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URBAN PERIPHERIES

**THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS
OF PLANNING PROJECTS**

FEDERICO SAVINI



URBAN PERIPHERIES

THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS OF PLANNING PROJECTS

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college
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With this dissertation I had the possibility to combine some of my personal fascinations: traveling and discovering new places, the exploration of cities beyond known touristic locations and my profound interest in politics. This dissertation also expresses three of my personal beliefs. First, that the beauty of cities can only be appreciated by comparing them, as an open confrontation that valorizes their particularities and specificities. Secondly, that each city, small or large, has something extremely interesting and unique to tell to any observer. Thirdly, that the main way to grasp these differences is to interact with the people working and living in those places and, ultimately, to live in these cities. In my work, I tried to combine the fascination of discovery the unknown with the need to design more rigorous analysis of social events. The thesis has traveled across different countries. It has been immersed in the context of research as I tried to embed myself in the cities I was living and in the institution I was visiting.

During the last 4 years, I relied on a large network of colleagues, friends and interviewees. Already at the time of my Master at the University of Amsterdam, I settled the first bricks of this research, investigating urban development policies in Paris and Amsterdam. My first exchange in Paris as student has increased my fascination for the French capital and Parisian politics, a city of incredible densities of ideas, people and activities. Christian Lefèvre made my staying at the Institut Français d'Urbanisme fantastic and today he is still guiding me through the study of metropolitan governance in France. Paul Lecroart at the Institut d'Aménagement et Urbanisme of the Ile de France introduced me to the world of regional and metropolitan planning. I thank him for having promptly suggested the right interviewees during all these years. In the same period in Paris, I had the pleasure to be directly involved in an atelier coordinated by Brigitte Guigou, that introduced me to practical issues of urban policy making. I particularly thank Mai Diep,

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INTRODUCTION

About 6 kilometers from Les Halles and the Centre Pompidou, we find an area that does not look like the Paris of monuments, fashion commercial centers, or royal heritages. It does not even look like the known La Courneuve, with its large social housing blocks of LeCorbusian allure. While walking from the beautiful Parc de la Villette along the périphérique to the West, we get lost in large congested roads, unused train tracks, large warehouses, surface parking lots, football and tennis courts, and scattered pockets of houses for those who cannot afford to live closer to the city center. Yet, we recognize the same lively and dense atmosphere of the French capital and something tells us that this place is not simply *out of* the city. We discover a certain dynamism in this place: new buildings are popping up with contemporary, but not futuristic, architecture, surprisingly combining refurbished 20th century red-brick structures with new offices. Yet, our walk in the area leaves us awkwardly wondering what neighborhood we are in; we see sporadic metro stops, less dense bus lines, and fewer commercial activities.

We are similarly surprised after getting off the 10 minute ferry from Amsterdam's central station to NDSM. Not more than 4 kilometers from the central station, and just across the IJ-river, we find another intriguing place. The large ship yards and warehouses are far removed from the cute houses of the Jordaan. They are also different from the ambitiously and alternatively designed houses of Java-eiland, Borneo-eiland, or IJ-burg. The ferry leads us to a place that looks partly abandoned, but that reveals new life upon closer examination. Glass and steel structures are built around the cranes and industrial buildings used to build ship components. Here we see history becoming an esthetic value for the urban. While biking back to the city, we recognize pockets of companies, small warehouses, large retail, student houses, and all kinds of small enterprise, all adjacent to the houses of the 1950s.

Our impression is the same heading just 5 kilometers north of Milan's marvelous Dome. After a brief trip on the Metro 1, we understand we have crossed the border of Milan only because of the extra charge on the ticket. In Sesto San Giovanni we see pockets of light brown and yellow houses, a lively neighborhood just next to the heavy traffic of Viale Italia, Viale Sesto-Marelli, and Viale Edison. This space is different from the area of Pirelli-Bicocca, with its large crowds of students, and the areas of Giambellino or Quarto Oggiaro. We see many companies, both small and large, manufacturing metals, glass, electronics, and plastic. Next to them we find pieces of universities, professional schools for chefs, or a new project for the creative manufacturing of clothes. Yet, walking here is not easy, with large distances and voids to circumvent.

These places tell us a story of transition and of place making; a transformation that does not demolish and rebuild but that attempts to reconstitute, rehabilitate, and readapt the existent space piece by piece. The northeast of Paris, the northwest of Amsterdam and the northwest of Milan share the common legacy of being places of social and economic change. At the same time, they have apparently jumped over the business led large scale redevelopment of the 1990s and they have not yet been colonized by booming real estate markets or futuristic districts for financial economies. However, they are neither like homogenous clusters of social housing target of extensive urban regeneration policies. They are not the center of the city, nor the outskirts of it. They are at the interface of what we know as 'the consolidated city', but at the beginning of the expanded metropolitan area. They are urban but have an embryonic *urbanity*. This book investigates how major political forces define the future urban agendas of these places.

WHAT IS THE URBAN PERIPHERY?

«During the past thirty years the growth of outer cities has both decentred and recentred the metropolitan landscape, bearing down and reconstituting the prevailing monocen-

tric urbanism that once anchored all centrifugal and centripetal forces around a singular gravitational node. Deindustrialization has emptied out many of the largest urban-industrial zones and nucleations of Fordism, while post-fordist reindustrialization has concentrated high-technology industries in new industrial spaces far from the old downtowns. These greenfields [...] are not just satellites but have become distinctive cities and gravitational nodes in their own right.»

(Soja, 2000, p.242)

The spatial organisation of today's metropolis has been defined as polycentric, fractal and kaleidoscopic, asymmetric, and edgeless (Hall, 1997). Outer sectors of metropolitan areas are becoming central targets of large public and private investments. The first and second industrial extensions of cities, built in the early 20th century, are witnessing great dynamics, even under the current economic crisis. After decades of suburbanization to the fringe, the inner city rings are gaining momentum due to stricter regulations on urban expansion, declining subsidies for private transport, and a general increase in awareness of the environmental limits of city growth. Peripheral areas are witnessing new social, political, and economic dynamics, with a combination of pockets of poverty, emerging productive clusters, and increased residential densities. Both markets and governments are more concerned with their redevelopment, while spatial planning is trying to understand, address, and even govern these trends by means of more polycentric spatial concepts.

The 'periphery' investigated in the book is the dynamic space which lies at the core of today's expanding metropolitan areas but has traditionally been viewed as an outer location. Yet, it is hard to define it in geo-morphological terms, and the different cities present different urban scenarios. They are not suburbs, in-between lands, or peri-urban spaces; they are urbanized zones that somehow occupy the in-between layers between what we can define as the inner city and what is generally considered suburban. Throughout the book, these spaces are defined as 'inner periphery', 'border areas',

‘interfaces’, and ‘urban peripheries’. All these terms respectively accentuate the geographical, functional, and socio-economic specificity of the same spatial pattern, depending on the specific argument of each chapter. *Inner peripheries* stress that these spaces are significantly different from outskirts, residential suburbs, or hybrid ‘in-between’ urban areas. Inner peripheries are the densely urbanized zones just outside what we generally define as the inner city. The term *border areas* punctuates the gap between spatial patterns and jurisdictional borders. Peripheries are thus spatially continuous and overtake institutionalized borders of governmental action. They entail a discrepancy between spatial dynamics and governmental dynamics, wherein spaces of ‘authority’ can be defined. Yet, the notion of cross-border areas embodies the potential of *connectivity* that the urban periphery has today. They become policy instruments to bridge urban policies and to address the governmental fragmentation that has for a long time characterized European and American metropolitan areas. Lastly, the term *interface* is often used in the text to accentuate the policy value of the periphery. The urban periphery lays at the cross-road between consolidated inner cities and upcoming urban nodes of regional and even national scale. The periphery can be at the juncture between airports, large business districts or huge suburban areas, and the cultural, historical, and economic core of the city. In other cases, it can be an area of local investment, or attempts to create new polarities.

The challenges for spatial planning are related to the necessity to define paradigms that understand and govern space in times of weak economic growth, stable real estate markets, and in the life choices of post-modern households. These new paradigms must be geared to the polycentric and networked conformation of cities. The major fascination of this research comes from awareness that the periphery is a *laboratory* for planning. The innovative potential of the periphery lies in two particular challenges for European urban and city-regional agendas.

The first challenge is the need to experiment, define, activate and institutionalize new *spatial qualities* in these outer areas. Planners are concerned with the typologies of urban and living spaces and

the different techniques to combine multiple land usages. They address the creative use of history and symbols in postmodern design, and try to successfully realize goals of sustainability into new forms of living. A challenge of spatial innovation springs from the gap between the great opportunities of experimentation in these areas and the tendency to address their problems with established planning norms and procedures (Downs 2005; Wilkinson 2012). The periphery stimulates planners and designers to adopt imaginative practices of urban change based on reuse, temporary development, perspectivism, flexibility, and smart technology solutions. However, because these locations are conceptualized as ‘urban’ spaces, these energies encounter consolidated regulatory frameworks (e.g. zoning), established decision making procedures, and enrooted ideologies.

The second challenge is that planning in the periphery requires a coordination of policies across jurisdictional borders and across tiers of government. This means managing the disruptive parochialism that inter-municipal competition might generate. Many of these models of ‘adversarial cooperation’ (Salet, et al., 2003) become problematic when it comes to coordinating land use planning in the border areas. It is thus important to look at how different planning agents cooperate or conflict in the practice of land use planning (Kantor et al. 2013; Lefèvre 2002). The rise of outer polarities certainly reveals the limits of metropolitan governance. Peripheral development is a practice that facilitates an understanding of broader dynamics of power configurations in polycentric city-regions.

The dynamic urbanization of urban peripheral ‘rest spaces’ creates a new agenda for collective action in search of spatial quality. Contextualized by local conditions, this agenda addresses such major issues as:

- the livability and environmental quality of the urbanizing peripheral spaces;
- the fractal nature of these spaces (displacing different urban activities such as housing, work, and recreation in separated specializations);

- the social polarization of urban peripheral spaces (creating new pockets of poverty);
- the selectivity and incompleteness of accessibility;
- the lacking sense of place of the embryonic spaces of urbanity.

A fascination with this dynamic process of urbanizing peripheral spaces and the inherent challenges for collective action and spatial planning underlies the *research question* of the present study. The book explores how these challenges of spatial quality are addressed under the fragmentary and asymmetric conditions of power in bolstering urban peripheries. These are the heuristic challenges that work as an umbrella of the whole work. They are addressed by looking at specific development projects in peripheral areas, framed within the power relationship between core city, market interests, and national/upper governmental planning strategies.

THE FIELDS OF TENSION AND MAJOR URBAN POWERS

«Because actual development policy grows out of a set of political activities, it behoves us to pay attention to arrangements by which policy is made and conflict is managed. If some arrangements are flawed in some fundamental way we cannot expect to have a good policy in the long run. Development policy will reflect the weakness of political arrangements.»

(Stone, 1987, p.282)

The exploration of this complex and dynamic subject matter will be guided by a conceptual framework. Each chapter makes use of particular sensitizing concepts, placed within this framework (Blumer, 1954). A sensitizing concept does not have the full explanatory power of hypothetical deduction, but it focuses the explorative research with a similar heuristic load. The basic sensitizing concept

of this study is that many actors with different backgrounds and different resources have stakes in the peripheral urban spaces, so their manifold interactions will be investigated as a permanent ‘process of negotiation’. The crucial notion of this concept is that the ‘field of negotiation’ is driven by asymmetric powers. The periphery is conceptualized at the center of a field of tension between three major sources of urban power: the core city, with its traditional political and economic position of domination; the strategies of market actors, namely pioneer investors looking to rent land in outer areas; and the upper levels of government, both national and/or regional (depending on the case) with their specific impulse to develop strategic poles in metropolitan areas. The tensions between these actors determine the planning outcomes of peripheral development. The following triangle (Fig.I) summarizes the major conceptual model.

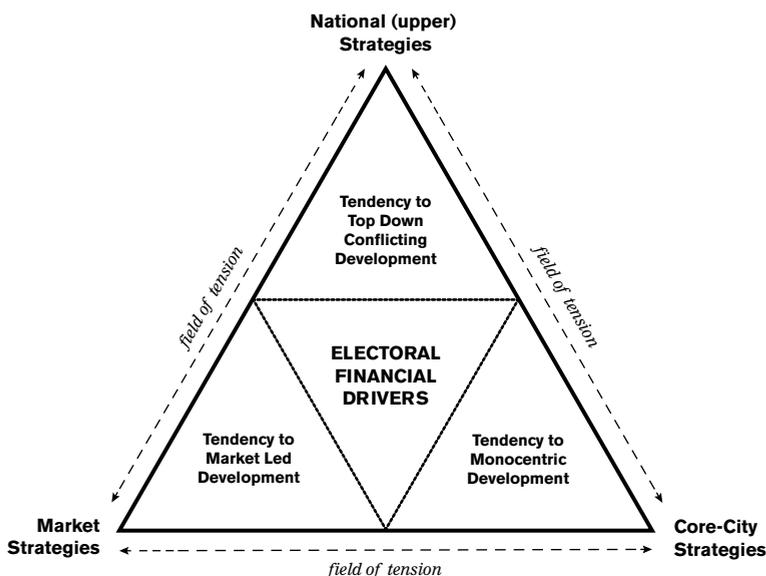


Fig. I. Conceptual model to study peripheral urban development projects.

The political construction of city-regions has been a dominant object of study in the past decade (Jonas and Ward, 2007). A great deal of research has been conducted to investigate how the emergence of new regional (polycentric) spaces of production and consumption are the result of an assemblage of these three major interests (Allen and Cochrane, 2007). Despite processes of decentralization and deregulation, national and upper levels of government have continued playing a role in urban development and have adapted their devices of authority to affect city-regional growth policies. Core cities have been, and still are, major players in shaping metropolitan transformations. In Europe, they are still the economic core of their regions and, despite increased salience, outer poles still depend on their performance. There is still a dominant view of core city governments in planning practice. Large cities often build upon established political linkages with national government to push for policies that reinforce centripetal development forces within networked spatial configurations. Lastly, shifting market strategies are generally considered as major factors in regional planning. Real estate investors, large developers, and international agents are increasingly interested in the yields that the inner periphery can offer. In doing so they play a major role in lobbying public city-regional policies (and zoning) to influence selective land pressure on these areas.

The new territorial salience of peripheral locations therefore expresses and leads a shifting power balance of these agents. It is not unlikely that different alliances among these major forces lead to different forms of outer development. Further, cohesive coalitions between core city and developers might reinforce the dependency of peripheral areas on the core city. This may be even more so the case when national governments also subsidize this connection through extensive infrastructural policies. This has been largely the case in the suburbanization of the 1950s-60s as well as in Europe's new town policies. Accordingly, strong coalitions between the state and large investors might lead to parachuted development in the outer poles, with critical implications on the spatial, social,

and economic continuity with the core city. Market led strategies in the periphery with a looser role for national and regional governments might lead to forms of peripheral development similar to what we have called urban sprawl for many years, gaining more yields of urban development in open areas. These spaces might be characterized by a less crystallized and more disconnected urban structure. The question of whether the negotiations between the different stakeholders work out in practice according to the dominance of the resources mentioned above will be empirically investigated in the selected case studies.

The articulation of the three major sources of power is informed by an interpretation of urban regime theory, which provides a political-economic approach to investigate how structured power relations shape urban development. The explanatory power of urban regime theory has been largely discussed in the literature and it is not exempt from critique. Ultimately, it is a conceptual model tailored over a traditional (American) distinction between downtown and suburb, core and periphery. Yet, it is one of the most resistant concepts of the post-Fordist literature as it 'provides a language and frame of reference through which reality can be examined and leads theorists to ask questions that might not otherwise occur' (Judge et al, 1995:3). In this book, urban regime theory is preferential to other models of urban political analysis because it frames urban development within the structuring effects of political and economic coalitions (Ward et al, 2011). It helps the researcher to analytically unpack the problem of peripheral development and urban politics by framing peripheral development as the dependent variable of a reorganization of power structures in city-regions. The theory conceptualizes the inter-dependency between economic and political logics of urban policy; between logics of economic growth and accumulation of consensus. It moreover looks at specific agents of these political dynamics and at the techniques used to mobilize resources, political consensus, and finance to enforce urban agendas. These actors are mayors and local parties, groups of technicians and planning experts, and incoming real

estate investors. Particular mention of regime theory is found in chapter 2, where a cross-border coalition is evident, and in chapter 3, where the power-holding capacity of local political coalitions is discussed in the light of strategic urban projects.

A major critique is that urban regime theory is not geared to explain European urban politics. Kantor and Savitch argue that *“a major obstacle to comparative research [in urban studies] is the lack of viable middle-level theories that are capable of embracing nations with very different histories and social life”* (Kantor and Savitch 2005: 136). The concept of urban regime has thus often been ‘stretched’ to embrace all sorts of policy contexts and dynamics (Mossberger and Stoker, 2002). The present study avoids these problems by adopting a looser definition of regime, but maintains the focus on the conflicting practices of coalition building between state, core city, and market interests. It looks at border areas as the policy object of this power struggle and addresses the inter-municipal level to look at how these actors instrumentally deal with peripheral development. Lastly, the European planning context demands more attention to the political linkages between local executives, regional councils, and national cabinets. It also demands awareness of the fiscal structures of cities, the larger transfers from the top, and the link between local leaders (mayors and aldermen) and nationally organized political parties.

REFINING THE CONCEPT: THE POLITICAL NATURE OF PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT

«Urban politics has diverged from the broader discipline to the extent that it has become a black hole where broader political science insights are rarely felt.»

(Clark and Crebs, 2012, p.2)

The concept outlined above has to be refined in order to investigate the drivers of change in different urban contexts. The outcomes in urbanizing peripheries differ from city to city and even differ within the same urban regions for different sorts of urban space. Thus, we have to refine the search for an explanation of different outcomes by pre cising the mechanisms within the above mentioned generic sources of power. Here, a further elaboration of the concept is needed. As the present research is concerned with the challenges of collective action with regards to prevailing problems in urbanizing the urban peripheries, I will focus the research on the political dimension of collective action in particular. This is not to neglect the role of market in the search for possible explanations (one of the major pillars in the conceptual scheme) but its role will only be investigated in indirect ways, namely in the way that politics responds to shifting markets strategies.

The present work does not attempt to simply map the (in)coherence between the triangle of powers and the spatial outcomes of planning policies in the periphery. It investigates the processes that lead to changes in this triangle. I will search for the mechanisms that lead the state, core cities, and the market to redefine their policies towards areas located at the border of cities. In doing so I focus first on the specific intergovernmental relationships between the involved municipalities (including the asymmetry between core city and smaller surrounding municipalities) and their relationships with higher tiers of government. Secondly, I focus in particular on the political drivers of peripheral development, namely in the practice of political confrontation between these actors and their responses to shifting market strategies. The political dimension is not just governmental but also encompasses social definitions of politics, as will be explained later. The book shows how the periphery becomes an object of political contention, instrumentalized to advance strategies for gaining and holding power.

Since the pivotal work of Rittel and Webber (1973), planners have agreed that governing urban change (also) involves a series of arbitrary considerations, politically built on contextualized beliefs

and norms of collective action. Planning decisions are built on the combined mechanisms of 'substantive rationality' (i.e. value rationality) (Weber, 1978) and historically established technical expectations. The 'urban question' has always been a political question for planners. The physical and functional shape of the 'city' has reflected particular forms of political organization and structures of power. *Civitas* and *urbs* are two sides of the same coin, reflecting the overlap between organized political power and living spaces. Cities have been generally interpreted as urban containers of political content (Isin, 2003). It is not surprising that the emerging polycentrism of city-regions has stimulated a large debate on the changed political configurations of power. After the decay of modernist planning doctrines, spatial planning has consensually been recognized as a 'politicized' process of decision making over the use of land. In the 1970s, the overlap between planning and politics was at an apex, with the urban planning question intimately attached to the social question. During the socio-economic restructuring of Fordism, planning became an object of political and partisan debate. The 'politicization' of planning (Castells, 1978, van der Cammen and De Klerk, 2012) was evident in the way political parties and political agendas started to place the urban question at the top of their agendas and started to think of urban change as a tool to address broader issues of economic growth and social pacification.

The politics of planning entail a dynamic relationship between *polities, policies, politics, and parties* (Rhodes et al, 2006). The first entails the changed scale of organized political consensus and the formation of spaces of political negotiation. The second refers to the products of political negotiation and the profile of decisions taken. The third refers to the dynamic negotiation, trading, conflict, and struggle between societal interests in defining policies. The fourth specifically stresses the organization of societal demands into more or less coherent groups of interests. In this book, the periphery is a space where it is possible to understand the changes in these different components of urban politics. The emergence of

polycentric city-regions and the salience of outer poles (polities) are likely to reflect new structures and dynamics of power (politics). These include new players (among which are new political parties) that foster new urban agendas (policies).

A new spatial conformation of cities generates political responses to address emerging spatial, social, and economic questions (Savitch and Kantor, 2002). These responses are dependent on the strategies of powerful groups struggling to adapt their authority to new metropolitan spaces, and among these we find new and old political parties and groups. Notwithstanding the salience of parties and politicians, there seems to be a lack of investigation in their behavior and their tactics in political confrontations. According to Campbell, *“the interactions between planners and politicians at once structure and determine the nature of the decisions made and moreover ensure such decisions are rendered accountable through the role of politicians within a representative democracy. It is striking that while this relationship occupies a pivotal position within the planning activity it remains little discussed in the academic literature and is more generally shrouded in mystique and secrecy”* (2001:83). The response of political groups to urban change does not follow economic rationality, but it entails a combination of different rationalities. They are based on an instrumental use of ideologies, symbols, and rhetoric to accumulate consensus.

A fundamental schism may have occurred between academic research, planning practice, and politics since the 1970s, the years of ‘Marxist ascendancy’ (Hall, 1988). In those years, political economists established ‘the urban’ as the dependent variable in their research designs and shifted the focus to macro societal structures or, in Marxist terms, an expression of a superstructure over the ‘base’. Planning theory was questioned as a product of production relationships while the pro-activeness of planning agents in societal innovation became secondary (Low, 1990). Marxist theory faced the dilemma of either theorizing the origin of planning within the historical logic of capitalism or prescribing and advising possible planning actions. Ultimately, the Marxist logic became ‘strangely

quietist; it suggest that the planner retreats from planning altogether into the academic ivory tower' (Hall, 1988:339). The apparent division between a 'theory of planning' and a 'planning theory' (Faludi 1973) was, however, productive. It made us aware of the clear relationship between (global) economic restructuring and local responses and it has certainly explained the emergence of macro spatial patterns. Only recently have post-structuralist works attempted to explain the contextual differentiation of planning responses. Such an analytical division might also downplay the opportunity to conceptualize the role of planners in achieving innovation. Today, critical studies stress the de-politicization of planning and the a-political character of decision making. Planning practice is today criticized as a choreographed exercise of citizens.

I do not attempt to corroborate or falsify structural hypotheses, but I attempt to explain the multiple variations of metropolitan transformations by adding insights from an electoral and political perspective. I will shed light on the relationship between land use planning and electoral dynamics, and how the latter combines with economic trends, in order to make sense of peripheral development.

THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH AND METHODS

«Case studies often tackle subjects about which little is previously known or about which existing knowledge is fundamentally flawed. The case study typically presents original research of some sort. Indeed, it is the opportunity to study a single unit in great depth that constitutes one of the primary virtues of the case study method. If a writer were to restrict herself only to elements of the unit that were generalizable [...], a reader might justifiably complain. Such rigor would clarify the population of the primary inference, but it would also constitute a considerable waste of scholarly resources.»

(Gerring, 2004:345-356).

How could we explain the differentiation of responses in planning urban development policies for polycentric city-regions? Why do some metropolitan areas show clear responses to polycentric development while others do not? What are the drivers of changes to the redevelopment practices of peripheral areas?

The design of the research follows these questions with an explorative approach. It is not a completely open investigation as it is heuristically guided by different sensitizing concepts in each chapter. There is a major hypothesis: I assume a field of negotiation between multiple agents at stake, with different positional backgrounds and different resources that condition new processes of urbanization via asymmetric positions of power. Three major forms of power condition the field of negotiation: core city, state, and market. This generic concept is further specified in order to explain different outcomes in different urban peripheries. Referring to the research question, which addresses the challenges of collective action in the spatial planning of the transforming urban areas, the research will be focused on the political dimension of processes of collective action to explore and elucidate the mechanisms that explain peripheral development. It problematizes peripheral development as a dependent variable of changed geo-political conditions in metropolitan areas, characterized by emerging political fractures and expressed in the rise of new electoral constituencies. These changed conditions are investigated through the realignment of upper levels of government, core city economies, and market pressures over locations outside city borders. This study aims to understand *why*, given certain spatial, functional, and economic conditions in today's metropolitan areas, we see particular planning approaches to peripheral development occur while others seem to fail to address the challenges of collective action.

Planning research and practice is widely interested in whether progressive and adaptive planning approaches can be arranged to respond to the emergence of new salient areas of development. This means redefining and reframing the concept of periphery, employing new planning tools, establishing inter-municipal cooperation, and promoting innovative practices of spatial innovation and urban

design. Assuming that these political configurations are dominated by national planning agents, core cities, and market interests, I expect that the profile of peripheral projects will change according to the electoral and financial relationship between these three sources of urban power. The study is guided by the underlying conceptual expectation that a shift in urban peripheral planning might occur when national governments, core cities, and market agents operate on peripheral spaces in order to complement electoral and profit interests.

This is a *case study* and it is not oriented to law-like generalization (Gerring, 2004). By observing three specific cases I attempt to enrich the existent empirical understanding of the power reorganization in planning polycentrism. The following classification applies:

Unit of analysis: I focus on areas located at the border of core cities, but whose planning also involves external neighboring municipalities. The study is limited to three European cities: Paris, Milan, and Amsterdam. There is a high internal variation in the unit of analysis on the specific variables of interest (see below). Based on these units, the study advances a better understanding of other more or less similar cases, providing an illustration (and thus the base for further hypothesis) of the political-electoral mechanisms driving peripheral change.

Variables of main concern: the specific types of planning projects undertaken in the periphery are the dependent variable. I focus on the combined variation of three independent variables: the involvement of the national government, the core city's strategies of metropolitan growth, and the type of market pressure on the periphery. Looking at the combined changes of these variables, I infer on the particular planning choices made in the selected locations of interest. As for any comparative (and replicable) study, it is fundamental to select variables that can be measured systematically (Kantor and Savitch, 2005). The research focuses on the variation

of the relationship between these three subjects in peripheral development (namely the conceptual triangle illustrated in the last chapter), conditioned by particular electoral and financial strategies.

Cases: the cases have been selected to maximize the variation of the dependent variable (the projects), keeping contextual spatial and economic conditions similar (the periphery). Within the unit of analysis (European urban peripheries) I selected three major cases to investigate: Paris Nord Est (PNE), Amsterdam ZaanIJ (ANW), and Milan-Sesto San Giovanni ex-Falck Area (Falck). The selection of these cases is further justified in chapter 5. Given the explorative character of the research, the cases are chosen coherently with their spatial, historical, and functional conditions. The three projects involve areas that:

- a) are of *comparable size* (respectively 2m sqm, 2.5m sqm, and 1.5m sqm);
- b) show similar urban histories and similar visions, although with some differences. They have been affected by former industrial uses. PNE hosted the former general warehouses of Paris at the northern gateway of the city, industry related to train transportation, and the treatment of raw materials for energy. ANW saw the decline of the Dutch shipbuilding industry, Shell's oil treatment facilities, and the food, chemical, and seed industries. The Falck site hosted a major portion of Italy's steel manufacturing industry with related engine companies;
- c) have become a relatively recent object of policy making since the early 2000s, with political pressure increasing in the last year with the active engagement of governments;

- d) present planning processes that somehow cope with issues of historical heritage, functional mixes, multiple land usages, and that address the combination of residential spaces, productive spaces, and environment.

The study makes use of qualitative investigation techniques for a spatial-electoral approach. Most studies on the relationship between electoral dynamics and policy responsiveness have made use of qualitative techniques (Clack and Crebs 2012). The material has been collected through extensive fieldwork on-site, desk research (policy documents, newspapers, archives), and around 35 in-depth interviews per project with politicians, academics, and planners. Different forms of data have been used to address different sub-parts of the major question. Particular attention has been given to the role of politicians, the position of party agendas in shaping development, and to the historical ideological issues at stake on the areas of interest. Local civic groups have been a rich source of information on the political conflicts around the projects. Questions regarding the motivations behind particular land use and infrastructure planning choices enhanced understanding of the instrumental use of planning by political groups. These data have been cross-analyzed, looking at the debates taking place within the municipal council. Particular attention has been given to the different perceptions between officials in national (or higher levels in the case of Milan) tiers of government, core cities, and those in neighbor municipalities affected by the development. They were useful to understand the political tension of regional governance in the periphery. The qualitative data have been combined with the financial and economic prospects of projects in order to discover whether the programming has been affected by changed political conditions. Data on electoral turnout have been used to address this point when available. The research also looked at the financial construction of the interventions and land ownership to detect the long-short term profit expectations of both private and public actors involved.

The methodological limitations of a three case explanatory case study are consistent with all qualitative case studies. The external validity of the work is limited, as I do not attempt to confirm or falsify hypotheses deducted from consolidated theories but to inductively enrich existing ways of understanding the politics of planning. Yet, I attempted to increase the learning value of the research by adopting an approach to a problem that aims to elucidate causal mechanisms at play, and that compares cases of similar conditions. An intellectual compromise is necessary whenever political science research meets heuristic fields of study, like planning, that are strongly practice oriented. The electoral-spatial approach adopted in the chapters does explain electoral politics in their making, the processes of lobbying, influence, and conflict, over concrete issues of land use. Yet, I am aware of the limited external validity of the research. Internal validity has instead been increased by triangulation of data types, extensive interviews with different actors, and continuous interaction with colleagues and planners. Each case has moreover learned from the other in sequential manner, despite the basic structure of research remaining stable.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book addresses different sub-issues in each chapter. I recognize this structure as both the main strength and limit of the work. On the one hand, each chapter has a value in itself, each time presenting a fresh perspective on the major problem of peripheral development and electoral-political mechanisms. Each chapter shifts the point of analysis to shed light on one side of a complex problem. In doing so every chapter is a *single outcome study* (Gerring, 2006): it interrogates an outcome or a piece of evidence in planning practice in one context to elucidate the mechanisms that lead (or do not lead) to one specific project. The thesis is built on articles, submitted or already published in international peer-reviewed journals. Therefore, each article has an introduction and a conclusion.

Chapter 1, published in *Urban Studies*, addresses the role of the national government in enabling strategic projects. The article sheds light on the first, and perhaps most controversial, of the three variables explained above. It challenges the argument that national governments have lost the power to control local urban development. The chapter is based on the result of a pilot study I conducted in cooperation with the former Dutch Ministry of Spatial Planning, Environment and Housing affairs (VROM, today Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment), the major sponsor of this whole PhD project. The article investigates the logics of governmental action in strategic projects, focusing on what I call stimulation planning tools. It adopts a sociological-instrumental approach to identify new logics of involvement, namely endorsement, monetary impulse, propulsion, and effectuation. It concludes that the state is still active in local development, but it is more specialized and territorialized as a meta-governor of complex decision making processes. In doing so it manipulates processes to advance national agendas on strategic locations.

Chapter 2 presents an article published in *Environment and Planning A*. It focuses on the specific case of Paris, explaining the political dynamics that unexpectedly led to a cross-border project in the Northeast. Paris Nord-Est is the first case introduced, as an example of a progressive planning policy aiming at crossing jurisdictional and political boundaries between core city and periphery. The paper makes an explicit use of the conceptual bases of urban regime theory and provides an analysis of the way peripheral projects are instrumental to coalition building. The case concludes that cross-border development in Paris has been triggered by a series of geo-political changes: a stronger social-democratic leadership in Paris that is mobilized against consolidated right wing national coalitions, the alignment of the border community, and an instrumental mobilization of real estate investors seeking new yields from their outer land assets.

Chapter 3, currently under review, focuses on the case of the ex-Falck brownfield in the north of Milan. The paper is an experiment to adopt a spatial-electoral approach that is able to understand the effects of electoral calculations on land development. The paper develops a concept that is able to grasp the relationship between land use planning, the electoral dynamics of local political coalitions, and the indirect influence of metropolitan power dynamics. It builds upon the hypothesis that political gridlocks are generated by the power-holding behaviors of local coalitions in conditions of complex development. The latter tend towards a conservative behavior, protective of local constituencies. The paper further advances that this conservative behavior is strengthened and institutionalized under conditions of fragmented metropolitan governance. Political parochialism is not only a cause of metropolitan fragmentation but it may also be a consequence.

Chapter 4 is currently under review. It provides another perspective on the political-electoral dynamics of planning, making explicit the major dilemmas that political majorities need to address in peripheral development: intervention, investment, and regulation. They entail the strain between predicted intervention and spontaneous change, between the legal certainty of zoning and the particularism of self-regulation, and between supply and demand driven spatial investments. Focusing on the case of Amsterdam Zaan-IJ (also referred to as Amsterdam North-West), the paper discusses how these dilemmas emerge from political fractures around developmental strategies that are rooted in normative ideas of desirable land uses: the types of urban spaces to be produced, industrial functions to be settled, and the types of environmental policies to foster. The paper shows that these dilemmas do not require more or less planning, but a significant effort to address broad ideological visions and to align party agendas at local, regional, and national levels.

Chapter 5 is scheduled for a special issue of *Environment and Planning C*. In this chapter the reader will find all the major components of this thesis. The paper explains the triangle of urban power struggle for peripheral development. It hypothesizes that different power configurations depend on the specific electoral and economic arrangements between the three major powers, and that their misalignment hinders progressive planning practices. Looking at the three cases, the chapter concludes with an overview of the position that peripheral municipalities occupy in the geo-political process of planning. It inductively concludes by elaborating three types of peripheral development: *isolated*, *cross-border*, and *organic*. There are three major conclusions, which are also the major conclusions of the thesis: first, new urban patterns in the periphery of cities are not only an expression of shifting geographies of investment but also entail political and electoral calculations by public actors in power. This makes urban development in the periphery a potential locus for planning innovation, even in times of economic recession. Secondly, this paper suggests that peripheries can be spaces for wider experimentation, but this requires a planning approach that is able to link different levels of action with issues of land use planning. Third, this chapter suggests that in order to achieve progressive spatial development in city-regional planning it is important to shift focus from core-periphery to more symmetric geo-political frames.

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1.

THE GOVERNABILITY OF NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING

LIGHT INSTRUMENTS AND LOGICS OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTION IN STRATEGIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

Neoliberalism and decentralization are eroding the capacity of central governments to implement their national spatial objectives. National government, with steadily less financial and political resources at its disposal, has little power to intervene in strategic urban development, because cities have sufficient autonomy to define their own land use plans. This paper challenges this understanding of the contemporary condition of national spatial planning. It demonstrates that although national governments have a weaker grip on local spatial dynamics, they play an active role in governing complex spatial development. Two urban development projects in the Dutch Randstad will be discussed in order to empirically demonstrate four different logics of involvement: endorsement, monetary impulse, propulsion and effectuation. I conclude that there is great potential for national planning in a 'lighter' profile, with instruments used to strengthen the interconnectivity of networks – a condition for generating strategic capacity and ensuring governability of spatial policies.



Almere Poort, The Netherlands, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

The relationships between the State and its urban areas have traditionally taken place in a context of high levels of expertise at the national level, national budgets and strong ties between national executives and local administrators. However, the capacity of national governments to influence implementation of urban and national policies has been progressively changing due to the ongoing processes of institutional decentralization, devolution and Europeanization. Also the neoliberalization of spatial policy has impacted the position of upper levels of governments (e.g. State or National governments, regional or city-regional authorities), often seen as a weaker institutional layers in a glocalised geo-political scenario (Brenner, 2004). Yet, the question of whether national governments can still mediate between changing local urban patterns and collective national interests is still relevant with the progressive regionalization and internationalization of spatial and socio-economic dynamics. In many (EU) countries, the State government is still significant for strategic development (Nadin et al, 1997; Alterman, 2001) as is evident from the numerous examples of national involvement in specific spatial interventions: in France, the *Operations of National Interest and the Territorial Development Contract* following the Grand Paris; in the UK, the *Eco Towns* and the *London Docklands* regeneration; in Germany, the recent federal *Pilot Projects of Spatial Planning*; the Ørestad project in Copenhagen; and the Dutch national Key Projects. Although many of these countries have decentralized planning systems, in spatial planning as in other policy sectors, the State seems to have enhanced its role in 'directly and/or indirectly organizing the self-organization of partnerships and networks' (Jessop, 1997: 305).

In the last decade, spatial planning interventions have become a key focus to detect inter-governmental governance and design innovative planning practice. However, there is still a discrepancy between existing planning regulations and the type of innovative governance needed for complex urban development (Albrechts at

al. 2001). This dialectic between outdated institutional settings and the need to adapt planning processes to new spatial dynamics raises issues of governability. According to a past definition of Mayntz, “*the state, because of the inherent shortcomings of its traditional instruments, is not able (anymore) to solve the economic and social problems it has identified. [...] in order to prevent unwanted developments it is either necessary to look for alternative instruments or to lower the aspirations of central-state control*” (1993,p.10). With the emerging topography of State power, decentralization of planning responsibilities, and uncertainty about the territorial scale at which socio-spatial dynamics are taking place, national spatial planning needs to be rethought (Allen and Cochrane, 2010). However, empirical research on the role of national planning agencies in projects has been largely overlooked..

This paper addresses the governability of national spatial planning by looking at the role of national government in developing areas of ‘national importance’ under conditions of decentralization. It answers one main question: how can national governments influence local urban development projects and what type of role can they play? The shifting context of national planning seems to suggest that national government will have less and less power in influencing local choices of development and that with less money the State loses political influence in decision-making processes. In this study I challenge this argument and demonstrate that national spatial planning is adapting to new institutional conditions and that the *governability* of complex spatial dynamics is still an issue that can be addressed by national governments. The paper conceptualizes a particular profile of the State in spatial planning through a typology of four types of *stimulation tools*. This analytical framework is used to interpret evidence from two cases with the aim to detect the specific character of national governmental action in conditions of weaker financial and authoritative power.

The Netherlands is an ideal context to examine the role of the national and sub-national governments. Although it is a decentralized unitary state, Dutch spatial planning has historically

developed as a process of persuasion and negotiation across layers of government to integrate plans at different scales. This is due to an institutional structure that combines fully autonomous local governments with significant funding from central sources, allocated according to nationally defined framework documents. Since the 1990s, the Dutch government has frequently taken a direct role in strategic planning projects and has aimed to 'get serious' about area development (Faludi and van der Walk, 1994, pag. 219). The selection of projects of national importance has become an established practice through which the Dutch government can translate policy directives into action (Priemus, 2004). However, the role of national planning has been rapidly changing in recent years raising questions on the design of instruments to achieve national priorities in a context of lower responsibilities and weaker economic capacity (Needham, 2011). The National Spatial Strategy (Nota Ruimte, Ministerie van VROM, 2006) formalized a trend already started in the 80s, towards a more proactive role of national planning agencies, linking spatial planning directly with spatial investments (Spaans, 2006). The New Spatial Planning Act (Wro) further decentralized planning competences towards provinces and regions, but it also intensified State powers within areas of national importance (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu, 2010; Needham, 2005). The newly elected government that in mid-2011 reviewed the National Vision on Infrastructure and Spatial Planning (*Structuurvisie Infrastructuur en Ruimte*, SVIR) and abolished the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Environment and Housing Affairs¹.

In this paper, the planning legacy of two projects is explored to empirically investigate the interplay between central and local governments in area development: *Schaalsprong* Almere (Upscaling Almere), a project to revitalize a new town adjacent to Amsterdam, and *Midden-Delfland*, an important green area in the heart of the heavily populated Randstad region. Both areas are important sectors of the Randstad since the population growth over the next 20 years, with Almere being still considered an area of urban expansion and Midden-Delfland green area being pressed by ongoing

urbanization. This article builds on the results of a study conducted in 2010 (Savini et al. 2010) that investigated VROM's use of stimulation tools in seven strategic projects in the Netherlands². The research consisted of 45 interviews with professionals involved in each project at both national and local level and of an analysis of policy briefs, newspaper articles and official reports. First, I will explore the key elements that currently constitute the governability of national planning objectives. A taxonomy of tools is provided in the second part to analyze the two cases. The fifth section specifically looks at the usage of each tool type.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES IN GOVERNING SPATIAL POLICIES?

There is agreement that national and regional plans must guide local agents in addressing complex planning problems (Mastop and Needham, 1997). However, even when a framework for planning is formulated at national level in a vertically integrated system, this is not guaranteed to steer local authorities in the desired direction. Lange, Mastop and Spit (1997) have already demonstrated that in some policy sectors (traffic and landscape) the performance of national frameworks is weak and national perspectives are rarely integrated in local plans. Governability problems occur whenever there is a discrepancy between the planning objectives of municipalities and those of upper levels of governments. They often derive from the discrepancy between the political and economic responsibilities of national governments to govern national, and international spatial changes as well as the ability of cities to autonomously pursue land use planning within their jurisdictions. Foucault has provided a major contribution to the conceptualization of the issue of authority between collective institutions and autonomous agents. With the concept of *governmentality*, he has investigated the State through the ensemble of institutions, procedures, reflections, calculations and tactics that allows governments to exercise power

(Foucault, 1991). Governmentality thus conceptualizes authority from an instrumental point of view, making a direct theoretical link between *instruments* and *strategies* of state power, looking at how specific techniques of government influence social networks in time. Following this line, in a context of weaker and less authoritative state power, a government will employ different tools to exercise its authority and influence urban development.

Until the 1990s, the problem of national policy implementation in decentralized systems was addressed administratively. In the American literature, a particular focus was given to the role of federal and State governments in the steering and control of policy-making through clear policy formulation, regulatory frameworks and particular ad hoc agencies (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1981; O'Toole, 1986). Since the mid-1990s, another strand of theories has conceptualized (spatial) policy implementation as a dynamic, asymmetric, interactive networking process, and argued that *enablement* instead of *control* is the key logic to understand inter-governmental relations. *The management of complex networks* is the logic of policy governability, which ultimately depends on the extent to which fragmented bargaining dynamics are managed across levels of government (Van Bueren, Klijn et al. 2003; Agranoff and McGuire, 2004). In Europe, a significant contribution to these theoretical insights has come from research on multi-level governance and European integration that focused on the different articulations of state intervention within trans-national functional systems and on its role as meta-governor in the constitution of the conditions *within* which self-organization of networks takes place (Jessop, 2002). Urban development is not the mere product of a vertical influence between layers of government whereby high-level objectives are percolated into area planning but it is an outcome of a networking process in which spatial dynamics are framed and rescaled to fit different policy levels. Specific political or technical agents becomes thus crucial to enhance the conditions of this inter-governmental negotiation over spatial strategies (Sehested, 2009) and national agents can actively align plans at different scales, coupling

concepts with financial-investments, connecting policy sectors, providing knowledge to orient planning and create platforms for inter-organizational coordination (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000).

A growing field of literature has sought to identify the tools of government used to facilitate the changing logics of government action in the practice of public policy-making (Eliadis et al. 2005; Hood, 2007). Lascoumes and LeGalès have argued that instruments constitute “*a condensed form of knowledge about social control and ways of exercising it*” (2007, p.3, see also Le Galès & Lascoumes, 2005). They underline the emergence of ‘new public policy instruments’ (idem, p.13) based on agreements (e.g. contracts); incentives; communications and information, all of which are less interventionist and entail different governmental arrangements than authoritative tools. In planning, Van der Broeck (2008) has adopted a socio-political perspective to investigate the link between social, political and cultural changes. He demonstrates that “*planning instruments embody socio-political characteristics, expressed in strategic selectivities favoring or constraining specific strategies of specific actors*” (Van der Broeck 2011, p.73).

Most of these works emphasize the importance of designing different types of instruments, tailored to the State’s weaker financial capacity. Such tools do not embody *command and control* logics but focus instead on incentives, political manipulation and information exchange to improve process management and generate organizational capacities (Salamon and Elliott, 2002). This paper investigates this specific category of tools, defined as , which become more crucial in conditions of decreased economic and fiscal power of central government. Stimulation tools are hence non-regulatory and non-authoritative in nature as they are used on selected pivotal projects, when national governments decide to intervene.

TYPES OF TOOLS: LOGICS OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

The report on which this article is based lists 20 different instruments integrated in five different spatial investment programs coordinated by the Ministry of VROM³. A taxonomy of four types of tools has been designed in order to detect the rationale of governmental actions. The model is a structuring device that allows empirical investigation of the different rationales of today's national involvement in strategic urban development and their respective outcomes on planning processes. Howlett has demonstrated that when national governments operate in situations of limited (political and economic) authority they tend to gear procedural tools to "*indirectly affect outcomes through the manipulation of policy processes*" (Howlett, 2000, p.413). Accordingly, it is expected that tools to stimulate and manipulate will be increasingly used in planning by national agencies nowadays. To define specific logics of involvement, this concept is operationalized according to two main working hypotheses.

First, decentralization arguably reduces the influence of national governments on local decisions, and gives greater autonomy to city authorities. It is hence important to measure the specific degree to which state agencies take part in planning processes to determine whether they assume responsibilities for decisions taken. In this paper, the higher the involvement, the more the government takes responsibility, invests political resources and is accountable for decisions taken (although formal responsibilities remain local). Second, reduced economic capacity arguably induces governments to operate selectively to maximize available resources. I hence distinguish between two targets: *content* or *process*. Governments operate on the *content* of plans when they aim at determining land use, or stimulating original thinking or solving problems (e.g. trajectories of infrastructure corridors, landscape design or locations for strategic projects). Conversely, they target *process* when their priority is to stimulate the overall decision making but without pushing for a specific solution (e.g. trouble-shooting, organization,

mediation between different actors). Four possible logics of governmental involvement are hence outlined.

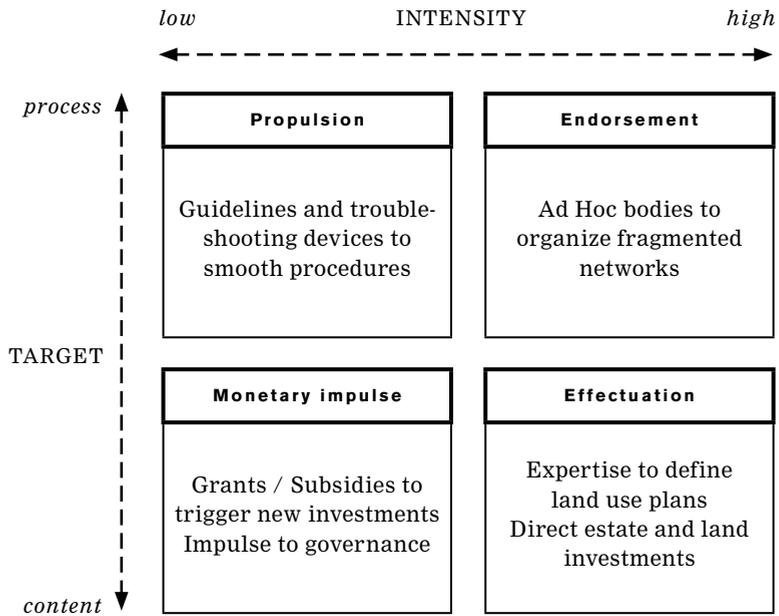


Fig. 1.1: The taxonomy of four types of tools and governmental action.

Monetary impulse: (content-low involvement): government aims at triggering decision-making on specific issues of development, without taking direct responsibilities on their implementation. National government can become involved at an early phase or when there is a need to mobilize other public or private resources. With monetary impulse, grants are very selective, issued to address chosen planning issues, and not given automatically. They are often allocated through competitively between specific projects. Monetary incentives are used to stimulate planning on aspects that are rele-

vant for national agencies (e.g. green development, spatial quality around infrastructure) but they do not involve an active engagement of state authorities in decision making (see effectuation tools).

Propulsion (process-low involvement): national planning agencies aim at stimulating decision-making but remain in the background of the process. The government invests in research and expertise without taking responsibilities on particular choices. The aim is to facilitate procedures through non-mandatory guidelines or by ‘trouble-shooting’ during the definition of a project. Governance is self-organized locally but national agencies provide background support where needed.

Endorsement (process-high involvement): the national government organizes the process to influence the power relationship in networks. It organizes institutional settings, facilitates access of key stakeholders within networks and strengthens interconnectivity between actors. By endorsing, it takes political responsibilities on the results of the process and it engages directly with local authorities. The involvement tends to continue throughout the process.

Effectuation (content-high involvement): governments stimulate implementation of projects through direct investments in real estate and land development and through a direct and active engagement on the planning and design process. National agencies can also advise on technical issues, urban design, land use planning and other solutions. The government does not substitute the role of local authorities but it mobilizes material resources and knowledge in the project. It can also organize expert think-tanks on several issues like spatial quality, architectural design, and the management of green areas. Different from monetary impulse, with these tools national planning agencies take an active part in the planning process, prompting specific land use interventions.

This typology is a relatively blank canvass, which could be enriched with further research on other contexts and the tools here defined are complementary to regulatory instruments still at governments' disposal. This paper is interested in detecting these alternative devices used in complex decision-making processes.

UP-SCALING ALMERE

The development of the Almere, a new town founded in 1976, has historically been a national project. Almere was designed to relieve the urbanization pressure in the core of the Randstad region and to avoid the development of a large urban agglomeration joining the cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague. Initially, the role of the national government was direct, extensive and oriented to both strategic planning and implementation, framed within the national strategy of 'concentrated de-concentration' and 'growth poles' (Second Report on National Spatial Planning 1966). The engagement of national agencies reflected the heyday of the Dutch planning system in the 1970s and 1980s with a complete fabric of planning in which inter-sector coordination was procedurally legalized and supported with powerful interdepartmental bodies at the level of bureaucracy, at the political level of the ministers, and also at the level of supporting advisory councils (Siraa et al. 1993).

The construction of the new town of Almere was a product of this planning machinery, based on a shared 'planning doctrine' with a strong 'culture of government' that allowed efficient coalition-building (Faludi, 1994, Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994). As a growth pole, Almere benefited from special organizational and financial resources from the State that supported municipalities that lacked sufficient administrative capacities to accommodate the planned housing growth. Contributions included covering the costs of infrastructure, special subsidies for administrative and building expenses, grants for multi-functional facilities as well as increased municipal funds (Faludi and Van der Valk, 1990). An interdepart-

mental commission was formed to manage the national policy on planned places of growth while a committee was responsible for distributing housing quotas in the northern cities. *The IJsselmeer Polder Development Authority* was charged to manage the process of land development under direct responsibility of the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management and to chair the municipal government. Land was directly transferred from the national to local authorities. In 1993, with the Fourth Report Extra (VINEX), Almere became a major target in the government's national planning for new housing expansions (i.e. *Almere Buiten*, *Almere Poort* and *Almere Stad*) financed by specific subsidies for land remediation, servicing and development; the State even guaranteed on the investment risk with venture capital and ad hoc regulatory arrangements (de Wolff, 1993). The different roles of each governmental level were fixed in advance by mean of specific contracts (VINEX *convenanten*, actualized into VINAC later). After the VINEX, governmental involvement progressively decreased and eventually seemed to stop in 2003, when the nearly finished *Integraal Ontwikkelings Plan Almere* was not supported by the new political leaders in The Hague.

Today, the city is still strategically important for the Dutch government because it is one of the few areas in the Randstad not protected by development restrictions and where the consistent national demand for housing can be met⁴. The *Schaalsprong* of Almere is a project initiated by the national government in 2005 to achieve: 1) the creation of approximately 60,000 new houses and 100,000 work spaces; 2) the development of a new 'urban milieu' to consolidate the socio-economic identity of the city; 3) the improvement of the infrastructure corridor of Almere-Amsterdam-Schipol. The city is planned to nearly double in population to reach 300,000 inhabitants by 2030. The planning challenge is to match the national government's long-term policy objectives with the development ambitions of Almere into a shared meta-strategic plan for the whole Northern Randstad. The strategic vision for the *Schaalsprong* must define housing and infrastructural development perspectives and

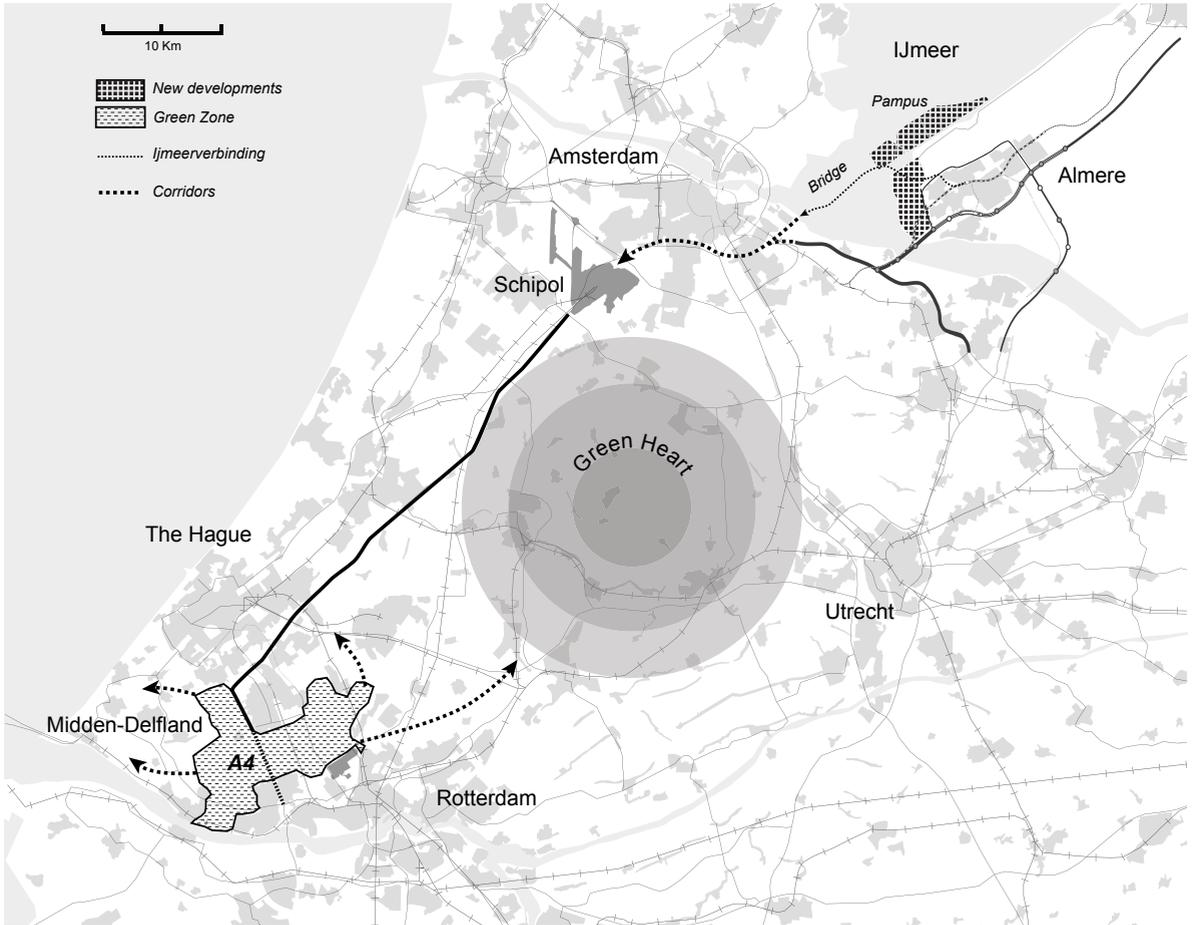


Fig. 1.2: Strategic interventions in the Schaalsprong Almere and in Midden-Delfland green zone within the Randstad Region

target spatial investments in a time of scarce resources, when spatial planning may be less of a priority than other policy fields.

Regarding the future of the city, conflicting scenarios have been produced. Some prioritize investments in the Amsterdam-Almere connections in order to strengthen the role of the new town as an urban extension of the Dutch capital, with major investments in infrastructure such as a €6bn light rail bridge linking Almere with Amsterdam (*IJmeerverbinding*). By contrast, other scenarios imply a more autonomous development of Almere and prompt for other investments on education, community-building and social services. A key element for governing this process is the capacity to frame the future of Almere as a multi-scaled spatial issue related to the urban position of the city within the Randstad region and, most importantly, within Amsterdam metropolitan area. Strategic planning in Almere is exacerbated by a discrepancy between land property assets and formal planning competences. The government is large land owner in development sites but Almere has the choice to acquire land within planned sectors of expansions. Such an inter-governmental assets is further stressed by the fact that according to the Spatial Planning Act approved in 2008 (Wro), there is a formal possibility for both provincial and national governments to overrule the local autonomy in drawing up land use plans (by issuing *inpassingsplannen*) or through specific legal instruments (i.e. *verordening* or *proactieve/reactieve aanwijzing*).

In 2006 the government decided to stimulate the planning of Almere and charged the national land development agency, the RVOB (*Rijksvastgoed- en ontwikkelingsbedrijf*) with the responsibility to manage the up-scaling. The role of the agency was to coordinate negotiations between the Province, other ministries and the City of Almere, to reach agreement over the *Noordvleugelbrief*, the first policy document for the Northern Randstad, whereby medium-term issues of the location of housing and infrastructure were addressed (Ministerie van V&W, 2006). The role of the agency was to liaise between the national general directorates of different ministries and local representatives. A similar objective was also

pursued with the production of a territorial agenda's (*Gebiedsagendas*) within the frame of the MIRT (*Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur, Ruimte en Transport*), the multi-year program of infrastructure and spatial investments updated yearly by the national government since 2007. Between 2008 and 2009 the national government stimulated the redaction of a document that could harmonize all the different national policies over the specific area of the North-West of the country (*Gebiedsagenda Noord-West Nederland*). In 2007, VROM politically restated that Almere was a key site for the implementation of the national spatial strategy and allocated approximately €84m of special grant to put underground a motorway crossing the inner city and to build a new school complex. In the same year, the *Schaalsprong* Almere was selected among 33 projects of the *Randstad Urgent* programme – a program defined by the Ministry of Infrastructures and Waterways (V&W) addressing priority projects in the region. A 'government duo' was created by the Minister of VROM and the alderman with the responsibility to formulate an agreement before 2010 on development priorities. An 'ambassador' was appointed to manage the communication process between the two politicians. These operations arose from the need to increase connectivity between political representatives to speed up decision-making on key projects. National and local governments have today reached a declaration of intent on joint priorities, the promotion of the realization of a municipal structure plan towards 2030 and a more precise financial plan. These agreements gave also precise procedural indication for the next steps, binding them to the allocation of other special grants in order to induce Almere to follow them. The recently published *RAAM-Brief* (National decision on Amsterdam-Almere and Markemeer, Ministerie van V&W, 2010) today operationalizes national and local policy objectives in the area and it quantifies a preliminary budget plan towards 2030.

MIDDEN-DELFLAND GREEN ZONE

Midden-Delfland is a zone that has attracted national attention since the 1960s. The area is a semi-rural space of approximately 6,600 ha, squeezed between the two larger agglomerations of Rotterdam and The Hague. Currently it hosts approximately 17,000 inhabitants in an urban system of scattered villages and small-sized cities. Parts of these were grouped in 2005 in the jurisdiction of Midden-Delfland which at present covers around 70% of the whole area. Since 1958, state authorities have taken a prominent role in governing the area, establishing specific directives and financial measures to purchase undeveloped land and manage agriculture and nature between The Hague and Rotterdam. In the 1950s the status of 'buffer zone' restricted new developments besides providing directives on uses of the landscape while allocating a subsidy for purchasing land fragments. From 1977 until 2010, a special regulation (*Reconstructie Wet Midden-Delfland*) was put in place to establish a state-led planning regime to directly control spatial developments (Van Rij, 2008). With this act, a commission composed of local, national and civic stakeholders (*Land Consolidation Committee*) became the responsible body to approve any new development and to define the areas of compulsory purchase to be used as natural heritage. Land management was coordinated by a special agency (*Dienst Landelijk Gebied*) under the Ministry of Nature, Agriculture and Nature (LNV). Van Rij and Korthals Altes (2008) have characterized this period as a 'slow planning approach', which was based on a governmental vision for rural planning, which has been major component of national policies in the past (*Nota Landelijke Gebieden*). The State enforced highly restrictive regulations (Van Schendelen, 1997) and provided the financial and organizational resources to directly manage the distribution of agriculture and nature within Midden-Delfland.

Today, Midden-Delfland's buffer-zone status is to be renegotiated with local authorities and the special regulation is set to expire. The national government is concerned about the urbanization pressure

on the southern Randstad, as approximately 280,000 houses need to be built in the areas of Rotterdam and The Hague. Midden-Delfland, with its major agriculture industry, sits in between two of the major agricultural areas of Holland (Westland-Oostland) and on the trajectory of Rotterdam-The Hague railway and A4 highway. The combined management of these issues is apparently a win-lose situation between urbanization and green-preservation. The governability problem lies in the need to manage negotiations between different national department (i.e. infrastructure, nature and housing) and the major cities to produce a shared strategic framework of urban-rural development.

In 2007, the *Randstad Urgent* program selected Midden-Delfland as a priority project. This allowed the alderman and the Minister of LNV to sign a declaration of intent in 2007⁵ to stimulate inter-municipal cooperation over the whole area. This direct link between local and national levels of government was motivated by the need to manage the complex, regional-wide network involved in the project and to better define which key players would be accountable in negotiations. An ambassador was also appointed to assist the aldermen in communicating with civil society representatives and the ministry. Aware of this national attention, Midden-Delfland took a leadership role to activate a dialogue between cities and province of South Holland on the opportunities of inter-municipal cooperation. The constitution of a governance platform representing 16 municipalities, including Rotterdam, The Hague and the Rotterdam city region has been the first tangible result of this stimulation. The *Hof van Delfland* now works as an informal arena in which local stakeholders can discuss broad strategic ideas on the relationship between urban and rural developments and the specific function of recreational areas together with the larger municipalities⁶. As in the North-West of the country, these interaction were supported by a national coordinate on long term objectives for the South Randstad region, stated in the MIRT territorial agenda in 2009 (*Gebiedsagenda Zuidvleugel/ Zuid-Holland*, 2009).

Financial and technical support was allocated in 2008 to stimulate reflections on rural-urban interventions. National agencies technically assisted local project leaders in designing landscape quality, locating recreational activities and plan the reuse of historical heritage to increase real estate values. Small grants (totaling €35m from the BIRK- *Besluit Investeren Ruimtelijke Kwaliteit* - and Nota Ruimte Budget programs) supported this framing process: these grants, targeted at smaller municipalities, have gone towards developing green corridors in the west and center of the Randstad on condition that local municipalities contribute a proportional amount. The funds do not cover the whole costs of the operations and are not addressed to the acquisition of specific land assets. Instead they are used to encourage small municipalities to develop green corridors, an ambition which cannot be realized without inter-municipal cooperation.

STIMULATING NEGOTIATIONS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

The governability of the spatial dynamics in Almere and Midden-Delfland depends on the capacity to strategically combine spatial dynamics which surpass city boundaries. This is a task which is unachievable by local authorities alone; yet, neither can it be achieved by the national authority where land use planning is a local responsibility. In the past, the problem of governability was addressed by the direct engagement of national planning agencies which, through extensive financial measures and consistent organizational and technical investments, have steered decision making, selected growth poles and directly managed agricultural land. With less spending capacity and a weakened governmental infrastructure, national planning agencies now play a less extensive, more specialized role in area development, within a less hierarchical arrangement of intergovernmental relationships. In both projects, the State became one stakeholder within a multi-step decision-making process, although it makes use of its position to manipulate, enable

and stimulate local choices in line with its own policy objectives. The national government's role shifted from a position of authority to that of enablement, establishing a new influence in the metagovernance of urban planning processes (Sørensen, 2002). Yet, this role is not uniform, but is performed in different ways according to the specific target and intensity of involvement:

a) Endorsement: in both cases the national government endorsed the project, through specific governmental bodies which joined lower and higher tiers of government (the so called 'governmental duos'). These are loosely defined political partnerships through which national and local authorities identify medium term priorities and distinguish responsibilities. In Almere, this was an attempt to structure political accountability and manipulate inter-organizational connectivity in a project with a strong metropolitan character. In Midden-Delfland, instead, Randstad Urgent helped to raise the profile of the project and overcome impasses in negotiations. As Midden-Delfland's alderman stated, "*the Randstad Urgent program focused on only two of the several governmental layers involved so to make a 'cross section' across the others*". This reportedly allowed the project to 'jump scales' and trigger systematic strategic thinking over the whole sector. Endorsement is in both cases a tactic to raise the sense of urgency of projects, to incite local actors in achieving agreements. However, it is not yet clear whether endorsement has enhanced the quality of the decisions taken.

b) Effectuation: in Almere, the government also made use of *effectuation tools*; by using these devices it directly got involved in formulating land use choices coherent with its policy framework. Effectuation tools targeted a specific area in Almere and aimed at operationalizing strategic choices for housing extensions. The government became a stakeholder in the process but it adopted a lighter approach to advance its claims into local land use planning. To do this, it employed a specific agency, the RVOB, to manage land assets and have a direct position in the process. This provided

a platform to match local and national demands within the Amsterdam metropolitan area. The RVOB manipulated a process full of ambiguity and uncertainty, with a high risk of stalemate, by focusing operational debate on concrete land use issues about developments in the west of the city. In Almere, the RVOB became active already at the strategic phase to mediate between officials over land use planning issues⁸. The use of the MIRT territorial agendas in both cases was driven by a similar intention as these documents has been a middle step into a long strategic planning process to detect possible conflicts between existent national and local investments.

c) Monetary impulse: in the past, national government made extensive use of grants, allocated automatically to selected locations to cover overall extra costs. Today, grants impact the networking driving spatial policy framing. They are based on project proposals developed by local authorities and they are not automatically allocated. In Midden-Delfland, subsidies were issued to raise awareness and promote self-designed solutions for green corridors. In Almere, allowances permitted government agencies to enlarge the network of decision makers and put pivotal issues on the table (e.g. education and quality of space) so as to re-orientate the framing of Almere. Funding is thus used to support broad topics, considered crucial to national spatial perspectives, even though the amount might not cover the full costs. Grants are today used to trigger alternative framing processes during the process.

d) Propulsion: national government reportedly stimulates decision-making being an 'outsider'. In the projects investigated, the government attempts to facilitate procedures without employing significant political or financial resources. The influence of these tools is variegated and depends on political conditions. Political relationships between national and local can give momentum to strategic planning⁹ in a better way than general guidelines provided by national programs, that are perceived as old-fashioned forms of

standardization of decision-making processes¹⁰. Yet, despite its 'soft' character, propulsion keeps political pressure on projects considered important at national level to facilitate planning. In Midden-Delfland, inter-municipal cooperation built upon the political support of national authorities. According to the coordinator of *Hof van Delfland*, "*the ministry has a direct influence on our governance network, but it is about recognition rather than institutional control. The group is kept together as it is sure to generate legitimate and implementable decisions*"¹¹.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper challenged the general expectation that national spatial planning has less power of influence on local urban development in conditions of decentralized and neo-liberalized planning systems. It argued that the governability of spatial dynamics is still an issue for governments at national, state, country or even regional level. I empirically looked at Dutch government behavior in strategic spatial interventions to demonstrate that even though competences are fully decentralized, central government has not completely withdrawn from spatial planning in the Netherlands. Instead, it concentrates its efforts on specific aspects of the planning process, following a 'lighter' pattern of intervention than in the past. In the Netherlands this is an ongoing pattern of institutional change: fiscal austerity curtails the capacity of the State to subsidize and finance spatial interventions. The current draft framework appears of a different nature, with a prominent focus on sectors of national interest and specific projects instead of institutionalizing broad spatial concepts; the recent Draft National Spatial Vision (SVIR) has indeed drastically downsized the relevance of the Randstad concept, at the core of the Dutch planning doctrine for the last 50 years. Lastly, the merger between spatial planning and infrastructure ministries has given an institutional structure to this trend, placing planning in a less unitary and less prominent position within national politics.

It is hence important to investigate practices of government involvement that can be geared to these new institutional conditions. In this paper four types of *stimulation tools* have been conceptualized as being used to enable strategic planning in local networks without imposing regulations. The outcomes of stimulation vary according to the degree to which national planning agencies get involved in the process and on the specific target they choose: *a) endorsement*: government decides to stimulate decision-making by reorganizing governance networks with the intent to clarify responsibilities, increase accountability and generate leadership; *b) effectuation*: governments get more directly involved in the process to foster their particular stakes so to reduce the mismatch between local and national priorities on specific interventions; *c) Monetary impulse*: the state supports spatial interventions through monetary allowances, which bring fruits when they are used to reframe planning problems; *d) propulsion*: government choose to work 'behind the scenes' to give momentum to specific projects, although this require political legitimacy of self-organized practices within national political arenas.

This new lighter profile of national spatial planning is emergent rather than completed. It requires a stronger policy focus on processes of urbanization and ruralisation to better maximize scarce resources. It also needs more institutional innovation and more interconnectivity, combining local strategic intervention with international platforms, such as European programmes. National government could facilitate local access to international institutions, to enable knowledge exchange, policy transfer and learning. The relationship with the private sector is also critical: national government involvement still seems focused on public arenas, leaving the design and management of public-private partnerships to local authorities. This can be a weak point for smaller municipalities with less capacity to bargain with large investors. Furthermore, under conditions of weak implementation capacity, national agencies can make best use of their position to favor connectivity among national key projects and to reframe and unlock stalemates in local planning.

NOTES

- 1) In November 2010 VROM, the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Environment and Housing Affairs, was merged with the Ministry of Infrastructures, Public Works and Water Management to form the Ministry of Infrastructures and Environment. At the time of writing debates were afoot about the effective functions of national spatial planning within this new institutional form.
- 2) The cases studied are: Kop van Zuid Rotterdam, Sphinx Ceramique Maastricht, Zuidas Amsterdam, Groot Mijdrecht Noord, Midden-Delfland, Spoor tunnel Delft, Schaalsprong Almere.
- 3) For the complete list see Savini et al. (2010, pag. 25). The first and second generation of key projects, the BIRK budget for spatial quality, the Nota Ruimte Budget grants and the Randstad Urgent program.
- 4) The National Spatial Strategy (Nota Ruimte) estimates total housing demand as approximately 400,000 dwellings to be met between 2010 and 2030. At least 40% of the total demand should be catered for in existing urban areas.
- 5) Ministerie of Verkeer and Waterstaat, Afspraken Randstadurgent 2007, p. 11.
- 6) A first draft document on priorities of interventions for the green zone was published at the end of 2010. Hof van Delfland 2025, Ruimtelijke Visie, Versie 0.5, 28 September 2010.
- 7) Interview with Alderman Midden-Delfland 15 May 2010.
- 8) Interview with Almere project leader at RVOB, 8 June 2010
- 9) Idem
- 10) Idem
- 11) Interview with Hof van Delfland coordinator at the Province of Zuid Holland, 26 March 2010

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2.

WHO MAKES THE (NEW) METROPOLIS?

CROSS-BORDER COALITION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN PARIS METROPOLIS

ABSTRACT

In fragmented agglomerations, urban development in peripheral areas tends to express the hegemony of the core city over its suburbs. Nevertheless, this paper demonstrates that despite deep-rooted political conflicts, inter-municipal cooperation can still take place in the context of cross-border development. I argue that cross-border development has a political and economic logic that is driven by a different power configuration in the metropolis: cross-border coalitions. These coalitions emerge when the redevelopment of areas around municipal borders provides an opportunity for political interests to strengthen their electoral alliances and for business interests to exploit possibilities of growth. This paper investigates urban development in Paris North East, an area on the periphery of Paris that crosses municipal boundaries. It examines how a coalition of public and private actors is cooperating based on the shared benefits they can derive from developments in this area. The case study captures the complex political and economic dynamics driving inter-municipal cooperation by examining the role of local political coalitions, their link with planning agencies and the behavior of emergent metropolitan entrepreneurs.



View of Paris Nord-Est, Paris, France, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

Metropolitan governance is a major issue for planners. This metropolitan scale has been explained as the outcome of the rescaling of the state driven by capital restructuring within a context of global inter-urban competition (cf. Brenner, 2003). A great deal of research has been done on the conflictive character of metropolitan governance, which poses barriers to political reform and makes it difficult to achieve socio-economic parity between competing municipalities within a city area (cf. Helae, 2007; Kantor, 2008; Katz, 2000; Savitch & Vogel, 2009). Since the 1990s, when early attempts at metropolitan consolidation failed, new experiments in meso-level governance have proliferated. These are based on different models of inter-municipal cooperation, ranging from specialized structures of service provision to fluid platforms of meso-level planning (Salet et al. 2003; Stephens & Wikstrom, 2000). The success of these experiments seems to depend on how the power struggle between central cities and their urban fringes is managed. A finely balanced internal power equilibrium is needed to create the political conditions for common policies (Lefèvre 1998; Lefèvre 2002). Importantly, this is not simply a matter of institutional reform. Inter-municipal competition in spatial planning ultimately relates to the authority of cities to govern land use within their jurisdiction. Conflict emerges when deciding *what* functions to place in which land, how to redistribute the benefits of high-profile activities and how to distribute the cost of less profitable developments.

In the last 30 years, large-scale development has become the main expression of urban change. Local governments have instigated multiple land use transformations to attract businesses and locate new housing developments. Some prominent researchers interpret this approach, oriented to development projects, as an expression of the neo-liberalization of planning systems. Large projects are seen as vehicles for market forces to generate urban growth and bypass public accountability (cf. Swingedouw et al, 2002). Other researchers maintain that the spatial, social and political outcomes

of large scale development depends on the power configurations driving it, on the specific role of governments and on how these power configurations are framed by stakeholders (Fainstein, 2008; Gualini and Majoor, 2007; Salet, 2008). Under conditions of political, fiscal and economic disparity, urban development projects are vehicles by which core cities may dominate weaker municipalities. Urban development often happens in a context of deep-rooted power asymmetries between core cities and their surrounding areas. Municipalities on the city fringe often view projects proposed by the core city for peripheral areas with suspicion, fearing that unwanted functions are being pushed out of core cities' borders. Yet, this outcome is not pre-given today, since it derives from an urban pattern based on the spatial and political domination of central cities and on the (economic) dependency of peripheries. Core cities are not the motor of urban growth anymore: agglomerations are becoming more and more polycentric with the consequent rebalance of inter-municipal power relationship. Projects can therefore become an expression of cooperative practices between municipalities, even in conditions of administrative fragmentation, where 'win-win' spatial solutions can be agreed to address emerging socio-economic interdependencies between core cities and their urban belts. The extent to which cooperation occurs ultimately depends on the specific geo-political landscape within which development is conceived and pursued.

In this paper I investigate why cross-border urban development occurs in urban contexts where institutional, political and economic fragmentation makes it unlikely. My argument is that the shift from inter-municipal competition to cooperation is determined by the emergence of new power constellations within agglomerations; an example of this shift is seen in the emergence of cross-border coalitions in which political, electoral and economic rationales are combined. These multi-actor coalitions pursue inter-municipal cooperation to strengthen their power in a geo-political context characterized by administrative and economic fragmentation. I will demonstrate that coalitions emerge when the

redevelopment of areas around municipal borders presents an opportunity for political interests to break with their past urban agendas and to strengthen party alliances, by teaming up with powerful land developers to secure investment and exploit new opportunities for growth. The paper studies an urban development project in the North East sector of Paris, to better grasp the characteristics of cross-border coalitions. To conclude, I will discuss how this coalition-building process takes place within a context of inter-governmental conflict over metropolitan governance.

Paris agglomeration provides an ideal case to analyze cross-border development. The French capital suffers a clear discrepancy between its urban and socio-economic dynamics, largely overtaking the small jurisdiction of Paris municipality, and its institutional asset, which is administratively fragmented and based on the economic and political dominance of the central city. Nonetheless, Paris has already undertaken several interesting experiments in inter-municipal cooperation. The Grand Pari(s) competition sponsored by President Nicolas Sarkozy and the recent experiment of Paris Métropole promoted by Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë have attracted worldwide media attention. Yet, these initiatives must be tested against the practice of urban transformation to understand how they might show significant shifts for spatial policies. This paper takes the large-scale development of 'Paris Nord Est' (PNE), a project which covers a strategic sector of north-eastern Paris, as a case to explore the micro-political dynamics driving experiments in meso-level planning. The goal of the 200 hectare PNE project is to redevelop underused land and create a new polarity within the agglomeration. Empirical data presented in this paper was collected between 2009 and 2011. Included are 20 interviews with Paris technical departments and land developers; a thorough analysis of policy briefs, council deliberations and newspaper articles.

The first section of this paper will discuss the interdependency of political and economic logics in cross-border development and outline the main empirical statements. In the second part I define the concept of cross-border coalitions and outline key features.

The third and fourth parts respectively introduce the recent inter-municipal dynamics in central part of Paris agglomeration and give a detailed look at the particular case of PNE. The latter section will treat separately the different dimensions and actors of cross-border coalitions in Paris.

UNEXPECTED COOPERATION? THE POLITICAL-ECONOMIC LOGIC OF CROSS-BORDER DEVELOPMENT

It is widely believed that inter-municipal cooperation is unlikely within cities that are administratively, fiscally and economically fragmented, especially where core cities have a strong influence on regional and even national decision-making arenas. The expectation is that cities would only pursue economic and social well-being within their jurisdictions and would engage in cross-border development only if that brought concrete economic, fiscal, urban or electoral advantages to their territories. Neo-Marxist and structuralist theorists are the foremost proponents of this argument. They argue that competition is fundamental to urban change. City politics is driven by capital accumulation strategies; local executives seek opportunities to increase the value, and fiscal revenue, of the land within their territories, delineating a scenario in which *“local jurisdictions frequently divide rather than unify the urban region unless ruling-class alliances are forged”* (Harvey, 1985, p.153). Inter-municipal cooperation could presumably only occur if driven by pro-growth coalitions, with market actors using planning as a vehicle to maximise land values (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Harding, 1995, Purcell, 2001; Cox and Jonas, 1993).

Although these accounts explain why cooperation is often an unlikely dynamic, some experiments of meso-level planning and cross-border development cannot be simply justified as growth strategies. Rather, the objectives are often fiscal redistribution, social equalization and spatial inter-connectivity. Moreover, economic explanations of urban change risk underestimating the

importance of political dynamics in fostering cross-border development. City politics can be an explanatory variable of the divergence of urban agendas between cities (Mollenkopf, 1992). According to Swanstrom (1988), urban development must be explained by looking at the particular combination of different logics of action. Economic logic dictates that urban development must increase the economic output of the city, maximizing investments by rationally targeting profitable areas for land use. By contrast, political logic explains how urban development can be a tool to strengthen political coalitions and electoral bases, development choices having a symbolic or ideological motivation. A critical explanation of cross-border development must take into account the manner in which these logics are combined in development agendas. According to Stone and Whelan (2011) this is possible by focusing on the agents of urban development, defined as *intermediate structures* of collective action. These structures identify the manner in which collective action is organized within cities: the wider power configurations that determine local sectoral policies and identify modes of governance. These structures translate macro-processes of capital restructuring and state rescaling (widely studied by political economists) into particular responses of cities to those exogenous in terms of urban and spatial policies. In the context of this paper, these are the particular agents, or coalitions that drive urban agendas and that explain the political and economic logics of cross-border urban development.

In spatial planning, it is generally argued that the capacity to develop new concepts, policies and actions depends on one key thing: the capacity to mobilize different actors and resources as well as organize their collective action. Strategic planning is a coalition-building process in which institutional and spatial boundaries are overcome and institutional capacity is generated (Healey, 2006). This process ultimately depends on the ability to reshape power imbalances and define elaborate planning solutions that benefit all actors. Coalition-building, however, does not simply cover the design of institutional settings or new regulatory frameworks to control

or orient decision making. Instead it takes place in a wider political framework, of which planning is only one component. Metropolitan governance entails political divisions, and spatial planning is one component of political cleavages on broad societal perspectives and on concepts like democracy, citizenship and social justice (Keil, 2000; Allen & Cochrane, 2007). Research on the emergence of city regions has understated this political genesis of metropolises: the emergence of metropolises should be conceptualized as a process of political alliance-formation taking place in specific fiscal, electoral and regulatory arrangements (Ward and Jonas 2004). Inter-municipal cooperation is hence a political construct, often built upon a conflict about the beliefs and ideologies of juxtaposed (partisan) factions. It reflects the position of powerful groups on issues such as fiscal equality, democratic accountability, and civic participation. To detect the drivers of metropolitan governance, the focus should therefore be on 'coalitions for change' (Harding, et al, 2006: 37) and on the manner in which they operate within politically divided landscapes; it must be investigated *for whom* new territorialities (i.e. metropolises) are necessary (Jonas and Ward, 2007).

Urban regime theory provides a model to explain urban development as an expression of certain power configurations (Phelps and Wood, 2011). It can help to fix the conceptual dimensions for an empirical analysis of the political and economic rationale of emerging urban agendas. Urban regimes are an enduring form of power, defined as governing coalitions that have institutional capacity to foster urban agendas (Stone, 1989, 1993; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). They are based on the inter-dependency of public and private forces; on business, political and local communities that develop a pattern of cooperation to achieve urban agendas and generate governing capacity by preemptive power. This paper does not test regime theory, but it retrieves three of its main empirical statements to explain cross-border development: a) that urban development is an expression of a (stable) coalition of heterogenic actors that combines both public and private logics of actions: electoral/partisan and profit-seeking strategies are interdependent in long-term urban

policymaking (Collinge & Hall, 1997; Harding, 1997, Elkin, 1985); b) that the achievement of urban development depends on the capacity to mobilize and reorganize ('power to') conflicting interests into cohesive coalitions in order to legitimize and enforce broad urban agendas (Greasley & Stoker; 2008; Orr & Stoker, 1994; Borraz & John, 2004); c) that governing coalitions cover different policy sectors: they are structures that link tangible interventions (e.g. area development) with broader urban agendas (Stoker 1995; Dowding et al, 1999). The utility of these assertions lies in their capacity to conceptualize emerging cross-border development as the expression of a coalition-building dynamic placed in context (Hamilton, 2004). This process covers different policy sectors; it unwinds in conflict management through leadership and incentives and it is ultimately driven by the purpose of consolidation of close relationships between key powerful actors to control long-term urban agendas.

CROSS-BORDER COALITIONS: THE BORDER AS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE

I argue that in order to explain the emergence of cross-border urban development, research must investigate *whether* and *how* it is driven by new coalitions aiming to develop zones on the border of jurisdictions. Three main assumptions support this argument. Firstly, it is assumed that inter-municipal cooperation in urban development is driven the interdependency of political objectives with those of business elites. This interdependency is visible in areas that are particularly valuable to politicians for electoral purposes and valuable to business groups for the development of the land. In cross-border development, synergies between conflicting interests can emerge to address development where it is socially, economically and institutionally challenging. Secondly, it is assumed that cross-border development requires a capacity to organize interests and define win-win solutions between core cities and surrounding municipalities. These win-win solutions are often a matter of political

negotiations and bargaining rather than technical evaluations. With economically dynamic belts, political negotiations are the conditions to maximize mutual (economic and social) gains from urban developments that might cross jurisdictional borders. In contexts of fiscal and administrative fragmentation, formal planning tools rarely enable cross-border development. The role of politics and leadership becomes crucial to overturn power configurations based on center-periphery domination ('power over') to center-periphery cooperation ('power to'). Thirdly, it is assumed that as coalitions operate on a political level, cross-border projects are part of an urban agenda that addresses broad issues such as social policies, transport development and fiscal reform. Cross-border development is framed within a wider perspective (and discourse) of social, economic and urban development of the whole agglomeration.

I define cross-border coalitions as *a combination of powerful public and business interests that pursues the redevelopment of border areas as a means to achieve electoral and economic strategies*. The specific character of these collective agents is in their spatial focus, which I call *border areas* or *urban peripheries*. Cross-border coalitions are constituted around a particular rhetoric of the 'periphery': they foster a political and epistemological shift in the way formerly neglected areas are conceived in urban policymaking. A new conceptualization of these spaces implies new planning concepts, new spatial design and new ways to interpret these places. The border becomes the policy object upon which urban agendas are built. Today, border areas have been rethought of as the new core of large agglomerations but their development suffers from the fact that planning regulations do not provide with formal tools to achieve true cross-border spatial policies.

This epistemological shift follows a new ontology of the border (Soja, 2005) based on a centrality that formerly peripheral areas have gained. Today's borders are obsolete constructs, as traditional municipal, regional and even national perimeters do not fit the 'dis-contained' socio-economic dynamics of post-metropolises (Soja, 2000). Following Paasi, borders are a 'symbolic and institu-

tional expression (and media) of territoriality' (2005:22); they entail legal, cultural, social and even emotional constructs that enforce specific conceptions of sovereignty. However, the border becomes a policy issue when a gap occurs between emerging territorialities and consolidated governmental perimeters (as discussed by transnational border studies, Anderson et al, 2002). Paradoxically, today's metropolises are governed through jurisdictional divisions (mostly) tailored on 19th century urban patterns and statehood. Cross-border coalitions' objective is the manipulation of the traditional political rhetoric of border areas which has traditionally defined borders as limits, boundaries or edges of cities, and that has legitimated spatial policies targeting peripheries as residual spaces, where unwanted functions could be placed.

Local government officials, large private investors and fringe municipalities are key players in cross-border coalitions. Within peripheral neighborhoods of core cities sectoral policies of public transport inter-modality, spatial quality, urban regeneration and service improvement are framed within and shaped by processes of political power consolidation. Local executives seek to strengthen their political ties with neighboring jurisdictions by crossing those boundaries in order to create the institutional conditions to govern cross-border spatial interdependencies. Equally, private developers are a necessary component of these coalitions. Cross-border projects are opportunities to increase land values within peripheral areas. Inter-municipal planning reduces the investment risks when these zones are rethought of as potential metropolitan cores. None of these groups alone has the capacity to govern and implement development in these areas. Local politicians and party officials have the power to define policy objectives, legitimize policy actions and ultimately approve land use plans according to which building rights are issued. However, they often do not have the capital to trigger innovative development, as land values must be leveraged and initial structural costs are significant. The capacity to plan border areas depends on the extent to which the political and economic relationship between core cities and their neighbor

municipalities is redefined to address the existent spatial and socio-economic continuities across their jurisdictions. Fringe municipalities, often perceived as weaker subjects in metropolitan planning, gained today significant bargaining power in policy making, becoming attractive targets for private and public investments (e.g. national infrastructures). For this reason, cross-border coalitions stem from the political recognition of the socio-spatial *interdependency* between core cities and neighboring jurisdictions and they express the rejuvenated political, technical and economic influence that the fringe has gained in governing urban development.

It is worth asking whether there are some particular institutional conditions that favor the formation of cross-border coalitions. The explanatory capacity of regime theory has been debated and even the concept of 'regime' is often used as a conceptual model for urban political processes to define types of local governance (Dowding, 2001). Its applicability in the European context has been a matter of discussion in so far as a more active redistributive role of the central state presumably makes local politics less dependent on local business elites (Harding, 1997). This paper, studying the drivers of inter-municipal cooperation in Paris Nord Est, takes an *exploratory* approach. It looks at the existence of a coalition in Paris Nord Est to firstly determine whether cross-border development is actually an expression of a city-wide urban agenda or simply an isolated case of innovative planning.

A closer look at the French institutional context justifies the focus on coalitions and provides some suggestions on factors that might explain their origins. Started in the eighties, the decentralization reform in France has made local actors (local groups, business elites and public officials) increasingly dominant in urban policy-making and more autonomous from central politics (Pinson, 2010; Nicholls, 2005). Urban development is today permeated by political and ideological beliefs as local executives are active entrepreneurs in fostering projects through specific public-led development agencies. In the last 20 years, many French and European cities have fostered entrepreneurial urban agendas and developed regime types

of politics, with a direct influence of business elites, especially in a context of high inter-institutional conflict (Harvey, 1989; Savitch and Kantor, 2002; Thornley et al, 2005, Cole&John, 1998, Dormois, 2008). In Paris, these agendas have caused an *embourgeoisement* of the city and a polarized socio-economic landscape that sets the enriched center against its periphery, the poorer eastern suburbs against the richer western ones (Préteceille, 2007). Furthermore, France has witnessed the emergence of a planning approach centered on 'projects' as instruments to govern cities (Pinson, 2009). Collective action takes place through contractual agreements on spatially defined areas between different levels of governmental authorities and other types of powerful actors (such as banks). Yet, these projects can provoke conflictive inter-governmental relationships, as national government aims to retain control over key sectors of national importance. In Paris, the emergence of new local coalitions must therefore be understood within its particular context. It is a context characterized by inter-governmental symmetries between local and central governmental layers; a practice of governance based on timely coalition-building for targeted interventions and spatial investments and on inter-governmental conflict; a socially polarized geo-political context; amid a backdrop of past pro-enterprise policies that have produced power asymmetries within the agglomeration.

FROM CONFLICT TO INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION IN PARIS

Inter-municipal competition within Paris finds its origin in the decentralization reform that took place in the 1980s, when pivotal competences in spatial planning, housing and economic policy were transferred to local authorities¹. Having been granted the power to define their own land use plans and structural visions, local municipalities now have autonomy to pursue and implement land development. One tool on which they rely is known as Common

Development Zone, (*zone d'aménagement concerté* - ZAC) an instrument which allows local government to develop their own areas but it cannot cross jurisdictions. With this tool, a municipal council can define zones of development and appoint an agency that manage the land development. This will usually be a public private partnership between the city and financial institutions (most often the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, a large public financing body). This institutional architecture makes local planning a task directly led by local executives; local politicians occupy chair positions within the public private partnership, allowing a direct link between policy objectives and implementation. Indeed, in Paris the municipality often owns the majority of shares in the partnership.

There are several institutional cogs in Paris's agglomeration planning wheel. The Public Bodies for Inter-municipal Cooperation (EPCIs), created across France 1999, provide a strategic direction. Run by chief politicians from the communes, EPCIs represent groups of municipalities that share their main fiscal revenues and some planning competences. Aiming to achieve better policies with increased strategic capacity, EPCIs are a key force behind local planning within Paris, especially in the development of the city's suburban belt. For its part, the region is one of the main planning institutions that, since 1995, autonomously define the Schéma Directeur de la Région Ile-de-France (SDRIF), a regional structural plan legally binding for municipalities. Lastly, the national government operates through its main planning agency (DATAR) and it can use specific legal tools that allow it to operate directly in strategic territories (through Operations of National Interest and the creation of a *Public Planning Agency – Établissement Public d'Aménagement*). It is noteworthy that the implementation of spatial policies within this decentralized planning system takes place by means of policy devices based on intergovernmental contracts. For example, in a contract between the state and a region the contract will define key objectives, spatial priorities and financial plans for implementation.

Within this system, mayors and chief executives are powerful figures who drive political change, as institutional innovation is often triggered by inter-governmental competition (Pinson; 2010; Pinson & Le Galès, 2005). This increased autonomy of local politics has made local municipalities reluctant to cooperate with each other as they have more opportunity to differentiate their spatial-economic policies and compete with each other. Problematically, however, territorial fragmentation and competition often makes it impossible to tackle socio-economic polarization (Nicholls, 2005). In Paris, the core city is politically and economically independent to foster its self-defined development policies; there are no legal rules formally promoting practices of cross-border development.

Inter-municipal spatial planning in Paris's densely built-up zone has traditionally followed a Paris-oriented approach, built upon a strong role of the national government and of the core city on the peripheries. Indeed, until the 1980s, the DATAR acted as the major planning agent of the agglomeration. The New Town policy activated in the 1960s, the regeneration program *Banlieue 89* and the most recent Operations of National Interest are well-known examples of nation state influence on the greater Paris area. While Paris has typically shown some interest in developing areas within the suburban belt, (*banlieue*) it has never concretized this effort into innovative governance. Most of the Parisian projects in the *banlieue* were interventions led by partnerships between Paris, the state and the region to develop land properties owned by the capital city. These operations were not embedded in any wider strategy and were mostly justified by the state-led, regional structural plan.

Even today, Paris region is affected by a 'project paralysis' (Roux, 2008:89). The significant dynamism in terms of urban transformations within the densely built-up zone is not encapsulated within any strategic vision of development, and the only inter-municipal bodies are *ad hoc* agencies of service provision (i.e. different inter-municipal or regional transportation agencies as the STIF and RATP). The significantly over-institutionalized French inter-governmental system makes it harder to execute policies that

change consolidated power structures (Estebe and Le Galès; 2003; Mabileau, 1991). There are multiple dimensions of division that structurally hinder inter-municipal planning in the Paris region: first, there is a political divide between the state and the region. The Regional Structural Plan (SDRIF) defined in 2008 is not yet enforced by national law and therefore is ineffective legally². This is due to a political division, still evident in the last regional elections in 2010, between the current Socialist president of the region (Jean-Paul Huchon) and President Sarkozy, whose conservative UMP party has been in power nationally since 1998. The regional-national conflict concerns the extent to which economic priorities (and related infrastructural solutions) are integrated in the document. Secondly, today the Paris region is socially and politically divided between the richer municipalities of the West and the poorer communities of the East of the region. Right wing governments represent most of the wealthier areas (three departments) while left wing majorities manage five departments including Paris. This political divide unfortunately has hindered discussions on the redistribution of wealth within the metropolis. The conflicts between the 'red belt' and the powerful right wing majorities in Paris council have historically jeopardized any attempts to structure cross-border cooperation (Fourcaut & Flonneau 2007). The capital city was (and still is) perceived by adjacent communes as the place where decisions over the whole region – and the whole country – are taken³ (Ronai, 2004).

Since 2001, metropolitan governance in Paris has become a national and local agenda item. The current geopolitical landscape in the region sees a left wing block of regional and Parisian executives (for the first time both have Socialist majorities) surrounded by 'red belt' municipalities of communist origins against a national right wing government. This has made metropolitan consolidation and governance highly politicized – creating an environment around which the power struggle between local and national executives is amplified (Burgel, 2008).

For its part, the national government undertook a top-down initiative of strategic planning in the capital region, nominating

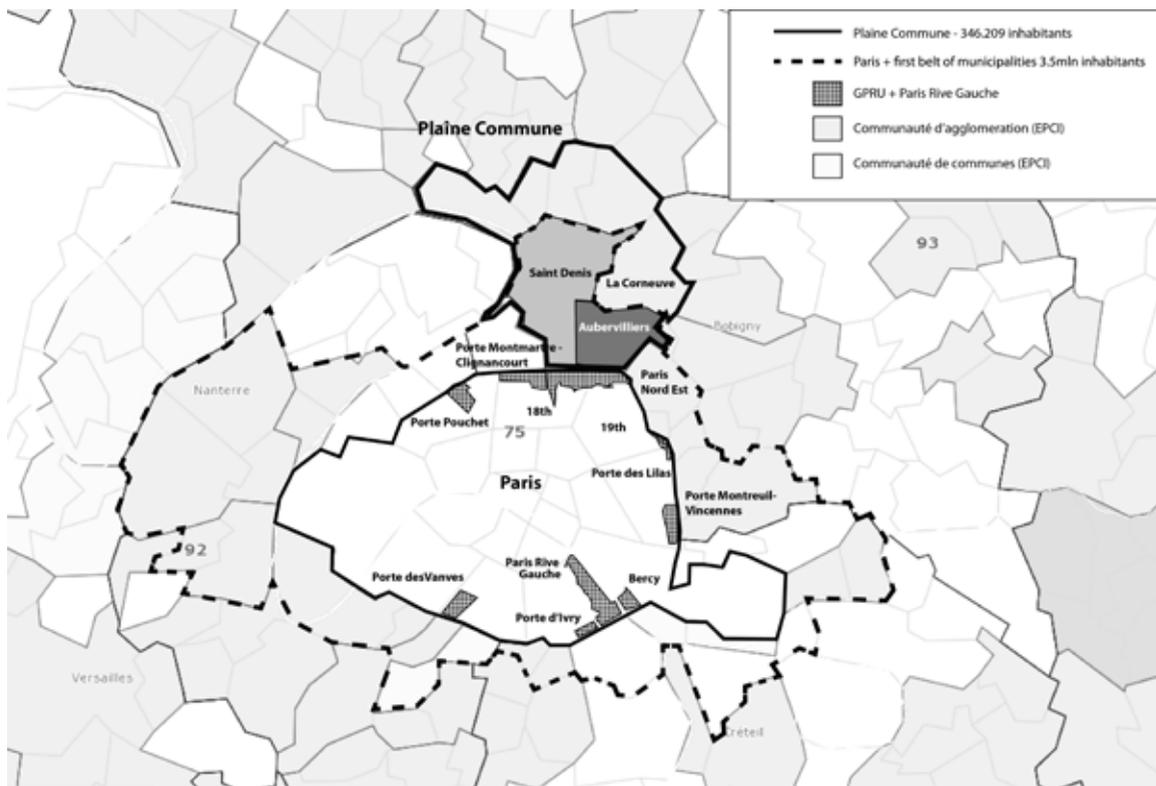


Fig. 2.1. Paris dense zone. GPRU (in red) with evidence of Plaine Commune, Saint-Denis and Aubervilliers.

Christian Blanc as state secretary for this task. The national government pushed for institutional reform and tried to foster spatial visions for the future with its *Grand Pari(s)* architecture competition. At the same time, the city of Paris established a new practice of targeted cooperative metropolitan planning, nicknamed ‘the metropolis of small steps’⁴. This approach consisted of agreements with neighboring municipalities on certain issues towards the construction of flexible governance platforms for meso-level planning. The platform *Paris Métropole* was the first achievement of this policy. Conceived as an open arena of discussion between Paris and its periphery on various policy issues, it currently gathers 188 members within the Paris agglomeration, backed up by a small budget of €2.5m and a task force of a few technicians. Notwithstanding the political enthusiasm and media resonance, this experiment has not yet delivered effective planning. Governance appears to be hampered due to consolidated hostility and mistrust between public authorities, as well as a lack of leadership (Lefèvre, 2002; 2009).

In 2001, the newly appointed alderman for inter-municipal relations, Pierre Mansat from the Communist party, began a partnership-building process with neighboring municipalities to address joint service provision and space management with neighboring municipalities. This approach is driven by the awareness that it would be impossible to define an urban development policy without considering new opportunities within areas along and just outside the city borders (Roux, 2008). The inner belt of Paris suburbs, in particular, has been put at the centre of the political debate and reframed as a space where the socio-economic chasm between the centre and the periphery can be addressed. Some specific sectors that became the main target of this rhetoric based on social quality, like the eastern social-housing complexes – with major constituencies from the Communist party – became battle fields during the riots of 2005. In particular, the main policy target has been the corridor along the highway ring (*périphérique*) surrounding Paris. Conditions of social housing and the spatial division from the socio-economic core of the city have been the areas of attention (TVK et

al. 2008). Today, around 700,000 people currently live in neighborhoods close to the *périphérique*, 80% of them in social housing.

Since its election in 2001, the Socialist-Green coalition has institutionalized its policy towards the border by a complex program of regeneration of cross-border areas. This includes the Grand Project of Urban Renewal (GPRU), an intervention program that defines 12 development areas along the highway ring, and several 'priority areas' to be the target of special action for urban regeneration (figure 1). Formally, the GPRU is a device of the major programs of urban regeneration developed in France since the 1990s, the *Politique de la Ville*, and it is enforced by a contract with the national government. The program encompasses a 940 hectare development area (634 hectares are located around the *périphérique*). The value of such a framework is more political than technical. It is an attempt to mark a rupture with the urban planning logic under President Mitterrand and Mayor Chirac, which was based on the inward-looking *Grand Projets*⁵, mostly developed according to core city interests. This endeavor underlines the political attempt to place the urban periphery at the centre of Paris planning. In the following sections I will explain the main forces driving this shift.

THE CROSS-BORDER PROJECT OF PARIS NORD EST

Paris Nord Est (PNE) is the largest sector of the GPRU. It covers 2 million sqm of Paris's traditionally poor 18th and 19th districts and it is geographically adjacent to the territory of Plaine Commune. The latter is an EPCI that performs joint planning tasks for eight municipalities and it is chaired by the former mayor of the Saint-Denis municipality adjacent to Paris, who is a member of the Communist party. With 43% social housing, Saint-Denis has one of the highest unemployment rates in the region (28%, versus an average of 18%). The neighboring 18th and 19th districts are similarly characterized by a relatively low density urban environment, large numbers of obsolete housing and a relatively high rate of social

housing (15% in the 18th district and 31% in the 19th district). Paris city and Plaine Commune are extremely different but territorially complementary environments. Plaine Commune has a much lower fiscal levy (less than €900 per inhabitant against €1,500 per inhabitant in Paris). The territory has historically hosted large industrial plants serving the capital city (in the 1950s, it had 700 hectares of industry). Paris also owns large tracts of land in the area. Politically, the municipalities composing Plaine Commune form part of the Parisian ‘red belt’, with communist majorities historically in contraposition with Parisian politics.

Three main reasons spurred the Parisian government to work on this territory. Firstly, the need to locate new spaces for development within the city, especially for social housing, today only available on the fringe. PNE land has lower values than other Paris areas which makes it feasible to realize the ambitious goals of social housing construction prioritized by the city’s mayor (20% in the total city, 50% in PNE). Secondly, the strong dynamism of the neighboring Plaine Commune has made it a powerful actor within Paris region since the 1990s. In the last 20 years, the territory has witnessed the development of the area between Paris and the Stade de France stadium and now sees border areas as the completion of this process. As explained by the city planning director in charge at that time (interview February 2011), *“Plaine Commune is today a territory with a strong spatial identity. They have know-how in planning and a strong political will to change. We couldn’t avoid working with them on the periphery”*. Thirdly, PNE is a crucial project and a top priority of Mayor Bertrand Delanoë from the Socialist Party, foremost among which is the goal to rehabilitate Paris’s periphery especially in the 18th district, where he has his electoral base⁶.

In 2001 the city council defined PNE as a ‘priority area of regeneration’ and broadly agreed the goals to be achieved, like decreasing spatial fragmentation, dis-enclaving housing complexes and striving for a better quality of space. After the call for proposal, the winning architect agency, Duspain&Leclercq, was tasked to coordinate the nine parts of the masterplan. Each of them is carried out

independently but in coherence with the general principles fixed in the first plan. While this approach stimulates interactions among stakeholders through a more adaptive project management, it needs strong public management. The governability of the whole plan was possible by defining the main coordinating architect and binding it to a long-term contract⁷. Reportedly, this procedure gave ground to early stage discussions with Plaine Commune and key stakeholders. The major issues debated addressed the consistency of (social) housing, location of services⁸ and joint projects in public transport (for the complete built program forecasted in 2011 see table 1). The building program was readapted in a few occasions to solve emerging controversies without modifying the main guidelines. The municipal project leader explains that: *“the first plan had no juridical value. It was only for the political negotiation. It evolved while we were reimagining the place together with other stakeholders. It was a political statement, not juridical”* (Interview, January 2009).

PNE has developed as a unitary project of related interventions, coordinated by one unique political entity (the city of Paris) and one technical coordinator (the main architect). The main planning objectives have been translated into three concrete spatial interventions which express the micro politics of cross-border project management: a) The construction of a tram line which relates to the wider renewal of the border area; b) The creation of an inter-municipal neighborhood over the peripheral motorway in cooperation with the adjacent commune; c) The development of the large warehouse, a public-private led project with symbolic importance (*Fig. 2.2*).

First mooted as part of Paris's Olympic Games candidacy in the 1990s, the tram line (T3) surrounding the eastern neighborhoods the city gave a new opportunity to build a coalition of interests around PNE. In 2002, the tram was framed as an instrument to pursue innovative urban transformations (Zittoun; 2008). Both the mayor and the technical services in Paris supported the plan to place sections of the track beyond Paris's borders, within the neighboring jurisdiction of Pantin, a formerly industrial town east of PNE. This political agreement is well explained by a project officials

involved in the tramway project in Paris: “*Pantin has a strong relation with Paris. Its socialist mayor understood that he must work with Paris (also to manage other key areas like Parc de la Villette). Paris’s mayor wanted to consolidate relationships with him. We didn’t ask any money for the project*”. (Interview, February 2011).

This operation was smartly presented in the media as a concrete action in support of the new agenda of inter-municipal cooperation. (Paris still finances the segments outside its administrative borders). The tramway – to be delivered in 2012 – became the backbone of PNE’s urban developments. Planned by the RATP (*Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens* – Paris public transport agency) and financed through central and regional funds, the route will join another tram line coming from the north at a transport interchange at the very core of PNE.

FIGURE	SQM	%
TOTAL AREA	2.000.000	
BUILT SURFACE	1.374.639	
INHABITANTS	+ 15.000	
EMPLOYMENT	+ 25.000	
HOUSING	601.196 (50% social housing)	44
WORK SPACES	170.999	12
COMMERCE	78.084	6
OFFICE SPACE	360.622	26
PUBLIC SERVICES	109.712	8
UNKNOWN		4

Fig. 2.2. Building program Paris Nord Est

In 2005, the mayor signed a political agreement with Plaine Commune to engage in a preliminary study for a possible ‘inter-municipal neighborhood’, known as Mines-Fillettes. The only way to make a joint plan was to have political alignment since the planning system in France does not allow land use plans to cross different jurisdictions. In 2008, a partnership was signed between Paris and Plaine

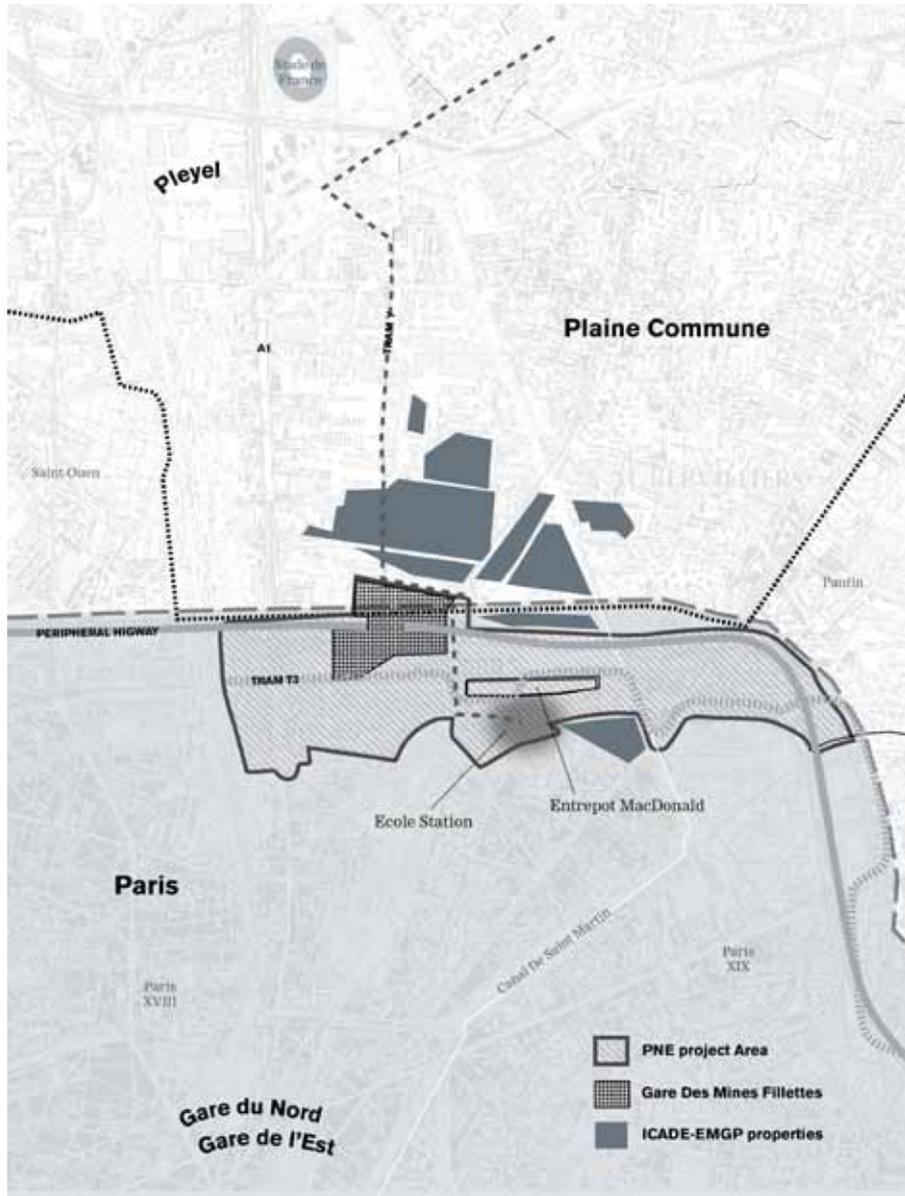


Fig. 2.3. Main components of Paris Nord Est project.

Commune on a general building program covering 22 hectares (15.6 within Paris and 6.4 of Plaine Commune). The agreement addressed objectives of inter-connectivity by proposing to build a roof over the *périphérique* highway; the creation of large sports facilities accessible from both municipalities; green transversal connections; and spatial solutions to dis-enclave existing social housing blocks. One unique coordinating architect was appointed.

The amount of social housing to be built and the future roof over the highway are controversial issues. For the moment, the governments have opted for different percentages (40%/50%) of social housing as Plaine Commune is less willing to increase its large stock. Regarding the highway, Plaine Commune strongly opposed the idea for an ethnic market planned by Paris on top of the roof. They feared that this solution would have been a further attempt by Paris to delocalize unwanted functions. The resolution of these controversies was possible through the active engagement of Paris executives, particularly the alderman for the inter-municipal relationship. The PNE chief architect explains that: *“the plan was a symbolic statement on land use to stimulate diplomacy. The suggestions were political. The ethnic market was a sort of ‘suitcase’ where to put problems. The mayor of 18th district [former Minister of the Interior] wanted something symbolic to discuss”* (Interview, February 2011).

This political atmosphere served to establish new contacts and to realign powers; reportedly, party affiliation permitted smoother discussions and mobilization. Hence, in May 2010, a joint document for the whole North East sector of Paris dense zone was presented by the director of Paris’s urban planning department and the president of Plaine Commune. It reframed the projects within a concept strategy for the northern part of the dense zone with a strong communication campaign and several working documents, mostly developed by the technical departments.

Big real estate developers have become a key motor in PNE. Development Company ICADE has become one of the largest land holders in the North East sector. In 2005 it acquired EMGP, a corporation owning a land area of 73.6 hectares in a former industrial

site along the border with Paris and another 342,000 sqm office space within the city. In 2006, Paris joined ICADE in a joint venture to pay for the development of Entrepôt Macdonald, a landmark industrial building in PNE, and its surrounding areas. This joint venture (SAS Paris Nord Est) was formed by the city development agency (SEMAVIP), the developer, ICADE, and supported by a state investment fund (*Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*). For the city of Paris, it was crucial to make this flagship operation economically sustainable. As a distinctive and historic landmark, the building has a strong symbolical value for the whole north east of Paris. The city built upon its informal relationship with EMGP and decided to make a strong partnership with ICADE, with the help of the state investment fund supporting urban regeneration projects. For its part, by joining with the city, ICADE could better orient development plans and valorize its land within and outside the city borders⁹. Following EMGP-ICADE's project manager: "*Paris Nord Est perfectly suits our land for tertiary development. PNE will become mostly a living area. For us it is important to open up our properties towards Paris to generate demand for our services and our commercial spaces. [Entrepôt] Macdonald allows us to participate in the city's development*". (interview May 2011).

This operation had direct effects in forming an enduring political and business alliance around PNE. Recently, studies have been jointly conducted by EMGP, Paris and Plaine Commune on the dynamic area between Pleyel, future station of the Grand Paris TGV train connection¹⁰ and Paris Nord Est. Platforms of discussion have been recently promoted by Paris and Plaine Commune to interact with private stakeholders in the area and to produce policy recommendations for the future of northern Paris.

WHAT DRIVES CROSS-BORDER URBAN DEVELOPMENT?

Today, the dense zone of Paris does not have the institutional, regulatory and fiscal conditions for effective inter-municipal cooperation, but since 2001 the French capital has pursued a policy agenda centered on cross-border development. This move is driven by a coalition that uses inter-municipal cooperation along the border as a vehicle for political and economic strength. As discussed here, this implies an interdependency of political and economic interests and a combination of both logics in fostering urban development on the border; a clear leadership of political officials in conflict management; and it encapsulates political conflict on broad urban agendas.

THE POLITICAL LOGIC OF CROSS-BORDER DEVELOPMENT: RUPTURE AND ELECTORAL POWER

The PNE project is not an isolated planning experiment. It is a component of a city-wide urban agenda, of which cooperation between Paris and its *banlieue* is a pillar. The current coalition composed of the Socialist party and various Green factions has consolidated its electoral power by breaking with the city's traditional administration style. These left wing political forces explicitly foster a different strategy to that of the 'absolute hegemony' of the city centre on the *banlieue*, which has historical baggage. Inter-municipal cooperation is the key pillar of an urban electoral strategy aiming to gain strength in the city and its proximate suburbs.

The Socialist-Green coalition advocates an approach to urban affairs that promotes participative democracy for segregated populations living in the urban periphery, sustainability in city planning and social equalization within the region. This paper is not the place to assess whether these goals are redefining the Left in the city; but it is evident that inter-municipal cooperation is implicit within this agenda. The political and urban connectivity with Paris suburbs is framed by local politics as a necessary action to achieve those ends. Paris's central zone, due to its high density, cannot

address broad issues such as social housing and social services unless it reaches out to surrounding municipalities. It is here where the contrast with past administrations is most evident. Interventions are focused on the eastern Paris district and suburbs, with concentrated poverty, weak infrastructure, and social housing enclaves. The projects included in the GPRU intervention program are evidences of this focus. They mostly address eastern areas where the current coalition wins most votes. Furthermore, these are the suburbs where the riots of 2005 exploded, where the fracture between the poor *banlieue* and the rich Paris is most problematic.

PNE is the most ambitious project of the GPRU because of its impact and because of its strategic location. It targets the 18th district together with the 19th, the *arrondissement* where the current mayor was elected. Furthermore, Pierre Mansat, the alderman for inter-municipal relations, is in the top rank of the French Communist party within the adjacent 20th district, the second mostly populated Parisian district. PNE serves the urban agendas of all three districts. A fragmented territory, with isolated pockets of poverty, the area also has a strong symbolic character, representing the past industrial history of the city. Key issues to address are the lack of green spaces, the low quality of public space and the large stock of derelict housing. The design of the tram line has been instrumental in this symbolic purpose of interconnectivity, connecting PNE with other eastern areas of Paris.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN POLITICS AND TECHNICIANS

The close link between politics, planners, designers, transport agencies and research institutes is a core component of cross-border coalitions. It allows the coalition to translate symbolic and political objectives into concrete actions, while local executives keep a grip on their policies. A detailed look at the PNE project indeed reveals that this link is fundamental to manage endogenous conflicts, to ensure leadership in planning and to manage the difficult relationship between social-oriented political strategies and growth-oriented private engagement (treated below). Key political officials

occupy strategic positions within the metropolitan debate. Pierre Mansat, for example, has directly participated in the management boards of the Paris Urban Planning Agency (APUR) which investigates possible strategies of urban interconnectivity with the *banlieue*. He has also taken part in Paris's Urban Architecture Council and the STIF. Most recently, he gained the presidency of the *Atelier du Grand Paris*, an agency that follows the results of the Grand Pari(s) contest. As a further example, Roger Madec, a Socialist, is the current mayor of the 19th district, one of the two targets of PNE project. He is the president of SEMAVIP, the public-private (with a majority share of the municipality) developer of one compartment of the PNE and a partner in the development company of Entrepôt Macdonald. Incidentally, he is also a representative of Paris city within the Senate.

Technical planning solutions are shaped by politics in strategic projects. In Paris Nord Est the planning solutions aimed to open up the debate and reframe spatial issues to enable political connectivity. The city chose to adopt an innovative management approach for this project, with a main architecture agency to coordinate the development of the sub-sectors. This ensures that the fundamental principles of planning are maintained despite the inevitable complexity of the project. Interviewees say the strong role of technical departments was critical in overcoming the political controversies around joint urban development across the border where local executives felt strongly about their own land use plans within their jurisdictions. The planning process in PNE was strategically developed to treat those key issues of land use (as in the case of Mines Fillettes) with the aim to open possibilities for win-win solutions. The planning departments of Paris and Plaine Commune had a proactive role in enabling joint reflections over new developments of those areas. In a nutshell, technicians and planners made the ground fertile for political agreements and cooperation.

METROPOLITAN ENTREPRENEURS AND THE ECONOMIC LOGIC
OF CROSS-BORDER DEVELOPMENT

Meso-level planning in Paris directly affects the market as it ultimately leads to the definition of poles of growth which influence perspectives of investors. Private interests have therefore been mobilized in the wider debate. Important associations operating in the region such as the Chamber of Commerce, the MEDEF (Movement of Regional Enterprises Île de France), have contributed to the debate of the Grand Paris and have repeatedly stressed the importance of inter-governmental agreements on long-term development plan both at the regional level (SDRIF) and for housing densification within the inner suburbs. By looking at PNE it is possible to see how, at a level below these regionally organized interests, there are key business actors concretely and proactively pushing for joint inter-municipal development. There is a strong business interest to activate inter-municipal planning within strategic sectors at the border of Paris: in these areas land values can be leveraged and it is possible to maximize investments in the neighboring suburbs by indirectly capturing development spin-off gains. For large land owners inter-municipal planning can be instrumental to maximize investments on their land by creating synergies between projects separated from municipal borders. In Paris North-East, EMGP is part of a larger development process which covers central parts of Plaine Commune and will probably develop a 'mini-Défense aux portes de Paris'¹¹. As a further example, BNP Parisbas Real Estate, a bank, has a similar position. It is directly involved in the development of the eastern part of Paris Nord Est in order to maximize its investment in a large office development in the adjacent municipality of Pantin where its new headquarters will be placed. These key actors are directly operating in the project, through joint ventures and partnerships built through informal contacts. It is important to note that this private sector growth is beneficial to political groups in border areas. Making land more valuable pays for better services, which are wanted by local politicians and their constituents. In PNE, the interdependency between public and

private is evident in the formation of a public-private company (SAS Paris Nord Est) that aims to maximize the public benefits of those private developments.

In addition, other pivotal stakeholders are pushing for cross-border development in Paris. The redevelopment of the Paris border results from the land transfer strategy of the state railway during the 2000s. A state agency was created to valorize these obsolete parcels of land. Its land assets, often located at the border of large cities but today incredibly central within agglomerations, provides huge opportunities for profitable development. Railway companies operate as business actors in this economic restructuring process. For example, state railway operator SNCF is a powerful stakeholder in many projects in Paris, such as Paris Rive Gauche or the more recent Clichy-Batignolles project. In PNE, the SNCF is directly managing land and real estate development within the western compartments (i.e. Chapelle International and Chapelle Charbon).

COALITIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL POLITICAL LITIGATION

Inter-municipal governance in Paris reveals a chasm between political factions organized at different governmental levels. Within the decentralized French system, the metropolis has become the territorial arena for intergovernmental conflict and the institutional architecture proposed for meso-level governance entails political and electoral goals. However, different from the US context, in France it is not yet possible to make a clear distinction between local and national political dynamics. There are strong vertical dependencies between local and national politics: what political parties do locally has a major influence on their performance nationally. As mentioned earlier, Paris is a key arena for national elections. The wider picture on Paris metropolitan governance and a closer look at PNE uncover a dialectic at play. On the one hand, the future of Paris metropolis is affected by the interplay between

left and right wing political alliances; on the other, cross-border development is the product of a progressive political change of the former Parisian red belt, triggered by local, regional and national growth agendas.

The metropolis represents a fracture along which the policies of different governmental layers are territorialized and reinforced against each other. The Grand Pari(s) initiative has been generally interpreted as part of an authoritarian strategy of the national state to retain power over the spatial development of the city and to weaken the leftist coalitions in Paris suburbs (especially those at the east of the city). This action operates through hierarchical instruments: fostering administrative reform, claiming exclusive development rights in key areas and exercising its authority on the approval of regional structural plans. Local left-wing political coalitions, guided by Paris and regional executives, set their agendas against these approaches by proposing a bottom-up planning approach of community power and self-organization. They claim for a fluid inter-municipal platform intended to promote constructive negotiations issues of metropolitan fiscal equity, housing policies and transports. Both approaches are politically legitimized in contrast with the other.

Cross-border development between Paris and its eastern suburbs has been favored by a gradual shift in the local politics of the outer suburban belt. Since the end of the nineties, Plaine Commune has witnessed socio-economic change which has partially closed the political differences that hampered cooperation with Paris in the past. Electorally, the red belt is becoming less red, after the Communist party recently lost power in Seine-Saint Denis and the city of Aubervilliers (Subra, 2011). The area is today moving towards more growth-oriented planning strategies, in line with the ambitions of cross-border development fostered by Paris. Plaine Commune is part of a strategic corridor that runs from Roissy-Airport to Paris. This change also results from an intense policy of urban and economic revitalization initiated years ago by national and regional governments that has concentrated political attention

to these sensitive areas: examples of these policies are the public planning agency 'Plaine de France' which aims to both promote new development in the sector, the development of new infrastructure in the Pleyel area, and the use of different devices of the *Politique de la Ville* which identifies those neighborhoods that are priority targets for investments and fiscal allowances. Furthermore, important key infrastructure and social interventions (like the T3 tramway or urban regeneration programs) are financed by means of contracts between the region and the state (*Contrat de Projet 2007-2013*). It is not possible to provide a complete overview of the different normative tools used to bolster new developments. The point here is that the emergence of a cross-border coalition is triggered by objectives of political power consolidation. This does not take place only within local arenas shifting from past right wing politics. It also concerns the power consolidation against national authority that makes the inter-municipal alliance within Paris dense zone politically strategic. Cross-border development results from the inter-governmental struggle for electoral power in Paris but simultaneously from the progressive convergence of local municipalities towards development agendas.

CONCLUSIONS

Collaboration between municipalities is often compromised by deep-rooted power asymmetries. Whether large-scale urban development reproduces core city domination depends on the types of political dynamics that encompass these planning endeavors, and on whether it is driven by objectives of power restructuring. In fragmented agglomerations, the shift towards inter-municipal cooperation cannot be explained without understanding the political and economic rationale of cross-border urban development and how it results in governing coalitions. This perspective complements the analysis of institutional, fiscal and economic conditions of meso-level planning that seem to fall short in understanding *why* policy

shifts occur. This paper has demonstrated that innovative practices of cross-border development are driven by powerful public and private interests that are concerned with generating political and economic power in border areas. A closer look at one project in the North East sector of Paris municipality revealed that cross-border coalitions have political, technical and economic components. The concerted action of neighboring cities and land developers is the response to the electoral and economic centrality of 'the border' within Paris metropolitan socio-economic landscape.

In Paris, cross-border coalitions emerge under particular geopolitical conditions. First, cross-border development signals a turn in Parisian politics. Leftist groups have made inter-municipal cooperation a pillar of their efforts to break with the political past of the city. Today they emphasize a new rhetoric of social equity, service provision, local democracy and sustainability. The border of the city has become the space to pursue that agenda, inter-municipal cooperation a condition for achieving it. Secondly, the link with local bureaucracy, planning institutes and architectural experts is fundamental to enforcing these objectives and to exercising political leadership in contexts of institutional fragmentation. Urban design and spatial planning have, de facto, helped to bypass the institutional, political and normative fragmentation that previously characterized the Paris-*banlieue* relationship. Third, cross-border urban development is triggered by the interest of and engagement with powerful business interests in Paris. Inter-municipal cooperation is necessary for these business groups to secure and maximize investments. Cross-border coalitions take advantage of a close relationship between politics and business for the redevelopment of the urban periphery through public-private partnerships based on their interdependent yet different objectives. Lastly, this coalition-building process takes place within the context of a political contest over who controls metropolitan governance. Inter-municipal cooperation and meso-level planning becomes a political construct that finds its *raison d'être* in its juxtaposition with national political factions.

It is not yet possible to define what type of metropolitan governance will emerge in Paris. At present, the metropolis is somewhere in between a political object of debate, a voluntary governance platform and a regional infrastructural project. However, the future shape of Paris metropolis must stem from an understanding of its origins. This paper has demonstrated that inter-municipal cooperation is embedded today within power games that are not only a Parisian matter. The current geo-political scenario mirrors new development opportunities within the inner fringe, triggered by national and regional policies that target Paris suburbs. Meso-level planning requires settling the contest between national, regional and local authorities over priorities of development. This is not only a condition for coherent metropolitan spatial policies but ultimately the institutional capacity to achieve redistributive fiscal policies. Moreover, the metropolis is not only a Parisian issue. Today, Paris municipalities are leaders in shaping a metropolitan agenda. This political asset will probably enable cooperation as long as the ambitions of the other municipalities remain in harmony with those of Paris executives. Until cross-border development will depends on the specific combination of electoral and profit ambitions, it will occur only in politically and economically dynamic areas, such as the North-East of Paris, where state, region and municipalities all have a direct stake. Paris metropolis as a whole will not have a promising future if the less economically dynamic sectors are neglected. Sustainable metropolitan planning needs to resist electoral shifts and be more independent from local-specific political and economic alliances.

NOTES

- 1) A first reform was initiated in 1982 with the *Loi Deferre*, which created autonomous regions and departments. It was followed by a series of further laws. In 1999, the *Loi Chévenement* assembled groups of municipalities sharing key competences in spatial planning. It also created Urban Communities (*communautés urbaines*), non-elected metropolitan governments formed by the core municipalities and their surrounding fringe. Paris never reached this status. In 2003, decentralization was

introduced as part of a constitutional reform. In 2010, a new reform made inter-municipal cooperation compulsory.

- 2) Until 1995 the regional planning of Île de France was de facto defined under the guidance of national government. With the *Loi Pasqua* the capital region was considered at a level equal to the national government but, yet, the State keeps the faculty to not enforce regional plans.
- 3) Paris municipal council has hosted three Prime Ministers (Balladur, Chirac, Juppé).
- 4) The difference between these approaches is well explained by Desjardins (2010).
- 5) Interview with the former director of the Paris spatial planning department.
- 6) The Mayor of Paris is indirectly selected among the elected candidates within each district.
- 7) Interview with city planning department director 2001-2008, February 2011.
- 8) Office space is much more profitable than housing within Paris border. Following the market the housing developments would tend to be placed within Plaine Commune; however, this district already has a large housing stock.
- 9) The price of new office space in Paris Nord Est can reach up to € 7,000/sqm while just 200 meters outside it fetches € 4,000/sqm.
- 10) ICADE expressed its opinion on Grand Paris within the Cahier d'Acteur Commun aux deux public debates, December 2010.
- 11) *Le Parisien* 08.04.2010.

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3.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE URBAN PERIPHERY?

THE POLITICAL TENSIONS OF POST-INDUSTRIAL REDEVELOPMENT IN MILAN

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates urban development on the fringe of urban agglomerations, exploring the tension between the socio-economic, financial, and political implications of post-industrial transitions. It presents and elaborates an analytical framework to conceptualize the interlocked influence of different dimensions of urban development in fringe municipalities, considering in particular how political and electoral dynamics impinge on other aspects of land development. In the article three types of challenges are thus identified. The paper adopts an explorative approach to detect how political and electoral logics of action affect urban development in the changing periphery. It thus advances that under conditions of metropolitan fragmentation and, urban projects risk to be prone to lengthy gridlocks of localistic bargaining, unable to fully govern the fundamental challenges of land development.



T5, ex-Falck Factory, Sesto San Giovanni, North Milan, Italy, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

In the last 20 years, planning research on the governance of urban transformations has generally agreed that strategic planning action involves “*deliberate efforts (author’s emphasis) to make connections among disparate and often conflicting and colliding pieces of [the] institutional infrastructure to generate momentum around particular ideas*” (Healey 2002:1787). These ‘efforts’ imply a choice of engaging in decision-making with often uncertain outcomes. However, in most empirical research (frequently focusing on best practices) this choice is not analytically questioned. While some municipalities seem to achieve innovation in practices of urban development, adapting to social and economic changes is highly problematic for others. In Europe especially, there are differences between the innovative experience of large municipalities— with more active citizenship, versatile local economies, and dynamic socio-economic environments – and that of the smaller municipalities at their borders, who are in a critical position. On the one hand, within an emerging polycentrism of metropolitan areas the periphery is today becoming a new hotspot for investments and planning experimentation, being often located in proximity to existing infrastructure. On the other hand, their weaker position within city-regional geopolitics due to their dependency on core city economies might be a barrier to grasp these opportunities, especially in times of economic crisis.

Today, the developmental trajectory of the periphery is influenced by two main trends in planning. First, large scale development projects are the major drivers of urban change within large agglomerations (Fainstein 2008; Swingedouw et al. 2002; Salet 2008). National austerity programs and fiscal decentralization erode the capacity of governments to steer these projects although economically vulnerable peripheries still depend on these developments for their social policies (Lovering 2010). These projects are also risky endeavors for localities since they are often promoted by large investors, occupying privileged positions of influence in metropolitan

spatial policies (Thornely et al. 2005). Second, the socio-economic condition of peripheral cities directly depends on the relationship they establish with core city economies and politics. Their development is affected by the performance of metropolitan governance geared to overcome the political problems of inter-municipal competition for wealth (Dreier et al. 2001; Salet et al. 2003; Ross and Levine 2006). The combination of these two trends is likely to determine both the developmental legacy of fringe cities and the overall trajectory of development in wider metropolitan areas.

In this paper I explore the 'political tensions' (Phelps and Wood 2010, 374) of peripheral development. Early research has already investigated the political construction of city-regions and how this is consistently affected by changing market dynamics (see Jonas, 2012). In this paper I attempt to complement this literature by examining the behavior of political coalitions and the influence of electoral and ideological beliefs in planning processes. While planning is generally considered a political task, the connection between electoral dynamics and land use outcomes is under-investigated (Campbell, 2001). The paper thus explores a long term planning process in the periphery through the lense of a conceptual model that integrates political factors into the land development process. The analysis of a 14 year long planning legacy for the 'ex-Falck' site, a 150 ha brownfield in the large municipality of Sesto San Giovanni (Sesto) on the border of Milan, sheds light on how political calculations might affect planning negotiations.

The current paper presents a study of one particular project in the north of Milan. It is thus a *single-outcome case study* (Gerring, 2006), namely a study that aims to *elucidate* the mechanisms that lead to a specific outcome with a specific context. I am interested in uncovering the manner in which electoral and ideological factors affect the post-industrial transition of peripheral areas, in this case explaining a specific planning outcome: a long lasting stalemate around the re-development of a brownfield despite market pressure with interested business actors and a strategic location within Milan metropolitan area. The question is: in what way do electoral

strategies impact peripheral development? The paper concludes that under conditions of metropolitan fragmentation, urban development is likely to experience political gridlocks and conservative strategies by political coalitions. The case of the Falck brownfield in Sesto San Giovanni has particular features which make it suitable to investigate the relationship between electoral politics and land development: a large unitary property to be redeveloped, high costs of development, a historically rooted coalition of left-wing interests, and a particularly traumatic transition to a post-industrial economy.

Milan city-region is a suitable context, being a city still struggling to address issues of metropolitan governance and post-industrial development in its first urban belt. Over the last decade, the socio-economic pattern of Milan, the economic capital of Italy, has changed substantially (Gualini 2003) with expanding peri-urbanization, a shrinking core, and the emergence of peripheral clusters within the first belt (*cerchia urbana*). These are characterized by a leading service economy, media industry, and informatics. At the same time, Milan's inner fringe continues to display fragmented spaces, scattered pockets of poverty, congested urban environments, social marginalization, and social conflict (Zajczyk, et al. 2005). This fringe thus reflects the duality of Milan city-region, with an emerging economic polycentrism combined with institutional, political, and social fragmentation.

In this paper I first define the interlocked challenges of urban development in the fringe. Next, I explain the inherent power-holding nature of local political coalitions by considering their behavior during different time periods, with data collected between 2010-2011 from 34 interviews, content analysis of newspapers, and direct participation in public meetings. Finally, I explain recurring stalemates by exploring the context of Milan's metropolitan geopolitical fragmentation.

THE TRIPLE CHALLENGE OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE URBAN FRINGE

It is generally agreed that the capacity to govern urban development is related to the definition of win-win solutions between public and private interests; matching the need to achieve financially sustainable and profitable projects with the collective expectations of community benefits. The success of projects thus depends on the alignment of these interests through formalized cooperation to control opportunistic behaviors, facilitating long lasting collaboration (Sagalyn 2007). Most literature investigating industrial areas has therefore focused on the economic barriers of land redevelopment and the role of public subsidies and development agencies in pursuing community goals (McCarthy 2002; Dair and Williams 2006). This economic perspective is based on the presumption that private investments naturally target profitable sites in inner cities or migrate to suburban areas where land is cheaper. However, the complexity of today's peripheral development lies in a 'prism' of conflicts (Godschalk 2004) that includes non-economic factors directly affecting developmental choices, like quality of space or socio-cultural change. In short, ambitions for growth clash with the need to protect existing patterns and to maintain livable spaces, even when growth is necessary to meet the cost of environmental and social policies. Similarly, the preservation of local socio-cultural milieus and spatial patterns can restrict the adaptation of local economies.

The analytical model here considers three main critical dimensions of peripheral urban development: property development, collective benefits, and socio-economic change. *Property development* refers to the financial costs of the land reuse, relating to, for example, soil remediation, building, and interest on investments. Collective benefits are the extent to which development gains are redistributed to communities in the form of public services, infrastructures, or tax relief. Socio-economic change refers to the social and cultural implications of spatial change that, in turn, affect local community identity. Governing post-industrial peripheral urban

development means considering all these dimensions because it a) involves significant initial investments; b) is a key opportunity for local municipalities to increase their revenues; and c) has an impact on areas with often entrenched local political cultures. Three main challenges emerge from this triangle of dimensions (*Fig. 3.1*).

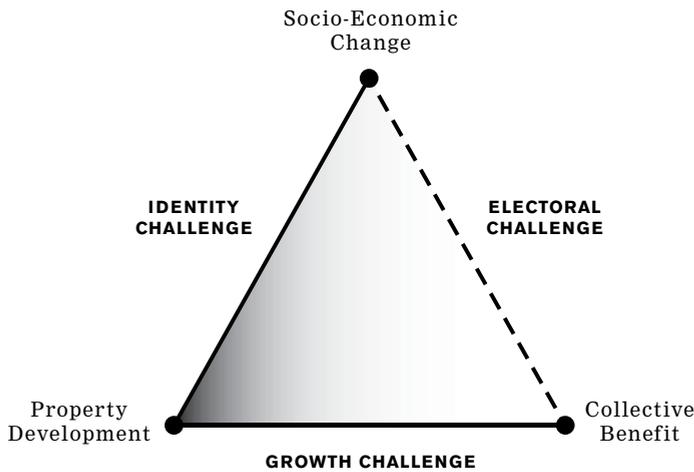


Fig. 3.1. The three interlocked planning challenges.

Growth challenge (property development/collective benefits) is the conflict between the economic needs of land development and the redistribution to communities of the gains generated through land reuse. Local authorities need to balance the costs of private investments and the public levy on private profit, i.e. the private responsibility to provide public amenities and betterment fees. This is a matter of negotiation and is dependent on the demands of organized interests and political climates (Wolf-Powers 2010). To facilitate land redevelopment of particular areas, local authorities can relieve pressure through tax allowances or direct public investments, or they can acquire more resources for the community without tax increases by increasing pressure on land redevelopment. When land

development is conducted by public agents, intensive requirements increase investment risks while lowering the public levy decreases collective gains.

Identity challenge (property development/socio-economic change) is the tension between the accommodation of market demands to facilitate development and the protection of local socio-cultural landscapes. These are the social costs of urban change in municipalities with traditional economies that manifest in a significant rent-gap, making them targets for new forms of production related to creative industries, high level education, or large-scale retail. The new economic activities trigger inflows of other social profiles with different living styles and demands, and trigger progressive change in local environments. This challenge encapsulates the erosion of existing cultural, spatial, political, and symbolic landscapes to accommodate the demands of new urbanities and economies (Dembski and Salet 2010). The market challenge therefore requires the capacity to manage the social impacts of urban change while at the same time exploiting history as opportunity.

Electoral challenge (collective benefits/socio-economic change) is the conflict between the need of fiscally vulnerable municipalities to improve local services by pursuing urban change and the political-electoral costs of socio-economic change. These costs are related to the long term implications of land use change on local constituencies and to the risks of policy innovation. First, local polities work on the basis of consensus consolidation in their choices and are supposed to operate according to electoral mandates. In pursuing urban transformations they are in the difficult position of trying to regenerate local economies for (supposedly) the collective interest while protecting the interests of their constituents. Urban change entails socio-political trauma inherent in the shift from production to consumption, from work to living, or even from factories to entertainment amenities (Clark et al. 2002). Second, when local coalitions experiment with alternative forms of public-private

partnerships or inclusive governance that may smooth this transition, they need to invest significant resources (political, technical, and monetary) with uncertain returns in terms of consensus and/or finance. The process of including different opinions and addressing conflicts with more flexible decision making can be highly costly and politically unsustainable in the long run (i.e. the ‘voice’ approach in addressing internal political conflicts, Hirschman 1970). Political elites often perceive innovative planning as a risk because it stirs local antagonism and has unexpected effects on local polities (Savini 2011). In addition, public-private partnerships always entail a certain degree of inequality, deriving from the trade-off of public accountability and transparency against technical and economic efficiency.

POWER-HOLDING STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL COALITIONS

Urban development is a dynamic process of negotiation, compromise, and bargaining between clusters of stakeholders, whose interests are distributed around the three elements of the triangle above. Following Rittel and Webber (1988), this process does not follow specific technical or economical rationalities, since the very definition of the problem is ‘wicked’; affected by the array of ideological and political positions of the actors involved. Hypothetically, an ideal-type situation would finally lead to a win-win solution, where all actors would agree on a land use plan that does not hinder or protect their specific interests. Such an end point is a matter of conceptual speculation, as planning consists of a series of agreements based on a ‘trading’ of gains and losses (Mantysalo et al, 2011). Within political systems of representative democracy, the behavior of politicians and political parties remains one of the major factors in understanding land use choices. Despite the increased relevance of civic society and businesses, aldermen and mayor are still among the most relevant in policy making processes and they often respond to their parties. Yet, their behavior in the

practice of land use planning is under-investigated (Clark and Crebs, 2012).

Looking at the crisis of Fordism, structuralist approaches have emphasized that urban development policies reflect a reorganization of the circuits of capital accumulation, pursued by entrepreneurial political coalitions (Harvey 1985). Within western countries this process has harshened municipal competition for resources and profitable functions, as area development is seen to be driven by expectations of an increase in municipal tax-income. Business-led entrepreneurial coalitions are considered the agents of this transition, with their capacity to manipulate political processes towards priorities of growth (Logan and Molotch 1987; Harding 1995). Under these conditions, projects are likely to follow real estate markets (e.g. suburbanization, inner district gentrification, or CBDs). They would focus on land redevelopment priorities over collective benefits, and suffocate political confrontation in the decision making process (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011). Challenging these arguments, this paper looks at how electoral and political logics complement and affect economic calculations in land development processes. Yet, the effects of political orientation in negotiations over growth strategies is a matter of investigation.

Negotiations involve a process of mutual adjustment between contrasting interests (Lindblom, 1959). However, this process is affected by systems of beliefs (i.e. 'biases') that condition the definition of 'wicked' planning problems. While theorizing on electoral choices and party behavior, Downs (1957) argued that ideologies are instrumentally used to manage consensus around specific policy choices, to define 'right and wrong' and organize consensus of voters, under conditions of limited knowledge of complex problems (i.e. limited rationality). According to the classic work of Weber, ideological beliefs define a type of 'rationality' that is 'substantive' and not 'formal'. Substantive rationality regards the way in which actors define goals and how they address them (Weber, 1978) and it sets the conditions of collective action. Conversely, 'formal rationality' regards the instrumental choice of means and policies oriented

to those specific goals. In the frame of this paper, such a substantive rationality is likely to determine how the three planning challenges discussed above are interpreted and prioritized by involved actors. Development choices that might seem economically irrational (such as long term vacancy) can be fully explained by this political logic (Wolman, 1988). In a planning process case study, Flyvbjerg (1998) has specifically demonstrated how rationality is not a static and objective concept, but it is constructed by political actors. Planning decisions are made by influential stakeholders that eventually 'rationalize' their choices by means of particular instrumental manipulation of the knowledge available on the problem at stake. These decisions are thus constructed by influential actors that manipulate decision making according to either political or financial considerations. These manipulations inform practical choices of adaptation, reaction, or resistance to economic and spatial change. In the long run, these ideological considerations, symbolic beliefs, and biases are institutionalized into specific patterns of action that condition future planning choices despite the changed socio-economic conditions. They structure specific governing methods and identify acceptable and desirable schemes of problem solving (DiGaetano and Stromm 2003). This paper attempts to understand how these institutionalized beliefs affect the land development process.

American research in urban politics has extensively examined the role of mayors, aldermen, and civic groups in addressing urban and economic change (DiGaetano and Klemanski 1999; Savitch and Kantor 2002). They empirically portray how governing coalitions have a built-in tendency towards *power holding*. The capacity to govern urban change lies in the power to enable cooperation among public and private interests and to mobilize 'intermediate structures' and coalitions to address emerging conflict (Stone and Whelan 2011). Stone (1988) has defined this mechanism as social production, and has emphasized that it is based on a logic of *pre-emption*: the capacity to structure collective actions that enforce urban policies and to protect agendas from disruptive conflict by holding a position of influence. Accordingly, I hypothesize that under conditions of

uncertainty, political coalitions are likely to hold fast to their power base. The trajectories of urban development undertaken by peripheral municipalities will be instrumentally geared to protect existing political interests. Political groups are likely to make conservative decisions when faced with complex problems because the electoral costs of *making* a choice will be higher (Hall, 1980). In planning, the responsiveness of elected officials to emerging issues depends on the electoral risk they can bear. However, since it is hardly possible to know the potential electoral consequences of a planning choice in advance, innovative decisions are highly risky. Politicians try to protect their power base, to simplify urban problems, and to work towards known and controllable planning processes. Elected coalitions will build on shared ideological purposes rooted in existing policy traditions and will use strategic symbols to maintain consensus (Stoker and Mossberger 2001; Stone, 1993).

This hypothesis is investigated in the context of peripheral development within smaller municipalities that often still depend economically on the wealth of larger cities. In these locations mayors and alderman tend to reduce their risk of losing the next election, especially in outer areas where there are particular conditions. First, voters in the periphery tend to have weak support for incumbents, to be more informed and active, and to more carefully evaluate specific policies than voters in larger cities, especially municipalities that are socially diverse (Oliver and Ha, 2007; Oliver 2000). Second, the pressure on elected officials is higher in inner peripheries, especially if the localities are less socially homogeneous, with more political groups competing with each other within smaller jurisdictions. Peripheral executives are thus operating in smaller contexts a short distance from their constituency, enabling them to look at policies in a more direct manner. Secondly, the inner periphery, especially in Europe, does not benefit from the fiscal advantages of external suburbs or core cities. Outer municipalities are usually wealthier (this is the case in Milan) than inner peripheries, where deindustrialization has been traumatic and poverty is concentrated. Core cities are also benefitting from more flexibility

in tax revenues and large profitable functions in their jurisdictions (e.g. museums, finance, education) (Kunzmann, 2010; Klausen and Røe, 2012). In the following section I will show how the electoral challenge conditions growth and identity challenges by looking at the behavior of the executive in Sesto San Giovanni.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FALCK PROJECT IN CITY PLANNING, POLITICS, AND ECONOMY

Sesto San Giovanni (Sesto) is a city of 80,886 inhabitants, with 23% of its active population employed in industry and manufacturing. Approximately 20% of its surface is currently brownfield land. The city witnessed 40 years of economic and demographic growth from 1951 to 1981, being a key attractor of labor force from the whole north of Milan. Today it has potential for development, being at the interface between the developed northern districts of Milan and the Monza-Brianza productive region. However, the city still has poor public services and a lack of green spaces, significant traffic congestion, and a fragmented urban pattern of newer social housing estates and post-WWII industrial residential blocks.

The Falck brownfield was formerly occupied by the largest steel factory in the country, covering 13% of the Sesto jurisdiction. Today it is a 150ha vacant space in the middle of the city, adjacent to the central station and easily accessible from the Northern and Eastern Motorways. After the factory closed in 1996, the area attracted the interest of investors who saw an opportunity for profit from the cheap land in a highly dynamic city-regional real estate market. The project became a long-term enigma for the municipality, as the land was acquired over time by four different corporations who made three separate plans with international architectural firms (Kenzo Tange, Mario Botta, and Renzo Piano). Due to the long-lasting stalemate, the acquisition price rose from 200m Euros (400 bn Italian Lire) to 220m Euros in 2005, and to 433m Euros in 2011. The project has the juridical status of an Integrated

Intervention Program (*programma integrato di intervento*), permitting quicker derogation to statutory planning (Law 142/1992 and Law 9/1999) and giving central importance to project-based bargaining between public authorities and development corporations on costs, revenues, and collective benefits agreements. The project is thus under the direct responsibility of the municipal government and the mayor.

A development program here will have considerable impact both on the condition of Sesto and on the urban pattern of northern Milan. In Sesto, the resolution of growth, market, and political-electoral challenges is likely to condition the political context of the municipality.

Growth challenge: the area is severely polluted, requiring approximately 200m Euros for soil remediation and major infrastructural interventions to reintegrate the site within the existing city. However, the prospect of returns is extremely high with housing values being similar to the Milan area. The redevelopment is vital for Sesto's authorities as the development gains generated will permit improvement of local services and stimulate local urban economies. In Italy, local budgets are determined through a standardized fiscal system of financial transfers from cities to central state which are then transferred back to regions and municipalities. Only 38% of the total revenues are returned, with 55% being retained by regional governments to invest primarily in health care and large infrastructure that often privilege core city economies. In mono-centric city-regions like Milan, this system does not help vulnerable peripheral cities. In Sesto, real estate development remains the only activity to fill the gap between fiscal revenues and the increasing costs of public services like social housing provisions (e.g. only 9.7% of social housing demand was covered in 2007). Consequently, the recently proposed Falck master-plan includes the refurbishment of four schools, construction of a library, 1,200 social houses, 45 hectares of green area, refurbishment of the central station, and adaptation of the road network¹ (proposta di PII 2011, Bizzi&Partners).

Identity challenge: the economic feasibility of the Falck project requires a marketable program with built saleable surfaces in the long term and attractive residential, commercial, and productive spaces. The several development corporations have been encouraging large retail, entertainment industry, and middle-high range residential space to produce residences within the urban area. On the other hand, the municipality is focusing on the interests of its electorate, most of working class origin or employed in small and medium enterprises. The capacity to attract these enterprises depends on how these two options are combined. The proposed scenario today reserves only 9% of the built surface and gives priority to finance-related industry, large retail, and luxury homes in the price range of 4,000-5,000 Euros². The mix of consumption and production is the core concern of the planning process, but it also concerns the whole future of the city; the proposed project will indeed mutate the social profile of the city, attracting 15,000 new inhabitants, mostly employed in the upcoming service economy (e.g. insurances, services to enterprises) or even commuting daily to Milan's inner districts.

Political-electoral challenge: Sesto's geo-political context is similar to that of many of the industrial belts of large cities, with cohesive local coalitions related to traditional economies (independent of their partisan faction) often in conflict with core city politics (e.g. Paris, see Savini 2012). Once called the 'Stalingrad of Italy' or 'the city of factories', Sesto is governed by an entrenched coalition based on a strong leftist political subculture. City politics is rooted in a dense local network of associations related to trade unions and businesses. Since the 1990s it has showed the neo-corporatist institutional context of *Fordism* in Italy, characterized by a strong integration of economic and urban policies and by a 'secluded micro-concertation' between social, political, and business interests (Regini, 1997:262). These power configurations are still strong, with local councils composed of strong leftist social-democratic parties (Democratici di Sinistra and Ulivo) and parties of Communist

origins (Rifondazione Comunista) whose electoral support reached 46% and 9% respectively between 1996-2006³. This has made Sesto a stronghold of Italian leftist parties within an economically and politically strong region dominated by neo-liberal parties in national politics.

THE LEGACY OF THE FALCK PROJECT

To illustrate the different implications of local coalition power-holding strategies, I will differentiate three main periods of the planning legacy of the project. The first period (1996-1999) is characterized by a strong focus on the labor and reindustrialization issue, with the city of Sesto benefitting from regional, national, and European support and a locally dynamic coalition oriented towards industrial stimulation. Between 2000- 2005 the city engaged in complex bargaining over land redevelopment costs and gains, driven by a political coalition uncertain about the city's future, finally opting for a restrictive development agenda. Between 2005 and 2011 the project became a central question, a catch-22 between accommodating market demands and addressing socio-political conflicts.

1994-1999: CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND THE POLITICS OF REINDUSTRIALIZATION

During the later periods of industrial decline, Sesto's spatial policies were a corollary to labor policies. The dimensions of land development, equity, and socio-economic change were addressed to counteract the progressive downsizing of industry, to stimulate production, and to manage unemployment in the area. Development was led by locally embedded cohesive growth coalitions, composed of leftist political groups and trade unions, with strong consensus within factories and with support from both workers and land-owners for production-oriented policies. During this period, the coalition was composed of social-democratic, communist, and socialist parties connected to national politics, allowing Sesto to

attract a range of national, regional, and European resources to boost manufacturing and improve infrastructure. These included the Communitarian 'RESIDER' (CEE regulation, 328/88) for reindustrializing declining areas, a special national grant for soil remediation (Law 582/1996), and several regional allowances for start-up SMIs (Regional Law 20/1994). Local coalitions could also make use of a progressive deregulation of spatial planning, which provided more flexible juridical tools to derogate the city zoning plan in favor of area-specific development, generally labeled as *negotiated programming*⁴.

In 1996, the region, the province, and the city of Sesto signed a programme-based agreement (*Accordo di Programma*) for reindustrialization (Regional Law 30/1994), allocating 6bn Lire (app. 3m Euros) and constituting an urban development agency for area development: the *North Milan Development Agency* (ASNMI). The ASNMI was a joint-stock company involving Sesto and three other neighboring municipalities with similar political background, the province (39% of shares), the Chamber of Commerce (19.4% of shares), and the minor participation of Falck Corporation (Lefèvre, 1998). Founded and chaired by a former Sesto alderman of public works, it operated under the private-law regime to speed up planning procedures and ensure better governmental control of development projects. It thus became a tool to facilitate land redevelopment, frame projects at an inter-municipal level, and enable inter-municipal political coordination (e.g. *Strategic plan North Milan*). The ASNMI acquired land plots to develop space for SMIs and in four years rehabilitated 4ha of brownfield areas.

Despite this dynamism, the Falck site remained an open issue, with local politics acting timidly because it was not crucial to the labor policy issue. Moreover, the ASNMI acted out of Milan, with the core city disinterested in the political experiment of the north of Milan. At that time, Milan followed an inward-looking mayoral agenda focused on 'domestic issues'⁵, neighborhood regeneration, and rebranding after political scandals (*Tangentopoli*). The few experiments to attract media-industry at the Falck site never

attracted coordinated political effort from the core municipality. The political stress on labor issues combined with weak cooperation with Milan made the Falck a politically insignificant endeavor. Eventually, the former alderman of town planning declared that *"We didn't want to transform the whole city, even though the planners were aware that our choices were irrational. It was too risky for our executive. We left the choice to the next administration"*⁶. The local government was stalled by the question: *"Now, the workers. After that, what?"*⁷.

2000-2005: TUG OF WAR PLANNING

The Falck brownfield became an opportunity to redefine Sesto's economic position within the growing Milan region. In 2000, the brownfield was acquired by a local real estate developer with a bank loan (95% of cost, from Banca Intesa), and the project became an effort to 'build and sell' as quickly as possible. Growth, market, and political challenges turned into a tug-of-war between contrasting interests: local executives attempting to settle new types of productive spaces and developers striving for residential development and large office blocks. The way to deal with this negotiation became a topic of political debate among the local left. Two factions developed, supporting 'interventionist' and 'regulative/restrictive' redevelopment approaches respectively. The former insisted on a stronger role for local executives in planning, with direct investments and active governmental development agencies (broadly inspired by the French *Société d'Economie Mixte*), while the latter insisted on a more regulative planning approach to control with requirements for private initiatives. The elections in 2002 strengthened the second faction, with a mayor supported by a Social Democratic-Communist coalition (the latter with 10% of seats). The group believed that the city's direct financial involvement implied unjustified financial and political risks, and that the suitable approach was to set requirements to regulate opportunistic development: a low density building index of 0.5%, a 450,000sqm park, the standard fees, a program of 60%-40% residential-productive built

surface, and the obligation to maintain the area as a unitary development project.

After the heavy deindustrialization of the 1990s stabilized, the key issue for the project became matching revenues to costs of the project (calculated at approximately 9% net of the total investment) to guarantee private returns while ensuring protection of local economic landscapes. Faced with the uncertainty of either accommodating office spaces or maintaining socio-economic conditions, the city decided not to take any risk. Even the more strategic approach undertaken by the developer in 2001⁸ (to set up large strategic objectives) failed to receive municipal approval. Local politicians did not engage whole-heartedly in these initiatives because they feared uncertainty in the financial and social outcomes of the project: *“they wanted to know the exact quantity and types of functions in advance for a project taking place over 20 years with volatile markets [...] the administration didn’t want to talk to experts. This was due to the fact that, by opening the discussions, the political issues of long term change would have emerged”*⁹.

The final proposal in 2002 involved a high percentage of residential developments (approximately 60%) and high-standard office spaces (30%) for finance-related services and bank headquarters. This proposal was not accepted by the local council as it failed to take implications on local socio-economic conditions, a fundamental issue for local executives, into direct consideration. The gridlock stemmed from the conservative requirements of the municipal plan (to ensure high collective benefits for the population and limit housing) and a general lack of strategic vision at higher levels. The project was simply viewed as a housing/industry trade off within Sesto. Discussions on amenities at regional and provincial scales were ineffective (e.g. a proposal for a tramway made in 2000, connecting Precotto metro station to Sesto central station across Falck). Both the provincial strategic plan (*Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Provinciale*) and the inter-municipal plan for the North of Milan issued by the ASNMI in 2002 (*Piano Strategico Nord Milano*) failed to conceptualize the connection between local issues

of land use development and the broader dynamics of urban change (Pasqui 2002). As the deputy mayor of Sesto said: “*the Falck is in our territory, why should Cinisello or Bresso (other municipalities) decide about it?*”.

2006-2010: TOWN PLANNING THROUGH PROJECTS

In 2005, Risanamento s.p.a, a Milan-based joint stock company conducting other large projects in the region, acquired the area for 220m Euros (and the bank debt of the former owner) and called Renzo Piano, an internationally-renowned architect, to work on the project. That same year the regulative framework also changed, allowing a redefinition of the development restrictions and requirements. A new Spatial Planning Act (Regional Law 12/2005) introduced a new instrument, the *Piano di Governo del Territorio* (PGT), permitting the city to redefine the spatial requirements of the Falck with a new municipal strategy. The transformation became the city’s priority, as growth and market challenges became a city planning issue beyond the limit of the single Falck site, directly related to the electoral success of the governing party.

In 2006, the city’s planning department constituted a new think-tank (*Tavolo di lavoro Falck*), with Renzo Piano’s architectural studio and the developer’s financial consultants. City executives began a series of bilateral bargaining while also activating the formal process of municipal planning. The process gained pace with a financially strong investor, approaching elections, and the rise of public discontent about the long-term vacancy. Local executives realized that it was necessary to ‘relieve the pressure’ on land redevelopment, re-discuss the collective benefits agreements, and provide incentives to facilitate realization¹⁰. To make the plan more financially sustainable and mindful of the skyrocketing interest on loans, work spaces required by the municipal plan were reduced to 30% and houses to 50%. The city relieved the pressure of an industry-oriented agenda and increased the electoral implications of the project. The issue became to “define a politically sustainable plan appealing to the local political and civic groups that resisted in the

past”¹¹. The 2007 proposal included more surface area (110ha), with the majority for housing (60%, 15% of luxury standard), 15% for office space, and 15% for large retail. Productive space decreased to 10%. Large public facilities were proposed in exchange for volumetric allowances.

This plan was eventually accepted in September 2011, when another development consortium bought the lease and made a few changes¹². This took place after many years of negotiations and debate addressing the social, political, and economic implications of this housing-oriented development. In these years the main issue was to connect the technical negotiations over the Falck land redevelopment with major issues of city planning; to reconnect specific interests on the site with city politics. On the other hand, the city executives tended to insulate the negotiations from city wide debates in order to reduce the risk of political disruption and lack of consensus. The opposition of local civic groups was stronger; accusing planning of a lack of transparency as it was conducted behind closed doors with the developer. Political representatives were faced with the dilemma of either undertaking a publicly managed process of decision-making on the municipal plan or counteracting speculation by private corporations. Puzzled by this choice, local executives delayed the approval of the plan, uncertain of the political reaction of the locality. However, this enclosure was instrumental to defining the final project; to eventually gain revenues for local services. The weaker bargaining capacity made Sesto’s executives dependent on the developer to negotiate large infrastructural projects with upper levels of government. Incentives were therefore given to Risanamento s.p.a. to negotiate with the national railway companies and the region to improve the central station.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF METROPOLITAN FRAGMENTATION ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Deindustrialization has heavily impacted Sesto’s socio-economic landscapes but local political coalitions have, for many years, been unable to activate spatial adaptation. The Falck case demonstrates

that political strategies affect land development choices and that local political coalitions tend to protect their interests when faced with uncertain outcomes. Why this outcome? How could we unlock these trends? I suggest that a possible explanation may be found in the geo-political positioning of peripheral development within wider city-regional patterns of transformation. With today's conditions of inter-municipal fragmentation in the Milan metropolitan area, to solve the interlocked growth, market challenges, and political challenges of development means to systematically set them as a win-lose situations. The political resistance of Sesto is de facto induced by a lack of inter-municipal planning. There is a mismatch between the inter-urban scale at which growth and market challenges take place and the city scale at which urban development is addressed. While the Falck project is a strategic endeavor for the city of Sesto, the tensions between land redevelopment, socio-economic change, and collective benefits are of such a complexity that a cooperative planning process is hard to be reached without expanding those development issues to a scale that includes Milan's border and the first urban belt (i.e. the denser parts of the metropolitan area).

There is no discontinuity in the urban texture of Milan and its first belt. Sesto San Giovanni has density equal to northern Milan's neighborhoods and is a major attractive pole for commuters within the city (PIM 2006). Real estate prices are similar to Milan due to good accessibility (e.g. Tangenziale Nord, Malpensa) and office space is even more profitable in some cases (OSMI 2011). The shrinking of Milan in the last 30 years (by -8.3% of population between 1991- 2001) has made the city dependent on its first belt and on the suburbs for affordable housing. Economic activities are thus progressively relocating to the outer areas, like Segrate (e.g. ADP international business), the South-East, and the North-West (e.g. Stephenson district and EXPO 2015 area). However, this dynamism is uncoordinated between municipalities and problems of high long term office and housing vacancy (6% and 10% respectively) and a lack of affordable housing in the inner districts exist. Traffic congestion and air pollution are increasing in the whole region.

Issues of growth, sprawl, and social redistribution affect the spatial, social, and economic inter-relationship between Milan and its fringe. These require a planning approach that defines win-win scenarios at the metropolitan level to accompany the polycentrism emerging in Milan. The framing of market growth, industrial settlement, and green area production can thus be done only at the regional level, weighting costs-gains of developments. The emergence of strategic forms of regional cooperation are based on recognition of the benefits to each municipality in collaborating on solving collective action problems, creating economies of scale in development, and coordinating public service production and delivery (Andersen and Pierre, 2010).

The inter-urban character of these socio-economic and environmental problems is well-known in the politics of both Milan and its fringe. Nonetheless, most of the inter-municipal policy making experiments undertaken so far have failed to overcome the political resistances to cooperation: the 1960s-70s experiments of the PIM (*Piano Intercomunale Milanese*), associating 63 municipalities and two provinces; the national framework of *Città Metropolitane* which attempted reorganization of administrative structure based on voluntary agreement between municipalities (Law 142/1990); the Milan's Framework Document (*Documento di Inquadramento*) in the 2000s (Healey 2004) which experimented with more flexible city planning; and the recent *Città di Città* project which explored and designed the polycentrism of Milan Province (Balducci 2011). In spite of their potential to 'manage' growth and market dynamics at a higher scale, these initiatives have not taken root in local development choices because, when it comes to definitions of land usage, local politics often fear win-lose situations. Milan metropolitan area is instead governed by non-cooperative and non-institutionalized inter-municipal coordination (Balducci 2003; Kantor 2008), consolidated by an integrated system of hierarchical planning which does not allow innovation in development policies. According to Balducci et al., there is a "*chronic lack of correspondence between administrative boundaries and the phenomena to control*" (2011, 5), which in turn generates "*a context of multi-level governance in which the*

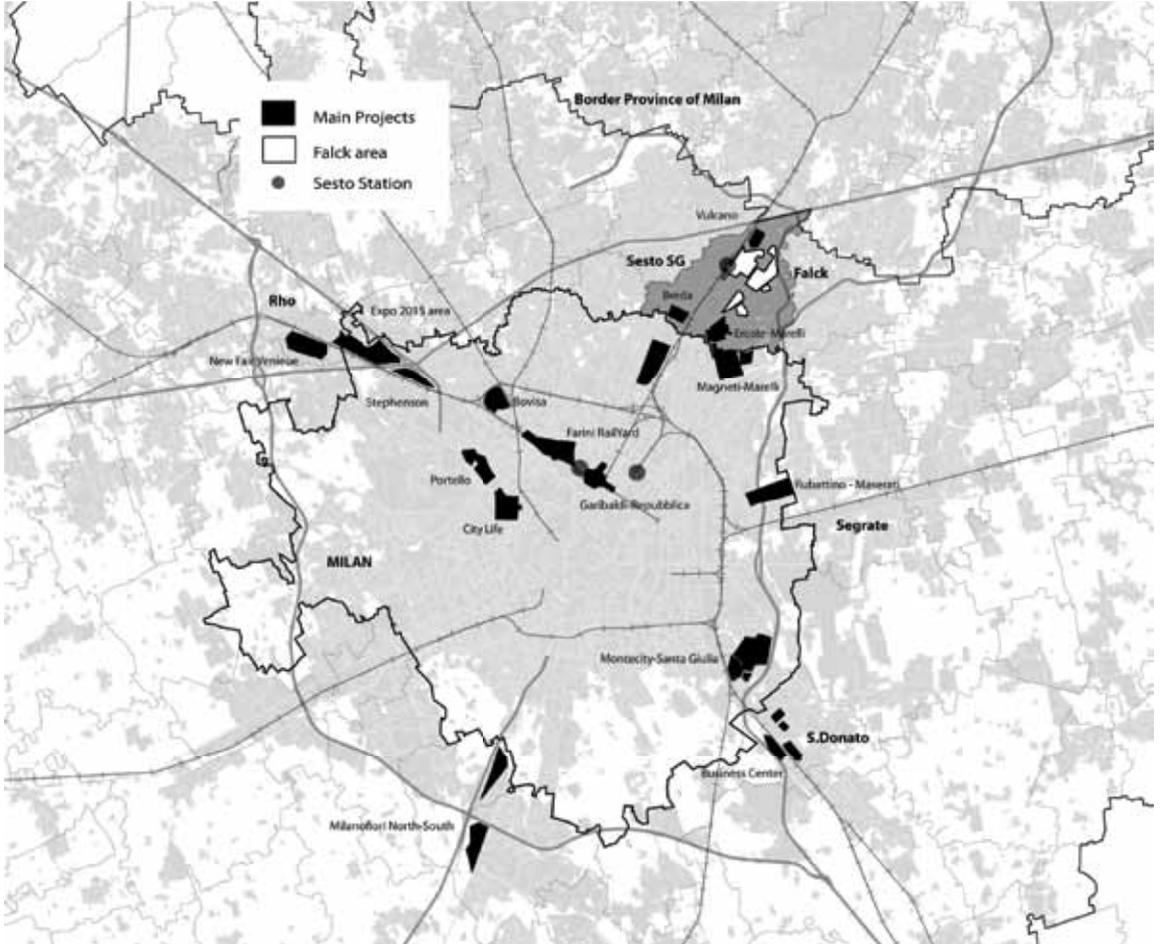


Fig. 3.2. Main ongoing projects in Milan and Sesto San Giovanni.

boundary lines multiply and overlap putting increasingly more pressure on the traditional boundaries of administrative organization” (idem, p.31).

Inter-municipal competition increased the perception of the electoral risk of land development in Sesto’s political elite. The fringe of Milan is alone in its large scale strategic project, with scarce resources, many planning responsibilities, and in a competitive context of regional development. The Falck project suffered isolation from higher levels of negotiation. Land development became a particularistic negotiation between politicians and financiers, with upper levels of government providing only normative frameworks. Although the latter can make use of different planning tools to orient development (*Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Provinciale* and the *Piano Territoriale Regionale*), they have few resources to enable innovative decision making, solve conflicts, or prioritize urban development nodes. They operate on infrastructure and protected environment but strategic development projects (e.g, the PII) remain a wholly local responsibility. The combination of localized planning competences, weak incentives for strategic cooperation, and a decentralized fiscal system generates an institutional situation which makes it hard to reorganize and reframe socio-spatial (and political) asymmetries between Milan and its belt.

In the periphery, metropolitan fragmentation has a direct effect on the (political) capacity of local government to respond to challenges of economic change and thus has indirectly conditioned the emergence of a balanced polycentrism in the region. Conservative localism has tangible impacts on the most economically and politically vulnerable developments, those in which the trade-offs between land development costs-profits, collective benefits-needs, and dynamics of social change-political risk are the highest. In fringe municipalities these challenges are significant, with consolidated political coalitions, historical socio-economic identities, and a need for social services. The Falck site lost the competition for profitable functions to more central interventions in Milan (e.g Santa Giulia, City-Life, Garibaldi-Repubblica).

A rescaling of the project might have affected the planning process in several ways. First, it could allow the strategic connection of local economic development issues with larger trends in the Milan region. Within inter-municipal platforms of governance, local coalitions become more aware of the changing dynamics of other municipalities and of major investment opportunities in a specific period. They can also better understand how local plans compete or complement neighboring visions in order to better address issues of timing in incremental planning. Moreover, the political stress over development could even be relieved by, for example, coordinating core-city economic development with connected investments in fringe green landscapes and inter-municipal transport improvement. A coordinated strategy of development reduces the political risks of complex developmental policies in the long term. Secondly, local political groups could find new opportunities for political coalitions by looking at the whole metropolitan area. The growth of many fringe areas is still dependent on the dynamism of the core city, so by looking at their interdependency it is possible to discover that specific policies for Milan municipalities can also promote peripheral well-being. The economic specialization of sub-centers can avoid competition between projects for investment but this can only be discovered by engaging in strategic discussions at regional levels. Lastly, rescaling peripheral projects would also strengthen the capacity of local groups to attract investments from higher tiers of government, as these subjects need to see realistic yields of their investments. By framing large projects as regionally strategic it becomes possible to attract more resources and to develop integrated planning solutions to large infrastructural policies. A lack of a strategic thinking on the streamlining of regional investments made it harder for Sesto to capitalize on upper level subsidies and support from public and semi-public institutions (e.g. national railway companies). It is important to stress that metropolitan governance entails political conflict and that large city politics tend to dominate smaller localities. Although political conflict might make cooperation impossible, my argument is that large scale projects

can help to frame inter-municipal cooperation at a more pragmatic level by focusing on the long term socio-economic gains for the whole region and consequently on concrete issues of redistribution. In doing so, political coalitions are firstly able to avoid parachuted projects from large developers that propose radical socio-economic change in the area. Secondly, they can see clearer opportunities to reach constituencies and political partners outside their jurisdictional borders. This allows to build up political support from specific strategic policies at other levels that could recognize the competitive advantages (and identity) of their locality. This allow to actively accompany social change, and thus gradually adapt political networks.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper aimed to cross-fertilize planning knowledge with concepts proper to political science. It used a spatial-electoral approach to empirically understand how electoral issues affect land development. The periphery is today a space crucial for metropolitan change but in many cases it needs to reinvent its socio-economic condition, adapting to new global economies and meeting demands for public services. The extent to which metropolitan regions are able to exploit opportunities of urban change and avoid risks of regional polarization depends on their capacity to manage multiple types of planning challenges at an inter-municipal level. These stem from the interlocked effects of financial, socio-economic, and political matters of area redevelopment.

This paper employed a single-outcome case study to reveal how political-electoral dynamics, market change, and growth strategies are interlocked in practice. Fringe development was conceptualized as a political problem surrounding the combination of financial and economic priorities of investors, the redistributive ambitions of local governments, and the electoral implication that growth has on socio-economic change. Specific combinations of these

ultimately determine whether, how, and what type of developmental policies will be realized. Based on the existent literature on political logics of urban policy making, I uncovered how this mechanism takes place. To do so I investigated a particular project that showed a surprising outcome, a long lasting vacancy; I looked at the way political groups in power attempt to maintain their power base. Lastly, I interpreted this behavior, claiming that it is in fact induced and strengthened by metropolitan fragmentation,

What can be learned from this particular case? The limits of single case studies are well known and they regard the limited external validity of the result. The case of Milan is certainly peculiar, with lower economic polarization between core city and inner periphery, enrooted political subcultures, and a stronger role of government in planning. On the other hand, it shows a negotiated practice of land use planning similar to English and American contexts, a practice also increasingly employed in northern European countries wanting less public involvement in land development. The legacy of Sesto is similar to the post-industrial transition of some of the rustbelt cities or with the political dynamics of the European red-belts. This study does not claim to be generalizable, but it aimed to advance steps towards the under-investigated relationship between electoral dynamics and planning in contemporary American and European literature, and to catalyze more interdisciplinary research between planning and political science. It provided detailed, qualitative information on a case in order to set the bases for a new hypothesis of research, and possibly to combine them with large N comparative case studies more frequently used in political science. Further investigation might address the behavior of neoliberal parties, or test the relationship between electoral turnouts and land use planning policies.

This study shows, first, that electoral strategies do influence development in times of economic growth and crisis but that politics may have a conservative bias. Politics also has a role to play in achieving innovation in land use planning, but this requires specific conditions. This statement attempts to complement discourses on

the domination of market subjects, especially in times of economic crisis where business tends to stick to established practices of development. Planning in times of crisis might not only need economic solutions, but also discussion of the democratic justification of growth policies. Secondly, the study suggests that under the conditions of emerging polycentric metropolitan areas, the degree of innovation in planning is related to capacities for rescaling and reframing development agendas at a metropolitan scale. Considering local parochialism the cause of failure for metropolitan governance might make institutional change difficult. In this article I took an opposite point of view, looking at creating local conservative policies in peripheral municipalities and arguing that metropolitan fragmentation might increase these tendencies (rather being simply the consequence). This is a shift in point of view which provides insights to inform and sustain experiments in the practice of metropolitan government. My argument is that local governments in the periphery might miss important opportunities by pursuing protective inward looking strategies, and this does weaken their position in metropolitan political platforms in the long run. Institutional experiments might thus attempt to rejuvenate the political linkages between local dynamics with regional trends.

NOTES

- 1) The economic prospects of the project changed over time according to the different periods of negotiation. The current project, defined in 2011, forecasts a total investment of approximately 3bn euros, with profit estimated to approximately 1bn euros.
- 2) The average price per square meter in Sesto is approximately 3000 euros.
- 3) The DS has progressively split into two different components, and communist parties have been uniting with other groups of communist origins. In Sesto, the Communist Party performs much better than the national groups that, even with different party coalitions, got no seats in the first chamber in 2008.
- 4) The Integrated Programs of Intervention, the Plans of Urban Renewal and the PRUSST)

- 5) Elected in 1997, mayor Albertini metaphorically compared the city of Milan to a 'condominium'.
- 6) Interview 30th November 2010
- 7) Interview with Studio Gregotti, February 2011.
- 8) Guidelines for the transformation of the former Falck Areas in Sesto San Giovanni (2000). Authors: Balducci A., Botta M., Carlone C., De Maio A., Perini M., Sapelli G., Vitale M.
- 9) Interview with involved architect, December 2010.
- 10) The incentives regarded sustainable building programs, the preservation industrial heritages, the realization of 'high standard' public amenities, and the private-led regeneration of the station which was formerly the responsibility of the rail company (RFI).
- 11) Interview with development company, December 2010).
- 12) The land acquisition is made by a complex financial construction that includes a holding company of the Sesto Immobiliare Stock Corporation, banks (30%, Intesa Sanpaolo, Unicredit, and Bpm) and other investors. Sesto Immobiliare Holding is composed of 80% Davide Bizzi, 10% the Korean Honua real estate agent, and 10% New Valley (an American society).

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4.

POLITICAL DILEMMAS IN PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT

INVESTMENT, REGULATION, AND INTERVENTIONS
IN METROPOLITAN AMSTERDAM.

ABSTRACT

Today's metropolis is polycentric. Core city borders are undergoing major transformations and the urban periphery is becoming an attractive area for investment as well as an experimental ground for planning innovation. Yet, its development entails deep political tension. This paper starts from the assumption that the role of political dynamics and political agendas of elected groups is under-investigated in today's spatial planning research, even though they become crucial to enable innovation in times of economic change. It contributes to this field of research in two ways: first, it conceptualizes the political challenges for planning into three major dilemmas over approaches to spatial investment, regulation, and spatial interventions in the periphery. The paper then empirically demonstrates that to address these tensions in spatial planning there is a need to consider more fundamental political issues over future city-regional agendas. Examining recent transformation efforts in Amsterdam's northwestern areas, where industrial, housing, and environmental change all conflict, the paper shows that these dilemmas are attached to broader political questions over growth strategies, the meaning of regulation, and the role of governments in land management.



View on NDSM Warf, Amsterdam North, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2010.

INTRODUCTION

The spatial organization of today's metropolis has been defined as polycentric, kaleidoscopic, asymmetric, and edgeless, with different variations in urban morphologies (Knox, 2008; Sieverts, 2003). In the 21st century's European city-regions, the urban periphery is becoming an area for urban restructuring, brownfield reclamation, and urban densification. These are urban locations at the border of core municipalities, located at the heart of growing agglomerations that are often presenting fragmented spaces with a mix of production, residence, and vacant land. The increased dynamism of this inner urban belt poses important challenges in spatial planning, which needs to develop new concepts and institutional frameworks to address the changed socio-spatial configuration of cities. While peripheral locations are recognized as key spaces for city-regional development and for planning innovation, they are at risk of being subordinate to developmental ambitions of core cities, targets of top-down strategies of economic development, or even neglected spaces in regional policies. The raising of new peri-urban spaces is confronted with the existing geo-political conditions of cities, which poses political and economic barriers to city-regional coordination in planning and hinders the emergence of substantial metropolitan politics (Orfield, 2002).

Phelps, Wood, and Valler (2010) suggest that peripheral transformation entails a political strain between the capital accumulation strategies of municipalities, the social implications of peripheral development, and the different positions of governments on political coordination across jurisdictional borders. Adhering to the idea that these tensions are inherently political, this paper proposes a conceptual and empirical contribution to reveal the relevant political issues for planners today. The direct links between planning practice and the power consolidation strategies of politicians have been historically recognized, and 'it is striking that while this relationship occupies a pivotal position within the planning activity it remains little discussed in the academic literature and it is

generally shrouded in mystique and secrecy' (Campbell, 2001: 83). In particular, 'the role of political coalitions in driving the development of [post-suburban settlements and peripheral locations] remains underexamined' (Phelps et al. 2010). Planners are often portrayed as mediators or brokers in a broader political process (Albrechts 2003), or as managers of political dynamics in project management (Gordon 1997). Planning is generally understood as a political process of power (re)configuration and consensus building between conflicting interests, but historically 'the question is not whether planning will reflect politics but whose politics will it reflect' (Long 1959:168). Although this is a historical question, the existing literature tends to keep electoral politics in the background of today's debates.

This paper contributes to the empirical discovery of the political dimension of contemporary spatial planning in two ways. First, it argues that planners are facing three major dilemmas in the development of the periphery: regulation, spatial investment, and spatial intervention dilemmas. Secondly, the paper empirically demonstrates through one case that these dilemmas have an inherently political (and not technocratic) nature, thus requiring consideration of the broader political context. This paper selectively looks at emerging urban transformations in the urban periphery to detect these dilemmas and show how they structure the spaces of political confrontation in the plan making process.

The paper explores the case of the redevelopment of Amsterdam's northwest periphery. This particular case has been chosen as its complexity and location makes political debates clearer. The area is a space of national interest, with different governmental agendas at stake. Moreover, the project encompasses multiple planning issues: changing housing markets and urban restructuring, environmental protection, and issues of industrial-residential zoning. Furthermore, most research on the Amsterdam metropolitan area has generally neglected the Northwest, privileging business developments and residential areas on the city's southern side. Lastly, a focus on the periphery in the Netherlands also facilitates a preview

of some consequences of Dutch planning reforms. Planning in Holland is currently questioning some of its fundamentals, such as the role of the Randstad concepts, the hierarchy of different governments, and the future of environmental and housing policies (Roodbol-Mekkes et al, 2012). The data are collected through a series of 30 semi-structured interviews at the city, provincial, and national levels between 2011 and 2012 with both politicians and planners involved in the project. The interviews were specifically designed to unearth the different points of view and stances at each level, with particular attention to pressures on elected politicians regarding specific planning issues (i.e. the future of the harbor, the typology of housing, and environment). These data have been cross-analyzed by extensive desk research on the specific interventions taking place within the area.

NEW POLITICAL DIVISIONS AND AGENDAS IN PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT

Increased development opportunities and social challenges in the urban periphery have stimulated great interest in the political economy of peripheral restructuring. Building upon the evidence of changing suburbs, scholars have engaged in a conceptual debate aimed at defining how economic and political forces are combined in emerging patterns of suburban change (Lang and Knox, 2009). This is seen in the USA where processes of peripheral retrofitting have become more evident in light of sharper spatial and social distinctions between core, downtowns, peripheral areas, and suburbs. These changes have driven scholars to attempt a re-elaboration of traditional political economic models to grasp how suburban and peripheral development might express a power change within city-regional politics (Phelps and Wood, 2011). The empirical application of consolidated theories of urban regimes and growth machines (Stone, 1989, Logan and Molotch, 1984) has traditionally focused on inner city urban redevelopment and on the (exclusionary) effect

that urban projects have had on urban socio-economic patterns (Fainstein, 2008). Suburbanization has been explained as one of the several expressions of a 'spatial fix' of capital, as a process creating land and real estate investment opportunities and reactivating inner city restructuring (Harvey, 2001). According to these views, the joint transformation of inner-city cores and suburbs is one of the major planning strategies of entrepreneurial city governments and the spatial expression of a raising private authoritarianism (Ekers, et al 2012). However, while these approaches have been successful in normatively analyzing growth driven strategies of urban enlargement, planners in both Europe and North America are concerned with addressing the social, economic, and spatial policy challenges advanced by the progressive crystallization of metropolitan areas into new polycentric or dispersed conformations (Bontje et al. 2005; Bogart, 2006). Despite major political and spatial differences in Europe and the USA, we see a reconfiguration of spatial functions in both contexts with a rearrangement of the territorial equilibrium of city-regions by emerging new poles.

Planners ultimately operate within broader political contexts that they must understand in order to influence from within. The political logic of urban development thus regards the way planners and plans entail particular visions over society, biased by forms of ideology, electoral agendas, and discourses used by political groups to sustain power. Planning takes place within a layer of polity that matches macro-objectives of growth with the power ambitions of political coalitions in city-regions (Savini, 2012). These assertions have been recognized for generations, but there is still room to better understand the exact political issues at stake in the planning of city-regional development and in the governing of changing urbanities. In political science, policy change has been generally understood by looking at the emergence of new political fractures that policy makers need to address. These fractures rotate around concepts of urban citizenship, economic wealth, and social justice (Keil, 2000; Allen & Cochrane, 2007), and thus extend to broader issues related to these notions, like state control and individual freedom

in land use. These cleavages entail conflicts and controversies that tend to polarize politics into groups of preferences, and, if fragmented, lead to in-governability.

The changing of fringe areas and outer poles of city-regions in different spatial configurations (in-between cities, post-suburbs, techno-burb etc.) is subject to debate in planning over possible ways to understand and address the social, economic, and environmental challenges posed. They thus entail new political divisions over possible ways to readapt established administrative and regulative planning frameworks, often rooted in clear-cut definitions of 'urban versus rural' and pinned over mono-centric conceptions of urban systems (Phelps, 2012, Young and Keil, 2010). The notions of core and periphery seem to assume a new sense in globalized scenarios. New forms of political participation emerge within the new relationship between city, regional movements and politics, and global urbanization trends. All these factors make the periphery a salient space where established conceptualizations of regional economic growth, urbanization, and environment can be questioned.

For planners, this means the development of new concepts for issues of sustainability, spatial quality, nature, and compactness (Grant, 2009), as well as addressing issues of inter-municipal cooperation (Salet et al, 2003). To respond to these spatial trends, new concepts need to redefine the balance between *environment, urbanization, and economic growth in spatial policies*. This means to combine issues of preservation and transformation of green spaces, historical heritage, and peri-urban landscapes together with economic development needs. The concept of urbanization is also challenged, with emerging forms of urbanities based on new types of housing, urban amenities, social mixes, and infrastructures. Lastly, changing environmental and urban patterns need to be recombined with new perspective on city regional economic growth or recession, which significantly affect the capacity of cities to sustain peripheral change or maintain more expensive policies of compactness and sustainability (Janssen-Jansen et al, 2012). Although it is generally recognized that planning needs to develop

new concepts to address the combination of economic growth, environment, and urbanization, the current planning debate rarely considers the need to address political values and power configurations to achieve this innovation.

PLANNING DILEMMAS DRIVING PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT

In peripheral development, the management of the conflict between economic growth, urbanization strategies, and environmental protection/management raises issues on the different approaches, goals, and tools of land use planning (i.e. ideal types). I use the concept of dilemmas to suggest that decision making processes in spatial planning structurally entail a series of compromises over different trade-offs, based on politically and arbitrarily constructed visions of the specific problem at stake (Rittel and Webber, 1973). These dilemmas characterize planning independently of the specific organizational approaches used, ultimately constituting the fundamental pillars of certain policy paradigms such as teleocratic or nomocratic approaches (Alexander et al, 2004). I here make an analytical distinction of the theoretical components of these dilemmas, although the practice is more nuanced. I use this classification to understand how planning develops as a continuous practice of compromise, conflict, and agreement along these conceptual lines. (Healey 2009, Mäntysalo 2002). These dilemmas can have different solutions depending on the scale of analysis and on the specific selection of the agents. Nonetheless, this classification allows an analytical reading of complex, non-linear policy processes. The dilemmas presented are considered crucial based on the assumption that there are three major components of public (spatial) policies: first, the mobilization of particular resources for politically driven goals (investments); second, the regulative framework that conditions and binds implementation of policies (regulations); and third, the locational and spatial component of policies which target specific areas in specific times, especially for spatial planning

(interventions). Although the organization of planning processes might vary across context (including the division of roles between public and private agents), spatial policies are ultimately anchored to these three elements.

Spatial investment dilemma –the dilemma between supply– and demand-driven spatial investment. This dilemma entails conflicting approaches to investment strategy in enabling socio-economic change in peripheral areas. Today's fringes have gained economic relevance in urban, regional, and national contexts as spaces where new economies can be created, related not only to distribution or logistics but increasingly to knowledge and creativity (Phelps, 2010). The allocation of investment follows a bargaining over long-term trajectories of regional economic development, especially in times of austerity. These strategies are built upon a politically constructed interpretation of the causal relationship between growth and urban change (Counsell and Haughton, 2003), and on a political definition of the 'value' of the environment (i.e. environmental capital). Political coalitions are structured over the particular strategies of allocation for investments to sustain long-term economic development. Some specifically focus on demand-side labor policies in order to create an attractive business climate, while others target investments and planning to increase the supply of space for businesses (Robinson, 1989). Some cities adopt the protective and stabilizing strategies of existing peripheral economies, while others undertake risky innovation by arranging brand new financial engineering for emerging demands. In particular, I refer to the position of public investments to trigger urban change. Today's governments are puzzled with the redefinition of their role as investors in highly risky projects. They need to quantify their capacity to hold risk, especially in these peripheral areas, and to design new forms of financing to maximize the yields of smaller public investments (Sagalyn, 1997). The investment dilemma emerges from the fuzziness of growth expectations and unresponsive real estate markets combined with the need of cities to draw new resources from

planned land development. It ultimately requires a reflection on new strategies of demand-led investments, emancipated from needs of ambitiously planned economic returns.

Regulation dilemma – the dilemma between protection and adaptation in land-use management. It entails conflicts between the practices managing existent land usages and the need for flexible adaptation to emerging land usages. The dilemma emerges when incoming expected usages clash with, and thus question, existing frames that control and steer urban change (e.g. green-blue preservation, quality standards, height limits, norms regarding pollution and density), procedural norms (e.g. hierarchical conformity of land use plans and master-plans), and established normative concepts (e.g. compact city development). These norms are usually institutionalized in local symbolic beliefs and thus hard to reform (Dembski and Salet, 2010). In contrast with neoliberal views on regulation, there is evidence that land use restrictions have been increasing instead of decreasing in recent years (McLaughlin, 2012). These restrictions contrast with strategies of adaptation, resilience, and change of peripheral spaces. The regulatory dilemma stems from the discrepancy between established legal institutions of suburban change and the spatial dynamism of today peripheries. Land use regulations ‘inherently prevent the natural evolution and adjustment of urban form with respect to consumer preferences between land consumption and accessibility’ (McLaughlin, 2012:52). Consequently, both zoning and growth prevention regulations (i.e. impact fees, growth boundaries) are often used instrumentally by parochial governments for the consolidation of political power (Feiock 2004). Governments have two conflicting choices: on the one hand, to enable organic adaptation of environment, production, and urban spaces within peripheries; on the other, to protect their existing specificities, historically rooted spatial and social structures, as well as local sub-cultures (Shaw, 2005). Resolution of this dilemma might require new structural forms of legal contextualization or nomocratic approaches (van Rijswick and Salet 2012).

Spatial Intervention dilemma – the dilemma between control/determination of planning action and outcomes, and the enablement of bottom-up dynamics whose outcomes are uncertain. It is the conflict between the rationalistic need to govern change by establishing priorities and targeting areas, and the increased uncertainty of the social, spatial, and economic trajectories of the urban fringe. Today's urban developments do not follow linear patterns of decide-and-execute but are driven by spontaneous forms of land use, bottom-up demands of built spaces, and grass-roots initiatives. In planning, the relationship between knowledge and action is non-linear (e.g. non-Euclidean, Friedmann, 2000), and this has been widely recognized in notions of *adaptive management* (Innes and Booher, 2004), *communicative planning* (Fischer and Forester, 1993), *relational planning* (Healey, 2007), and *actor-relational planning* (Boelens, 2010). All these approaches demonstrate that planning solutions are interactive, contextual, and consensus based, but they become problematic when civic dynamism is low, markets are inelastic, and the uncertainty of long-term change stifles planners. In this case, planners must address issues of priority and the targeting of interventions in order to address both localized demand and the long-term objectives of city-regional development, which are often de-contextualized and discussed within other political arenas. Experimentation might clash with broader objectives based on knowledge and predictions produced at other levels (Mazza 2002). In practice, these issues are raised whenever there is a need to accommodate formality and informality in urban uses, both long- and short-term visions, and the consideration of both preservation and change. Interim spatial usages, temporary activities, or creative forms of land management are likely to happen in peripheral locations where space is available and urban structures are versatile. However, this needs to be integrated with objectives defined, often consensually, by governments at different scales.

POLITICAL SHIFTS IN THE AMSTERDAM METROPOLITAN AREA

In the Amsterdam metropolitan area, the development of the inner periphery takes place in the context of enduring governmental efforts to match increasing housing demand in both the North and South sectors of the Randstad, to coordinate infrastructural investments, and to protect the scarce green space of the Green Heart. Today, the inter-dependency of Amsterdam's jurisdiction and its periphery is structural, as the problem of housing scarcity can be matched only at a city-regional level due to housing market inelasticity and high urban densities (Korthals Altes, 2006). Production and office space have been relocating outside the inner city since the early 1990s and 57% of current development takes place in the fringe (Hamers and Piek, 2012). Spatial interdependency is also anchored to the Dutch fiscal system, with local expenditures dependent on central government redistributive policies that allocate funds across cities into specific areas of policy priority¹ (Allers, 2011).

In the early 1970s the positioning of the core city within the region became highly politicized (van der Cammen and De Klerk, 2012) with the emergence of more urban labor parties in the national political spectrum. A series of policies were undertaken to equalize unbalanced socio-economic development between Amsterdam and its surrounding municipalities. Until the 1990s these efforts were facilitated by the involvement of national governments, mitigating conflict between Amsterdam and its border municipalities who were often ideologically reluctant to cooperate with the core city. These policies were justified to counteract Amsterdam's diminished financial capacity due to the outflow of middle-class families to suburban regions. This trend was generated by a national policy of de-concentration towards outer urban centers (2nd Nota on spatial planning produced in 1966) that triggered a downgrading of central neighborhoods. The national growth of welfare and the increasing use of space had generated a population spillover from the core city, resulting in Amsterdam's population diminishing by 150.000 inhabitants during the 1970s and 1980s. A national growth coalition

(Terhorst and van der Ven, 1995) stimulated national urban, economic, and fiscal programs to regenerate cities based on a national policy of supply-oriented planning for core-city economies (4th Nota, Ministerie van VROM, 1990). Major policy outcomes included a program of urban regeneration in large cities (Big City Policy, Premius 1997) and a national investment program for large-scale inner-city development projects (Schuiling, 1996). In the 1990s, the VINEX program (Ministerie van VROM, 1991) became a tool to steer suburban expansion in order to return high quality privately owned housing to cities, requiring a coordinated management of housing extensions between municipalities. In the Amsterdam metropolitan area, the ROA (Regional Overleg Amsterdam), an inter-municipal body established in 1986 and then institutionalized in the Stadregio Amsterdam (SRA), was given the additional task of governing the allocation of state subsidies and managing the political controversies emerging from investment allocation in housing expansion.

Urban development in the periphery has since been governed through a more experimental approach to metropolitan governance, aimed at organizing political coalitions around broad objectives, regional/urban and economic investment strategies, and specific policy issues (Janssen-Jansen, 2011). After a failed attempt at agglomeration in 1995, a more informal political-technical network was initiated in 2000 under the label of Noordvleugelconferenties (North Wing conferences). Renamed *Metropoolregio Amsterdam* (MRA) in 2007, it functions as a think-tank for Amsterdam, 36 surrounding municipalities, 3 provinces, and the regional body (StadRegio Amsterdam) on issues of urbanization, infrastructure-mobility, regional economy, landscape, and recently sustainability. The success of these platforms illustrates a new political convergence of municipalities in the region towards growth oriented development policies in response to political shifts at the national level (Nota Ruimte in 2004). With the national government's decreased capacity for investment and spatial control, Amsterdam realized that urban-suburban political polarization was the major factor hindering economic growth. In light of this, common

management of regional housing growth had to be found autonomously, through self-made bilateral agreements between municipalities and interventions coordinated across jurisdictional borders.

The policy shifts outlined above have been the expression of a conflicting dialectic between different political views on the role of the core city and its relationship with the region. The spatial organization of the Amsterdam region has been an area of confrontation between progressive groups, 'culturalist' intellectuals, and planners. These groups represent different political views on city growth objectives, arguing over different strategies of core-periphery symmetry, urban restructuring, and connectivity between nodes (Rooijendijk, 2008). The metropolitan governance of 2000 was also driven by a shift in regional geo-politics, especially in the Northwest. In the mid-1990s the former 'red' governments of the urban belt started to adopt developmental strategies that favored creative economies, knowledge intensive industries, and R&D, with less nostalgia of former industrial production. The Northwest has a long tradition of labor governments, both from working class parties (Socialist Party, SP) and from social democratic parties (PvdA). For many years they represented the industrial harbor tradition and have driven Amsterdam's socially oriented urban policies of social housing and tenure mix, but have also historically created ideological barriers to post-industrial redevelopment in the area. Since the 1990s, new electoral factions related to green and environmental movements (Green-Left, which gained the municipal executive in spatial planning and has received stable votes since the 1990s) or moderate right wing liberals (D66) have been gaining power. These new groups represent new social profiles like international and multicultural young professionals, highly qualified workers, and highly educated families employed in third sectors and R&D. These groups advance new developmental concepts and generate new policy issues in spatial planning related to emerging notions of internationalization, multiculturalism, livability, and sustainability that might clash with existent ones. They demand easier access in

the private housing market, central locations, and non-suburban living environments (see for example, Uitermark 2009), and they also stimulate a retargeting of interventions towards specific types of urban environments. The rise of these groups has progressively stimulated regeneration and gentrification policies towards up-and-coming locations in the city's north and inner east, and more recently they have attracted attention to new developmental possibilities in the Northwest². Between 2006 and 2010, PvdA lost 10% of their votes in the municipality with major losses in the Northern and Western Districts. D66 gained 10% in the last election after their early success in the late 1990s. Most strikingly, the Socialist Party, often connected with the most nostalgic workers, has lost votes at every level (i.e. 6% municipally, 8% provincially). The neighboring Zaanstreek (Zaanstad and Oostzaan) area has progressively converged towards Amsterdam's electoral situation³ (i.e. SP has lost 5% and PvdA 10%), constituting a 'red progressive' axis in the middle of a province dominated by liberal parties (Louter and Eikeren, 2012). This political alignment has brought Amsterdam and Zaanstad to lobby the national government to put the transformation of Amsterdam's northwest periphery into the investment agenda (see below).

Because of this changing and fragmented political geography, the inter-municipal and intergovernmental political alignment of executives becomes crucial in the governability of urbanization trends, economic growth, and landscape protection. Moreover, a recent series of reforms by the Dutch government has made political alignment between executive directions at different levels even more pressing. The Spatial Planning Act of 2008 (Wet Ruimtelijke Ordening, 2008) equalizes the role, but not the fiscal capacity, of each government tier in strategic planning, with each level of government producing their own spatial policy documents (*structuurvisies*) that do not formally bind the others (Needham, 2005). Furthermore, the current draft Structural Vision on Infrastructure and Environment (Ontwerp SVIR, Ministerie van I&M, 2011) does not propose new national spatial concepts (such as the Randstad) that

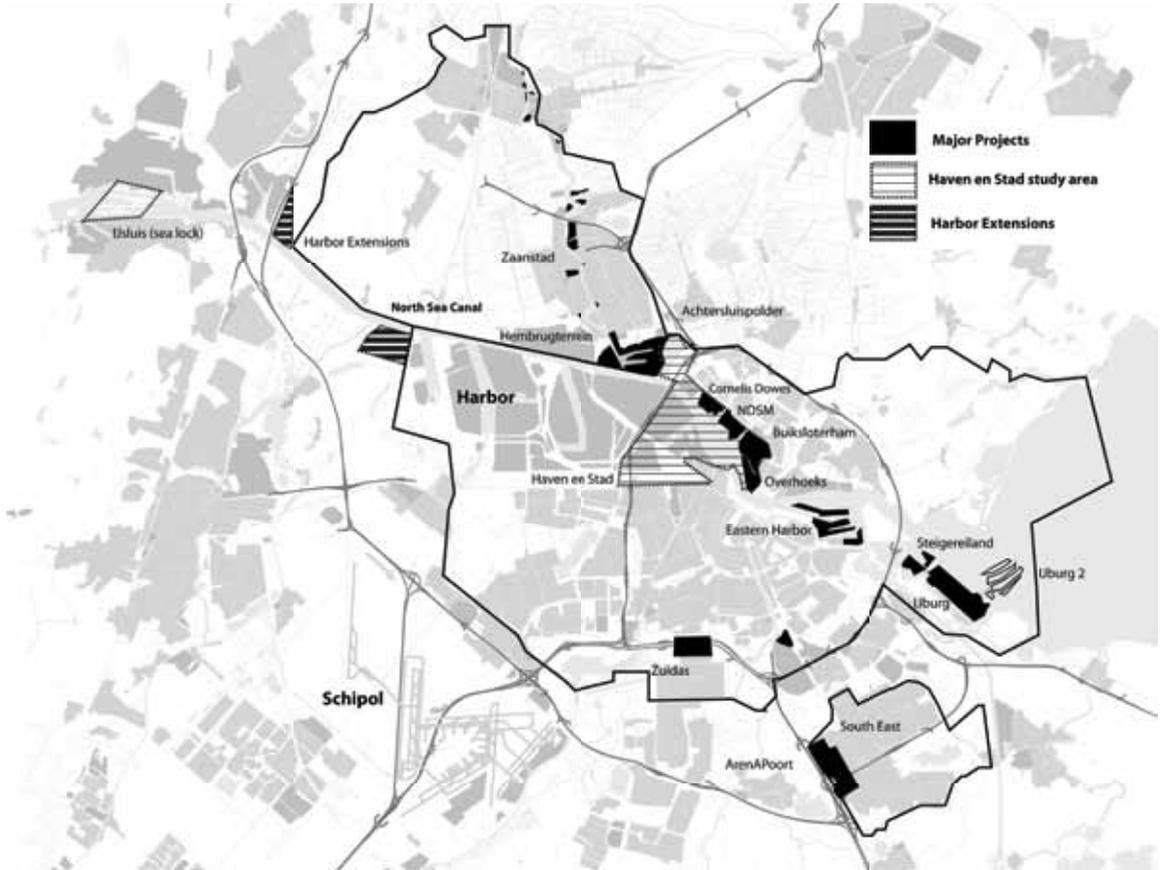


Fig. 4.1. The North Sea Canal Area including major planned interventions.

helped in building national coalitions for urban development in the past (Faludi, 1994). It instead focuses on different areas of intervention for which different spatial strategies will be elaborated and investments programmed. Lastly, national spatial planning has recently lost its unitary institutional identity (the Ministry of Spatial Planning, and Environment and Housing Affairs). The right-wing Liberal-Christian Democrat cabinet elected in 2010 has restructured the executive, politically dividing spatial planning competences, environmental management, and housing across three different ministries⁴. In addition, divisions were drawn across the three levels of government, placing economy and infrastructures under national, environmental issues under provincial, and housing development under local government. Below I will illustrate how the combination of shifting electoral geographies and recent institutional reforms poses three major challenges for planning.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMSTERDAM'S NORTHWEST PERIPHERY: ZAAIJ

In 2010, new pressure from progressive left groups in Amsterdam and Zaanstad resulted in a study for the strategic redevelopment of the northwestern waterfront⁵ (*MIRT-onderzoek ZaanIJ*). Political pressure on the area increased progressively from the mid-2000s, with a series of actions undertaken by local politicians and planners to redevelop underused land on the northern banks. The area was indicated as a strategic project in the regional agenda designed by the Amsterdam metropolitan area (Gebiedsagenda Noordwest Nederland) in 2009, and was recently named a national strategic location in the draft national structural document (Ministerie van I&M, 2012). The project will set the bases for a national strategic vision on the whole North Sea Canal area (*Noordzeekanalgebied*), recognized as one of the national economic motors of the country. Today, the ZaanIJ is a cluster of coordinated projects from the north banks of the IJ to the western outskirts municipality of Zaanstad

(see Fig. 4.1).

The northwestern periphery has been historically considered a marginal location for regional urban and economic growth in comparison to the attractive central locations of the Amsterdam Zuidflank (i.e., Schipol, Zuidas, residential estates in the east) and the new town of Almere. However, this area could indeed benefit from major national and international investment because of its interconnectedness with the other major nodes of the Randstad and plentiful land available for housing development. The municipality of Zaanstad, a community of 148.000 inhabitants, initially played a weaker role in the early days of the Amsterdam metropolitan negotiations for both political and geographical reasons. In the early 2000s the city faced fragmented internal politics and post-industrial political change, driven by consolidated labor protective coalitions that were skeptical of emerging new economic sectors and regional growth policies. Moreover, the geographic location of Zaanstad does not allow extensive urban expansion in the green areas. Still, the city's attractiveness has been increasing, with growing industry in food processing, financial services, and pioneering creative clusters spilling from the nearby transformation of the North Amsterdam developments. The peculiar combination of post-industrial landscapes and buildings, lower urban densities, and accessibility to green landscapes have become very attractive to political parties sustaining the rising 'creative-class' in the outskirts of the city. The political alignment between the progressive left of Amsterdam and Zaanstad has provided good conditions for spatial interventions.

The ZaanIJ project could potentially match 6% of the total housing demand in the Randstad's North Wing, but this planned change makes evident a clash between urbanization, economic growth strategies, and environmental management. On the one hand, the North Wing has a housing deficit of 10.000 units per year, since only approximately 5.000 units are built annually. To address this deficit, there is a need for a minimum of 14.000 up to a maximum of 30.000 units per year, with different typologies and costs. However, this housing expansion rate strongly conflicts with local and regional

economic perspectives on harbor growth, industrial expansion, and Schipol airport expansion. Both urbanization and economic perspectives directly affect ambitions for natural and urban landscape protection in the area, as expansion would imply the erosion of surrounding green areas, the change of existing natural structures, and the eventual reconsideration of Amsterdam's compact-city policy.

**SPATIAL INVESTMENT DILEMMA:
SUPPLY OR DEMAND ORIENTED?**

A spatial investment dilemma arises from the conflicting trends of industrial expansion and urban change in the area that will require radically different uses of public resources in the long run. At stake is the economic sustainability of Amsterdam's manufacturing and logistics industries versus the long-term competitiveness of the Amsterdam metropolitan area based on the accommodation of new sectors of production (e.g. finance, third sectors, and creative industries). Amsterdam's harbor is Europe's 4th largest in tonnes of materials shipped and further growth is planned. However, the forecasted increase from 64 to 125 tonnes per year (Amsterdam Haven, 2009) requires an investment of up to D800 million to renew and enlarge the North Sea Canal harbor lock (the IJsluis), as the current harbor, built in 1929, is not suitable for today's ship sizes. The costs of this investment can only be covered through the plus-value generated by harbor growth within the next twenty years. Conversely, the creation of new housing requires investments in soil remediation, infrastructures, and the relocation of harbor activities. The accommodation of both functions would require further harbor expansion into the green landscape of the region.

Today, political groups are clashing over strategies to address this problem of collective action. The investment dilemma regards the management of the economic win-lose situation generated by different territorial expressions of economic policies, namely the strengthening of existing productions or a risk-taking strategy to

generate new productive landscapes. Strategic gridlock emerges from political uncertainty on the use of national and local resources to promote urban and industrial change. Policies of industrial expansion clash with the need to transform internal areas of the harbor to accommodate incoming social profiles with new urban environments.

The political divisions spread across different levels. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, responsible for housing development, is concerned with housing production to match the shortage in the Randstad. Its position has been largely uncertain in political terms, often bound to liberal views of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. The latter already agreed to invest €541 million in a new sea lock in 2009 and expects to cover costs with larger harbor outputs. The Ministry of Economic Affairs is also defining new national policies directed towards economic sectors alternative to those managed in Amsterdam harbor, subsidizing high-tech, creative industries, and knowledge intensive jobs⁶. Yet, these documents lack focus to encompass different political views as they prioritize a large proportion of Dutch economic sectors. Local politics is also fragmented on the issue, making the project even more uncertain at the moment. Divisions stem from conflicting views on the typologies of urban environments to be produced. While the city government has already expressed its preference for the transformation of the inner harbor areas (Structuurvisie, 2011), the Liberal alderman strongly supports harbor growth. Amsterdam's Green-Left aldermen strongly support a constituency of the young, highly educated, and urban creative with the production of new types of housing, compact city policies, and decreasing pollution of the harbor. Urban transformation does not find support among other parties; both liberal parties and, to a minor extent, the Socialist Party contend that those housing policies will erode 8% of the harbor land in which 15% of the total harbor gross product is generated.

**REGULATION DILEMMA:
PROTECTION OR LOCAL ADAPTATIONS?**

The combination of harbor, housing, and green spaces creates issues with zoning and land use regulations. The regulation dilemma stems from the discrepancy between existent zoning regulations and the need to define new combinations of usages to enable a progressive transformation of the area. Regulatory frameworks in Amsterdam are consolidated into broad national and local restrictions. There are national programs for nature preservation like Natura 2000, the EHS (Ecologische Hoofdstructuur), the National Parks, and the UNESCO 'stelling van Amsterdam'. In addition, the Randstad is a patchwork of environmental zones with restrictions related to noise (65db around infrastructures), fine dusts (Pm10), air pollution, and external safety. Ultimately, the building restrictions related to the growth of Schipol Airport further reduce possibilities for urban development in the western periphery of the Amsterdam metropolitan area.

The many attempts to combine harbor functions and housing in more central locations have frequently faced appeals. The hypothetical relocation of most central harbor activities to open space has generated opposition from smaller municipalities, who use environmental regulation to their advantage. With looser national protection rules (e.g. abolition of state buffer zones, which are protected green areas between cities), landscape becomes the center of a political deadlock where local and regional interests conflict. Amsterdam supports housing growth and industrial reduction, but in this way it indirectly advocates for a relocation of the harbor to accommodate housing. This agenda clashes with the leftist-environmentalist majorities at the provincial level. They defend the value that landscape has gained for Amsterdam's economic attractiveness, and also protect the interests of smaller municipalities that are pushed to take the environmental risks of city-regional growth.

Local planners have been highly pragmatic in addressing this dilemma with a series of ad-hoc procedures and exceptions to enable plot by plot restructuring, temporary reuse, and case-by-case management. These have required particular agreements and new forms of organization, like a joint city-district planning office (Noordwaarts) or specific contracts with local enterprises. The city needed to overcome harsh conflicts between district needs and city-regional strategies, as well as the frequent appeals of local companies against urban transformations in surrounding areas. The 2009 Covenant NDSM-Houthavens and the exemption zoning of the recent Crisis en Herstelwet, 2010 are examples of these policies. Yet, these decisions have progressively hindered today's planning strategies, which often strive to find coherence among these multiple agreements. The problem is *"how to guarantee that, after the exemption period expires, local governments have found a permanent solution to environmental restrictions"*⁷. While exception rules allow a few pilot examples of planning innovation locally (e.g., *Het Zaans Proeflokaal*), they today make coordinated interventions complicated and unpredictable. Political fractures emerge on the fundamental value of these regulatory practices. Some advocate for more flexibility and local autonomy to enable demand led change, while others (especially existing vested interests and property owners) might tend to argue the value of zoning for spatial and environmental qualities. Here the answer is political rather than technical or organizational; it regards the definition of longer term agendas of socio-economic development and industrial policies. A provincial executive, the level in charge of environmental and industrial policies, elaborates: *"The question is: do we want the harbor's growth to reach our metropolitan objectives of economic competitiveness or do we question our environmental zoning?"*⁸ Others underline that *"[the Amsterdam metropolitan area] is not exempt from discussing the conformity of national, local, and even European regulatory requirements for urban development"*⁹.

**SPATIAL INTERVENTION DILEMMA:
CONTROLLED OR SPONTANEOUS CHANGE?**

In the ZaanIJ, the interventions dilemma questions the basic institutions of Amsterdam's planning system: the sustainability of the government's active role in land development. Since the early 1990s, the dynamic cooperation between Amsterdam and its fringe in metropolitan strategic planning had been alimanted by a growing economy, allowing cities to enlarge the margins of bargaining over spatial priorities and to reinvest development surpluses in urban projects (Janssen-Jansen, 2010). Regional planning was based on an expectation of successful projects and returns, which allowed the activation of different projects pleasing different regional alliances within a larger scheme of growth. These were projects of varying nature, including suburban developments, business districts, inner city renewal, and logistic related urban areas (e.g. Almere, Schipol, Zuidas, the renovation of the Bijlmermeer, the central Overhoeks, the eastern harbor area, IJburg, Steigerisland, and Zeeburgerisland). Today, thinner national subsidies and weaker market investments are pushing cities to resize the spatial priorities of regional transformation. One of the first examples of coordinated de-programming is the platform PLABEKA (*Platform Bedrijven Kantoren Metropoolregion Amsterdam*), recently created in cooperation between city departments of spatial planning and economic affairs.

Planners are today challenged by the need to facilitate spontaneous change to enable emerging market pressures while also sustaining established expectations of urban economic growth. In a time of weak markets, this implies a revision of development priorities and the reassessment of projects. There is a need to address the greater intra-urban competition for projects and eventual cannibalization effects. The salience of the ZaanIJ in the metropolitan agenda radically conflicts with ongoing planned interventions of different types. One of the crucial cases is the development of Almere (Schaalsprong Almere) with planned interventions in the West. Together with the redevelopment of the South West Schipol-

Haarlemmermeer area (SMASH), the new town is considered a strategic and urgent project by the national and local governments (Savini, 2012). It involves €2 billion of infrastructural investments and the timely development of IJburg. This project clashes with the ZaanIJ by pursuing different typologies of housing: The ZaanIJ a project of urban restructuring while Almere is still framed as suburban expansion of a twin city. The ZaanIJ is planned to accommodate mid-range private housing units for the highly skilled middle class (€250.000 – 350.000 price range) while Almere is currently developing lower density single family houses. On this issue, Amsterdam's political geography is fragmented and perhaps confused. The city currently pursues a maintenance policy that encompasses both interventions. The local Green-Left pushes for compact city, inner restructuring, and creative urbanites. Social democrats are addressing both issues but also regard Almere as a key project. The national cabinet applies pressure for fast housing production, leaving the question of typology to local agents.

The dilemma between spontaneous and controlled change cannot be addressed without a deep discussion of the city's planning capacities to activate and govern land development. The transformation of northern areas has been triggered by a series of bottom-up interventions since the late 1990s (after master plans were jeopardized by negative business cases and harbor-related political conservative groups¹⁰) that have created a unique and attractive environment for incoming users. The site is attractive today because of this spontaneity, but at the same time its land development bears unpredictable costs for both municipal and private developers. Amsterdam planners are aware that *“the development pays itself step by step, and if [they] start [they] need to ensure that banks and developers invest and gain returns at a different pace than before”*. While land lease presses the city to generate development, developers tend to maintain a strategy of attendance, keeping risk on the shoulders of the municipality of Amsterdam as prime owners of the land. According to a planner at the land development agency, the question here is not about governing the municipality's

different interventions, but understanding whether the municipality should actively manage the land market to promote growth: *“It is not about theoretical housing shortage but about what planners should do: provide what people want each time or make a political choice. [...] we need to decide where we want housing, if we should follow the market, or even whether we want to grow at all”*¹².

The dilemma thus requires a discussion over the institutional bases of Amsterdam land policy, both within the municipality and in coordination with the competing policies of neighboring municipalities (Segeren et al, 2005). In the North, the city has chosen an organic approach based on plot base development. Land values are still lower than other areas in the city, but risks are higher due to issues of soil remediation. After the erosion of more nostalgic socialist and workers political groups in the area, the incoming governments attempted to capture the added value of artists, squatters, and creative industries relocating to the area. However, the success of this process is highly uncertain and hinders the capability of the city of Amsterdam to meet housing demand. Although discussions are not yet disruptive, these issues divide political factions in the council between sustaining Amsterdam’s active, costly land development policy or radically adapting the institutional bases of land markets in the city.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Peripheral areas are becoming dynamic locations, delineating polycentric city-regional spatial patterns. This new socio-spatial conformation poses new important challenges for planning policies. The periphery is becoming a political object that raises questions on established conceptualizations of environment, urbanization, and economic growth in today’s planning policies. It is a laboratory where new concepts of sustainability, climate change, resilience, and alternative spatial qualities can be translated, readapted, and tested in practice. This generates political divisions along different

interpretations of natural and historical landscape change/preservation, city-regional typologies of economic growth, and the typology/quantity/location of urban amenities. Planning needs to recombine and address these different visions under consensual trajectories of peripheral change. This paper provided a particular view on this substantial change and it looked at the political fractures emerging from this social, economic, and urban trend.

In this paper, three major dilemmas are identified in order to analytically explore the fundamental challenges for planners. The concept of dilemmas recognizes the fundamental role of planners and political groups in enabling a shift in established planning practices and it better emphasizes the dialectic and confrontational character of the planning policy process. Although under different forms, spatial planning tends to follow consolidated processes of decision making based on growth expectations, supply-led investments strategies, and enforced zoning regulations. This practice follows the need to secure long term expectations. In this paper I show that planning in peripheral areas urges us to rethink the essential bases of planning processes beyond the pure organizational considerations of the decision making process. First, public spatial investment in land development should be reconfigured towards a more demand-led approach. Secondly, there is a need to address the contradictions generated by contextualized spatial innovation within established regulatory frameworks. Thirdly, the essential role of public planning agents to coordinate multiple interventions within metropolitan areas must be addressed. This paper suggests that the achievement of planning innovation along these lines does not (uniquely) depend on the design of new organizational structures or processes of decision making, but requires more fundamental political confrontation.

The practice of planning is more nuanced than the analytical differentiation presented here. Dutch planning practice has largely showed that different factions are capable of achieving compromises in spatial policies. However, this paper's case shows that in the periphery these compromises are yet to be established in light

of current economic context. They entail a process of confrontation between political groups and parties and this is likely to affect Dutch planning institutions. These compromises are often punctual and are not institutionalized into a different approach to planning, still striving to control and predict long term change to address expectations of growth. This paper suggests that under conditions of polycentric development, economic downturn, and decentralized planning systems, planning theory and practice need to closely address the value of a paradigmatic change for important planning institutions: the contextual meaning of zoning and regulations in addressing local specificities, the cogency of planning tools to control individual use of land, the economic viability of demand-led investments in long term planning, and the organization of land markets within metropolitan areas. This requires a re-politicization of planning practice, the questioning of broader concepts of collective interests, and a more critical view on the concepts of city-regional growth.

NOTES

- 1) In 2006, the self-raised revenues of cities only amounted to 21% of the total city budget.
- 2) de Voogd, J. (2012), Behoudzucht troef in beroerde buitenwijk. <http://www.socialevraagstukken.nl/site/2012/07/12/behoudzucht-troef-in-beroerde-buitenwijk/>
- 3) Data from Amsterdam Statistical Office yearly overview, 2006 and 2011: <http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/publicaties/amsterdamin cijfers/>
- 4) The former Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and Environment (VROM) had the role of coordinating among these sectors.
- 5) The first report of this research is published in December 2011 from a think-tank composed of representatives of Amsterdam Harbor, the City of Amsterdam and Zaanstad, the province of North Holland, Stadregio Amsterdam, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- 6) These were the sectors that benefitted the most in the policy Piek in de Delta (2006-2010) and the major sectors in the current *Topsectorenbeleid*.

- 7) Interview with Project Leader ZaanIJ at Zaanstad Municipality, 8th March 2012.
- 8) Interview with Project Leader ZaanIJ, responsible for North Sea Canal structural vision, at the province of North-Holland, 13th March 2012.
- 9) Interview with planner at the Stadregio Amsterdam, 14th March 2012.
- 10) Interview with official responsible for the 2002 Noordelijke-IJoever Masterplan at the DRO Amsterdam, 8th March 2012.
- 11) Interview with ZaanIJ project leader at the Municipality of Amsterdam, 29th March 2012.
- 12) Interview with official at Amsterdam City Land Development Company, 16th May 2012.

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5.

SOURCES OF POLITICAL POWER IN THE URBAN PERIPHERY

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN AMSTERDAM, MILAN, AND PARIS

ABSTRACT

This paper questions the political and financial drivers of urban development in the contemporary context of multi-actor and multi-level governance. It focuses on the processes that drive spatial planning and large scale development projects in the inner periphery of three metropolitan areas: Amsterdam, Paris, and Milan. Peripheral development is conceptualized as the outcome of the realignment of three major sources of urban power: the national government, the core city, and large market investors. Early research has largely demonstrated how each of these elements influence metropolitan transformations, often separately, with special focus on economic logics of development. We propose to instead empirically investigate the political logics, hypothesizing that the changing relationship between these three power sources depends on a combination of electoral and financial dynamics. Focusing on three particular projects, this paper shows how different spatial outcomes of peripheral development spring from different combinations of electoral strategies, political confrontation between emerging parties, and their (dis)connections with business interests.



Creative Spaces in De Scheepshoofdgebouwen, NDSM, Amsterdam North, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2012.

INTRODUCTION

This paper questions the political drivers of urban development in the contemporary context of multi-level governance, with a particular spatial focus on the urban periphery. The different spatial manifestations of polycentrism in metropolitan development have been an object of geographical and sociological investigation for the last twenty years (Knox, 2008). One of the most relevant planning questions is how to successfully introduce progressive planning concepts that support smart growth, environmental sustainability, and balanced socio-economic development in the very dynamic, politically splintered, and private investment dominated fringe areas of today's metropolis (Raco & Street, 2012; Grant, 2009; Wilkinson, 2012). The emerging socio-economic polycentric morphology is not yet fully crystallized into effective sustainable practices because of institutional inertias, political fragmentation, and rigid regulatory frameworks (McLaughlin, 2012; van Rijswijk & Salet, 2012).

Major urban development projects play a pivotal role in the spatial development of the new polycentric region. Inner urban fringes in particular have become the preferred location for (often contested) investments because of the combination of lower current land values and high opportunities of profit in the long run. New university campuses with start-up facilities (e.g. science parks), conference and exhibition centers, retail and entertainment complexes, and spectator sports facilities have started to dominate the spatial planning agenda of areas that in the past were called 'the periphery'. While we can witness an increased dynamism of inner peripheries, the consolidated practices and institutions of metropolitan planning are often not tailored to address their new economic relevance in respect to core city economies. The spatial, social, environmental, and economic results of these interventions show large local varieties. These areas bring about large opportunities for planning, but it is not yet clear how these qualities can be enhanced towards progressive planning solutions. The final goal of the research is to understand what determines planning outcomes in the periphery

in order to inform practice and research on possible sources of paradigmatic change for polycentric metropolitan areas.

Early research demonstrates that the socio-economic outcomes of spatial interventions can depend on numerous factors, from the role of national government to the re-framing of problems and from land use norms to the role of business interests (Oosterlynck et al, 2011; Salet, 2008; Majoor, 2009). Others have underlined that new urban spaces express different local responses to capital restructuring and shifting strategies of investment (Swyngedouw et al, 2002). All these are fundamental components explaining the establishment of developmental policies for outer urban areas, but they exclude other factors that are equally important to explain the variation of planning and spatial outcomes. This article constructs a conceptual framework that could complement this knowledge by selectively looking at the political drivers of peripheral development in combination with emerging economic trends.

Projects in the periphery take place with political tensions and changing power constellations, reorganizing around developmental objectives. In these dynamic political spaces, the contrasting forces of national government, core cities, and market actors are negotiating for control of development. However, current research tends to under-investigate the role of electoral, symbolic, and ideological elements at play and thus does not give a full account of socio-political contexts in development policies. This paper will focus particularly on the behavior of political groups. After introducing the major concepts and hypothesis in the next section, the paper will provide an in-depth analysis of three cases to elaborate on these dynamics.

SOURCES OF POWER IN FRINGE AREA DEVELOPMENT

Existent research has detected three major sources of power underlying area development in metropolitan fringes: (a) national governmental actor strategies; (b) core city government strategies; and (c) private land development strategies.

*National governmental actor strategies*¹: despite arguments that suggest a ‘hollowing out of the state’ in some countries (Rhodes, 1994), empirical works in Europe demonstrate that national planning agents are not fully abdicating their role in steering local development (Alterman, 2001; Greenwood & Newman, 2010). Many European national planning systems still integrate regulative and legislative instruments that allow the national government to influence localized processes of decision making in land use (e.g. national subsidies, specific exemption regulations, or fiscal zoning) (Savini, 2012b; Fainstein, 2008). Yet, there is a shift in the forms of state governance, which today is based on a higher degree of specialization and localization, executed through new instruments based on bilateral negotiations between governmental levels (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007). Unlike the past, national governments often specialize their role to focus on urban economic ‘champions’ where local economic development is expected to generate national gains. We are interested in the political and economic nature of this new ‘spatial selectivity’ of the national state towards outer locations which is fostered by means of ‘hegemonic projects’ (Crouch & Le Galès, 2012; Jones, 1997).

Core city government strategies: recent empirical studies have demonstrated that polycentrism does not necessarily mean power symmetry between city-regional nodes, often entailing a bipolar regional geography (Halbert, 2004). Particularly in the European context the economic interdependency of inner and outer locations is high. Core cities become the central node of an ‘archipelago’ of poles and maintain key political powers to influence regional spatial policies (Pain, 2008; Salet, 2006). These cities can still benefit from historically built political alliances with higher governmental levels and have closer connections with active global investors. However, the development of the inner periphery – just outside their jurisdiction – entails a tension between these centripetal politics and centrifugal economic dynamics. While inner cities remain pivotal leaders in determining city-regional policies, the periphery

becomes a necessary partner for realizing many projects. We are here interested in the different ways the core city's pivotal role in urban peripheral development is orchestrated (Lefèvre 1998; Kantor et al, 2012).

Private land development strategies: it has been largely proven that city-regions reflect a process of capital restructuring and that metropolitan planning is the new territorial scale to govern investment opportunities for global capital (Jones, 2001). Recent works have suggested that the outcomes of these initiatives can be predicted by looking at capital accumulation circles and market shifts (McGuirk, 2012). Inter-municipal policies have thus been associated with the need to address the redistribution of urban activities in response to changing geographies of investment, the need to coordinate public investments to enable growth, and the need to address negative externalities at the regional scale. Research has shown that projects around major cities are often guided by a strategy of land valorization, and thus are activated by growth-oriented coalitions composed of local entrepreneurial governments and globalized business interests. These projects often represent a strongly *depoliticized* planning practice with hybrid organizational structures between public governments and private investors (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012). Less clear in contemporary literature is the influence of private peripheral land development dynamics on the political dynamics of alliance formation at the local level. While the connection between market interests of capital accumulation and local polities has been investigated in respect of inner city development (e.g. growth machines), this relationship has not yet been addressed at a regional scale that includes polities other than core cities. This is where our interest in this research lies.

These three sources of power address changing conditions in peripheral development. It is crucial to construct an integrated framework able to understand how different constellations explain the variety of emergent urban patterns. Following Phelps, Wood, and

Valler (2011), a careful study needs to be made of the *policy tensions* between these forces in achieving progressive peripheral development planning values. While existent literature has already emphasized the relevance of market and capital restructuring in changing these constellations, the political linkages between the other two remain under-investigated. These linkages are not only economic, but they have *ideological and symbolic* nature, following different forms of rationality. The next section will briefly explain these drivers, introduce the conceptual framework, and establish the hypothesis of this study.

THE MISSING ELEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY PLANNING RESEARCH: POLITICAL-ELECTORAL DYNAMICS

The role of political and economic power in research on urban development is certainly not a novelty and metropolitan areas are recognized as political constructs (Jonas, 2012). Since the 1990s, local practices have been explained by looking at electoral tactics of political subjects and investment ambitions of businesses (Mollenkopf, 1994; Savitch & Kantor, 2002; Stone, 1993). Early studies clearly asserted that urban development is accountable to electoral and financial strategies of power consolidation (Elkin, 1987). However, they do not apply the same dynamics within politically constructed metropolitan action spaces (Phelps & Wood, 2011), nor are they specifically geared towards understanding the complex governance processes that take place in large-scale urban development projects.

Inner-metropolitan divisions can be understood as the product of instrumental strategies of power consolidation and ideological differentiation (De Maesschalck, 2011) around major societal categorizations or cleavages, like center/periphery, labor/capital, and rich/poor (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Keil, 2001). While political scientists have largely mapped the changing geography of consensus and preferences in current national, urban, and suburban governments

(Oliver and Ha, 2007), it is not yet clear how these changes affect decisions on land use and city-regional development policies. Spatial planning is a political process of power reconfiguration (Healey, 2006) and as such is also driven by electoral variables, which are mostly kept in the background by planning research (Campbell, 2001). However, electoral dynamics are fundamental in grasping the relationship between social change, shifts in public opinion and popular consensus over territorial policies, and more complex changes in urban politics. The ambition of political parties to gain democratic power is still a major component in urban politics. In particular, when looking at the governance of peripheral change *“the ownership and organizational structure of the suburban (and post-suburban) economy and the role of political coalitions in driving the development of these settlements remain underexamined”* (Phelps et al, 2011, 374). The changing position of political coalitions and of business interests is also *“inextricably interlinked with the role of the state in facilitating development [...] and yet the vitally important role of the state in the production of post-suburbia has barely begun to be explored”* (idem).

To explain the different planning outcomes in the periphery we concentrate on the hypothesis that the relationship between the three sources of power introduced above depends on a combination of electoral dynamics and financial dynamics. While the second of these factors has been largely investigated in the literature on the politics of urban development, we more selectively discuss the role of political dynamics and their interaction with economic factors. These drivers are prominent in the confrontation between different political arenas to address market shifts. Government executives, emergent political parties, and pressure groups in local political contexts are in confrontation with broader interests like national authorities, national cabinets, regional councils, and emergent national parties. The former are more concerned with the costs and gains of land development while the latter instrumentally view local urban change as a resource for regional growth and broader geo-politics. Peripheral municipalities are not powerless in front

of market dynamics, and they follow specific logics of action that do not necessarily entail objectives of capital accumulation and growth. The electoral tactics of city governments always build on symbolic and ideological strategies of consensus management and political power accumulation. This means a focus on the interactions, confrontations, and negotiations between groups that own political power in regional policy making. Planning strategies might express a tactical use of specific rhetoric, demands, and ideological statements oriented to construct consensus, aggregate interests, and seduce constituents (Downs, 1959; Swanstrom, 1988). Peripheral spaces are in this sense a political construct, instrumentalized by different groups to restructure geo-political configurations of power in city-regional governance. Development corporations and land investors become part of this power game, but not necessarily the major players. In the periphery, these political negotiations are not simply local issues but affect city-regional growth as well, with their dominant perceptions to be translated into concrete land use policies. They directly affect land use choices, infrastructure, and economic and social policies within polycentric cities, and thus pose the conditions for social redistribution at wider levels.

By implication, we expect that when the tensions between these sources of power lead to the dominance of one, urban development interventions in the periphery will show less balanced (social, spatial, and equitable) outcomes or long standing political gridlocks. These gridlocks will thus reflect conflicting politics, whose explanation must be found in electoral confrontation. When investment projects are dominated by national strategies they are likely to stimulate one-sided top-down developments that accommodate nationally relevant economic functions (e.g. high speed train station, intermodal transport hubs, large business centers). This might create negative effects on localities, with splintering between national-global and local development (Graham & Marvin, 2001). Predominately core city-driven political alliances might produce urban development strategies of spatial 'domination' in more vulnerable fringe locations, with projects geared to assist city-core

economic growth. Large municipalities (especially national capitals) are the major electoral basin for national parties. Finally, peripheral developments dominated by private market-led regional coalitions are likely to increase land speculation in outer vacant land and decrease community benefits (e.g. environment with poor urban amenities). This also risks the reproduction of disconnected urban environments, with possible generation of urban sprawl or even the emergence of patterns of self-excluded urbanism, like gated communities, in outer localities. Figure 5.1 gives a visual summary of our conceptual framework and hypothesis.

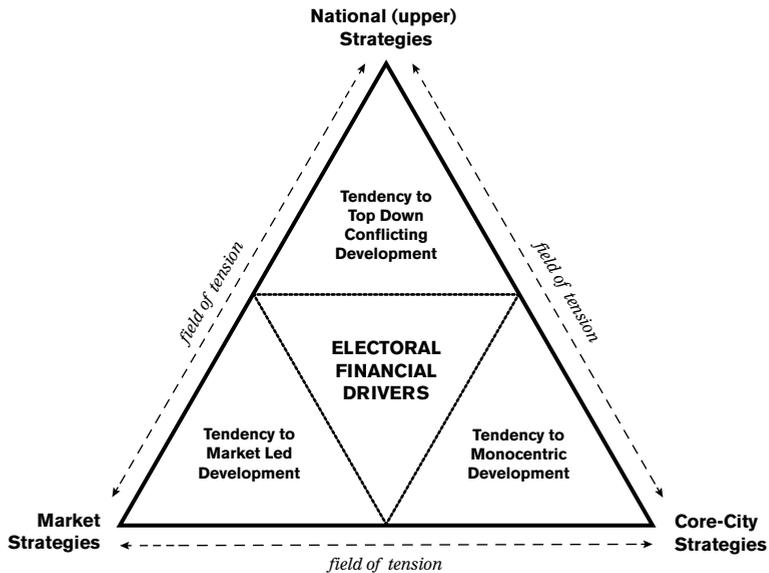


Fig. 5.1: Conceptual model to study peripheral urban development projects.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The hypotheses will be tested by empirical investigation on concrete ongoing strategic urban projects. To do this we concentrate on inner peripheral zones, mostly characterized by early 20th century industrialization and urbanization, in three major European metropolises that are witnessing peripheral revitalization: Amsterdam, Paris, and Milan. Our particular interest in these areas is due to the combination of opportunities for land development and the difficult conditions for enabling urban change. The three selected projects show similar spatial and socio-economic patterns. They are patchworks of different urban spaces, often polluted and in need of remediation, and relatively outside of the core real estate markets. Yet, they can capitalize on their strategic location within dense urban areas connected by existent infrastructures.

In data collection, particular attention has been given to the role of politicians, the position of party agendas, and to the historical ideological issues at stake. The material has been collected through extensive fieldwork on-site, desk research (policy documents, newspapers, archives), and around 35 in-depth interviews per project with politicians, academics, and planners². Questions posed addressed the motivations behind land use and infrastructure choices. These data have been cross-analyzed, looking at debates taking place within municipal councils. Particular attention has been given to the different perceptions between officials in upper tiers of government, core cities, and neighbor municipalities affected by the development. The quantitative and qualitative political data have been combined with the financial and economic prospects of projects in order to discover the effect of changed political conditions. Data on electoral turnout have been used to address this point when available. The research also looked at the financial construction of the interventions and land ownership to detect the long-short term profit expectations of both private and public actors involved. In particular, we used interviewing to reveal whether strategies of stakeholders were supported by cohesive coalitions that either overcame fields of tension or reinforced confrontation (Savini, 2012a; 2012b).

THE RAISING OF THE INNER PERIPHERY IN PARIS, MILAN, AND AMSTERDAM: DIVERGENCE IN CONVERGENCE

Paris, Milan, and Amsterdam show centrifugal spatial urban expansion in combination with a more recent activation of policies for inner city densification (Kunzmann, 2004). The three cities have been following comparable trends, with a light population spillover in the 1980s and an increase of core city population since 2000 (to a lesser extent in Paris). The three cities share common trajectories of urban polycentrism: the upcoming of outer development areas coupled with the emergence of strategic corridors between the core city and key transport locations³. These new morphologies establish the inner periphery as the interface between centrifugal trends of extension of the functional space and the consolidated cores of the metropolis.

Recent planning documents in the three cities have recognized this significant developmental potential in the inner ring of peripheral locations, where dense urban textures are combined with urban voids and potentially high land values. The Amsterdam Structural Vision (*Structuurvisie Amsterdam 2040*) expresses a strategy of 'inner-city out-rolling' into the inner ring area with urban densification to create outer attractive environments. Similarly, Paris has activated a policy of regeneration for the inner ring in 2001, the Great Project of Urban Renewal (*Grand Projet de Renouveau Urbain*), consisting of 12 priority areas around the périphérique. In Milan, to a lesser extent, the current Territorial Government Plan (*Piano del Governo del Territorio 2011*) locates major project areas along corridors extending towards the city's border. These policies identify similar social, spatial, and economic 'progressive' objectives for peripheral development: new 'spatial qualities', mixed land uses, environmentally sustainable structures, reuse of vacant spaces, and densification against urban sprawl.

Paris Nord-Est (PNE), Sesto San Giovanni Falck (Falck), and Amsterdam North-West (ANW), are among the most relevant projects of urban development taking place within these locations.

With a comparable size (PNE 2m sqm, Falck 1.5m sqm, and ANW 2.5m sqm⁴), they share common morphological features: fragmented vacant spaces, disconnected areas, obsolete infrastructures, polluted land, and an alternation of scattered residential zones (mostly social housing built in the 1960s-70s). They are urban voids within densely built urban structures, and represent spatial fractures between core city functions and outer fringe residential locations.

The following sections show why the planning processes and outcomes of these three projects substantially diverge despite their comparable locations and socio-spatial features. Although they have all been activated between 1999 and 2002, Paris Nord-Est is today an example of relatively successful, well-balanced cross-border area development. The Falck area has been suffering from a long lasting political grid-lock, while Amsterdam North-West turned into a planning laboratory of organic development.

PARIS NORD-EST: CROSS-BORDER COALITION FOR SPATIAL INNOVATION

The transformation of the north-east sector of Paris Municipality became more than a simple project of urban redevelopment after the first left-wing executive of Paris took power in 2002. The redevelopment of the area surrounding the border of the city became a political issue of confrontation between an emerging local left-wing coalition and the consolidated national right wing parties. Paris Nord-Est is today an experiment of inter-municipal cooperation aimed at reconnecting the inner city with its *banlieue* spatially and politically. It targets 2m sqm of the poorer districts of Paris Municipality (18th and 19th), a patchwork of disconnected plots, social housing, and the lowest land values in the city. Despite great developmental opportunities in the Parisian real estate market, the project does not resemble the pro-growth development we would expect from traditional state-endorsed large projects. Instead, PNE is an attempt to overcome a governance context characterized by

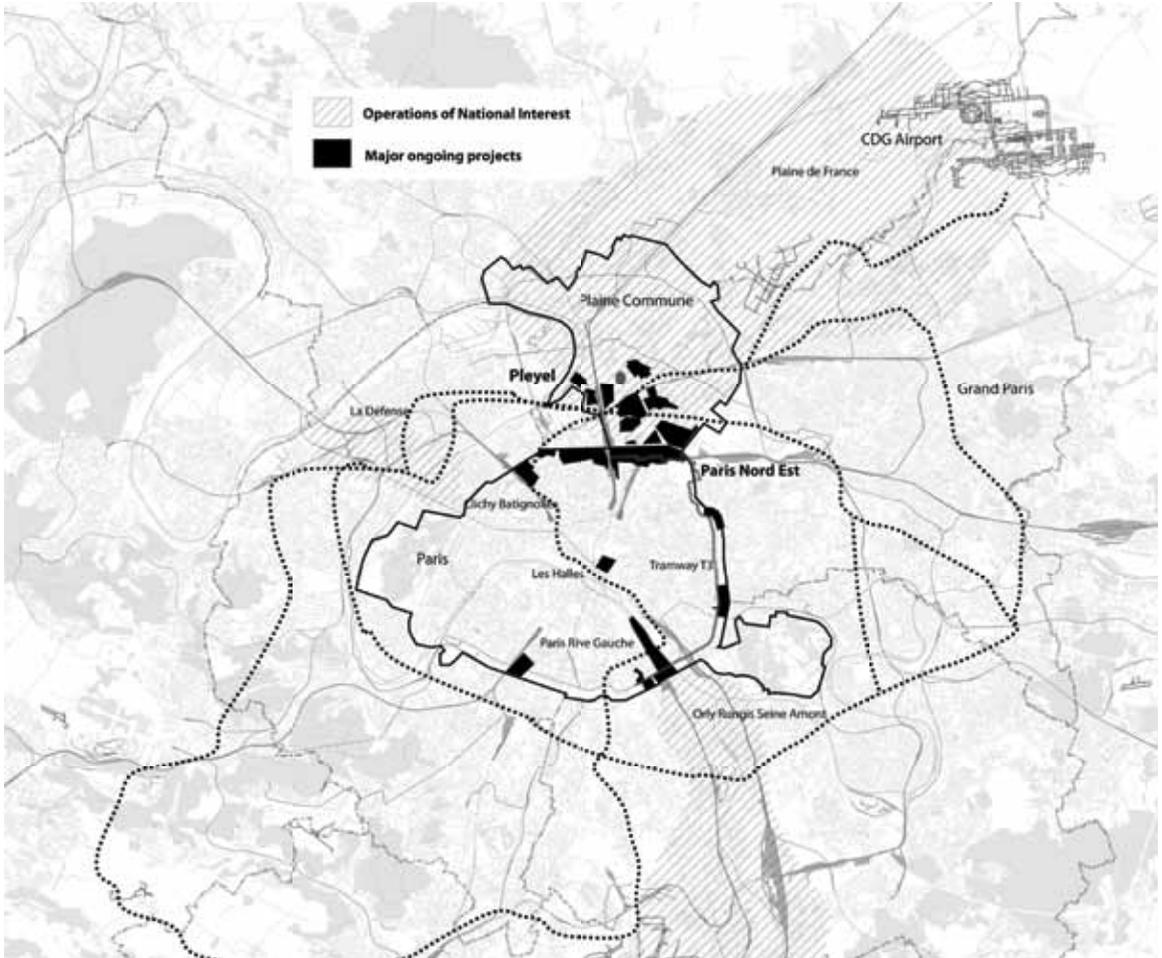


Fig. 5.2. Major projects in Paris and Plaine Commune.

inter-municipal competition that has paralyzed innovative metropolitan policies for decades (Fourcaut & Flonneau, 2007; Lefèvre 2002). The project attempts to combine social and economic objectives, focusing on social housing development, intermodal public transport, innovative building structures, and reuse. The project forecasts a total built area of 1,374,639 sqm, with 44% comprising housing (50% of which is social housing), large infrastructural works (including a new station and the covering of the highway), and a series of green connections between Paris and its outside urban area⁵.

This cross-border project is the expression of a combined system of authoritative state policies, core city strategies, and private interests, all concentrated on the redevelopment of the dense inner periphery (Savini, 2012a). The redevelopment of the area is driven by municipalities attempting to build electoral alliances with neighboring cities on progressive developmental agendas. The city executive elected in 2001 pushed for a policy of 'rupture' and 'metropolitan cooperation', aware that their major policy objectives of democracy, equality, and livability could not be achieved without the cooperation of outer municipalities. In its governing agenda, the Paris executive recognized opportunities for power consolidation within an area that has become the major basin of the progressive left in the region and where innovative experiments of urban regeneration can be undertaken. Paris' left-wing government, chaired by the socialist Mayor Bertrand Delanoë, turned PNE into a political tool to reconstitute bonds with the red progressive groups of Plaine Commune⁶. The recent development of Paris Métropole, a cooperation of 199 municipalities in the region, started in 2007 under the leadership of Pierre Mansat (Communist Party), the alderman responsible for Paris' inter-municipal relationships. It is the political umbrella whereby a series of agreements between Paris and its banlieue are achieved on cross-border concerns of land management, social services, and urban amenities improvements (Desjardins, 2010). Different sub-projects in PNE reveal this attempt to enable spatial and political cooperation. Examples are the

prolonging of a tramway surrounding the eastern districts of the city and the development of an 'inter-municipal' neighborhood, the Gare De Mines/Fillettes.

This shift from Paris-centered politics to more inclusion of border cities instrumentally combined with emerging strategies of land developers and real-estate investors interested in valorizing their properties outside of Paris' jurisdiction (see Lefèvre and Halbert in this issue). Private actors are interested in cross-border planning in order to capitalize unused land and retail-office estates developed outside of the Paris border (where prices are lower) and combine them with the demand generated by residential development in Paris. These actors are national railway companies, today operating as private developers of their obsolete infrastructures (e.g. *Paris petite ceinture* and the SNCF land at Porte de la Chapelle), and large land owners and banks, seeking office space just outside of the city (e.g. BNP). Organized into regional networks (e.g. MEDEF), they benefit from the promotion of outer poles, especially if connected to the Grand Paris. This activism is translated into experiments of public-private partnership to achieve spatial innovation. For example, ICADE-Foncier, a large land developer in the Paris region, has engaged with the city developers (SEMs) and national investment banks (*Caisse des Dépôts and Consignations*) to redevelop the Entrepôt Macdonald, one of the core projects within PNE. This involvement was motivated by the need to coordinate the PNE housing-office programming with the redevelopment of the large area of EMGP (*Entrepôts et Magasins Généraux de Paris*).

The Paris periphery is a field of confrontation between these local dynamics of left-wing power consolidations, under the leadership of Paris' mayor, and national right wing majorities seeking domination of the economic core of the country. The north-east of Paris and the whole dense zone of the metropolitan area is a space of political conflict between local coalitions and national powers, which makes the area highly dynamic for planning. It is part of a national strategic sector, between the core city and Charles de Gaulle International Airport, where new infrastructure nodes are

planned. Although administrative decentralization has been implemented in the last 20 years, the national government is still deeply involved in area development. This involvement is executed by the *Operations of National Interest* and, more recently, with the *Grand Pari(s)*⁷. Local planning responses in PNE are an expression of the political struggle between these top-down initiatives and bottom-up achievements of cooperation, crystallized around infrastructural investments (*Contrat de Projet*) (Pinson & Le Galès, 2005; Nicholls, 2005). PNE illustrates this state-city power struggle and political cooperation becomes an active tactic to counterbalance national strategies of authority, as seen in the Loi Grand Paris⁸ which allows the state to overrule land use planning competences of municipalities in station areas.

To conclude, the Paris Nord-Est project became a political tool to enable cross-border cooperation, advancing progressive policies of social housing, transportation inter-modality, and inter-municipal planning. It is sustained by the political alignment of Paris and its proximate banlieue towards leftist progressive policies of urban regeneration. This electoral tactic is set in opposition to attempts of national right wing executives to control the legacy of Paris metropolitan planning, but is supported by proactive businesses whose profit interests are complemented by the political strategies of local governments.

MILAN FALCK: POLITICAL ISOLATION AND LOCAL GRIDLOCKS

The north-east periphery of Milan shows a different picture from that of Paris. The Falck site is located in the border municipality of Sesto San Giovanni (80,886 inhabitants) and it is 1.5m sqm of brownfield, formerly a steel factory, covering approximately 13% of the whole municipal area. Despite its pollution and the heavy costs involved with land recovery, it occupies a strategic location within the north-east corridor of Milan-Monza as it sits in the midst of a dense urban area with connection to the northern and western ring

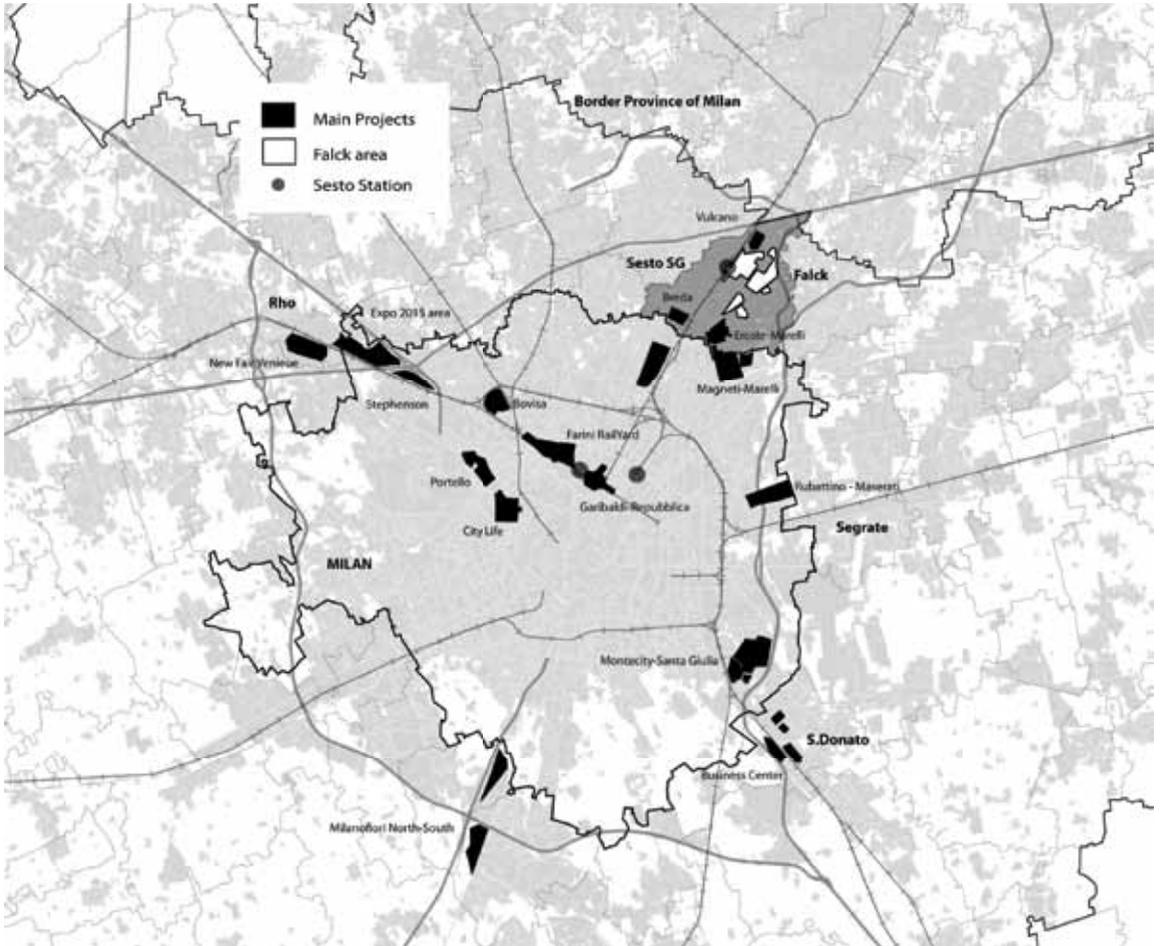


Fig. 3.2. Main ongoing projects in Milan and Sesto San Giovanni.

highways. In 2011, the area was also named as a UNESCO heritage site for its importance in industrial history. After the deindustrialization of the 1990s large private corporations envisaged opportunities of residential and office development here. The area is also interesting for city government, as public returns from its development could increase supply of public services, social housing, and scarce green spaces. However, since the factory's foreclosure in 1994, the area never found a new future; it is still the object of contention between local political coalitions and private developers, locked into political stalemate, while land speculation continues⁹. In the Lombardy negotiated planning system, the success of the project depends on a bilateral agreement between local government and the developer on gains and benefits from interventions (*Programma Integrato d'Intervento*). This legacy is the expression of a critical position that peripheral municipalities occupy in Milan's metropolitan area: they are loci of great opportunities but they suffer institutional isolation from both core city policies and regional strategies of development.

The geo-political confrontation between the Milan municipality and upper levels of government emerged in Sesto in response to market pressures. After deindustrialization, the Falck site soon became an area to valorize by building real estate. The first attempts were undertaken by Falck area industry itself, through a specific think-tank (*Parco Scientifico-Teconologico Ambientale*). A second attempt was undertaken in 2001 by a local developer in cooperation with *Banca Intesa*, one of the largest banks in the region. These attempts repeatedly clashed against the reluctant local government. The latest attempts, undertaken by a powerful joint stock company (*Risanamento Spa*) and designed by Renzo Piano, proposed a dense residential development that has repeatedly encountered local skepticism. With deindustrialization, Sesto's municipal executive has been concerned by socio-political change within the process of urban change. Deindustrialization triggered a potential increase in high-middle classes in the area, workers of financial economies and third sectors, at the expense of bulk of the city's left-wing constituency

(existing workers communities and smaller manufacturing). Yet, this parochial approach has brought negative effects, with long lasting vacancy and increased public dissatisfaction at the local level. Defensive political tactics resulted in the creation of a masterplan in 2011 that lacks clear benchmarks for implementation, while continuing to increase the stock of large retail and private housing. These factors have since led to the electoral defeat of the coalition in power in 2012.

Seeing the great opportunities of land development, the project was largely instrumentalized by local leftist-communist coalitions in power within Sesto. They saw an opportunity to build their local constituency and sustain left-wing politics, today rapidly declining in a region historically dominated by the neo-liberal right and a breeding ground of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's constituency. The Milan metropolitan area is today a field of political contestation rather than a scale of policy innovation. The city has been the historical stronghold of the liberal right in the country and it benefitted from a strong political axis with the region, fostering radio-centric infrastructural policies. Milan and its fringe compete for profitable developments and scarce subsidies from the provincial and regional levels. The inward looking focus of Milan's urban policies is also instrumental to maintain the substantial political power of Milan's constituencies at the regional scale and to sustain the capacity to lobby for regional investments in the city against an expanding (and politically challenging) hinterland. The linkages between the core city and its periphery are thus non-cooperative, non-institutionalized, and highly politicized (Balducci, 2003). Several experiments of cooperation between Milan and its fringe since the 1970s have been jeopardized by party politics and power struggles over regional planning. The *Piano Intercomunale Milanese* in the 1970s and the *Città di Città* strategic plan of 2005 (Balducci et al. 2011) did not survive electoral shifts, and this same parochialism also hindered the implementation of annexation policies in the 1990s (Law 142/1990). This fragmentation is alimented by inward looking strategies of core-city development;

Milan's structural plan (*Piano del Governo del Territorio*, 2011), for example, confirms a mono-centric strategy of urban growth, pushing for profitable development within its borders: a 'solitary post-modern municipalism' (Boatti, 2011). It is based on a supply-oriented planning strategy, traditionally supported by neo-liberal right wing majorities, aiming at inner city growth and concentration of high value economic activities (finance, services, knowledge economy, higher education).

The political position of higher levels of government did not help in capitalizing Milan's peripheral opportunities into a mature polycentrism. The region and the province (the authorities with planning competences) tend to occupy a protective position in peripheral change, strongly focused on infrastructural issues and environmental management¹⁰. The redevelopment of strategic sectors, such as Milan's north-east, is left to local negotiations and suffers weak strategic thinking at regional and provincial levels. Differently from the past, the inner periphery is now relatively isolated despite its opportunities. In the 1990s, the region and the province could enable inter-municipal strategic planning during the early phases of deindustrialization. In those years, upper tiers of government instituted a program of post-industrial transition, enforced by subsidies for strategic areas, enabling land development to accommodate new SMEs. The North Development Agency (*Agenzia Sviluppo Nord Milano*) was one of the projects supported by regional urban policies in those years. It is still today one of the most successful attempts to govern urban development across four municipalities, aligning private, local, and provincial interests around developmental objectives (Lefèvre, 1998). However, these examples of coordinated governance for post-industrial development were driven by an electoral alliance of labor groups, large industrial businesses, and national-regional policy oriented to reindustrialization. The north of Milan is today a patchwork of nostalgic left-wing groups and a left-wing entrepreneurial government. These are in contraposition with the largely neo-liberalized city of Milan, now a location of expanding financial industry.

The periphery is thus at the crossroad between its position of dependency to Milan's economic power (i.e. suburbanization scenario) and a scenario of 'economic recovery' with new production settled in the area. This would require synergy between market investments, regional policies, and core-city agendas, but political fragmentation jeopardizes the strategic placement of peripheral development. The proactive developers encountered a vacuum of politics, with fractures between parochial majorities in Milan and Sesto San Giovanni. Milan's development policies today do not consider the future of its border and do not create planning synergies. The institutional isolation of the planning process gridlocked negotiations into the vicious circle of localism that ultimately favored opportunistic strategies of developers.

AMSTERDAM NORTH-WEST: ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT AS RESPONSE TO POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

The redevelopment of the north-west waterfront of Amsterdam shows a third type of peripheral urban change. After the 2000s, ANW rapidly became a fluid, flexible, and undefined endeavor to push housing-production within the west-north-west axes of the metropolitan area. It is a cluster of projects stretching from the most central locations of Amsterdam North (Overhoeks and Buiksloterham) to outer fringe locations along the Zaan river in the adjacent municipality of Zaanstad. The Amsterdam government has recently approached the spatial change of these peripheral locations with a planning approach that differs from the master-planned techniques traditionally employed in the city (Van der Cammen & de Klerk, 2012) by privileging organic and incremental approaches. The major objectives are the creation of new areas of living and production to favor housing production within the limit of the urbanized area. The current approach consists of small scale design, experimental land use mixes, temporary approaches, and stimulation of local activities, knowledge intensive economies, and creative economies. However, the success of this strategy depends on the

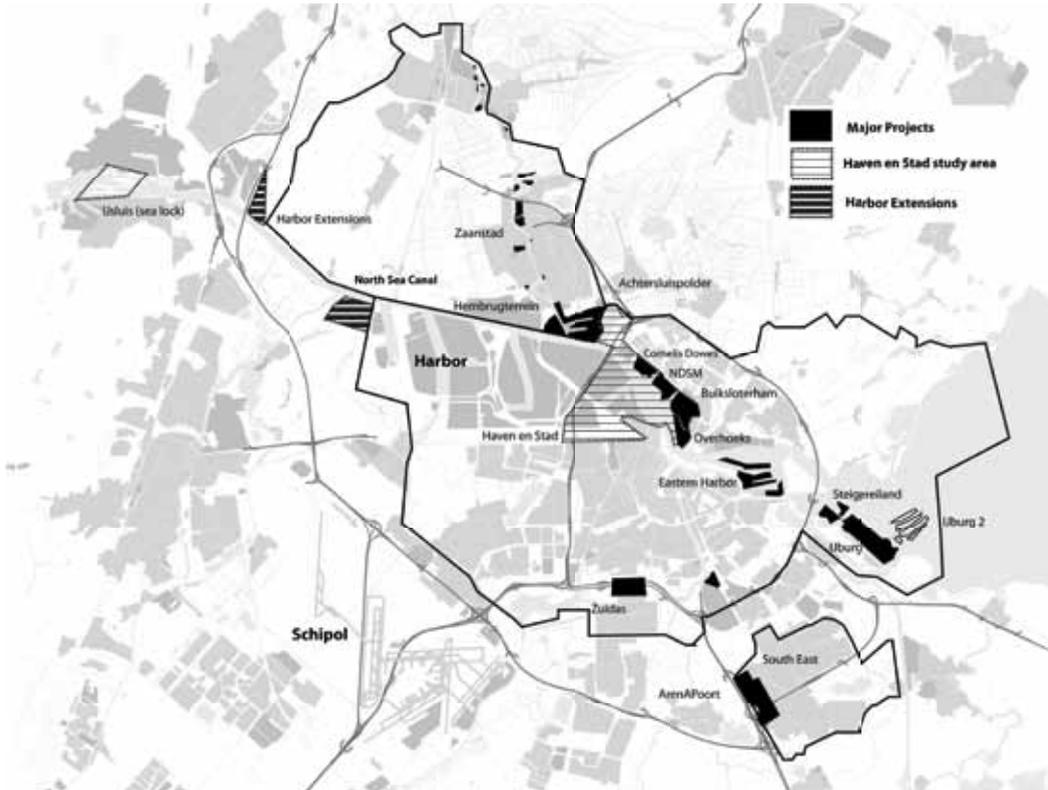


Fig. 5.4. The North Sea Canal Area including major planned interventions.

management of three major spatial trends in the area: the growth of the sea harbor, housing production for the north wing of the Randstad¹¹, and environmental management around and within the city.

The organic transformation of ANW illustrates the slow change in the geo-political equilibrium of the region and the emergence of new political fractures over developmental policies. In particular, national and local governments are confronted around issues of housing development, economic growth agendas, and green development and environmental sustainability. These political fractures connect with major debates on the role of public investments, primarily from higher levels of government, and the engagement of the city in regional planning. The north-west periphery became a unitary target for new development in 2009 when the *Gebiedsagenda Noord West Nederland*¹² identified areas of possible housing expansion. The document was built on an agenda already defined by local government through the Noordvleugel (renamed *Metropoolregio Amsterdam*) platforms, identifying the waterfront (ZaanIJ) as a major structuring project for the metropolitan area (Janssen-Jansen, 2011). The sector was identified as a potentially relevant endeavor for regional (and thus national) economies, to accommodate housing for knowledge workers, and to address urban restructuring¹³. The development of ANW is, however, a major project pushed from an emerging local alliance of the new left in the north-west axes of the region. The area, formerly governed by labor-socialist parties anchored to the industrial workers constituencies, is today a breeding ground for progressive leftist movements representing emerging middle-classes. The north was a major constituency of the Social Democrats (PvdA) but in the last 6 years it's support has decreased by 10%, combined with an average decrease of 8% for the Socialist Party (PS) in the same northern districts¹⁴. The incoming political groups in the city thus instrumentalize urban change to sustain new urban patterns. They push for existent mixes and structures, relatively close to the inner city, that were attractive for knowledge industries, R&D, and booming creative industries. This agenda is sustained by an emerging entrepreneur-

ial left in Zaanstad that joins Amsterdam in a 'red-progressive' political axis in the north-west (Louter & Eikeren, 2012). ANW is thus a political instrument of a proactive new left, seeking to accommodate incoming constituencies and to compensate for suburbanization trends in southern and eastern development areas around Schiphol, Zuidas, Bijlmermeer, and Almere.

The organic approach to ANW is underpinned by a misalignment between these emerging agendas and the growth strategies of national executives, moving towards the liberal political spectrum but more uncertain on major urban and economic policies than before. In the Netherlands, the state has always been a partner in local development, both for its historical capacity to shape urban growth¹⁵ and for its position in a fiscally centralized system. Yet, a series of liberal reforms have substantially reshaped the Dutch planning tradition and made inter-governmental alignment more dependent on area-based negotiations (Roodbol-Mekkes et al, 2012). ANW is one key political issue within a more general strategy for development of the *North Sea Canal area*, one of the locations of national economic interventions (Ministerie IenM, 2011). Organic planning is advanced as a means to progressively align public agendas towards a common developmental strategy and to facilitate this process by unpacking the problem into different issues. This tactic allows more effective negotiations between the agendas of the concerned parties, reflecting perhaps the pragmatic capacity of Dutch politics to achieve political compromise. Yet, the middle point is not yet clear. The liberal government pushes for housing growth and sustains investments in the sea harbor and logistic economy, but does not address the related effects on landscape. It pushes for deregulated housing development and localization but it does not seem to give (fiscal) means to cities to achieve their own housing policies. On the other hand, the liberal forces at the province and city are focusing on the harbor for economic growth, clashing with Amsterdam's strong greens. Here, the green-left pushes for new housing within existing urban borders and in doing so needs to address political conflicts with both pro-harbor groups and pro-suburbanization parties.

The organic development approach is an attempt to generate, rather than address, opportunities of development. The ANW area became an agenda issue as soon as new political forces emerged in Amsterdam and Zaanstad, pushing for transformation of its industrial structure and new forms of economy. This endeavor has been stimulated from the bottom by emerging political groups pushing for specific typologies of urban spaces for a new constituency of urban dwellers, while the role of national government has reduced, with pursuit of unclear socio-economic and territorial strategies over the area. The state is politically pressing and endorsing the project (also by legal constraints), but it does so without any sort of direction due to progressive decentralization of competences. This strategy is best geared to address small scale investments, enabling self-financing by smaller land owners and end users among incoming populations. It is also an inevitable response to the lack of proactive market actors. Market pressure unexpectedly seems to focus on many other sites in the city-region, like the south (Schiphol, South Axis) and east (towards Utrecht) with rather different planned outcomes than ANW.

CONCLUSIONS

Peripheral locations are nowadays key areas for development. In Paris, Milan, and Amsterdam urban planning policies demonstrate how the fringe of core municipalities have turned into a space for intensification, new economic development, and planning innovation. We focused on these spaces because of the large opportunities that they bear for innovation in polycentric city-regions. In this paper we looked at planning as political confrontation and cooperation between three major sources of power: core city strategies of growth, national (and regional) development strategies, and market investment patterns. We hypothesized that in order to understand different trajectories of metropolitan development it is important to look at how political-electoral dynamics affect the relationship between these sources of power.

	PARIS NORD-EST	MILAN FALCK	AMSTERDAM NORTH-WEST
CORE CITY – NATIONAL (UPPER) GOV. STRATEGIES	National pro-growth right wing coalition conflicting with local red progressive coalition.	Mono-centric conservative politics. Lack of regional coalition on peripheral development.	Development oriented progressive politics on the border, focused on creative industries and new spatial qualities
NATIONAL(UPPER) GOV. STRATEGIES – MARKET	Pro-growth strategies of peripheral development.	Lack of inter-governmental political coalition on growth strategy. Regional development jeopardized by electoral strategies	Fragmented approach. Weak political coalition on priorities and typologies of investments
CORE CITY – MARKET	Socially progressive local agendas combined with land development strategies of poorer districts.	Core city centered pro-growth coalition. Conservative peripheral politics towards market	Public led projects with ambitions to create new development opportunities. Market invests in different areas.
POSITION OF THE PERIPHERAL MUNICIPALITY	Politically aligned with the core city. Dependent on core city investments	Inward looking and isolated. Conflicting with core city interests	Dependent on core city and politically aligned. Seeking to join Amsterdam trends.
TREND IN PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT	CROSS-BORDER Progressive planning coalition for border area to counter balance national domination. Major investments on border areas endorsed by public governments	ISOLATED Political gridlock springing from conservative planning Resistance of local ‘red’ coalition to post-industrial change.	ORGANIC Ill-defined project with uncertain outcomes. No unitary agenda. No strong investments on border area

Fig. 5.5. Summary table on fields of tension in peripheral development.

The three cases show different patterns of development (see table 2). In some cases market actors are central in the development process and decisions seem to reflect political and ideological rationalities rather than calculations of development's costs and gains. This is why the position of peripheral spaces where projects are developed differs from case to case. In Paris, a cross-border coalition of local politics, emergent market actors, and national governments was formed to redevelop the dense inner periphery. The electoral-political conflicts between local left-wing progressive majorities and national right-wing constituencies have pulled towards innovative planning solutions that stimulate cooperation based on electoral alignment. To the contrary, in Milan the redevelopment of the large and strategically located Falck brownfield has been jeopardized by inter-municipal conflicts and has thus pushed local coalitions into a hopeless resistance to market trends. The project became the stronghold of a nostalgic red coalition in Sesto San Giovanni, losing a regional power game with inward looking strategies. In Amsterdam, a local left-wing progressive coalition for creative city development emerged between Amsterdam and Zaanstad. There still seems to be uncertainty on the urban future of the area due to unclear political influence at the national level, the advancement of disconnected policies, and inactive markets in that specific zone. Political negotiations around locations, typologies, and the developmental agendas of the broad metropolitan areas have triggered less straightforward planning, instead employing more organic (with uncertain yields) attempts to generate, rather than respond to, shifting markets.

In the article we arrive at three major conclusions: first, new urban patterns in the periphery of cities are not only an expression of shifting geographies of investment but also entail political and electoral calculations by public actors in power, which are often different (or even in conflict) from logics of economic growth. These factors can thus be a space for further investigation to understand the structural factors that might enable or hinder progressive planning solutions. This is especially significant when planning must

adapt to economic recession. Secondly, this paper shows that peripheral development entails a redefinition of broader geo-political configurations at the regional level, between the three major powers of core cities, upper levels of government, and regional investors. The periphery is thus a political object, often instrumentalized by different political groups to advance particular views and authority over the regional space. Accordingly, peripheral development requires a larger scope of analysis than simple land use planning. Third, this paper suggests that although the periphery is becoming a key metropolitan space, the asymmetries between peripheral municipalities and traditional sources of power hinder integrated planning. Peripheral municipalities seem to have not yet gained the political power to influence regional growth policies. Yet, the periphery is an object of debate rather a well-defined planning endeavor. We thus suggest that in order to achieve progressive spatial development in city-regional planning it is important to shift focus from core-periphery to more symmetric geo-political frames.

Planning certainly is, and will always be, a political task. This paper contributes to this understanding with an empirical account of the electoral dimension of this political process. This is a dimension that is sometimes not considered in the field of urban politics and even less in planning studies. This paper shows that an electoral-spatial approach can explain policy responses to planning problems. Further research could look more specifically and operationally at how specific party politics influence urban policies. International comparison and large N case studies might complement single-outcome case studies like this one. In this paper we suggest that this method has large potential but it is not yet mature. It can uncover alternative explanations to polycentric city morphologies and thus reveal alternative manners to address the spatial implications of macro-economic shifts.

NOTES

- 1) In some cases, the planning role of national government is less relevant and the major upper level involved is the region (e.g. Italy and Germany).
- 2) Transcripts of all these interviews are available from the authors.
- 3) For example, the South Axis-Schiphol corridor in Amsterdam, the Plaine de France-Charles de Gaulle corridor in Paris, and the Bovisa-Rho convention center towards Milan Malpensa airport.
- 4) This size includes the Noordelijke IJ-Oever project, 1.95m sqm (NDSM, Buiksloterham, and Overhoeks) plus the study areas of Hembrugterrein and Achtersluispolder (total approximate 0.5m sqm). The project also invested in the southern part of the city (i.e. Haven en Stad study area).
- 5) Data, March 2009, *Stratégie Urbaine*, Paris Municipal office.
- 6) Plaine Commune is a collective body managing planning for 5 municipalities that was traditionally in a conflicting position towards Paris but today fosters more entrepreneurial policies (Subra 2011).
- 7) The Grand Pari(s) is a political instrument of Nicolas Sarkozy's national right-wing government that until mid-2012 was searching for authority in the red Capital region. With the election of François Hollande this is likely to change but it is not yet clear in what way.
- 8) The *Loi Grand Paris* is the the juridical translation of the *Grand Pari(s)* project,
- 9) From 2002 to 2011 the price inflated from 220m euros to 433m euros, while the built program boomed from 750,000 sqm to 1.1m sqm.
- 10) The *Territorial Regional Plan* and the *Territorial Plan of Provincial Coordination* are de facto tools to fix the limits of local development but rarely inform on strategic choices of polycentric growth.
- 11) Today it amounts to a total of 150,000 units within 2040, with a yearly production deficit of 5000 dwellings.
- 12) An operational device to implement the national *multi-year investment program* (MIRT, 2012).
- 13) 30,000 new houses and 40,000 economic activities were theoretically forecasted in this sector.
- 14) Electoral data are available at the Amsterdam Statistical Office yearly overview <http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/publicaties/amsterdamincijfers/>
- 15) Examples of this are seen in bundled suburbanization, VINEX, and National Key projects.

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APPENDIX

- LIST OF INTERVIEWEES -

**MINISTRY OF VROM
(CHAPTER 1)
SEPTEMBER 2009 – FEBRUARY 2010**

**PARIS NORD EST
SEPTEMBER 2009 – FEBRUARY 2011**

**MILAN - EX-FALCK SITE SESTO SAN GIOVANNI
SEPTEMBER 2010 – JULY 2011**

**AMSTERDAM ZAANIJ
SEPTEMBER 2011 – FEBRUARY 2012**

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- The list of interviewees has been organized by specific project name of investigation.
 - The functions of interviewees and affiliated institutions refer to the time of the interview or, in case of retired officials, of the previous task.

MINISTRY OF VROM: SEPTEMBER 2009 – FEBRUARY 2010

NAME	FUNCTION	PROJECT NAME
RENE DANIELS	Project Leader Rotterdam 1988-1991	Kp van Zuid
BRAM VAN NORDEN	Project Manager Rotterdam	Kp van Zuid
FRANK HOFMAN	Project Manager Rgd	Kp van Zuid
HUUB SMEETS	Gemeente Maastricht Former Directeur Stadsontwikkeling	Maastricht Ceramique
KEES DE JONG	Former Adjunct- Rijkscoördinator	Maastricht Ceramique
DICK REGENBOOG	Former Abp Real- Estate Manager Ceramique	Maastricht Ceramique
WIM JAN DOELMAN	Procesmanager Gemeente Maastricht	Maastricht Ceramique
ROBERT DIJCKMEESTER	Commercieel Directeur Projectbureau Zuidas	Zuidas
FANNEKE FAASEN	Algemeen Secretaris Bestuurszaken	Zuidas
JAAP BERNHARD	Project Manager Vrom	Schaalsprong Almere
WARD DE MEULEMEESTER	Project Manager Almere	Schaalsprong Almere
PIERRE VAN ROSSUM	Project Manager Pmb Amsterdam	Almere Pampus + Zuidas
CHRISTIAAN VAN DER KAMP	Wethouder MiddenDelft Land	Midden-Delfland
BERT MENS	Provincie Zuid-Holland - Hof van delftland	Midden-Delfland
BEA GOLEN	Project leader LNV	Midden-Delfland
BART-JAN KOUWENHOVEN	Project director Delft	Spoortunnel Delft

NAME	FUNCTION	PROJECT NAME
JANGEERT VAN DER POST	Assistant Process Manager / Project	Spoortunnel Delft
INE MINIS	project manager V&W - DGWater	Groot Muidrecht Noord
CARLA BISSELING	Project manager Province Utrecht	Groot Muidrecht Noord
ERIK VERSLOOT	project manager Province	Groot Muidrecht Noord
ELLEN DRIESSEN	Evaluation on NSP - Cluster Instruments	Ministry of VROM
JAQUELINE VROLIJK	Evaluation on NSP - Cluster Instruments	Ministry of VROM
LISETTE GROOT KOMERLINK	Coordinator program Nota Ruimte Budget - Randstad Urgent	Ministry of VROM
ELIEN WIERENGA	New Sleutelprojecten Investigation	Ministry of VROM
RIS VAN DER WOUDE	Evaluation Sleutelprojecten	SPB
TIJE VAATSTRA	program manager BIRK	VROM
MERIJN SNOEK	Project Leader Schaalsprong Almere	RVOB
GERRIT VAN VEGSCHEL	ING real estate - Uitvoeringsalliantie	ING Real Estate
PASCAL LAMBERIGTS	Randstad 2040 Uitvoeringsallianties	Royal Haskoning
LENNERT GOEMANS	Sneller en Beter	VROM
STEVEN WOUNDA	Centrum Publieksparticipati	CPP
MAAIKE DE BEER	Centrum Publieksparticipati	CPP
MICHIEL RUIS	Program coordinator Randstad Urgent	V&W

PARIS NORD EST: SEPTEMBER 2009 – FEBRUARY 2011

NAME	FUNCTION	INSTITUTION
MR. MEZIANI	Architect - Planner	Atelier Parisien D'Urbanisme
PAUL BAROIN	Architect – Planner	Atelier Parisien D'Urbanisme
FRANCOIS DUBOIS	Coordination Operations GPRU	Municipality of Paris
BENOIT DE SAINT-MARTIN	Project Leader Paris Nord Est	Municipality of Paris
ANNE CHABERT	Project Leader Paris Nord Est	Municipality of Paris
LAVESSIER	Advisor Mayor	19th arrondissement
FREDERIC BOURCIER	Advisor Mayor	18th arrondissement
SYLVIE AMZI	Project Leader Paris Nord Est	Municipality of Paris - DPVI
PEGGY CLEMENT	Project coordination	SEMAVIP
WITOLD MARKIEWICS	President	Paris Banlieue Environnement
JOEL IDT	PhD	Institut Français D'Urbanism
CAMILLE PICARD	Project leader	ICADE development
ANNE MOLINIER	Project leader	Plaine Commune
CHATERINE BARBÉ	Director Strategic Partnerships	Société du Grand Paris
DANIEL VIGER	Leader Territorial Strategy	Plaine Commune
ELIANE DUTARTE	Counselor	DATAR
FLORIS ALKEMADE	Architect	Entrepôt Macdonald
HUGO BEVORT	Advisor - Paris Métropole	Municipality of Paris
LUDOVIC HALBERT	Researcher	LATTS
OLIVIER GUILLOUET	Planning Advisor	ICADE - EMGP
REMI FERRAND	Architect	Agency Dusapin-Leclercq
STEPHANE LECLER	Planner	Municipality of Paris - Tramway T3

**MILAN - EX-FALCK SITE SESTO SAN GIOVANNI:
SEPTEMBER 2010 – JULY 2011**

NAME	FUNCTION	INSTITUTION
FABIO TERRAGNI	President	Development Agency North Milan ASNM
CARLO LIO	President	Milano Metropoli
DEMETRIO MORABITO	Deputy Mayor	Municipality of Sesto San Giovanni
GIUSEPPE PASINI	Developer	Gruppo Pasini - Cascina Rubina
CARLO TRIBUNO	President Breda Energia	Panel of expert Cacina Rubina
FULVIA DELFINO	Planner Director	Municipality of Sesto San Giovanni
GIANMAURO NOVARESI	Planner Director	Municipality of Sesto San Giovanni
ANTONIO LONGO	Architect	Panel of expert Cascina Rubina
LAURA POGLIANI	Architect	General Plan Sesto San Giovanni
GIANPAOLO MAFFIOLETTI	Architect	General Plan Sesto San Giovanni
MATTEO BOLOCAN	Researcher	DiAP - Polytechnic of Milan
GEROSA ANGELO	Alderman Urban Planning	Municipality of Sesto San Giovanni
MATTEO E DANIELE	Activists	Social Center Baldina Sesto San Giovanni
ALESSANDRO MENEGHELLI	Engeneer	Cascina Rubina - Risanamento spa
ENRICO SCHIAPPAPIETRA	Planning department	Municipality of Sesto San Giovanni
PREDO HENRIQUEZ	Architect	Municipality of Sesto San Giovanni
SERGIO BRENNIA	Architect	Polytechnic of Milan
GIULIO ZANOTTO	Political representative	Communist Party Sesto San Giovanni

**MILAN - EX-FALCK SITE SESTO SAN GIOVANNI:
SEPTEMBER 2010 – JULY 2011**

NAME	FUNCTION	INSTITUTION
CANIO DI RUGGERO	Trade Unionist	GIOM - CGIL
ANTONIO BELVEDERE	Architect	Renzo Piano Building Workshop Paris
SERGIO BRENNIA	Architect	Renzo Piano Building Workshop Paris
ANDREA TOTA	Project Leader	Sesto Immobiliare spa
FRANCO SCCHI	General Director	Study Center PIM
FILIPPO PENATI	Mayor	Sesto San Giovanni

AMSTERDAM ZAANIJ: SEPTEMBER 2011 – FEBRUARY 2012

NAME	FUNCTION	INSTITUTION
DICK SCHUILING	Professor	AMIDSt – University of Amsterdam
MARIEKE VAN SCHEDELEN	ormer Alderman	Stadsdeel Noord
HERMAN SWEN	GSB Coordinator	Municipality of Zaanstad
JESSE BOS	Member City Council	Municipality of Amsterdam
TEO VAN GOETHEM	Urban Designer	Municipality of Amsterdam
HARRY VAN DEN BERG	President	Association ANGSAAW
RENE GROENDORST	Director Project Agency	Bureau Noordwaarts
PIETER KLOMP	Masterplan North Banks	DRO Amsterdam
MICHIEL WEIJS	Former Senior policy adviso	Office alderman Spatial Planning Amsterdam

NAME	FUNCTION	INSTITUTION
HENRI DE VRIES	Former Senior policy advisor	Office Alderman Spatial Planning Amsterdam
ERIC VAN DER KOOIJ	Project Leader MIRT ZaanIJ	DRO Amsterdam
HENK GROTENDORST	Planner	Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord
JUNGEN JOOGENDOORN	Policy Advisor	OGA Amsterdam
LEONIE VAN DEN BEUKEN	MIRT ZaanIJ	Amsterdam Port Authority
SASKIA VAN DEN BEEK	Project Leader PLABEKA	Economic Affairs Amsterdam
RALPH PLOEGER	Strategic Advisor	OGA Amsterdam
RAYMOND HOFFMAN	Planner	Ministry of Ien M - Strategic Area North Holland
BART VINK	Project Leader Randstad 2040	Ministry of VROM-IenM
MIRJAM DE GRAAF	Project Leader MIRT ZaanIJ	Ministry of Internal Affairs
KEES HANSMA	Project Leader NZKG	Ministrie of IenM
HELEEN GROOT	Project Leader Gebiedsagendas	Ministry of IenM
PROJECT LEADER MIRT	Policy Advisor	Minsitry of Economic Affairs
MARC HANOU	Project Leader ZaanIJ - NZKG	Province North Holland
GERRIT VAN DER PLAS	Senior Planner	StadRegio Amsterdam
ONNO WITTEBROOD	Project Leader Overhoeks	ING real estate
STEPHAN KUNST	Project Leader NDSM	Biesterbos Ontwikkelaar

SUMMARIES

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THE URBAN PERIPHERY AND NEW AGENDAS OF URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

The urban periphery has become a highly dynamic space. The consolidation of polycentric urban patterns and the emergence of outer urban poles raise fundamental questions for planners. Spatial planning needs to redefine intervention approaches and instruments to address new spatial dynamics in times of weaker economic growth, stable real-estate markets, and post-modern household life choices. The innovative potential of the periphery lies in two particular challenges. First, there is a need to experiment, define, activate, and institutionalize new *spatial qualities* in these outer areas. Second, there is a need to achieve better coordination of spatial policies across jurisdictional borders and to institutionalize polycentric spatial concepts.

The thesis investigates the political processes that drive the redevelopment of the urban periphery. It explores how major planning agents reconfigure their relationships in order to respond to changed symmetries between core locations and peripheral zones. It aims at understanding *why*, given the spatial, functional, and economic conditions of today's metropolitan areas, we see particular planning approaches to peripheral development occur while others fail to address the challenges of collective action. It hypothesizes that more progressive planning concepts and the strategies of outer areas depend on the realignment of core municipality planning strategies and national planning policies with regional market investment strategies.

The research investigates three major redevelopment projects in Paris, Amsterdam, and Milan metropolitan areas: Paris Nord-Est, Amsterdam Northwest (ZaanIJ-North Banks), and Milan-Sesto San Giovanni's ex-Falck brownfield development. The research looks at the political tensions and dilemmas that drive these planning policies.

DIVERSITY OF RESPONSES OF PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENT

The empirical investigation of the three projects shows different planning responses to the challenges of peripheral development. Despite the common city-regional strategies of growth, local agendas tend to differentiate according to implementation techniques, planning processes, and major issues addressed. There are three types of urban development:

Cross-border: in Paris, peripheral development became a tool to overcome entrenched divisions between the core city and its banlieue. Inter-municipal development in Paris' dense zone is embryonic, with emerging experiments of both bottom-up coordination (Paris Mètropole) and top down practices of regional planning (Grand Pari(s)). Paris Nord-Est innovatively addresses issues of spatial, political, and ideological fragmentation by means of a unitary planning project, driven by the municipality of Paris. A cross-border coalition of core city politicians, neighboring municipalities, regional government, and market actors is using Paris Nord-Est to advance broader urban agendas. The project is pinned on a set of coordinated interventions under the leadership of Paris Municipality: a new connection of a tramway around the city which crosses the municipal border, an inter-municipal neighborhood crossing the motorway, and a public-private flagship redevelopment project of an existing landmark. The project is enabled with the direct participation of property investors, active in the development of the whole northeast of Paris.

Isolated peripheral development: the redevelopment of Sesto San Giovanni's ex-Falck site reveals a localistic planning process jeopardized by long lasting gridlocks in the negotiation between development corporations and local political majorities. The major planning challenge regards the pursuit of agreement between the need to activate a risky project, the political will to maintain small scale industrial spaces in the city, and the need to address socio-economic change in the area. Locally entrenched left wing majorities

conflict with large development corporations over possible scenarios of development, and the process is permeated by ideological considerations. The (most recent) negotiations seeking resolution of this planning issue have suffered from a parochial planning process, disconnected from broader dynamics of city-regional planning and metropolitan governance.

Organic development: in Amsterdam metropolitan area, the north-west periphery became a space for political and planning experimentation. Yet, past attempts to define a long term plan for the area have failed. Today the project is a patchwork of small scale interventions trying to address the combination of industrial usages, new housing supply, and environmental protection within the North Sea Canal area. The Northwest is, however, considered a space that can address accommodate housing, creative economies, flexible forms of production, and new forms of urbanities. The organic approach is geared to flexibly address the uncertainty of development. However, this approach entails fundamental dilemmas over the long term planning of Amsterdam metropolitan area. They regard the use and legitimacy of existent regulative frameworks for zoning and green protection (regulation dilemma), the calculation of risk in long term public investments (spatial investment dilemma), and the need to readdress developmental priorities of the whole city region (intervention dilemma).

THE POLITICAL CHALLENGES OF PLANNING INNOVATION

In order to explain why these different planning approaches occur, the research focuses on how political dynamics and changing electoral geographies combine with market pressures in these areas. The major subjects of these confrontations are the national and regional governments (and their respective planning strategies), the core municipalities (their visions over the metropolitan area), and the large development corporations (and their profit expectations).

The three cases show very different political constellations and dynamics. Yet, their comparison finds that, despite different political contingencies, progressive planning efforts towards the periphery might emerge from a convergence of the instrumental interests of all the three major agents mentioned. Also, conflicting relationships might constitute a basis to proactively address the periphery as a planning issue. Yet, the nature of this relationship affects the typology of planning outcomes.

Cross-border development in Paris emerges from a political and electoral confrontation over the northern periphery of the city. The progressive left has instrumentally built a discourse around the area to rejuvenate political bonds with the communist majorities in the northern banlieue. These political alliances are instrumental to counteract national top-down projects in the metropolitan area, proposed by right wing majorities. The periphery is thus an electoral issue, over which two major ideologies are confronted. Within this confrontation, Paris' progressive coalition pushes for a new socially oriented agenda and finds large local development corporations as a partner in this endeavor. The overlap between the electoral interests of local constituencies and economic/financial ambitions of regional property developers makes it possible to turn the border into a planning target.

The isolation of the Sesto San Giovanni project reflects parochial politics in Milan's metropolitan area. The large scale project is kept local by municipal left wing majorities, turning it into an instrument of political *power-holding*. Local majorities are focusing on protecting declining working class constituencies. This approach is strengthened by a mono-centric strategy employed by Milan municipality that focuses on its core within a competitive regional environment. This separation is exacerbated by electoral issues. Sesto San Giovanni still attempts to maintain its position as a productive working-class city, while Milan has long been a laboratory for the growing new liberal right in both regional and national politics. Possible attempts at coalition building suffer a lack of reflections on the gains that metropolitan development can bring about for that project.

The organic development of Amsterdam Northwest reflects the political uncertainty of Amsterdam's metropolitan area, with particular focus on the North Sea Canal. The project is lobbied at the regional and national level by local progressive left wing parties in Amsterdam, Amsterdam's northern district, and in the neighboring Zaanstad. The progressive erosion of most conservative socialist groups has opened up opportunities to trigger a change in the area. Yet, the project delineates an endogenous confrontation within Amsterdam council about possible scenarios of growth and crisis recovery. There is opposition between pro-harbor/industry related parties and fractions sustaining a more pro-active approach to transformation. The position of national planning agencies exacerbates this uncertainty, allowing a less straightforward development approach. The national majorities push for an agenda of urban growth and indirectly push for housing development, but they also transfer responsibility for housing and environmental policies to local governments. Planning agents at central levels are progressively adopting meta-governing roles with more open spatial agendas. Under these conditions, planning Amsterdam's northwest periphery becomes an opportunity to politically question the institutional basis of city planning. These questions address the capacity of zoning to enable bottom-up development, the design of new forms of public investment and new calculations of long term returns, and the need to discuss the role of publicly led projects in the frame of city-regional development.

THE RELEVANCE OF POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN PLANNING EMERGENT SPACES

The specific conclusions of three different cases can be summarized into three encompassing reflections. These conclusions are not generalizable to contexts other than those investigated but they can inform further hypotheses of research into the political dynamics of planning.

-
- *The periphery is politically constructed:* the emerging polycentrism of cities is not only an expression of shifting geographies of investment but it also entails political and electoral calculations by public actors in power. These calculations might diverge from mainstream definitions of economic growth and might even hinder developmental policies. Local politics show conservative traits under conditions of isolation, while they are pushed to change planning approaches when there is political pressure over these areas. The periphery is often instrumentalized by different political groups to advance particular views on regional growth.

 - *The periphery is a planning object in tension:* the emergence of planning agendas for outer spaces entails (and requires) a reconfiguration of consolidated power constellations. National and upper levels of government are still active players despite progressive decentralization policies. They struggle to address local dynamics and capture the economic potential of peripheral areas. Core municipalities are still powerful players in driving policies for outer areas, as they respond to changed investment geographies. This suggests that they depend more and more on the dynamism of their surroundings. Peripheral municipalities are becoming more active players in city-regional governance, but their position in urban development is not yet mature: it is reactive and bound to other subjects.

 - *The periphery as a lab to challenge planning paradigms.* The new urban question for peripheral areas questions the essential bases of planning. Definitions of core and periphery, borders, and urbanity are blurred. These challenges are not only organizational but concern the meaning of ‘governing’ peri-urban change, in times of slow or no-growth, across consolidated jurisdictional borders. The work suggests that the transformation of the periphery can be a space for

political experimentation, to experiment and design new planning concepts and instruments. In particular, further exploration might go in the direction of financial innovation in demand-led planning, contextualized uses of planning rules, and a new role for public agents in achieving planning through projects. Yet, this is not possible without a confrontation of political groups in power on fundamental planning institutions like the definition of economic growth, the cogency of prediction-based spatial plans on spontaneous change, and the position of outer areas within political metropolitan platforms.

DE STEDELIJKE PERIFERIE EN NIEUWE AGENDA'S VOOR STEDELIJKE TRANSFORMATIE

De periferie van steden is verworpen tot een zeer dynamische ruimte. De bestendiging van policentrische stedelijke patronen en de ontwikkeling van regionale sub-centra stellen planners voor fundamentele vragen. In tijden van teruglopende economische groei, vastzittende vastgoedmarkten en postmoderne leefstijlen van huishoudens moet de ruimtelijke ordening haar instrumenten en manieren van interventie ten opzichte van deze nieuwe ruimtelijke dynamiek herdefiniëren. De innovatieve kracht van de periferie staat of valt met twee specifieke uitdagingen. Ten eerste is er de noodzaak de nieuwe ruimtelijke kwaliteiten in deze buitengebieden te definiëren, vast te leggen en hiermee te experimenteren. Ten tweede gaat het om het nastreven van betere afstemming van ruimtelijk beleid over bestuurlijke grenzen en het 'institutionaliseren' van policentrische concepten.

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de politieke processen achter de verandering van de stedelijke periferie. Het onderzoekt hoe de belangrijkste planningsactoren hun relaties opnieuw vormgeven om te kunnen beantwoorden aan de nieuwe verhoudingen tussen centrum-stedelijke locaties en perifere gebieden. Het probeert te begrijpen *waarom*, gegeven de specifieke ruimtelijke, functionele en economische condities van de hedendaagse metropool, bepaalde planningsmethoden ten aanzien van de ontwikkeling van de periferie zich succesvol ontwikkelen terwijl andere falen in de uitdagingen van collectieve actie. De hypothese is dat de meest bevorderlijke planningsconcepten en strategieën voor buitengebieden zich richten op het onderling afstemmen van de planningsstrategieën van centrale gemeenten, nationaal ruimtelijk beleid en regionaal opererende marktpartijen.

Het onderzoek richt zich op drie grote herontwikkelingsprojecten in de metropolitane regio's van Parijs, Amsterdam en Milaan, respectievelijk Paris Nord-Est, Amsterdam Noordwest (Zaan-IJ en Noordelijke IJ-oever) en Milaan-Sesto San-Giovanni ex-Falck. Het kijkt naar de politieke spanningen en dilemma's achter het ruimtelijk beleid voor deze gebieden.

GEVARIEERDE ANTWOORDEN OP DE ONTWIKKELING VAN DE PERIFERIE

Het empirisch onderzoek naar deze drie projecten laat zien dat er verschillend wordt omgegaan met de uitdagingen van perifere ontwikkeling. Ondanks dat de regio's een op economische groei gericht beleid delen, variëren lokale agenda's in implementatie technieken, planning proces en onderwerpen die op de agenda staan. Er zijn drie typen van stedelijke ontwikkeling te onderscheiden:

Cross-border: in Parijs werd de fysieke ontwikkeling van de periferie ingezet als middel om de diepgewortelde contrasten tussen de centrumstad en haar banlieu te slechten. Intergemeentelijke ontwikkelingsprojecten in de sterk verstedelijkte agglomeratie staan nog in de kinderschoenen maar experimenten met zowel een bottom-up (Paris Métropole) als top-down (Grand Pari(s)) aanpak zijn momenteel in uitvoering. In Paris Nord-Est wordt, met Parijs als aanjager, op een innovatieve manier omgegaan met ruimtelijke, politieke en ideologische fragmentatie door middel van een gecentraliseerd project. Een coalitie bestaande uit politici van de kernstad, omliggende gemeenten, de regionale overheid en marktpartijen gebruikt Paris Nord-Est voor een bredere metropolitane agenda. Het project draait om een aantal gecoördineerde interventies, geleid vanuit de gemeente Parijs: een nieuwe tramverbinding rondom de stad die dwars door gemeentelijk grenzen snijdt, de ontwikkeling van een wijk die binnen twee gemeentes valt; en de publiek-private herontwikkeling van een beeldbepalend gebouw. Het project wordt mogelijk gemaakt door de directe inbreng van ontwikkelaars die ook elders in het noordoosten van de Parijse regio investeren.

Isolated peripheral development: De herontwikkeling van Sesto San Giovanni (ex Falck) laat een lokaal-georiënteerd plannings proces zien dat lijdt onder de patstellingen tussen ontwikkelaars en de lokale politiek. De uitdaging is de balans te vinden tussen de noodzaak een risicovol project te starten, de politieke wens om kleinschalige industriële werkgelegenheid in de stad te behouden en om

te gaan met sociaaleconomische veranderingen in het gebied. De lokaal sterk ingebedde linkse politieke meerderheid botst met grote ontwikkelaars als het gaat om mogelijke ontwikkelingsscenario's: het proces is doordrenkt van ideologische overwegingen. De (meest recente) onderhandelingen over de oplossing van deze plannings vraagstukken lijden onder het plannings proces dat los staat van bredere veranderingen in regionale ontwikkeling en metropolitane bestuursvormen.

Organic development: in de metropoolregio Amsterdam heeft de noordwestelijke periferie zich ontwikkeld tot een ruimte voor politieke en planologische experimenten. Recente pogingen om tot een lange termijn visie voor het gebied te komen hebben echter niets opgeleverd. Vandaag de dag is het project een allegaartje van kleinschalige ingrepen rond het Noordzeekanaal die proberen een balans te vinden tussen industrieel gebruik, woningbouw en milieueisen. Tegelijkertijd is het noordwesten van de regio bestemd voor grootschalige woningbouw, creatieve economie, flexibele productiemilieus en de ontwikkeling van nieuwe stedelijkheid. De huidige organische aanpak geeft flexibel invulling aan ontwikkeling binnen onzekerheid. Deze aanpak geeft echter geen antwoord op fundamentele dilemma's omtrent de lange termijn planning van de metropoolregio Amsterdam. Deze dilemma's zijn van belang voor het gebruik en de legitimiteit van bestaande bestemmingen en milieunormen (regulerings dilemma), de inschatting van het risico van lange termijn publieke investeringen (ruimtelijke investeringsdilemma) en de noodzaak de ontwikkelingsprioriteiten van de gehele stedelijke regio te heroverwegen (interventie dilemma).

DE POLITIEKE UITDAGINGEN VAN PLANOLOGISCHE INNOVATIE

Om deze verschillen in aanpak te verklaren richt het onderzoek zich op hoe politieke dynamiek en veranderende electorale verhoudingen zich verhouden tot de marktvrage in deze gebieden. De belangrijkste actoren hierin zijn de rijks- en regionale overheid (en hun

ruimtelijk beleid), de kerngemeente (en hun visie op de regio) en de grote ontwikkelaars (en hun inschattingen van waar winst valt te behalen).

De drie cases laten sterke verschillen in het politieke speelveld zien. Desalniettemin leert de vergelijking dat, ondanks verschillen in politieke context, de ontwikkeling van de periferie gebaat is bij een convergentie van de belangen van deze meest voorname actoren. Tegelijkertijd kan juist een conflict de basis vormen om de ontwikkeling van de periferie actief op te pakken. In alle gevallen is de aard van de relaties bepalend voor het uiteindelijke plannings resultaat.

Inter-gemeentelijke ontwikkeling in Parijs komt voort uit de politieke en electorale tegenstellingen in de noordelijke periferie van de regio. Links heeft daar nieuwe allianties gesloten met de Communistische Partij die een meerderheid heeft in de noordelijke *banlieue*. Het doel van deze politieke allianties is tegenwicht te bieden aan rechts-georiënteerd rijksbeleid. Op deze manier wordt de periferie dus een politiek onderwerp waar de twee dominante ideologieën lijnrecht tegenover elkaar staan. Binnen deze confrontatie zoekt de progressieve coalitie in Parijs naar nieuwe sociale agenda's, waarbij zij grote ontwikkelende partijen aan haar zijde vindt. Het is deze convergentie tussen electorale belangen van lokale politieke groepen en economische ambities van ontwikkelaars die het mogelijk maakt van de ontwikkeling over gemeentelijke grenzen een planningsdoel te maken.

De isolatie van Sesto San-Giovanni is symptomatisch voor de parochiale politiek in de Milanese regio. Het lokale linkse bestuur ziet het project als een lokale aangelegenheid om zo politieke zeggenschap over het gebied te behouden. Zij richt zich daarbij vooral op het beschermen van de lokale arbeidersklasse. Deze benadering wordt in de kaart gespeeld door een monocentrische strategie vanuit Milaan die zich vooral richt op het versterken van het centrum van de competitieve regio. Deze scheiding wordt verder versterkt door bestuurlijke scheidslijnen. Sesto San-Giovanni probeert nog altijd haar positie als een gemeente voor de arbeidersklasse te behouden

terwijl Milaan een van de eerste gemeenten was waar liberaal rechts opkwam. Pogingen tot het smeden van coalities gingen niet gepaard met een overweging van de politieke voordelen die gecoördineerde ontwikkeling met zich mee zouden kunnen brengen.

De organische ontwikkeling van het noordwesten van Amsterdam is symptomatisch voor de onzekerheid waarin de metropoolregio Amsterdam, en vooral het Noordzeekanaalgebied, verkeert. Op regionaal en nationaal niveau wordt er sterk voor het project gelobbyd door de linksgeoriënteerde partijen in Amsterdam, Stadsdeel Noord en de gemeente Zaanstad. De afnemende invloed van conservatieve stromingen binnen deze partijen (traditioneel sterk verweven met de havenindustrie) biedt mogelijkheden om veranderingen in het gebied te initiëren.

Desalniettemin dient zich een confrontatie binnen de Amsterdamse gemeenteraad aan rond de mogelijke groeiscenario's. Er is een sterke tegenstelling tussen haven- en industriegeoriënteerde partijen en actoren die pleiten voor een voortvarende aanpak van de transformatie. De houding van de rijksoverheid verergert deze onzekerheid waardoor een eenduidige aanpak onmogelijk wordt. Zij vragen om stedelijke groei terwijl zij tegelijkertijd woon- en milieubeleid decentraliseren. De Rijksoverheid speelt steeds meer een *meta-governance* rol door het gebruik van softe planninginstrumenten. Gegeven deze omstandigheden dient zich in de noordwestelijke periferie van Amsterdam de mogelijkheid aan om de institutionele basis van de ruimtelijke ordening op de politieke agenda te zetten. Concreet gaat het dan om de relatie tussen zoning en bottom-up ontwikkelingen, het vormgeven aan nieuwe vormen van publieke investeringen en nieuwe rekenmethoden voor lange termijn rendement en de noodzaak tot het herdefiniëren van de rol van publiek-geïnitieerde projecten in regionaal ruimtelijk beleid.

DE ROL VAN POLITIEKE DYNAMIEK IN HET PLANNEN VAN ZICH ONTWIKKELENDE RUIMTE

De conclusies van deze drie casestudies kunnen in drie punten worden samengevat. Deze conclusies kunnen niet worden gegeneraliseerd naar andere projecten dan die zijn onderzocht maar kunnen wel het beginpunt vormen voor nieuwe hypothesen omtrent de politiek van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling.

- *De periferie is een politiek construct.* De ontwikkeling van policentrische regio's is niet enkel het gevolg van veranderende investeringsbeslissingen maar ook het resultaat van politiek en bestuurlijke strategieën. Dergelijke overwegingen kunnen afwijken van gangbare ambities ten aanzien van economische groei en kunnen zelfs ontwikkelingen belemmeren. Lokale politiek heeft de neiging conservatief te reageren wanneer zij geïsoleerd is maar kan juist met nieuwe planningsmodellen experimenteren wanneer zij onder politieke druk staat. In vele gevallen wordt de periferie gebruikt om specifieke politieke opvattingen ten aanzien van regionale ontwikkeling uit te spelen.

- *De periferie als planningsobject staat onder spanning.* De ontwikkeling van ruimtelijke ambities ten aanzien van buitengebieden vraagt om een herschikking van bestaande machtsstructuren. Nationale en bovengemeentelijke actoren zijn in weerwil van de recente decentralisatie nog altijd belangrijke spelers. Zij worstelen lokale dynamiek een plek te geven en tegelijkertijd de economische potentie van perifere gebieden te verwezenlijken. In het beleid ten aanzien van de ontwikkeling van perifere gebieden zijn kernsteden, reagerend op de versterkte dynamiek in hun omgeving, nog altijd machtige actoren. Tegelijk worden ook randgemeenten steeds actiever in regionaal bestuur maar hun positie is nog altijd niet volwaardig en voornamelijk reactief en afhankelijk van andere partijen.

— *De periferie als een laboratorium voor nieuwe planning paradigma's*. De nieuwe uitdaging ten aanzien van perifere gebieden raakt aan de fundamenteën van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling. Traditionele definities ten aanzien van centrum en periferie, grenzen en stedelijkheid werken slechts verwarrend. Deze vraagstukken zijn niet enkel van organisatorische aard maar raken aan wat het betekent regionale groei te sturen in tijden van stagnerende groei en dwars door bestaande bestuurlijke grenzen heen. Dit onderzoek laat zien dat de veranderende periferie plaats kan bieden aan politieke experimenten met nieuwe planningsconcepten en -instrumenten en met nieuwe vormen van ontwerp. Verder onderzoek zou zich met name moeten richten op innovatie in de financiering van vraaggerichte planologie, gecontextualiseerde toepassing van regelgeving en de nieuwe rol van publieke actoren in de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling door middel van projecten. Dit is echter niet mogelijk zonder een discussie van partijen met bestuurlijke macht over de fundamentele instituties van de ruimtelijke ordening zoals de definitie van economische groei, de bewijskracht van kosten-batenanalyses ten aanzien van spontane ontwikkelingen en de positionering van buitengebieden binnen metropolitane bestuursorganen.

LA PERIFERIA URBANA: UNA'AGENDA PER LA PIANIFICAZIONE

La periferia urbana é oggi un contesto caratterizzato da un fortemente dinamico, in termini sociali, economici ed urbanistici. Il progressivo consolidamento di geografie policentriche e l'aumentata rilevanza economica e sociale di aree decentrate costituiscono importanti sfide per la pianificazione territoriale contemporanea. Quest'ultima si trova a dover quindi individuare originali strumenti tecnici quanto economici e concettuali, per rispondere a nuove, e ancora poco definite, dinamiche spaziali e sociali, in un periodo caratterizzato da decrescita economica, mercati immobiliari indeboliti e una profonda diversificazione di stili abitativi e lavorativi. La periferia rappresenta un potenziale innovativo importante per due principali motivi. In primo luogo, diventa uno spazio dove sperimentare, definire, attivare ed istituzionalizzare nuove tipologie di 'qualità spaziali ed urbane'. In secondo luogo, il cambiamento della periferia urbana richiede pratiche di coordinamento inter-istituzionale innovative, di cooperazione intercomunale, basate su nuovi concetti spaziali, rispondenti a visioni territoriali policentriche.

Il presente lavoro costituisce una esplorazione ed analisi dei processi politici che guidano le pratiche di sviluppo urbano nella periferia urbana. Il principale oggetto di studio sono le nuove pratiche di negoziazione tra interessi istituzionali e privati nei progetti di sviluppo. La ricerca si concentra quindi sui processi di pianificazione, con l'intento di individuare i fattori che determinano il successo di pratiche innovative così come le criticità che caratterizzano pratiche sperimentali. Lo studio si basa sull'ipotesi che la definizione di concetti e progetti di pianificazione 'progressisti', che quindi creino un elemento di rottura rispetto a pratiche consolidate, dipenda da un riallineamento dei rapporti di potere nella governance metropolitana e regionale. Questi ultimi si costituiscono sulla base delle strategie di sviluppo di attori sovralocali (ad es. nazionali e regionali), del ruolo della municipalità centro nella definizione di strategie metropolitane ed in relazione alla posizione di soggetti

privati coinvolti nello sviluppo immobiliare e fondiario delle aree d'interesse.

I dati empirici impiegati nella ricerca riguardano tre progetti di sviluppo e riqualificazione urbana nelle aree metropolitane di Parigi, Amsterdam e Milano: Paris Nord-Est, Amsterdam ZaanIJ (Nord-Ovest riverfront) e le aree dismesse ex-Fack in Sesto San Giovanni (Nord Milano). La ricerca guarda alle tensioni politiche ed ai dilemmi della pianificazione territoriale che caratterizzano la definizione delle politiche di riqualificazione delle suddette aree.

MOLTEPLICI POLITICHE PER LA RIQUALIFICAZIONE E LO SVILUPPO DELLE PERIFERIE URBANE

Dalla ricerca emergono evidenti diversità nei tipi di politiche per il governo del cambiamento delle periferie urbane. Nonostante vi sia una generale convergenza verso pratiche di sviluppo urbano con obiettivi di crescita economica e sociale, le agende delle tre aree metropolitane si differenziano per il tipo di tecniche di implementazione e decision-making, per il grado di centralità dei diversi concetti spaziali utilizzati e per le problematiche politiche emergenti durante il processo di policy-making. Si possono distinguere analiticamente tre tipi di approcci.

Cross-border (politiche basate sul superamento di confini): a Parigi la riqualificazione dell'area nel settore nord Est della città è divenuto uno strumento politico per la ricostituzione della cooperazione intercomunale tra la municipalità di Parigi e i comuni limitrofi della banlieue. La cooperazione intercomunale nella zona densa della regione parigina è tuttora in fase iniziale e ad un livello sperimentale, con la recente proliferazione di pratiche di cooperazione guidate dalla città di Parigi (Parigi Metropoli) o direttamente implementate dal governo centrale (Grand Pari(s)). Paris Nord Est si inserisce in un quadro istituzionale dinamico e propone concetti spaziali centrati sull'idea di continuità tra l'interno e l'esterno del

confine comunale. Il progetto rappresenta uno sforzo coordinato della città centro e delle municipalità vicine, in stretta cooperazione con le strategie d'investimento di alcuni grandi promotori immobiliari attivi nelle aree periferiche dismesse. In termini urbanistici, il progetto di sviluppo intercomunale si struttura attorno a tre interventi principali: una nuova linea tramviaria lungo il confine della giurisdizione parigina utilizzata come spina dorsale del progetto, un quartiere 'intercomunale' costituito da due progetti urbani separati ma coordinati strategicamente e la riqualificazione di strutture industriali esistenti, presentati come simbolo di una nuova qualità urbana dell'area.

Isolated peripheral development (progetto isolato di sviluppo periferico): lo sviluppo delle aree dismesse ex-Falck a Sesto San Giovanni rivela una politica urbana di natura più locale, a lungo caratterizzata da rilevanti problematiche decisionali e da alcuni inconcludenti processi di negoziazione urbanistica. I principali obiettivi strategici dell'intervento dipendono dalla programmazione negoziata tra il commune, ed in particolare l'esecutivo locale, e le prerogative economiche e finanziarie di un grande promotore fondiario. Sono identificabili due grandi fazioni che si contrappongono sulla base di due differenti scenari di mutazione urbana. Il primo si focalizza sulla riqualificazione del tessuto produttivo e sociale tipico della grande industria manifatturiera, attraverso politiche urbane indirizzate alle piccole medie imprese, educazione superiore e attività ad alto valore aggiunto. Il secondo si concentra invece sulla trasformazione dell'area in senso residenziale, con una maggiore intenzione verso le densità abitative e investimenti strutturali in termini di sostenibilità energetica e qualità abitativa. Questo progetto ha una forte caratterizzazione ideologica e soffre un certo grado di isolamento politico ed istituzionale rispetto a dinamiche politiche ed urbanistiche su scala metropolitana. Non infatti chiari esempi di cooperazione con il comune centrale sugli obiettivi sviluppo dell'area.

Organic development (Politiche di sviluppo organico): il settore Nord Ovest di Amsterdam é ad oggi uno spazio di sperimentazione urbana. Guidato da una cooperazione tra il commune di Amsterdam e quello limitrofo di Zaanstad, il progetto non ha una fisionomia urbanistica definita e si presenta in rottura con la pratica di pianificazione tradizionale della città, generalmente fondata su una zonizzazione rigorosa, una capacità di guida forte del comune ed un ruolo proattivo di agenzie pubbliche di sviluppo fondiario. Il progetto è composto da una serie di interventi, debolmente connessi tra loro tramite pochi e semplici concetti urbanistici e in assenza di un vero masterplan. Si iscrive all'interno del più grande progetto di trasformazione dell'area portuaria nel Bacino del Canale Mare del Nord. Il progetto richiede una minuziosa gestione dell'interazione tra sviluppo residenziale, sviluppo industriale e portuale, e politiche ambientali delle aree non edificate. Per tale motivo, il comune ha optato per una politica di 'attesa', poco dirigista e basata su pratiche di negoziazione localizzata attorno a delle questioni particolari (qui denominate dilemmi): l'uso e la rilevanza di norme urbanistiche, ambientali e procedurali il rapporto a pratiche di sviluppo dal basso; la tipologia di investimenti spaziali e gli strumenti di finanziamento dello sviluppo urbano; la coerenza dei piani municipali in rapporto a pratiche di autogoverno del territorio.

LE SFIDE POLITICHE DELL'INNOVAZIONE URBANA

La ricerca costituisce un tentativo di illustrare la relazione tra dinamiche politico-elettorali e le diverse politiche urbane attivate nelle periferie urbane. Tali aspetti politici sono inoltre combinati con gli aspetti economici del progetto e con i cambiamenti delle geografie di investimento dei grandi promotori immobiliari. I tre casi menzionati mostrano sistemi di potere diversamente strutturati, e caratterizzati da pratiche di negoziazione differenti. Si può comunque evidenziare una tendenza alla sperimentazione di politiche innovative nei casi in cui vi sia un allineamento delle agende

politiche dei principali portatori di interessi metropolitani sulla questione 'periferie'. La natura di tale allineamento differisce da caso a caso.

Il progetto di cross-border development a Parigi riflette una contrapposizione elettorale tra le maggioranze di governo nel settore Nord Est e quelle nazionali. Il progetto costituisce uno spazio di conflitto su temi di sviluppo regionale e metropolitano, priorità economiche e sociali tra due grandi coalizioni di interessi: una coalizione social democratica di stampo comunista a livello locale e una di stampo dirigista di centro destra a livello nazionale. Il progetto costituisce una piattaforma di confronto elettorale ed è strategicamente costruito per rispondere alla necessità di definire una nuova agenda per la metropoli parigina. Il comune di Parigi ha costruito un'agenda politica attorno allo sviluppo del proprio confine attraverso la quale poter consolidare una coalizione metropolitana progressista (con regione e comuni limitrofi) da contrapporre quella presidenziale. E' tuttavia la sovrapposizione di tali interessi elettorali con quelli immobiliari di un grande promotore immobiliare a fornire le condizioni economiche ed istituzionali per la realizzazione del progetto.

L'isolamento del progetto ex-Falk a Sesto riflette la frattura politica ed elettorale che ha caratterizzato, e caratterizza, la politica metropolitana milanese degli ultimi 15 anni. Il progetto è strumentalizzato dalla coalizione politica locale di sinistra, come veicolo di consolidamento e mantenimento di rapporti di potere neo-corporativista in una regione politicamente sbilanciata verso il centro destra e anzi spesso rappresentata come laboratorio della destra liberale italiana. Il progetto rappresenta una strategia di resistenza, rafforzato da una corrispettiva politica monocentrica e municipalista della città centro, concentrata sull'aumento delle proprie densità urbane. Il progetto è dunque penalizzato da un contesto politico intercomunale fortemente competitivo ed ideologizzato, che rendendo difficile il raggiungimento di accordi negoziali tra comune e promotore rafforza il potere di influenza di interessi consolidati.

Lo sviluppo organico nel Nord Est di Amsterdam riflette invece l'incertezza e il rapido cambiamento dell'agenda urbana ed economica della regione metropolitana. Il progetto era stato inizialmente promosso da una coalizione progressista di sinistra tra Amsterdam e Zaanstad, sviluppatasi entro piattaforme di governance metropolitana consolidate. L'erosione dell'elettorato socialista legato all'industria portuale ha offerto un'opportunità per il cambiamento urbano e sociale nell'area, strumentalizzate da partiti emergenti legati alla sinistra moderata, sinistra liberale ed ambientalista. Nonostante l'allineamento politico tra i due comuni in merito all'agenda di sviluppo dell'area (in senso cosmopolitano, di industrie creative e della conoscenza), il progetto non è sostenuto da una chiara posizione del governo centrale, molto importante nella pianificazione locale olandese, né da strategie di investimento immobiliare privato. Il progetto rimane principalmente un intervento pubblico, costruito a livello metropolitano, ma è debolmente integrato in una politica territoriale regionale e nazionale (benché sia identificato come progetto strategico nazionale). Processi di decentramento amministrativo del governo centrale entrano in contraddizione con le strategie statali di gestione economico-finanziaria dell'industria portuale e logistica, e si contrappongono con la politica industriale ed ambientale di livello provinciale. Lo sviluppo organico si costituisce dunque come una pratica di 'temporeggiamento' e 'compromesso', finalizzata alla definizione di nuove tecniche e procedure capaci di ricostituire un processo di agenda setting.

LA RILEGANCE DEI PROCESSI POLITICI NELLA PIANIFICAZIONE DI NUOVE TERRITORIALITÀ

Le specifiche conclusioni dei tre casi di studio possono essere sintetizzate in tre riflessioni generali. Non si intende qui fornire generalizzazioni incomplete dei risultati quanto piuttosto offrire una base di riflessione per la formulazione di nuove ipotesi di ricerca.

— *La periferia è un costrutto politico*: le nuove geografie urbane policentriche non sono semplicemente espressione di nuove tattiche di investimento immobiliare ma esprimono il confronto su nuove agende politiche dello sviluppo metropolitano e regionale. Il valore politico della periferia non è riducibile a semplici strategie di competitività urbana o crescita economica, ma costituisce invece un tema il relazione al quale riflettere su di cittadinanza, sostenibilità, giustizia sociale e qualità urbana. Le politiche urbane prodotte rischiano tuttavia di ricadere in forme improduttive di localismo e particolarismo qualora non si riesca a generare una sinergia tra i principali attori della pianificazione regionale e la costruzione un'agenda metropolitana che renda tali territori più centrali. La pressione politica è un elemento fondamentale per l'attivazione di processi di pianificazione virtuosi. Essa non rimanda ad una semplice innovazione delle tecniche e degli strumenti dell'urbanistica, ma sollecita invece l'apertura di un dibattito su grandi temi politici.

— *La periferia è un oggetto di pianificazione 'in tensione'*: la risposta a processi di policentrismo metropolitano richiede una riconfigurazione dei rapporti di potere istituzionale costituiti. I governi nazionali e sovralocali sono ancora i principali attori dello sviluppo urbano, nonostante i processi di decentramento amministrativo, in quanto costituiscono importanti interessi nelle politiche di sviluppo economico e sociale. Le città centro mantengono un ruolo da protagonista, confermando l'idea che una vera ed innovativa politica metropolitana può difficilmente emergere senza un ruolo proattivo della città principale. Ciononostante, le municipalità centro dipendono sempre di più dalla loro periferia, sia economicamente che territorialmente, per un'offerta di residenze abbordabili e per la promozione di cluster di produzione più innovativa, spesso

localizzati in zone più decentrate. In questo quadro, benché con crescente attivismo, i comuni della cintura urbana non costituiscono ancora un soggetto centrale nella costruzione di politiche di sviluppo metropolitano. Dalla ricerca emerge un ruolo più attivo ma non ancora maturo dei comuni della cintura, spesso dipendenti da processi sovra locali, o dalle capacità di lobby politica delle municipalità centrali.

- *La periferia è un laboratorio per nuovi modelli di pianificazione.* La periferia è al centro di una nuova questione urbana, le cui dinamiche di trasformazione pongono in discussione alcuni assunti fondamentali della pianificazione moderna, come ad esempio le nozioni di centro e periferia, di confine (giurisdizionale o territoriale) e di urbanità. Queste sfide non sono esclusivamente organizzative o tecniche, ma riguardano il significato stesso del concetto di ‘governo del territorio’ in periodi di alta incertezza economica, di crisi dei modelli di previsione di crescita, e di impossibile inventariazione delle traiettorie individuali di vita e consumo. Il presente lavoro riconosce la periferia come uno spazio di sperimentazione, nel quale definire e testare nuovi strumenti concettuali, procedurali ed economici. Nuovi orizzonti di ricerca possono riguardare la costruzione e sostenibilità finanziaria dei processi di pianificazione urbanistica tradizionali, il valore giuridico e normativo degli strumenti legali esistenti, il valore strategico della pianificazione e la sua rilevanza per la promozione di forme di autogoverno territoriale. La trattazione di questi temi non è possibile senza l’apertura di un dibattito in merito ai valori politici e senza una riattivazione del dialogo e del confronto continuo tra urbanistica e scienza politica. Questa interdisciplinarietà è necessaria per la ridefinizione delle nozioni fondamentali su cui il planning odierno si basa, primi fra tutti i concetti di ‘crescita’, ‘sviluppo’, ‘previsione’ e ‘rappresentazione’.

The urban periphery is a key planning object in polycentric metropolitan areas. In defining new urban agendas planners need to employ alternative concepts of spatial quality, connectivity, centrality and political representation. The periphery is a space for experimentation often conducted through large scale development projects which attempt to govern urban change. This research investigates the political challenges, dilemma and tensions that characterize progressive or conservative planning practices in peripheral areas. It explores the relationship between the political and electoral conflict of major city-regional planning agents and the emergence of a new urban agendas for border areas. It concludes on the need to address fundamental political dilemmas of planning, embodied in problematic notions of regulation, investments and interventions.

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