Chapter 1: Research Design

Chapter 2: Literature Survey

1. What are the dominant planning paradigms in contemporary urban development?
   The evolution of the urban planning practice is described along the lines of modernism and post-modernism. Assessing both schools of thought provides a frame of reference for assessing contemporary urban development. Both Keynesian and Neoliberal theories provide detailed and dynamic perspectives on complexity, and a perspective on the evolution from master planning to strategic planning.

2. What is the utility of strategic projects in contemporary urban development?
   Planning based on individual projects has become the principal instrument of modern-day urban development. Strategic projects change the image of cities and regions, producing spatial transformations through complex city- and projects management procedures. Strategic projects have become a dominant and much discussed feature in cities all over the world. As a result, the concept of a city as an economic engine, strategic projects are regarded as an instrument to contribute to the greater competitiveness of a city or region. This makes the relation between strategic and abstract ambitions and spatial projects essential.

3. What factors influence the realization of strategic projects?
   The steering model of de Leeuw (2002) provides a frame of reference with three elements that are taken into account in assessing the realization of strategic projects: (1) the context, (2) the process, and (3) the development authority. In addition the emphasis on goal orientation provided by Build et al (2004) results into the fourth and final aspect of the assessment of the realization of strategic projects: (4) attainment of ambitions.

Chapter 3: Empirical Study

5. What is the public leadership styles in the three selected strategic projects?
   - Case A: Rotterdam Central District. During the first round (1997 – 2001) the Urban Planning Department (dS+V) in Rotterdam focused on a high quality urban area. During the second round (2001 - 2006) the Public Works Department (GW) chose a more pragmatic leadership styles with a highly technical focus. This had far reaching consequences for the development of the Central Station – neglecting the urban area component. During a controversial non-collaborative period many technical aspects were dealt with and the responsibilities for the project were clearly divided. In the third round (2006 - present), which is still underway the Rotterdam Development Company (OBR) focuses predominantly on facilitating and enabling initiatives that come from the market.
   - Case B: Bilbao Abandoibarra. Concrete paradigm shifts have not occurred until now. On the one hand the development shows clear signs of a collaborative consensus building role through Bilbao Metroopoli-30. The proactive involvement of public entities in using urban development as an economic engine has been the basis of the planning of the city. On the other hand, the executive efforts that have been made through Bilbao Ria2000 are predominantly directive.
   - Case C: Paris Rive Gauche. The leadership styles was predominantly focusing on executing public initiatives from a directing perspective. The crisis at the end of the 80s resulted into public investments – resulting in the development of the French National Library and a social housing project of 450 units in 1997. Due to a lack of community involvement in the first period SEMAPA was forced to develop a system of active public involvement. The highly increased academic program, an additional social housing and added public space are considered an enhancement to the development authorities efforts to develop Paris Rive Gauche. Despite the incorporation of the communal opinion, the regulatory culture and the proactive development of public program have not caused a major shift in SEMAPA leadership styles.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

How can public leadership affect the realization of strategic projects? In every case a shift in public institutional attitude affected the realization of the strategic project. There is however not one best way to lead – or not one best attitude to have. The Paris Rive Gauche case provides an interesting insight concerning the contextual circumstances. Developing a strategic project through separate autonomous projects provides the means to react to changes in contextual circumstances. The Bilbao Abandoibarra case offers an understanding in the participation process, a widespread and shared sense of urgency is an important precondition. Joint problem-ownership units and speeds up the process of finding consensus for development. The Rotterdam Central District case provides an interesting consideration regarding the organizational culture of the development authority. It is commendable to assess the organizational culture of the development authority since it plays an important role in the realization of strategic projects. The advice is: know your own organization before interacting with others.