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

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'Many of the results of this [...] analysis may seem obvious: leaders lead, followers follow, group composition matters, and so on. The reason is simple. Because each of us spends much of each day swimming in social waters, we each have a deep intuitive understanding of social phenomena.' (Ellickson 2001, p.63)

'How can you have a systematic means for getting to what you do not know?' (Appadurai 2006, p.169)

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: A MULTI-LAYERED ANALYSIS OF AMBITIONS FOR NEW URBANITY

'The Zuidas is commonly regarded as an area with a high potential for development of offices, housing and facilities. The aim is to develop an international top location with an adequate mixture of uses' (Gemeente Amsterdam 1998, p.13).

'In Ørestad, efforts should be made to integrate the various functions known from the historic city. The mixture of functions will help to make Ørestad a living town where people walk around comfortably and are able to meet conveniently at all times of the day' (Ørestadsselskabet 1994, p.64).

'[Forum] had to constitute a 'new' space in two senses. It was 'new' because it was the first time the area had been urbanized. It was also new in conceptual terms because it represented the city's commitment to turn blighted areas into well-structured contemporary urban spaces' (Acebillo 2004, p.192).

2.1 Introduction

This study deals with three contemporary large-scale development projects in which certain actors have a clear initial preference to develop these places into truly 'urban' areas within a foreseeable future. Nevertheless, these ambitions are formulated not only in an initial stage of a project – often predating any concrete investments – but also at a high level of abstraction. These intentions are regularly expressed and visualized in master plans, design visions and other policy documents. Self-evidently, they need to be followed up by a series of concrete investment projects – often implemented by other actors – in order to become a reality.

Now, after approximately ten years of decision-making and development, Zuidas, Ørestad and Forum are slowly taking shape. In our introductory chapter we discussed

some of the policy dilemmas connected to the contemporary generation of large-scale development projects. Different critical overviews indicated that – although the ambition was almost universally part of their original plans – a common feature of most projects is their lack of real urban character (Moulaert et. al. 2003; Salet and Gualini 2007; Trip 2007a). In other words, previous studies revealed difficulties in transforming the often imaginative intentions for new urbanity into a built reality. This study makes a careful analysis of processes of framing and decision-making in three recent projects to inform the debate on this intriguing inconsistency and possible ways to move ahead.

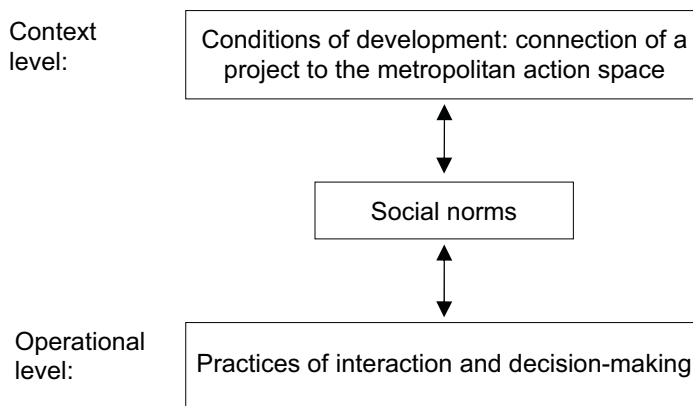
What we want to establish in this chapter is: ‘...a ‘framework’ that organizes our prior (scientific and prescientific) knowledge about what to expect in the province of the world that is of interest to us, that emphasizes the questions that are worthwhile asking, the factors that are likely to have high explanatory potential, and the type of data that would generally be useful in supporting the invalidating specific explanations.’ (Scharpf 1997, p.29-30)

It will be a conceptual framework in which we borrow concepts from institutionalist schools of thought. In this way we can connect operational practices of decision-making, in which this specific ambition of new urbanity has to be realized, with a broader institutional analysis. Our case studies will, among other things, reveal insights into the context-specific struggles of interaction and framing around this topic. The comparison between the cases is especially interesting. Although our three case studies share an ambition to become an integrated ‘urban’ area, we selected them specifically because they differ considerably in the way these ambitions were initially framed. This offers us a chance to test hypotheses on the relationship between different key variables of our conceptual framework.

Our conceptual framework, in which we emphasize aspects of *change* and *innovation*, contains two different dimensions and one important connecting device (see: Figure 2.1). The two dimensions are: (1) the connection of projects to the metropolitan action space and (2) the operational dimension of interaction and decision-making in the project. The crucial term used to make the connection between these dimensions is in the concept of ‘social norms’. We interpret social norms as being *social rules of conduct that influence actions by explicitly, but mostly implicitly, enabling or disabling certain forms of behaviour*. According to this definition, social norms are a key device by which to understand structural aspects in interaction, since they help to comprehend the ‘ought character’ of agency.

We hypothesize subsequently that the development of what we defined in the previous chapter as a large-scale development project of new urbanity will be stimulated if this ambition is reflected upon normatively in social practices over the course of time. In other words, that it gets part of the (set of) social norms that structure interactions in a project and thus becomes part of the intended or ‘ought’ character of agency. This will certainly not happen automatically. We believe there to be a strong relationship between the (development of) social norms and the way projects are connected to the domains of the metropolitan action space and how this connectivity has developed over the course of time. These points will be explained in greater depth later in section 2.4. Figure 2.1 provides a basic overview of our conceptual framework. The different aspects of this framework are introduced in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

Figure 2.1: Basic conceptual framework



The way the different aspects of our conceptual framework are linked together are explained in the sections below. Although we appreciate Coleman's (1990) statement that the real observable knowledge about social systems is at the micro (operational) level, we still prefer to start our framework by introducing more analytical tools at the macro (context) level. Our introductory chapter emphasized more than once the significance of the understanding of these projects as being affected by (and also producing) different broader social, economic and political processes. This means that if we limit our perspective only to the operational practices within projects, our framework will miss important explanatory power. By including an analysis of the context of a project, via its connection to the metropolitan action space – and the development of this connection – we believe we can achieve a more structural understanding of how operational practices in projects are formed and developed based on the influence of this context.

Therefore, we first introduce the concept of connectivity to the metropolitan action space in section 2.2 as a tool by which to understand the origin of the projects we study and their connection to society. We reveal the considerable differences between our cases in this respect. Then, in section 2.3, we introduce conceptual tools by which to analyse the complex operational dimensions of large-scale development projects. This will be done via an actor-centred institutional approach which enables a reconstruction of the structure of decision situations from the perspective of active agents interacting in actor constellations. We supplement Scharpf's (1997) framework on actor-centred institutionalism with a more sociological perspective on the relationship between action and structure. Structure is operationalised by identifying different *rules* that apply to decision situations. Finally, the concept of social norms is introduced in section 2.4 as the most important theoretical device in our framework by which to monitor and explain (the difficulties in) processes of change and innovation. Section 2.5 presents the research questions for the case studies.

Self-evidently our framework is not only like a lens focusing on specific aspects of a very complex reality but is also a revelation of different explicit or implicit choices from the researcher regarding the direction of this study. We examine certain aspects and deliberately ignore others. This study does not, of course, aspire to cover issues on

large-scale development projects holistically. Chapter one explained our scholastic interest in the specific niche within the larger spectrum of possible studies on large-scale development projects we are focusing on. The most important demarcation we made is certainly formed by the *location* and *type* of projects we selected for this study. We selected projects located in major metropolitan regions outside the traditional urban centres where, in the stage of initiative, a conception of new urbanity was created and supported by leading actors. There are, of course, lots of other sorts of large-scale development projects in other locations, or without this specific ambition for new urbanity. This has to be kept in mind when reading the conceptual framework, empirical results and conclusions of our study.

2.2 Context level: connections to the metropolitan action space

Although action – by definition – can only take place at the level of individuals (Coleman 1990), it is obvious that large-scale development projects contain strategic dimensions above the level of the individual agent. To explore this context level we study how projects are connected to the so-called *metropolitan action space*. We define this as the *societal setting*, which consists of numerous social, economic and political institutions and players and which is of importance to understand the development and governing of space in a certain metropolitan area.

2.2.1 Two dimensions of framing

For our analysis we made a distinction between two aspects of the connectivity to the metropolitan action space. On the one hand a content or symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing. On the other hand a process or organizational dimension of framing. These two dimensions have an intimate and mutually reinforcing relationship, as they refer to dimensions of social-institutional processes that jointly affect the behaviour of actors (Gualini and Majoor 2007). A common focus in the academic literature on framing is on the social-psychological meaning of framing as a strategic-communicative practice, by which ‘...the definition of different actors’ preferences and conducts may become mediated over time through the sharing of frames, and on the contextual role played in this mediation by structured forms of interaction.’ (Gualini and Majoor 2007, p.300).

The symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing.

First we study the way a group of actors in a project are united in a common direction regarding its development in the metropolitan action space. We refer to this as the symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing. A project can, for example, be framed as a project of infrastructure improvements or as a project with a certain social aspect. These are examples of a strategic way a group of individuals interpret the goal of a project. Such a frame (can) guide a group of individual actors towards a certain form of collective action, by giving a perception of a future state. In our empirical study, we reconstruct these frames and their development via an investigation of policy reports, secondary sources and in a series of in-depth interviews with key participants. We especially study to what extent the ambition for new urbanity has been reflected in the way a project is strategically framed. Obviously in projects we expect different symbolic-cognitive frames, and also conflicts (of interpretations) of these frames. Although

a strategic frame of ‘new urbanity’ was one of the leading initial frames in all three projects, we expect to find certain ambiguities regarding its precise meaning. Neither does such a frame dismiss the possibility that important actors have preferences which are not aligned to it. It is therefore necessary to study the possible development of frames and their reflective capacity over the course of time (frame reflection). On top of that it is necessary to analyse the interaction, possible conflicts or reinforcing capacities between this particular frame and other major symbolic-cognitive frames that play a role in these projects. Finally, of course, it is interesting to find out to what extent this frame of new urbanity is ‘powerful’ enough to change the original motives of behaviour of actors not aligned to this frame. As Coaffee and Healey (2003) observe, for planning concepts to be successful they must have the capacity to ‘travel’ across different levels of the governance process, from the level of the actor in a specific episode towards the routinization in practices and finally into cultural norms and values. We study the latter specifically via the concept of social norms, introduced in section 2.4.

The organizational dimension of framing.

The understanding of spatial developments via an analysis of the connectedness of initiatives to the metropolitan action space is one of the important contributions of recent literature on urban governance. Among others, Salet et. al. (2003) and Herrschel and Newman (2002) portray an overwhelmingly complex picture of governance in contemporary metropolitan areas. Next to the traditional geographically bound jurisdictions of local, regional and national government, a large variety of inner-municipal and intra-municipal, public-public and public-private initiatives are relevant to an understanding of the governing of space in metropolitan areas nowadays. We referred to this development in section 1.3 above. It certainly is not our aim to make an original contribution to these vivid intellectual debates and studies. Here, we simply absorb some of their findings to help understand how large-scale development projects are strategically connected to the metropolitan action space and how this connection has developed over the course of time. We refer to this as the organizational dimension of framing and it is also an important tool by which to understand processes of *development* and *change*.

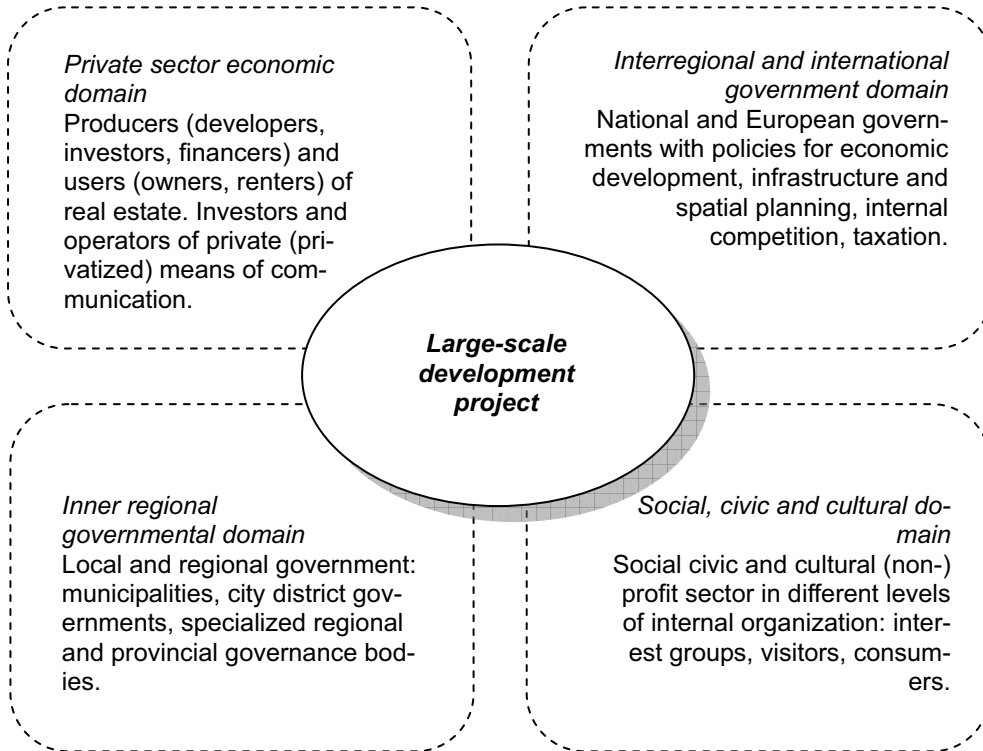
In our empirical studies we investigate how projects were initially connected to the operators in the metropolitan action space and how this connection has developed over the course of time. A typical aspect of contemporary large-scale development projects is that these initiatives often originate and develop at the crossroads of lots of different domains within the metropolitan action space. Based on work by Salet et. al. (2003), we distinguish four major sub domains within the metropolitan action space which we assume are of importance for the development of large-scale development projects:

- *Private sector economic domain*: the domain in which the agents of international private streams of investment money operate.
- *Interregional and international government domain*: the domain in which higher level governments operate.
- *Inner regional governmental domain*: the domain in which local and regional government(s) operate.
- *Social, civic and cultural domain*: the domain in which social, civic and cultural organisations, both public and private, operate.

We subsequently ask what dynamic in time is observable in the case studies in their connectivity to these four sub domains of the metropolitan action space.

Figure 2.2 pictures the four sub domains and indicates a non-exhaustive list of major operators within these domains relevant for large-scale development projects.

Figure 2.2: Domains of societal action in the metropolitan action space relevant for large-scale development projects



Since the nature of any diagram is to put a fluid and often changing reality into a rather straightforward graphical order, it makes sense to state that these domains might, in reality, overlap. Although the two domains with the word ‘government’ suggest a neat geographical demarcation, reality can reveal overlapping jurisdictions whereby, for example, national government influences (or subsidizes) local government. The private sector economic domain has deep-rooted links with an inner regional governmental domain, for example via business associations or the Chamber of Commerce. At the same time, there are always links between the social, civic and cultural domain with the other domains. Basically, these four domains always exist in connection with each other.

An additional complexity is formed by the international differences, which we also expect to find in our three European cases. The eclectic nature of the term ‘metropolitan action space’ means however that it is possible to include the differences between

the three cases by using the four major sub domains as main ordering devices. Nevertheless, in some countries certain activities that were previously public are (partly) privatized, like collective transport, higher education or infrastructure maintenance. It is therefore important to emphasize that this scheme should not be interpreted in a highly deterministic manner, its purpose in our research is to give a basic indication of the connection of the project to the society.

2.2.2 Initial differences between the cases regarding the organizational dimension of framing

For our research we chose three projects that strongly *contrasted* in their initial connection to the metropolitan action space, that is in their organizational framing. This was done deliberately. Our comparative approach enables us to study the impact of this different initial connectivity on the development of these projects. We expect that these differences, and especially the way this connectivity has developed over the course of time, are vital for an understanding of the *conditions* in these projects to realize the planning goal of new urbanity.

The Amsterdam Zuidas project was initiated in the private sector sub domain given that large financial institutions opted for a relatively empty area on the south side of Amsterdam and stated their ambition of realizing a new mixed-use international business area. In the initial stage, quickly connections with the inner regional domain were established, especially with the municipality of Amsterdam. The project was hardly related to the other two domains. By contrast, the ambition of the Copenhagen Ørestad project was to realize a new mixed-use prestigious urban area based on a partnership between local and national government at the beginning of the Nineties, with a link to EU supportive programmes. The social, civic and cultural domain and the private sector economic domain were then invited to show interest in the project that had been formulated under this governmental logic. The Barcelona Forum project again adopted a totally different approach. Here, the initiative for an extensive program of investments in urban developments, infrastructures and public space in a formerly industrial area was taken up in a domain featuring an active local government together with actors from the social, civic and cultural domain. From this starting point connections were sought with higher levels of government and private sector investors.

2.2.3 Hypotheses

We hypothesize that the interpretation, development and realization of ambitions for new urbanity are linked to the strategic connection to the metropolitan action space, via the influence this has on the set of rules and the social norms that constitute the concrete action situations at an operational level in these projects. We also expect that this will influence the symbolic-cognitive framing.

In concrete terms, if a project is strongly connected to a private sector domain, we expect action situations which are geared more towards the realization of financially profitable combinations of spatial functions, together with only lukewarm incentives to accommodate other less profitable functions. If a project is initially connected to an interregional and international government domain, we imagine the project to be one in which action situations stimulate more emphasis on (internationally oriented) strategic public investments, for example, in education and trade, supplemented with a more strategic orientation around, for example, the achievement of the EU Lisbon agenda.

Large infrastructure investments are also more likely to be integrated into a project since they are often the responsibility of higher forms of government. A predominant connection of a project in an inner regional domain is expected to lead to situations in which local stakes are taken into account more. Moreover, this could lead to a greater emphasis on the embeddedness of a place in connection to other locations. Finally, a more developed connection to the social, civic and cultural domain is expected to facilitate an action situation which is more open to ambitions for a project of new urbanity with particular social and cultural dimensions.

We even want to radicalize our anticipation by stating that a connection to all four distinguished sub domains of the metropolitan action space is a *necessity* for the successful development of large-scale projects with ambitions for new urbanity. We hypothesize that only this leads to a situation in which the maximum of relationships, resources (ideas, initiatives, investments, support) and variety from society is accommodated and combined. All four domains are particularly important for the ambition for new urbanity. The private sector domain is crucial to ‘deliver’ necessary investments and clients for projects. The interregional and international government domain is of major importance almost everywhere as regards securing both infrastructure investments as well as establishing other (spatial and non-spatial) policies that can positively enhance the conditions for new urbanity in these projects. The inner regional domain often consists of political actors of considerable importance for political support, identification and connectedness between ‘the project’ and society. Finally, the social, civic and cultural domain consists of potential important feeders for interesting programmatic aspects in these projects. The lack of connection to one of these domains is expected to lead to unbalanced developments.

The way a project is strategically connected to the metropolitan action space is not something that simply happens but can be actively set up, steered or altered as well. In all the projects in our study we expect to find traces of deliberate attempts to connect a project in a certain way. However, it is expected to be very difficult to develop this connectivity since it demands a certain strategic thinking and acting that often surpasses the individual mindsets of actors. This leads us to the following general hypothesis based on the expectations we just raised:

Concepts of new urbanity are more likely to be successful implemented if a project is positioned in all four domains of the metropolitan action space we identified. We therefore expect projects that were first embedded in a limited fashion in certain domains of action to seek connections with other domains during their development in order to ‘repair’ this situation, if they want to fulfil their ambition of becoming a truly integrated location.

2.3 Operational dimension: practices of interaction in projects

If we want to understand how projects with ambitions for new urbanity are created, shaped and executed, the most natural level to start our exploration and gather data is at the micro level of interaction practices in these projects. While the context level, which we introduced in the previous section, focuses on the strategic connectivity to the metropolitan action space, the operational dimension tries to open the black box of operational activities *en situ*.

In his majestic introduction on social theory, Coleman (1990), signals that a focus on studying the behaviour of agents is becoming more popular in social science in the last few decades, visible in an explosive growth of qualitative case studies. However, this ‘often leads away from the central problem of social theory, which concerns the functioning of social systems’ (Coleman 1990, p.2). His argument that the essence of social explanations, and the only way for social science to accumulate knowledge, is formed by studying the relationship between agent interaction and structuring parameters, is widely followed nowadays. It is in this spirit in which we have designed this conceptual framework.

2.3.1 Actor-centred institutionalism

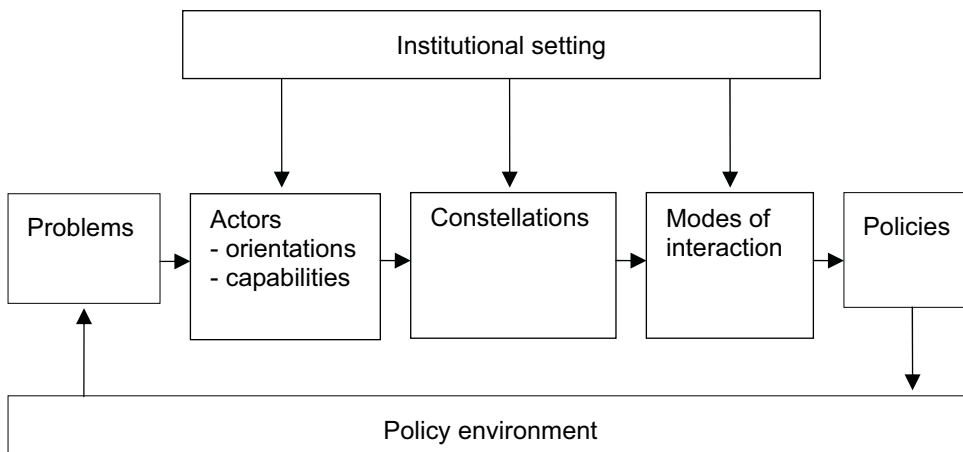
What we need to have to shape our investigations in the operational dimension is a quite practical framework that can help to analyse actor behaviour in relation to such a structure of (dis-)incentives. Scharpf’s actor-centred institutionalist theory satisfies our interest in conceptualizing complex decision-making situations via the concrete behaviour of actors while, at the same time, referring to a broader set of institutional explanations (Scharpf 1997; 2000).¹ In Scharpf’s framework, which he explicitly presents as capable of facilitating comparable research, a distinction is made between actors, actor constellations and modes of interaction. From a sociological perspective the notion of a collective actor suggests a level of intentional action above the level of the individual. Because most of the organizations involved in the projects we studied are collections of large numbers of individuals (governments, large investors etc), external *and* internal interactions are needed to create intentional action at the level of the organisation. These collective actors can be characterized by specific capabilities, specific perceptions and specific preferences. In our research these actor-features are not postulated, but constructed on the basis of a backward analysis of their interactions in practices around the specific project by means of studying reports, policy documents and via in-depth interviews with representatives of major actors and key observers. Perceptions and preferences can change over time since each actor has ‘...its own understanding of the nature of the problem and the feasibility of particular solutions, ...its own individual and institutional self-interest and its own normative preferences, and ...its own ca-

¹ In the second half of the last century, the discipline of policy analysis underwent considerable theoretical developments. Different, sometimes competing, models have been developed for the analysis of policy-making by a variety of scholars from different academic backgrounds. A basic classic distinction can be made between (1) models that interpret decision-making as a sequence of steps taken by a policy actor to interpret and solve a certain policy problem (phase-models) and (2) models that interpret decision-making as a process in which different streams of problems, solutions and political actions are connected (stream models) (Teisman 2000). Both models have their advantages and disadvantages and an extensive analysis falls outside the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, one important aspect which is missing in both models is the role of (multiple) actors and their interacting behaviour. Phase-models (implicitly) work with the concept of one single powerful actor which takes decisions. This seems to be less relevant to an understanding of situations in which a defining aspect is the plurality of actors, goals and means and a fragmentation of power (however this is not to say that power is evenly distributed among actors!). Although some actors behave like they are capable of planning and implementing projects, in reality they are highly dependant on others (Teisman 1992). Stream models also seem to lack the concept of the individual actor. These kinds of models seem to be relevant to an analysis macro-level policy development but miss the empirical finesses to cope with the fine-grain of interactions at micro level. These omissions are one of the reasons for the development of more actor-oriented models in the last decades, which will also be used in this research.

pabilities or action resources that may be employed to affect the outcome' (Scharpf 1997, p.11).

Ultimately this will lead to individual sets of preferences regarding the available courses of action at a particular moment in time. Collective actors are involved in practices of interaction around large investment projects in which they do not behave independently, but have to interact with others. This aspect is crucial in Scharpf's understanding of *actor constellations*, the next step of Scharpf's analysis in which a strategic dimension is added. Actor constellations will describe: '...what we know of the set of actors that are actually involved in particular policy interactions – their capabilities (translated into potential 'strategies'), their perceptions and evaluations of the outcomes obtainable (translated into 'payoffs'), and the degree to which their payoff aspirations are compatible or incompatible with one another' (Scharpf 1997, p.72). This all happens in a very dynamic multi-actor constellation since there can be different co-existing practices of interaction on the same project, involving different sub-topics, sometimes different players, and sometimes the same players but with a different role. Nevertheless, Scharpf sees the domains of 'actors' and 'constellations' as giving static pictures of a certain round of policy formation. The concept of 'modes of interaction' is an analytical tool which can be used to understand the actual character of the interaction (Scharpf 1997, p.46). Scharpf distinguishes between 'unilateral action', 'negotiated agreement', 'majority vote' and 'hierarchical direction' as predominant modes of interaction. The fragmented governance situations on large-scale urban projects suggest that we often have to deal with negotiated agreement. Figure 2.3 gives a schematic overview of Scharpf's actor-centred institutionalist framework.

Figure 2.3: Scharpf's domain of interaction-oriented policy research



Source: Scharpf 1997, p.44

The institutional dimension in Scharpf's framework lies in the connection of the study of actors, actor constellations and modes of interaction with an *institutional setting*. Scharpf defines that as a '...shorthand term to describe the most important influences on those factors that in fact drive our explanations – namely, actors with their orientations and capabilities, actor constellations, and modes of interaction' (Scharpf 1997, p.39).

Therefore, if we were to use Scharpf's framework to analyse the operational domain in large-scale development projects we would probably identify site-specific 'games': different actor constellations in which purposeful actors strategically interact. In his interpretation, the concept of institutional setting is limited to systems of rules that structure the courses of action that a set of actors may choose in such a situation. It can hence be placed under the broad header of 'rational choice institutionalism'.

Although we use parts of Scharpf's framework, especially those parts that help to create some basic structures of understanding of complex processes (namely actors, actor constellations and modes of interaction), we want to problematise the connection with the institutional setting slightly further and move beyond a rational choice interpretation. This is not because it is necessary to create more complexity per se in our conceptual framework, but because we are convinced that the subtle connection between behaviour (micro level analysis) and structure (macro level analysis) offers interesting areas to explore, especially in complex multi-actor situations.

2.3.2 Rules that structure action situations

Ostrom (1986) proposes studying the relationship between structure and action via the rules that affect the structure of an action situation and thereby the options for action of participants. In most situations one can empirically observe that individuals or actors have to operate and cooperate in repetitive, interdependent relationships. In these situations rules are set up to create order and predictability. A crucial aspect is that most of these rules are *deliberately* set up and are also potentially subject to change (Ostrom 1986, p.6). She distinguishes seven broad types of rules that operate configurationally to affect the structure of an action situation. These include:

1. position rules that specify a set of positions and how many participants hold each position;
2. boundary rules that specify how participants are chosen to hold these positions and how participants leave these positions;
3. scope rules that specify the set of outcomes that may be affected and the external inducements and/or costs assigned to each of these outcomes;
4. authority rules that specify the set of actions assigned to a position at a particular node;
5. aggregation rules that specify the decision function to be used at a particular node to map actions into intermediate or final outcomes;
6. information rules that authorize channels of communication among participants in positions and specify the language and form in which communication is to take place;
7. payoff rules that prescribe how benefits and costs are to be distributed to participants in certain positions (Ostrom 1986, p.19).

The concept of Ostrom to understand the structure of an action situation as a collection of (interdependent) rules is a very helpful one and is an important analytical theoretic

tool. We referred above to the fact that one of the distinguishing factors of large-scale development projects is that special governance settings – with a collection of rules – are often created. These constitute an important part of the structure of the action situation in a project. However, these rules only acquire explanatory value in combination (and in interaction) with a model of a decision maker that operates in these actor constellations (or ‘action situations’ as Ostrom names them).

When we combine the works of Ostrom and Scharpf we come to the two following analytical questions that can structure our investigation in the operational dimension of our case studies:

- What are the rules (and their development) that affect the participating actors and modes of interaction?
- What are the rules (and their development) that affect the scope and strategy of participants?

Ostrom agrees that, in most cases, rules define the possible spectrum of outcomes but not the outcomes themselves. She distinguishes three ways rules influence sets of outcomes:

1. A rule states that some particular actions or outcomes are forbidden. The remaining physically possible or attainable actions and outcomes are then permitted. The rules state what is forbidden. A residual class of actions or outcomes is permitted.
2. A rule enumerates specific actions or outcomes or states the upper and lower bound of permitted actions or outcomes and forbids those that are not specifically included.
3. A rule requires a particular action or outcome (Ostrom 1986, p.7).

In complex processes of interaction on large-scale urban projects we expect governance situations to be typified by rules 1 and 2. There is hardly ever a direct link between a rule and an action. Actors are more likely to be rule-oriented rather than pure rule-following (Gualini 2001). Rules help define action spaces, but at the same time they can be purposefully invoked or created by actors. Although these concepts can help understand action structures in projects, and therefore operationalise the macro to micro relationship in Scharpf’s scheme, we see a need to enrich them with a more sociological interpretation of action.

Before we explain this in more detail, we want to mention two crucial elements which typically reflect the complexity of decision-making on large-scale development projects that led us to make our decision. In our opinion, these two elements conflict with a straightforward rational choice understanding of the relationship between structure and agency in our study.

Firstly, there is the presence of large-scale complexity with multiple (rounds of) interconnected decisions between numerous and changing actors that are partly interdependent and related to each other during a long timeframe. This supports the observation of Kiser and Ostrom that situations in which actors can behave with simple pay-off matrices ‘...describe only a small segment of the decision situation[s] one could analyze’ (Kiser and Ostrom 1982, p.217). In situations of complexity and uncertainty – the way we introduced these projects in chapter one – it seems realistic to accommodate a wider, more sociological perspective on the relationship between agent interaction and structuring parameters.

Secondly, we certainly do not expect the relationship between actors, actor constella-

tions and modes of interaction and the institutional setting to be a one-sided, let alone stable, relationship. Most institutional settings are ultimately made by humans, and they can also be purposively constructed, influenced and altered. The latter would certainly also be acknowledged by rational choice institutionalists. However, their interpretation of the reasons for the establishment or changing of certain settings is linked very directly to the interests of the actors involved. From their perspective, institutional settings can be directly understood as a product of the interests of (the most powerful) actors. In our opinion, however, the interests of actors are not an easily recognizable commodity, particularly in the situation we are studying of possible change and innovation.

2.3.3 Beyond rational choice institutionalism

We can begin to explore this by introducing some alternatives to rational choice institutionalism. Besides Scharpf, a lot of scholars answered the question of how one should understand agent behaviour by referring to assumptions that actors can be understood as purposeful utility-maximizing units, with relatively stable preferences that are influenced by their position in a political system. March and Olsen (1984) refer to this line of reasoning as ‘goal-directed behaviour’. Understanding behaviour as goal-directed, and individuals therefore as rational egoists, has its origins in the period of Enlightenment (Healey 1997). The main assumptions of such a rational choice approach are: (1) actors have a fixed set of preferences or tastes and behave instrumentally to maximize the attainment of these preferences, (2) politics is seen as a series of collective action dilemmas in which individuals try to maximize their own goals at the frequent expense of a collectively suboptimal result, (3) the behaviour of actors is likely to be driven in interaction with others, leading to strategic calculations, (4) institutions originate (and are created by purposeful actors) because they have value for the actors: some institutions survive because they have more benefits to the relevant actors than alternative institutional forms (Hall and Taylor 1996, p.944-945). The last element relates specifically to an institutional understanding: the connection between structures and action. In the view of rational choice institutionalists, these structuring parameters (institutions) influence agent interaction by possibly influencing the utility function of individual agents. This means that they may change the balance of costs and benefits associated with particular actions and thereby the probable behaviours of actors. It is, therefore, a rather one-sided relationship in which there is no form of higher social intelligence which moves (systems of) actors (Coleman 1987, p.135). Actors move themselves, each under their own guidance system, and take account of structuring parameters (the rules) in their utility function. Essentially this means that concepts of multiple intensive land use would be implemented by actors if they fit into their utility function.

It is our conviction therefore that, when studying such complex decision situations, it makes sense to adopt a more sociological perspective. Powell and DiMaggio (1991) incorporate the observation made in lots of empirical studies on policy makers, such as classic work from Simon (1997), that organizational members discover their motives only by acting. Although actors could be self-proclaimed goal-oriented, it is difficult to deduct the collective outcome of all these actions simply from their individual utility functions. In a concrete situation, problems and solutions are typically decoupled, uncertainty grows, and decisions often occur through oversight or quasi-random matching

of problems and solutions.

A more sociological approach to understand the relationship between actor behaviour and structuring parameters moves away from a 'simple' analysis of an individual utility function. In this perspective 'The individual is seen as an entity deeply embedded in a world of institutions, composed of symbols, scripts and routines, which provide the filters for interpretation, of both the situation and oneself, out of which a course of action is constructed. Not only do institutions provide strategically-useful information, they also affect the very identities, self-images and preferences of actors' (Hall and Taylor 1996, p.939). These theories therefore have a much more balanced view of the relationship between structure and action, rather than seeing it as a linear relationship (Gualini 2001, p.235).

Giddens' (1984) structuration theory takes precisely the recursive relationship between the two as his point of departure to explain social systems. In his view, structures are not something outside human actors but are man-made and reproduced *by* the acting of purposeful agents. As Healey observes, '... Individuals are neither fully autonomous nor automatons. Powerful forces are around us, shaping our lives and presenting both opportunity and constraint. But structure is not something outside us. It is not an 'action space' within we operate, as rationalist policy analysts tended to imagine. How we act in structured situations not only 'makes a difference'; our actions constitute (instantiate) the structural forces. We make structural forces, as we are shaped by them' (Healey 1997, p.49).

This perspective not only views the connection between agents and structuring parameters as a two-way relationship, it also extends the definition of 'structuring parameters'. It opens it up to consider frames, scripts, images and social norms as aspects relevant for incorporation when understanding actor behaviour, and to take these aspects into account when drafting a conceptual framework to study large-scale development projects.

It is not the ambition of this study to engage in an extensive debate on the pro's and con's of the rational choice and other more sociological perspectives on agent interaction. Neither is it necessary to see the two perspectives as mutually exclusive (Hall and Taylor 1996). However, as part of the way to reaching a workable conceptual framework for this particular study, it makes sense to adopt a position based on the specific issues at stake in this research. Although we agree with Scharpf that the actual behaviour of actors should be taken as a point of departure for analysis, in our study we discard his rational-actor interpretation concerning the relationship between the institutional setting and actor interactions. By viewing the institutional setting as a *system of rules-in-action* we create a more delicate feeling of how macro-level aspects influence micro-level interaction situations. However, adopting this position means we do not find a satisfactory answer to the question of why actors follow certain rules (and not others). More importantly for our study on innovative projects, they do not help us to understand processes of change and innovation by which other rules are formed, or existing rules are interpreted differently. We can observe rules and their functioning but there is no conceptual tool to help understand their origin, rather than understanding them as useful from a rational viewpoint of (powerful) actors. For this crucial question we need to enter a more sophisticated level of analysis that takes account of a normative dimension as well. We present the concept of social norms for this level in the next

section. We are convinced that social norms can act as important explanatory variables to answer questions on the structure of incentive settings in situations of (collective) behaviour.

2.3.4 Summary and hypotheses

We can summarise our conceptual model on the operational domain till now by stating that the framework provided by Scharpf, who distinguishes, actors, actor constellations and modes of interaction, is useful for the creation of some order in the analysis of very complex, chaotic and long-term processes.

His rather rational interpretation of the relationship of this micro level of interaction with a macro level of 'institutional structure' can be complemented and enriched with a focus on rules that structure action situations, as introduced by Ostrom. Together, this framework gives us basic possibilities for describing and analysing operational domains in complex projects. However, for the specific interest we have, we need to go one step further. To understand processes of change, and especially the creation of a form of collective behaviour in the direction of innovative outcomes (i.e. new urbanity in large-scale development projects in this case), we have to add a more subtle, but also more powerful tool, namely social norms.

In this section we have focused on the understandings of practices of interaction and the behaviour of actors. If we connect these aspects with some of the topics we have dealt with in the first chapter, the result is the following hypotheses:

1. A purely (closed) project-oriented governance setting in the operational domain will eventually lead to a contested status for the project if such a situation is not changed during the process of decision making and development.
2. Closed operational practices in large-scale development projects will lead to decision-making processes in which actors will follow 'proven' concepts of monofunctionality at the expense of more innovative concepts like new urbanity.

Regarding these two points: Previous studies on large-scale development projects have observed their depoliticising nature (Moulaert et. al. 2003; Salet and Gualini 2007). The implementation of concepts of new urbanity demands innovation, creativity and the connection of projects in the different sub domains of the metropolitan action space (see previous section). The practices often observed in large-scale development projects are to initiate, develop and execute projects in a business friendly, rather introvert managerial style. We therefore expected this to be a negative condition for the implementation of concepts of new urbanity.

2.4 Social norms as an intermediary concept

As a working definition, we can state that social norms are social rules of conduct that influence actions of individuals by implicitly or explicitly enabling or disabling certain behaviour. The result is that certain forms of behaviour acquire a so-called 'ought character'. This means that a form of consensus is being established in a social system that a particular form of behaviour is appropriate in a certain situation.

By addressing social norms in this study we hope to reveal more structurally if (and how) operational practices develop in a certain way. We expect this to help us improve our understanding of how certain programmatic ambitions for new urbanity, which are

defined on a quite abstract level and which require a form of collective action, relate to processes of interaction and decision-making on a micro level and vice-versa. This section first deals with some important questions regarding social norms, before establishing an explicit link with the concepts we introduced in the previous section to help us understand operational practices.

Before we discuss the application of the concept of social norms in our study, we deal with three important questions relating to the concept of social norms, namely (1) why do certain behaviours become normatively reflected? (2) how do social norms become validated? and (3) how do social norms develop and change? By addressing these issues we complement the concept of rules with a normative 'turn', that is a tool to understand how and why certain rules are evoked, challenged or changed in particular situations leading to (other) structures of (dis-)incentives for new urbanity.

2.4.1 Why do certain behaviours become normatively reflected?

Basically, social norms are social expectations relating to action by oneself, others, or both (Coleman 1987, p.135). They specify '... what actions are regarded by a set of persons as proper or correct, or improper or incorrect' (Coleman 1990, p.242). Social norms are validated in daily activities when people expect certain behaviour from each other, that is when certain forms of behaviour are reflected on normatively. A social norm exists at macro-social level, but influences behaviour at micro-social level (Coleman 1990). However, under which conditions does this happen and what conditions will a demand for some forms of social norms give rise to?

Firstly, we can state that social norms are strongly linked to *existing patterns of action* in society. If many people engage in the same behaviour, a certain 'oughtness' will almost automatically develop and many individuals will be motivated to comply with the norm (Horne 2001, p.6). However, not all behaviour that extends beyond a statistical regularity results in a *normative* reaction. For example, using an umbrella when it starts raining appears to be nothing more than common sense. The question of how certain behaviour develops from being merely habitual to being normative is strongly related to social processes that develop in groups of individuals and collective actors. This observation has both an individual and collective dimension.

From the perspective of the *individual* actor we maintain that normative behaviour usually becomes manifest in response to behaviours of others in a situation when such behaviour creates externalities (Horne 2001, p.10). In a situation of multiple interacting agents, for example, such as an operational practice for a large-scale development project, actors take account of more than only the consequences of their own actions. They behave strategically by also paying attention to the behaviours of others since this will influence their opportunities as well. This is also one of the key themes of Scharpf's actor constellation presented in the previous section. Thereby: '(...) people will approve of actions that result in positive outcomes for them and disapprove of those that have negative consequences. To the extent that people are damaged by others, they will favour norms that discourage antisocial behaviours; and to the extent that they benefit from others' behaviours, they will want norms that institutionalize those behaviours' (Horne 2003, p.134). Hence, one can expect actors to actively pursue the 'codification' of these social norms as well by the establishment and enforcement of certain sets of rules that order these interactions. This can explain how a set of social norms can emerge and can be maintained among a set of rational individuals.

An important condition for behaviour to become normatively reflected is therefore the ties of social groups in which members start to share forms of awareness. It makes sense to understand that, for people to interact successfully, they must share common understandings of the situation they are in, their behaviours, and their roles (Horne 2001, p.11). Exactly this point is elaborated by Ullmann-Margalit who gives a *collective* dimension to the previous individual perspective. She explains why conformity to social norms is not only beneficial for individual actors but also for groups of actors. This is especially relevant if there is a multi-actor ‘coordination’ situation. This is a situation in which – potentially – joint action is beneficial for individual *and* multiple actors. The most important reasons are:

- A social norm is capable of regulating and channelling the expectations – and hence the choice of actions – of anonymous participants.
- A social norm will provide the principle of continuation which will resolve potential ambiguities in most future events.
- There is a higher degree of articulation and explicitness associated with a social norm than with a mere regularity of behaviour. In this respect a norm is closer to an agreement than is a regularity. Furthermore, the fact that a norm is taught and told, and is supported by social pressure, enhances the salience of the particular co-ordination equilibrium it points to. (Ullmann-Margalit 1977, p.83-89)

According to Ullmann-Margalit, in a situation where actors are dependant on each other, a certain social norm could be performed as a source of salience. This means that one of the possible outcomes in an interaction situations has some conspicuous features which are able to create an ‘ought dimension’ with related sanctioning mechanisms if actors do not pursue this outcome.

The question of how much actors care about the symbolic meaning, or oughtness, of their acts compared with the instrumental consequences, is discussed in the next subsection when we focus on the validation of social norms. Obviously this is especially relevant if a certain social norm is opposite to the behaviour a certain actor individually considers as rationally appropriate. It is then very questionable whether a certain demand for social norms will be satisfied, i.e. if an actor will change its behaviour because of this social norm.

In our study we will investigate to what extent the initial (abstract) ambition for new urbanity is developing into such a conspicuous feature, that is an enforced social norm able to create a certain norm alignment between actors in micro-social behaviour. Based on the literature regarding large-scale development projects we introduced above, we do not expect such a social norm to be initially present in these projects. However, following the observations of Ullmann-Margalit, we believe that such a development is quite necessary if an outcome has to be realized that can only be realized by the contribution of a large number of individual participants. Since, in these large-scale development projects, such an outcome can only be realized when a series of smaller building projects from different actors contribute to this common goal. Exactly this situation is indicated in literature as hampering the implementation of concepts of new urbanity, since it means that (some) participants have to behave in a manner that diverts from the outcomes they would choose if they follow their (short-term) rational pay-off matrices (Salet and de Jong 2000; Nijkamp et. al. 2003).

We can interpret this as a condition for a demand for an effective social norm. Only

empirical research can show if this demand will be satisfied, i.e. if the right to control a certain action (a concrete building project within a large-scale development project) is not only held by the individual actor but also influenced by others and, if so, to what extent this creates conditions for spatial concepts of new urbanity.

It is important to mention that, rather than attempting to define social norms in a specific situation and expect a direct relationship with behaviour, it is better to regard them as more or less *conditional* for acting and often ambiguous in their content (Hechter and Opp 2001). We agree with Ostrom that, when we oversee the different ways social norms function in reality, it makes sense to view them more as (in-)directly affecting the *structure of a situation*, rather than producing *direct behaviour*. This is a subtle but very important distinction (Ostrom 1986, p.7).

It is important to emphasize that there is never a completely fixed agreement on one social norm. Although there can be an implicit or explicit (temporarily) consensus within and between groups in society on a certain social norm, differences in interpretation between groups and continually changing situations make the picture more blurred. Essentially this is because social norms as such are often ill-defined and unwritten, with their meaning only becoming clear in a specific situation. Sometimes they lead to clear rules that order situations (although the interpretation of rules is not always straightforward as we have seen) but most often they result in much softer 'guidelines' for behaviour. Instead of discussing what social norms precisely are, it would appear to be much more effective to study how they work, how they influence actor behaviour and how they (can) change. In this sense, it seems that the ambiguity of the content of social norms perfectly suits our broad interpretation of the concept of 'new urbanity'.

2.4.2 Validation of social norms

Social norms can be reflected upon and validated in practices of interaction and struggle. They are based on *doing*, not on *having*, and hence they are 'invoked' rather than 'obeyed'. Social norms are, almost by definition, not formally written down and in a continuous process of evolution (Salet 2002). Only in practices of interaction, as a result of permanent validation, does their precise meaning in a particular situation unfold. However, although norms are only enacted *en-situ* and often have an informal character, they are also capable of being reported and incorporated into various discourses. This can make them more general and constraining to action (Fine 2001, p.145). However, as long as the individual actor holds the right to his own action completely, no social norm can exist (Coleman 1990, p.243).

Because of their 'ought' dimension, social norms are being taught and canonized in social systems. Their functioning is closely linked to aspects of socialization. For individual actors, 'understanding' social norms requires a process of inductive learning and sometimes trial-and-error. This process also includes notions of 'sanctioning' which are regarded as crucial by scholars of norms for an understanding of their functioning (Horne 2001). 'Violation' of social norms will usually be sanctioned by '...loss of reputation, social disapproval, withdrawal of cooperation and rewards, or even ostracism' (Scharpf 1997, p 38). In the case of effective social norms, someone who honours a norm may receive informal rewards such as enhanced esteem and greater future opportunities for beneficial exchanges (Ellickson 2001, p.35). In some cases the sanc-

tioning process is hardly visible. This is especially true when a norm has been internalized through socialization. In such a case, social norms have directly modified the utility function of actors (Coleman 1987, p.135-136).

However, in many situations there is no one clear social norm that can be used as a moral basis to sanction an offender. A particularly interesting aspect of social norms emerges precisely in a situation in which different social norms conflict. It is in these situations of disagreement that their visibility increases, thereby creating particular conditions for norm change or development (see next subsection).

Essentially, therefore, a social norm is validated when, in a social system, the right to control action is established by others, rather than being a pure result of a self-maximizing strategy of an individual actor. According to Coleman (1990):

‘...this means that others have the authority over the action, authority that is not voluntarily vested in them, either unilaterally or as part of an exchange, but is created by the social consensus that placed the right in their hands. The right that is relevant to the definition of a norm is not a legally defined right or a right based on a formal rule imposed by an actor having authority. It is, rather, an informal or socially defined right’ (Coleman 1990, p.243).

2.4.3 Change of social norms

If social norms directly affect the structure of a situation, it becomes extremely important to understand mechanisms of change, development or stagnation in them. This applies especially because we are studying how the innovative goal of new urbanity can possibly be normatively reflected upon in a micro-acting situation and therefore develop in such a social norm. We stated above that our working hypothesis is that, in all three case studies in our book, initial innovative macro-level ambitions for new urbanity have to develop into broadly supported notions held by a variety of others to create better conditions for their implementation. Often these ambitions are voiced in a preliminary stage and written down in masterplans. However, they can only become reality through concrete smaller investments of (other) actors that have to share the same ambition. If we were to rephrase this in a language of social norms, this means that we have to study whether these ambitions, over the course of time, become normatively reflected upon, and can therefore result in a change of social norms into a direction which is more receptive to realising this innovative goal (Majoor 2006a). Since it is then normatively validated, and accompanied by different forms of sanctioning, such a situation of ‘norm-alignment’ will possibly encourage other actors to become motivated to change their behaviour and contribute to this collective outcome (see the point of Ullmann-Margalit we referred to earlier).

But what does literature learn us about supportive conditions for a change in social norms? Can goal-oriented ambitions from certain (key) actors result in a change of social norms that influence other actors? Literature on (change of) social norms refers to two basic partly-overlapping conditions, (1) social network-related dynamics and (2) social and technological innovations.

1. Social network-related dynamics which influence social norm change

We mentioned before that a social network is crucial for social norms to function, since most of the functioning of social norms (rewards and punishments) is exposed by others in a social network. It can also help to overcome free-rider activity. In social net-

works actors can encourage others to change their behaviour. In complex processes of decision-making we often deal with so called disjoint-norms (Coleman 1990). Since group members mostly share common *and* different interests, the costs and benefits for one person or set of people in one particular action situation are different from another. This is most probably the case in large-scale development projects. Certain investments in new urbanity are expected to be more expensive or less profitable in the short term as we indicated in chapter one. Under such conditions, we expect contradictory social norms to emerge. Another option is that the group with the most powerful interest will succeed in having social norms that help it to prevail over others (Horne 2001, p.17). This suggests that we have to investigate how powerful the actors are that strive for new urbanity in letting their social norms prevail over the social norms of others.

Another social network-related dynamic that is relevant to social norm change is a change in group composition. When new members are added, or old members leave, new normative patterns of behaviour may be established in interaction situations. This suggests that we have to investigate how the group composition in a certain project has changed over time. This relates back to the issues of connectivity to the metropolitan action space and the working of the actor constellations we referred to above. We already hypothesized that an optimum connectivity to the different sub domains of the metropolitan action space is a beneficial condition for the creation of new urbanity in large-scale development projects.

A third social network related dynamic for a change in social norms referred to in the literature focuses more on individuals who can function as ‘moral entrepreneurs’, a ‘norm entrepreneur’ or a ‘change agent’ in a certain social setting (Ellickson 2001). This means an individual who promotes a change in social norms. According to Ellickson, change agents have attributes that make them relatively low-cost suppliers of new norms. In general, they possess superior technical intelligence, social intelligence and leadership skills (Ellickson 2001, p.41). This suggests that we have to investigate whether we can find a (charismatic) norm entrepreneur in these projects that actively promotes the values of new urbanity.

2. Social and technological innovations and social norm change

A variety of social and technological innovations may affect material conditions and thereby trigger dynamics in social norms. Social and technological changes not only affect the costs and benefits of behaviours but also lead to the recognition that other normative arrangements are possible (Horne 2001, p.18). New scientific or technical information can change social practices, just like certain environmental shocks (Ellickson 2001, p.49-50). However, this is by no means a straightforward relationship since, in many respects, social norms mirror and conserve existing practices. Changes in external factors might influence the utility function of actors but change itself also has a high transaction cost. Displacing internalized norms is by no means something that happens ‘overnight’. Certain social norms that are ‘inefficient’, even for the majority of a social group, can therefore be maintained. This suggests that we have to investigate what the viewpoints of actors are regarding new urbanity and to what extent they have been changed. Have certain social and technological innovations made these investments more appropriate? This is something we suggested in the first chapter, but it can only work as a relevant factor of change if it is perceived as such by individual actors.

2.4.4 Application of the concept for our study: framing the dimension of norms in coordination situations

We concluded above that it is essential to study complex investment projects with ambitions for new urbanity as processes in which actors are dependent on each other. Decisions are made against the backdrop of practical interaction between different sets of actors. In this dynamic setting, actors interpret reality and choose between a number of alternative ways of acting. We have to study social norms and their role in complex practices of interactions between multiple actors within a social system of a large-scale development project since they play an important role in understanding the *situational frame* of actors (Fine 2001).

We have already mentioned that it is not only important to study social norms as important devices that are reflected upon by individual actors in practices of interaction, but that social norms are actually needed to create any form of collective action in a situation in which different actors are dependant on each other. Without shared social norms there would be no guidance of expectations amongst actors, and hardly any form of reliability or common sense between actors. In our empirical studies the concept of social norms is investigated through in-depth longitudinal analysis of three case studies. Hereby we hope to understand how social norms develop or stabilize over time and what opportunities arise for ‘norm alignment’, in this case a situation in which actors start to share a conviction for new urbanity as an acceptable form of ‘behaviour’ (Majoor 2006a). In this way we can also foster our idea of the inherent ‘social’ character of norms. Although they shape the behaviour of an individual actor, they are part of a social system (Coleman 1990). They are formed, reinterpreted and reconfirmed in practices of interaction in which multiple actors participate.

Of course, the question arises as to whether actors are dependant on each other in the situations we are going to study and, if so, to what extent? We think there are two main reasons why actors are dependant on each other in large-scale development projects: (1) positive and negative externalities in the built environment and (2) issues of competitiveness.

1. Positive and negative externalities in the built environment

City building and especially city building in very densely built areas results in different positive and negative externalities. These processes operate at different levels of scale. On the level of the large-scale development project there are often (expected) positive externalities of urban uses being developed close to each other. From an economic perspective, proximity creates support for shared (public) uses, cheaper communication costs, etc. On a more abstract level, conditions for ‘urbanity’ can therefore be created. However, negative externalities can occur at the same time, such as traffic jams and subsequent economic losses and pollution because of crowded streets, or noise nuisance (Vreeker, de Groot and Verhoef 2004). Although quite commonly observed, the individual perception of these different externalities can be quite different.

The literature on urban planning that we referred to in the first chapter suggests that there is a strong potential for positive externalities for individual agents in a situation of new urbanity in large-scale development projects. The reasoning behind this is that these areas will eventually ‘perform’ better in a social and economic sense. The expectation is that their attractiveness will, for example, result in higher rents (Rodenburg 2006). However, the creation of a high density mixed use project leads to more com-

plex investments and often to higher investment costs, as well as sometimes creating greater uncertainty about financial performance. In these projects, individual developers contribute to a larger scheme. There is ample room for ‘free-riders’ since the positive externality for new urbanity seems to be stronger at the level of the whole project than at the level of the short-term individual building project. In other words, actors could develop mono-functional office buildings and could still profit from other kinds of investments in their vicinity, like housing, schools, facilities, public space, that positively affect the value of their property. Obviously this makes actors dependant on each other. If every actor were to do what is best for him individually on the short term, it is not likely that new urbanity would be realized. However, literature on new urbanity suggests that most can benefit in the long run, if such a place is created, although it will probably take more time and money in the short term.

2. Issues of competitiveness

Secondly, and maybe even more importantly, literature on urban governance has shown the dependency of (city) governments on attracting and pleasing (international) investment capital (Moualert et. al. 2003; Newman and Thornley 2005). Large-scale development projects rely heavily on these fluid streams of money. As a consequence, city governments are often very eager to please private investors. We touched on this in the first chapter. We hypothesize that this undermines the capacity of successfully implementing policies that are – at first sight – not deemed to be favourable for individual private investors. We have seen that this is part of the dilemma of concepts of new urbanity. Though the general concept is appreciated by many, the concrete execution via projects is difficult since these individual projects often lead to more complex buildings, higher investment costs, higher risks, etc. Due to this issue of competitiveness, we expect governments that try to implement these measures in a top-down manner have little chance of success since private investors – especially those which are very internationally oriented – will most probably (threaten to) invest in other places. Governments are afraid of losing private investors and are then expected to downscale their ambitions to keep them (or get them) on board.

These two forms of dependency establish the need for some form of social norm if a certain abstract ambition, like new urbanity, has to be realized at micro level. The question of whether such a social norm will develop gives our research an institutional turn. It helps us to deepen our understanding of the ‘social system’ with regard to large-scale development projects. It also more explicitly adds a dimension of power, struggle and change to our framework. Although we take actors and their interacting choices as the point of departure for our analysis, the concept of social norms reminds us that changes in social systems, are inevitably linked to social structures and deeply embedded beliefs and practices and power relations. Recognizing this helps us to avoid simply embracing every new planning concept – how relevant it might be – and then wondering why it is not immediately accepted in reality.

2.4.5 *Hypotheses on social norms*

The following hypotheses refer to the social norms part of our conceptual framework:

1. In large-scale development projects, individual actors have to cooperate to achieve a common goal of new urbanity. Due to issues of competitiveness, the capacity for

governments to impose planning concepts in a top down manner is hollowed out. If concepts of new urbanity get normatively reflected on in a positive way by the actors in the operational domain, the conditions for norm-alignment as regards the future courses of interaction for the implementation is strongly enhanced.

2. Social norms can only effectively be enforced if the operational domain of a large-scale development project develops in a forum in which the individual actors actively comment and criticise each other's proposals.
3. More successful conditions for the realization of new urbanity as a social norm can develop as a result of social network-related dynamics and due to social and technological innovations. The social network-related dynamics we identified (the group composition, the power of the actors initially holding the norm and the norm entrepreneur) relate strongly to the way projects are strategically connected to the metropolitan action space and the rules that structure the operational level.

Our introduction positioned the concept of social norms as the crucial connector between the connectivity of projects to the metropolitan action space and the rules that structure the operational domain. In this section we have explained the need for the concept of new urbanity to develop into a social norm. We only expect a successful implementation if individual actors, that are often not inclined to implement concepts of new urbanity into their projects in the short term, are being successfully penalized in social settings for 'inappropriate' behaviour. In order to create such a situation it is important that these social settings actually exist (see hypothesis 2). Having observed the results from other projects, we do not expect this social norm to be present in an initial phase in our three case studied. However, as mentioned in hypothesis 3, we expect there to be a number of conditions that could lead to the development of such a norm. Most of them are actually dependant on the connection of a project to the metropolitan action space and the rules that structure the operational level. If a project is widely framed in the metropolitan action space from an organizational point of view, we expect more varied group compositions and more power for actors holding the norm for new urbanity than if the goal of the project is defined narrowly and the contributing actors form an introvert operational domain, as we already explained in our earlier hypotheses.

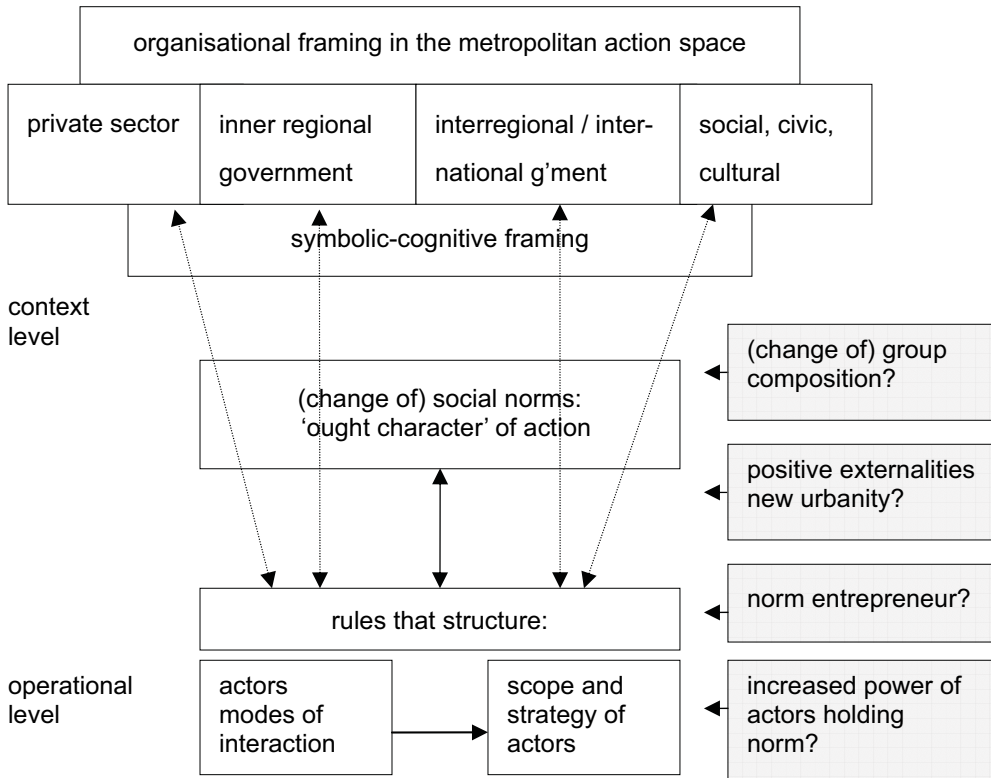
2.5 Extended conceptual framework and research questions

On the basis of the previous sections we can now fill in the details of our conceptual framework that we introduced at the beginning of this chapter (see Figure 2.4, next page).

At an operational level we study rules that structure actors, modes of interaction and the scope and strategy of actors. The latter are in a two-way relationship with the concept of social norms. Social norms give a possible 'ought' character to certain forms of behaviour. They are an intermediary variable between the operational level and the context level. The connectivity of projects with the sub domains of the metropolitan action space influences the rules that structure the operational domain. They influence the actor constellations, the modes of interaction, but also the scope of the project and the strategy of the actors. However, they do this *via* the concept of social norms since

this gives an 'ought' dimension to the question of what an appropriate project connectivity is. On the right side, the darker boxes indicate different (external) factors that are mentioned in the literature as possible supporting conditions for a change in social norms.

Figure 2.4: Extended conceptual framework



The three building blocks of our conceptual framework generate the following research questions:

Main research questions

The scientific oriented question which will be answered for each individual project is:
As regards the initial ambition for new urbanity, how can we understand the dynamics between the connectivity of a project in the metropolitan action space, the systems of rules that structure operational domains and social norms in Amsterdam Zuidas, Copenhagen Ørestad and Barcelona Forum?

The policy oriented research question which will only be answered in the concluding section with reference to all three projects is:

What can we learn from these projects regarding the conditions for the realization of new urbanity in large-scale development projects?

Subquestions

Context level subquestions:

- To what extent has the ambition to realize new urbanity been reflected in the way projects are strategically framed in a symbolic-cognitive way and how has this framing developed?
- What dynamic in time is observable in the case studies in the way projects are organizationally framed in the four distinguished domains of the metropolitan action space?

Operational level subquestions:

- What are the rules that affect the participants and modes of interaction in a project and what development is observable in these rules?
- What are the rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants, and what development is observable in these rules?

Social norms subquestions:

- As regards the ambition for new urbanity: To what extent is this ambition normatively reflected upon and validated in the operational domain of these projects?
- Are processes of change in dominant social norms perceivable as regards this issue being hinted at in the literature? Is there a change in group composition, an increase in power of actors holding the norm for new urbanity, a charismatic norm entrepreneur, or a change in the positive externalities for new urbanity as perceived by the participants?

2.6 Comparing cases

The lack of systematic and comparable results from case studies is a frequently heard criticism. Although the knowledge generated might be interesting, the value of the analysis for situations outside the specific case study is often questioned (Yin 1984). Making extensive historical studies of a single case may do justice to the complexity of interacting factors, but mostly it cannot produce satisfactory results theoretically since it will be difficult to create transferable knowledge for other cases, let alone further cumulative theory development:

‘...in their reliance on narrative explanations, they [case studies] do also tend to over-emphasize historically contingent sequences of events at the expense of structural explanations; thus, though they help us understand the past, they do not necessarily improve our ability to anticipate on the future; and, more generally, they do not contribute to the cumulative growth of a body of systematic knowledge about political structures and processes and their effect on the substance of public policy.’ (Scharpf 1997, p.28)

The most difficult aspect according to Scharpf, who wrote extensively about methodological issues regarding policy oriented research, is the excessive variety and complexity of the different relationships. The best way to deal with this issue is to focus the case study comparison on a subset of cases in which it is possible to hold other contingent conditions sufficiently constant to allow the influence of institutional variations to

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

be identified with some confidence. The two most important variations according to Scharpf are: (1) *the policy challenges to be addressed* in the case and (2) *the preferences of the actors* (Scharpf 2000, p.767).

In the proposal for the study that we presented in this chapter we expect these two aspects to be relatively comparable between the three cases (complete comparability would be only possible in hypothetical situations). As the opening quotes of this chapter indicated in a quite loose way, the same policy challenge is being pursued by some of the main actors in all three projects, namely the creation of a project of new urbanity, outside traditional urban areas. The preferences of actors differ, and hence they are an important aspect of our study. However, generally speaking, the ambition to create such a place of new urbanity in all three cases is supported in an initial stage by important actors, though some actors also oppose the idea, or have not adopted a clear position.