Werk

Titel: Managing and marketing of urban development and urban life
Untertitel: proceedings of the IGU-Commission on "Urban Development and Urban Life", Berlin, August 15 to 20, 1994
Jahr: 1994
Kollektion: fid.geo
Signatur: XX
Digitalisiert: Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen
Werk Id: PPN1030505985
PURL: http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?PPN1030505985
OPAC: http://opac.sub.uni-goettingen.de/DB=1/PPN?PPN=1030505985

LOG Id: LOG_0116
LOG Titel: Double cities: Identity and marketing of a new urban product
LOG Typ: article

Übergeordnetes Werk

Werk Id: PPN1030494754
PURL: http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?PPN1030494754
OPAC: http://opac.sub.uni-goettingen.de/DB=1/PPN?PPN=1030494754

DOUBLE CITIES:
IDENTITY AND MARKETING OF A NEW URBAN PRODUCT

Jan Buursink
University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

All over the world cities compete with each other for investments, firms, and tourists. Competition between cities which are very close to each other seems however unwise. Cooperation could be more fruitful. In this paper the case of the 'double city' Enschede/Hengelo in the Netherlands is discussed. For some years even a complete fusion of both cities has been pursued, in the expectation that this would yield substantial extra economic development. The plan for the fusion has been dropped in the meantime, but the experiment has produced a number of new research questions. A research project has been designed in which cases of double cities in Europe and North America will be analysed and compared. In this paper first the phenomenon of double cities will be explored, and next we will, from a citymarketing approach, discuss the question whether a double city could be a marketable product.

1 Introduction

This is a time of shrinking worlds, of expanding cities, and of integrating regions. *Territorial integration* could be the catchword for the combined effects of these three processes. Everywhere in the world people experience the collapse of familiar local frameworks, which is brought about by the ease of travelling and receiving information from all parts of the world, and by the abolishion of formal borders between territories. Local and regional territories are gradually assimilated in larger frameworks. At the same time the need of defending local values makes itself increasingly felt, because the new world seems to be a threat to existing local identities.

Most local and regional communities find themselves in a situation of adaption to new circumstances. There are several choices, cooperation with a neighbouring community being one of these. This strategy, a form of territorial integration, which is perhaps not the most commonly chosen one, is the subject matter of this paper.

In this paper special attention will be paid to the case of **'double cities'**, by which is meant a pair of two cities of about the same size, each with its own identity, which are very close to each other and have grown together, now forming one continuous urban area (agglomeration). Their physical integration could be a reason for cooperation or even complete administrative integration. This could produce administrative economies of a sizeable scale and a well-coordinated urban policy. A question that remains to be answered is whether this would also yield other benefits - in particular economic benefits? And if we approach the subject from the conceptual framework of 'citymarketing', another question to be analysed is whether a 'double city' is a marketable product?

2 What is a double city?

Double cities are a special case of the more general phenomenon of 'neighbouring cities', pairs of cities which already many years ago were studied by the German geographer Dietrich BARTELS (Nachbarstädte, 1960) from the conceptual framework of central place theory. Whereas 'neighbouring cities' as meant by BARTELS can be of a very different size and also at some distance, 'double cities' are both very close to each other and of about the same size. *Rivalry* is a very common relation between neighbouring cities, in particular between double cities.

In our definition of a double city - not to be confused with 'dual cities' or 'divided cities', but more or less synonymous with 'twin cities' - five elements are stressed:

1. **size:** both cities are of about equal population size and function;
2. **situation:** both cities adjoin each other immediately, having a common administrative boundary and having no intermediate smaller city in between;
3. **autonomy:** both cities are - at least initially - separate administrative entities;
4. **awareness:** both cities are aware of their closeness and common interests, which may appear from rivalries as well as from endeavours to cooperate;
5. **presentation:** both cities present themselves, or are recognized by the outside world, as a fixed pair, sometimes with a common name.

In many cases double cities developed on both sides of a river, because a river location has always been an important factor behind urban development. However, a city that crossed the river only in recent times, to realize its expansion on the other side in green area (for instance Rotterdam in the 19th century) is - in our view - not to be considered a 'double city', because there is no pre-existing equal urban community on the other side.

A narrow strait or bay can be another location for the development of a double city. State boundaries also provide some excellent cases of double cities. These cases may even be of special importance in this time of territorial integration of national states.

The structure of a double city is to be expressed in a theoretical model (Figure 1).

Both parts of a double city are supposed to have - initially - their own administrative apparatus, their city centre, their local symbols, their local identity and communication media, and of course their own history. So each double city has not only its physical duality, but also a socio-cultural duality. If, however, a process of territorial integration occurs, these local attributes are subject to changes and shifts. The two cities eventually can become one.

Figure 1   The theoretical model of double cities
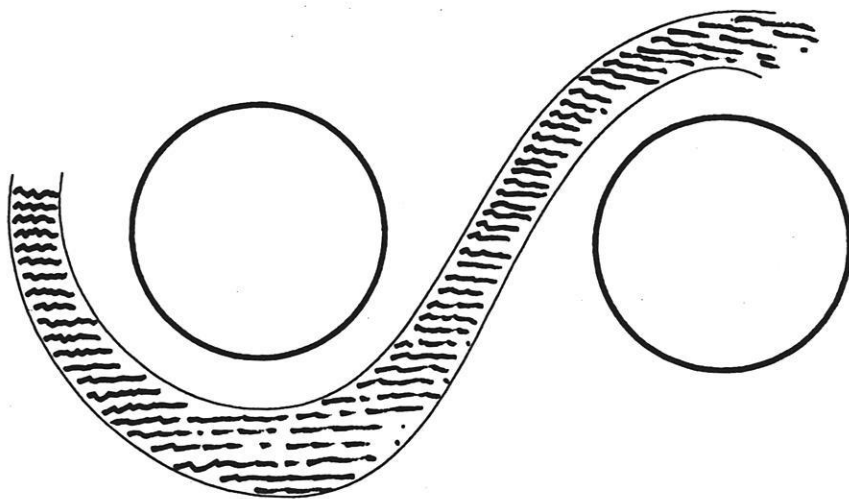
3 Berlin, originally a double city

Berlin is an excellent location for presenting a paper on double cities, because this city has its very origin in a double city. And although our interest is first of all in present day double cities, it may be of use to look first at some historical cases.

Presently, Berlin ows part of its reputation first of all for having been a separated city - by The Wall - for decades. Its roots, however, are to be found in the double city of Berlin/Coelln on the river Spree (Figure 2). Both cities were founded in the Middle Ages (12th century) as merchants' settlements, possibly as an outcome of the urban policy of the 'Markgraf' of Brandenburg, who may - according to HOFMEISTER (1990) - even consciously have created a situation of rivalry between the two neighbouring small cities, in order to protect his preponderance (*'divide et impera'*). Moreover, the 'Markgraf' took up his residence in the city of Coelln, preparing this environment for its future as the capital of Brandenburg and Germany. The sovereigns of Brandenburg developed three new cities outside the area of Berlin/Coelln, to accommodate their civil servants and soldiers. According to HOFMEISTER (1990: 8), these developments were in fact speculative projects. Revenues (taxes!) appeared however to be much lower than costs, and in 1709 the sovereign therefore decided to join up these three residential cities with Berlin and Coelln - both still small cities - thus creating the new city of Berlin. In conclusion, the development of the double city of Berlin/Coelln in the Middle Ages and the merger of these cities in the early 18th

Figure 2 The double cities of Berlin and Coelln (1652)
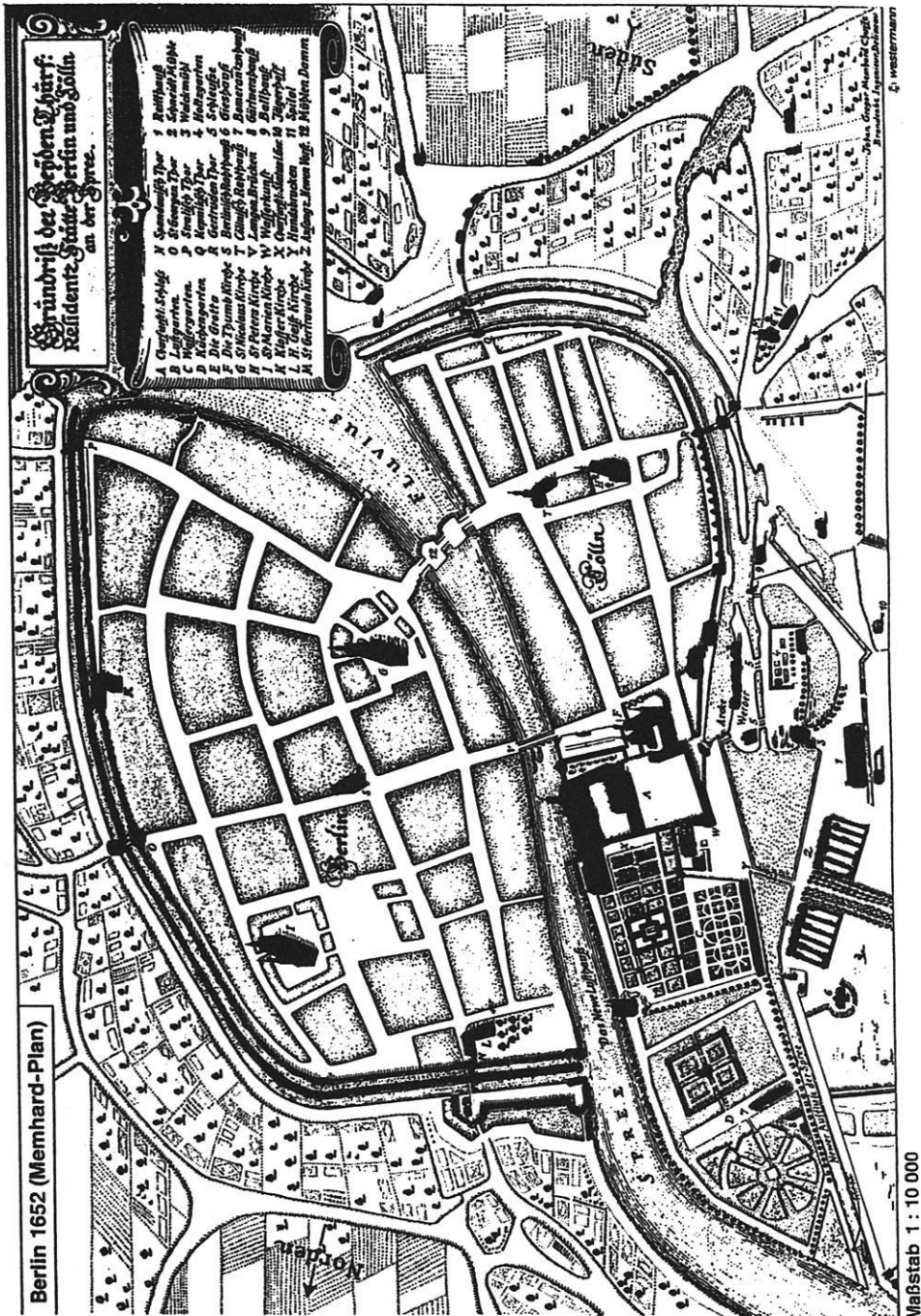
century, were both conscious acts of an urban policy, to create a large city. In the 19th century Berlin indeed became such a large city, that the historical nucleus of the double city nowadays almost has sunk into nothingness. But the lesson of this historical double city is that by policy a tiny settlement can grow into a genuinely big city. A rather peculiar development of recent years - that is after the reunification of East and West Berlin (1989) - is the policy to create once more two main centres for the city as a whole, one around the Alexander Platz in East and the other one around the Kurfürstendamm in West. After three hundred years Berlin can once again become a double city!

4 Other historical examples of double cities

Besides Berlin many other large European cities (London) have their origin in a double city. In North America Boston and Cambridge originally are true 'twin cities', both having been founded in 1630, on either side of the Charles river. The best-known historical example of a double city is however the Hungarian capital *Budapest*, which was formed in 1872 by merging the three (!) independent cities of Buda, Pest, and Obuda.

Budapest
Urban development in the area of present day Budapest started about 2000 years ago, when the Romans built fortresses on both sides of the river Danuba, but mainly on the hillside. Together with a civilian settlement, this military settlement formed the city of Aquincum, which site was in the present Obuda. Aquincum, the capital of the province of Pannonia fell into ruins, however, after the 4th century.

Urban development did not start again before the 13th century, when both the cities of Buda and Pest developed on opposite sites along the river Danuba. Buda had its starting point in the royal castle built by king Bela IV on a lengthy and steep hill on the right bank of the river. Pest developed on the other side of the river, where a flat terrain provided a suitable site for a settlement of merchants. In the Middle Ages Buda was the larger one of the two cities.

In 1526 both cities were conquered by the Turks and remained in their hands till 1686. Their prosperity disappeared altogether. After the expulsion of the Turks both cities received a new population. In 1720 Buda/Obuda had about 9600 inhabitants and Pest merely 2600 (ELTER and BAROSS 1993). But in the course of the 18th century Pest outstripped Buda. At the turn of the century Buda had 25.000 inhabitants and Pest already 35.000. Pest offered the best opportunities for establishing industrial plants and other commercial activities, because of its flat terrain. At the moment of the unification of both cities the difference in population size was significant: at the Buda side 70.000, at the Pest side 200.000 inhabitants (ELTER and BAROSS 1993).

The unification of Buda and Pest was suggested by the creation of the 'double

monarchy' of Austria and Hungary (1867). Hungary needed a capital city, which was created by the merger of Buda, Pest and also of the small city of Obuda.

Together these three cities could form the starting ground for what in fact was a new city: Budapest. The local populations did not agree heartily, but they could only accept the unification, which was believed to be necessary in order to give the new state a proper capital. So, the motive for the merger was to be found in the expectation that the new city would undergo a fast economic development and growth of population. Individually, the three cities would not have been able to carry the expected development.

Because of its lead in population size and commercial functions, Pest had no difficulties at all to become the undisputed main centre of the new city, as early as the end of the 19th century. The main shopping area and the entertainment area are now entirely concentrated in Pest. So, speaking of the 'inner city' or the 'city centre' of Budapest, one refers to the Pest district. The Buda district now has the character of a middle and upper class residential district, built in the hills behind the Castle Hill. The Castle Hill itself can be characterized as the ceremonial centre of the city and the country, because of the Matthias Church, the National Library, the National Gallery and other historical monuments.

Identities

So, at present, Buda and Pest have very different characteristics in their morphological and functional structure. The social structure of both parts is also different, Buda still being a residential area for the well-to-do citizens.

There is, however, no local identity in Buda or Pest that is connected with a sense of belonging (place identity) to either Buda or to Pest. This is so not only because the unification already occurred well over a century ago. The main reason is that afterwards new waves of citizens entered both parts of the city from outside, having no attachment at all to either Buda or to Pest. They came from the countryside and were mainly Hungarians, who gradually came to outnumber the resident population groups (Germans, Austrians, Jews, Serbians, and others). Hence, there is no rivalry between the inhabitants of Buda and Pest.

Integrated city

At the end of the 20th century Budapest is a normal, monocentric and integrated city, situated on both sides of a river like Berlin, Paris, London, Rome and many other riverside cities. There is only one city centre, in Pest, where all the main public functions are to be found. Buda has not lost its centre functions, because it never had such functions, due to its historical development. So, Budapest in fact is a historical example of a double city, or a former double city.

The reason for the unification of Buda and Pest (and Obuda) in 1872 is, however, a point of importance. The merger was motivated by the desire that the new capital of the new state of Hungary should be big enough to carry out its capital functions. The merger was a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for future growth. In this

respect the formation of Budapest resembles that of Berlin. Both cities prove the argument that a merger of two cities *can* be followed by impressive expansion and growth. Moreover they support the argument that the merger should be imposed by central authorities. The ultimate success of Budapest (and of Berlin) is, however, due to external conditions (state creation, construction of railways, industrialization).

Wuppertal

Less well-known but perhaps more instructive is the case of the German city of Wuppertal, which was formed in 1929 by the merger of the pre-existing cities of Elberfeld and Barmen. Wuppertal is to be found in the south of the Ruhr area, some kilometres east of Düsseldorf, in the valley of the small river Wupper.

"Elberfeld und Barmen - sind sie nicht wie jene siamesischen Zwillinge, welche, obwohl keineswegs in allen Stücken harmonirend, so fest mit einander verwachsen waren, dass man sie lebendig nicht trennen kann?" With these pathetic words a local author started his book *"Elberfeld und Barmen. Beschreibung und Geschichte dieser* **Doppelstadt des Wupperthals**" *(1863)*.

The concept of 'double city' may have originated in Wuppertal. In the mid 19th century both places - Elberfeld and Barmen - had already become one elongated industrial settlement. Elberfeld was originally a town, Barmen a village which underwent rapid growth in the early 19th century, as a consequence of industrial development. Both places were separate municipalities, although they already had some institutions in common, such as a court of justice, a tax-collector's office and a chamber of commerce. The author also reported many examples of rivalry and jealousy between both communities. A merger of Elberfeld and Barmen had already been suggested, but *"A complete fusion into one administrative municipality is not yet to be expected, because of the particularities of situation and history and - most of all - interests"*. Nevertheless, the author foresaw a splendid future for the double city, which would grow - in his vision - from a mere 100.000 inhabitants in 1861 to almost 3 million (!) inhabitants 150 years later. This was, of course, not a very professional prognosis. The noticeable point is the optimistic view that both cities together would experience a tremendous population growth. The dream that a double city will eventually become a big city was clearly present in early Wuppertal.

Actual situation

At this moment, at the end of the 20th century and 65 years after the merger, Wuppertal is still not a city with over a million inhabitants, but a lively city with about 380.000 inhabitants. The district of Elberfeld has become the main shopping and business district, where the central station is too located, whereas the administrative centre is to be found in the district of Barmen. Besides Elberfeld and Barmen, several small villages and communities have gradually been incorporated.

The people of Wuppertal now speak and write about Wuppertal as "Unsere Stadt" ("Our City"). To people from other parts of Germany and from abroad, the names of Barmen and Elberfeld are quite unknown. Wuppertal is a well established name.

Nevertheless, the several parts of the city ("Stadtteile") each have their "Bürgerverein", a local and non-political organization of citizens living in the residential districts. Many inhabitants of Wuppertal attach their local feelings in the first place to their own "Stadtteil". About 30 "Bürgervereine" express the 'sense of place' of the citizens. The "Stadtverband der Bürger- und Bezirksvereine Wuppertal" is also present as a coordinating framework.

5 Contemporary double cities

Germany offers several more clear examples of contemporary double cities. Some years after the formation of Wuppertal, the ski resorts of Garmisch and Partenkirchen decided to merge (1935), but they still have a duopolic structure. Other cases include for instance Mainz/Wiesbaden, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen, and Villingen/Schwenningen (merged in 1972). In Britain Bradford and Leeds have been called 'twin cities' by Robert DICKINSON, long ago. And in other European countries, as France, Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands as well double cities can be distinguished.

In the United States Minneapolis and St. Paul (ADAMS and VANDRASEK 1993) were called 'twin cities' by Richard HARTSHORNE as early as 1932. Since that time they present themselves as *the* Twin Cities. In the state of Maine Bangor and Brewer do the same. Other cases are Tampa/St. Petersburg (Florida), Durham and Raleigh (North Carolina), Dallas and Fort Worth (Texas) - already suggested by HARTSHORNE in 1932 and analysed as 'multinodal metropolis' by BERRY a.o. (1993) - and Kansas City in the states of Kansas and Missouri.

Transborder double cities

Special cases are provided by transborder double cities - which are frequently to be found at border rivers - such as El Paso (USA)/Ciudad Juarez (Mexico), Konstanz(G)/Kreuzlingen(Sw), Cesky Tesin (Czechia)/Cieszyn (Poland), and Guben (G)/Gubin (Poland). The last one, however, only became a double city after 1945, when the Neisse river became the new border between Germany and Poland, dividing the German city of Guben into a German and a Polish part.

In Scandinavia, the Danish/Swedish double city of Helsingör and Helsingborg can be mentioned, whereas Copenhagen and Malmö/Lund are preparing themselves for the role of a double city, after the completion of the new bridge across the Sund.

And outside Europe a new double city has come into existence, when Elat and Aqabah discovered each other as close neighbours, after the opening of the border between Israel and Jordan in the summer of 1994.

Research questions

In the present world there seem to be many cities which could be called 'double cities' or even 'twin cities', because they are rather close, or because they have been

brought together into a new administrative entity. The idea of 'double cities' is easily extended and applied to different pairs of cities. Therefore, it is preferable to restrict the notion to cities that answer to the definition given above. Of crucial importance is, however, the sense of belonging together.
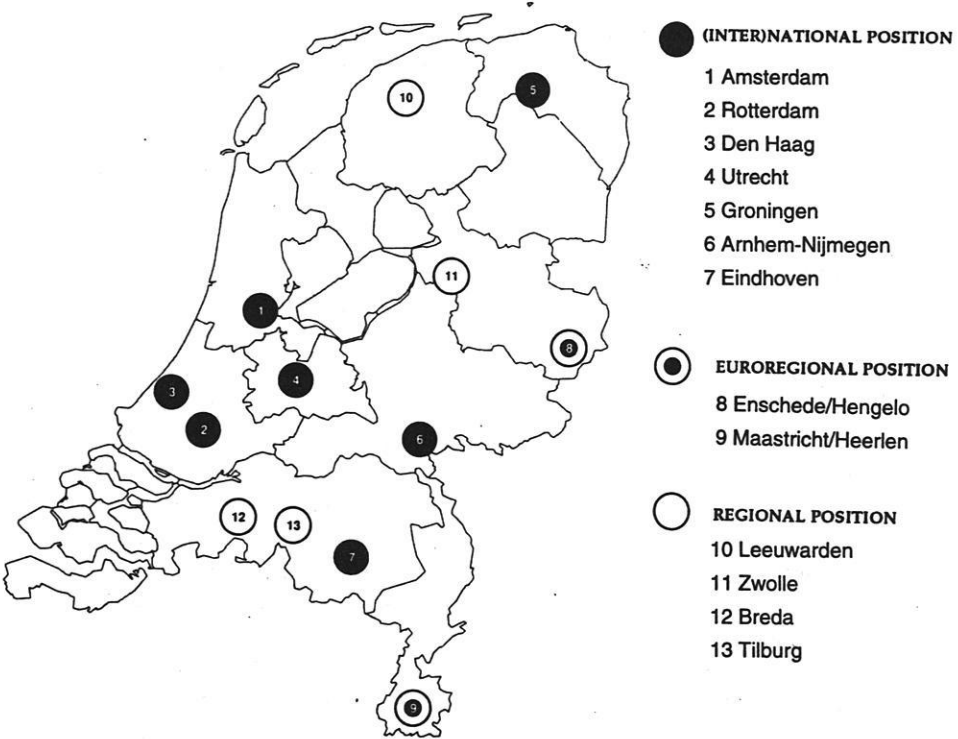
The research question, however, is not where 'double cities' exist and how, but whether it *makes sense to entice two (or even more) different urban communities, each with its own identity, to merge into a larger urban unit?* This and other research questions have been derived from recent experiences with double cities in the Netherlands.

6 The Dutch experience

In the Netherlands the concept of 'double city' became relevant some years ago (1988), when the Dutch government designated a dozen *'urban nodes'*, inside and outside the Randstad (Figure 3). These cities were considered the most important economic centres with favourable growth perspectives for the future. In three cases the 'urban node' was not a single city, but consisted of two nearby cities, which therefore were called 'double nodes' (i.c. Arnhem/Nijmegen, Maastricht/Heerlen and Enschede/Hengelo). The neigbouring cities of Enschede (150.000) and Hengelo (75.000), having been 'eternal' rivals for years, immediately developed aspirations for becoming a real *'double city'*, after their designation in 1988. Consequently, they called themselves *the* Double City.

Both cities owe their existence to the rise of the textile industry and of engineering manufacture in the late 19th century, but suffered a dramatic fall of manufacturing in the second half of this century. The built-up areas of both cities are at a distance of only two or three kilometres, the area in between being mainly occupied by a technical university and a business park. The local authorities in both cities made plans not just for close cooperation, but for a complete merger of their municipalities, in order to establish one new city of about 225.000 inhabitants. The dream of becoming a big city was unmistakably present in the project, for the would-be double city presented itself proudly as 'the nation's fifth city', which should also be able to do well in the urban competition in Europe. The merger was emphatically promoted with the expectation of a substantial economic development and increase of employment. In the long run an increase of almost 30.000 jobs was predicted. Opponents, however, criticised this policymakers' 'megaproject'. They doubted the benefits that were to be gained in the long run and underlined the disadvantages in the short run. By merging particular municipal services (sanitation departments), for instance, both local authorities could cut back personnel, with the consequence that some tens of jobs would be lost. In Hengelo, the smaller city, many people feared domination by Enschede. To overcome this fear, Hengelo became designated as the seat for the future town hall, after long negotiations. Local identities did indeed play an important role in the process. Early 1994 the effort failed dramatically, however, for 2 reasons:

Figure 3 The urban nodes in the Netherlands

(INTER)NATIONAL POSITION

1 Amsterdam
2 Rotterdam
3 Den Haag
4 Utrecht
5 Groningen
6 Arnhem-Nijmegen
7 Eindhoven

EUROREGIONAL POSITION

8 Enschede/Hengelo
9 Maastricht/Heerlen

REGIONAL POSITION

10 Leeuwarden
11 Zwolle
12 Breda
13 Tilburg

First, the local elections were won by the anti-merger parties. Second, the central government refused to guarantee an extra annual allotment of 45 million guilders to the future double city after the merger, in spite of its urban policy of favoring the urban nodes. So, not only the financial basis, but also faith disappeared. Both municipal councils immediately decided to postpone further steps towards the merger, even before the referendum - planned after the elections - had taken place.

Pro's and contra's

The project of Enschede and Hengelo has been observed and followed from various sides, because of its innovative character. A fusion of two separate cities of such size is a rare phenomenon. Apart from the purely administrative point of view, the experiment is also of interest from an economic point of view.

We have to remember that 'urban nodes' were designated in the Netherlands, because of their economic prospects - according to the national urban policymakers in this country. The local politicians and administrators had no reason to doubt the

Figure 4 The double city of Enschede and Hengelo
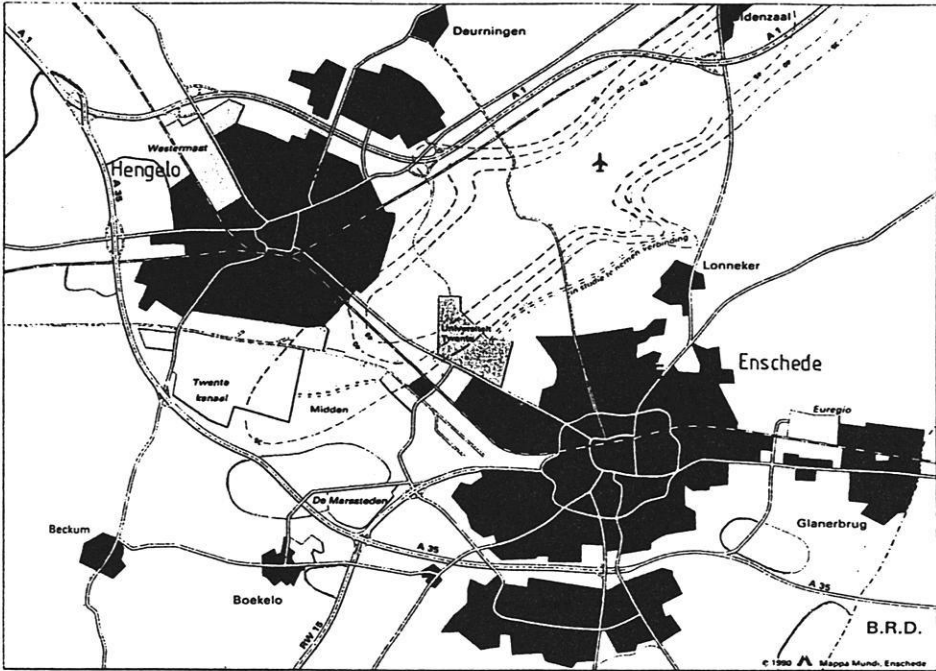
insights and views of the national (urban) policymakers, and behaved accordingly. Mayors and other local politicians expressed their firm belief in the official Report on Physical Planning, as if it were a holy book. For physical planning is indeed a kind of religion in this country. This could possibly explain the fanaticism of the local policymakers in Enschede and Hengelo, who defended the merger with great economic benefits to be gained in the hereafter. Another explanation of their behaviour is the uncertainty about the economic future of cities, that makes policymakers eager to embrace radical and new ideas.

Moreover, in this decade of *'entrepreneurial cities'* and of *'city marketing'*, many local authorities considered themselves 'entrepreneurs' and their city as a product or a marketable commodity. Whether they were urban entrepreneurs or not, interurban competition became almost a daily experience. And as it became a very common thing to see competing firms decide to merge - in order to resist the competition of other firms together - it was thought that the same could be done by two cities. A

fusion of the two cities of Enschede and Hengelo was motivated by the economic prospects for the new double city.

At this point we have to distinguish between (calculable) economies of scale in the administrative apparatus of the city after fusion, and (hypothetical) economic benefits for the population and the local enterprises. A complete fusion of the administrative apparatuses of both cities would produce substantial savings in exploitation costs and a larger allotment of financial means from the central government. So, the administration would be better off.

The efforts of local politicians and administrators in favour of the fusion have generally been supported by the local business community. In their culture, fusion and cooperation is a normal and sound phenomenon. They even became impatient, when the process slowed down. Many ordinary people and experts from the local university, however, uttered their doubts and unbelief. The first because the inhabitants of both cities had always considered each other as 'braggarts' and 'simpletons'. Moreover, those of Hengelo feared domination by those of Enschede. Environmental arguments (protection of the landscape) also played a role. The experts could find no empirical evidence from other cases or theoretical argument for the fusion.

This exactly is the weak point in the project: nobody can demonstrate or prove that the economic prospects for both cities will be substantially better after fusion than if both cities continue on their road to the future separately. There is even no theory why a fusion of two nearby cities will yield an extra increase of employment in the long run. If so, it would be better to bring more cities into the process of fusion and it goes without saying that other pairs of cities would have followed the example. So, the economic argument for the fusion of both cities is very weak. An administrative measure like the fusion of two cities can yield economies of scale, but will have no impact at all upon the economic development of the area.

But even if it may have been impossible to develop any empirical economic argument in favour of the fusion, the mere idea of a fusion of two rivalling cities, and being a double city, could have radiated an image of being a modern and dynamic environment to the outside world. Therefore, in the last section we will pay attention to the marketing aspects of the project.

7 The marketing aspect

The pursued merger of the two rivalling cities should have produced a new impetus for their economic development. The local authorities were convinced of the success; the citizens were not. So, long before the economic fruits could be harvested, the experiment failed politically. The champions of the merger had neither created sufficient support inside their communities, nor outside, at the national political level.

Marketing, essentially being a communication effort, could possibly have contributed to the success of the project. However, we have to distinguish between

the *political* and the *economic* success. Marketing the Double City should first of all have been aimed at the identity and the internal support for the integration of both cities, before being applied on external target groups.

In the opinion of the present author citymarketing has two important dimensions, an external and an internal one. The external dimension, can be qualified as economic and 'offensive', because its aim is to resist external competition; not only by attracting new firms and investors from outside, but also by assessing the actual position of the city in the world and by protecting its commercial and non-commercial values. The internal dimension is socio-psychological and 'defensive', because its aim is to mobilize the internal resources and identities. So, the champions of the fusion had a double task. First, to understand why many citizens did not support the idea of the fusion, and to bring forward convincing arguments in its favour. Second, to promote the idea of a double city in the country and in Europe as a profitable environment for enterprises. The first task is a political one, the second is an economic task.

In our democratic society it seems wise and self-evident that such a radical step as a complete fusion of two cities cannot be taken without a broad consent of the inhabitants, although the (few) successful examples of the past have all been imposed top-down. The political result of the effort would have been better for the champions of the fusion, if a thorough marketing campaign had been organized previously. The target groups in both communities should have been approached, not only with understanding for their feelings and attitudes, but also with convincing arguments that the fusion would be profitable for ordinary people, they being the 'clients' of the double city.

However, does it really matter what inhabitants of two cities think of each other and which stereotypes are popular? The people of both cities could, without any problem, have kept their identities and rivalries for years, because these values are not really relevant for economic developments. Ordinary citizens are not able to see the economic significance of the fusion and - by consequence - are not competent to judge its merits and disadvantages. (But do their town councillors and administrators possess that insight?)

The problem was not that both communities did not like each other, but that they did not need really each other. Why should both cities enter into a complete merger? The champions in fact had no other argument that Enschede/Hengelo, once fused, would be 'the fifth city of the country' and together would receive more financial means from the central government than they could get separately. So the plan was perceived as a dream of administrators, whose ambitions had been inspired by national urban policy. Both, dream and stereotype, clashed with reality. The politicians' dream would not have changed the economic reality of both cities and the citizens' stereotypes did not even touch it.

8 Conclusion

In conclusion, **city marketing** could have contributed to a more realistic policy for local economic development in this project. What city marketing could have added to the project of the fusion of the two cities dealt with and the creation of a double city is - in a word - consciousness. The local authorities, being the entrepreneurs of their city, could have been better informed about the market position of both cities, apart and together. A marketing procedure could have yielded better insights into the internal and external possibilities, that is the opportunities and threats. A city marketing procedure would have been a better foundation for a solid urban policy than the government document on physical planning and urban policy. But the experience with city marketing - or better **place marketing** - shows that the marketing of entire cities is a difficult task. Place marketing offers better possibilities for spatial parts (for instance a business park, the city centre, a revitalization project, and so on) of the city, than for cities as a whole or even double cities.

Without doubt, being a double city can contribute to the external identity, but that quality alone is not able to boost extra economic development. Without a special task that could only be performed by the two cities together (like the capital function for former Buda and Pest), the fusion of Enschede and Hengelo would have become a purpose as such rather than a means. In sum, *a double city may be a remarkable product, but is it also a marketable product*?

What remains, anyhow, is the more general conclusion that being a double city becomes a policy issue. This particular case of two Dutch cities has provided us an interesting theme for research on the behaviour of urban policy makers and of urban people, on the role of urban identities and - most of all - the implications of territorial integration of neighbouring cities. For because so many more double cities exist in all parts of the world, the problems of territorial integration and the political cooperation between such cities are worth to be scrutinized.

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