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

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## CHAPTER 3

### AMSTERDAM ZUIDAS<sup>1</sup>

#### 3.1 Introduction

The Zuidas ('South Axis') in Amsterdam is the biggest and one of the most ambitious and complex contemporary urban projects in the Netherlands. The strategic location of the Zuidas, namely a green field site on either side of Amsterdam's southern ring road and close to the international airport, is crucial for its development. The area is often referred to as Amsterdam's 'golden mile', that is the country's prime office location. Within the Dutch context it is a prime example of a project whose ambition is to become both a new economic international oriented competitive office location *and* a new urban centre.

The horse shoe shaped corridor to the south of Amsterdam, between Schiphol Airport in the southwest and the office parks of Amsterdam Bijlmer in the southeast, is the most spatially dynamic area in the Netherlands. During the past few decades, various new infrastructure investments in road and rail have resulted in important improvements in the external and internal accessibility of this area. The combination of these developments with an economic boom at the end of the Nineties raised the expectations public and private parties had of the Zuidas project. Since the initiation of the project in the mid-Nineties, this has resulted in a constant increase in the ambitions as regards the area's urban development, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The most recent master plan for the area proposes the creation of a lively urban centre with approximately 1.1 million square metres of office space, 1.1 million square metres of apartments and half a million square metres of facilities to be realised over a total development period of about 30 years (Gemeente Amsterdam 2004a).

The most interesting issue as far as our study is concerned is whether the adequate institutional conditions are available (or have been created) to implement the project's innovative goal of becoming a new lively urban centre. During the past decade the Zuidas has clearly developed into a project which can be viewed in two different ways and which is developing at two different speeds. On the one hand, there is the quick and rather straightforward development of available parcels on both sides of the bundle of infrastructure, the so-called flanks. This process started in the mid-Nineties and led

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a modified, extended and somewhat updated version of an earlier published chapter: Majoor, S.J.H. (2007a) "Amsterdam Zuidas: the dream of 'new urbanity'", in: W.G.M. Salet and E. Gualini (eds.). *Framing strategic urban projects*, Routledge, London, pp. 53-83.

to quantitative successes as regards the number of office developments realized. On the other hand, there was a much more institutionally and financially complicated process of decision-making in relation to a proposal to incorporate the infrastructure into a tunnel and build an integrated city on top of it in the central area of the project. The project's initiators regard the latter as a crucial precondition for realising the goal of new urbanity in Zuidas. The ambition for this so-called 'dock model' has been the central theme in ongoing complex public-public-private negotiations during the past decade. At the time of writing, final decisions had not yet been taken. This does not prevent us, however, from making an assessment of the connectivity of the project to the metropolitan action space, the rules that structure the operational domain and the social norms related to new urbanity and how these aspects have developed in the first ten years of development. The basis for our analysis are the results of the project parts which have already been finished.

Section 3.2 of this chapter is a brief introduction to the context of urban developments in which the Zuidas project was initiated. The project start-up, following the failure of the creation of a new CBD waterfront on the south bank of the river IJ is analysed in the following section. From section 3.4 onwards the focus becomes more analytical as we assess the connectivity to the metropolitan action space and the functioning of the project's operational domains. Finally we examine to what extent social norms relevant to new urbanity have been taken into account during the first actual building projects in the area.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.2 From controlled urbanization towards polycentricism in the Amsterdam region**

The context of spatial planning in the Amsterdam region has been rapidly changing in the past few decades and this has led to new planning approaches and new priorities. The Zuidas project, both in its content and in the governance aspects of its decision-making, was one of the key markers of this new situation.

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<sup>2</sup> The research for the empirical part of this chapter took place from late 2001 until early 2007. Various qualitative research methods were used. The monthly strategic meetings of the Zuidas project office were observed over a period of almost 5 years. In addition, internal documents were analyzed and informal talks were held with the participants. Additional information was gathered via more official in-depth interviews with 38 people involved in the Zuidas development who held various positions in local government, provincial government, national government, the private sector and non-governmental groups. Their names can be found in the appendix. The text sometimes refers directly to one of these interviews. The information acquired from these interviews features regularly in our analysis, usually not as a direct citation but as a concern, issue, thought or question expressed by the interviewee during that particular interview. This information serves to underpin, strengthen or illustrate our own line of reasoning.

In addition, three expert meetings were organised under the auspices of Zuidas Reflector in the autumn of 2004 on different aspects of its development. One focused on economic development, the other on decision-making and the last on housing and new urbanity. From 2002 till 2007, various national conferences on the Zuidas project were attended. A large number of presentations were given by the author to national and international visitors to the Zuidas project and this generated very useful feedback. Earlier results from the fieldwork on the Zuidas have been published in: Majoor 2004, Salet and Majoor 2005a and 2005b, Majoor 2006a, Majoor 2007a and 2007b.

In this section, we first provide some brief background information on the system of metropolitan governance in the Amsterdam metropolitan region since this makes it easier to understand the context in which public policies on spatial interventions are made. Of particular relevance to the Zuidas project is the renewed emphasis on the economic dimensions of spatial policies and interventions, an orientation that was slowly reintroduced in Dutch spatial policies in the mid-Eighties. The last decade can be characterised by an increase in the speed and magnitude of certain spatial and economic processes, of which the Zuidas is a clear example. However, the institutional and political responses have often been slow to materialise.

### 3.2.1 Metropolitan governance

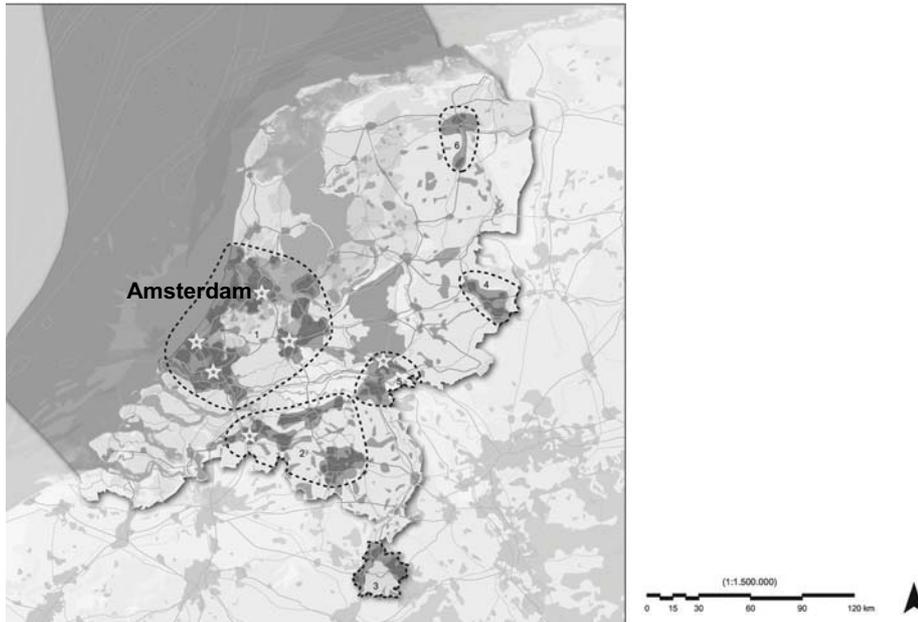
Barlow (2000) concludes that metropolitan governance in Amsterdam is in a league of its own and therefore difficult to compare with other metropolitan regions. He cites four points as being crucial for an understanding of Amsterdam's special position, namely (1) the welfare state, (2) spatial planning, (3) consensus-oriented decision-making and (4) the three-tier system of government. The welfare state has been gradually built up after the Second World War and peaked in the Sixties and Seventies when it became a generous system of financial assistance for large groups of society (Terhorst and van de Ven 1997). However, during the Eighties and Nineties, significant cutbacks had to be made to reduce national government budget overruns and, just as importantly, to make the labour market more competitive.

Spatial planning has always been relatively important in Dutch politics and this has resulted in a comprehensive planning system at different levels of government as well as in ambitious planning goals. In the Amsterdam area a regional structure plan and local land-use plans are the most important means for spatial policymaking. However, their capacity to actually steer developments is sometimes questionable and Amsterdam's spatial policy seems to move in a direction of project-oriented spatial planning.

Consensus-oriented politics are another dominant pillar of Dutch society. Most observers argue that they are a result of the pacification between the traditional pillars of society that were dominant throughout most of the twentieth century (Lijphart 1968; Schuyt and Tavernier 2000). The result, on one hand, may be an 'accommodating and tolerant society' (Barlow 2000, p.258) which is very successful as regards agreeing on controversial topics without causing too much social unrest. It is this political climate and supporting institutions that many held responsible for the impressive economic recovery of the country in the last decade (The Economist 2002). On the other hand, public dissatisfaction with this corporatist style of governance has been increasing in recent years, especially after the Pim Fortuyn murder (2002).

The Netherlands is a so-called decentralised unitary state. This basically means that the country has a rather strong national government, expressed particularly in a strong centralised system of tax collecting. However, many government responsibilities have been transferred to lower levels of government, to the provincial and especially the local authorities. The execution of these responsibilities mostly takes place via the implementation of national laws and policies that are executed on the basis of national government funding. Only a small percentage of the income from local government is from internal sources. This dependant situation is sometimes referred to as a situation of *golden cords* between national and local government.

Figure 3.1: Map of the Netherlands, Amsterdam is located in the Randstad area, the economic core in the west of the Netherlands



Source: Ministerie van VROM (2004)

The three-tier system of government in the Netherlands, namely national state, province and local authorities, reflects a complicated system of inter-governmental relationships. On the one hand, national government is the heart of many fields of politics and local authorities are 90% dependent on national funding. On the other hand, local authorities have considerable freedom in many fields of policy, especially with regard to implementation. ‘Two important aspects of the Dutch three-tier system are co-governance and consensus. Co-governance is the notion that the three tiers of government are highly interdependent and closely interwoven by governmental relations... [essentially] dynamic interaction among relatively independent units within the state system as a whole creates a flexible and fluid structure that has the potential to adapt to a diversity of problems and to changes in society’ (Barlow 2000, p.260).

The National Spatial Planning Act is a strict procedural Act, which means that it only indicates the way spatial plans at different levels of government should be prepared, how formal decision making should take place, how appeal procedures work, etc. There are no specific instructions on the content of spatial plans. The most important policy document of the Ministry Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Spatial Planning) is the National Spatial Planning Report that is issued approximately once every ten years. It describes long-term (strategic) spatial policies. The intermediary between the national and the local level is the relatively weak government layer of the twelve provinces. Provincial governments have their own spatial planning documents, the provincial structure plans [*streekplannen*], which are used to integrate local planning initiatives in a wider context.

Most powers related to spatial planning are, however, located at the level of the municipalities. The municipalities draw up spatial structure plans and local land use plans. The latter is the only legally binding planning document in the Dutch system. As mentioned before, most planning powers are concentrated at local level. Municipalities have the obligation to make structure and land-use plans. In the case of Amsterdam it is also important to mention that the government owns most of the land within its boundaries and uses a land-lease system to keep control of its properties. This creates a constant stream of revenues and gives the city government a strong position in the event of the large-scale (re-)development of certain areas.

### *3.2.2 Spatial policies: controlled (sub) urbanisation and competitiveness*

An anti-urban tradition was actually one of the backbones of the much-praised Dutch urbanization model. The concept of the Randstad – Green Heart dichotomy has been at the centre of Dutch spatial planning policies since the Second World War and is still debated intensively by Dutch and international scholars (Hall 1966; Musterd and de Pater 1992; de Boer 1992; Faludi and van der Valk 1994; van der Cammen and de Klerk 2003; van Duinen 2004). The concept of growth cities formed the backbone of Dutch urbanization planning during the Seventies and Eighties. However, the picture of a ring of small and medium sized cities around an open agriculture and recreational area has changed over the last decades. Despite national spatial planning schemes that tried to prevent intensification of the Green Heart area, this area has been the focus of most developments and population gains (van Ham 2002). Compared with other countries, however, the Dutch urbanization policy was relatively successful in controlling urban sprawl in the Seventies and Eighties (Bontje 2001).

In the Eighties, national spatial planning policies throughout North-western Europe focused again on cities as ‘engines’ for economic growth, despite the fact that the large cities in the Netherlands continuously generated lower-than-average annual growth percentages (Manshanden and van der Vegt 1996). This movement can therefore be explained more effectively by political motives rather than economic ones. In the Netherlands, the Fourth National Spatial Planning Report (Ministerie van VROM 1988) introduced policies to enhance the position of cities, especially by initiating investments to improve infrastructure and by making grants available for large-scale development projects. This was a new development since previous national spatial planning memoranda focussed particularly on policies of regional redistribution (van der Cammen and de Klerk 2003).

### *3.2.3 Amsterdam metropolitan area: economic development and metropolitan governance*

The city of Amsterdam experienced roughly the same change from controlled development with an emphasis on social aspects in the Seventies and Eighties towards a more economic oriented perspective in the late Eighties and Nineties (Musterd and Salet 2003a). The General Extension Plan of 1933 envisioned a development of the city of around one million inhabitants, a number regarded as sufficient for the city at that time (van der Valk 1990). After the Second World War, this scheme was used as a strategic spatial plan during the period of renewal and reconstruction. The city expanded mainly towards the west, the south and the south-east. Natural and political boundaries prevented further growth. Within the Amsterdam area the policy in the Seventies and

Eighties was focused on urban renewal and the re-use of underdeveloped parcels (Bartelds and de Roo 1995). The urban renewal program was successful in physically upgrading pre-war neighbourhoods and in creating affordable social subsidized housing (Schuiling, Pflug and Straub 1990).

However, this relatively controlled and internally oriented urban development became under growing pressure. The controlled urbanization policy of the sixties and seventies already resulted in a regionalization of spatial patterns and relationships, albeit with the central city still in a dominant position. During the eighties processes of (financial) internationalisation and economic globalisation started to have a stronger effect on the spatial development of the emerging metropolitan region. Amsterdam was relatively successful to accommodate new economic developments. It was traditionally a city with a strong economic emphasis on financial and cultural clusters, and excellent logistics due to its harbour and large airport.

The result was that this situation of relatively controlled spatial development of both the city and the region started to change during recent decades (Musterd and Salet 2003b; Salet and Majoor 2005b). The market sector was particularly active in searching for new areas of spatial expansion for offices, logistic centres and infrastructures. For the first time in decades, Amsterdam and the Amsterdam region generated higher economic growth figures than the Dutch average. The economic systems (for example in labour and consumer markets) of the city and the region and of the different regions in the west of the Netherlands started to become more integrated (Kloosterman and Lambregts 2001).

It became clear that the metropolitan region was starting to become the most important location for the integration of social, economic and spatial activities. It is therefore not surprising that different experiments have recently been proposed to tackle the 'regional gap' in Dutch planning. However, proposals for the creation of an official and powerful new layer of government have failed (Barlow 2000; Terhorst and Van de Ven 1997). Instead, a looser form of sectoral coordination of certain policies, like public transport, has been realised in the Amsterdam Regional Government, a form of cooperation between Amsterdam and fifteen neighbouring municipalities. New, more experimental forms of governance, like the 'North Wing Coalition', have been recently set up in which municipalities coordinate more strategic issues of regional importance relating to investments and development locations. Other initiatives focus on the more effective organization of cooperation between public and private actors at the Randstad level (Salet 2003).

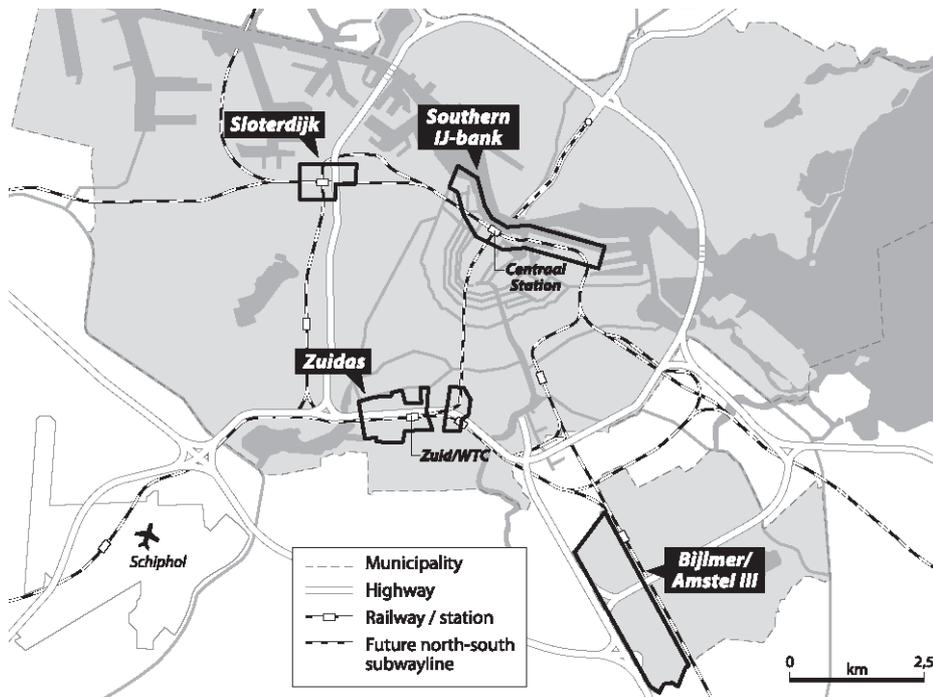
### **3.3 Initiating Zuidas**

The project to redevelop the southern banks of the river IJ as a new central business district for the Amsterdam region was one of the prime examples of this renewed orientation around the economic potential of cities. It was also one of the first examples in many decades of a large-scale development proposal in Amsterdam with a strong private investment orientation. However, the process of turning these new competition-oriented attitudes into a new urban development strategy was fraught with problems. Inspired by successful American examples in cities like Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco and Seattle, plans were drawn up for large office volumes and waterfront

promenades which would constitute an extensive redevelopment of former harbour areas (Ploeger 2004; Rooijendijk 2006). A public-private partnership, the *Amsterdam Waterfront Financieringsmaatschappij* (AWF) was founded with just one private company, namely ING, which is a major insurance company, bank and developer. However, it soon transpired that it would be extremely difficult to turn the huge ambitions into a feasible urban project. The problem for the central area of the southern banks of the river IJ was that the comprehensive imaginative spatial scenario, as drawn up by the Dutch architect Koolhaas, was not viable in development terms, particularly because of the office market slump at the beginning of the Nineties (Schuiling 1996). Most investors – even major ones – were more interested in smaller projects, with risks that were easier to predict. On top of that there were substantial political uncertainties about the new infrastructure that was necessary to improve the area’s accessibility. Therefore, the adopted setting soon proved to be very rigid and left too much room for exit options to generate stable commitments between the various actors.

While the focus of the city government planners was still on the south bank of the river IJ as Amsterdam’s future central business district, the central area alongside the southern A10 ring road increasingly caught the attention of private investors as a much more attractive option as regards a high-end business location. This area, a former infrastructure reservation strip from the 1935 Amsterdam Extension Plan located between two residential areas, was already very accessible and easy-to-develop in comparison

Figure 3.2: Map of Amsterdam indicating Zuidas, the Southern IJ-bank area and two other large-scale development projects for offices: Sloterdijk and Bijlmer/Amstel III



Source: UvA-Kaartenmakers

with the southern banks of the river IJ. When the infrastructure (A10 ring road, heavy rail and light rail) was built in phases between 1950 and 1980, a considerable strip of land on the south side of the infrastructure – used mainly for parking lots and sports grounds – was kept almost vacant. Some scattered developments took place in the strip north of the infrastructure in the Eighties, most importantly the building of the Amsterdam World Trade Centre and the Court of Justice. However, the real breakthrough came when ABN/AMRO – the major multinational Amsterdam-based bank – decided to leave its ensemble of scattered offices in the historic inner city for one new international headquarters. The bank insisted on the Zuidas as its new location, instead of the southern banks of the river IJ, as suggested by the city government. Together with the collapse of the AWF in 1993, this became the start sign for the city of Amsterdam to reorient its strategic spatial policies and, eventually, focus on the area alongside the southern ring road as the city's new economic core.<sup>3</sup>

The saga of the developments on the southern banks of the river IJ is extremely relevant to an understanding of the origin and the development of the Zuidas project. The failure of the planning schemes for the banks of the river IJ because of the uncomfortable relationship between the traditional strong city planning bureau and the private sector, created a learning opportunity for both public and private actors, and the idea of a 'fresh start' in the Zuidas area. "The reports on the failures of the southern banks of the river IJ development are still on my desk" admitted a senior official responsible for the Zuidas development (interview municipality of Amsterdam 2004).<sup>4</sup>

The first phase of the Zuidas project represents a development strategy by the Amsterdam municipality which is almost completely opposite to the previous attempts to develop the southern banks of the river IJ. Officially, this shift was announced in 1994 when, after local elections, the city government of Amsterdam publicly decided to focus attention on the area around the southern ring road.

At that time, the entire area between Schiphol Airport in the south-west and the highway to Utrecht in the south-east was emerging – from an economic perspective – as the most vibrant and dynamic area of the region, featuring a variety of major competing office developments, which were often overtly the result of growing inter-municipal competition. Planning a ring of subcentres had been part of Amsterdam's spatial planning policy from the beginning of the Eighties onwards. These subcentres were mainly conceived to be concentrated overspill areas, where large volumes of offices could be realised that could not be accommodated in the historic inner city. The locations were strategically positioned close to motorways and public transport. However, the down-

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<sup>3</sup> In the beginning of the Nineties, while the official policy was still completely focused on making the Southern IJ-banks a success, the Spatial Planning Department of the municipality of Amsterdam had already started drawing up a study of the possibilities for developments alongside the southern ring road. The status of these plans was limited and they were presented as 'a preliminary study' for a future structure plan. The introduction to the study clearly states that, 'The condition is that the development potential at the Southern IJ-banks may not be negatively influenced by this study' (Gemeente Amsterdam 1992, p.5) [translation by the author].

<sup>4</sup> After the failure of the AWF plan, the southern IJ-banks were developed from the mid-Nineties onwards based on a more parcel-by-parcel approach with a less offices, more modest infrastructure investments and a greater emphasis on cultural institutions and housing.

town area would remain the most important CBD within this policy.<sup>5</sup>

The area around the existing small Zuid-WTC train/metro/bus station, which is one of these sub-centres, was designated the core of the Zuidas development. This was no surprise because ABN/AMRO was planning its new headquarters right next to this station. The Zuidas concept eventually took shape in the city's planning strategy in the form of an intensive, rather introverted nodal development, basically contained within the city's pre-existing administrative boundaries and in close proximity to the historic urban fabric. Thus, as for its role in the urban topology, the Zuidas acquired the ambiguous position of being a rather peripheral location or, in fact, an 'exurban' location in the perception of most residents of Amsterdam. While claiming a high degree of centrality at regional level, it also had the potential to become a link between the pre-war Amsterdam South neighbourhood on the one side of the ring road and the post-war neighbourhoods of Buitenveldert on the other side.

Compared with the first, mainly fruitless, public-led initiatives on the southern banks of the river IJ, the Zuidas represented a major change in many ways. It was, in the first place, a market-led rather than market-oriented initiative, supported by the local government but, in first instance, only marginally regulated. Contrary to the former project, the Zuidas followed the dominant geographical and functional market demands for accessible locations on the southern side of Amsterdam. It meant the beginning of a strategic move away from the dominant planning philosophy that the inner city would be the main economic core of the city and the region. One of the most interesting features of the project was the explicit ambition from the start to create a new economic *and* urban centre. We investigate this ambition in the following sections using the framework we set out in chapter two. First we study the connectivity of the Zuidas project to the metropolitan action space. Then we assess the operational domain before finally investigating the extent to which the ambition for new urbanity was normatively taken into account during the initial Zuidas building phases.

### 3.4 Connectivity to the metropolitan action space

The two research questions we posed in chapter two regarding the connectivity to the metropolitan action space were:

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<sup>5</sup> From the beginning of the Eighties the planning of a ring of subcentres was part of the Amsterdam spatial planning policy. These subcentres were mainly conceived to be concentrated overspill areas, where large volumes of offices could be realized. The locations were strategically positioned close to motorways and public transport. However, the downtown area would remain the most important CBD. The most important subcentres were in the west of Amsterdam (Teleport/Sloterdijk) and the southeast (Bijlmer/Amstel III) (see Figure 3.2, p.73). Neighbouring municipalities like Diemen in the east and Haarlemmermeer in the southwest (where Schiphol airport is located) were actively developing rival office locations. During the Nineties these areas underwent rapid (speculative) development as part of Amsterdam's successful integration into global markets that led to above-average growth rates. Compared to other parts of the country, the whole Amsterdam region benefited most of the fast-growing Schiphol Airport to the southwest of Amsterdam. Under heavy supportive state-conditions – the airport was conceived to be a 'main port' for the Dutch economy (together with the harbour of Rotterdam) in the Fourth National Spatial Plan of 1988 – Schiphol grew to become the fourth largest airport in Europe for both passengers and freight.

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

We explained in chapter two that our hypothesis for the organisational framing is that it is necessary for a project based on a new urbanity ambition to be broadly connected to the four domains of the metropolitan action space we distinguish. We expect that only this will ensure that, at the project's operational level, the maximum of energy (ideas, initiatives, investments, support) from society is accommodated in these efforts and turned into a sustainable and mixed flow of investments in the area. When there would be an initial limited connectivity, we expected a pressure to develop on active agents involved in supporting this goal to seek a connection with other domains to rectify this situation.

Our assessment of the symbolic-cognitive framing of Zuidas revealed that the project was initially framed in the mid-Nineties in three ways, namely (1) as a new economic competitive location for high-end businesses for Amsterdam, (2) as a major infrastructure project, and (3) as a new mixed-use urban area. We can now conclude that, during the first ten years of the project, there was a sub-optimal organisational connectivity to the domains of the metropolitan action space we identified. However, we also identified different changes in organisational framing during the final period.

#### *3.4.1 The symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing Zuidas*

##### **1. Zuidas framed as a new economic competitive location for Amsterdam**

There were two main spatial conditions that influenced the fate of the development of the Zuidas as a new economic competitive location: (1) the existing strategic institutions in the area, and (2) the improved connectivity of the area during the Nineties. These basic spatial conditions were positively supplemented by different processes of consolidation and clustering in important economic sectors at the end of the previous century that worked out positively for Zuidas.

As regards point 1, in the decades before the Zuidas project started, the area already accommodated several interesting institutions and developments that worked as a stepping stone for a new concentration of high-end offices in the legal, financial and business services. The most important were the Court of Justice, the World Trade Centre and the Insurance Stock Exchange. These three institutions, and some other office buildings, were located to the north of the highway, in a small strip at the side of the city centre. In a wider ring around the area there were other institutions that contributed to the economic potential of the area, namely the Free University to the southwest and the RAI conference and convention centre to the northeast. Together with the closeness to the historic inner city and the adjacent exclusive Amsterdam South residential area – that was also the location of numerous small legal and financial firms – the location was becoming increasingly attractive as a site for business.

As regards point 2, one can state that the other crucial spatial condition for the initiation and success of the Zuidas project was the rapid increase in the centrality of the area during the Eighties and Nineties. The Amsterdam ring road (A10) was completed

in different segments between the mid-60s and 1990, making it one of the busiest highways in the country. A train service between the small Amsterdam Zuid station and Schiphol airport was opened in 1978. In the following 15 years this isolated service became integrated in the network of Dutch Railways, via a number of different extensions. From 1993 on, the by now renamed Amsterdam Zuid/WTC station was fully integrated when a connection to the east was opened. It started to operate as an intercity station. Additionally a light rail connection between the centre of Amsterdam and the southern municipality of Amstelveen was inaugurated in 1991 and provided a rapid link to the centre. In 1997, this link was supplemented by the new light rail ring line connecting Zuidas to a series of other prime office locations in the Amsterdam area. All these investments increased the area's connectivity to the rest of the metropolitan area and region. During the Nineties, Schiphol airport underwent rapid expansion and the Zuidas was strategically positioned to the airport by road and rail, giving it a premium international connectivity as well.

The framing of Zuidas as a new economic competitive location for Amsterdam cannot be explained by these two spatial conditions alone. It is important to understand them in the context of prosperous economic development in the Amsterdam region from the mid-Nineties onwards. Especially in the period of the 'ICT boom' during the turn of the millennium, there was a strong increase in the demand for offices, including in the higher segments of the market. In the financial and legal services sector, important rounds of consolidations and mergers took place which led to an increased demand in (representative) headquarters. The protected historic downtown of Amsterdam was unable to facilitate large amounts of new (headquarter) offices (Ploeger 2004). Especially in the higher segments of the legal and financial sector, firms were looking for new locations that combined accessibility with prestige. The Zuidas became the preferred option for many of them due to its accessibility and its proximity to customers and competitors.

However, besides these macro conditions, the Zuidas development has to be explained as well by considering two extremely important players in the private sector that were present at its incarnation. ABN/AMRO and ING are two major Dutch financial institutions that went through a process of mergers and consolidation at the beginning of the Nineties. Both companies were not only searching for a new location for their international headquarters, they were also interested in major project developing or project financing activities. After the failure of the southern IJ bank project, ABN/AMRO forced the municipality to accept a new location for its headquarters on the south side of the Zuid/WTC station. For a while, the city government was reluctant to accept this proposal since it still supported the southern IJ bank as the new prime office location for the city. However, eventually it gave in after becoming afraid of losing out on the investment altogether.

Initially, the ambition for a new major high-end office location for Amsterdam hit ground in a relatively small part of the private sector domain. However it soon received support from the municipality. After that, the Zuidas project gradually became the most important location for office development in the city in official policy documents.

The frame of Zuidas as a new economic top location for Amsterdam was the first of the three-way framing that led to actual investments in the area. The new ABN/AMRO headquarters was eventually opened in 1999. Since then numerous office developments have been initiated in the different subprojects of the Zuidas development. The Zuidas

became not only the most prestigious office location in Amsterdam, but was quickly perceived as the most important competitive office location in the Netherlands, as reflected in a strong increase in the rent levels. The emerging spatial concentration of important banks, lawyers and financial institutions increased the attractiveness for other actors to (re-)locate in the Zuidas area and this in turn improved its competitive position. This process of concentration is clearly visible in the area, especially in the legal services sector.<sup>6</sup> However, although the framing as a new competitive office location can be judged as successful in a quantitative sense (more information is provided on the numbers in our investigation of the operational domain), it is important to mention that mainly Dutch internationally-oriented businesses located in the area during the first ten years of the Zuidas development. Though the World Trade Centre has a very international orientation, with (small) offices of service-oriented firms from around the world, the major new offices in the area are predominately occupied by Dutch firms (Engelen and Smit 2006).

## 2. Zuidas framed as an intensively urbanised mixed use area

Although the ambition was originally for a new competitive economic location, the project soon became framed as an integrated development with an important place for other spatial functions. The option to incorporate the central infrastructure bundle in a tunnel was introduced in the first master plan (Gemeente Amsterdam 1998). This technical solution, the so-called dock model, would facilitate a large-scale housing program since it would eliminate dust and noise from the area. In the years that followed this proposal, the framing of the Zuidas as a future new urban mixed use area was enhanced with proposals for more intensive building programs, and a radical mixture of uses, namely 45% offices, 45% housing and 10% facilities. Framing the project as a new urban space enabled the initiators to incorporate additional goals into the project. The aim, as laid down in the official documents, changed to focus on the creation of a real 'urban' atmosphere in Zuidas with places for museums, sport facilities and high-quality public areas alongside housing and office development (Gemeente Amsterdam 1999; 2001). Slowly, the ambition to become a mixed use area also became an important marketing tool and one that was picked up by the private sector. This distinguished the Zuidas project from its competitors (Majoor 2006a).

Although not completely new as a concept – after all the city of Amsterdam has a history of several decades of intensifying and mixing land use within its city boundaries, referred to as the 'compact-city policy' (Jolles, Klusman and Teunissen 2003) – the main innovation was the geographical transfer of this policy to a relatively peripheral location (Bertolini and Salet 2003). This was confirmed in the most recent structure plan for Amsterdam entitled 'Choosing for Urbanity' [*Kiezen voor Stedelijkheid*] that was approved in 2003. It designated the Zuidas as a new urban core area (Gemeente Amsterdam 2003). One could therefore argue that the Zuidas enabled polycentric urbanity to become officially accepted and embraced in policy reports, rather than being blocked as it was in the past in order to protect the position of the inner city as the ex-

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<sup>6</sup> The Zuidas has evolved into the main location for the biggest Dutch internationally-oriented law firms. De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek and Baker & McKenzie are currently located in the Mahler 4 area, Nauta Dutilh in the WTC extension, Loyens Loeff in the north-west zone and Van Doorne in the Zuiderhof area, next to the Free University.

clusive space for central ‘urban’ functions.

It is important to mention – and this point will be expanded upon in the following sections – that although this symbolic-cognitive framing on new urbanity had strong rhetoric capacity, it was still mainly a framing in policy documents and intentions. On the one hand there were quite practical reasons for this since decision-making relating to the most important physical precondition for the realisation of the ambition, the dock model has been an ongoing process over a period of almost ten years now, without any final decision having been reached. On the other hand, however, it was also the expression of a more strategic omission since the framing as an intensively urbanised mixed use area had emerged almost exclusively from the domain of the local government and (parts of) the private sector. In the first years of the project this framing was only partially attached to the social, civic and cultural domain (Kreukels 2005). The result was that a lot of buildings have been realized in the area, but that there are hardly any urban functions other than offices present at the moment. This is also having a negative effect on the general public’s identification with the Zuidas as a new urban area.

### 3. Zuidas framed as an infrastructure project

The location of the Zuidas, along the southern Amsterdam ring road, around a public transport hub (with tram, bus, light rail and metro) and close to Schiphol airport and the inner city, is often referred to as the most important physical condition for its success.<sup>7</sup> We have already mentioned the different infrastructure investments that improved the centrality of the Zuidas area. In the mid-Nineties, just after the framing of Zuidas as a new economic top location for Amsterdam started to hit ground, a new series of infrastructure investments was being proposed for the area. The national government – the owner of most of the infrastructure – announced plans to increase the capacity of the highway and rail in the corridor south of Amsterdam by adding more lanes and rail tracks. This coincided with the prospect of a future High Speed Train (HST) connection between the Amsterdam area and the south (Belgium) and east (Germany). In the light of these investments, the national government, or more precisely the powerful Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Transport), initially framed the Zuidas not as an economic or urban development project but as an area where this bundle of infrastructure had to be expanded to meet future needs. This meant proposals for additional road and rail investments and an ambition to upgrade the small existing station. Although the origin of the Zuidas as a new economic and urban location is strongly related to its position in the infrastructure networks, the proposals for these infrastructure expansions were for a long time totally unrelated to the other two frames mentioned before (Majoor 2004). For the Ministry of Transport, adopting a goal oriented rather narrow minded position; the interface with the urban environment was not of great importance (see also next section). This way of framing conflicted with the framing as a new intensively developed urban area, since this resulted in a preference for the dock model by which a very complex interface had to be created between infrastructure and urban development.

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<sup>7</sup> The current configuration is (from north to south): 3 lanes highway east-west, 2 tracks for light rail, 2 tracks for heavy rail, 3 lanes highway west-east. The proposed configuration is: 4 lanes highway east-west, 2 tracks for light rail, 2 tracks for heavy rail at the west side of the station 4 tracks in the station and 4 tracks on the east side of the station, and 4 lanes highway west east.

Figure 3.3: Overview of the central infrastructure bundle of highway, rail and light rail. On the left the headquarters of ABN/AMRO, in the centre the small Zuid/WTC station and on the right front the World Trade Centre



Source: Gemeente Amsterdam

#### 3.4.2 *The organizational dimension of framing Zuidas*

The first phase of the Zuidas development can be characterised as a period of consolidation and operationalisation of the vision of a new decentralised urban development pole, based on fruitful cooperation between city government and the business community and substantial optimism about the intrinsic potentials of the area for both economic *and* urban development. The business community was satisfied with the strategic move the city made towards developing the Zuidas, which apparently facilitated the pursuit of predefined investment objectives. On top of that, the area already had good internal and external infrastructure, both for road and rail, which was even improved shortly after. The office development at the Zuidas progressed quickly. The framing as a new intensively developed urban area increased enthusiasm for the project, especially within the realm of the city government. Initially, the connectivity of the proposal with the metropolitan action space was particularly pronounced in the private sector economic domain and the inner regional government domain. Our analytical toolkit with the four subdomains of the metropolitan action space (private sector domain, inner regional governmental domain, interregional and international government domain and finally the social, civic and cultural domain) is unfortunately rather imprecise. The connectivity was especially good with certain parts of the private sector domain, particularly ABN-AMRO and ING, and soon afterwards with a series of larger legal firms that were interested in establishing premises in the area. However, the connection with

the international part of the private sector economic domain was much more weakly developed. Although it is a clear aim of the initiators, the area has not yet been very successful in this respect. On the other hand, the connectivity with the Amsterdam municipality was good. Nevertheless, the regional connection was lacking for a long time. In the next section we analyse some operational responses to this omission.

As mentioned before, frame conflict arose when the concept of the dock model created a physical interface with the frame of infrastructure expansion and thereby involved what was then a national government subdomain which was still operating rather independently. Although a part of the national government, the Ministry of Spatial Planning, supported the urban ambitions of the Zuidas, the Ministry of Transport had more influence for a long time. The municipality of Amsterdam slowly found out that dock model could only move forward when the urban ambition of the Zuidas was connected to the infrastructure expansion ambition. This demanded both innovations in how the project was mutually symbolically-cognitively framed as well as how certain operational responsibilities were organized (more on the latter in the next section).

Two complex processes of organizational reframing took place in the last few years that were grounded on a combination of substantial *and* political reasons: The first one was fuelled by empirical and scientific observations that the concept of new urbanity, combined with high-density development, also had a potential strong economic value. This was something planners often presumed. However, the line of reasoning started to take root in the private sector as well (Nijkamp et. al. 2003; Rodenburg 2005; different interviews with private sector actors involved in Zuidas). There were two dimensions to this. On the one hand, there is the rather straightforward and defensive observation that a mixture of uses potentially diminishes investment risks. The office market is often volatile, while the housing market – at least in Amsterdam in the last decades – has been very stable. A less tangible dimension is a perceived change in preferences for locations and location environments for representative (head) offices. Although accessibility is still of major importance, there are clear signs that the orientation of private actors in these segments is changing towards a preference for more urban environments with attractive public space, bars, restaurants and other facilities (Trip 2007a). The result was that, in the Zuidas area at least, the private sector domain became one of the strongest supporters of the concept of new urbanity of the area, as we will analyse in more detail below.

The other, related complex process of reframing that took place was the reframing of the Zuidas as a project of national economic importance and prestige. In the initial stage, the connectivity of Zuidas with the national government domain was underdeveloped. Eventually, the initiators noticed that had to change to fulfil the ambition for the dock. However, for more than five years the city of Amsterdam was quite unsuccessful in persuading the national government to support the dock model investment, mainly due to the high investment costs and the unclear benefits from the perspective of the tunnel infrastructure (see next section for a more operational analysis of this controversy). Only from 2004 onwards, a process of reframing slowly started to take place that changed this situation. In a period of enduring economic decline and growing uncertainty as regards the international competitive position of the Netherlands, a new centre-right government started to change spatial and economic priorities. The emphasis was placed more on the support of economic potentials instead of economic redistribution policies (Ministerie van Economische Zaken 2004). Based on a strong

lobby from private actors enthused by the early economic successes of the project, the Zuidas was able to increase its political clout at national government level. Slowly the project started to be reframed as an investment project of national importance. This frame took much more account of the need for the dock model – the unique selling point of a mixed use development that could attract and accommodate new international offices and improve the competitive position of the Netherlands. In a nutshell, these two related and reinforcing framing processes changed the connectivity of the Zuidas project in the metropolitan action space. This had important operational consequences, and strongly influenced the conditions for urban development, as we will explore in the next sections.

Given the rather strong organizational connectivity to three of the four subdomains of the metropolitan action space, and a growing common awareness of the virtues of new urbanity, the lack of connections with the social, civic and cultural domain is surprising. It seems that new urbanity in the Zuidas area is framed particularly as a concept to enhance the economic development of the project. It has failed to escape the still rather narrow organizational domain in which it has been developed and has not been deployed to connect to a wider public. This is not surprising if we consider the importance of private forces in its development. With the exception of the relatively weak Ministry of Spatial Planning, the national government has not been overly interested in the urban dimension of the plans either. It seems to be the logical organizational task for the Amsterdam municipality to connect to this domain. In the last couple of years, however, the local project organization seemed so obsessed with (re-)framing its organization vis-à-vis the private sector and the national government that this has become a strategic omission.

#### *3.4.3 Conclusion: integrative framing but failure to connect to the European and social, civic and cultural domain*

In the context of the four domains we have distinguished we can localise the initial framing of Zuidas to be strongly connected to the private sector economic domain and the inner regional governmental domain. However, within these domains, the framing is sometimes sub-optimal. In the private sector domain, the step towards large foreign international companies locating in the Zuidas still has not been made in the first phase of development. In the inner regional domain, we have identified a very committed Amsterdam municipality, but framing at the level of the regional governments was very weak during the initial phase. One could hypothesize that early successes – many parts of the project started favourably once the plans had been announced – perhaps misguided the coalition of proponents in their assumption that connections to other spheres were less important. On the other hand, other levels of government, both provincial and national, only showed marginal interest in the project. However, when the goals of the project were adjusted after the first master plan of 1998 towards the realisation of a new mixed-use city centre and it became clear that national government involvement was necessary to bear the risks of crucial infrastructure investments, it became crucial for the project to embrace a more extrovert strategy and open up to other domains of the metropolitan action space in order to fulfil its ambitions. Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 summarize the development of the symbolic-cognitive and organisational framing of Zuidas. The operational responses indicated in the tables are analysed in the next section. Figure 3.4 (p. 84) gives a graphical representation of the organisational connec-

tivity of Zuidas in the metropolitan action space during the first development period.

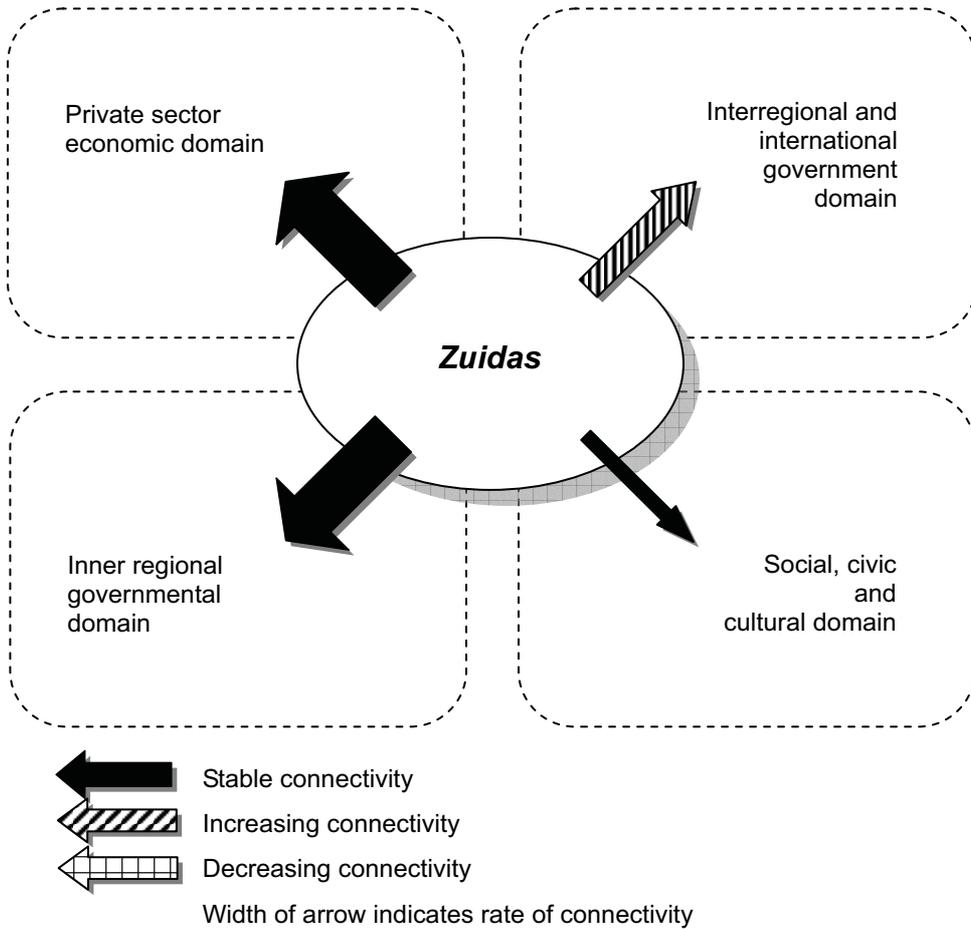
**Table 3.1: Symbolic-cognitive framing of Zuidas and its development till 2007**

<i>Symbolic-cognitive framing</i>	<i>Initial situation (mid 1990s)</i>	<i>Development (till 2007)</i>
Zuidas as a new economic location	After the failure of the IJ bank development, due to serious private interests, Zuidas is presented as Amsterdam's new prestigious office location.	Very successful economic development, Zuidas is the most prestigious Dutch office area but lacks international investments however.
Zuidas as a mixed use urban area	Some early plans for mixture of uses, but basically a plan for an office area.	Mixed use developed into the most important spatial ambition for area but hardly visible in investments. Dependence created on dock.
Zuidas as an infrastructure project	Plans from national government to expand infrastructure at Zuidas, unrelated to urban development.	Slow and difficult process to integrate urban development and infrastructure expansion. More national government support for dock model.

**Table 3.2: Organizational framing of Zuidas and its development till 2007**

<i>Organizational framing</i>	<i>Initial situation (mid 1990s)</i>	<i>Development (till 2007)</i>
Private economic sector	Zuidas initiated in this domain of the metropolitan action space: supported by a small number of powerful banks.	ABN/AMRO and ING still most important private actors, more (Dutch) financial institutions have followed. Private actors are willing to take responsibility for long-term development of area, including dock infrastructure.
Interregional / international government	Zuidas especially framed in context of policies to increase rail and road capacity at the south side of Amsterdam. Interest of Ministry of Spatial Planning to invest in HST-station. No EU-framing.	More holistic organizational connectivity. National government acts in less fragmented way. Willingness to participate in a public-private Zuidas Company.
Inner regional government	After failure of development approach at the southern IJ-bank, support for Zuidas grows. A search for more private oriented flexible forms of governance at Zuidas.	Amsterdam slowly understands need for broader organizational framing. Reorientation of local government necessary in situation of future private dominated Zuidas Company.
Social, civic and cultural	Consulted about Zuidas but not directly linked to decision-making.	Lack of interest and identification. Lack of possibility to enter operational domains.

Figure 3.4: Graphical representation of the organizational connectivity of Zuidas and its development in the metropolitan action space



### 3.5 Operational domain

We now turn to the operational domain in which we study which action situation is created in the Zuidas project to plan and decide on the program of spatial functions in the area. Our strategy is to study the rules that structure action situations and their development over the course of time. We pay specific attention to rules that influence the project's ambition to create an urban place.

In the next section on social norms we take a serious look at these action situations by examining whether this ambition to become an urban place is normatively performed by actors in actual building projects. We study to what extent the ambition of new urbanity can be regarded as having evolved into a 'social norm' in Zuidas. Self-evidently, there is a strong relationship between the rules that structure the operational domain

(and their evolution) and the social norms that are performed in concrete situations of choice. Nevertheless it makes sense to analyse them separately. In our framework, the rules directly affect the *structure* of a situation, while social norms are more closely linked to the production of behaviour in a particular situation.

For the analysis of our empirical case study we specifically look at two aggregated sets of rules that help us to understand the operational domain of a project:

1. Rules that affect who participates, the positions of the participants and their modes of interaction;
2. Rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants (actor constellations).

Ostrom defines rules as ‘...linguistic entities that refer to prescriptions commonly known and used by a set of participants to order repetitive, interdependent relationships. Prescriptions refer to which actions are *required*, *prohibited*, or *permitted*’ (Ostrom 1986, p.5).

### *3.5.1 Rules that affect the participants and modes of interaction*

The operational domain of Zuidas strongly mirrors the connectivity to the metropolitan action space we investigated in the last section. Initially, a clear distinction was visible between two different operational domains, namely (1) an operational domain in which decisions are made on the urban development of the ‘flanks’ of Zuidas, especially occupied by private actors and the municipality, and (2) a domain of decision-making on the infrastructure development and the possible dock model, consisting mainly of the national government and local municipality, with a strategically significant role for the private investors. However, over the course of time, a certain integration between these two constellations became visible, resulting in recent proposals and concrete actions to establish a new governance form for the development of real estate and infrastructure in the project based on a possible future dock *and* on the remaining developable parcels on the flanks. The following is a brief introduction to these two different domains based on a reconstruction of the rules that affected who participated and the modes of interaction. This is followed by an examination of the integration trajectory of these two domains over the last few years (from 2003 on). In section 3.5.2 we focus particularly on the scope and strategy of the participants in the operational domain.

#### *3.5.1.1 Participants and modes of interaction on urban development on the flanks of the Zuidas (1995-2003)*

The most important participants in the operational domains on the flanks are the private actors (individually and united in the Zuidas Coalition) and the municipality of Amsterdam. A smaller role is played by the national government and other actors. Throughout the first ten years of the Zuidas development this operational domain can be characterized by a cooperative public-private atmosphere, fuelled by a strong demand for the development of the area from the private point of view. The operational domain is quite strongly structured by a set of rules issued by local government regarding the different planning stages. However, this standard framework is supplemented by flexible site specific modes of cooperation between public and private parties. In most situations on the flanks the position of the local government is enhanced by land ownership. The following is a brief introduction to the most important actors in the operational domains.



### Zuidas Coalition and private actors

In the beginning of 1995, the city promoted the establishment of a Zuidas Coalition to improve the commitment of private actors to the integral development of the area, instead of a development as a series of ad-hoc projects. The Zuidas Coalition included the main actual and potential investors in the area as well as some important local stakeholders. Some key private sector actors were two of the country's major banking, insurance and real estate investment companies, namely ABN/AMRO and ING. Both expressed interest in establishing their new headquarters in the Zuidas area as well as in taking on a role as developer and investor in the rest of the area. The RAI conference and exhibition centre, the Vrije Universiteit and the World Trade Centre, for their part, were already located in the area (see: Figure 3.5) and had plans to expand. The coalition also included public sector actors like Dutch Railways and the National Public Works department, involved due to the presence of national roads and rail infrastructure in the area and subsequent plans to increase their capacity and upgrade the Zuid/WTC station.

The Zuidas Coalition can be seen as the project's relational backbone, although its importance has declined since the project started. At the time of its formation, however, this new coalition framework – albeit informal – represented an explicit attempt to realise a new level of connectivity as regards operational support for the project, including both horizontal (inter-organisational) as well as vertical (inter-governmental) levels of relationships with key actors. It represented, moreover, an explicit alternative to a holistic partnership-based development model that, with its juridical implications, was seen as inadequate when it came to reconciling the aims of coordination with a focus on the requirements of flexibility and changing corporate attitudes in such a complex arena. This was a lesson clearly learned from the previous failures to establish productive relationships between public and private partners in the southern banks of the river IJ project. Instead, the Zuidas Coalition defined a long-term commitment around a general vision of development and of the expected mutual benefits, leaving their short-term contractual and operational definition to ad-hoc, situation-defined agreements. Significantly, the Zuidas Coalition made no concrete binding agreements, but rather an informal commitment to 'feed' the 30 year program with a constant flux of investments in order to achieve the final vision in a flexible, step-by-step manner.

While the Zuidas Coalition became the strategic loose partnership that supported the project as a whole, the concrete building proposals in the flanks were discussed in the context of the different subprojects. The following projects emerged: Noordzone, Mahler 4, Gershwin, Vivaldi, Kop Rivierenbuurt (later renamed Kop Zuidas), Beethoven and VU-kwartier (see Figure 3.5).<sup>8</sup> It is important to mention that these subprojects are being developed quite independently of each other, with a separate organization format. In most cases the municipality of Amsterdam is leading these processes, for reasons of land ownership, although they claim to be employing a 'demand-oriented strategy' (Gemeente Amsterdam 2004a). The following structure of decision-making has been set up for these subprojects: it starts with a '(concept) project decision' which is taken by the municipality consisting of a general outline of the different spatial functions and building volumes. This decision goes through a process of

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<sup>8</sup> Although Zuiderhof is pictured in Figure 3.5, officially it is not part of the Zuidas project. In a later stage the subproject 'Ravel' was added, located in between Vivaldi and Gershwin.

public consultation. After that an 'execution-decision' is taken consisting of a precise building program, an urban design concept and a cooperation document with private parties. The exact form of the public private cooperation depends on the nature of the project, the ownership situation and the complexity. In the real 'greenfield' parts of the Zuidas (Mahler 4, Gershwin) a selection procedure is set up to select interested parties. In situations of a plot that had previous functions and owners, cooperation is often initiated (Vivaldi, VU-kwartier, Kop Rivierenbuurt). At the level of the sub projects, specific semi-private actors, with development ambitions, also enter the arena. Examples are educational institutions (Free University, Hogeschool Amsterdam), some art institutions (especially for the Beethoven area) as well as the semi-privatized housing corporations for subprojects that consists of substantial housing developments, like Gershwin.

#### City government

In November 1997, the project was officially granted top priority status within the city organisation when it was designated a 'major urban project' [*Grootstedelijk project*]. This status meant that most public sector involvement was transferred from the local district council of *ZuiderAmstel* to the (central) city government level (Gemeente Amsterdam 1997). The role of the local district since then has been limited to issues regarding the spatial integration of the Zuidas with the neighbouring areas and the maintenance of the public spaces.

A special project office, the *Projectbureau Zuidas* (located on-site in the WTC building), was established as a point of liaison between public and private actors and to overcome inner-municipal controversies. The project office has almost no staff of its own, but enters into contracting relationships with the traditional local departments involved in spatial planning issues in order to prepare studies and plans. The project bureau hires expertise from municipal organisation departments like spatial planning, transportation and infrastructure, economic affairs, environmental affairs and housing as well as from different consultancy firms.

Within the project organization, two major modes of interaction can be distinguished, namely (1) a mode of interaction on 'facets' or 'themes', and (2) a mode of interaction on 'projects'. The first is mainly a municipal domain. This mode of interaction deals with the project-wide strategic development of Zuidas. Important themes that are being discussed are general urban planning vision and strategy, traffic and transportation, economic positioning, water, publication and communication and environmental affairs. Various studies into these different themes are being set out by the project office. The realization of (an update of) the master plan is an epic moment in the domain of interaction of facets or themes. The first master plan was accepted in 1998, and updates followed in 2001, 2004 and 2007. The most important role of the master plan is to create a consensus between public and private actors on the project's long-term development goals. However, in effect, it is mainly a municipal product, realized after lengthy interaction between the different municipal departments. It is important to emphasise that the role of the project office is instrumental in streamlining this process. It is responsible for the final product and asks municipal departments to contribute to it. According to our respondents, and based on observations by the researcher this

‘area-oriented strategy’ is seen as quite successful.<sup>9</sup> It certainly reduces the power of the individual municipal departments and increases the integral focus on the area. The introvert character of the modes of interaction on the master plan is remarkable. The discussion on the ambition and strategy as regards the themes is without doubt a predominantly internally-organized matter, safely convened within the local government. In the latest update of the master plan it was decided to keep public consultation and input to a minimum.

The second mode of interaction is on the specific projects. This involves some other, mainly financial, juridical and project-management oriented knowledge. Self-evidently, these modes of interaction are geared more to creating agreements with private parties and progress as regards the official sets of rules with a view to project execution. Obviously, the results of these domains of action can conflict with the general policy aims of the master plan. However, the latter report mainly uses vague and general statements about the future development of the Zuidas and its different sub areas. It mainly sets quality criteria, instead of fixed programs, in order to stay flexible. This is a particularly interesting aspect for our investigation of the execution of the ambition for new urbanity in the Zuidas in the rest of this chapter.

Both the master plan and the different concrete plans for subprojects have to be approved by the Amsterdam city council, in accordance with the traditional juridical procedures. In the case of the Zuidas, flexible use is being made of the local land use plan (*bestemmingsplan*) – the only legally binding plan in the Dutch planning system. A new land use plan is made after agreement with private parties. However, this procedure certainly does not differ greatly from that applicable to other projects in the Netherlands.

#### Other actors

As we noticed before, consultation with private actors is one of local government’s crucial development strategies. Most consultation with market actors is strongly organised in the operational domain of the specific subprojects. However, the general direction of development is being discussed in some more strategic forums like the Zuidas Coalition or the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce. Neighbourhood groups play a rather small role in the development of the flanks. There is a ‘Zuidas residents’ platform’ [*Bewonersplatform Zuidas*] that unites different local groups. This platform was sponsored for a while by the project organization, but this subsidy was recently stopped. Since then, the residents’ platform has found it financially difficult to support its small office. The local group ‘Friends of the Beatrixpark’ [*Vrienden van het Beatrixpark*], a member of the residents’ platform, is one of the most active and influential neighbourhood groups. If the dock model is realized, the Beatrixpark will be expanded on the top of the infrastructure. However, the reason that this group is so involved is because of the urbanization of a section of the current park as part of the Beethoven subproject.

Although extensive attempts were made by the city government to involve nearby residents and other social players in the process of creating the first master plan and urban design vision (1998 and 1999), public participation seems to have become less important lately. The most intense involvement – sometimes leading to juridical pro-

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<sup>9</sup> The monthly strategic facet-oriented meeting at the project office was being observed for a period of almost five years (end 2001 – end 2006).

cedures – is in concrete building plans, for example Gershwin which was stalled for over a year due to a successful appeal by residents. However, the group in question consisted of really no more than a handful of individuals.

Conclusion participants and modes of interaction on urban development on the flanks of Zuidas (1995-2003)

If we assess the rules in the operational domain relating to urban development on the flanks of the Zuidas in the first development period, we find an efficiently-operating ‘machine’ of public-private cooperation that was helped by market circumstances which were favourable to the development. It is clearly not a Public Private Partnership (PPP), but a quite traditionally oriented development with the city government taking the lead, albeit in an area with strong market interests. The interactions are structured by the rules of the city government regarding plan making and development. Flexibility of spatial functions and phasing is a key aspect of the development strategy. The operational domains are quite introverted, a fact that some may find surprising given the ambition to realize an urban area. The process that resulted in the first master plan and its design update a year later (Gemeente Amsterdam 1998; 1999) involved a large number of quite informal public hearings. Decision-making on the first subprojects that have involved real spatial implications have followed the basic requirements on public hearings but have not been innovative in this respect.

*3.5.1.2 Participants and modes of interaction on infrastructure expansion and a possible dock development (1995-2003)*

For a long time, the quite flexible and rapid urban developments in the flanks contrasted starkly with the slow development of decision-making on the infrastructure expansion. Compared to the domain on the flanks, this domain is occupied by a different set of actors, and different modes of interaction structure the processes. The municipality of Amsterdam also plays a role in this domain, but the role is a much smaller one and the municipality is definitely less powerful in this case. For the realisation of its ambitions, the Amsterdam municipality is not only dependant on market actors willing to invest in the (future) parcels on top of the dock, it also has to deal with the national government, as the owner and operator of the infrastructure.

At the end of the Nineties, the Ministry of Transport acknowledged the need to expand the road and rail infrastructure that cuts through Zuidas. This decision was made in the context of the *MIT [Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur en Transport]*, the long-term program for infrastructure and transport, which presents national infrastructure investments. As a result, the ministry started formal (top-down) plan procedures to investigate possibilities, impacts and costs. These included an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Formal Trajectory Procedure. In the meantime, the existing station was selected in the New Key Projects program from the Ministry of Spatial Planning as a possible stop for the High Speed Train (Ministerie van VROM 2000; 2002). This selection meant a possible subsidy for the municipality in relation to plans to create a new station and an upgraded station environment. For the station (area) development, a special steering group with participants from the ministry and the municipality was set up. In this specific context, the role of the Dutch Railways (*Nederlandse Spoorwegen*) was important but also quite unclear. In the aftermath of a process aimed at the creation of a more independent relationship between the state and the national railway company, the

latter was split up into different divisions, which were then responsible for different aspects like passenger transport, goods transport, rail development and maintenance, station exploitation and real estate. Against this fragmented backdrop, responsibilities for the station itself were quite unclear (Majoor and Schuiling 2007).<sup>10</sup>

Although formal decision-making was a predominant public affair, the private sector played a strategic role in the operational domain of the dock model. In 2001, driven by enthusiasm relating to the rapid development of the flanks, three private actors, ABN/AMRO, ING and NS Vastgoed, made an indicative offer to take most of the future developable parcels on top of the dock. The support of this so called Dock Consortium was crucial for the city government in the context of its backing of the dock model, since it reflected strong market interest.

However, the way this operational domain was structured resulted in a quite defensive environment for such a proposal, regardless of the question of whether the dock proposal was a feasible idea as such. The situation was that the effective power and most investment potential for infrastructure was concentrated in the hands of the Ministry of Transport (Majoor 2004). When studying these investments for infrastructure (extension), the ministry adheres to its own transport-oriented cost-benefit models that hardly take any urban development aspects into account. As we will find out in the next section, besides this procedural standpoint, the ministry also had strong content-based arguments against the dock model. The other section of the national government that was involved, the Ministry of Spatial Planning was less powerful, and it was dependant for its own Key Project program on the decision-making on the infrastructure solution for the area as well.

The result was that there were two sides to the modes on interaction on the infrastructure. On the one hand, the municipality had to wait for (and cooperate in) the lengthy standard top-down procedures on national infrastructure investments while, on the other hand, it tried to carry out active bottom-up lobbying for its preferred option, namely the dock model, being strengthened by market interests.

Conclusion participants and modes of interaction on infrastructure expansion and a possible dock model (1995-2003)

If we assess the rules, the operational domain on the infrastructure expansion and the possible dock model in the first development period, we find a quite hierarchical and standardized decision-making situation in which most power is held by the Ministry of Transport. This is a situation which is being challenged by the more bottom-up entrepreneurial local government – business coalition who took up a more integrated pro-

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<sup>10</sup> Under the supervision of ‘Dutch Rail Commerce’, two main parties are involved in the development of stations (situation 2004): NS Stations (Dutch Rail Stations) for the commercial uses in the station and station maintenance and NS Vastgoed (Dutch Rail Real Estate) for the development of commercial properties on and around the stations. Pro Rail is the actor that develops the stations assigned by the national government. The national government allocates a budget to realize a ‘basic quality’ station. If actors together decide to realise a higher quality level, other forms of money have to be found. The local authority is responsible for the integration of the station in local land use plans and has an overall steering function, while the provincial government is responsible for integration with regional modes of transportation (Nederlandse Spoorwegen 2004). In 2007, Dutch Rail Real Estate and Dutch Rail Stations merged in an attempt to overcome some of the institutional fragmentation.

ject-oriented strategy. The operational domain is structured however via the rules of the national government regarding the investigation and planning of new or expanded infrastructure. The interface with urban development is not an important aspect here. The above frustrated the city government, as the actor most strongly connected to the ambition to realize a dock model, since there was no receptive environment in which to debate this alternative. As we will find out later, changes in the organisational character of this operational domain was an important innovation in the next phase.

### *3.5.1.3 Integration of operational domains (2003 onwards)*

In hindsight, 2003 will perhaps be regarded as a watershed in the processes towards the realisation of the Zuidas as a project of new urbanity, including a dock model development. It is the operational consequence of the integration of the three different frames we analysed in the previous section. More information on the specific changes in orientations that led to this integration is discussed in the next sub-section. In this section we focus more on the (potential) influence on the set of actors and the modes of interaction that order the operational domain of the Zuidas.

Since 2003, under the supervision of an independent negotiator, former minister Elco Brinkman, who was also an important person in the construction sector, a new, more connecting process has been initiated with the involvement of both the city of Amsterdam and a wide array of national government departments on the possibilities of the dock model.<sup>11</sup> Although – at the time of writing – final outcomes of this process are not yet reached, insiders hint at a possible agreement between the parties. The key thing is that a much bigger group of participants is now involved, being not only other public actors, but specifically a larger group of private investors outside the three actors of the original dock consortium. This larger group will probably also invest in the infrastructure. This process can therefore be understood as an attempt to connect the two separate domains of infrastructure development (mostly a public affair) and urban development (mostly a private affair). The modes of interaction are now focused on creating a common public-private investment project, instead of a more traditional situation of public investment in infrastructure and private investments in real estate.

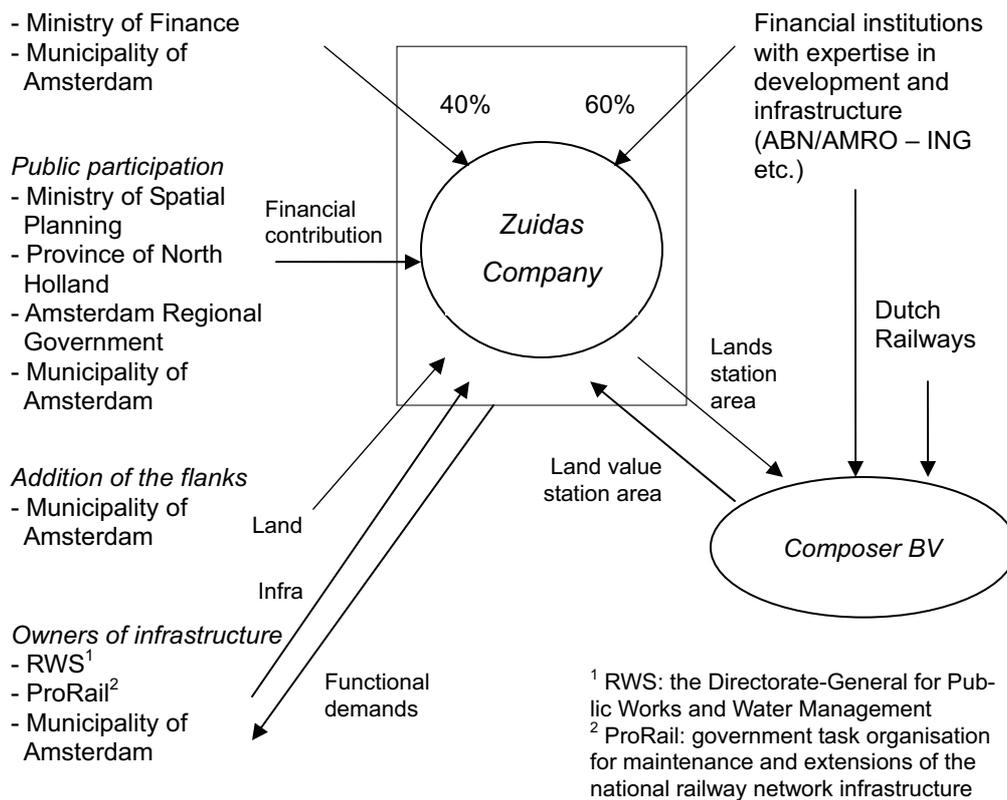
The first proposal on the table was to create a Zuidas Development Company for the dock zone. It would be a public limited company dominated by private shareholders building the tunnels and the station and exploiting the air rights zone of approximately one million square metres. Public money would come from the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Spatial Planning, the Municipality of Amsterdam (the expected profit from the other parts of the Zuidas), the Provincial Government of North-Holland and the Amsterdam Regional Body [*Stadsregio Amsterdam*]. Private capital would come from a series of large financial institutions via a process of auction according to EU regulations.

Although, at the time of writing, the Zuidas Development Company has not officially been set up, we can already identify a changed in its proposed goals. The parties agreed that this future company will also develop the remaining parcels in the flanks of the Zuidas, in order to prevent inner-project competition between the flanks and the dock-

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<sup>11</sup> Brinkman is the chairman of ‘Bouwend Nederland’ [Building Netherlands], the employers’ organization of the Dutch building companies. Brinkman holds numerous other public functions and was declared by *de Volkskrant* newspaper to be ‘the most influential man in the Netherlands’ (June 2006).

Figure 3.6: Structure of the proposed Zuidas Company



Source: Zuidasdok 2007

zone. The task of this corporation is to build the new infrastructure and sell the parcels on top of them. The idea is that a number of major private investors should acquire the majority of shares in the new corporation, namely 60%. Currently, the following actors have shown an interest and have been ‘pre-selected’: ABN AMRO Bank, Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten, Fortis Bank, HBOS (Bank of Scotland), ING Real Estate, Schiphol Group, Rabobank and Stichting Pensioenfonds ABP.

These actors have an opportunity to bid for a certain percentage of the shares. This auction is planned to take place in the winter of 2008. To make a bid more interesting, it was eventually decided that the private investors should not only be involved in the sales of the land, but that they are also allowed to develop approximately 500,000m<sup>2</sup> of the most valuable lands on the future dock, around the station.<sup>12</sup> The public parties are set to acquire a 40% participation in the new company and play a triple role in this new corporation. Firstly they will subsidise the company (for example the Ministry of Transport will subsidise a certain investment in infrastructure), secondly they will be

<sup>12</sup> For this development, a special company called ‘Composer BV’ is to be set up, which will also involve Dutch Railways.

shareholders in the future company and thirdly and finally they will have certain public responsibilities and policy aims. The exact ordering of these three roles is quite difficult as we will find out in the next subsection. At both national and local government levels, measures are being taken to re-order the internal organisation and separate the responsibilities according to these different roles.<sup>13</sup>

The initial governance philosophy for the Zuidas Company is based on transparency of roles and obligations. Different additional ‘wishes’ of parties for the dock, like more rail tunnels, or social housing, were reduced to ‘modules’. Actors interested in realizing these ambitions were to be able to ‘buy’ these modules at their own expense. One of the first tangible results of the independent negotiator has been that the design for the dock model was made more financially feasible because of this principle. It was also decided that all the public parties would make an initial contribution next their originally intended investments of subsidies. Complemented with loans this would give the company the capital to start the expensive infrastructure works. The exact governance details are still being negotiated at the time of writing, and a preliminary organization scheme is pictured in Figure 3.6 (previous page).

The integration of operational domains can be characterized as a period full of innovation and experimentation. It is the first such public-public-private partnership in the Netherlands for several decades. Major questions relating to risks and opportunities play a crucial role for private participants. As far as public parties are concerned, these are supplemented by more political arguments relating to democratic accountability. The governance organization of the possible new company is still under debate. The position of the municipality regarding its spatial goals for a mixed development of the Zuidas is of specific interest for our study. It is uncertain how capable it is to secure ‘public goals’ in general and spatial ambitions in particular given its situation of being a minority stakeholder.

#### *3.5.1.4 Conclusion on rules that affect the participants and their modes of interaction*

Regarding the domain of urban development in the flanks of the Zuidas area, we can distinguish two sets of rules that affected the participants and modes of interaction. On a strategic project wide level, pragmatic rules have been drawn up by the public and private initiators of the project that facilitate a holistic, long-term strategy for the area aimed at overcoming inner-municipal controversies. Nevertheless, the definition of the participants that were allowed to engage in this domain was rather narrow and was mainly applicable only to local government and private ‘clients’. This made the domain seem rather introverted. To a large extent, this was a conscious strategy on the part of the project initiators with a view to working more effectively. As regards the project flanks, which were relatively easy to develop, this strategy was instrumental for ensuring rapid progress as regards the completion of the building program. No representatives from regional and national government or from broader parts of society were involved. This was a clear reflection of the project’s initially weak connecting framing and turned out to be one of the strategic weaknesses of the project when a step towards the integration with the domain on infrastructure investments needed to be made.

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<sup>13</sup> Actually, in 2007, preceding the auction, the company has already been established, with only public shareholders, the municipality and the national government.

At the level of the different subprojects in the flanks, more classical rules governed the operational domain in which contractual agreements were set up between the municipality (the owner of most of the parcels) and (consortia of) private parties regarding concrete development projects. At both levels the Zuidas project office played an instrumental role, as a bridge between different parties and as a ‘front office’ for the municipal organization.

Regarding the domain of infrastructure and possible dock model development, top-down national government rules dominated the official decision-making processes in the initial stage. This frustrated the bottom-up visioning of the dock model from the local government and a consortium of three private parties. This situation slowly changed from 2003 onwards when a process was started to develop the Zuidas, including the dock model, in the form of a joint public-public-private development corporation. This meant that new public and private actors were entering the operational domains, and new modes of interaction were set up. It is particularly interesting how this situation of experimentation and uncertainty will influence the conditions for a more urban development of the Zuidas in the next phase. In the following section we will analyse the changing scopes and strategies of actors that have resulted in these changes of participants and modes of interaction.

### *3.5.2 Rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants (actor constellations)*

In this section we focus on the scope and strategy of the participants regarding the general direction of the project’s urban development. Some of the most important concrete development projects that have been realized will be analysed in the next section when we investigate the social norms relating to new Zuidas urbanity.

Throughout our analysis so far we have highlighted the different steps in the process. Table 3.3 (next page) provides a brief overview of the most important ‘milestones’ of the Zuidas project up to now which serve as a basis for our assessment. We analyse which rules have affected the scope and strategy of three important groups of participants in the Zuidas, namely (1) the local government, (2) the private actors and (3) the national government. Self-evidently, this is a simplification of reality. There are major differences in scope and strategy within these three groups. We will try to refer to them when this is necessary for a more micro understanding of a certain situation. However, for the sake of clarity it is also necessary to create some structure in our analysis to understand a very complex process. We once again make a distinction between the scope and strategies of actors in relation to (1) the urban development of the flanks, (2) the infrastructure investment and the possible dock model, both from 1995 to 2003 and (3) the most recent period of integration of these two domains, from 2003 onwards.

#### *3.5.2.1 Scope and strategies of actors in relation to the urban development of the flanks (1995-2003)*

For the private actors involved in the initial stages of the Zuidas project, the focus was clearly on capitalizing on the strategic position in infrastructure networks with a view to creating an (international) competitive location for office development, with a strong emphasis on high quality architecture and urban spaces. In an initial stage, the municipality soon identified the area’s potential and wanted to prevent a series of scattered developments. It developed a vision for an economic competitive location, but one which was urbanized in a very high-density nature and which included other functions

to create a more urban atmosphere (Majoor 2006a). After the Zuidas project was mentioned for the first time in official policy documents in 1994, the project soon acquired an important position in the various spatial and economic plans of local government. As mentioned before, the latest spatial structure plan of Amsterdam designated the Zuidas as one of the city's three urban zones (together with the historic city centre and the area around the Amsterdam Arena in the south-east).

Table 3.3: Official milestones in the decision-making of Zuidas

<i>Year</i>	<i>Milestone</i>
1994	Zuidas mentioned in Amsterdam government program of new centre-left government.
1995	Zuidas Coalition formed.
1997	Official involvement of the national government: Zuidas obtains Key-Project status.
1998	Zuidas Master plan presented.
1999	Zuidas urban design vision presented (concept): start of series of public consultations.
2000	Indicative offer of consortium ABN/AMRO, ING and NS Vastgoed for dock model.
2001	Zuidas Vision presented: clear choice for Zuidas as new urban centre with mixed land use.
2001	Intentional agreement city government – national government to start Environmental Impact Procedure for infrastructure expansion.
2003	Intentional agreement to set up joint development corporation for the Zuidas between city government and national government.
2004	Process is started to set up a joint public-public-private Zuidas development corporation by an independent negotiator: Elco Brinkman.
2006	Preliminary agreement between national government and local government is reached on participation in a public-public-private development corporation.
2008	Auction to select the private participants in the Zuidas company.

There were two important rules that structured the municipality's scope and strategy and there is an interesting dynamic between the two. On the one hand, Amsterdam tried to employ a clear 'demand oriented strategy', meaning a very open and receptive positioning vis-à-vis investment initiatives from the market (Gemeente Amsterdam 2004b). The project office often presents itself as 'facilitating market interests' (interview with Zuidas project office). However, the other rule that defined the scope and strategy is based on the (spatial) contribution of the Zuidas to Amsterdam's urban area. Compliance with this rule led to the introduction of a whole series of policy concepts that had to safeguard the realisation of these market initiatives in a setting that was also favourable for social housing, a high quality public space, local institutions, water, the implementation of environmental innovations, etc. Ambitions relating to the latter rule have been intensified over time. While the first master plan (1998) was quite modest about the 'urbanity' of the new Zuidas, the following documents (1999, 2001 and 2004) were very outspoken on this issue.

An important source of diffusion of the concept of multiple intensive land use and new urbanity was represented by the Ministry of Spatial Planning in drafts of the new national strategic spatial planning document which highlighted the strategic need, in a densely populated country, to intensify and combine different land uses (Ministerie van

VROM 2001). At the actual level of the Zuidas project, this ambition was translated into a proposed mixture of 45% offices, 45% housing and 10% facilities throughout the whole project area (Gemeente Amsterdam 2001). At the level of the specific subprojects these proportions could differ. At the micro level of the individual projects the ambition was to create multiple-use buildings with facilities and shops at ground level and a mixture of offices and apartments on the higher floors. The urban character of the area was to be completed through specific attention to public spaces, a dominance of pedestrian zones and high-quality architecture. As far as local government was concerned, the concept of new urbanity use gained the status of a new (marketing) label, a new agenda for the area. It became dominant in the negotiations with private and other public parties that were necessary to realise this planning concept.

Although the precise ambitions for major infrastructures for the whole area were not discussed in the specific subprojects domain, they played an instrumental role in defining the ambition of the local government and private parties. Because of the high connectivity of Zuidas, and the expected future improvements, expectations of the private sector regarding the quality of the location increased during the first period. The good connection of Zuidas with Schiphol airport and the rest of the Randstad was particularly important for them, while the municipality tried to built upon the already environmentally favourable modal split of the area in defining the program.<sup>14</sup> An important symbolic aspect in this context is the (possible) connection of the Zuidas to Amsterdam's future High Speed Train (HST) stop. However, in reality, this status is far from being secured. The High Speed Alliance (HSA), a company founded by Dutch Railways (90%) and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (10%), has won the concession to run the HST between the Belgian border and Amsterdam in the period 2007 – 2022. In the agreement between the national government and HSA, it was agreed that the latter had the power to select the station to be used in Amsterdam (either Amsterdam Central Station or Amsterdam Zuid/WTC). HSA has decided to use Amsterdam Central Station as its terminus, at least in the first few years (interview HSA 2004).<sup>15</sup> The future connection of the Zuidas to the North/South subway line improves its connectivity, but ironically it does the same for Amsterdam Central Station.

Throughout the project's initial years the interest of the private sector in the flanks of

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<sup>14</sup> There was modest support for the Zuidas project from the environmental community, especially because of its good modal-split performance and its high-density construction ambitions (Milieucentrum Amsterdam 2000). The modal split for the area is already favourable to public transport: 40% public transport, 20% walking/biking and 40% cars, and the expectation is that this will improve in the future when the North/South subway line and other infrastructures have been built (2020: 50% public transport, 20% walking/biking and 30% cars, Gemeente Amsterdam 2004a).

<sup>15</sup> This decision is contrary to the expectations voiced by project proponents in the different plans for the Zuidas. The HSA made the decision for a number of different reasons. The current track configuration at the Zuidas (only 2 through tracks, 4 at the station since 2007) is insufficient to accommodate the new high speed trains that are expected to run 6 times per hour between Amsterdam and Rotterdam. On top of that, the station is too small to have a dedicated HST platform and its general lay-out and quality level are regarded as poor. There is no railroad yard close to Zuid/WTC for the cleaning and maintenance of trains and, finally, the connections between the station and the rest of the public transport network are seen as insufficient till the North/South subway line is realised in 2013. HSA has indicated that when the new subway line is in operation, a new railroad yard is being built close to the station and the station is qualitatively upgraded it will consider stopping at Zuidas. However, the latter seems quite a difficult condition to fulfill. In the case of a dock model scenario the station will be located in the middle of a construction yard for almost 15 years.

the Zuidas was greater than expected. It was certainly the most important project driver (Majoer 2006a). The Zuidas was successful in fulfilling the increasing demand during the Nineties for more exclusive high quality office locations in the Amsterdam area. (Ploeger 2004) This demand was partly the result of a series of mergers and consolidations in the financial and juridical sector, two historic strongholds of its historic economic base (Engelen 2007). The location of the court of justice in the Zuidas area in the Eighties was an important spatial stepping zone for a clustering of law firms in the area (see footnote 6, p.78). Occupancy rates were extremely high and different subprojects were put onto the market earlier than expected in the first years of the Zuidas development. Even recently, in a period of crisis in the office sector, the Zuidas seems to be relatively untouched compared to other office locations in Amsterdam. This reflects a strong differentiation in submarkets in the office sector and seems to support the argument of project proponents for the need for a top quality 'international competitive' location. However, the expensive dock model can only be 'afforded' if extreme high land prices are realised in the Zuidas area. This automatically limits the target group for the area to a small segment of companies capable (and willing) to pay a high price for premises in a prestigious location. The most notable of these are companies involved in finance, consultancy and legal services. The question remains as to whether the demand for these sectors will stay high in the long term (Centraal Planbureau 2003). Financiers and investors have indicated that their involvement in the Zuidas also depends on the (artificial) creation of scarcity of competing high-end office locations in the region (interview Ministry of Finance). In an urban planning milieu with a weak form of regional coordination this is a problematic issue. At the moment, there are many competing locations and, although they do not offer the same location qualities in terms of image and public transport accessibility, their rental prices are considerably lower than those in the Zuidas. Moreover, they offer the same quality of car accessibility (and sometimes even better). This issue remains an important aspect, certainly in the case of the development of the quite inflexible dock model, since this would mean a substantial increase in the project's office volumes.

The two major private investors in the Zuidas: ABN/AMRO and ING – both the result of mergers in the beginning of the Nineties – had multiple roles in the development of the flanks. They were interested in a new location for their headquarters, but they were also actively pursuing possibilities for project development and finance in the area. Within the different subprojects, varying forms of cooperation were set up to develop the plans. Mahler 4 (161,000m<sup>2</sup> offices, 37,000 m<sup>2</sup> housing and 18,100m<sup>2</sup> facilities) is being developed by a consortium of Fortis Vastgoed, ING Real Estate and G&S Vastgoed. Gerhswin (40,000m<sup>2</sup> offices, 200,000m<sup>2</sup> housing and 39,000m<sup>2</sup> facilities) is being developed by three consortia. Each consortium includes a financier, a project developer and a housing corporation. Vivaldi (165,550m<sup>2</sup> offices, 88,000m<sup>2</sup> housing and 10,000m<sup>2</sup> facilities) is being developed by ING Real Estate, Blauwhoed and Bouwfonds (formerly owned by ABN/AMRO).

Figure 3.7: Map of the Zuidas Vision 2004 with the dock model: by integrating the north and the south flanks one continuous urban area would be realized



Source: Gemeente Amsterdam 2004

3.5.2.2 *Scope and strategies of actors on infrastructure investments and the possible dock model (1995-2003)*

While consensus and the rapid production of built areas typified the urban development of the flanks, the scope and strategies of actors regarding the infrastructure investments and the possible dock model reflect a different dynamic.

The interface between the infrastructure development and the urban development of Zuidas became crucial after Amsterdam officially declared the dock model to be the preferable option for further development of the area (Gemeente Amsterdam 2001). This was more than a self-binding decision since it had ideological impacts as well. As far as Amsterdam was concerned, the dock model was the clearest representation for the high ambitions it had with the area and the only real way to fulfil these ambitions.

Interestingly the scope of the city government has been extremely stable since no alternatives to the dock model have been seriously considered.<sup>16</sup> This is striking in a

<sup>16</sup> In the 1998 Master Plan, two other models were presented: (1) expansion of the additional infrastructure on the existing dike (+1), this was named the dike model, and (2) development of an additional surface with urban developments on top of the dike (+2), named the deck model (Gemeente Amsterdam 1998). The latter was never seriously considered. However, the dike model was, for a long time, the national government's preferred option. It was dismissed by local government because it would mean an even 'thicker' volume of infrastructure that separates the two-sides of the project. The levels of pollution (noise and dust) would make housing developments in the area only possible at the southernmost fringe.

situation of grandiose uncertainty. However, the city government's expectation was that these studies would only weaken its own position.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the strategy based on achieving the dock model underwent rapid development during the past few years. We have already stated that the modes of interaction shifted towards a more cooperative and investment-orientated model and we explore this in more detail in the next subsection. It is important to mention that the first plans for the dock model came purely from local government which expected that it would be able to develop this solution quite independently from other actors.

Let us first introduce the spatial concept of the dock model, namely a set of 1.2 kilometre tunnels through the entire infrastructure (highway, trains, lightrail and metro) would run and which would physically and visually integrate the two parts of the project, and almost double the space available for development to 2.7 million square metres (see Figure 3.7, p.99). Since such a solution eliminates noise and dust, the environmental problems that currently hinder housing development in the flanks of the project would no longer apply.

Although the scope of the city government in its preference for the dock model stayed very stable during the last years, the strategy by which it tried to realize it changed considerably as we noticed in the previous sub section. Initially – at the end of the Nineties – the City of Amsterdam expected revenues from the 'air-rights' parcels on top of the dock to be sufficient to pay for the additional costs of the dock model, compared to the investments that were needed anyhow to expand the exiting infrastructure on the dike (although it was unclear what these investments would exactly be). Following on from this way of thinking, the only thing that then had to be done was to urge the Ministry of Transport, which is responsible for national infrastructure, to plan and execute the construction of the dock after which it would be able to pass on the additional costs for the dock model to the city. The city government made the very important self-binding decision that it would reinvest the net revenues from the development of the flanks (expected at that time to be between 300 and 400 million euro) to pay for the dock zone development.

However, things did not turn out that simple. The Ministry of Transport was not enthusiastic about the planned tunnel. Their preferred long-term investment option was to expand the current configuration of infrastructure (highway, rail and light rail), including the station, on the existing dike. The advantages of this solution are the relatively low costs and the possibility of investing in different phases without excessively disrupting the existing flows of cars, trains and metros. From a transportation and cost-oriented perspective, a tunnel option only generates disadvantages.

In the negotiations with the national government, the city government referred to two significant supporters of the dock model. Most importantly there was clear private sector interest in the form of an indicative offer made by a consortium of ABN/AMRO, ING and NS Vastgoed on 21 December 2000. These parties offered to buy half the parcels on top of the possible tunnel. The precise details of this offer were never made

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<sup>17</sup> This was one of the reasons why, for a long time, the city of Amsterdam blocked or delayed its cooperation on short-term improvements at the existing small Zuid/WTC station. Due to the new offices in the area, the station was in serious need of extra capacity for trains and passengers. However, the municipality feared that short-term improvements to the existing dike-level station would diminish the chances for an investment in a dock model (including a fully new station then) later.

public. Although the city government always used this offer as proof of the financial and economic strength of the project, other respondents referred in our interviews to the poor ‘deal’ that the private actors offered the local government. This observation reflected a wider problem, namely that in this very politicized operational domain, there was hardly any agreement on ‘hard’ facts, nor was it possible to get very accurate estimations on future economic potential of the dock. The expected lengthy construction time would mean that it would only be possible to put the first buildings on the market after approximately 15 years.

However, the proposal for a dock model was not only supported by market actors but by the Ministry of Spatial Planning as well. In 1997, this ministry selected Zuidas as one of the six projects of the Key Projects policy to support high-density and mixed-use development around future High Speed Train stations (Ministerie van VROM 2000; 2002; Majoor and Schuiling 2007).<sup>18</sup> Key Project selection meant that Zuidas would be treated as a national priority via a grant to finance certain non-profitable (public) parts of the project. The policy backed the plan for a dock model at the Zuidas location because it was expected to contribute strongly to the ‘spatial quality’ of the area. However, the Ministry of Spatial Planning was a rather powerless national government supporter. It had only a small degree of influence on the processes of decision-making on the Zuidas because (1) the initially proposed additional subsidy of 70 million euro for Zuidas was very small compared to the total investment costs of the project and (2) the status as a Key Project – officially a national government-wide policy – only marginally influenced the positions and involvement of other departments in the project, most importantly the Ministry of Transport.<sup>19</sup>

The result was a stalemate which lasted a number of years with regard to the decision-making relating to the expansion of the infrastructure and the feasibility of the dock model. However, this changed from 2003 onwards, once the city government and the national government, under impetus of renewed interest from the business sector, started to alter their strategies.

### 3.5.2.3 *Towards an integration of scope and strategies*

In 2003, it slowly became clear to the municipality of Amsterdam that it had to change its strategy. This was especially necessary when the local government found out, after different internal assessments, that it had overestimated the capacity to compensate for the additional investment costs of the dock model. It became clear that there were considerable uncertainties as regards the benefits. This was supplemented with different worrying national and international reports about a consistency of cost overruns in ‘prestigious’ infrastructure projects (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius and Rothengatter 2003; Commissie Duivesteijn 2004). This was confirmed by a very critical cost-benefit analysis of the plan by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis that

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<sup>18</sup> These six projects had to provide important incentives to the physical and economic structure of the country, by (1) providing new employment, (2) leading to improved management of the growing mobility, (3) producing a more intensive land use policy around the station and (4) improving the socio-economic vitality of urban areas (Ministerie van VROM 2000, p.13).

<sup>19</sup> The allocation of the total grant of 245 million euros reflected the traditional redistributive character of the Key Projects program. Although the proposed building program of the Zuidas is larger than the sum of the other five projects (located around the stations in Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Breda and Arnhem) it was only allocated 28% of the subsidy.

forecast a deficit of 800 million euro (Centraal Planbureau 2003).<sup>20</sup> Together with the huge unknown financial risks the city government faced in the upcoming decade because of the construction costs of the North-South subway line, it became clear that another strategy needed to be pursued to make the dock model a reality (interview Municipality of Amsterdam 2004).<sup>21</sup> Instead of a being a client (and partly a subsidiser) of a national infrastructure project with major local consequences, the municipality changed its position in order to try and create a partnership with the national government and a more extensive range of private investors to realise a project in which the costs and benefits would be spread among a wider range of actors. Amsterdam realised it needed to broaden support at national level to foster a breakthrough on the issue of the dock model, with regard to which functional transportation criteria ‘overpowered’ and frustrated the plans for area development.

There were two main concepts that stimulated the integration of the different operational domains: (1) a growing awareness of the importance of the development of the Zuidas for the national economy, and (2) a growing interest from both private parties and the national government to experiment with public-private partnership in large development projects.

As regards point 1, during the course of a relatively long economic recession, the goals of the Ministries of Economic Affairs and Finance acquired closer links with the development of Zuidas and finally Amsterdam was getting more successful in underlining the ‘national importance’ of the development of Zuidas. First there were the goals of the Ministry of Economic Affairs which, during recent decades, has often produced policy documents on the spatial-economic development of the country. In this period of economic decline and growing attention for issues of ‘competitiveness’ it has started shifting its focus away from the traditional redistributive regional economic policies and towards the support of ‘spaces of opportunity’, i.e. spaces that are already experiencing favourable economic growth, especially in the Western part of the Netherlands (Ministerie van Economische Zaken 2004). For the Amsterdam region this means particular attention (and probably money) for Schiphol Airport and the Zuidas and improved highway connections (interview Ministry of Economic Affairs 2004). This was also supported in a policy advice of the VROM-council [*VROM-raad*] an influential

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<sup>20</sup> The report by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (Centraal Planbureau 2003), estimates an investment of 1.6 billion euro for infrastructure and an additional 850 million euro for preparation of the sites for construction. Total revenues are in sale of land (1.1 billion euro), an increase in value of offices on the tunnel and the direct surroundings (450 million euro) and benefits for local and regional traffic (together 100 million euro) (all 2003 prices). This creates a deficit of 800 million euro. The same method results in a deficit of 500 million euro if the infrastructure were to be built on the existing dike level. It is interesting to note that recent numbers that were produced by the independent negotiator show a much smaller deficit.

<sup>21</sup> The North-South subway line will connect the Zuid/WTC station directly with Central Station and Amsterdam North (see: Figure 3.2, p.73). The latest forecasts are that the line will start operating in 2013 and construction is currently underway on different locations. Although most investment costs for the line are to be met by national government, this is a fixed subsidy, meaning that the City of Amsterdam holds the risk of any additional construction costs. This has resulted in considerable anxiety within the city government since the line passes right underneath the historic core of the city and some very difficult stations have to be constructed. The city government tried to insure the risks, but this turned out to be too expensive. The only ‘solution’ now is a strict cost control and, as far as the city government is concerned, to keep its fingers crossed that the operation will stay within budget.

government advisory body on housing, spatial planning and the environment that was published in that same period (VROM-raad 2004).

As regards point 2, in a period of severe public spending cuts, the Ministry of Finance wanted to encourage the use of public-private partnerships in urban development and other spheres of governance. Both the national government and the most involved private actors (especially ABN/AMRO and ING) started to identify the Zuidas as a prime opportunity to set up a financial partnership between national government, local government and the private sector (Interview Ministry of Finance 2004). This also reflects a general trend of growing interests of the private financial sector to invest in large-scale development projects (Torrance 2007).

In both cases the influence of the business sector was of strategic importance. On the one hand ABN/AMRO and ING, as two of the largest Dutch firms, publicly and privately voiced their 'patriotic' concern about the dire state of the Dutch competitive position if Zuidas would not be fully developed. On the other hand they were more than eager to join an innovative public-private development corporation, to get experience in these kinds of developments and to safeguard the prestigious development of the area which already hosted their two corporate headquarters. A senior official from the local government revealed the importance of the direct involvement of ING and ABN/AMRO in the discussions with the national government. According to him, these actors have certain lines of communication and influence that eventually led to a breakthrough at the highest levels of the national government. Due to their intention to invest in the area, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance (and Vice-Prime Minister) have been personally involved with the topic. Both men have visited the project and expressed their interest in the successful development of the project, with the dock model as the preferred option (interview Municipality of Amsterdam 2005).

One of the consequences of this process of integration was that at national government level, an interdepartmental working group was formed with representatives from the ministries of Spatial Planning, Transport, Economic Affairs, Internal Affairs and Finance. Leadership in this complicated policy issue improved, both at the level of politicians and civil servants, due to reorganisations at national level. Senior officials at national government level admitted a dominance in governance processes of the contrasting views of the Ministry of Spatial Planning (that stands for 'spatial quality') and the Ministry of Transport (that stands for functional and efficient investments). Within national government, the conviction grew that it was necessary to change strategies to prevent the continuation of the stubborn behaviour of actors. The lack of a strong regional governing body has already been mentioned before. But in the recent more comprehensive effort set up by the independent negotiator even the provincial government of North-Holland has shown an interest to actively participate and invest in a public-public-private partnership in order to develop the area (interview province of North Holland 2004). The results of these developments were that the scope and strategy of parties started to change. Slowly a joint focus on the potentials of the area as a new competitive location for offices, housing and facilities of national importance started to prevail over the fragmented (or absent) positions from the earlier period. However, this was no guarantee for quick progress. The dock model project was too complex and, in a way, still too expensive and risky. However, one of the concrete results of the process of integration was that a wider range of public parties was willing to cooperate financially in the Zuidas project. Moreover, due to the Brinkman process,

investment costs in the dock were reduced by introducing a new layout for the tunnels while certain potential revenues were increased.<sup>22</sup> An overview of the investments and expected revenues can be found in Table 3.4 (see next page).

Figure 3.8: New proposal for the dock model. By building tunnels on top of each other development speed increases and the middle zone can be used for car parking



Source: Zuidasdok

During 2006, an intensive process was initiated which involved interested private parties, the local government and the national government whose aim was to further specify the ‘scope’ of the Zuidas Company, and more specifically the development of the dock zone (Tweede Kamer 2006). During this process, which was closed to outsiders, intensive sessions took place with a view to recalculating all the aspects of the infra-

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<sup>22</sup> Building the vehicle tunnels on top of each other reduces the total use of space for tunnels, making underground parking facilities possible in the centre area of the dock. It also allows for a speeding up of the building process (see Figure 3.8).

One of the ways to increase revenues involved are the so-called zero coupon bonds. These are bonds which do not pay periodic interest payments, or so-called ‘coupons’. Zero coupon bonds are purchased at a discount from their value at maturity. The holder of a zero coupon bond is entitled to receive a single payment, usually of a specified sum of money at a specified time in the future ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)). In this case the zero-coupon bonds are issued against the guarantee of future land lease incomes.

structure dimensions of the plans and further optimizing the area's urban potentials. The first results seems to be that the private parties – including the new ones that only joined the process from 2006 onwards – were quite satisfied with the concept of new urbanity which the city government wanted (interview Municipality of Amsterdam and different representatives of private parties involved 2007). However, there were also signs that certain aspects of the new urbanity concept would come under severe pressure. More specific details on this issue can be found in the next section when we investigate the social norms on new urbanity at the Zuidas location.

Table 3.4: Financial overview of the investments and expected revenues in the Dock model in millions of Euro (2006 prices, Net Present Value)

<i>Investment costs</i>	
Infrastructure	1,873
Ground production dock	138
Ground production flanks	740
<i>Total costs</i>	<i>2,751</i>
<i>Expected revenues</i>	
1: Ground revenues on dock	837
1a: Dock zone	331
1b: Composer	506
2: Ground revenues flanks	1,161
3: Zero coupon bonds	154
<i>Total revenues</i>	<i>2,152</i>
<i>Government subsidies</i>	
1: Ministry of Transport	479
2: Ministry of Spatial Planning	127
3: Province of North-Holland	75
4: Amsterdam Regional Government	61
5: Municipality of Amsterdam	42
<i>Total contributions government</i>	<i>784</i>
<i>Result</i>	<i>185</i>

Source: Tweede Kamer 2006, p.8

#### 3.5.2.4 Conclusion on rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants

The processes relating to the development of the Zuidas are ongoing and are currently even more complex than before due to the possible creation of the Zuidas Company. The question is what kind of rules that affect the scope and strategy of participants can be distilled from these very active operational domains?

The most important conclusion is that there has been a slow integration of scope and strategy from parties, in the direction of a joint understanding of the importance and potentials of the area's development. Table 3.5 (next page) shows a very schematic overview of the development of the initial situational frame of actors and their development till 2007.

The plans for Zuidas have evolved from an orientation towards a new business park to one that focuses on a new city centre. Different goals have been reconciled and a potential mutual surplus value has been reached in the planning concept of new urbanity. This ‘buzzword’ appealed to the private sector that initially wanted a high-density office district. It appealed to the public sector for several reasons. It fitted in with the overall spatial policy aim of the city of Amsterdam for a more effective utilisation of space and a concentration of urban uses within the city boundaries (Gemeente Amsterdam 2003). It created the potential for a rather substantial addition of housing units and it is a possible long-term spatial recipe for the optimisation of land revenues in the area, needed in order to pay for the dock model. In theory, the concept is also appealing to wider groups in society because it has the capacity to open the area up for uses other than the ones currently present (predominately offices). The business community, in first instance mainly ABN/AMRO and ING, began to interpret the concept of new urbanity as an opportunity to the fulfilment of their goals as well, especially because it important asset in the high-end office market. We can thus conclude that an important initial rule that affected the scope and strategy of the participants was the focus to optimise the urban potential of the area.

Table 3.5: Development of the situational frame of the most important actors

	<i>Initial situational frame</i>	<i>Development (till 2007)</i>
Private actors	A few pioneering investors are interested in exploiting the private investment opportunities in the Zuidas	Ambition to realize an international competitive top location for offices, housing and facilities supported by more strong national players
Municipality of Amsterdam	Facilitating market interest, building up concept of new urban area	Strong focus on economic and urban aspects of Zuidas. Dock model as the preferred option. Future participant in Zuidas Company
Ministry of Transport	Interested in expanding the capacity of road and rail in the area on the existing dike, unrelated to urban development plans in the area	After the integration process the plans to expand the capacity of road and rail in the area in a dock is officially being supported
Ministry of Spatial Planning	Selection of Zuidas as potential HST station. Small subsidy available to realize additional urban qualities	Agrees to contribute more subsidies, supports the concept of a Zuidas Company
Other government agencies	Lack of involvement	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Provincial Government of North-Holland and Amsterdam Regional Government started to get involved in the Brinkman process. Emphasis on the importance of Zuidas for the national economy grows
Social and civic groups	Lack of involvement	Rather underdeveloped. Not much protest, not much interest either. Some small social and civic initiatives

We identified a process wherein the scope and strategy of this relatively contained city-business domain started to integrate with the national government and wider economic interests. An important additional rule that affected this was a growing emphasis on the Zuidas as an important business location for the Dutch economy. The concept of a joint development model potentially unites different public and private actors on some basic general rules of development, but it also create new tensions. On the one hand, all parties will now gain if the investment on the infrastructure is effective and does not exceed estimations. In a previous situation this was mainly a concern for the Ministry of Transport. All the parties that participate in the Zuidas Company also gain if the development potentials of the dock zone and the rest of the area are maximized. Although this has always been a concern for public and private parties involved in the dock zone proposal, for the flanks this was mainly a concern for the local government. Due to landownership it could reap the benefits of additional development.<sup>23</sup> Potentially much more collective pressure could develop to maximise the value of the remaining parcels of the Zuidas to create a more profitable joint development.

This last point obviously creates an interesting link with the ambition to create a new urban area. In the conclusion of section 3.5.1, we have already stated that the public parties, and especially the municipality of Amsterdam, are entering a situation of multiple roles and – potentially – multiple conflicting interests as well, especially regarding the ambition for new urbanity. This is something we explore in the next section more in detail. Finally, it is quite remarkable that, although the common scope and strategy of different public and private actors seems to be converging towards an appreciation of a rather strong form of new urbanity in Zuidas, the operational domain in which visioning is taking place and decisions are taken is mostly closed off from public involvement and public scrutiny. The enormous financial pressure associated with balancing the books in the case of the financially very risky dock model could lead to even more closed door dealings in the future. It would be interesting to explore whether, in such a situation, a social norm on new urbanity can be performed in Zuidas.

### 3.6 Social norms on new urbanity in Zuidas

The previous section analysed the rules that constitute and influence the operational domain of the Zuidas project. We introduced the relevant actors, their scopes and strategies, the way they interacted and the changes in all these areas throughout the project's history. In this section we specifically focus on the ambition for new urbanity. We have already noted that this ambition played an important role in the strategic and operational aspects of the project. In this section we investigate to what extent new urbanity has evolved into a social norm, which influences and possibly even alters actor behaviour. To do so we first investigate the ambitions written down in the policy reports that were produced in the first stages of the project. Then we observe the materialization of these ambitions at the micro-level of the first real building project. It is important to make a distinction between the development of the flanks – where we can actually assess some of the first newly-built parts of the Zuidas – and the central dock

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<sup>23</sup> Amsterdam is somewhat limited to maximize the developments in the flanks because of guidelines in the Provincial structure plan. However, the Province will possibly also join the Zuidas Company in the future.

zone. In the latter area we can only assess a hypothetical future situation on the basis of conditions.

In this section we provide answers to the following two questions posed in chapter two:

- *As regards the ambition for new urbanity: to what extent is this ambition normatively reflected upon and validated in the operational domain of Zuidas?*

- *Are there processes of change in dominant social norms perceivable which are related to this issue, as 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?*

Although frames and rules structure the action situation at a context level, they do not generate in a satisfactory answer to the question of why actors are following (addressing) certain rules (and not others) in behaviour at a micro level. With the concept of social norms we expanded our analytical toolkit to include a more normative instrument so as to understand this level. Social norms are social rules of conduct. They represent a form of consensus in a social system that a particular form of behaviour is appropriate in a certain situation. The concept of social norms thus adds a normative dimension to (the analysis of) behaviour (see section 2.5 for an introduction to this concept).

Figure 3.9: Construction of the Mahler 4 project



### *3.6.1 Ambitions for the development of new urbanity in Zuidas*

What exactly are the ambitions for new urbanity at the Zuidas location? The (evolving) goals of the city government of Amsterdam as regards the Zuidas project are presented in a master plan for the area and a series of updates to this document or studies (Gemeente Amsterdam 1998; 1999; 2001; 2004a). The master plan outlines the overall development strategy and the conditions for the development of the different subprojects. The goal of the city government is to create a new urban centre with international

allure around a node of mobility, namely the Zuid/WTC station. As mentioned before, the new urbanity planning concept started to play an important role in materialising these ambitions after 1998. The introduction of the concept of new urbanity not only meant the addition of a 1.1 million square metres housing program (approximately 8,000 units), but also the inclusion of a soccer club in the area (5 soccer pitches). The goal is also to earmark twelve percent of the program (485,020m<sup>2</sup>) to facilities. At the level of the specific subprojects these proportions could differ. At the micro level of the individual projects the ambition is to create multiple-use buildings with facilities and shops at the ground level and a mixture of offices and apartments at the higher floors. The urban character of the area should be completed through specific attention to public spaces, a dominance of pedestrian zones and high-quality architecture. The most recent proposals for the dock zone identify the area around the expanded public transport station as the core of the urban area.

A first quantitative and qualitative assessment of the built environment of the completed parts of Zuidas shows, however, that these ambitious proposals have only marginally been implemented in the first projects. Up to now the Zuidas has developed predominately as an office location (see: Table 3.6). The only non-office functions in the central area of Zuidas are a couple of supporting facilities in the form of cafes and restaurants, and some small shops in the WTC building. In the first years, no housing has been realized.

Table 3.6: Building program of the Zuidas project (in square metres)

	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Offices</i>	<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Total</i>
Realised in 2004	-	137,000	7,500	144,600
Construction phase	37,700	111,600	18,600	167,900
Preparation phase	170,000	174,250	75,170	419,420
Study phase (medium term)	93,750	78,000	43,800	215,550
Study phase (long term)	772,250	620,750	163,450	1,556,450
Total Zuidas, excluding Free University	1,073,700	1,121,700	308,520	2,503,920
Free University	18,000	50,000	176,500	244,500
<i>Total development potential</i>	<i>1,091,700</i>	<i>1,171,700</i>	<i>485,020</i>	<i>2,748,420</i>

Source: Gemeente Amsterdam 2004a, p.20

### 3.6.2 First projects in the flanks: WTC extension, Mahler 4, Vivaldi and Gershwin

Although ambitions for new urbanity in the first subprojects of the Zuidas flanks have not been realized in a very convincing manner till now, it is too easy to conclude that there is simply a discrepancy between the general ambitions and the normative reflection of this ambition in concrete plans. When we investigate Zuidas' built environment today we can conclude that the vast majority of developments have been new office buildings. The only (partly-) developed area with a more mixed program is Mahler 4. This area can therefore be identified as the clearest attempt yet to realize new urbanity at the Zuidas location. However, the final program of Mahler 4 is still rather office-oriented and consists of 166,500m<sup>2</sup> offices, 41,900m<sup>2</sup> apartments and 26,563m<sup>2</sup> facilities. The total area is expected to be completed in 2009. This subproject occupies

Figure 3.10: New public spaces in the Mahler 4 area



a very strategic spot in the Zuidas program, in the central zone, next to the station. The area, designed by well-known international architects has, as yet, failed to create a real urban atmosphere. Initial observations hint at a series of unfavourable situations in the area. Not only is the program still mainly office oriented, most of the ground floors of the buildings have no public uses.

The public space between Mahler 4 and the ABN/AMRO tower is certainly too large at the moment, and lacks usage, especially after office hours. The urban fabric consists of massive blocks that give the area a quite interesting 'skyline' from a large distance, but seem to work less advantageous from the pedestrian level up close. At the moment, the area is quite isolated. It is surrounded by building sites, the huge ABN/AMRO tower and the infrastructure bundle and is still totally unrelated to the rest of the built environment in the area. There are no pedestrian or biking routes through the area. The huge offices create a lot of shade and wind and certainly do not create the typology of an urban place satisfying the conditions of urbanity promoted by Lynch and Salet as presented in the first chapter. It is certainly not functioning very well for a project with the clearest urban ambition in the Zuidas till now (see Figure 3.10).

The ambition to realize new urbanity is reflected much less clearly in two other sub-projects that have been actively developed in the last few years. The renovation and extension of the World Trade Centre at the north of the station has resulted in the addition of 62,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional office space. In front of the station, between the different parts of the WTC, the new Zuidplein (South square) has been realized, that also contains some ground level facilities for office workers, such as small shops and cafes. The square itself has been paved with expensive materials and trees in an attempt to make it a nice place to stroll around and eat lunch. However, although it is busy during office hours, it gives a very deserted and un-urban impression after office hours and during

the weekend when the facilities are all closed. The Vivaldi office area in the south-east corner of the project adds to this impression. It is an existing office area which is being incorporated into the Zuidas project with the ambition being to restructure and intensify it. The area is to provide space for 265,500m<sup>2</sup> of new offices and 700 apartments (88,000m<sup>2</sup>). At the moment, this area is still undergoing development. Although it is more closely linked to existing built-up areas it gives a very un-urban impression as a collection of rather unrelated large office buildings.

Two individual office buildings dominated the Zuidas in an early phase, namely the new headquarters of ING and ABN/AMRO. Both buildings are architectural icons, though very different. While the ABN/AMRO building is a classical headquarters-to-impress, the ING is much smaller and quite odd in shape. It appears to be a building intended more for representative activities (see Figure 3.12, p.113). What both buildings have in common, however, is that they do not enhance the vision of new urbanity at all. Both are individual buildings, almost unrelated to their environment and hardly accessible. The interface with public space is in both cases a hard security situation. It is quite remarkable that the two private actors that support the urban ambition of Zuidas the most on paper are located in these buildings.

We therefore observe that the transfer of the ambitions from the drawing board to the urban reality in the first building projects on the flanks of the Zuidas is still rather unsuccessful. Some promising investments are planned for the future however, like new educational facilities and a newly designed museum. Another important proposal is for a large-scale retail complex in the area around the station, if the dock model would be realized. Previously, this has always been politically blocked due to the fear that it would reduce retail in the adjacent neighbourhood centres. However, it was reintroduced during the recent process to set up a Zuidas Company. Nevertheless, a shopping centre does not automatically lead to a successful urban place (as we will find out in the chapter on Copenhagen).

The obvious question is whether the lack of new urbanity in the current realized building projects of Zuidas is just a matter of having to 'wait for the things to come' (the dock model, the first large housing scheme at Gershwin etc.), or whether the current failing points to deeper flaws? At first sight, it appears that the ambition for new urbanity, although heavily present in the plans, has not developed into an enforced social norm as yet. One of the reasons might be a technical one, for example that different environmental laws have made it impossible till now to realize large housing concentrations close to the central infrastructure bundle (Engelsdorp Gastelaars 2005). However, whether it is only a matter of technical or juridical obstruction, or a deeper discrepancy between macro level intentions and micro level behaviour is unclear. It could also be that it has indeed developed into a social norm, but that this has not yet been reflected in physical objects.

The literature we introduced in chapter two indicates that there are several conditions that can trigger a change in dominant social norms. The aspects referred to were a change in group composition, an increase in the power of actors that hold the norm for new urbanity, a charismatic norm entrepreneur, or a change in the positive externalities for new urbanity as perceived by the participants. If we start by presuming that there was no social norm for new urbanity in the initial phase (only intentions by some actors), we can then investigate these conditions to achieve a better understanding of changes and expectations for the future.

Figure 3.11: Artist impression of the new central area of Zuidas



Source: Gemeente Amsterdam

If we investigate the short history of the project, there are hints that there have been changes in some of these conditions, although their influence on the ambition for new urbanity remains largely ambivalent. The group composition has certainly changed in recent years with the addition of more private actors and more support from a wider range of government departments. Although their involvement in the first place was mostly based on the expected economic potentials of the area as an office location, they have till now all underlined the ambition for new urbanity that was formed in previous years (various interviews with public and private actors). What is certain, however, is that the actor originally most supportive of new urbanity, the municipality of Amsterdam, is losing power in the new constellation being set up to implement this ambition directly. It is going to become even more dependant on private investors since they will not only dominate investments (as they did already), but also have a much bigger say in the area's general direction of development. It will therefore come down to the private actors more than was so in the past. Although still quite speculative, due to the fact that the processes are in their early days, it seems that this has the potential to support *and* hamper the conditions for new urbanity.

A possible supportive condition for a future enforced norm on new urbanity seems to be related to the stronger positive externalities of new urbanity. During interviews with representatives of private parties, all of them underlined the economic *and* social importance of a mixture of functions in the area. They agreed that only a mixed use environment can create the highest land revenues in the long term. This would strongly encourage actors to invest in this ambition, even without any government pressure.

However, there are certain comments we need to make. Firstly, there seems to be a clear difference in interpretation between private parties as regards the precise meaning of new urbanity, which may be quite a long way removed from the original intentions of the municipality, and the definition we gave in the first chapter. During recent interviews we also noted a more privately oriented focus on mixture by some parties, with a strong emphasis on profitable exclusive uses (high-end shops, high-end housing), rather than a more diverse mixture. This relates to a second unsolved issue for the future. Although there might be a growing consensus on the social and economic virtues of new urbanity as a planning concept in the long term, there is still the issue of free-ridership in the short term. Without a strong social norm or other kind of influencing mechanism one can expect that certain investors can possibly benefit from investments by others in a mixed use development – mostly more expensive and complicated in the short term – while they develop a monofunctional (office) development next door and reap higher rent prices due to the more urban environment in which it is accommodated. These kind of processes could eventually frustrate the whole development and lead to a situation with no actors willing to ‘make the first step’ to innovate. The latter argument leads us to two possible and related other conditions that may have a negative influence on a social norm on new urbanity in the future. The first is the quite introverted business-oriented operational governance setting of the project with a lack of connectivity to the social, civic and cultural domain. An initial response would be to expect that this situation will continue or even become more extreme should a

Figure 3.12: ‘Trophy-architecture’ at the Zuidas: The iconic ING building



predominantly privately-operating Zuidas Company assume control of the whole operation. Although actors in this domain are mostly not involved in decisions on urban investments (with the exception of arts facilities) they are certainly capable of preventing the operational domains from becoming rather one-dimensional with a strong real-estate and short-term profit orientation. Social norms are voiced and enforced in social situations in which individuals (or actors) react to each other's behaviours. If proposals for the future Zuidas plots are only discussed in purely closed and private settings, we expect it to be a lot less likely that social norms on new urbanity will be enforced. However, this is also clearly dependable on which private parties are present in this operational domain. If they are all short-term hit-and-run developers and projects are planned and developed quite independently, this will also have a negative influence on the likelihood of enforcing a social norm on new urbanity. The selection of private actors – by the private led Zuidas Company – is therefore very important.

In addition to these possible negative conditions related to the framing and operational domain of a future Zuidas Company, there are also 'material' concerns about the costs of the preferred dock model that may negatively influence the ambition for new urbanity. It is not unrealistic to expect that the construction of the dock model will become so expensive that an even greater pressure will exist within the Zuidas Company to maximize profits on the dock zone and the remainder of the flanks. This can certainly have a negative effect on possible investments that could enhance urbanity, like a mixture of income groups for the housing program, support for the location of social and cultural facilities and the realization of an attractive public space. In such a situation it will be interesting to investigate the behaviour of the city government. It was always the most outspoken supporter of new urbanity. It seems that its long-awaited dock solution is coming closer to becoming a reality. Ironically, this could well be at the expense of its urban intentions that it wanted to realize with this solution. As regards the recent plans for the Zuidas Company, a process to optimise land values further to make the dock model possible is not unlikely, and could possibly polarise the situation if certain public goals (like social and affordable housing) and other (cultural) uses that could create an urban character are removed to reduce costs or improve revenues. The underlying problem is that, in such a situation, the local government is itself forced to act in a very businesslike manner to help make the dock model possible.

All these comments are quite speculative. However, regardless what measures and policies will be proposed, it is certain that a more private oriented governance domain will influence the conditions for new urbanity in the Zuidas in the future. It is in this setting that the innovative planning concept of new urbanity really has to prove its value.

### 3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we studied the following key scientifically-oriented research question:

*As regards the initial ambition for new urbanity, how can we understand the dynamics between the connectivity of Zuidas in the metropolitan action space, the systems of rules that structure operational domains and social norms?*

We can conclude that, above all, the Zuidas is still a project under development. In its relatively short history, the project has gone through different development phases. The

project's initiators always refer to flexibility as a crucial strategy for development. This seems especially necessary for a project with a building period of approximately thirty years. Therefore, one could even argue that the Zuidas is not a project which fits into the traditional definition of a geographically contained and time-bound physical transformation. Instead, the project is a rather loose framework for a continuous transformation alongside the southern Amsterdam ring road, through the execution of various smaller projects. Once the last parts of the project have been finished in around 2030 (according to current forecasts), the first parts will probably be undergoing some form of reconstruction in a process Schumpeter calls *creative destruction* (Schumpeter 1942).

The exception to this flexible mode of urban transformation is the proposal to overcome the infrastructure bundle by building the dock model. On the one hand, this plan helped to define the project's ambition and generated a lot of attention. On the other hand, and in contrast to the development strategy of flexibility, it added a very inflexible aspect to the project. However, the ambition to build the dock model eventually helped to open up the quite introverted strategic framing and operational domain of the project and drove the city of Amsterdam into a wider partnership to realize its ambition, although without a strong connection to the social, civic and cultural domain as yet.

The Zuidas project has many aspects that harmonise with projects assessed by critical scientific scholars as the result of neo-liberal policies and 'new urban politics' (Moulaert, Rodríguez and Swyngedouw 2003). The Zuidas is a very large undertaking, with a strong business orientation. Some new governance structures designed to facilitate private investment are being set up to enable swift decision-making. Nevertheless, the project has another interesting ambition as well since it can be seen as an interesting example of a situation in which a government accommodates business interests but also tries to reposition itself vis-à-vis the business sector, both in the goals it is striving for and in the internal government processes designed to implement these goals. The ambition is therefore to safeguard certain public goals and to create an added value. The still rather undefined ambition for new urbanity has developed into a buzzword for this.

For the city government, the planning concept of new urbanity was initially appealing because it opened up the possibility of combining office development with a large housing program. The scarcity of adequate building locations in the region forced Amsterdam to optimise its land resources, and this underused strip seemed to be an attractive zone. The private sector eventually embraced the concept as appealing because high-end office areas distinguish themselves from other office locations not only because of their location, but also because of their embeddedness in more urban environments with a diversity of facilities like restaurants, cultural venues, kindergartens, hotels, temporary furnished housing, etc. The business sector therefore became more open than before to accepting changes in the plans aimed at more mixed use. A positive factor from their perspective was also that the yields on housing development in the higher segments of the market almost equalled those on offices. However, an investigation of the results of the first parts of the Zuidas that have been built shows that they all concern purely commercial space, namely a collection of office towers alongside a highway, with mainly deserted public spaces in between. The central question is therefore to what extent the conditions are being created in the Zuidas area to implement these ambitious goals?

In this chapter we studied to what extent the strategic framing and the operational domain facilitates these ambitions and to what extent they have been normatively reflected upon in the first concrete building projects. Our conclusion on this point has to be ambivalent, and this is not only because a lot of the project processes are still ongoing. Despite the outspoken commitment of the city to a strategy of quality, the first building projects can be regarded as an expression of the persistence of conflicting frames and preferences within the planning process, and of their possible influence on the project's future. Governance processes related to the Zuidas are ongoing and this makes it hard to draw any definitive conclusions. Because of the dependency on the dock model, and therefore national government intervention to create a real new urban centre, the success of the concept of new urbanity in the local government-business sphere and the master plan still remains somewhat superficial. While some conditions for the future of the Zuidas as an urban place have improved, others have become more worrying.

On the positive side, the integration of the strategic frames on the urban development of the area and the infrastructure development has created the opportunity for a more comprehensive vision of the area's urban potentials. It has opened up the operational domain to new actors that have the capacity to support this ambition. Having the Ministry of Economic Affairs on board means potentially better conditions exist to integrate Zuidas as an economic development strategy for the Netherlands which will help to attract businesses wishing to establish international headquarters. However, it is

Figure 3.13: New square in front of Mahler 4



clear that this capacity also depends on a lot of other non-spatial variables (Tordoir 2005). The Ministry of Finance has been instrumental in setting up complex public-private partnerships. Support from the Provincial Government of North-Holland and the Amsterdam Regional Government potentially increases the regional awareness and support for the project and could lead to additional public investment and the implementation of policies that support its development. The more connective framing has resulted in the potential for more public investment in the project and greater and more diversified interest on the part of private investors. All this has made the proposal for the dock model, which is seen as a physical prerequisite for new urbanity, a lot closer to becoming a reality. If this is to be developed in the future, the basic physical conditions have been created for a very densely developed urban area around an important public transport hub.

There are, however, three main negative conditions regarding the possibility for a social norm of new urbanity in Zuidas in the future. They are related to the processes of connectivity to the metropolitan action space and the functioning of the operational domain as studied in this chapter. The conditions in question are, (1) the lack of connectivity to the social, civic and cultural domain and their lack of presence in the operational domains, (2) the pressure on the economic dimension of the development in the operational domain, and (3) the current lack of urban functions and a current sign of a social norm on new urbanity, leading to an 'image problem'.

As regards point 1, the lack of connectivity to the domain that might enhance most directly the (current) urban character of Zuidas is still underdeveloped. Although the framing of Zuidas has become more comprehensive over the years, this step has not yet been taken convincingly. The question is whether this is only a matter of time, or whether this is a deeper problem. There are multiple dimensions to the issue of connectivity to this domain. It has a physical aspect in that, up to now, there has been hardly space in the buildings of Zuidas for small-scale economic functions, for cultural activities, for social places, for a place for this domain to settle and infiltrate the urban fabric. The current urban design with large-scale office buildings has not, for example, made this area rival the historic urban environment of the inner city. On the other hand it is a symbolic connectivity that is lacking. Zuidas has hardly been framed as an exciting contemporary cultural place. Its transformation is rather clinical, technical and reflects the closed professional circles in which it is discussed. The lack of existing (historic) buildings was generally seen as an advantage in an early stage of the project, but now it also seems to hamper development in a more strategic way. Zuidas is a place with almost no history and with no cultural connotations.

As regards point 2, it seems that, in the case of the public-public-private Zuidas Company to be set up in the future, there will be even more focus on the financial revenues of the development. The dock model is extremely expensive and very risky. All the parties stand to gain if the financial performance of the Zuidas Company improves. This may be at odds with the creation of a more urban development, with a distinction between different functions and categories of revenues. It might be that the rules that structure the operational domain will become (even) more unreceptive in the future to investments which might enhance the urban character of Zuidas but which are not capable of paying the high rents in the area.

As regards point 3, one can state that the current results of the Zuidas development are hardly urban. Optimistically one could point to different small scale initiatives that

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have been set up in the current office-dominated program for the realization of interesting urban content in the area. Small investments in a public art program and an art centre have been made. A new museum will probably open in a couple of years, as will a new theatre. Some new restaurants and bars have opened in the area recently, leading to more activity during and after working hours. Though these are small signs of a programmatic move away from pure office functions, it is safe to conclude that, in its first ten years, the Zuidas has failed to create a strong urban feel. Neither have important (public) investments been made that could underline its urban ambition. At the moment, people do not regard Zuidas as either an urban place, or a *potential* urban place. Some of the office buildings that have been realized, especially the centrally located ABN/AMRO building and the new huge blocks of Mahler 4 make it questionable if this perception can change. Moreover, these areas are not properly connected to the rest of the city, either visually and physically. Currently it is this 'urban' experience that is associated with Zuidas by a wider public. Obviously this can only change by means of concrete results. However, it seems clear that there is still a lot to prove in this respect.

Figure 3.14: The Zuidplein during the day

