

New Town Development

A New Approach in Planning for New Towns

A case study of urban growth of Almere, The Netherlands

This thesis is written as a final assignment for the master Landscape Architecture and Planning, specialization in Spatial Planning, at Wageningen University

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Abstract

In the past century the development of new towns has been practiced in the Netherlands, most recently on the Zuiderzee polders. The planning method and approach used for the new town developments have progressed for each new development. However the new methods were not ratified in a legal formal policy for new town planning. The Dutch planning methods has been researched and reflected whether there is a need of revising its method and for a new and different approach in planning for new town developments.

Almere is a new town development from the 1970's and is now approaching a turning point in its existence. The national government has authorized an urban expansion of Almere to provide housing for the growing population of the Randstad region and double its population by the year 2030. This is a lot to ask for a young city to accomplish. Including this task, the municipality of Almere is using this opportunity to develop and strengthen its identity as a self-sufficient city. By looking back to past new town developments and focusing on the concept of what new towns stand for, brings my attention to whether past methods of new town planning is still suitable for future new towns.

This thesis elaborates the concept of spatial planning, planning theory and the theoretical approach used in practice and how it fits in with new town planning.

(Key words: Spatial planning, new town, planning methods, planning approaches, new town policy, Almere)

Contents

List of figures and tables.....	vii
Preface and Acknowledgements	ix
Summary.....	xi
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Problem description – Urban expansion for Almere	1
1.2. Research Objective	3
1.3. Methods.....	5
1.4. Thesis Outline	6
2. Theoretical Framework – Literature Review	9
2.1. Planning concept	9
2.2. Elements around planning.....	10
2.3. Innovations in Planning - New Approaches in Planning	13
2.4. Conclusions.....	13
3. Spatial Planning in the Netherlands – Structure.....	15
3.1. Formal Planning Framework.....	16
3.2. Informal Level	17
3.3. The need for change in planning – change in governance	18
3.4. Conclusions.....	20
4. New Town Development	21
4.1. New Town Concept.....	21
4.2. International New Town Institute.....	23
4.3. Conclusions.....	23
5. Almere Case Study - Introduction.....	25
5.1. History and Development of Almere	25
5.2. Innovations in the planning scheme.....	27
5.3. Planning and design concepts for Almere	29
5.4. Learning from the past	30
5.5. Almeres involvement with worldwide New Town organizations.....	32
5.6. Almere Present Situation.....	33
5.7. Dilemmas in the urban expansion of Almere	37
5.8. Conclusions.....	38
6. Discussion & Conclusions.....	39
Bibliography	44
Appendix A.....	48

Appendix B	49
Appendix C	51
Appendix D	52

List of figures and tables

Figure 1.1 Flexibility and change in planning practice.....	5
Figure 2. 1 Complexity in Planning Process.....	11
Table 2. 1 Categories of theory.....	12
Figure 2.2 Flexibility and change in planning process.....	14
Figure 3.1 Formal and Informal policies involved in Almere’s growth development.....	15
Figure 4.1 New Town Dimension.....	22
Figure 5. 1 Verkavelingsplan Zuidelijk Flevoland 1968.....	26
Figure 5.2 Almere Timeline Development.....	27
Figure 5.3 Ebenezer Howards’ Garden City concept.....	29
Figure 6.4 Randstad Urgent Program projects involving Almere.....	36

Preface and Acknowledgements

Over the past years I have become interested in town and city planning. In my home country, urban development has grown immensely. The spatial planning practice is very young in Iceland therefore actors involved in planning look to methods used in foreign countries.

Before I started my study in Wageningen, I had worked for one year at a spatial planning department for the city of Hafnarfjörður in Iceland. Working there gave me a good insight of spatial planning in practice. Spatial planning is a young profession in Iceland which is why I chose the Netherlands for my master study where spatial planning has a long history and much experience. The education I received in Wageningen has given me a theoretical understanding of the spatial planning profession. With the knowledge I have gained I hope to go back to Iceland with a new perspective in spatial planning which will be taken into consideration and bring innovations to the spatial planning practice.

My thesis topic concerns new town development. During one of my meetings with my supervisor, Wim van der Knaap, I remember his remark of resembling a thesis to a new town. Both are new and developing factors which take many changes in course of time. They are both learning processes where obstacles are encountered and when one doubts whether the subject matter is taking a different direction from what one had first in mind. A thesis and new town are continuous developments and can be improved with time. In the end they both hold the outcome of a method chosen by the creator which can be speculated by others as the right or wrong approach. This thesis may not be fully developed but it is the beginning and outcome of a process which I started. It withholds my interpretation of the information I read and how I understood it.

Writing this part of the thesis make me realize that my time in Wageningen is approaching its end. Coming here was a big choice and step for me. I left my normal life in Iceland where I had a job and an apartment and moved to Wageningen, the City of Life Science and into a student accommodation with shared facilities. It was a bit of shock for me at first going back to the student life. I was fortunate enough to receive a room with 5 Dutch students who welcomed me into their group which I now call my second family. My time with them has been most memorable and I thank them for their patience, understanding, companionship and everything they have done to make stay enjoyable. Many thanks to Robin and Mirjam for their help during my final steps with the thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisor Wim van der Knaap for his supervision and guidance during my thesis research, for giving me new insights for the thesis topic and maintaining my focus on my research question and preventing my mind to wander afar to other topics. I thank him also for his patience and understanding. I would also like to thank the interviewees for their time in participating in my research.

To my family and friends back home in Iceland I thank them for showing me moral support during my study in Wageningen and filling me with motivation when things were not going as I had planned.

I cannot end this note of acknowledgements without thanking and showing my gratification to the friends I made here. I thank them for the times shared with them and making my stay in Wageningen most memorable. Thanks to Alessandro for his encouragement, insights and reminding me not to take things too seriously, to Jacopo for keeping me in balance, to Tereza, Gloria, Lizzie and Jeff for your laughter, friendship and enlightenment, and to my friends in “The Students without Agendas”: Natxo, Mark and Annemarie for their moral support, lunch coffee and breaks we shared with each other during our time writing our thesis at Gaia.

Last but not least I thank you for taking your time in reading my thesis. I hope you enjoy it.

Hilda Bjorg Thorgeirsdottir

Summary

Almere is a new town development authorized by the Dutch central government to provide housing for the vast growing Randstad area. Almere is located on the south-western tip of Flevoland, in close vicinity to Amsterdam and the Gooi. Almere was therefore the perfect location for an urban expansion. Since the first inhabitants moved to Almere in 1976, the town has grown to the population of 180.000. Now 30 years later, Almere is once more the focus point for a further urban development by doubling its population to 360.000 which will make Almere the fifth largest city in the Netherlands (Cramer, 2008). This is a great challenge for Almere not only regarding population growth but also in providing over 100.000 new jobs and becoming a self-sufficient city. In fulfilling this obligation, Almere is also using this as an opportunity to build and strengthen its own identity. It is a great task for a young city to accomplish having to overcome many obstacles that new towns encounter such as maintaining a strong economy, solving social and environmental issues and most important to survive the beginning stages of existence and continue its further development. It is therefore no surprise that there is much discussion regarding which methods and approaches should be used for Almeres growth development.

The Netherlands have a prestigious reputation in spatial planning worldwide (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). One category of spatial planning is new town developments on new reclaimed land of the Zuiderzee polders. The planning of new towns in the Netherlands has progressed due to mistakes made in the past such as Haarlemmermeer in 1852 and the long planning process of Lelystad which started in 1950 with Van den Ban's report on alternative designs for Lelystad to 1970 with the official Structure Scheme of 1969 (Van der Wal, 1997). Taking this into consideration makes it somewhat evident that the Dutch are reflecting on their planning approach in relation to new town planning. A new town policy may be the next step of innovation for the Dutch planning system and become an example for foreign new town developments.

The results gained from this research, brings me to the notion that planning is and should be continuous and open for change associated with innovations affecting the society, environment and economy. The experience acquired in practice should be kept and implemented in a new town policy in order for future new town developments to progress into self-sufficient cities. This elaboration led me to the below paradox for a new approach in planning:

Planning by Experience – Experience to Theory – Theory to Planning Perception

This paradox is referred to the flexibility that can be implemented to the planning practice which could retrieve and add more value to the Dutch spatial planning system which has high recognition by foreign countries as declared by Hajer & Zonneveld (2000).

1. Introduction

Throughout human civilization settlements were built according to geographical location, water and land resources, trade or other reasons that were beneficial for human habitation. These settlements developed through time into towns and cities of which some achieved historical meaning. The development of new settlements still continues, although today, there are different reasons for their existence such as the supply of housing needs. World civilization is growing and cities are expanding to their outer city limit which leads to an urban sprawl and the formation of suburbs. Specialized city suburbs have been developed over time which eventually separates the inhabitant's social connection from the main city centre. As a result the city has exceeded its outer boundaries and leaves limited space for further urban development.

When population and housing demands increased, government authorities, in the Netherlands sought out for new and other options; the development of new towns. In his book *In Praise of Common Sense*, Coen Van der Wal (1997) describes a new town being a plan of a new settlement as opposed to an extension of an existing town or city. A more consistent definition of a new town is however best described by the International New Town Institute as (INTI, 2009a):

...human settlements that were founded at a certain moment in history by an explicit act of will, according to a preceding plan and aiming to survive as a self-sustaining local community and independent local government, able to play a role in the ongoing development of the region in which the new town is located.

A new town is a new settlement built on either rural land transformed to urban land use or on new reclaimed land as has been practiced in the Netherlands. The objective of developing new towns is to become a self-sufficient town. New towns seem to be the answer to the urban sprawl and suburban dilemma where there are low economic job opportunities creating a high percentage of commuting. This however becomes a mutual problem for new towns as they evolve making them dependent on neighboring towns and cities for employment and various types of social services (De Klerk, 2007). Another issue that new towns have to deal with is the identity crisis which links to its lack of history. This therefore leads people to the misconception of new towns as suburbs (Reijndorp, 2007).

As indicated by de Klerk (2006) new towns are different to suburbs, therefore de Klerk proposes that a new town planning policy is needed to overcome the dilemmas that suburbs face and help new towns progress into becoming self-sufficient towns and cities. In this thesis I explore the spatial planning context and search for an approach which will help me clarify my proposition of whether there is a need for a new town policy.

1.1. Problem description – Urban expansion for Almere

Almere is a new town settlement built during the 1970's on the Flevoland polder. The purpose of Almeres' development was to supply housing for the heavily populated Randstad area. Now 30 years later, there is yet again a growing need for housing within the Randstad region making

Almere once more the focus point of a further urban expansion. Almere is facing a transition and turning point in its existence having to supply land for new housing areas, double its population by the year 2030 and using the opportunity to develop an identity that will be recognized throughout the Netherlands.

It is a great challenge, or what Dutch authorities call a 'Scale Jump', where Almere must among other things provide over 60.000 new homes and 100.000 jobs for the Randstad and North Wing (Noordvleugel) as well as to become a self-sufficient city. With this growth development Almere will become the 5th largest city in the Netherlands (Cramer, 2008).

There are different concepts of spatial design for planning living areas and new towns which take the social (people), economical (profit) and environmental (planet) elements into consideration. These elements are mentioned in the Almere Principles (Municipality of Almere, 2008), which are a set of principles of a desired future growth for Almere. However a planning policy is still needed for how these elements are to be implemented in the planning procedure. The Schaalsprong Almere 2030 is a starting point of discussion regarding how the goals set for Almere will be accomplished. Nevertheless it is not a policy but merely a discursive process of which method should be used for carrying out Almeres urban growth.

The Structuurvisie Almere 2030+ [Almere Structural Vision for 2030 and beyond], are the guidelines and methods of how the Scale Jump will be executed. The Scale Jump is presumed to be completed at the end of 2009 (Duivesteijn, 2008)

Over the years, the Dutch spatial planning system has been highly acclaimed by foreigners for its approach on including a broad field of actors in government administrative levels (the national, regional and local level), the great number of planners working on different levels for private and government institutions, and of its long history in planning (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). Today however, there is much discussion and critics on the Dutch planning system being outdated to how planning should be approached in the present.

One critique is made by Nozeman (1990) where he discusses the need of revising one of the Dutch post-war planning policies, the urbanization policy for Dutch new town planning, officially called growth centres. He explains that it is time to reflect on its efficiency by looking at the positive and negative results of existing new towns. A new urbanization policy would profit from the revision and learn from previous governmental actions and the instruments used in new town and growth centre planning. Another critique is made by Brink et al. (2006,p.152) where they discuss the need of revising the Dutch structural governance for the metropolitan landscape and reinforcing the participation of the regional administration in land-use planning.

For a new town, Almeres' urban expansion could be the test of the Dutch planning system. As Prof. Dr. Len A. de Klerk (2007, p.7) states in his paper 'New towns in development policy: an introduction', *"There is a future for a new towns policy, provided that it is reinvented as a large scale regional urbanization concept and concentrates more on creation of new economic activities than on housing."*

In this thesis I reflect on what role new towns play and what is expected of them. I elaborate on the critics made on Dutch spatial planning, stressing the need of revising its procedure by adapting it to the present and future issues, and apply it to the case study of Almeres urban growth.

Based on the current issues and critics made of Dutch spatial planning with the focus on new town planning, the urban problems new towns face and high expectations of Almeres urban growth, the main issue is:

Is the existing planning approach and method used in the Netherlands suitable for new town planning in the future such as Almere?

In other words:

Should new towns have a tailor-made planning policy?

1.2. Research Objective

The urban growth of Almere is a hot topic in the Netherlands. The Schaalsprong Almere 2030 is a project under the Randstad Urgent Programma which will decide on the suitable planning method for Almeres development. In the words of Adri Duivesteijn (2007, p.11), “...the Scale Jump is the next step in the tradition of Almere’s growth”. In 2004, Almere instigated the International New Town Institute (INTI) for researching new town planning. The institute was part of Almeres development policy for the education system (Meyer, 2007). In accordance to the results from the first INTI seminar 2006, brings the attention to the need for putting more thought in spatial planning by reviewing the methods used in previous new town planning, in this case the Dutch planning system.

Discourses of the Dutch planning system being outdated are discussed in articles such as by Hajer & Zonneveld (2000) and Brink et al. (2006) which calls upon a new and improved planning approach designed for new town planning. The Dutch planning system is not the only area of planning to be considered but also the affect the four tiers of spatial planning, (the EU, national, regional and local scale), have on new town planning. I state that planning new towns are different to planning existing towns and cities. New towns are planned and constructed on land transformed from rural to urban development perusing to become a self-sufficient city whereas a suburb or VINEX is an extension of an existing town and city. Restructuring or revising areas in a city uses different means of planning. Urban planners for instance examine specific problems in a city: economical, social, or environmental issues that could be solved with a sectoral restructured plan. Planning a new town is on the other hand the development of a new settlement with its own government authority.

It is expected that in time the social and living habits of people will change, alterations in the economy will occur and the importance of environmental issues and climate change will increase. In accordance to these changes spatial planning will need to deal with these issues. With this research I reflect on the critics made on the Dutch planning system by authors such as Nozeman (1990), Hajer & Zonneveld (2000) and de Klerk (2007) in order to come to my conclusion of

whether the Dutch planning system is out-of-date and needed to be adapted for new town developments.

Given the literature regarding planning in the Netherlands, and the interviews with planners from three tiers of government authority, I want to reflect on a new approach in planning by using a comprehensive integrated approach using knowledge obtained from past new town planning and implementing the skills to present planning. This new approach leads me to the following paradox:

Planning by Experience – Experience to theory – Theory to planning perception

This paradox is formulated with the writings by Flyvberg (2001, p.10) in his discussion of the evolution of the human learning process:

Novice – Advanced beginner – Competent performer – Proficient performer – Expert.

The continuation of gaining knowledge moves a person one step further in its personal development. I believe this example of knowledge progress could be applied as a method of planning by using experience gained in the planning practice and the innovations of society to build a new planning theory implemented in a new policy.

With this in mind, the purpose of this research is to consider whether the existing spatial planning approach and methods used in the Netherlands is obsolete for the planning of new towns. By using Almere as a case study on new town planning and urban expansion I hope to acquire a better insight on how urban planning is implemented in the Netherlands and what approaches have been used by the state, regional and local authorities in the case of Almere. Most importantly I hope to obtain an answer to my question of whether a new planning policy should be made for new town developments.

The objective of this research is to review the administrative planning levels in the Netherlands, including the EU planning level and discuss what role they play in planning new towns including the development, growth and success for a new town such as Almere.

In addition to my main research question I also seek to answer to the following questions:

- Do the critics justify the need for a change of approach in the Dutch planning system?
- Is there room for flexibility in Dutch planning, having a planning history based on 'rule and order'? Can a new methodology on planning be applied in the Dutch planning system?
- Should there be an equal approach for all urban developments, whether it is for restructuring a city or for a new town development? Should a new town adapt to these planning levels or should they adapt to new towns?
- Is Almere searching for an identity policy or a planning policy?

1.3. Methods

The aim of this thesis is to inquire whether new towns should have their own planning policy for an urban development. I began with a literature review of the historical development of Almere proceeding to institutional documents regarding its future urban growth. When I became well acquainted with Almeres 'great task' of expanding itself for the purpose of national benefits, my attention was brought to the Dutch spatial planning system. I reviewed the Dutch administrative levels and the planning procedure used in the Netherlands and I learned that the Dutch planning procedure persisted of a top-down – systematic – rational planning approach. I continued with a short review of other means of planning approaches as an option for a new method in planning.

To obtain an external opinion of the Dutch planning system, I sought out scientific articles that criticize the Dutch planning system being old-fashioned and narrow-minded and emphasizing the need of change in planning approach. With this information I pondered whether the existing Dutch planning system was advisable for new town planning and if a different approach should be used. According to Rabbinge (2007) planning methods of the past may not be suitable for planning in the present and future time, taking into consideration the change of social needs, economic issues and environmental protection. With the remarks made by Rabbinge (2007) I consider planning, and in this case spatial planning, should be open to innovation and adapt to present situations.

With this information I developed the below planning scheme/method/approach that could be adapted to present and future planning and most importantly to be applied to new town planning. It is the circulation of how planning can change and adapt to innovations in society and time.

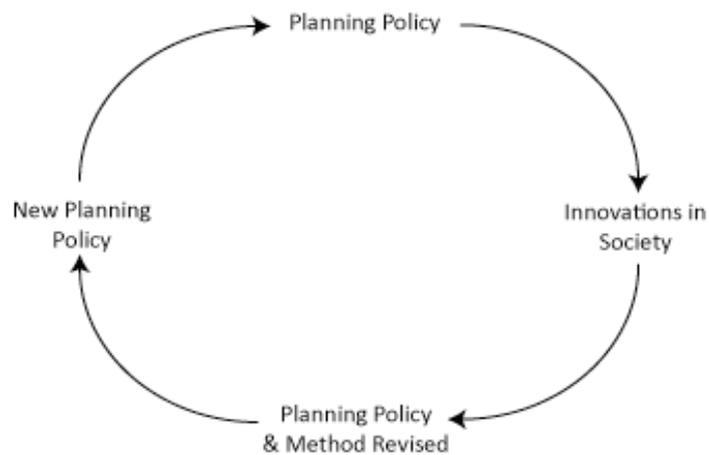


Figure 1.1 Flexibility and change in planning practice

I gathered information on new town planning for Almere to acquire an understanding of its uniqueness and find a source to justify my inquiry of producing a new town policy. I used data from the internet regarding research organizations on new towns, such as the International New Town Institute (INTI), which consists of research documents and debates on new town

developments. This organization was initiated by the city of Almere to do research on new towns and provide information on their developments and progress for the future (Meyer, 2007). A short discussion is included of the collaboration between new towns where information is exchanged on governance and project implementations leading to the creation of a knowledge network between new towns worldwide.

Interviews

Interviews were taken with three employees of each administrative planning level: The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Flevoland Province and the Municipality of Almere. I produced a questionnaire for each interviewee (see Annex A-C) of what role they played regarding Almeres urban growth development and what their perspective is on having a separate new town planning policy. I was able to take face-to-face interviews with the Province of Flevoland and the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM). Both interviews were audio taped. The interview with the Province of Flevoland was taken in Dutch and in English with VROM. Due to difficulties in receiving contact with planners at the Municipality of Almere, I was not able to take a face-to-face interview. Instead the interviewee filled out the questionnaire by his best knowledge and sent it back to me.

Limitations

Other information used in this thesis were documents and reports published by the Dutch government authorities. Most of these documents and reports of the planning policies for the national, regional and local level were issued in Dutch, and due to my limited knowledge of the language I had difficulty in reading and understanding the material. For that reason there may be some misinterpretations of these texts in this thesis.

Case Study

The research is first and foremost about new town planning which includes a review of whether the Dutch planning system is applicable for new town planning or whether there is a need for a new town policy. I choose Almere as my case study for my research because of its important task of providing housing and employment for the Randstad, for doubling its population by the year 2030 and its ambition to become a self-sufficient city and obtain its own identity. Almere is therefore a good case to consider whether there is a need for a new town planning policy.

1.4. Thesis Outline

The thesis begins with a general introduction of the research including the problem question, research objective and the methods used for the research. The next chapters prelude to a further detail of the research in the following order:

The second chapter regards the theoretical framework of the thesis. I begin with a discussion of different elements in planning which involves the definition and clarification of concepts in planning. The chapter continues with the discussion of the use of theory in planning and different planning styles that have been used over time. I carry on with the review of the critics made on the Dutch planning system and a brief discussion of why there is a need of a new approach in planning.

In the third chapter I introduce the Dutch planning system in the formal administrative level and the informal level, which are active for the Randstad area.

The fourth chapter explains the new town concept, distinguishing its difference from a suburb by focusing on the essential elements needed to develop a new town and for it to adapt, evolve and endure the hardships of becoming a self-sufficient town.

Following the explanation of planning, I proceed to the discussion of the administrative levels of Dutch planning by dividing them into the formal level: national, regional, local, and European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) designed for the European Union and the informal: the Randstad

The case study of Almere new town is the topic of the fifth chapter. I begin with an introduction of the development of Almere proceeding to its present state and the great task that has been put on Almere for an urban expansion, providing land to build houses for the growing population in the Randstad area.

I end with a discussion with a compilation of the information discussed in the previous chapters including my thoughts of the planning practice in the Netherlands and whether new towns such as Almere will benefit of having a new town policy. In the final chapter I conclude to whether I have obtained answer to my research question.

2. Theoretical Framework – Literature Review

As an accumulation of the information of planning practice by authors such as Faludi (1989), Faludi & Van der Falk (1994), Allmendinger (2002), and Hall (2002), planning is the practice which involves is the integration of administrative levels, a complex and multidisciplinary practice that integrates a number of elements into one system. Urban planning has urban dimensions, process in planning and actor involvement. Below are three topics of urban planning specifying particular issues which I find important to urban planning and will use in the research:

<u>Urban Dimension</u>	<u>Planning Process</u>	<u>Administrative Tiers</u>	
Social/Cultural	Vision	<i>Formal</i>	<i>Informal</i>
Economical	Approach	European Union	NGO's
Spatial	Method	National Ministry	Community org.
	Strategy	Regional	
	Negotiation	Local	
	Decision		

Although I divide the topics into this framework, they are interconnected in the complex world of the planning practice. The methods are many, with their own theoretical background. Some of these methods will be explained in this chapter. Over the years the methods used for planning have evolved due to the influence of social and economical change. This is relevant because all elements must adapt to change in order to function in a proficient manner.

In this chapter I start with my explanation of planning and the elements associated in the planning practice. I then continue with a discussion of the innovations of planning with the emphasis on the importance of new approaches that could be used in the present planning practice.

2.1. Planning concept

Planning has been given many definitions. For example, Peter Hall's (2002 p.1) explanation of planning is being "...concerned with deliberately achieving some objective, and it proceeds by assembling actions into some orderly sequence." According to Campbell and Fanstein (2003 p.6.), "Planning is intervention with an intention to alter the existing course of events." In other words planning is a method to make changes that affects the society, economy and environment. Neuvel and van der Knaap (2009) discuss planning with interrelated aspects; substantive and procedural .

Substantive aspect – the making of space for different purposes

"Spatial planning focuses on the physical landscape and the activities that take place in the landscape." (Neuvel & van der Knaap, 2009, p.103). Spatial planning is the integration of land-use, transportation, water management, housing development and environmental issues. It is the process of situating land-use activities in the physical environment for a specific purpose. Spatial planning is a tool used in negotiating and decision making for future spatial projects. Spatial

planning can therefore be described as a *“future-oriented activity”* (Couclelis, 2005 in Neuvel & van der Knaap, 2009, p 103).

Procedural aspect

Procedural aspects concerns the action of choosing a plan based on a *“decision-centered approach”* (Needham, 1998, p.96). Neuvel and Knaap (2009 p.104) define procedural aspects to *“...how spatial planning processes should be designed, how spatial planning decisions should come about or how conflicts about both substantive and procedural aspects should be managed.”*

Procedural aspect is in other words the process of choosing a method used to approach a decision for a plan. The process contains a plan or a *“vision”* made up of ideas and goals which are intended to achieve in a given time period. Therefore the planning process is the means of choosing a method to obtain specific results.

2.2. Elements around planning

In *Keeping the Netherlands in Shape*, Faludi (1989, p.8) describes the following terms of instruments used in planning:

- Planning Doctrine – *“...a body of thought concerning (a) spatial arrangements with an area; (b) the development of that area; (c) the way both are to be handled. Ideas under (a) and (b) combine into an overall principle of spatial organization for the area concerned.”*
- Planning Principles – *“How spatial arrangements and development are to be handled.....They concern the preparation of plans, their form and use.”*
- Planning System - The principles are the basis for the various planning institutions which *“make up a country’s planning system.”*

These three terms are the tools used in the planning procedure which actors involved in planning use in decision making.

Planning policies are important to maintain order and regulate developments on the national, regional and local scale, such as building houses, transportation, land use distribution, natural areas and other elements in an urban community (Faludi 1989).

A network of authorities and actors make decisions on what is stated by Faludi, in a planning doctrine, what will be completed, how it will be accomplished and which planning level should be responsible for the development. The actors involved in the planning phase include politicians, stakeholders, planners, the general public and multi private and public organizations. These groups have different backgrounds, ideas, interests and values. When a large and diverse group of actors are involved in planning projects, approaching a consensus becomes difficult and time consuming. Therefore planners develop a strategic plan that is effective enough to complete the planning procedure (Faludi, 1989).

Under the influence of Faludi’s (1989) description of the instruments planning I conclude to my own interpretation of these planning instruments as:

- Vision – the ideas, plans, goals
- Approach – how to do things, how to reach the decision
- Method – the technique used to obtain specific results whether the chosen approach was effective.

The planning doctrine, (Vision) is made up of ideas for projects that are aimed to be achieved in a certain time period. The ideas and goals are incorporated into a policy and are then used as a tool and guideline which includes a time schedule for projects to be achieved and their line of importance. The planning principle, (Approach) is the approach which will be used to complete the development. The planning system (Method) is the network of steps within planning used in negotiations and decision making. The action of applying the vision, approach and method into practice is what I call the process in planning.

The interaction of spatial and procedural planning is the equivalent to the planning system framework where negotiations, strategies and decision-making take place (Figure 2.1).

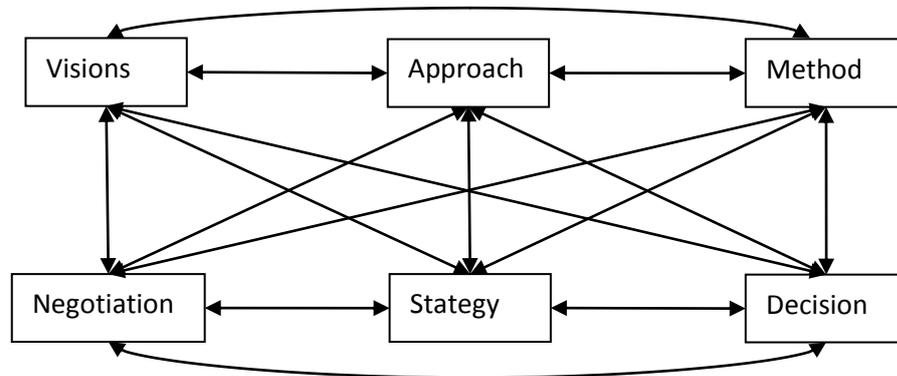


Figure 2. 1 Complexity in Planning Process

The use of theory in planning

What is the importance of using theory in planning? Planning is a highly bureaucratic profession in which planners are hired by governmental authorities to perform as their mediators for planning developments (Allmendinger, 2002). There is much power from governmental authorities applied in the planning system. It is unavoidable that planning is under the influence of power. As a mediator, planners must maintain a neutral position in settling disputes and discourses between various actors involved in the planning process. Planners are therefore influenced by three opposing thoughts; *“their own personal and professional feelings, their employers objectives and the code and ethics of their professional institute.”* (Allmendinger, 2002,p.23). It is therefore planners use theories as a tool to justify their motive in practice.

Allmendinger (2002) questions whether all theories are applicable to various situations. The definition of theory does not clarify its many uses in different situations. He then explains the discourses of *“theories of planning (why it exists and what it does) and theories in planning (how to go about it)”* (p.2). Theories in natural science are hypothesized that have been proven true by means of testing, whereas theories in social sciences are difficult to prove through testing and are

therefore subjective and open for adjustments due to changes in society, social values. *“Society has a habit of shifting values, meaning and actions.”* (Allmendinger, 2002, p.3).

The distinction of theory and its use is identified in six categories (Judge, Stoker and Wolman 1995 in Allmendinger, 2002, p. 8-9).

Type of theory	Characteristics
Normative theory	Concerns how the world ought to be
Prescriptive theory	Concerned with best means of achieving a desired condition
Empirical theory	Concerned with explaining reality
Models	Representations or stylized and simplified pictures of reality
Conceptual frameworks of perspectives	Ways of looking at or conceiving an object study
Theorizing	Thinking of an aspect of a phenomenon

Table 2. 1 Categories of theory (Source from Judge, et al. 1995 in Allmendinger, 2002 p 9.)

These theories are used as a source of approaches and procedures in planning and planning styles. The theories have different functions but could be combined into one planning approach.

Shifts in planning styles

1. Systems Approach in Planning **Professional knowledge vs public participation**

The systems approach is built on modeling and impact analysis of changes occurring in an area due to interrelated components. In the case of planning, a systems approach is used to predict the effects a particular development proposal will have on a town, city or environment with the help of professional knowledge (Allmendinger, 2002). Systems in planning is also used in the hierarchy of planning levels concerning power; national, regional and local.

2. Rational Planning - Prescriptive

Rational planning is described as ‘prescriptive planning’ in decision-making. In similarity with systems planning, the rational approach is an undemocratic planning method where as planners play the role of experts. Decisions were based on factual and technical information rather than the opinions of the public (Allmendinger, 2002).

3. Advocacy Planning – Planners as Mediators

When advocacy planning came into use, planners became the ‘middle man’ for the public and politicians. Instead of relying mainly on technical and factual information, planners started to include values in the planning process and decision making.

The question became: ‘for whom are planners planning for?’ and ‘who is actually planning, the planners or politicians?’ (Allmendinger, 2002).

4. Top-down vs Bottom-up - Hierachry

In this planning approach, plans or decisions are made starting at the highest to the lowest level (Top-down) or vice versa, from the lowest to the highest level (Bottom-up).

5. Collaborative Planning Communication and Public Participation

Collaborative planning is the communicative approach in decision making, were there is no one true statement. Knowledge is subjective and therefore open for discussion and criteria (Allmendinger, 2002).

Collaborative planning is a form of rational discourses between actors on different levels. It is the use of particular knowledge applied through language used in discussions and negotiations.

2.3. Innovations in Planning - New Approaches in Planning

"...planning processes are dominated by instrumental rationality, born of the Enlightenment and modernity..." (Allmendinger, 2002, p.182). This was the time when knowledge was only true if it could be scientifically proven. Therefore, all elements had scientific logic. It was thought to be affective due to its systematic form by making decisions based on rational decision making.

Over the years much discussion has been on new approaches in planning for both the Netherlands in general (Needham, 1988; Hajer & Zonneveld; 2000; Campbell & Fanstein, 2003). As time evolves, so must planning in order to adapt to current situations and be prepared for future changes and open to new ideas.

The major issues in planning today such as sustainable development, limiting regulations, and global competition were not known in the past (Alden et al., 2001). The impact of globalization has not only transformed society but has also affected the means of governance by the state authorities. It has now become a question whether the Dutch institutional structure in the planning framework are proficient for the present issues in planning. New approaches in governance are therefore being sought out in order to adjust to these innovations (Alden et al., 2001).

Planning is a social related practice which involves interaction with a diverse group of actors and different means of negotiation tactics. When challenges and problems are encountered, the method of institutional governance remains the same. The top down, rational and systematic planning methods no longer fit in with the social related planning practice of today and is now being replaced with a more democratic and normative approach, stimulating public and institutional participation (Alden, et al., 2001).

2.4. Conclusions

It seems that new approaches are applied through knowledge and lessons learned from previous mistakes made in planning. Knowledge is not only gained in books but also through experience (Flyvberg, 2001). Experience is therefore implemented as new methods and approaches in planning. Experience gained in practice is new knowledge that should be kept and realized as new planning methods for different developments in the planning practice which leads to the conclusion of that experience becomes theory which is then implemented to the planning practice.

As a result, planning is an evolving activity which should adapt to present and future changes in society for new developments as shown in the below figure introduced in chapter 1.

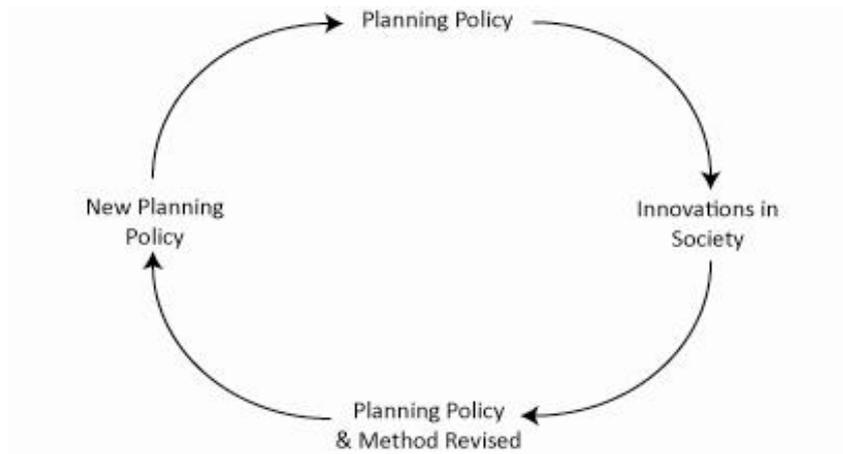


Figure 2.2 Flexibility and change in planning process

3. Spatial Planning in the Netherlands – Structure

For a small country such as the Netherlands, spatial planning and development is an important issue. Due to lack of space, almost every square meter is used accordingly. It is therefore said that Dutch planning is best described with the ‘rule and order’ concept. The rule is order and rulers are those who sustain order (Faludi, 1989 and Faludi & van der Valk, 1994).

The Dutch spatial planning approach is described by the European Commission as being “...conducted through a very systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, which coordinate public sector activity across different sectors...” (European Commission, 1997, p.36, cited in Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000, p.339).

In this coordinative planning activity the planners have a discursive role, in which they interpret plans, policy documents and visions to actors involved in the planning development (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000).

In this chapter I go forth with the discussion of the Dutch planning framework, which I have divided into the formal and informal procedures (Figure 3.1.). I will explain what role each level plays and its connection to Almeres urban development. Likewise I will explain the role of the informal factors which were invented in wakening of the discussion of Almeres urban growth development. The governmental policies are the formal and legal process in planning. The informal process in planning can be the “vision” and ideals of how the levels of government foresee the development of a specific area.

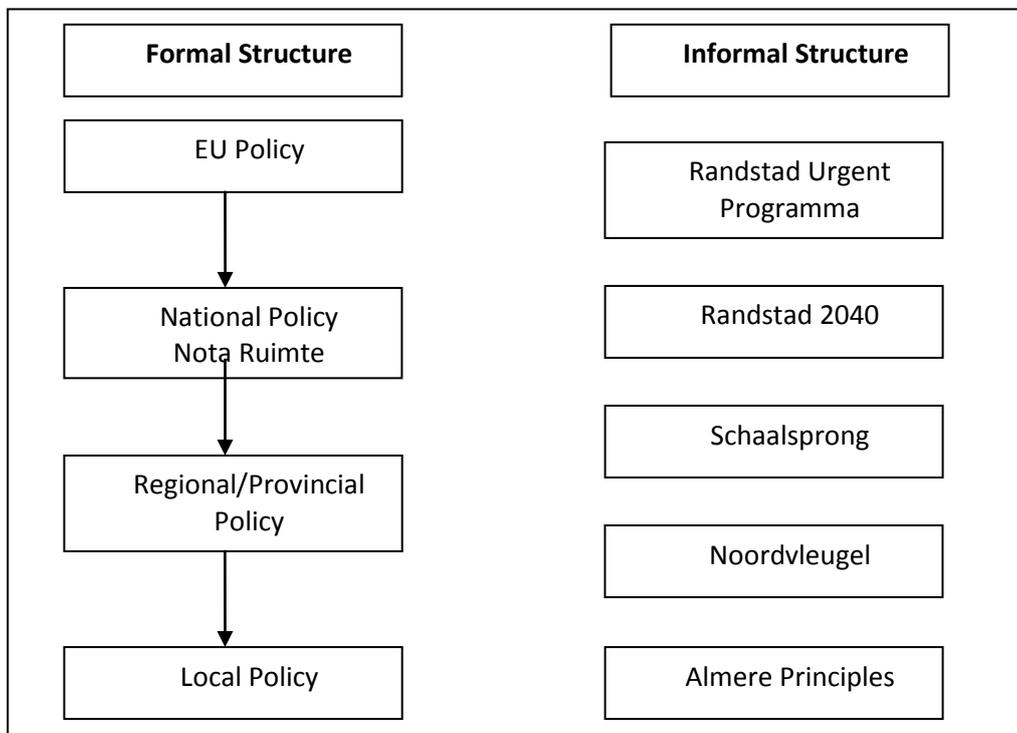


Figure 3.1 Formal and Informal policies involved in Almere’s growth development

This chapter will also evaluate the critics made on the Dutch planning system. In research articles by Brink et al. (2006, p.147) discuss the need of *“reframing the notion of spatial planning at the national and provincial geographical and administrative scale* researchers such as Urge and recommend to review the system.

3.1. Formal Planning Framework

The Dutch planning system is classified into three levels having the EU level as its top level. Each level provides an agenda or plan of objectives that the levels intend to accomplish which are linked to the plans of the other governmental levels. Each level provides more detail as the level becomes smaller, such as the goals for the local level (municipality) are more detailed than stated in the regional level. Although the national government and parliament make the legal decision for the provinces and municipalities, the three governmental levels or tiers in the Netherlands all have a substantial amount of freedom in their legal domain, which makes the final decisions in spatial.

The Dutch planning system is formal and rational, a top-down approach in policy beginning at the highest level (national) and ending at the bottom (municipal). It is best described as a formal approach in planning, whereas an informal approach could be declared as a non-documented agreement/approach. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, *Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM)*, has the great responsibility of providing and implementing spatial policies that will protect the Dutch nature, landscape, cultural history, public safety but also ensure the growth and strengthen cities and rural areas in the Netherlands (VROM, 2009). A decision made on one level will no doubt affect the other levels.

EU level of Spatial Planning – European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)

The European Union is made up of many different cultures with their own set of values and policies. With such diversity it becomes quite complex when creating a unified policy in spatial planning for the EU countries for each nation will in some way be affected in a negative approach. The European Union has open borders making aligned countries become more integrated socially and economically making cities and regions in the EU become dependent on each other. (ESDP website, 2009). As a result when changes are made on a regional or local level of an EU nation will therefore influence other EU nations in one way or the other (ESDP website, 2009). This also affects international spatial planning in the EU.

The Single European Market is one important issue for the development of the ESDP. Regions and cities will compete with each other for attracting businesses to their location. The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) was developed to withhold guidelines on how to maintain and approach spatial planning within the EU (ESDP website, 2009). Consequently this means that any spatial development the Netherlands plan to implement will affect other EU nations.

National Scale

The national level authorizes what needs to be implemented and allows /encourages projects to be developed for each region therefore, *“...the government chooses a dynamic, development-driven spatial policy...”*(VROM, 2009). The national level for spatial development creates a policy

document called *The National Spatial Strategy* and is the general and fundamental plan for the entire country. It contains the governments' opinion on spatial development in the Netherlands. It is used as a guideline for the projects needed to be completed and stating the responsibilities of underlying authorities (regional and local). The national government and parliament make the legal decision-making for the 12 provinces and 458 municipalities of the Netherlands (Van den Brink, et al., 2006). Nevertheless the government has amended its dictatorship approach with rules and regulations and given the regional and local levels more opportunities to control their own developments (VROM, b website 2008).

Regional Scale

The second level of planning is the regional or provincial level. Each province creates its own regional plan, stating their main goals for spatial development and focus on issues that affect the municipality, such as economic strategies, transportation, safety issues and protection of the environment (nature and landscape). The regional plan authorizes what type of land-use the municipalities tend to have. Each region indicates and specifies what goal it has in mind for their municipalities. As well as the regional plan, some provinces create an unauthorized planning vision (Van den Brink, Van der Valk, & Van Dijk, 2006).

Local Scale

The municipal level is the third planning level. In similarity to the other levels, each municipality develops their own plan which relates to the set goals that the region has for each area of the region. The municipal plan indicates a more detailed land-use plan and is also dependent on citizen participation in the land development. The planning system of the three tiers is therefore reliant on the land-use decisions of the municipal plan.

3.2. Informal Level

Randstad – Green Heart Randstad as a planning level

At the end of World War II, world population increased which lead to vast urbanization. European cities such as Paris, London and Copenhagen, which at that time were already large cities, kept expanding and formed into locales/districts and suburbs. In contrast, small cities in the Netherlands grew and formed a circular route, a “ring of towns” around a green area or “green heart”, which is now known as the ‘Randstad Holland’ (Rim City Holland) (Nawijn, 1979, p.19).

The Randstad became known as the ‘Dutch metropolis’ after Gerald Burkes’ book from 1966 *Greenheart Metropolis*, (Burg & Vink, 2008, p.1). The metropolis term brought on much discussion whether the government was in favor of the Randstad developing further into a metropolitan area (Burg & Vink, 2008).

With the growth of population and international competition, the government is discussing the Randstad as one planning level which could strengthen the growth of the Randstad area and collaborative decision making for future investment and infrastructure. The Randstad is located in four provinces: North Holland, South Holland, Utrecht and Flevoland with each province having its

own planning policy. It may cause much dispute between the provinces to come to a consensus of deciding the future role for the Randstad.

Almost half of the Dutch population, or 45% (Burg & Vink, 2008, p.2) live in the 'Randstad' or 'Rim City', which consists of the four largest cities (including its surrounding area) in the Netherlands; Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam.

To prevent these cities from further expansion into the "*green heart*" a new policy 'The Green Heart Policy' was accepted which protected the area. As a result, building new towns became the answer for population growth and urban expansion in The Netherlands. (Nawijn, 1979).

Randstad Urgent Programma 'Randstad Strategic Agenda 2040' is the outcome of these discussions. It contains the government's vision for the future growth and development of the Randstad region.

Randstad 2040 - Randstad Strategic Agenda 2040

The Randstad Strategic Agenda 2040 is one of the many projects under the Randstad Urgency Program (Randstad Urgent Programma). The Randstad Strategic Agenda 2040 is a 'vision' of how the government foresees the future of the Randstad area. The Randstad plays an important role for the Netherlands. "*The Randstad has been the economic, cultural, political, and demographic focus of the Netherlands since the Middle Ages.*" (Burg and Vink, 2008). And even today "*The Randstad is the core of the Dutch economy, an international centre of traffic and trade*" (Frieling, D. 2008).

3.3. The need for change in planning – change in governance

In the 1960's "*Planning, as a form of systems analysis and control must itself be dynamic and concerned with change.*" (Allmendinger, 2002, p. 43). As the Dutch planning system is well known to be systematic and controlled, it should therefore be open for change in governance in coherency to the change of society, economy and environment.

Hajer and Zonneveld (2000, p.337) clarifies that the Dutch planning system is threatened by "*...recent developments within planning as a policy practice as well as the effects of some macro-sociological developments...*". This means that innovations in society are now affecting the methods used in planning.

Critics on Dutch Planning

The Netherlands have a long history and prestigious reputation in strategic planning. (cf. Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000; Faludi & van der Valk, 1994). The Dutch planning system is under continuous scrutiny by both Dutch and international scholars (Faludi & Van der Valk, 1994). These researchers criticize the system and explain the need for changes in the Dutch planning system due to new strategies and issues in planning. Revision in planning is necessary to be in tact with the changes in society, economy, cultural diversity and environmental issues that will affect mankind such as climate change. In order for the Netherlands to maintain their reputation for its strategic planning methods they need to be open for a change in planning approaches (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). If

researchers claim the necessity of reviewing the Dutch planning system, it could also be the chance to develop a new approach for new town planning.

In 1999 a UK research report named *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, made by the Urban Task Force discussed the urban decline in England and the need for a change in planning and governance. Although the report focuses on urban regeneration in the United Kingdom, their ideas could also be implemented in new town planning. The Urban Task Force (1999 p.191) state:

- *“development plans should become simpler, more flexible and strategic documents, closely integrated with other local strategies, and avoiding the inclusion of detailed site-level policies;”*
- *“the formulation of detailed planning policies for a regeneration area is often better dealt with as part of an area planning process, which includes the preparation an integrated spatial masterplan and provides more meaningful opportunities for local people to participate in decision-making than through the traditional Plan Inquiry process.”*

The Dutch national level states in the National Spatial Strategy *Nota Ruimte*, a change of governance in planning. Instead of complete control by the national level, it opens opportunities and promotes the citizens, public and private organizations and stakeholders to take part in the planning procedure with collaborative and participative planning. Although the Dutch planning process remains a top-down planning approach it is now promoting an open and collaborative participation of those who want to be involved in the planning development.

In the past 50 years of Dutch spatial planning, five basic principles have been used (Rabbinge, 2006 p.78):

1. Concentration of urban development
2. Spatial cohesion
3. Spatial differentiation
4. Spatial hierarchy
5. Regional and national fairness

As stated by Rabbinge (2006), these principles should be maintained in spatial planning by implementing diverse *“instruments”*. Rabbinge (2006 p.78), however argues that *“The traditional instruments are no longer effective...”* or methods used for spatial planning in the past cannot be used for present developments. Rabbinge gives three reasons for this. First, contextual reasons have changed. The need of new town development decreased when the Dutch government realized that the population growth was not progressing as they had predicted. The second reason is conceptual. Concepts in former spatial plans are no longer used. The third is due to a change in institutional participation, meaning that some institutions involved in the planning process no longer exist, which therefore changes the entire planning process. The strict top-down/bottom-up approach is no longer valid. With new institutions, concepts and contextual

reasons, a planning method with more coordination is needed to maintain the five basic principles which have been used in Dutch spatial planning for 50 years mentioned above.

Rabbinge suggests that by applying flexibility in planning and the dynamics of society and environment, “a new Utopia could be created” in planning development and practice.

3.4. Conclusions

According to van den Brink, et al. (2006) conflicts in the Dutch planning system are mainly caused by decisions made on land-use. These conflicts generally affect the local and national level. On the municipal level land-use development is highly reliant on the citizens and therefore determines what land development will be permitted. This decision affects the national level which must then reorganize the national plan in accordance with the municipal plan. The involvement of the provinces has been limited but now they are becoming more involved.

More collaboration strengthens the planning procedure bringing the opinions from each administrative tier forth making it more clear what the problems are and how a concise solution could be obtained.

4. New Town Development

4.1. New Town Concept

A new town has been interpreted as a relocation of housing for overpopulated cities or a safe suburban living area for the middle class family (Reijndorp, 2007). A new town is not an extension of an existing town or city. It is a blueprint plan of a new settlement before it was built (Van der Wal, 1997). Another author, de Klerk (2007), relates new towns with the Ebenezer Howards' Social City, indicating that new towns are the structure of social reform.

In accordance to the urbanization policy (part of the post-war planning policy in the Netherlands) new towns were initially defined as 'growth centres' and "*subsidiary centre within a city region*", (Nozeman, 1990,p.149). 'Growth centres' were extensions of neighboring overpopulated cities that are confined to urban growth and lack of space and therefore unable to offer housing for the growing population (Nozeman, 1990).

New towns were also characterized as a new concept of lifestyle: 'living in a green and healthy environment' after much destruction to existing cities and towns during World War II. New Towns became the answer to divert over-populated and congested cities to a new location of a new town. The development of new towns has served as relocations for the overspill of existing cities. It should not be forgotten that new towns also exploits rural land that may have served for other land use developments such as for farmland or nature and recreation area. The Zuiderzee Project in the Netherlands is an example of the change of land use from farmland to new town development (INTI, 2009b).

In his book *In Praise of Common Sense*, Coen Van der Wal (1997) discusses how new towns were created before the twentieth century. He explains during medieval times in the Netherlands, new towns were developed in close vicinity to an existing kingdom which also helped to build up trade. When agriculture and production increased so did population growth. New towns came into existence attracting people who did not want to live in an agrarian environment but instead wanted to live in a place which offered other types of work. Another form of new town development was to compete with other existing towns for reasons of trade and power. In contrast, new towns of the 20th century were initially developed as satellite towns for overpopulated and congested cities and became relocations for the growing population.

New towns became known as a spatial reform based on Ebenezer Howard's The Social City concept. This concept was used in new town development during the 1950's and 1960's in Europe and the United States (De Klerk, 2007). The Social City seemed to be the best solution for providing homes and creating a better living environment. However years later, problems became evident that these new towns did not achieve the contents of what the Social City concept stood for. In his paper *New towns in development policy: an introduction*, De Klerk (2007) mentions three central problems which occurred:

1. Population and economy growth declined, service economy took over the industrial economy

2. High educated people moved to the old part of cities rather than to the new towns, which were designed to attract that particular group of people.
3. There was less employment opportunities as new towns grew, creating more commuting.

The lack of economical functions and employment resulted to the commuting of people to the city and new towns became known as ‘sleeping’ towns, in which the towns were empty during the day and provided a sleeping area during the night. The fast development of new towns may be the cause of the lack of economy in the area.

“The dimensions of new towns are spatial, social and economical, as are the dimensions of any village or town.” (De Klerk, 2007 p.8). De Klerk (2007) explains that these three elements are the fundamental concepts to creating a new town and for a new town to development. De Klerrk (2007, p.8) also makes it clear that these three dimensions *“...generally shape the organization of cities and, with regard to new towns, they are specifically related to population growth in a society.”*

These elements have evolved since the publication of Ebenezer Howards’ book *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (published first in 1898 as *To-morrow* and then in 1902 as its existing title) with his ideology of building new towns around decentralized industries which enabled people to live and work in a healthy environment (Hall,2002).

In figure 4.1 I have made an illustration to show how the three dimensions, according to de Klerk (2007), interconnect with each other in order for a new town to function.

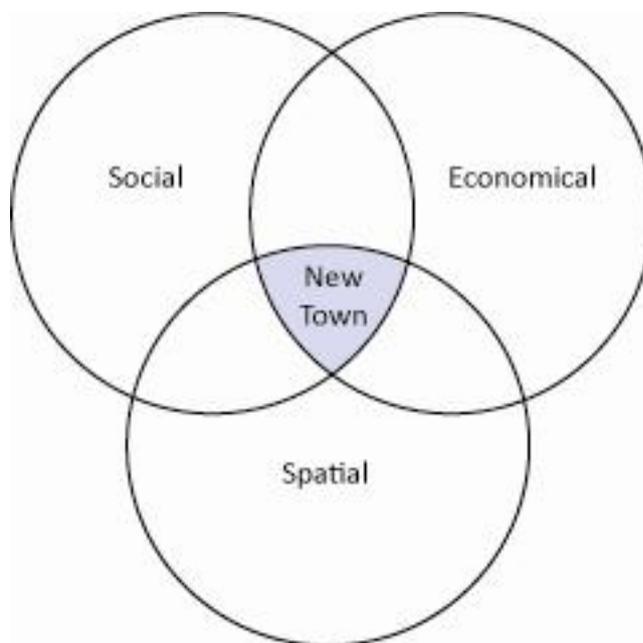


Figure 4.1 New Town Dimension

VINEX – Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra

VINEX stands for the *Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra*. It was a policy plan from the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) notating solutions of spatial and housing demands. During the 1990's new housing areas known as the 'VINEX Wijk' were built in the Netherlands as an answer to the need of housing. The VINEX wijk were extensions of cities and became known as the 'new suburbs' in the Netherlands (Duivestijn, 2008). In contrast to 'VINEX wijks', "...new towns are about growth and reform, about rational economic planning and rational spatial planning." (De Klerk, 2007, p.13).

4.2. International New Town Institute

In 2004, the city of Almere launched and added to its development policy, a research project on worldwide developments of new towns called the International New Town Institute (INTI). The research involves the study of past, present and future of planned communities in an urbanizing world. On the New Town Institute website, there can be found introductions to many on-going researches regarding New Towns, such as *'Building by Registering: a tailor-made method of house development: Beijing-Amsterdam'* a proposal of a "tailor-made method of housing development" (Jing Zhou & Hein de Haan, INTI,2009d.)

"INTI is a research and knowledge institute which focuses on the history and regeneration of Western New Towns, with a commitment to improving the planning of present day New Towns worldwide. The research takes a wide angle approach, employing social sciences, history, design and planning as analytical and operational tools. The subjects of this research range from the informal cities in the developing world, to large scale planning in urban Asia, to the use of urban simulation in planning."

"INTI initiates studies, offers educational programs, and organizes public events and lectures." (INTI, 2009c.)

Being a new town on reclaimed land, Almere could provide information to INTI for developments of new towns in rural and urban areas (Frieling, 2006).

4.3. Conclusions

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter new towns were officially 'growth centres' or "...a subsidiary centre within a city region." (Nozeman, 1990,p.149). This description brings people to relate new towns to suburbs or a relocation of housing needs for existing cities. Reijndorp (2007) mentions in his article *Growing pains of new towns* that new towns carry the myth of a suburb, or new living areas in safe and quiet areas far from the city.

On the other hand the concept of new towns, described by de Klerk (2007), is about reform and a new a new beginning. According to Reijndorp (2007, p.121) *"New towns...are places of hope and expectation."*

In today's society there are many complications due to continuous change in our environment which includes the economy, social needs, land-use and now climate change. An important change of policy for New Town Development is to include the three elements discussed by de Klerk (2007); Society – Economy – Space, which he explains that make and shape a city leading to population growth for the city.

In Almeres' case, in order for it to stand by its declaration of becoming a self-sufficient city, it should be taken in consideration to involve social, economical and spatial issues in a new town policy and end the suburban myth that new towns carry.

5. Almere Case Study - Introduction

Almere is a new town and settlement located in the Flevoland Polder as part of the Zuiderzee land reclamation project, started at 1918. From the beginning, the south-western tip of Flevoland was to become “the overflow” or relocation of inhabitants due to the increasing population and urbanization of the western and northern part of the Randstad; Amsterdam and Gooi (Van Duin & De Kaste 1987). The main reason for the relocation was to prevent existing cities to expand, due to the protection of the “Green Heart”, a large green and nature area within the Randstad circle. Almere was therefore created to supply housing for the urban expansion of Amsterdam and the Randstad area in the 1970’s. Now 30 years later, Almere is yet again the focus point for not only solving housing problems for the growing population of the Randstad but also the need of employment.

The national government has authorized a double expansion of Almere from 180,000 to 360,000 people by the year 2030. Almere offers the possibilities of providing land to build more homes for the Noordvleugel Amsterdam and the remaining Randstad area.

Almere is now facing a new challenge which not only requires it to double its population and urban expansion but is also making its way to becoming a self-sufficient town, which could lead to competition with other cities surrounding the Randstad.

With its close location and expansion towards the Noordvleugel, Almere will have a significant meaning for the area not only for habitation but also for improving the economical prospects. As mentioned in Nota Ruimte, the national government intends to strengthen the economical competition between the Netherlands and other European countries. It makes a reasonable argument for using Almere as a new economical center for the Netherlands.

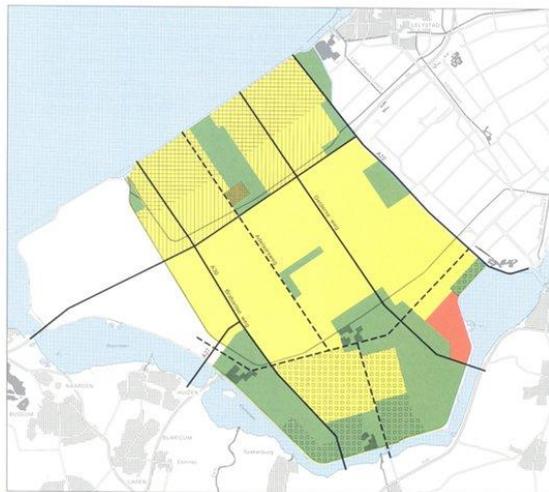
In this part of the thesis I will discuss the case study of Almere. I begin with a brief history of its development including the ideology of Almeres design concepts and the departments and authorities that were established during its construction. I continue with a discussion of the present situation of Almere after 30 years of existence, the tasks assigned to Almere by the central government and the vision the municipality has for Almeres urban growth as a sustainable and self-sufficient city, also Almeres involvement in projects within the Randstad. I then precede to the dilemmas the EU, national, regional and local level encounter with each other. The chapter ends with Almeres involvement with worldwide new town organizations concluding to benefits of new town cooperation of exchanging knowledge and experiences of new town planning. and whether a new town policy is beneficial for Almeres growth and for future new towns.

5.1. History and Development of Almere

Almere is a new town designated by the Dutch government as a solution to the shortage of space for building houses in the Randstad area. Almere is part of the Zuiderzee Project, a prestigious land reclamation development in the Netherlands introduced in the late nineteenth century by Cornelis Lely. The project was extensive and focused on improving water management and creating land for agriculture and habitation (Van der Waal, 1997). Three polders were drained in

the project; the Wieringermeerpolder (“a trial polder” test polder), the Noordoostpolder and Flevoland. Flevoland was reclaimed in two parts: Eastern and Southern Flevoland. The Southern Flevoland reclamation started in 1959 and ended in 1967. In 1965 the first parcellation plans for the eastern part of Southern Flevoland (*Het verkavelingsplan voor het oostelijke deel van Zuidelijk Flevoland*) was created in collaboration by the Zuiderzee Project Department (ZPD) and the IJsselmeerpolders Development Authority (IJDA). According to the plan, most of the polder was parceled into land for agriculture, with the exception of two areas marked for urban development;

7500 hectares in the western part of the land and 450 hectares towards the east. This area was considered to attract a higher urban development due to its close connection to the Randstad area. In 1968 the *Verkavelingsplan* (Figure 5.1.), a research report of alternative urban development for Almere was designed and approved by the Ministry of Transport and Water Management and the Second Chamber. Although not marked as an urban area on the 1968 plan, the *Verkavelingsplan* and the parcellation plan both had the same location of the urban area on the western tip of Flevoland (white land parcel) and the agrarian and nature sectors (yellow & green parcels) in the middle of the polder.



Figuur 3: Verkavelingsplan 1968; algemene bestemmingen



Figure 5. 2 Verkavelingsplan Zuidelijk Flevoland 1968 (Nieuweland website 2009)

The below timeline shows the progress towards the development of Almere:

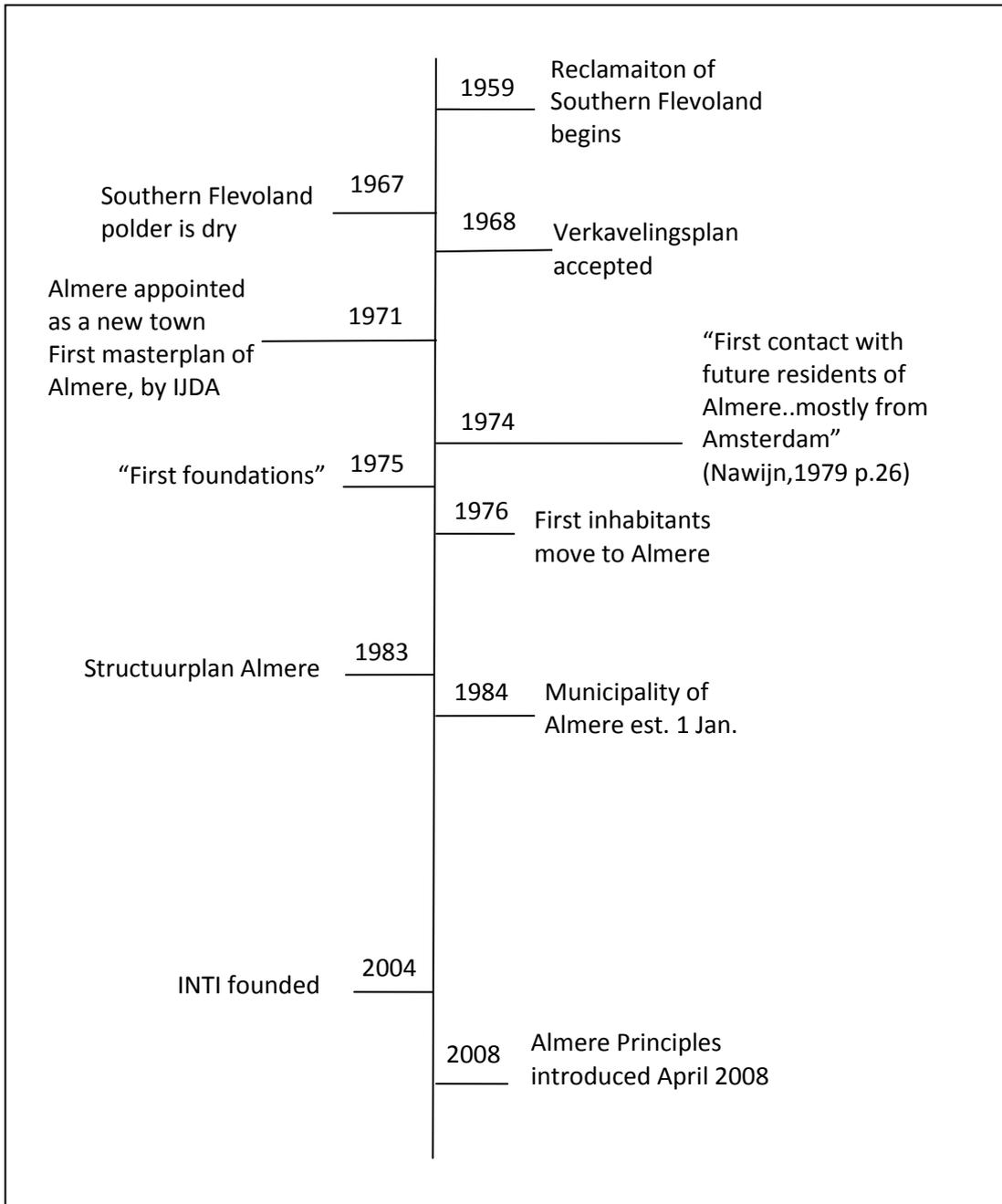


Figure 5.2 Almere Timeline Development

5.2. Innovations in the planning scheme

A Change in Land-use

The Wieringermeer and the Noordoostpolder were purely created for agrarian purposes. However, during the planning of the Eastern and Southern Flevoland, a shift in land-use development

occurred. In place of creating land for purely agrarian purposes as was with the Wieringermeer and the Noordoostpolder. The Southern polder was divided into four land-use functions. Apart from urban housing, the northern part was considered for industrial development (now the area of the Oostvaardersplassen), the mid-section was kept for agricultural purposes and the southern area for forests and recreation (Van der Waal, 1997). The idea was to create an area of diversity. The planners responsible for the planning of Almere, used the existing landscape as a method of creating a new urban environment.

In the history of Dutch land reclamation, polders not only served for agricultural purposes, it also provided land for farming villages and furthermore as a place where people of a higher aristocracy were able to live on country farm estates in close vicinity to the city area in places such as the Beemster and the Watergraafsmeer (Feddes, 2008) . This function was revised when the decision was made to locate an urban area on the western tip of south Flevoland. However this time the focus was to all groups of society target groups.

Social reform

A change in society had an influence with the urban planning of Almere. Peoples' mentality transformed from collectivism to individualism (Van der Waal, 1997). The public insisted on being more involved in public affairs. The public urged for putting more importance and emphasis on public health, safety and environmental issues. Not only did this have an influence on Almeres' design concept but also with the approach in planning were taken more into consideration.

Transitions in planning process

The planning of Almere took a different course compared with other new towns of the IJsselmeer polders. Previously, the Zuiderzee Project Department (ZPD) was in charge of new town planning for the IJsselmeerpolders . This time the IJsselmeerpolders Development Authority or IJDA (Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, RIJP) took over urban planning and was designated by superior authority for the construction of Almere. Before, the IJDA was accountable for cultivating the polders for agriculture, now they progressed to urban development. At this time the IJDA had enough employees of different backgrounds such as planners and civil technicians in order to make the urban plan for Almere. The IJDA was determined to value the mistakes made with the planning of Lelystad which had many delays in the design, extensive procedures and disagreements between two governmental agencies with knowledge derived from two different schools: technical knowledge from Delft and agricultural knowledge from Wageningen (Feddes, 2008 & Van der Waal, 1997). IJDA vowed that the Lelystad process would not repeat itself (Van der Waal, 1997).

The Zuiderzee project is viewed as a 'learning organization' (Feddes, 2008 p.60). It was a time when scientific knowledge excelled due to research on inpoldering .

Almere was a fresh start for planners after the unsuccessful planning of Lelystad. First, IJDA brought in a new and young multi-disciplinary group of designers and scientists who brought new insights for approaching a design. A form of chaos took over, influencing more creativity for the urban design of Almere, which is noticeable to the diversity in architecture and the variety of

houses in each nuclei. As Feddes (2008) explains, there was the transformation of hierarchy to equality within the group. Secondly, a sufficient framework was arranged consisting of status order for IJDA and the amount of time given for decision making was kept in control for maintaining a successful planning procedure.

5.3. Planning and design concepts for Almere

The two leaders of the IJDA were W.M. Otto and R.H.A. van Duin, both former students of the Agricultural University of Wageningen. The IJDA group considered the following elements to devise a plan for Almere:

- *Population expectancy*
- *The competition capacity/capability with other cities,*
- *Good urban functionality and flexibility to change*
- *Choosing the proper location for the urban expansion.*

As for other new town developments on the Zuiderzeepolders , Otto and van Duin were in much favor for the polynuclear concept, anticipating 15,000-20,000 inhabitants for each nuclei making it more efficient to build low-rise housing and low-density neighborhoods (Feddes, 2008 & Van der Waal, 1997). This was their design strategy for meeting the demands of the people. Later on this became known as the anti-urban concept of IJDA.

Polynuclear – Multi-core Design

Almere was expected to supply 3000 houses a year for Amsterdam and the Randstad area on a designated land area of almost 18,000 ha (44,479 acres) (Wezenaar, 1999). The polynuclear concept was used for all town planning on the Zuiderzee polders including Almere (Van der Waal, 1997). The idea is a derivative from Ebenezer Howards’ Garden City Concept (Figure 5.2.) of building a multi-core or multi-nuclei city and creating a healthy living area for humans by adjoining country and town. The main nuclei is positioned in the center with smaller interconnected nuclei encircling it. The polynuclear design of Almere soon became known as the “supply and demand theory”.

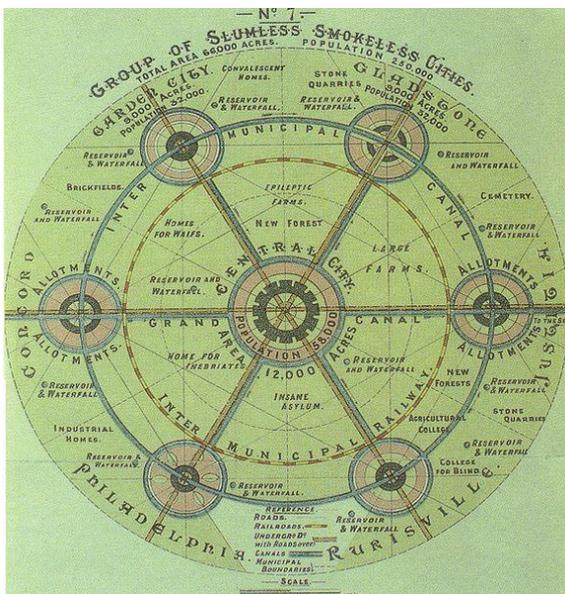


Figure 5.3 Ebenezer Howards’ Garden City concept (The Babuk Report.B, 2009)

Leisure Local

During the planning stage of Almere, the planners were under the inspiration of the 'leisure locale' concept, a place for diverse leisure activities to occur at the same time. A leisure locale is not confined to one particular behavior pattern. It is a place for both formal and informal behavior. The planners added this new concept to the land-use functions for Almeres' new town plan (Wezenaar, 1999). The polynuclear concept has its origin from the 'leisure locale' concept, ".....a place where people engage in behaviour not ordinarily associated with the instrumental or work aspects of existence." (Wezenaar, 1999, p. 464). Almere is therefore built from a network of leisure locales that are connected with smaller sets of leisure locales.

5.4.Learning from the past

Haarlemmermeer vs. Almere

From a historical perspective, one can learn from mistakes in planning which should not be repeated in future developments. The planning procedure used for the Haarlemmermeer was a lesson learned by the national government (Van der Wal, 1997).

The reclamation of the Haarlemmermeer in 1852, was merely seen by the State as economical and technical purposes. The State did not take action concerning local planning nor local matters such as social problems and business matters. The State laid out the basic infrastructure needed for the new polder which were roads and canals and reserved two 16 hectares for future towns. The State did not give the municipality the authority of the land which caused a chaos in the planning of Haarlemmermeer. What happened was that the municipality was incapable of applying/carrying out a plan for the two future villages which contained locations of different types land use, streets and open green areas which meets the conditions and construction requirements arranged by the State in 1858. (Van der Wal, 1997). Some land was sold off to the public and some were handed over to the municipality. As a result the land obtained a different role and created a non-structural whole for the area.

When the State realized what was happening, it was almost too late to take action in restoring order. In the years to come, the government sought to it that the Haarlemmermeer approach was not to repeat itself. The government would be more active and take responsibility during the entire process. This became true during the new town developments of the Zuider Zee Project.

The UK New Towns Act of 1946

The New Towns Act of 1946 is a policy founded by the British government which indicates the means of development of new towns. It is structured by the Reith Committee's final report. The New Towns Act states that new towns are to be designated by the ministry of town planning. (Hall, 2002). Construction and management of the new town was put in the hands of a development corporation set up by the ministry. When the new town was completed it was to be handed over to the local authority. This procedure was also used in the development of new towns on the Flevoland polder, including Almere. However in 1958, the government at that time in the United Kingdom decided that the Commission for the New Towns should take over new towns rather

than local authorities. The reason behind this decision was because new towns were perceived to be a good investment and the land value increased. Instead of the local authority to gain profit on the land value, the government would now receive it. (Hall, 2002).

Authority development during the Zuiderzee Project

In 1918 the Zuiderzee Act was enacted by the Dutch government, commencing the closing of the Zuiderzee and reclamation of the polders known as the Zuiderzee Project. It was an extensive and complicated project which needed much supervision as it progressed. The Zuiderzee project was under the authority of the Ministry for Public Works. The ministry therefore created new authorities in the course of the polder development (Van Duin & De Kaste, 1987). Therefore the Zuiderzee Board was included in the Zuiderzee Act which served as an advisor for the Dutch government. The following authorities created were (Van der Waal, 1997 p.63):

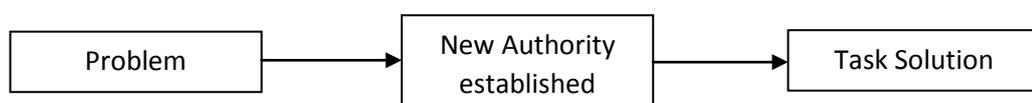
1. Zuiderzee Project Department (ZPD), *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken* was assigned to reclaiming polder land and creating the infrastructure.
2. Wieringermeer Directorate, *Directie van de Wieringermeer*, which later became the IJsselmeerpolders Development Authority IJDA *Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders*, was to prepare the polder fit for human habitation.
3. Public Authority, *Openbaar Lichaam*, a temporary authority for maintaining civil and social services.

In addition to these authorities, other important boards were established. Two boards were included in the Zuiderzee Act of 1918: The Zuiderzee Board, an advisory group for the Dutch government and the Zuiderzee Fund who financed the project (Van der Most, 2007). In 1919 The Zuiderzee Project Directorate was created for the hydraulic engineering works and in 1930 The Provisional Wieringermeer Project Directorate, which was under the authority of the Ministry of Public Works, was established to manage research and development for reclaimed land in the beginning stages of the Zuiderzee Project (Van Duin & De Kaste, 1987).

For each reclaimed polder, a new planning profession was introduced:

- The Wieringermeerpolder – civil engineering and agricultural techniques were applied (in the 1920's)
- The Noordoostpolder – social geography/planning was used (introduced in the 1940's)
- The Eastern Flevoland Polder – landscape planning implemented. (Van der Waal, 1997 p.35)

As for the development of Flevoland, the same procedure was used in which a new department was established to undertake responsibility for the next step. These departments were first and foremost founded in relation to the land reclamation of what is now known as Flevoland.



This method and approach however should be taken as an example as a need to include these steps in a policy for future developments whether it is for land reclamation or new towns. It can be used as guidelines to indicate which department is needed for each authority level and what tasks it should have and at which planning stage it should come in.

In Almeres case, it is the national government who authorized the urban growth but has placed in the hands of the regional and local level to develop strategical plans for Almeres future urban growth. However it is yet in discussion on which method will be chosen to acquire the goals and plans set for Almere.

5.5. Almeres involvement with worldwide New Town organizations

Almere is part of many New Town organizations. These organizations form a network system where new towns exchange information on governance, developmental process, planning practices used for new town developments. By joining forces with these new town organizations, Almere and other international new towns could benefit and learn from each others development mistakes which could therefore help produce a new planning policy for new town developments. Could this new town collaboration be the starting point of a New Town Development Policy?

Below are a few organizations in which Almere is taking part:

- European New Towns Platform (ENTP)
- Knowledge Network: Governance in Action (an example of a new town network)
- INTERREG IIIc project
- European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)

European New Towns Platform – ENTP

Almere is the co-founder of the European New Towns Platform (ENTP) founded in 2001. ENTP serves as a 'platform' or information center where their members are able to *"exchange information share practice and implement common projects"* (ENTP website, 2009). ENTP also supports and represents the new towns on the European level and aims to *"promote and strengthen their role on a regional and transnational level"* (ENTP website 2009). ENTP has produced a guideline document of the planning practices used for different new towns.

The New Town Institute is one of 10 partners for the ENTP (ENTP website 2009).

The purpose of ENTP is:

- *"For its members: to work as a platform to exchange information, share good practices and implement common projects"*
- *"At the European level: to work as an advocacy body to represent the New Towns, promote them and strengthen their role on a regional and transnational level"*

Knowledge Network: Governance in Action

Almere is a participant and leader of the INTERREG IIIc project 'Knowledge Network: Governance in Action'. The project consists of 17 cities, 4 research institutes in 11 countries and the European New Town Platform.

“Governance in Action is about shift from government to governance, from working for the people to working with the people.” (Knowledge Network website 2009). The purpose of the project is to activate citizens, social organizations and companies’ participation in development on both local and regional level. It is a form of resource network where knowledge, practice of local governance are shared and exchanged between European countries/cities/towns which could improve decision making and consensus between different stakeholders.

After almost a 30-40 year experience of developing new towns, we should be aware of what is needed for developing a functional new town, and also take into considerations the faults of unsuccessful towns.

European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)

The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) is a distributor of information on urban development issues to policymakers and other actors involved in the planning practice throughout Europe. The EUKN helps strengthen the development of the cities in the European Union (EUKN website 2009).

International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP)

IFHP – *“is a worldwide network of professional institutions and individuals of many signatures active in the broad fields of housing, urban development and planning.”* (IFHP website 2009).

The International New Town Institution

In 2004, Almere initiated the International New Town Institute (Meyer, 2007). It was included in the development policy for higher education. Unlike the other ‘visions’ I have mentioned above, the International New Town Institute promotes research on past and present new town developments world-wide: why they were founded, under what circumstance and how they developed. Being a new town, Almere offers substantial information of its own developmental progress which could be beneficial to future new towns (Meyer, 2007). INTI promotes research on the history of new towns development, past and present, by involving the participation of the University of Amsterdam, the Technical University of Delft, the Amsterdam Vocational Training Centre, New Land Heritage Centre in Lelystad and the Public Library of Almere (Meyer, 2007 & Frieling, 2008). The aim is to collect information that could be useful for the development of Almere and for the building of future new towns.

By now INTI has organized two seminars on new towns. The first was in 2006 and the later in 2008.

The research information from INTI could provide input and ideas for a specific planning direction which Almere may want to consider. With the help of INTI’s research, it is a possibility to construct a new town policy for new town developments.

5.6. Almere Present Situation

“The city is not built, it is planted, and will grow as a landscape in which a great deal can still change.”(Feddes, 2008 p.50)

Unlike other new towns such as Zoetermeer and Purmurend, Almere is a young town. As Hans ten Velden, Project Director Almere (Cluster manager) for Municipal Projects for the Ministry of VROM, explained in our interview that Almere is in its adolescent stage, which is a delicate period in a new town's existence, in similarity for human beings. Almere is still dependent on higher authorities to solve discourses. All eyes are being focused on Almere, due to the great task put on Almere for its urban expansion, building more homes and providing future jobs. All levels of authority are involved, the national, regional, local not to mention the Randstad, as an informal level and a level of its own and the Noordvleugel. For each authority level, formal planning policies have been created including informal documents of principles and visions. For each level there is also a work group that is focused on the development of Almere.

Formal planning policies and approaches

European Union – The European Union has 27 members of different cultures. Every nation has its own perceptions of spatial and procedural planning, therefore making it difficult to develop a spatial policy for the entire EU.

National Level

The development of Almere was authorized by the central government therefore making the national level most responsible for Almeres development. If the Ministry for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) implies that Almere must build 60,000 more houses, then VROM must provide the finances for the construction.

Although the policy does not mention Almere specifically, there is a chapter of the future of the Randstad and its importance for the Dutch government to strengthening its international competitiveness in Europe and world-wide. As Almere plays an important role for the Randstad, it will be interesting to see what the outcome will be for the Randstad as to how effective Almeres urban growth will progress.

Regional Level – The Provincial Plan for Flevoland for 2006-2015 aims at an integrated approach in the further expansion of Almere which includes integration and support from the national/central government, provincial and local level including other stakeholders benefiting from Almeres growth development. The province will make a contribution built on an investment program that consists of the following:

- Strengthen the economy and facilities
- The quality of the green-blue framework: ecological value, outdoor recreation.
- The quality of higher education
- Resolving specific infrastructure: roads, motorways, improved connection with the mainland and Randstad, residential development.

The province seeks the support from the central government and private investors in fulfilling these goals.

In the interview I took, in relation to the urban expansion of Almere, the province works with the SchaaIprong in collaboration/co-operation with VROM and the Municipality of Almere. The province focuses more on quality of the urban growth of Almere rather than the quantity.

Local Level – The municipality of Almere is in charge of the detailed local planning of the town. Its other functions are to ensure that planned projects are carried out from the beginning to the end. The policy that the municipality authorizes should be in correlation with the authorized policies of the national and provincial level.

Informal planning “policies” The Visions, Ideas, Goals, Aims

The below plans are merely visions for the future of Almere and the Randstad meaning that they are all informal documents unauthorized by the government. These visions have many things in common relating to a sustainable urban growth of the area, including the protection of the environment and nature and the awareness of the affect of climate change will have in the future.

The Almere Principles

The Almere Principles contains a list of seven principles with the purpose of a sustainable urban development. It is exclusively created for the Municipality of Almere in collaboration with William McDonough the co-founder of the *Cradle-to-Cradle* philosophy of sustainable design and development of cities. *“The Almere Principles will serve as the reference standard for all concrete standards”* (Cramer, 2008, p.7). The Almere Principles is not an official policy document but rather a guideline for the municipality of achieving a sustainable urban development of Almere.

The Almere Principles have a somewhat indirect connection with the unwritten principles used for the creation of Almere, such as the building of diverse housing areas, living close to nature and offering inhabitants a better and healthier living area. The means of action that will be used and implemented to achieving this goal is however not mentioned in the Almere Principles. The Almere Principles can thus be noted as a marketing plan which appeals to a certain group of people to live there (Almere Principles, 2008). To a certain extent the Almere Principles is about promoting a new and specific lifestyle which could also be interpreted as a new identity for Almere.

As of now the municipality of Almere has taken The Almere Principles to use as a guideline for their urban expansion. It is based on the ‘Cradle to Cradle’ concept by William McDonough and Partners, for a sustainable urban development. This implies that Almere has taken the significance in attaining a goal for their urban expansion and becoming a self-sufficient town. In some way this could be an indication of a new planning approach for new towns.

The Randstad Urgent Program

The Randstad Urgent Program is a program to enforce the status of the Randstad area as the economical center of the Netherlands and to withstand competition in Europe. The program has 33 projects for the Randstad area, where Almere is involved in three: The Schaalsprong Almere 2030, OV SAAL (the improvement of public transportation between Schiphol Airport-Amsterdam-Almere-Flevoland), and the Markermeer & IJmeer (improving the ecological system in the water area).

Figure 5.4 illustrates the four projects that Almere is involved in regarding the Randstad Urgent Programma. The Schaalsprong Almere 2030 and the Randstad 2040 are the two projects that I

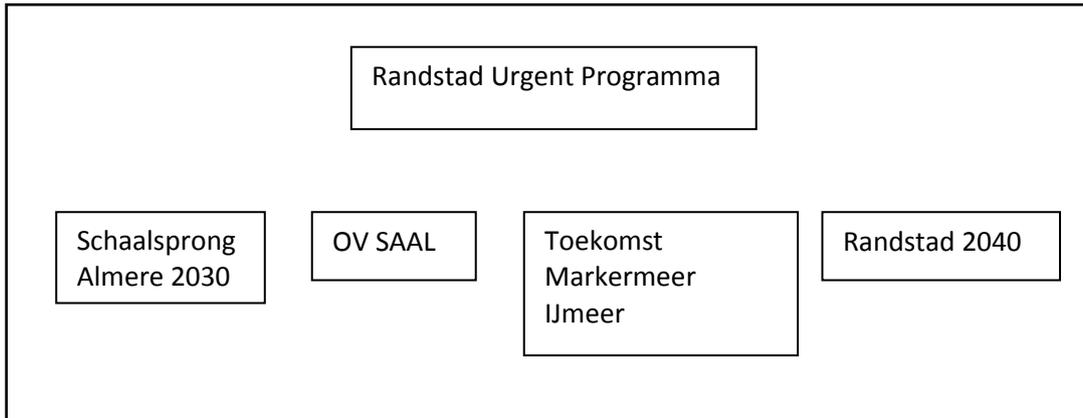


Figure 3.4 Randstad Urgent Program projects involving Almere

The Scale Jump – Schaalsprong Almere 2030

“The Scale Jump is a new assignment, which requires new answers to the needs and wants of today and tomorrow.” (Duivesteijn, 2008, p.9). The Scale Jump discusses the *“enormous task”* (Druivesteijn,2008, p.8) which Almere has set for itself. The Scale Jump is also an unofficial framework of the goals Almere must achieve and guidelines of how to accomplish them. In the *Noordvleugelbrief* [North Wing Paper] (2006), the government points out that the Scale Jump Almere 2030 would help the city of Almere to develop a distinguished identity including an economy and social facilities.

The means and methods of how the Scale Jump will be used is to be decided upon the *Structuurvisie Almere 2030+* [Almere Structural Vision for 2030 and beyond] (Duivesteijn, 2008). The *Structuurvisie Almere 2030+*, are the guidelines and methods of how the Scale Jump will be executed.

Randstad 2040 Structuurvisie

“A Structural Vision is a policy document about spatial structure strategy. A Structural Vision outlines the spatial developments of the area that it covers, ...” (VROM, 2008 c.)

Following the authorization of the Spatial Planning Policy Document (*Nota Ruimte*), the national planning strategy for 2006-2020, the Dutch parliament requested a detailed planning vision for the future development of the Randstad region. The main reason was because of the important role the Randstad plays for the Dutch government. The area withholds the economical and administrative core of the Netherlands including the national airport Schiphol and shipping port of Rotterdam. It also inhabits 41% of the Dutch population. The Randstad 2040 Structuurvisie is the outcome of this request, a document of a detailed and structural vision of what the Dutch government has in mind for the area. The vision implies *“to turn the Randstad into a sustainable and internationally competitive leading region”* (VROM c, 2008 p.10).

Randstad 2040 Structuurvisie, is part of the Randstad Urgent Programme. It is the joint collaboration of the national, provincial governments, municipalities and metropolitan regions in

the Netherlands to “*resolve difficulties and make decisions, with a view to ensuring the Randstad’s International status as an economically strong region, now and in the future*” (VROM c, 2008, p.11).

The North Wing – Noordvleugel

The North Wing or Noordvleugel is defined as the northern part of the Randstad area. It is mentioned in the a document regarding the future development of the Amsterdam Metropolis for 2040 by Reinoud Bakker a regional planner and landscape architect for the province of Noord-Holland. The North Wing includes 27 municipalities, 1 regional body and 2 provinces. Almere is included in the North Wing. The discussion of this project is quite similar to the goals and future visions of the Randstad, to build a strong metropolis in Europe. Each of the municipalities and provinces make their own structural vision of their area derived from their own interests.

The South Wing – Zuidvleugel

The South Wing or Zuidvleugel is the southern district of the Randstad area. The Nota Ruimte briefly mentions the need to increase the use of the existing transportation infrastructure for both rail and road and to focus on increasing urbanization in the vicinity of existing stations.

Almeres involvement with several structural visions for its future growth could lead to a clash between the visions. Overall they have the same structural theme which is to focus on a sustainable urban growth development; the decision on how “*the vision*” will be implemented could be the main problem, as it may prolong the decisions taken for executing the plans

If Almeres urban expansion will affect the whole of the Randstad area, it could be beneficial for authorizing a new town policy which combines the essential factors into one structural vision that the whole Randstad will benefit from.

5.7. Dilemmas in the urban expansion of Almere

Almeres urban growth must fit in with the national policy of spatial development mentioned in Nota Ruimte , in van der Burg & Vink’s proposal *Randstad Holland towards 2040 – perspectives from national government* (2008) and in Dirk Frielings lecture *Almere Between Land and Water* (2008):

- The focus of strengthening the economy within the Randstad area for international competition.
- The focus on water management including flooding, rise in sea level as potential threats of climate change.
- The protection of the Markermeer/Ijmeer for nature reserve.
- The transportation network including highways through the entire Netherlands and its connection to neighboring countries.
- The growth of airport traffic and expansion of Schiphol airport.
- The concentration of deconcentration in urban areas of the Randstad.

These aspects are also an issue for regional and local planning and must align with the national scale. The national scale must also be aligning with the policies on the EU scale such as maintaining the nature reserve of the Markermeer (Frieling, 2008). On the local level the nature

reserve policy of the EU which protects the ecological system of the Markermeer affects the direction of Almeres urban growth.

Frieling (2008) takes into account that decision making is dependent on the elected political party. He discusses that each party has different focus points and policies for all developments. Therefore a planning project proposal may change in relation to which political party is in office.

The actors involved with Almeres urban expansion are extensive. Participants in the Randstad region include, 3 water boards of the Dutch government, 14 municipalities, 2 provinces and 5 ministries in total 24 authorities (Frieling, 2008). Other actors include a wide group of stakeholders who wish to participate in Almeres growth development.

All levels of authorities have similar issues that need to be considered and applied in the planning process. Although the issues are alike, discourses are liable to appear and are unavoidable. In the interviews I took for each level authority, all agreed that discourses were resolved in negotiations in both formal and informal manners, depending the size and importance the issue was.

5.8. Conclusions

Almeres existence spreads over 40 years of development. Since its first arrival of inhabitants in 1976 and receiving its municipality rights, the development of Almere has expanded and is now reaching its ultimate test in a further urban expansion by doubling its population. As a new town Almere is searching for new ideas from foreign countries regarding new town development and learn from their experiences of both negative and positive actions made.

6. Discussion & Conclusions

In the previous chapters I have discussed the challenges Almere faces with its urban expansion, providing more housing, employment and doubling its population to 360,000 people. Almere is put in a difficult position having to fulfill the expectations and goals that have been mentioned in both the formal and informal plans.

In chapter two I explained the meaning of planning and its use in practice. I discussed the different types of planning approaches and methods and of how theory is applied in planning.

Chapter three introduced the spatial planning approach of the Netherlands. The formal administrative levels and their roles in planning were discussed. I also included the informal level of the Randstad, which is not a legal administrative level. I then continued with the critics made of the Dutch planning system and the advisement of planning researches of changing the Dutch planning approach for present and future developments.

The concept of new town development was introduced in chapter four where I explained the difference between planning a new town compared with a suburb or extension of a pre-existing city. When developing a new town three essential elements must be included in order for the new town to progress: Society – Economy – Space.

Chapter five focused on the case study of Almere. In this chapter I went through the history of Almeres development and where it stands now. A short introduction of international organizations that work with new town planning is followed. The ideas and experience from these organizations could bring a discussion to new approaches in new town planning. Next I discuss the formal and informal planning policies and their relation to Almeres development concluding to dilemmas that may occur between the formal levels.

In this chapter I connect the theoretical background with the case study of Almere to clarify whether my schema, introduced in the first and second chapter (Figure 1.1 and 2.2: Flexibility and Innovations in Planning Practice), of implementing flexibility to the planning practice due to innovations in society. Changes in society influences the need of revision in the planning practice and therefore influences the need for a new planning policy.

From my own experience, planning is full of uncertainties. There are continuous new encounters and crossroads. The search for the best solution may take endless amount of time and most certainly results to differences, discourses and conflicts. The planners I interviewed on the national, provincial and local level had the same idea as I state above. It is almost impossible to produce a plan which satisfies the needs for all levels of authorities, stakeholders and other actors. Therefore negotiations are made between each group of actors. At first informal discussions and negotiations are used to approach disputes, if a solution is not found, formal procedures are used.

Interference from many actors (policy makers, planners, organizations, INTI), rules and regulations of policies and the visions/principles such as the Randstad 2040, Almere Principles, Scale Jump makes the development of Almere more complicated.

A lack of coherency in a planning doctrine and principles can cause confusion, delays and discourses in decision-making. Almere is connected in a number of visions for its urban growth including the future of the Randstad area. If visions lack coherency the decision-making will take longer.

This brings me then to my research question:

- ***Is the existing planning approach and method used in the Netherlands suitable for new town planning in the future such as Almere?***

Today's planning practice must focus on these essential aspects of present and future issues such as climate change, environment, social and economical issues and add them to a new regional and local planning level by means of a change in policy.

A good and strong strategy is essential when a new town is being developed. In today's society there are many complications due to continuous change in our environment which includes the economy, social needs, land-use and now climate change. An important change of policy for New Town Development is to include three elements which make a community; Society – Economy – Space. According to de Klerk (2006), new towns are about "*growth and reform, rational economic planning and rational spatial planning*" (p.13). The Dutch method for planning new towns was based on a "*top down bureaucratic central model*" (De Klerk, 2006, p.13). Collaboration, negotiation and strategical thinking is needed for the present and complex world of planning practice.

When, how and for what reasons do new towns become just normal ones? Do these more or less artificial communities have specific opportunities for being new or do they encounter special threats as soon as the special policy ends that gave them birth? (INTI, 2009b).

Learning from the past

My conclusion to new town planning and spatial planning in general is that with every new project, the planning strategy progresses by looking back to previous planning projects and learn from the mistakes made there. This is documented in chapter 5.4 where I discussed the development of Haarlemmermeer. The planners and government officials vowed that the mistakes made in this project would not be repeated.

Planning by Experience – Experience to theory – Theory to planning perception

By learning from the past developments of new towns and suburbs I believe there is a potential possibility of producing a new town policy which could be designed as a guideline and framework indicating the essential necessities needed for a new town to evolve successfully.

The role of new towns is not only for providing housing. A strong economy for a new town which offers good employment opportunities for future inhabitants is essential in order for the new town to survive and progress to becoming and maintaining as a functional and self-sufficient city.

Finding the suitable location for a new town is vital. The Randstad region is the most populated area in the Netherlands, withholding a thriving economy, educational (universities) and transportation/shipping goods. By developing a new town such as Almere, due to its close vicinity, and involving it with the pre-existing economy would make Almere grow into a strong self-sustained city, attracting more local and even international companies. This then strengthens the Netherlands in competing with other European metropolises which is one of the goals stated in the *Nota Ruimte*.

Developing a new town also brings the question of what sort of identity will it have. Up until now, Almere has been known by many, as a suburb for Amsterdam and the Randstad area. The inhabitants live in Almere but commute to other cities for work. Almere is focusing on becoming a self-sustained city with its own identity and therefore may not want to become economical bystander for the Randstad by taking on the leftover economy.

It is essential for Almere to find an economy which is suitable for the city and its location. I believe once this goal has been achieved Almere will acquire its own identity with a boosting economy and sustainable growth, fulfilling the statements and visions of the Almere Principles.

The IJDA planners had learned their lesson with the planning of Lelystad, of not using the low-rise building low-density concept that was introduced by other planners.

This time the IJDA had made reports of what was needed in order to prevent the Lelystad incident from reoccurring. The outcome was a polynuclear structure concept resembling to Ebenezer Howards' Garden City concept.

My second question:

•Should new towns have a tailor-made planning policy?

In the words of Prof. Dr. Len A. de Klerk, *"There is a future for a new towns policy, provided that it is reinvented as a large scale regional urbanization concept and concentrates more on creation of new economic activities than on housing."* (De Klerk, 2007, p.7)

Too many rules and regulations can cause complications in new town planning, With a separate new town policy, the planners and policy makers have the opportunity to create a *"Utopian Plan"* which is in one way what a new town is. The basic principles are taken into consideration.

In the case of Almere: The central government is putting much investment into the growth development of Almere. There are high hopes put into Almere.

When I asked this question to the interviewees from VROM, Flevoland and the Municipality of Almere, all agreed that a new town policy was not needed. Almere is a special case and should therefore receive special treatment. Therefore I conclude that each new town should have a tailor-made policy.

According to the project leader of the Schaalsprong (Flevoland) “*every new town is different, therefore it is not feasible to have a new town planning policy to go by.*” It is true that you cannot approach all planning procedures in the same way. You must look at the planning process in a holistic manner.

Conflicts would be solved when they appear. This has much relation to the process of the Zuider Zee project. During each new phase of the development a new authority would be created to deal with issues belonging to particular development.

As for the critiques regarding the Dutch planning system I ask:

- **Is there room for flexibility in Dutch planning, having a planning history based on ‘rule and order’? Can a new methodology on planning be applied in the Dutch planning system?**

To some extent a change is occurring in the Dutch planning system starting at the national level. As mentioned in the Nota Ruimte, the central government is allowing the provinces and municipalities more freedom in making their own decisions and developments rather than the central government controlling it.

This is an indication of a decentralization of the hierarchy in the Dutch planning system.

The use of theory in planning: Practice – Experience – Theory

Going back to Allemendinger (2002), a theory is never true until tested. Theory used in planning is related to social sciences consisting of values, meanings and actions which have the tension of shifting over time. Therefore it makes it almost impossible to test the theory as is in natural scientific theory. If theories in social science are not able to be proven, then there is no true theory reliable in planning. They are merely assumptions that could possibly be used for a certain planning strategy.

As Allmendinger (2002 p.20) puts it, there is a gap between theory and practice. Theories are produced by academics for planners to use in practice. However, planners claim that theories have no correlation in practice, when ‘common sense’ outweighs hypothetical theories. This is confirmed in an interview with Flevoland and VROM. When it came to making important decisions and solving discourses in planning developments, planners and policy makers came together and discussed matters first in an informal approach in small groups and if negotiations were not attained, a formal method approach for negotiations was used, meaning the discussions went through formal meetings rather than behind closed doors as with the informal approach.

Both local and regional levels come across stakeholders and NGO’s that would like to have more influence on developments. The local and regional levels nevertheless still abide the rules and regulations that are made by higher authorities. There is little outside influence for changing development plans.

If common sense is used in planning rather than academic theories, then implementing experience to planning could influence a change in procedural planning leading to a new theoretical approach in planning.

When looking at the spatial planning practice considering urban development, I ask:

- **Should there be an equal approach for all urban developments, whether it is for restructuring a city or for a new town development? Should a new town adapt to these planning levels or should they adapt to new towns?**

In the future of planning new towns, the ideas may be different to what they are now. Today issues such as climate change are the main topic following improvement on transportation and environmental protection. Population growth is also a problem issue, on the other hand according to the predictions of population statistics; there will be a recession on population growth. Therefore the building of new housing will not be needed. This indicates that there may not be a need of building new towns, but rather a reformation of existing towns and cities. Whether or not new towns will be built in the future, it is in my opinion still necessary to have a new town policy, for it will come of good use no matter what.

New towns are different from existing settlements. New towns are like humans, and go through different development phases: Childhood – Adolescence – Adult. As Hans ten Velden from VROM explained, Almere is in its beginning stages of adolescence, which is a delicate period in similarity for humans. Almere must prove that it is capable of approaching its ‘adulthood’ by achieving the goals set by the central government in doubling its population, providing 60,000 new homes and creating 100,000 new jobs.

- **Is Almere searching for an identity policy or a planning policy?**

To some extent Almere is using its growth development as an opportunity to develop a strong identity that will be noticeable and acknowledged by other provinces and municipalities of the Netherlands. As Dr. Harry H. Zondag from the Municipality of Almere explained, although the Almere Principles are merely principles they will be used as guidelines during developmental process of Almere.

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Appendix A

The Administration Procedure and Organizations

A long list of departments was founded from the process of the Zuyder Zee Project to the establishment of the Municipality of Almere.

1977 – An exclusive advisory committee for Almere is established by the Commissioner. The advisory committee works in collaboration with the Southern IJsselmeer Authority's Advisory Board. (Van Duin & De Kaste, 1987)

1978 – An advisory board is elected “with its own Executive Committee”.
“Consultations between the IJsselmeer Polders Development Authority and the Southern IJsselmeer Polders Development Authority were governed by the same procedure as in Lelystad.” (Van Duin & De Kaste, 1987 p.102).

1983 – The Minister for Home Affairs enacts a Bill to authorize Almere to become a municipality. The Minister for Home Affairs controls the provinces and sets tasks for the municipalities.

1984 – The municipality of Almere was established 1. January 1984. The Almere municipal council gains the power that the Commissioner and Minister for Transport and Public Works, had on local levels “administrations” (Van Duin & De Kaste, 1987).

Once Almere became an official municipality on 1 January 1984 by the Minister for Home Affairs, it gained the power on local levels that were controlled by the Commissioner and the Minister for Transport and Public Works (Van Duin & De Kaste, 1987).

Appendix B

Questions for the Municipality of Almere

Dr. Harry H. Zondag

Gemeente Almere

Dienst Stedelijke Ontwikkeling

Strategisch Adviseur Ruimtelijke Planning

1. What is the municipalities approach for planning as a new town? Formal such as open discussions and negotiations), informal as in closed discussions, top-down, bottom-up, pragmatic or collaborative approach?
2. How and what is the relationship between the municipality of Almere with the Province of Flevoland and VROM in planning? Communicative – Participative – Collaborative – Top/down – Formal/Informal. Does one level have more power and influence on the other levels?
3. Are there conflicts in planning between the three levels? What are they and how are they solved? Formal or informal approach?
4. Are current laws causing restrictions to the way planners and the municipality want to approach in Almeres' expansion? If so: Who authorizes these laws? Is it a formal or informal approach?
5. Does the municipality of Almere feel pressure from the national government and regional government of Almeres' developmental progress? Does the municipality need to receive approval from VROM and Flevoland in decision-making for planning development?
6. How effective are the Almere Principles in the planning procedure, such as citizen participation?
7. It is difficult for a town to thrive without an economy. What are the economical strategies for Almeres development?
8. Did the municipality encounter any mistakes from the previous planning of Almere? If yes, what were the mistakes?
9. Is the municipality using new strategies for planning? ex. Limiting participation – increasing participation. More/less restrictions
10. What is the municipalities opinion of creating a separate policy for New Town development?
New Town Development Policy
11. Almere is part of some 'informal' new town organizations such as Knowledge Network, Governance in Action where the main focus is "...the relation between local policy and the inhabitants/citizens of our towns" (Storm 2005).
 - a. Is the municipality implementing the goals from this organization by using effective local governance? Is that where Almere Principles come into use?
 - b. The Knowledge Network insists that the participants share and exchange information and practices on governance. Is Almere also contributing to that matter?
 - c. Has Almere received information from other participants, if so what information is that? Could it be useful?

12. How does the municipality of Almere foresee itself in 2030 and the coming future and ? Ex. A suburb of the Randstad or a self-contained city with a growing economy.
13. Is the Schaalsprong Almere 2030 to some extent a planning policy?

Appendix C

Questions for the Province of Flevoland

Dhrs Ad Otte, Project Leader Schaalsprong,

1. What is the provinces' approach for planning new towns? Formal - open discussions, negotiations, informal - closed discussions, top-down, bottom-up, pragmatic or collaborative approach?
2. Is there a close cooperation between the province with VROM and the municipality of Almere in new town planning? Does one have more control/influence than the other?
3. What role does the Province of Flevoland play in Almeres' development? Do the provincial planners have any influence or power on Almeres growth and development?
4. Are current laws causing restrictions to the way the planners and the province want to approach in Almeres' expansion? If so: What are these laws and who authorizes them? Is it a formal or informal approach?
5. The Province of Flevoland is a new land development and therefore has experience with new town planning. What is the provinces' experience in planning and decision making for new towns by means of land-use, housing, transportation, social needs and economy. What planning strategy did the province use for Almeres development? Was it the same method used for the planning of Lelystad?
6. What were the positive and negative events during the planning stage for Almere? What were the conflicts during the planning process and how were they solved?
7. Due to Almeres' close vicinity to Amsterdam: Does the Province of Flevoland have more expectations of Almeres' development compared to Lelystad as of economical growth, attracting local and international business institutions, cultural activities and education?
8. Does the Province of Flevoland support and have comments on Almeres' goals stated in the Almere Principles?
9. What is the provinces' opinion of creating a separate policy for new town development? *New Town Development Policy*. Should there be a standard or tailor-made policy for each new town development?
10. In The National Spatial Strategy Nota Ruimte, the following is stated:
"Local and regional governments, social organizations, citizens and private actors are explicitly invited to participate in spatial planning in order to arrive regional and local visions and policy implementation with a broad support base." (Nota Ruimte, p 7)
Does the Province of Flevoland encourage and involve these actors to participate in spatial planning?
11. What are the provinces comments on Almeres' progress for the future – 2030 and what role will Almere have for the Randstad area?

Appendix D

Questions for the National Level – VROM

Hans ten Velden, Projectdirecteur Almere (Clustermanager) voor Project stedelijk

1. What is VROM's approach for planning new towns? Formal such as open discussions and negotiations, informal or closed discussions, top-down, bottom-up, pragmatic or collaborative approach?
2. Is there a gap between planning policies and planning in practice? Theory vs Practice.
3. Is there a close cooperation between VROM and the province in new town planning? Does one have more influence than the other?
4. How are stakeholders, public and private institutions involved in new town planning by VROM's point of view?
5. What is VROM's experience with new town developments in the past and now with Almere, regarding decision making?
6. What were the positive and negative affects during the planning stage? What were the conflicts during the planning process for previous new towns and for Almere and how were they solved?
7. How does VROM see Almeres' progress in the future – 2030? Would VROM like to be (more) involved in Almeres' progress? What are the reasons: why and how.
8. What is VROM's opinion of creating a separate policy for new town development? *New Town Development Policy*. Should it be a standard or tailor-made policy for each new town development?
9. Does VROM have plans on new methods and approaches in planning for new towns?
10. Does VROM see Almere as an important link for the Randstad area? How and in which ways will Almere contribute to the Randstad?