CITY IN BALANCE

a spatial vision and strategy on the continuity between centre and periphery in Amsterdam

Cateau Albers
MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences
YESTERDAY
a dichotomised Amsterdam

TODAY
a gentrified Amsterdam

TOMORROW
a rebalanced Amsterdam
WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE ORGANISATION OF CENTRALITY

but perhaps you do not realise it yet ...
YES, WE KNOW WHERE TO GO IN THE CENTRE

but what happens when you cross the Ring?
FOLLOWING A RADIAL: THE CONTINUITY OF STREETLIFE
the continuity between centre and periphery

A10

periphery  Ringzone  centre

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ORGANISATION OF CENTRALITY

non-residential functions: streets vs. clusters
A STREET WE GO TO >> A STREET WE GO THROUGH
from high street towards traffic artery

CENTRE

high street

PERIPHERY

traffic artery

mall + facilities

Drawing based on Read, 2001
IN BETWEEN: DOMINANCE OF THE RING
an unattractive zone oriented towards the Ring
EVERYTHING CHANGES WHEN ENTERING THE RINGZONE
the grey zone: where discontinuity begins

IT IS GREY!
AND THIS IS WHERE MY THESIS BEGINS …

the continuity between centre and periphery in Amsterdam
1934: GENERAL EXPANSION PLAN

anticipation on expected growth + introduction of new spatial concepts
TWO SPATIAL CONCEPTS
centralisation and decentralisation in Amsterdam

CENTRE
- centralisation
- centrality on streets
- fine grain

PERIPHERY
- decentralisation
- centrality next to streets
- coarse grain
CONTINUITY BETWEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY

the impact of the infrastructural layer on the tangibles and intangibles

- metropolitan-scaled grid connection with the region
- middle-scaled grid connection with other city parts
- local-scaled grid connection with other city blocks
MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: METROPOLITAN-SCALED GRID
meant for metropolitan-scaled movement - regional network
MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: MIDDLE-SCALED GRID
meant for middle-scaled movement - primary network of the city
MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: MIDDLE-SCALED GRID
meant for middle-scaled movement - radials
MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: LOCAL-SCALED GRID
meant for local-scaled movement - the local network
THE IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FURTHER EXPLAINED

meant for local-scaled movement - the local network

end product: vital urban life

social importance of public space

economic importance of public space

interconnectivity between the grids = bringing different worlds into relation with each other
LEVEL OF INTERCONNECTIVITY
short vs. long distances

high interconnectivity = short distances
low interconnectivity = long distances
MODAL SPLIT OF AMSTERDAM
depending on the availability of networks and distances

centre: slow traffic + public transport
periphery: car (West and South East)
FEWER LONG HIGHLY INTEGRATED SPACES IN AMSTERDAM?

global scale reference | orientation function
integration and connection of widely separated city parts

Oxford Street, London

Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris
**Co-relation movement and functional patterns**

Impact on the movement and experiential continuity

**Metropolis**
- Metropolitan-scaled grid:
  - Metropolitan-scaled functions: head-office clusters, hospitals, industrial parks, congress centres, stadiums, etc.
  - Located at middle-scaled grids / local-scaled grids that are more or less directly attached to metropolitan-scaled grid

**City**
- Middle-scaled grid:
  - Middle-scaled / city-scaled functions: employment agencies, cluster of shops, flooring/carpet shop, etc.
  - Located at middle-scaled grids

**Neighbourhood**
- Local-scaled grid:
  - Local-scaled / neighbourhood-scaled functions: baker, supermarket, corner shops, etc.
  - Located at local-scaled grids
RINGZONE AS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL BARRIER

dominance of the metropolitan-scaled grid

Ring West: 828 m

Ring West: 1150 m

Ring Noord: 988 m
THREE SCALE-LEVELS CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN THE CITY . . .

. . . AND EXPLAIN THE SUDDEN CHANGES IN THE URBAN LAYOUT
IT IS NOT JUST THE TANGIBLE CITY …

living inside the Ring vs. living outside the Ring

Liveability of areas in Amsterdam in 2016 (2004 = 100) (OIS Amsterdam, 2016)
THE SPATIAL FOOTPRINT OF TRENDS
living inside the Ring vs. living outside the Ring

Average grade on satisfaction of residents with their own neighbourhood on a scale 1-10 (CBS Amsterdam, 2017)

Overall participation, based on income, education, jobs and living situation compared to other areas in the Netherlands (CBS Amsterdam, 2017)
DISCONTINUITY OF THE INTANGIBLE STRUCTURES
living inside the Ring vs. living outside the Ring
DICHOTOMY

CENTRALISED CENTRE | DECENTRALISED PERIPHERY

... and the Ringzone as a mental and physical barrier in between
YESTERDAY
a dichotomised Amsterdam

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a gentrified Amsterdam

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MEANWHILE IN AMSTERDAM …
the dichotomy between centre and periphery is slowly taking over the city

Municipalities growing with + 1000 residents (comparison 2016-2017)
Source: CBS
WHAT ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY?
Structural Vision 2040: a spatial response to social issues?

> maintaining welfare of all residents
  Amsterdam as a whole should be a good city for all residents

> maintaining prosperity of all residents
  Amsterdam as a motor behind the national economy should stimulate the knowledge economy

+ public space of social and economic importance

“The Amsterdam Structural Vision must seduce and convince with a coherent narrative, a story in which the social benefit of spatial interventions is explained and justified in terms that are as clear as crystal...”

“... and a strong spatial integration between centre and periphery is crucial”
THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE RINGZONE

densification and transformation of the existing urban territory:
Ringzone as the most suitable area to develop into an attractive new part of Amsterdam
EVERYTHING STARTS WITH A DOT
Amsterdam is organised in projects

1 objective
4 thrusts
6 spatial tasks
17 building blocks
58 projects

+ a new scale and character for post-2008 urban investments
FRAGMENTATION TYPE I
inward-oriented islands - focused entirely on the city centre
LITTLE MANHATTAN

> inward-oriented island near Station Lelylaan
> oriented towards centre
> patchwork of exclusive public spaces
FRAGMENTATION TYPE II
inward-oriented islands - focused on the Ring and centre
LAAN VAN SPARTAAN

> inward-oriented island near Ring A10
> oriented towards Ring A10 (and centre)
> patchwork of exclusive public spaces
GENTRIFICATION AS A STATE-LED PROCESS
a means to drive neighbourhood change
THE TAKEOVER OF AMSTERDAM
the unbalanced relationship between centre and periphery

CENTRE
a gentrified centre

RINGZONE
a grey zone as mental and physical barrier

PERIPHERY
a disadvantaged periphery

... and the municipal strategy is actually reproducing the social and spatial hierarchies it sets out to address!
AMSTERDAM IS OUT OF BALANCE

a gentrified centre

a grey (Ring) zone

a disadvantaged periphery
AMSTERDAM IS NOT AN URBAN VILLAGE ANYMORE ...

... BUT DEALING WITH METROPOLITAN CHALLENGES
WHO OWNS THE CITY?

THE HAVES | THE HAVE NOTS

... do we want a high quality of living or a high return on investments?
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A CITY IN BALANCE - THE VISION

the unbalanced relationship between centre and periphery

end-product:
spontaneous emergence of vital urban life

+ welfare of all residents
  public space of economic importance

+ prosperity of all residents
  public space of social importance

a more equal relationship
between centre and periphery
(reorientation process)

continuity of vital urban life
THE LINK BETWEEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND VITAL URBAN LIFE

the first set of guiding principles

towards a high area integration

towards a generation of flows

towards local x global

towards a multiplicity of use
TOWARDS A SPATIAL SCOPE
radials as arteries of public life

75%
lives within 5 min walking distance from a radial (Nieuw-West)

92%
lives within 10 min walking distance from a radial (Nieuw-West)
TOWARDS A SPATIAL SCOPE
radials as arteries of public life
RADIALS INSIDE THE RING

centralisation

Jan van Galenstraat (S105)
Jan Evertsenstraat
Postjesweg
Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)
Heemstedestraat
Henk Sneevlietweg (S107)
Amstelveenseweg (S108)
Europaboulevard (S109)
A2 / S110
RADIALS INSIDE THE RING

centralisation
RADIALS OUTSIDE THE RING

decentralisation

Witzanghlaan

Bos en Lommerweg (S104)

Jan van Galenstraat (S105)

Parnassusweg

Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)
RADIALS OUTSIDE THE RING

decentralisation
ONE STRATEGY FOR ALL RADIALS?

yes: length, no: depth

Jan van Galenstraat (S105)

Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)

Henk Sneevlietweg (S107)
THE LENGTH OF RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

the second set of guiding principles
THE LENGTH OF RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE
the second set of guiding principles

the plinths of radials

the symmetry of radials

the car dominance of radials
RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

the need to focus on a specific area
THE DEPTH OF RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

the third set of guiding principles

continuity of public space

continuity of decentralised neighbourhoods
RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE: NIEUWWEST

the final spatial scope of the strategy
RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

the existing places of vital urban life in Nieuw-West
THE GARDEN CITIES OF NIEUW-WEST

8 Garden Cities - 8 central elements
NIEUW-WEST: DIFFERENT NEIGHBOURHOODS + ETHNIC GROUPS
in a district that was designed for a homogeneous group of society
THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION IN NIEUW-WEST

in a district that was designed for a homogeneous group of society

radials as traffic arteries, cutting off neighbourhoods

hidden squares, not taking advantage of existing flows

socially and culturally homogeneous neighbourhoods
THREE CATEGORIES OF STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

of which two will be explained by designs

minimalisation of the grey zone

periphery

centre

centralisation - decentralisation

periphery

centre

in between decentralisation

periphery

periphery
MINIMALISATION OF THE GREY ZONE

the Rembrandtpark in between centre and periphery
THE REMBRANDTPARK
causing a mental and physical barrier
THE REMBRANDTPARK vs OTHER PARKS
metropolitan parks vs neighbourhood parks
Although the Rembrandtpark is larger than the Vondelpark, the Vondelpark has much more to offer. Besides the amenities indicated on the map the Vondelpark contains multiple statues and other art objects. Moreover the Vondelpark is more diverse in terms of ecology. Almost all amenities are located directly along paths or close to the entrances of the park.

The Rembrandtpark only has a few amenities in the northern part of the park. The southern part is even more quiet and empty. The amenities and the open space in the park both show a lack of maintenance, which has consequences for the entire appearance of the park.

The municipality of Amsterdam did a survey in order to find out what people would like to have in the Rembrandtpark. It appears that people would appreciate more cafes; more activities; more attention to cleaning, safety and maintenance; a swimming pool; more playgrounds; more facilities such as a barbecue and benches.

At the moment 51% of the people who visit the Rembrandtpark primarily pass the park in order to reach another destination. Moreover, only 38% of the people indicated that they come to the park to get some activity, whereas 70% of the people uses this reason to go to the Vondelpark. What is even more striking is that 53% comes to the Vondelpark in order to meet friends, whereas this is only true for 11% of the visitors of the Rembrandtpark.

### AMENITIES

- Open Air Theatre
- Playground
- Rosearium
- Water playground
- Cafe
- Tennis fields
- Pavilion with museum and cafe
- Hostel
- School gardens
- Children’s farm
- Playground
- Cafe
- Music pavilion
- Open Air Theatre

### COMPARISON REMBRANDTPARK AND VONDELPARK

The amount of amenities
THE REMBRANDTPARK
the proposal
THE REMBRANDTPARK
the proposal
IN BETWEEN DECENTRALISATION

neighbourhoods segregated by green in-between space
A PARK OR IN-BETWEEN SPACE?

the local route towards the Sloterplas
THE ENTRANCES OF THE PARK
from the middle-scaled grid and the local-scaled grid
PARK ROUTE SLOTERPLAS
the proposal
A CITY IN BALANCE

towards a more equal relationship between centre and periphery in Amsterdam

EQUAL RELATIONSHIP
centre and periphery
+ Ringzone as liminal space

CONTINUITY
OF VITAL URBAN LIFE

SOCIAL IMPORTANCE
OF PUBLIC SPACE
maintaining welfare

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE
OF PUBLIC SPACE
maintaining prosperity
A CITY IN BALANCE

towards a more equal relationship between centre and periphery in Amsterdam

CENTRE
a gentrified centre

RINGZONE
a grey zone as mental and physical barrier

PERIPHERY
a disadvantaged periphery
“Amsterdam is doing well, very well. But: not everyone in the city benefits from this. [T]he dichotomy between the rich and poor, white and black and highly educated and lower educated is growing.”

“Halsema will need to give people living outside the Ring the feeling that she is their mayor as well.”

NRC Handelsblad, 28 June 2018
MY GRADUATION YEAR
the evolution of the story

A10 ring road

centre

Ringzone

periphery
CITY IN BALANCE

Thank you!

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