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### Disconnected innovations : new urbanity in large-scale development projects: Zuidas Amsterdam, Ørestad Copenhagen and Forum Barcelona

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*'In solemn moments such as this I have put my trust'*  
Leonard Cohen, *Memories* (1977)

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After almost six years of work it is quite difficult to describe exactly how I feel. Quite honestly I can say that it was a real privilege to work on this book. Firstly because it was an almost unprecedented opportunity to pursue my academic interests. I really appreciate the freedom I was given by both my supervisors to explore and organize my work the way I wanted. It was probably not the recipe for the most effective research, but it gave me opportunities to pursue other intellectual endeavours in the meantime. When I was asked to do this study, I was quite afraid that being a PhD candidate would only mean long days in the office or library. I cannot deny that that was a part of my job during the last few years. However, there was also so much more to it than this. It was an opportunity to explore places, to travel, to network, to live abroad, to interview people and to observe practitioners at work. It might sound like an awful cliché, but it was also an opportunity to find out more about myself and that turned a long research project into a multidimensional and interlinked personal and intellectual experience. What I will remember most are the great friendships I established with other young people exploring the world whom I was able to meet in different places. With all these privileges, comes a duty of course and the most significant is to report your findings. I hope that this book does just that. The more personal aspect which, from my point of view is just as important, is hidden between the lines of this book and present in quite a disorganized fashion in my head.

Among the most memorable moments were the many interactions I had, nationally and internationally, with wonderfully gifted people who helped to structure my ideas, who encouraged me and who gave up their valuable time to explain all my questions. My promoter Willem Salet proved to be much more than just a very supportive academic

## Acknowledgements

guide. His humour and down-to-earth character, combined with the enormous encouragement and trust he gives to young people overwhelmed me sometimes. In one of the first weeks of my job he told me, “Stan, this institute is a very busy and active working-place!”, pointing to the ever-growing disorganized piles of paper on his large desk. Almost six years later I can only say that I fully agree with him and I enjoyed almost every aspect of it.

I had the pleasure of work intensively with Enrico Gualini when we together gave a course on policy analysis. We made quite a name for ourselves at European level! Enrico combined sarcastic humour and sharp observations with solid academic advice on the direction my research should take.

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A crucial part of this study involved in-depth case studies on ongoing large-scale development projects. Because of their frequently closed nature, a lot of effort was required to gain access to their networks and to build relationships of trust. The help of key informants was crucial. In Amsterdam these were Ben Teunissen, Robert Dijkmeester, Remko Schnieders and in a later stage Jaap Korf. These were all hard-working people who were willing to spend time outside their busy jobs to discuss my preliminary analyses and hypotheses and to give me access to the inner world of the Zuidas project. I received additional valuable support from Jan Stoutenbeek, Pi de Bruin, Douglas Grobbe and Jan Doets. Gregor Heemskerk and Han Joosten were perfect sparring partners in the critical discussion on the progress of the Zuidas project.

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Less than half a year later (May-June 2005), I was able to carry out in-depth fieldwork on the Barcelona case thanks to a two month stay at the Institut 'd Estudis Territorials. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Francesc Carbonell who made this possible. During the fieldwork, Marc Pradel was an excellent translator of documents and a helpful source of 'local knowledge'. A special word of thanks are due to Maria Buhigas, Marisol García, Marc Marti, Francesc Munoz, Antoni Ollé, Arturo Rodriguez and Miquel Sodupe for their help during the study period. A complete list of interviews conducted for this part of the study can again be found in the Appendix.

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## Acknowledgements

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