

Dilemmas in Gentrification Discourses

A Foucauldian discourse analysis to identify resembling and conflicting discourses on gentrification

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Abstract

Gentrification is a widely- and often discussed topic by academics and media. Many articles have been published that are not in favour of gentrification and its assumed effects: displacement, rent increases, and social segregation. However, there are academics and sources of media that pledge in favour of gentrification and its assumed positive effects; social mix, decrease in criminality, and a social and physical upgrade of neighbourhoods. In this thesis we ask the question: “Are the statements about gentrification made in media and scientific literature actually identified in a gentrifying neighbourhood”? My hypothesis is that the vast majority is not in favour of their neighbourhood gentrifying, as people are likely to be afraid to be forced out of their homes. In order to find out whether this is true, I have chosen a case study area in which the effects of gentrification are significant: the Van der Pekbuurt in Amsterdam-Noord.

This thesis aims to find out whether the statements made are also identified by local stakeholders of a gentrifying neighbourhood. This will be done by executing a discourse analysis, based on the principles of Michel Foucault. Hereafter, the results will be compared to the discourses identified in media and science. This focus leads to the following research question: *What discourses on gentrification are identified in academic literature and media, and how do these relate to the discourses identified in local discursive (re)productions?*

By systematically sorting out academic literature on gentrification in general, and media articles on gentrification of the case study area, two main discourses have been identified. However, the argumentation for adding to a discourse is varied. By in-depth interviews and walk-along interviews in the neighbourhood I have tested whether what is written and said by academics and media, is also backed up by local discourses.

Contrary to my expectations the discourses identified by local stakeholders were rather positive. There was an increase of the sense of community, especially among newer residents. The upgrade of physical features was appreciated much and the increase of popularity of Van der Pek delighted entrepreneurs and residents. This did not match the majority of what was described by media or

academics. Media and academics are mostly writing about the negative side of gentrification; displacement, rent increase and social mix gone wrong. Yes, this was also identified in local discourses, albeit in sharp contrast with the positives of gentrification.

There can be concluded that multiple truths regarding gentrification do exist, that it brings problems as well as prosperity to a neighbourhood. Most importantly, neighbourhoods are being physically improved and this is experienced positively by most of its resident. Media and academics are less positive as they mostly shed light on the problems resulting from gentrification. The positivity in the neighbourhood regarding (the effects of) gentrification was contrary to my hypothesis. Therefore my final conclusion is: gentrification is not the problem, the spatial relocation of poverty is.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

“Shortly only the rich will live in the city” (M. Remie, 2016).

1.1 - Problem indication

On 19 April 2016 Dutch newspaper NRC published an article written by Mirjam Remie, arguing that ‘Shortly only the rich will live in the city’. The article is accompanied by a picture of four people from seemingly foreign origin, strolling around in a polluted street. The ambiance of the article and photograph is alarming to me. Despite the fact that Amsterdam has a high degree of social housing (Gent, 2013), Mirjam Remie seems to be making the claim that in a short period of time, there will be no place left in cities for low income households. The reason is that low income households are being replaced by more wealthy families. The article seems to intend to create negative feelings with regards to gentrification. Briefly, the writer mentions a positive aspect of gentrification: the physical upgrade of weak neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, other points made are in significant contrast; negative anecdotes and facts implying gentrification is a process that forces poor people away from their neighbourhoods, in order for wealthier people to take their place.

But, not everyone looks upon situations like these the same. For instance Jos Gadet, chief urban planner at the Amsterdam planning department of space and economics. He claims that the process of gentrification, in contrast to Mirjam Remie beliefs, is a positive development (Metz, 2015). Gentrification often goes hand in hand with the establishment of new public facilities. Besides, Jos Gadet also debunks statements about poor people being displaced. Due to rental protection in the Netherlands people cannot be forced to move at once, pointing out most of the movements are voluntarily (Metz, 2015).

These examples of different perceptions illustrate the various ways to look upon gentrification. Academics in favour, academics against, and the same goes for media. But do the various stances identified in science and media actually resemble the narratives told in gentrifying neighbourhoods, or is it merely an academic pro- versus against ‘gentrification-battle’ fought in literature and media?

This thesis is inspired by the desire to explore the differences and similarities of discourses on gentrification, argued by academics, media and those who feel and actually experience the effects of gentrification in their daily lives (residents, shop owners, the police, etc.).

Therefore, this thesis aims to identify the different ways academics, media and local stakeholders look upon gentrification. These perceptions will be assessed by means of discourses. Discourses are considered “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” (Hajer, 2005). Later on, we will dive deeper into the theory and application of discourse analysis.

1.2 – Knowledge gap and relevance

Gentrification is not something new, as the first time ‘gentrification’ was spoken about was in 1964. British sociologist Ruth Glass used the term to describe a process of urban change that was noticed in the centre of London. Literally, gentrification means the “replacement of an existing population by a gentry” (Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2013). This definition is a basic one, but definitely covers one of the most infamous aspects of gentrification: displacement. Times change, but this definition of a likewise process of urban change still applies, but does not cover the load sufficiently anymore.

Gentrification includes many different contexts of urban development, types of cities and types of neighbourhoods. Due to these expansions gentrification was regarded as the process that is related to the “production of space for –and consumption by- a more affluent and very different incoming population” (Slater, 2004).

This definition, however, does not imply the way in which neighbourhoods can become gentrified. Gentrification often goes hand in hand with enhancement of the physical environment. Many have tried to tie the process of gentrification into a definition, and to me Erik Clark’s (2005) definition covers the load perfectly: “Gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital”.

Studies on the effects of gentrification have been performed for multiple cases, for instance London, Amsterdam and Paris (Watt, 2014; Uitermark & Bosker, 2014; Stott, 2015). In many situations, gentrification is said to be caused by two developments. First, it is assumed to be a result of behavioural change (Byrne, 2002). Whereas the more affluent families would live in more rural or suburban areas, the city was considered to be for the poor. This changed drastically, as more and more affluent people want to live in the city, the place where cultural and social facilities are superior to those of the suburbs or rural areas (Byrne, 2002). Second, economic change has increased the demand for housing in cities. The current supply does not meet the demand, and are therefore prone for renovation plans (Byrne, 2002). Despite the apparent improvements of the physical quality of neighbourhoods, gentrification is assumed to not always be as desired.

However, studies on how different discourses exist regarding the developments and effects of gentrification are scarce. Those that do exist are often focussed on social mixing (Rose, 2004), or are looking at the ways how gentrification is implemented in governmental strategies (Slater, 2002; Slater, 2004).

In my opinion it is valuable to know if, and how, different discourses may exist within a neighbourhood, and by whom they are (re)produced. This is important as planning is not solely the profession of shaping future spatial developments. For me, spatial planning is giving shape to future developments in order to benefit the physical and social environment (Madanipour, 1996). A good mutual understanding of what is going on in social environments, can streamline plans for physical adjustments to the environment. Besides, people are more and more involved in the planning process, and a good understanding of what is really going on in a neighbourhood can enhance the cooperation (Kahila-Tani, Broberg, Kytä & Tyger, 2016). Therefore, analyses of discourses can be valuable information for governmental institutions, and companies involved in the (re)development of neighbourhoods.

1.3 - Objective of the study

The aim of this thesis is to find out whether the discourses identified in academic literature and media articles do resemble the discourses that are reproduced by local stakeholders in the Van der Pekbuurt. It is important to acknowledge the possible existence of multiple discourses regarding gentrification. There are more social constructs instead of a singly truth or reality (Jacobs, 1999). It must be clear that I am not searching for the ultimate truth, instead I am curious about the differences and resemblances within discourses regarding gentrification. Therefore, this thesis can be considered an exploratory research.

I will execute a Foucauldian discourse analysis, which is in short a way of analysing how, why and by whom a certain truth is attributed to particular arguments and not to others. In other words: the way different people interact upon the same phenomenon may be different (or the same) for a whole range of different reasons.

It should be clear that there is no right or wrong in discourses, and my goal is not to identify whether who would be right. Rather, I will identify who makes which claims on the truth, how these relate to other claims (resembling/conflicting or anywhere in between). The tough issue here is that some actors have a bigger audience than others, enabling them to let their truth be more easily reproduced. That what is written and discussed in academic literature is often regarded as true. Scientists get cited if something they claim is considered true by the citer, by doing so reproducing the discourse of the scientist. The same goes for media. The media is regarded to be spreading the truth, and many simply accept that what is written is true. People

talk about it, reproducing what they have read or seen, and by doing so reproducing the discourse of the media(-author). Media and academics have way bigger audiences than a random resident of Van der Pek. This resident might have a totally different look than what is written in science and media, however his or her significance to be able to spread their discourse is much lower, due to a smaller audience. This does not mean he is any less right than media and scientists.

Therefore, I want to know how the discourses identified in media and academic literature relate to the discourses identified in the discursive productions of local stakeholders of Van der Pek.

In order to research this I will make use of the following question:

What discourses on gentrification are identified in academic literature and media, and how do these relate to the discourses identified in local discursive (re)productions?

My hypothesis is that academics will largely write about the negative impact of gentrification upon a neighbourhood, as academics are often trying to find solutions to problems. I think that media will be either positive or negative depending on their political stance. Residents and local stakeholders will mainly be negative as the neighbourhood they live in is changing rapidly.

1.4 - Outline

The outline of this thesis is as follows: in the next chapter the literature regarding gentrification will be stated, as gentrification is the topic on which I will execute a discourse analysis. In the chapter following upon the literature review the theoretical framework will be discussed, in which discourse analysis will be explained, and why Foucauldian discourse analysis is matching the best with my research. In chapter 3 the research methodology I will describe the way in which this thesis has been executed. Chapter 4 offers a background of the municipality of Amsterdam and its structural vision 2040, which will have great impact on the area of case study. After this introduction, I will zoom in to the Van der Pekbuurt and sketch a necessary background of the neighbourhood. In chapter 6 the two main discourses are identified together with the results of the discourse analysis. Eventually, I will conclude upon these results in the conclusion. In the final chapter I will discuss upon the results of my thesis, connect them to the theory given afore, reflect upon this and might give recommendations accordingly. In the discussion I will reflect upon this thesis, and look for possible limitations and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 - Literature review on gentrification

Understanding gentrification

What is gentrification and how is it assumed to affect people's lives? The best way to start is to review academic literature on the topic. Aforementioned in the introduction, literature on gentrification has expanded to include cities all over the world. Nowadays, gentrification includes many different contexts of urban development, types of cities and types of neighbourhoods. Due to these expansions gentrification was regarded as the process that is related to the "production of space for –and consumption by– a more affluent and very different incoming population" (Slater, 2004).

This basal definition does not necessarily imply that neighbourhoods are being renovated, or at least given an impulse in quality. As gentrification often means an enhancement of the physical environment leading to an increase in attractiveness and, therefore, popularity among higher income-class households, the definition of Tom Slater is not covering the load sufficiently. Tom Slater's book offers a more sufficient definition of contemporary gentrification: "The transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use" (Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2013). This definition is close to what Erik Clark (2005) stated: "Gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital".

For this thesis Erik Clark's definition of gentrification will be used. This definition covers the developments in the Van der Pekbuurt perfectly, which will be elaborated upon in a later chapter. As the definition suggests gentrification is a process that affects both the physical and the social layer of an area (city, neighbourhood). Social changes are recognized in the socio-economic status, while physical changes are noticed in the quality of the built environment.

Gentrification is assumed to be caused by two developments. First, it is a result of behavioural change (Byrne, 2002). Whereas the more affluent families would live in more rural or suburban areas, the city was considered to be for the poor. This changed drastically, as more and more affluent people want to live in the city, the place where cultural and social facilities are superior to those of the suburbs or rural areas (Byrne, 2002). Second, economic change has increased the demand for housing in cities. The current supply cannot meet the demands, and are therefore prone for renovation plans (Byrne, 2002).

Socio-economic effects of gentrification

So, gentrification has an effect on the physical and social layer of a neighbourhood. After distilling the scientific literature (Schoon, 2001; Byrne, 2002; Smith, 2002; Andersson & Musterd, 2005; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005; Lees, 2008) on the effects of gentrification five main categories of socio-economic effects can be identified:

- Economic prosperity
- Social mix
- Displacement
- Crime and Safety
- Attracting visitors

These categories do not speak in favour or against gentrification on themselves. You can see them as some sort of coat rack, on which you can hang different arguments (either pro and against) within one category. In my empirical analysis I will go into these arguments as these arguments add to the different discourses. Now we know where to look for in different academic articles, media articles and local discursive productions we need to know how discourses are being analysed. In the next chapter I will elaborate on (Foucauldian) discourse analysis.

Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework aims to summarize and review Foucauldian discourse analysis. As this research aims to find answers on how academics, media and local stakeholders of Van der Pek are thinking about the developments in the neighbourhood. In order to research these discourses I will make use of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). Before anything is analysed whatsoever, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what 'Foucauldian Discourse Analysis' is, and which methods are used in executing FDA.

3.1 - Discourse theory

Discourse analysis is an 'umbrella-term' for several approaches to analyse discourses. Discourse is basically considered the convergence and reproduction of discursive interactions (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). This includes the act of talking to each other, as when people talk they engage in 'discourse' (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). However, the act of talking is not the only communicative interaction that is known. 'Discourse' can also be considered to be text: articles, statements, documents are all considered 'discourses'. It is that what is written, or said, that counts as discourse (Hastings, 1999). She specifies herself by stating that discourses can be further defined as "a range of spoken and written texts 'involved in producing or constructing reality, specifically our perception or knowledge of the world and the meaning we make about it'" (Hastings, 2000). Therefore, discourse analysis is the study of language, and the use of language as evidence of certain aspects of social life (Taylor, 2013). For this thesis the definition of Maarten Hajer (2005) is covering the load perfectly as discourse is defined here as "*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*". This does not mean people engaging in a certain discourse are fully aware they are actually doing so. One may see it as a cloud. Water can condensate in different ways, by different means. When different drips form a cloud, logically it is seen as a cloud from outside, rather than multiple drips apart from each other. The same goes for discourses. People can (re)produce the same ideas, concepts and categories for different reasons, not aware of actually reasoning within or contributing to a discourse. As Maarten Hajer (2005) explains it: "Discourse analysis illuminates a particular discursive structure, that might not be immediately obvious to the people that contribute to the debate". The fundamentals of discourse analysis were laid by Michel Foucault, though he did not offer a method, rather he created a new way of thinking; a scientifically philosophical and epistemological change (Foucault, 1994).

3.2 – Controversies in discourse theory

The aforementioned definitions of what discourse theory really may be might be confusing, just like Sharp and Richardson (2001) stated: “As the term ‘discourse’ means different things to different researchers, and to their audiences”. This shows that there are different views on what discourse exactly is, how it works and what the impact of discourse may be. Multiple stances have been taken, varying from very linguistic (critical discourse analysis), political (political discourse analysis) to more multimodal approaches that include not only textual aspects, but also sounds and visuals (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2012).

It is not only the ‘what-to-analyse’-type of debate that complicates discourse theory. Also, discourse theory can differ in an ontological way. Jonathan Potter (1997) discusses the extreme constructivists, who argue that discourse is as much as the only reality, meaning that all human experience and knowledge is a social construct. Others do have a connection with regards to the physical reality. The critical realists see the physical environment as some reality that is engaging with the social environment (Sperber, 1996). This reality however, only becomes ‘real’ through discourse. Meaning, therefore, is only given to the physical environment when it is reproduced through human interaction (Kress, Gunther & van Leeuwen, 2001). Another interest within discourse theory is the socio-economic reality that has been given shape by the act of discourse. Marxist theories apply to discourse analysis in a way to distinguish “beliefs, values, ideologies” and “knowledge properly so called”. The former being ‘false’ knowledge, while the latter being ‘true’ knowledge. Marxist analysis of discourse are trying to expose or discover systematics in ideologies that are found in class preferences (Fairclough, 1995). Foucauldian discourse analysis attempts to identify the power relations within specific sites – the prison for instance, but any given situation can be applicable – and how different truths are constructed from these relations.

3.3 – Foucault explained

In this paragraph I will explain Foucault by juxtaposing it to Marxist discourse theory. By reflecting the two ways of looking at discourses can help clarify the way in which Foucault did so. In both the discourse paradigms power is seen as important in the reproduction of discourse.

Important in Marxist discourse analysis is the way power is imposed to create a certain ‘truth’. For Marx, power was not something that was expressed religiously, philosophically or politically. Rather, power is something that can be seen as a resource. And, resources do not come in unlimited supply. Therefore, there are those with power (ruling class and state) and those without (the ‘proletariat’). In Marx’ paradigm power is often expressed through economic processes. Those who have accumulated capital, are those who have acquired power to influence economic processes, and are therefore those that have power (Marx, 1976). Marxist discourse derives from

the notion that economical gathered power, which is often material, is expressed in a non-material way. Power controls ideas. Ideas, on its turn, are being reflected upon the material economic processes, as they are implemented in the working life of the proletariat. In this way, power is creating a 'truth' which is easily believed by those who profit from, or are being paid by, it (Sherman, 2015).

Limitations on Marx' view on power are often found in the debate of who holds power, and how it is expressed. Michel Foucault does not see power as a resource or possession (Foucault, 1980). Rather Foucault sees it as a relation, that is exercised throughout the social environment. Besides, power does not necessarily come from the accumulation of capital, like Marx thought. And, wherever there is power, there is always counter-power. This means, that power does not solely work top-down, but can also be expressed bottom-up. Unlike Marx' thoughts of power being repressive, Foucault sees power as something productive (Foucault, 1977). Instead of Marx' sole economic power, Foucault argues there are more ways in which power is acquired and exercised (Sherman, 2015).

Foucault also debunks Marx' paradigm of solely the ruling class and the state as those with power. In every social relation lies power, which can be explained as small-scale politics, or micro-politics. This means that power is exercised not only top-down, but also bottom-up. Analysis of power relations on micro-level is working on extraordinary detail: "The conduct of the conduct" (Foucault, 1977). If power is exercised in two directions, then multiple truths are probable to exist. Here lies the fundamental difference of Foucault and Marx. Whereas Marx thought the ruling class was able of creating the ultimate truth, which comes forth out of economic production, Foucault accepted the notion of multiple truths which could come together in discourse, and can ultimately be productive. What this means for this thesis is explained in the following paragraph.

3.4 – Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Following Foucault's notion of discourse, discourses can be regarded as some sort of 'lens' through which the world can be seen, and statements can be made (Waite, 2005). This means that instead of seeking the ultimate truth, Foucauldian discourse analysis suggests 'that we should ask how, why and by whom truth is attributed to particular arguments and not to others' (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Hereby discourse is not defined as an use of language, like a letter or any other linguistic entity. Rather, it describes a set of rules or systems by which knowledge is expressed (Jones, 2014).

As mentioned in the paragraphs before, Foucauldian discourse analysis focusses on power relations within social practices. In Foucault's ideas, everyone has to some extent the power to create a truth. But, those with the most power seems to be able to create the best believed truth.

Academics and media are more top-down 'nodes' of power, of which their truth is more easily believed. In this Foucauldian discourse analysis I will look for resemblances or differences within these top-down bodies of power, and compare them to the discourses identified in the discursive reproductions by local stakeholders of Van der Pek. Resembling discourses can be seen as converging ideas through multiple layers, while opposing discourses can be seen as divergent ideas. So, within a discourse ideas are converging, while the relation of opposing discourses is divergent. How I will execute a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is explained in the next chapter 'Research methodology'.

Chapter 4 - Research Methodology

Due to the largely exploratory background of this thesis, and the fact that discourses are based on opinions, a qualitative approach to this research is appropriate. In order to find answers to the research question mentioned before various data is needed. In this chapter I will first go into the way in which data is collected, after which the way how this data is analysed is outlined.

4.1 - Executing a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

In this thesis the multiple truths will be identified by means of discourses. These discourses will be further classified by whom and how these discourses are reproduced. Ultimately, I want to find out whether the discourses identified in academic literature and media articles are also identified in the discourses of local stakeholders of the Van der Pekbuurt.

In the figure below is illustrated what groups are investigated, and in colour the potential different discourses that may be identified. The categorisation of the discourses will be done accordingly to convergent and divergent discursives. Those who have the same idea about gentrification will belong to one discourse (convergent ideas), while other, divergent, ideas belong to another discourse. The colours resemble a simplified diversification of the discourses, but give an idea of the conceptualisation of this thesis. The local discourses remain uncoloured as these discourses are unknown for now.

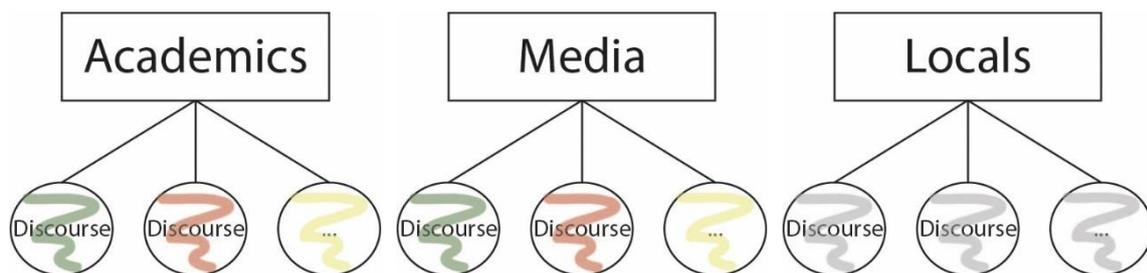


Figure 1 - Discourse Framework. Source: Author.

4.2 - Data collection techniques

In order to identify the different discourses in the academic debate, the media and local narratives I will use more than one data collection technique. In the setup for the discourse analysis I have adopted four data-collection steps of Maarten Hajer's (2005) steps of discourse analysis. I have

used them in the following order: Desk research, helicopter interviews, document analysis, interviews with key players.

The desk research was done to get an overall feeling of the contextual situation of gentrification in Amsterdam-Noord in general and the Van der Pekbuurt specifically. This consisted of reading policy documents, like the structural vision of Amsterdam for 2040, and reading about the history of the respective neighbourhood. This gave me a clear understanding of what is happening in the Van der Pekbuurt.

Helicopter interviews are interviews with actors that are chosen because of their overview of the field. This mainly included staff from Ymere (from different branches of their cooperation). They know what is going on in the neighbourhood and are able to tell me about the latest developments.

The document analysis is a very crucial step in this process as this involves the identification of discourses in scientific and media articles. For the media I have searched for articles in the timeframe of 2011 till 2017.

Lastly, I have done interviews with key players. Key players are those living, working or recreating in the Van der Pekbuurt. People that have high stakes in the neighbourhood.

4.3 - Data collection

The amount of interviews depends on when saturation is achieved. I have done helicopter interviews (three) as well as walk-along interviews (approx. 25+). The 'helicopters' are employees of Ymere and policemen, as these actors have a clear overview of what is going on in this neighbourhood. The interviews with key players were conducted among those who are personally involved in the neighbourhood (visitors and residents, but also shop employees). The interviews were semi-structured as this thesis deals with the opinions of people, which can be very personal. Therefore, the interviews among visitors and residents should be comfortable so people are more likely to open up (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As the conversations were held in their own neighbourhood, openly on the streets, people may feel safe and 'at home' and may therefore freely talk about the various themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The interviews will be constructed in such a way, that first it is clear how intense the connection to the neighbourhood is (how long someone lives there, or how many times visiting).

The 'helicopters' were purposively selected through information read on the topic. I have also used network-sampling as my first interview was an interview and a guidance tour at the same time. The interviewee introduced me to shop owners, and the local police officer which I could speak to afterwards. Hereby I used the network of a previous interviewee in order to become familiar with other potential interviewees (Carrington, Scott & Wasserman, 2005). The first

interviews were settled for by requesting them for an interview by e-mail. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours. During the tour through the neighbourhood it was too complicated to record, as it consisted of many background information, handshakes and small-talk about the neighbourhood and my thesis.

The data will be categorized according to the different topics within the discourses. These are: economic prosperity, displacement, crime and safety, social mix, and attracting visitors.

4.4 - Data analysis

In order to analyse media articles and academic literature I will need a theory backed-fundament of processing articles. The following toolbox, developed by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meijer requires care and disciplinary attention, so that every article will be analysed with minimized bias (Wodak & Meijer, 2009). This toolbox is developed for media articles, but can also be applied to academic literature, and interview data.

1. Processing material for the structure analysis, e.g. of the entire selected discourse strand of a newspaper/magazine
 - a. General characterization of the newspaper: political localization, readership, circulation etc.
(Academic literature --> general info on writer/researcher)
(Interviews --> general info of interviewee)
 - b. Overview of the medium in question reviewing six years of the selected theme
 - i. *List of articles covered which are relevant to the theme with corresponding particulars of the bibliographic data: abbreviated note form on the theme;*
 - ii. *Allocation of single themes to thematic areas (concerning the political discourse strand, for instance, to the following sub-themes: 'economic prosperity', 'social mix', 'displacement', 'crime and safety', and 'attracting visitors'..*
 - c. Summary of 1a and 1b: determination of the discourse position of the newspaper/magazine/scientific literature/local narrative

For the analysis of the results I will categorize the discourses according to the position of the discourse (pro-gentrification or against-gentrification). Within these discourses there are multiple reasons to be identified as why the actor, media or academic adds to this discourse. Therefore, I will categorize the reasons accordingly to the themes: Economic prosperity, Social mix, Displacement, Crime and Safety, and Attracting visitors. When there are other reasons than these to add to a discourse, this will be mentioned as this might give new insights in the way gentrification is looked at.

Chapter 5 – Contextualizing the case study

In order to start researching different discourses regarding gentrification in Amsterdam it is of utmost importance to know what is going on in Amsterdam and Van der Pek. Hence, the context will be sketched here. In the first paragraph the goals and directions Amsterdam is trying to achieve and pursue are outlined, in the second paragraph we will look more closely to the Van der Pekbuurt.

5.1 - Amsterdam in transition

§5.1.1 – Structural Vision Amsterdam 2040

In order for a structural vision to apply to the current situation, it is important to know the contextual situation of a city. The way the council of Amsterdam is sketching the current situation is important, as measures are often taken in order to support the strong aspects, and to find solution for negative aspects.

Amsterdam is a low-lying metropole in a landscape dominated by water. It has an historic city centre with canals that are known over the entire world. Besides, Amsterdam has an international image of a liberal moral. In the 17th century it was the world's centre; nowadays it is a global city with an irresistible power of attraction (Nijman, 1999). The role of cities has changed drastically in the past few decennia. More than half of the world's population is now living in cities. The influx to the city is seen everywhere, from Vancouver to Hong Kong, and the same counts for Amsterdam.

However, cities haven't always been this attractive to live in. Up to the late 1970's the city had fallen out of grace. It was no longer a desired place to live, as it was no longer the place where chances were found. Generally, when you had the possibility to live in a rural area, you would do so. In the late 1970s there was a turning point (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008). The notion of the fact that the drivers of the economy were increasingly found in, and close to, the city was acknowledged. Not in every city, though. In Amsterdam this was, and increasingly is, the case.

According to research of the Dutch Planbureau voor de leefomgeving (2014) the region of Amsterdam is expected to grow in the decennia to come, while other regions of the Netherlands are already showing a shrinking population. People are coming to Amsterdam to work on their future: personal development, jobs, a partner or even people in the same situation. People come by themselves, together or with their families. Amsterdam was, and is, a place with high dynamics regarding its population. This is what has made Amsterdam the city it currently is. It makes the metropole Amsterdam the economic engine of the Netherlands.

The role of economic engine of the Netherlands is a positive development for Amsterdam and its region, but it also brings along responsibilities. In order to keep this engine running smoothly it is important to properly accommodate those who add to the engine. According to the council of Amsterdam it is the wrong choice to accommodate those outside of the region of Amsterdam. This choice would lead to a 'compact deconcentration', increasing traffic-congestion, investments in infrastructure and fragmentation of the landscape. Amsterdam and its metropole-region are making, and want to make, an essential contribution to the Dutch economy by facilitating growth, for companies as well as for the people who work at those companies. Nevertheless, Amsterdam is also being tested due to the economic crisis. Therefore, this structural vision is also reviewed with regards to crisis resistance (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011).

Urban life is constructed by the interaction between the physical environment and its users. The physical environment invites people to come to Amsterdam to live, work and recreate. The presence of a wide variety of facilities is one of the pull-factors of Amsterdam. A comfortable bench in a nice, tidy park, a cosy community centre, and good coffee within walking/cycling-distance from home are examples of these facilities. All the people working, living and recreating in Amsterdam are giving shape and colour to the physical environment. Besides, they initiate ideas: starting a company, initiate a neighbourhood-association or use the park as a place to work. And especially: these people unite, all over the place, accidentally or deliberately. That is what makes the urban life of Amsterdam. It is that, what makes Amsterdam a city of chances, of possibilities to climb upwards in life, to emancipate. This is all made possible by the countless possibilities to learn, to study, to work or any other way to manifest yourself.

According to the Amsterdam local government people are the potential of Amsterdam. Jurists, tilers, comedians, nurses, professors, they are all to be found in Amsterdam. People with very specific skills and knowledge. The economy is dependent on this human capital. This is why the factors and wishes for establishment are getting increasingly important for these people. Companies are establishing themselves on places where they can recruit sufficiently qualified employees. Amsterdam is such a place. A good city for people is a good city for companies, and vice versa.

The city of the future is a city that is people-centred. The municipality should meet the demands for housing, maintain the economic dynamics and keep the surrounding environment green. Because space in the city is scarce, the municipality should use it intensively. Intensified land use is not a goal on its own, as it should not be at the expense of quality of living and the environment. The densification of the inner city also leads to investments in public transport, as this mode of transport is a more efficient form of transport when coping with a high pressure on space.

Furthermore, the quality of life in the city is, for an important part, determined by the living environment and by greenery, water and beautiful public space. For this reason, 'citystreets' and 'citysquares' are getting special attention. Also, there are designated 'metropolitan places' in which the user-friendliness of public space is of high importance. Also children and families should be cherished by creating more relaxed environments within the city. This can be done by keeping in mind neighbourhood-facilities, sporting facilities and childcare when making new plans. These plans can be integrated in the expansion or renovations of housing.

The inner city is popular as living area, but also for economic establishments. The architectural qualities of the inner city, the '19th-century Gordel' and 'Gordel '20-'40' are valued and protected. Areas outside the city centre are left behind, and less affluent people and functions are driven out from the city centre. Amsterdam is actively trying to not let the social-economic differences increase even more. The attractiveness and the amount of facilities should be ensured, and strengthened when possible. The attention for the architectural qualities is growing. In urban renewal plans the housing stock is actively dealt with: demand is changing, and therefore supply should too. By doing focussed investments the different parts of the city can be used to their full potential. This does not mean that the mixed living environment from the city centre should be exported to outside the city centre. It is about investment in public space, especially greenery, and to offer possibilities for the establishment of strong landmarks. Enhancing the socio-spatial structures outside the city centre, and using the full potential of these areas helps Amsterdam to be a good city for everyone (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011).

People and companies thus come together in cities. Worldwide cities develop themselves, and increasingly they are the engines of the national economy. Metropole-regions are not just extraordinary because of their high degree of facilities and companies. Metropole-regions also tend to have a high gross regional product, and a relatively high labour productivity. Besides, these regions also grow faster than the national average. The causes for this fast growth is clear: high degree of specialisation, innovation, excellent opportunities for education, and economies of scale. Also the reappraisal of artisanal sectors is one of the major developments within metropole-regions.

The spatial challenge Amsterdam is facing is directly in line with economic success. Therefore, it is of high importance to maintain sufficient space for economical functions. The power of Amsterdam's economy is diversity. This should be cherished and strengthened. The Amsterdam economy is known for its strong combination of prosperous economic sectors: ICT, creative industries, financial and entrepreneurial services, life sciences, trade and logistics, tourism and congresses and food, fish, and flowers. It is important to try to make these sectors as sustainable

as possible. But, what is also important for Amsterdam: What are the requirements for these sectors to stay in Amsterdam, and in what kind of environment do their employees want to live?

§5.1.2 – Four robust movements

In order to keep Amsterdam economically strong and sustainable the city council have proposed multiple directions for spatial developments that can be seen as ‘four robust movements’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011). I will summarize the proposed movements below.

Rollout city centre

The highly urban centre area is opt for more intensified use. Therefore the city centre is expanding, even across the ring road A10 and the IJ. These developments are the most direct result of the enormous attraction of Amsterdam. People, companies and institutions settle as close as possible to the core.

However, space is scarce and therefore the orientation of companies and people is expanding. The revitalisation of the 19th-century Gordel is no longer the only result of high interest in the city centre. Increasing interest in potential areas like the Northern IJ-banks, Zeeburgereiland and the Gordel '20-'40 is quickly emerging. These interests are never uncontested as many spatial claims are set. Therefore, the rollout of the city centre demands careful considerations whether which claim can provide an economically strong and sustainable city.

The spatial claims vary from new highly urban areas, to ‘citystreets’ and ‘citysquares’, and from a new role of transport to highrise and rollout of the city centre.

The new highly urban areas are the result of the expansion of the housing stock of Amsterdam. This expansion is too complex to realise in the city centre, and should therefore rollout to adjacent neighbourhoods. These adjacent neighbourhoods are not yet highly urban, but space will be intensified, and therefore these neighbourhoods will develop to be highly urban. The ‘citystreets’ and ‘citysquares’ are playing a big role in the enhancement and development of the rollout of the city centre. Think of them as canals flowing from the city centre to new highly urban areas. Due to these concepts the new highly urban areas will become serious part of the expanding city centre. Also the new role of transport adds to an expanded city centre. The rollout of the city centre asks for a new role of the car. When space has to be intensified for various facilities, it is important to not use this space for the parking of cars. The area in which the pedestrian and cyclist are most important is therefore increasing. However, this can only be maintained when public transport is prioritized. Lastly, highrise buildings will be promoted as this enables high usage of space. Due to the canals being a World Heritage Site (UNESCO), it is not allowed to build highrise within 2km’s

of these canals. In the map below, this boarder is illustrated. Across these boarders highrise is being promoted.

Interweaving the metropolitan landscape and the city

The second robust movement is the interweavement of the metropolitan landscape and the city. Amsterdam is surrounded by a diverse landscape. This landscape reaches far into the city through structures of green. These add to the aesthetics of the city, and enable the liveability in a dense city. The ambition within this structural vision is not only to expand the build assets of a city, but expand the green structures too.

Ever from the Golden Century people recreated in the region around Amsterdam, mostly on estates. In the current situation the green structures are an assembly of large parks, like Amsterdamse Bos and Spaarnwoude, and historical cultural landscapes, like Amstelland and the Tuinen van West. Many of these are relatively close to the city and therefore easily accessible by bike. Making these green entities accessible by bikes relieves the pressure on motorized traffic infrastructure and enhances the recreational character of these areas.

Green structures provide peace and calmness, however the scores for these attributes are rated lower than the Dutch average. The reason for this is the immense impact of the city of Amsterdam, and its location. Amsterdam wants to improve these weaknesses by promoting slow traffic (cycling, walking) and public transport. Also the quality and diversity of the green structures may need an impulse.

Amsterdam sees its surrounding as a metropolitan landscape, meaning a landscape that is complementing the city, whereby the wishes of its inhabitants are melting together with the character of this landscape. Mostly, this comes forth out of the cultural-historical identity of the area. The future of this metropolitan landscape should include aspects of adventure, story-telling, multiple layers, imagery, monuments, geographical and ecological values, products, activities, events, and temporary as well as permanent functions. These aspects can be filled in as teagardens on the property of a farm, or facilities for big events like festivals. Assigning different functions to different green structures is an important strategy in improving the quality of Amsterdam's green entities. By this diversification the pressure on green structures will be dispersed.

Rediscovery of the waterfront: The IJ central

The idea of this 'robust movement' is the renewed awareness of the richness that entities of water offer Amsterdam. This richness offers a variety of functions: space for (economic) development, experience value, and possibilities for recreation. Water is the foremost aspect that makes

Amsterdam differ from other metropolises. Due to the developments on the banks of the IJ, IJburg, Amsterdam North, and the relation with Zaanstad, the IJ is getting a more and more central position in Amsterdam. The IJ is going to function as 'watersquare' or waterpark, while at the same times it remains to be among the busiest inland waterways.

Within the development of the water entities multiple major directions are to be identified: the modernisation of the harbour, the further urbanisation of IJburg, but also the ecological values of the IJ in combination with water- and coastal recreation. Another point on Amsterdam's agenda is climate adaptation and mitigation, for obvious reasons stated in the waterfront section.

In their structural vision they mention that their priorities for the next ten years are projects that are already initiated like Overhoeks, Buiksloterham, the NDSM-werf, Houthavens, Zeeburgereiland and the second phase of IJburg. On the Western banks of the IJ the focus is on economic development of the harbour, while on the Eastern banks of the IJ the focus is on the interaction between the city and recreation.

Internationalisation of the South flank

The last of the major movements is the development of Amsterdam's South flank, in which major physical changes are to be identified. The driving forces behind these physical changes are Schiphol Airport, and the strategic location within the conurbation 'Randstad' along with the existing infrastructure. The South flank flows over in the corridor 'Amsterdam-Utrecht', adjacent to the highway A2, where lots of economic prosperity is found. The South flank of Amsterdam is a concatenation of large-scale projects: the expansion of Schiphol Airport, the development of the 'Zuidas' and the intensification of 'Zuidoostlob'. Railway-station 'Amsterdam Zuid' is becoming one of the major public transport nodes of the Netherlands.

Many of the aforementioned projects are still in construction, and new initiatives are rapidly added to the agenda: The development of the Zuidas-Schiphol corridor, the increased urbanisation of Buitenveldert, and the adornment of the Amsterdam Bosscheg and Amstelscheg.

The South flank of Amsterdam has a lot to offer. Facilities like the Johan Cruijff ArenA, AFAS live, as well as the larger shopping malls are to be found in the South. Developments in the Southeast direction have always been a bit troubled. The Southeast has been fragmented due to the infrastructure in the direction of the Netherlands' centre. This has led to ad-hoc-developments and receptivity regarding sports- and leisure-facilities. The Zuidas is not located where it is without reason. This quarter of Amsterdam has the most international image. It is, together with Schiphol, one of the main locations for future economic development.

5.2 – Contextual Situation Van der Pekbuurt

This paragraph focusses on the history and development of the case study-area, the Van der Pekbuurt, a neighbourhood in Amsterdam-Noord. The first section will be about the early years of this neighbourhood, mainly focussing on why this neighbourhood was built. Secondly the developments will be examined that have shaped the neighbourhood up till the renovations. In the last part the current interests in the neighbourhood will be briefly outlined. What is the vision of the housing corporation Ymere for this neighbourhood?

§5.2.1. – 1903 till 1926 - The construction of the Van der Pekbuurt

As a result of the industrial revolution in the second half of the 19th century, many people moved to cities (Obdeijn & Schrover, 2008). Just like many other cities, Amsterdam was encountering problems due to a shortage of housing. Amsterdam's city centre got increasingly crowded in the late 1890s and early 1900s, and the living conditions were poor. In order to counter the housing shortage that troubled Amsterdam, a new commission was founded. The aim of this new commission was to come up with a plan to expand Buiksloterham and Nieuwendammerham (Swart, 1990). In 1903 a plan was proposed: relocation of industries that were more and more located in the city centre, due to the expansion of Amsterdam. And so it happened. The industries were relocated and the vacant land was to be used for either a neighbourhood for prosperous citizens, or for a working class neighbourhood (Swart, 1990). However, the construction of a neighbourhood for prosperous citizens was calculated to be more expensive. It was thought to be more expensive as the commission considered it necessary to build a bridge between the city centre and Amsterdam-Noord, because the more prosperous citizen was working and enjoying the cultural life in the city centre. On the other side, when the neighbourhood would be allocated to the working class only a ferry would suffice (Schade, 2010). The working class was expected to work for new industries recently located on the cities' borders, and therefore had less interest in a quick connection to the city centre. As the housing shortage among the working class was higher, this option was favoured to be executed, and so it happened. The industries were relocated between 'het IJ' and the 'Johan van Hasseltkanaal', and the new urban expansion was allocated in between. Later the Van der Pekbuurt turned out to be part of this urban expansion (Vermeer, Rebel & Stissi, 2010).

The construction of the Van der Pekbuurt is quite interesting as it is one of the first neighbourhoods that was experimenting with social housing. The living conditions of the working class were aimed to be improved. In 1926, the construction was finished and Van der Pek counted 1.399 dwellings (Swart, 1990). As can be seen in the picture, the Van der Pekstraat functions as the main axis of the neighbourhood. The Van der Pekstraat is crossed by the Heimansweg and

together they divide the neighbourhood in four divisions. Right in the middle of the four parts a square and some shops were established (Schade, 2010).

§5.2.2 – 1926 till 2011 – Development of Van der Pek

After the completion the neighbourhood had a good reputation and retained this for a long time (Swart, 1990). People, especially those in need of social housing, were enjoying life at Van der Pek and it became a really popular neighbourhood for the working class to live. However, this reputation has not been retained until today (Swart, 1990).

The neighbourhood had received major blows during the Second World War. The Allies had planned a bombing on a factory that was located next to the neighbourhood. The bombing was unsuccessful as all the 440 bombs ended up on the Van der Pekbuurt, killing up to 200 residents and (partly) destroying many dwellings. Despite the economic crisis after the war, the renovation of the neighbourhood begun quickly after. However, due to the structural renovations in Amsterdam as a result of war attention was paid to quantity, instead of quality. Many prefabricated components were used to speed up the renovation process. This attention for quantity instead of quality, however, is not the reason behind the decreased reputation (Swart, 1996).

For a part the fall in reputation has been the result of deferred maintenance. The decreasing condition of the dwellings up to the 1990s led to restorations throughout the neighbourhood. Restoration was preferred over modernisation, as rents would rise when dwellings would be modernised (Swart, 1990).

Of course, a site does not only change due to developments from within, also developments from adjacent areas are of influence. The current interest in the Van der Pekbuurt is not something that emerged only recently. The neighbourhood was selected via the 'Monumenten Selectie Project' (Monumental Selection Project) to become a 'Beschermd Stadsgezicht' (protected townscape). Politics, however, have opposed this nomination as owners of dwellings that are marked as protected townscapes are able to increase rent with 15% if its proven that money has been spend on maintenance.

The focus on Amsterdam-Noord, where the Van der Pekbuurt is located, has not gone by unnoticed. In the 'Structuurplan Amsterdam 2000' it is described that Amsterdam-Noord should focus on urbanisation and its development towards a metropolitan area. Although the writers do not speak about the Van der Pekbuurt specifically, they do write about the area the neighbourhood belongs to. In order to develop the area into a metropolitan area it is considered necessary to enlarge and improve the housing stock, create more space for socially mixed areas, all in a higher density than before.

In the in 2011 released 'Structuurvisie: Amsterdam 2040' the Van der Pekbuurt is taken into specific account. The areas surrounding the Van der Pekbuurt are currently being constructed or renovated. Multiple projects regarding urban expansion are implemented, mainly focussed on the supply of residential functions and facilities that provide services for (new) inhabitants. The Van der Pekstraat, the main axis of the neighbourhood, is in the structural vision seen as a main component of 'rolling out' the city centre. More facilities and increased interconnectedness with the current city centre has its impact on the neighbourhood. Increased popularity of neighbourhood attracts other classes than merely the working class.

§5.2.3 - 2011 - 2017+ - Current developments

As mentioned earlier, different parties hold interest in the Van der Pekbuurt. The main party is Ymere, the housing corporation that owns the housing stock of pretty much the whole of Van der Pekbuurt. Of course, also the current inhabitants have a vision of how they would like to see the neighbourhood develop. Also the 'Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening Amsterdam' has a vision about how the neighbourhood should be developed. In this paragraph there will be shed light on each vision.

Although all of Van der Pek is under the supervision of Ymere (H. Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017), the municipality still has indirect influence on the neighbourhood. Ymere has to work within borders set up by the municipality (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017). The idea of using the Van der Pekstraat as 'citystreet' is imposed upon Ymere. Ymere's plans for the neighbourhood have changed drastically over the past years. When at first demolition was thought to be the best solution for the poor condition of the houses now only renovation has calls for the future. Plans for demolition were abandoned due to significant critique expressed by inhabitants (Zonneveld, 2014). Plans for renovation were made and the neighbourhood was split among several phases in which renovation would take place.

Recently, Ymere finished the renovation of phase I and II. During these renovations, the original inhabitants were temporarily housed in other dwellings of Ymere (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017). The choice was up to them whether they returned or not. Daniel Gaulard, Ymere's neighbourhood manager of Van der Pek, told that the other housing blocks will be renovated when funding is available.



Figure 2 - Renovation completed (left), to be renovated (right). Source: Author

As seen in figure 3 and 4 the difference between the renovated dwellings and the original dwellings is easily recognized. They also have brought back the original horizontal, yellow lines on the houses like they had before being bombed. This way Ymere is also taking historical and architectural aspects in mind while renovating. The colours (orange/yellow) are the original colours as Jan Ernst van der Pek had used (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017).

But, the vision of Ymere is not ONLY solely taking the physical environment into account. The social mix in the neighbourhood is something they try to work on and has been improved in the recent months. Daniel Gaulard states that 'Ymere would like to see students next to original inhabitants, and an old couple, next to a young family who just moved in'. Ymere is trying to reach a diverse range of possible new inhabitants by promoting the houses to different audiences. But, the major requirement for them to qualify is their yearly income has to be within the range of €22.200,- and €40.349,-. (H. Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017). Hafida Oucheikh, real estate agent of Van der Pek, mentions a growing demand for housing in Van der Pek among households with higher incomes than the aforementioned requirements, but Ymere is currently not able to meet this demand. Hafida Oucheikh mentions that this growing demand, however, is not regarded as a threat to the current inhabitants. This growing popularity increases chances for a social mix and a healthy neighbourhood (H. Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017).



figure 4 - Renovation completed (left), to be renovated (right). Source: Author

Regarding the facilities in the neighbourhood, Ymere is working within the boundaries set by the municipality. In collaboration with the current inhabitants of Van der Pek facilities were chosen that meet the demand of current residents (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017). But, it is not just the inhabitants of Van der Pek that are making use of these new facilities. People

from other neighbourhoods also visit Van der Pek for a drink or a bite (H. Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017). Daniel Gaulard mentions that the increased popularity of Overhoeks, an adjacent neighbourhood, trickles down onto Van der Pek. And, with the Van der Peksquare as main attraction, this works pretty well (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017).



Figure 5 - Van der Peksquare East. Source: Author

The Van der Pekbuurt has developed itself into a lively area where people like to live and recreate. However, as mentioned in the literature review, not everyone experiences this change the same. Due to the recent socio-economic impulses Van der Pek is gentrifying rapidly. Therefore, media and residents are actively engaged in this process, making this case extremely suitable for a discourse analysis regarding gentrification.

Chapter 6 – Results of Discourse Analysis

In this chapter the results of the discourse analysis will be outlined. As mentioned in the methodology the different discourses in academic literature, media and local discursive productions will be identified. The first division is based on convergent or divergent ideas (pro- and against-gentrification). Within this division the arguments are categorized according to the categories found in academic literature. First, I will briefly show that gentrification in Van der Pek cannot be denied by using literature, media articles and interviews. The structure of each argument begins with claims from academic literature, as these are proven arguments. These will then be connected to what I have found in media articles and my interviews. This way the converging ideas of different actors are systematically categorized within each discourse.

6.1 – The rise of Noord and Van der Pek

Amsterdam became increasingly popular as city to live and work in.

“Researchers among middle-class households have pointed out that urban life is on the rise, as a response to the opportunities and difficulties of modern family life” (Milikowski, 2012).

But then, what makes Noord, and Van der Pek, interesting?

“In the absence of affordable housing for families, and an even bigger absence of affordable housing including a garden, young families have taken the step to the North” (Milikowski, 2012).

Especially the Van der Pekbuurt is popular and is considered to be one of the frontlines of gentrification in Amsterdam:

“The Van der Pekbuurt is one of the frontlines of gentrification, the process of upgrading which dispersed from the Jordaan all over Amsterdam since the seventies. Old, ‘worn-out’ neighbourhoods are being rediscovered, upgraded, and taken by new inhabitants. A process that is the result of success, says Jan Rath. In many ways Amsterdam fares well. It is a popular city with lots of activity. Therefore, the pressure on the city is gigantic” (Meershoek, 2015).

This is also something that is recognized by Ymere, the local housing corporation.

“What I recognize is that a lot of people want to live in Van der Pek, also people with a higher income. There is a growing demand for rental housing” (Hafida Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017).

Aforementioned, there are at least two sides to a story. These discourses are elaborated upon in the next paragraphs. Just like the literature review, I will start off with the results of the ‘pro-gentrification’-side of the story.

6.2 – Gentrification changes Van der Pek for the better

§6.2.1. – Economic prosperity

Generally, an influx of more affluent and/or educated residents is beneficial for cities. This is expressed by an increasing number of residents who are able to pay their taxes (without support from the state), are able to purchase local goods and services, and are able to represent the city in political processes (Byrne, 2002). This is acknowledged by Floor Milikowski (2013) in her article ‘Te duur voor de middenklasse’ (Too expensive for the middle class):

“The good news is that the salaries in successful cities in almost every sector of the labour market have risen. In a city with lots of knowledge and creativity the production level, and therefore the revenues and cash flows, increases” (Milikowski, 2013).

Gentrification is seen as a sign of economic prosperity. Money starts to flow into a neighbourhood as result of the influx of human capital (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). This leads to the renovation and beautification of buildings and other physical features, and the establishments of new facilities. Due to all these upgrades, the value of property increases. The increase of property value, also means property taxes are rising, and on its turn municipal funding rises with it (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005).

“Gentrification offers, next to often private, public investments in the cities’ quality more advantages. It creates job opportunities, increases participation, the value of property increases and therefore municipal revenues of property taxes too, besides the support for more facilities increases” (Gadet, 2015).

“You can see a lot of new facilities establishing here. For us [Pek&Kleren] the growing popularity of Noord means business. Years ago this concept would not have worked here, but the growing curiosity with regards to Noord enlarges the carrying capacity of trendy stores. It is nice to be a pioneer in a upcoming neighbourhood” (employee Pek&Kleren, personal communication, August 29th, 2017).

Therewithal, cities that gentrify are often acknowledged for their ‘smart growth’. This smart growth implies that cities do not sprawl, as new or renovated housing is increasingly provided close to urban centres, therefore preventing urban sprawl and pressure on rural areas (Byrne, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). It can therefore be seen as a stabile development that can prevent a continuing spiral of decline (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005).

“Renovation of Van der Pek is simply necessary in order to prevent an inhumane living environment. Ever since demolition got off-track, we focussed on a proper renovation of all the dwellings.” (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017)

§6.2.2. - Displacement

Displacement is often used as argument against gentrification. But, this is not always the case, especially in the Netherlands.

“The cliché is that hip artists and highly educated young urbanists expel the poor from their homes, and that the old neighbourhood bar is replaced by the umpteenth yuppie coffee shop. This is simply not true, according to Jos Gadet (Director of spatial planning at municipal service of Space and Economics” (Metz, 2015).

Besides, the seemingly cliché of people being forced to move out of their homes is too one-sided either:

“We have rental protection here, in the Netherlands. Nobody is forced to move out of their social housing, besides rents cannot suddenly increase with hundred percent, like in American cities. Around 20 and 40% is leaving voluntarily and the expenses of moving are often reimbursed, according to Jos Gadet” (Metz, 2015).

This is also acknowledged by one of the residents that is already living in Van der Pek for over forty years:

“I am not going anywhere, I have lived here for 40 years. But, I am already in my 80’s, and so is my wife. Ymere knows they should not bother trying to kick me out. When me and my wife cannot take care of ourselves anymore we will move into a nursery home anyway. Why try to fight us, when you can also wait? Of course, people don’t want to move out, especially if they only pay €300,- rent, but I’m not scared of these developments.” (Resident Van der Pek, personal communication, August 29th 2017).

§6.2.3. – Social mix

Previously homogenous neighbourhoods are increasingly diversified, as social mix is increasing as well. There are three arguments identified that promote achieving a decent social mix in a neighbourhood (Schoon, 2001). First, as middle-class households are more affluent, they have a better connection to public resources and therefore attract a more diverse range of facilities to a neighbourhood. Therefore neighbourhoods with middle-class households are expected to fare better than those with only low-class households. Secondly, the ‘trickle-down’ effect would apply

to neighbourhoods with different socioeconomically classes. This means that low class households also benefit from the capital middle-income classes bring along, as they are more able to support a local economy. Thirdly, it is said that a neighbourhood with a diverse social mix is the best way to increase social cohesion and interaction (Lees, 2008).

“Ymere and District Noord were constantly investing in the neighbourhood, before as well as after the battle of Ymere and the residents who were fighting against demolition, and for the right of return after the renovations. The battle was won by the residents. And all the time, everyone was convinced that this should become a neighbourhood where everyone was welcome, and to get to know each other – an example for Amsterdam. Since then, hard work has been done. By nice people with heart for the neighbourhood. Entrepreneurs as hospitable as Mick (Il Pecorino) and, Mike and Kees (Café Keppler) are hard to find. When possible, they search for staff in Noord” (Keulemans, 2017).

An employee of Thisissoul Skateshop explains many shops are trying to do their best to contribute to the Van der Pek community. Knowing many of the residents are poor, the skateshop is lending out second-hand skates for the kids to play with, free of charge. This ensures some sort of enthusiasm throughout all social layers of the neighbourhood” (employee Thisissoul skateshop, personal communication, August 29th, 2017).

Tracy Metz (2015) offers a more nuanced opinion on the benefits of achieving a social mix in a neighbourhood. Nonetheless, she sees it as a positive development:

“People from different income groups do not necessarily visit each other more often in gentrified neighbourhoods. But, their kids do go to the same school and play with each other. In a mixed neighbourhood you simply have more chance on contact with people from outside your own income group” (Metz, 2015).

§6.2.4. – Crime and safety

Unoccupied houses in gentrifying neighbourhoods have more chances to become occupied, therefore reducing the amount of vacant houses in the neighbourhood. Also, crime rates tend to decrease in gentrifying neighbourhoods (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). This is something Hans de Zwaan, local police officer, noticed in Van der Pek:

“I am satisfied with the current developments in the neighbourhood. The future looks promising. I don’t have to intervene as much as I had to. There definitely is less criminality now.” (Hans de Zwaan, personal communication, June 8th, 2017).

Also the feeling of safety has changed throughout the years:

Even though he has been working there for only one year, he knows things have changed in the neighbourhood. "I've heard people saying they were scared of crossing this street [van der Pekstraat] twenty years ago, but it changed so much, people actually come here on purpose now" (employee Thisissoul skateshop, personal communication, August 29th, 2017).

§6.2.5. – Attracting visitors

A successful neighbourhood attracts more visitors, rather than only its residents.

"For years the North of Amsterdam was considered as vacant land on the other side of the water. But with Eye Filmmuseum, Tolhuistuin, and all sorts of creative initiatives it is changing into a top-location rapidly. Other neighbourhoods are envious" (Milikowski, 2012).

And..

"Stötzer, shortly living in Overhoeks, is visiting Van der Pek more frequently: 'We have discovered Van der Pek only recently. Our own neighbourhood is more of a wasteland, with all those housing blocks under construction. But at the market at the Mosplein it is nice, typically Amsterdam, and they have a playground where we go often. Actually, it is a beautiful neighbourhood. It just needs to be renovated. This is outdated'" (Van Hulten, 2010).

This is also something noticed by Hafida Oucheikh and entrepreneurs settled on the Van der Pekplein:

"The renovation has done a lot for Van der Pek. Not just in aesthetical values. You can see that there are more different people are visiting Van der Pek. Also people that do not live here, but stop by just to have a drink or bite on the Van der Pekplein" (H. Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017).

"Many people come to buy their bread here, also people that are not living in Van der Pek. I like the diversity of people that is coming here, but I must admit that it is more difficult to reach the original Northerners. But, it is gradually getting better" (Eric Dolzon, personal communication, June 8th, 2017).

The same opinion is shared by employees of Café Keppler:

"Café Keppler is, like, becoming a thing. People go to Van der Pek to grab a coffee at our Café. The Van der Pekplein is attracting visitors from all over Amsterdam. The neighbourhood is getting bigger,

in a relative way. Though, it remains difficult to attract the original Northerners, as they instantly designate us as 'hipster coffeeshop' or like our neighbours as 'extravagant artisan cheeseshop'. But then, what has changed? I think the bar has been lowered for everyone actually, while some of the original Northerners still think it is too high" (Employee Café Keppler, personal communication, August 29th, 2017).

And also by the original residents of Van der Pek:

"I am also taking city-tours to Amsterdam with my wife, even though I've lived here all my life. That is why I don't think it is bad for other people to visit Noord too. I want to see some of what is theirs, they want to see some of what is ours. That is how it goes. You do not have to be friends in order to visit each other's neighbourhoods" (Resident 6, personal communication, August 29th, 2017).

6.3 – Gentrification changes Van der Pek for the worse

§6.3.1. – Economic prosperity

Compared to others Noord is still leader, but that is all relatively. The absolute numbers of the social housing stock are shrinking nonetheless. And it not just the social housing stock that is affected. Also facilities are changing neighbourhoods.

"As the space for the new reigning class increases, the space for other classes is decreasing, says Jan Rath (urban sociologist). People don't want to pay €4,- for a cappuccino. The old population of Amsterdam is gradually replaced by a new population. Highly educated 'knowledge-workers' and entrepreneurs, the fuel for the contemporary knowledge-economy, are taking the places of the working class on which the urban economy leaned on during the industrial age" (Milikowski, 2017).

According to these media articles, gentrification seems to be making the housing market more shallow, by increasingly focussing on higher income groups. Van Eijck & Naafs (2016) confirm this by emphasizing that the social housing stock is shrinking due to various strategies:

"Also in Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague lots of social housing disappeared due to sales, liberalisation, or demolition" (Van Eijck & Naafs, 2016).

Besides, gentrification is not a new development in Amsterdam. It has happened in other parts of the city too. This could mean that the problem is relocated every time a neighbourhood is upgraded.

"I have heard that when the Jordaan transformed from a white working class neighbourhood into a neighbourhood for merely the rich, the people from the Jordaan moved to the North. And now the

Northerners are being displaced to IJburg, Purmerend and Almere, so that yup's can buy their renovated social housing, to subsequently complain about their new neighbourhood in which they get 'terrorised' by small children" (Hutak, 2017).

"Within the borders of the municipality higher concentrations of poverty are emerging, especially on the city's edges. This relates to an important issue: gentrification does not obviate poverty, rather it moves it. Out of sight from the middle class. A so called 'waterbed effect'" (Hochstenbach, 2017).

The relocation of poverty is not the only negative side to displacement. The false dilemma of the only solution to a deteriorating neighbourhood being gentrification is simply narrowing down the 'box' of thinking.

"Eventually, gentrification is a process of exclusion and inequality. The false dilemma between either gentrification or deterioration hinders the search for ways to make urban development socially just. Like realising an affordable housing stock, accessible for a diverse audience" (Hochstenbach, 2017)

§6.3.2. - Displacement

As mentioned in the literature review one of the main disadvantages of gentrification is the increase in rent prices. The two major consequences are people either have to pay a larger share of their income on rent, or are displaced to other parts of Amsterdam, or even to other cities. Eventually, with property prices rising, affordable housing becomes increasingly scarce in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Therefore, success is not spread equally. Especially displacement is an issue that pops up in the media often. Milikowski (2013; 2017), Meershoek (2015) argue how displacement is a consequence of gentrification strategies, and is often not as beautiful as it may sound:

"In cities with a flourishing economy and a high degree of attracting the creative class, other classes are being gradually displaced. It is exactly the effect what critics had pointed out ten years ago. Although Richard Florida believed in a 'trickle down-effect', whereby also teachers, police officers, waitresses, cleaners, car mechanics, and construction workers would profit from the cities' economic success, the reality seems to be less beautiful (Milikowski, 2013).

"Prosperity is, of course, a good thing, Jan Rath emphasizes: 'there must be bread on the table'. But the success has a downside. Amsterdam is in a flow. The municipality and housing corporations are focussed on facilitating the 'better' people in the city: residents with a higher education, a higher income, a higher property value, and a style resembling that of decision-makers. It is a development in which people that are not hip, cool or high educated not or barely profit from" (Meershoek, 2015).

“The consequence of this development is that the ‘successless’, like Rath describes them, slowly but certainly are driven out of the city. ‘It has become a loaded term, but the policy-makers are definitely perpetuate population policy in the city. Officially, it is called the aim for the right social mix in the neighbourhood, but it comes down to a decrease of the amount of housing for low income households. Those people are more and more expelled towards the exit of the city, off to cheap housing in Purmerend or Almere” (Meershoek, 2015).

Ymere says that they cannot meet the demand of rental housing in the free sector (Oucheikh, personal communication, July 11th, 2017), but the social housing stock is shrinking nonetheless. On average, Van der Pek, and Noord in general, still has a high degree of social housing, but it cannot be denied that the stock is shrinking, which simply means there is less space for low income groups. Bas Kok confirms the shrink in the social housing stock:

“The percentage of social housing in Noord shrunk from 80 to 62% in ten years.(...) Yes, there is a decrease, but with a percentage of 62% Noord is still the leader in affordable housing” (Kok, 2017).

“We offer people the chance to come back when the renovation is finished. The rents do rise, but some are simply too low either way. We try our best at defending social rent, that is what we do in the first place. But, when rents are unexplainably low, the rent increase is relatively big.” (D. Gaulard, personal communication, June 8th, 2017)

§6.3.3. – Social mix

Furthermore, quantitative social mixing does not necessarily lead to a healthy or stable social mix. In other words, a socially diverse neighbourhood does not counter social segregation per definition, as conflicts might occur between original and new inhabitants (Smith, 2002; Andersson & Musterd, 2005).

“But still. Nobody looked for it, on the contrary, but: if you want to see where gentrification evolves into segregation this is the place be. Uncle Ali and Aunt Alie do not come here. They are very well aware that their territory ends at the market. Conversely, Pepijn and Janneke do not go to ‘Eetcafé No. 1’ at the Mosplein” (Keulemans, 2017).

“The influx of new inhabitants increased the quantitative social mix in the neighbourhood, but unfortunately, the qualitative mix still is a problem. The original inhabitants are not very welcoming to the new residents of Van der Pek. It is a segregated community in a beautiful neighbourhood” (Hans de Zwaan, personal communication, 8th June, 2017).

Most of the arguments in favour of social mixing are refuted in more recent debates about social mixing and gentrification. First of all, the settlement of middle- and high-income classes could lead

to the settlement of more facilities (i.e. Starbucks or other coffee shops), but low-income households usually have different expenditures than higher-income classes and could therefore lead to exclusionary feelings among the underprivileged (Van Crieelingen & Decroly, 2012).

“The district Noord and Ymere want more liveliness in the streets, and nobody opposes that idea. But, now expensive shops are establishing on Van der Pekstraat that do not benefit the residents. A vintage designer-boutique with purses of €70,-, an expensive skate shop or a luxury sandwich shop – the residents cannot afford these products as almost all houses are social housing” (Grimbergen, 2013).

“The amount of old shops is decreasing in the Van der Pekstraat. They are replaced by new, more expensive shops, but the residents of Van der Pek are not to be found in these shops often. “In this neighbourhood nobody is going to pay €6,- for a sandwich”” (Grimbergen, 2013).

Instead of social mixing leading to social cohesion and increased interaction, social mixing may lead to the opposite instead. Over time, gentrification could lead to a ‘deepening of social inequalities and spatial divisions’ (Uitermark & Bosker, 2014). The argument that social mix is leading to social cohesion is simply lacking proof (Slater, 2004). This forced social mixing leading to social inequalities is a much discussed topic in the media:

“But the original Northern people are not persuaded to visit Tolhuistuin yet, despite his ‘storytelling-evenings’ and dancing events. “It is taking off slower than thought in advance. The segregation is deeply-rooted” according to Chris Keulemans, former director of Tolhuistuin” (Milikowski, 2012).

“In reality, new residents see this diversity more as something to look at. They find it pleasant that a Moroccan shop is close by, but they will still buy their olives at Albert Heijn. The exotic touches merely serve as decor” (Meershoek, 2015).

And it is not solely the type of facilities in which segregation is identified. A split in type of people is also recognized:

“On the ferry behind Amsterdam Central Station you recognize them easily: the new Northerners. And the old ones too. The new are standing, regardless of the weather, out on the deck. The old Northerners are sitting inside. New rides Vespa. Old is recognized by their trusted Aprilia. For fun, you can count the training suits, after which you can count the custom-made suits and intellectual or artistic glasses. Then, jump to conclusions. Exactly. The North of Amsterdam is changing” (Van Hulten, 2010).

People seem to be increasingly aware of the effects of gentrification. Gentrification does not only change neighbourhoods, but also seems to be changing people's perspectives regarding each other:

"History repeats itself and nobody does anything. If it were only out of aesthetical interest. When it comes to the 'pimping' of poor neighbourhoods there seems to be only one universal plan: something with a shopping mall close to the metro station, and burgundy new buildings. A lack of inspiration and fucking ugly" (Hutak, 2017).

"And therefore is Noord the urban version of Cinderella: the stepchild of Amsterdam which finally fits the shoe, and everyone wants to be the prince that found the shoe first. Especially for those new, proud inhabitants I have only one message: Stay away. Haha. Kidding. Sometimes I frighten myself when I hear myself talking about new Northerners. Import, as we call them. "They change everything!", "Let them stay away, those seekers of happiness!", and my favourite: "Give Noord back to the Northerners". With regards to Noord, I spontaneously become a PVV-voter. And that is not weird, because Noord is my home. When I am on the ferry with my bike and moor on the North side, I probably feel what Donald Trump feels when he sees himself in the mirror in the morning: You sexy motherfucker" (Hutak 2017).

Some are wary of the problem, and see the future consequences of an increasingly segregated community:

"It is a problem wrapped as gift. The best coffee, pizza, cheese, pastry, bread and flowers of the city are to be found on Van der Pekplein. For now, there has not been chosen for Starbucks of Bagels&Beans. But the differences that made Noord Noord have been vanished. If we don't pay attention, the uniform red canopies might say: this square is not for everyone" (Keulemans, 2017).

6.4 – Summary of findings

After the collection, converging and categorization of the empirical data. There can be said that there are many different reasons to add to a discourse. The reasons do not have to be the same to add to the same discourse, but that is what strengthens the respective discourse. Beneath a short summary of the different layers of actors and their contribution to the respective discourse:

Discourse 1 – Pro-gentrification

Academics: A smaller share of the academics is in favour of gentrification. Those who do often focus on the economic benefits of gentrification, like Peter Byrne (2002) and Rowland Atkinson & Gary Bridge (2005). Other academics add to this discourse because they are debunking arguments about the negativity regarding displacement, like Jos Gadet. Other academics belong to this

discourse because of their beliefs in the way social mixing can lead to a better neighbourhood; Nicholas Schoon (2001) and Loretta Lees (2008). Few speak about the increased safety in gentrified neighbourhoods; Atkinson & Bridge (2005).

Media: Floor Milikowski and Tracy Metz are two research journalists who do see the advantages of gentrification. This does not imply they are choosing sides, rather it implies they add to this discourse. Further the media that adds to this discourse is often right-wing oriented and often write about the economic benefits of gentrification.

Local stakeholders: This discourse is the most reproduced discourse by local stakeholders of Van der Pek. This discourse is characterized by discursive reproductions focussing on increased economic prosperity, increased feelings of safety due to decreased crime rates, nuanced feelings of displacement, growing popularity of Van der Pek in Amsterdam, and social mix as catalyst for an increased sense of community.

Discourse 2 – Against-gentrification

Academics: A bigger share of the academics add to this discourse. The biggest reason for this is the displacement which affects poor families. Besides, the wealth that enters the neighbourhood does not benefit everyone. Especially Cody Hochstenbach (2015; 2017) writes about the negative aspects of the economic prosperity in a poor neighbourhood. Many write about displacement and social mixing; Neil Smith (1996), Johan Andersson & Sako Musterd (2005), Mathieu van Criekingen & Jean-Michel Decroly (2012), Justus Uitermark & Tjerk Bosker (2014), and Tom Slater (2002; 2004).

Media: The media writes a lot about the negative effects of gentrification. Increased prices for either housing and living, housing liberalisation, relocation of poverty, changing social atmosphere, displacement and social segregation are topics widely elaborated upon. Most of these articles were published in leftist newspapers.

Local stakeholders: There were very few local stakeholders who added to this discourse. The only concerns were the rent increase and the segregation between the original Northerners and the new residents.

In the next chapter I will conclude upon these results.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

In this chapter the main research question will be answered. Conclusions will be drawn from the results of the Foucauldian discourse analysis.

After outlining the results of the discourse analysis the time has come to conclude upon these and answer the main research question. The research question was as follows:

What discourses on gentrification are identified in academic literature and media, and how do these relate to the discourses identified in local discursive (re)productions?

There are two main discourses identified. But, simply dividing the discourses in pro and against would not suffice the variety of reasons within a discourse. Therefore the results were split up among certain topics that were identified in academic literature. All the discursive productions of academics, media and local stakeholders belonged, to a certain extent, to these categories.

Therefore can be concluded that the discourses identified in academic literature and media articles are, to a certain extent, are recognized in the discourses produced by local stakeholders. Therefore, multiple truths definitely exist. But some discourses are more prominent than others, differing per group of actors (academics, media and locals):

The pro-discourses is much more identified by local stakeholders than the negative discourse. The general feeling of the Van der Pek'ers regarding the effects of gentrification is positive. The fact that there is more written about the negative effects of gentrification in academic literature and the media can be explained by saying that the writers were more solution-driven than those who wrote about the positives of gentrification. Writing about problems is adding more information to a solution than writing about what is already assumed to be good. The fact that the negative side is less recognized by local stakeholders could mean that gentrification is advantageous for a neighbourhood and its inhabitants, but those who steer the gentrification process should never lose sight of the negativities. Gentrification is not the problem, spatial relocation of poverty is. Therefore, gentrification cannot be seen as a blueprint for successful neighbourhoods.

Chapter 8 – Discussion

The results were not as I expected them to be before I started the research. Due to much of the negativity read in academic literature and in media I would not have guessed the feeling in the neighbourhood would be rather positive. It really surprises me that what is written in much of the academic literature, but especially in media is not really recognized by the inhabitants of Van der Pek.

Logically, academic literature and media articles have a bigger reach than local discursive reproductions. Therefore discourses expressed in them are more easily read, heard or seen and are therefore more easily reproduced. This would be the explanation why my hypothesis was that local stakeholders of Van der Pek would be rather negative about their neighbourhood changing. Before starting, I was caught in what I had read in literature and media.

This shows that Foucault's notion of power is knowledge can be seen as applicable mechanism in this context. Due to the bigger reach of academics and media upon society (which can be seen as a form of power-relation) their findings and opinions can more easily trickle down upon society. Therefore, the discourses identified in media and academic literature can easily grow popular, and therefore be reproduced more often; the so-called snowball effect. Discourses on the local scale, reproduced by local stakeholders, seem to have a smaller reach, therefore having less power. This way, for outsiders it is easier to accept what media and academics are writing. This does not mean, in any case, that what media and academics are writing is false, it is their way of looking upon the phenomenon gentrification and its effects.

Nevertheless, due to the existence of different discourses it is possible to say that different truths are identified. The local discourses are more often a product of emotional experience or attachment with the subject (Van der Pek), while discourses identified in academic literature are a product of objective study on, sometimes, one implication of gentrification. Media acts differently, and political stance is of high influence on the way gentrification is discussed. Leftist media are more keen on identifying the social consequences of gentrification, while right wing media focusses more on the intrinsic value of neighbourhoods and success of Amsterdam.

The discourses do not let themselves to be categorised easily. Dividing the discourses vertically among groups (academics, media, local stakeholders) would not suffice and mainly would not be right. Neither can the discourses be divided horizontally (pro or against) as this would not give enough credit to the reasons why. It would, though, be fair to say that the discourses identified can be as intertwined, diagonal (so crossing groups and pro-against) entities like clouds, of which

the water particles are in various ways condensed from different sources. Put differently: discourses are made up of different discursive (re)productions from different entities of power (social relations, e.g.) that all have their own reason for adding to the discourse.

Within the gentrifying neighbourhood Van der Pek, the effects of gentrification are not very much seen as a problem or a negative development. The positive results of the renovations overshadow the displacement of the poor. Therefore I really have to agree with Jos Gadet, that gentrification is itself is not the problem, the spatial relocation of poverty is. Cities are becoming more popular to work and live in, and therefore housing corporations and municipalities should act accordingly. It is harsh to say, but shouldn't those who contribute much to society in the form of higher taxes, be rewarded? Is this the reason to explain away the displacement of the poor? No. But, if the poor in the neighbourhood are having a tough time opening up for change and mingle in with new, more wealthy citizens, shouldn't they live with like-minded people?

One of the biggest limitations of this study might be the one-sidedness of the data gathered. As the results pointed out, most of the interviewees had seen significant improvements in either sense of community, facilities, safety and physical quality of the neighbourhood. But, those who are really affected by the upgrade of the neighbourhood might not live there anymore. Therefore, some valuable, possibly negative, information might be not taken into account. These missing contributions might contribute to certain discourses identified. On the other hand, I was looking at the current discourses and did not research how much discourses have changed over a timespan of multiple years.

This would be an opportunity for further research. It would be interesting to get acquainted with those who couldn't or didn't return to their renovated homes due to the rent increase. Another idea for further research could be in the direction of a longer timespan comparison. One study can then be done before renovations or gentrifying developments, and one after and discuss the differences or resemblances found in the discourses. I think it is also interesting to research the significance of the power academics and media have when compared with power of local stakeholders. I do not say negativity around gentrification is 'fake news' or ungrounded, but the power of the media and/or academics is high and can therefore definitely create some sort of dominant discourse, which might not be reflecting what is felt in a neighbourhood.

Chapter 9 - Epilogue

I would like to use this epilogue to express the value of this research for my professional career. I chose this topic mainly out of interest in the changing socio-economic roles of cities. In my opinion, a thesis is something that should enrich your knowledge about a certain topic, but should also teach more valuable lessons that can be used in your career. This thesis certainly has added to my personal development. This is something I actually have discovered during my internship, and currently my job.

I am now working at Sweco, an engineering and consultancy company, which is primarily project-based. Within projects there are multiple tracks that are executed. For instance, I am now working on water-safety projects in Tiel. But, every spatial development does not only need a (technical) design. The way you deal with people living there, is just as important as a good design is. In Dutch the way of dealing with the local residents and other stakeholder is called 'omgevingsmanagement'. Speaking with people about how certain development may impact their daily lives, whether it is gentrification or dyke reinforcements, is extremely important. Of course, the design may be the best, technically seen, but it is the people that play the key role. They can make it, or break it.

This is something I have seen during my thesis. People like to be heard, and people want to be heard. Take the time to speak to them, it definitely enlarges the chances of successful implementation of a project-design. Due to my work now, it really feels like this thesis has been of great value. Value that exceeds the casual, new knowledge on gentrification I have gained. It has been a mean of learning how to deal with people in projects. After all, we work for them. It is their environment we hope to enhance.

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