agree that it is indispensable to achieve well-balanced sustainability.

Randstad, with its advantageous geographical situation, is receiving strong pressure for further urban development, particularly after the establishment of the single market in Europe. The Dutch National Government has adopted a new strategy 'seeing the Randstad not only as the main economic area of the Netherlands, but also as a key area in north-west Europe, thanks to its position at the mouth of the Rhine and the Maas in the increased reality of the open market of the EU' (Kreukels, 2003). One might say that Randstad is currently at something of a crossroads, having to maintain a balance between continued economic performance and environmental considerations. The physical urban–rural balance that has ensured the polycentric urban system has arguably reached its saturation point. The typical Dutch landscape, which has always had a clear distinction between urban and rural areas, is rapidly disappearing. Discussions began in the 1990s as to whether Randstad should be developed as a single-large metropolis in the future. The green heart has also experienced a qualitative transformation. While it has lost a lot of its agricultural economic base, the demand for recreation and sport is increasing. There is a significant demand for housing in rural and village areas because of its attractive living environment and high-quality landscape (VROM, 2001).

The *Fifth Memorandum of Spatial Planning* has designated this polycentric city-region 'Delta-Metropolis' (VROM, 2001) rather than Randstad.[2] 'Delta-Metropolis' is an expression of the objective to promote better integration between parts of the Randstad area, enabling it to operate more as one coherent unit' (VROM, 2001). It declares that 'spatial integration is achieved by strengthening the networks of relationships' and emphasizes the importance of the green network as well as the infrastructure network. However, the image of Randstad as a well-balanced polycentric urban system with green space in the middle and green buffer zones between component cities seems to be fading as its physical aspect is approaching that of a wider metropolitan-region developed from a monocentric urban system.

The other difficult task of dealing with market-motivated development, without losing the traditional landscape of compact built-up areas on a green carpet, is being intelligently explored. Planning applications and programmes for new developments

are permitted more easily as long as the overall green area is not reduced; compensation for lost green spaces is required through the greening of brownfield sites. This means a radical shift from strict and static land-use planning to more flexible and dynamic management of the city-region.

Conclusion

The two strategies of Randstad and Tokyo outlined in this paper converge in the same image of sustainable city-regions which, to be effective, must have the following three characteristics in common:

- **A polycentric system keeping one coherent regional unit**
- **A clear contrast between built-up and green areas**
- **Flexible and dynamic management**

The convergent images of future Tokyo and Randstad show that a sustainable spatial form requires a regional unity with a polycentric structure. It is obvious that city-regions based on a network of small- to medium-sized cities, such as the case of Randstad, should adopt a polycentric urban system. This chapter has revealed that the global city of Tokyo is also attempting to shift from a monocentric towards a polycentric urban system, indicating its adaptability as an urban planning model.

If economic efficiency is the primary goal, it is almost impossible to judge which is more appropriate for the city-region: polycentricism or monocentrism. However, if we consider that quality of life forms a basic element of regional competitiveness, polycentrism can provide a high quality of life within a compact sphere, through good access to green spaces. Clear contrast between built-up and green areas ensures a lifestyle that can enjoy the benefits of both the compact city and green open spaces. Connections are required as well as separations. The component urban cores should be well connected to one another by public transport and information infrastructures that should be as efficient as those in large, monocentric cities. An efficient public transport system will help to achieve well-connected city-regions with component urban cores that are physically separated from one another.

For Tokyo and Randstad, it will be the flexibility of polycentricity as a model that ensures its success. Modern land-use planning in Randstad is no longer able to maintain the contrast of the urban and the rural. The polycentric model should be adopted to achieve the virtues of both a high-density compact city and a low-density settlement with large tracts of green space. In terms of the economic progress of the city-region, flexible management is necessary to react to market forces, as well as to strike a balance with environmental concerns.

Acknowledgement

Collaboration in preparing graphics for Figures 3.2–3.5: Akira Masuda.