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11. AMSTERDAM: A MULTI-CULTURAL CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Simin Davoudi and Wil Zonneveld

Amsterdam, with a population of under one million, is comparatively small. However, as part of the Randstad (a polycentric urban region consisting of three other major cities of Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht with complementary functions) it can be comfortably positioned amongst the world cities. This chapter offers a profile of Amsterdam and its position in the wider metropolitan and regional context. Its authors explore the city's cultural profile in the context of Dutch cultural policy and governance and discuss multiculturalism in Amsterdam and the way in which it has been accommodated in the Dutch housing policy and planning tradition. They conclude by highlighting the current neoliberal approaches to public policy and their implications for Amsterdam as a multicultural 'capital of culture'.

Introduction

‘There is an ethic in Amsterdam, based in centuries of benevolent activism by intermediate organizations, that comes to play in creating its diverse, egalitarian milieu’ (Fainstein, 2007:110)

Amsterdam offers a distinct case. On the one hand, the city rubs shoulders with the world cities by offering globally networked financial institutions, a cosmopolitan outlook, and around the clock attractions of a metropolis. On the other hand, it portrays a charming image

of a provincial town with a well-kept historical urban fabric, no dominance of the automobile, a humanely scaled urbanism, and a sense of civic engagement. Behind these two faces is a long history which goes back to its seventeenth century Golden Age, when Amsterdam could be comfortably qualified as a world city of mercantile capitalism. However, its top position in global trade was combined with what Simon Schama (1987) calls the ‘embarrassment of the riches’; a defining feature of the Dutch culture in its Golden Age. ‘Dutchness’, he suggests, ‘was often equated with transformation, under divine guidance, of catastrophe into good fortune, infirmity into strength, water into dry land, mud into gold’ (Schama, 1987:25).

Having emerged from the polders to become a vibrant city, Amsterdam is the epitome of efforts to ‘moralize materialism’, ‘not through divine guidance as much as through secularized spatial planning and an extraordinarily committed civic consciousness that persists to the present’ (Soja, 2007:119), as well as a perceived engineering feat . Its strong civic consciousness is reflected in and reinforced by a generous welfare system, an egalitarian tradition, and a political culture of consensus-seeking, consultation and compromise (Hendriks, 2006:935), all of which permeate the Dutch approach to cultural policies and governance as will be discussed in this chapter. We will, however, show that not all is well, particularly after major changes that have been taking place in recent years. The remaining part of the chapter consists of four main sections. Section two discusses the position of Amsterdam in its wider metropolitan and regional context. Section three describes the cultural profile of Amsterdam with reference to Dutch cultural policy and governance. Section four discusses the extent and nature of multiculturalism in Amsterdam in the context of Dutch housing policy and planning tradition. The final section concludes the chapter by exploring the implications for culture of the current neoliberal approaches to public policy.

A decentralized 'world city'?

Despite several waves of restructuring, Amsterdam has remained among the higher ranks of cities to date, even with a population of less than one million. A contributing factor in maintaining this position is Amsterdam's relative proximity to three other major cities in the Netherlands - Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht – and their actual and perceived complementary functions and cultural activities. Together, they form a densely developed polycentric urban region known as *Randstadt* (Davoudi, 2003). As Shachar (1994) suggests, *Randstad* often provides a substitute, albeit a contested one, for the lack of a single Dutch world city. The term was coined by the Dutch aviation tycoon, Alfred Plesman, in 1938 (Burke, 1966; Rossem, 1994). Looking at the distribution of population and cities in the west of the country he argued that another location (apart from Schiphol which is close to Amsterdam) was needed for a national airport in the middle of the ring of cities that he called *Randstad* (or Rim City). Unusual for his time, he argued that the cities in *Randstad* would eventually coalesce and create an integrated urban area which would become Europe's fourth city in terms of population size – after London, Paris and Berlin – and third or even second city in terms of economic power. What Plesman argued, and many others echoed him, was that given the density, proximity and expansion of the cities in the west of the country it is legitimate to consider the area as a single metropolis. This idea was later given international fame in the field of spatial planning when Sir Peter Hall (1968) put the *Randstad* alongside the premium league of seven 'World Cities'.

Most of the *Randstad*'s constituent cities, which date back at least 400 years, have since expanded to the point where they are beginning to overlap. However, they have been kept apart, to some extent, by a system of green belts and a large protected area of water and agricultural land called the Green Heart without which the *Randstad* would have become a Dutch Los Angeles. In addition to the four large cities, the southern part of the *Randstad* (the

‘South Wing’) is also an agglomeration of densely packed and sprawling cities (Kantor, 2006). *Randstad* is therefore home to Europe’s largest port (Rotterdam), its fourth largest airport (Schiphol), a major Internet exchange hub, a large concentration of international justice and legal organizations (the Hague), and a major centre for international financial institutions (Amsterdam) and service sectors (Utrecht). With 350,000 firms (50 per cent of the Dutch business interactions) and over 7 million inhabitants (two-fifths of the Dutch population), *Randstad* is the fifth largest metropolis in Europe after London, the Rhine Ruhr region, Paris, and Milan (Lambregts, 2006; OECD, 2007; Wall, 2009) and hosts a number of internationally renowned cultural institutions.

Fragmented governance

Although the idea of the *Randstad* has been on the Dutch governments’ agenda since Plesman coined the term, its exact geographical delineation, administrative authority and governance arrangement have not yet materialised. This is despite Plesman’s insistence that such an urban complex needs a single authority because its constituent provinces (the middle layer of administration in the Netherlands) would not be able to work together efficiently; a foresight which has proved to be true. Since then several fierce policy debates about how to create a metropolis in a country which is so quintessentially polycentric have taken place but none has resulted in the creation of a single, pan-*Randstad* authority (Lambregts & Zonneveld, 2004). Attempts to forge alliances and coalitions under a new label of ‘Deltametropolis’¹ (an area between the Rhine and Meuse Rivers) have not been able to overcome the fragmented governance structure of the area², as pointed out by the OECD review:

Official boundaries for the Randstad do not exist and it does not fit into one of the three government tiers in the Netherlands. It remains an almost abstract concept as no government policies are implemented using it as the geographical basis for intervention (OECD, 2007:6).

The result has been continuous competition between the constituent cities and particularly between Rotterdam and Amsterdam over a whole host of issues including the location of nationally-subsidized cultural institutions. The rivalry goes back to the latter part of the nineteenth century (Kooij & Van de Laar, 2002) when Rotterdam began to grow rapidly after the opening of the *Nieuwe Waterweg* in the 1870s. The new waterway gave the port an open access to deep water of the sea and provided the city with a growing number of wealthy merchants and ship owners who were keen to improve the cultural standing of Rotterdam. For example, a large part of the famous Old Masters collection of the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum was once owned by one of the ‘harbour barons’ (Kooij & Van de Laar, 2002: 16). Nevertheless, Rotterdam’s bourgeoisie was always smaller in size and had a somewhat different cultural orientation compared with its counterparts in Amsterdam, mirroring the distinction between ‘new’ and ‘old’ money, respectively. This, however, has not stopped Rotterdam from competing with Amsterdam over all aspects of public life, be it the ports, football clubs, ‘high’ culture, or attracting the ‘creative class’. In the 1980s, for instance, there were major clashes between the two cities about the government’s decision to locate in Rotterdam a national architecture institute created by the merger of three former Amsterdam architecture institutes and one based in Rotterdam. This was a deliberate political decision aimed at decentralizing the nationally-funded cultural institutes (Kooij & Van de Laar, 2010: 16) in the spirit of Dutch egalitarian tradition, but at the expense of Amsterdam’s metropolitan aspirations. Similar competition occurs over privately-financed development projects that can lead to lucrative revenue for the cities through increased land prices.

Lack of coordination is not exclusive to the *Randstad* scale, it happens at the level of cities, too. A clear indication of this is the uncoordinated closure of some of Amsterdam's most important cultural institutes for renovation in the last decade. The Rijksmuseum, which will reopen in 2013, has been closed for about a decade now, with the exception of some rooms showing the most loved masterpieces. The grand scale renovation and restructuring of this national institute has been severely hindered by a clumsy municipal administration. The Amsterdam municipality is split into seven districts (at the time of writing), one of which is responsible for the management and contested planning issues related to the renovation of the Rijksmuseum; a responsibility well beyond its capacity. Another tragic example is the closure of the modern art gallery, the Stedelijk Museum, in 2003 with, as yet, no reopening date. Its renovation has been hindered by poor management, budget overruns, construction problems and the bankruptcy of the developers in 2011. In spite of temporary exhibitions elsewhere in the city, the closure of the Stedelijk has had negative effects on the turnover of modern arts galleries in the inner city; it seems that the city has lost its appeal as a centre for modern art. The third uncoordinated closure is that of the maritime museum, which took place around the same time. On a more positive note, the opening of the first foreign branch of the Hermitage in 2009, housed in a large, seventeenth century nursing home, has been a major boost to Amsterdam's position as the cultural capital of the *Randstad*, as discussed below.

Amsterdam: the cultural capital of the Randstad

While the ideal of polycentric region implies an almost equal distribution of cultural institutions across the four major cities, the reality begs to differ. According to Stam *et al.* (2008) the strongest concentration of creative industries (defined as arts, media and publishing, and creative business services) are in the North Wing of the *Randstad*

(Amsterdam-Utrecht) which hosts the Dutch broadcasting industry in the Gooi region (where employment in creative industries is the highest in the Netherlands, at 22 per cent). Although Utrecht is particularly strong in publishing and media, Amsterdam boasts a concentration of all three types of creative industry as well as major cultural institutions. It is therefore not surprising that Amsterdam is considered as the cultural capital of the *Randstad* (Kantor, 2006; Hendriks, 2006). It has the largest historical city centre in Europe (with its large ring of canals protected as a world heritage site since 2010) and is home to more than forty museums (including the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum, the Rembrandt House and the first branch of the Hermitage), a large array of performing arts and music halls (including the National Opera, one of the two large classical ballet ensembles, the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra), a wide range of restaurants offering a variety of international cuisines, and around the clock entertainments. Many of the structures and institutions that lie behind Amsterdam's current cultural (as well as economic) pre-eminence were established during the Dutch Golden Age in the seventeenth century which in turn was made possible partly through the influx of rich people, artists and craftsmen especially after the siege of Antwerp by Spanish troops in 1584-1585.

In comparison with other major cities, Amsterdam did not suffer much from the problems associated with a declining industrial base, with the exception of its northern residential quarters across the IJ River where the workforce was highly dependent on the shipbuilding industry. These were concentrated at the north banks of the river and have now become regenerated into a focal point for creative industries. Its historical strengths in 'global trade, high caliber knowledge-rich services and the financial sector have once again replaced commodities as the key to economic development' (Musterd and Deurloo, 2006:80). 'Cultural industries' -- defined as 'publishing, advertising, radio and TV production, news agencies, the arts sector, film and video production' (op cit, 2006:81) -- are particularly

important in such substitution. Amsterdam's success in attracting small, independent firms in advertising and creative industries from across the world is due to a number of factors such as the city's overall image, the availability of a well-educated workforce (including a high number of students), a multilingual population, a high quality of infrastructure and amenities, legal and political stability, and low corporate taxes (Engelen and Musterd, 2010).

Much has been written about the role of the so-called 'creative class' in boosting city economies and the 'quality of place' as a key component of attracting creative people (see Florida, 2002). Drawing on this notion, a study undertaken by Trip (2007) has shown that in the first part of the 2000s, 27.2 per cent of the population could be considered as being employed in creative industries. It is argued that Amsterdam's economic resurgence in the second half of the 1990s was due to the fact that it was the only Dutch city in which there were measurable spill-over effects in terms of employment growth from creative to other types of industries (Stam *et al.*, 2008). Distinguishing between three types of creative industries: arts, media and publishing, and creative business services³, Stam *et al.* (2008) argue that the latter are most dependent on economic cycles (and the least innovative) while the former (arts) are the least dependent, may be due to arts' dependence on public subsidy.

Cultural policy

The above observation may be due to the cultural policy in the Netherlands which has been described as lying between the European tradition of government intervention and the Anglo-Saxon's 'arm's length' stance (Delhaye, 2008:1304). The central government's subsidy has always been available to support the autonomy and quality of the arts on the basis of a value system that eschews profitability as a measure of success. However, if subsidy is reduced or withdrawn in favor of marketization, it remains to be seen how independent of economic cycles arts organizations will remain. Furthermore, recent changes in the taxation system may

also affect the arts. The level of Value Added Tax (VAT) on the arts is to be increased from 6 to 19 per cent, which would in turn reduce the number of visitors, although of course the effect will differ from sector to sector because of difference in price elasticity.

Dutch cultural policy emerged in 1956 when the National Arts Council, a semi-independent body whose role was to advise government on the arts, was established. It began to thrive in the 1960s when advisory groups, interest groups, and consultative structures were put in place. In the 1970s and in line with Dutch traditions mentioned above, a policy of disseminating culture to lower-income social groups was initiated and arts policy increasingly pursued intercultural dialogue and supported ethnic minority artists. Also at city level, the arts have been fostered by municipal councils although in a patchy and sporadic way. Although Amsterdam's own cultural policy was initiated in the 1920s, it was not until the 1960s that it secured its own arts council, a local version of the National Arts Council, mentioned above, with a specific remit to advise the city on funding awards (Holleman, 2004, cited in Delhaye, 2008). From the 1980s onwards, the cultural policy moved from encouraging participation to inviting the involvement of the 'New Dutch' (migrants to the Netherlands). The present centre-right government has abandoned this objective because it does not believe in 'multiculturalism' (see below). In the 1990s, the city developed its first four-year plan (1997-2000) as a framework for cultural organizations to make longer-term projections.⁴ This plan echoed the national policy -- in terms of both content and structure -- through which it was administered. The plan continued the trend of targeting a wider and more diverse public, and stipulated that arts institutes should be responsive to public demand. However, in the late 1990s an evaluation of the city's arts policy found that although audiences had been increased, their diversity had not; the employees and the appeal of the arts world in Amsterdam remained restricted to dominant social groups. A further 1999 report from the British cultural expert Trevor Davies found little awareness of diversity in

Amsterdam's cultural institutions, despite the fact that half of the under eighteen audience had an ethnically mixed background (Delhaye, 2008).

Amsterdam: a multicultural city

Take a seat by the window in a café, on one of the squares in Amsterdam Poort shopping centre on a Saturday afternoon, [...] and as you watch the ever changing scene outside, you may marvel at the way the public spaces of larger cities in western Europe and North America have become transnational commons, where white, black, brown and yellow people mingle (Hannerz, 2007:178).

Until the 1960s, there were very few (4 per cent of the population in 1967) non-native Dutch in the Netherlands (Delhaye, 2008). However, Dutch cities have always been particularly prone to settlement by 'foreigners', and Amsterdam has undergone continuous waves of immigration attracting, for instance, French Huguenots in the seventeenth century, central and eastern European Jews in the eighteenth and Indonesians and South-Moluccans after the independence of Indonesia in 1949. With the 1970s waves of immigration to the Netherlands from former Dutch colonies in Surinam and the Antilles came labour migrants from other parts of Europe such as Turkey and from North Africa, who were attracted by the high-performing post-War Dutch economy. Even after the contraction in labour migration due to the 1970s recession, relatives of Turkish and Moroccan migrants, for example, as well as asylum-seekers continued to arrive (Delhaye, 2008).

The four *Randstad* cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague have particularly high concentrations of ethnic minorities compared with the rest of the Netherlands. In Amsterdam, people who are classed as 'foreigner'⁵ amounted to 41 per cent of the total population in 1994, rising to 49 per cent in 2004 (Musterd and de Vos, 2007). According to municipal figures, some 178 nationalities are represented in the residential

population of the city, making Amsterdam one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world.⁶ Those with highest numbers are Surinamese, Antillean, Moroccan, Turkish, and South Europeans. Between 1994 and 2004, Moroccans had grown from 6 to 8 per cent of the Amsterdam population and Turks from 4 to 5 per cent. More than half of the people of foreign origin have also acquired Dutch nationality, which means that 88 per cent of the Amsterdam population has Dutch nationality.

Immigration policy initially supported the labour migrants in maintaining their own culture and language on the grounds that this would ease their eventual return to their own countries – including children born of immigrant families in the Netherlands (Snel, 2003, cited in Delhaye, 2008). The first official immigration policy, put in place as late as 1983, promoted integration while retaining the culture of origin (van den Broek and van den Camp, 1983, cited in Delhaye, 2008). However, from the 1990s onwards, policy on minorities tilted towards an increasing emphasis on integration and away from the emphasis on retention of ethnic identities. This has been intensified since the prominent murders that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century: that of the right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 by a left wing extremist and of the film director Theo van Gogh by an Islamic extremist in 2004. In the aftermath of van Gogh's death, the reaction of Dutch politicians was to steer arts policy towards a re-appraisal and instantiation of the Dutch canon, as reflected in the policy to complement the intercultural dialogue that it had hitherto supported.

If multiculturalism is defined as policies 'that value cultural difference, perceive integration as a two-way process, and consider intolerance and discrimination as serious obstacles to the emancipation of minorities' (Hajer and Uitermark, 2008: 8-9), then the above-mentioned assassinations seem to have marked a departure from multiculturalism. In its place, they seem to have ignited a 'new realist' discourse on immigration, putting greater pressure on immigrants to integrate with the culture of the country of habitation (Prins, 2002;

Ghorashi, 2003). As a result, the concept of multiculturalism, especially popular on the left of the political spectrum, has become less popular or even suspect. However, if one uses a more neutral interpretation of multiculturalism, as a mere descriptor of a population characterized by a large variety of cultures and nationalities, Amsterdam remains a multicultural city and to a much larger extent compared with all other cities in the *Randstad* and the country at large.

Social and spatial segregation?

The overriding question is whether the multicultural nature of the population has led to a segregated and divided city. The answer on the whole should be negative as Amsterdam seems to have been relatively ‘successful in integrating its immigrant populations, socially and spatially, into the urban fabric’ (Soja, 2007:134). Social segregation along ethnic lines is much less apparent than for example in Rotterdam and The Hague. The latter has always been segregated and the former is experiencing increased segregation because of economic decline. Hence, by comparison, Amsterdam displays an exceptional heterogeneity (Kauko, 2009). Its ‘Inner Suburbs’, for example, include some of the best-appreciated and most expensive neighbourhoods as well as some with the cheapest and worst reputed.

Furthermore, some of the areas with the lowest ‘neighbourhood annoyance’ levels can be found within *De Wallen*, the notorious red light district. Examining the changes in the Moroccan and Turkish make up of Amsterdam districts between 1994 and 2004, Musterd and de Vos (2007) found that the emerging patterns are linked more to typical steps in the residential property ladder taken by immigrant families than to conscious or unconscious strategies of ethnic minority concentration. When people moved houses, their places were often taken by other low-income and ethnic minority movers, apparently attracted by what they could afford rather than by ethnic clustering. Analysis of the housing types preferred

showed a link with these groups and post-war social housing. Those Moroccans moving in came from areas with smaller and older properties and with more private rented housing. The Moroccans moving out went to areas with a higher share of larger and owner-occupied properties. Even the new towns around Amsterdam such as Purmerend and Almere are part of this system of residential moves.

A major explanation lies in the housing and planning policies of the national government and the municipality. For nearly two decades central government has been supporting the building of new housing estates within or at the edge of existing urban agglomerations (through a planning policy known as VINEX⁷) to prevent suburbanization and sprawl which have taken place in many other parts of the world, resulting in segregation at regional levels, with higher income groups and families leaving the central city. The municipality is the major landowner in Amsterdam and is therefore able to create owner-occupied housing for higher income groups in the less popular areas and social housing for lower income groups in more popular areas.⁸ The policy has been to attain a level of 30 per cent social housing in every major housing project, using the profits earned by the municipality from the land developed for commercial and especially office uses. The office market has now totally collapsed and is unlikely to recover for at least a decade. Hence, the funding available for transfer from a commercial to a housing project is almost non-existent, making the 30 per cent doctrine untenable for the most expensive locations (the redevelopment of previously developed sites in the existing urban fabric is always more expensive than development on green fields). As a result, many building and restructuring projects have been put on the back-burner with large areas of land lying vacant. What this will mean for segregation remains to be seen, but it is already clear that the financial crisis, coupled with the election of right-wing politicians have struck the Amsterdam planning strategy in the heart.

Conclusion

Amsterdam, once deeply divided between Catholics and Protestants, managed to reconcile its religious differences through the policy known as ‘pillarization’.⁹ While the religious rationale has been substantially weakened by decades of secular principles, the moral commitment to democracy and fairness is still alive and underline the City’s continuing prosperity, diversity, cultural values, practices and investments. It is true that polarizations and spatial segregations have been creeping in for some time, but it is also true that they have been fought back by a generous welfare state, a propensity to take decisions through consensus, and a ‘moral code’ which has continued to strive towards equality and egalitarianism.

The future, however, is uncertain. The current administration is a centre-right minority government supported in the Parliament by the right wing PVV (‘Party for Freedom’) under the leadership of Geert Wilders. The extent to which they are committed to the long standing moral principles which have guided previous actions remains questionable. Signs of divergence are already on the wall, as far as cultural policies are concerned. The dominant view in the current coalition government is that over the past years the arts and the cultural sector as a whole have become far too dependent on government subsidies and for the benefit of the cultural elite. They have therefore put in place plans for cutting down the national arts budget each year. It will be reduced to 200 million Euros in 2015, a cut of some 20 per cent. Museums and cultural heritage will be spared from the cuts to a certain extent. So the sectors most likely to be hit (with a 50 per cent cut by 2015) are the performing arts: music, drama, dance and opera, all heavily concentrated in Amsterdam. The city will also be hit indirectly. After retreating from an initial plan of closing down the Netherlands Broadcasting Music Centre (which hosts two classical music orchestras: the renowned

Netherlands Radio Choir and a large light music orchestra), the Government is now planning to cut down its budget drastically. These ensembles often play in Amsterdam halls, especially in the Concertgebouw and the Music Theatre, so their diminishing presence will have a profound effect on their revenues and on the cultural status of Amsterdam.

Budgets for the arts will be affected by another development as well. Within Europe the Netherlands is at the bottom of the league in terms of taxes collected locally. Indeed, 94 per cent of all taxes are collected by the national government (Merk, 2004) leaving municipalities and provinces with little influence on their income through taxation. The bulk of the municipal and provincial budgets derive from the 'provincial and municipal funds'. These, too, are subject to cuts by the national government. The effects are already visible. For example, many municipalities are closing down libraries. However, so far, no major cuts in Amsterdam arts budget of about 85 million Euros per annum (about 10 per cent of the art budgets of all Dutch municipalities put together) are foreseen. There will be some shifts from larger to smaller cultural institutes to ensure their survival. Despite this, Amsterdam will be disproportionately hit by budget cuts because of its status as the cultural capital of the *Randstad*. In a country with little tradition of private sectors' financial support and individual philanthropy, the cuts in public sector support will be a major blow to cultural institutions. Amsterdam's cultural sector, which has thrived on government subsidies, is now confronted with a major threat. The sector has to reposition itself and comes to terms with the disappearance of several groups, institutes, ensembles and the closure of music halls and galleries, which increasingly appears to be unavoidable.

Notes

¹ Deltametropolis was established as an attempt at bottom-up network building, under the directorship and aegis of Dirk Frieling, Professor of Planning at Delft University. It consisted of the four main *Randstad* cities and eight smaller cities of 100,000 inhabitants and more. By 2006, the Association Deltametropolis had 32 members: 12 cities, 5 Chambers of Commerce, 6 Water Boards, four green institutional members, 3 housing corporations, employers and transport organizations (Hendriks, 2006).

² The Netherlands has three levels of government: national, provincial and local. The *Randstad* covers four of the twelve Dutch provinces of: North Holland, South Holland, Utrecht and Flevoland. These comprise 207 of the 938 Dutch municipalities.

³ Excluding business services such as software and IT on the grounds that work in these industries is not always creative.

⁴ There is currently a fierce debate in the advisory infrastructure about cultural policies in Amsterdam. The ‘alderman’ in charge of these policies is pushing through a plan to appoint a personal advisor. There is a general fear that she is using this to bypass the municipal arts council and open the way for political influence on the content of arts, which goes against the prevailing doctrine going back to the 1848 national constitution.

⁵ A term used by the Dutch government based on oneself or one’s parents born outside the Netherlands.

⁶ It should be noted that some nationalities are represented by only one or two people.

⁷ The acronym originates from a 1991 national policy document.

⁸ With the principal aim of avoiding speculation, the Amsterdam land lease system started in 1896 gave to the municipality ownership of all the land outside the historical core and the nineteenth century extensions. Amsterdam is the only *Randstad* city which applies this system on such a grand scale. Once becoming the property of the municipality, land is never sold again.

⁹ This concept, which became internationally known by the seminal work of Lijphart (1968), relates to societies such as those of the Netherlands and Belgium, in which different ideologies or faiths (in the Netherlands: Catholicism, Protestantism, liberalism, and socialism) have been institutionalized in ‘pillars’ each characterized by its own institutions in domains such as broadcasting, health care and education. To avoid large scale clashes, a complex consensus-seeking structure evolved over the years. Pillarization is gradually fading away, although many of its organizations are still there.

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