Urban Renewal in Rotterdam

An analysis of the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam's urban policy and practices

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Abstract

Urban renewal - the process of redevelopment of urban areas - has evolved throughout decades in Dutch housing and planning policy. Urban renewal has taken place on large and small scales. Recently residents of Rotterdam could vote in a referendum on the urban renewal policies of their municipality. The municipality of Rotterdam has plans to restructure 20.000 affordable housing units for middle and high income households. Some argue that the need to retain higher educated people is necessary to propel the economic trajectory of Rotterdam. Others argue that the way in which affluent households are attracted displaces low income households.

The ideas, motives and strategies which lie behind the current urban and planning policy will be analysed in this research. This paper examines the discourse of gentrification which has become manifest in the urban policy of Rotterdam. It will look at the argumentative structure of the discourse and identify which components make up the discourse. Two narratives have been distinguished: the pro gentrification narrative and the counter narrative. They view gentrification and the urban trajectory of Rotterdam differently.

The aim of this thesis has been to understand the argumentative structure which lies beneath the current policy as it is implemented. The way in which a narrative can become institutionalised has thereby played an important a role. The thesis illustrates that the debate on gentrification - in Rotterdam - cannot be simply understood as those for and against the phenomena, but needs to be understood as a discourse wherein the pro gentrification narrative understands gentrification as a 'tool' to improve a neighbourhood, whereas the counter narrative acknowledges benefits associated with gentrification but has some concerns with gentrification and how it will shape the city.

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1. Introduction

The urban fabric of cities changes continuously. In the past cities were strongly shaped by their key industries. A more globalised world led to the decline of these industrial industries in western countries (Paxton, 2016; Saltenyte, 2013). Many industries left the city and a post-industrial society slowly emerged. The sizable poorly qualified labour often remained, with a lack of job opportunities as a result. Industrial cities formerly known for their economic growth were often unable to shift towards a more modern knowledge based industry (Saltenyte, 2013; Uitermark et al., 2007). They often suffered or are still suffering the consequences of the industrial era (Agueda, 2014).

Nowadays in the Netherlands it can be stated that cities are becoming more popular and are growing. A report by the PBL & CBS (2016) states that that by 2030 the Dutch population will have increased with one million inhabitants. More than 75% of the growth can be attributed to the cities (Kooiman et al. 2016).

The urban landscape is constantly shaped and re-shaped by an increasing urban population and by a host of urban processes. Like many other big cities in the Netherlands, Rotterdam is actively involved in the development and transformation of its urban spaces. As part of the urban renewal policy, the city of Rotterdam is restructuring its dated neighbourhoods in order to improve the stock of housing and the living environment (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2017a; Uitermark et al., 2007).

The way in which urban renewal takes place, in Rotterdam and the rest of the country has changed as well (Priemus, 2006; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008; Schuiling, 2007). Over time, an urban renewal focus has incorporated social goals, besides the predominant physical ambitions (Schuiling, 2007; Uitermark et al., 2007; Colomb, 2011).

The housing vision of Rotterdam is part of the urban renewal policy of Rotterdam. Plans are made to demolish and renovate affordable housing for more affluent inhabitants (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016a). Motives favouring this planned development are based on providing suitable housing for more affluent residents since Rotterdam putatively possesses an already exceedingly large supply of affordable housing. The resistance to the plans portrayed under the housing vision was voiced during a referendum, which was held on the 30th of November 2016 in Rotterdam.

In order to understand the argumentative structure behind the urban renewal strategy, this thesis has made use of discourse theory. A discourse, in its simplest form, can be seen as a way in which we act, think and talk about a particular subject. It is embodied in one's speech and social interaction (Richardson & Sharp, 2001). By studying the gentrification discourse in Rotterdam, the public debate on how urban developments should be

structured will be examined. Thereby looking at the relation between policy rhetoric and action, which is a Foucauldian perspective on discourse analysis (Richardson & Sharp, 2001).

Discourses are often contested and renegotiated. The referendum that was held on the 30th of November and can be seen as a contestation of the gentrification discourse. In this referendum, citizens of Rotterdam were asked whether they agree or disagree with the council's housing vision. The resistance towards the housing vision was mainly based on the demolition of 15.000 affordable houses and the renovation of 5.000 dwellings, favours the more affluent households.

The demolition of cheap housing units transitions residential areas towards more affluent households, which is considered a classical form of gentrification (Lees et al., 2008). Gentrification refers to the process of inner-city investments in previously disinvested neighbourhoods, which often accompanies a social change (Lees et al., 2008; Freeman, 2005). Gentrification in itself has been part of urban strategies worldwide and has been used frequently to revitalise neighbourhoods (Webb, 2010; Smith, 2002).

There has been a lack of scholarly research into policy discourses concerning the use of gentrification (Doucet et al., 2011). The traditional way of urban policy research has yet been less successful in providing an analysis on the underlying conflicts that influence policy implementations and the deliberations (Jacobs, 2006). Doucet et al. (2011) stated - in a study - that a discourse based on gentrification clearly exists in Rotterdam. Doucet et al. (2011) uses discourse to understand the pursuit of a gentrification strategies.

Where Doucet et al. (2011) focussed on the neighbourhood of Hoogvliet, I will not focus solely on one particular area. Furthermore, I will address a broader conceptualization of the gentrification discourse. Thereby looking at the corresponding parts which build up the discourse of gentrification. I will also look at how the discourse of gentrification has institutionalised. *"Institutionalization occurs as actors interact and come to accept shared definitions of reality"* (Philips et al., 2004 p. 635). I will also look at how the discourse of gentrification or parts of the discourse have become institutionalised in local policy and practice.

Within this research I will investigate the way in which the gentrification discourse forms the urban renewal policy and its practices, thereby also looking at how the discourse of gentrification is contested. The discourse analysis used in this thesis will be inspired by the Foucauldian perspective of discourse in which power-relations play a pivotal role.

1.1 An introduction to urban renewal and gentrification

Urban renewal is a phenomenon that has been present for decades now. It has been known and adopted to deal with a changing urban environment (Chan & Lee, 2007). It has however been debated whether the effects of urban renewal strategies have resulted in a positive influence when it comes to the social living environment (Chan & Yung, 2004; Chan & Lee, 2007).

In the last 30 years urban renewal policies have become more and more complex due to the poverty, unemployment, housing quality, segregation and low quality of public space (Kleinhans, 2004; Bolt et al., 2007). These factors can differ tremendously per country, where it depends on the type of government and the structures of the urban areas, socially and economically (Kleinhans, 2004). For Rotterdam - halfway through the seventies - this was promoted as 'building for the neighbourhood'. The attention during this time period was focussed on the values of existing neighbourhoods and the renewal was centred around the current neighbourhood residents (Gemeente, Rotterdam 2017a; Schuiling, 2007).

What the urban renewal policies often have in common is that they revolve around the stock of housing (Musterd, 2003; Kleinhans, 2004). They strongly focusses on the diversification of housing types and the social mix of people in the neighbourhoods. Diversification has been at the core of housing policy in the Netherlands and the UK, and has played a great role in other western countries too (Kleinhans, 2004; Colomb, 2011).

Social mixing refers to the idea that neighbourhoods can be improved via the social spectrum and confront the segregation, social exclusion and concentrations of deprivation (Colomb, 2011). Colomb (2011) describes the concept and the occurrence of it as follows:

"In various countries policy-makers have consequently began to adopt a policy discourse on the necessity to address socio-spatial segregation via interventions which seek to modify the social or ethnic composition of an area, i.e. to promote a form of (greater) mix. This is based on the notion of the neighbourhood effect […] which hypothesizes that a high concentration of poor, or ethnic minority, people in specific areas reinforces and perpetuates poverty and exclusion. The policy implication of the idea of the neighbourhood effect is that intervention is needed to deconcentrate poverty, i.e. dissolve concentrations of deprived (and/or minority ethnic) urban residents, by introducing a form of social mix in poor areas." (p. 224). This particular view has widely been incorporated in urban renewal and regeneration strategies worldwide.

The term urban renewal and regeneration can vary in precise terms but is often used interchangeable (Zheng et al., 2014). Urban renewal is often associated with the

improvement of the environmental quality and the promotion of land values, while in the meantime dealing with urban problems (Adams & Hastings, 2001). Regeneration is more focussed on an exhaustive vision and integrated action to deal with the complexity of various urban problems, to improve the physical, social, economic and environmental conditions (Ecran, 2011).

Urban renewal has become popular due to more people moving towards the city and due to improvements of parts of the city being overdue. To add, there is also a growing concern on how to deal with abandoned urban areas and the results of urban sprawl (Couch, 1990; Zheng et al., 2014). There are some downsides to urban renewal and regeneration practice. It is associated with social problems such as breaking up existing social networks, displacement of vulnerable groups and conflicting impacts on the living environment (Chan & Lee, 2008).

In some cases, urban renewal and regeneration have been associated with gentrification (Oliver, 2015; Smith, 2002). Improving the physical appeal of areas can put pressure on the poor and more vulnerable communities (Ecran, 2011). The demolition plans, as presented in the housing vision of Rotterdam, strike a similarity with the process of gentrification. The demolition of cheap houses and replacing it for a more affluent households is considered by scholars a 'textbook' form of gentrification (Lees et al., 2008; Crump, 2002; Slater, 2006; Davidson & Lees, 2008). As mentioned, gentrification refers to the process of inner-city investments in previously disinvested neighbourhoods (Lees et al., 2008; Freeman, 2005). This inner-city investment is then coupled with a new group; middle-class residents which enter the neighbourhood (Smith, 2002; Lees & Ley, 2008). Gentrification in itself has been part of urban strategies worldwide and has been used frequently in ways of revitalising neighbourhoods (Webb, 2010; Smith, 2002).

Within this research, I will look at how the discourse of gentrification adds to urban renewal policy and practice, what the argumentative structure is of the discourse and how the discourse of gentrification has become institutionalised.

1.2 Problem description

The Rotterdam housing situation faces several problems. Different views exist on how Rotterdam's housing stock should be developed, with eye on the future. The planned demolition of 15.000 dwellings and the renovation of 5.000 houses has the potential to negatively impact the less affluent people of Rotterdam, due to a decrease in affordable housing stock. On the other hand, it provides opportunities for more affluent residents to live in Rotterdam. One believe is that the presence of more affluent households will have a 'trickle-down effect' for Rotterdam. Different meanings and problem perceptions are attributed to the housing situation in Rotterdam. A way to understand this variety of perceptions and values is through studying urban renewal in a discourse analysis. A Foucauldian discourse analysis will aid in investigating this gentrification discourse and hopes to contribute to the study of the gentrification literature. This insight is expected to contribute to different perspectives and discourses on the urban housing problem in Rotterdam.

1.3 Research objective & questions

The objective of this research is to investigate how the discourse of gentrification is embedded in the urban policy of Rotterdam, while in the meantime investigating the different elements which make up the discourse of gentrification. A discourse is based on underlying sets of norms, rules and beliefs, that guide the policy making. The discourse of gentrification will be studied in order to understand how it influences the urban planning policy strategies in Rotterdam. This will be done in order to understand how the gentrification discourse is being shaped and contested and to discover the underlying influencing and impacting factors. Doucet et al (2011) established a discourse based on gentrification in Rotterdam. However, discourses are contested, and continuously changing over time (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). To not fully rely on the housing discourse discovered by Doucet et al. (2011), it will only form the starting point of this analysis. A different insight into the discourse of gentrification may arise from studying the discourse and gentrification in Rotterdam along the lines of the new housing vision and the debate structured around it. This gives insight in the way in which the discourse of gentrification is constructed in the policy realms of Rotterdam.

This public debate, focused on how urban developments should be structured, will be examined by an in-depth study concerning the way in which a gentrification discourse is part of the local urban renewal policy in Rotterdam. Through Foucauldian discourse analysis and discursive institutionalism the discourse of gentrification will be studied. Relevance is attributed to institutional practices, combining discourse and discursive institutionalism in the same spirits of Schmidt (2008; 2010; 2011a) and Arst & Buizer (2009). An indication

of how a certain discourse is structured and how it has become institutionalised in policy and practice will come to light.

The following research questions have guided and structured this thesis. These research questions are however simplified to prevent confusion of certain terms for the reader. After the theoretical framework, the research questions will be more specified since the theory and the elements which make up a discourse will then be discussed.

Main research question:

How has the discourse of gentrification become manifest in the urban renewal policy and housing debate of Rotterdam?

Sub research questions

What is the argumentative structure of the discourse of gentrification?

How is the discourse of gentrification being contested?

How has the discourse of gentrification been institutionalised in local policy practices?

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter contains the theoretical framework that supports the analysis of the Rotterdam case. My thesis looks at how the gentrification discourse has been embedded in the urban policy of Rotterdam. In order to understand what discourse, gentrification and discursive institutionalism entail, a theoretical framework is needed to distinguish these concepts. At first, the theory of discourse will be illuminated to show what role discourse and discourse analysis play in this research. Secondly, discursive institutionalism will be discussed in order to understand the context in which a discourse can be situated. Thirdly, the concepts of power and institutionalisation will be discussed. Finally, the discourse of gentrification will be examined to see how it plays a role in Rotterdam.

2.1 Discourse theory

Different approaches exist when tackling discourse. Two of the most influential discourse theories are a Habermasian and Foucauldian perspective (Stahl, 2004). A Habermasian view - which focusses on setting the right circumstances for a debate - is a more practical and normative approach to discourse (Sharp & Richardson, 2001; Hajer & Versteeg 2005; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Fairclough, 2003). In a Habermasian view text and talk are considered important because social change takes place through communication (Sharp & Richardson, 2001; Fairclough, 2003). However, this thesis takes a Foucauldian perspective in which the structure of the gentrification discourse is studied by analysing competing ideas. The different ways in which discourse is analysed, is best summarized as the following:

"Different approaches to discourse analysis contain critical assumptions about how changes in policy relate to broader social change. In particular, greater or lesser significance is attributed to developments in institutional structures and communication as causal factors in bringing about social change." (Sharp & Richardson, 2001 p.193).

As one can imagine with multiple approaches to discourse, the term 'discourse' is used differently by researchers. In its simplest form, when you talk to one and another, you are engaged in a 'discourse'. For some scholars, discourse is thus perceived as *"the sum of communicative interactions"* (Sharp & Richardson, 2001 p. 195). In this interpretation, discourse is regarded as 'text', for example speech, conversations, statements and articles accommodating policy-making (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). This type of discourse can be considered the most 'classical' form of discourse analysis (Arts & Buizer, 2009). It therefore comes as no surprise that the origins of the term discourse can be found in linguistic studies, but it was not until the works of Zellig Harriss in 1952 that the term gained scientific traction. Since then it found its way in different social sciences (Mujahid, n.d.; Fischer & Gottweis, 2012).

The analysis of discourse does not only have to be textual. For understanding the policy process and the aspects of policy-making, a 'wider' form of discourse analysis can be used, by seeing discourse not just as a communicative exchange but as something that "*extends into the realms of ideology, strategy, language and practice, and is shaped by the relations between power and knowledge."* (Sharp & Richardson, 2001 p.195). This is a Foucauldian perspective, which is taken as a lens within this thesis. The definition of discourse used is the well-known one of Hajer & Versteeg (2005): *"An ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices."* (p.175). A discourse analysis therefore seeks to understand and identify these practices. Thus, in a Foucauldian discourse analysis, both 'text' and 'practice' are embraced (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

Maarten Hajer made major contributions to this particular field of policy discourse analysis (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Sharp & Richardson, 2001; Hewitt, 2009). This Foucauldian discourse analysis focusses more on the existence of power in the formation and contestation of discourses or ideas. It is not necessarily the power that an individual possesses but the power that is shaped by the particular discourse (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Hewitt, 2009).

In Foucauldian discourse analysis a critical stance towards 'truth' is taken (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). It is not about discovering an 'ultimate truth' but it questions why, how and by whom an argument is considered as 'truth'. Through the exercise of power, an argument can be appropriated as 'true'. Or as Edwards and Nicoll (2001) put it: *"the claim to truth can itself be seen as a powerful rhetorical practice"* (p.105).

The analysis and philosophy of discourse fits within the argumentative turn, which gave rise to a wider attention to discourses in contemporary science (Fischer & Gottweis, 2012). The argumentative turn was relevant because it does not automatically assume that everything can be explained by algorithms. It is a process wherein principles, beliefs and actions are weighed under multiple frames. They are open to different evaluations and interpretations of the world (Dryzek, 1993). The argumentative turn tries to move beyond objectivism and relativism and can thus be seen as an anti-essentialist ontology, meaning that there is not just one reality, but multiple socially constructed realities (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005).

Discourse studies show how a variety of actors try to influence the problem definition. Actors try to position themselves actively so they can enforce a dominant discourse (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Looking at discourse as a practice and not only as a text thus requires a more diverse approach (Richardson & Sharp, 2001). Written or spoken text, conversations and debates will be studied. Institutional practices will be analysed as well

to illuminate how the discourse of gentrification is constructed and embedded in Rotterdam in both policies and in practice.

As mentioned, discourse is studied in a variety of ways. The structure of how a political problem is defined relates to a distinct narrative wherein the problem is discussed. Language therefore plays a crucial role in how people define the problem (Hajer, 2006).

Metaphors, storylines and narratives are three concepts that help shed light on distinct features of a discourse (Hajer, 2006). Metaphors in its essence are there to understand one kind of a thing in terms of another (Hajer, 2006). Or as Hajer and Versteeg (2005) mention: *"Seeing something in terms of something else, bringing out the 'thisness' of a that or the 'thatness' of a this"* (p.176).

Narratives can be seen as an *"attempt to project a particular version of reality, seeking to organize it in a certain manner while simultaneously attempting to mask or deny contradictions within that reality and limit our perception of such contradictions."* (Atkinson, 2000 p. 213). Not only considering what is said in the narrative can be of relevance, but also what is not said can be of interest (Atkinson, 2000). Looking at how a particular narrative is structured can restrict the way in which 'reality' is talked about, especially when narratives are linked to institutional forms (Atkinson, 2000). Whether a phenomenon is considered a problem rests on the narrative in which it is discussed (Hajer, 1993).

A storyline refers to a condensed statement that summarises a complex narrative. In identifying storylines, one sees that a problem does not have a fixed identity but that the problem definition is continuously changing (Hajer, 2006). In short: storylines encapsulate the essence of a complex narrative (Hewitt, 2009; Hajer, 2006). As Hajer (2006) mentions storylines *"often have the form of a narrative: people tell facts in a story. One quickly becomes aware that in any field there are a couple of such stories that fulfil a particularly important role."* (p. 69).

By analysing the narratives, storylines and metaphors, an understanding can be formed of the formation and contestation of the gentrification discourse. This thesis examines how these three concepts form a gentrification discourse and how elements of the discourse of gentrification are institutionalised.

A Foucauldian discourse analysis provides the opportunity of doing more than putting policy text into (institutional) context (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). It is a way of expressing and examining how discourses are embedded in local practices. Foucault believed that there is a strong relation between discourse and power. Not the way in which actors exert power

linguistically or textually, but the way in which power is embedded in the discourse itself (Arts & Buizer, 2009). It forces people to talk, think and operate in a particular manner delimiting other ways (Arts & Buizer, 2009). Here I turn to the theory of institutionalism. Institutionalism and especially discursive institutionalism can help to understand how the discourse of gentrification becomes institutionalised in policy and offers a great example of how a narrative has been embedded in local practice.

2.2 Discursive institutionalism & Discourse

Discursive institutionalism can be seen as one of the most recent institutionalism of 'new institutionalism' (Schmidt, 2008; Schmidt, 2010). Other institutionalisms are rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. The choice for discursive institutionalism instead of other institutionalisms will be further elaborated, by providing a brief overview of the older institutionalisms, their flaws and implications.

Rational choice institutionalism focusses on the behaviour of rational actors. Stable institutions exist due to the continuity through certain fixed references (Schmidt, 2010). Historical institutionalism focusses on explaining structures and practices which are path dependent and embedded in macro-historical structures and regularities (Schmidt, 2010). Sociological institutionalism leans more towards the discursive institutionalism and focusses on culture and norms of social agents. Thereby, the institutions are to be seen as cultural norms and frames (Schmidt, 2010). What these three institutionalisms have in common is that change is explained through exogenous shocks (Schmidt, 2010).

Discursive institutionalists put ideas and discourse into institutional context (Schmidt, 2011a; Schmidt, 2011b). Discursive institutionalism - unlike the three older institutionalisms - can be seen as a more dynamic view of change, whereby it overcomes obstacles which were associated with older institutionalisms, that are considered to be more static, more equilibrium focussed and path dependent (Schmidt, 2008; Schmidt, 2010). Change, in discursive institutionalism, is not explained through exogenous shocks, but through ideational and discursive abilities (Schmidt, 2010). Ideational abilities refer to the ability to create institutional practices, while discursive abilities refer to the ability to criticize, maintain or change those institutional practices (Schmidt, 2010).

This theory of discursive institutionalism complements the Foucauldian discourse analysis in this research. As Schmidt (2008; 2011a) often mentions: discursive institutionalism takes ideas and discourse seriously, since the notion of discourse is also relevant in discursive institutionalism. Discursive institutionalism sees discourse as an object of explaining ideas and discourse of (conscious) agents (Schmidt, 2010). The ideas presented in policies and programs can be categorized into two types: cognitive- and normative ideas

(Schmidt, 2008). As Schmidt (2008) simply states: *"Cognitive ideas elucidate 'what is and what to do,' whereas normative ideas indicate 'what is good or bad about what is' in light of 'what one ought to do'."* (p. 306).

Cognitive ideas in this context can be seen as guidelines or instructions for political action and is used to justify policy based on 'facts' and logic which stress a certain necessity (Schmidt, 2008; Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). It indicates how problems can be solved by offering a solution to the current problems. Normative ideas on the other hand can be seen as ideas which attach a certain value to political action and are seen as the level of '*appropriateness'* to which policy is justified (Schmidt, 2008; Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016).

What should be understood is that some discourses and ideas are based solely on technical and cognitive arguments but in order for these arguments to be powerful the arguments need to resonate with the public. The ideas only become successfully reproduced or accepted when they carry a normative function so that the narrative remains accessible to a wider audience (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2015).

Some institutionalism scholars only relate the policy to the notion of these two ideas and avoid the use of the term discourse. However, the use of discourse in an institutional context and can help to indicate the (different) ideas which are represented in a discourse. It can therefore be useful in studying the interactive processes in which ideas are transferred to one another (Schmidt, 2010). A way in which this occurs can for instance be seen in the public debate on the housing vision in Rotterdam.

The representation of ideas is thereby explicitly addressed when using the notion of discourse, since it focusses on the discursive interaction where actors exchange and reproduce ideas within a certain institutional context (Schmidt, 2008).

Institutionalisation can therefore play a valuable role. Phillips et al. (2004) describe institutionalisation as a phenomena where actors interact and acknowledge a *"shared definition reality" (p. 635)*. The assumption is not that action essentially provides the grounds for institutionalisation, but through discursive processes that these perceptions of realities become established (Phillips et al., 2004).

Institutions - from a discursive perspective - can be seen not just as social constructions, but as social constructions established through a discourse (Schmidt, 2011a; Phillips et al., 2004; Kress, 1995). Or to put it in other words: every institution is a discursive product of a discourse, but not all discursive products of a discourse are institutions, since not all discursive products have 'social controls' (Phillips et al., 2004).

A discourse indirectly affects actions since it is produced though institutional practices and these embody a certain set of 'sanctions' that prohibit contradictory actions. The degree to which something is institutionalised depends on how it is (self)-regulated (Phillips et al., 2004). The more costly challenging of the institutional practice is perceived, the more institutionalised the narrative or discourse has become. For those contesting the institutionalised practice this could result in less legitimacy (Philips et al., 2004; Phillips et al., 2000).

Ideas - which are part of a discourse – do not 'float freely' (Schmidt, 2011b; Risse-Kappen, 1994). As one can imagine, they need to be carried by agents. Via these agents ideas are transferred, thereby constituting the discourse which eventually leads to action (Schmidt, 2011b). Schmidt (2011b) calls these type of agents the 'sentient agents'. These are thinking and speaking agents, who produce and discuss ideas through discursive interaction, which may eventually lead to a certain policy action (Schmidt, 2011b). This can result in the explanation of driving forces of policy change and continuity.

When studying the discourse of gentrification it can be useful in understanding positioning of actors, they *"use ideas to identify their interests, to construct their policies, and to legitimize them. Discourse analysts would go further to argue that they use ideas to dominate or to create 'hegemony'."* (Schmidt, 2011b p.116).

For studying the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam and how this discourse relates to urban renewal, it will be useful to understand that actors try and position themselves in order to legitimize their ideas, which could even lead to an institutionalisation of ideas and narratives.

2.3 Power & institutionalisation

The notion of power can be considered relevant to institutionalism theory and therefore fits within the scope of discourse analysis since power is inherent to the process of maintaining a certain discourse and the contestation of it. In a Foucauldian perspective of discourse, power can be considered one of the central concepts of political science (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2015).

A concept relevant to the power which is embodied in institutions is the ideational power. Carstensen & Schmidt (2015) elaborate on the concept that ideas and power matter in politics: *"To distinguish more clearly between the general claim that ideas matter in politics, and the more specific argument that one significant way ideas matter is through agents' promotion of certain ideas at the expense of the ideas of others, this contribution develops the concept of ideational power."* (p.31). The ideational power can be defined as the capacity of agents to influence normative and cognitive beliefs through the use of

ideational elements of other actors (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). Several types of ideational power can be distinguished.

The first type of ideational power which Carstensen & Schmidt (2016) derive is the '*power through ideas'*, which is considered to be the most familiar approach to ideational power. Power through ideas can be seen as the capacity of actors to persuade others to adopt and approve their views of what to assume and to act through the use of ideational elements. Persuasion plays a central role in the form of ideational power (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). It is not the power in the sense that one forces you to do something you dislike, but it's more like the power which is achieved through the reasoning and the argument being made (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). It is not per se that the 'best' argument wins but it is embedded in the cognitive and normative arguments which are part of this persuasion (Schmidt, 2008; Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). With the emphasis on persuasion, this type of power should not be seen as the manipulation of people.

A second type of ideational power which Carstensen & Schmidt (2016) describe, is the *'power over ideas'*. This relates more to the compulsory power and is less focused on the persuasion of ideas. It is about the power of an actor to prevent alternative ideas of other actors in the policy-making scene. This type of power often relates more to the traditional form of power (resources). It is the way in which agents can promote their own ideas while excluding the ideas of others (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). A most classical form of this is contextualized within a totalitarian regime where there is control of the mass media and information distribution (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). This type of ideational power shows some resemblance with compulsory power, since the emphasis is on the relation between actors which are often in conflict. The ideational agent in this case does not have to fall back on the persuasion of ideas (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016).

The third type of ideational power is that of 'power in ideas'. It constitutes the power in the form of structuration and institutional level (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). It pertains to the notion that certain ideas are considered viable and reasonable but go to a deeper level of institutional and ideational structures in which actors rely on. Unlike 'power through ideas' and 'power over ideas' this type of power does not relate to the direct interaction between actors (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). An example of power in ideas is when certain policy programs become taken for granted. These programs are in such a state that they become so embedded in someone's thought that the goals and instruments are not questioned. Power in ideas may therefore also be seen as a way actors can use it to avoid change.

The notion of ideational power can help influence the way in which a discourse becomes institutionalised in public policy. Ideational power can for instance be derived from the

argumentative structure of the different components of a discourse. How for instance does a metaphor become accepted as 'normal' or how are certain ideas prevented from the public debate? These are questions which will be answered in the analysis chapter of this thesis. The notion of ideational power can therefore put the discourse of gentrification into its institutional context.

2.4 Discourse of gentrification

Gentrification is the object of study in this discourse analysis. As mentioned, the definition of discourse used is that of Hajer & Versteeg (2005): *"An ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices."* (p.175). In terms of this definition of discourse, gentrification is the 'social and physical phenomena' to which meaning is given. The value which actors address to gentrification will therefore be of interest in this study. Not only the value given to the process of gentrification will be of interest, but also the use and embeddedness of the discourse of gentrification in policy and practice will be of importance. This will be done in order to illuminate how the discourse of gentrification is used and institutionalised in local practice.

Gentrification is often described as a process where middle-class residents occupy a vacant or working class area in inner-city locations (Lees et al., 2008). Gentrification commonly occurs in urban areas where prior disinvestment in the urban infrastructure creates opportunities for attractable and profitable redevelopment (Slater, 2011; Freeman, 2005). As one can imagine, the scale and effect of gentrification differs per situation and location (Lees, 2000; Criekingen & Decroly, 2003). It is for this reason that gentrification is viewed differently among scholars and policy workers.

Some see gentrification as the saviour of a problematic neighbourhood (Byrne, 2005; Duany, 2003), whereas others see it as the end of the affordable city (Gent, 2015). In order to investigate the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam, it is relevant to understand the positive and negative effects associated with gentrification. Some authors emphasize, certain policy makers reject the existence of gentrification and claim it simply as 'urban succession' (Freeman, 2005) or down-play the effects of gentrification (Lees et al., 2008; Doucet et al., 2011). The way in which language is structured around these effects therefore influences the discourse. When studying the discourse of gentrification and how the narratives are shaped, it can be revealed how certain effects associated with gentrification are masked or neglected.

One of the most discussed effects of gentrification is that of displacement. Displacement refers to the process where some types of residents are forced out of their living area due to the presence of gentrification. The ways in which displacement can take place varies

from a 'direct' displacement to a more 'subtle' displacement. The more direct forms of displacement are known for forcing people out of their building because it is demolished or converted for another type of resident (Marcuse, 1985; Slater, 2006).

A slower and more subtle process of displacement can take place which stresses the affordability of a neighbourhood when the rent slowly goes up. In a more attractive neighbourhood the rent prices increase, forcing the former residents to move out (Slater, 2009). LeGates & Hartman (1986) summarize the effect of gentrification related to displacement as the fact that *"displacement imposes substantial hardships on some classes of displacee, particularly lower-income-groups and the elderly" (p. 197)*. This statement is confirmed by Atkinson (2002), who states that the poor suffer more from gentrification than wealthier people. Other negative effects associated with gentrification are the loss of affordable housing, community resentment and an increase in rent price (Atkinson & bridge, 2013; Slater et al., 2008). Some scholars however reject the notion of displacement and see gentrification as a part of the cities trajectory or as an urban cycle. They believe that people moving in and out of a certain place are just an inherent part of the urban transition (Freeman, 2005).

Positive effects associated with gentrification are: the stabilisation of declining areas, an increase in property values, increase in tax revenue, a crime decrease and an increase in social mixing caused by the social change of the new residents (Atkinson, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge, 2002). The acknowledgement of these 'qualities' of gentrification has led to declarations - by policy makers in Amsterdam - articulating phrases like: *"let gentrification happen"* (Gent, 2015). In this view of the policy maker in Amsterdam, gentrification is to be seen as a spontaneous process and should be embraced. Language can play a pivotal role in formulating a stance and narrative in the discourse of gentrification, since using the term 'social' mixing can be used for covering up the fact that people are displaced (Nedučin, 2009).

Smith (2002) argues that the term urban regeneration is often used to cover up state-led gentrification. As Smith (2002) states: *"The language of regeneration sugarcoats gentrification. Precisely because the language of gentrification tells the truth about the class shift involved in 'regeneration' of the city."* (p. 445). Gentrification is then to be seen as a 'dirty word', preventing the explicit use of the word in order to avoid conflict (Smith, 2002; Doucet et al., 2011). The choice of words for expressing urban renewal therefore matters:

"The question of the anodyne language of 'regeneration' in itself. In the first place where does this language come from? A biomedical and ecological term, 'regeneration' applies to individual plants, species, or organs […] and insinuates that the strategic gentrification of

the city is actually a natural process. Thus, the advocacy of regeneration strategies disguises the quintessentially social origins and goals of urban change and erases the politics of winners and losers out of which such policies emerge." (Smith, 2002 p. 445).

As can be derived from above, power can be embedded in the language used to frame gentrification. In order to understand the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam the same type of reasoning and power is investigated in studying the discourse of gentrification.

Gentrification does not have to be seen as a spontaneous process, but has lately been part of urban renewal or regeneration strategies by cities worldwide (Lees & ley, 2008; Webb, 2010). As Webb (2010) states: *"The consequence of this conceptual extension of gentrification is that the interests driving 'traditional gentrification' (market capital and higher income residents) have been transferred into the new environment of urban renewal"* (p. 314). Gentrification can be seen as a way of being incorporated in the policy domain and thus forming a discourse through which urban renewal has to be led. A phenomena that has often been known for its great resistance and riots in the past, has now been embraced by policy makers (Davidson, 2007). It will therefore be interesting to see to what degree narratives of the discourse of gentrification are institutionalised.

When gentrification is viewed as something that benefits the city as a whole, it is often referred to as 'positive gentrification' (Cameron, 2003; Chaskin & Joseph, 2012). A win-win situation is seen as eminent by the policy makers. This means that a transformation of the neighbourhood would not only be beneficial to the new residents but also to the long term inhabitants. Often public services and local schools are improved, while at the same time removing the stigma that was associated with the neighbourhoods (Cameron, 2003; Slater et al., 2008). In this view that gentrification is seen as something positive. For policy makers gentrification can then be seen as a blueprint on how developments should be tackled (Lees, 2000).

I will look at how gentrification and its effects are talked about within this discourse, which metaphors and narratives are expressed and how these narratives become institutionalised. This can help to understand how the discourse of gentrification is used as a planning strategy for urban renewal in Rotterdam.

Language and social practices are the core objects of study in a discourse analysis (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). The way in which a discourse of gentrification is framed and structured can therefore have the potential to increase the acceptability and institutionalisation of the discourse or narrative. As Hajer and Versteeg (2005) put it: *"Language has the capacity to make politics, to create signs and symbols*

that shift power balances, to render event harmless or, on the contrary to create conflict." (p. 179).

In this study the discourse of gentrification is partially based on the housing discourse already established by Doucet et al. (2011). Early identification of a discourse can take over later analysis and obscure other features of the situation (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

Therefore, in this thesis, it will be studied how discourse of gentrification is constructed through text and in practice, thereby focussing on how the discourse of gentrification is advocated, institutionalised and contested. By studying the argumentative and discursive structure - which are based on normative and cognitive ideas - it can be understood why policy makers, amongst others, advocate or contest narratives within the discourse of gentrification.

2.5 Research questions

The research questions mentioned in the introduction chapter have now been further elaborated. Based on the theoretical framework discussed above the following research questions have been adopted.

Main research question

How has the discourse of gentrification become manifest in the urban renewal policy and debate of Rotterdam?

Sub research questions

Which narratives, metaphors and storylines can be derived from the discourse of gentrification and what is their argumentative structure?

How is the discourse of gentrification being contested?

How has the discourse of gentrification been institutionalised in local policy practices?

3. Method

To answer the mentioned research question and sub-questions, this thesis presents a discourse analysis. There are many ways in which discourse analysis can be carried out (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Hewitt, 2009; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). This particular thesis gathered qualitative data from multiple sources. The type of discourse analysis, that has been opted for, is a so called Foucauldian discourse analysis.

The method of discourse analysis inspired by Foucault's work has obtained limited systematic attention. Prescribing a method might seem paradoxical since it would imply a certain 'truth', which can be considered un-Foucauldian (Hewitt, 2009). There is not one approach to conducting discourse analysis (Gee, 2011). Methodological questions set out by Sharp and Richardson (2001) have guided this research. Examples of these questions are:

"Where are discourses manifested? […] How are struggles between discourses manifested? […] How are the outcomes of these struggles manifested? […] How are the research aims focused into a manageable research project? […] How can the story of discursive conflict be analysed and convincingly presented?" (Sharp & Richardson, 2001, p.201).

These methodological question have helped to look at how discourses can be identified and how they are manifested. Another methodological approach which has been used is that of Carol Bacchi (Bacchi, 2012) who introduced the so-called 'What is the Problem Represented to be approach' (WPR approach). This approach helps to understand how problems are represented in policy (Bacchi, 2012; Bacchi & Eveline, 2010).

A helpful way of analysing discourse, is by starting to choose a discourse roughly from scientific literature. Later this discourse can be applied to the case (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). This was the starting point of the thesis. However, the relevance of gentrification discourses identified in the academic literature were limited for the case of Rotterdam. Therefore, I have opted for a more bottom-up approach to discourse, meaning that the discourse being studied is not primarily derived from earlier analyses of discourse in literature. However, the empirical work of Doucet et al. (2011) formed the starting point for this analysis of the discourse of gentrification.

In analysing this discourse also looked at the contestations of this discourse and how competing narratives might challenge certain assumptions, metaphors and storylines within the discourse. The construction of a theoretical framework has been an iterative process and theories have been adapted and added over time based on discoveries in the field.

To set boundaries to the research, this discourse analysis opted for a case study. Case studies help to answer in-depth questions by producing in-depth descriptions and interpretations, often in a short time period (Lapan, 2003). The selected case has been that of Rotterdam, as already elaborated intensively in the introduction. The discourse which is being studied relates to the whole wider city of Rotterdam. However, some examples in the analysis have referred to particular neighbourhoods or districts due to their current or past relevance for urban renewal policy.

3.1 Data collection

The data collection of the qualitative research has been conducted through a variety of methods. The most classical way in discourse analysis is research via text. The data collection started with desk research. Policy documents, online articles, visions and newspaper articles have been studied and were part of this step. The 010 debate, which was held on the 26th of October, also gave an insight in how the housing referendum and urban renewal was talked about in Rotterdam. Multiple sources can provide an in-depth picture of the 'case' (Creswell, 2012).

Secondly, semi-structured interviews were held with different types of actors. Representatives of the municipality, as well as housing corporations, political parties and politically engaged groups were interviewed for this research. In total fourteen participants have contributed. This is a reasonable number for a thesis which is credited for a period of half a year (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Or as Guest et al. (2006) state: *"If the goal is to describe a shared perception, belief, or behaviour […] then a sample of twelve will likely be sufficient."* (p. 76). Each interview took approximately an hour.

The interviews were held on separate dates. Roughly half of the interviews were held before the housing referendum and the other half were held after. This has been done in order to balance out the potential bias of the referendum results. Also, it was considered whether the referendum could be seen as a point in time at which the speech of the interviewees changed. However, this was not discovered. Having several rounds of interviews also meant there was time for analysis of the data. This leads to better questions for the next round and for refocussing of the research (Maxwell, 2012).

This thesis made use of semi-structured interviews during the two phases identified in the text above. Semi-structured interviews give the respondent the possibility to answer more freely (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This also provides the interviewee with the possibility to frame his or her particular storyline or narrative within a given discourse. The referendum, that was be held on 30th of November, was the starting point for this discourse analysis.

3.2 Data analysis

The analysis of discourse falls within the social constructivist and interpretative tradition of the social sciences (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). It can therefore be seen as an iterative process when dealing with the analysis and framing of a particular discourse. Hence, the data analysis will make use of coding. Coding provides the possibility to break the data apart in an analytically relevant way. When done properly it leads to further questions about the data (Saldaña, 2012). The coding of the transcripts, observations and documents has taken place over multiple periods and in several stages. As Creswell (2012) suggests, an 'initial' coding took place, thereby coding the most interesting and relevant parts of the data at first sight. Following this, a more systematic coding was undertaken, distinguishing several themes before the data could be fully interpreted and used.

The way in which interview data is analysed in discourse analysis differs from a more humanistic analysis. In such a humanistic approach the focus is on the capture of actual intentions, experiences or meanings of the interviewee. In discourse analysis the focus is more strongly geared towards the analysis of the interview at the macro sociological level. The aim is then to generate interpretations which go beyond that of the individual (Talja, 1999).

As Talja (1999) would describe, the analysis of a discourse is *"an approach which surpasses the dichotomy between subjective meanings and objective reality, as well as the dichotomy between user-centered and system-centered research"* (p. 2). The analysis of the interviews is therefore not analysed as an individual's opinion by itself, but as a narrative or storyline that fits within a particular discourse. This has been done in order to distinguish competing storylines and narratives.

Like the many definitions of discourses, the way in which discourses can be studied also varies. A more classical and traditional way of analysing discourse is only via text (Hewitt, 2009). Taking the definition used earlier, discourse is about the discursive objects, how these are structured and contested. In practice, by simply narrowing the focus on only text can thus be limiting in the understanding of a particular discourse (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

In a discourse analysis that focusses solely on text, there is a risk that a policy document becomes the main focus of the research while neglecting other forms of articulation. In Foucauldian discourse analysis, text is key in underpinning struggles as a part of the discourse. Other actions, debates or practices can be seen as valuable as text (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

A methodological approach which has been used in the thesis is that of Carol Bacchi. What's the Problem Represented to be? Also to be known under the acronym WPR-approach. This approach has been used while constructing preliminary interview questions and with the analysis of the data.

This approach and the philosophy behind it can be useful in the sense that when it comes to policies, a certain shape and meaning is given to 'problems' which are implied. As Bacchi and Eveline (2010) mention: *"policy 'problems' do not exist 'out there' in society, waiting to be 'solved' through timely and perspicacious policy interventions. Rather, specific policy proposals 'imagine' 'problems' in particular ways that have real and meaningful effects''* (p.111).

The WPR-approach can be seen as a heuristic tool focused on how 'problems' are portrayed in policy. It is often a common perception to think about policies as if they are there to 'solve' problems. The WPR-approach however overturns this notion (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010). Policies, in this sense, are not seen as a '*reaction*' to contemporary problems but relate to the idea that proposed policies '*create'* or '*produce'* policy problems. These distinct problems play a role in shaping the social perception and looks into which problems in this representation are left unaddressed (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010).

Questions which arise from this approach are: "*What will be done, given this representation of the 'problem'? To whom? What will stay the same? Who will benefit from this representation of the 'problem'? Who will be harmed? Who is 'blamed' in this representation of the 'problem'?"* (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010 p.115). With this approach it reflects on the underling premises which are made in the representation of the 'problem' (Bacchi, 2012; Bacchi & Eveline, 2010).

This approach has also been useful by looking at what is considered unproblematic in the representation. The WPR-approach can help in understanding and analysing the argumentative structure of narratives, storylines and metaphors within a discourse.

3.3 Validity

Reliability and validity are essentially, in core, tools of a positivistic epistemology (Golofshani, 2003). In quantitative research replicability and the reliability of the measurements means that in essence the research can be carried out by others (Richie & Lewis, 2003; Golofshani, 2003). In qualitative-interpretive research this is harder since the subjectivity of the researcher influences the outcome of the research. From a constructivist standpoint one could even argue that there is no single reality, so replication is irrelevant (Richie & Lewis, 2003). Quality criteria in qualitative-interpretive research are often referred to in terms of trustworthiness and validity (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

There are some measures that can improve the trustworthiness. The first is that of checking the transcript in order to review whether obvious mistakes have been made (Creswell, 2012; Gibbs, 2007; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). This can be time consuming, but it will also familiarize the researcher with the data (Gibbs, 2007). Another way of checking the validity is making sure there is no drift in the definition of codes, during the coding process. Comparing the codes with the data constantly, and writing memos about the codes, will increase the trustworthiness of the research (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013; Gibbs, 2007; Creswell, 2012).

The validity of a research often depends on the epistemological character of the scientific research (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In positivistic epistemologies it is 'assumed' that research can be done without a bias, since the 'truth' can be measured 'out there'. Criteria are then set out to reflect this knowledge of truth. In social constructivism sciences this can be more of a challenge since this considers multiple truths that are constructed differently. It does require certain validity steps (Golofshani, 2003). This research was conducted in the light of a social constructivism viewpoint.

The procedures of validity strategies can vary from triangulation, peer reviews, thick description and external audits to member checking. According to Creswell & Miller (2000), the choice of tools to validate studies depends on the 'lens' of the researcher and the researchers' paradigm assumptions.

Triangulation will be one of the validity methods used in this research. Triangulation can be seen as a validity procedure wherein different and multiple sources will be used in the process of gathering and analysing information (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Mathison, 1988).

3.4 Positioning of the researcher: Worldview & Bias

Discourse analysis can be considered a constructivists approach to policy analysis and planning (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Fairclough, 2003). When conducting a discourse analysis the core events and topics shape the research. In discourse analysis it has been mentioned that the difficulty of such a research is to investigate discourse analysis from the 'outside' whereas we often already think within a certain discourse (Hewitt, 2009; Hidding et al., 2000). In qualitative research in general, the researcher's position and personal views influence the outcome of the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

It is hard to eliminate all subjectivity in one's research. Acknowledging that a qualitative research and discourse analysis is coloured by the position of the researcher provides the first step forwards. Explaining my worldview is another validity-strategy used in this research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Ontology views can generally be distinguished between two categories: relativism and realism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They are involved with the nature of social reality and it is thus related to how we see the world out there (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Tuli, 2010). Positioning myself would lead to a categorization in a relativistic ontology, meaning that I see reality as a subjective entity. These intangible mental constructions are often shared with other individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This fits the sceptical view I have on reality and on assumptions people make about 'truths'.

As one can assume from this anti-realism viewpoint, it influences the manner in which research should be done. Science is not just about presenting facts that shape reality. Epistemology refers to how the researcher relates to knowledge and thus relates to how research should be executed (Tuli, 2010; Healy & Perry 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A constructivist epistemology is taken in my thesis, which fits the concept of discourse analysis in which realities, language and practice are socially constructed.

Another way to formulate ontology and epistemology is via a worldview (Creswell, 2012). In its core, I would consider myself a social constructivist. A social constructivist believes that "*individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences— meanings directed towards certain objects or things, these meanings are varied and multiple.*" (Creswell, 2012 p.20). I can find myself in this statement of Creswell (2012), while in the meantime I respect other worldviews and can partially agree with a pragmatic worldview.

In the past I was very interested in social and physical developments in urban areas. I studied gentrification in Arnhem previously. This gave a sceptical view of urban developments in general and gentrification in specific. I have noticed how the process of gentrification is often accompanied by negative effects, socially as well as physically. In this work I have tried to contain my biased view by being as neutral and careful as possible in the assumptions I make. This is of course done to increase the validity of the research.

4. Analysis

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, I take a bottom-up approach to the study of discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam. However, the empirical research of Doucet and colleagues (2011) formed a starting point for the study. Doucet et al. (2011) identified a gentrification discourse in Rotterdam that focussed on attracting wealthier residents. By making a distinction between different concepts such as narratives, storylines and metaphors that shape the discourse in Rotterdam I have found two competing narratives that strive towards dominance in the discourse. Making a distinction between narratives, storylines and metaphors has helped me structure the research and analysis of the discourse. By specifically studying the components of a discourse, one knows what to look at. Because by studying the components of a discourse one can better understand the discourse of gentrification, which parts are agreed on and which parts are contested. By looking at specific components one can then understand the discourse more fully and know what to look for in the analysis of the discourse.

Doucet et al. (2011) stated that Rotterdam has pursued gentrification as an objective. The ambition or need to gentrify in the eyes of Doucet et al. (2011) and Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008) stems from the idea that there is already an abundance of social housing in Rotterdam, and that this does not stimulate differentiated neighbourhoods. The understanding is that Rotterdam has a relative high number of affordable and social housing compared to other big cities in the Netherlands (Doucet et al., 2011). In this research Doucet et al. (2011) discovered that the municipality of Rotterdam focusses strongly on high income households and gives more attention to Rotterdam's housing strategy to deal with the 'problem' of the stock of affordable housing. This assumption will be the starting point for my analysis of the gentrification discourse in Rotterdam, where higher value is given to higher income households in urban policy.

In addition, unlike Doucet et al. (2011), who studied two new-build gentrification projects and the underlying strategies behind them, I studied the discourse of gentrification for the whole municipality of Rotterdam. In figure 1 I briefly introduce the different narratives, storylines and metaphors I discovered throughout this research.

This chapter first describes in greater detail the narratives within the gentrification discourse. The storylines which make up this gentrification narratives will then be discussed. These can be either shared by the two narratives, or just simply be associated with one narrative. Lastly, the metaphors which make up the discourse of gentrification are discussed.

The housing vision referendum that was held on the 30th of November played a meaningful role in the analysis of this thesis. The housing vision debate can be seen as a clear moment

in which different narratives could be recognised. It is through the referendum and the public debate surrounding the housing vision that the gentrification discourse - the narratives, storylines and metaphors - became visible. I distinguished two narratives from studying this debate and interviews with (political) parties involved in Rotterdam's urban policy.

The first is the pro gentrification narrative, which has some resemblance with the findings of Doucet et al. (2011). The other one is a counter narrative, which contests this pro gentrification narrative. In Image 1, I made the distinction between the elements which make up the discourse of gentrification. I saw the public 010 debate as an encounter in which both narratives could be traced in the speech of the participants. This contestation and the supporting argumentative structure behind it will be referred to as the counter narrative. This narrative tries to compete within the discourse of gentrification for dominance.

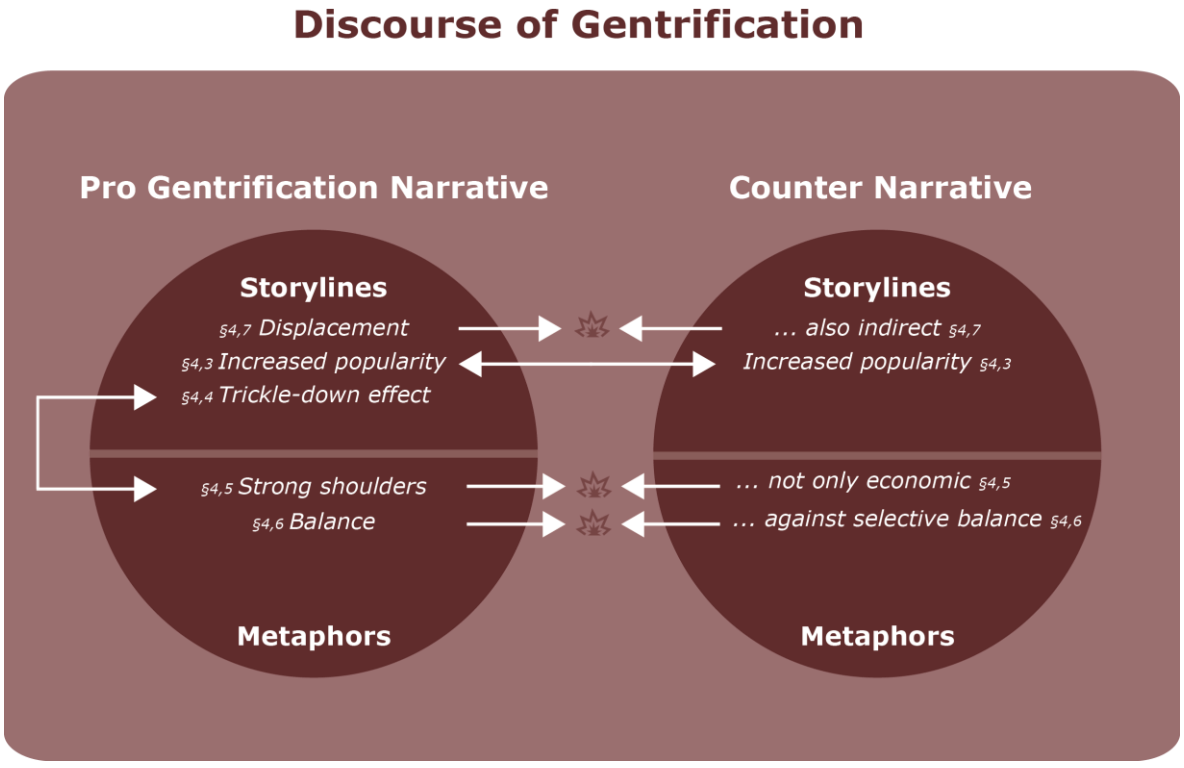

Figure 1: overview discourse of gentrification

The pro gentrification narrative I consider a dominant narrative. As can be seen in the image above, the pro gentrification and counter narrative clash on certain storylines and metaphors. Although they do agree on the storyline of increased popularity. Both narratives perceive an increase in popularity in Rotterdam, and agree that this should be acted upon. However, the way in which it should be dealt with differs. The pro gentrification narrative believes in a certain 'trickle down' storyline whereby affluent residents have a

positive effect on the economy of the city. This viewpoint has led to the metaphor of 'strong shoulders' it describes these affluent people as such. The counter narrative disagrees on the perception that 'strong shoulders' should only be seen as something economic, in this view 'strong shoulders' should also retain a social aspect.

Furthermore, the metaphor of 'balance' was part of the pro gentrification narrative. This metaphor is often used to describe the aim to 'balance' problematic neighbourhoods and to add wealthier residents in these neighbourhoods. The idea is that the neighbourhood will improve. The counter narrative, however, sees the described balance as something selective, only occurring in 'poor' neighbourhoods and not in the richer areas of Rotterdam.

Last but not least, the concept of displacement forms part of the gentrification discourse. However, views on displacement seem to differ strongly. The pro gentrification narrative sees displacement rarely occurring, whereas the counter narrative sees indirect displacement taking place as a consequence of current policy programs.

More detailed attention to these narratives, storylines and metaphors will be given throughout the analysis. Furthermore, it will also be examined how the dominant narrative of the gentrification discourse has institutionalised itself in public policy and practise.

4.1 The referendum

The referendum challenged the idea that cheap housing has to make way for more expensive dwellings. How this has been attempted will be explained in this chapter. However, I will first provide a brief overview of the referendum and its origin.

On the 30th of November 2016 the citizens of Rotterdam had the possibility to cast their vote on the housing vision in a referendum. The last time that people could voice their opinions - in a referendum - was in 1995, when the residents of Rotterdam were asked whether the city should be divided into separate municipalities (RTV Rijnmond, 2016).

The residents of Rotterdam had the possibility to vote in a manner that could influence the way in which the city should be shaped, potentially influencing the planning policy. The referendum question that was printed on the ballots was formulated as follows: *"Are you for or against the housing vision of Rotterdam?"* (Naber, 2016; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016c). The referendum was technically an advisory referendum. However, politicians stated that they would adhere to the results of the referendum when the threshold of 30% would be reached. Then the referendum would be considered a valid advisory referendum. The referendum resulted in 72% of the voters opposing to the housing vision, however only 16,9% of the eligible voters casted a vote. The 30% threshold for a legitimate advice was not nearly reached (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016b).

The housing vision entails a lot of subjects and topics regarding the living environment of Rotterdam. The most highly contested subject was the number of housing which are planned to be built, renovated or demolished before 2030.

The housing vision states that 36.000 new units are needed to fulfil in the demand for housing to support affluent home-seekers in Rotterdam. This should happen at the expense of 20.000 affordable housing units. The plans formulate the demolition of 15.000 houses and the renovation and upgrade of 5.000 houses for the wealthier residents of Rotterdam. In total, this would result in a decrease in the stock of affordable housing in Rotterdam by 20.000 units (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016a).

The term gentrification was not mentioned in relation to the replacement of the cheap housing for more expensive dwellings. Although, scholars would consider this replacement one of the most 'classical' forms of gentrification (Lees et al., 2008; Slater, 2006; Davidson & Lees, 2008). Other topics such as environmentally friendly housing, child friendly neighbourhoods, the responsibility of maintenance for privately owned property and providing self-contained housing for (elderly) people were also discussed in the housing vision. These topics however are not really of interest to the initiators of the referendum, the 'actiecomité woonreferendum'. This movement is of the opinion that the other issues only distract the 'fundamental problem', which is the disappearance of 20.000 affordable houses in Rotterdam.

The group contesting this housing vision, as already mentioned above, is the so-called 'actiecomité woonreferendum'. The group consisted of a variety of members, such as tenants' associations (Actiecomité woonreferendum, 2016). This group will from now on be referred to as the anti-gentrification movement, since this is how they are represented in the media (Doucet et al., 2016). By referring to the initiators of the referendum as the 'anti-gentrification movement' I try to capture the essence of this group. Since the anti-gentrification movement does not reject the need of higher income households in Rotterdam, they only contest the way in which low-income households have to move out of the way for affluent residents.

The anti-gentrification movement has actively campaigned against the demolition of 20.000 affordable houses. While not everybody would agree that this form of campaigning is the right way of framing the reduction of housing (since only 15.000 will be demolished and 5.000 converted), it can be considered as a smart way of activating people to vote.

"Not only the demolition of Crooswijk, but also Kralingen-West, de Wielewaal, there the same happened or they currently demolishing. In the past year there have been multiple parts, Smeetsland is also one of them. A lot has been demolished in the past years and

nothing has been built back. That image sticks with people. They are going to demolish more while there is still enough space'' (RTMXL, 2016).

The image of demolition has haunted the people of Rotterdam. Large scale demolition of housing blocks has formed images which the anti-gentrification movement uses to activate people and mobilise them to vote. It therefore makes sense that the campaign against the housing vision started on a wasteland of formerly affordable housing.

Figure 2: Advertisement by the anti-gentrification. Translation: Rotterdam has to build, not demolish. Photo: John van Hamond

On this site (in figure 2) nothing was built back as a result of the financial crisis. The framing of this demolition image by the anti-gentrification movement can be considered as an incentive to motivate potential voters. Nevertheless, the campaign with the image of the large scale removal of 20.000 affordable houses as 'demolition' instead of a reduction, did not mobilise enough voters for the 30% threshold.

The 010 Debate which was held on the 26th of October between alderman Schneider and George Verhaegen of the anti-gentrification movement- can be seen as a public discursive struggle on how to deal with urban renewal and higher income households in Rotterdam. Embedded in their argumentation were the two narratives of the gentrification discourse: the pro gentrification narrative and its counter narrative.

The debate surrounding the housing referendum can be divided in two 'camps': for and against. The 010 debate can be considered a clash of opposing camps that rely on different 'facts' and 'values': respectively cognitive arguments and normative arguments. However, the main difference can be derived from the different 'truths' the groups adhere to.

The main argument for the camp in favour of the housing vision is the fact that there is a large supply of social housing and a lack of suitable housing for the wealthier people of Rotterdam. As aldermen Schneider frames it:

*"We see that the supply of the cheap housing is relatively large. When you look at the numbers you can see that the eligible households [for cheap housing] is approximately 125.000 households. The supply however is tens of thousands higher, around 165.000, 167.000 houses, while in the meantime we ascertain a large deficiency in single family homes, in semi-expensive housing which families want to move in to." (*Schneider, 2016 - 010 debate).

With this cognitive argument, the alderman tries to justify its action of replacing 20.000 houses for the benefit of more affluent residents of Rotterdam, since there is an excess of supply of affordable housing. A difference of fifty thousand in demand and supply resembles in his eyes an unreasonable distribution on the housing market as Schneider (2016 – 010 debate) states: *"Rotterdam should be a place where all kinds of groups of people can live properly, whether they have a small wallet or a larger wallet. It's about diversity in the city."*

According to this statement the affluent residents of Rotterdam just simply leave Rotterdam due to the fact that the type of housing which they seek is not available in the city. Cheap housing is therefore over-represented in Rotterdam. Meaning that the reduction of 20.000 cheap housing units will not force the lower-income groups away. In this rationale the initial cognitive argument of reducing 20.000 houses is thereby complemented with the normative argument that everyone should be able to live in Rotterdam.

The one-sidedness of housing supply is perceived as problematic, thus the lack of diverse housing in a neighbourhood which is allegedly an issue: *"It's about the monotony of the housing composition which causes problems. When people are able to make a (small) step on the 'housing ladder', they move out of the neighbourhood. Those are neighbourhoods with what we call: a 'high migration rate'. When people slightly improve their housing mobility they move out, and others move in. These are neighbourhoods with a lot of social problems […] These social problems can be resolved, among others, by a differentiation in the types of housing, so that when people are able to make a step forward, they are able*

to make that step forward in the neighbourhood, and that improves the social structure of such a neighbourhood" (Schneider, 2016 - 010 debate).

By building more houses for middle incomes, residents from within the neighbourhood are able to stay within their neighbourhood when they step onto the housing ladder. The reasoning is that the demolition of cheap housing and replacement by more affluent housing is in favour of the current residents in the neighbourhoods. Possibilities are thus created for the social climbers within a neighbourhood. The demolition of cheap housing should not displace residents since the more expensive dwellings are created for current residents. They would otherwise have to leave the neighbourhood.

The notion that affordable housing needs to be demolished in order to supply the social climbers within a predominantly monotone neighbourhood is rejected by the anti-gentrification movement:

"If children want to live near their parents, let them move just a bit further. On the grasslands of Smeetsland, Zuidwijk IJsselmonde and Feijenoord are a lot of open fields. Let them build there." (Verhaegen, 2016 - 010 debate).

This argument relates to the perception that there is enough space in Rotterdam available for affluent home seekers. This has led to the anti-gentrification movement using phrases such as 'Rotterdam has to build, not demolish'. The areas which are empty due to the financial crisis should now be used properly instead.

Although not mentioned publicly, the large amount of cheap housing units puts pressure on the budget of the municipality. As a politician puts it: *"It of course puts pressure on the budget of Rotterdam. Recently we had another survey on the number of social assistance claimants and in Rotterdam it keeps increasing"* (VVD, 2017). Rotterdam's housing stock currently consists for 56% out of affordable rental housing units (Naber, 2016). Reducing the number of cheap housing in Rotterdam would limit the government's resources being spent on social assistance.

The anti-gentrification movement doesn't acknowledge the housing numbers stated by the alderman: *"That there are too many cheap houses, that's not true. […] I rely on the numbers of the prime minister."* (Verhaegen, 2016 - 010 debate). This indicates that the two parties disagree over the surplus of affordable housing in Rotterdam.

In the eyes of the anti-gentrification movement the type of housing is not the problem: *"I furthermore don't think building [houses] will solve the problems. The problems don't arise from housing. The problems are caused by other affairs, like integration or language deficiency or poverty."* (Verhaegen, 2016 - 010 debate).

Elaborating on the view that building more expensive housing will not solve problems: *"I'm of the opinion that the alderman only focuses on the differentiation of the housing supply. However, I believe he should look into … a lot of people in Rotterdam-Zuid have payment problems."* (Verhaegen, 2016 - 010 debate).

The anti-gentrification movement does not see the need to replace affordable housing to accommodate housing for more affluent residents. There is enough free space to build on. Due to a halt of building plans during the financial crisis. The response of the alderman to this argument is that these 'wastelands' are already reserved for residential areas.

Although not explicitly mentioned, the plans surrounding the housing vision and the demolition of housing is mainly focused on Rotterdam-Zuid or the 'South'. In the South of Rotterdam the concentration of 'problems' and stock of cheap housing are the biggest (Programmabureau NPRZ, 2014; Policy-worker municipality Rotterdam, 2017).

The main problem perceived by the anti-gentrification movement is the affordability of housing in Rotterdam and the diminishing stock of social housing in the South. They argue that social housing has become more and more expensive over the years. The anti-gentrification movement - to an extent - resists the notion that there are 'bad' houses in Rotterdam. They reject the point that the demolition of 20.000 houses is needed.

"Hellevoetsluis or Afrikaanderwijk, or other [neighbourhoods], when you drive through those neighbourhoods and I don't see a tear in the wall, though. They are maybe a bit of boring housing types, but we have a lot of rent-increase measures, and I don't hear people complaining about 'jeez my home isn't designed for this day and age'. That's not a problem, they accept that. At the most they complain about black mould or a shower that leaks. Elementary things, that's what you need to solve." (Actiecomité woonreferendum, 2016).

A certain disbelief therefore exists when it comes to the need of demolishing cheap housing in order to be replaced by more expensive dwellings. This disbelief can perhaps be founded in the way the municipality has led to the demolition of (whole) neighbourhoods such as Crooswijk or Smeetsland without building back the housing that was promised.

The anti-gentrification movement shares a lot of views with the counter narrative. The main difference is the fact that the counter narrative distinguishes a need for demolition of certain bad housing, whereas the anti-gentrification movement rejects the notion that housing needs to be demolished at all, only things need to be fixed and the houses should remain affordable.

4.2 Establishing the pro gentrification narrative

The focus of urban renewal policy has shifted away from social housing towards housing for middle- and upper-income households in Rotterdam. This can be seen in several policy documents such as the 'City vision', 'Promising neighbourhoods for families', and in the most recently debated 'housing vision'. This narrative, that focuses mainly on attracting affluent households to improve the economy, will be referred to as the pro gentrification narrative.

"*We argue that Rotterdam as part of the Randstad [metropolitan area] should maintain a strategy that on the one hand focuses on the development in the knowledge based- and service economy and on the other hand should create an attractive living climate for higher educated, creative workers and the middle and high incomes. This strategy is needed to remain relevant to the international competition between urban regions. This is urgent, because we can only shortly profit from the growth of the (working) population and the related housing demand''* (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007 p.43).

From this quote, a few things can be derived. First, the emphasis is on the 'urgent' necessity that Rotterdam's development should focus on being attractive for more creative people. This resembles the 'creative class' in gentrification literature (Florida, 2002). This hunger for the creative and middle class is therefore needed to keep its competitiveness between urban areas. To hold on to this development, Rotterdam has to act quickly or miss out, is the logic within this pro gentrification narrative.

Secondly, it states that the city should focus on the knowledge and service economy. The types of people which come along with this type of economy are not the working class but the higher educated people. The local economy has lost a great number of lower-educated workplaces. This was not only observable in the case ten years ago - when the city vision was drafted - but is currently still noticeable. A policy worker in Rotterdam, mentions this 'transition':

"Well, what you see is that we have in comparison a lot of lower educated people. For the city that you want to become you need a different distribution of the labour force, than what we have. That is a transition that is happening everywhere. It's not unique to Rotterdam one. In old industrial cities you experience that transition, that's progress. We are at the moment somehow stuck. Whether that is due to the economy or due to the housing supply or the other way round, it's like the chicken and the egg story.'' (Policy worker municipality Rotterdam, 2017).

This quote presents the assumption that a shift towards a more post-industrial city requires the presence of higher educated people and thus a more developed labour force than what Rotterdam currently has.

One of the main parties advocating the pro gentrification narrative and which is involved in pursuing gentrification goals, is the current political party in power, Leefbaar Rotterdam. This party is most actively involved in shaping the pro gentrification narrative within the discourse. The party has provided the city with alderman Schneider and with the board of alderman that shape the urban (renewal) policy. Their recent housing vision embodies the pro gentrification narrative. It has the tradition of demolishing or renovating cheaper housing in Rotterdam with the aim to facilitate developments for more affluent residents.

The housing vision can be considered as the most recent articulation of the pro gentrification narrative, linking the discourse with aspired actions. As mentioned in the ambition chapter of the housing vision:

"Rotterdam experiences a wide variety of appealing living environments with a clear profile and a well-balanced stock of housing. Big concentrations of weak living environment belong to the past. The stock of Rotterdam grows and transforms, which leads to a better equilibrium between cheap, middle and high segment. Similarly, changing the socio-economic balance in favour of middle and upper income groups." (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016b p.11).

The aim is to create appealing living environments. 'Weak' neighbourhoods are something of the past, is an idea that most people would agree with. However, the goal is an equilibrium in the spread of housing segments over the different parts of the city. This means that currently there is a putative misbalance between the segments which does not favour the middle or upper income groups. The new plans will therefore facilitate the wishes of more affluent people at the expense of the lower income groups. The pro gentrification narrative implies that there is a too large number of cheap housing and of poor quality housing stock.

"In parts of Rotterdam there is often still a large concentration of houses with a low or declining value (WOZ-waarde), outdated and of poor structural and energetic quality. […] Partly due to the one-sidedness and low value of the housing supply, these neighbourhoods function as a flow-through area and these houses are known for their high migration rate. A function that involves challenges for the quality of living and working in these areas. A tóó high concentration also endangers the gap between rich and poor in the city. A more balanced distribution of low-cost housing in the city by taking in these areas is our pursuit" (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016b p.17).

The pro gentrification narrative justifies the replacement of the 'outdated' housing of the poor and provide housing with more value. The perceived segregation between the North and South can be tackled in this philosophy and urban policy. It would then create neighbourhoods with lower migration rates.

Another problem implied in his pro gentrification narrative is 'selective migration'. There are goals to prevent 'selective migration' formulated in municipal policy. Selective migration in Rotterdam, is defined as the following in the housing vision:

"Rotterdam is currently insufficiently able to hold on to higher educated residents. The people of Rotterdam pursue their education in the city and afterwards often their first job. Also from outside Rotterdam people settle due to study or work. However, when the next life phase of forming a family takes place and their jobs become more secure, too many of these (young) people leave the city. Such population dynamics doesn't necessarily have to be bad. […] As long as the inflow of this group is bigger than the outflow, the city itself will improve. But in Rotterdam the number of people with work, a good education and a middle or high income that leave is só great that the establishment and growth of promising youngsters compensate this insufficiently. The result is a negative and selective migration, which leads to an unbalanced demographic." (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007 p. 40).

What this shows is that selective migration of the more affluent residents of Rotterdam is considered 'negative'. This implies that the arrival of poor or less educated people is seen as a problem, since the city itself will only improve if relatively more educated people live in Rotterdam. One of the (current and past) problems perceived within this narrative is the phenomena of affluent people leaving Rotterdam. The pro gentrification narrative considers selective migration as one of the main problems.

In reaction to the pro gentrification narrative another narrative has emerged, the counter narrative. This counter narrative challenges certain phrasing, assumptions and claims of 'reality' set out by the pro gentrification narrative.

The counter narrative challenges mainly the demolition and conversion plans of Rotterdam that endanger the stock of affordable housing in Rotterdam. It sees the current developments and plans as a moulding of the population into a 'desirable' distribution of households by various incomes, thereby prioritizing the (future) higher educated and higher income households of Rotterdam. This counter narrative is not necessarily against the arrival of higher income households in Rotterdam. It is only against the way this happens. Besides challenging the phrasing and action of the pro gentrification narrative, the counter narrative agrees however on some points, such as the storyline of increased popularity.

4.3 The increased popularity storyline

Within the gentrification discourse a certain popularity view of the city has emerged. This view is shared in different narratives and therefore I consider this a shared storyline within the discourse of gentrification. On the municipal website it is proudly announced: "*In the recent years, Rotterdam has been positively in the spotlight with listings in the New York Times and the Rough Guide as a city that has to be seen."* (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2017b). Thereby presenting Rotterdam as an upcoming and popular city. This popularity is not only recognised by tourists and foreign media, but also by people from within the Netherlands:

"Rotterdam is of course becoming extremely popular. Where we used to see people moving out [of Rotterdam]. We now see people that actually have no affiliation with Rotterdam entering, because they perceive the city as appealing and awesome, right. Rotterdam has become a sexy city." (VVD, 2016).

This quote illustrates the belief that the trend whereby people who were starting a family and earning more tended to leave the city, has now been reversed:

"When I mention Rotterdam people say that's great, a lot of things happen there. The city is becoming more popular and you notice that when people start earning more, the do not automatically leave the city. So it is not only like we want to attract that [higher educated and a more affluent] group but also that there is a demand for it." (D66, 2016).

The perceived increased popularity of Rotterdam has led to a view that mainly the higher educated people should be attracted to the city. Since the city is mainly becoming more popular for them. Especially the pro gentrification narrative stresses that the phenomenon of residents with plans for family expansion leaving the city must be reversed. The popularity is also explained in a comparison to Amsterdam:

"Now the demand for housing is quite large. Rotterdam is popular. You could also state that Amsterdam is becoming so popular that people are now moving to Rotterdam, migrate to Rotterdam. That is also what you see. People don't feel like paying 3,5 ton for some kind of shitty apartment in Amsterdam. In Rotterdam housing is still reasonably affordable" (SP, 2017).

Figure 3: Apartment complex in a popular residential area. Photo: Otto Snoek

Although there is a shared view that Rotterdam is becoming more popular, the way in how to deal with this popularity is divided:

"When it comes to Rotterdam, we should promote it much more. I think we are not doing that enough now. If you buy an apartment in Amsterdam you pay an arm and leg for the rest of your life. You then can't make use of the city, and when you buy here, you can still go out for dinner in a starred restaurant, sort of. Simply, the difference in price is gigantic. For a lot of people it is extremely appealing, when you like a city which has the same services as Amsterdam." (D66, 2016).

Underlying the widely shared view that Rotterdam is becoming more popular, there are different views on how this should be addressed:

"I think everyone would agree that Rotterdam is becoming more popular. If you compare it with 18 years ago, then it was considered the ugly duckling among the big cities. Now everyone wants to live here, very nice. It's only a shame that you can't let the whole city benefit from this. Because what happens now is that the city centre is becoming more popular, people want to go to the city, and stay the night and want to spend money. And I find it very important that when you look at the city you also look at how the 'Rotterdammers' can benefit from it when the municipality earns money, this will be mainly from the city centre, that's where the people go to." (SP, 2017).

Within this discourse there is a strong tendency to cash in on that perceived popularity and provide possibilities for higher incomes to attract them to the city. This brings us to the next point of discussion: the perceived need of higher educated people for Rotterdam and the 'trickle-down effect' associated with this group.

4.4 The 'trickle-down effect' storyline

To take the storyline of increased popularity further, the pro gentrification narrative sees many benefits to the presence of higher educated and wealthier residents of Rotterdam. There has been an assumption that due to the popularity of Rotterdam, higher educated people should be attracted. A certain benefit is thus perceived with this group. Higher income groups and higher educated people are seen as 'saviours' of the city. A program like 'promising neighbourhoods' (Kansrijke wijken) is an example of that and can be seen as a way to merge the popularity of the city together with attracting affluent households.

The goal of the 'promising neighbourhoods' policy is to attract 10% more 'promising families', surrounding the city centre. The promising neighbourhoods are: Oude Noorden, Nieuwe Westen, Middelland, Liskwartier, Nieuw-Crooswijk, Kralingen-West, Lloydkwartier, Katendrecht and Kop van Zuid-Entrepot. The following is defined as a promising family:

- A household (including single families) with at least one child under the age of 18 years
- None of the parents receives social security benefits
- If one parent is registered as non-working job seeker at the UWV, at least has a completed HBO education
- The household lives in a rental or owned house with a WOZ-value of at least 160.000 euro

(Gemeente Rotterdam, 2015)

When looking at these criteria, it can be said that one of the goals besides attracting higher educated people is saving on social security benefits. Less affluent households - relying on government support - are not considered 'promising'. The promising neighbourhoods, benefiting from municipal investments, came to be known as 'cargo-bike neighbourhoods' (bakfietswijken).

The term 'cargo-bikes' resembles the 'type of people' that own such a bike. A newspaper article describes the owners of cargo bike as the following: *"Cargo bike mothers and – fathers have been described in stories for years, as a weird folk. They are portrayed as: supposedly very 'hip' or to be known as show offs who ride antisocially on the roads."* (Bijlster, 2012). The article mentions that you either hate them or you are one of them. It indicates the stigma of such a term as 'cargo-bike neighbourhood'.

This is also recognised by a policy maker of the municipality: "*In the previous board period we had a program called 'promising neighbourhoods'. The world laughed at us, that got launched as 'cargo-bike neighbourhoods'. Very funny, especially for the people of Amsterdam. They despise the cargo bike. But in neighbourhoods with potential for families with education and higher incomes, we have a program with the corporations that they*

create such housing. It's a bit about nice looking old buildings in 'urban neighbourhoods'. […] It is mainly focused on the city centre, the northern banks and Katendrecht.'' (Policy worker municipality Rotterdam, 2017).

An image has thus emerged of 'promising neighbourhoods'. It can be seen as a form of stimulating or facilitating gentrification:

"[Gentrification] that is the underlying term of this policy which is realised. The housing vision is a part of that. Before that it was the 'cargo-bike neighbourhoods' with extra investments in the city centre, in order to attract rich families with children. That's out-and-out gentrification.'' (SP, 2017).

The reasoning of this pro gentrification narrative is that higher educated- and wealthier people need to be attracted so that the city will improve. A certain 'trickle-down effect' is associated with these types of people.

"That's what every board of aldermen does in every city. Rotterdam is not an exception [to attracting wealthier people], that's good. People with a higher income are in general in working sectors where a whole pyramid is below, other jobs, other functions, therefore if you have those higher educated people, the rest will follow […] Because it are the people that bear the cultural industries, so they go sometimes to the theatre or to an exhibition, that kind of stuff." (Woonbron, 2017).

"We currently have a labour market in the harbor that's mostly for HBO or the higher educated. But we don't have that population. When you look at the amount of headquarters of companies in the city, which supplies a lot, a trickle-down effect it is called. Which has also been disputed. But let's state it like this. A city that is vibrant, where there is a lot to do, with many café's and bars, a lot of events and a lot of culture there's quality work. There is automatically also a large demand for lower educated work. That's actually the biggest challenge for the city, housing is only a derivative'' (D66, 2016).

As can be concluded from these quotes, the pro gentrification narrative believes that there is a certain trickle-down effect from the higher incomes in the city. This belief in the trickle-down effect of the higher educated has led to the perception that these types of people contribute more to Rotterdam than 'others'. The term 'strong shoulders' (sterke schouders), introduced by Leefbaar Rotterdam, can be seen as a metaphor that summarizes the ideology that higher educated people provide more for the city than others. As Schneider mentions in an interview:

"Every city needs strong shoulders. Enough purchasing power is a prerequisite for the creation of varied activities and facilities." (Van Kesteren, 2015).

In this view the 'strong shoulders' have enough purchasing power that can be spent in Rotterdam. Educated and wealthy people are therefore considered the driving forces of a city that is moving towards economic growth. Those 'promising families' also are considered strong shoulders; they are a highly educated group with a favourable economic position.

4.5 The 'Strong Shoulders' metaphor

The term 'strong shoulders' is often mentioned when talked about attracting or retaining wealthy residents of Rotterdam. It can be considered a metaphor in this discourse of gentrification. The term has been considered to be introduced by alderman Schneider and is used to convey ideas on what the composition of residents should look like in the future. However, not every narrative agrees on the underlying definition that higher income households and educated people are the only 'strong shoulders'. By focussing on the higher educated people in this metaphor, there is a certain disregard for the lower educated and less wealthy inhabitants of Rotterdam.

As a person in the crowd of the 010-debate mentions: *"The most important argument is that Rotterdam is already balanced. The alderman already said the education level is already higher than average. Why does that have to be even higher? Balanced, too few strong shoulders are allegedly in Rotterdam, why does that mean higher educated are needed? I myself am also highly educated. I find it really pleasant that I'm welcome, but what I dislike is that I'm very welcome in the city, whereas people with a low education or income are less welcome or not even welcome. Like those [people] can't be 'strong shoulders': as if they aren't relevant to our city."* (Schneider & Verhaegen, 2016 – 010 debate).

This phrase captures the critique by challenging the definition and thus the 'power in ideas' this metaphor tried to have. So what does phrase 'strong shoulders' actually mean? Looking at the composition of the two words, the framing refers to strong shoulders as those carrying the weight of society. By this logic, the less affluent people can be seen as the 'weak shoulders' of society, which are needed to be carried by the 'strong' ones. Thereby, this logic is implying that a normal or healthy city can only exist when the strong shoulders carry the weak. The term strongly indicates an economic position certain groups have, delimiting the other interpretations of what strong can be:

"The alderman talks about 'strong shoulders' which he wants to lure to Rotterdam. He deprives the Rotterdammers that already live here […] Well look, what are strong shoulders? When it comes to having a fat wallet, if he means that, then I kind of get him. But then it's only about money. As soon as he talks about strong shoulders I recommend him to especially look at the harbor worker and the migrant groups which came to live here

in the 60's and 70's and have contributed to the reconstruction of Rotterdam after the Second World War." (NIDA, 2016).

This view is that strong shoulders should not just be limited to the economic prosperities some groups have. Other people, who have contributed to society in other than monetary terms, should not be forgotten:

"I personally believe from our party-vision, looking at strong shoulders from only the income perspective is total bullshit, when you look at neighbourhoods where a lot of high incomes live and you look at the social cohesion in such a neighbourhood, it's pretty low, how does that come about? Everyone sits behind their fence, parks their car in the parking-garage and goes to their penthouse. You don't see them anymore. While in neighbourhoods with lower incomes, there are a lot of people willing to organise things to improve their neighbourhood. And those are people with a low income sometimes with a low education or high one. These people contribute more to society than someone that coincidentally has a high income. When you mean that strong shoulders are the people that the municipality receives money from, then that's correct. But I assumed that it wasn't meant in this matter." (SP, 2017).

Again this quote shows that the 'strong shoulders' is predominantly looked at through an economic lens. The view of the counter narrative is that strong shoulders should not be limited in the economic sense. Instead we should be focused on who contributes to society. A certain perception has risen in which lower income households have become irrelevant to the city and are regarded as a priority:

"When you are a family with a low income you aren't relevant anymore if you are just higher educated while not having a high income you aren't relevant either. You are only relevant when you have a family in a more expensive house with a reasonable income. Thereby stating, you don't earn enough you aren't relevant, but you are relevant. They try to house them in the city centre that becomes more popular. There they try to attract people with more income to the neighbourhoods that were already attractive. I find it idiotic because I think, there are neighbourhoods that need that money much more. Because there the state of roads, sidewalks and playgrounds are way worse than in those neighbourhoods. Go invest there first. Why does that have to happen in neighbourhoods that are already appealing." (SP, 2017).

The quantification and determination of attracting and maintaining those affluent families is not always perceived well: *"What I found annoying is that in the housing vision it is stated like, yeah families are leaving the city and higher educated people are leaving the city, and I'm like A higher educated has become more diverse, fortunately enough. And B*

'families' I find useless, because a family is so much different than that it was twenty years ago. A family is no longer only a mother and a farther with two children" (Havensteder, 2017).

This statement implies that a certain conventional aspect is associated with higher educated residents with families, that they are high income earners and that they have a certain composition. But this might not be the case anymore, since society has changed.

4.6 The metaphor of 'balance'

One of the metaphors most talked about - leading up to the referendum - was balance. When is a city or neighbourhood balanced, and when is it not? Many different thoughts exist on the term 'balance'. The pro gentrification narrative within the gentrification discourse regards that balanced neighbourhoods are only necessary in 'problematic neighbourhoods'. As the alderman puts it:

"You need to provide a place for these people [the affluent people that left Rotterdam], a place in the city, that's really good. For certain neighbourhoods, where those people came from. If you create that type of housing in that neighbourhood then that is good for the neighbourhood, that way you keep those people in the city. Then you have a balanced, healthy and pleasant city where everyone can live pleasantly." (Schneider, 2016 - 010 debate).

A balanced neighbourhood is therefor considered to be one where affluent people live. By providing the preferred housing types for this group the assumption is that these people will remain in or come back to Rotterdam. In a way, the demolition of housing is meant to benefit the people of the neighbourhood, justifying the demolition and conversion of housing while in the meantime creating an 'equilibrium'.

"As I mentioned this is a city for everyone, but if I convey like I said before, the housing for families that's four times as much demand as the supply. Is the [current] supply then balanced? I don't call that balanced. […] Because we have too much of cheap supply and the stock that people que for is too meagre. Yes, then we have to adjust that, that's balance I think." (Schneider, 2016 - 010 debate).

The outspoken intent of the pro gentrification narrative is not to chase away the low income groups but to provide possibilities for everyone. The normative argument can therefore be seen as providing a more 'balanced' Rotterdam for the future:

"*Rotterdam in 2025 is thus a city where on the neighbourhood level you experience balance. Where there is an appealing residence for everyone in Rotterdam, whether you have an empty wallet or a well filled wallet. It is a city where you are raised in Rotterdam,*

*you finish school, and where you have your first job you can find a house. And later on, when you raise a family you, can find a single family home. Everyone has a place in Rotterdam, Everyone.'' (*Schneider, 2016 - debate 010).

However the balanced neighbourhoods which are currently envisioned by the alderman are not everyone's perception of what balance means:

*"Balance is what it is about. This is what the alderman refers to, which is gone in - in his own words - in the city. We agree with that only the other way round. You see a high concentration of bad housing in particular neighbourhoods, that is a fact. The alderman wants to replace them with middle and expensive housing at the expense of cheap and affordable housing. Let's call it that. On the other hand in neighbourhoods such as Hillegersberg or areas in Kralingen the opposite occurs. Because what they actually say is that they don't want social housing in those neighbourhoods, because the value of the villas will decrease. Which is understandable. But it doesn't resemble the story that we want to provide 'balanced neighbourhoods'. If that's what you only want to achieve in certain neighbourhoods, say so too.'' (*NIDA, 2016).

The recognition that balancing neighbourhoods only happens in less affluent areas of Rotterdam, such as the South, is recognised by this counter narrative. In this philosophy, a balanced neighbourhood is only needed in neighbourhoods where the housing typology does not provide the right circumstances for wealthier people to move in.

It is the view of people adopting the counter narrative that the term 'balanced' is used for covering up the fact that residents are being displaced. The spoken language does not coincide with the actions of reducing the affordable housing stock significantly:

"The housing vision is currently impossible to realize, in the way they envision it. You have to look at differently when you want to reject or move the low-income households out of the city. That is the vision. […] Now you can state a 'balanced' city, a fancy word right, because that is what you are allowed to say.'' (Actiecomité woonreferendum, 2016).

The contradiction that can be found within the reasoning of the alderman is the fact that he wants a Rotterdam for everyone, with high income and low income earners to be able to live, whereas the actions and programs - to an extent - limit the possibilities for lower income groups to settle in Rotterdam. By just simply using the word 'balance' it seems to 'justify' the replacement of affordable housing. The word balance has therefore become a loaded term, to be used with caution:

"Watch out, 'balance' has a bit of a negative connotation […] but that doesn't take away the fact that in some neighbourhoods you have a high concentration of cheap housing, and a high concentration in people from foreign descent. You can ask yourself, is that bad? We don't think that's bad. That's a deliberate decision. In some neighbourhoods we believe that a high supply of affordable housing is more needed than other. That however doesn't mean that in some neighbourhoods no social housing should exist. That's improper. We think that the distribution is very important." (Woonbron, 2017).

The ambiguity of the term 'balance' can best be summarized as the following: *"I think, the fact that you strive towards diversity is not bad. But when this occurs only one way round and use it to decrease the supply [of affordable housing] than that's not good."* (SP, 2017).

A 'balanced' neighbourhood however does not necessarily mean a neighbourhood with strong social cohesion is the perception of the counter narrative. The contact between different income groups or mixed neighbourhoods is described as the following:

"I assume that they won't have contact with each other, even though they live close to each other. This is what we have seen in the history of the Netherlands. Also, in mixed neighbourhoods there is little interaction between educated and different income groups. […] The different income and educated groups actually live separate lives, even though they live close to each other. […] That's what we saw the last forty years. In the Oude Westen, a neighbourhood Turkish migrant workers came to live in the seventies, of course there was contact between people. But you also see a selection, because a housing block or neighbourhood is structured along the lines of income. I think people like to live in a mixed neighbourhood, especially in big cities. However you see an 'automatic settling' of certain educated categories. You shouldn't have the grand ideals that a mixed neighbourhood automatically means integration, that is a myth." (Vestia, 2017).

What this indicates is that people like to live in 'mixed' neighbourhoods even though the interaction between different groups is limited. There is however a potential upside perceived by the counter narrative. The assumption is that proper structuring of different housing types could potentially lead to interaction between groups with different income. The way in which these groups interact can then be stimulated by structured town planning.

"You have contact with neighbours when you are open to it. Therefore I think it is important to not only have high and low [incomes], but also to try and have a step in between it. That you have middle-high, but also middle-low and also low income groups together. I think that is important. Then you get that exchange." (Havensteder, 2017).

"When you - by figure of speech - have social housing next to a higher segmented area there is a chance that social cohesion will form. This is more likely than when you place

just a villa worth half a million euro next to it. […] It really depends on how you design it. But I think that how it's often done now, with just adding expensive housing, little interaction evolves. There has been research in the north-east of Rotterdam. The new families - with money - that came to live there still didn't put their kids on the local primary school. They all went to Blijdorp to put their kids on a 'white school'. That's a shame of course." (SP, 2017).

However the perception is not always that the new families send their children to 'white schools':

"*We have a new neighbourhood in Kralingen. It's a bit of retro, some architects go wild for that building style. Coincidentally, I know some people that live there and I ask them whether they ever use the front door. Because they all enter through a fence, via their back door. And then you have a parking lot where the children play. Next to it is a playground, those children don't use. […] there have been reports that gentrification isn't good for social cohesion, as was thought in the past. What however does happen is that the school close by which was a 'black school' like you call that, where the parents are of Turkish and Moroccan descent, and parents moving into the neighbourhood turned it into a mixed school. However, the new residents still seclude themselves. […] When this happens with just single houses instead of enclaves in working-class neighbourhoods it makes a difference.*" (PvdA, 2017).

Mixed views on social cohesion exist within the discourse of gentrification. The counter narrative is more critical towards simply adding higher-end households to working class neighbourhoods. Balance and social cohesion is thereby hard to realize, as is assumed within this counter narrative. Large scale demolition activities with an aim to create 'balanced' neighbourhoods are not favoured by the counter narrative, since the current forms of redevelopment limits the degree to which social cohesion takes place.

4.7 Storylines on Displacement

The degree to which the narratives acknowledge displacement differs within the gentrification discourse. The pro gentrification narrative believes that the presence of social housing limits displacement and rejects the idea that current households living in Rotterdam are displaced. The presence of the housing corporations with their social housing protects (poor) people from being displaced:

"*You don't have to leave the city of Rotterdam. But the big quality improvement that is occurring, if you are not pleased with it, you can chose to leave the city. But no one has to leave the city because they don't have enough money."* (Policy worker municipality Rotterdam, 2017).

"*That's what we [the housing corporations] are for. It's not like America where you are forced to leave your house. Our legal system is designed differently, in a way so that doesn't happen. Imagine if this would be an American situation, then everyone would have been displaced out of the city. But that's not how our system works.*" (Woonstad, 2017).

In the mentioned system it is possible that people with low income stay in the city. Individuals that have to move, within the city due to demolition, isn't seen as displacement by the pro-gentrification narrative. They can still live in neighbouring areas or even in the same neighbourhood:

"What you see is that when it's purely about demolition, and that is organised by the corporations, they get an 'urgency' status. This also happened in Crooswijk. Those people get the possibility to remain in the neighbourhood. People get an improved house, with a lower energy-label. […] Those people that left Crooswijk, partially came to live outside of Crooswijk, they got an 'urgency status'. That is properly organised by corporations and eventually they are excellently placed in housing, in Rotterdam'' (Schneider, 2016 - 010 debate).

This might seem a contradiction at first: people who are 'forced' out of their dwellings still have a place in their neighbourhood, even though the dwellings have been demolished to attract more affluent residents. A portion of the social housing is sometimes rebuilt. The belief is that this portion 'covers' the displaced residents since there is already a *'natural progression'* (Schneider, 2016 - 010, debate). As people leave the neighbourhood before the renovation process starts. Furthermore, the view is that residents that have to move out of their neighbourhood but are able to stay in Rotterdam is not seen as displacement.

The counter-narrative looks at the rehousing of residents differently. It acknowledges that individuals are rehoused throughout the city, but this is limited:

"A very small portion, really a hand full of people stayed in the same neighbourhood. They stayed in the neighbourhood but got a more expensive dwelling or one that accidentally remained and became available." (SP, 2017).

However the view within this counter-narrative is that it is inhuman, in the meantime making the waiting lists longer because of the high amount of demolition taking place in Rotterdam. The 'urgency status' these displaced inhabitants get has a downside, because they are making the waiting-list longer:

"The pe*ople whose houses' got demolished can often stay in Rotterdam, but probably not in their own neighbourhood, but in the city. The young people that for the first time sign up for social housing when they are 18 can't get a dwelling the next 10 years. Then I still think you are displacing inhabitants of Rotterdam. You force them to search for housing somewhere else. Unless they find a job and can afford to buy a house."* (SP, 2017).

The pro gentrification narrative only sees leaving the city as displacement. Whereas the competing counter-narrative sees displacement also occurring within the city, a neighbourhood. Displacement can then even happen multiple times:

"People themselves have experienced it. I have spoken to people in the city and they had to move twice. They came from somewhere and were placed somewhere different in a neighbourhood, then their house got demolished. They had to leave again. Over time I can imagine that you get the feeling you aren't welcome. Like if we feel like moving you, we move you. You can't imagine that happening, that someone decides for you where you can live. I can't imagine that. […] Look, even if it would be appealing for people from outside [Rotterdam].Then you still have a group of people that can't live there and have to go somewhere else." (SP, 2017).

The increasing popularity and gentrification of Rotterdam causes various ways of displacement. The whole gentrification discourse sees the appeal of a more attractive city, but a fraction of the discourse acknowledges the extent of displacement of lower-income households. The dominant narrative hardly acknowledges the degree to which displacement occurs or even rejects it. In their eyes the city will always remain accessible for the poor, thanks to the presence of housing corporations. The perception is that the pro gentrification narrative is used to shape the city to achieve a 'desirable' population distribution in the city.

"Look, the formal goal is to make the city accessible for everyone. But we sometimes get the impression that it [demolition] is used as a tool to force a large group of low income people out of these areas. [...] it's like the idea behind the housing vision, that a high

concentration of low-income groups have to leave the city and find a place outside of the city. But that's hard to prove. It however seems to be an additional goal." (Vestia, 2017).

From this statement it can be concluded that the population of Rotterdam is something tangible, that can be 'moulded' and shaped into the desired distribution of household types. The pro gentrification discourse is not only used for creating 'balanced' neighbourhoods. Other motives, as mentioned in the quote above, are behind the current policy implementations.

The problems associated with low-income households then become the problems of other municipalities. It is not a method to resolve problems but more a way of moving problems to neighbouring municipalities. As is stated below: "*The tactic is actually to expel the problems out of the city. Whether that is better for the people involved is irrelevant. They then become the problem of Schiedam, Capelle or Spijkenisse. In my opinion that is not solving the problem."* (SP, 2017).

"The demolition of housing happens more, out of fear that the people from Rotterdam - with a low income - will move out of Rotterdam to municipalities like Spijkenisse, Schiedam or Vlaardingen. So they are also starting with demolitions. There they have to move to as well. Where do they then have to stay the North Sea?" (NIDA, 2016).

What these two quotes show is a view in which not only people are displaced out of Rotterdam but also that the problems which are associated with low-income households are exported to neighbouring towns. Views also exist that a continued strategy of gentrification and displacement will lead to an exclusive city:

"There are more things relevant than money. Now I probably sound like a hippie. […] Look at society now. In ten years it will be nice that the municipality of Rotterdam has earned all kinds of money, but if you then only have a city which is white and rich, nobody will be happy. Except the white and rich people perhaps". (Havensteder, 2017).

5. Institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative

There are different ways in which the pro gentrification narrative has institutionalised in the urban policy of Rotterdam. Institutionalisation has occurred in municipal policy, the policy of housing corporations, programs such as 'ZOHO' and in the housing referendum. These are particularly illustrative because they show the extent to which the gentrification discourse plays a role and becomes accepted in urban policy and programs. The reason that institutionalisation of this pro gentrification narrative has occurred instead of the counter narrative, can be derived from the notion that the current political parties - represented in the board of aldermen - share the views of this narrative.

5.1 Institutionalisation in municipal policy

As mentioned, institutionalisation occurs in many shapes and forms. The previous analysis chapter showed that the pro gentrification narrative played a role in policy documents such as 'the housing vision' and 'promising neighbourhoods'. Policy programs which are more subtle in the institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative are the Rotterdam-law and National Program Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ). The Rotterdam-law focusses on preventing low income groups from outside of Rotterdam entering certain areas in the city.

The Rotterdam law is applicable for certain housing in a particular neighbourhood or street. If a person wants to apply for this type of (social) housing the person has to prove that he or she earns an income generated from a job or you have to have lived six uninterrupted years in Rotterdam. (Uitermark et al., 2017; Woonnet Rijnmond, n.d.; RTV Rijnmond, 2008). Otherwise you are unable to live in these specifically appointed dwellings. This law implies that people without an income out of work are considered problematic. The effectiveness of this law has however been debated. For a detailed description see Ouwehand & Doff (2016). The aim of a discourse analyst is not to debate whether or not the Rotterdam law is good or not. The Rotterdam law can be interpreted as a discursive object of the dominant pro gentrification narrative, one which housing corporations have to use for the specifically dedicated areas.

Another way in which the pro gentrification narrative has become institutionalised is via the National Program Rotterdam Zuid. The NPRZ is one of the biggest urban renewal projects in Rotterdam. This urban renewal policy has the intention to improve the quality of life in the South of Rotterdam (Programmabureau NPRZ, 2014). The program is based on three pillars: work, school and housing. Since this thesis focusses on the urban renewal and the gentrification discourse of Rotterdam, it has mainly looked at the housing and spatial aspects of this plan. Although some - like the alderman - will argue that *"the three pillars can't be seen separate from each other […] and are equally important"* (Schneider, 2016 - 010 debate). It is also argued that the problems are considered very versatile:

"It is also a labour problem related to labour supply and a liveability problem. It is for a reason that there is a national program, the problem is much bigger than just the housing supply. If that would be the only problem the city would have made sure that the proper types of housing would be built there. But it's not that simple." (Woonstad, 2017).

The housing aspects of the NPRZ are however focussed on attracting higher income earners and making the neighbourhood attractive for them. The notion that higher income groups resolve problems, has thus been institutionalised. For example, it is mentioned in the NPRZ that there is an ambition to make the South more attractive for higher income groups:

"The neighbourhoods are currently seen, mainly by the social climbers and middle incomes experienced as monotone, poor and dull. There is a demand for a bigger difference between lively and tranquil areas and a critical mass of the supply of housing and facilities for people with middle or high income find appealing. […] By for example adding housing for middle and higher incomes at the expense of the cheap housing supply." (Programmabureau NPRZ, 2014 p. 9).

"Living on in South becomes furthermore appealing for middle and higher incomes when there is a limited travel time for a lot of jobs are in the vicinity." (Programmabureau NPRZ, 2014 p.19).

What these two statements show is that when improving the South of Rotterdam, one has to consider how to attract the middle and high income households, while looking at the preferences of these affluent households. Because the presence of this group will have a positive effect on the low income households and neighbourhood in its entirety. 'At the expense of' indicates that affordable housing has to be replaced by more expensive dwellings. It cannot be a process in which housing types are created for both affluent and less affluent residents. The middle and high income households are seen as a part of the solution, by replacing residents in problematic neighbourhoods. For the South, this revolves around preventing segregation and stimulating the economy. Thereby, the South should become appealing for its new targeted audience.

5.2 Housing corporations & institutionalisation: Performance agreements

A way in which housing corporations and the municipality of Rotterdam structure their cooperative practice is via performance agreements. Since the new national 'Housing-law' of 2015 the relation between housing corporations and the municipality has changed. The main focus of housing corporations should now be on the production, renting out and sale of social housing (Ouwehand & Rohde, 2015). Besides a changed role for the housing corporations, a change has emerged in formal collaboration between housing corporations and local governments as well (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016d). Nowadays, performance

agreements are negotiated between the municipality and housing corporations. In these deals the activities of the housing corporations are settled for the upcoming year.

These performance agreements change the way in which housing corporations work with the municipality. Instead of working side by side, as was formerly the practice, the perception now is that housing corporations serve the wishes of the municipality:

"*It is a pity that the central government somehow made the performance agreements enforceable. The choices the housing corporations made weren't always that pleasant. But I believe that cooperation is the better solution, rather than a disguised municipal department. I however put it quite black-and-white."* (D66, 2016).

This quotation shows the perception that the power balance has shifted. Instead of the housing corporations and municipality being considered as equal partners in the (re)development of the city, the housing corporations have become an organisation catering to the wishes of the municipality. The role a housing vision can have in performance agreements should also not be overlooked:

"The housing visions are there for a long time period and you see that when policy is made, when it entails a zoning area or a plan or agreements with the housing corporations, every time the housing vision returns as the framework'' (SP, 2017).

This implies that the housing vision and the pro gentrification narrative become institutionalised over time, since the housing vision - which is embedded with the pro gentrification narrative - structures developments. These performance agreements lead to housing corporations retaining the 'young' higher educated residents of Rotterdam.

"It is not like the whole vision of the corporation is to maintain 'young potentials' in the city. What we saw in the past is that people that studied here left after a while and that is what we want to change. But that's for that targeted audience. For other audiences we have other visions, that people with a small wallet have a place in the city'' (Woonstad, 2017).

What this shows is that the pro gentrification narrative has been institutionalised in the speech of housing corporations. Even the term '*small wallet'* which is frequently used by alderman Schneider, is used in the story of housing corporations' representatives. The language used by Schneider has been copied. It can therefore be stated that the pro gentrification narrative has been institutionalised in housing corporations' policies.

5.3 ZOHO - Zomerhofkwartier

Another example of how the pro gentrification discourse has been institutionalised is via the plans for 'ZOHO'. That is a brand name attached to the Zomerhofkwartier. ZOHO is a central area in the city with a lot of office space, which was intended to be replaced by a residential area. After the crisis these plans were abolished and the function has changed. The area is now known for creative entrepreneurs and businesses (Mensink, 2015). The municipality, together with a housing corporation, is currently redeveloping the area. The branding of the area implies it can be associated with SOHO in New York, which is known for its creative people and early gentrification in Manhattan. As a representative of a housing corporation mentions:

"I think a graphic designer is more attracted to the name ZOHO than a garbage man. […] ZOHO is a super awesome name when you want to refer it to SOHO in America and London. But when you walk around in it– and that's maybe the coolest thing about it- it looks awful, so you can't really compare it yet with SOHO'' (Havensteder, 2017).

What the 'yet' implies is the fact that ZOHO can be considered a gentrifying area which has not fully been gentrified, although it could have the potential to gentrify like the SOHO's abroad. The intention of stimulating the creative sector and wealthier residents in this area is however still present: *"The municipality sees a lot of potential in this area. And I really want that nice things to happen here that are really in line with (pause) the housing vision''* (Havensteder, 2017).

This pause indicates the displeasure of the housing vision, but not necessarily an aversion to gentrify this area, which is a five minute walk from the central station. This shows that disagreeing on the housing vision does not necessarily mean disagreeing on the narrative behind the housing vision. It can therefore still be stated that the pro gentrification narrative has been institutionalised within the housing corporations: *"I don't think that all housing corporations are like 'yeah only gentrification'. But on the other hand when a neighbourhood experiences gentrification the land becomes more valuable. They say it becomes more social. But that mainly has to do with the fact that another type of residents are arriving there, and that the other groups actually have to leave. From a value perspective it is positive, when looking at it economically."* (Havensteder, 2017).

This statement shows that the pro gentrification narrative is considered to be institutionalised in housing corporations since the value of the gentrification is acknowledged from an economical perspective and it is used in their policies and programs.

"I would say that for certain neighbourhoods, people with a high income could be interesting. A neighbourhood –in general- doesn't become worse. The question only

remains that the original residents don't get displaced. On the other hand you could state that if you don't have so much to spend, why should you have to live in the most attractive neighbourhoods of the city. Apparently they are worth more and have a higher price tag. It is only sour if people that already live there are displaced by other income groups –which is the case with gentrification- in general I would state that it's a fine development'' (Vestia, 2017).

This means the value of gentrification has become accepted and institutionalised, in the sense that corporations might not fully agree with a gentrified neighbourhood, but they acknowledge the benefits the gentrification process can bring to a neighbourhood. They are therefore willing to aid in the process. What can be derived from the two quotes above is that despite the fact that the pro gentrification narrative has been institutionalised, concerns still remain on the presence of displacement. The dilemma can be formulated as follows:

"The only thing that is a pity is that either you get a gentrification and it becomes really white and really rich, or it doesn't happen and it becomes impoverished. It would be nice if there could be a way in which neither the extreme is reached. […] Only I think that when you look now at the housing policy of such a city as Rotterdam. If this continues it will occur like in Amsterdam. That's not what I want." (Havensteder, 2017).

The institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative does not mean that a gentrified neighbourhood is seen as a way of resolving all issues associated with problematic areas. The main task of the housing corporations seems to remain focussed on the less fortunate and less affluent residents of Rotterdam.

"Those [less affluent] people have to stay somewhere. You can't gentrify every neighbourhood. Then you only have neighbourhoods with middle- and high income households. The good thing about the Netherlands is that housing corporations guard that. Also, in Rotterdam they take care of an X amount of supply for a social target group. I see that as our task." (Woonstad, 2017).

The reasoning is that while parts of the pro gentrification narrative has been institutionalised in the practice and policy of housing corporations, their main focus still rests on individuals in need of social housing.

5.4 The Housing vision Referendum

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, there has been a lot of debate about the referendum question. In short, the parties opposing the housing vision requested a different referendum, a more specific question. Whereas the parties in favor of the vision felt that a referendum question should relate to the whole policy document. The referendum and the formulation of the question will therefore be put into an institutional context. The anti-gentrification movement indicates not being an expert in requesting the referendum and describes the process as following:

"We never made use of a referendum before. Therefore we went to the council and had a discussion with civil servants. Then we asked: is this question [Are you for or against the reduction of 20.000 cheap housing?] a legitimate question for an ordinance? Right, we did everything exactly like should in the municipal democracy, right. When we didn't have the required expertise we turned for help to the authority." (Actiecomité woonreferendum, 2016).

This statement indicates that the question, which was requested, in the referendum was considered a valid and legitimate question and that the requesters of the referendum were unfamiliar with the institutional processes. The requested question however was not the final referendum question. The city council still had to decide on a definite referendum question. A slight majority resulted in the final referendum question: are you for or against the housing vision? (Naber, 2016; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016c). This takes away the emphasis on the reduction of cheap housing units which was planned. This can be seen as 'power over ideas', where the board of aldermen blocked an alternative idea from entering the debate. The reduction of 20.000 units became not the 'official' focus of referendum. The following statements show the perceived effect of a changed referendum question:

"The opponents who gathered those signatures, they were really against the demolition of 20.000 houses. The reduction actually, since a part will be transformed. The question has been reduced to almost nothing, by just simply asking are you for or against the housing vision. Yeah, then it becomes really broad, in which I don't even know if I should vote for or against." (RTMXL, 2016).

The way in which the final question was legitimized is the following: *"We as municipal council have to make a decision on the housing vision. The people have to advise us on that, the deliberation political parties have to make is how much do they weigh the outcome of the referendum, to be against or for the housing vision. And that is precisely the weighing we have to do. It is therefore really illogical to ask are you for or against the demolition of 20.000 houses, since this is not the question we have to answer."* (D66, 2016).

The logic of this argument was also the fact that once a referendum was requested for the reduction of 20.000 houses another referendum could have been requested for another part of the housing vision:

"You can't say we agree with this, but disagree with that. And then you get another person who says: yes I agree with the 20.000 housing units, but not the residential typologies. Or I don't want housing with gardens in Rotterdam. So what you get is another referendum about a referendum and then you only get confused." (D66, 2016).

These statements show that once you have a question entailing only a part of the policy, it opens up opportunities for other referenda to be organised. They slow the decision making process and is therefore viewed as unnecessary. The anti-gentrification movement and (political) parties used the same kind of logic of arguing for the requested question as these two statements show:

"*When the question is: are you for or against the reduction of 20.000 cheap housing units you have a concrete question, which you can be for or against. If you then reach the 30% threshold and a majority is formed, then there it is a clear voice of that, oke, and things have to change in the housing vision. If now a majority rejects the housing vision the alderman can still interpret it as he wants. Apparently they are against it, then we will adjust this. And that and we we still have done our job."* (RTMXL, 2016).

"*What happens when people vote no on the housing vision […] is that against everything, is that against a portion? I think you really need to structure a referendum on something to which you can say yes or no: for or against."* (VVD, 2016).

One could state that the institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative has led to a dominance over the formulation of the wording in the referendum question. It has become acceptable for political parties to disregard the requested referendum question. Doing so, they limited attention for the most controversial issue of the housing vision: the demolition and conversion of affordable housing.

The vagueness of the question has paved the way for the current political parties to enforce their ideas and use the pro gentrification narrative to accomplish this. It is the power of reframing the topic and re-shaping the debate, because against what are people voting? Is it the reduction of affordable housing or is it also against making houses more sustainable? The knowledge required to fully understand the referendum question is beyond the scope of the average resident. These problems arise with such a 'vague' question in which forming an opinion can be considered difficult. This dilemma is also recognised by a local political party:

"As I mentioned there are also good things mentioned in the housing vision, like making houses more sustainable and that kind of stuff. Or balance - although I don't agree with the terminology that is used - but like housing mobility which is perceived, those are good developments and a densification of the city which we are for. Only you notice that the demolition of 20.000 houses, social houses can't be seen separate from the other. It is a dilemma they want to force on people." (NIDA, 2016).

The way the alderman in cooperation with his coalition partners has steered the debate can be seen as 'power over ideas' since it limits the promotion of other ideas. Through the formulation of the referendum question the referendum was not about the demolition and conversion of housing but the whole housing vision. This makes the referendum officially not about the reduction of affordable housing. This impacts the quality of the debate. As a policy worker from the municipality notices:

"The discussion was about the wrong question […] but the most important [subject] is not the demolition, but what you build back. That's what the discussion had to be about. We don't demolish houses to change the composition. We demolish houses that are bad [of quality]. To replace them with proper housing. It is a choice you make: social or expensive [housing], that's what the debate had to be about. And not about whether to demolish or not." (Policy worker municipality Rotterdam, 2017).

For this policy worker the formulation of the referendum question steered the debate in the wrong direction. The vagueness of the question did not specify clearly enough what housing types should return.

The anti-gentrification movement the referendum has actively campaigned that 20.000 cheap houses were going to be demolished, instead of 15.000 houses and has highlighted the conversion of 5.000 houses for more affluent residents. This framing of the demolition can be seen as a tactical reaction on the 'failed' referendum question, hoping to activate people to come and vote.

Figure 4: Advertisement by the anti-gentrification movement. Translation: Build, don't demolish, vote the 30th of November against the housing vision, stop the demolition of 20.000 affordable housing.

It is not a misunderstanding of the housing vision, since all parties who spoke about the demolition of 20.000 houses were - after questioning - able to make the distinction between demolition and conversion. For this reason, I would argue that people have a certain image of demolition, as something permanent and drastic whereas the reduction of 20.000 houses – which can be considered more factually correct- lacks the necessary passion and historical load to motivate people to vote.

The referendum can be seen as an attempt for the counter narrative to strive for legitimacy and dominance. However, the institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative and the discursive abilities of actors advocating the pro gentrification narrative limited the way in which opposing topics could effectively be contested. The way in which the referendum question was eventually formulated impacted the quality of the public debate.

6. Discussion

In my theoretical framework I presented the concepts of discourse, discursive institutionalism and power as theoretical lenses in order to understand gentrification and urban renewal policy in Rotterdam. I thereby focussed on three concepts that make up a discourse: narratives, storylines and metaphors. My analysis of the discourse of gentrification helps understand how the gentrification dimension of urban renewal is viewed differently by different actors.

First I discuss my findings relating to the gentrification discourse and how these findings relate to the claims made by Doucet et al. (2011), who studied the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam. They argued that the city's housing discourse was strongly focussed on attracting middle-class households (Doucet et al., 2011). I will therefore compare the findings of Doucet et al. (2011) and elaborate on the distinct narratives I derived, adding to the understanding of urban planning practices and the discourse behind it. Also, a more general comparison will be made between the findings in this research and planning literature on gentrification.

My analysis showed that the perception of displacement encountered throughout my research differs from the already established displacement theory. In the present chapter I will therefore pay ample attention to this discovery. To add to this, the way in which displacement is acknowledged within the discourse of gentrification will be discussed. There have been several ways in which displacement is conceptualised. Marcuse (1985) derives four types of displacement. Contributing to the existing literature on displacement (e.g. Atkinson, 2003; Marcuse, 1985; Slater, 2006; Lees et al., 2008; Freeman, 2005; Slater, 2011), my study suggests that there are more different ways in which displacement can be experienced. Further planning research should be conducted in order to understand the dynamics of displacement.

6.1 An evolving discourse of gentrification

In studying gentrification and discourse in Rotterdam, Doucet et al. (2011) mentioned a focus on high income households and a perceived scarcity of middle-class households. This is also what I discovered when studying the gentrification discourse in Rotterdam.

Retaining and attracting affluent households has been a strong part of the gentrification discourse and in particular the dominant pro gentrification narrative. The belief within the pro gentrification narrative is that higher income households benefit the city's environment. This has led to the institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative in public policy. The trickle-down effect which is associated with the presence of middle- and high- income groups is the main reasoning why high income households should be retained to Rotterdam. In the pro gentrification narrative, the presence of this affluent group alone is

viewed as capable of providing a remedy for the economic and social problems that are associated with problematic neighbourhoods.

Doucet et al. (2011) mentioned that the municipality of Rotterdam was not 'shy' of using the word gentrification. It is not considered a 'dirty word' by Doucet et al. (2011). This phrase - that originated from Smith (1996) - is often used for summarizing a 'hidden' value that is given to the word gentrification (Smith, 1996; Smith, 2002). Smith's reasoning is that policy makers might explicitly not use the term gentrification since it is often associated with negative effects, and thus constitutes as a 'dirty word'. In the city vision (2007) for example the term was used 31 times. The claim that Doucet et al. (2011) made for not considering gentrification a 'dirty word' in the context of Rotterdam can therefore be justified at that time. However, since the publication of Doucet et al. in 2011 the mentioning of the word 'gentrification' in public policy has been strongly reduced. In my research on recent policy documents, the term was only mentioned once in one of the performance agreements the municipality agreed with a housing corporation (Woonstad Rotterdam & Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016).

From the limited presence of the word gentrification, I have derived that the term gentrification has become a 'dirty word' or at least a 'dirtier word' in policy than before. Gentrification has not been replaced by a term such as 'regeneration', it therefore has not fully become a 'dirty' word. Despite the fact that the term has not often been mentioned publicly in policy, it does not mean that less attention has been given to the phenomena of gentrification. Policies such as 'promising neighbourhoods' and the 'housing vision' are still strongly embedded within the pro gentrification narrative and thus sustained with those gentrification motives.

Due to the presence of the housing vision referendum, a struggle within the gentrification discourse could be noticed. I distinguished two composite narratives: the pro gentrification narrative and the counter narrative, the former being more dominant than the latter. Unlike Doucet et al. (2011), who focused on a comparative case study between two European industrial cities, I have solely focussed on the distinct elements that make up the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam.

As mentioned by Lees and Ley (2008), views on gentrification have often changed. From being considered a highly demonstrated phenomena and problem, towards being a solution for problems in urban policy (Lees & Ley, 2008; Uitermark et al., 2007). The view that gentrification is a solution to urban problems is mainly recognised within the pro gentrification narrative. The 'housing vision' and the 'National Program Rotterdam South' are examples of how gentrification is viewed as something positive which can improve a neighbourhood or district. The way in which gentrification is used as a tool for development

can be categorised as a 'state-led' or 'state-facilitating' gentrification (Lees & Ley, 2008; Doucet et al., 2011; Davidson, 2008).

Gentrification is often used in public policy to 'obey market forces' (Wyly & Hammel, 2005). Gentrification is then seen as a way to supply the demand for middle-class housing. This can be seen in the discourse of Rotterdam, due to the shared storyline that Rotterdam is becoming more popular. Also, the necessity to act quickly is stressed within city vision (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007). This increased popularity requires action to accommodate new residents of Rotterdam, which is especially focussed on affluent households. The deliberate choice to demolish and convert affordable housing therefore has two functions. The first function relates to facilitating the demand for higher income households and the second and perhaps more important motive is 'improving' the neighbourhood. Like the gentrification literature, the degree to which gentrification really improves a neighbourhood is questioned. This questioning of the proposed policy has been translated into a counter narrative. There is a nuanced understanding on the critique of gentrification. The two narratives however should not be seen simply as those opposing gentrification and those in favour of it, because the critique and understanding of the gentrification process is more nuanced. As Freeman (2008) mentions:

"The world does not cleave neatly into greedy capitalists promoting gentrification and community activists resisting it" (Freeman, 2008 p. 190).

I will not view advocates of the pro gentrification narrative as 'greedy capitalists'. However, this narrative does have a strong economic perspective, with aims to gentrify. The argument for attracting higher income households tunes into economic gains more than social gains. Uitermark et al. (2007) state that Dutch governments do not attract the middle-class in order to strengthen their tax base, unlike the North-American gentrification motives. This might be true. However, by replacing housing that is affordable for people with a lower income with more expensive housing, there are fever vulnerable residents depending on governmental support. Thereby, it is viewed as an indirect economic benefit, as perceived by the pro gentrification narrative. The articulation of the metaphor 'strong shoulders' is an example of how the affluent residents are viewed within the pro gentrification narrative.

The assumption in the pro gentrification narrative is that higher income households have an economic advantage for the city. Former industrial cities are often associated with problems such as high unemployment and low skilled workers (Rousseau, 2009). It is for this reason that the arrival of higher educated people can help the 'transition' of the city towards a more modern knowledge and service based economy (Gemeente Rotterdam,

2007). It is not uncommon for post-industrial cities to strive towards a more modern economy in which a 'class transformation' takes place (Hamnett & Whitelegg, 2007).

A subjective problem - which is often associated with 'declining cities' - is that they experienced 'bad press' or a 'poor image' in the past (Rousseau, 2009). The currently perceived increase of popularity of Rotterdam - within the discourse of gentrification - can thereby be seen as something that should be built upon. Facilitating gentrification is viewed as a way to deal with this former unpopularity and a way to extrapolate the current trend of new, wealthier citizens. Arguably, the past 'negative' migration out of the city of high income households can then be reversed.

Gentrification literature often mentions that the aims of gentrification are promoted to stimulate a desired social mix, thereby increasing the social cohesion between residents (Lees et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2002; Nedučin et al., 2009). This has not been the ultimate goal of the pro gentrification narrative in Rotterdam. The perceived need to gentrify within pro gentrification narrative is mostly based on the argument that higher income households should have a place in Rotterdam and that 'mixing' different income groups will partly solve the problems of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Improving social cohesion is seen as a derivative. Creating 'balanced' neighbourhoods is the articulation of this goal, which would resolve the problems that are associated with these neighbourhoods. Indeed, Byrne (2003) argues that gentrification reduces social isolation of the poor. This is in line with the pro gentrification narrative. It sees placing middle-class households between low income households as a way of preventing further segregation between the North and the South. The improved quality of housing, which gentrification brings, is also recognised by scholars (Freeman, 2005; Atkinson, 2002). This physical improvement is recognised by both the pro gentrification and the counter narrative.

The pro gentrification narrative sees gentrification not only as something where residents from outside a neighbourhood move to, but also as a way in which social climbers are provided housing possibilities within their neighbourhood. The argument is that after the demolition, social climbers within a neighbourhood are able stay within their neighbourhood. This contradicts the mainstream gentrification theory which states that middle class housing is attributed to affluent households moving into the neighbourhoods (Freeman, 2005; Smith, 2002), not to the long term residents who are suddenly able to afford more expensive housing.

The creation of 'mixed' neighbourhoods often only happens in 'problematic' neighbourhoods, not in neighbourhoods with predominantly expensive housing. This is common for social mixing strategies for high income dwellings to be placed between cheap dwellings instead of the other way around (Lees & Ley, 2008; Nedučin et al., 2009). This

critique of one-sided 'balancing' of neighbourhoods has been formulated by the counter narrative which emphasizes that there is a selective intention of balancing neighbourhoods.

Discourse theory focuses on multiple socially constructed realities (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Likewise, my research has shown that there are different 'truths' to distinguish. It resulted in two narratives: the pro gentrification narrative and the counter narrative. The counter narrative within the discourse of gentrification challenges the language and practice of the (institutionalised) pro gentrification narrative. The counter narrative opposes the meaning and philosophy behind the notion of 'strong shoulders' and 'balanced' neighbourhood. It views these metaphors as something selective, only being focussed on economic gains.

The counter narrative mainly critiques aspects of the pro gentrification narrative. It does not necessarily reject the notion that bad housing exists and that a mix of income groups is seen as something potentially positive. However, the counter narrative challenges the assumption that gentrification should be facilitated by the demolition of housing. The argument here is that demolition is not needed to facilitate an increased demand from affluent residents. To a degree, the counter narrative sympathizes with the idea that social climbers are given more space in a neighbourhood, but it rejects the idea that all newly built and more expensive housing in problematic neighbourhoods will be filled only with existing residents from the neighbourhood.

My study offers a view on a nuanced nature of the discourse of gentrification. It illustrates that there is a counter narrative that challenges the assumption that social cohesion improves with the arrival of higher income households. The perception is that mixing groups of households with varying incomes in a neighbourhood does not automatically lead to social cohesion. Especially not in the way it is currently done in Rotterdam, namely by placing an enclave of middle-class households in predominantly low income neighbourhoods. Doing so, it challenges the legitimacy of past Dutch social mixing and housing policies.

6.2 Acknowledgement of displacement

Within the discourse of gentrification, displacement is an important topic. The two narratives which have been derived from the gentrification discourse view displacement differently. In the literature displacement occurs when a household has to move from a dwelling under circumstances beyond its 'reasonable' control (Marcuse, 1985; Slater, 2009; LeGates & Hartman, 1986). I argue that the acknowledgment of displacement differs within the discourse of gentrification. The different narratives assign different values to the phenomena. I therefore draw on the insights of Marcuse (1985) and Slater (2009) to further discuss the finding of displacement.

Marcuse (1985) distinguished four types of displacement which are still relevant in contemporary gentrification and displacement studies (Slater, 2009). These four types of displacement will be discussed in relation to the forms of displacement which were found in the gentrification discourse of Rotterdam.

The first is 'direct last-resident displacement': this type of displacement relates to when a resident of a dwelling is forced out caused by physical or economic means (Slater, 2009; Marcuse, 1985). This can be the case when a landlord cuts of the heat or when rent is increased, making it unliveable or unaffordable and forcing the resident or household to move.

The second type of displacement distinguished by Marcuse (1985) is 'direct chain displacement': this relates to the displacement occurring multiple times in one dwelling or is due to earlier rent increases or an earlier physical decline of the building (Slater, 2009). It thus looks beyond the last-resident displacement and sees displacement potentially happening several times within a dwelling.

The third type of displacement is that of 'exclusionary displacement': this occurs when units are combined to fit another type of resident (Slater, 2009). The number of available houses is often reduced.

"When one household vacates a housing unit voluntarily and that unit is then gentrified or abandoned so that another similar household is prevented from moving in, the number of units available to the second household in that housing market is reduced. The second household, therefore, is excluded from living where it would otherwise have lived." (Marcuse, 1985, p.206).

The last form of displacement distinguished by Slater (2009) and Marcuse (1985) is that of 'displacement pressure'. This relates to the suffering of the poor due to the transformation of the living environment (Slater, 2009). The facilities which long-term residents admired have thereby been replaced by those for the new types of residents.

The first two types of displacement are not recognised within the discourse of gentrification. This perhaps has to do with the view that tenants in the Netherlands are considered strongly protected by national law. Without any significant renovations, current tenants of social housing can only experience an increase in rent of a maximum of 2.8 % or 4.3% a year, depending on their income (Rijksoverheid, 2017). In the private sector, rents are only allowed to be increased once a year. An unreasonable increase can (easily) be contested in court. This is probably the reason that these types of displacements are not recognised by the pro gentrification- and counter narrative. In gentrification literature, it has been mentioned that the presence of social housing limits the effects of gentrification since it can be seen as a buffer for those who will have been displaced if market rents are applied (Atkinson, 2002; Walks & August, 2008). Displacement through a rent increase might therefore not be recognised in a slow gentrification process.

The last form of displacement, the so-called 'displacement pressure', is also lacking in acknowledgement within this discourse of gentrification. This type of displacement is perhaps more relevant when studying perceived displacement amongst residents of a gentrifying neighbourhood.

The most significant form of displacement - which has been acknowledged - is that of 'exclusionary displacement'. The counter narrative considers the municipality actively facilitating this type of displacement through the demolition of affordable housing. Furthermore, the conversion or renovation of dwellings - which is proposed in the housing vision - contributes to this type of displacement. The counter narrative sees this as displacement whereas the pro gentrification narrative only sees displacement as something that happens when households have to leave the city.

Besides the acknowledgment of exclusionary displacement, another form of displacement can be derived from the analysis: a 'geographical' displacement. This form of displacement, as highlighted in my study, differs from what gentrification literature on displacement suggests. It relates to the geography to which households are 'displaced'.

Households that have to move because of a demolition or a conversion but are still able to stay in the same neighbourhood, are not necessarily seen as displacement within the counter narrative. This 'geographical' element to displacement is also shared by the pro gentrification narrative. However it only acknowledges displacement as something that occurs when residents have to leave the city. Since tenants of social housing get an urgency status they are not displaced. Also, the 'natural' progression or succession of households which is perceived by the pro gentrification narrative, prevents displacement from occurring. The view created by this narrative is that nobody is forced to leave Rotterdam

because of their low economic position. The migration out of a neighbourhood is thus not always viewed as displacement.

Another acknowledgement of displacement by the counter narrative is a more 'indirect' form. When social housing disappears in the city due to demolition or conversion displaced households have to be rehoused. These households get a priority status within housing corporations, making waiting lists longer, thus displacing people in time.

Young residents of Rotterdam, who in the future might want to live in the city, are not able to move into social housing because of an increased waiting list. The urgency status which is given to those residents of displaced households enhances pressure on the waiting list and therefore forms an indirect form of displacement of current, less affluent and young residents of Rotterdam.

The pro-gentrification narrative mainly acknowledges displacement when those households who have to move, leave the city. What differs with the types of displacement mentioned by Slater (2009) and Marcuse (1985) is the fact that displacement in the eyes of the gentrification discourse is often seen as geographical displacement. Future research on geographical elements of displacement can contribute to studies on displacement, which have so far mainly focussed on measuring displacement in terms of households that have been pressured to move. However, the physical act of moving might not be experienced as displacement.

6.3 Benefits of discourse and Institutionalism theory

It is often claimed that discourse is power (Arts & Buizer, 2009; Hewitt, 2009; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). This is what I have seen in the case of Rotterdam, where the dominant narrative was enforced and institutionalised in policy and in practice. It forced people to act and speak in a certain way. The structuring of language and how it is used to represent actions helps to understand different competing values and ideas (Jacobs, 2006). As Jacobs (2005) states: *"Discourse analysis offers an explicit basis to interrogate […] terms and to show how they are deployed by policy makers at a strategic and ideological level"* (p.48).

In this thesis discourse analysis has helped in showing the different views that exist on gentrification. It is not simply those who oppose the process or gentrification but within the discourse of gentrification a certain critique has risen on certain aspects of the gentrification process. It is for this reason that the debate and different narratives are competing. Both the pro gentrification narrative and the counter narratives strive towards 'better' housing and living environments in Rotterdam, although the 'best' way forward is disputed, where fears of excluding low income of the counter narrative contest the ideas of economic growth of the pro gentrification narrative.

The analysis of discourse has therefore been helpful in understanding metaphors and phrases such as 'strong shoulders', 'Balance' and 'promising neighbourhoods'. By investigating the logic and argumentative structure of these discursive articulations - with what is directly and indirectly said - helps put the underlying ideas of these expressions into context. Also a comparison can be made between policy rhetoric and the actions that really occur (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

A focus on discursive institutionalism has provided a better understanding of how certain narratives have become more strongly institutionally embedded than others. I have found that the pro gentrification narrative has been embedded in municipal policy as well as housing corporation policy. Discursive institutionalism has therefore been useful in understanding how the pro gentrification narrative is strategically used to attract more affluent people to Rotterdam.

One of the widely debated issues at the time of this research was that of the housing vision. A failed referendum however does not mean a failed contestation of the pro gentrification narrative. In discursive institutionalism, the referendum should not be seen as a change through an exogenous shock that challenges the dominant narrative. Discursive institutionalists argue that change is created through agents which continuously challenge certain cognitive and normative ideas through ideational abilities (Schmidt, 2008).

The referendum of the housing vision can be seen as a momentary transferral of power towards citizens. However, the institutional practices and ideological power still influenced the referendum question and thus the way in which the narrative is contested. Even with a 'transfer' of power, it is not the fully transferred towards the voters since institutional forces delimited the way of contestation.

The board of aldermen facilitates the agreement performance with housing corporations. It is therefore often a political party that is able to realise their particular beliefs from within the discourse of gentrification. The institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative in policy can therefore be considered as a temporary institutionalisation. Depending on future political parties in charge, the way in which the discourse becomes institutionalised can vary. Only time will tell how the discourse with its narratives, storylines and metaphors will evolve and shape planning practices.

For understanding urban renewal strategies, the role of discourse analysis is to show the underlying motives which capture the ideology of the strategy which results in an intent to demolish and or renovate affordable housing in Rotterdam. In this research, making a distinction between narratives of political parties and discourse narratives has not always been easy. After all, critique on certain articulations might not always be a critique on pro

gentrification or counter narrative, but more a critique on the political party that uses one of the gentrification narratives to achieve political goals.

The housing vision embodied the pro gentrification narrative. These plans were mainly formulated by Leefbaar Rotterdam. The other coalition partners involved backed these plans. Whether these coalition partners fully agreed with the plans is hard to tell.

Hajer distinguishes structuration from institutionalisation. As mentioned in the theoretical framework: institutionalisation occurs when a shared definition of reality exists (Phillips et al, 2004; Hajer, 1993). While structuration refers to the process wherein *"central actors are persuaded by, or forced to accept, the rhetorical power of a new discourse."* (Hajer, 1993 p.48). This distinction helps me understand that the political parties in the current coalition might not fully share the same construct of 'reality' as Leefbaar Rotterdam. They might be forced to accept the rhetorical power because of the coalition obligations. Acknowledging that they were persuaded or forced to accept the pro gentrification narrative - which is strongly pursued by Leefbaar Rotterdam - potentially decreases the legitimacy of the coalition. This makes it hard to distinguish institutionalisation from structuration, since no acknowledgement of forced acceptability was mentioned or discovered. If the political structure would be different another narrative would perhaps have arisen instead.

A downside to discourse analysis is therefore the temporality of the research, since just like the urban fabric of a city, discourses and their narratives are continuously changing (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

7. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam. It has sought to answer the question: how has the discourse of gentrification become manifest in the urban renewal policy and debate of Rotterdam? In order to answer the main research question set out in my research I will first answer the sub research question: which narratives, metaphors and storylines can be derived from the discourse of gentrification and what is their argumentative structure? How is the discourse of gentrification being contested? And how has the discourse of gentrification been institutionalised in local policy practices?

In studying the discourse of gentrification in Rotterdam, I have distinguished two narratives: the pro gentrification narrative and the counter narrative, which each attribute a certain value to storylines and metaphors. There is a particular relation I have discovered between these two narratives. The pro gentrification narrative strongly resembles the ideas and articulations which Doucet et al. (2011) observed when studying the housing discourse in Rotterdam, namely a focus on attracting high income households. I have categorised this pro gentrification narrative as the dominant narrative within the discourse of gentrification.

It is thanks to the presence of the referendum that a counter narrative was distinguishable. Due to the strong presence of the pro gentrification narrative in urban policy, this counter narrative has emerged, challenging the ideas and actions of the pro gentrification narrative. However, the two narratives do not have a one on one relation with those opposing and favouring gentrification in planning literature. As I will summarise in the following, the understanding of the gentrification process and its critique is more nuanced.

The argumentative structure of the pro gentrification narrative is that Rotterdam's housing stock has too many social and cheap housing units in the city. The pro gentrification narrative has as strong economic focus. The perception within this narrative is that the housing stock has to change and more affluent housing should be created. The 'trickle-down effect' storyline - which is part of this narrative - plays a leading role in the perception that higher educated and wealthier people are needed to transition Rotterdam out of the industrial era. Related to a need for higher educated residents is the metaphor of 'strong shoulders', in which the affluent households are referred to as the strong shoulders of society, carrying the weak. By 'balancing' neighbourhoods with higher educated households problems associated with 'bad' neighbourhoods will be resolved is the logic.

Within the discourse of gentrification, the perception is that the process of gentrification can be used to solve problems in deprived neighbourhoods. Especially for the South, gentrification is seen as a way to resolve the problems associated with 'bad' neighbourhoods. Within the pro gentrification narrative the view is that gentrification can

reduce the segregation between North and South. Reducing the perceived segregation would also involve the reduction of affordable housing stock. A less segregated city in this narrative also means less affordable housing in the South.

The counter narrative can be considered a reactive narrative, which has concerns with gentrification and how it will shape the city. The counter narrative does not see the arrival of higher educated people as a problem. It mainly critiques the way in which space is created for affluent households. The critique is mainly on the demolition and the conversion of the more affordable housing, which is replaced by middle-class housing. The counter narrative also sees the conversion and demolition of affordable housing as in-direct displacement of lower income groups.

The contestation of the discourse of gentrification is from within the discourse itself. It is the counter narrative that contests the dominant pro gentrification narrative. It is thus not a separate discourse that challenges the gentrification discourse. It is a contestation from within. The way in which the counter narrative is structured is as a reactive articulation of critique, meaning that the counter narrative cannot be seen as a narrative by itself. It mainly reacts to the metaphors such as 'strong shoulders' and 'balance', by criticizing the 'limited' understanding of what balance and strong shoulders really entail.

It is through the referendum that the counter narrative has emerged or at least has become more visible in the rhetoric of different actors and parties. It should however be noted that those who opposed the housing vision are not automatically those who fit the counter narrative. In politics there are other, hidden motives to oppose the housing vision, namely a bargaining position or simply opposing the plans for an increased popularity for the party in the upcoming elections.

A more concrete referendum question of the housing vision would have led to a better quality of the debate. The institutionalisation of the pro gentrification narrative which has led to the 'vague' referendum question distracted from the main point of debate, namely the demolition and conversion of affordable housing. The housing vision adds to the existing policies and programs in which affluent residents are seen as the foundation for economic growth.

A failed referendum however does not mean a failed contestation of the pro gentrification narrative. Discourses are being understood as a constant battle over ideas. The same can be said of the competing narratives which I have derived. From a discursive institutionalism perspective, I would argue that change is not only created through exogenous shocks such as the referendum, but also through a continuous struggle over ideas.

There are different ways in which the pro gentrification narrative has been institutionalised in local practice. Housing corporations and the municipality mainly see economic benefits of the pro gentrification narrative. The discursive practices of the pro gentrification narrative have led to the acceptance of the gentrification process.

My aim in this research was to show how the gentrification discourse has become manifest in the urban policy of Rotterdam. I showed what the gentrification discourse entails, thereby focusing on competing narratives, storylines and metaphors.

Where the dominant pro gentrification narrative sees gentrification and the process of building new housing as a tool to 'improve' the neighbourhood, it is perceived by the counter narrative as replacing less affluent households and displacing less fortunate generations. The demolition, in the eyes of the counter narrative, is not needed to provide housing for affluent residents. Because the counter narrative only sees the reduction of affordable housing units. It does not see gentrification as the 'tool' behind the reduction of housing, through which problematic neighbourhoods are to be 'improved' by the arrival of affluent households. The biggest flaw of the debate surrounding the housing situation is that the aims of using gentrification as a tool is not properly elaborated on, by the pro gentrification narrative**.**

The debate about the demolition of housing is a debate about the trajectory of the city and how to 'improve' it. What the counter narrative lacked is a way in which it envisions the future housing distribution. The reactiveness of the narrative limited the ideas about the way the city could and should be shaped.

The counter narrative is not necessarily against a process of gentrification in which neighbourhood decline is reversed. Instead, the counter narrative is strongly against the 'end-result' of gentrification which results in the displacements of existing residents and that changes the Rotterdam's population to predominately white and rich.

8. References

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8.1 Public debate & interview

Actiecomité woonreferendum, representative (personal communication, 16 November, 2016)

D66, two representatives of the political party (personal communication, 16 November, 2016)

Havensteder, representative of the housing corporation (personal communication, 3 March, 2017)

NIDA, representative of the political party (personal communication, 23 November, 2016)

Policy worker municipality Rotterdam (personal communication, 30 March, 2017)

PvdA, representative of the political (personal communication, 28 February, 2017)

RTMXL, representative of the Public platform (personal communication, 17 November, 2016)

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SP, representative of the political party (personal communication, 6 March, 2017)

Vestia, representative (personal communication, 27 February, 2017)

VVD, representative of the political party (personal communication, 17 November, 2016)

Woonbron, representative of the housing corporation (personal communication, 10 April, 2017)

Woonstad, two representatives of the housing corporation (personal communication, 3 April, 2017)

8.2 Images

Front page: Van Hammond, J. (2016). Rotterdam trekt aan. Nu nog de woningen. [Photograph]. Available from: nrc.nl

Image 1: Versluis, R. (2017). Discourse of Gentrification. [Illustration]. Made with Adobe Illustrator

Image 2: Van Hammond, J. (2016). Rotterdam trekt aan. Nu nog de woningen. [Photograph]. Available from: nrc.nl

Image 3: Snoek, O. (2015). Gentrificatie: nu is Rotterdam aan de beurt. [Photograph]. Available from: vn.nl

Image 4: Actiecomité Woonreferendum. (2016). Bouwen, Niet Slopen! [Illustration]. Available from: woonreferendum.nl

Appendix: Semi-structured interview guide

Examples of structured questions are displayed below (in Dutch). These questions were categorised into four sub-categories in order to structure the interview. Interviewees were introduced to the subject of study although the mentioning of gentrification and the discourse of it was only referred to at the end of the interview. This was done in order to prevent certain 'preferable' answers of the interviewees.

The problem representation of different stakeholders

- Wat ziet u als het probleem van Rotterdam als het gaat om wonen?
- Wat ziet u als de grootste uitdagingen als het gaat om stedelijke ontwikkelingen in Rotterdam?
- Er wordt wel een gesproken over dat 'wijken uit balans zijn', wat vindt u daarvan?
- Wordt er naar uw mening voldoende rekening gehouden met de populariteit en bevolkingsgroei die toeneemt in Rotterdam?

The gentrification discourse contestation

- Hoe vindt u dat het woonvisie referendum verlopen is?
- Wat vindt u van de referendum vraag dat het gaat om de woonvisie en niet een 'ja' 'nee' vraag op de vermindering van 20.000 woningen?
- Zijn naar uw mening genoeg partijen betrokken geweest in het opstellen van de woonvisie?

The argumentative structure within gentrification discourse

- Waarom focust dit college zich op hoogopgeleiden/hoge inkomens aan te trekken, denkt u?
- In de woonvisie werd gesproken over een overschot van goedkope woningen, wat vindt u daarvan?
- Zijn er naar uw menig voldoende lege plekken zijn in Rotterdam waar gebouwd kan worden?
- Waarom denkt u dat er wordt gekozen om woningen te slopen?

Associated effects of current policy and gentrification

- Waarom streeft dit college naar een ander type woning in bepaalde gebieden? Wat is het doel wat ze er mee willen behalen? Gelooft u in de woon-carrière?
- Wat denkt u dat de gevolgen zijn als er 20.000 goedkope woningen verdwijnen en er duurdere woningen voor terug komen?
- Denken jullie dat het slopen van woningen en er nieuwere (duurdere) woningen neerzetten een goede strategie is voor het opwaarderen van wijken?
- Wat voor een invloed hebben de nieuwe bewoners op de lagere inkomens? Zijn het rolmodellen voor anderen?
- Hoe voorspellen jullie dat nieuwe en lange termijn bewoners met elkaar omgaan?