Paper to be presented at the 45th Congress of the European Regional Science Association
'Land Use and Water Management in a Sustainable Network Society'
Amsterdam, 23-27 August 2005

Railway station development in post-industrial Rotterdam: path dependency and shifting priorities

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Abstract:
The combined effects of industrial decline and the development of a service economy currently bring about a change in urban economies. Accessibility, proximity and an attractive urban climate are considered important factors of urban competitiveness. These are all combined in railway station area, which is therefore considered a focus point of urban economic development.

The paper explores the role of station development projects in the perspective of these long-term social and institutional processes, as well as the continuity found in a city's established economic structure, prevailing policy arenas, objectives and cultures. It does so by means of an analysis of station development in Rotterdam, a manufacturing and seaport city now struggling to find ways to develop a competitive service economy. The paper draws a comparison with Rotterdam's rival Amsterdam, showing that differences in present economic performance and urban development are partly rooted in different economic histories. The paper investigates to which extent these differences affect the role of major railway station redevelopment projects in both cities, and the way these projects are implemented.

Key words:
Railway stations; urban economy; path dependency; Rotterdam

Acknowledgements:
The research on which this paper is based is co-funded by NWO-Connekt.

1. Introduction

As a result of the transformation from an industrial to a service economy, new perspectives on urban competitiveness are taking shape. Other factors than in the industrial era now are important to economic success or failure of cities, and other cities than before are successful. Building on the ideas of Marshall (1920) and Schumpeter (1939), studies of urban economy pay growing interest to innovation (Jacobs, 1969), information (Castells, 1989), knowledge (Lambooy, 1993; Storper, 1997; Hall, 1998), culture (Scott, 2000; Kloosterman, 2004) and creativity (Florida, 2002; 2005). Storper, for example, emphasizes the importance of knowledge transfer, while Scott and Florida focus, respectively, on the role of cultural industries and creativity in defining a city's economic strength. Others, such as Grabher (2002) and Bathelt et al. (2004), concentrate on the relation between local clusters and 'global' networks, while Storper and Venables (2002) and Boschma (2005) analyse the role of proximity and face-to-face contacts in this.

All in all, an essential factor for the competitiveness of cities in the long term appears to be the transfer of specific knowledge, such as tacit knowledge or know-how, between clusters of related firms (Storper, 1997:239; Malmberg and Maskell, 2002). It has become apparent that this knowledge economy is multi-scalar, involving local and regional, as well as distant interaction. It depends largely on intense personal relations and face-to-face contacts, and thereby on geographical proximity (Storper and Scott, 1995:506; Glaeser, 1998:146-7); this often extends to the regional level (Malmberg and Maskell, 2002:442-3). On the other hand, as for instance Granovetter (1973), Grabher (2002) and Bathelt et al. (2004) demonstrated, the exchange of essential knowledge often involves weak ties to distant acquaintances or businesses. In these cases other types of proximity, in particular cognitive proximity, may be more important than 'permanent co-location', as face-to-face contacts then may be organised by travelling (Boschma, 2005:69-70). Hence, knowledge spill-over also depends on accessibility and transport.

The railway station area is a particularly interesting case, in this respect, as it combines virtually all of the elements mentioned above. It offers both accessibility to transport networks and proximity to central urban areas. Furthermore, it is a place and part of the city. Thus, as Hall (2001:73-4) states, newly developed locations, somehow based on transport nodes, increasingly supplement traditional locations of face-to-face con-

tacts. Many of these concern railway stations and in particular, nowadays, high-speed train stations. Clearly, regional and national transport networks are vital for this development of station areas as locations of economic development. But the expanding high-speed train network adds an international scale, and a cosmopolitan image that may be at least as significant. Although it is not the first modality in passenger numbers, the anticipation of the HST in many cases gives a decisive boost to urban development, as the combined efforts of public authorities and private developers lead to an almost unprecedented redevelopment of areas around many future HST stations.

However, developments such as these cannot be seen separate from the local context. For instance the specific structure of the local economy, local administrative conventions and a city's position in existing transport networks influence the objectives of projects, and also the way plans are elaborated and implemented. Many of the elements of the local context involve highly path dependent processes. Accordingly, present development and policy may be either stimulated or opposed by a city's past. The paper will illustrate this by the development of Rotterdam, an industrial and seaport city looking for ways to develop its service economy. Perhaps the most explicit expression of the city's desired new identity is to be the new Central Station. The paper focuses on the role of this project in the perspective of the long-term economic transformation and social and institutional processes, as well as the continuity found in Rotterdam's established economic structure, prevailing policy arenas, objectives and cultures.

Structure of the paper

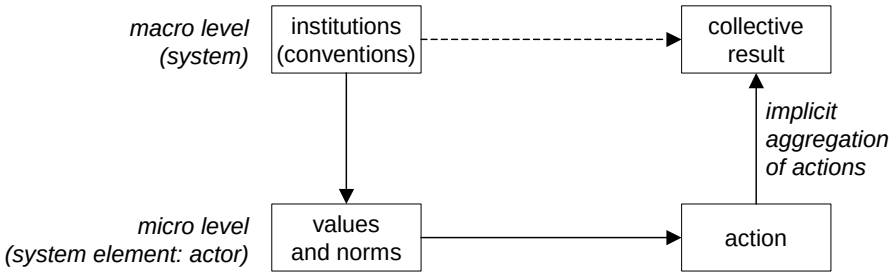
Section 2 discusses some relevant aspects of the planning process, in particular with respect to the roles of path dependency and of the urban redevelopment plan itself. Section 3 presents a brief overview of the local circumstances in which the development of Rotterdam Central Station takes place. Furthermore, it discusses the way this context influences the objectives of the project. Section 4 then elaborates the development of the project itself. A brief discussion, which also draws some parallels to similar developments elsewhere, concludes the paper.

2. The planning process [1]

Before discussing the influence of path dependency and the local context of development, it is useful to focus briefly on some relevant aspects of the planning process itself.

Figure 1 provides a generalized framework of the policy process, based on the approach of Coleman (1990), which also applies to the specific planning process of station area development projects. Underlying this framework is a focus on processes internal to the social system, especially the assumed relation between institutions and policy results. In this respect, institutions represent, as Scharpf (1997:38) states, 'rules that structure the courses of actions that a set of actors may choose', as well as to systems of social norms and culturally defined values.[2] These are reflected in conventions, opinions, historical and professional backgrounds or (often implicitly) ideology. The question is, then, how these institutions, or a change in these institutions, affect final policy results. In Coleman's view the answer to this question ought to be based on an analysis of the individual actors that are the systems basic elements. Thus, a question related to the macro level of the social system has to be studied on the micro level of its elements.

Figure 1: Generalized scheme of the policy process (based on Coleman, 1990:8-10).



Nevertheless, the macro level also influences the micro level, as the left part of Figure 1 indicates. Institutions constitute the conditions in which individual actors operate, shaping their values and norms. Thus, they influence actors' perceptions of reality, which can therefore be considered to be a social construct, and thereby their actions. An individual's perceived image of reality, rooted in the prevailing institutions on the macro

[1] I like to thank Prof. Jack Burgers, Prof. Robert Kloosterman and Stan Majoor and for their very useful advises concerning the issues dealt with in this section.

[2] Sometimes institutions are also thought of 'social entities capable of purposive action' (Scharpf, 1997:38), but it seems less confusing to reserve the term 'actor' or 'collective actor' for this.

level, and a certain 'bounded rationality' together define his purposive action in a specific situation (Scharpf, 1997:36-7).

At the individual level, the relation between one's values and norms and one's actions appears more direct and clear than in the collective system at the macro level, where various opinions and beliefs intertwine more easily than on the individual level; in the eventual result they are sometimes hard to disentangle. The individual action is not to be confused with the final result of a policy on the macro level, however. As the system was split to analyse all individual actor's motives on the micro level, all actors individual actions should be aggregated again to get the eventual result at the macro level.

The framework above may provide basic insights into the relation between actors, institutions and policy results, but it is rather general and abstract. In practice social systems may occur in numerous situations, from the very large-scale to small, project-focused networks entailing only a few actors. Various subsystems may often be distinguished on different scales and in different fields, yet all relevant to the case involved. In this regard, Teisman (1992:62; cf. Majoor, 2004) applies the concept of the 'policy arena', a network centred around a specific policy initiative, and based on a problem or objective of at least one of the actors involved. However, the arena also provides other actors involved with the opportunity to link their aims to the issue under discussion.[3]

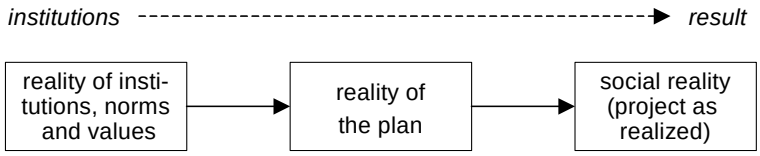
In practice, the actors involved and their mutual relations will be different for each individual project. Nonetheless, which actors are involved in the policy-making process may also be influenced by, for instance, changes in the prevailing institutions and other, external factors.

Different roles of the urban redevelopment project

With regard to urban redevelopment projects, the above points at the different roles that may be attributed to project plans. Obviously, the plan has a function as a blueprint of the intended final result. Just as the reality of institutions precedes the reality of the plan, the latter may be considered an image of a desired social reality, in which the plan has been carried out successfully (Figure 2).

[3] With regard to the single redevelopment projects discussed here, 'arenas of decision-making' may also be an appropriate term, in contrast to the 'arenas of coordination' which refer to controlling the usual course of events.

Figure 2: Three levels of reality.



As such, however, the project plan also serves as a platform to unite actors for an already existing goal. In particular in the case of large, long-term projects in which many actors are involved, a project plan tends to have a function also as a vehicle for discussion and lobbying. It serves to sort out possible solutions to main planning issues and gain commitment from actors which may be involved in the next planning stages. Thus, the level of detail that is shown already in an early stage in many comprehensive project plans may be deceptive, and may serve mainly to structure the discussion and persuade potential supporters or opponents of the project. Detailed plans may than in fact be elaborated at a lower scale for separate sub-projects. In general, this procedure was followed during the planning of Euralille, based on a general urban scheme made by Rem Koolhaas. Planning of the Zuidas in Amsterdam is based on a general scheme also, which is currently elaborated (and occasionally adjusted) in sub-project plans. Initially, this approach was taken in Rotterdam also.

Path dependency

So far, the focus has been on the planning process in itself. In reality, however, existing situations and external influences disturb the effectiveness of planning; urban planning hardly ever concerns an isolated tabula rasa.[4] Thus, the objectives of the station area redevelopment project, the actors and specific arenas and cultures involved cannot be viewed separately from this 'context of development'. This involves the existing urban fabric and transport networks, but also local economics and institutions.

These are to a considerable extent shaped by external influences, as well as various types of path dependent processes. This may imply that a specific development is reinforced, by increasing returns, according to a cyclical, iterative pattern (Pierson,

[4] This problem concerns specifically the planning type applied in modernism, which generally tends to be more comprehensive and more isolated from existing urban situations than planning types applied before. Post-modern urban planning seems to have somewhat more modest intentions. In particular, in contrast to modernism, it recognizes that planning cannot neglect the specific local context, and that local differences in for example institutions, culture and economy must be taken into account (Healey, 1997:40-1).

2000:252-3), but it may also concern a chain of successive events which follow from each other (Mahoney, 2000:508-9). Both are involved in for instance the development of transport networks, by means of technological path dependency and increasing returns in the form of network economies.

A specific type of path dependency is the geographical path dependency which is involved in the growth and semi-permanence of many local economical clusters. It appears that one of the defining factors in this is knowledge exchange, an aspect which has been elaborated by for instance Storper (1997) and Kloosterman (2001).

Finally, and perhaps most general, there is what could be called institutional path dependency. Previous institutions, points of view and social patterns are locked in in earlier stages of the policy process and affect present and future decision-making. Furthermore, a cyclical, iterative process may easily occur, as positions and competences of actors or groups of actors are often stable and insensitive to change for long periods, especially in case of large actors such as governments or multinational organisations (cf. Pierson, 2000). For instance, urban economic development is to a considerable extent influenced by the existing economic structure, which in turn is reflected in the locally prevailing institutions. This means that many decades of development in a certain direction often lead to a significant bias in the views of urban policy makers, for instance by a disproportional influence of a specific policy arena, even if the current economic situation does not justify this any longer. This is not simply a matter of outright conservatism. Institutional and social networks, formal as well as informal, tend to be stronger in old parts of the economy than in newly developing sectors. Also, past investments may be used to justify new ones.

The focus here is on this third type, institutional path dependency. Economic transformation processes such as the change from an industrial to a service economy give evidence of a strong institutional path dependency. Particularly in traditional industrial cities, the focus of local authorities still tends to be the manufacturing industry, in which large investments haven been made and which is in many cases deeply involved in the local governance. Thus, an industrial past may pose a burden on the development of a service economy. The question is, therefore, how this is reflected in the case of Rotterdam, and whether and how this affects the development process of Rotterdam Central Station.

3. The context of development

Rotterdam did not have Amsterdam's striking development during the seventeenth century. Rather, growth came with the industrialization in the nineteenth century. Due to its favourite location in the Rhine estuary and the industrialization of its German hinterland, the port of Rotterdam flourished. Moreover, Rotterdam became an important manufacturing city itself. Expansion of the port was driven by public as well as private forces. Both were combined almost exemplarily around 1870 in the person of Lodewijk Pincoffs.[5]

The destruction of the inner city in 1940 made Rotterdam a 'city without a heart'. Instead of trying to save what little was left, it was decided to develop a new city centre according to strict modernist design principles (Bosma and Wagenaar, 2002:197-9). It gave Rotterdam an inner city that, compared to other Dutch inner cities, provides more space to car traffic and included some novelties as for example the Lijnbaan, the Netherlands' first modern pedestrian shopping street, and the first metro system in the Netherlands. Other significant buildings from this period include the Groothandelsgebouw and the Central Station. According to Schrijnen (in: Moscoviter, 1995:35-6), this stage lasted until the beginning of the 1990s, when post-war buildings were for the first time considered of historic value, worth to be preserved. This implied a new focus of urban development, based on the existing urban fabric, rather than on filling up empty space.

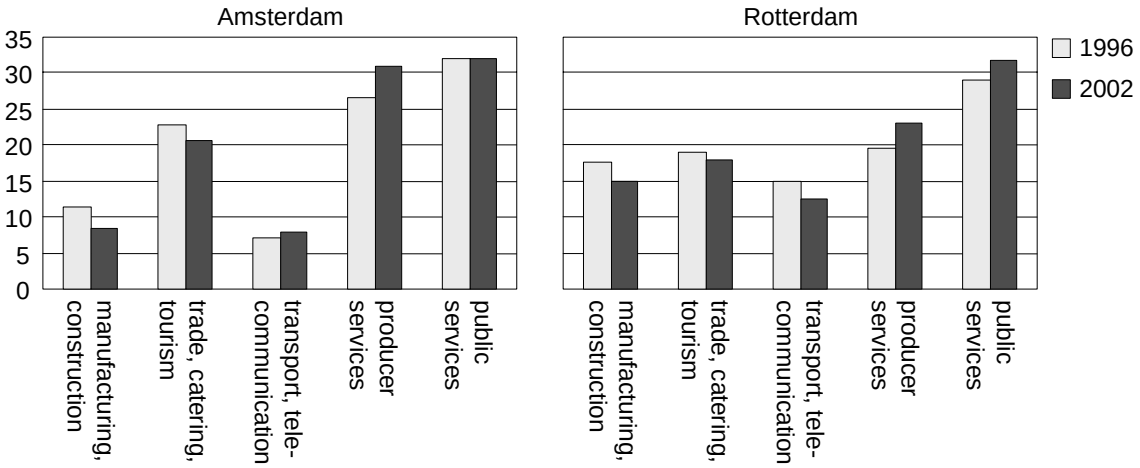
Industrial decline – slow economic transformation

Meanwhile, the port expanded further seaward and Rotterdam became a main focus point of the Dutch post-war industrialization policy. In particular petrochemical industry became an important sector. However, being an industrial city, Rotterdam suffered from the general decline in traditional manufacturing industries that also reduced employment in cities such as Antwerp, Manchester and Hamburg. Moreover, seaport activities also became increasingly labour extensive, due to mechanisation and automation of cargo handling and production processes.

[5] Being a prominent businessman and a member of subsequently the city council, provincial states and national parliament, Pincoffs has been a main driving force behind the expansion of the seaport around 1870; his career in Rotterdam would, however, end in financial scandal (De Klerk, 1998:90-93).

Figure 3 shows the economic structure of Rotterdam in 1996 and 2002, in comparison to that of Amsterdam. The shares of manufacturing, construction and trade between 1996 and 2002 decreased in both cities, while producer services show a strong increase. This points at a continuation of the process towards a post-industrial economy in both cities. In terms of their economic structure the difference between the two cities actually became smaller, an indication that both cities' economies tend to converge.[6] This appears to be a slow, long-term process, as Kloosterman (1996) found rather similar results for the period between 1980 and 1992.

Figure 3: Economic structure of Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 1996 and 2002 (shares in percentages of total employment).



Source: employment figures per 2-digit SBI/ISIC Rev.3.1 sector (International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities), LISA (2003).

Despite this slow convergence in economic structure, however, the difference in absolute employment actually increases. Between 1996 and 2002, total employment in Amsterdam increased by 24 percent from 375 to 465 thousand, in Rotterdam by 15 percent from 278 to 319 thousand (LISA, 2003). In Rotterdam the share of construction, manufacturing and transport remains high, while in Amsterdam the share of trade, tourism, ICT, financial and legal services and cultural activities is larger. The latter are – more than the specialities of Rotterdam – sectors considered characteristic for advanced

[6] The sectoral composition of employment of the two cities in 1996 and in 2002 has been compared by the χ^2 measure, measuring the cumulative deviation of the actual employment share (O) from the share expected (E), according to the formula $\Sigma(O-E)^2/E$. Over all five sectors distinguished in Figure 1, χ^2 decreased from 18,564 in 1996 to 13,504 in 2002 (based on absolute employment figures and corrected for overall working force growth).

knowledge-based urban economies, in which the 'creative' element, added value and also employment growth are relatively high. Consequently, in Amsterdam the share of the fast growing service sectors is larger, whereas Rotterdam does benefit less from its larger share of manufacturing industry, which is becoming increasingly labour extensive. The recent decrease in employment in 2003 illustrates this: the only sectors in Rotterdam in which employment actually increased were financial services, health care and some public services (COS, 2005:3). This difference between the cities is reflected in a lower level of education in Rotterdam and in unemployment, which is higher in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam (five to seven percent in 2002), and more persistent: since 1996, the end of a period of economic recession, unemployment decreased by approximately 55 percent in Amsterdam, compared to 42 percent in Rotterdam (CBS, 2003). On the whole, then, Amsterdam definitely has the most competitive, 'creative' economy of the two.

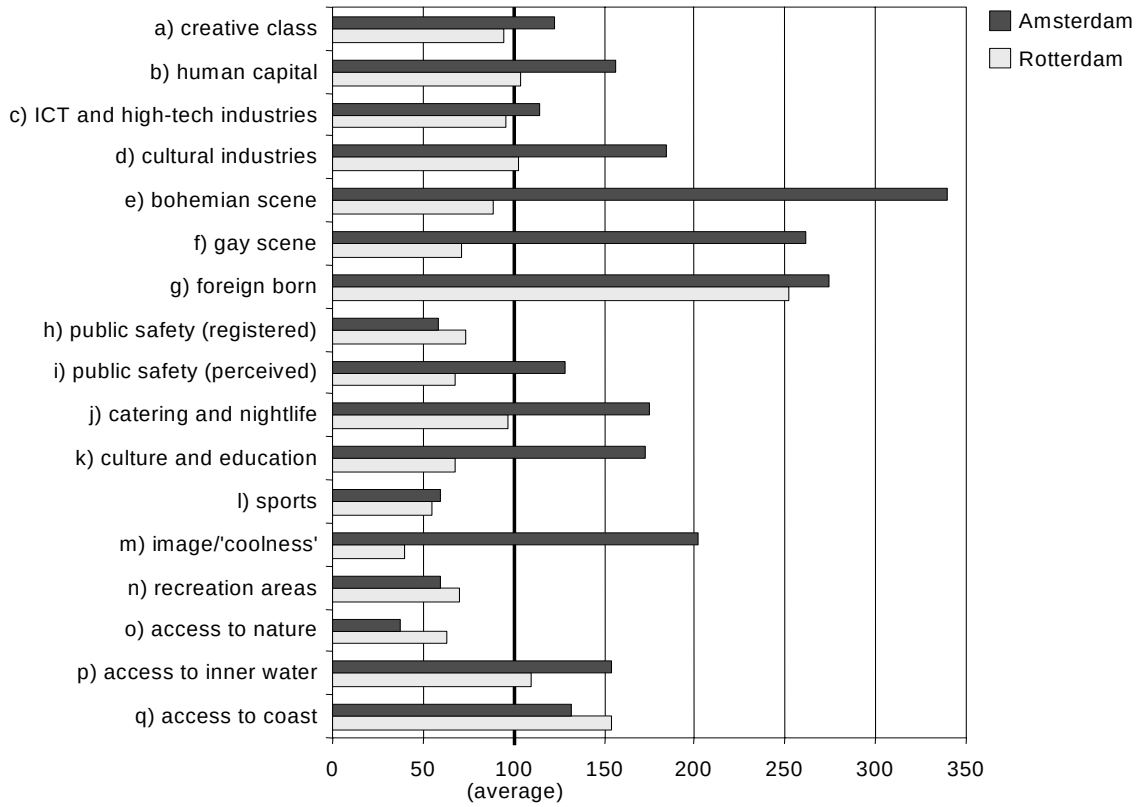
New ambitions

Despite the above, seaport and manufacturing activities still are very important to the current economy of Rotterdam, if only because of their sheer size. However, they are no longer sufficient as an economic base. Moreover, the relation between the city of Rotterdam and its seaport, which used to be very close, is changing spatially as well as economically. Port activities increasingly involves large-scale, labour-extensive or even automated processes that require larger harbours and larger areas. Port functions gradually move seaward, while old harbour areas are being redeveloped for residential and commercial functions. As a consequence, the city becomes less tied to the port, and it has to. Like many old industrial cities, it has to find ways to become less dependent on its manufacturing base and to transform itself in a modern service economy.

As was mentioned above, Rotterdam is still far from that at the moment. One factor in this may be that also with respect to the 'quality of place', which is considered of increasing importance specifically for the development of a service economy and the attractiveness of a city to knowledge workers (Florida, 2002; 2005), Rotterdam lags behind Amsterdam. Figure 4 shows a brief comparison of Rotterdam and Amsterdam on a number of indicators of quality of place. While the difference is largest in terms of socio-cultural aspects (Kloosterman and Trip, 2004), the quality of the inner city itself is

another problem. Understandingly, during the 1950s and 1960s the focus was mostly on the reconstruction itself, rather than on urban or architectural quality, and many of the buildings now look rather characterless and outdated. Leisure, cultural and shopping facilities are less abundant than in Amsterdam and are, on average, of lower quality.

Figure 4: Rotterdam and Amsterdam compared on a number of indicators of quality of place (indices: average is 100).



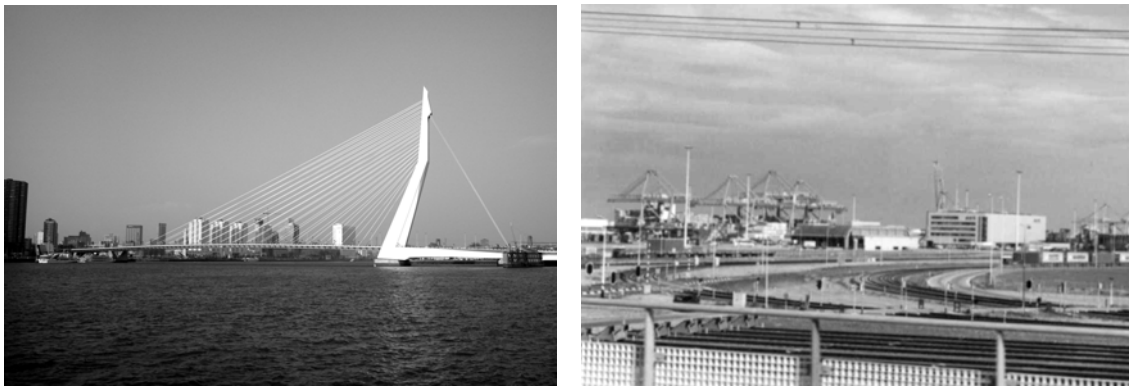
Top-down: a) creative class as a percentage of the working force; b) percentage of the working force with higher education (HBO/WO); c) people working in ICT and high-tech industries as a percentage of the working force; d) employment in selected cultural industries as a percentage of total employment; e) bohemians as a percentage of the population; f) relative importance of the local gay scene; g) foreign born people as a percentage of the population; h) reciprocal of total registered crimes per inhabitant; i) percentage of the population feeling safe at all times in the city; j) catering and nightlife amenities per inhabitant; k) cultural amenities and institutions for higher education per inhabitant; l) individual sports facilities per inhabitant; m) image of cities among e-business companies; n) size of recreation area per inhabitant; o-q) indices of the access to nature areas, inner water and coast. Based on: a), c), e), f) and o-q) Marlet and Van Woerkens (2004); b), g), h) and n) CBS (2003; 2004); d) Kloosterman (2004) and CBS (2004); i) O+S (2004); j), k) and l) KPN (www.telefoongids.ptt-telecom.nl, 9 June 2004); m) Healey & Baker, 2001:25). Average is: for a), c), e), f) and o-q) the fifty largest Dutch cities; for b), d), g), h), j-l) and n) the Netherlands; for i) 31 selected European cities; for m) 26 selected European cities.

Yet, the need to broaden the scope of the urban economy, towards a service-oriented economy, is widely recognized. Urban government now focuses on attracting higher income groups – Rotterdam is the poorest of the main Dutch cities – and retaining the

middle class, which has mostly left the city for surrounding towns such as Capelle, Barendrecht and Bergschenhoek. The success so far has been limited, however.

Nevertheless, the increased ambitions are to some extent reflected in the development of the city itself. Since the 1980s and especially the 1990s, after the post-war reconstruction had been completed, striking modern architecture became increasingly important for the image and identity of Rotterdam, as an expression of the city's renewed self-consciousness. The centre-left urban government developed an active policy to encourage distinct and high-rise architecture. The main icon of the city is now the Erasmus Bridge (Figure 5), which connects the city centre to the Kop van Zuid, a former port area which is being redeveloped and currently accommodates high-rise office and apartment buildings, a hotel, theatre and other leisure activities. Similar, but less ambitious developments take place elsewhere in the city.

Figure 5: To the left: the Erasmus Bridge (picture by H. Heeger, OTB); to the right: large scale port activities some thirty kilometres further: the ECT container terminal at the Maasvlakte.



4. Rotterdam Central Station

In recent years, however, the city's ambitions, as well as their flaws, may have become most obvious in the Rotterdam Central Station project.

Rotterdam CS has become too small to accommodate future passenger volumes. The current building has been designed in 1957 by Van Ravesteyn, who used Termini station in Rome as an inspiration. Even nowadays it is crowded with 140 thousand travellers per day, a figure expected to increase to approximately 210 thousand in 2025 (PTRC, 2003:9,12). Especially the tunnel beneath the platforms is a bottleneck during

peak hours. Moreover, the station seems too small and shabby to match the city's desired modern image. Instead, the new station should be the next landmark of modern Rotterdam.

The Masterplan

The decision to construct a high-speed railway between Amsterdam and Paris induced the renewal plans for Rotterdam CS. However, the objectives of the project go beyond the station itself. The project also includes the redevelopment of the wide surroundings of the station, now partly the domain of busy motorized traffic, partly an unattractive out-of-the-way place. On a somewhat higher level, the aim is to improve the connection between the station area and the inner city, and to use the upgrading of the station area to improve the attractiveness of the inner city as a whole. To provide a real contribution to what we could call the quality of place of the inner city, the station area should include a larger variety of functions, traffic nuisance should be reduced significantly and the comfort and safety of pedestrians be improved.

In 1995 the urban government of Rotterdam and the Dutch Railways (NS) developed the initial ideas for a new station. Despite an invitation to participate, there was no direct involvement of the national government at the time. Finally, in 1999 these parties, together with the private investors Amvest (later Rodamco) and ING Real Estate found each other in a public-private cooperation and defined the starting points of the project in a programme of requirements. Eventually, Alsop Architects from London was selected to make an elaborated design.

In April 2001, Alsop presented his *Masterplan Rotterdam Centraal*. It included a real estate programme of 641,000 m^2, consisting of 195,000 m^2 of residential area, 318,000 m^2 of offices, a hotel and 125,000 m^2 of 'urban entertainment', entailing various amenities such as shops, catering and a theatre. This would imply a considerable increase in density that should improve the liveliness of the area and provide environmental and financial advantages. As a highlight, the station entrance would be marked by a group of giant 'champagne glasses'.

Alsop's Masterplan was not so much an architectural design, as a flexible framework. It aimed explicitly not only on the improvement of the station itself, but also on the more abstract objective of upgrading the inner city of Rotterdam and creating a metro-

politan atmosphere suiting the 'new economy', by means of specific spatial measures, but also by inducing a new dynamism in the city. The role of the project as a platform for discussion and further policy-making is made clear in the Masterplan:

> An essential element of the Rotterdam Centraal project is that it generates new relationships and activities at different levels of scale. The city is interweaving with the qualities that are present elsewhere. Conversely, the city is becoming a principal alternative in the larger (trans) national region. Rotterdam Centraal is becoming a gateway to Amsterdam Airport. The high-speed railway will bring Rotterdam within an hour's travel for over 6 million people. In that context, Rotterdam Centraal is not only a physical project, it is a catalyst for other initiatives. It does not determine in advance, but facilitates a framework that will be responsive to future market development (Alsop Architects, 2001:014).

Shortly after the presentation of the Masterplan in 2001, both private investors left the cooperation, for reasons not directly related to the plan itself.[7] The public-private cooperation effectively ceased to exist. Still, on the whole the Masterplan seemed more than appropriate for the goals that were set. The drawback of this, however, were its costs of about €875 million (Kooijman and Wigmans, 2003b:321).

A political landslide – the Masterplan abandoned

Meanwhile opposition in Rotterdam increased. While the planned real estate programme and the conceptual design of the project seemed appropriate for a project intended to be of international standing, the plan would be too expensive and was considered by many too extravagant for Rotterdam. Those same elements that distinguished the project were the main objects of criticism – especially the champagne glasses, mostly intended to demonstrate the potential and flexibility of the programme and to distinguish the location of the station, and in fact not essential to the plan (Kooijman and Wigmans, 2003a:9).

As the debate about the Masterplan increased, the costs were reduced to €605 million (Kooijman and Wigmans, 2003b:321). Nonetheless, the Masterplan was finally abandoned when in March 2002 local elections caused a political landslide. This brought into power the local Leefbaar Rotterdam party, which was strongly opposed to the 'megalomaniac' project. Although this is generally regarded as the deathblow of the

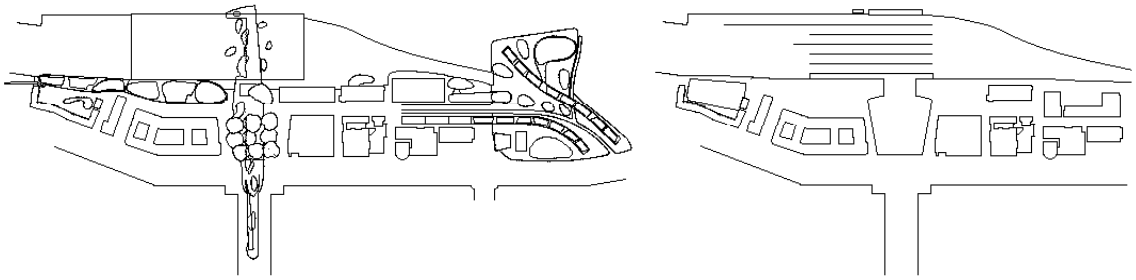
[7] Rodamco, because acting as a real estate developer would imply the loss of its corporate tax dispensation; ING, because it proved impossible to purchase the old post office building, which it considered essential to its participation (Kooijman and Wigmans, 2003a:8).

Masterplan, in fact the elections seem to have suddenly exposed a lengthy, gradual process. In the city council support for the project now eroded quickly, as the conservative VVD withdrew its support too (Kooijman and Wigmans, 2003b:320). Looking back, it seems the dynamism of the planning process may have been to fast for some of the actors involved and support for Rotterdam's great ambitions proved less robust than supposed, when it concerned the willingness to pay for them. Obviously, a more affordable plan was needed.

Team CS

In 2003 the region of Rotterdam, the NS and the ministries of transport and spatial planning formulated a new programme of requirements (PTRC, 2003; Kooijman and Wigmans, 2003a:10). Team CS, a combination of Benthem Crouwel, Meyer and Van Schooten and West 8 Landscape Architects, were appointed to design the new station. The new project will be cheaper, about €410 million, and smaller (Figure 6). The current project area does not include the Hofplein area, which was a part of the Masterplan and the redevelopment of which was, according to Alsop, one of its main advantages (Alsop, in: PBRC, 2001:4).

Figure 6: To the left: scheme of the area as proposed in the Masterplan of 2001; to the right the smaller and less complex current plan (preliminary design of 2004).



However, the problems with respect to the structure of the station area have not disappeared, although the previous discussions may have made them even more obvious. Moreover, the implementation of the high-speed railway and a new light rail system, scheduled for 2006/2007 and 2010 respectively (V&W, 2004a), has increased the pressure on the planning of the station itself, as well as the logistic problems during the construction. It was also the main reason of the involvement, after all, of the national gov-

ernment in the project. Consequently, construction on the infrastructure has already started and the focus of the project is now on the station itself, as this is most urgent.

Gradually the design of the new station is made public, but the contrast between the openness and large publicity around the Masterplan and the present cautious, almost reserved, communication is striking. The new station will be a 'modest icon'.[8] While the definitive design of Team CS has not yet been finalized, it is clear that the new station will be much larger than the old one, and the façade will be closer to the street than is currently the case. The station and the infrastructure involve a purely public investment. For the development of the surrounding area – much smaller than the area considered in the Alsop plan – private investments will be needed. This is expected to occur in a second stage and is explicitly considered a spin-off of the railway station. This implies quality of public space and facilities will be a main criterion, and will be used to attract people from the station to the streets around it. However, no new, large-scale 'urban entertainment' facilities are included.

5. Conclusion

In comparison to Rotterdam Central Station, the Zuidas project in Amsterdam is larger and more complex. It is also based on a broad urban design by Dutch architect Pi de Bruijn, not entirely unlike the Masterplan of Alsop, which is subsequently elaborated by other architects. The planning process in Amsterdam has, so far, been very much focused on a specific objective, the construction of a railway and motorway tunnel. Also, the planning process is driven by the ongoing development of the urban design. Also in the case of Euralille, based on an urban design by Rem Koolhaas, a similar approach has been taken. Koolhaas was selected, as his ideas were based on a vision on the city, rather than just the station area (Bertolini and Spit, 1998:75). The planning process in Lille was very much driven by him and Mr Mauroy, the mayor of Lille (cf. Spaans, 2002; Trip, 2004). The Masterplan, and Alsop himself, might have played a role similar to those of the urban schemes and architects in Amsterdam and Lille, but the Masterplan

[8] Interview with Mr P. Rodenberg, Rotterdam Development Corporation.

was abandoned. As a result, these important elements now seem to be missing, to a large extent, in the Rotterdam CS project.

Obviously, the huge costs of the Masterplan have been a main reason for this. Moreover, the focus has been on the wrong aspects of the plan: on the 'champagne glasses', instead of the flexibility included in the plan and the broader urban-economic concepts on which it was based. Nevertheless, part of the problem also seems to be institutional: the lack of a consistent and unambiguous vision on the development of the local economy, which could serve as a solid base for the development of the Rotterdam CS project (cf. Kloosterman and Trip, 2004). The problems of Rotterdam illustrate the path dependency that characterizes many economic transformation processes. As a traditional industrial city, Rotterdam has difficulties transforming its local economy. Employment in manufacturing industries decreases relatively in both cities, while services increase. In absolute growth, however, Rotterdam lags well behind, as the city is relatively weak in most of the service industries that currently generate most employment growth, such as finance and ICT.

There is the intention in Rotterdam to stimulate the development of service industries, which is difficult enough in itself and is complicated even more by the still predominant influence of the port. Priorities may have shifted somewhat, but it is difficult to change institutions – mindsets and positions of power which have been established for decades. Thus, huge investments are still demanded for the expansion of the port which generate relatively little employment; most important is currently the expansion of the Maasvlakte area, in which the Port of Rotterdam Authority invests €2.6 billion (V&W, 2004b). The question is, whether this money would be more effectively invested in the development of the knowledge economy.

Thus, the need for change, which is generally recognized, is confronted with a tendency to continuity driven by the vested interests of the port. This balance is then disturbed by the political changes in Rotterdam. The initial plans that were developed by the former centre-left urban government were abandoned when the local regime change in 2002 brought into power right-wing parties, that at least at present seem to be most attached to the port. Meanwhile, issues such as the development of a 'knowledge economy', the 'creative class' etc. in Rotterdam are currently discussed particularly by left-wing political parties. The need to improve the quality of the city is recognized by the

present local government, but in practice the focus is overwhelmingly on social safety and immigration control. Such an approach is too limited and, in the long run, not effective.

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