AESOP Track: Institutional change and regional transition

Governance and power in the metropolitan regions of the Randstad[1]

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Abstract: Urban growth and new patterns of urban flows demand new scales and forms of governance since administrative borders often do not reflect contemporary functional relations such as labour and housing markets. To address these issues, new arrangements for metropolitan governance have been developed across many countries. These arrangements can take many forms but often seek to reduce administrative fragmentation and manage complex issues beyond the municipal scale. These arrangements are often collaborative and negotiated; competences and processes of deliberation and decision-making are not closely defined by the rule of law. Their strategic capacity or powers are derived from 'resources', 'process' and 'meaning'. This paper compares these three types of power in the governance arrangements for two Dutch metropolitan areas: Amsterdam and Rotterdam The Hague.

Keywords: Metropolitan regions, governance, power, Randstad

1. Introduction

Trends in decentralisation and globalisation are increasingly testing the capacity of regional economies to adapt and exploit their competitive advantages, while also offering new opportunities for regional development. All levels of government are rethinking their strategies for building competitive, sustainable, inclusive urban territories (OECD, 2016). Effective relations between different levels of government, as well as greater participation by citizens, firms, education and research institutions, and other non-state actors are required in order to improve the delivery and quality of public services (OECD, 2016).

In practice there has been a rapid growth in consultation and coordination structures in response to the growing spatial interaction and integration at the supra-local level, including metropolitan regions (as well as other types of regions). The private sector and voluntary actors are increasingly participating in the management of territories. Government itself has become a multi-actor system as policy sectors (the proverbial silos) have their own agenda while the range of semi-autonomous governmental agencies add to administrative complexity (e.g. airport and port authorities, public transport providers and their managing authorities).

This has resulted in the pursuit for new governance arrangements for metropolitan areas. The OECD (2015) distinguishes between four broad categories of governance arrangements that can be found around the world (Figure 1): (1) informal/soft co-ordination, (2) inter-municipal authorities, (3) supra-municipal authorities and (4) special status of 'metropolitan cities' (Figure 1). Each of these arrangements is associated with different levels of competences and different types of instruments. These categories are not mutually exclusive: different

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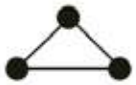
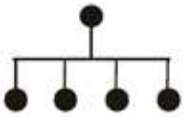
arrangements may coexist in the same country, and even within the same metropolitan area (OECD, 2015).[2] More than half of the metropolitan governance bodies across the world rely on informal or soft coordination arrangements.

Figure 1. Broad categories of metropolitan governance arrangements

Informal/soft co-ordination. Often found in instances of polycentric urban development, lightly institutionalised platforms for information sharing and consultation are relatively easy both to implement and to undo. They typically lack enforcement tools and their relationship with citizens and other levels of government tends to remain minimal.	
Inter-municipal authorities. When established for a single purpose, such authorities aim at sharing costs and responsibilities across member municipalities – sometimes with the participation of other levels of government and sectoral organisations. Multi-purpose authorities embrace a defined range of key policies for urban development such as land use, transport and infrastructure.	
Supra-municipal authorities. An additional layer above municipalities can be introduced either by creating a directly elected metropolitan government, or with the upper governments setting down a non-elected metropolitan structure. The extent of municipal involvement and financial capacity often determine the effectiveness of a supra-municipal authority.	
Special status of "metropolitan cities". Cities that exceed a legally defined population threshold can be upgraded into a special status as "metropolitan cities", which puts them on the same footing as the next upper level of government and gives them broader competencies.	

Source: OECD, 2015: 21

This paper examines the nature and powers of governance arrangements in two Dutch metropolitan areas both situated in the Randstad: Amsterdam and Rotterdam The Hague. To do so, it draws on the work of Healey (2006) and Haran (2010). Both Healey and Haran identify a triad of similar (but differing) factors influencing the decision environment. Healey draws on the work of Giddens (1984) in her analysis of institutional adaptation and change, identifying three key flows which shape the materialities and identities of actors and create the structural forces that they experience: 'material resources', 'authoritative resources' and 'ideas and frames of reference'. Meanwhile, Haran draws on the work of Lukes (1974) and distinguishes three dimensions to explain the way power is used to organize the relationships between the actors involved in regional governance: 'resources', 'process' and 'meaning'. In this paper, the powers derived from 'resources', 'process' and 'meaning' are used to structure the analysis and comparison of governance arrangements in the two Dutch metropolitan areas.

The *power of resources* has close ties to Healey's dimension of 'material resources'. For Healey, material resources refer to goods and assets, technologies, finance, labour power. Under the power of resources, Haran refers to information, knowledge and expertise, political access, control of money, rewards and sanctions including the mechanisms for their distributions like laws and regulations when referring to resources. In this paper, legal competences for different activities (e.g. spatial, transport and economic development) are also included under this form of power.

[2] For example, a metropolitan area may adopt one arrangement for a specific public service but another arrangement for other services.

The *power of process* is related to Healey's flow of authoritative resources, which includes regulatory power, the power to regulate the behaviour of others through formal and informal norms, codes, and laws (Healey, 2006). Haran (2010: 49) refers to the power of process as the power of actors to prevent certain issues from reaching collective decision-making agendas. This paper considers the power of process by analysing the actor network and the relations between them.

The *power of meaning* is closely linked to Healey's flow of ideas and frames of reference, the power to generate new imaginations and shape identities and values (Healey, 2006). According to Haran (2010), this power relates to the capacity to shape the perceptions and beliefs. In spatial planning this is closely related to visioning, the creation of 'images of the future' (see also Shipley, 2002) which is often intrinsically linked to visualisation and map-making or 'framing with images' (Faludi, 1996; Zonneveld, 2005). This power relates to how the structure of both metropolitan regions is perceived.

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on a mixture of primary and secondary sources, building on earlier related work by the authors (including Zonneveld & Spaans, 2014; Spaans & Zonneveld, 2015, 2016; Spaans & Stead, 2016). The paper is divided into six main parts. It continues with an overview of recent international trends in metropolitan governance. It then presents a summary of trends in sub-national governance in the Netherlands. This is followed by analyses of power in the metropolitan regions of Rotterdam The Hague (MRDH) (section 4) and Amsterdam (MRA) (section 5). It concludes with a reflection on the extent to which the powers of metropolitan governance in the two cases coincide and have experienced similar changes.

2. Trends in regional and metropolitan governance in an international perspective

2.1 Trends in regional governance

Building on the work of Lidström (2007) and Fürst (2009), a number of closely interlinked contemporary trends in regional governance can be identified across Europe and beyond (Stead & Pálné Kovács, 2016). These trends can be summarised under five headings: (1) redefining of the role of the nation-state; (2) the strengthening of lower levels of self-government; (3) increasing diversity, variation and even asymmetry of governance; (4) increasing marketization of the public domain; and (5) shifting rationales for intervention.

Redefining of the role of the nation-state

The establishment and gradual expansion of the EU has changed the role of national borders and has transferred decision-making powers both upwards and downwards: to the supranational and sub-national levels. European regional policy, primarily through the Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds, has contributed to the establishment of new regional bodies (or the strengthening of existing bodies) in various countries to administer European regional policy resources. At the same time, territorial management and planning approaches in member states are being increasingly shaped by European policies and initiatives (e.g. structural fund rules, environmental management and nature protection directives). Meanwhile, the role of the nation-state has been challenged from inside in some cases where demands for separatism or self-government have been made, motivated by regional culture or identity arguments.

Strengthening lower levels of self-government

In many European countries, examples can be found where functions have been decentralised from central government to local and regional levels of government. In some countries, this has happened as a result of the reorganisation of sub-national government, either by amalgamating municipalities or regions, or by creating new regional levels of self-government. Reforms in sub-national government have been enacted in various countries where comprehensive reforms of the whole structure of local and regional government have

taken place, including amalgamations of municipalities and regions, and the transfer of functions between different levels of government (see for example Galland & Enemark, 2013). In some cases, however, reforms to government structures and competences have not always been accompanied by corresponding shifts in funding allocations for a variety of reasons including the political difficulties or complexities of fiscal reforms (Maier, 1998; OECD, 2001).

Increasing diversity, variation and even asymmetry of governance and government
This tendency towards diversity can be seen as the result of empowerment of lower levels of government. Not only is the scope for variation between sub-national units greater, some units are also permitted to follow their own paths that may differ from the general national pattern. Various types of asymmetry can be distinguished: political, administrative and fiscal (Loughlin, 2007).[3]

Increasing marketization of the public domain
The increased involvement of non-state actors (including the private sector) is one of the central dimensions of the shifts from government to governance (see for example Kooiman, 1993). Many functions that were seen as typical public responsibilities during the peak of the welfare state era (when government rather than governance prevailed) have more recently either been privatized or are run jointly by public and private providers. Public organizations are increasingly taking an 'enabling' role where other actors are the providers of public services. In many countries, the welfare state has been reconfigured in ways that makes it less centralized and less redistributive, and more oriented to promoting the role of the market. Outsourcing is one of the ways in which non-state actors (including private and non-profit) are increasingly involved in delivering goods and/or services, a trend closely associated with the emergence of new public management. Governments can outsource the delivery of services in two ways: providing technical support (e.g. consultancy or back-office functions for government); and delivering goods or services directly to the end user on behalf of the government (e.g. public transport or waste disposal services).

Shifting rationales for intervention
Territorial governance is being redefined in the light of important societal challenges, new powers and responsibilities (see above) and new attempts to increase the societal relevance of planning. Across Europe, territorial governance is being recast as a way of managing the increasing interdependencies of actors involved in territorial development (Stead & Meijers, 2009). Because the competition for various goods and services often extends well beyond national boundaries, the pressure to introduce governance reforms to respond to these challenges has increased. Moreover, the internationalisation of trade, education and communication is also contributing to shifts in the way in which territorial governance is practiced and conceptualised.

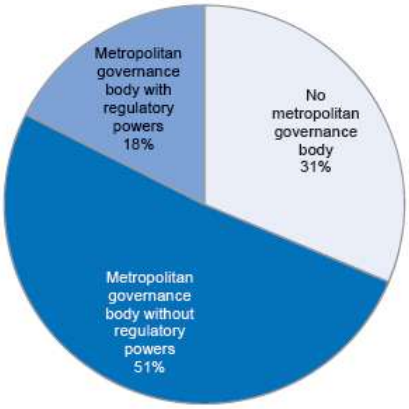
2.2 Trends in metropolitan governance

Metropolitan governance bodies – bodies aiming at organising responsibilities among public authorities in metropolitan areas (see also Figure 1) – are extremely common in most OECD countries. Very few countries have no metropolitan governance body at all (see Figure 2), although rarely are all metropolitan areas in a country covered by a metropolitan governance body. Since the 1990s, there has been renewed momentum in the creation of metropolitan governance bodies (or in the reform of existing ones). According to the OECD Metropolitan

[3] The 'special' and 'ordinary' regions in Italy provide one example of political asymmetry and diversity within a state. Different forms of territorial administration within the UK provide one example of administrative and fiscal asymmetries, where the three territorial offices representing Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have distinct relations and arrangements with London. Meanwhile, in Spain, the Basque Country and Navarre have more financial (and legal) autonomy than the rest of the country, and exhibit fiscal asymmetry.

Survey held in 2013 (Ahrend et al., 2014), more than two-thirds of OECD metropolitan areas currently have some kind of body or agency responsible for metropolitan governance (Figure 2). However, not all these bodies have many, or even any, legal powers.

Figure 2. Share of OECD metropolitan areas with a body responsible for metropolitan governance



Source: OECD, 2015

A majority of metropolitan governance bodies work on regional development, spatial planning and transport. However, considerable diversity exists in their legal status, composition, power, budget and staff, and consequently in their impact on policy design and implementation. Within OECD countries, around 80% of metropolitan governance bodies work on regional development, over 70% on transport and over 60% on spatial planning. More than half of metropolitan governance bodies are active in these three fields at the same time (OECD, 2015).

Metropolitan-wide planning can be achieved by either formal and informal institutions or a mix thereof depending on how sectoral competencies are divided. The effectiveness of either institutional approach depends to a large extent on the types of issues that a territory faces, the relationships among the actors, the resources at their disposal and, in general, the capacity to implement a common agenda. The policies of upper level governments, regional or national, have a major impact on the adoption of inter-municipal or metropolitan planning frameworks. (OECD, 2017: 142) The majority of metropolitan governance bodies in the OECD tend to involve forms of informal or soft co-ordination; less than a quarter of OECD metropolitan areas have governance bodies that impose regulations.

Links to political authority are directly tied to an entity's capacity or to raise funds independently and to establish binding regulation (the 'power of resources'). Informal forms of metropolitan governance can struggle to implement a common agenda where major trade-offs are required and have weaker connections to the citizens they govern in terms of democratic legitimacy and accountability. Despite these drawbacks, there are many reasons why metropolitan areas have chosen to adopt more informal approaches to metropolitan collaboration, including the critical role they play in establishing a common metropolitan agenda (OECD, 2017: 150).

Intergovernmental transfers are highly instrumental across OECD countries in establishing metropolitan forms of governance. In the Netherlands, however, such mechanisms are not currently employed. Here, the national government funds large projects of metropolitan importance directly particulary in the domain of transport and infrastructure, rather than being funded by metropolitan regions as these regions lack taxation tools.

3. Searching for regional governance in the Netherlands

Many of the general trends discussed above were also visible in the Netherlands. Here too, the 1990s marked an important point in the search for new forms of metropolitan governance. However, the quest to find regional and metropolitan governance structures started a few decades earlier while becoming highly frenetic in the years after 1990. Quite typical for the Dutch case is the fact that more than one spatial scale was involved: the level of the entire Randstad as well as the level of its two constituting 'wings' and the urban regions within these wings.

3.1 First efforts to find 'suitable' regional governance arrangements

The present administrative structure of the Netherlands goes back to the 1848 constitution which defines two levels below the national level: provinces and municipalities. In those days there were 11 provinces and more than 1,200 municipalities. Today, by comparison, there are 12 provinces and 355 municipalities in the Netherlands. Not surprisingly whether municipalities could effectively deal with spatial development became an issue in the years to come. Discussions gained momentum during the first decades of the twentieth century as urbanisation started to become a regional phenomenon through suburbanisation and rapid urbanisation, in particular in industrial and mining areas and in the west of the country. From the 1910s onwards strong pleas for regional spatial planning were made, in particular after 1924 when a large international conference on this subject took place in Amsterdam. As at that stage there were still more than 1,000 municipalities, planners called for giving planning competences to the provinces. However, national government regarded this as far too centralistic (Faludi & Van der Valk, 1994). Regional planning issues had to be dealt with by (voluntary) cooperation between municipalities.

After the Second World War the Netherlands embarked on a long quest to find suitable governance arrangements, most specifically for metropolitan regions (Needham, 2014: 94-98). For instance, the national so-called Second Planning Report of 1966 proposed to add a fourth administrative layer in selected urban regions. This asymmetric solution (only applicable in a part of the country) was eight years later followed by a proposal to create a fourth level across the entire country through 44 districts (*'rayons'*) with planning and implementation competences. This idea was soon abandoned as in 1976 a new coalition government proposed to maintain the three levels of administration but to regionalize the middle – provincial – layer: from 11 to 26 provinces. In follow-up proposals the number went down to 24 and 17 respectively. Massive opposition from politicians, administrators, academics and civil society at large eventually led to the withdrawal of all legislative proposals in 1983. Regional governance had to be achieved through municipal cooperation and the capacity to do so had to come from the application of the so-called Joint Regulations Act (WGR: *Wet Gemeenschappelijke Regelingen*) of which a first version dates from 1950. What this act does is opening up the possibility of cooperation between provinces, municipalities and water boards, but without directly elected councils: the watershed with a full-blown administrative layer. After the collapse of the plans to establish 'new style' provinces a new WGR came into force on January 1, 1985. A principle objective was that all the present cooperation provisions had to be bundled and integrated to foster effectiveness and transparency, with the provinces in a kind of supervisory role. This 'conclusion' (i.e. intermunicipal cooperation) would only hold for a few years.

3.2 Opening Pandora's box once more

The economic recession of the 1980s particularly effected the four largest cities of the Randstad. Mid-1988 government decided to install a heavy-weight advisory committee to evaluate policies with an effect on the social-economic position of these cities, the so-called Montijn Committee. One area this committee specifically looked at was local governance. The main conclusion was that voluntary municipal cooperation based on the WGR was insufficient. The advice what to do was twofold and essentially multiscalar: (1) create four

regional municipalities in the Randstad; and (2) create an Administrative Platform Randstad. How the second proposal was taken up we will discuss in the next sub-section.

On the basis of this advice and a range of other studies and advisory reports, government decided in 1993 for the top-down creation of so-called city-provinces in seven regions, including Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague (the other regions were Utrecht, Arnhem-Nijmegen, Eindhoven and the Twente region in the east of the country). This would have to be achieved in a processual sort of way, instead in one single step. The route was laid down in the 1994 'Framework Law Administration in Change' stipulating the establishment of *mandatory* municipal cooperation bodies in the seven regions in preparation of full-blown city-provinces. The temporary regional constructs acquired the rather unattractive name of 'framework law areas' (*kaderwetgebieden*).

How the situation would have to look like was clearified in a 1995 legislative proposal concerning the Rotterdam region: the new Rotterdam city-province would be formed by existing municipalities and the creation of new municipalities by splitting up Rotterdam. A similar trajectory was foreseen for Amsterdam. The idea that both Rotterdam and Amsterdam would 'vanish' led to a massive civil society uprise though. Making use of local referendum regulations a referendum was organized in both cities. The liquidation of the Rotterdam and Amsterdam municipalities was rejected with a vast majority (Lambregts et al., 2008). Initially government wanted to push through the idea of city-provinces but this idea had to be abandoned as parliamentary support in the end proved to be lacking, even in the government coalition.

In the light of history it did not come as a surprise that government changed to the trajectory of intermunicipal cooperation once more. By January 1, 2006 the Framework Law was withdrawn and a new Joint Regulations Act came into force. This version of the act provided additional competences in the field of spatial planning and public transport for the seven areas mentioned above plus one region in the south of the Limburg province. They acquired a highly bureaucratic, technical sort of name: WGR plus regions. The new competences for the public bodies created by WGR plus included the making of mandatory regional structure plans (*structuurplannen*). However, this latter competence did not last very long. In 2008 a new Spatial Planning Act came into force which took away the plan-making competences of the WGR plus regions (Janssen-Jansen, 2011: 264). Parliament considered the democratic legitimization of WGR plus decision-making as rather poor.[4]

This in itself shows the vulnerable political basis of asymmetric solutions which sit somewhere between the standard, countrywide administrative layers. For this reason it should not come as a surprise that just after eight years after they came into existence all WGR plus regions were abolished by January 1, 2015. A major reason for giving back competences to provinces and municipalities was the perceived lack of democratic legitimacy of the WGR plus regions (OECD, 2017) although this was not a dominant issue when they were created. Responsibilities for transport and related funding from national government were returned to the provinces, except for the provinces of South-Holland and North-Holland, which they had officially lost since the 2005 WGR plus Act. In South-Holland the areas of the two WGR plus regions were combined to form the Rotterdam The Hague Transport Authority (see next section). The Amsterdam WGR plus region, without any change in its perimeters, became the Transport Authority Amsterdam (TAA). Both transport authorities are mandatory forms of cooperation sharing the same legal basis. Both form the commissioning authority for public transport by bus, tram and underground railway (excluding the services of the national railway company). They also finance improvements to the regional infrastructure for goods vehicles, cars, bicycles and public transport, so investments in physical infrastructure. Both

[4] https://www.denederlandsegrondwet.nl/id/vilqfxp1clz9/intergemeentelijke_samenwerking (accessed June 12, 2019)

entities are strictly briefed to limit their activities to transport and in no way expand their actions to other areas. As we will see in the next two sections issues outside (public) transport are addressed to network-type arrangements called metropolitan regions (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Location of the two metropolitan regions in the Randstad

Source: MRDH (2014): 7

3.3 The emergence and downfall of Randstad cooperation bodies

Since the Randstad concept was invented as a planning concept at the end of the 1950s it was national government which was in charge of a spatial strategy for this area. However, in the early 1970s some sort of cooperation between the provinces of North-Holland, South-Holland and Utrecht started under an acronym which only civil servants can invent: Dripo (a Dutch acronym for 'three provinces'). In 1975 it was the South-Holland executive taking the initiative to broaden and deepen the cooperation by suggesting that also the four main Randstad cities should participate. However, the other two provinces feared that these cities would dominate. North-Holland was anxious that Amsterdam would reach out to the Green Heart (Quist, 1993: 30-32). This proposal and 'Dripo' in general faded into oblivion after a while.

Amidst the economic recession of the 1980s cooperation between the three Randstad provinces picked up again in various domains from 1985 onwards, including spatial planning (Quist, 1993: 49). The province of Flevoland started to participate as an observer as its main city Almere as a new town played a key role for the northern part of the Randstad. In 1994 this province became full member of *Regio Randstad*, since 1991 the official name for cooperation in the domain of planning (Lambregts & Zonneveld, 2004: 314). As an expression of a desire to deepen the cooperation the Randstad provinces decided to base their cooperation under this banner on the Joint Regulations Act.

Cooperation in the Randstad seemed to intensify even more when as of September 2002 not only the four main Randstad cities but also the WGR plus city-regions around these cities joined Regio Randstad. The joint provisions arrangement was adapted and from that moment

cooperation was not only multi-actor but also multi-level, involving twelve actors. Cooperation had a twin objective: (1) to strengthen the international competitive position of the Randstad and (2) to improve quality of life (Lambregts et al., 2008: 50).

This expansion from four to twelve Regio Randstad actors could be regarded as a logical consequence of yet another Randstad organization: the Administrative Committee for the Randstad (BCR: *Bestuurlijke Commissie Randstad*). This rather giant negotiation platform included the twelve Randstad authorities and no less then five ministries. It was created in 1997 to renew the covenants between national government, provinces, urban regions and municipalities on housing allocation and production (Dijkink et al., 2001: 30). Later on its tasks became much wider: not only the coordination of central government's spatial investments in the Randstad but also to discuss Randstad-input for the fifth national planning report which would see the light in 2001 (Lambregts & Zonneveld, 2004: 314).

Changes in government coalitions, in nearly all cases preceded by national elections, played an important role in the changing perceptions how to (re)organize regional governance as discussed above. Likewise changing perceptions about the importance of the Randstad for the country as a whole and the perimeters and internal structure of the Randstad had similar repercussions. Mid-2002 a new coalition government took office which was less convinced of the need to put the level of the Randstad at centre stage (Lambregts et al., 2008: 51). The Randstad was divided in four programme areas and concrete policies and investment strategies were coordinated with the authorities in each of these four regions (Amsterdam; Utrecht; Rotterdam The Hague; and the Green Heart). However, a later coalition government again attached greater importance to the Randstad. Warned by ever lower rankings of the Randstad in international comparisons it established a high level committee which was asked to advise on its administrative structure. The assumption was that administrative bustle ('*bestuurlijke drukte'*) was seriously undermining all efforts to improve the competitive position of the Randstad. Early 2007, in a few months time, this committee issued the daring advice to create one single metropolitan government for the entire Randstad that would take over a range of (mainly planning) competences of the provinces and the four WGR plus regions.

Another coalition than the one which established the Randstad advisory committee set aside this strongly formulated advice. Weary of governmental reform in general, support for this negative decision came from several research and advisory bodies. In 2006 the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research published an elaborate report showing that the Randstad is not a single, integrated urban region but on the whole is formed by two sub-regions (Ritsema van Eck et al., 2006). About a year later the OECD acknowledged that although the Randstad may represent a relevant scale in relation to certain issues, it did not consider the introduction of a Randstad authority a necessity and instead favoured the strengthening of the governance capacity of city-regions (OECD, 2007 as discussed by Lambregts et al., 2008: 52). On top of that at parliamentary request, the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research (De Vries & Evers, 2008; see also Evers & De Vries, 2013) made a comparison between the governance within the Randstad and how this is organized in a (small) sample number of other urban regions: the general assumption is that the situation in the Randstad is far worse when compared with examples abroad. The assessment agency concluded that this is definitely not the case. In 2008 the government advisory council on spatial planning recommended that the creation of coalitions around strategic projects is far more effective than an overall restructuring of the administrative system (VROM-Raad, 2008).

By the time this latter advice was published the twelve partners of Region Randstad already took the decision to end their cooperation body by January 1, 2008. Two dominant reasons reasons are named in a frank letter by its chairman, the Crown's Commissioner of the province of South-Holland (Franssen, 2007): (1) Randstad Region partners are becoming ever less prepared to prioritize the Randstad scale; and (2) the present organisation is too heavy

and too 'administrative' while the shared ambitions are too weak. The letter also points out that there is no match between how Region Randstad works and how government organizes programmes which seek to support the economy of the Randstad. Under the so-called Randstad Urgent Programme which started in 2007 all (35) projects are supervised by high level administrative duos: one administrator from national government and one from local government, a sort of implicit reply to the VROM-Raad advice.

Since the disappearance of Region Randstad in 2008 there is no longer a cooperation body at this level. However, 'Region Randstad' is still used as a label for various joint lobbying and promotion activities by the four Randstad provinces in Brussels.

4. Metropolitan region Rotterdam The Hague

4.1 Introduction

In the early 2000s, the southern Randstad or South Wing became conceptualized as one of the urban networks in the Netherlands. This new national planning concept meant that groups of cities could form networks tied together by functional relations, physical infrastructure and connected government. When the director of the Department of Spatial Planning and Transport in the province of South-Holland assumed office in 2002, he set up the South Wing Studio (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*). His opinion was that the South Wing was suffering from an abundance of plans, strategies and fierce competition between local planning actors and municipalities and that an institution which would be independent from daily political routine and which would have time to reflect would help the province as well as other planning actors to develop a regional frame of reference for decision-making (Balz & Zonneveld, 2015: 877). The focus of this Studio was design-oriented and helpful in bringing relevant stakeholders informally together and introducing them to the level of scale of the southern Randstad.

Around the same time (in 1997) an informal multi-level government cooperation in the southern Randstad was set up (Dijkink et al., 2001). Members included the province, the two main cities, the two WGR plus city-regions and three WGR regions. This Administrative Platform South Wing (*Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel)* covered the city-regions of Rotterdam and The Hague with extensions towards Leiden to the north and Dordrecht to the south to improve the coordination of urban development in the area. Its aim was to undertake preparatory work for a new covenant between the region and national government regarding investments in infrastructural and other spatial projects in the southern Randstad (Dijkink et al., 2001: 30). In 2000 the decision was taken to make the Platform a permanent structure supported by a small secretariat located in the House of the Province of South-Holland in The Hague. It did not have decision-making or executive tasks, but formed the setting for negotiations with central government in investments in which the province had the strongest agenda-setting role (Spaans & Zonneveld, 2016).

The Metropolitan region Rotterdam The Hague or MRDH (*Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag)* arose in 2010 when national government announced the abolishment of the WGR plus city-regions. As the WGR plus city-regions were also the transport authorities for their territory and as such received considerable national budgets for public transport, the announced abolishment initiated a quest for these budgets and intensified the power play between municipalities and province. A new arrangement had to be set up to replace the city-regions. One option was that the infrastructure tasks would go to the province. The mayors of both Rotterdam and The Hague chose to block off this route as this meant that a large central government budget would find its way annually to the province. The Metropolitan region placed itself at the forefront. In the law regarding the abolishment of the WGR plus regions, national government indicated that because of the complexity in the Randstad wings the new transport authority would cover the geographical area of the Metropolitan region Rotterdam The Hague. But the exact elaboration was left to municipalities and provinces. This resulted in the Metropolitan region becoming the transport authority and resulted in a formal

arrangement: fixed perimeters and formal duties (which go hand in hand) but – like the city-regions before that – without an elected council. In December 2014 a joint provision was signed for the transport authority. On January 1, 2015 all eight Dutch city-regions were abolished and the MRDH formally appointed by central government as the Transport Authority.

As MRDH gained in power, the informal cooperation for the larger area in the southern Randstad – the Administrative Platform South Wing – repositioned itself in 2016 as Network Southern Randstad focussing on strategic spatial-economic issues and cooperation with national government on national public investments in this field (Zuidvleugel, 2015).

As said the current Metropolitan region Rotterdam The Hague (MRDH) was formed by the integration of the two former WGR plus city-regions of Rotterdam and The Hague. The MRDH cuts a large chunk out of the territory of the province of South-Holland as it houses more than 60% of the population and 36% of the land area. The geographical area that spans 23 municipalities which vary considerably in population size and nature. It covers a metropolitan authority tasked with transport and economic development responsibilities for this territory. One of the core ambitions of the MRDH authority is to bring the economies of Rotterdam and The Hague closer together while generating growth and well-being (OECD, 2016).

4.2 The power of resources

The previous section explained that the MRDH emerged as a new metropolitan-scale institution with the ambition of becoming the transport authority but at the same time it also embraced additional ambitions. While in the stage of emergence the MRDH envisaged an even broader scope, it narrowed down to a twofold focus: transport authority and economic development. The broader scope at the start covered three coherent strategies (1) to exploit the potential of being a single daily urban system by improving internal connectivity; (2) to make better use of, and invest in the knowledge and innovation potential of the region; and (3) to fully exploit the wide diversity in amenities, services and landscape assets of the region (Meijers et al., 2013).

When we compare the two pillars of the MRDH, the Transport Authority (TA) is much more formalised and with a considerable higher budget that the ecomonic development pillar. The MRDH's budget is composed of public transport subsidies from national government[5] and contributions from the participating municipalities for the economic development pillar. Important to stress is that MRDH has only limited possibilities to broaden its financial resources as it is not allowed to levy taxes or impose other fees or charges. In the Netherlands most taxes are collected at the national level and then redistributed to the local and provincial levels. Municipalities collect approximately one sixth of their budget by levying local taxes.

In 2019 the budget in the field of public transport was 0.74 billion euro (the budget is not indexed which means that its value is going down due to inflation), which is used both for operation of public transport and investment in new infrastructure. The Transport Authority pillar employs 56 full-time staff in 2019[6]. Legal competences and financial resources in the field of economic development are much more limited, which is also reflected in a more limited staffing: 12 full-time staff members in 2019. For this task the MRDH does not possess any 'hard tools' as its responsibilities are based on a voluntary agreement among member municipalities without any enforcement mechanisms. The annual budget of about 4.8 million

[5] Largely based on the Broad goal-oriented grant for transport (BDU or *Brede Doeluitkering* in Dutch) which is a financing programme for regional traffic and transport projects funded by central government.

[6] Data from Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag (2018) Begroting 2019 en meerjarenbeeld 2020-2022 Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag, Rotterdam: MRDH.

euro (for 2019) comes primarily from the municipal authorities, in the form of a fixed amount per resident from each member municipality: 2.58 euro in 2019. According to the OECD (2016) such a funding arrangement for the economic pillar of the MRDH is common across the OECD and that its per capita budget is comparable to other informal metropolitan associations without regulatory powers, but that in terms of staffing the MRDH has a smaller secretariat compared to other OECD metropolitan governance bodies that oversee a similar population size. A remark is however that the MRDH has a more limited set of responsibilities.

4.3 The power of process

Shifts in leadership form an important underlying reason for the emergence of the MRDH. For a long time there have been tensions between the three major appointed administrators – the mayors of the two main cities of Rotterdam and The Hague and the Crown's Commissioner of the province of South-Holland[7]. This did not help to function as a cohesive policy network (Spaans & Zonneveld, 2015). When in 2008 in both Rotterdam and The Hague new mayors were appointed matters changed drastically politically. Although they were from two different political parties they got on very well which their predecessors certainly could not. It is through them that there is now the MRDH as a genuine politically approved informal governance arrangement (Spaans & Zonneveld, 2016). Although the MRDH and the province of South-Holland had a problematic relationship at the start, their co-operation has improved since then (OECD, 2016: 12). As both governance bodies each have their own responsibilities in a partly overlapping geographical area they simply have to cooperate in economic and transport planning. After the abolishment of the WGR plus city-regions in 2015, the Province of South-Holland and the MRDH signed a management agreement in 2016 and renewed and refined this in 2018, which focuses on the common fields of traffic and transport and economic business climate. The Network Southern Randstad complements this cooperation.

The MRDH has been established in a formal joint arrangement under the Joint Regulations Act of 2016 (MRDH, 2018a). The voluntary, bottom-up collaboration among municipalities is a positive, distinctive feature of the MRDH compared to other OECD metropolitan regions built around two large cities (OECD, 2016: 148). The organization mirrors how provinces and municipalities are organized: a General Board and an Executive Board which cover both pillars of the MRDH. The current organisation of the MRDH reflects the balance between the two major cities on the one hand and the smaller municipalities on the other. The Executive Board includes the mayors of Rotterdam and The Hague (who act as chair and vice-chair) and representatives from three other municipalities. and prepares decisions for the General Board.

The mayors of the two major cities rotate every two years as the chair of the General Board which is the highest decision-making body of the MRDH. This body comprises 27 members and meets four or five times a year. Representatives in the General Board have a varying number of votes, depending on the population size of the municipality they represent[8]. Decisions within the general management require an absolute majority of votes, but given the Dutch culture of political consensus, it is generally expected that most decisions will be taken unanimously. Interesting is that the two major cities together do not have the majority of the votes although they represent more than half of the inhabitants of the MRDH (OECD, 2016: 145). The hesitation of some of the smaller municipalities to join the MRDH due their fear of being overruled by the two cities was taken away by this. Member municipalities are represented in different administrative committees.

[7] Mayors and Crown's Commissioners are appointed and not elected in the Netherlands.

[8] Each representative of Rotterdam has 15 votes, each representative of The Hague has 13 votes, the representatives of Delft, Zoetermeer and Westland have 9 votes and so on, up to the smallest municipalities, whose representatives have 2 votes each (OECD, 2016: 145).

Although the MRDH as a governance body is not directly elected, it can be considered as indirect legitimacy: bottom-up from the local level. Residents of the MRDH are given the right to speak at MRDH meetings. Participation is possible if the resident has an interest in a topic that is on the agenda of the meeting[9].

4.4 The power of meaning

The MRDH deliberately restricted itself to the policy fields of transport and economic development. Responsibilities of the Transport Authority MRDH relate to public transport in its territory, while the province has competences (and related budgets) for provincial infrastructure (roads and waterways). As OECD (2016) puts it: economic development is a competency of the province but it is also a field of work of the MRDH. The responsibilities for spatial planning however have remained a function of the province. The initial sensitivities between province and MRDH made probably had as a result that the MRDH did not want to give fire to any additional potential problems. It therefor did and still does not develop any development visions on maps for its territory; if any they take the form of pictures and text than maps (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Meaning of MRDH

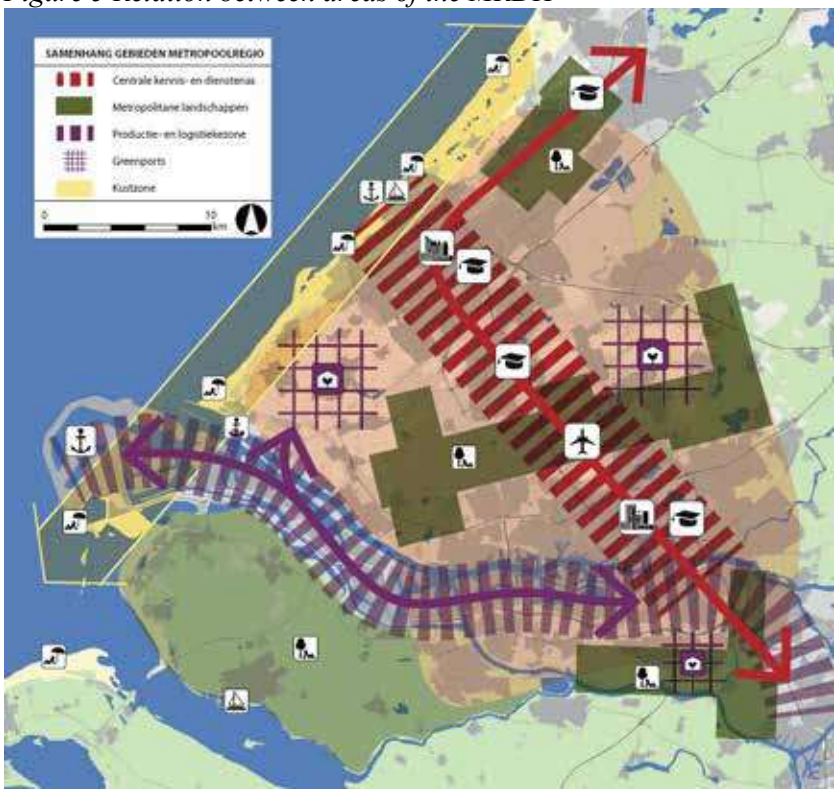
Source: MRDH, 2018b: 8

Publications on the website of the MRDH hardly include any visualisations and those included refer to visual analyses at in the MRDH Atlas (MRDH, 2014). Meaning in the sense of 'framing with images' is not applied by MRDH. The aim of the MRDH to increase economic growth by fostering economic integration of the region, may need spatial planning policies by the province that contribute to this goal by providing sufficient space for the economy to grow (OECD, 2016: 125). Achieving these ambitions require that policy areas of both MRDH and province are well co-ordinated. Figure 5 shows an attempt by the MRDH to stress the importance of such an integration by relating economic clusters to each other. But

[9] https://mrdh.nl/bestuur (accessed on April 23, 2019).

this type of visualisation is often a one-off use and is not used in external framing of the MRDH area.

Figure 5 Relation between areas of the MRDH



Source: MRDH, 2014: 80

5. Metropolitan Region Amsterdam and Transport Authority Amsterdam

5.1 Introduction

Cooperation in metropolitan regions is often multi-scalar as we have seen above. The Amsterdam region is an obvious example as there are two cooperation structures which cut different slices out of the wider area spatially connected to Amsterdam while they also have different 'powers'. First there is the region covered by the Transport Authority Amsterdam (TAA). Legally it is the successor of the WGR plus city-region Amsterdam, terminated on December 31, 2016. The new entity grounded on the Joint Regulations Act took over. The boundaries did not change: the area includes 15 municipalites, all within the province of North-Holland. The land area is 38% of the territory of this province and it houses roughly 54% of its population (about 1.5 million), percentages which are comparable with those of the MRDH.

The second, much larger entity is the Metropolitan Region Amsterdam or MRA (*Metropoolregio Amsterdam*). Having a population of about 2.5 million it is located in two provinces: North-Holland and Flevoland. Based on a covenant signed on March 6, 2017, its membership includes 32 municipalities, the authorities of the two provinces just mentioned as well as (and that is highly interesting) the Transport Authority. The MRA covers a large area: 59% of the geographical area of North-Holland falls within the MRA and no less than 77% of its population. The figures for Flevoland are 42% (area) and 69% (population). Comparable with the MRDH is that the Transport Authority Amsterdam falls within the OECD category known as 'inter-municipal authorities' while the MRA obviously fits within the category of informal or soft co-ordination.

The MRA and even more the TAA has a track record in cooperation going back in time. The MRA cooperation started in the late 1990s under the banner of North Wing Consultation (*Noordvleugeloverleg*). After seven high-level conferences joined by administrators from the entire area, the structure was consolidated in its present, elaborate form. The smaller scaled Informal Agglomeration Amsterdam Consultation (*Informeel Agglomeratie Overleg Amsterdam*) started about 30 years earlier, in 1969 (Van der Lans, 2006). It went through successive periods of ever stronger cooperation, each phase indicated by a slightly different name, eventually leading to the present legally based stage of Transport Authority (see Lambregts et al., 2008; Haran, 2010; Janssen-Jansen, 2011; Levelt & Janssen-Jansen, 2013; OECD, 2016; 2017).

5.2 The power of resources

If we compare MRA with the TAA then obviously the first one is lighter in the sense of not having a statutory basis. In theory the cooperation within MRA could also be based on the Joint Regulations Act, but politically this was not acceptable amongst its membership (Stadsregio Amsterdam, 2016: 5). In essence the MRA is a network although one could argue like the OECD does (OECD, 2017: 153) that it is also a political body as it is based on a political agreement, discussed and accepted amongst all its members, meaning 32 municipalities and two provincial councils. Although 'light' the predecessor of the MRA, the North Wing Consultation was considerably lighter as there was no written agreement at all. Its main resource was based on *process*: meetings between administrators on a regular basis leading to several political agreements (we will come back to this below). The fact that this kind of cooperation has continued for nearly two decades and is politically formalised in a covenant basically means that although MRA lacks the 'power to implement' (OECD 2017: 157) it created a valuable resource namely trust.

Having no power to implement means MRA cooperation is 'cheap' in financial terms. Organisationally the cooperation is based on annual contributions from its members. As specified in the 2017 covenant the municipal members contribute € 1.5 per inhabitant. While in the MRDH this is 72% more, in the MRA also the provinces contribute. North-Holland pays the same as Amsterdam and Flevoland the same as its biggest town, Almere. Both North-Holland and Amsterdam also contribute extra to the Economy Platform, one out of three platforms (see below). For 2019 this leads to a budget of about € 8.25 million (MRA, 2018). About a quarter of this budget is needed for running the MRA bureau. The total number of staff is limited: about 12 fte (MRA, 2016; 2018). As the MRA is not a legal entity all staff members work on the basis of secondment from municipalities, especially Amsterdam. There is a strong multiplier effect in terms of manpower. According to a rough estimate (MRA, 2016) about 60 tot 80 fte across all MRA members are working on the implementation of the so-called MRA agenda, plus the cooperation itself like the preparation of meetings (see below).

The transport authorities in the Amsterdam region and the Rotterdam The Hague region have similar competences. The budgets are different though. Annually the TAA receives about € 390 million from national government, which is much less compared with the MRDH as the latter region has a far more complex urban structure. Every year there is about € 4.5 million available for research while the TAA bureau (mainly staff) costs about € 7.5 million (VA, 2018: 20) which is about four times more compared with the MRA. This means that about 3% of the annual budget is not directly spend on (public) transport and infrastructure.

Both the MRA and the TAA spend some of their budget on research. The MRA focuses on analyses of the housing market, the state and structure of the MRA economy and on energy transition. The TAA has a much larger research budget and the focus is primarily on accessibility studies. One particular project is about the modelling of (future) transport called VENOM: Traffic Model Metropolitan Region Amsterdam (VENOM, 2016). Interestingly the research area is not the TAA region but the MRA area. The spatial logic is obvious: the TAA

area does not cover the functional urban area of Amsterdam while the MRA area does much more strongly. This is reflected in the VENOM partnership which is currently in its third period (2017-2020). Next to the TAA, partners include the two provinces involved in the MRA, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the municipality of Amsterdam plus ten other local, regional and national partners.

5.3 The power of process

This particular power or capacity is about how shared policy agendas come about and how the TAA as well as the MRA creates authoritative capacity within their constituencies as well as within their broader political context. As both entities are situated between constitutionally defined administrative levels with directly elected councils, a rather crucial issue concerns how legitimacy and accountability is organized while at the same time dominance of Amsterdam is mitigated. The latter is a more sensitive issue compared with the MRDH as Amsterdam in terms of population and economy heavily dominates the MRA and even more the TAA.

Comparable with the MRDH the TAA has a General Board (called Regional Council) as well as an Executive Board. The Regional Council has 51 members. Although the number of seats a municipality has is related to population size the Joint Provision uses a gliding scale. While more than half the population of the TAA lives in Amsterdam, the number of seats in the Council is less than a quarter. Members are appointed by the municipalities through their councils and the majority is recruited from these councils. The Council decides on the distribution of the financial funds across (four) programmes and projects. The Daily Board is rather small, with four members. The chair is an alderman of Amsterdam, holding a portfolio which includes transport and mobility.

The MRA has what the OECD calls a 'flexible geometry' (OECD, 2016: 177). Concrete activities and work processes rest on platforms. Of the three platforms the Transport Platform works quite exceptionally: most MRA municipalities do not participate in this platform, only those parties which participate in the TAA. The municipalities which do not participate in the TAA are represented by the two provinces. The MRA Mobility Platform obviously functions as a kind of interface between the MRA and the TAA. Some projects falling under this platform are not even limited to the perimeters of the MRA, in particular a project called MRA-E which seeks to stimulate electric transport in all municipalities not only in North-Holland and Flevoland, but also neighbouring Utrecht.

The Economy Platform focuses on employment and competitiveness. One of its main feats it inherited from the period of the North Wing Conferences which preceded the MRA cooperation, namely the decision made at the fourth, 2005 North Wing conference to establish a platform to create a joint policy on the development of locations for offices and trade and industry: PLABEKA (*Platform Bedrijven en Kantoren*). As municipalities in the Netherlands tend to compete with each other in this area (Needham, 2007: 74-75), this is no mean achievement. Connected to the Platform Economy albeit not a genuine MRA 'institute' is the Amsterdam Economic Board. The composition follows the classic triple helix formula. It has an advisory role both for the Amsterdam municipality as well as the MRA.

Most MRA municipalities are represented only indirectly in the Platform Economy as nearly all municipal members participate on behalf of one of the seven MRA *sub-regions*. This implies not only that MRA co-operation is characterised by a flexible geometry, but is also multiscalar. Sub-regions play a crucial role in the Territory Platform which of all three platforms has the broadest focus. However, the platform does not call itself (in translation) Spatial Planning (see for this interpretation OECD, 2017: 149). The Dutch equivalent (*ruimtelijke ordening*) has the connotation of defining land-use through zoning plans. As this is a statutory competence this could not be dealt with by a network organization as the MRA. However, within the Territory Platform municipalities in MRA seek to coordinate house

building programmes, on the level of the sub-regions as well as on the level of the entire MRA. This is roughly the housing equivalent of PLABEKA. Both arrangements obviously have spatial implications, but the legally binding decisions on land-use are taken by the individual municipal councils according to the credo to be found on many MRA webpages and in published material: no competences are transferred from the participating authorities to the MRA.

There are connections between the three platforms. These are dealt with by four so-called portfolio consultations, their members are recruited from the ranks of municipal aldermen as well as the two provincial executives. The domains covered are: Sustainability; Building and Housing; Landscape; Art, Culture and Heritage.

5.4 The power of meaning

What capacity do the TAA and the MRA have to shape perceptions and beliefs, both within the partnerships as well as the outside world? In its publicity material the TAA emphasizes its *functional* relevance: 'working for a region in which people can quickly and easily reach their destination' (TAA, n.d.). Interestingly, if one visits the website and clicks on 'area' the menu does not only show the municipal members but also the MRA which suggests that the TAA is not just active within the perimiters of the area formed by its 15 municipal members but in a much wider area, forming an integrated mobility system.

As the TAA is a mandatory form of cooperation, there is less need to work on its profile and relevance. In contrast, the MRA is a voluntary sort of organization with a much wider focus and a much bigger area compared with the TAA. There is therefor much more needed to show relevance, in particular to keep its membership together. In such a context framing becomes particular important: creating perspectives how to understand or perceive a particular, complex situation (Rein & Schön, 1993), in this case an area. This can be done through words and images.

To start with the first, two particular concepts are important. Going through the material produced within the context of the MRA, there is a particular emphasis on the Metropolitan Area as a *daily urban system*, a space forming a coherent area for its inhabitants.[10] This obviously suggests it is only 'natural' to regard this area as a logical object of policy cooperation.

The second highly relevant concept here is the conception of the North Wing of the Randstad as Metropolitan Region Amsterdam. At the 7th North Wing Conference, December 2007 the decision for the name change was taken, only two months after the decision to abolish the Randstad Region. Both events were connected to each other. North Wing obviously is linked to Randstad as the concept originates from a discussion about its structure and morphology. Doing away with the Randstad paved the way for another 'label', much more attractive due to the connotation of an area being a metropolis: a world class regional city, based on Amsterdam.

Also images play a role in the perception of the MRA. Early 2008, after a year of intense debates, conferences and design studios a 138 pages vision document was published (MRA, 2008). Its key image served as a kind of logo for the years after (Förster et al., 2016: 17-20) (see Figure 6).

[10] See for instance: https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/volg-beleid/ontwikkeling/metropoolregio/ (accessed 15 May 2019).

Figure 6 The 2008 vision of the MRA

Source: MRA, 2008: 50

In 2016 a new policy map has been created. This time it is not called a development vision but an action map (*actiekaart*). It is part of a glossy of 60 pages bearing the names of dozens of authors, under the auspices of the Platform Territory (MRA, 2016). It is not a replacement of the development vision but an addition, showing all the projects which are carried out in the region over a period of about four years (2016-2020), obviously suggesting the MRA cooperation has drive, momentum and practical relevance.

6. Conclusions

The Netherlands is obviously no exception when it comes to the rescaling of governance. What is striking is the duration of the 'quest' and the many turns that have been taken over the course of time. The four broad categories of metropolitan governance arrangements as identified by the OECD have all been discussed at some stage. A fifth model was also considered: an new fourth layer of administration across the entire country, including elected councils. The fourth model, special status of metropolitan cities (the proposal to create city-provinces) finally seemed to become the trajectory for seven regions but resistance from civil society and eventually parliament led to the option of inter-municipal authorities (the WGR plus regions).

Government and parliament has changed its mind time and time again: the perceived lack of democratic legitimacy was the insurmountable stumble block. Since 2010, just two metropolitan regions exist in the country, both situated in the Randstad. In these two regions, there is currently a supra-local authority in the domain of (public) transport with some measures to safeguard some form of legitimacy by giving elected members of local councils an advisory role. The two authorities are almost exclusively dependent upon government funding as municipalities (and provinces) have a very slim tax basis. Clearly, the abolition of the multi-purpose city-regions in the Netherlands runs counter to trends in metropolitan governance as observed by the OECD.

For a large-scale Randstad authority, governance complexity simply proved to be too great while the level of functional integration between the various parts of the Randstad, as expressed by for instance commuting patterns, is lacking. Next to the two statutory Randstad

transport authorities soft-coordination takes place under the banner of 'metropolitan regions'. The MRDH is more focused on economic development while the area is the same as that of the transport authority. The MRA is much more comprehensive in its ambitions and is 'working' for an area almost twice as big compared with the Transport Authority.

Looking at the MRDH and MRA in more detail, we arrive at the following conclusions in relation to the three categories of power on which our analyses are based. When it comes to the *power of resources* both regions are almost exclusively dependent on national government funding, at least in the transport domain as already stated. Outside this domain there are (very) limited resources for staff and projects, although especially in the MRA there seems to be a large multiplier effect in relation to staff due to the comprehensiveness and multi-scalarity of the cooperation.

From the perspective of the *power of process* we conclude that the two metropolitan regions seem to slowly converge in the way in which they are organised. Both have, for instance a daily board and a supervisory board, the latter mostly recruited from municipal councils. Nevertheless they also show two major differences: the province (i.e. North-Holland and Flevoland) is a prominent participant in the MRA and joined as of the start. At the phase of emergence of the MRDH the province was even foreclosed. Currently the province participates in some of the MRDH committees.

The second major difference is geographical in nature: even though there might surely still be discussion about the exact external borders, it is the intention of the MRA to be inclusive and cover the whole daily urban system of Amsterdam in its metropolitan governance arrangement. In the MRDH two urban agglomerations (Leiden and Dordrecht) which functionally are part of the daily urban system in this area are not represented in the metropolitan governance arrangement. From this perspective there seemed to be a fundamental flaw in the set-up of the arrangement. This may have an impact on the degree to which policy integration in the focus policy areas can be reached.

With respect to the *power of meaning* we observe a major difference in the fact that the MRA is actively using visions, maps and spatial images as a way of bringing coherence in the issues at table between the actors involved and in the projects and programmes at stake in the region. Accessibility, economy and spatial planning seemed to be much more aligned than in the MRDH where spatial images are nearly non-existent and spatial planning is not a policy field with which it wants to relate. Economic development is the the integrating frame here.

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