorb the pressure for urban expansion. Sooner or later links to the center become congested, open space – the green wedges – comes under pressure and the new urban nodes on the periphery of the city require new tangential links. As in other radial regions, this physical transition is now appearing in greater Amsterdam. Urban pressure and mobility have shifted to regional links which bypass the central city, such as Schiphol-Almere and Schiphol-Zaanstad. A wide range of new urban concentration is emerging along highways and around transport nodes, and the former green wedges are gradually being transformed from open agricultural areas into enclosed urban “islands” of greenery.

Due in part to the specific natural conditions mentioned above, the process of suburbanization during the past century has been relatively concentrated. The original exclusive residential communities have grown into prosperous middle-sized towns. Of the ten most prosperous municipalities in the Netherlands, nine are found in a broad sweep around Amsterdam – mainly in the Gooi and behind the coastal dunes. The more mass forms of suburbanization which began in the late 1960s were concentrated to a large extent in growth hubs, such as Almere and Haarlemmermeer, and there has also been a striking amount of construction in the compact original city itself. There are fewer opportunities for unbridled urban sprawl in this region than in many others. Nevertheless, regional development during the past 20 years has been much less tightly managed since the economic expansion on the city periphery and in the region has taken on a more scattered pattern. The traditional hierarchical structures have not evolved into a straightforward network of new multi-centered hierarchies. The regional networks are fairly disorganized and there exists a growing rivalry between a whole range of fragmented centers of regional urban growth.

The scale of the regional city varies considerably, depending on which aspects one considers. The National Planning Agency has recently started using the so-called “three-layer model” in its strategic plans. This draws a distinction between ecological aspects, flows of infrastructure and urban occupation patterns (residential and working districts, and so on). Against this background, attention in the current strategic planning debate has turned to issues at the scale of the entire “Delta” – the area defined by the Dutch coast and by the estuaries and courses of the great rivers, and which in fact embraces all of the western Netherlands. The country’s four largest cities were the original instigators of this new thinking about a “Delta metropolis.”

From an ecological perspective, the first “layer,” includes a number of important issues that are at stake: integrated coastal management, managing river flows, the ecological quality of and links between areas of natural importance, the arrangement of open landscapes, and so on. But in other respects, flows of infrastructure and urban occupation patterns, the Delta still seems far too ambitious a level to be working at. As far as the infrastructure is concerned, there are many unresolved strategic issues with respect to links between regional infrastructure and supraregional or international arteries. These are very strategic because hierarchical networks are forming, in the new knowledge infrastructure as well as in public transport and the road system, which are all decisive in the external positioning of metropolitan regions. The construction of a

high-speed rail link with a limited number of stations is a good example of this. Such developments are being played out at the national, international and urban regional levels. It is of course relevant to consider these strategic issues at the Delta level, but this does not mean that a unity at this level should be the decisive factor in determining priorities for new infrastructure. In this respect, it seems far more important to examine how the links between regional and supraregional infrastructures relate to the third “layer” mentioned above: the development of urban occupation patterns. In other words, the real question is how infrastructure development – including that at the national and international level – relates to the true centers of gravity in urban development, particularly the new geographical concentrations of residential areas and office locations and the mobility they generate. This strategic spatial dynamic remains concentrated for the time being at a lower level, that of relatively compact metropolitan regions. The scale of the “Delta metropolis” or “Randstad” is much too broad to organize cohesive metropolitan development.

As far as economic relationships and movements in the labor and housing markets – and hence the main axes of displacement – are concerned, the intensity of contacts between the northern part of the Randstad (Amsterdam and Utrecht) and its southern part (Rotterdam and The Hague) is surprisingly low. Nor is it by any means certain that they will become more intense, since expansion of the northern Randstad to the east and of the southern Randstad to the southeast is at least as plausible as an increasing integration of the two parts. In short, in terms of the development of urban occupation patterns the Randstad is “oversized” and its scale does not seem properly tailored to primary considerations in strategic land-use policy.

Even within the northern part of the Randstad, further differences can be identified. Regional urban development is concentrating within the relatively compact agglomerative tangent connecting Haarlem, Schiphol, Almere, and the Zaanstreek and in the fairly compact agglomeration around Utrecht. These delineations are fluid, though; there are a number of overlaps – in Almere and the Gooi, for example, which look to both Amsterdam and Utrecht – and new dynamics are appearing at various points around the periphery. Consequently, the agglomerative urban district as the defining regional factor, which since the 1970s has reflected dominant planning and administrative policy concepts, seems less and less appropriate for organizing regional urbanization. Finally, it is also necessary to mention the selections of geographical patterns which make it essential that the contours of the metropolitan region not be defined too narrowly. Economic development is sprawling across the region, as a result of which the original city is in fact increasingly specializing in the cultural economy whilst the commercial economy is regrouping in a series of new clusters outside it. The housing and labor markets, too, are differentiated regionally. The important strategic policy dilemmas in the development of regional urbanization are directly associated with such selective processes as geographical specialization. The conclusion, therefore, is that it is not at all easy to define the metropolitan region at one straightforward level because different activities are conducted at different levels. When considering strategic planning policy, however, a scale encompassing the whole northern

wing of the Randstad would seem to be the most practical.

Given the dynamic in regional geographical development described above, it will come as no surprise that the contours of the *institutional* framework are also very much open-ended. People's cultural association and identification with activities in the region have many aspects which manifest themselves in very different ways. These are largely dependent on which groups and which activities are being studied. But what is striking is that people's "mental maps" do not yet feature any strong identification with the metropolitan region. One might expect a greater attachment to the boundaries of traditional local and provincial administrative bodies, but even here there are new differentiations and the problem arises that territorial delineations such as the boundaries of administrative districts and provinces do not correspond with the shifts in the geographical dynamic which have been described above. It is therefore striking that public administrations, social organizations and business alike have joined together in a range of coalitions at various levels. Cooperation between local authorities resulted in the establishment of a Regional Consultative Body for greater Amsterdam. The province of Noord-Holland has also organized an influential consultative forum together with the provinces of Flevoland and Utrecht, plus a large number of local authorities and community organizations, and encompassing the entire northern part of the Randstad. Yet another example is the Delta Metropolis initiative, which unites many local authorities, provinces, the national government and community institutions in lobbies at the level of the Randstad as a whole. In addition, there exists a whole series of ad-hoc forums and coalitions made up of government bodies, non-governmental organizations or a combination of the two. As a result of this, a complex pattern of multi-level and multi-actor governance has taken over policy areas which were previously administered directly by territorially defined local authorities, provinces and national government. Such formal and informal relationships tend to exert enormous influence.

In this way, local authorities, provinces, and other actors in society are playing a part in every aspect of the emerging metropolitan region. Local authorities often play dual roles in different coalitions, where for obvious reasons they do not always have the same perspectives, do not set the same priorities, and do not represent the same positions. The City of Amsterdam, for example, has promoted major infrastructure projects at the city level (improvement of the metro network), the regional level (public transport in the agglomerative tangent) and the Randstad level (regional rail links). But these are very different policy lobbies which certainly do not automatically dovetail with one another and cannot be achieved simultaneously and with equal policy priority. The same problem arises with the development of new office locations, housing districts, strategic urban nodes and hierarchical public-transport nodes. On paper, all of the government's plans fit together seamlessly, but in practice there exists a whole range of conflicting coalitions in which the traditional territorial administrations themselves play different roles. The fragmented metropolis therefore has to wrestle with a coordination problem of gigantic proportions, with the question being

whether spatial perspectives are adequately tailored to the evolution of the new region. Falling back on the certainty of territorial administrative planning does not automatically deliver the desired results, either, as current developments in land-use planning show. The City of Amsterdam has drawn up a new structural plan – at more or less the same time as the province of North-Holland was producing its new regional plan and the national government its Fifth Memorandum on Land Use. There was plenty of coordination between all three, but when the final decisions were taken regarding the Fifth Memorandum, it turned out that the broad informal consultations which had been organized in respect to the northern Randstad had changed the thrust of the way strategic planning policy would be decided, whereas the equally informal Delta Metropolis lobby had exerted considerable influence over transport policy. In any case, with the fall of the Kok government (in 2002) decisions about these policy areas have been postponed and new twists cannot be ruled out in the next round of decision-making. For a growing metropolitan region which is already manifesting itself in countless fragmented and conflicting fora, yet is not fully accepted psychologically by either its citizens or politicians and has not crystallized into administrative frameworks, the development and implementation of a visionary policy strategy is no sinecure.

### **Strategic Policy Dilemmas**

The fragmentary context within which the growing Amsterdam region has to exist is not a flaw but a characteristic of the contemporary metropolitan framework. It would be a mistake to think that a unitary administrative hierarchy would achieve consistency in social and geographical development. If the past experiences of a large number of other metropolitan areas are taken seriously, then it must be recognized that a multi-dimensional context featuring many different actors with different interests and standards, and with a wide variety of collaborating or coordinating coalitions between them at various levels, is quite simply a fact of life within which urban regional development treads its path as if in a sort of experimental laboratory. The fact is that this involves much “jostling for position”, overlapping, and competition, which not only has its detrimental effects but also creates beneficial conditions for innovation. The fact, too, that certain urban features are no longer developing exclusively in the core city but also to a greater extent outside it, is stimulating the regeneration of traditional central locations. In order for them to continue to draw both investment and customers, their economic and cultural environment, their shopping centers and their urban amenities need to be made as attractive as possible. This makes it equally clear that the core cities can no longer dominate the new regional urban developments from an exclusive position of power because the new urban nodes outside the centers are demanding their own role. It is extremely difficult for the traditional city to compete with the new nodes in terms of accessibility, space, and functionality. On the other hand, the new locations do not feature the variety and historic qualities which give city life its particular verve. The mutual rivalry between places in a fragmented metro-

politan environment can result in individual local qualities within the region being magnified to create a fascinating geographical contrast.

Having noted this, it is nevertheless clear that proper coordination in decision-making should be striven for in various matters of a strategic nature. This can be done through a hierarchy or through cooperation, and can be stimulated by the public or the private sector, but regional coordination is essential concerning a number of issues, especially if the detrimental effects which inevitably arise in a fragmented framework are to be avoided. The challenge is to create the common economic, social, cultural, and ecological conditions for achieving this. We shall now examine each of these sets of conditions in turn.

### *Economic Conditions*

The strong profile of the Amsterdam regional economy within the international network economy is being achieved through the combination of three economic complexes. The first is business services, with the notable concentration of financial services and international head offices in the region. The second is economic services related to aviation – both the distribution economy and international services. And the third is the cultural economy, which is particularly strong in the center of Amsterdam. Actually, greater Amsterdam's hinterland is really too small for the concentrations of international air traffic and high-end financial and business services which it has historically attracted. Nevertheless, these sectors have grown remarkably over the past decade. The secret of the region's economic success lies in the many subtle links between the three economic complexes (as explained in greater detail in Tordoir's contribution to this book).

However, the past decade has also shown just how much an increase in economic growth can endanger the very geographical conditions that have led to this success. The center of the city was originally also the center for its specialist financial and business services as well as the heart of its cultural economy. The services have now moved to the edge of the city, but even more striking is that the pressures of ten years of economic growth and increasing prosperity are now also gnawing at the conditions that nurtured a creative economy in this central hub of the region. The city center is beginning to lose its appeal for economic start-ups, alternative cultures, and young artists: there is just too little old industrial space available and not enough marginal residual land which can provide a "breeding ground" for creative and economic innovation anymore. The central city is "finished," and being handed over to arrivées. At the other end of the scale, the new functional economic environments along and beyond the capital's ring road have developed into rather monolithic business parks which are not functioning as new centers of wide-ranging urban activity. The traditional monocentric pattern of greater Amsterdam has thus gone forever. But the new development is evolving in an extremely uncoordinated way. No new "multi-centered hierarchy" has appeared spontaneously to replace what has been lost. Every new economic sub-center along an expressway or major public transport link has the ambitions of becoming a new urban node. But it is in fact only possible for a few of these new nodes to grow into

urban hubs that will feature the right mix of spatial qualities to be established at the regional level. Regionally coordinated efforts are needed both to develop new nodes in the right places – particularly at multidimensional infrastructure interchanges – and to prevent their development in the wrong ones, particularly spread out along expressways. Properly organizing the new pattern of major urban nodes in the Amsterdam region is too important to be left to the chance outcome of fragmented forces.

### *Cultural Conditions*

The previous section already referred to the problem of increasing uniformity in the economic development of the core city. Amsterdam's historic city center is gradually losing its varied urban character because it is beginning to be dominated by the commercial cultural economy and because the conditions needed for producing creativity are being squeezed out. The core center is thus developing an increasingly uniform profile, one of predominantly prosperous residents and of activities devoted to commercial entertainment. At the same time, new functional economic centers with a very uniform profile are developing along the Amsterdam ring road. New commercial and cultural centers such as the ArenA, the Southern Axis, Sloterdijk and, more recently, Watergraafsmeer are designed more as centers of functional containment than as new and varied expressions of urban culture. A truly varied urban culture will only develop in the long term once successive forms of land use have each left their mark and given greater depth to current activity – which is why, despite the current tendency towards uniformity, the historic city center still remains an oasis of cultural ingenuity and diversity. Nevertheless, new areas could be structured from the outset to enable more varied use of the space within them. And, of course, this need for cultural diversity applies not only to the new locations along the Amsterdam ring road but also to the many extensive new residential and working districts being developed throughout the region, a lot of which are decidedly one-sided in their design.

Finally, the many subcultures which are so important to Amsterdam also need enough “unregulated” open space in existing neighborhoods and run-down industrial and port areas to establish their alternative lifestyles. It is important to ensure that not all so-called “marginal areas” – such as the former docks in Amsterdam-North and the many old industrial zones along the River Zaan – are reallocated for new housing or offices. If the region shuts out subcultures, it loses the key to creativity and urban diversity.

### *Social Conditions*

One strategic issue which has been in the picture for several decades is the selective distribution of the population across the region. The city of Amsterdam itself is relatively mixed in terms of incomes and ethnic backgrounds. In terms of educational levels, too, with its combination of specialized courses at one end of the scale and large numbers of poorly educated immigrants at the other, Amsterdam is very diverse. During the past ten years, the scale of its urban problems has significantly diminished due to the general rise in prosperity. However, it is clear that the regional concentrations of such

problems as long-term unemployment, poor education, and major social troubles are found in the central city, in a number of post-war districts and certain sections of the early 20th-century belt. The demographic selections are also striking, with one and two-person households – amongst them a large proportion of young and elderly people – dominating the city and families with children the region. It has often been asked in recent decades whether a certain degree of redistribution would not be desirable, and housing policy adjusted accordingly. With social and commercial rented housing representing more than 80 percent of the stock in Amsterdam, and less than 20 percent of homes being owner-occupied – proportions which are almost reversed in the surrounding region – the city should perhaps opt more for higher segments of the housing market. After 80 years of being dominated by social politics – and not just in the field of housing – should the city not more generally choose to invest in a refined urban culture? (See the recollections of the historic change in trends in the 1920s, in the contributions by Wagenaar and Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars.)

There are many sides to this question. If the housing market in the central city were not dominated by the social-rented sector, it is probable that the entire area would have become inaccessible for households with an average or below-average income and the historic city center would have developed into an urban monument catering solely to visitors, as has long been the case in Venice and has happened to Prague during the past ten years. Amsterdam's city center has long had a mixed population, with access to the district not primarily being determined by income. On the other hand, the residential districts surrounding it – particularly the post-war ones – are sometimes extremely uniform. The strategic dilemma with regard to the social structure of the city and the region, and to the selections which have evolved within them, has been recognized since the 1970s. Politically, however, it is highly sensitive and for that reason has not resulted in rapid and explicit policy responses. With the expansion of the past ten years, this social dilemma increasingly needs to be defined at the regional level. Moreover, it is becoming ever more clear that the many frictions in the markets for both rented and owner-occupied homes mean that this issue cannot be left to fragmented, contradictory local interests and to the partial deregulation of the rented housing sector. Here again, regional coordination to achieve collective action is essential. The guiding hand of higher levels of government – regional and national – is probably essential here, because policy distribution is unlikely to appear spontaneously in a context of cooperation.

### *Ecological Conditions*

Finally, it is important to look at the strategic issues with respect to the ecological structure of the Amsterdam region – and, indeed, the wider area. The increasingly regional configuration of geographical and urban developments has largely made the traditional clear distinction between urban and rural area a thing of the past. At one time, the city and the countryside were distinguished by a clear difference in geographical profile. Nowadays, urban activities are encroaching into areas which were once regarded as rural – not only because of the pressure of expansion that comes from

the cities themselves but also because of the changing, and increasingly urbanized, nature of autonomous activities in the countryside. This now often makes it difficult to distinguish between urban and rural areas in urbanized regions. It may be possible, at a higher level, to see a contrast between urbanized and unurbanized regions, but within the former this is not practical any more: the use of green areas can no longer be viewed separately from urban activities. This development was originally regarded mainly as a threat, with the rise of urban functions likely to damage the quality of the rural landscape. But the debate has now become considerably more complex. The view has gained ground that urban activities and ecological values could actually be better allies than the traditional association of the “green” sector with the uniformly commercial agricultural sector. In any event, the picture has become much more varied and the landscaping of urban and park environments has risen to the top of the agenda in regional urban politics.

One important point requiring consideration is the significance of water as a conditioning factor. The many recent floods in the Netherlands have brought the issue of water management back into the limelight. Controlling water levels and flows is bound up in all sorts of ways with the uses which can be made of it. Water has been rediscovered by strategic land-use planning. New urban and recreational uses for it have been discovered, and it is now an essential element in landscaping the city. The disappearance of the traditional dividing line between city and countryside has made it necessary to set new collective priorities at the regional level in respect of the development and reorganization of green areas and the bodies and flows of water within them. Here again, the interests involved are powerful and the chances of an irreversible loss of quality are too great to allow the results to depend upon the autonomous play of fragmented metropolitan forces.

## **In Conclusion**

We can conclude that the relatively autonomous economic, cultural, social, and ecological developments in the Amsterdam region necessitate strategic choices for a collective policy based on the joint consideration of the key values which underlie a balanced land-use planning policy. The question of whether regional coordination in such strategic matters is being achieved successfully still has not yet been answered definitively in this region. Whilst many other regions in Europe did succeed in achieving coordination during the 1990s, usually with a view toward the global economy and competition with other regions in Europe, this has so far eluded the Amsterdam region. As it happens, this region was so favorably positioned within the networks of the new global economy that it was able to benefit as a whole from the economic growth of the past decade without having to make any coordinated effort. But economic conditions will not always remain so positive and, as we have shown above, one-sided trends in the geographical development of the region make collective action on a number of strategic issues urgently necessary.





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