METROPOLITAN STRATEGIES: DIPLOMACY FUELLED BY STORIES

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The interdependencies in the Amsterdam Metropolitan region are not bound to one governmental body. On the contrary, the region is characterized by a strong governmental fragmentation. In an era where regional interdependencies become ever more apparent, this requires innovative strategies in order to achieve an effective and integrative form of planning strategy. In the Amsterdam approach diplomacy and storytelling go hand in hand.

KEYWORDS: planning culture, governance, participation, regional collaboration,

Amsterdam as a global city. Amsterdam as the core city of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Nowadays this concept is commonplace in a rapidly expanding circle. Currently, the Physical Planning Department (known by the Dutch acronym DRO), together with other local organizations is developing a new master plan, a structure vision. This is a long-term vision on spatial development of the city towards 2040. After the municipal elections in 2010, the council shall ratify the Structure Vision. From that moment on it will be the *leitbild* for the spatial development of Amsterdam. In this paper I will explore the forms of planning preceding this plan and used in the making of the structure vision.

In the first paragraph I will analyse the institutional history of the Netherlands and Amsterdam. This helps to understand the current arena wherein the game of planning takes place: planning strategies cannot be seen separate from the local context. In the second paragraph the shift from government to governance that occurred the last decades is described. Afterwards I will describe the North Wing collaboration and subsequently the metropolitan narratives. Then I will explain how the new structure vision of Amsterdam is being developed.

Throughout the paper I will use the notions of Healey (1998) on building collaborative relationships for urban planning in order to reflect on the Amsterdam case. According to Healey, collaboration in urban planning is beyond lobbying or creating interorganisational networks. It's about building up of various policy cultures. In this, she argues, five elements are crucial. In short: integrative place making: no more sectoral separation into different policy fields; collaboration in policy making: emphasis on collaboration with all partners in strategy development; *inclusive stakeholder involvement*: involve all stakeholders, not only lobby groups; *use of 'local' knowledge*: recognise the many forms of knowing and valuing and make use of the distinctive forms of local knowledge represented among the stakeholders; and *building 'relational' resources*: don't only rely on the existing institutional capital, but also contribute in building it.
I will conclude the paper by reflecting on what happened and how this has influenced the Amsterdam form of planning.

1 A DECENTRALISED UNITARY STATE

The Dutch institutional structure is often characterized by calling it a 'decentralised unitary state'. Formally, each tier of government has its own discrete room for deliberation. In practice, however, the strict borders between responsibilities of different tiers of government are more flexible. So much that it even meant that the Netherlands for a long time was characterised by administrative centralization and functionalism (Ploegers, 2001).

1.1 Netherlands before the pacification

Before 1848 the structure of the Dutch state had been fragmented in several ways. Firstly, there was a difference in the position of towns and villages on several levels as a consequence of a distinction between the two by law. Secondly, the Dutch state had not united its territory in a time-space perspective through e.g. the construction of a railroad network. A third reason for the fragmentation of the Dutch state has been the structure of the fiscal and electoral system. It became soon obvious that this old, complex, institutional structure, including the electoral and fiscal system, was not suited to cope with changing economic and societal developments. In 1848, the Liberals were able to introduce a new constitution. This liberal constitution, designed under supervision of Thorbecke standardised the public administration. The constitution arranged the responsibilities of the three tiers of government and the new electoral system, which was made less oligarchic (Terhorst & Van de Ven 1997a, pp. 212-219, Van der Veer 1997, p. 54-56, Knippenberg & De Pater 1988).

Until 1865 the expansion of Amsterdam took place within the city walls, because of the tax system and the local leases. Only in 1865 the central state was able to compensate a loss of revenues for the cities, caused by fiscal reform. As a consequence of the fiscal reforms the land and personal taxes made up an important part of the revenues of Dutch cities. After the breakdown of the city wall there was the need for the city to expand due to industrialisation and population growth. Annexation of surrounding municipalities was only possible after the modification of the electoral system in 1896. On the national level the Housing law was enforced and in Amsterdam the ground lease (Dutch: erfpacht) system. The latter led to an increased municipal control in future city expansions (cf. Needham 2002).

After 1896 the municipality of Amsterdam has been able to annex (parts of) surrounding municipalities, due to the electoral reforms that led to an electoral system with proportional representation. Before this annexation Amsterdam had to deal with the "free rider problem" and out-migration of the higher classes to the suburban communities because of the lower taxes. As a result, the tax base of the city deteriorated. This situation changed after the annexation and the increased fiscal centralisation. The electoral reforms, and later the Housing Law and ground lease system were just the beginning of a more intense change.

2.2 The Netherlands after the pacification

The 20th century would be shaped by the pacification in 1917. The pacification was a compromise between the several classes and religious groups leading to the introduction of general suffrage and equal rights for public and special (i.e. religious) schools. This led to a new extremely proportional electoral system and a progressive income tax. The agreements made during the pacification formed the preconditions for the development of the pillarized welfare state. Pillarization, at least in the Netherlands, meant the division of society according to religious and societal believes. The several groups were separated of each other by the provision of their own facilities. Each group had among others its own schools, political party, broadcasting organisations, youth movement and sport clubs. The pillarized society was only possible due to negotiation and cooperation of the pillars on the top level (mainly in a political way). The transformation into a pillarized society was only possible with a system of functional decentralisation and fiscal centralisation. In this way each pillar was able to finance and control its public services on a national level of scale, funded and controlled by the central state.

As already has been mentioned the municipality of Amsterdam has been able to annex large pieces of land of the surrounding municipalities because of the already stated problems. Because of the growing resistance against annexations one had to search for other solutions. A way to circumvent the fiscal problems was increased fiscal centralisation. By increased fiscal centralisation annexations with the purpose to equalise differences in tax pressure would be redundant. An important reform in this perspective was the abolition of the municipal income tax in 1929. The losses in revenues were compensated by payments from the central state's newly funded municipal fund. In the second halve of the 1930s the budget of the municipalities consisted for more than 50% of central government funding. (Terhorst & Van de Ven 1997a, pp. 264-280.

1.3 The post- World War II period

During the expansion of the welfare state, the principle of pillarization remained in place, now including the lower classes as well. In order to make this possible there was a new round of fiscal centralisation. The control over the housing market was increased at the same time. Herewith, the Dutch government actually pursued a policy of territorial consolidation.

The annexation in 1921 and the fiscal centralisation in 1929 created in Amsterdam the opportunity to form an alliance between the working class and the capital, which resulted in the General Expansion plan (Dutch: Algemeen Uitbreidings Plan or AUP) for Amsterdam in 1935. For this purpose the distribution of funding from the municipal fund changed in favour of Amsterdam and the growth centres or new towns. In the 1960s and 1970s central state financing covered 90% of the municipal budget. As a result of the crisis in the 1930s and World War II the plan was executed after World War II (Terhorst & Van de Ven 1997a, pp. 287-300). In the 1950s and 1960 it became clear that the planned deconcentration would reach beyond the municipal borders. This resulted in the annexation of the Bijlmermeer. Soon it became obvious that the suburbanisation would not be limited to this area. As a solution a policy of bundled deconcentration was pursued. This policy based on growth in suburban growth centres was from the Amsterdam point of view actually a continuation of the former policy, but now beyond the city limits. The city had a direct influence on the new towns policy.

Figure 1: The Amsterdam region.

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s there has been a shift in discourses. In 1980 Amsterdam was still the most important area of employment in the Netherlands. After the decrease in industrial jobs, the service sector had grown. These jobs moved to the ring road. Around 1980 Amsterdam's relationship with its new towns altered from complementary into one of rivalry, and the city started a densification policy. The city came into financial problems because of the flight of the middle class to the new towns. The strongest decline was found in the most important employment centre of the region, the historic city centre. Till the 1980s the policy was just a defensive strategy. In the fourth report on spatial planning (Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening) the policy changed in an economic growth strategy; the report confirmed the national

importance given to large cities. After a period wherein the western part of the Netherlands was considered to be overcrowded and wherein policies were designed to support the economic weaker regions the general thought shifted to the opposite idea. One has to strengthen the economic strong regions: the large cities. Before 1980 the growth was the problem and deconcentration was the solution, whereas after 1980 the economic deconcentration was considered to be a problem with economic growth of the cities as the solution. The compact city became both in economic and housing policy the objective.

Soon was understood that the functional expansion of Amsterdam would not be limited to its municipal boundaries and as such plans for an Amsterdam city-region or city-province were developed. A city region would be more capable than a small municipality to compete with other city regions in the context of an evermore internationalised world. Furthermore, a city region would be able to create equilibrium between relative rich and poor inhabitants on the regional level. Finally, it would fit better to the functional relations in the region.

There have been several efforts to realise a regional governmental layer. The support on the national level for the formation of a serious city region by dissolving the existing municipalities decreased after the 1995 national elections. Moreover, in a local referendum more than 90% of the votes were against the formation of the city region by dissolving the municipalities. The surrounding municipalities were willing to cooperate, but were not willing to give up their independence for the sake of a powerful city province. The efforts to form a city province did result in the Regional Body Amsterdam (Dutch: Regionaal Orgaan Amsterdam), later renamed to City Region Amsterdam (Dutch: Stadsregio Amsterdam or SRA). This is a non-elected regional tier of government with few responsibilities consisting of 16 municipalities. From the beginning the SRA had several fundamental weaknesses. The city of Amsterdam accounted for more than half of the population, but had only one third of the seats in the SRA. Furthermore SRA did not encompass the whole Amsterdam region. At the end of the day SRA seemed not to be powerful enough to realise planning aims (Terhorst, forthcoming).

In the meanwhile Amsterdam anticipated on the future governmental structure of a city region. This, together with the desire to increase accountability, led to the division of the municipality into city boroughs. The city boroughs each have there own borough council, but they do not levy any taxes which makes them fully dependent on the central city. Therefore they are not capable of competing with adjacent municipalities. In addition the responsibilities between the municipality of Amsterdam and its boroughs are not always very clear. (cf. Terhorst forthcoming, Salet et al., 2003, pp. 175-187, Terhorst & Van de Ven 1997a).

The lack of a powerful city region in combination with the institutional structure might have been a blessing in disguise. Because of the territorial consolidation and fiscal centralisation municipalities have to be less concerned about their local tax base. This enables them to realise their political aims without being constrained by conflicting aims of adjacent municipalities. This might be considered as an important motive for the exploration of new forms of planning.

2 GOVERNANCE

Several processes have caused a change in traditional governmental arrangements. In the past decades we have witnessed a hollowing out of the nation state. (see for example Brenner 1999). This is a process where political power is redirected downwards to the subnational level of scale, upwards to the supranational level of scale and sidewards to other authorities than the state. This sidewards redirection occurs among others because parts of the activities of the state are being privatised. This has led to a more prominent role for the local and a shift of responsibilities towards city governments. At the same time there has been a shift from government to governance Gualini defines governance as "emergent patterns of policy-making dealing with the resolution of collective problems at the threshold between state, markets, and civil society in terms which may be held accountable to institutions of representative democracy" (Gualini 2001). These new forms of government differ in a number of ways of the classical democratic national state in terms of responsibility and accountability, democratic control and representation of its citizens. Some claim that the upsurge of these new forms of government are characterised by the development of new coalitions of economic, political or cultural elites on the one side and the systematic exclusion of the socially weaker

groups on the other side (Swyngedouw & Baeten 2001). Local entrepreneurs increasingly have built regimes of governance, not only within the city borders but also outward from central cities into the greater urban regions. By reaching consensus and cooperation between the involved actors, both private and public, the city should be able to achieve development supported by all actors involved.

3 AMSTERDAM METROPOLITAN AREA

In 2001 the first "North Wing" conference took place. The aldermen of spatial planning of the municipalities across the North Wing of the Randstad conurbation wanted to cooperate on the regional level in order to have a stronger say in the making of the fifth national plan on spatial planning. From 2001 to 2007 there have been several North Wing conferences each addressing a different topic. Agreements were reached with regard to infrastructure and mobility, housing construction, spatio-economic developments and green-blue quality. All agreements were included in the North Wing Development Scenario 2040. To emphasize the shared metropolitan ambition the public partners the North Wing cooperation was renamed as "Amsterdam Metropolitan Area".

The making of the Development Scenario 2040 included multiple expert meetings and consultations and produced loads of expectations, opportunities and threats for the future of the metropolitan region. In the sessions with politicians, non-governmental organisations and experts there was consensus over the fact that cooperation is crucial in the further development of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area as a competitive European metropolis. The whole process led to a new regional idea on spatial planning, based upon mutual interest and respect instead of suspicion: a coalition of the willing instead of a city province.

This tendency could be considered as a reaction to the shattering of the city province. A formal, structure, solution failed, but the desire of metropolitan cooperation and the insights in the benefits of such cooperation are an important reason for this new informal way of collaboration. From the five elements of Healey, the North Wing did at least two, i.e. integrative place making and collaboration in policy making. The former, because there were issues of mutual interest in all policy fields the approach was integrative. The latter, since collaboration on the level of strategic policy was easier than cooperation on concrete projects. A shared vision on the future is less intimidating than a discussion who will do what today.

4 METROPOLITAN STORIES

At the same time there has been a shift in thinking about Amsterdam. In this paper I won't elaborate on the elements of this shift. In short, there has been a shift from thinking about the compact city and a polycentric network city towards the metropolis and a metropolitan area. More interesting is the way this new set of words, metaphors and ideas came in to place.

Instead of being committed to paper, the metropolitan narratives were presented in the form of PowerPoint presentations. There are maps and charts that illustrate and ratify the vision, but these are little more than a collection of attractive illustrations unless one actually hears the story they accompany. There wasn't one fixed narrative, the narrative and the accompanying slides showing the qualities of the city and the region was slightly altered for each audience. The current qualities were then presented as possible metropolitan development paths. The audience was invited to use their imagination. "Just imagine…" or "Wouldn't it be wonderful if…." were sentences the narrator used to invoke the audience in the thinking process. Gladwell (2002) describes this form of communication very well.

The intriguing and sometimes even provoking metropolitan narratives have thus developed on the wings of the powers of imagination and thanks to the input of the members of the audience. The vision on the metropolis developed every time the story was told. Everybody had its own associations with the metropolitan ambition. Consequently people started to ask themselves what they could do. Now we are seeing the emergence of new joint ventures between different sectors and the various strata of government, resulting in a range of projects that are being elaborated on the basis of a shared metropolitan ambition (Vreeswijk 2009). "Imagine that this street would attract way more tourists, what would my restaurant look like?" or "Wouldn't it be wonderful if everybody had easy access to a free bicycle?".

Some criticised the metropolitan stories as figment of the imagination or as a solo of Amsterdam. In reality the narratives helped to think beyond sectoral points of view. Furthermore, this strategy invited all people with their own distinctive forms of knowledge to opt in. In addition, it might have led to new networks, which could be considered as early institutional capacity.

5 STRUCTURE VISION

Not only the ideas on cities have changed over the last hundred years. Ideas on how to make a good spatial plan have changed as well. It is necessary to grasp all the knowledge and ideas that are present in the city. Discussion and consultation on the direction and choices of the structure vision are important for a clear and detailed view on the future of Amsterdam. This is essential in order to have the right information on the city and its developments and to create a shared picture of the future.
This consultation and discussion is the backbone of the vision and because this takes time it takes three years to develop the vision.

5.1 New Spatial Planning Act (nWRO)
With the new Spatial Planning Act (nWro, by July 1, 2008) the "structure vision" is introduced as a new governmental instrument for each tier of government. The structure vision is a major, comprehensive plan for a municipality in which all the major trends and the main focus of spatial policies is described. A big difference with a structure plan -the predecessor under the old act- is the fact that a structure vision is more binding. By the new Spatial Planning Act the vision has to include a chapter how to realise the vision.
It is thus a self-binding instrument of the municipality with pass-through in all policy fields.
Because of deregulation in terms of the structure plan does not include procedural rules in the nWro. Therefore there are no rules on the organization of consultations with other governmental bodies, citizens or civil society. A municipality can therefore organize this in a way that best suits the particular situation.

5.2 Cooperation and collaboration
The collaboration and consultation for the new plan started with the North Wing conferences. All the municipalities and the province agreed that the Development Scenario 2040 for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area would be the framework for the structure visions. Consequently, the key question of the structure vision is: "Which spatial strategy and its incentives are necessary to continue to develop Amsterdam as core city of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area?".
To answer this question a paper was made including the basic principles for the plan in order to start discussions with all stakeholders. The main idea in this paper was that spatial planning should be linked to interests and needs of people and companies, because the building of homes, offices or infrastructure in itself won't create a metropolis. Spatial challenges serve the people and companies in the city. Several conditions that are requested of a city are defined: hospitality, sustainability, recreational, entrepreneurial, serviceable and accessible.

5.3 North, east, south, west
These six conditions have been the input for various discussions on the future of the city. The main question was: which spatial policy and what projects are needed to meet these conditions? These discussions were conducted in conversations called "Waartsen" and were organised geographically: north, east, south and west. Neighbouring municipalities, NGO's, businesses and municipal departments sat together at the table to discuss the future of Amsterdam. In addition, there were discussions ongoing with key partners, including the city boroughs, City region Amsterdam (SRA) and the province of Noord Holland.

5.4 Open question
It is unthinkable and undesirable to develop a structure vision without input from anyone who wants to share his or her thoughts and ideas. For this large group of people who couldnt attend one of the meetings the campaign 'within30minutes' (binnen30minuten) was developed. The campaign is an open question to the

city to think about the future of the city with the aim to start a broad discussion. The title of the campaign is based on the fact that the city is bigger than one thinks, once it took 30 minutes to walk from dam square to the edge of the city, now you only need 30 minutes from Amsterdam Central Station and your at the North sea or the new town Almere.

Central part of the campaign is the website www.30minuten.nl. The online campaign is aligned with the planning of the structure vision and encourages people throughout the process to post their considerations. The reactions are immediately published on the website and accessible for everybody. The opinions and ideas about the city are summarized and used to make decisions by the authors of the structure vision, the alderman, the College, the Council Committee.

As part of the campaign there is also student design competition, which was launched in February 2009. The entries with the most innovative ideas about the future of Amsterdam will be exhibited. Over 250 students from eight different institutes are participating.

5.5 Free State of Amsterdam

The exhibition Free State of Amsterdam is about the future of the Amsterdam metropolis. It is organised in the autumn of 2009 and is a part of IABR, the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam. Partners, citizens, political parties, professionals, philosophers, journalists and youth are invited to participate in the program. The entries of the student design competition will be exhibited and for the youngest children of Amsterdam has a special program, The Young Free State. ine Dutch urban design offices present their visions on the future of Amsterdam, in nine large models for sections of the future metropolis. The offices were given a free hand to make their designs without predetermined rules or restrictions. Their models do not show plans or blueprints for the city so much, but rather inspirational ideas for the long term.

5.6 Structure vision

The cooperation and collaboration with governmental bodies, NGO's and businesses, the campaign and the ideas that come up during the exhibition will crucial input for the next step in the making of the structure vision, the draft which will be presented early 2010. In the process of creating the structure vision much time is taken to involve people.

Back to the five notions coined by Healey, regarding the collaboration in policy making on the strategic level there it is unquestionable that this is the case. The subjects of stakeholder involvement, use of local knowledge and building relational resources is, partly unintended, the focal point of the process. We won't be able to see if this has been a success before the process is finished. In the process it is tried to work truly integrative. This will remain a challenge during the process because integrative some times means less attention for the policy field someone knows best.

6 CONCLUSIONS

There have been several initiatives to create a new powerful governmental layer on the regional or metropolitan level, but none of these initiatives have been as successful as intended.

The lack of a formal metropolitan government has led to creative forms of metropolitan planning. At the same time, storytelling about the metropolitan area influence stakeholders' view on reality and future. In these narratives people were invited to see the possibilities of the region, not hindered by practicalities. This approach has led to new platforms for the joint exploration of the future.

Even though these strategies, one characterized by diplomacy and the other characterized by storytelling or narratives, are sometimes felt as opposing, they actually are two sides of the same coin. The storytelling generates energy en enthusiasm that drives the diplomacy. Both approaches –diplomacy and narratives- have collaboratively paved the way for the making of the spatial structure vision for the municipality of Amsterdam. The plan is made in dialogue with the city boroughs, the adjacent municipalities and several other stakeholders with stories and visions as their inspiration.

Reflecting on the Amsterdam situation we can notice that the planning that emerged is heavily influenced by the institutional history. The institutional setting of the Netherlands as a whole and Amsterdam

including the failure to create a formalised functional and effective metropolitan government has been the stimulus for more informal ways of cooperation.

Together with the shift towards governance and the ever growing number of stakeholders, this has led to a form of planning that unintended encompasses at least partially the five crucial elements coined by Healey "integrative place making, collaboration in policy making, inclusive stakeholder involvement, use of 'local' knowledge; and building 'relational' resources". Of course, we will to have to reassess this hypothesis again in 2040, because only then we determine if this form of planning has been effective.

In retrospect, the failed attempts of governmental reorganization, i.e. the creation of a metropolitan authority, which was considered to be the Holy Grail, can be considered a blessing. It has led to a new form of metropolitan planning which focuses on mutual interest and a shared responsibility. A way of planning that is flexible and led by inspiration and imagination.

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