Dissecting the urban(ized) binoculars

From deconstructing to reconstructing and realizing urban futures
An optimistic story using the case of Rotterdam

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...being moved by the past begins with being stuck in the present...

...being stuck in the present begins with having lost the future...

...losing the future begins with estrangement from the past.

Eelco Runia, 2014, *Moved by the Past: Discontinuity and Historical Mutation*
Urban planning, vision- & strategy-making

Focus 1: construction, articulation, and circulation of futures and futuring

Focus 2: performative, constitutive, generative effects on planning

Substance  
Process

Futures & futuring

Results and effects
Framework

Critical future approach

Sociology of expectations

Van Driessche 2017/ Groves, 2016/ Inayatullah, 1990,
I. Expectations about the urban future: 
repertoires, imaginaries, operative futures
Future expectations (general)

➢ Expectations = “statements about the future – uttered or inscribed in texts or materials – that circulate” (van Lente, 2012, p. 772)

➢ Expectations are drawn from repertoires, are enacted in the present, and thus become performative

➢ interacting with affects and operative futures, turning into ‘collective imaginaries’
Future expectations (Rotterdam)

➢ Production, negotiation, circulation and embedding of expectations within the social fabric of the city:

- ‘core’ agents (municipality+)
- ‘city-makers’ (architects)
- active citizens
- minority groups
- ‘silent majority’
Versneller binnenstedelijk interactielieuw en verbinden deze economische motoren: Erasmus MC, RCD, EUR.

Doorontwikkelen Merwe-Vierhavens tot Innovation District.

Versterken optimale mix: Erasmus MC, Rotterdam Centraal District, EUR, Merwe-Vierhavens.

Ruimte aan crossovers: Coolportplus: agru-electroport.
Versterken deltalandsschap: levendiger, aantrekkelijker, natuurlijker.

Vergroten invloedsfeer M4R.

Focusgebieden:
- Centrum op twee oevers
- M4R/DOM, Maashaven, Stadionpark
- Toevoegen kleine verbindingen en opwaardering bestaande oeververbindingen
- Nieuwe oeververbindingen
ROTTERDAM RESILIENCE STRATEGY

READY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

1. ROTTERDAM: A BALANCED SOCIETY

2. WORLD PORT CITY BUILT ON CLEAN AND RELIABLE ENERGY

3. ROTTERDAM CYBER PORT CITY

4. CLIMATE ADAPTIVE CITY TO A NEW LEVEL

5. INFRASTRUCTURE READY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

6. ROTTERDAM NETWORK – TRULY OUR CITY

7. ANCHORING RESILIENCE IN THE CITY

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Sociology of expectations (Rotterdam)

➢ ‘core’ agents (municipality/port): (‘next’) economy and spatial-functional integration/resilience
➢ limited regional focus
➢ ‘city-makers’: design and architectural qualities
➢ active citizens: ‘affordability’
➢ minority groups: ‘home’
➢ silent ‘majority’: ‘the past’, represented by populist local interest party (Leefbaar)
Sociology of expectations

- Rotterdam social fabric
  - ‘superminority’, vocal
  - ‘makeable’, business focus
  - open, communicative political culture
II. Manifestations of affect, and the environmental and technological ‘unconsciousness’
Anticipatory assemblages

‘more than human’

Affect

Environmental unconscious

Technological unconscious

‘human’

Epistemes, discourses, & styles of anticipation

Sea and repertoires of expectations

Collective imaginaries

Operative and performative futures

Institute for Management Research
Radboud University
Affective/ selective urban ‘futures-in-the-making’

➢ Genealogical perspective (‘history of the present’)

➢ The effort = (de)construct future imaginaries, images, narratives, metaphors, discourses, frames

➢ probing ‘presences’, (silenced) ‘absences’ and ‘unconsciousness’

➢ *environmental* and *technological*
PRAAT MEE OVER DE TOEKOMST VAN ROTTERDAM
WAARIN WILLEN ROTTERDAMMERS INVESTEREN?

TOP 10
MEEST GENOEMDE ONDERWERPEN.

1. Onderwijs
Ontwikkel talent bij jongeren. De jeugd kent de toekomst, daar moet energie naar toe.

2. Groen

3. Duurzaamheid

4. Veiligheid

5. Woningen
In de kwekerij aan meer groene, duurzame en betrouwbare woningen. Koester de rijs van mensen en tuin dus als goede balans tussen wonen voor hoge en lage inkomens. Zodat verder blijven.

6. Openbaar vervoer en fietsen
OV moet 24/7 zijn, met goede verbindingen en comfort. Stimuler het fietsen met vele loopbanden. Rotterdam moet de fietsstad van de wereld worden. Oud gedeelt fietsen.

7. Innovatie
Rotterdam moet lokaal zijn als schone haven. Zet in op innovatie in duurzaamheid en zet in op kunstenaar Nixon.

8. Werkgelegenheid
Zet in op het plegen van de kansen in de economie; wat levert werkgelegenheid. Zet op baan voor lager opgeleiden.

9. Schone stad

10. Verbinding tussen mensen
City as sandpit: experimenting, limited regulation, innovative
Beste meester,

Jullie kunt zo veel dingen vragen:

Niet meer gaskrachtigen,
OV, fiets en wandelen stimuleren,
Nooit meer zo'n mensen vanwege hun mening in de publieke ruimte aanstooten,
Of anti-racisme criminaliseren,
De woonvraag van arme mensen blijven faciliteren.

Dankzelf,
Met vriendelijke groet,
Charlotte Ros
Critical voices
‘open letters to the Mayor’

“It seems to us that Rotterdam is falling into the same trap that many cities already have: focusing too much on appealing to tourists and investors and forgetting the people that already live here. .... We would really like to urge you to learn from these cities and not repeat their mistakes” (Amateur Cities)

“What is happening to Rotterdam is a conflict over ever changing image of the city. Imposing an image of competitive global metropolis over one’s right to settle in a self-created surrounding is globally present process that shapes not only urban matrices and skylines but everyday life, politics, personal and collective struggles.” (Jere Kuzmanic)
“Our wish is to see more government and municipality funding allocated to the development of a cultural institutional landscape in the South of Rotterdam that isn't mainly profit oriented [to] aid the development of intellectual and creative work as a viable option for socio-economically deprived communities... Füsun Türetken featuring Sami Hammana”

By considering the heart Rotterdam as a Cabinet of Curiosities, I would like to propose a radical and sensitive reordering of the historical city ...

Donna van Milligen Bielke

We need contemporary visions for housing, affordable to all citizens, and therefor new ways of getting homes realized. Let us start by asking the really relevant questions.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Critical voices
‘open letters to the Mayor’

Dear Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb,

Yours sincerely,

Lilith van Assem
III. Epistemes, discourses and styles of anticipation
Anticipatory assemblages

‘more than human’

Affect

Environmental unconscious

Technological unconscious

Epistemes, discourses, & styles of anticipation

Sea and repertoires of expectations

Collective imaginaries

Operative and performative futures

‘human’
Epistemes, discourses and styles of anticipation (general)

➢ How do we know/sense reality, and its becoming in *time* and *place*?

➢ Which discourses fuel futuring stories and repertoires of expectations, what do they feature/hide/keep unconscious?

➢ How do ways of knowing, narrating and acting congeal into *styles of anticipation*, shaping which future horizons and modes of planning?
Return of Visioning

➢ Bouncing back from *spatial management* to *visioning*, notably at urban-regional level

➢ Focus on ‘grand stories’ in view of grand challenges, rather than grand design > *affective* and *effective*

➢ **Rotterdam**: Maps and talks to inform the *Omgevingsvisie* (Municipal Environmental Planning Strategy)
Municipal Environmental Planning Strategy:

Fase 1: 1ste Concept Omgevingsvisie
Fase 2: 2de versie Omgevingsvisie
Fase 3: Definitieve versie Omgevingsvisie

Welk tussenresultaat ligt er eind 2017?
collage van: kaarten overzichten werkproces

Wat wordt het eindresultaat?
Future horizons (Rotterdam)

➢ Futuring style of *integration* and *innovation*: spatial, organisational, participatory, governance

➢ More emphasis on operative futures in detail - elaboration of collective imaginaries shifts from *design* to *action in the presence*

➢ ‘bricolage’ of small- to large-scale area (re)development and connections (eg makers district, greenport, Feyenoord...)
Innovative makers district between port and neighbourhood
Green city ‘lounge’ and roofs
Still design: Area development Feyenoord City
Environmental and technical unconscious (Rotterdam)

➢ Dovetailing the new with the old: strong emphasis on continuity and stepwise change. Green, smart and liveable, not radical.

➢ Substantive future remain superficial and unimaginative, not capacitating full transitions

➢ Strong semantics of complexity, uncertainty, diversity, indeterminacy

➢ Yet Rotterdam is rather proactive, somewhat visionary, strong vested interests, transition orientation
Looking forward

➢ How (why, with whom) we are looking AT the future sets how we deal with the city in the present
➢ Intending to reinvigorate and refashioning an effective and affective utopianism of hope, possibility, and transformative potential
➢ Rotterdam
  ■ bricolage style of anticipation, interviewing old/new interests/manners
  ■ future horizons somewhat minute, despite manifold operative futures
  ■ emergent combination of different practices, from technocratic to highly affective
Discussion / Q & A

Thank you for listening!
BACK-UP SLIDES
Rupture of discontinuity

Future as continuous

Complexity and uncertainty

Futuring = “Present-ing in disguise”

Future as extremely discontinuous

Futuring = necessary and desired BUT seems in vain, meaningless, too optimistic, doomed to fail
Analyzing metropolitan futures-in-the-making

Spatio-temporal relational context

Spatial, a.o.:
- transnational exchange and dissemination of futures, modes of futuring, urbans and modes of urbanism
- policy mobilities, learning networks, etc.
- in a context of power and structuration

Temporal:
- traces from the past
- traces towards the future
- layering of past futures, present futures, future presents, future pasts

Localized ‘present’ context

Anticipatory assemblages

‘more than human’

Affect
Environmental unconscious
Technological unconscious

‘human’

Epistemes, discourses, & styles of anticipation

Sea and repertoires of expectations
Collective imaginaries
Operative and performative futures

Urban futures-in-the-making in urban planning

Urban epistemologies, discourses, practices, categories, policies, etc.
(e.g. ‘new urbanology’, ‘urban age thesis’, ‘metropolis’/‘postmetropolis’, particular urban-regional branding, …)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct of time</th>
<th>Rupture of continuity</th>
<th>Rupture of discontinuity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional → modern experience of time</td>
<td>Modern → ‘post modern’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construct of the future</td>
<td>Future= open &amp; discontinuous</td>
<td>Future= less and less knowable &amp; more continuous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implications for future understanding</td>
<td>* Control and active construction of future possible</td>
<td>* Knowledge, control, and construction of future not possible</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Belief in progress</td>
<td>* Loss of confidence in progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Collective futures</td>
<td>* Belief in complexity, uncertainty, diversity, indeterminacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future engagement society</td>
<td>* Society strongly future-oriented</td>
<td>* Personal futures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Constructive and diverse future engagement</td>
<td>* Future engagement superficial, negligent, unimaginative</td>
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