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Organisation Of Station-Area Developments

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ORGANISATION OF STATION-AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Paper presented at the 40th European RSA Congress – Barcelona 2000

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Abstract

Renewal of station areas is complicated by the large number of actors involved, such as local governments, urban planners, project developers, railway companies and local residents. In principle, they all have their own ideas concerning desired developments. We suppose that such areas can only be adequately developed when all these actors are involved in a balanced way in the development and decision processes. How do such processes evolve, what can we learn from theories such as *growth machines* and *urban regimes*? What can be noticed in practice in the renewal processes of many European HST station areas?

1. Introduction

In this article we go into the influence of the different actors involved in the spatial renewal processes of metropolitan station areas connected to the developing European HST-network? Which actors are involved in these processes? What are the interests and aims of these actors? How can be coped with the differing interests of these actors? Which actors lead or dominate the development process? How can be adequately reckoned with the specific needs and potentials of the urban area involved?

2. Contingency approach

Each city is unique. So are station areas. There are no general rules for renewing station areas. To analyse the renewal processes, it is essential to stress the differences between station areas. For this the contingency approach seems to be helpful.

The premise of the contingency approach is that there is no universal validity of theories. It is the reality of the concrete situation that determines to which extent and how certain theories and principles can be applied¹. To understand metropolitan developments, it seems to be essential to start with individual case-studies. It is important to analyse real situations to be able to understand how urban elements are influencing each other. Often, the best way to do this is by speaking with people directly involved with the problems to be analysed. These people often can tell more about the mutual relationships between urban elements than is written down in books and reports on these matters. According to Jacobs [1961 440] to understand cities, the most important habits of thought are to think about processes; to work inductively, reasoning from particulars to the general, rather than the reverse; and to seek for “unaverage” clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more “average” quantities are operating.

Process thinking

To understand elements, actors, organisations and activities, of cities, it is necessary to study them in their proper circumstances and context.

City processes in real life are too complex to be routine, too particularized for application as abstractions. They are always made up of interactions among unique combinations of particulars, and there is no substitute for knowing the particulars. For cities, processes are of the essence. Furthermore, once one thinks about city processes, it follows that one must think of catalysts of these processes, and this too is of the essence [Jacobs, 1961, pp. 440-441]. In this research, for instance, the advent of the HST is considered to be an important catalyst for urban economic development. It forms a kind of breakthrough, which enables all kind of private and public investments that would have not been generated without the advent of the HST. To understand this particular catalysing force is important to understand which processes take place

¹ See Schieman, 1980, pp.44/45.

around HST-stations and which actions an urban region has to undertake to benefit from the advent of the HST.

Inductive analysis

The only useful analysis of economic development of urban regions seems to be studies of concrete, individual situations. It is hardly possible to find out general principles of the economic functioning of urban areas in a deductive way. For, cities differ too much from each other. Only by analysing case-studies relevant ideas of the functioning of these spatial entities can be developed. By comparative urban research certain statements about urban economic development can be made, that possibly are true for other cities. But, these generalisations based on inductive analysis have to be made very carefully, exactly because of the large differences between urban regions.

A fair example in this respect is the question, whether rail infrastructure functions always as an undesired barrier in urban areas. One might say that such a barrier is always hindering a sound functioning of interurban relations, and therefore will always hinder a sound urban-economic development. We find out that this was considered to be true in Turin, Italy, and that this city, therefore, decided, to put all the main rail infrastructure underground. As a consequence, urban districts that were separated by this infrastructure could integrate, and develop in a positive way, because all kind of interurban relations are stimulated by these investments. In Rotterdam, however, the city does not consider underground rail infrastructure in the city centre as valuable for the sound economic development of the urban region. In this Dutch port city, the barrier function of the rail was considered to be desirable to preserve the existing urban structure, clearly separating certain urban areas with different “characters”. The urban centre with a “metropolitan character” is at the northern side separated from a mainly residential area by the rail infrastructure. Elimination of the rail barrier might imply a proliferation of metropolitan functions over a larger area. This is considered to be conflicting with the desired intensification of the metropolitan centre. Therefore, in Rotterdam, the rail infrastructure will be kept above the ground with the advent of the HST. These examples illustrate that specific analyses is often necessary to deal with similar problems. Specific circumstances in urban environments makes it hardly possible to make general rules about for instance the ideal way of integrating new transport infrastructure in the urban fabric.

"Unaverage" clues

Relatively small "unaverage" clues can play a major role in city development. They can determine how large urban processes develop. To analyse these "unaverage" clues is, therefore, of essence to understand urban economic processes. *To learn how things are working, we need pinpoint clues. The “unaverage” can be physical, as in the case of eye-catchers which are small elements in much larger, more “average” visual scenes. They can be economic, as in the case of one-of-a-kind stores, or cultural, as in the case of an unusual school or out-of-the-ordinary theatre. They can be social, as in the case of public characters, loitering places, or residents or users who are financially, vocationally, racially or culturally unaverage* [Jacobs, 1961, 442-443].

An example of how an unaverage clue can influence urban economic development is the politician who decide to construct a new transport system, only for keeping a certain promise to his electorate, but without a profound study of the consequences. This decision can have a large influence on the spatial distribution of activities in an urban area.

Another instance is the nomination of a city as Cultural Capital of Europe. This unaverage clue may imply that a substantial larger amount of infrastructure investments can be realised than without this nomination, that –again- can have substantial consequences on the spatial distribution of activities.

In statistical analyses, these unaverage clues are normally not studied, because they are statistically not significant. These clues can, however, be essential for understanding specific urban developments. According to Jacobs [1961, 443] also city planners regard “unaverage” quantities as relatively inconsequential, because these are statistically inconsequential. Therefore, in her vision, often, they do not consider essential information to understand urban development.

Contingency approach for station-area renewals

For the contingency approach an important question to answer is: considered the specific context of the urban region involved, what are the specific problems to be solved, and the new opportunities to anticipate on.

The vision and strategy on the desired station renewal is to be based on a thorough knowledge of the local situation of the urban region and the station area. Then the potentials of the station area and the possible spread effects can be estimated.

A suboptimum project might be developed when the specific local circumstances are insufficient taken into account. An attempt to copy a successful project of another city might turn out to be meaningless. For this project was developed for specific circumstances elsewhere. Its success might be explained by the adequateness to respond to the local problems and opportunities. But they differ between urban regions. Hence also station renewal processes normally have to be different from one another.

In comparative urban studies we try to deduce general patterns of urban development, which can be noticed in a multitude of cities. These general rules can be used to explain or even predict developments in other urban regions. It is, however, necessary to be very careful in applying such rules to other situations, because –as stated- cities can differ so much from each other. Thus, though, there is and always will be a need for such rules, in principle, every generalised rule of urban development has to be applied in a very critical way.

3. The actors involved in station developments

The actors involved are those who in some way are influenced by, and/or have influence on, the development of the station grounds. Efforts to (re)develop station areas are complicated by the relatively large number of actors involved, of whom the local government and the railway company are the principal ones. Other actors are the central and/or regional government, local transport companies, project developers, urban citizens, and travellers. Their interests may coincide, but just as easily give rise to conflicts. Individual groups may give priority to for instance overall accessibility, to maximising the long-term value of real estate, or to a pleasant station environment. All these actors can contribute to creating a vision on a desirable urban development focused on the (renewal of the) station environment and its integration in the surrounding urban region.

The underlying philosophy is that the actors involved have a shared interest in an attractive city, but different ideas as to how to achieve it, ideas inspired by economic and social interests, ambitions, perceptions and insights. Should the variety of actors and their ideas be neglected, then the wrong choices could easily be made, choices that would lack the necessary social, political, economic and financial support.

Table a. Key actors with different tasks and multiple interests in station areas:

	<i>Local government</i>	<i>Railway companies</i>	<i>National government</i>
<i>Tasks</i>	City and transport planning Co-ordination between actors involved Communication to actors involved Financial participation Real-estate development	Railway services Exploiter of the railway station Real-estate development	Planning and financing of infrastructure Co-ordination between urban regions Setting preconditions for railway operations
<i>Interests</i>	Attractive environment Improving accessibility Variety of urban functions Social security	Increasing capacity and quality of rail and complementary infrastructure and railway station Space for commerce, large passenger flows Maximising return on investments	Improving accessibility Economic growth Improving quality of life

Often there is not one leading actor for the development of station areas, but a number of key actors who have to make decisions together. The local government and the railway company are the most likely key actors, but the national government and/or large private businesses may also enter the fray. Table a. indicates some tasks and interests of key actors. To have a say in the (re-)development of the station grounds, actors or groups of actors have to organise themselves in a certain way.

In many publications on urban development is stated that the importance of local governments and private organisations increases and of national governments decreases. Moreover, metropolitan projects are more and more co-productions of local governments and private actors involved. *Success of urban projects is increasingly dependent of the presence of regional relation networks between government, private companies and other institutional structures. The presence of close-knit, homogeneous and active growth coalitions is essential for the initiating of regional-economic dynamics*². The directing role of the government (*governing*) changes into a co-managing role (*governance*)³.

4. The organisation of station-renewal processes

4.1 Introduction

The station renewal processes can be distinguished in two aspects: the contents and the management of the station renewal process (see figure a):

Contents: Development strategies enriched with the input of all relevant actors involved

² Ministerie VROM, Rijksplanologische Dienst, 1999, Ruimtelijke verkenningen 1999, p. 123.

³ Idem, p. 10.

- The station renewal plans should fit the specific needs and potentials of the urban area involved (contingency approach)
- In principle the actors involved should reach an agreement on a common project proposal based on converging as well as diverging ideas about a desirable development of the station area (social constructivist paradigm).
- The created plans should have sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances during the renewal process.
- There must be sufficient societal and political support for the common agreement.

In this paper we deal with the organisational part of the contents; in another paper we will go into the material part of the contents. There we will make a distinction between accessibility, location and revitalisation policies for station-area renewals.

Management: Strategic partnerships

- Often a limited number of public and/or private actors dominate the renewal process.
- These actors can set up a strategic partnership. A partnership that determines the renewal process and hence the redevelopment of an entire urban district could be called an urban regime or a growth machine.
- Such strategic partnerships can be directed by the economic and financial interests of the actors involved. Often financial clearing systems have to be set up based on these interests in the station area. We will not go into these clearing systems in this paper.

Figure a Combining interests and aims of the actors involved in the station area

Aspect	Problem	What to combine? (input)	Solution (output)
Contents of renewal process	Diverging ideas and interests in the renewal of the station area	Ideas, plans and experiences	Development strategies enriched with the input of all relevant actors involved
Management of renewal process	A multitude of actors involved. No overall responsible actor	Economic and financial interests, commitment	Strategic partnerships with financial clearing constructions

4.2 Development strategies enriched with the input of all relevant actors involved

Combining ideas, plans and experiences

Station-area development cannot contribute to a harmonious city unless the interests and aims of all relevant actors are reckoned with in an adequate way. A certain balance will have to be struck between the three distinguished strategies of station renewal. The actors involved need to lay out a development path that leads to *potential Pareto* improvement for the *urban region*. Thus the station-renewal process has to contribute to urban economic growth. A *potential Pareto*

improvement exists when the gainers from a change are hypothetically able to compensate those who lose, so that it is possible for no-one to be any worse off after the change and for at least one person to be better off [Pearce, 1992, p.338].

To develop a common strategy and vision integrating the differing views seems to be a precondition for a sound development of station areas. To deal with the differing interests and aims is a complicated process, however. An ideal project, which balances the interests and aims of all actors involved seems out of reach. A ranking is possible, however, to decide which proposal matches the interests and aims better than other configurations.

To better understand this problem, the social-constructivist paradigm can help. The social-constructivist approach presupposes a multitude of social constructed realities. Each actor or group of actors creates its own social construction regarding the development of station areas. These can be converging as well as diverging realities. These social constructions are determined by the values and choices of the interacting persons, as well as by the physical, psychological, social and the cultural context, in which these interactions take place. The social-constructivist paradigm is considered the counterpart of the positive paradigm. The positivism presupposes the existence of one objective reality “out there” [Van der Zijde, 1998, p.59]. According to Van der Zijde [1998, p.135] are decision processes too strongly dominated by a trust in so-called objective research results (the positivist approach) and too less determined by negotiating processes between involved social configurations.

One reason why an ideal solution is out of reach is the *bounded rationality* of actors. That notion introduced by Simon [1960] indicates that by definition an actor has to live with incomplete information and uncertainty. An urban actor is no “economic man” who manages all relevant information about all relevant production factors and market conditions, and can handle them rationally. Our actor’s actions and level of aspiration are strongly influenced by the situation in which he lives and works, his past experience, his social and spatial relations and the preferences due to the prevailing system of norms and values. He can do no more than make a rational choice within the scope of his possibilities and given his level of aspiration [Lambooy and others, 1997, p. 59]. In that train of thought, urban actors are optimisers rather than satisficers. An urban actor is a ‘*homo psychologicus*’, not an economic man.

In the social-constructivist approach, efforts are made to reach a joint strategy with the help of an independent party (the ‘process architect’). The different perspectives which actors have of a complex problem like the development of a station area, are called social-cognitive interest configurations. These configurations might have different accents. Residents in a station area might for instance give more priority to creating a high-grade living environment, than a railway company might do. This organisation might prefer to invest in good complementary transport infrastructure to station areas. The relevant social-cognitive configurations are given substance by drawing up (contrasting) scenarios [Van der Zijde, p. 134]. With social-constructivism, the stakes are the constructions which the involved parties themselves appreciate as ‘more informed and sophisticated’ than others. Ultimately, the relevant actors will have to put together a project proposal that is superior in ‘quality’ than the others.

To bind the project elements together and guarantee the quality aspects of the whole, an authoritative process director seems indispensable. His task will be to integrate in an adequate way the various social constructions in the project. It may be necessary to insert “still” periods into the

process. In innovative decision-making trajectories, periods of stillness are needed to ponder the proposed solutions in depth [Teisman, 1997, p. 49]. The problem has to be made manageable by limiting the number of actors and making them homogeneous. The director and the project partners must indeed be allowed sufficient scope to design a certain configuration without being subject to continuous criticism from the actors involved.

In that connection, Teisman [1997] pleads an *orchestrating role* for the government (a director's role, *konzertierte Aktion*) in the decision making. The government could award authoritative value to the relevant social constructions. *The orchestrating role, the continuous guiding of solution trajectories and problem flows, implies judging various administrative, professional and social initiatives in the light of the problems that political actors want solved* (Teisman, 1997). Teisman compares the decision-making process with a good theatre production: not one specific part but the coherence of the parts decides the quality of the product. To raise the quality of major projects Teisman pleads stimulation of creative competition. Quality rises can be accomplished by setting several teams to compete at different projects, telling them that only projects that satisfy *several social preferences* at once will qualify for selection [Teisman, 1997, p. 48]. Such a process can be compared with competitions between architects, who vie for creating the best solution for a new building (valued by an independent jury) conform clear preconditions which were set in advance. For the station-area renewal the preconditions are to reckon with the different relevant social constructions.

With respect to the development of station areas, the local government has many different interests. A prominent question is, however, whether the many facets are an advantage or a disadvantage to a local government that directs the decision making. An important point of attention is the financial interest the local government has in the development of station areas. On the one hand, as the party with the greatest variety of interests, the government seems to be best authority to weigh the interests. On the other hand, because of its own financial interests in the area, the government may be considered insufficiently neutral by the other parties involved. In such a case, an independent actor might be desirable for the orchestrating role.

Strategic networks between the actors involved

To realise a common strategy for the station renewal process the actors involve can set up strategic networks. Strategic networks can be conceived of as patterns of interaction between mutually dependent actors that evolve around policy problems or projects. A network consists of the total of relations among (public and private) organisations, institutions and persons, the relations being marked by a degree of two-way dynamics [Van den Berg, Braun and Van der Meer, 1997, p.11]. In most urban regions several networks influence strategic planning and decision making. The dominance may be either with private or with public actors, or there may be public-private networks. An important aspect of organising capacity is the interaction between the networks.

Station areas can become economic and social growth poles in an urban region. The advent of the HST motivates in many cities public and private actors to invest in various aspects of the station area. Many actors who feel committed to contribute to its attraction from economic, social, financial and perhaps still other motives, may receive an additional impulse from the advent of the HST. One challenge is to structure that commitment so as to keep it going into the long term. Strategic networks could keep the relevant actors committed for some time to the development of

the station area. In figure b. is indicated that during the entire HST-integration process strategic networks can be active. To begin with, groups may lobby for the connection of the urban region to the HST-network. Besides, studies of a balanced development of the station area can be performed or co-ordinated in a network. From such a network, an organisation can emerge which undertakes the execution of the station plans, that is to say, the implementation of the development strategies chosen. Finally, such a network can evolve into an organisation that supervises the constant quality control of the area.

A strategic network can make the many actors structurally to interact with one another. It is one instrument to arrive at a policy for the station area which has a relatively broad support, and does justice to the variety of social constructions, and takes account of the discrepancies pointed out by the actors involved.

Flexibility of station-area renewals

The ideas about urban planning change with time. There is progressive insight into the demands of urban projects. New and still unpredictable fundamental developments may greatly affect these demands. *In a community where quality is an expression of social preferences, quality cannot but be a dynamic concept* [Teisman, 1997, p. 5].

Station-development projects should therefore be flexible. What we consider high quality today can be judged differently tomorrow. The ambition levels of urban actors are determined by a multitude of factors, among them the prosperity of their urban region and their individual prosperity. The ambition levels are much affected by exogenous developments. For instance, the European integration and the development of the European HST-network have greatly influenced what urban actors want to achieve in station areas. Klaassen and Pawloski [1982] pointed out that a model that predicts the future on the basis of the present societal structure contradicts itself. Indeed, fundamental developments that affect regional-economic systems, often cannot be anticipated on because they are unexpected. Klaassen and Pawloski gave as an example that a forecast of developments in the 1980s derived from a time series ending in 1965 would have ignored the energy crisis, the increased societal appreciation of the living environment, and the influence of the micro-chip on societal developments [Van den Berg, 1987, p.4].

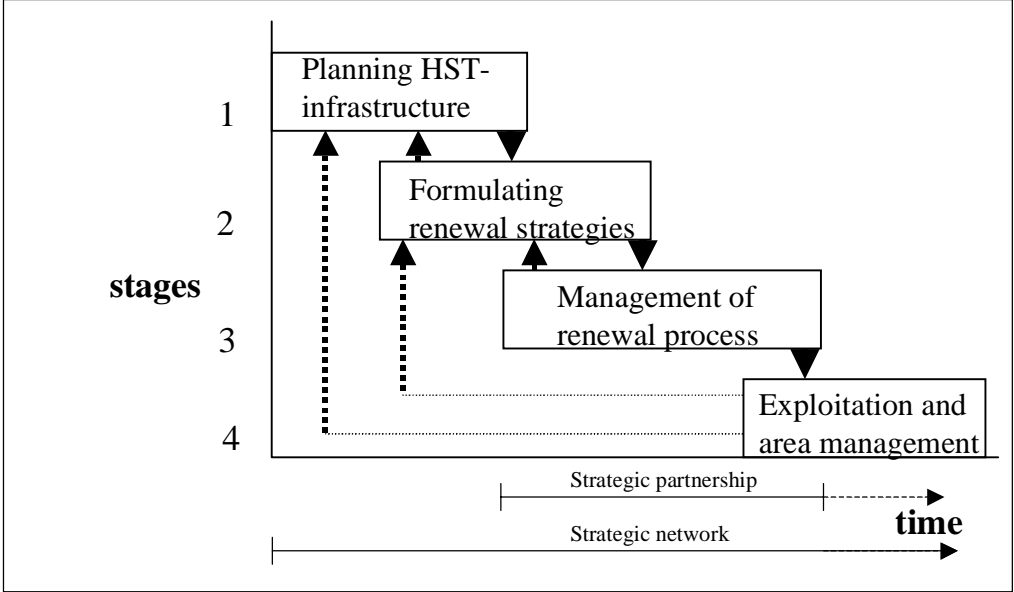
Exogenous factors are evidently unpredictable. We do not know what fundamental trends will come up say after one decade. These trends can however drastically change our ideas about desirable station developments. They can for instance change the ideas about which urban functions to accommodate, and what kind of infrastructure to construct. Renewal plans of station areas often have to be implemented during a multitude of decades. Thus there is a large chance that there will come up some new fundamental developments which we can not predict now. It is therefore necessary that the long-term renewal plans for station areas have sufficient flexibility to adapt to such changing circumstances.

Support for the integration

If the plans are inadequately communicated to the local population, the development of the station area may be delayed. The importance of the station renewal may be obvious to the actors directly involved (the project partners), failure to communicate it to other actors, such as the local population and private businesses, reduces the chances of successful implementation. Adequate

communication right from the start seems therefore to be essential; it may convert initial resistance into support. The opinion of the local population in turn can affect the political support.

Figure b. Strategic partnerships and networks during the HST-integration process



For the local residents themselves, adequate organisation is of the essence for the submission of ideas and adequate defence of their interests. Organisation simplifies communication with the project partners because it provides clear points of address. There seems to be an increasing awareness that the input of the local population may enhance the quality of the development plans. Project partners seem sometimes however apt to believe that communication with the local population can only work adversely and that a NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) attitude of the locals could and would torpedo virtually any urban change. Now that especially for urban zones the quality of the living environment has become essential to the urban economy, a constructive discussion with the local population is indispensable to put together a high-quality project plan that is broadly supported by all relevant actors. Ultimately, the project planners will have to persuade the population that the final project proposal adequately reconciles all the various ideas and interests. Good feedback to all actors is needed to assess whether the plans take sufficient account of all the relevant social constructions that have been proposed, and therefore may count on sufficient support. Adequate mutual communication should help, then, to streamline and accelerate rather than delay the decision making.

4.3 Strategic partnerships

The management of the station-renewal *implementation* is complicated by the fact that there is not one actor that has the overall responsibility. Normally, a multitude of actors is involved. All these actors have their own financial and economic interests. They can have differences regarding amongst others the time horizon they focus on (short-term versus long-term visions) and the

preferences in the renewal process (quality of life versus accessibility). These differences are relevant for the contents of the station area but also for its management. For both facets are quite interrelated. Because there are relatively large financial and economic interests at stake, these differences can become explicitly manifest during the management part, when relatively large costs are to be financed, and relatively large benefits to be generated. During the management of the station renewal process a kind of co-operation has to be set up between the actors involved, in order to reach adequate mutual agreements. Because they will last for a relatively long term (at least for the period in which the planned station renewal is to be implemented), we speak about *strategic partnerships*. The co-operation in a partnership is important during a renewal process, but can also be continued after this process during the exploitation, to strive among others for continued high-quality standards within the station area.

The constitution of a strategic partnership (that is to say: which partners participate) is often already clear before the ultimate agreement on the contents. In most cases there is an iterative process between the contents and the management part. The members of the partnership want part of their aims to be realised in the contents in exchange for their efforts and investments. Normally, these aims thus have to become part of the contents. The actors of a strategic partnership are thus led for a part by their own economic and financial interests in the station area, but have to reach a common agreement taking into account the interests of the other partners as well as of the actors involved outside the partnership (residents, travellers, national government).

According to Robentraub and Helmke [1996], strategic partnerships can be decisive for responding to new opportunities or crises. They refer to such partnerships as growth coalitions (ad hoc groups) or growth regimes (more permanent). These authors argue that coalitions for growth occur in response to geographically and technologically bound opportunities, potential and conditions. A region has to meet some preconditions for economic growth, to incite groups of actors jointly to develop new strategies and policies in response to opportunities and/or problems. These groups or coalitions will then co-ordinate activities and affect, if not dictate, development patterns. In this study the growth coalitions sprang from the momentum created by the advent of the high-speed train to European cities. In some cities this momentum is strengthened by relatively bad economic circumstances, for instance, a high unemployment rate due to declining industrial activities. Bertolini and Spit [1998, p.217] refer in that respect to the capacity to act: the capacity, on whatever side, to mobilise, and involve in the process, a plurality of public, private and community actors, spanning both the transport and the land-use domains. Whatever the external and internal divisions, a high degree of active consensus appears indispensable to the implementation of station projects.

5. The case of Utrecht

In this section we will go into one case of station renewal, the *Utrecht Centrum Project*. In the synthesis we will analyse this case with the help of the social-constructivist paradigm and the regime theory.

Social-constructivist paradigm: (perspective of actors involved)

Which actors have which interests? Could they put forward their ideas and have they be reckoned with? Hypothesis: When the preferences of the relevant actors involved are insufficient taken into account, this might lead to a suboptimum result (the renewal only fits the demands of a part of the relevant actors involved) or lead to insufficient societal or political support (then the process might be stopped or slowed down).

Regime theory: (institutional/ management of the station areas)

Are there some actors (eventual organised in a partnership), which form the motor of the development? Hypothesis: We suppose that key-actors for the development of station-areas are the railway company, the local and the national government. For a balanced development of the station area these but often also other local actors have to be involved (within a strategic partnership or not).

The renewal process of the Utrecht station-area

At this moment, the City of Utrecht is in a process of substantial reconstruction of the central-station area. This plan is called the Utrecht Centrum Project (UCP). Major reasons for this reconstruction are the relatively bad (perceived) quality of the public spaces, the suboptimum connection with other transport modes, and the increasing (spatial) economic pressure on the City of Utrecht. It involves a complete transformation of the station and the station area. Since already more than a decade, the City of Utrecht is planning to reconstruct the area. During the last three years the process has been accelerated. Actors with a long-term interest in the project co-operate with each other to carry out a comprehensive plan to improve the transport function, the quality of life and to develop new economic activities.

The train station in Utrecht is located close to the city centre. Utrecht was the first Dutch city with a station-area developed as a multi-functional area. The area around the station has a high-density of functions and buildings. Most buildings have been constructed in the seventies. They include the large-scale project “*Hoog Catharijne*” (HC) that contains a large indoor shopping centre, offices and apartment buildings. It was officially opened in 1973. The project is located on the east-side of the station between the station and the historic city centre. On the west-side an important congress and exhibition hall (Jaarbeurs) is situated. The station terminal is located above the rail infrastructure and links HC with the Jaarbeurs-area. Because of its location, the shopping centre of HC functions as an indoor gateway for pedestrians between the city centre and the train station. Moreover, it was an explicit policy to make HC the main entrance of the railway station-area, in order to maximise the flows of visitors to the shopping area. Car-traffic was vertically segregated from pedestrians. Cars were accommodated at ground level, pedestrians at +1-level. This kind of urban planning (typical for the seventies) was one of the main causes of the bad quality of public space at the ground level of the central-station area. The local population succeeded via strong opposition that some canals as well as some residential buildings were put on the list of protected monuments⁴.

Many agree with the statement that the lay-out of the Hoog-Catherijne area was poorly developed. It was very badly integrated in the existing urban fabric. It is seen as an undesired

⁴ Bertolini and Spit, 1998, p.93.

physical barrier between the station and the city centre. There was insufficient architectural beauty and the public spaces lack quality, they were perceived as being socially unsafe and were avoided by many people during evenings and nights. One of the discussion partners described HC as a *heart transplant with repulsion problems*, mainly caused by the bad quality of the public area and the lack of architectural beauty. Sufficient attention for these qualities is a necessary precondition for being accepted by the people of the city. Otherwise, there will be a high risk of *repulsion phenomenons*.

Contents of the UCP-plan

Since a decade, plans are made to restructure and upgrade the central-station area. Part of the buildings in the area will be renovated and modernised, others will be demolished. A substantial number of new buildings have to be added to the urban centre. A major starting point for the plans was the wide dissatisfaction with the unsafety and the unattractive public spaces around the railway station. In the last three years these plans have been speeded up, to start the actual restructuring process (UCP) as soon as possible.

An important feature of the UCP-plan is its integrality. The plan contains three basic elements, which are to be dealt with in a balanced way⁵, enlarging the transport function, improving the quality of the public space and development of real estate. The involved actors seem to be convinced that this integral approach is necessary to carry out the project in a successful way. The major difference with the HC-development is, therefore, the large attention paid to the quality of the public area. The point is to prevent *repulsion phenomenons of the urban heart*, which did occur with the HC-development.

The organising of the UCP-renewal process have had a quite peculiar course. The process can be divided in three periods (see table b.). Plans to reconstruct the station environment in Utrecht failed two times in the last decade. Currently, the City of Utrecht is in a third period of organising the UCP-project. The current partners are very close to a final agreement. Basically, these actors are the same as in the first period. Then, however, they could not make a joint agreement on the UCP-development. The four most important actors in the UCP are:

- The City of Utrecht. They want to develop a coherent central-station area with a high quality of the buildings and public areas. The City is the main landowner in the UCP-area. Moreover, for the city also the wider economic spread-effects of the UCP-area are relevant. On the one side, the UCP-area has to accommodate the increasing economic pressure on the city centre and on the other side, this area has to contribute to a further growth of the regional economy.
- NS Real Estate. This is the real estate division of the privatised Dutch Railway company. It owns part of the land in the UCP-area and wants to generate revenues from real-estate development. Moreover, it has to fulfil some broader aims of the Dutch railway-organisation.
- Jaarbeurs Utrecht. This is the organisation exploiting a large congress and exhibition complex located next to the central station. It aims at continuation and extension of its activities. The Jaarbeurs therefore wants to attract more customers, which will stay longer and spend more in their part of the UCP-area.

⁵ See also Ministerie van VROM, 1998a, pp 33.

- Winkelbeleggingen Nederland (WBN). This is the owner of the shopping centre Hoog Catharijne and a subsidiary company of ABP-investments. WBN wants to restructure in a fundamental way their shopping area. After 25 years, it does not fulfil anymore the current requirements of a modern shopping centre.

Together these four actors own 98% of the land in the project area. They are considered to be partners for the long-term, because they have converging interests in developing a high-grade urban district, that generate synergetic effects and with high-quality public areas. In other words: they have a common interest in developing a new *urban heart without repulsion phenomenons*. Developing the area together by investing in common public areas has to speed up the process because it will enlarge the political and societal support. Moreover, it will generate a higher value increase of the real-estate on the long-term than without the common investments. For the attractiveness of the buildings strongly depends on the quality of their surroundings. The more attractive the quality of the public areas, the higher the value increase of the real estate will be.

Table b. Three periods of formulating the ambitions for the central-station area

Period	Actors	Actions
1: 1986-1993	City of Utrecht, ABP, Jaarbeurs, NS	Masterplan UCP, No PPP-agreement
2: 1993-1995	City of Utrecht and three property developers	Spatial-functional concept, no agreement
3: 1996-1999	City of Utrecht, WBN, Jaarbeurs, NS Real Estate	Definitive-Urban-Design plan

Source: Bertolini and Spit, 1998, pp. 100 and input discussion partners

First period (1986-1993); City of Utrecht and key stakeholders

In 1986, stimulated by the, already stated, shortcomings of HC, the community of Utrecht took the initiative to restructure the central-station area. One of the aims was to decrease the car-dependence, to increase the liveability of the area, but also to obtain financial support of the national government (precondition for national financial support was to attract less cars in the centre). The UCP process turned out to be very cumbersome. The Community tried to set up a public-private partnership with the three long-term interested stakeholders (see above). In 1993 a master plan was presented. However, the three stakeholders did not agree with the outcome of it. They were not convinced of the economic vitality of the plan. *ABP was afraid of competition for its indoor shopping centre from the envisaged new shopping developments at street level. The NS was not convinced by the financial calculations. And the Jaarbeurs did not see the added value of an active involvement. All three, it must be said, were also in the process of more or less extensive reorganisation. This implied that company objectives and approaches had to be redefined before firm commitments could be made⁶.*

Several discussion rounds were held in Utrecht in order to create sufficient political and societal support for the plans. However, the interests of the groups involved seemed to diverge so much, that within these discussions no agreement could be reached. One of the major problems of the discussions was the mistrust of the population in the UCP-actors. They thought that the discussion rounds did hardly matter at all. The most fundamental decisions were according to them already taken. Thus, the population had the perception that there was no interaction at all. It were, in their perception, just a kind of formalities.

⁶ Bertolini and Spit, 1998, p.94.

Second period (1993-1995); City of Utrecht and property developers

After the disappointing first round, the City of Utrecht tried to set up a partnership with three large property development companies. The City would have a majority share of 51% in the partnership. This was considered essential because of the large public interests involved. The most important document produced in this period was a *spatial-functional concept*. This rather conventional urban design plan was seen as a basis for consultation with the local population, potential investors, firms located in the area, higher administrative levels, and other interests⁷. Via better communication and consulting involved actors it was hoped to enlarge the support for the project. This was one of the major lessons from the earlier period: the only way to proceed with the project was by creating sufficient societal support. In the second period, the long-term interest actors played a much less important role than in the two other periods. This is also considered to be the main cause that also then no final agreement could be made in the partnership. The property developers have an interest in making profits during the construction process, but are less interested in creating attractive public spaces or in better integration of the project in the urban structure. In short, they do not have long-term interests in the project. Therefore, they are the wrong partners to enlarge societal support for the project. They can play an important role in the development process, but not as key actors in the planning process.

Third period (1996-1999); City of Utrecht and key stakeholders

In the beginning of 1996 the four UCP-partners established an administrative platform, chaired by the mayor. The aim of this platform was to analyse the strengths and weaknesses and the threats and opportunities for the station and the station area and to develop a common vision and plan for this area. An organisational distinction was made between the process and the contents of the UCP project: there was a manager of the process and a supervisor of the urban planning. The process landed in an acceleration stage. In 1997, a conceptual plan was presented for the development of the station and the station area. At the end of 1997 the City of Utrecht approved the final design for the project. Based on this plan more detailed designs for parts of the project can be made. The aim is to develop the whole project in the period between 1998 and 2010.

The four partners have agreed to develop and exploit their land individually. From the cash-flows of their projects they will contribute to a common fund (*het "Spaarvarken"*). The height of their contribution depended on their goals they want to achieve in the UCP:

- NS Real-Estate wants to achieve a minimum return on investments of ten percent.
- WBN wants to achieve a minimum return on investments of thirteen percent (average returns on shops are higher than those on offices).
- The Jaarbeurs wants to achieve a positive exploitation; they want to generate synergetic effects between their new activities;
- The City of Utrecht has broad goals with respect to the *social* return of the project.

The process manager calculated the expected returns on the different sub-plans, in order to determine the subsequent contribution of the four partners to the common fund. This fund will

⁷ Ibid.

partially finance public facilities. The total costs of public facilities are estimated to be 553 million guilders. The national government is asked to subsidise 280 million of this amount. The co-operation between the actors involved depends on whether the national government will agree with this financial contribution.

The total costs of the project are estimated at about 3.9 billion guilders (EUR 1.77 billion, see table c.). This amount does not include the costs for the development of a high-grade infrastructure for public transport (HOV) and the expansion and modernisation of the central station. The HOV is estimated to cost 600 million guilders and the expansion and modernisation of central station 500 million guilders.

Table c. Total investments of actors involved in UCP

Actor	Functions	Total investments in millions of guilders
City of Utrecht	Houses, offices, parking places, bicycle sheds, music hall, infrastructure	1056
WBN	Shops, parking places, other	420
NS Real Estate	Offices, shops, parking places, bicycle places, other	1268
Jaarbeurs	Offices, leisure and urban entertainment, other	646
Other costs		553
Total investments		3943

Source: KPMG-BEA, 1998

Next stage: realising the ambitions

Metropolitan projects, like the UCP-plan, have a large impact on the socio-economic functioning of urban centres. The (economic) life of directly involved actors, like residents, owners of shops and other economic activities, will be influenced. Transparency and good communication of the consequences of such projects are essential for the chances for success of such projects. The lack of good communication can imply that actors will only obstruct the process. The consequences might be large delays or even no continuation of the project.

In Utrecht, there was no adequate communication towards the population and other actors involved concerning the UCP-project. As a consequence, mistrust in the local politics sprang up. In local elections, the political parties, which were in power lost many votes. A new local political party (*Liveable Utrecht*) had a large political success, because they try to fight for the interests of the local population. It became the largest political party in the City-Council. But, the other political parties could stay in power by constituting a large coalition without *Liveable Utrecht*. One of the major lessons, however, was the essential importance of an adequate communication towards the population concerning large scale projects. A professional communication office was commissioned to set up guidelines how these projects are to be communicated in a tactical way.

In spring 2000 a new impasse was reached in the renewal process of the central-station area of Utrecht. De Jaarbeurs threatened to withdraw from the strategic partnership, because they were not willing to pay anymore for some public elements of the project. They claimed that this would not pay off for them. In June 2000, the City Council of Utrecht voted however in favour of the continuation of the project, notwithstanding the financial gap of 150 million guilders. The latter was

solved by postponing some secondary parts of the project. The construction activities have to start in 2001.

6. Synthesis

Development strategies enriched with the input of all actors involved (contents)

One of the prominent features of station development is the relative large number of actors involved, with differing interests and aims, and hence perceiving different discrepancies between the actual and the desired developments. Together the actors strive for a potential-Pareto improvement. In this research it is supposed that there is no such thing as an optimal plan for station areas. Thus a *positivist approach* is rejected here. The actors involved have to reach an agreement on a plan that adequately reckons with the different *social constructions* (the *social-constructive approach*). A development plan has to be drawn up which balances the different interests and aims. To achieve this, the presence of an authoritative director (project architect) can be desirable. The local government often has a dominant role to play. Mostly it has broad interests in the renewal of the station area, such as increasing the economic attraction, accessibility and quality of life. But as its financial interest in the development increases, a conflict of interests may occur and the enlistment of a neutral party for the orchestration may be desirable.

To respond to unpredictable future fundamental trends, development plans need to be sufficiently flexible. Changing societal needs regarding for instance transport or location preferences may demand another ways of redevelopment during the process. Thus, *social constructions* can change during the process, and hence the desirable development to achieve a potential-Pareto improvement.

An element of the development of an HST-station that should not be underrated, is the creation of sufficient (social and political) support for the plans. If the support is insufficient, the process can be considerably delayed. Therefore, the plans will have to be presented in an adequate way to the actors involved. They will have to be convinced of the quality of the plans, which should strike a balance between the differing interests and aims. The local population in particular will want to know whether their interests and aims have been adequately reckoned with. They should also have ample opportunity to submit constructive ideas for the plans ultimately to be carried out. The better the local population gets the idea that the ideas they submit are taken serious, the more support there will be for the project plans.

To get sufficient commitment from the actors at the development stages of station renewal, the formation of strategic networks is advisable. They can initiate a variety of activities, to begin with in lobbying for an HST-connection, then go on to mount a study of the most desirable station development, and end with the maintenance of a stable quality of the station ground.

Strategic partnerships with financial clearing constructions (management)

For the implementation of the renewal plans often strategic partnerships have to be set up between the most involved actors. Such strategic partnerships can be directed by the economic and financial interests of the actors involved. These partnerships might operate as one actor to speed up the

renewal process, they will co-ordinate the different activities needed for the process and eventual during the exploitation process on the long term.

For the implementation of station renewal plans of, a relatively large amount of financial means is required. Usually, much investment is needed in the short term, but revenues are forthcoming only at longer delay. An additional complication is that it is not always possible to ascertain which investments generate which revenues. Nearly all relevant actors have an interest in a pleasant living climate. The problem is that investment in the living climate, unlike in shops and offices, does not always immediately yield income. However, in the long run such investment may have a positive influence on the value of land and buildings in the station area. Certain actors might need to invest in a substantial way without generating corresponding revenues, while others may reap relatively high revenues without needing to invest much (free-rider problem). To prevent this and other financial mismatches, financial clearing constructions that fairly reflect the financial and economic interests of the actors involved, are often advisable. Clearing can be achieved through mutual agreements of the relevant actors or (through tax levies) by a public body. The more actors are economically and financially involved, the more advisable clearing by taxes will be. For then it will be less clear which costs are related to which revenues and it will be more difficult to set up mutual agreements between the actors involved.

Social constructivist approach in Utrecht?

The Utrecht station area was redeveloped in accordance with urban-planning ideas of the seventies, like a strict division of pedestrians and car-traffic. One of the consequences was that relatively few attention was paid to the quality of life on the 0-level, which was meant for car-traffic. The impression is that in that period not all relevant actors were involved in the decision process. In particular the involvement of the local inhabitants seems to have been too low.

Open and fair communication with, and an early involvement of the local population turned out to be essential for creating societal support for the plans. This is one of the weak points in the process in Utrecht. A large part of the population seems to have a mistrust in the local government and its partners. They think that their opinion was not heard, and that the real decisions were taken elsewhere. Dissatisfaction with the current situation, the poor quality of the public area at HC, contributed to the mistrust. In stead of improving the current situation, people seem to expect that it will become even worse: more (too) large office buildings and more car-traffic. One of the consequences of the mistrust of the local population has been the large success of the protest party *Leefbaar Utrecht* in the municipal elections. Professional communication offices now have to deal with this mistrust and to help building support for the UCP-plans.

The impression is that during the seventies - complying that other ideas of urban planning were prevailing - due to the lack of involvement of some of the relevant actors involved *possibly* a suboptimum result was achieved. Not to involve them sufficiently has contributed to a deeply rooted mistrust of the local population in the city administration. Though currently more attention is being paid to the preferences of the local population, they still seem to have the impression that their opinion is not really counting. This could lead to insufficient political support. Notwithstanding the importance of the protest party *Leefbaar Utrecht* the municipal party still voted in favour of the station project.

Long-term interested actors play a key role in Utrecht

It seems that only those actors which have a long-term interest in the station-area development, can set up a sustainable partnership for a complicated metropolitan project. They are supposed to have sufficient incentives to strive for a certain quality level in the area. These actors will be prepared to invest in the quality of public areas, for this can generate land-value increases on the long term and can smoothen decision procedures by increased political and societal support. This seemed to be one of the major lessons of one decade negotiations for the UCP-area with several actors. The current partnership-actors, the City of Utrecht, the real-estate department of the national railways, WBN and the Jaarbeurs, are all landowners in the area, and all are interested in a sustainable development of the UCP-area. Mutual trust during the negotiations was important to formulate common goals and common actions.

The City of Utrecht is the key-actor in the station area. It is the *machine activist* of the renewal process, and was the only actor that was playing a role in all three described stages of the negotiating process. The other three mentioned actors are all important land owners in the Utrecht station-area. They seem to be the most logical partners for the redevelopment of the area. The national government is not actively involved in the redevelopment, though they finance a relatively large part of the necessary investments. A major problem seems to be the relatively large amount of public elements to be invested in. In first instance also the private partners were willing to invest in them. For it is also their interest to raise the quality of life in the area. These actors however also know how important and urgent the redevelopment is for the governments involved. They can thus play a strong negotiating role for the financing of the different project elements, hoping that the governments involved will pay the major parts of the investments in public elements.

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