

Rotterdam: Harbor or cultural haven?

Lecture by Deirdre McCloskey

Thu. May 24 2018, 15.30 – 17.00 hrs. (doors open at 15.00 hrs.)

CB-01 Theil-building, Erasmus University Rotterdam, campus Woudestein

Free entrance, reservations recommended via [[link](#)]

Rotterdam, known for its harbor and “doers” mentality, is standing at a crossroads. It can either invest in the harbor, or in the steadily growing creative and knowledge industry. What is knowledge worth in an industrial city as Rotterdam? Should the city of doers increasingly become a city of thinkers?

What should be – literally - core business for Rotterdam in the near future? The ever shifting geo-political balance, innovations on the labor market and a changing economy poses this urgent question on the economic future of Rotterdam. Rotterdam is standing at a turning point: are we going to invest billions in the harbor to welcome even bigger ships and keep up with the enormous harbors in China, or are we putting our money on its creative industry, a higher percentage of well-educated and a sustainable top three in Lonely Planet-lists? What could in the long run be the key investment for Rotterdam - and for the Netherlands?

Do we still have the luxury to bet on both ‘thinkers AND doers’ - as our university’s slogan reads - or is it time to choose between harbor or higher education? Underneath lies the fundamental discussion of the value of knowledge and culture versus hardcore economics. What is knowledge worth, and what does it contribute to society? In what way does knowledge define the city of Rotterdam? What is the value of the Erasmus University and other higher education? And how does the identity of Rotterdam as a merchant city relate to humanistic qualities?

As an expert in economic history of the Netherlands, and as both a fervent defender of free markets and an advocate of arts & culture, world-renown professor Deirdre McCloskey might just be the right person for prizewinning advise on Rotterdam’s next economical long term plan. A plea for a disciplinary “marriage” between humanities and economics as the key for a humanistic rather than a merchants revival of the Dutch Golden Age and Rotterdam’s economic survival.

Deirdre McCloskey is Distinguished Professor of Economics and of History, and Professor of English and of Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). From 2001 to 2006 she was visiting Professor of Philosophy at Erasmus University. Her main research interests include economic theory and history, philosophy, feminism and statistical theory.

She describes herself as a “literary, quantitative, postmodern, free-market, progressive-Episcopalian, Midwestern woman from Boston who was once a man. Not ‘conservative’! I’m a Christian libertarian.”

Moderated by Blaž Remic (ESCHCC)

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