

Crossing the Ij river in Amsterdam: on the desirability of a connection

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Since the development of Amsterdam North at the beginning of the 20th century, the Ij river has always functioned as a great wall dividing both parts of the river sides. Amsterdam-North has predominantly been developed as a working class area, with several garden-city style working class neighborhoods. As recent articles in (local) papers underline, especially the 'new' inhabitants of Amsterdam-North demand a better connection with the city center. They have recently been attracted by lower housing prices in increasingly popular working class areas within relatively close proximity of the city center across the river, since their social and professional linkages with the 'other side' are very strong. The influences of gentrification in Amsterdam-North are profound. The lower class inhabitants of Amsterdam-North do not necessarily need to be connected to the "urban mess" on the other side.

I would like to research the perspectives on a connection between Amsterdam-North and the city center of, on one side, the population group that lives in Amsterdam-North for decades and, on the other side, the new inhabitant of Amsterdam-North. Additionally, I will provide a critical view on a connection between both sides of the Ij river from a historical perspective. As the case of Amsterdam-North will show, a connection has severe implications of which, among others, a strong social division. Is a better connection desirable or is it preferable to preserve the social characteristics, the current connections and the build heritage as a valuable urban assets?

I will analyze articles on social media and from (local) papers. In addition, I will take interviews with inhabitants belonging to one of both population groups and other stakeholders in order to draw the different perspectives on a connection crossing the river.