Regulating urban office provision: a study of the ebb and flow of regimes of urbanisation in Amsterdam and Frankfurt am Main, 1945-2000

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3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The regulation of urbanisation

3.1 Introduction

Market spaces and state spaces, both platforms on which the agents in office provision act, exist for different reasons: An economic system comprises “all those activities, organisations and institutions organised around (or at least involved in) capital accumulation,” whereas a state system comprises “all those activities, organisations and institutions organised around (or at least involved in) making collectively binding decisions for an imagined political community” (Jessop, 2000: 349). The fundamental difference in the rationales behind their existence does not mean that they should be studied in separation.

This dissertation has argued for an institutional approach to explain real office provision processes. It is important to note here that the “new institutionalism” that informs this study does not constitute one coherent body of thought. Rather the opposite: A multitude of contributions draw on a vast number of disciplines across the social sciences. Still, one main assertion unites most of these institutional theories and approaches: When trying to explain actually existing capitalist economies, a redefinition of what is considered to be “the economic” is vital. As MacLeod (2001: 1147) puts it:

“… markets are socially constructed; economies are diachronic, evolutionary and volatile; and economic behaviour is itself embedded in and shaped through a whole range of institutional habits, seemingly nonrational cultural mores, knowledge-creating networks, and place-based ties of proximity.”

So, in light of these considerations, this chapter presents an institutional approach to the analysis of urban office development and sociospatial regulation, concentrating mainly on the state as a site of struggle over these issues. First, in section 3.2, this chapter presents the dialectical relationship between the territorialisation of accumulation and the structure of the local state. Then, in section 3.3, the institutionalism of the regulation approach is presented as an analytical theoretical framework that offers explanations for spatial and temporal
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variations in structures and processes of planning, office provision, and state formation. The subsequent sections present the theoretical concepts derived from this approach, the research questions associated with them, and the methods of analysis.

3.2 The role of the city-state in the production of space

It was argued in the previous chapters that urban space is not just the outcome of either political or economic processes. It was also argued that it is wrong to regard space as merely a container of social relations. Instead, it was contended that space should be regarded as the materially anchored medium and outcome of economic and political processes. In relation to this, the theoretical connection between capital accumulation and space is also dialectical: Both are mutually constitutive. Drawing on Lefebvre (1978) and on Harvey (1982), who contends that each phase of capitalist development has been grounded upon distinctive forms of territorial organisation, Brenner (1998) argues that “there is a spatial fix for every successive regime of accumulation. Social space operates at once as a presupposition, medium and outcome of capitalism’s globalising development dynamic.”

The so-called territorialisation of capital is always temporal, and manifests itself in long-term investments in immobile cities and territories” (ibid.). In the production of these spaces, the role of cities remains important. Although the old territorial infrastructures currently need restructuring (Swyngedouw & Baeten, 2001), cities potentially remain the fundamental locational nodes through which global systems of production and exchange are organised (Brenner, 1998). As noted by Swyngedouw (1989; 1996b; in Brenner, 1999: 63), key forms of industrial, financial, and service capital use local accumulation strategies that attempt to secure competitive advantages within global production filières through the promotion and exploitation of locally and regionally specific conditions of production (e.g., industrial districts, technopoles, and the office parks of the global city).

The state, which is always spatially organised, is one of the relatively fixed and immobile spatial infrastructures within, through, and upon which each successive wave of capitalism has been grounded (Swyngedouw, 1996a; Brenner, 1998). Consequently, the local state is bound to be caught up in the various rounds of fundamental economic “reshuffling,” and should be brought to “centre stage” if we want to understand urban economic development (Swyngedouw, 1996a).
For instance, national states were the central political scaffolding underlyin
Fordist accumulation. They were among the main agents in the rescaling of the
economy, and were central in state rescaling. In a way, processes of state rescaling
create part of the new geographical infrastructures upon, within, and through
which economic flows can circulate (Brenner, 1999). When new institutional spaces
are introduced, they may be instrumental to overcoming the growing territorial
non-coincidence between the scales of state territorial organisation and those of
capital accumulation (Brenner, 1998).

If we, for matters of heuristics, view the rescaling of the state as a conscious
political effort to re-coincide the scales of state territorial organisation and capital
accumulation, this process of rescaling the state and of economic governance is a
state-orchestrated accumulation strategy. New constellations of territorial politics
are produced, in which cities have become increasingly important coordinates of
state territorial power; after all, local and regional states are well fit to mobilise
urban-regional territorial organisation for purposes of accelerated accumulation
(Brenner, 1998). In practice, the rescaling of the state is one of a wide range of new
policy instruments and institutional forms which have been created in order to
exercise control over the geographical re-concentration of capital in urban spaces.
Recent mediation processes include “spectacular development perspectives and
political programmes,” and the construction of new urban landscapes through the
channelling of capital into speculative real-estate-based projects (Swyngedouw,
1996a).

This approach acknowledges the importance of institutions and forms of
governance in the economic process. Therefore, it can be called an institutional
analytical approach, since it “insists on how, in addition to merely economic
advantages, the social, cultural and institutional armature contributes to the creation
and the perpetuation of an economically dynamic environment” (Swyngedouw &
Baeten, 2001). An analytical approach, which builds on these notions, is presented
in the following section.

### 3.3 The regulation approach

*The origin of the approach*

MacLeod (2001: 1156) says that a “well-established body of theory” associated with
the institutional turn in studies of urban economic development is the regulation
approach (RA), which originated in the 1970s at the CEPREMAP research institute
in Paris. Two deficiencies in mainstream economic theory formed the basis for the development of the RA. These deficiencies are 1) the premise that there is an economic sphere that can be clearly distinguished from other social spheres, and in which purely economic relations tend to follow a path toward general equilibrium, and 2) exchange within this economic realm is said to be driven by the optimising behaviour of rational individuals. Aglietta – the first Parisian regulationist – was dissatisfied when he observed that real markets continuously function remarkably differently than the abstract markets in mainstream economics do, and that instead of doubting the models, mainstream economists treated real markets as exceptions to the rules of mathematical models.

Epistemologically, the RA argues that it is inadequate to try to develop scientific knowledge on the basis of constant conjunctions or other empirical regularities (Jessop, 2001b). Instead, the RA:

"... poses questions about the necessary and/or sufficient conditions of a given explanandum (that which is to be explained) and thus to develop knowledge of real causal powers or mechanisms. It also implies that an explanation is only adequate relative to a given definition of the explanandum" (ibid.).

The RA argues that the abstract relations that are the defining features of the capitalist mode of production cannot guarantee the reproduction of capitalist social relations. Since these abstract relations are only realised in concrete and complex social practices (institutional structures, political and social processes, cultural discourses), these changing and geographically varied political, cultural, and social forms are turned into the explanans, (that which explains), while the accumulation progress is turned into the explanandum. To really understand actually existing markets, Aglietta argued, it is vital to see society as a network of social relations, and to look at the economy as a part of this society, as "solely a methodological demarcation within the domain of social relations" (Aglietta, 1979). This part cannot be studied in separation from the whole.

As Jessop (2001a) argues, three key aspects of the capital relations explain why capitalism needs regulating. Firstly, he refers to the inherent incapacity of capitalism as a mode of production to achieve self-closure: This self-closure is rendered impossible by the dependence of capital accumulation on fictitious
commodities\(^1\) and extra-economic supports. Second, every commodity has both an exchange value moment and a use value moment. This structural contradiction, which appears in different forms in different conjunctures, poses strategic dilemmas for opposing agents, institutions, and systems that are the prime bearers of one or another aspect of a given contradiction or dilemma \((ibid)\). Third, Jessop argues that since there are different ways to seek the closure of the circuit of capital and to compensate for its lack of closure, modes of regulation and governance vary widely, both in the economic and extra-economic relations.

Thus, the economy is not a fixed and stable autonomous sphere that can be captured in sophisticated equations; nor is economic rationality. Instead it is socially and historically constructed, and varies over space and time. Variation over space exists because social relations outside the economic realm (from family and education to the state and law) shape the characteristics of the fictitious commodities that function inside the economic realm. The commodity’s place-specific characteristics influence the relations in the economic realm, which therefore take on forms other than the social relations in other economic realms, which are embedded in other social realms. As Boyer (1990: 44, in Jessop, 1997c: 296) puts it: “Even perfectly competitive markets derive from the organisation of social space; they are constructed on the basis of power relations and legal rules.” By focusing on the “historically contingent economic and extra-economic mechanisms which lead specific economic agents to act in specific circumstances in accordance with the unevenly changing, objective requirements of capitalist reproduction,” regulationists argue that “economic development is path dependent and irreversible” (Jessop, 1997c: 295).

There is also temporal variation in the social relations that define the economic realm. Since, as argued above, the economic realm is so dependent on the commodification of extra-economic social relations, stability in the economic social relations is not the natural order of things, and crisis is a much more logical event. Thus, a period of prolonged stability in the configuration of social relations that define capitalism, which is called a “regime of accumulation,”\(^2\) needs

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\(^1\) Elements of the economic system that form the basis of exchange relations in the economic sphere (e.g., labour power and money) are produced in realms other than the economic realm. For instance, labour power is produced primarily through the family and education, while money is produced through through law and the state. Therefore these commodities, according to the RA, should be regarded as fictitious commodities (Jessop, 1997c: 295).

\(^2\) This regime of accumulation should not be confused with the “industrial paradigm,” which refers to “the dominant technical and social division of labour” (Goodwin, 2001), and thus only includes the purely economic social relations.
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explanation. Regulationists argue that extra-economic supports of capitalism (which can be found in social norms, governing networks, and state policies, as well as in customs and consumption norms, etc.) contingently combine to ensure this unity, regularisation, and normalisation of the accumulation process (Goodwin, 2001). These contingent supports are called the mode of regulation. When, after a series of social and political struggles, the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation are “contingently coupled” (MacLeod, 2001), the conditions for a “long wave of capitalist expansion” (Goodwin, 2001) are present. By way of this model of development, the inherent contradictions are only contingently overcome. In other words, crisis is postponed, albeit indefinitely.

Third-generation regulationist work: introducing space, scale, and politics into the framework

Most Parisian regulationist scholars initially looked for contingent couplings of accumulation and regulation at the national institutional level, and in the process discerned various “Fordisms” and “post-Fordisms.” In the current era of globalisation Parisian scholars have reoriented their research toward supranational couplings of accumulation and regulation (second-generation regulationist work), while the sub-national level has been the object of inquiry by scholars primarily located outside France (see MacLeod 2001: 1158; also MacLeod 1997). The RA became increasingly popular among primarily British observers of local governance, whose work was labelled third-generation regulationist work by Jones (1997) (among others Jessop, 1990, 1997a/b/c, 2000; Goodwin, 2001; Painter & Goodwin, 1995; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999a, 1999b; Goodwin & Painter, 1996, 1997; MacLeod 1997, 2000, 2001; MacLeod & Jones, 1999; Peck & Tickell, 1995; Jones, 1997). In this section I highlight some of the characteristics of this work.

In a review of third-generation work, MacLeod (1997) distinguishes several new conceptualisations that were formerly alien to the RA. New theorisations were made that extended the scope of the RA toward understanding, among other things the political and sociocultural sensibilities of regulation, the role of discourse in mediating processes of social and economic change, and issues of gender, race, nationalism, and other social schisms (MacLeod, 1997). For the study of urban office development, the most vital element in the third-generation regulationist approaches is the “heightened significance accorded to space, place and scale” (ibid: 533).

For students of planning or of urban and regional development, the spatialised RA can offer a way to understand the economic history of various
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territories from a theoretical vantage point. It builds on the idea of temporal and spatial uneven economic and political development that was put forward in section 1 of this chapter, and tries to conceptualise the underpinnings of this unevenness. Here, we focus on Painter and Goodwin's (1995; also Goodwin, 2001) idea of regulation as a process that, because it operates through particular sites and institutions, is temporally and spatially variable. It is the regulation itself that is uneven, because of varying social struggles and conflicts. From Painter and Goodwin's perspective, multiple and interacting regulatory processes constitute a relative regulatory flux. These processes operate in and through a variety of spatial scales, and are therefore inherently complex, producing unique processes of social and institutional struggle and temporally and spatially uneven regulation.

In order to grasp this uneven, multi-scalar and spatially unique process of regulation, Tickell and Peck (1992; also Jones, 1997) introduced the concept of the local mode of social regulation, a formal concept that can be:

“operationalised at lower levels of abstraction, by analysing the emergent complex, concrete regulatory systems and their manifestations via specific regulatory forms and mechanisms which operate in and through a variety of spatial scales” (MacLeod, 1997: 539, drawing on Peck and Tickell, 1992: 350-353; see also section 3.4).

The local level is operationalised in terms of “regional couplings” of distinctive production cultures and powerful sub-national legislative frameworks, which give rise to particular regional or local modes of social regulation (MacLeod, 1997: 540). Thus, a local mode of social regulation is analytically not distinct from a national mode of social regulation; rather, they are mutually constitutive.

“Key sites and spaces of regulation” (Goodwin, 2001) can be distinguished using the concept of mode of social regulation. In the era of “scalar flux,” cities have become strategic arenas (Brenner, 2000). However, as indicated above, they should not be regarded by researchers as “separate territorial islands of social relations” (Brenner, 2000). Because “each set of social practices has its own key sites,” a strategic “quest” for a spatial scale adequate for economic development and governance is manifest across different sites, and issues at the urban level therefore “must be related to wider sets of social, economic and political processes” (Goodwin, 2001). At the same time, spatial scales are not only the setting of social and political conflicts, but also one of their principal stakes
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(MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999b). Many theories fail to consider the becoming and structuration of place and scale (Goodwin, 2001).

Through political and social struggle, state institutions at various scales try to maintain a “variable mix of institutional forms and governance mechanisms involved in stabilising specific economic spaces in however provisional, partial, and temporary a manner” (Jessop, 1998, in Brenner, 2000). In this conceptualisation, rescaling of the state can be conceived as an important accumulation strategy. In this context, Jones (1997) introduced the concept of spatial selectivity:

“Spatial selectivity implies that the state has a tendency to privilege certain places through accumulation strategies, state projects, and hegemonic projects. The process of geographical privileging, which is implied by the notion of spatial selectivity, takes on both material and ideological forms” (Jones, 1997).

Concluding his overview of the third-generation regulationist research, MacLeod (1997: 546) identifies two “chief lessons,” which centre on (1) the need to consider the RA as an analytical framework rather than as an invitation to develop typologies, ideal types, or binary historical geographies, and (2) the injudiciousness of merely invoking the original, unadulterated regulationist framework (and its specific inquiry of the economy) into political or sociocultural research phenomena. MacLeod gives credit to the third-generation regulationist work for filling in parts of the RA’s weak causality structures, by stressing for instance space, scale, state, and politics. On the other hand, he emphasises the importance of fitting the particular regulation-inspired approach to the specific object of inquiry. Following Painter and Goodwin (1995), MacLeod stresses the importance of grounding any analysis in its concrete and complex practice: He argues that only an appreciation of the contingent articulation of practice brings us closer to an understanding of regulatory processes. So, using the RA entails conducting a theoretically informed study “rationally abstracting from (but grounded in) concrete circumstances” (ibid.: 547). Section 3.4 will address both the issue of fitting the RA to the particular type of study and the issue of abstracting from concrete circumstances.
3.4 Theoretical concepts as analytical lenses

In the third-generation applications, the RA linked the processes of urban restructuring to various ongoing transformations of state territorial organisation (Brenner, 2000: 366). The concepts developed for this aim can help to shed light on the relationship between the development of a local social support space for capitalism’s expansion on the one hand, and sociospatial regulation and office provision on the other. Three concepts are especially applicable, namely:

- The local mode of social and spatial regulation;
- The spatial imaginary and the regime of urbanisation;
- Urban accumulation strategies.

These concepts are briefly described below.

The local mode of social and spatial regulation

The practices that together constitute sociospatial regulation originate from various scale levels. An RA-inspired analysis of urban office development should therefore start from a multi-scalar theory. The mentioned analysis by Peck and Tickell (1992) is a good starting point for such an analysis. The local scale occupies a central role in their analysis, which is based on the premise that “different regulatory mechanisms and forms are rooted and/or dispensed at different spatial scales” (Peck & Tickell, 1992: 352). They distinguish five categories of regulatory forms and mechanisms\(^3\) that are in operation at these different spatial scales. These are outlined in Table 3.1 below.

Following Boyer (1990), Peck and Tickell ask a series of questions about the nature of regulation, using the five categories as points of reference. These questions focus on the nature and coherence of regulatory forms and mechanisms,

\(^3\) In developing a framework for the analysis of local modes of social regulation, Peck and Tickell observed that when the “mode of regulation” is formalised inadequately, it remains a somewhat slippery concept, prone to confusion because it is easily used casually at different levels of abstraction. Unhappy with this danger of theoretical slippage, they propose a formal framework of analysis, introducing five levels of abstraction (from abstract to concrete) (Peck & Tickell, 1992: 350):

1. The mode of social regulation (MSR): a generalised theoretical structure abstracted from concrete conditions;
2. Regulatory functions;
3. Regulatory system: concrete and geographically specific manifestation of an MSR;
4. Regulatory mechanisms: historically and geographically distinctive responses to the regulatory requirements of the accumulation system;
5. Regulatory forms: concrete institutional structures through which regulatory mechanisms are realised.
Table 3.1: Regulatory forms and mechanisms in a local context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulatory form/mechanism</th>
<th>Regional/local manifestation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Business relations</td>
<td>Local growth coalitions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Localised inter-firm networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour relations</td>
<td>Local labour market structures and institutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Institutionalisation of labour process</td>
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<td>Money and finance</td>
<td>Regional housing markets</td>
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<td>Local and regional land market</td>
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<td>Venture capital and credit institutions</td>
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<td>State forms</td>
<td>Form and structure of local state</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local economic policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil society</td>
<td>Local trade union/production politics</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Gendered household structures</td>
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</table>

and their relationship with the regime of accumulation. Less developed is the way in which these regulatory forms and mechanisms come to exist; thus regulation is regarded as a “quantifiable expression of more or less regulation” rather than as an “unfolding quality.” As we saw, various authors have picked up this theme since the early 1990s and emphasised the need to investigate the process of regulation (Goodwin, 2001; Painter & Goodwin, 1995; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999a/b).

The spatial imaginary and the regime of urbanisation

Sociospatial regulation is a contingently emerging process. Much like this more broadly defined concept of “regulation,” spatial/urban planning is thus defined as a process originating from multiple institutions and organisations at various spatial scales, and it can be analysed at various levels, ranging from the abstract to the concrete.

Jessop (1997a) introduced the concept of “spatial imaginary” to refer to the strategic “quest” for a spatial scale adequate for economic development and governance. All social forces, Jessop argues, attribute different importance to space and scale. Therefore, depending on the economic discourse they adhere to, relevant economic space is perceived in different ways by these different social forces. Consequently, their spatial imaginary will vary (cf. MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999b: 712). “Through political and social struggle over these competing spatial imaginaries, an economic space is demarcated in however provisional, partial, and temporary a manner” (Jessop, 1998, in Brenner, 2000). This implies that spatial scales are amongst the principal stakes of social and political conflicts (see MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999b; also: Terhorst & Van de Ven, 1997), and that the
becoming and structuration of place and scale is a central element of regulationists’ research of local modes of social regulation (Goodwin, 2001).

Of course, these imagined spaces do not automatically coincide with formal territorial and functional demarcations. So, the key for those behind the dominant spatial imaginary is to transform it into a real space amenable to regulation or governance practices (Jessop, 1997a: 61). This demarcation of scale is a strategic endeavour in that it creates the arena in which actual development through government and governance practices is to be pursued (cf. MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999b: 712-713).

In recent case study research that uses the RA analysis of the actual demarcation of space mostly entailed analyses of institutional governance experiments with regards to for instance regionalism and learning economies (e.g. Brenner, 1999b; Jones, 1997, 1999, 2001; MacLeod, 2000; Jones & MacLeod, 1999).

These applications emphasise social space over concrete space, and institutional change over stability. However, the struggle over competing spatial imaginaries does not always lead to distinct breaks with existing spatial fixes. On the contrary, once in place, the territorial scaffoldings of accumulation – be they particular regulatory forms and mechanisms or real fixed and immobile capital – co-evolve with the process of accumulation, as the regulatory process progresses.

In order to demarcate the role of urban planning in regulatory processes this thesis uses the concept of “regime of urbanisation” (Soja, 2000), viz. a period of prolonged stability in the configuration of social relations that define urban development.

Since urban planning is concerned primarily with urbanisation processes, the struggles over this demarcation of urban space are conceptualised in this paper as battles over competing imaginaries of urban space. Such battles occur over both the definition of relevant territories for urbanisation and the desirable functional development of this territory. These competing imaginaries do not necessarily comply with formal territorial demarcations and their associated political powers. Processes of urban planning, especially those that imply very visible choices drawn on maps, bring together different worlds of action that all put their claims on urban space.

Urban accumulation strategies

In the range of extra-economic activities to be coordinated in order to realise an economic development strategy, the demarcation of a relatively autonomous
economic space is essential (Jessop, 1997a). The final, official demarcation of space can occur at various scale levels and at various levels of detail, ranging from overall visions on urbanisation in a regional context, via structural outlines of urbanisation and detailed landuse plans, to master plans for the development of a limited urban space.

This actual demarcation of space, as well as the definition of a general strategy appropriate to its realisation, occurs through accumulation strategies. Anticipating the actual (spatial-economic) strategies of urban and regional economic development, translating the spatial imaginary into a workable spatial-economic environment is a contested undertaking in which planners have an important voice. However, the resulting planning documents are not necessarily the representation of a dominant urban imaginary. For the already mentioned problem with the planning profession is its rather introverted way of working. It is my assertion that only plans and strategies to fulfil these plans which relate somehow to the dominant urban imaginary stand a chance of being successfully implemented.

3.5 The set of claims regarding the regulation of office provision

A set of claims on office provision and sociospatial regulation can be derived from the two sets of analytical tools described above (namely the SoP approach and the RA). This set of claims (or hypotheses) leads to a set of questions, which will be used in this dissertation to identify the role of the sociospatial regulation in processes of urbanisation and office provision.

Urbanisation (the production of urban space) derives from processes of accumulation and regulation that, because of necessary interrelations, cannot be studied separately. Accumulation, situated primarily in the economic realm, depends on extra-economic supports for its further development. One of these supports is the spatial fix: A distinctive form of territorial organisation – the landscape through which capital accumulation is enabled – that consists partly of long-term real-estate investments in cities. The social production of such spatial organisation through the process of accumulation is delicately intertwined with processes outside the realm of the economy, such as processes of political decision-making, processes of household formation, and processes of consumption.

The office, as an element of this temporarily fixed urban environment, is both the medium through which the capital accumulation process can proceed (the
office as a means of production), the milk cow for capital's further accumulation (the office as a financial asset), and the material manifestation of a particular round of capital accumulation (the office as an object in space). These different definitions of an office in different institutional realms cause the interests in the office development process to diverge.

Because of its societal impact, office provision is subject to local state regulation. This spatial regulation, an outcome of the process of urban planning, is part of the local process of regulation. This regulation is a process that partly unrolls on the platform of the local state. On this state platform the struggles over imagined futures for local spaces are fought out between the agents that have assumed the described roles in the office provision process and agents that have interest in space and functional change from another background (e.g., residents, environmental groups, etc.). These agents try to obtain dominance on the platform of the state, so that the regime of urbanisation (a stable configuration of social relations that defines urbanisation) reflects their particular interests.

A structure of office provision — a concrete network of relations associated with the provision of particular offices at specific points in time — contains contradictions and tensions forcing change. These contradictions are inherent in the different markets in office provision, but also result from their extra-economic supports on the platform of the state. If a contingent coupling of a regulatory fix (a long-term and stable local mode of social regulation) with a specific regime of urbanisation results from the struggle over diverging ideas of utopia, the chances of a stable longer-term structure of office provision increase, because the contradictions and tensions resulting from the components of change are postponed indefinitely. Ultimately, however, the inherent contradictions in all economic and extra-economic spheres (the ever-contested regulatory fix, regime of urbanisation and regime of accumulation) will get the upper hand. Because regulation and accumulation are two communicating vessels, turbulence on the level of the state (e.g., a local regulatory flux) necessarily influences the destabilisation of the social regimes of accumulation and urbanisation that are founded upon it. The result is new instability in the social relations in office provision, which forces a state of flux and struggle, until a new balance is reached and a new round of regulated urban development can occur.

To breathe life into this set of theoretical claims, and to guide the further concrete research into the post-war office development histories of Amsterdam and Frankfurt, a list of theoretical statements based on the theories presented in the first three chapters and a derived list of research questions will be presented.
Building on the theoretical notions on time- and place-specific struggles in various state and market spaces, the theoretical relations between urban planning, urbanisation and office provision are:

1. If an office is realised, it is the result of a plethora of social interactions cutting across a number of institutional spaces at various layered and intersecting scales. Therefore, an urban planner who operates for and from the platform of the local state can have only limited influence on the provision of an office.

2. The margins for urban planners to have an impact on office provision derive from the fact that agents inside a structure of office provision are legally bound to interact partly through the local state, because local planning regulations, plans, and guidelines are indispensable in any process of office provision. Thus, because an office is a real object, in need of real urban space, which is subject to local state rules, regulations and plans on which urban planners have important influence, a certain amount of influence is always guaranteed.

3. These rules, regulations, and plans are developed on the various platforms of the state. On these platforms, they are objects of struggles that bring together agents operating at a variety of spatial scales. Agents with pivotal positions in a structure of office provision may find it beneficial for their future profits to enter into these struggles, in order to try to influence such decision-making. The struggle over the definition of future urban space thus is a struggle between agents with competing imaginaries. The winners of such struggles fit neatly within the local mode of social and spatial regulation and its associated regime of urbanisation. Therefore, their interests are directly reflected in new state accumulation and urbanisation strategies and projects.

4. The other way around, urban planners can enter the institutional space of the market in order to participate in a local structure of office provision. Therefore, they have to adopt one of the key roles in the realm of office provision (user, investor, landowner, developer), and in this way try to influence the provision of an office.

The theoretical notions on the actual evolution of post-war urban planning, urbanisation and office provision are:
5. The state is the platform for social mobilisation and struggles over landuse regulations, guidelines, plans, and scales of intervention. Because of its privileged position in the legal framework of urban landuse planning and regulation, the urban planner is one of the pivotal agents in the network of agents that compete for dominance in deciding the future model and scale of urbanisation. However, social forces mobilise in and through the platform of the state and engage in political struggle. Ultimately, a group of agents gain a dominant position and decide on strategies that will further the development of the regime of urbanisation that suits their particular shared interests, at the costs of the interests of excluded agents.

6. During the heydays of industrialisation, a belief in the necessity of planned industrialisation and guided urbanisation caused the rise of an elite and corporatist regulatory fix. This fix, because of its embeddedness in local social relations, differed per locality. Because the provision of real estate was in the hands of those that decided upon the regime of urbanisation, the model of development remained stable for a long time.

7. The fundamental changes in the industrial paradigm guiding capitalism—which were preceded by the gaining of relative influence by extra-economic social forces that propagated social, ecological, and non-economic urban development—kicked off regulatory instability and new struggles over the regime of urbanisation. The demise of the Fordist model of development created a vast number of problems for cities, which saw their vast urban spaces become derelict, the industrial working classes lose their jobs, and their planning processes become obsolete and ineffective. The post-Fordist spaces of accumulation that arose subsequently were provided by different agents for different social groups that had never been incorporated into the local mode of social and spatial regulation, and whose activities and strategies could not be affected by regulatory processes deriving from the old model of development.

8. The growing prosperity that was associated with the heydays of Fordism and with the growth of post-Fordist accumulation caused the rise of living and working standards, the associated higher demands on urban development, and a growing political consciousness amongst a broad group of urban inhabitants. Combined, this led to the questioning of the dominant regime of urbanisation and the call for new ways forward.
9. With the gradual demise of Fordist accumulation, pivotal agents in the newly developing structure of office provision won the struggle for dominance on the platform of the state and thus obtained central roles in local modes of social and spatial regulation, which at the same time meant that they gained dominance over the regime of urbanisation and the associated accumulation projects and planning processes.

10. The evolution of regimes of urbanisation is a multilayered and multifaceted process, carried out by a multitude of agents on a multitude of state and market platforms. Post-Fordist urbanisation therefore is not a singular process, but a contested undertaking that leads to fundamentally different combinations of regulation-urbanisation-accumulation.

A series of research questions on the real practices that have unfolded in Amsterdam and Frankfurt since 1945 will guide the investigation. The answers to these questions build toward an answer to the following main research questions:

*How can the co-evolution of the economic, political, and spatial systems be characterized in both Amsterdam and Frankfurt?*

*What was the influence of these patterns of socio-spatial regulation on the successive generations of office landscapes in Amsterdam and Frankfurt during the period from 1945 to the present time?*

As stepping stones toward answering these questions, the following questions will be answered systematically for the cases of Amsterdam and Frankfurt, using qualitative research data (interviews, and primary and secondary literature).

First, on the nature of the structure of provision:

1. Which social agents were/are actually involved in office provision in the period under investigation, and how did/do these social agents intervene in the physical process of provision?
2. How does the involvement of agents change over time, and what is the rationale behind either stability or change?

Second, on the nature of regulation:

3. How have the multi-scalar regulatory forms and mechanisms unfolded in the period under investigation?
4. What is the rationale behind this time- and place-specific manifestation of regulatory forms and mechanisms?

5. To what extent does the set of regulatory forms and mechanisms identified cohere as a group?

Third, on the nature of change and struggle:

6. What contradictions inside and between the spheres of office production, planning, exchange, and consumption were important causes of struggle in structures of building provision?

7. Which of these struggles were fought out on the platform of the state, and how were they reflected in the unfolding of regulatory forms?

Fourth, on the nature of planning:

8. How did the process of planning unfold from this diversity of processes in the period under investigation?

3.6 Analysing the emergence of regulation

With Holden and MacLeod (2003), I believe that one of the main challenges for scholars who use the RA in inquiries into urban and regional development is to think of avenues of explaining the becoming of regulation. The RA itself, with its causal arrow pointing from modes of regulation (that which does the explaining) toward the accumulation process (that which is to be explained), does not offer us such theories.

Since the state is more than just the organisation that we call government, but rather an institutional ensemble in and through which different social and political forces act (Jessop, 1990, 2000), the process of regulation and the enactment of state power should be analysed in terms of the power of these social forces. The state thus is an operationally autonomous system that provides a structural site for political action. This state system comprises “all those activities, organisations and institutions organised around (or at least involved in) making collectively binding decisions for an imagined political community” (Jessop, 2000: 349).

Collectively binding decisions on future urban development – and, associated with that, the production of economic spaces for a new round of accumulation – are thus partly fought out on the state platform. As the outcome of
earlier struggles that made certain powerful agents more dominant than others, the
state, as an institutional ensemble, is biased toward certain dominant political and
social forces: “particular forms of state privilege some strategies over others,
privilege the access by some forces over others, some interests over others, some
time horizons over others, some coalition possibilities over others” (Jessop, 1990: 10). These privileges are manifestations of what Jessop calls “strategic selectivity.”

A regulatory fix — in its most concrete form, the emerged structure of
provision — is thus contingently shaped in a specific space and time, and open to
social and political forces to contest or reinforce. So the changes in these
strategically selective regulatory fixes and the associated regimes of urbanisation,
and the changes in concrete actions, are mutually constitutive, co-evolve over time
and space, and should therefore be analysed in relation to each other (Jessop,
2001a).

Analysing hegemonic regimes of urbanisation: the platforms for interaction
In the previous chapters I argued for the analysis of the interplay between the
fundamentally autonomous worlds of action of the economic system and the
political system, which meet each other in the production of urban space. A regime
of urbanisation — being a period of prolonged stability in the configuration of social
relations that define urban development — was said to come into existence when
the irregularities in either or both realms are postponed through a temporal
hegemonic urbanisation project that unites the interests of the dominant fractions
in both worlds. Thus, the development of a regime of urbanisation is more than
just the settling of claims on space with regard to the content of urbanisation
(economy – ecology – society) and the spaces of urbanisation (core – periphery –
suburbs) through the drafting of a spatial plan.

The analysis of processes of regulation and urbanisation therefore entails the
description of place-specific production of space, through case study research, with
special emphasis on:

1. The dominant local processes of accumulation as played out on the
   platform of the economy, and the resulting claims on space (the
economic mode of spatial regulation);
2. The processes of economic and social mobilisation as played out on the
   platform of the state (the social mode of spatial regulation).
Both platforms for interaction are contingently structured through past processes of regulation, accumulation, and urbanisation. First, the state’s contingently and temporarily shaped spatial/scalar, fiscal, and electoral representation decisively influences the path of urbanisation; for example, it selectively influences the outcomes of struggles over urban development issues, intergovernmental relations, and urban accumulation strategies (cf. Terhorst & Van de Ven, 1997; Elkin, 1985, 1987; WRR, 1990). Therefore, next to an elaboration of the concrete struggles over urbanisation, the analysis of the regime of urbanisation will also entail an analysis of these spatial/scalar, fiscal and electoral representations. Second, the economy’s contingently and temporarily shaped industrial paradigm, scalar reach, and regime of accumulation decisively influence the path of urbanisation through selectivity with regards to the perceived possibilities for excessive yields; for example, the functional economic reach, the preferred spaces of production, and the preferred circuit of capital investment (cf. Harvey, 1985). So, as with the analysis of the state, some attention will be paid to these structural components of economic change, before reverting to the direct struggles over space.

The main emphasis in this dissertation is on those struggles over space that unfold in the realm of social regulation (the level of the state). The real production of urban real-estate is a private undertaking, originating from the economic realm. However, these processes are partly pulled into the state realm because of their broader, contested, effects on society, their spatial implications that need legal or political approval, and/or their perceived beneficial effects for society at large, implicating the interference by government bodies.

Through qualitative research of both secondary and primary sources, these struggles over urban space on the platform of the local state will be illustrated in the following chapters. Because the availability of comparable statistical data over the described period is limited,¹ and because the main aim of this study is to give a qualitative account of regime shifts in urbanisation in both cases, the presentation of statistics throughout the following chapters is not the main aim of the study; rather, statistics are presented in order to give an indication of the dimensions of urbanisation and accumulation in the subject cities, so that the reader will be able to grasp and contextualise the struggles over space that are discussed.

¹ Urban statistics in Germany focus mainly on residential data. Moreover, commercial property is usually measured in cubic meters and, moreover, it was only in the mid 1980s that agents started to collect office development data.
3.7 Conclusion: the role of sociospatial regulation in processes of urban development and office provision

In this chapter it was made clear that this dissertation’s search for a better understanding of the interplay between urban development, office provision, and sociospatial regulation is undertaken from an institutional perspective on urbanisation practices, regulatory practices, and planning practices. Therefore, the aim of the following case studies is not to give an extensive, all-encompassing description of all facets of urban office planning and development since 1945, but rather to tease out the tendencies that or have actually operated in the contexts of Amsterdam and Frankfurt (cf. Lawson, 2003: 19). For this reason, this work diverges from both geographical and planning studies, many of which are concerned with the detailed description of the factual development trajectories of specific geographical areas, or with the detailed description of factual planning processes. In this study, the description of urbanisation processes, planning processes, and real-estate developments is made instrumental to the analysis of the ebb and flow of regulatory processes, and of their interrelations with the evolution of office provision.

The following chapters will present a reinterpretation of the histories of planning and urbanisation in Amsterdam and Frankfurt, making use of the set of claims put forward in the previous sections. Both case studies consist of three chapters, each of which covers a formative episode in the evolution of office planning and urban development. Each chapter thus consists of a theoretically informed qualitative account of this specific formative period, and a preliminary analysis of the processes of sociospatial regulation, office provision, and urbanisation. Together, these processes give an indication of the evolution of the regimes of urbanisation and their backbones. Finally, a concluding chapter will look back on both cases and contrast the path-dependent change of the regimes of urbanisation in both cities. It will also confront the hypotheses formulated above with both case studies, in order to enrich the understanding of the interplay between processes of sociospatial regulation, office provision, and urbanisation in urban development trajectories.