# as NC

Edited by Manuela Triggianese **Roberto Cavallo Nacima Baron** Joran Kuijper

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### exploring the role of stations in future metropolitan areas from a French and Dutch perspective

**Delft University of Technology**, **Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment Delft Deltas, Infrastructures & Mobility Initiative Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions** Université Paris-Est, École d'Urbanisme de Paris

Stations as Nodes—exploring the role of stations in future metropolitan areas from a French and Dutch perspective



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Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment

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Highways (blue) and rail ways, metro- and tram lines (red) Map by Joran Kuijper and Manuela Triggianese

# Research through Education: Amsterdam Sloterdijk

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Research through Education: Amsterdam Sloterdijk

Scenario made by Group C imagery by Francesco Camilli, Elisa Cantone, Rein de vliet, Jialei Feng, Janet Hetman, Matthijs Kosicki, Nhu Luong, Qin Li and Karen Valitov



# Group C Designing Transition: A continuous variety allowing chance

Fabrizia Berlingieri Roberto Cavallo group: Francesco Camilli, Elisa Cantone, Rein de vliet, Jialei Feng, Janet Hetman, Matthijs Kosicki, Nhu Luong, Qin Li and Karen Valitov

#### A paradigmatic shift: from an incremental transfer system to a relational hub

Since its completion in 1985, the current Sloterdijk station embodies the role of the railway terminal in the 20th century society: a transfer machine. Built as one of the nodes of the infrastructural ring of urban expansion around the historical city,<sup>1</sup> the station was envisioned as the cross point of the most used means of transport: motorways and railways. The following development of Sloterdijk station consisted of an incremental process of infrastructural additions, connected one another simply by discrete logistic opportunities. The doubling of the flyover, in 1997, modified the structure of the station due to the accommodation of the new metro line; in 2003 the direct connection between Zaandam and Schipol Airport, with the so-called Hemboog,<sup>2</sup> inserted a disconnected duplication of the hub; later on the tram stop and the bus station moved from the front of the station (the current Orlyplein) to the Carrascoplein on the lower level. The growing demand for public transport, proportional to the impetuous growth of the city, has gradually occupied more space - inside and outside the main hub - according to the infrastructural needs, transforming Sloterdijk into a complex urban system of routes at different levels and of connections between parts.

# Contemporary tendencies: the role of Sloterdijk

In the last decades, the development of new models of transport hubs constituted a very active research field, in which the Dutch results represent a point of reference. The national strategy about the renewal of the main railway stations concerned indeed not only with the substitution of the previous nodes with increasingly complex typologies, but generally with a deep requalification and urban development of the related districts<sup>3</sup>. But the case of Sloterdijk seems to be an exception. Despite the municipal ambitions to attract new inhabitants to the area within few years and with several development plans,<sup>4</sup> the station itself sticks to its current configuration: a complicated tangle of disconnected outputs. However, Sloterdijk railway station has already changed its role within the public transport network in the metropolitan area of Amsterdam. It represents the city gateway from the west side, connecting the north and west lines from Alkmaar and Haarlem to the inner city and serving the crossing flows coming from the outskirts with those of the main infrastructural ring. A crossroad that also marks the change between transport modes: from private to public.

# The common, the district and the negotiation: station as destination

The increasing centrality of Sloterdijk in relation to the metropolitan scale has led to new interests, emerging from private and public investments, for the development of the area through densification. Yet, even if the urban profile of the district will rapidly change, its core-engine claims for new strategies. As mentioned before, European and Dutch experiences in Transport Oriented Design concentrates urban development around transport nodes, seeking a coordinated and coherent

Scenario made by Group C imagery by Francesco Camilli, Elisa Cantone, Rein de vliet, Jialei Feng, Janet Hetman, Matthijs Kosicki, Nhu Luong, Qin Li and Karen Valitov



upgrade between the hub and the adjacent urban district.

The actors of these complex transformations can be identified in three main figures: the common, i.e. the new role of the station as a social fulcrum, the "public" strategy and vision of transformation; the district that replaces the building typology of the station, thus bringing forward a leap in scale and complexity for urban design strategies; the negotiation, i.e. management and policies also creating very often innovative practices in the domain of spatial planning, expressed through productive and never predictable results with positive outcomes for the community.

# Designing transition: new technologies, new mobilities

The case of Sloterdijk station could be considered as a paradigmatic example of the adaptive growth of infrastructural nodes in respect to the raising of new mobility patterns and new technologies in transportation, mostly in the last decades. Starting from the proposed critical reading of the hub evolution, the main assumption for the design scenario is to turn this process of continuous additions into the driving force for the reconfiguration and upgrade of Sloterdijk station. The design scenario grounds, indeed, on the choice of considering the incremental evolution of the station as a possible answer to strategically hosting the future changes in technologies and mobility patterns. The proposal addresses the future scenario by designing transition, complying and supporting the incremental evolution of the existing hub and, at the same time, stressing in the design scenario this peculiar character. The existing configuration becomes the starting point for a next step of stratification able to allow changes, going beyond the concept of station as a circumscribed building but, on the contrary, framing it as a proper spread urban system, as a

soft infrastructural layer embedded within the district. The station as a spread system constitutes a jump from the architectural scale to the urban design one, at the same time weakening the iconic dimension of the architectural scale of the building complex in favour of the capacity to innovate characterizing the entire area of Sloterdijk. An open decentralized infrastructural system can generate new research themes for the future of intermediate metropolitan transport hubs, overtaking the obsolescent image of the caesura between the infrastructures and the city, and appearing as strong feature for the edging neighbourhoods, leaving openness for transition in transport modes<sup>5</sup>.

The project scenario constitutes a new framework that can accommodate the technological changes in progress now and in the coming future. This basic choice is translated in the proposal by means of two complementary actions: the design of the open public space to expand the influence of the station at an urban scale; the identification of new poles to host temporary activities in the domain of transport innovation.

The ground level manifesto: the station invades the city As mentioned here above, the main element that characterizes the design proposal is the reconfiguration of the open public space that unifies and connect physically the fragmented urban areas around the station. The proposal looks at the double level of its articulation: the one of the railway accessibility (circa 5.00m above the ground) and the one of the city (ground level). The latter level, under the flyovers of the railway lines, is actually the field of new activities supporting both the hub and the livability of the district. An area freed from the circulation of cars and reserved essentially for pedestrians, public transport by tram and bus station. The homogeneous open space is intended to support

leisure and sports activities, as well as to provide new waiting areas. A space whose characterization consists of a material uniformity punctuated by small elements or pavilions as temporary grafts. The activation of the ground level is structured not only because of common activities and pavilions, but above all by the introduction of a new soft mobility network that connects the two levels of public accessibility (railways and the city). Yet, as concluded during the preliminary analysis, there is a strong lack of north-south accessibility in the area, particularly due to the presence of the railway tracks creating a barrier for pedestrian and bicycles. Because of that, a new "spine" for soft mobility is envisioned along the north-south direction. The spine runs on the two levels of the public space and at the same time intercepts different "common spaces" that are organized in the proximity of the station and within the high rise building area that will be developed around Sloterdijk in the near future. Together with the ambiguous porosity that the spine proposes, three nodes for new mobilities are distributed in the reconfigured station area – north, center and south -, helping to finalize the "spread station system" throughout the Sloterdijk district.

# Variety allowing change: phasing the scenario

The station that invades the city as a discrete system, made up of nodes connected with each others by a soft mobility network and a porous public space, is the main idea of the proposal. The construction of this new scenario can be implemented as a "spider-net", according to two main principles of contemporary design practices related to infrastructures that characterize the proposal: porosity and ambiguity. The first concept is addressed by means of the soft mobility network and the different common spaces envisioned both in the public domain and in the private developments, bringing forward also a functional mix that allows permeability and social inclusion in the future district. The second concept of ambiguity is addressed by supporting transition in the design scenario, namely proposing a temporary occupancy versus a fixed plan evolution. Indeed, an ambiguous position has, in this case, the main goal to enhance and enforce the idea of proximity between the station and the district as well as to support technology and mobility changes already happening in relation to infrastructural urban design. Consciously, the proposal turns down the iconic architectural imagery, nowadays too often self-referential, replacing it with a continuous variety allowing change.

#### Notes

#### 1

C. van Eesteren and Th. K. van Lohuizen. Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan Amsterdam, 1934. Collectie NAi,

#### 2

The name Hemboog refers to Hemhavens, the harbor area at the other side of the IJ water, marking the beginning of the municipality of Zaandam. 3

Transit Oriented Development Strategy, see also Tan, W., Koster, H. R. A., & Hoogerbrugge, M. (2013). Knooppuntontwikkeling in Nederland: (Hoe) moeten we TOD implementeren? 's-Gravenhage: Platform 31.

#### 4

Ruimte voor de Stad (Space for the City). Development Strategy for Amsterdam 2025. See Plan Amsterdam 01-2018 available online: https://issuu. com/gemeenteamsterdam/ docs/planam-01-2018

#### 5

For more information look at Transport Systems Catapult Exploring the Opportunity for Mobility as a Service in the UK: www.ts.catapult.org.uk

Final presentation poster group C

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► Final presentation poster group D





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