

De Jong, Bart

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Schiphol Airport Amsterdam: to understand the past is to secure future economic growth

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Bart de Jong, Utrecht University, Faculty of Geosciences.

Adres: P.O. Box 80115, 3508TC, Utrecht Netherlands. Tel: +31(0)30-2532738

E-mail: b.dejong@geo.uu.nl

Abstract

Schiphol Amsterdam, the main airport of the Netherlands, is a dynamic node, where the space of places and space of flows meet. The days that Schiphol was just an airport are long gone. This makes it a complex entity. The different governments concerned with the future development of Schiphol appear to be indecisive. Next to the government a growing number of public and private actors exists that try to influence spatial planning to their advantage. The rise of the network society has made the process of policy making much more difficult. Decision-making was once the domain of the governments, but nowadays it takes place in more informal, network type configuration.

This year Schiphol exists 90 years. At the same time the government decided to extend the quantity and quality of the airport by letting it grow to 600 000 airplane movements per year. To illustrate this growth: in 2005 Schiphol had 400 000 airplane movements. The civil society and the opposition reacted furious. In a climate of distrust formed by a lack of communication, the Schiphol file seems complex and obscure: an administrative stalemate arises. In this paper I try to discover how this stalemate came into existence. The aim is to create and analyze a problem inventory. To come to this problem inventory, it is important to understand the changing context in which the policy making process takes place. First I will introduce some theories that help us understand this changing context. Secondly a historical evolution of Schiphol will be given to illustrate the impact of this changing context. After this evolution it is possible to make a problem inventory which points out the different themes and problems that exist in the Schiphol region.

Keywords: Schiphol Amsterdam; airports; network society; decision making, problem inventory

Introduction

On 19 September 1916, three ramshackle airplanes land on a bumpy meadow in Haarlemmermeer, the Netherlands. This was actually the beginning of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (From now on called Schiphol), where in the mid-twenties an average of less than twenty passengers per day were transported. Of course, in those days you could hardly speak of an 'international airport'. Functionally Schiphol evolved from a one-dimensional transport junction towards a more multimodal network city which handled 44 million passengers in 2005 (Schiphol Group, 2006, Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997).

Since the beginning Schiphol received a lot of attention. At first it was mainly the fascination for aviation that drew people to the airport, but with the growth of the aviation industry the perception on airports changed (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997). Also the decision making process about airport planning took on a new meaning over time. This development cannot be viewed apart for society as a whole changed. Individualization, technological innovations and globalization have changed the face of the planet the last hundred years (Wissink, 2000). As a result a different planning approach in general and a different airport planning approach in particular was demanded. But also the deregulation of the aviation industry caused the needs for a new airport planning approach.

Gradually, Schiphol evolved from a plain airport to an airportcity. This resulted in a different view on Schiphol. In addition the administrative arrangements were subject to change. All in all Schiphol experienced functional dynamics and likewise the institutional and social setting changed. Nowadays the Schiphol file seems complex and obscure: an administrative stalemate arises.

In this paper I try to discover how this stalemate came into existence. The aim is to create and analyze a problem inventory. To come to this problem inventory, it is important to understand the changing context in which the policy making process takes place. First I will introduce some theories that help us understand this changing context. Secondly a historical evolution of Schiphol will be given to illustrate the impact of this changing context. After this evolution it is possible to make a problem inventory which points out the different themes and problems that exist in the Schiphol region.

A changing world

Without any doubt one can say that our world is changing. It is stated that the forces of globalization have triggered a technological revolution centered around information technology, that is reforming our society into a network society. This network society is characterized by an increasing worldwide and at the same time paradoxical interdependency, blurring and redefined boundaries and flows of people, products, services, capital and information that gain independence. This means that traditionally fixed and geographical regularities become less and less relevant. Spatial contiguity is no longer a precondition for social and economic interaction. Activities become footloose and are no longer bound to specific places. But it is wrong to think that we live in a borderless world. Instead we live in a world of increasing complexity, interconnectedness and volatility, where boundaries are permeable. The space of places and the space of flows co-exist in harmony as well as disharmony (Castells, 1996, Dicken, 2003, Hakfoort & Schaafsma, 2000, Huys & van Boxtel, 2005, Boelens, 2005b).

Globalization is a complex of interrelated processes, rather than an end-state. Several sets of processes – internationalizing, regionalizing, globalizing – co-exist. (Dicken,

2003) This means that on the one hand different actors will form new and complex networks and on the other hand traditional institutions, such as governments, can be neglected. Boundaries – not only physical ones, but also social and symbolic ones – became vague (Boelens, 2005b). This has major consequences for governments and spatial planning. Next to the government a growing number of public and private actors exists that try to influence the spatial planning to their advantage. The rise of the network society has made the process of policy making much more difficult. Decision-making was once the domain of the governments, but nowadays it takes place in more informal, network type configurations (Huys & van Boxtel, 2005, Wissink et al, 2003). The government is no longer the focal point but just one of the many players in these network type configurations. Next to this it seems as if connectivity is more important than proximity. Activities occur increasingly in functional business networks that do not coincide with territorial boundaries (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000, Salet et al, 2003). Therefore it seems as if holding on to traditional forms of spatial planning becomes useless (Boelens, 2005a). The government cannot keep up with the more dynamic society, which results in the society demanding spatial developments, that government doesn't realize and the spatial developments that government does realize, don't match social demands.

At the same time the aviation industry changed too. Since 1919 nation states had full control over their airspace. This was decided upon after the First World War. That's why many countries were intensely associated with the development of national and international aviation networks. Honest competition or a free market system did not exist (Burghouwt, 2005).

This changed in 1978. The United States of America enacted the *Airline Deregulation Act* on the 24th of October (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997). The aim of this act was to trigger

competitiveness. The airlines, which until that time hid behind the national governments all of a sudden got to deal with a free market system. Another effect of the deregulation act was that airlines were no longer committed to one airport. So from that day on airports had to do their best to retain their home carrier.

Thanks to the deregulation of the American aviation sector and the positive outcomes which resulted from this, Europe also decided to deregulate the market gradually. This happens from 1987 until April 1997. Slowly but surely international competitiveness emerged within the aviation sector (Hakfoort & Schaafsma, 2000, Huys & van Boxtel, 2005, Burghouwt & Huys, 2003). From the perspective of a small country like the Netherlands aviation is by definition an international phenomenon. Through the continuous liberalization of the aviation sector this perspective was deepened. The importance of Schiphol for the international competitiveness for 'Holland Inc' increased. In terms of network configuration the deregulation introduced the hub-and-spoke principle. This means that direct flights from and to smaller airports were more and more replaced by indirect flights through a central bigger airport, otherwise known as the hub. To conclude the deregulation led to many new alliances. Important for Schiphol is the merger in September 2003 between home carrier KLM and Air France: from that day on Schiphol is part of the Skyteam alliance (Burghouwt, 2003). Nowadays there are three major alliances: Skyteam, Oneworld and Staralliance.

As a result of the free market system airports have less certainty about future network developments. Aviation became more and more a volatile business. So multi serviced airports were developed. Airports began to offer 'urban' services such as shopping and entertainment. Advantage of this urbanization strategy is that airports distribute the risks and reduce the dependence on aeronautical revenues in an aviation sector which is characterized by vitality and uncertainty (Burghouwt, 2002). The growth of air traffic also leads to an increasing basis of non aviation facilities.

This 'changing world' had major consequences for the development of the airport and its direct surroundings. Not only the changing aviation industry influenced the development of Schiphol, but also the rise of the civil society, individualization and globalization. This will be elaborated in the next part of this paper.

Schiphol history

In 1916 Schiphol was founded as a military airport. Despite the fact that the Netherlands were neutral during the First World War, it was agreed upon 'better to be safe than sorry'. This military exigency ceased after the war ended in 1918. At the same time civil aviation gained importance and Schiphol was appointed as a civil airport. Still, investments were minimal and it wasn't until 1928 -when the Dutch state sold the airport to the municipality of Amsterdam- that Schiphol became a competitive player in the European aviation market. The Dutch airport developed into one of the best equipped airports in Europe as a result of the Olympic Games of 1928 (held in Amsterdam) and the direct air links to Dutch colonies.

Unfortunately, during the Second World War, Schiphol was bombed several times by both the Nazis and Allied Forces. Not much was left of Schiphol, so a new national airport was needed. It was believed that the post-war reconstruction was primarily a matter of the state. The national government decided that the post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands should be linked to economic growth. This target was only achievable if the government would play an important coordinating role. As a result the national government took the reconstruction of the airport in hand. But the decision-making process concerning the rebuilding of Schiphol was a slow process. The parties involved did not manage to reach an agreement about the final design and the financial aspects. Eventually it took ten years before the plunge was taken. In the meantime the public

limited company Schiphol (Schiphol Group from now on) was founded: a collaboration between the Dutch government and the municipalities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. By that Schiphol became the national airport of the Netherlands (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997). From the 1960s onward, developments in aviation accelerated. Because of rapid economic growth and an increasing prosperity arising out of this, the airplane as a mode of transport became more accessible for more people. The introduction of the jet engine strengthened this trend even further, because the invention triggered cost reductions by which the airplane seat trade slowly but steadily became a mass product. In 1967 the 'new' Schiphol was declared open at last by her majesty the queen Juliana. If we look at the developments the airport has been through from that moment on, five developments can be distinguished which in due course began to overlap each other.

Opening the new terminal: growth becomes controversial (since 1967)

The new Schiphol marked the beginning of a dividing line between airside and landside and as a result a functional diversification occurred gradually (Hakfoort & Schaafsma, 2000). At the same time the introduction of the jet engine leads to the first protest groups. Noise pollution gradually looms large on the public agenda. In the 1969 annual report Schiphol Group admits that noise pollution is a serious problem. As a solution to this problem the airport presents plans for a fifth runway. This proposal caused an endless discussion. Was a fifth runway necessary? Or should the government construct a whole new airport? In 1968 inquire into a possible new airport was initiated (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997). The research concluded that a new airport was financially not feasible, but a fifth runway would not be constructed for some time either.

In 1978 the Schipholrailway was put into use and the airport wasn't longer solely accessible by land. More infrastructural improvements followed in the years after and

Schiphol integrated further into the regional networks and evolved towards a multimodal node (Hakfoort & Schaafsma, 2000). At the same time the tension between the airport and its surrounding area was build up even further. Until that moment Schiphol Group was only able to cope partly with this awkward situation so it was decided that a new strategy was necessary. Image building became the new magic word. Not only for the immediate surroundings, but also for potential cargo and passengers: the one terminal concept¹ proved to be an important marketing strategy when it came to attracting cargo and passengers. By the 1980s the category transfer passengers grew faster than the total amount of passengers. This again resulted in a positive outcome on the landside assets, such as tax free shopping. Slowly but surely the service aspect was pushed into the background: cost-effectiveness became the new core business (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997).

A broadly-based research, *de economische betekenis van Schiphol* (the economic importance of Schiphol), concluded that same year that Schiphol was of growing importance for the Amsterdam region and the national economy as a whole. In 1982, Schiphol Group, KLM, NVL (Dutch Association for Air transport) and the ministry of economics decided to start promoting the airport as an international distribution node: *Holland International Distribution Centre*. Every potential investor, especially those of American and Japanese origin, was made clear what the factors determining the location of a business at the Schiphol region were. Schiphol Group imputes itself a gateway function as a marketing instrument (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997).

¹ The name says it all: the *one terminal concept* means that all passengers can be handled from one building or terminal. This is a huge advantage when you handle a lot of transfer passengers like Schiphol. The passengers don't have to rush from terminal to terminal as is the case at London Heathrow for instance.

Schiphol becomes a Mainport: an economic engine for the Netherlands (since 1988)

A further deregulation of the aviation industry resulted in increasing competition between airlines but also between airports. Market position gained importance. In a system dominated by a free market system a prominent place was only given to a select set of airports. Schiphol Group was eager to claim such a prominent role and therefore a new strategic concept was founded: 'mainport' (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997).

A mainport was defined as a transportation junction where different modalities meet. The term mainport was originally used to point to the harbor of Rotterdam. The mainport concept was broadened in 1986 by the 'van der Zwan' committee and the transport lobby. The concept as Schiphol founded it was recognized by the committee and lobby, but at the same time some threats were distinguished. It was no longer obvious that the KLM – home carrier of Schiphol – was linked to the airport.

Financial-economic factors and slot capacity became more important. The small domestic market and the dependency on transfer passengers also made the airport vulnerable. The committee and lobby concluded that if Schiphol wanted to contribute to the Dutch economy, the airport had to present itself as the *Rotterdam of the air*. The extension of intercontinental transport to an increasing number of primary and secondary destinations was considered essential: possibilities to expand were mainly positioned on an international level. To achieve this Schiphol should work on its attractiveness, after all the airport was no longer a monopolist (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997). Facilities and interconnectivity gained importance, just as the exploitation of locational advantages. The hub function of Schiphol was more and more apparent. The number of transfer passengers and cargo goods in transit grew every year (Bouwens & Dierikx, 1997). The national government adapted the mainport concept in 1988 owing to an economic recess. In the Fourth Report on Spatial Planning the mainport concept made its presence felt. One of the cornerstones of the Fourth Report was *Nederland*

Distributieland (the Netherlands, distribution land). Trade, transport and distribution were traditionally specializations in which the Dutch bloom. This specialization is based on the geographical position of the Netherlands, right in between the Atlantic world and the Euro-Asia continent. But the position acquired was not taken for granted and should be maintained. That is why the Fourth Report stated that strategic investments concerning future expansions of the two mainports, Schiphol and the harbor of Rotterdam, were necessary. For the first time extensive attention was given to the growth potential of Schiphol. There was a common belief in the economic importance of the airports' development (Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing & Environment, 2006, van der Cammen & de Klerk, 2003).

The government emphasized that the significance of the most important gateways, the mainport, and the significance of their connections with the hinterland were critical for the further development of the country (Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing & Environment, 1988). Economic growth should be promoted through strengthening the competitive position of the Netherlands in Europe. To that end the mainports and the international transport possibilities should be strengthened. At the same time a double orientation arose. Economic growth must be stimulated, but simultaneously improving and sustaining the quality of space and the environment was just as important: the *double objective* was born (Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing & Environment, 2001). It was up to spatial planning to make sure that this interest was guaranteed.

Airportcity: further commercialization of the airport (since 1995)

In 1995 Schiphol Plaza, a shopping mall accessible for everyone was inaugurated. The enclave Schiphol opened a public space and revenues derived from landside activities gained importance once more. Schiphol Real Estate delivered its first buildings and the airport presented itself increasingly as a real estate developer. Also, participation in

airports abroad expanded in 1997. The philosophy was if Schiphol Group wanted to be a leading international airport company further internationalization was needed. Schiphol Group began to redevelop and exploiting terminal 4 of John F Kennedy Airport in New York and began to participate in Brisbane airport (Schiphol Group, 1998). These are significant developments because Schiphol Group presented an image as airport company, more than just an airport operator. The airport made more money through landside activities (such as concessions and real estate) than airside activities (such as airport charges).

Schiphol Group developed the airportcity concept. In this concept the airport is viewed as a city and a perfect stopover in the travel process where the visitor should be offered a unique experience. The airportcity is defined by the Schiphol Group as: *a dynamic hub integrating people and businesses, logistics and shops, information and entertainment. It is an efficient, multimodal hub for air, rail and road transport. It is a location offering its visitors and locallybased international businesses all the services they require on a 24/7 basis* (Schiphol Group, 2006). Through international alliances and participation the airportcity concept could be exported.

In the meantime policy makers could not keep up with the rapid growth of Schiphol and the surrounding area, which led to conflicting ambitions. At the same time a new chapter in the aviation law was prepared because environmental norms were not met. Chapter eight, better known as the Schiphol law, would replace the existing environmental norms. This was necessary because of the inaccurate norms and prognoses that were used. Schiphol would get an environmental permit and could decide how the airport wanted to facilitate future developments just as long as these developments did not exceed the environmental criteria that were given. At the same time after years of

debating the construction of the fifth runway was approved at last. The immediate surrounding area frowned and stated that the Schiphol law legitimated more growth.

Polderbaan comes into operation (since 2003)

On the first of february 2003 the Polderbaan came into operation. The total amount of complaints rose immediately, mostly because people complained in areas where they were confronted with airplane noise for the first time ever (Schiphol Group, 2004).

Thereupon the so-called *invoerfout* (input mistake) came to light. In the environmental impact assessment on the basis of which the limiting values for the enforcement points for noise were determined a crucial mistake was made: The calculation model estimated a more generous use of the Polderbaan than was feasible in reality. To make matters worse, Air Traffic Control the Netherlands reported two weeks after the runway came into operation that simultaneous take-offs from the Polderbaan and the Zwanenburgbaan were not possible, even dangerous. Initially, Air Traffic Control promised that this would be possible, but eventually in practice this turned out to involve risk of life. KLM complains that at other airports where two runways are situated even closer to each other, simultaneous take-offs are not a problem at all. Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management replied by saying that at those airports airplanes have the possibility to fan out in different directions. At Schiphol this is impossible because of the rigid environmental norms (Interview, Schiphol Group, 2004, Bijnsdorp Communicatie Projecten, 2005). Finally the impact of noise produced by taxiing airplanes grew. Mainly because it takes airplanes a fair amount of time to taxi to the Polderbaan.

After these several mistakes the civil and public society (at least the opposition) reacted furious. They stated it was all a typical *Schiphol game*, and the mistakes were made at purpose. This seems to indicate that there is total lack of trust in the region. All those

concerned find the communication with Schiphol Group poor. Schiphol Group hardly reveals anything about future plans and/or developments. They state that Schiphol Group and the government should be frank: seek the confrontation and show your vulnerability (Bijnsdorp Communicatie Projecten, 2005).

Evaluation Schiphol law (completed in 2006)

When the new Schiphol law was adopted it was decided that the new law should be evaluated before February 2006. In this way it was assured that the new law would offer the same protection as the prevailing norms before February 2003. More than thirty reports were written in three years and in February 2006 it was concluded that the Schiphol law offered the same protection as the law it replaced (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, 2006).

One specific report is very interesting for this paper. 'Twee jaar ervaring met het Schipholbeleid' (two years of experience with the Schiphol law) by Bijnsdorp Communicatie Projecten (2005). This report shows us that there are many actors concerned with Schiphol and that severe dissension has arisen between these actors. They believe that they have no say in the Schiphol file and therefore they are suspicious of Schiphol. Since the Polderbaan came into operation and the prevailing aviation law was adopted, the relationships in the Schiphol region have been disturbed. Schiphol Group lost quite some respect due to the consternation following the input mistake and the debacle concerning simultaneous take-offs. It is remarkable to see how these several mistakes and Schiphol Groups' future plans about slot capacity or developments are frowned upon by the surrounding area. Experiences and opinions mingle and without actual knowledge a negative image is constructed, fed by distrust.

The national government though, seems to choose for more growth and continues to extend the quantity and quality of the airport. In April of this year – after the evaluation –

the government decided that Schiphol is allowed to grow towards 600 000 airplane movements per year (To illustrate this growth: There were proximately 400 000 airplane movements in 2005). Again, the civil society and opposition were not exactly amused. All those concerned even speak of secret master plans, free state Schiphol, deception of the public and hidden agendas (Bijnsdorp Communicatie Projecten, 2005). Schiphol is an unreliable neighbor.

Problem inventory

The changing world had great consequences for the aviation industry and logically the development of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. Next to an enormous growth, the public opinion about Schiphol gradually changed from merely positive to merely negative nowadays. How could this happen? Looking back at the historical evolution three main reasons can be given: 1. the position of Schiphol changed, 2. a growing number of parties are involved in the decision making process, 3. different parties have different interests which can also be subject to change. I will describe the three factors in more detail.

Ad.1. In the beginning aviation had an almost mythical status. During the First World War aviators were seen as modern knights. After the war ended and civil aviation came into development the days of Columbus, Diaz, Magelhaes and so forth seemed to be revisited. Again, a global race began with at stake the discovery of the world but this time by air. The first KLM flight to Indonesia, in those days still a colony, was celebrated throughout the country. In those days the main task of Schiphol was a facilitating one. The airport made sure that 'our Dutch pride' KLM could take off and land. This changed when Schiphol introduced the tax-free shopping concept in the late fifties. The

introduction of the jet engine a couple of years later changed aviation forever. The airplane as a mode of transport became more accessible for more people and the airplane seat trade slowly but steadily became a mass product. But the introduction of the jet engine also resulted in the first protests. The facilitating days of Schiphol were over; the airport was also seen as a noise polluter. In spite of protests Schiphol grew rapidly. More money was made by non-aviation activities and in the mid-eighties the airport emerged as the new economic engine of the Netherlands. But at the same time the double objective was introduced. Economic growth should be feasible without environmental deterioration. As a result of increasing prosperity the environmental aspect became more important. In practice economic growth and environmental sustainability were not always feasible and Schiphol was held responsible for this by the direct surroundings. The last five years were years of turmoil: the new runway came into operation but several big mistakes were made, the total amount of complaints increased considerable and political dissension and a climate of distrust arose. After being the Dutch pride and national economic engine, Schiphol is experienced as an unreliable neighbor nowadays.

Ad.2. From day one the parties involved had great difficulties reaching agreements concerning the future developments of Schiphol. Mostly because of financial arguments or power struggles. This never changed. Schiphol is an emotionally charged, national topic. And as time went by more and more actors became involved. This resulted in excessive governance which means there is simply too much co-ordination which is seen as oppressive and obstructive (Cerfontaine, 2006). The committee for Administrative Co-ordination defines excessive governance as *excessive administrative effort and co-ordination in a complex administrative constellation that is not in proportion to the ultimate effect* (Andere Overheid, 2005, English translation by Cerfontaine, 2006).

In its report, the committee discusses the excessive governance surrounding site developments in the Schiphol area. Commercial development in the Schiphol area involves one regional municipal collaborative body, two municipalities, three provincial authorities and four ministries. This excludes the dozens of other parties, institutions and government bodies involved in the growth of the airport. It is remarkable that the same parties keep meeting one another in various committees and none of them seem to be able to decide which committee is really relevant and which one's not (Andere Overheid, 2005).

Furthermore the committee points out that effective leadership from the national governments' side is lacking. According to Huys & van Boxtel (2005) this is precisely what the National Strategy on Spatial Planning² indicates. Interesting here is the principle of subsidiarity, which states that decisions should be made at the lowest administrative level possible. The ministries concerned prefer to limit their efforts to general issues (e.g. creating a level playing field or setting the limiting conditions in terms of environmental (noise) pollution). But at the same time parties concerned complain that a clear-cut vision or consistent implementation strategy is not in place (Cerfontaine, 2006, Huys & van Boxtel, 2005). Vital public leadership is missed.

Ad.3. Closely related to the growing number of parties involved in the decision making process, is the fact that different parties have different interests which can also be subject to change. Excessive governance leads to dissension as different parties have different interests and even more important different agendas to promote their own interests. This has several consequences. First there seems to be a disagreement when it comes to defining concepts. Take for instance the mainport concept. The Dutch government seems to emphasize that the mainport is an important economic engine for

² This is the sixth Spatial Planning report.

the Netherlands. Schiphol Group states that the mainport is a hub for global transport flows between the world's major economic regions. Actors annoyed by noise pollution believe that the mainport concept is a tactical trick to justify economic growth (Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing & Environment et al, 2006, Schiphol Group et al, 2004, Bijnsdorp Communicatie Projecten, 2005). In this sense the mainport concept can be used to one's own advantage. Secondly, new plans concerning the airports should be judged on their global merits as Schiphol is a global node. Unfortunately, surrounding municipalities judge plans on their local, at the most regional merits. Of course, when referring to Schiphol as a major hub it is unrealistic to think that plans can be judged in this way. Namely because Schiphol is a physical place where global networks meet. Municipalities play ostrich, probably because they do not want to account for economic growth, hence cause more annoyance, towards their inhabitants. Finally, opinions are constructed and reconstructed in interaction between different actors and are institutionally embedded. This means that an actor bases his or her opinion on things they hear, read and see in their direct surroundings and through social relationships. Lack of trust and inadequate communication make sure that the general consensus about Schiphol is a negative one.

Conclusion

The transferring points in the networks, the nodes, also known as hubs, can be seen as the places where the space of flows interacts with the space of places. An airport is such a place where the space of places and space of flows meet. The development of the airport can be seen as the ultimate example of a physical node where urban regions interconnect with international networks (Hakfoort & Schaafsma, 2000). As a consequence, the spatial and economic policy making about the future of the airports

have to cope with these partly parallel, partly intersecting universes (Huys & van Boxtel, 2005).

The Schiphol case illustrates that this is not an easy task. Because Schiphol is a concrete object in a concrete environment it's always necessary to bear responsibility towards the direct surroundings. Subsequently, if inhabitants of the direct surroundings experience nothing but inconvenience it is very difficult to create public support for future developments. Developments of which inhabitants, except from inconvenience, won't perceive much at all. Schiphol grew explosively in the past ninety years and as a result the impact on the direct surrounding area and politics grew as well. Schiphol became an emotionally charged subject, where even the national politics rather won't burn their fingers on. In this paper I pointed out that there are three causes for this all.

1. The position of Schiphol changed. When Schiphol was founded it was nothing more than an airstrip where propeller airplanes could land and take off. Meanwhile Schiphol developed into an airportcity which apart from aviation engaged in real estate, shopping and other non aviation activities. In addition people are more articulated and show their disapproval.
2. A growing number of parties are involved in the decision making process. This leads to excessive governance and indecisiveness. In this way the policy making process advances with difficulty and this is just what a dynamic node as Schiphol can live without. An airport has to react fast to global changes. At present this is not possible due to rigid laws and red tape.
3. Different parties have different interests which can also be subject to change. A great deal of actors is involved in Schiphol in one way or another and all have their own agenda. Unity is lacking. Basically this is a logical finding, because all parties concerned have different ideas when it comes to the future of Schiphol. They would be delighted to see their idea as the dominant discourse. Nevertheless this results in opinions based on

emotional arguments. This hampers the policy making process and the search for possible solutions.

Schiphol is the ninth airport in the world when it comes to passengers. It's an enormous company and economically the airport is doing well. At the same time it seems as if the public and political support decreased towards an absolute minimum. In the long-term this can have consequences for the competitiveness of Schiphol and maybe even the Netherlands as a whole. I made this problem inventory so proceeding from the inventory, research can be conducted in order to find problem solving solutions which make sure that future developments and the competitiveness of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol will run no risks.

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