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GENDER IN THE POST-FORDIST URBAN

The Gender Revolution in Planning and Public Policy

Marguerite van den Berg

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Gender in the Post-Fordist Urban

Abstract In this introductory chapter, I make the case for looking at the contemporary post-Fordist urban through a gendered lens. I introduce the key concepts genderfication and urban regeneration and outline the book. In the introduction, the main case of the book, the city Rotterdam in the Netherlands, is also introduced as an excellent case to investigate gendered aspects of the post-Fordist urban.

Keywords Gender · Post-Fordist urban · Rotterdam

Drinking Espressos, Playing in the Sun

Imagine a short film: the camera first captures a seagull crossing the blue sky. The camera lowers and brings into focus the quintessential urban image: a skyline and busy streets. A young man drinks an espresso on his balcony in the morning sun. A young woman on a terrace finishes her orange juice. A man in a turtleneck sweater folds a shirt in a fashionable boutique. We see modern art in a museum, people shopping for exotic foods, urbanites enjoying the summer sun in the park. Children are playing. The music accelerates, we see people getting off the metro, shopping, moving. We see mothers carrying children to the playground, children shouting and running, young women on the streets at night, a barman mixing drinks, a businessman on the backseat of a car.[1]

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The video shows Rotterdam, the Netherlands. It is a very particular representation. In this version of Rotterdam, people consume and play. Not so long ago, Rotterdam was promoted as the "work city": a city of industry and hardworking men. While these images have not entirely disappeared (although they are absent in this film), they are supplemented by representations of the consumption of the city. The 2011 film is part of the marketing campaign of Rotterdam. It is to showcase Rotterdam's most charming features and to attract visitors, businesses and new inhabitants. Like many other cities, Rotterdam struggles to move away from the industrial past and into a new future of affluence, or at least economic viability. Something else in the film stands out too: the images of women and in particular of mothers and children playing. Their prominence in this video is not coincidental. Children do, actually, make up quite a large portion of the Rotterdam population (COS 2012a). Rotterdam is the youngest city in the Netherlands and one of few in Europe that is not ageing. But more importantly: in Rotterdam, women, mothers and children play an important role in policy efforts to regenerate the city. The cheerful images of partying women, of babies, children and a merry-go-round serve a purpose. They advertise Rotterdam as a place for women and a place to raise children.

The video shows a *genderfying* city: a city in which space is produced for post-Fordist gender relations. In the decades after World War II, the city was far less imagined as a place for women and children. In the past half century gender relations have changed dramatically and this has definite, yet underexplored effects for the urban. The Fordist city functioned on the basis of women's unpaid suburban labour and on the basis of conceptions of women as inactive and place-bound, and of men as active and mobile. The Fordist city was, so to speak, the extreme spatial consequence of the sexual contract (Pateman 1988): a contract organizing the subordination of women into the private, reproductive and suburban realm and granting men access into the public, productive and urban realm. In the post-Fordist city, this sexual contract is fundamentally renegotiated and possibly abandoned (Adkins 2008). The enormous increase in women's participation in paid labour, the rise of dual-income families, the recent re-urbanization of families with children and the supposed "feminization" of urban labour markets have been and are fundamental for urban change in the past fifty years and constitutional to contemporary urbanism. However, in many accounts of the ascent of the entrepreneurial city, the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism or the postmodern city,

the gendered aspects of these changes are left out. However much the importance of gender for urban space has been noted by feminist scholars, the impact of these significant changes in urban gender relations in the "West" remains seriously under-researched as many accounts of re-urbanization and gentrification focus on class struggle and capital flows. These views are limited since, as Doreen Massey has noted: "There is a lot more determining how we experience space than what 'capital' gets up to" (1994: 148).

This book offers an exploration of the high-profile presence of women in the imagined urban in the "West". It looks at the contemporary urban as possibly feminized – or at least imagined as a space for women's liberation and family simultaneously. After decades of feminist urban theory, are we witnessing the ascent of a less sexist city? Has the confinement of women and children to the suburban private realm come to an end as a result of an unravelling sexual contract? Exactly what women and children are desired inhabitants and at what and whose cost? To understand the urban gender revolution and its spatial and policy translations, I develop the concept of genderfication. Building on theories of neoliberal productions of space, genderfication is a variation on the concept of gentrification. In general terms, gentrification is a process in which space is produced for more affluent users (cf. Hackworth 2002: 815). I define *genderfication* as the production of space for post-Fordist gender notions. As the empirical studies in the following chapters will show, genderfication is apparent in city marketing endeavours where women and families appear more prominently as urbanites. Genderfication can also be observed in urban planning: when, for example, housing is built specifically for urban families with children. These are important departures from a historic urban imaginary of masculine muscled manual labourers, high-rise buildings, family suburbs and industrial waterfronts. The concept of genderfication allows for an understanding of how important contemporary issues in urban studies (gentrification, the creative classes and cities' desire to attract them, the return of families to cities) are profoundly gendered. Without presupposing gendered unequal access to space or gendered agency in the production of space, it asks questions about the gendered dos and don'ts that space signifies (cf. Lefebvre 1991: 121; compare; Molotch 1993: 887). Moreover, genderfication as a process may hold potential for the creation of more gender-equal cities. The important questions that are to be answered in this book are then: How precisely? And: for whom exactly?

The Case: Rotterdam

In the four chapters, genderfication as a concept is further developed on the basis of empirical cases in urban theory, planning, marketing and social policy. Ranging from policy analysis to content analyses of marketing campaigns to ethnographic fieldwork, this empirical material is mostly (but not only) collected in the city of Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Zooming in on this particular city provides depth in the analysis of genderfication. Rotterdam is a strategic case to research the spatial and policy translations of the urban gender revolution. It can stand as an example of how other cities in the "West" are adapting to new gender relations. Rotterdam is also a strategic case to study the dynamics of a former industrial city aiming for a future beyond this industrial past. It is a case from which we can learn lessons that are more generally applicable for European former industrial cities struggling to establish a new economy. The point is not so much to generalize my findings as such (to say, for example, that what goes on Rotterdam, goes on elsewhere in the same way) but to *learn* from what I studied in this particular case (cf. Flyvbjerg 2006). My analysis of mechanisms of urban policy and logics of urban regeneration as well as genderfication processes can serve as searchlights for other scholars and analysis in other locations. In the Netherlands, Rotterdam has been the quintessential industrial city for decades. It rapidly expanded in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as a result of growing harbour activity and massive flows of people moving to Rotterdam to find work. When compared to other cities in the larger metropolitan area *De Randstad*, Rotterdam suffers most from deindustrialization and the long-lasting effects of the built 50s modernist city after World War II (in which Rotterdam was bombed). It is adjusting to the post-Fordist economy much slower than Amsterdam (the Dutch capital and only approximately 60 km away). And, importantly, this is experienced in government and public opinion as an important and urgent problem.

As a Rotterdammer, my own biography is very much tied up in the analyses in this book. Having grown up in a Rotterdam suburb with parents commuting to Rotterdam for work, I myself am now raising two children in the city. For my parents, settling down to have a family while my father worked full-time in Rotterdam meant moving to a suburb almost naturally. For me and my partner, combining full-time employment and children, urban living provides the convenient proximity of

public transport, childcare facilities, schools, shops and restaurants. I am therefore personally engaged with the issue of the genderfying city and Rotterdam in particular. Especially poignant in this respect is that I find myself in the awkward position of being the explicit desired inhabitant of Rotterdam: highly educated, part of a dual-earning household, raising children. In the coda of this book, I shall offer some reflections on this particular involvement and standpoint.

Subject Formations for a "Feminized" Post-Fordist Urban

As said, Rotterdam is one example of a larger phenomenon: former industrial cities in the "West" have been struggling with their economies and labour markets since the 1970s, when industry rationalized and production was outsourced to other parts of the world. Deindustrialization hit hard in cities like Liverpool, Marseille, Liège and Rotterdam. These urban economies were booming during decades of industrial expansion and are now adjusting to new economic realities. Industrial cities very often animate masculine images. Steel, smoke, muscle; it invokes the idea of a masculine city – a masculinity at the intersection with working classness. It is the image of manual labourers, of heroic physical strength and aggression. Katie Milestone, (2016), for example, shows how Manchester is still considered particularly "laddish": a city of angry young men. Rotterdam, too, considers itself rough, rugged and macho. This particular intersection of class and gender, where working-class (city) identities are thought of as masculine, is the central nexus of this book. Interestingly, indeed, for my concerns here, the macho working-class identity that fit well in the harbour economy of the past is now taken up as a problem resulting in very elaborate and explicit efforts to "feminize" the city. This particular problematic is taken up in Chapter 3 where gendered imagineering is the central focus.

Not only cities struggle with the profound change that is the transition to post-Fordism. In a way, Europe as a whole is struggling with the uncertainty that characterizes a regime of flexible accumulation – especially since the 2008 economic crisis. Like urban administrations, national governments and the European Commission worry about the labour force and creating employment by attracting business and economic innovation. To give only one example, in a 2012 report the European Commission urges for innovation and educational flexibility to combat "skill imbalances" in Europe. It says: "Skills mismatch is an increasing

economic problem (in the EU) (. . .) (and this) affects economic competitiveness" (European Commission 2012: 16). This "mismatch" between the skills needed for new economic activities and those acquired by the actual labour force prompt educational and social policies for the EU, as they do in Rotterdam. This is an important site for urban politics: problematizations of the population and what labour it has to offer prompt desires to change this population and its labour. Europe, nations and cities alike are thus imagining future populations and developing interventions to change the characteristics of the actual population to fit the economic demands of the future. Besides the particular subjectivities that may be the result of the spatial aspects of genderfication, this book also dives into a particular empirical case of subject formations for this post-Fordist future: parenting guidance courses. In Chapter 5, I offer my analysis of ethnographic material of courses designed to "support" and "guide" parents (but mostly mothers) in their parenting practices. Urban policy entrepreneurs indeed think of populations as important urban features or aspects of urban brands and as actors in safety and "liveability" policies. Concerns about the city and its future labour force crystallize in parenting guidance practices. Interestingly, in this facet of genderfication, mothers are recognized as key actors and addressed as the primary and sometimes only ones responsible for future Rotterdam inhabitants. In the parenting classes themselves, then, ritual-like practices of communication and reflection produce subject-positions that very much resemble what is expected of employees in the post-Fordist and arguably more feminine labour markets: subject formation for a more gender-equal service-industry based future happens there.

Entrepreneurialism and Regeneration

While cities are part of nations and Europe, they also behave like separate entrepreneurial entities in interurban competition. In urban policy, the "city" is enacted. Individual cities compete to attract businesses, visitors and certain groups of inhabitants in order to revitalize and secure economic viability. In the academic field of urban studies, scholars have written about this phenomenon and they have designed a myriad of conceptual frameworks for understanding it, such as – famously – "cities as growth machines" (Molotch 1976) and "entrepreneurial cities" (Harvey 1989). Following early examples like New York and Glasgow, cities around Europe have developed such entrepreneurial strategies. Amidst much

economic uncertainty, they envision their future as an important node in international networks, as a centre for highbrow culture, as the place where sellable ideas are thought of and restaurants frequented, where young people find their path towards success and international businesses want to stay put. Local and national governments alike develop strategies for desired urban futures. They employ Richard Florida's ideas of the creative class and find ways to attract artists, bankers and universities. They spend large budgets on extensive marketing. They compete to become European Capital of Culture or host international events such as football finals or G8 summits in the hope that the spotlight on their city will bring revenue. They build high-quality neighbourhoods Jane Jacobs-style, with stores, restaurants, businesses and playgrounds next to each other. And they employ government strategies to influence the composition and characteristics of their populations. In this international marketplace of cities, therefore, families and children matter. The next generation of urbanites is one entry point for entrepreneurial urban strategies in which it is seen as an instrument to regenerate the city.

The Rotterdam administration identifies the city's demographic makeup as one of the most important causes of the city's problems. Rotterdam is too poor, too poorly educated, too "black" and too "lagging behind"[2] or so say the policy texts. For example, in 2004, the new administration of the late Pim Fortuyn analysed the situation in Rotterdam and stated that

> The colour is not the problem (for Rotterdam, MvdB), but the problem has a colour. (Rotterdam 2004a: 12)

And more recently, statements about "selective out-migration" of "prospect rich" use a different idiom, but are similar nonetheless. "Selective out-migration" (COS 2012a) is a term taken to mean that higher earning inhabitants in the 30–45 age bracket are more likely to leave Rotterdam as a place of residence than other categories of inhabitants. And the attraction of the city for the "prospect poor" is considered the other side of the same coin, inhibiting the development of Rotterdam. For example, in a 2011 policy report analysing the social situation in the south of Rotterdam, the authors state

> Cheap housing attracts prospect poor and people with a small income. As a consequence, the social upgrading of South as a whole has not sufficiently taken shape. (Team Deetman/Mans 2011: 4)

And in response the mayor, Ahmed Aboutaleb, stated that

> What is at stake is the social upgrading (*sociale stijging*) of the people. People make the city, not the buildings. The school results (as measured in standardized test scores, MvdB) are too poor. That way, you know what the future of Rotterdam South is going to be like if you don't decide to invest in those people in a major way. For example in education, to upgrade. (. . .) If you invest in children of four years old, this will render results in sixteen years. It is a long-term investment.[3]

I analyse the logic and terms such as "prospect poor" in more detail in the chapters to follow. What is important here is that demographic characteristics such as education levels (a frequently resorted to Dutch proxy for class), ethnicities and age are quite explicitly considered the core of Rotterdam's problems. These characteristics were of much less import in industrial times, when the harbour provided manual jobs. But cities struggling to stimulate new (service) economies are concerned about such demographics, especially because embodied and social skills and characteristics are pivotal in such an economy. Emotional and aesthetic labour has, for example, become much more important. The population's cultural capital and its value on labour markets is therefore at stake. Building on rich historical repertoires of urban planning and paternalist policies, the Rotterdam administration has developed a range of policies to change Rotterdam's demographic composition in order to fit desired futures of a post-Fordist economy. In the chapters in this book I show that it aims to do so in roughly two ways. One route is the actual material replacement of the current population with a "better suited" and "prospect rich" one. The efforts to build more expensive homes, to gentrify neighbourhoods, to attract higher-educated parents with their children, to market the city to a more affluent population and to "disperse" lower-educated "prospect poor" are concrete strategies towards this goal of replacement. These strategies that I consider to be part of the genderfication project are further researched in Chapter 3. Another route is to change today's children into the desired population of the future: to educate, "upgrade" (to use the mayor's term) and invest in the young members of the current population so that they can finish school, become "prospect rich" and find jobs in the service/knowledge economy. Strategies that are to bring about this change are, for example, programmes to prevent early school leaving, after-school programmes, preschools and, indeed, "parenting guidance". Both routes are what I term urban re-*generation*: efforts to

renew the city by either investing in the children (the next generation) of the current population or replacing the current population of children by a new generation of better suited children. Urban regeneration as a concept is a variation on the term urban regeneration. It supplements it because it focuses on the city as a reproductive milieu, where urban regeneration usually points to material and economic restructuring. Urban regeneration identifies the cities' reproductive milieu (as opposed to the Fordist relegation of reproduction to the suburb) and the next generation as important routes for social engineering and planning for the imagined future.

Strategy and Perspective

In this book, I build on a body of work that is best referred to as feminist urban studies. I engage with this literature in the next chapter. Here, it is important to outline the strategy of the book. I employ an intersectional perspective on the issues dealt with and look in particular at the intersection of class and gender. Originating in black feminist thought, intersectionality perspectives allow making visible complex and combined forms of domination (Crenshaw 1991; Brah and Phoenix 2004; Jaunait and Chauvin 2012; Wekker 2016; hooks 1984). The central claim of intersectionality perspectives is that gender, class, race (or ethnicity, religion, age, etc.) take shape as social constructs and categories ordering power relations *only* in interaction with other important social constructs and should therefore be understood as axes of domination intersecting in meaningful ways. What is at stake in this book is a cross-secting system of domination that now (symbolically and practically) privileges certain types of femininities for the post-Fordist urban. How this happens precisely and what this means for new exclusions is the object of research here. In my analysis, I privilege gender as an axis of domination and meaning making. This means that in each chapter, and with each issue or empirical case studied, I look in particular at what can be learned from that case or about that issue when employing a gendered perspective. This is because I think that such an analysis can bring to light mechanisms that have not been analysed before. As mentioned above, in urban studies in general and in critical geography and critical urban studies in particular, a class perspective is very often privileged, rendering gendered logics underexplored. My focus on gender, however, also entails that I do not focus primarily on questions of ethnicity and race. This may be odd in a book that employs intersectionality as a perspective, since that very perspective came out of critical race studies and black feminisms. However, in the

case of Rotterdam and of de-industrializing cities in the European continent in the 2000s, race and ethnicity have been foregrounded so much in both public policy as in scholarly work, that sometimes it is all we see (even though in the Netherlands, analyses of racism have been strangely absent, Van Reekum 2014; Wekker 2016). One of the primary goals of this book is to examine what is going on in Rotterdam and other former industrial European cities *besides* race/ethnicity and cultural conflict.

Of course, precisely because race and ethnicity were foregrounded so much, these analytical categories are not absent from my perspective. Race and ethnicity were meaningful categories in many policies and practices that I studied and when this is the case they are analysed as such. For example, in the Rotterdam promotional film with which I opened this introduction, Rotterdam's ethnic and racial diversity was a striking absence. The children, mothers, youngsters and businessmen shown in the film are almost all White. Besides a black and Chinese woman shopping for food and a black waitress, the ethnic or racial "Other" is absent from the film. This selective representation is surprising for the most ethnically diverse city in the Netherlands. In 2001, when Rotterdam was European Capital of Culture, the city chose to highlight what was called "multiculturalism" as an asset. The theme for this year of events was "Rotterdam is many cities", and symbolically, this phrase was put on billboards throughout the city in many different languages. Ten years later, Rotterdam does not seem to place racial and ethnic diversity in the marketing spotlight anymore. Ethnic diversity is, however, certainly *not* left out of the scope of policymaking in Rotterdam. Much has been written about Rotterdam's struggles with ethnic conflict, racism and cultural differences. Uitermark and Duyvendak, (2008), for example, argued that a particular brand of Rotterdam urban revanchism is specifically targeted at ethnic minorities and Muslims in particular; it consists of policies efforts geared towards a reconquering the city from the ethnic other. And Van der Waal and Burgers, (2011) asked the question of how ethnocentrism and post-industrial job markets are related. My research supplements these existing strands of research with an analysis of the role that gender and family have to play in urban regeneration.

The Book

In addition to showing genderfication in empirical cases, I also argue in this book that at the intersection of gender and class in contemporary cities, gender is often put to work to produce class upgrading: higher middle-class

dual-earner families and feminine city marketing instruments sometimes serve to get rid of working-class and precarious populations and images. Indeed, when we ask just how cities genderfy, we should also ask what this means for whom. Genderfying cities may become more inclusive for career women and dual-earner families at the cost of working-class and precarious urban populations, rendering the employment of an emancipatory agenda for women potentially harmful for the urban poor.

Rotterdam is not the only case in this book. In Chapter 2, I build on an analysis of Amsterdam discourses and in most chapters I provide examples of other cities to contextualize my findings in Rotterdam. When I write of what a city does – when I write of Rotterdam or other cities as agent – I mean their political administration unless otherwise specified. In practice, this means that I refer to different successive administrations and many participating political parties and administrators. The Rotterdam administration is made up of many actors. But when I write of the aims of the "Rotterdam administration", I write of the aims in formal policy documents that I analysed for this dissertation. Moreover, I include some texts and other communications (such as images, commercials, etc.) that were produced by Rotterdam Marketing (2008a, b), which is a public service that works for the Rotterdam administration. There is much consistency and continuity in how the Rotterdam administration has governed since 2008 (the year in which I embarked on this project). The prominence of family, mothers and children in urban regeneration efforts and the felt urgency to depart from Rotterdam's industrial past have featured in the policies of several administrations that were designed and executed by many actors. My ethnographic research took place in the years 2008–2010 and the policy texts that I analyse mostly cover these years too. However, this material is supplemented by recent cases that show a striking continuity and coherence.

In Chapter 2, I outline clues for genderfication in urban theory. Contextualizing current developments by dealing with feminist urban theory and debates on urban post-Fordism, I investigate what is to be expected of the renegotiation of the sexual contract for the urban. Chapter 2 is, however, not to be considered a theoretical framework for the other chapters alone. It is, instead, also an empirical undertaking to understand the contemporary popularity of an interesting exception to the history of masculinist urban theory: Jane Jacobs. Celebrated by academics, politicians and planners alike, Jacobs's 1961 "Death and Life of Great American Cities" is a stake in genderfication efforts, especially in Amsterdam.

In Chapter 3, the imagined future city is the central concern. This chapter is about marketing and imagineering and the role gender plays there. It investigates what it means to imagine a future city that is beyond the industrial and masculine past. Analysing imagineering throughout several contexts, it is especially the case of the festival “La city” in Rotterdam that stands out here: a festival organized specifically to feature Rotterdam’s “feminine side”. Rotterdam emerges from this analysis as a muscleman in pink stilettos: a crossdresser.

In Chapter 4, the very profession that Jacobs so vehemently attacked is investigated: planning. Urban planning is where the genderfication project is perhaps most visible and in this chapter I deal with two particular cases in the context of Rotterdam: (1) plans for a “child friendly city” and (2) designs for the “city lounge”. Both definite examples of genderfication, they are meant to create a welcoming atmosphere and concrete housing, restaurants and playgrounds for affluent women and families with children. In addition, Chapter 4 deals with urban regeneration as a concept and its relation to genderfication.

Chapter 5 takes this one step further by investigating what the imagination of a future genderfied city means for subject formations and the production of subject positions in the social policy practice of parenting guidance. Extending the focus from the usual suspects of critical urban studies (planning and marketing) to this less studied, but very political setting, social policies targeted at mothers are thought of as one location in which the future city is imagined. While not overtly planned to do so, these practices are to change subjectivities for the future service economies, to produce subjects that are communicative and reflexive.

Notes

1. Rotterdam Municipality Promotional Film (2011).
2. *Achterstandsgroepen*. This is a term used in policy, for instance in one of my cases: Bureau Frontlijn, I have given a more elaborate description of this case and this term in Chapter 4 and 5.
3. This was in response to the report by Team Deetman and Mans, (2011) in the television interview programme Buitenhof, VPRO/ NTR, October 30, 2011.

CHAPTER 2

Urban Theory: Feminist Urban Studies and the Urban Gender Revolution

Abstract Besides offering the theoretical frame for the rest of the book, this chapter is to investigate the use of urban theory in contemporary genderfication efforts. It is especially concerned with the current popularity of Jane Jacobs's views on the urban and planning in Amsterdam as a case. Especially for the modernist planners that Jacobs attacked in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, urban public space was decidedly masculine. Jacobs's alternative – though not explicitly feminist – of mixed-use planning, diversity and active street-life suits the post-Fordist city perfectly.

Keywords Feminist urban studies · Genderfication · Jane Jacobs · Amsterdam

Feminist Urban Studies

In order to understand the urban gender revolution, I build here on a tradition of feminist urban studies. Virtually all urban scholars adopting a feminist or gendered perspective have outlined how urban theory and planning historically suffered and still suffers from a male paradigm (to name but a few: DeSena 2008; Bondi and Rose 2003; Sibley 1995; McDowell 1999). As in many other scientific disciplines, feminist theory outlined how certain relations of power remained out of sight in most work in urban studies, thereby leaving the status quo of masculine domination intact. Dating back to the early 1980s, especially, feminist

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urban scholars critiqued the absence of women from urban theory and women's consequent spatial marginalization. Feminist critique of the male paradigm in urban studies has, more fundamentally, examined the dichotomies of private-public, feminine-masculine, time-space altogether (Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Wilson 1991; Peake 2009; compare Warner 2002). Especially powerful is Doreen Massey's intervention (1994) in which she outlined how scholars often under-conceptualize space to then understand it as apolitical, static and feminine. In her view, such dichotomies are "related to the construction of the radical distinction between genders in our society, to the characteristics assigned to each of them, and to the power relations maintained between them" (1994: 256).

Especially in much planning theory, unspoken masculine viewpoints are omnipresent as it often builds on a modernist history of privileging the top-down view and of social engineering. An especially potent and recent metaphor for this almost natural and unquestioned masculine claim to planning is the idea of "planning without a condom". Outlined in Davy (2008), this idea finds its roots in Simmel's influential "the Metropolis and Mental Life". Davy's perspective is not particularly influential or especially important, but can stand here as a contemporary example of unexamined male paradigms. The city, for Davy, is conceptualized as a rapist and planning as potentially offering the possibility of protection against this rape. The rape, in Davy's interpretation of Simmel's original German text, consists of the over-stimulation of the city and its "multi-rationality". Taking Simmel's metaphors seriously literal, Davy thinks of urban dwellers as walking around with their minds protected by condoms – a metaphor for "monorational planning". Davy employs the condom metaphor in a plea for urban diversity. Notwithstanding the continued relevance of Simmel's thinking on the urban, the metaphor of urban planning as condom use repeats the familiar agency/planning/protection/masculine versus passive/consuming/threatened/feminine binary, whereby potency, threat and protection of that danger are offered by (not even so much exaggerated) masculine planning saviours for the non-agentic feminine population that simply consumes space and is easily overwhelmed by the city's impulses.

This is an example of how despite decades of feminist urban theory, much remains of the privileging of the male paradigm, in this case even in a plea for diversity. To cite a recent text of Linda Peake (2016: 1), "It is still unclear (. . .) whether feminism has arrived in urban theory or urban studies more generally". Feminist engagements with gender and the

urban are therefore still often missed in mainstream urban theory or ghettoized to gender studies platforms. Oftentimes, this is also achieved by reducing feminist theory to "critique". Harding and Blokland (2014), for example, in their 2014 book on urban theory (subtitled "a critical introduction") contend in the paragraph on gender that "feminists, like neo-Marxists, are relatively united upon and expansive about what they are against, but less clear when it comes to what they are for" (197). Important feminist contributions to understanding the contemporary urban are missed as a consequence.

Especially in radical geography and critical theory in urban studies, neoliberalism and movements of capital remain the continued focus. Staying close to the Marxist underpinnings of radical geography, many urban scholars in practice still follow Harvey's (1989: 5) argument that

> In a class-bound society such as capitalism, (…) spatial practices acquire a definite class content, which is not to say that all spatial practices can be so interpreted. Indeed, as many researchers have shown, spatial practices can and do acquire gender, racial and bureaucratic-administrative contents (to list just a sub-set of important possibilities). But under capitalism, it is the broad range of class practices connected to the circulation of capital, the reproduction of labour power and class relations, and the need to control labour power, that remains hegemonic.

Without rehearsing the differences in viewpoint of Harvey and feminist geographers (and Doreen Massey in particular, see, e.g. Massey 1991; Callard 2011) here, it is important to note that significant changes in gender relations in the urban still remain seriously understudied. Our understanding of the contemporary urban therefore benefits insufficiently of developments in the fields of feminist theory and gender studies, and indeed: "there is a lot more determining how we experience space than what 'capital' gets up to" (Massey 1994: 148).

In this book, gender is considered an analytical category that helps our understanding of relations of power in productions of space. Examining the social and cultural meanings attached to the category of sex, the study of gender is about normative masculinities and femininities as actively constructed and relational: "gender becomes a way of denoting 'cultural constructions' – the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men" (Scott 1988: 32). If we look at space as socially produced and as producing social relations (following Massey's insistence

of this being a two-way relation, 1994), as "signifying do's and don'ts" (Lefebvre 1991), then surely these normative femininities and masculinities matter. Indeed, "doing gender" intersects with space in important ways – certain spatial organizations structure certain ways of performing gender and, vice versa, certain ways of performing gender structure certain spatial organizations. Genderfication, the central concept of this book should be understood, precisely, as offering a way into this intersection of space and gender. Building on the literature in gentrification (see Chapter 3 for a review of literature on the importance of gender for gentrification), I understand genderfication as the production of space for different gender relations, notably post-Fordist gender relations. In the following paragraphs, I set out to do two things: (1) providing an outline of components of a Fordist sexual contract in order to understand its spatial translations and to understand how a changing sexual contract affects productions of space and (2) starting the empirical exploration of genderfication with a case study of the contemporary popularity of Jane Jacobs in mainstream urban theory, planning and policy. Investigating this popularity in the particular case of Amsterdam, the discursive uses of Jacobs for the genderfication project are scrutinized.

Renegotiations of the Sexual Contract

With Daphne Spain (2002) I contend that although missed in much urban theory, one of the most important revolutions of the twentieth century, in particular with regard to the urban, is the gender revolution. In the second half of the twentieth century, the rapidly increasing access of women to the public sphere in terms of paid labour, politics and urban public spaces may indeed be the "real spatial revolution" (Spain 2002: 15), for such an important social revolution "cannot change society without changing its cities as well" (16). Important contemporary feminist struggles notwithstanding, much has changed: the enormous increase in women's participation in paid labour markets, the (perhaps imperfect) inclusion of women in public/political life, renegotiations of gender roles. These changes all have profound impact not only on social relations, but on the urban too.

One way to understand these transformations is to investigate what remains of the sexual contract that accompanied Fordism and how it is renegotiated. The sexual contract is a concept from Carole Pateman (1988) and refers to the social contract on which all other contracts

rest: the one organizing gender and sexual relations and rendering the private sphere apolitical. Pateman argued that in dominant stories about the social contract and civil society, the underlying sexual contract and, therefore, the underlying patriarchal order was systematically repressed. Access to the civil sphere and the formation of citizens rested, she argued, upon a production of sexual difference and a separation of private and public spheres. Men's domination of women and men's access to women's bodies was fundamental to the state and to public and political life more generally.

Fordism, as a Western twentieth-century organization of social life, depended on this sexual contract or gender order, feminist scholars argued (see, e.g. McDowell 1991; Adkins 2008). It distributes paid and unpaid labour, production and reproduction between the sexes and rests on a division of the private and the public. In fact, as Linda McDowell (2014: 32) argued: "Feminist economists, sociologists and labour historians took this pattern of participation as the norm, at least during the post-war Fordist years when second-wave feminist scholarship flourished, theorising the differences between men and women's employment histories as a consequence of their 'dual roles' in the home as well as in the workplace, arguing that women's domestic labour was essential for capitalism, as well as for individual men".

Fordism in the strict sense depended on workers that were consumers too; it depended on mass production and mass consumption (Amin 1994). In terms of gender, Fordism depended on men with a five-day working week and enough leisure time and income to be able to buy a Ford car themselves; to go on vacation and to invest in a home – the space for the female homemaker. Fordism, thus, depended on masculinities in which involvement in paid labour was central (compare Nayak 2006) and femininities that took shape in the reproductive, private, realm. By turning all workers into consumers, the quantities of production could go up. The Fordist sexual contract may never have been fully realized (if it was, this was so in the 1950s, supported by post-World War II economic growth and welfare states), at least not for all social classes or ethnic groups. It was, however, dominant as an ideal. In the Fordist sexual contract, the home came to be seen as a tranquil retreat from the market (Abramovitz [1988] 1996) and women's domesticity fitted wonderfully with the need for increased mass consumption (Ehrenreich and English [1978] 2005). Fordism was thus characterized by a more or less stable working class and the nuclear family (McDowell 1991). This Fordist division of

labour and women's consequent domesticity was what second wave feminists like Adrienne Rich ([1976] 1988) and many others, for example, Millet (1969), Friedan (1974) and Smit (1967), struggled against: an ethic in which women were required to be domestic, patient, caring, mystical, romantic mothers. They were supposed to self-sacrifice, in the words of Rich: to let their "autonomous self" die with the birth of their children, working only towards the right individuality for the child. bell hooks (2000 [1984]) famously argued how in the US context Friedan's concerns about "the problem that has no name" were bourgeois and white. Indeed, not all women were at home in the reproductive realm. Boredom and confinement was something to aspire to rather than something to suffer from for many working-class women and women of colour. Nonetheless, the Fordist bourgeois ideal of a gendered division of labour and a feminine private realm were shared by many (ibidem).

This sexual contract, at its height in the 1950s, has, as McDowell argued in her article "Beyond Father and Ford", "melted into air" (1991: 407; she further developed this argument in 2014). In post-Fordism, it is far less clear that capitalism and production depend on unpaid domestic labour and reproduction. Instead, much unpaid labour previously performed by mothers and wives has entered the realm of consumption and service industries. Cleaning, laundering, childminding: in post-Fordism, much of this is part of market transactions now, still largely performed by women, oftentimes from the Global South, leading to global care-chains (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). The urban gender revolution (as described above: the mass involvement of women in paid labour and other forms of public life) coincided (at least in time, I'll leave arguments of causality aside here) with the widely acknowledged transformation in the mid-1970s from Fordism to post-Fordism (see for accounts: McDowell 1991; Harvey 1990; Amin 1994). New gender orders are an important characteristic of post-Fordism, therefore, however much understudied.

Lisa Adkins examines such renegotiations of the sexual contract for contemporary post-Fordist labour (2008, 2012). With a growing consensus in social science that the sexual contract is, indeed, dismantled or at least fundamentally renewed, she asks what this implies precisely. Thinking about these renegotiations as primarily steps towards women's emancipation or "liberation from problematic arrangements of gender" (2012: 623), she argues, rests on a misunderstanding of fundamental changes in the economy and labour. Adkins understands post-Fordist

labour to be primarily about futurity and potential (2008). Post-Fordist accumulation processes, she argues, are much more about speculation (she uses the trade in customer leads as an example) than about commodities as the end product of labour. The gender implications of the shift of Fordism to post-Fordism, therefore, in her view do not consist primarily of women's increased financial independence or gender equality. It does however position "women as *the* future of capitalism" (2012: 625, italics original). While problematizing young men and their labour (McDowell 2014; Nayak 2006), post-Fordism privileges female labour and especially young women as those with capacity. Female labour in post-Fordism, therefore, is a site of potential and promise and, not least, of feminist dreams (Adkins 2012). In this context, Angela McRobbie (2007) investigated how young women or, in her words "top girls", emerged as a "subject truly worthy of investment" (721). A post-Fordist sexual contract (or rather the unravelling of the Fordist sexual contract), for McRobbie, therefore, entails not gender equality, but rather more radically that young women are now the preferred subject for the accumulation of economic capacity. The gender revolution that took place in the past decades therefore does not entail that gender is somehow less relevant. Its role has, however, changed, something that is also apparent in debates about a feminization of the precariat (Standing 2008). Young women may be considered the future of capitalism, simultaneously and especially since the 2008 financial crisis, they are disproportionally impacted by poverty (ibidem). As Adkins (2008) argues, the question is "what currency storing up capacity has in regard to a form of capitalism which is not concerned with the past but with the future. What currency does embodied labour power have when value lies outside of the labouring body and outside of the commodity form in the yet-to-come?" (198). I will return to these questions below and in Chapter 5, when investigating the production of subject positions for post-Fordist labour markets. For now, it is important to underscore the importance of understanding gender relations and renegotiations of the sexual contract for an understanding of the post-Fordist urban.

Public/Private: Suburbanization

This book is, precisely, about some spatial consequences of this renegotiation of the Fordist sexual contract. The Fordist city had its definite spatial translations. As Massey (1994: 2) has argued: the spatial is "social relations

stretched out". Quite literally, the sexual contract of Fordism stretched out in the modernist urban and its counterpart of the suburban. Using a "universal" aesthetic, modernists wanted to build for "Man" (Harvey 1990: 40; Fainstein and Servon 2005). In Fordism, the city is the site of politics, of activity and production. The Fordist suburban, on the other hand, is the site of the private and apolitical, of stasis, passivity, emotion, the body and reproduction (Massey 1994: 257). This was often deliberately planned as such, especially in modernist planning and post-World War II stimulation of suburbanization. (Public) transportation, for example, was designed to move workers from home to work in the city centre. As Sophie Watson argues: "Transport links seldom connect schools, shops, services, employment and shopping centres and many women do not have the use of a car during the day" (2002: 290). As a consequence, the Fordist suburban was the realm of place-bound women, children and reproduction, where the city became signified as a masculine place of mobility and production. This marginalization in the second half of the twentieth century often took the form of a relegation to the private realms in the suburbs. Especially in post-World War II Fordism, the spatial separation of men and women was strict: "the focus on central business district development and the opposition (. . .) between downtown and neighbourhood reiterates and reinforces the familiar distinctions between the male and the female spheres" (Fainstein and Servon 2005: 5). Elizabeth Wilson goes even further in her statement that "it would (. . .) be possible to describe the (. . .) town-planning movement (. . .) as *an organised campaign to exclude women and children*, along with other disruptive elements – the working class, the poor, and minorities – from this infernal space altogether" (1991: 6, emphasis added). This is why many scholars have looked at ways of developing a feminist perspective on the city, moving beyond our view of the city or city culture as ultimately male. Elizabeth Wilson (1991, 2001) has made especially influential contributions to this project of both investigating women in cities and reclaiming the city as a liberating and emancipatory space for women. And indeed, others too have argued how cities can destabilize gender dichotomies and how "in the city, the active independent woman came into her own" (McDowell 1999: 155).

Famously, Harvey argued in his *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990) how the supposed "sea change" of 1972, the transition to post-Fordism, was paralleled by a change in form: a change from modernism to post-modernism. Urban planning changed from a modernist focus on

"large-scale, technologically rational plans" (ibidem, 66) to a cultivation of "a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented" (66), mixed, diverse and organic. This *post-Fordist* city is in intense competition with other cities for visitors, inhabitants and especially for investors and businesses (Van Reekum and den Berg 2015). Fordist economies were far heavier in the literal sense than the footloose knowledge economies of post-Fordism. In Fordism, therefore, competition for businesses and employment between cities was far less fierce. Since the 1970s, this relation between capital and cities has changed dramatically: cities are almost all involved in inter-urban competition and have developed many entrepreneurial strategies (cf. Harvey 1989) to cope with this new situation. Especially cities that thrived in Fordist conditions experienced trauma. Precisely because they were so reliant on heavy industries they had a hard time adapting to new modes of production and capital accumulation. Almost all cities in the "West", however, have been involved in city marketing strategies and productions of space for populations that were believed to attract investment and businesses. In the hope of creating an overall positive effect on urban development, public policy has therefore often been devised at pleasing the already well-off. Richard Florida's (2002) influential strategies for attracting "creative classes" are examples of such policies.

Modernism as a planning paradigm, however, is not easily replaced. Cities that were the object of urban renewal and regions that were built in a modernist fashion today deal with a built environment fitting an outdated sexual contract. In many ways, the modernist spatial form endures, changing gender relations notwithstanding. In fact, this enduring modernist form continues to structure everyday life for many across urban contexts. Modernist, patriarchal planning left its mark on most cities in the "West". Rotterdam is an excellent example of such extreme modernist planning. It was bombed quite heavily in World War II. Partly destroyed in the subsequent fire, the bombing was also, importantly, taken up as an opportunity at the time to build a new, modernist city for the future. This future, however, proved quickly to make modernist planning outdated and unfit for post-Fordism. Far from being future-proof, therefore, the modernist planning of Rotterdam is precisely what planners today are trying to undo (and I will come back to this in Chapter 3). With renegotiations of the sexual contract, space is renegotiated too. Or to paraphrase Liz Bondi (1999): urban space changes when patterns of reproduction and production change. On the one

hand, therefore, modernist planning changed many cities in the "West" based on a patriarchal Fordist sexual contract and this still largely structures contemporary life. On the other hand, the urban is likely to change as a result of changing gender relations. One study outlining such changes is Leslie Kern's (2011) about condominium development in Toronto. She shows how in the context of revanchist urbanism higher educated professional single women are contemporary agents in urban change and the production of space: the buying of property by these women changes Toronto's urban landscape. In the contexts in which I did research, not only single women drove urban change, but, importantly, families with children did. What we see now is, thus, the rediscovery of the city as a space for reproduction, families and children.

The Discursive Uses of Jane Jacobs for the Genderfying City

It is precisely in these changes and public policy facilitating these changes that Jane Jacobs has appeared as the planning hero of the day. Especially Jacobs's 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* found its way to contemporary plans (in the UK, the USA, the Netherlands and other contexts) for and practices of urban regeneration. This raises a number of questions: Why is Jacobs so popular more than half a century after publication of her most famous public intervention? And what does it mean that she took on modernist planners especially, arguing that they took the life out of the city? In the following, I offer the first empirical case study of this book. I investigate the discursive uses of Jane Jacobs for the genderfying city, especially in the case of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Amsterdam is suitable case here because the influence of Jacobs is especially apparent there. In addition, as the capital of the Netherlands, it is (like Rotterdam, the primary case of this book) part of a very strong Dutch tradition of planning and public policy (Boomkens 2008). In Amsterdam, Jacobs's ideas about how to foster vital cities have become part of the set of instruments that Dutch planners use, despite her distaste for engineering through spatial interventions. As will become clear, investigating the Amsterdam case provides a perspective on the gendered production of the post-Fordist urban. Jacobs's views offer an attractive alternative for planners to the patriarchal modernist city and an opening for genderfication.

Jacobs's *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) is possibly the most referenced work on cities in public policy in Amsterdam today. More

generally one of the most cited books in urban studies and planning, *Death and Life* is an inspiration for many in public policy. Phrases such as "eyes on the street" and "mixed-use planning" are part of everyday (Amsterdam) planners' discourse. And, to use Max Page's (2011) words, Jacobs is "treated as infallible and unquestionable. For far too many in the urban planning world, the bracelets that say 'WWJD' (What Would Jesus Do?) may as well stand for What Would Jane Do?" (4). *Death and Life* is, first and foremost, "an attack on current city planning and rebuilding" (1961: 5). Building on countless observations in her hometown New York and other American cities such as Boston and St. Louis, Jacobs took on the modernists both on paper and in the streets, in her famous protests against Robert Moses's plans for downtown Manhattan. Jacobs's analysis of the city and vision for city planning focused on actual, day-to-day uses of men, women and children: of social interactions, safety, spontaneous organization and economic vitality. Her alternative to Moses involved respect for the complexity of urban life and for its diversity. Jacobs, other than many feminine scholars/activists (Sibley 1995), is very much part of the urban studies canon. In many accounts of the history of urban theory and urban studies, Jane Jacobs is the earliest included female author (compare Sibley 1995). She is, by consequence, often the exception to the rule of the masculinist urban studies field. This is even more surprising, perhaps, if we take into account that Jacobs was not a scholar in the strict sense (but rather an independent journalist), and that she was much involved in actual protest. Her activism is often celebrated, while the activism of, for example, Jane Addams and many other female scholars in Chicago (often thought of as the birthplace of modern urban sociology) was cause for delegitimizing their productions of knowledge as based on a lack of scholarly "detachment" (Sibley 1995). Jane Jacobs, though not a self-declared feminist, represents something of an exception to the history of male urban theory.

This is even more significant if we look at Jacobs's focus on women's and children's everyday use of the city. Although published in the years in which suburbanization and Fordism were at its peak, for Jacobs, cities and, importantly, city streets were a place for women and children. One of her most famous (and most used) concepts, "eyes on the street" (1961: 45), is, in fact, based on a study of safety in the hustle and bustle of the sidewalk "ballet" (65) that includes mothers and children, and an entire chapter is dedicated to the study of the uses of sidewalks for the socialization of children (Chapter 5). Where feminists have argued that

in many perspectives on (Fordist) cities, women and children were absent, for Jacobs they are thus an important and central part of city life. In fact, the modernists Jacobs rallied against argued that the street was unsafe for children. In general, they deemed the street an improper space for anybody to spend time in. Jacobs, in her acute style, argues:

> Children in cities need a variety of places in which to play and to learn. (. . .) they need an unspecialized outdoor home base from which to play, to hang around in, and to help form their notions of the world. (105–106)

And:

> Why do children so frequently find that roaming the lively city sidewalks is more interesting than back yards or playgrounds? Because sidewalks are more interesting. (112)

The spatial separation in modernist planning of mothers and children on the one hand and men on the other was apparent to Jacobs, too, and it was one of her main objections to this design fashion. Interestingly though, for her, the primary problem was that children that grow up in suburban back yards and parks grow up in a "matriarchy" (109). Part of the appeal of the sidewalk consisted, to Jacobs, of children being allowed to play outside of the purview of constant monitoring of their mothers. She argues:

> Most city architectural designers and planners are men. Curiously, they design and plan to exclude men as part of normal, daytime life wherever people live. In planning residential life, they aim at filling the presumed daily needs of impossibly vacuous housewives and preschool tots. They plan, in short, strictly for matriarchal societies. (109)

Interestingly, the sidewalk life and residential areas are, for Jacobs, "normal" life. Working from home as a mother herself, it is this life of playing children and sidewalk interaction that is "normal life", not life in business districts and factories. From a feminist point of view, this is a surprising representation as it is precisely this life that has been interpreted in many feminist perspectives as a form of relegation, a confinement. While she does judge "housewives" "impossibly vacuous", Jacobs thus observes the same separation of spheres (male/female, production/reproduction) but interprets it quite differently: "matriarchal societies" are the problem for

children growing up, as is the exclusion of men, not the exclusion of women from production and political economy in patriarchy. For Jacobs, women (as mothers and girls) were all but excluded from public life: they were among its main agents, not just "there", but in fact actively involved in the everyday making of public space.

Jane Jacobs is thus an exception to the history of urban theory and to perspectives on the male/female masculine/feminine separation of the Fordist city. She celebrates city life (including for women and children), arguing for the need for a truly public sphere where strangers meet. But why is this perspective so appealing to urban planners now? And what does this appeal have to do with gender? In what follows now, I outline three specific ways in which the "fit" between Jacobs and the genderfication project becomes apparent.

Interestingly, first, Jacobs's gender is often made symbolically important in discourses around planning in Amsterdam. Indeed, the fact that Jacobs is a rare female voice in the planning canon is mobilized. Zef Hemel, former director of Amsterdam planning, for example, cites Jacobs often and for many purposes and in a synthesizing article on his blog refers to Jacobs as a symbol of "the feminine side of the (planning) discipline" (Hemel, blog-post 10/10/2013). And:

> It seems that the feminine approach has (…) won. Eyes on the street, street life, street corners, less cars, more pedestrians, diversification, creativity, productivity, organically grown city, yes, the spontaneous city is up and coming nowadays. (Ibidem)

Femininity is here associated with the imagined future city: a city of creativity and spontaneity. For this imagined city of the future, Jacobs is mobilized because she symbolizes this non-modern spontaneity, but also because she is a woman. In Hemel's view, the both necessary and contemporary view on cities *is* feminine and this, importantly, can account for cities' creative and productive potential. Another illustrative example of this relation between imagined urban economies and femininity is Hemel's response to an op-ed article that I wrote for a Dutch national newspaper (NRC Handelsblad) in 2013. In the article, I cited the Rotterdam alderman Hamit Karakus (PvdA, Labour) who claimed that Rotterdam needed to "grow tits". I had argued that for a city that wanted to become more feminine (the theme of this book), Rotterdam was using quite macho language and a lot of muscle (this theme is taken

up further in the next chapter). Hemel took my article as an invitation to outline the importance of gender and sexuality in urban economies on his blog (translations mine, Hemel 2013):

> Van den Berg points out that successful consumption-cities don't use macho language and that success demands more women and femininity. Women are a minority in Rotterdam. In Amsterdam they are the majority. This female dominance says something about Amsterdam's success. (. . .). The fact that successful cities today are more feminine and house many gays (*homofielen*) says a lot about our modern economy that is more and more service based. This economy is not blue collar, but pink collar. What spatial characteristics go with such a pink collar city? Not football stadiums (. . .) not glass towers in the city centre (. . .). What then? Listen to women like Jane Jacobs and Marguerite van den Berg. Can a macho city reinvent itself? It seems hard. Pittsburgh did it. It attracts lots of young women and singles, but has said goodbye to its industrial image too. Maybe if Rotterdam would take the message of women like Van den Berg to heart, it would work (. . .).

In his blog, Hemel links the economic success of cities and Amsterdam in particular, quite simply to the percentages of female inhabitants and gender. Interestingly, moreover, he also immediately associates a more feminine city with Jacobs. My op-ed piece did address the pink-collar debate and Rotterdam. It did not, however, invoke a Jacobs connection. For Hemel, however, this connection is self-evident. The fact that Jacobs is a *female* writer on cities, with a "feminine" point of view, for Hemel, is symbolically important: planners should "listen" to "women like Jacobs".

The second way in which the relation between Jacobs's popularity and genderfication is apparent is her vivid protest against modernist planning. Jacobs figures as a symbolic move away from the modernist masculine city. Robert Moses in post-World War II New York may have been dominant, in contemporary stories about urban development, he is a popular villain. Moses's city relied on the Fordist sexual contract. The lower Manhattan express way (the project Jacobs rallied against that Moses's wanted to build) was to bring workers from the suburb into the city centre by car: a typical Fordist project. Jacobs's insistence on women's and children's presence in the city as spatial agents is important in this regard, although not often cited in Amsterdam planning discourses. More prominent is her "bottom up" or "street-level" perspective. The top-down masculine perspective of Moses is often discursively

positioned over and against the bottom-up, supposedly “feminine” activist perspective of Jacobs. Important in such discursive moves is Jacobs’s famous phrase “eyes on the street”. In the words of Jos Gadet, a contemporary Amsterdam planning director: “the reader of this beautiful book (Death and Life), will make expressions such as eyes on the street to his *(sic)* standard repertoire” (Gadet 2006). Jacobs’s notion of “eyes on the street” was developed in her study of safety in the dynamic of the sidewalk “ballet” (1961: 65) that very much includes women and children. In a city that tries to genderfy, to produce space for post-Fordist gender notions, Jacobs’s continuous and explicit reference to women and children as urban agents is both significant and convenient.

This is related to the third “fit” of Jacobs and the genderfying city: the way in which her argument for diversity in terms of “mixed uses” is interpreted as important for families with children that aim at gender-equal task sharing. For YUPPs (Karsten 2003), Young Urban Professional Parents, a spatial structure of a mix of shops, childcare centres, schools, playgrounds and homes works well. Indeed, in several studies by Boterman (2012) and Karsten (2003) about residential practices of Amsterdam families with young children, YUPPs relayed their preference for inner city life, explaining how in their experience, it made task sharing and dual earning easier (compare for the USA: Goodsell 2013). The combination of paid work and caring for a family is, for example, facilitated if childcare facilities are located close to home or work. YUPPs, according to Karsten, reinvent space in “the production of a new ordering, mixing and blurring of traditionally contrasted concepts such as family-city, adult-child, public-private and work-care” (Karsten 2007: 186). This holds interesting potential for a feminist urban project in the sense that traditional gender categories are destabilized. In any case, this shows that in the post-Fordist city the sexual contract is re-negotiated. The urban gender revolution – consisting of both the inclusion of women in the formal labour market and the re-urbanization of families – calls for a city that is mixed-use, planned less top-down and with room for families with children. This is why Jacobs is so appealing to contemporary planners: Jacobs fits the genderfication project beautifully. For urban planners today, Jacobs’s views offer an attractive alternative to the patriarchal modernist city and an opening for genderfication: for producing space for changed gender relations, for including femininity, women and children in daily city life.

Importantly, though, where Jacobs fought to include working-class street life – after all, her defence of Soho and Greenwhich Village was a

defence of the vitality of areas that were considered by the planners of her time to be "slums". Jacobs's views are now, however, used to legitimize the inclusion of women and children from far more affluent groups. When Jos Gadet, for example, argues for a mixed-uses urban space, he explicitly connects this to the aim to attract higher-educated populations and families with children. This is most apparent in his repeated pleas for gentrification. In his interpretation of Jacobs's work, gentrification is a perfect accelerator of urban economic vitality. Gadet finds critical perspectives on gentrification to underestimate the positive effects. "Gentrification is a blessing. The more higher-educated residents in the city, the better for the economy" (in Bockma 2015). For Gadet, Jacobs's work is especially useful in bringing about this desired gentrification because of her focus on mixed-use planning and diversity – this, in his view, is what creatives and higher educated inhabitants desire. He even goes as far as placing this positive evaluation of gentrification with Jacobs (in a newspaper interview, in Bockma 2015).

From Amsterdam to Rotterdam

The association of families with children with gentrification and their role in genderfication projects is the theme in Chapter 4, where the idea of "child-friendly" cities is analysed. By way of conclusion to this chapter, then, it is important to note that the preference for affluent families with children in planning is apparent in Amsterdam too. The Amsterdam planning bureau DRO explicitly identifies "urban families" (*stadsgezinnen*) as one of the "demand categories" (*vraagcategorieën*, Amsterdam DRO 2011), for which to build a supply of housing and for whom to design public space. In contrast to earlier planning reports, then, families and children appeared as the explicit desired category. Like in Jacobs's vision, the city, then, is imagined as a place for women and children as much as it is imagined as a masculine space. Far from the masculine Fordist city, the city is now equipped with larger homes with gardens and "relaxed" and "child-friendly" public spaces (DRO 2011: 93). This genderfication logic has become so very naturalized that Tracy Metz (2015), a public commentator on urban issues, wrote in a 2015 article (with the title: "A cup of babicino") for the progressive magazine De Groene Amsterdammer:

> It is beneficial for the city if there are more children. It is good for the balanced composition of the population – a city is not attractive if it is only

> the domain of elderly, youngsters and migrant (*allochtone*) families (*sic*) that cannot afford to leave. (Translation mine)

This logic returns in Chapter 4 when I analyse public policies to produce "child-friendly" cities. There, too, the universal language of families is used to refer to very particular families: higher educated, dual-earning nuclear families with children. The language of family and gender intersects in this example in important ways with class and ethnicity. For Tracy Metz, families with migrant descent are not the desired families, or even recognized as families that bring life to the city at all. In the public policies analysed in Chapter 4, working-class and precarious families are the undesired. In the following chapters, indeed, I will draw on further empirical cases to come to an understanding of this privileging of women and children as urbanites of the future and the apparent and acclaimed inclusion of women, children, families and certain femininities as central in the urban imaginary at the cost of more masculine and working-class imaginations.

CHAPTER 3

Imagineering: Social Engineering Through Gendered Mythmaking

Abstract This chapter outlines the symbolic dimensions of the genderfication project. As cities today are widely considered to be products, the urban experience is commodified into marketable symbolic items by urban entrepreneurs. This chapter investigates forms of place marketing and looks into gender as a repertoire for contemporary imagineering. The 2008 festival "La City" in Rotterdam is analysed as an attempt to introduce a new symbolic economy: one that is to accompany a service-based and post-Fordist economy and labour market. This analysis shows how the city uses femininity as a marketing strategy to "cleanse" Rotterdam of its working-class mythology as well as construing a hegemonic gender identity capable of excluding precarious groups.

Keywords Genderfication · Imagineering · Mythmaking · Symbolic economy

Of "Tits" and "Softness": Macho Languages of Femininity

"Rotterdam needs tits" (*Rotterdam heeft tieten nodig*), said Hamit Karakus (PvdA, Labor), the Rotterdam alderman in 2013. Since then, the sentence has resonated quite a bit. It has been referred to in pleas for

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a "gay-friendly Rotterdam" (Grievink 2014), and, for example, in an effort of artist Everaert to "furnish" Rotterdam's public space:

> "Rotterdam needs tits. The city already has balls: it is a tough, masculine city with potent high rise. Neat, businesslike, no embellishments. Gorgeous, but from up close you can feel the strong wind blowing. How would the city feel if you change the carpeting? The furnishing? The lighting?" His wife did this to their home when they first moved in together. "Little things that had a softening effect. I was amazed." (Everaert in De Volkskrant: Dirks 2014)

Karakus was not the last, but also not the first to utter this desire for Rotterdam to grow breasts. In 2008, then alderwoman Marianne van den Anker (of the local "Liveable Rotterdam" party) likewise argued for a more "round" and "breasted" Rotterdam. In this chapter, I investigate how this highly gendered and sexed language came to be considered appropriate in the context of urban regeneration projects and what this symbolizes. I investigate the symbolic economy (Zukin 1995) of Rotterdam here and the gendered engineering meant to change the mythologies of the city. This chapter is, thus, about genderfication in the symbolic realm: Rotterdam is a case through which we can consider the gender logics in imagineering projects.

The diagnosis that Rotterdam is somehow too masculine is shared widely and so much part of the "urban charisma" (Verkaaik 2009) that in the newly reopened Museum Rotterdam (reopened in 2016 and very much meant to exhibit the "character" or charisma of Rotterdam), I photographed this text as part of an exhibition characterizing Rotterdam and Rotterdammers (Fig. 3.1).

Already in this exhibit item it appears necessary to correct the masculine "reputation", if only by outlining the actual sex ratio. Masculinity, it seems, is something that needs to be softened and nuanced. There was a time when presenting Rotterdam as tough and masculine was no problem at all. Especially during the years of industrial expansion, Rotterdam and Rotterdammers prided themselves on their toughness. Although this repertoire is still very much in place today and selectively used, it seems that to be a "tough" and "masculine" city with only "balls" and no "tits" is not enough in the post-Fordist era. In post-Fordism, in an urban economy that revolves around consumption, "softness" matters. Imagineering Rotterdam in the past decade, it is fair to say, involved a gendered rhetoric. In this chapter, I investigate the balancing act that is imagineering and that

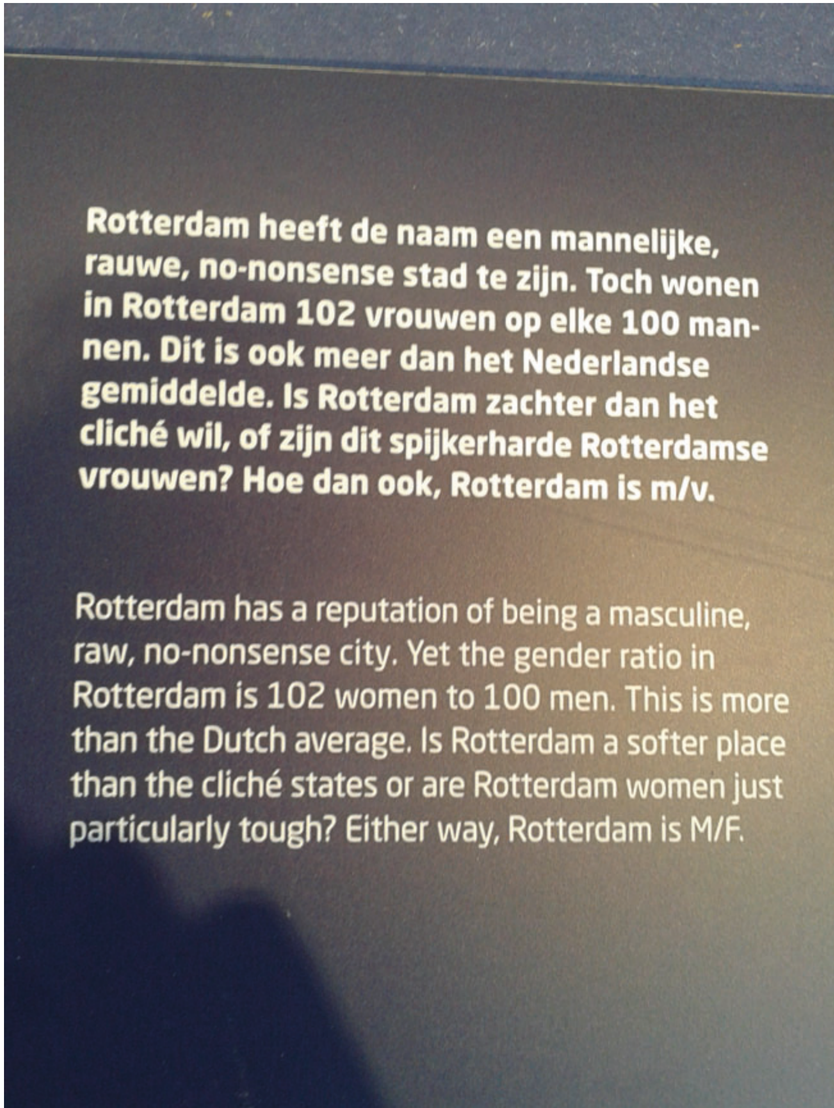

Fig. 3.1 *Picture Marguerite van den Berg, Taken in 2016 in Museum Rotterdam*

involves resonance with old repertoires and the introduction of new ones. Imagineering Rotterdam involves departures and continuities and I argue here that the language and symbolism of gender provided tools for this project. I critically consider imagineering Rotterdam as an act of cross-dressing. It is this performance of gender bending that I am after in this chapter. In addition, I also try to begin formulating an answer to the question who are winners and who are losers in a city that imagines itself to become "softer" and more "feminine", all the while employing quite macho language to do so.

In the following, by way of context, I first briefly introduce some other cases on the European continent in which industrial port cities are aiming to reinvent themselves: Marseille and Antwerp. For both cities, a "rough" image came to be a problem and both aim, like Rotterdam, to balance this out by imagineering and particular cultural strategies. Second, I outline some theoretical considerations in the study of (gendered and sexed) imagineering. Third, I investigate the empirical case of this chapter: the festival La City '08, organized in Rotterdam in 2008 to showcase its feminine side.

Reinventing the "Rough" Port City: Marseille, Antwerp, Rotterdam

However much Rotterdam celebrates its harbour and related industries, there is also a large consensus among economists, policymakers, politicians and administrators that Rotterdam needs to *depart* its industrial past if it is going to be an economically successful city in the future (Van der Waal and Burgers 2011; Van der Waal 2009; Kloosterman and Trip 2004). This consensus is largely informed by the need to create employment. The Rotterdam economy boomed since the second half of the nineteenth century into the post-war years because of the harbour and related industries, but since the mid-1970s, the economy has been struggling. Rotterdam is not alone in this predicament. Other large industrial and port cities such as Antwerp, Liverpool, Marseille and Hamburg and have had to deal with similar hardships. Precisely the cities that were booming during the decades of industrial expansion in the "West" have the hardest time adjusting to new global economic situations and interurban competition (Waal and Der 2009; Waal et al. 2011; Mangen 2004). Since the mid-1970s, Rotterdam's unemployment figures grew tremendously and by the end of the 1990s, Rotterdam

was the city with the highest unemployment rate in the Netherlands. Much has been said about this by Dutch (urban) sociologists, geographers and economists and most in comparison to Amsterdam, the Dutch capital and a much more successful post-Fordist city. What I think is most important to recount from these studies here, is that today, it seems that the Amsterdam economy is creating more jobs in service sector employment – for both higher and lower educated workers – than Rotterdam *and* is doing this faster. Because of this, Burgers and Musterd (2002; see also Van der Waal 2010) have argued that Saskia Sassen's famous polarization model (the idea that in global cities the amount of higher-earning and higher-educated jobs grows, resulting in a higher demand for lower-educated jobs in the service sector) fits the Amsterdam job market quite well, while the Rotterdam economy seems to be characterized by a mismatch: the large numbers of lower-educated inhabitants cannot find jobs because the jobs that are created are higher professional ones. Van der Waal and Burgers (2009) and Burgers and Musterd (2002) thus suggest that international competition has led to a labour market composition in Rotterdam that provides jobs for the higher educated in banking, business and for professionals while leaving the lower educated unemployed because their sets of skills are no longer needed in the new economy. Why exactly globalization and economic restructuring affects Rotterdam in such a different way than Amsterdam remains somewhat an unanswered question. It seems, though, that at least two factors play a role: (1) the relative diversity in Amsterdam's economy when compared to Rotterdam's assures Amsterdam of more economic flexibility and (2) Rotterdam's new vacancies for higher-educated personnel are filled by people living in the vicinity of Rotterdam and not by actual Rotterdammers. The latter would hypothetically create a demand for services within the city and thus a polarized job market with job creation for the lower educated as well. But it seems that for Rotterdam, this effect is not realized.

Antwerp and Marseille are other European examples of such changing urban port economies. What these cities have in common is not just their similar histories, but also strategies to depart these: they became what David Harvey has called "entrepreneurial" (1989). Marseille is in some ways strikingly similar to Rotterdam. Like Rotterdam, Marseille is the second city of the country, following only Paris. With 860,000 inhabitants it is larger, but still relatively comparable in size to Rotterdam and like Rotterdam, Marseille has seen tremendous economic decline over the past

decades, resulting in a range of contemporary urban problems. In the years between 1960 and 1990, Marseille lost half of its industrial jobs (Mangen 2004). It is sometimes called the "Detroit of France" (Viard in Kimmelman 2013) in the sense that its "single industry" was trade with the colonies. The loss of employment after France's decolonialization was hardly compensated in the tertiary sector. Actual compensation came almost solely from jobs in the public sector (Mangen 2004). Coupled with ethnic tensions that became apparent in the large housing estates of Marseille (Body-Gendrot 2000; see also Bauhardt 2004), and relatively high crime figures, the economic situation gave rise to serious concerns in the local and national government about the city's future and image. To some, Marseille with its crime ridden neighbourhoods and rundown city centre was an eyesore and not particularly worthy of being the second metropolitan area of France (Mangen 2004). Like Rotterdam, Marseille has a particularly rough image and mythology that is often retold: a story of crime, immigration and dirt (Andres 2011; Kimmelman 2013). Because urban policy in France is in large part a national endeavour, Marseille became an important target of planning from the Ministère de la Ville in Paris. First under president Mitterrand, and later also under Chirac and Sarkozy, Marseille has been an important focal point in nationally planned urban policies and this was reflected in two appointments of important figures in Marseille to the post of Minister of urban policy (Mangen 2004). Like the Dutch, the French selected urban areas (the Zones Urbaines Sensibles) for special attention on the national level. Mitigating fierce place wars (such as those in the USA), the Marseille budget is quite substantially distributed on the national level (Savitch and Kantor 2002). Under the pressure of the populist right that is especially strong in Marseille (it is one of the strongholds of the Front National), and especially since the 2005 riots in the French banlieus (although Marseille remained relatively calm), urban policies now are much more repressive and focused on crime and safety than they were before. Sarkozy (first as Minister of Interior, later as President) especially came down hard on the youths in the large poor housing estates, calling them "racaille" (scum). Like Rotterdam, Marseille is simultaneously repressive towards these groups of marginalized youths and facilitative of a new urban middle class (these strategies are, like in Rotterdam, to "recapture" the city), using "quality of place" strategies such as investments in the cultural sector and in waterfront development. In fact, Marseille became the European Capital of Culture (EcoC) in 2013, like Rotterdam was in 2001. EcoC,

according to Andres (2011), can be seen as the final stage of investment in a much longer strategy of (culture-led) urban regeneration.

Like Marseille and Rotterdam, the port city of Antwerp saw economic decline and a rise of populist politics (Vollebergh 2016). Although different in many ways, Antwerp struggles with unemployment like other former industrial cities and has developed various entrepreneurial strategies during the 1990s to boost its local economy. Unlike Marseille and Rotterdam, Antwerp and Belgium do not have long histories of urban policy and planning. In fact, Justus Uitermark (2003) argued that a certain anti-urbanism that may have its roots in the reaction against the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century prevented an urban focus in policy and politics in Belgium. It took until the 1990s for urban policies to develop under the severe pressure of the populist right wing party Vlaams Blok that, in fact, built its very success on an urban and xenophobic agenda. Under this pressure, other political actors saw themselves forced to formulate policies against spatial segregation of immigrants (especially "Moroccans" have been hotly debated, see Vollebergh 2016) and focused on safety and "liveability". At the same time, Antwerp positioned itself in the 1990s as a culturally exiting city with special attention for fashion. The EcoC in 1993, Antwerp successfully marketed itself as an Avant-Garde fashion city without actually being a fashion trading hub (like Milan or Paris). Javier Gimeno Martínez (2007) argued that "Antwerp's status as a fashion capital was created within the logic of organised tourism and mega-cultural events" (2449). That is to say that by positioning fashion as Antwerp's most characteristic creative industry and by presenting and conceptualizing fashion first and foremost as art, Antwerp succeeded in fulfilling its post-industrial ambitions of becoming a progressive creative hub. In fact, the fashion image was also discursively put to work against the felt "negative" image that was the result of the success of Vlaams Blok (Gimeno Martínez 2007). It helped to produce "cosmopolitan" images to balance out the "xenophobic" messages that were communicated as a result of the populist right's success.

Rotterdam, Antwerp and Marseille use a cultural repertoire to balance out negative images about their city and especially imagery of roughness. These are examples of cities that deal with hardships that are the result of economic restructuring, the transition to post-Fordism and interurban competition. Being characterized as rough becomes a problem when the harbour and related industries no longer provide enough jobs and new

industries have to be established. The sophistication of fashion or EcoC is then used to balance out this working-class roughness that is always also masculine. Urban regeneration is in part, in all three cities, the retelling of stories and changing the mythologies along the way. Not coincidentally, I would argue as an aside here, Rotterdam, Antwerp and Marseille have been important sites for far-right politics: the Fortuyn revolt in the Netherlands started there, the anti-immigrant nationalist Vlaams Blok was originally from Antwerp and the Front National is especially strong in Marseille. The consequences of the transition to post-Fordism have far-reaching consequences and that the problems that Rotterdam deals with and has dealt with since World War II are structural, serious, disruptive and not pertinent in Rotterdam alone.

Gender in Mythmaking for the Post-Fordist Urban

Marseille, Antwerp, Rotterdam and other cities increasingly behave like entrepreneurs that are promoting themselves as (cultural) products. The urban is commodified in items that can be marketed, sold, redesigned and resold. Contemporary inter-urban competition for visitors, investors and new populations incites cities to develop marketing strategies and slogans. Although urban decline and deindustrialization were certainly not a distinctly American phenomenon in the 1970s, cities in the USA were the first to develop place marketing (Ward 1998: 46). This was in part due to their reliance on a local tax base and therefore (far more than many European cities) on their local economies. At a time when economic activity is lighter and capital moves around far more easily and quickly than in the post-war decades, capturing the imagination of investors, tourists and potential inhabitants is an important asset for cities. Commodifying the city therefore entails the engineering of imagery, or, to use a Disney term: it entails imagineering. To imagineer (again in the terms of Disney) is “combining imagination with engineering to create the reality of dreams” (Paul in Yeoh 2005: 42). In the context of this book (and in Van den Berg 2015), I define imagineering as the *rewriting* of meaning that is attached to urban environments and the social and economic effects this produces. Imagineering is a form of mythmaking. The function of urban imagineering is to transform images of the city into ideologically laden and potent narratives (compare Selwyn 1996). Today, marketing and imagineering is therefore a primary location for social engineering.

By attracting new types of businesses, by symbolically producing space for certain visitors, by aiming to become attractive for certain new inhabitants, cities remake themselves.

Theories of mythmaking are helpful in analysing imagineering because they (1) provide a good understanding of discursive strategies in which contemporary narratives make use of symbolic and historical repertoires, (2) provide analytic tools to explain the specific *forms* imagineering takes and (3) provide ways to move away from the vocabulary that is used by the city marketers themselves by deploying "mythology" as a concept instead of "marketing" or "branding". Barthes' perspectives on mythologies are especially instructive (1993). For Barthes, a myth is a meta-language: a way in which a sign becomes a signifier, or, rather, a way in which extra meaning is given (and imposed) to what is seen and interpreted. Myth makes first-order images into second-order meanings. In this sense, myth does not mean "unreal" or "fake" as it often does in everyday use. Myths, rather, distort meaning instead of letting meanings disappear, although they are often "vehicles of forgetfulness" (Selwyn 1996: 3). This distortion is to "simultaneously reveal and conceal, undercommunicate and overcommunicate" (Selwyn 1996: 3). Myth functions to *naturalize* certain narratives of history and meaning. Imagineering serves to present a certain shallow narrative of history as a matter of fact, not to be questioned: "Myth has the task of giving a historical intention a natural justification and making contingency appear eternal" (Barthes 1993, [1957]: 142).

Modern cities in the global marketplace need to produce uniqueness and, for that purpose, actively engineer such mythologies. Gender and sexuality as social identities appear to be very useful to produce the difference that cities are looking for in imagineering. Identity politics then becomes an instrument in the hands of city marketers (I have elaborated on this theme in Van den Berg 2015). Urban mythmaking always excludes certain narratives, whether for the purposes of marketing or not. But when social identities are used as tools in mythmaking for the purpose of bringing in more revenue for a city, certain particularly poignant effects can occur. Exclusion of those not able to appropriate the chosen identities is then a likely product of imagineering. On the other hand, such mythmaking may also enable certain groups and emancipate them further.

San Francisco, for example, is thought of as a haven by many that identify as gay (Duyvendak 2011). It sees itself as the "gay capital of the world". As the destination for many young men and women that identify as gay, lesbian

and queer and that are leaving home in the past decades, San Francisco is and was home to many gays seeking refuge from homophobic and heteronormative (Warner and Berlant 1998) societies. This identity is incorporated in the city's strategies to enhance tourism. As Duyvendak (2011) noted: "Tourism to San Francisco in large part depended on the city's libertine image". In local protests against mainstream society's influences in the gay neighbourhood the Castro, this imagery is even given the language of mythology: "The Castro has a kind of 'mythic regard' overseas, and we are the 'guardians' of this place for future generations" (Save the Castro, quoted in Duyvendak 2011). Both emancipating and creating revenue, then, sexuality is a potent reservoir of meaning.

In the "rough" and "laddish" city of Manchester (Milestone 2016), "gay space" was marketed as a cosmopolitan spectacle as well (Binnie and Skeggs 2004). In this particularly masculine city, gay cosmopolitanism was used to make Manchester appear less threatening, more welcoming and more desirable for a wider audience, including those identifying as straight. For this purpose, Binnie and Skeggs (2004) show, overtly sexual aspects of gay bars, culture and communities were undercommunicated while what was considered "cosmopolitan", including conspicuous consumption, was overcommunicated. Sexual difference was then included in the cities' mythology in such a way that it could appear as part of a safe imagined cosmopolitan experience. While some straight people could read the code of cosmopolitanism in such a way that it allowed them to navigate the gay village regardless of their own sexuality, some (black women, working-class men in this example) cannot and therefore appear as provincial or otherwise out of place.

Sexuality became one of the primary categories for imagineering when Richard Florida's ideas about the creative class and urban economies were adopted in many cities. For Florida (2002), for cities to attract the much desired creative classes, they need diversity and the way in which Florida measures diversity in his empirical studies is by measuring the amount of inhabitants that identify themselves as being gay or lesbian. Notwithstanding much critique on these measurements and fundamental problems with equating diversity with sexual orientation (for an overview see Hubbard 2006), these analyses have led to cities aiming to attract gay inhabitants and gearing their city marketing towards this goal. The imagineering of gay space in both San Francisco and Manchester produces space for gays and empowerment on the one hand, while on the other mainstreaming and commodifying it and excluding those that cannot navigate or do not fit the cosmopolitan, a category that is heavily classed and raced.

Case: Imagineering Rotterdam – La City ’08

In the summer of 2008, the city of Rotterdam launched the cultural event and campaign “La City ’08”. This new step in the city’s then-marketing programme “Rotterdam dares!” (*Rotterdam durft!*), used femininity as a strategy to establish a new image for the industrial port city. It was an elaborate and explicit attempt to adjust Rotterdam’s masculine image in order to become the “Creative city” (“Urban Vision 2030”) it aspires to be. “La City” was a month-long chain of events in fashion, music, dancing, arts, sports and dining. It also involved a national marketing endeavour to highlight the “feminine” side of Rotterdam. “La City” was deliberately designed by the administration and the marketing bureau to cleanse the city of the working-class image that according to the officials and marketers was mitigating vital innovations. In the following, I analyse the *mythology of Rotterdam* as this was considered to hold back the economic and social development of the city in competition with other urban areas. Strategies were designed to adapt a new symbolic economy (Zukin 1995) by giving Rotterdam a more *feminine mythology* to fit the future. La City ’08 is thus an excellent case of genderfication through imagineering.

Rotterdam Mythology: The “Muscleman”

The mythology of Rotterdam consists of myths about the “international orientation” of this “working-class city” that has the status of “metropolis of the Netherlands” but where people maintain a “down-to-earth” attitude. The mythology or narrative that is told around these myths consists of at least two elements: the harbour and the World War II bombings. Every written or oral history of the city of Rotterdam starts with the harbour (e.g. Becker et al. 2004; Engbersen and Burgers 2001; Van Ulzen 2007). It has been the most important symbol of Rotterdam for decades. The image of Rotterdam as “working city” finds its origins in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century decades of ever-growing harbour activity. The second important element in the myth of Rotterdam is the rebuilding of the city following the 1940 World War II bombings (most of the city centre was bombed by the Nazis and burnt out in the days after). The mythology of Rotterdam thus consists of the twin narratives of (1) musclemen working in the internationally oriented harbour and industry and of (2) the city centre being continually rebuilt.

The Rotterdam Marketing Bureau characterizes Rotterdam as a "war child"[1] and a recent book to celebrate Rotterdam and to promote it to tourists and international business says:

> Most Rotterdammers have been used to it all their lives: a walk through the city centre usually ends up with muddy shoes. There is always construction going on somewhere.
>
> (Van der Horst et al. 2008: 9)

In the following, I illustrate three concrete myths that seem "natural" within the mythology of the harbour and World War II: the "international allure", the "no-nonsense attitude" and the "working class/blue collar" identity, which appears as a "muscleman" and extremely masculine. For this purpose, I look at stories that are told and indeed are experienced as natural, but also at active mythmaking by the city administrators and marketers. What I analyse here is the attempt by the local government to influence the already existing inflexions of history that are myths. This can be compared to the way in which Barthes analysed, for instance, the way in which commercials and marketers make myths and use existing cultural repertoire and myths to do so (see, e.g. his short essay "The New Citroen", Barthes, Barthes [1957] 1993).

One of the great Dutch writers of the twentieth century, F. Bordewijk, characterized the city as international when the main character of the book *Character* says:

> Amsterdam is our national city. Rotterdam is our international city. (. . .) It has received its mark by the sea, because the sea goes beyond boundaries, the sea is the only true cosmopolitan in this world. (Translations mine unless otherwise specified)

The myth of the "no-nonsense attitude" comes to the fore in the popular sayings that "In Rotterdam, shirts are sold with their sleeves already rolled up" (Martens and Dekker 2008) and the adagio that "Actions speak louder than words" (Dutch: "Geen woorden maar daden"). These sayings are used constantly in newspapers and statements by politicians and policy-makers. Blue-collar work in the harbour is often cited as the cause or history of the down-to-earth mentality of Rotterdammers, for instance, in the popular nostalgic song "Greetings from Rotterdam", by the Berini's (which is sung with a heavy Rotterdam accent):

> When, in place of blood, the river Maas flows through your veins
> Then deep inside your heart you know this is your city

> The most beautiful place on earth is where you were born
> To that city, where people are still down-to-earth
> I have lost my heart
> The old harbours, an industry beautiful in its ugliness
> It's always Christmas in Pernis[2]

"Christmas in Pernis" refers to the lights on the cranes and pipes in one of the old harbour areas with heavy industry. The rough character of working in the harbour and of the harbour itself is celebrated in the song as romantic elements of Rotterdam's identity. This is the mythology that the organizers of "La City" refer to as masculine, as is reflected in this quote in a promotional book on Rotterdam by Peter de Lange et al. (2001: 53): "In the old days, yes, Rotterdam was a city of bully boys and tough guys, of muscle-bound working men." But the book quickly follows this statement with the idea that

> Today's Rotterdammers are much *wiser*. (. . .) The city no longer has such a need for musclemen. The majority of the people of Rotterdam are *normal people*. To be *unusual*, a city needs a lot of normal people. (English in original, italics mine)

Rotterdam feels that it needs to shake off its image of the masculine "blue-collar city" in order to be ready for the economic competition of the future. The working-class image is very explicitly associated with a strong, masculine gender identity: Rotterdam *is* a muscleman. It is stressed that today's Rotterdammers are much "wiser", which refers to their higher education, and much more "normal", which later in the text is equalled by the author to "middle class".

Rotterdam's administration finds elements of the mythology problematic, for instance, when it says in its plan for the city centre in 2020 (Rotterdam 2008): "Rotterdam has a story that is longer than that of a workers city. There has always been more to Rotterdam than the harbour." The city wants to engineer the mythology of Rotterdam to fit their new entrepreneurial strategies. What happens here seems to be paradoxical: On the one hand, the repertoire of the masculine "working city" mythology is constantly invoked to construe a coherent present-day mythology despite the fractures in the city's history (after all, a mythology selects certain myths or shallow historic narratives), for instance,

when the "Actions speak louder than words" adagio is put to work by politicians. On the other hand, a *new fracture* is forced with a *departure* from the "working city", or the "working-class city". A new mythology is formed in which certain myths are maintained, some are departed and others are engineered. There is both continuity and fracture; resonance and balancing out old mythologies by introducing new ones. One way in which the paradox of the city's mythology is resolved is the way in which the fractures in the city's history are celebrated as a *sign* of Rotterdam's daring attitude.

> (Rotterdammers) are not afraid to take risks. (. . .) For some reason, the people have always been open to the great and the new. (. . .) that is because they live in a port city (. . .) they have seafaring blood flowing through their veins and the mentality of daring to take risks and looking beyond the horizon has not vanished. (Van der Horst et al. 2008: 17)

This quote from a promotional book is a perfect example of how the mythology is construed to be *natural*: although Rotterdammers no longer *work* in the harbour, they still have seafaring and daring *blood*. To the myth, it is of no relevance that today most of Rotterdam's inhabitants are not the children or grandchildren of Rotterdammers that worked in the harbours or industries. The old myth of the "working ethos" of the city is adjusted to fit a new mythology of doing and daring and is adjusted to fit new strategies. Myths that were once compatible parts of the mythology are now rearranged and juxtaposed: the "working city" is a "daring city" that moves "beyond the harbour" and can ultimately even change its gender.

Like many other cities, Rotterdam adopts entrepreneurial (Harvey 1989) "characteristics once distinctive to the private sector: risk-taking, inventiveness, promotion and profit motivation" (Hubbard 1996: 1141). These characteristics are often associated with masculinity (in addition to the neoliberalization that Hubbard refers to here). Risk-taking and competition are not only the symbols that the city of Rotterdam uses to define itself, they are also the symbols that fit neatly in common sense views of the masculine. In fact, the entrepreneurial city has been said to be inherently masculine (Hubbard 2004: 667). Interestingly, the masculine, the entrepreneurial and the Rotterdam identity overlap in this respect. Rotterdam's masculine identity that derives from its working-class mythology here serves to legitimate an entrepreneurial strategy to, paradoxically, install a

more feminine mythology and identity for the city. This confluence, I would argue, also explains the macho references to "tits".

Rotterdam aims to present itself as a culturally interesting city in large part because the idea is that the attraction of a creative class will lead to job growth (Marlet and Van Woerkens 2007) and Rotterdam lacks "creative people" (Franke and Verhagen 2005). Just as the entrepreneurial is most often associated with the masculine, the creative is associated with the feminine. Not only are employees of the service and creative sectors far more often than in other economic sectors actually female, the "creative" itself is considered a feminine trait. The masculine entrepreneur that is Rotterdam thus has to get in touch with its feminine side in order to attract the much desired feminine "artistic dividend" (Markusen and Schrock: 2006).

Sex and the City: Gendering the Urban Class Issue

On the tenth of July in 2008, the front page of free newspaper "Spits" showed a picture of a gigantic cocktail glass, made of ice filled with a pink cocktail made especially for Rotterdam called "My Rotterdam" or in short (referring to the very feminine Marilyn Monroe): "MonRo". DJ Helene di Firenzi, unknown to the larger audience, but according to the organizers the ideal spokeswoman of "La City '08" because of her "daring attitude" and "male profession",[3] climbs the stairs to the cocktail ice glass of 4 m while smoking a large cigar. Adorned in masculine artefacts (a powersuit and cigar), the DJ symbolizes the kind of woman that Rotterdam is looking for: the educated, assertive, non-traditional (maybe even promiscuous) woman that is thought to be needed for the aspired new, post-Fordist, economy.

According to its organizers, and the local politicians that were responsible for its funding, "Rotterdam is the masculine city par excellence"[4] and this reality and image urgently needs adjustment. Many Western cities have been characterized as masculine (see the Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of this book for an overview of literature). Tall towers, steel constructions and working men in the streets all fit into common categories of the masculine. The fact that Rotterdam, specifically, is perceived as a masculine city has everything to do with the working-class myths and modern built environment after the World War II. A good example of this usage of the gendered character of space and architecture is this quote of Van den Anker (the initiator of the festival and then alderwoman of Rotterdam):

> The image of Rotterdam is only based on masculinity. It is hard for people to say goodbye to that. But in the meanwhile, Rotterdam has become the city where everything is high and square. (. . .) All phallus symbols. (Translation author)[5]

The modernist planning and 1980s architecture are characterized by the alderwoman as masculine phallus symbols and in need of change. Rotterdam now wishes to establish a mythology that (1) includes women and families, but, most importantly, (2) attracts more middle- and higher-class inhabitants and visitors and (3) can catalyse a shift towards a post-Fordist economy. “La City” does this by combining Rotterdam’s “daring” image with a particular brand of femininity:

> Rotterdam dares to show her feminine side. During “La City ‘08”, the city takes its feminine interests and ambitions in focus, with a month long of innovative initiatives and sparkling events in fashion, art, dance, business, sports, emancipation and beauty (*verzorging*). Rotterdam will be more tempting than ever, for women and men[6]

This quote from the promotional booklet of “La City” focuses on the innovativeness of Rotterdam. The booklet seems to say that Rotterdam may have been a “muscleman” in the past, but that it is now a creative temptress. The “city as woman” is a tempting femme fatale, luring new people with its virtues: “stylish, powerful, creative, inspiring, sparkling and full of surprises”.[7] In fact, the evaluation of the festival in 2009 pointed out that Rotterdam was successfully portrayed as a city in which traditions are broken (success was measured in the relative amount of people that agreed with this statement in a questionnaire). The evaluation report notes this specific outcome as the most important effect of the event.[8] What is interesting here is that the city invokes the image of an eroticized temptress in order to attract more women and especially more families to the city. There seems to be a tension here between the eroticized woman on the one hand and the family and mother on the other hand. But the temptress is primarily invoked to break with the mythology of the rough men of the harbour. Both images are extremes on the axes of gender. Rotterdam uses the hyperfeminine to change the mythology of the hypermasculine. While this hyperfeminine might not resonate too much with the existing mythology, by introducing this new myth, the aim is that the mythology is balanced out and softened. Moreover, the image of the promiscuous woman can serve to exclude Muslim women and other

inhabitants of Rotterdam that are deemed "traditional" or "not yet modern" (this theme is further dealt with in Chapter 5).

The logo of "La City" is laden with ideology as well. The phrase "La City '08" was printed in round characters that were especially designed for the occasion. This roundness refers to "the feminine form" and expresses the "softer", "feminine" side of the city.[9] On top of form, the message of the festival was brought to the fore by the changing colours in the logo: shading from blue to pink. Also, the image of a pink stiletto shoe frequently appeared in articles on the festival and on the festival's materials themselves. The message is clear: Rotterdam is trading the steel-nosed shoes of the harbour for the pink high heels of the cocktail bar. The city cross-dresses: in essence, it likes to remain the entrepreneurial and macho city that is not afraid of some authoritarian tough talk. But for occasions, it dresses in pink stilettos and lets out its creative temptress. In the name of daring, then, it promotes an image of femininity that is not only quite traditional and stereotypical (alas for the tradition breaking ambitions), but also very much bourgeois and white.

Moving beyond the aesthetics, the actual actions or activities show a similar pattern of gender changes and class upgrading. One of the most important activities in the "La City month" was the "Ladies Night", a night of shopping with extended opening hours of the stores in the city centre. The activities of "La City" were very much about consumption and "pampering". They were divided into three subthemes: Body, Mind and Soul:

> *Body* stands for pampering, *Mind* stands for development: mental exertion and enrichment (but also personal and professional relaxation, of course), *Soul* stands for inspiration, turmoil and temptation.[10]

Examples of activities are concerts, dance parties, lectures, fashion shows, sporting events and "Meet and Eat experiences". The feminine is in this instant more or less equated to consumption.

Cities have been the décor of (conspicuous) consumption since at least the second half of the nineteenth century (Harvey 1989; McDowell 1999; Laermans 1993; Wilson 1991). And very early on, consumption and femininity were connected (McDowell 1999; Laermans 1993; Wilson 1991). The early department stores for consumers (instead of customers) has become a symbol for the change from a production based society to one that is consumption centred (Laermans 1993). Modern consumer culture

was a parallel process to women's emancipation (McDowell 1999; Laermans 1993; Wilson 1991). Talking about leisure spaces for women without men and women's free movement often means talking about consumption spaces, as it did in "La City". The actions and activities of the city of Rotterdam in "La City" symbolize its ambition to partake in the move of many global cities towards a more service-based economy. What better way to shake off the myth of the "blue-collar workers city" than to combine the myth of the active, traditions-breaking city with a more feminine gender that is embedded in leisurely activities and luxury and thereby introduce a new, pink-collar economy?

Conclusion: A Muscleman in Pink Stilettos and What That Excludes

People often think of cities as gendered. Rotterdam is a muscleman, the people of Karachi think of their city as a girl (Verkaaik 2009) and Frank Sinatra sang "L.A. is my Lady". Rotterdam is in many ways a muscleman: a tough-talking strong doer. Part of the "urban charisma" (Verkaaik 2009) of Rotterdam is this masculine mythology: a mythology of an international orientation, high rise and harbours, of rolled up sleeves, hard work, blue collars, sweat and muscle. For a post-Fordist future, the consensus seems to be that this mythology needs to be softened, made less masculine and more feminine. The festival "La City '08" is an excellent case of gendered imagineering: of engineering the city's mythology with gendered means. It is also a case of genderfication, as this symbolic engineering is meant to, in the end, attract new, less macho and less working-class populations. Rotterdam is, thus, bending its gender. The city's administrators and marketers are construing a new, more feminine mythology with selective reference to the city's past. The myth of Rotterdam as a "daring city" used to be told in the context of the masculine, "blue-collar/working-class city" and harbour. Now, precisely this myth of "tradition-braking" is invoked to embrace on the one hand masculine entrepreneurial strategies and on the other the city's feminine side, middle-class families and a "pink-collar economy". The association with femininity is an entrepreneurial strategy that is to accompany material restructuring of the city and the city's economy. The imagineering in this case is a production of a feminine mythology that may not resonate now but does help to frame who belongs in the city and who does not.

In the next chapter, the winners and losers of this gendered imagineering and genderfication project will become clearer, but as a prelude, this reference to Rotterdam's tits in a call for more acceptance of queer lifestyles and expressions is interesting:

> We have heard many call for "more tits" for Rotterdam. The city was to become softer. That was primarily meant as a statement about the cities' planning and furnishing: no more robust skyscrapers, but flower baskets and soft lighting. The results of the efforts are there: the city is becoming softer and more feminine. But Rotterdammers can still use some more tits. Rotterdam was built by harbor workers. A city in which many cultures live together, and where the Western way of dealing with sexuality is seen as too much by some. A city with a tough street culture, too, where there is struggle over who gets to be boss in public space and where extravagant outfits are seen as provocation. How do we get them softer and more tolerant? (Grievink 2014).

What this quote shows once again is that the interpretations of what is considered feminine are extraordinary traditional. Where above we saw interpretations of softness, temptation and stiletto heels, here, apparently, flower baskets make for a more feminine city. But more importantly, in this quote there is an explicit allusion to what genderfying Rotterdam may mean for populations that are not considered ready for gender bending: those "non-Western", "tough" workers that are uncomfortable with anything queer and feminine. Rotterdam today is no longer just a muscleman, it seems, but a muscleman in pink stilettos trying to grow breasts. And everyone uncomfortable with this genderfication should adapt.

The city moves. A mythology of the essence of a city is always a simplified package without multiple meanings. Of course, the inhabitants of cities do experience these "undercommunicated" (Selwyn 1996) urban aspects. And urban dwellers live and work in the "potentially disturbing spaces beyond the edges of pictures" (Ossman 1995: 19). These urban inhabitants have lost the game of capturing the imagination of the ones making the choices, the battle to be seen. Sometimes they have been actively excommunicated for the abstract homogenous image that is to engineer the mythology of their city. As the examples of contemporary cities around the world in this chapter have shown, existing inequalities are almost always mirrored and reproduced through the rewriting of urban myths for place promotion. Imagineering produces places to play, but also puts "places *in* play" (Sheller and Urry 2004).

Mythologies are ideologically potent narratives (Selwyn 1996) and serve to legitimate practices of placemaking and restructuring. Imagineering has very real effects. Choices are made to revitalize certain neighbourhoods while neglecting others, to build football stadiums instead of children's playgrounds, to invest in a marketing campaign while leaving inequalities intact. The next chapter shows the material productions of space that are part of the genderfication project.

What the examples in this chapter show, though, is that the ideal post-Fordist city is less rough and masculine than its Fordist predecessor. In transitioning to a post-Fordist economy in entrepreneurial strategies, femininity is a tool and strategy and, importantly, femininity is the preferred gender. It can be used to introduce a new economy: one that is service-based and post-Fordist. The aspired new economy in Rotterdam, Antwerp, Marseille and many other cities is to replace the lost jobs for men in the harbour and industry by new jobs for men and women in tourism, health care and creative industries. Blue collars are to be replaced by pink collars; masculine "work" by, slightly exaggerated, feminine "professions" and creative producers. The entrepreneurial city has been said to be inherently masculine (Hubbard 2004: 667). This may be so, but a very different picture surfaces from my analysis: one of a hyper-femininity capable of excluding working-class masculinities. When trying to enhance the attractiveness of Rotterdam for potential middle-class residents, young men from working class or precarious backgrounds are the first category to exclude. "La City's" ambassador Helene di Firenzi says it best: "We are going to enjoy our femininity (. . .). Showing everybody inside Rotterdam, *and especially outside the city*, that you can eat and shop wonderfully in Rotterdam [italics author]."[11]

Notes

1. www.rotterdamdurft.nl Het verhaal van Rotterdam, retrieved June 6 2008.
2. Groeten uit Rotterdam/Greetings from Rotterdam. A song by the local Group De Berini's. Translation author.
3. Evaluation report "La City" Rotterdam Marketing Bureau, Karin Akkerhuis. http://www.bds.rotterdam.nl/content.jsp?objectid=203286. Retrieved October 10, 2009.
4. www.lacity.nl retrieved July 10, 2008.
5. Marianne van den Anker, the alderwoman in a newspaper article in newspaper Algemeen Dagblad: "Zet eens een rondborstig gebouw neer." June 2008.

6. www.rotterdam.info La City Campaign. "The City as Woman" translations author, italics author). Retrieved July 10 2008.
7. La City flyer, June 2008.
8. Evaluation Report La City (see above).
9. Evaluation Report La City (see above).
10. Evaluation Report La City (see above).
11. Guestcolumn of Ambassador Helene di Firenzi in: Uitagenda Rotterdam, number 10 (1), 2008, pp. 41.

CHAPTER 4

Planning: Attracting Women and Children as New Urbanites

Abstract This chapter goes deeper into cases of urban planning in which women, children and families are targeted as desired new inhabitants. It builds on two empirical cases to further unpack the concept of genderfication. First, it investigates how in contemporary state-led gentrification policies women and families currently are considered gentrification pioneers. The chapter zooms in on Rotterdam's urban planning programme for the "child-friendly city", in which current urban dwellings are replaced by new, larger and more expensive "family-friendly homes" as a strategy for urban regeneration. Second, it investigates the Rotterdam urban planning programme for the "City Lounge": plans for an urban public space that is especially designed for middle-class consumption and leisure. This public leisure space is targeted at middle-class urbanites and explicitly meant to stimulate a consumption-based economy that is to replace the Fordist economy of previous decades. Both planning strategies aim at producing space for affluent populations that adhere to gender equal norms and are here thus considered as strategies of genderfication.

Keywords Child-friendly planning · Urban planning · Leisure space · Genderfication · City Lounge · Middle class housing

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A Reassuring Story? From the Modernist to the Post-Fordist

> There is a reassuring story being told in the world today. Through it many people, undisturbed and baffled by the ever-expanding, increasingly destructive powers of man, have regained their belief in the future, in the ultimate triumph of good over evil. They have heard it from friends, they have read it in the newspapers, they have listened to it being related on the wireless. The lucky ones among them have seen it with their own eyes. For it is a story that is being told in deeds rather than in words. It is the story of Rotterdam, the city where man has rebuilt what man had destroyed. Nay, more than that. Both the port and the city have risen again, more efficient and more beautiful than they ever were before. Thus Rotterdam has become, as it says on its coat of arms, stronger through struggle. There is not a shadow of doubt about that. (Rotterdam PR 1955: 3, original in English)

This "reassuring story" is the opening paragraph of a 1955 booklet of the Rotterdam Public Relations Office meant to showcase the newly rebuilt Rotterdam. It shows a determination to overcome the destruction of the World War II bombings and a utopian, distinctly modernist view of the future of Rotterdam. The booklet looks back at the "damage-defying description" that was the result of the Nazi bombing of the city centre in May 1940. Almost the entire centre was burnt out in the days after the bombing. Famously, modernist planners seized the opportunity to not save or rebuild, but build anew. Modern roads for automobiles and skyscrapers had been planned and built in the decades before the war, but the empty space that was the result of destruction provided a planners' carte blanch (Van Ulzen 2007).

The 1955 booklet sings the praises of this new, modern, healthy, forward-looking city that rose out of the "unbroken spirit" of Rotterdammers.

> "In spite of all the hardships, the job (of cleaning up after the bombing, MB) was finished before the end of the year and the centre of Rotterdam (. . .) had by then become one vast open space ready for future building." (. . .) "whatever the new city centre was going to be and look like, (Rotterdammers) realised that good results could be achieved only if an all-embracing plan were drawn up for the entire area." (8)

The "all-embracing plan" included high-rise, space for automobiles and modern garden cities. In the booklet, pictures of pre-war slums are followed by the much "healthier" dream of "bright" communal gardens. "Light" and

"air" were the magic words of the future in 1955. Contrasting the "higgledy-piggledy place, with buildings designed and erected in a haphazard manner" was the "spacious, airy complex of carefully zoned buildings designed for a city devoted to commerce and industry" (31). For these purposes, the city's functions were separated into grouped spaces and collective buildings. Residential buildings became scarce in the city centre. Habitation was moved to areas outside of the centre, to suburbs and garden cities.

This modernist dream of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s is now the city's nightmare. The zoning of work and shopping areas, the building of residential areas outside of the city centre, the motor ways dissecting the city: all are results of the efforts of post-war planners and eyesores for the current administration and its planners. Today's regeneration of Rotterdam consists of precisely the departure of these ideals and materialized spaces. Rotterdam now wants to *mix* urban functions instead of separating them and build for the post-industrial or *post-Fordist* future. Precisely the departure of the industrial and modern character that was the object of praise in the 1955 promotional book is now its goal.

In the booklet, gender surfaces as an important ingredient when it emphasizes the role of housewives in Rotterdam's reconstruction.

> Many think it was the men who built the new centre of Rotterdam. That is not true. It was really the women, the housewives, who reinvested Rotterdam with its specific character, its personal touch. The men were bold enough to conceive a grand plan for its reconstruction. (...) However, once the big office blocks headed by the new bank buildings had been completed, it was found that the typical atmosphere of a city centre had not yet been created. That did not make itself felt until more shops had been built. The big department stores, the attractive fashion stores, and especially the enchanting variety of smaller shops have drawn the shopping public – which, after all, is predominantly female – back to the city centre. With them the old bustle returned to the centre of a city from which it had been absent so long. (44)

This excerpt can almost stand as an example of the Fordist sexual contract in the sense that a clear gendered division of labour appears: men designed the material city and women (or rather "housewives") graced this new and modern city with their "personal touch". Working as homemakers of a city, creating its atmosphere, the women gave the city life, the excerpt says, by going shopping. This narrative and version of events now seems very dated. Interestingly, the Fordist, modernist city is

here explicitly represented as gendered: planned by men for banks and business, made enchanting by suburban housewives. We will not likely find this particular view of "housewives" and their "rational" men in today's texts and images of Rotterdam.

In this chapter, I analyse Rotterdam's aims for change and the urban planning that is to bring about the desired success. I employ an intersectional analysis to two cases of urban planning: (1) the Rotterdam plans for a "child-friendly city" and (2) the plans for the "city lounge". My choice for these cases is strategic; the materials I used for these analyses can be considered "strategic research materials" (Merton 1987). That is to say that these materials teach us something about the gendered logics of urban planning and policy in a city aiming to de-industrialize. In the following, I zoom in on two concrete urban planning strategies in the Rotterdam case that are exemplary cases for urban regeneration in such ex-industrial European cities.

Case 1 – Gentrification and Urban Regeneration: The "Child-Friendly" City

For decades now, Rotterdam has employed gentrification to "upgrade" the city. To this end, the city subsidizes vintage clothing shops, hip restaurants and art galleries to establish themselves in parts of the city that are designated for gentrification. Before the economic crisis hit in 2008 and currently again as the housing market is back on its feet, this also involves the replacement of small and affordable housing (in large part social housing) by larger and more expensive dwellings, for example in the recent and highly contested Woonvisie (see Doucet et al., 2016 for an account of the referendum about this policy document). In Gaffelstraat, one of the narrow streets of the neighbourhood just west of the city centre, a project was to attract new inhabitants in 2010: a project to design your "dream house".[1] A large banner meant to advertise the project shows a 30-something White woman with a fashionable leather jacket, a baby carrier with her toddler in front of her. To advertise "dream houses", it would appear, the imagery of a White fashionable femininity is very useful. In most recent plans (Rotterdam 2015a, 2015b), the new adagio is that Rotterdam needs "strong shoulders" (interestingly, this perspective is most fully developed in a presentation for internal administrative purposes that is nonetheless analyzed for this chapter because it is the most explicit and most elaborate example of this rhetoric yet: *Sterke Schouders*, Rotterdam 2016) in order to be a "strong city". In the most explicit sense yet, the administration

expresses the desire to attract a higher educated population and a population with more to spend when compared to the current population: "(we aim to) accommodate the demand of middle – and higher earning and higher educated" (Rotterdam Municipality 2015a: 11). Higher-educated and higher-earning parents of children is a target population. In a presentation that was meant for internal purposes in the administration, women figure prominently: of the five fictive "profiles" of what "strong shoulders" may look like, three are women. These five profiles very explicitly and quite elaborately offer female and feminine imaginations of the future Rotterdam population. Consider, for example, these two:

> Vanessa. The free entrepreneur. She is a real citizen of the world. (. . .) she started her own business and lived with her husband in many places in the world. Rotterdam is the only constant and will remain so. (. . .); She plans on growing old there. (. . .) She thinks that everyone has a responsibility towards to city. For herself, she sees this primarily in the social realm, in her own neighbourhood. To have a chat with the neighbour, when she walks the dog. She shops in the independent stores in the neighbourhood. (. . .) She thinks that is both fun and a way to keep the city lively. (Rotterdam Municipality 2016: 7)

And:

> Maaike. The tough mother. Her attitude towards life is positive and hands-on. She is a successful marketeer and has three small children. If anyone around her experiences a problem, she will try to negotiate and come to a solution. She is a real free-thinker this way. (. . .) Her point of view: 'there are a lot of different people. That is neither strange nor scary. On the contrary: I find that interesting.' (Rotterdam Municipality 2016: 8)

Why is a young and affluent *mother* the desired new inhabitant of the Gaffelstraat? Why are White and affluent young *women* the "strong shoulders" of Rotterdam? How can we understand these perhaps surprising choices in marketing of a project developer, housing associations and the municipality itself? In order to come to an answer to these questions, I here analyse contemporary gentrification policies in Rotterdam, the role of gender in them and plans for a "child-friendly city".

Because of the huge stress that is put on the "quality of space" for the urban economy in today's thinking about urban government, many entrepreneurial strategies of Rotterdam take the shape of planning interventions in housing and the spatial organization of the city. One collection of strategies that has

become immensely popular in the Rotterdam government but elsewhere as well is state-led gentrification (Uitermark et al. 2007). In fact, in the eyes of many policymakers in former industrial cities, gentrification is a "positive urban policy" (Lees et al. 2008: 198). Gentrification policies are so widespread in Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands that the term seems to have lost its original critical meaning. Administrators and planners are aiming for more middle-class inhabitants in former working-class neighbourhoods and at a "social mix" of different groups in their populations.

The term gentrification generally refers to the process where affluent people or businesses buy property in formerly poor or working-class neighbourhoods and occupants are displaced. Usually, and usefully so, gentrification is approached in research as a class-based issue (see Smith 1996; Lees et al. 2008; Slater 2006). Although many have outlined the use made of culture and consumption in gentrification (Ley 2003; Zukin 1989; Warde 1991), gentrification is usually studied along class lines. However, many gentrification scholars have had attention for the gendered dimensions of the process. This is apparent for example in the abundant amount of studies on male gay gentrifiers (see for an overview: McDowell 1999), but many also suggest that in gentrification, importantly, (heterosexual) women may be at the forefront (Bondi 1991, 1999; Fincher 1990, 2004; Lees et al. 2008; Kern 2011). In these studies, single women (Kern 2011), and dual-earner couples without children play an important role. Those not in nuclear families have thus for a long time been understood to push gentrification. Famously, Damaris Rose showed that especially women in "alternative lifestyles" were "marginal gentrifiers" (1984). In any case, gentrification in time coincided with the massive entrance of women in paid labour and professional urban jobs and therefore gaining access to the financial resources necessary to buy property (Smith 1996; Kern 2011). Gentrification, therefore, is a process at the intersection of gender and class. Some have even argued that gentrification is *best* understood as a gendered process (Warde 1991). I use Hackworth's definition of gentrification as "the production of space for progressively more affluent users" (Hackworth 2002: 815). The advantage of this definition is that it can be applied to the production of space beyond residential properties in working-class neighbourhoods. Moreover, it focuses on the social production of space, and is thus well suited to look at meaning making and at the production of space "through human intentions" (Molotch 1993: 887).

Rather than women with "alternative lifestyles", more recently, nuclear families with children have become catalysts of gentrification.

Lia Karsten showed how in the Netherlands and in Amsterdam in particular, YUPPs (Young Urban Professional Parents"; 2003: 2573) now often make "a positive choice for the urban way of life" (2003: 2573). Rather than all moving to the suburbs as soon as children arrive, therefore, in post-Fordism, especially dual-earner families with children find the city an attractive place of residence. Fainstein and Servon (2005: 6) addressed how what "women in labour markets means spatially" is often left out of studies in urban sociology. One of the effects of women's participation in labour markets, it seems, is family-fuelled gentrification (compare Goodsell 2013 for his concept of familification). Boterman (2012) and Karsten (2003, 2007) indeed show that in residential practices of nuclear families, parents display a preference for inner city life, or at least living close to the inner city, as it makes task sharing and the combination of two careers easier. In this context, Karsten cites Manuel Castells:

> The structure of the household generally determines the spatial choice. The larger the role women play in the household (*sic*), the more the proximity to jobs and urban services in the city makes central urban space attractive to the middle class, triggering the process of gentrification of the central city. (1993: 270; also cited in Karsten 2003: 2575)

Besides the strange assumption that women start playing a role in the household when they enter in paid jobs, it does appear that families increasingly often choose the urban as place of residence rather than the suburb, at least when compared to the Fordist decades after the World War II. This shows how, indeed, changed gender notions, and perhaps post-Fordist gender notions, spur new forms of gentrification and patterns of spatial mobility. In Rotterdam, city administrators took note. In the genderfication project, the aim is to strengthen this process by enhancing the attractiveness of the city for families with children through spatial design. Deliberately trying to dissuade young parents to move to the suburbs, Rotterdam associates family with gentrification as a public policy.

The 2010 plan "Building Blocks for a Child-Friendly City" (Rotterdam Municipality 2010a) and the more recent "Prospect Rich Neighbourhoods for Families" (*Kansrijke wijken voor gezinnen*, 2015b) give detailed strategies for the future planning of especially older inner city poor neighbourhoods. I interpret these plans as part of an "instant

gentrification" (D. Rose 2004: 280) strategy and an exemplary case of the shift in focus of cities that aim for gentrification from single young men and women to *middle-class nuclear families* as gentrification pioneers. Rotterdam explicitly takes its cue for these policies from Vancouver's history of recovery (Van den Berg 2013, 2015). This Canadian city is often considered an international emblem for urban "liveability" (Punter 2003). The city was successful in attracting desired inhabitants to its urban core by focusing on dual earner families. Vancouver developed a gendered strategy to attract these groups: it built family-friendly housing in inner city neighbourhoods and provided spatial solutions for the combination of care and work (Hutton 2004; Punter 2003). Rotterdam's plans for a "family-friendly" or, alternatively, "child-friendly" city are inspired by these examples.

In this paragraph I analyse the Rotterdam plans for a "child friendly" city by looking at the following texts: "Building Blocks for a Child-Friendly City" (Rotterdam Municipality 2010a), which is the main text to set out the plans, the "Child-Friendly Boroughs Monitor", an annual monitor that is designed to track the effects of the plan (Rotterdam Municipality 2010b), the "Urban Vision Rotterdam 2030", which outlines the more general urban planning of Rotterdam (Rotterdam Municipality 2008b) and the more recent texts "Woonvisie" (Rotterdam Municipality 2015a), "Prospect Rich Neighbourhoods for families" (Kansrijke wijken voor gezinnen, Rotterdam Municipality 2015b) and, the presentation "Strong shoulders, strong city" ("Sterke schouders. Sterke stad", Rotterdam Municipality 2016). I view the plans for the "child-friendly city" as part of what I term urban re-*generation*. In the case of the plans to attract families, urban regeneration means the replacement of the current population of parents and children with a new population of families that are better suited in terms of education and income levels. Efforts to build more expensive homes, to gentrify neighbourhoods, to attract higher-educated parents with their children, to market the city to a more affluent population and to "disperse" lower-educated "prospect poor" are concrete strategies towards this goal of replacement. I define urban regeneration as efforts to renew the city by either investing in the children (the next generation) of the current population or replacing the current population of children by a new generation of better-suited children. Urban regeneration as a concept supplements the much used term of urban regeneration in the sense of material and economic restructuring in its focus on the city as

a *reproductive milieu*. In urban regeneration, the cities' reproductive milieu and the next generation are important routes for social engineering and planning.

Rotterdam considers "selective migration" of the "prospect rich" to be the root of all urban problems. This comes to the fore most clearly in this early quote from the City Council:

> The capacity to absorb in certain areas is challenged and exceeded by a continued in-flow of people without and the continuing out-flow of people with prospects. This is the core of all problems of Rotterdam. (Rotterdam Municipality 2004a)

The image is invoked here that without an immediate stop to this process, further deterioration of the city will be inescapable. "Prospect rich" can mean many things (compare Bonjour and Duyvendak 2015), but generally, in the Rotterdam context, "prospect rich" and "prospect poor" are categories that are used in the exceptional spatial policy measures to prohibit the renting of houses to people with a low income (less than 110% of the social minimum 2) in specific areas under the "Umbrella and Exception Law", also known as the "Rotterdam Law" (see Schinkel and Van den Berg 2011; Hochstenbach et al. 2015; for further elaboration on this law and its consequences). In these cases, "prospect poor" is a euphemism for "poor" because it is defined as people in the lowest income bracket. In the case of the most recent "child-friendly city" plans (2015a), a rather clear definition of "prospect rich" is in fact given:

> A prospect rich family (*gezin*) is defined as follows: a household with at least one child under the age of 18, none of the parents receive welfare benefits, in case one of the parents is unemployed, (s)he has an educational level of at least HBO (professional college graduate level, MB), the household lives in an owner-occupied or rented dwelling with a value (WOZ waarde, MB) of at least 160.000 euro. (Rotterdam Municipality 2015a: 4)

Families with these clear class characteristics are deemed to be able to "strengthen" the city (2015a). The "class upgrading" that is the clear and extremely explicit goal here is perhaps not so surprising since many cities are working towards such goals (however unjust they may be). What concerns me here is the understanding that particularly families and women are thought to be this "strengthening" force and that they

are so if and when they are part of a dual-earner household. So in the policy rhetoric apparent in all the above-mentioned texts the administration says, for example:

> (Families with children) strengthen the social cohesion and the economic activity of the city. They provide the ideas and the energy for the future Rotterdam. They are the future in which the city invests. (Rotterdam Municipality 2010a: 9)

New families of which the parents are dual earners and have a higher education (as is made explicit in the plan) *are* the future of Rotterdam, it turns out in this quote, and they are also the ones in which the city invests. In addition, they are the ones that can bring back "balance" to Rotterdam: in most plans, families are the said target in order to bring "balance back". These quotes are telling because the plans indeed focus on spending public budgets to provide housing and attractive milieu for the already "prospect rich". I now turn to how it proposes to do so.

The plans insist that a "family-friendly city" is accomplished by working on four "building blocks": housing, public space, amenities and routes. Public space and routes speak more or less for themselves: the efforts under these headings focus on sporting areas, parks, playgrounds and traffic safety. The efforts to strengthen family amenities are interesting because the plan speaks of the necessity of families in order to keep amenities affordable. It says: "If families leave, the quality and quantity of amenities withers" (Rotterdam Municipality 2010a: 13). What is interesting here is that in most of the boroughs in which this plan proposes to invest in order to become more "child-friendly" and attract more "families", there *are* already many families with young children. In fact, some of these boroughs are the most "child dense" (the emic term for the amount of children per hectare) of all the boroughs in the city, such as Afrikaanderwijk or Rotterdam Noord. The neutral language of "families" and "amenities" disguises the way in which very specific families are targeted: the municipality will invest in amenities such as schools, sporting clubs and child care if it will attract the higher middle classes.

The municipalities' efforts for gentrification by families find their concrete distillation in the definition of "family-friendly housing". In the guideline, a "family-friendly house" is 85 m[2] in size or larger, has a private outdoor space, an elevator if it is not on the ground floor and has a separate bedroom for each child. In fact, if the latter is not the case, the

municipality now considers a house "overcrowded" (Rotterdam 2010b). When applied on the current housing stock of Rotterdam, the city states that certain neighbourhoods have less than 10% "family-friendly houses" (Rotterdam Municipality 2010a, b). The plan proposes to change this not only by building new homes, but also by converting two smaller apartments into one. This leads to less dwellings and the displacement of current inhabitants. This is, however, exactly what is the more or less latent goal in the 2010 texts, as is made explicit:

> *An accidental advantage* of this is the dilution of these highly populated boroughs. (Italics mine)

In 2015 and 2016 the language is far less careful (and in a sense needs less analysis), as de Woonvisie clearly states that in order for Rotterdam to become more attractive for higher earning parents with children, 20,000 affordable dwellings should be demolished or alternatively converted into bigger and more expensive houses (Rotterdam Municipality 2015b see for an account of the Woonvisie referendum: Doucet et al., 2016). Interestingly, the middle-class boroughs and the city centre are areas for planned residential "condensation". Under the neutral guise of remaking the city into a "child-friendly" one, the dispersion of the precarious and a "heightened density" of middle-class families is the central goal. The plan speaks of attracting more families and the need for children in order to have "life" in the city. But when it comes to the poorer neighbourhoods, exactly the density of children becomes a problem.

In the urban planning texts, "*child friendly*" is a proxy for *middle-class friendly*. The city does not apply the guidelines for "family-friendly housing" so that all families in Rotterdam can have such a house at an affordable price nor does it aspire to do so. On the contrary, as a result of the plans (at least if the municipality has its way) prices will go up, creating affordability problems for large groups and new, more affluent families will move into these neighbourhoods, leaving many of the poorer families displaced. One of the groups that is not a desired target group and therefore suffers from the plans and its implementation are elderly. Because families with children prefer ground-level housing, especially these have become harder to hold on to for older people (Neijts in de Havenloods 2016). Protests against the newest plans gained momentum in 2016 and resulted in a November 2016 referendum on the Woonvisie plans (see the Coda for a reflection on my role there and see Doucet et al., 2016 for an account of these events).

The Gender Subtext: Genderfication

We can now see that the families that Rotterdam is looking for are dual-earning, middle-class, heterosexual, nuclear families that consume the city. In this context, if we consider the profiles of "strong shoulders" for Rotterdam (2016) as given above once more, we can see that the fact that both women are in a heterosexual relationship, higher educated, in paid labour and that one is focused on consumption while the other is raising three city children is no coincidence (I'll leave the fact that both are White in a city that is not aside for now but will return to race as another relevant axe of domination below). In the "child-friendly city programme", space is produced for families that subscribe to specific gender ideals. This is apparent for instance when the combination of work and care is made easier by the provision of childcare facilities close to "family-friendly houses", but more explicitly when a desired "prospect-rich" family is taken to mean a family with two incomes (in the definition as given above, 2015a). At the intersection of class and gender, this means that class upgrading of neighbourhoods is given a distinctly gendered form and is done using gendered strategies. It is produced for a specific gendered order and in that sense the "child-friendly city" is a form of genderfication. The Fordist sexual contract and the spatial translation in the modernist city is considered problematic and a necessary target for change through public policy and urban planning. Genderfication changes this order into one in which the public and private sphere are much more intertwined, where men care and women work in the (home) office and where children are brought up in dual-earning families and in daycare facilities. What Rotterdam aims for is not *just* more families and children, or even more middle-class families, but in fact women, children *and* men that subscribe to certain specific norms about raising children and dividing labour. In other words: Rotterdam is seeking middle-class groups with specific gender roles and norms. And these specific gender notions are dominant in the YUPP – higher middle class that Rotterdam desires. The production of space for these gender norms is a means to produce space for progressively more affluent users (and thus gentrification), but can be distinguished from gentrification because it does order space in a clearly gendered way. Genderfication is to establish gentrification in the end, but has specifically gendered features, uses gendered strategies and thus works differently and produces specifically gendered outcomes. Informed by intersectionality

perspectives, we can now see how Rotterdam's efforts are not just about class upgrading and gentrification, nor are they only about the attraction of families, as some of the policy texts portray the targets. Instead, the genderfication project consists of gendered strategies to attract desired new (higher) middle-class inhabitants. Those have sufficient income to buy a family home in the city, they live in heterosexual nuclear families, share work and care tasks, aim for gender equality and earn dual incomes.

From my analysis of the plans for the child-friendly city, it becomes apparent that the gender ideal that guides genderfication in Rotterdam consists of norms of (1) gender-equality, (2) dual-earning and (3) the (heterosexual) nuclear family. Genderfication assumes a specific shape in the case of Rotterdam: it leads to building larger, more expensive (as compared to the current housing stock) owner-occupied homes for middle-class nuclear families, with ground-level front doors, 3–5 bedrooms, with parks and daycare facilities in direct proximity. The first element of the genderfication in the case of Rotterdam, that is, gender equality, is expressed in the farewell to modernist planning that consisted of the zoning of spaces for work and family that is declared in the "Building Blocks" plan. As I wrote earlier in this chapter, Rotterdam is a typical example of such a modernist city with a current spatial layout that is the product of the zoning of and separation of production and reproduction in gendered spheres. Now, Rotterdam attracts middle-class families precisely on the basis of their moving away from modernist zoning with a new spatial mix of urban functions. The most telling example of this is the goal of the city to become an attractive *residential* city. The Rotterdam Urban Vision 2030 (Rotterdam Municipality 2008b) states:

> To be able to live in the city there must be good housing and suitable employment. Employment, in turn, thrives only when the city can offer favourable conditions for business development with high quality housing. (10)

These goals are presented as neutral in the plan, as it says that both goals are "inextricably linked" (10). In this quote, the current ideal of the effect of "quality of space" on the urban economy is obvious. After World War II and in the 1970s, Rotterdam primarily focused on building residential areas outside of the city centre and did not consider residential and economic functions to be linked spatially at all. The ideal in the beginning of this century is that women and men share their

responsibilities of work and family and that in order for the new, more gender-equal family to live in the city, work, play, home and care facilities should be mixed and provided on a neighbourhood level in order to make the combination of work and care both more equal and accessible. The modernist ideal of the separation of production and reproduction in gendered spheres is thus departed in favour of a production of a gender-equal space of mixed urban functions.

The second element of the Rotterdam gender ideal, "dual earning", is expressed in the form of larger, more expensive family houses. Dual earners generally have more to spend than traditional breadwinner families and can therefore afford such a house. Moreover, dual earners are working increasingly from their homes in order to, again, be able to combine work and care duties. This is expressed spatially in the plans in the form of home offices. The merging of smaller and cheaper apartments into larger dwellings is one of the main instruments of the plan "Building blocks for a child-friendly Rotterdam". Moreover, the first two elements, "gender equal" and "dual earner", also find their concrete distillation in the investment of the city in community schools (*brede scholen*) in which after-school programmes and childcare facilities are most often included. This enables parents to combine care and work duties.

The third element of the gender ideal is expressed in the form of the provisions of homes for nuclear families. A family, in the urban plan for the "child-friendly city", consists of parents and children under the age of 18 living together in one unit.[3] This is an expression of the general practice of families in the Netherlands. But the above-mentioned guidelines for a "family-friendly house" show how families with approximately 3–5 members are the norm (see the "child-friendly monitor", Rotterdam 2010b: 8–9). Interestingly, the gender subtext of the plan for the "child-friendly city" here expresses precisely the bourgeois, heteronormative, modern, ideal of the nuclear family with one to three children and both parents present. In the *form* that genderfication assumes here, we see on the one hand a departure from the modern ideal of the breadwinner household and on the other hand an affirmation of the ideal of the nuclear family.

Case 2: The "City Lounge"

While living in the five-bedroom house in urban areas close to the city centre, the nuclear families that are targeted in Rotterdam public policy are also thought to "strengthen" the city by consuming it, hence the

continuous stress on the "attractiveness" of the city centre. In order to further analyse the concrete spatial translations of this desire for Rotterdam to become a lively consumption city with a mix of urban functions instead of its separation of consumption, production and habitation, I here focus on what is called the City Lounge. The City Lounge is the guiding concept for the planning of the city centre. In the 2008 plans for the year 2020, the centre is conceptualized as a lounge: a place where people can relax, meet, eat and play. Planning to mix production and consumption (exactly as Jane Jacobs would have it), the City Lounge plans aim to bring revenue to the consumption and service industries in order to replace the industrial economy of Rotterdam and its modernist planning. Consider, for example, this quote in the text outlining the concept (2008a: 10):

> The concept of the City Lounge indicates the most important goals of Rotterdam: the development of the city centre into a quality spot for meeting, staying and entertaining for inhabitants, corporations and visitors.

In terms of space production, this goal is translated into public investments in street-level planning: the broadening of sidewalks, the creation of urban parks, bicycle paths, terraces and space for festivals. At the time of the presentation of the plans, Rotterdam used language of flânerie. Reminiscent of the flâneur of Baudelaire or Benjamin, Rotterdammers and Rotterdam visitors should, according to the plans, be able to walk the city while distantly observing city life. In the words of then-alderman Lucas Bolsius: "flaneren (walking like a flâneur, MB) is light-footed. It is an activity for which you do not need too much energy, and your pace can be just a little bit slower" (Bolsius in City Informatie 2008).

To mobilize the language of flânerie is an interesting choice. The flâneur, many feminist urban scholars mentioned, is not only inherently bourgeois, but also inherently masculine (Wilson 1991; Massey 1991). The flâneur observes but is himself not watched. He can consume the city and its women in passivity from a position of wealth and write about it. Elisabeth Wilson (1991) sought to investigate the possibility of a female flâneur, or flâneuse, in the figure of the prostitute, roaming the Parisian streets. The city of Rotterdam, it seems, doesn't need prostitutes: the move to feminise and genderfy, in fact, accompanies the introduction of flânerie and passive consumption. For Rotterdam, a more feminine city is also and strangely a more passive or at least less productive one. Interestingly and importantly, imagining the city

beyond Fordism and modernism involves imagining it as somehow *inactive*. Promising consumption and relaxation, the City Lounge is a move away from production, labour and industry. This is an especially stark contrast to the hard-working modernist city that Rotterdam thought itself to be until recently and to some degree still today, for instance, when the adagio "geen woorden maar daden" – "Actions speak louder than words" is invoked in the current administration programme (Rotterdam 2014a: 9).

On the cover of a recent City Lounge programme text (Rotterdam municipality 2013) we see a photo of a group of people (mostly women) laying still on their backs in a main square in yoga's dead man's pose. It represents a Sunday morning yoga class that is organized in the summer months in public space. Besides the female physical dominance in this picture, what is interesting here, too, is how an intensely passive imagery is chosen to market the city centre. I understand this as a symbolic move away from Rotterdam's story of muscle, hard work and "rolled-up sleeves". Rotterdam here uses an extreme image of passivity to depart the image of the "working city" when this is deemed necessary. I think not coincidentally, femininity is culturally and traditionally often associated with passivity in European thought. Particularly in the context of the Fordist urban, passivity and relaxation was relegated to the suburbs. The Fordist urban was a site of productivity and activity. Indeed, in the booklet with which I opened this chapter, women were thought of as "housewives" that consumed while men rebuilt the city. To strengthen a consumption economy, then, Rotterdam here intertwines meanings of femininity, passivity and conspicuous consumption (compare McDowell 1999; Laermans 1993; Wilson 1991). In departing a Fordist, production-based economy and introducing a post-Fordist, consumption-based economy, therefore, the focus on "relaxation", "flânerie" and lying in dead man's pose in squares is important.

In terms of concrete spatial interventions, the City Lounge includes investments in urban public space, such as parks and sidewalks and also, interestingly, the enhancement of bicycle paths. Dutch cities are internationally well known for their bicycle culture and in the City Lounge plans, more and qualitatively better space is planned for cyclists. Celebrated in policy programmes as a symbol of the "arrival of a new middle class" (2013: 32), one of the aims is to increase the number of cyclists in Rotterdam. In other words: the facilitation of cyclists is explicitly linked to the welcoming of (higher) middle-class inhabitants. The middle class

here takes yet another guise: now they are cyclists. Producing space for them includes, for example, the realization of 500 extra bicycle parking lots (2013: 12; Rotterdam Municipality 2015b). Interestingly, this production of space for the bicycle is also part of the "child-friendly city" plans: the creation of what is called "cargo bike neighbourhoods" (*de bakfietswijk*, Rotterdam Municipality 2014a): neighbourhoods in which the owners of cargo bikes are especially targeted as future dwellers. Quickly becoming the symbol of a new urban middle class, the cargo bike (able to transport up to four children) is particularly expensive. The newest "child-friendly city" plans include specific cargo bike parking spaces. Perhaps surprising to an international audience therefore, bicycle paths and parkings are thus public investments in the quality of public space for this new middle class.

Connected to the "child-friendly city", the target of the City Lounge plans (Rotterdam Municipality 2014b) is higher-income families again. It is put quite bluntly in the texts: "The focus on target groups with higher and middle incomes, families and students is important" (ibidem: 12). Both the child-friendly city and the City Lounge here thus aim to reach two goals in one move: to produce a population that is both differently classed and differently gendered: higher-earning inhabitants with children instead of the apparently single musclemen on the docks. Explicitly outlining the importance of "knowledge workers" and "higher educated" for Rotterdam's position in inter-urban competition, the city centre of Rotterdam is to become an area for "shopping, relaxation and enjoyment" (Rotterdam 2014b: 3) because "a good city is like a good party" (English original, ibidem: 12).

> Successful cities know how to commit creative and well-educated populations with their urban dynamic and their level of amenities. This group is becoming ever more mobile and is of the utmost economic importance. That is why the competition between cities and urban regions increases. (Ibidem: 6)

The city is not only represented in the above quotes as a space for relaxation, creativity and yuppies, but for particular middle-class White femininity: a "good party" of shopping, playgrounds, cocktails and yoga. This middle-class White femininity is a new intersection of axes of domination in urban productions of space. Its counterpoint is the citywide "ban on gathering" in public space. Danielle Chevalier and I (Van den Berg and Chevalier forthcoming) investigated the "ban on gathering" as a racialized

counterpoint to the City Lounge in which for some populations, "lounging" in public space is regarded as "loitering". These populations are usually not only working class or precarious but also consist of young men of migrant descent. Aspects of working-class non-White masculinities, it turned out, were conceptualized in Rotterdam public policy as "nuisance" in stringent safety policies. This chimes with accounts in other national and urban contexts of such problematizations of certain masculinities. In many urban contexts now, scholars have shown certain working-class masculinities to have become perceived as problematic in a post-Fordist era. In this context, Anoop Nayak (2006), for example, wrote of "displaced masculinities" in Northern England and the lack of (masculine, productive) labour as a means of constituting contemporary masculinities (compare McDowell 2003). In Rotterdam especially, working-class migrant masculinities (and in particular Muslim identities, Van den Berg and Schinkel 2009; Schinkel et al. 2011) signify the industrial past that the city is trying to depart. This is how merely being present in public space, for non-White young working-class men is now broadly defined as "nuisance". Rotterdam public policy is therefore an exemplary case of a location in which government aims to manage these masculine "surplus populations" of post-Fordist capitalism (Cowen and Siciliano 2011).

Conclusion: Women and Children as Urban Saviours

In a 1972 film (coincidentally the year in which many claim the transition to post-Fordism took place), children take to the Amsterdam streets in protest to demand less cars, more bicycle paths, playgrounds and trees with the slogan "stop the child-killing!" (*stop de kindermoord!*). In the black-and-white film, the working-class area of de Pijp indeed was devoid of both playroom and green. A boy interviewed calls for action: he tells the viewer he has seen beautiful houses in the countryside and feels that "we can make it beautiful here, too". De Pijp looks remarkably different now when compared to 1972, columnist Mark Wagenbuur shows (Wagenbuur 2013): trees now line the streets, red bicycle paths have replaced some of the parking space and children can play on the sidewalks. The irony is, here, (though missed by Wagenbuur) that for most working-class families de Pijp has become completely unaffordable. The home now to YUPPs and a cosmopolitan elite, de Pijp echoes developments in many cities across the globe (not least Jane Jacobs's beloved Greenwich Village, compare Zukin 2010).

The child friendliness of cities is currently a global theme, taken up by Unicef (see, e.g. the website childfriendlycities.org) and governments around the world. My point here is by no means to question the relevance of taking children into account in planning and enhancing cities. Indeed, where much urban space is produced to be "normally" adult space (Valentine 1996), attentiveness to children's needs in the urban is not only important but also often long overdue. Where child friendliness is taken on as a strategy to produce gentrification, however, critical scrutiny is necessary. In the above, I have argued that in the Rotterdam case, indeed, child friendliness is used to produce middle-class friendliness. This is something to be extra attentive to in cities aiming to become more "liveable" or "upgraded". The model often used in producing family and child-friendly cities is Vancouver, Canada. An often-cited success story of 'liveability, Vancouver's success consisted in large part of attracting desired inhabitants to its urban core in a decisively gendered strategy to attract, like Rotterdam does now, nuclear families to the city centre. The narrative and marketing that pushed this development, besides the actual building of family homes, consisted of a story of the demand of middle-class families to combine work and care duties. The ideals of gender equality apparent in Vancouver directed its spatial strategy: an example of genderfication.

Extended well beyond the Rotterdam case, then, child friendliness is a form of urban regeneration: of renewing or upgrading the city by replacing the current population of parents and children with a new population of families that are better suited in terms of education and income levels. In Vancouver and many other places (see this valuable resource on examples in the UK: http://www.rethinkingchildhood.com), the city is then imagined as a reproductive milieu. Contrary to imagining the city as a place of production and masculinity, then, the urban in post-Fordism is imagined as a more feminine realm of consumption and heterosexual reproduction. Stronger still: some discourses claim that children can save the city from itself, for instance, when Bogotá mayor Peňalosa states that: "Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people" (found on Tim Gill's blog http://www.rethinkingchildhood.com) quoted in a magazine article entitled "To save our cities, put children first"[4] – quite a departure from a Fordist and modernist city without room for children!

Already signalled in the previous chapter, the preferred subject for the post-Fordist urban as apparent in public policy and planning is White, (higher) middle-class, higher-educated, interested in consumption and

female. “A good city is like a good party”, Rotterdam claims. And indeed, like in many other post-Fordist cities (compare Featherstone 1994; McDowell 1999), Rotterdam invests in the spectacle: in festivals, landmark buildings, shopping streets. But not everyone is invited to the party. In practice, it is accompanied by a repressive approach to young precarious and working-class men of migrant descent. Their presence in the streets is considered neither “fun” nor “lounging”, but instead “nuisance” and “loitering”. Genderfication here, therefore, amounts to a quite fundamental reshuffling of the right to the city along the axes of gender, race and class. While offering opportunities to be seized for feminism and a feminist urbanism, genderfication therefore also entails classist and racist logics.

Notes

1. see www.wow-rotterdam.nl, poster retrieved September 27, 2010.
2. The “social minimum” is a national policy measure to ensure all citizens a basic income level, which is annually adjusted. Basic income support (Bijstand, Wet werk en bijstand: WWB) is based on this calculation.
3. The definition of “the family” is broad in the policies. The Dutch national government uses a similar broad definition, thus including gay couples with children, or single parents.
4. http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/to-save-our-cities-put-children-first retrieved July 20, 2016.

CHAPTER 5

Social Policy: Targeting Women in Urban Policies – Producing Subject Positions

Abstract This chapter considers the next generation of urbanites as one entry point for entrepreneurial urban strategies. It investigates the way in which cities aiming to redefine themselves imagine future populations and how in these efforts they design social policies that explicitly and particularly target women as mothers. It develops the concept of urban regeneration: efforts to regenerate the city by either investing in the children (the next generation) of the current population or replacing the current population of children by a new generation of better-suited children. Based on an ethnographic case study of parenting guidance policy practices, this chapter shows how a ritual-like practice of communication and reflection produces subject positions in parenting guidance that very much resemble what is expected of employees in the post-Fordist and arguably more feminine labour market.

Keywords Feminization · Parenting · Mothers · Emancipation · Empowerment · Urban regeneration

This chapter investigates the way in which cities aiming to redefine themselves imagine future populations and how in these efforts they design social policies that explicitly and particularly target women in two ways. First, women are targeted as part of programmes for empowerment, activation and emancipation – focused on their autonomy.

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Second, and perhaps paradoxically, they are targeted as mothers, as responsible for raising a new generation. In this chapter I present results from ethnographic case studies in which indeed the targeting of women in urban policy is planned towards their "emancipation" or "empowerment" but at the same time towards their role as mothers (see also Van den Berg and Duyvendak 2011). The imagined urban in social policy is at once a space for women's liberation and a space for family and heterosexual reproduction. Women are targeted for themselves, or, rather, to become their "active" selves, *and* as vessels through which "communities" or children can be targeted and can become the object of social engineering. Through my ethnographic research in cases of such engineering, a picture surfaces of the types of subjectivities that are produced there.

This is an important site for urban politics, and especially from a feminist perspective. Linda Peake (2016) signalled how in much urban theory urban subjects are somehow assumed as pre-existing entities (see also Hoffman 2014). A feminist understanding of the urban, she argues, should be "grounded in the place-based practices of subjectivity formation" (6). This chapter is about such subjectivity formations, or about certain pedagogies or sites of social engineering that are part of social policy. As with the genderfication efforts that were analysed in Chapters 3 and 4, the privileging of women (and in the case of social policy even their empowerment and emancipation) might be cause for celebration. At face value, after all, it would seem that women's autonomy is a primary policy goal in the case of Rotterdam and many other urban contexts. The question that should be asked, however, is what subject positions are produced precisely in the policy practices that are to accomplish this. Changing our focus from planning and marketing as sites of urban politics, then, in this chapter I do not assume an urban subject, but rather investigate sites that are designed to engineer subjectivities to fit the imagined urban future. Remaking the city and genderfying it, I argue here, does not just involve marketing and planning (more usual sites of research in critical urban studies) but also subject formations and efforts to engineer these through pedagogies.

In the following, then, I first identify women as the preferred object of (urban) policies and analyse the logics that legitimate this preference, especially in my case of Rotterdam. After that I draw on ethnographic data in parenting guidance programmes (see also Van den Berg 2013) to look more closely at the production of subject positions there.

Emancipation and Empowerment: On "Becoming Active"

A plea for empowerment is, Barbara Cruikshank (1999) argued, always a claim to power: who defines who as lacking power? And who identifies a need for this empowerment? The "will to empower" (ibidem) in urban social policies is almost solely directed at women. Urban women, it would then seem, are in need of empowerment and in the context of the Netherlands, this lack is often identified within state bureaucracies. Aradhana Sharma (2008) showed how in her case in India, but elsewhere as well, empowerment has become a ubiquitous term in development policies. Embraced by the World Bank and in neoliberal Indian discourses, women empowerment programmes use the repertoire of Freirian and feminist theory but now within the context of development and neoliberal government. Women are, thus, globally sought out as target group of social and development policies. This is reflected in the motto for the UN Beijing agenda for 2030 that reads: "Empowering women, empowering humanity". The idea behind gender equality policies is one that resonates globally: "if you educate a mother, you educate a family" – women are not only those most in need but also considered the more responsible gender that gives access to the larger community. They therefore appear as the best recipients of support. This idea is also part of NGO strategies such as micro-credit programmes (Kabeer 1995; Rahman 1999; Peake and Rieker 2015). Beyond the case of Rotterdam, then, social policy globally targets society at large by targeting women *as* women and because they are women. In such conceptions, then, women are those most in need, while at the same time the target group of which most societal change is expected.

Sharma's case is a women's empowerment programme in rural India. But the preference for women in development and social policy not only pertains to such rural areas that are thought of as "underdeveloped" or "backward" but to populations that are defined as such in the urban too. Ideas about such "backwardness" or cultural lag are often accompanied by the responsibilizing notion that women are also "inactive" and in stasis and therefore not catching up (I developed this argument more fully in Van den Berg 2016b). In the targeting of women in urban social policies, the intersection of gender, class and ethnicity has become especially prevalent in the Netherlands. For decades and especially in the early 2000s, women that were referred to as "allochthon"

(usually defined as "not born in the Netherlands, or with (grand) parents that are not born in the Netherlands", see for a critical analysis of these categories Schinkel 2007), and especially Muslim women, were a primary target group in urban policies. Much has been written about this focus in Dutch policies on Muslim women and gender issues such as the headscarf (see, e.g. Van den Berg and Schinkel 2009; Ghorashi 2003). My aim here is not to repeat the arguments made in the quite expansive literature on these issues, but rather to note that much urban policy is a translation of elements of the discourse on the supposed backwardness of migrant and Muslim women in the Netherlands (Van den Berg 2016b). In such discourses, they appear as particularly agency-less, as passive beings. Halleh Ghorashi (2003) also noted this conceptualization of migrant women and Muslim women in particular as "passive". This image of passivity is sometimes accompanied by an image of victimhood: of Muslim women as in need of saving by the Dutch from their repressive husbands. Or as Baukje Prins put it: "Immigrant men make problems, immigrant women have them" (2000: 34). The Dutch like to conceptualize themselves as such saviours and simultaneously as the end point of gender equality and emancipation (Wekker 2004). In fact, such ideals of gender equality are quite central to Dutch self-representation (Wekker 2016).

Translations of these components of Dutch (and wider European) public discourse in policy involve public debate series on Islam and women's emancipation (Van den Berg & Schinkel 2009), sex education programmes aimed at the empowerment of girls (Van den Berg 2013) but most importantly programmes for women's "activation". If we zoom in on the case of Rotterdam, indeed, much social policy is laid out in the language of "activation". Activity in such instances can mean a lot of things: often it is to mean paid employment, but today, activity in the form of voluntary work, of caring for your elderly mother, going to weekly swimming lessons or of being an "active citizen" is also included (Van den Berg 2016a; Van den Berg and Arts forthcoming). Andrea Muehlebach (2011) analysed in her research on volunteering (2011, 2012) how, in post-Fordist Italy, activity became related to citizenship and certain kinds of activity became legitimized. Muehlebach posits that this logic is one of the remains of Fordist times: belonging is related to a particular active role in society. In Fordism, this role is found in paid employment, in Post-Fordism, a similar logic now focuses on particular forms of unpaid labour.

Case: Parenting Guidance in Rotterdam

Muehlebach researches volunteering in the service sector and doing unpaid care work. The women in my ethnographic research are primarily activated into the unpaid labour of *mothering the next generation*. There are important slippages in conceptualizations of "emancipation" and "activation" of women here that result in programmes under the name of "activation" that address women primarily in their role as mothers and within families. In an analysis of (women's emancipation) policy documents that I made with Jan Willem Duyvendak (Van den Berg and Duyvendak 2012), three forms of emancipation became apparent. There were, first, policies that focused on the project of making women become empowered and more autonomous of their husbands, families and traditions. Yet, upon closer scrutiny, these women were found and addressed in groups that were brought together on the basis of their role as mothers (for instance, in the elementary schools of their children). In addition, there were policies that focused on emancipation in women's roles as mothers. The idea is then for them to become autonomous mothers: because they are too "lagging behind" to enter the paid labour market or other emancipatory realms, they should become autonomous, emancipated and empowered in their role as mothers. The third form of emancipation through motherhood we found was when policies looked at women as an entry point into larger communities and as a vessel for the development of their children into responsible and successful citizens of the future. It is primarily this last confluence of empowerment, emancipation and mothering that I am interested here.

In imagining an urban future beyond the industrial and Fordist, urban entrepreneurs and policymakers imagine future populations too. In inter-urban competition, therefore, mothers matter. The next generation of urbanites is one entry point for entrepreneurial urban strategies in which it is seen as an instrument to regenerate the city. This is why many contemporary urban policies aim to intervene in family life. What is at stake in this chapter is one form of urban regeneration. To reiterate: I understand urban regeneration as efforts to renew the city by either investing in the children (the next generation) of the current population or replacing the current population of children by a new generation of better-suited children. I have discussed the latter in the previous chapter. Here, I discuss particular investments in the current population of children as a project of imagining a future population for the post-Fordist

urban. These investments are to somehow change today's children so that they can become the desired population: to educate, to civilise, to "upgrade" them so that they can become the "prospect rich" population the administration is after. Urban regeneration as a concept identifies the cities' reproductive milieu and the next generation as important routes for social engineering and planning. Urban regeneration sets out to change characteristics of the actual population to fit the economic demands of the future.

Parenting guidance practices, I contend, are forms of urban regeneration. Imagining the future population of Rotterdam and efforts to actually produce it are to be found, in part, in the many elementary schools and community centres in which parenting guidance takes place in Rotterdam. In my understanding of parenting guidance as a form of urban regeneration, I build on studies of projects of nation building in other times and places. Women, and mothers especially, have throughout history often been held responsible for the reproduction of the nation, whether socially, biologically or demographically (Donzelot [1977] 1980; Yuval-Davis 1997; Bonjour and De Hart 2013). I looked at parenting guidance practices in Rotterdam as a location in which subject positions for the post-Fordist economy were rehearsed. Parenting guidance policies, I argue here, are to support mothers into *mothering the post-Fordist city.*

I researched parenting guidance ethnographically in Rotterdam in 2009 and 2010. Parenting guidance is organized by social work agencies and other bodies within the municipality, oftentimes in cooperation with schools and community centres. These organizations employ trained pedagogues and social workers and are contracted by the (sub-) local government. Most practices in which I participated were parent *courses* (that consisted of one meeting or a series of meetings, spanning a period ranging from 3 weeks to 6 months), but I also participated in more long-term one-on-one guidance arrangements in which practitioners or students in social work set out to help parents manage their everyday life and childrearing practices, sometimes in the families' homes. The parenting guidance practices that I researched were all highly accessible and part of what is often referred to as preventative youth policies. Parents can participate as they like whether they experience trouble with raising their children or not. Typically, parent courses are provided in what is called the "parent room" of elementary schools or in community centres. The participants were almost exclusively mothers and they participated

voluntarily. Mothers would drop in the parent room after they had accompanied their child into their classroom, have a cup of coffee and then stay to participate in the course that was offered or leave again. Their participation was very informal, almost nowhere were they requested to register as a participant. For my research, I went along with practitioners on "house visits", I participated in series of courses and I dropped in on organized debates for mothers and "themed meetings". I was interested in what happens when policy ambitions enter a parent room, family home or community centre where "parenting guidance" is taking place. For the purposes of my study, ethnography was the most suitable methodological approach. Following the views of Willis and Trondman (2000), I understand ethnography quite broadly as a collection of research methods that involve "the disciplined and deliberate witness-cum-recording of human events" (5). I consistently look at what happened in *between* mothers and practitioners. My object of observation is *interactions* in parenting guidance practices (cf. Goffman 1967).[1,2]

In the Making: Subject Positions for the Post-Fordist Urban

If mothers and professionals work together in a classroom setting with policy ambitions between them, what do they perform together? What is done in the courses? What is it that is produced in their interactions? And how does this relate to the desired urban future for Rotterdam? Here, I deal with what was done "in between" actors in urban social policy and what subject positions were produced. I argue here that in the parenting guidance practices that I researched, mothers and professionals coproduce reflexive and communicative subject positions in ritual-like interactions. When I participated in the practices, I soon identified a common theme to them. The practices I participated in differed greatly. Some aimed for a basic sense of order and cleanliness in family life, others for frank sex education. Some consisted of a "theme meeting", a thematic discussion with mothers. Others consisted of longer-term one-on-one guidance. Teachers spoke from varying dispositions and so, of course, did the participating mothers. But the practices also had something powerful in common: they were all centred on reflection and communication. There were debates, discussions, exercises, negotiations and conflict. In fact, parenting guidance practices were often explicitly set up to facilitate

discussion and debate. But my claim here goes further: reflection and communication were *done* in parenting guidance practices. No matter the substance of the issue at hand, interactions almost all took a particular *form*: that of egalitarian talk, negotiation, debate, evaluation or observation. And because of this, communicative and reflexive repertoires were produced and rehearsed within the interaction. We practised *being* and *doing* communicative and reflexive. The interactions thus provided something of a reflexive and communicative mode of being and doing. This I refer to as subject positions. I define subject positions as "ways of doing, being (. . .) and thinking" (Starfield 2002: 125) that become available in interactions. Beyond the transferral of professional knowledge about certain issues, the point was that we *practised* communication and reflection. I first started noticing this when every meeting I participated in started and ended with evaluations. Teachers would ask mothers what they thought of the previous meeting, what they would like to discuss in the following one, what aspects they would like to discuss more extensively and so on. Evaluation was, thus, one of the forms of communication and reflection that we practised.

Ritual-Like Interactions

This form of the interactions produced something itself, regardless of the substantive message. The production of subject positions took shape in particular "ritual-like" (cf. C. Bell 1997: 138) interactions. I prefer the term "ritual-like" to ritual because the interactions that I researched were not rituals in the classic anthropological sense: they were not necessarily *symbolic* moments (see Verkaaik 2009, 2010; C. Bell 1997 for overviews). Moreover, the participants did not see the interactions as rituals, nor did course designers anticipate the ritual-like character of the assignments, debates and discussions. But many interactions that I witnessed were ritual-like nonetheless. That is to say that particular forms of interactions were used repetitively. I distinguish (1) evaluation (2) observation, (3) egalitarian talk, (4) negotiation and (5) debate. No matter the content or substance of the practices, we dealt with them in distinguished and repetitive forms and the point is that these forms produced something that goes beyond the content of the course or guidance meeting. My use of the analytic framework of ritual-like interactions starts from the insights of Erving Goffman (1959, 1967). I, too, focus on ritual-like aspects of social encounters. Goffman did use the term ritual – other than myself – and with

it he drew attention to the way in which ritual can create conformity to the *procedures* and *form* of the situation itself.[3] In general, the focus on form is much cited as a central aspect of ritual (C. Bell 1997; Verkaaik 2009). Ritual draws individuals into the situation, or – alternatively – the interaction, in part through this form. Moreover, for Goffman, ritual focuses attention on a particular object, underlining its value. Certain aspects of the situation are highlighted, certain values put front and centre and as a consequence, participants learn to behave and learn to *be* in particular ways (compare Verkaaik 2009, 2010). Through the form that was thus produced, certain ways of being, talking, acting, certain subject positions, were highlighted and made available. These possibilities exist within the interaction: they are produced in between the ones participating (in this case: mothers, teachers and myself). In the case of the productions in parenting guidance practices, the available subject positions are reflexive and communicative in specific ways: to be heard in a parenting guidance practice, a participant is most likely to use a reflexive stance and to use, for example, egalitarian talk and evaluation as communicative strategies.

In addition to being so focused on form, the interactions were also repetitive. Some theorists look at ritual as a pedagogical instrument: as a way of becoming a certain type of subject through repetitive acts (Verkaaik 2009). Especially in the work of Talal Asad (1993), this focus on pedagogy can be found (but this is a point also made by Goffman, for instance when he asserts that it is through ritual that an individual is taught to be a certain way (1967: 44)). Asad draws on an analysis of monastic rites from the medieval Christian period to show how ritual was then understood as practice meant to form certain dispositions. Ritual, in this sense, is not so much about symbolism as it is about repetitive practice – scripts – through which certain subjectivities emerge. Or, to use the words of Saba Mahmood: ritual uses routine to cultivate desire (Mahmood 2001). Ritual, in the work of Mahmood and Asad, contributes to the actualization of a particular type of agency or subjectivity (compare Verkaaik 2009, 2010). In this sense, ritual is a means of socialization: of forming a habitus. Asad (1993) and Mahmood (2001) focus their attention on *conscious* habitus formation through ritual: of *practising* certain acts in order to form certain dispositions. The women in Mahmood's research, for example, induce the desire to pray in the early morning precisely by practising early-morning prayer repetitively.

In my approach, the production of subject positions does not necessarily lead to *durable* habitus formation (as with Bourdieu 1996 or Asad 1993) or

subjectivation beyond the interaction itself. In future interactions, the participants of the parent guidance practices are subjected to and co-producers of what is available to them in these particular future interactions. These future situations will require them to behave and be differently. If interactions are always a coproduction, co-constituting the elements within the transaction, then the participants of the parenting guidance practices change according to the interaction. In other words: the interactions in parenting guidance produce reflexive and communicative ways of being that not necessarily translate to other interactions. I am concerned here with the local practice of interactional coproduction instead of the transformational power of policy. My perspective focuses on what mothers and teachers do, in fact, produce together in classroom settings and guidance meetings instead of the policy effects in terms of how mothers undergo durable change as an effect of policy. That is not to say, however, that what goes in classrooms and mother-teacher interactions has no relevance to the larger issue at hand here: genderfication and urban regeneration. It very much does, as I hope to show in the following pages.

Five Ritual-Like Forms

Evaluation

One of the first patterns that I distinguished while doing my field work was that in almost all encounters mothers and professionals engaged in evaluations. They evaluated the previous encounter, they evaluated the plan for the next meeting, they evaluated their own behaviour, that of the mothers, of the room in which the course took place and the effects the previous meetings had had on the mothers' lives at home.

> In a morning class, one of the items to be discussed is "Learning to say 'No'". The participating mothers interpret that the teachers want to talk about saying no to children, about how to put up boundaries. But that is not the intention of Samira, the teacher in charge. Her idea was to talk with the mothers about "saying no" in general, as a way to become more assertive in life as an autonomous person. (. . .) Right after the assignments and discussions, a good half hour of the scheduled time is allotted to evaluating the meeting we just had. Barbara, one of the mothers, says how she likes the fact that she can now "stop to think" (*stilstaan bij*) when it comes to communication.

The teacher here does not aim to teach mothers concrete parenting skills, as the mothers expected her to. Rather, she wanted to encourage the mothers to become more assertive and autonomous for themselves. In this aim, evaluations are an important form. As a very specific form of reflection, evaluation necessitates a certain lack of involvement in the moment itself. It necessitates distance. Barbara, one of the mothers, has appropriated the vocabulary of the teachers and says it best: she now "stops to think" about communication. The necessary distance that is thus produced is further extended in this interaction by reflection on parenting and life in general, instead of focusing on parenting practices in a more narrow or concrete sense.

Assignments of evaluation were repetitive: most meetings started and ended with evaluations, involving both mothers and teachers in a repetitive moment of reflection and focused attention on the process of the course itself. And they were a particular *form* of interactions. Evaluating the parenting guidance practices in parenting guidance practices can be seen as a means of practising reflection: of creating a temporary distance to the practice itself.

Observation

Besides evaluation, observation is an important form of reflection I encountered. Standardized instruments, itineraries, schedules and videos were used to produce, again, a certain distance to the everyday reality and routine of raising children. They produce a certain temporary distance and disengagement. From field notes of a class setting:

> The mothers use a standardised form to chart their daily routines. They have to fill out the form with daily activities charted on a timeline. The teachers use the forms to initiate a discussion about structure. One of them asks: "is this a consistent structure of your day? Why do you do it this way?" The mothers respond shrugging: "Isn't that commonsensical? It just takes shape a certain way."

Like in the evaluative assignments, the task is to make the everyday concrete, involved, immediate experience of life and raising children into something more abstract, distanced, to be debated, contemplated, discussed and planned. In many of the courses video material was used to produce a similar distance through rituals of observation.

> We watch a DVD with three short examples of parent-child interactions in which the child asks the parent for money. In the first example, the (Dutch native) mother is very permissive and gives in: the child takes the money, the mother says: "What can I do?" In the second clip, the (apparently Moroccan) mother says no immediately, without listening to the child. In the third clip, the (apparently Turkish) parents don't immediately give in, but listen to the child and then say: Maybe.
>
> Simone (the teacher) asks us what we think of the different clips, of the possibilities of dealing with such a situation. The mothers agree that the first clip is a bad idea: far too permissive. They prefer the third clip, which is entitled "Democratic parenting", even though the mothers explain that in real life, you react in different ways to different situations at different times.

My point here is that the reflection on parenting and daily life is accomplished through the observation of video material. The mothers say it themselves: the point here is not actual parenting, as they acknowledge that in their daily practices they would probably do otherwise. It is, rather, about observation and distance. This is of course already reflected in the choice of the course organizers to meet mothers without their children – in most parenting guidance, children are not invited. In the end, the form of observation is rehearsed in a ritual-like manner by using the *distance* provided by the video.

Egalitarian Talk

Much of what we did in the courses and what we practised in assignments was a particular form of communication: egalitarian talk (for an elaboration on egalitarianism in parenting guidance, see Van den Berg 2016a). Talk was advised often as a parental strategy. But more importantly, we practised being communicative by engaging in talk ourselves. We – the participants of the parenting guidance practice – engaged in the repetitive performative interaction of talking. Egalitarian talk was so dominant as a ritual-like form that at times it seemed that communicative mothering was to solve parenting problems through mere talking. Egalitarian talk as a form of parent-child interaction was consequently often rehearsed in the courses as was egalitarian talk as a form of dealing with parental problems. There were many assignments in which we

practised egalitarian talk and these were by their form set apart from other talk. From my field notes:

> We do an assignment together. Half of the group of women (among whom myself) are asked by the teachers to go outside of the classroom. The other half stay inside. The group that is outside is asked to – once we come back into the room – act as though we are not interested in what the members of the group that stayed inside will tell us when we come back. The women inside the classroom are asked to tell us something about themselves. When I come back, Fatiha tells me a story about her life and I act as though I am not interested. Fatiha is irritated by my behaviour. When the teachers declare that we can stop doing the assignment, I am relieved that I can stop acting and Fatiha makes a joke to smooth over the initial irritation. When the teachers ask Fatiha and some others what they thought of this assignment, they tell us how bad it felt to not be heard.

In this assignment, we practised bad communication in order to learn communicative skills. We took the role of the other – in this case the adolescent child – in order to practice empathy and understanding of the importance of attention and communicative skills for parent-child interactions. This is done in the form of an assignment in which "the mother" (impersonated by half of the group of women) is placed vis-à-vis "the child" (the other group of participants) in a one-on-one situation. In this fabricated situation, we talked in a replicated real-life situation, rehearsing talk *for* such situations.

Negotiation

The courses I participated in were very much focused on teaching mothers scripts for negotiation as an alternative to "authoritarian practices" and helping them to incorporate these through assignments and repetitive practice. Explicitly and especially, the course for parents of adolescents ("Dealing with adolescents") aims at departing "authoritarian" command as a parental strategy. This focus on negotiation and egalitarian relationships was not always agreed upon in the interactions in the classes. Mothers sometimes underscored their authority, highlighting the need for them to be clear about "who's boss" or, alternatively, "who's the mother". They negotiated the prescript to negotiate and thus did participate in the

interaction using *the form negotiation*. Negotiation was produced nonetheless or indeed precisely because of their disagreement. For instance, in the next excerpt of my field notes, Ellen, a participating mother, particularizes negotiation:

> Ellen feels that negotiation and deliberation may work in dealing with small problems with your children, but where "real problems" are concerned, it doesn't work. She refers to her son and how he refuses to go to school.
>
> You know, he has to. I cannot deliberate or negotiate this with him. He has to go to school. He is obliged by law and I am responsible. You know, but I didn't go to school either. So I am asking something of him that I didn't do myself. I understand where he's coming from, but I want him to go to school too. The other women agree: with "real problems", negotiation is difficult if not impossible.

Through particularizing negotiation, Ellen underscores the importance of negotiation and deliberation. She uses the form of negotiation. She does this first by deliberating with the participants of this class what she should do in this situation with her son. But second, she acknowledges the limits of her power in her relationship with her son and shows her empathy for his position.

Debate

The most clearly distinguished form of communication we performed was debate.

> The theme of this morning's meeting with parents and professionals in Feyenoord is bullying. The idea is that mothers will debate with each other using statements about bullying. The morning is introduced by Lydia (the professional pedagogue): there are large posters on the walls with statements about bullying. All participants (the mothers, two interns and I) walk around the room to read the statements. We are given Post-its on which to write our name. The idea is that we can put these on the posters with the statements that we would like to talk about. Some preliminary discussion starts this way and pretty soon, several statements are evidently most popular. They are about the need for parents to supervise their children's use of the internet, about responsibility for bullying, about kids that bully and those standing by, the responsibility of parents, and whether or

> not designer brand clothes should be banned from schools. Especially this last theme was very popular. Lydia monitored the debate that followed. She read one of the statements and then asked one of the women to say something about it. We were also asked to stand on one of two sides of the room signifying whether we were or weren't in favour of or in agreement with the statement. Lydia passed around a carpet-beater to signify whose turn it was to speak. During the debate, Lydia highlighted several times that we were to debate the issue of bullying in a democratic manner.

In this example, we participated in a ritual-like interaction in a distinct *debate form*. The term democracy was used throughout the assignment and the form of debate highlighted the democratic ideal too. We distributed ourselves spatially according to our opinions, in a mimic of, for instance, the UK House of Commons, being allowed to speak only when the chair (Lydia) gave us the carpet beater. The democratic message, in this instance but many more, became most convincing in the *form* of the interaction: a structured performance of equality and exchange of arguments. There were many other instances in which the form of debate was successful and mothers participated in voting games and debate assignments. Even when we discussed subjects of a rather delicate nature, we used voting cards to express our opinions. For instance, in one of the courses for sex education, we used voting cards to say whether or not we thought that statements were true. The statements were about topics such as birth control and hymens.

> Yvonne wants to discuss some more issues that have to do with birth control. "Let's do this in a game: true or false?" She distributes red and green cards and presents us with a list of statements about sex and birth control methods. When one of the statements is to teach the women that the pill protects you from pregnancy, but not from sexually transmitted diseases, Khadija intervenes and explains that she has used many different types of birth control pills, but when you take a painkiller like ibuprofen, she says, they might not work so well and you may end up getting pregnant anyway. Yvonne says how nice it is that she can learn from the mothers each time.

Interestingly, even a fact (the effects of birth control methods) is a topic for debate here. Khadija's statement is in a way non-debatable: Yvonne and other participants in this interaction know it is not true. Yet, Yvonne accepts her statement as a contribution to the "debate game" and underscores their equal relationship by stating how much she learns

from the mothers. In this instance, form trumps content. Khadija's opinion and Yvonne's statements of scientific facts appear in this interaction as equal.

Reflexivity, Communication and the Post-Fordist Economy: An Elective Affinity

In the five ritual-like forms, we practised *being* reflexive (through observation and evaluation primarily) and communicative (through egalitarian talk, negotiation and debate). By engaging in talk, negotiation, debate, evaluation and observation, we opened up the possibility of being reflexive and communicative within the interaction: we produced reflexive and communicative subject positions. Whether we talked about breakfasts or bedtime stories, the point was that we talked and whether we looked at schedules of daily eating routines or videos, the point was that we observed parenting from a distance and learned how to reflect upon our daily life. All issues were subjected to the form of the ritual-like interaction: even the non-negotiable was negotiated, even well-established facts were debated. I do not mean to argue that the substance or content of the practices was not important. The point is, rather, that no matter the issue at hand, it was dealt with in a particular form in which we practised being reflexive and communicative: by engaging in egalitarian talk, for example, or evaluation.

If we look at these findings in the light of the problematic of this book, the following becomes clear. These interactions are located in a place and time where industrial production is moved elsewhere and new jobs and careers are available in an interactive service economy. The reflexive and communicative subject positions that were coproduced resemble the type of employee that the new service economy desires. I argue, therefore, that there is a remarkable affinity between the *subject positions* that were produced in the interactions in the courses that I researched and the *vocational ethic* for a desired post-Fordist future economy of Rotterdam. The concept that I think is most suitable to use in this argument is "elective affinity", or "Wahlverwandtschaft". The term Wahlverwandtschaft was introduced to sociology by Max Weber in his study on the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism (Weber [1920] 2002). In this famous study, Weber showed an "elective affinity" between Calvinist beliefs and capitalism's success. For example,

the Calvinist belief in predestination led many to look for signs of being elected. And these doubts were resolved by seeing success through hard work as a sign of being chosen. This stress on hard work, thrift and responsibility fitted very well with a capitalist vocational ethic, needing hard-working individuals (Kalberg 2002; Weber [1920] 2002). The Protestant ethic and the values of capitalism strengthened each other. The relationship between the two phenomena is one of *affinity*, not causation. That is to say that there is, what Weber called a "meaningful connection" (Weber cited in Kalberg 2002: xxviii) between values and materiality, but the direction is less clear.

Fast forward into the twentieth century, at the moment in time when Fordism was at its peak, there was a clear connection between a mode of production and a certain "way of life" or "ethic" too. The Fordist division of labour and women's consequent domesticity was what second wave feminists struggled against. This particular ethic accompanied the Fordist mode of production: women were required to be domestic, patient, caring, mystical, romantic mothers. They were supposed to self-sacrifice, working only towards the right individuality for the child. This, at the time led to a new interpretation of the role of mothers: mothers were increasingly asked to *educate* their sons and daughters into their roles in Fordist society. And this meant gender-specific parenting (preparing boys and girls for different roles) and values such as hard work, the importance of consumption, authority and obedience (Berg and Den 2013; Abramovitz 1996). In both the industrial revolution (as argued by Weber) and at the peak of Fordism in the 1950s and 1960s, then, modes of production and capitalism showed "meaningful connections" to cultural practices of childrearing and the production of subject positions in general.

How, then, does this play out in the post-Fordist urban? While mothers have largely remained responsible for the moral education of children (lots of continuity with Fordism there), what precisely this moral education should entail changed and has been changing since. I argue here that what I witnessed in the parenting guidance practices in Rotterdam was the coproduction of reflexive and communicative subject positions that show a similar affinity with a *post-Fordist capitalist vocational ethic*. In a way reminiscent of the "meaningful connection" between capitalism and Protestantism, or of the relationship between Fordist production and domestic, self-sacrificing motherhood, the stress on equality, autonomy, democracy, reflection, communication and emotion management in the parent courses fits what the urban post-Fordist

service economy needs: autonomous, reflexive and communicative workers. A similar argument was made by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) about what they call a new *spirit* that accompanies post-Fordist or post-Taylorist capitalism. In the following, I will elaborate on and explain this argument by first introducing descriptions of the post-Fordist vocational ethic, to then compare this with the reflexive and communicative subject positions that were produced in the interactions.

The Post-Fordist Vocational Ethic

In the new service sector, young working-class people are far more likely to "learn to serve" (McDowell 2000, 2003) than to "learn to labour" (Willis 1977). In Willis' famous ethnography of teenage working-class boys, "Learning to labour", he showed how the boys' counter-school culture prepared them for the shop-floor culture of manufacturing plants. Today, however much alive some components of this culture and its masculinities, young people are far less likely to transition from youth to adulthood through industrial jobs (Nayak 2006). In most parts of the Western world, the service sector has become much larger than the industrial sector. And learning to serve – or learning to bank, learning to practice medicine or learning to teach – entails a different set of skills and dispositions than learning to labour in industry.

Much has been written about this "sea change" (Harvey 1989) in modes of production and job markets. The enormous surge of the service sector has had far-reaching effects so far and many scholars have taken note (see, e.g. Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Harvey 1989; McDowell 2009; Sassen 1991). The optimistic story in the literature is about the new knowledge economy and ever increasing education levels of populations, globally connected through the internet, "foot loose" and free. The pessimistic story is one of the increase of precarious service sector work, insecurity and risk; exploitation and inequality (compare McDowell 2009). How the two stories relate in the urban context is the object of fierce debates in urban studies (see, for instance, Van der Waal and Burgers 2009; Sassen 1991) but not the object of my concern here. That is, rather, that despite the enormous differences in type of employment for high-skilled service sector workers (such as bankers, scientists, managers) on the one hand and type of employment for low-skilled service sector workers (such as waiters, cleaners, hair dressers), there are similarities, too. Working in the service sector, whether in jobs that are for low-skilled workers or those that are suitable for high-skilled

workers, roughly entails (1) being able to manage emotions, (2) being communicative and (3) being reflexive.

The courses that I studied were, to make one more variation on Willis, about "learning to mother for post-Fordism". In the following, I further explain the above three characteristics of service sector work and compare these with aspects of parenting that were highlighted in the ritual-like interactions talk, negotiation, debate, evaluation and observation: reflexivity, communication and emotion management.

Emotion Management in Parenting: Emotional Labour

Since the first publication of Hochschild's "The managed heart" in 1983, it has been widely acknowledged that both high and low-skilled work in the service economy entails emotional labour (Grandey et al. 2012; Nixon 2009). Like Hochschild's famous flight attendants, hair dressers, waiters and nurses, too, work at the *emotional style* of the service they are offering (cf. Hochschild 2012 [1983]: 5). The management of their feelings to "create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild [1983] 2012: 7) is part of their labour. The bar tender sells his smile, the nurse her empathy, the hairdresser her chatting. Being able to manage your emotions is more important in service work than it was in Ford's factories or on the docks of the Rotterdam harbour. In fact, it has become one of employees' most important skills because so many are working in what has been called interactive service work (McDowell 2009). As a consequence, "personal qualities" or "character" are increasingly often selection criteria for jobs and, in Boltanski and Chiapello's words, this leads to the "exploitation of human abilities" such as the ability to relate (2005: 242; compare De Keere 2014).

Interestingly, Hochschild already argued that the socialization in (in her interpretation middle class) families prepares workers for this emotional demand by constantly foregrounding feelings and emotions as important and sanctioning certain emotional responses. And indeed, this important aspect of service sector work corresponds with the way in which emotion management was accentuated in the ritual-like interactions in the parenting guidance practices that I studied, especially when it came to the delicate balance between involvement and distance. Both mothers and teachers agreed that anger was an unproductive or even destructive emotion in parent-child relationships and that a certain emotional distance was necessary to provide the best parental response to particular problems. On the other hand, other

emotional involvements of parents in childrearing, such as empathy, were promoted. A certain hierarchy in emotions thus emerges as does a certain particular balance of involvement and disengagement. The important lesson in the practices I studied was, thus, that emotions must be managed in order to be effective as a parent. And this corresponds with the importance of the management of emotions for service sector jobs and careers. This balance between distance and involvement was practised in ritual-like interactions of evaluation and observation, when the immediate sphere of actual mothering was replaced by reflection and evaluation of mothering.

Communicative Subject Positions: Communicative Work

Related to this emotional labour is the ability to communicate. Interactive service work means co-presence of the one providing and the one consuming the service. In the words of David Harvey, in service work, the turnover time is immediate (1990). Much of this work – whether it is nursing in a hospital, presenting a new marketing campaign to a client, selling mortgages in a bank or fries at the counter of a fast-food restaurant – thus entails face-to-face contact. As a consequence, communicative skills are immensely important. In the words of Linda McDowell (2009: 33), "the ability to convince" is a crucial element in service exchanges. The rough behaviour of the working-class boys in Willis's "Learning to Labour" would possibly not be appreciated by clients or employers for most jobs today because of this communicative aspect. Persuasion has become ever more important, both as a technique of management (because authoritarian close supervision is no longer considered effective or efficient), and as a technique of worker-client interaction.

Even in jobs outside of these interactive services, much work consists of deliberation and sharing information and is in that sense interactive and communicative too. Much work that was routine in Fordist or Taylorist organizations is now automated or outsourced to other parts of the world. The work that is left in European cities is far more communicative (Hage and Powers 1992; Boltanksi and Chiapello 2005) and presupposes the ability of workers to act and interact in written language and some to have some measure of "discursive ability" (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 241). Moreover, the widespread use of communication technologies requires quite complex communication skills, for which continuous training is necessary. The capacity to communicate has, as a consequence, become ever more important in the selection of employees, for which

psychological tools to assess "personalities" are frequently used (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; compare De Keere 2014).

Given this immense importance of communication in the new economy, the emphasis put upon communicative mothering in the parent courses I studied becomes understandable. The technique of egalitarian talk as parental action and negotiation as an alternative to command that were produced in between mothers and professionals in parent classes show much resemblance to the communicative subject that the post-Fordist economy needs: (seemingly) egalitarian and focused on persuasion and convincing rather than on command and conflict.

Reflexive Subject Positions: Reflexive Autonomous Work

Both the emotional and communicative aspects of post-industrial work presuppose the ability of individuals to (1) understand themselves as an autonomous individual self and (2) to reflect on that individual self and its behaviour. It presupposes the ability to observe oneself from a distance, to analyse and evaluate one's behaviour and to then change it according to the demands made by the job market, business, restaurant owner, concrete customer exchange or the local social services "street-level bureaucrat". It is no surprise, then, that much has been written about what has been termed reflexive modernization (Beck et al. 1994) in post-Fordism (see, for instance, Adkins 2002; McDowell 2009). The thesis of reflexive modernization identifies a radicalization of modernization itself. Often (but this is only one interpretation), reflexive modernization is interpreted as a process in which autonomous individuals choose their identity throughout the bricolage project that is their life. According to Giddens (1991), the self is more and more understood as a reflexive project, an open product, a constituted identity.

Although the limits of the framework of reflexive modernization have been illustrated by many scholars (see, for instance, Adkins 2002; Duyvendak 2004; Elchardus 2009 for critiques), reflexivity is an important asset of workers in the twenty-first century. Today's labour market is both more flexible and more interactive. Individuals (have to) change jobs more often than they did before and individuals more often work in direct interaction with clients, patients and other recipients of services. The ability to reflect on demands made by employers, customers or the job market in general is a crucial skill in today's labour market because of these characteristics of flexibility and interactivity. Labour market success or failure is increasingly perceived as both an individual accomplishment and the result

of the ability to perform whatever identity and type of behaviour is required in different social settings (Adkins 2002). And although this fluidity of identities and flexibility of careers should not be overstated – after all, social categories such as race, gender and class still are immensely important – service sector employment does require individuals to understand themselves as more or less autonomous individuals and to be reflexive of this position and the fitting performance. Successful workers in the post-industrial economy build "portfolio" careers, selling presentations of themselves and their biographies (McDowell 2009: 68). To give only two examples here: a good hairdresser not only has the technical skills to cut hair, she also knows what clients like to chat and who prefers a more anonymous interaction. She can interpret a social situation and present herself accordingly. Likewise, a successful businessman understands what suit to wear to what meeting as much as he understands the content of the meeting.

Practising reflexivity in the ritual-like interactions in parent courses that I studied fits very well with these labour-market demands. The importance of "stopping to think" (*stil staan bij*) and personal autonomy was one of the most striking features of parenting guidance. In exercises like filling out observation lists to monitor their own behaviour and the continuous meta-evaluation of the parent classes themselves, mothers and teachers produced reflexivity together. In both the future labour market *and* in the parent classes, individual autonomy and reflexivity were highlighted (Fig. 5.1).

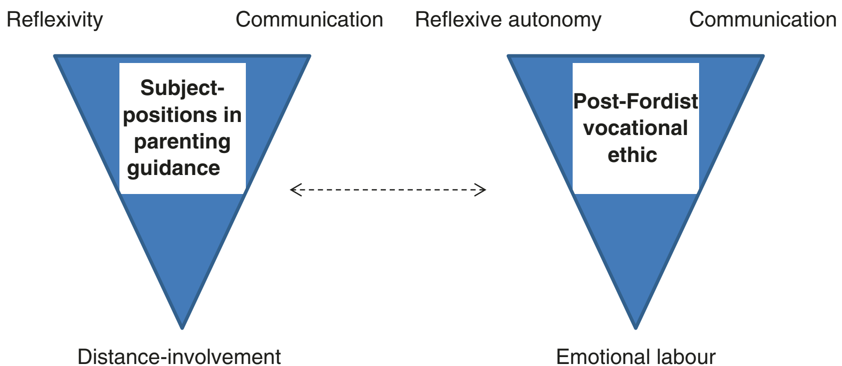

Fig. 5.1 The elective affinity: characteristics of the post-Fordist vocational ethic and subject positions in parenting guidance

Feminization: Gender and the Pink Collar Economy

To return to the broader problematic of this book, there is one more theme that I would like to address in this chapter. And that is the question of how this elective affinity between communicative and reflexive subject positions and the twenty-first-century vocational ethic relates to gender. To introduce this theme, this is an especially interesting piece of data: an excerpt from (parenting) course materials:

> If parents try to influence their children's behaviour in a negative way, this can have several consequences. A: It will have less effect. Praising and rewarding desired and acceptable behaviour is *far* more effective than criticising and punishing undesired and unacceptable behaviour. B: And the self-image of children is negatively influenced. (. . .) leading to fear of failure and bravado (*bravoure gedrag*). (Emphasis in original, MB; NIZW 2006: 20)

Bravado (*bravoure gedrag*) is not gender neutral. It is very much attributed to boys and masculine behaviour. And indeed, Rotterdam worries most about boys and young men, as I have addressed in the previous chapters. The transgressions that are worrisome to the Rotterdam administration, schools and professionals in the field of pedagogical advice are indeed coded as masculine transgressions. In the excerpt of course materials that I cite here, masculine transgressions are quite explicitly linked to "negative" parenting practices that are part of "authoritarian" parenting. The statement in the quotation pertains to effectiveness of parenting practices, but it goes further than that: "authoritarian parenting" *causes* certain problematic behaviours. Furthermore, "authoritarian" parenting styles (see for an elaboration Van den Berg 2016a, 2016b; Van Reekum and Van den Berg 2015) are often located in the Fordist past. The authoritarian, the Fordist and the masculine are connected here.

The move towards "authoritative parenting" is a parenting style of persuasion. Not only does this fit in the elective affinity that I described above, it is also a move towards the feminine. Interestingly, many scholars have signalled not only a development towards post-Fordism, but also a feminization of the economy and labour market during the past decades (see for discussions: Adkins 2002; McDowell 2009) and a problematization of certain masculinities in post-Fordism (Nayak 2006; McDowell 2003). In the words of Lisa Adkins (2002: 6), there may be a

"transposition of a feminine habitus into the economic sphere of action". For the young men in Paul Willis' study of the relationship between counter school culture and manual labour, manual labour could still signify not only masculinity but also superiority. Mental activity for them was too feminine and therefore inferior (1977: 145). But labour is no longer masculine per se. Not even bodily labour, as most manufacturing has moved elsewhere or is automatized and interactive service employment and its particular embodiments has replaced it. Linda McDowell (2009) has therefore argued that the labour market advantages that were historically associated with masculinity have disappeared, at least for men at the bottom end of the job market. In its stead, attributes such as empathy, care and communicative skills are increasingly desired by employers. The elements of the twenty-first-century ethic that I analysed above were communicative abilities, emotional labour and reflexivity. And these attributes are traditionally considered relatively feminine. Whether or not the increased importance of these attributes should in fact be termed "feminization" is the object of scientific debate (see, e.g. Adkins 2002). But we can be sure of this: gender performances are used as workers' strategies in today's labour market. The ability to give performances of certain aesthetics and emotions is increasingly part of successful labour market participation. The reflexivity needed to *use* certain gendered performances can indeed by understood as a most important labour market asset (Adkins 2002; McDowell 2009). The change towards a post-Fordist service sector economy is thus gendered. And the twenty-first-century vocational ethic is feminine in particular ways, especially when compared to the Fordist ethic of the twentieth century.

In some places, notably those where industry moved away, this leads to "displaced" (Nayak 2006) or "redundant" (McDowell 2003) masculinities. The macho and rough behaviour that fitted quite well with manual labour and manufacturing is no longer appreciated in the labour market, nor in many other spheres, such as the Rotterdam streets where young boys are prohibited from meeting publicly (Van den Berg and Chevalier, forthcoming). Young working-class men today may well be the new "culturally oppressed" (McDowell 2009: 194) because certain masculinities are deemed illegitimate and so much of a Fordist, industrial masculinity is embodied by young working-class men. I will return to the question of feminization in the concluding chapter of this book.

Conclusion: Mothering the Regenerating City

In terms of social policy, "gender in the post-Fordist urban" entails a targeting of women in emancipation, empowerment and activation programmes. Paradoxically, these programmes often in practice address women as mothers. Interestingly, therefore, part of what remains of Fordism is the primary responsibilization of mothers for childrearing. In this sense, there is much historical continuity (compare Van den Berg and Duyvendak 2012). "Activation" is, I have argued above, often taken to mean becoming active in mothering. Remaining in the private, feminine sphere of the home is in such an instance not understood as a form of passivity per se, although the perceived "passivity" of some mothers does legitimize state involvement in private lives. Besides these continuities or resonances with Fordism, though, my ethnographic case studies here point towards important departures too. I understand what happened in the parenting guidance practices that I studies as "Learning to mother" for post-Fordism.

So what, precisely, does this production of reflexive and communicative subject positions in debate exercises and discussions have to do with the re-*generating* city and its post-Fordist future? How does this reflexivity and communication relate to the issue of Rotterdam departing from its industrial past and imagining new urban futures? I have used the Weberian notion of "elective affinity" to point to the "meaningful connection" between the production of reflexive and communicative subject positions and a twenty-first-century vocational ethic. The logic in parenting guidance resembles the logic in post-Fordist interactive service work in important respects, but that is not to say that this resemblance is in any way the result of a direct relationship between the two logics. The concept of affinity makes a certain *relatedness* visible without pointing to a direct relation.

In this chapter I have zoomed in through ethnography on practices urban regeneration in Rotterdam. If we zoom out again, we can see that these practices do not take place in isolation. They are located in the beginning of the twenty-first century in a place participating in inter-urban competition for investors, visitors and new inhabitants and trying to imagine a future beyond the harbour and industry. Industrial production is moved elsewhere and available jobs and careers require a different set of skills, dispositions and sensibilities than did the jobs in the harbour and related industries. To be more precise: available jobs are far more

likely to be in the interactive service sector than in industry and manufacturing. Employers in the interactive services are likely to look for employees that display reflexive and communicative dispositions and are able and willing to do certain kinds of emotional labour. This description of ideal employees bears much resemblance to what I found was the main product of parenting guidance practices. Urban regeneration, then, is the investment in the future population by providing that population with repertoires of reflexivity and communication.

There are clues that in other former industrial cities, too, mothers are an important target group for social policy meant to re-*generate*. For example, in urban areas in France, "parenthood" is an important category in urban social policies (Boucher 2011). And in cities in the UK and the USA among other national contexts, "parent involvement policies" in schools have proliferated (for the UK, see the work of Vincent 2001; and Crozier 1998; Crozier and Davies 2007; for the USA, see, e.g. Lopez et al. 2001; Epstein 2001). Even though most scholars do not consider these efforts in the context of urban regeneration per se, critical scholarly work does examine the targeting of migrant and working-class/precarious parents/mothers as categories for policy by schools and local administrations. These clues suggest that mothering is a category in policy in many urban settings and that a consideration of these efforts in relation to other forms of urban regeneration, gentrification, city marketing and planning efforts can be fruitful and innovative in contexts beyond Rotterdam.

Notes

1. This means that unlike many researchers I was not primarily interested in the lived experiences of the ones participating in the practices, nor was I looking for their perspectives on the interactions or the policy strategies per se. Rather, I studied a range of moments, or rather situations, in which practitioners executing social policy and individual mothers consuming/targeted by these policies met: instances in which they encountered each other. The primary objects of my research are, thus, interactions in parenting guidance practices, not the agents participating in them. In addition to my ethnographic observations that I recorded in field notes, I interviewed 10 practitioners and 7 managers of the organizations that provided parenting guidance and 12 mothers that participated in the programmes. These interviews were largely to expand my knowledge of the practices and to reflect

upon them with agents in the field. But the extensive ethnographic research of interactions forms the core of the data on which this paper is based.

2. Access to the practices that I set out to study posed no great problems because I wanted to participate in more or less open and in any case informal settings. I entered the field as an invitee of the practitioners. Almost all agencies and practitioners were very welcoming to my participation. They were convinced of the quality and necessity of their work and were in some cases quite eager to show me. Usually, the practitioners I came into contact with gave me their weekly or monthly schedule of where and what they would be teaching and coaching and I would be, so to say, "signing in", meeting them in the scheduled time and place. In those locations, the mothers were confronted with my presence and I introduced myself as a university researcher working on my PhD and interested in parenting guidance. I encountered distrust a couple of times, for example, in the form of further questions about my motives. However, the mothers were generally quite used to invitees of practitioners (interns were, e.g. a frequent presence as were policymakers and managers) and, as a matter of fact, researchers, because in the Netherlands not only policy interventions into private lives are common, but so are researchers looking into these private lives and policy interventions. Many mothers had encountered and talked to researchers before. Some of the time, mothers were delighted that somebody "from the university" would want to talk to them. In any case, I was always open to participating mothers and practitioners about my research plans and goals. I explained that the research was done for my PhD, what a PhD was and how no other parties (such as the municipality or state) had direct interests or were involved. The mothers and practitioners in this article thus gave informed consent to me recording the events that I witnessed in writing (I made no audio records) and using these recordings for scientific and popular publications on the subject, provided I anonymized everyone. All names used here are thus pseudonyms and if necessary, some details about the mothers are left out in order to further protect their privacy.
3. Goffman uses the term "ritual" to point to the way in which the self becomes sacral in everyday symbolic encounters (for instance in 1967). My use of the term ritual differs from Goffman's approach in precisely this aspect. Instead of looking for the symbolic or sacral, I am interested in the repetitive form of ritual-like transactions.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions: The City as a Potent Muscleman in Pink Stilettos

Abstract In this concluding chapter, I argue that the post-Fordist urban is speculative in its focus on future populations. Moreover, I argue that in imagining the yet-to-come, in speculation on the population, (1) women, mothers, mothering, families and children play an important role and (2) gender and femininities are strategic instruments. This chapter also considers the class-gender intersection and the way class is reconfigured in the post-Fordist urban in which Fordist affects nonetheless have an afterlife.

Keywords Speculation · Imagining urban futures · Feminization · Classed effects of genderfication

The Speculating Post-Fordist Urban

The post-Fordist urban speculates about its future population. Because populations are thought to bring in economic activity and revenue, the future population and its potential are crucial. Whether cities aim for "creative economies" or "start-up hotspots", the dominant idea is that the yet-to-come urban economy depends on the yet-to-come population: its talents, its labours, its children. It is no coincidence that the city of Rotterdam refers to desired inhabitants as "prospect rich": it is not necessarily their current activities or assets the city is interested in, but what they can do *in the future*. After decades of industrial expansion, many cities, including Rotterdam, are now insecure about this future.

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They seek ways to depart their industrial and Fordist past and become something other, new, future-proof. But what should they become then? The Dutch writer Wilfried de Jong captured this uncertainty in Rotterdam in the phrase that translates as: "Rotterdam is in a hurry. The city fights itself to death mimicking something yet inexistent".[1] Many post-Fordist cities indeed "mimic something inexistent". There is much insecurity about what de-industrializing cities should and can become. Like many other cities, Rotterdam aims to develop a post-Fordist economy, but what exactly is this? Linda McDowell (1991) noted how the adjective "post" "reflects uncertainty about the new order – the extent and direction of change is still unclear and incomplete" (400). Rotterdam is not alone is this insecurity. Other harbour cities and former industrial economies are struggling to move beyond this past too. Marseille, Glasgow and Antwerp are developing spatial, economic, cultural and social strategies to become something new too.

In imagining the yet-to-come, in speculation on the population, I argue here, (1) women, mothers, mothering, families and children play an important role and (2) gender and femininities are strategic instruments. In this book I have grasped part of reimagining the urban beyond the industrial and its consequences in terms of urban regeneration. This concept refers to practices that are based on the idea that *generations* can be *policy instruments.* Regeneration is to renew the city by either investing in the children (the next generation) of the current population or replacing the current population of children by better suited children. Urban regeneration efforts are to create a new and economically successful urban milieu. In it, families and generations are policy tools and mothers form a particular target group. The concept urban regeneration supplements regeneration as it is often studied in the field of urban studies because it entails subjectivities in the making. When we think of what the future post-Fordist city might be like, much is indeed insecure. The interactive service economy, though, is likely to remain important, creating jobs in which communicative and reflexive skills are imperative. Many cities, therefore, imagine a future population that is prepared for this type of employment. Rotterdam's administration has indicated time and again that the demographics of the city's current population are among its main concerns. It aims to change the current population into one more "balanced": including higher-educated parents with children. This imagined population is to fit the economy of the future. One important argument in this book is, therefore, that social policies that are aimed at

young children are well thought of as part of urban regeneration: as ways for the city to imagine and invest in its future. This post-Fordist urban needs reflexive and communicative subjects and therefore invests in mothering practices that are thought to bring about these subjectivities.

When doing my fieldwork in 2009 and 2010, I came across many imagined futures for Rotterdam and many policy measures to accomplish it. One of the most poignant examples of such an imagined future was when in Afrikaanderwijk (a poor borough in the South of Rotterdam) I noticed an enormous banner that said: "The Afrikaanderwijk in 2020. A neighbourhood to be proud of" (*De Afrikaanderwijk in 2020. Een wijk om trots op te zijn*). The banner was to present the plans of the local government and social housing associations to regenerate this part of the city to its inhabitants. It is a perfect example of the sweet and sour of prospects. There is a tragic in this banner. It promises investments, housing improvements and better playgrounds. But it also communicates that in 2009 (the year I saw the banner there), Afrikaanderwijk was *not* a neighbourhood to be proud of. It would be so only after more than ten years of investments, and the "dispersion" (*verspreiding*: an emic Rotterdam administration term) of those that live in Afrikaanderwijk now. In other words: the promise is that Afrikaanderwijk will be a neighbourhood to be proud of when a portion of the current inhabitants leaves. In other instances, the Rotterdam administration, its social housing associations, businesses and other actors in the field of local government, communicate similar messages: Rotterdam today is *not yet* the vibrant and successful city it wants to be. The Rotterdam population is *not yet* the higher-educated group of autonomous individuals that work in the creative and service sectors. And policy plans set out to change this so that we can taste the sweet in the future. In this book, I have shown that one of the routes used towards this successful future is interventions in the private lives of those considered *not yet* autonomous consumer-citizens.

Feminizing the Urban? Gender as Urban Strategy

Higher-educated "pink-collar" women are explicitly targeted by entrepreneurial "city marketing" and "urban planning" strategies. It would appear, then, that the masculine blue collars of the Fordist past are to be replaced by more feminine and post-Fordist pink collars. To understand these efforts, I have developed the term *genderfication* in this book. In the case of "La City '08", this meant a departure from a history of

masculine imagery of muscled manual labourers, high-rise buildings and industrial waterfronts, to a "pink-collar economy", professional women and consumption-based economy through feminine imagery in myth-making. In other cases, it can work in different ways, but in all the cases studied here, somehow, space is produced for post-Fordist gender notions and a post-Fordist sexual contract: one in which women are involved in consumption and paid labour, in which (heterosexual) parents are both active in the reproductive realm of childcaring, families with children reside in the city and in which, therefore, women and children are an important presence in the urban.

Scholars have suggested that in today's labour market gender performances can be strategic instruments for individual employees (McDowell 1997; Adkins 2002). Urban economies in the "West" have not just changed in terms of gender because there are more women in the paid labour market (although this has been, in fact, quite a revolution). The shift from Fordism to post-Fordism was also a move away from the patriarchal sexual contract of Fordism (McDowell 1991; compare, 2003, 2009) towards a service-based economy with room for female workers, more gender equal task sharing and less rigid gendered divisions of labour. Importantly, in contemporary urban economies, a certain ability to reflexively play with gender performances – to have some mobility when it comes to gender – seems to be important. My research shows how gender is not only a strategy for individual workers in twenty-first-century labour markets, but that it can be a strategy for cities to support the emergence of a post-Fordist economy too. Employees rely on gendered performances for labour market success in highly competitive contexts, as, it turns out, do cities. In inter-urban competition, gender matters. The main contribution that this book has to offer is a contribution to discussions about the feminization of labour markets, a post-Fordist sexual contract and possible new configurations of (gendered) power by showing how gender matters in entrepreneurial urban strategies and "on the ground" urban policy practices and how in these practices, femininities and female subjects are a central focal point.

At first sight, Rotterdam aims at "feminization": a feminine gender performance. The "La City '08" festival is the most obvious example of such a strategic gendered move, but the genderfication apparent in the plans for the "child-friendly city" is, indeed, also based on a certain gendered logic that opens up possibilities for women. The logic prefers dual-earning middle-class families as urban inhabitants. And while not intentional, the parenting guidance practices that I studied showed a

feminization of sorts too. In these practices, reflexivity, communication and emotion management was practised and reflexive and communicative subject positions were produced. Many would define reflection and communication as relatively feminine performances (see, e.g. McDowell 1997, 2009). Because these showed resemblance to what I have termed a twenty-first-century vocational ethic, it relates to a possible (desired) "feminization" of Rotterdam's labour market too. Based on these three cases, I could defend that Rotterdam is, in fact, feminizing and leaving behind its masculine heritage. Maybe I would even argue that the post-Fordist urban in general is feminizing. But that conclusion would be too quick and too one-sided. Rotterdam indeed aims to genderfy and regenerate. It aims to become more feminine *and* more middle class, leaving behind its industrial heritage by producing space for those more affluent, and for those less macho. But when looking more closely, a rather more complicated picture surfaces. As I have argued in Chapter 3, the myth-making of "La City" was not merely "feminization", but, rather, part of quite *masculine entrepreneurialism*. "La City" used the masculine repertoire of "doing and daring" and "tradition-braking" to cross-dress: to correct the hypermasculine mythology by creating a hyper-feminine counterpoint as part of entrepreneurialism. Rotterdam, then, is a muscleman in pink stilettos (the stilettos were an element in Rotterdam's imagineering efforts). In this case, Rotterdam used gender as a quite flexible strategy to highlight not only the "feminine side" of Rotterdam, but, importantly, its desire for a consumption-based economy and middle-class inhabitants.

The efforts for a "child-friendly city" are forms of genderfication and may be interpreted as part of a feminizing city as well. Here too, gender is part of an urban strategy. However, again, it is not as clear-cut as the term "feminization" suggests. The "child-friendly city" plans are to produce space for a specific gendered order. The modernist planning of the post-World War II period is now largely considered a problem or even hindrance for development and growth. This modernist planning was patriarchal in its separation of the sexes through the separation of private and public life based on the clear gender roles of Fordism. The "child-friendly city" plans aim to change precisely this patriarchal and gendered order: it aims to mix public and private uses of the city. Daycare facilities, playgrounds and attracting dual-earning families are at the core of the plans. What Rotterdam aims for is not *just* more families and children, but in fact women, children and men that subscribe to certain specific heterosexual and middle-class norms about raising children and dividing labour. But in

the attachment to the *nuclear family*, part of the heteronormative patriarchal ideal of Fordism is transported into the new genderfied city. In the "child-friendly city" case, gender is a strategic instrument, but not one used for gender equality or feminization per se.

It may be tempting to see the production of reflexive and communicative subject positions in parenting guidance practices as a feminization of sorts too. After all, the twenty-first-century vocational ethic with which I argued an elective affinity exists is often considered more "feminine" than the vocational ethic in Fordist times. Some authors even speak of a "feminization" of labour markets, as I mentioned already above. One could argue that the "style" of parenting propagated in the courses is more "feminine" than is the "authoritarian" or patriarchal model. But I think that however much feminization can be identified in the cases I studied, there is much continuity with the past when it comes to gender configurations, too. Importantly, *mothers* are the ones addresses primarily by the policy practices that I studied. Sometimes explicitly and intently (when the programme is targeted at mothers specifically), sometimes more implicit when mothers are addressed as primarily responsible as a result of the scheduling of courses (during the day, when mothers are not expected to work in paid labour) and other contextual factors. Paternalist policies have historically often been executed by women and targeted at women as mothers (Van den Berg and Duyvendak 2012). It seems that contemporary parenting guidance is organized in much the same way and on the basis of (at least in part) a gendered division of labour that is reminiscent of Fordist times.

The urban gender revolution that is central in this book is therefore taken to mean the increased role gender plays in planning and public policy in the aftermath of the undoing and reworking of the Fordist sexual contract. The language of "gender revolution" or a revolution from Fordism to post-Fordism notwithstanding, there is, we can conclude here, much continuity when it comes to gender in the post-Fordist urban. In the cases I researched, mothers are held responsible for the private sphere. Fathers are much more rarely addressed as responsible parents. The heterosexual nuclear family is the norm for new urban planning and city marketing may attempt to depart muscles, but uses macho language nonetheless. Much of the gender configurations of Fordism remain. The rhetorics of change are sometimes put to work strategically in government, like in the case of "La City" or "the child-friendly city". In these cases, a break with post-World War II industrial Rotterdam is forced to make room for a new services-based economy. In these cases, discontinuity is rhetorically emphasized. In the

case of Rotterdam, policy and planning discontinuity talk (about gender, age, "prospects", "strong shoulders" or otherwise) is to make room for a new economy that is to end the economic hardship that resulted from deindustrialization.

Intersections: The Genderfication Project, Its Costs and Its Uses

Even so, genderfication may seem to be cause for a celebration. After decades of feminist urban studies, Jane Jacobs is the hero of the day in planning discourse, planners are thinking about more gender equal cities and child-friendly cities are increasingly a popular adagio in public policy circles. This could lead to less sexist and ageist cities, in which girls and women have a place as agents in the production of space. Private and public space may become less stringently separated, public space easier negotiable for women and families and private spaces more natural territory for men. Genderfication could then perhaps be thought of as a project by which the city is becoming less sexist.

While there are opportunities to be seized here, my concern with the genderfication project is that it uses gender equality and femininity as means or even instruments for class upgrading and the creation of revenue. The access of women to public space in the twentieth century marked the move from a production-oriented to a consumption-oriented society (McDowell 1999) and now it seems that to further develop that consumption-based society, to boost urban service economies, the inclusion of women and femininity in views on urban planning is an important strategy. Genderfication is importantly used for the attraction of more middle-class women and families. And indeed, for these groups, the city may become more welcoming, less sexist and filled with amenities that cater to their dual-earner family lifestyles. The problem here is, however, that the city then becomes a place for dual-earner higher-educated families at the cost of other urbanites and working-class families in particular. Genderfication is likely to include middle-class women and children while displacing those that cannot afford the gender equal YUPP lifestyle or the owner-occupied family homes. The genderfication project may help to overcome inequalities along gender lines, but it underlines those along class lines. Gender – femininity in particular – is discursively used to produce space for those more affluent.

In addition, the privileging of certain types of femininities in the post-Fordist urban has its costs. The femininity that is central in the genderfication efforts that I studied in this book is one that is focused on (1) consumption, (2) participation in paid employment, (3) higher educated and (4) involved in mothering. In many ways, then, genderfication amounts to a "retraditionalization" (Adkins 2002) of gender relations. Furthermore, as it turns out, it is (higher) middle class and White. Especially "working-class" and post-migrant masculinities are often made into a policy problem (Van den Berg and Chevalier forthcoming). New exclusionary logics are therefore the result of genderfication. My findings on urban post-Fordist femininities resonate with Angela McRobbie's (2007) analysis of the new sexual contract: a post-feminist focus on women's *capacity* in terms of consumption, education and employment rather than the Fordist focus on women's containment. To push a creative economy and the arrival of a creative class (Florida 2002) – to put it slightly exaggerated – masculine working-class muscle is replaced by more feminine human capital and a focus on creativity. This in no way means that employers now suddenly prefer women over men or that – as public discourse would sometimes have it – there is an "end of men". Indeed, the urban precarious labour force that comes with an interactive service economy largely consists of women. Many questions remain around what genderfication and gender in the post-Fordist urban means exactly for future urban inequalities. Do working-class and post-migrant masculinities indeed become displaced (Nayak 2006) or redundant (McDowell 2003) in precarious urban labour markets in the future? And: how are we to think of a concurrent feminization of poverty? For these questions, reconsiderations of new classed inequalities and their intersections with gender are vital and it is with some reflections on this theme that I would like to conclude.

The "Afterlife" of the Fordist Urban: On Classed Urban Inequalities

Rotterdammers like to claim that in the Netherlands, money is "made in Rotterdam" and "spent in Amsterdam". Some time has passed since this was true. Cities like Manchester or Marseille, too, still pride themselves on their hard-working attitude, laddishness or roughness. In general, urban economies that were in large part dependent on industry in the recent past have a much harder time adjusting than cities that already had strong service sectors before the 1960s and 1970s (Van der Waal 2009). As a

consequence, oftentimes, the service sector is not compensating the loss of jobs in the harbour-related industries. Jobs for lower-educated urbanites often effectively disappear. And new employment opportunities are far more likely to be created for those higher-educated. Former industrial cities desire a post-Fordist economy and a growth of service sector jobs for the lower-educated, but as of yet, they are not as successful as they often would like to be. In this last part of the conclusion, I would like to draw attention to what could be called new urban class conflicts. Rotterdam and other former industrial cities think of themselves as "blue-collar" cities and of "working-class cities" still, no matter the ambitions for post-Fordism. But in post-Fordism, class may not be defined as much by type of work as it was before. In the words of Valerie Walkerdine: "Class does not sit easily with a very changed labour market in which traditional markers of working-class masculinity have been eroded and many people would not define themselves in class terms" (2003: 237). By no means do I mean to argue here that class is in any way less relevant to the post-Fordist urban when compared to the Fordist urban. Contemporary classed inequalities in the city are, however, far more about precarization (Lorey 2015; compare Standing 2008). If Rotterdam (and other cities) *does* succeed and jobs in interactive services make up for the loss of jobs in industry, these jobs are likely to be rather precarious, for instance, in the hotel and catering business. What it means to "work", therefore, is changing. The term "working class" and even more so "blue collar" stems from a Fordist era, as do much sociological considerations of class (Watt 2006; Standing 2008; Walkerdine 2003). Now, new configurations of class are emerging and as a consequence, so do new social conflicts.

Andrea Muehlebach (2011) showed what "remaining Fordist affects" can produce (compare Berlant 2007). She argues that instead of highlighting the break between Fordism and post-Fordism, insights into the meaning of work and the state may arise if we look at *what remains* of Fordism. Paid labour afforded (male) citizens a sense of belonging in Fordism. Now that much industrial labour has left Western Europe, many yearn for this lost sense of belonging. This yearning is a source for state interventions that ask citizens to do unpaid labour: care work, volunteering, mothering. Citizens unable to find employment in the current labour market are asked or obliged to do such unpaid "volunteering" labour or to participate in workfare. Often termed "activation", policies that require those dependent on state support to work as "volunteer" proliferate (Kampen 2010; Adkins 2012). Legitimate and illegitimate

forms of "activity" thus surface and once urbanites are no longer in paid employment, their lives and "activities" are assessed by local governments in such a vein. What remains of Fordism in many former industrial cities, therefore, is in part a focus on "hard work". The narrative of the "blue-collar worker" with "rolled up sleeves" has an "afterlife" (Muehlebach 2011: 62), so to speak. It is not only used to legitimate entrepreneurial government strategies, but may well serve to create new distinctions between "undeserving" and "deserving poor" (compare M. Katz 1989), "potent" and "impotent" citizens (compare Piven and Cloward 1972), "working class" and "marginalized". These new distinctions have shown to legitimate new state interventions (Van den Berg 2013; Van den Berg and Arts forthcoming). Is it possible to belong to a "hard-working" city without having paid employment? If living in certain areas is becoming more and more expensive due to state-led gentrification/genderfication and being (temporarily) unemployed thus effectively means displacement? How is paid employment substituted with other forms of "activity" that enable this belonging? What forms of "activity" make citizens "deserving"? and how are these gendered? These are important questions for future research projects indeed. For now, it appears that the labour of mothering, including important continuities with the gendered division of labour in Fordism, is an important site: one of the forms of legitimate "activity" is mothering the next generation of urbanites: of being an agent in urban regeneration.

Note

1. "Rotterdam heeft haast. De stad vecht zich dood om op iets te lijken wat er nog niet is." Wilfried de Jong. De Jong (2012) said this in a speech on the occasion of the departure of the national newspaper NRC Handelsblad from Rotterdam. The NRC offices moved to Amsterdam in 2012.

CHAPTER 7

Coda

Abstract In the coda, I offer some reflections on what it means to be part of a ‘desired’ population and on how, in this light, I view my particular commitment to the issues studied in the book.

Keywords Auto-ethnography · Reflection · Woonvisie Rotterdam protest

I am part of a dual-earner higher-educated family with children that lives in Rotterdam. Therefore, I think it is relevant to offer some of my reflections on my own standpoint in the processes and debates that are central to this book. This is relevant in the context of a book positioned in feminist urban studies especially, as much feminist theory has stressed to beware of what Donna Haraway has called the “God trick” (Haraway 1991): the strategy of taking up a supposedly neutral position of knowledge. In much urban theory and urban research, still, the location of the author is unknown (Peake 2016). In research on gentrification, for example, hardly any urban academic writes of him or herself as inevitably often also gentrifier: as important agent in gentrification processes (Schlichtman and Patch 2014). While I do not necessarily think that the reader needs an autoethnographic account of my personal housing trajectory (as is the proposal of Slichtman and Patch 2014), I will offer some reflections on what it means to be part of a “desired” population

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and on how, in this light, I view my particular commitment to the issues studied here.

I grew up in Zwijndrecht, a Rotterdam suburb. My parents commuted to Rotterdam for work. For my parents, settling down to have a family in the late 1970s/early 1980s meant to move to a suburb almost naturally. When asked, they responded that this was just what you did, in those days. As children, my sisters and I could play unsupervised in Zwijndrecht. There were playgrounds and parks to roam around in and there was our own backyard. Rotterdam was the point of reference for most things interesting, however, especially to a teenager: theatres, shopping streets, subcultures, record stores. Rotterdam in the 1990s was also the object of fear of many of my friends and their parents. Stories of drug trafficking, prostitution, harassment and crime found their way to many Zwijndrecht living rooms. Because my parents worked in Rotterdam and were well familiar with the city, I was allowed from a relatively early age to go there without them and to explore the urban streets myself. I moved there when I was 18 years old when I started as a student at Erasmus University.

When I moved from my student housing to my first apartment, I was welcomed warmly by the other residents in the building. I was able to buy a small apartment that was previously social housing and part of the housing stock that has continued to be sold off. Most residents in the block rented their home from the housing corporation and at some point were offered to buy theirs but many had been unable or unwilling to do so. I was welcomed so warmly because, so said my neighbours, they could tell I was "net" and they had wanted someone "net" to come and live there for a while. Being "net" translates to English best as respectable or decent: I was immediately read as trustworthy, as a worthy inhabitant. My whiteness, my middle-class habitus and my university education were immediately recognized as an upgrade of the building. Of course, the fact that I bought the apartment for a modest prize from the housing corporation meant that I contributed to housing being withdrawn from the social housing stock. The irony here is that while my arrival in the building was so warmly welcomed by those in the building, it was part of a process that would make it harder for them to stay in the city in the future.

At a time when Rotterdam aims to attract higher-educated "families with children" (gezinnen) to the city centre and does so by promoting owner-occupied housing of 180,000 euros and up (something I would

have never been able to afford when I made my first move on the housing market), I find myself, again, in the position of the desired Rotterdammer. I am raising two children in an urban neighbourhood that is close to the centre but is nevertheless suburban in its feel: like in the neighbourhood of my childhood, there are parks here and tree-lined streets and good schools. The city centre is, however, ten minutes by bike and therefore, all the amenities and fun that the city has to offer is within reach. Like a true YUPP, I regularly take my children for a cup of coffee in an urban coffee cafe. Getting my son in the school of our choice was not a problem, since we live across the street from it and the school selects children on the basis of this proximity – an effective strategy for class selection and resulting in class and racial segregation on an urban level. And although I raise two children here, I have never been approached to take part in parenting guidance programmes. In sum, I am the "strong shoulder" that Rotterdam desires and my presence in the city has been celebrated all along.

All the more strange then, perhaps, that when I argue in public debate against the plans for the demolition of social housing or state-led gentrification, I get asked how I, especially, can oppose these plans. Why would I be against more expensive housing? Or even more pointedly: why would I argue that *I* shouldn't live in Rotterdam? I wouldn't, of course. But in the dominant framing of debates around space and housing in Rotterdam, the idea is that the city is still "too poor" and that anyone defending the right for poor or precarious urbanites to live there surely also argues that no middle-class people should be able to live there. The struggle for urban space in Rotterdam came to some sort of a climax in November 2016, as the city's citizens were asked in a referendum if they did or did not agree to the plans in the city's Woonvisie. The plans are in essence to take 20,000 affordable houses out of the housing stock to make room for owner-occupied housing, effectively displacing 20,000 households. In the end, voter turnout (17%) was not enough for the referendum to be validated (it was stipulated beforehand that the referendum would need a voter turnout of 30%). So even though 72% of the voters voted against de Woonvisie, it looks like the administration can now proceed with their plans to produce space for more affluent users (see my article with Brian Doucet and Gwen van Eijk for an account of the referendum and its politics: Doucet et al. 2016). Likewise, when I offer a feminist reading of contemporary urban politics, this has been taken up (e.g. in 2013 in the national newspaper NRC) as an argument

for the privileging of women and for a feminization of Rotterdam and then, awkwardly, *my* gender is made symbolically important.

While Rotterdam is celebrated increasingly often as a “hot spot” and the marketing language resonates successfully, Rotterdam and Rotterdammers are also always under attack. Rotterdam is still associated with social problems, poverty and crime. However much Rotterdam’s rough beauty is praised and sang about, and Rotterdammers are considered wonderful “down-to-earth” people, in the blame game that frequently follows the analyses of the “wrong lists” and “problem areas”, Rotterdammers or the Rotterdam population loses much too often. As Rotterdam social scientist Joke van der Zwaard put it poignantly and ironically in May 2013, the logic in policy and public debate is often this: “Rotterdam is such a beautiful city, the inhabitants are a pity though” (*Rotterdam is een mooie stad, alleen jammer van de inwoners*).[1] Besides a scholarly work about genderfication, this book is, thus, also my way of engaging with debates on Rotterdam’s future and the injustices in current popular analyses and consequent policy actions. As part of my commitment to feminism and my commitment to issues of urban inequalities, I feel it is important to continuously ask why I am, unquestionably, a “strong shoulder”. Why is the nurse (kraamzorgster) that attended to me and my daughter when she was born not a “strong shoulder”? Why aren’t those (temporarily) unemployed in a precarious labour market? Besides writing a scholarly book on genderfication, therefore, I have also been active in the local debate preceding the referendum on the Woonvisie and have tried to ask these and other questions there as well as in this book.

Note

1. Van der Zwaard said this in her response to Willem Schinkel’s *Rotterdam lecture* in Het Steiger, Rotterdam, May 23, 2013.

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