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### Inequality in the gentrifying European city

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# CHAPTER 1 – Introduction: Gentrification and social-spatial inequalities

Socio-economic and class inequalities are on the rise in a host of contexts (Piketty 2014; Savage 2015), underpinned by a restructuring of the global economy, labour markets, finance, and the welfare state (Sassen 1991, 2014). The Fordist welfare state that provided extensive social safety nets has been subject to a gradual dismantling and, instead, contemporary welfare states have been reoriented towards facilitating private accumulation and enabling market forces (Peck & Tickell 2002; Brenner et al. 2010). Although socio-economic inequalities are in essence a-spatial, they are typically also expressed in urban space. Most major European cities of the twenty-first century are marked by aggravating levels of socio-economic segregation (Tammaru et al. 2016). Affluent residents increasingly seem to be flocking together into areas of privilege, while lower class residents are ever more likely to concentrate in low status areas. Indicators of segregation say little, however, about the different dimensions of social-spatial inequalities and the underlying dynamics that forge them.

Gentrification, the transformation of urban space for more affluent users, is frequently attributed a key role in neighbourhood change. However, gentrification may also be an important force of urban change that reshapes the social geography of cities as a whole. Most gentrification studies focus – insufficiently – on the consequences of gentrification for urban-regional inequalities, for instance by only considering the gentrifying neighbourhoods themselves and ignoring their spatial flipside, or by only taking into account certain types of gentrification. This is a crucial lacuna given the ever growing footprint of gentrification (cf. Smith 2002; Lees et al. 2016). The main aim of this dissertation is therefore to understand the impact of gentrification on social-spatial inequalities at the urban-regional level to its full extent.

This dissertation innovatively employs a multi-scalar methodology that takes a bird's eye perspective to understand gentrification's social-spatial consequences at the urban-regional scale, while also zooming in at the neighbourhood level to unravel the conceptual and spatial diversity of gentrification. We currently have insufficient insight into the spatial reach of gentrification, insight that simultaneously remains sensitive to between-neighbourhood differences in the form that gentrification takes (cf. Van Criekingen & Decroly 2003; Hedin et al. 2012). I argue that precisely because gentrification has proven able to surface in different guises in different neighbourhoods, it has been able to extend across space. Although different forms of gentrification may produce different outcomes, only by considering all of these gentrification processes does it become possible to understand the magnitude of their impact. This illuminates the force of gentrification in remaking the social geography of cities and their surrounding regions.

It is often simply taken for granted that gentrification processes contribute to starker social-spatial contrasts. At the neighbourhood level, gentrification is assumed to go hand-in-hand with the eventual establishment

of virtually homogeneous affluent spaces – while acknowledging that in the short-run, it may contribute to a greater social mix. With the advance of gentrification, this translates into a more polarized urban landscape, with a gentrified core and struggling periphery. This dissertation not only seeks to establish whether this is indeed the case in contemporary cities, but also to investigate how such social-spatial inequalities come into being. Most importantly, it questions the dominant view that residential moves are the most important factor in changing population composition. The role of the state as a potential key actor in gentrification also comes into view here. States have influence not only by deploying policies that either stimulate or restrict gentrification processes, but also by determining where and how they do so. This has implications for how gentrification influences social-spatial inequalities.

It is important to stress here that social-spatial inequalities come in various forms and run along various dividing lines. New and stronger divides are currently emerging, especially along generational lines. Intergenerational inequalities are on the rise in many contexts, with younger generations increasingly struggling on the housing market. Related to this, the intergenerational transmission of resources has become more crucial in helping young adults to acquire housing (McKee 2012; Forrest & Hirayama 2015). Generational divides are, however, rarely considered in gentrification research, and neither is intergenerational support as a form of capital upon which young gentrifiers may draw. In this dissertation, I introduce these intergenerational dimensions into the framework of gentrification. For instance, gentrifiers of different generations may play a role in gentrification processes in different ways. Intergenerational support reproduces inequalities across generations and may play a role in fuelling gentrification and exacerbating social-spatial inequalities.

Displacement may constitute a key link between gentrification and wider social-spatial inequalities. The progression and expansion of gentrification may imply that exclusionary forces become stronger and different forms of displacement (cf. Marcuse 1986) more pronounced. Housing market structure plays an important mediating role, however: the presence of a large regulated housing stock is likely to dampen the scale at which displacement and exclusion occurs. Yet welfare state restructuring has not left housing markets untouched. There is a general push for homeownership, while rental housing faces decline (Ronald 2008; Doling & Elsinga 2012). It is important to establish the extent to which and where this translates into a diminishing of the social housing stock, in order to understand how a changing housing market structure shapes displacement and exclusion.

Establishing how and to what extent low income population groups are hit by displacement or exclusion has proven notoriously difficult. This dissertation picks up this major challenge by zooming in on the residential behaviour of low income groups to understand how their housing position is altered by gentrification processes. These impacts may be far from uniform, producing outcomes that differ across space, time, and population groups. Furthermore, the displacement engendered by gentrification not only disrupts or constrains individual residential and life trajectories, but is also likely to

hold important broader implications, altering the social geography of cities in a host of ways.

Together, the range of gentrification processes may play an important role in shaping and rearranging social-spatial inequalities along different dividing lines. This dissertation addresses this relationship by tackling the following research question:

**How has gentrification been able to expand across space?  
What is the impact of gentrification processes on social-spatial inequalities in urban regions?**

This question is answered using a multi-scalar and multi-method comparative approach. The study is multi-scalar because it moves beyond the neighbourhood level in order to also consider the impact of gentrification at the urban and regional levels. While much of the dissertation primarily draws on micro-level longitudinal data and quantitative geospatial methods of inquiry, the dissertation also employs qualitative methods to analyse urban policies. Furthermore, the quantitative analyses are firmly embedded in a broader understanding of the structural factors that produce the conditions for gentrification to occur. The research question is answered through a comparison between the urban-regional contexts of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In so doing, this dissertation provides the most comprehensive study of gentrification in the Dutch context to date. The question is also answered through a temporal comparison that includes the boom period preceding the 2008 global financial crisis, and the recession that subsequently took hold.

This introductory chapter continues as follows. First, I will situate this dissertation in the broader gentrification scholarship. Second, I will introduce the broader theoretical framework, delving deeper into the factors that allow gentrification to expand in contemporary urban contexts, and how this influences social-spatial inequalities. Third, I will elaborate on the overall research design, the sub-projects, and important methodological considerations. Lastly, I will discuss and contrast various basic characteristics of the two main cases in this dissertation – Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

## **Gentrification**

In this dissertation I follow recent scholarship in adopting a broad definition of gentrification that understands the process as the class-based transformation of urban space for progressively more affluent users (Hackworth 2002; Lees et al. 2008). More conservative accounts would opt for a definition closer to gentrification's initial observation, conceptualizing it as the upgrading of lower class inner city neighbourhoods in major cities of the Global North. Such a narrow definition obscures, however, the fact that upward class transformations, despite occurring in different forms and spaces, may have similar underpinnings and produce very similar outcomes, for example in terms of displacement. Because the central aim of this dissertation is to establish how gentrification in its different guises influences social-spatial inequalities, a broader and more flexible definition is warranted (cf. Clark 2005).

It is possible to analyse gentrification from various angles rooted in different scholarly traditions. In this dissertation I distinguish between structural and material explanations for gentrification (cf. Abbott 2004). Structural explanations focus on the logics underpinning gentrification that emphasize the broader political economy. Material explanations, by contrast, place greater emphasis on how gentrification *processes* unfold in space and over time, highlighting how different population groups shape and are shaped by gentrification. It is worthwhile to briefly consider both perspectives<sup>1</sup>, because the two approaches help our understanding of how gentrification has become a more widespread and pervasive process, with potentially stronger impacts on the social geography of cities and city regions.

The first approach foregrounds structural explanations for gentrification related to the factors producing (the conditions for) gentrification. Typically rooted in neo-Marxist analyses of contemporary capitalism, this approach ascribes critical importance to capital flows rather than population flows (Smith 1979). Through capital switching (Harvey 1982, 1985), accumulated capital washes into the built environment, prowling for profitable niches. Such niches may exist in disinvested neighbourhoods, where rent gaps – simply put, the difference between capitalized and potential ground rent – may emerge and can subsequently be capitalized upon (Smith 1979; also Clark 1988). In this vein, gentrification is primarily about private accumulation through investment in and speculation on real estate and land, thus supplying increasingly expensive housing (Lees et al. 2016: 69). Landlords, property owners, developers, investors, states, and liaised actors are therefore considered the main agents of gentrification (Smith 1979). They are the ones that gentrify neighbourhoods through reinvestment, that force out low income tenants, and that speculate on real estate and financial markets.

Based on this structural understanding of gentrification, Hackworth and Smith (2001) have schematized the ways in which gentrification has mutated over time. They define three waves separated by economic crises: the first occurring from the 1950s until the early 1970s, the second from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, and the third from the early 1990s onwards. Although they base this distinction on the very specific context of New York, it has found resonance in other contexts too and is a useful framework for contextualizing the expansion of gentrification. The waves are differentiated primarily on the basis of capital flows and the key actors producing gentrification. Gentrification in its first wave was a sporadic and isolated process limited to major cities, and driven by the piecemeal investments of private households frequently backed by state support. Large private players at the time typically still considered investment in gentrification too risky. The second wave saw gentrification transform from an anomaly into an anchored process integrated into wider economic and cultural processes, thus smoothing the flow of capital into gentrifying neighbourhoods. In its third wave form, gentrification has been able to spread rapidly across space and away from inner cities, to gain

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1. The following section presents a literature framework that delves deeper into some of the points touched upon here.

hold in a wider range of neighbourhoods. This was enabled by intensified private capital investment and active support from interventionist states that consider gentrification a panacea to all their neighbourhood or urban woes (Smith 2002). In their overview work *Gentrification*, Lees, Slater, and Wyly (2008) suggest that during the early twenty-first century, a new fourth wave of gentrification emerged in the US. Rather than being a radical break from the third wave, fourth wave gentrification should be understood as an extension of it, with the state continuing to play an important role in promoting gentrification ever more directly and fiercely. Importantly, however, the fourth wave is also marked by the “intensified financialization of housing” (ibid.: 179) and the “tight integration of local gentrification with national and global capital markets” (ibid.: 180).

The second dominant approach highlights population dynamics and typically attributes an especially important role to residential moving patterns in driving neighbourhood population composition change. This approach draws on sociological class analysis to explain which middle class fractions move into (and stay in) gentrifying neighbourhoods, and why. It also employs analyses common in population geography and demography to explain how population flows alter population compositions. Class analyses typically forefront the agency of the middle classes, investigating their residential preferences and practices. In explaining the choice for a gentrification neighbourhood, these studies highlight, for instance, the importance of distinctive consumption practices, the value attached to residential spaces with an ‘authentic’ appeal, time-space management, and the preference to live among peers with similar consumption patterns (Butler & Robson 2003; Butler 2007; Karsten 2003; Ley 2003). These studies typically link such residential decisions to broader perspectives on the life course. An urban residential orientation has become more prominent among the middle classes, especially early on in the life course, for reasons of education and employment (Ley 1996; Smith & Holt 2007). This literature has been criticized for its lack of attention to the impact of gentrification on the lives and residential trajectories of vulnerable households (Slater 2006). Population geography or demography studies focus to a greater extent on overall population composition change, centring on changing moving patterns. Various studies ask, for instance, how and to what extent gentrification processes expose lower class residents to different forms of displacement (Newman & Wyly 2006; Wyly et al. 2010; Freeman & Braconi 2004; McKinnish et al. 2010). The key question of where the displaced end up has so far proven notoriously difficult to answer, however, as the displaced typically disappear off the radar post-displacement.

The approach focusing on population dynamics links the expansion of gentrification to broader economic restructuring, and the overall growth of middle class professions (Hamnett 2003). Furthermore, focus on the agency of gentrifiers naturally leads to the acknowledgement that there is not one type of gentrifier (Rose 1984), but that different middle class fractions have different motivations to move to a gentrification neighbourhood. This has led to the identification of different types of gentrifiers. These range from the low income but upwardly mobile ‘marginal gentrifier’ seeking affordable

residential niches in inner cities (Rose 1984), to high income ‘family gentrifiers’ and ‘super gentrifiers’ that prioritize homogeneous and safe urban environments (Butler & Lees 2006; Karsten 2003). This variety is projected onto urban space as it translates into different forms of gentrification. Gentrification processes are shaped in different ways and to varying intensities depending on who moves in. Furthermore, different forms of gentrification catering to different gentrifiers are likely to take place in neighbourhoods that are differentiated on the basis of factors such as location, affordability, and housing characteristics. It follows that in order to understand the magnitude and spatial reach of gentrification, it is important to take into account these different forms of gentrification.

In this dissertation I incorporate these two different approaches into the analytical framework. Structural explanations focusing on political economy and class analyses, and with a focus on agency, provide different perspectives on the expansion of gentrification over time. Perspectives derived from population geography and demography are in turn better geared towards understanding how gentrification influences social-spatial inequalities at the urban-regional scale. In so doing, this dissertation focuses on the residential behaviour of residents as influenced and structured by structural conditions including housing market structure, state policy, and the role of capital in housing (cf. Giddens 1984).

## **Literature framework**

This literature framework delves deeper into the perspectives touched upon in the previous section. It focuses on how contemporary gentrification processes can be understood, specifically their potentially widespread and pervasive nature. To do so, this section covers new population dynamics, the role of capital and of the state, and the disruptive impact of the 2008 global financial crisis.

### **New population dynamics<sup>2</sup>**

To understand the expansion of gentrification processes, it is important to consider contemporary demographic trends. An important point of reference is Ley’s (1996) work on the rise of a new middle class, which took place during the post-war period marked by the transition to a post-industrial society and economy (cf. Bell 1973). Economic growth and restructuring fuelled a rapid expansion of the middle classes. While middle class suburbanization burgeoned at that time, a counter-process was also on the rise. Expanding university enrolment among the baby boom generation prompted specific middle class fractions of this generation to develop a more urban residential orientation (Ley 1996). Furthermore, the growth of middle class professions in services, finance, and consumption also found their concentration in major cities. For specific fractions of the middle class, the decision to live in the inner

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2. The argument developed in this section is partly based on the publication “Age, life course and generations in gentrification processes”, co-authored by Willem Boterman and forthcoming, in the *Handbook of Gentrification Studies* (edited by Lees & Phillips). (Hochstenbach & Boterman forthcoming).

city constituted a rebellious choice that opposed the residential and household arrangements considered 'normal' in society. It often represented a rejection of suburban living arrangements closely intertwined with the nuclear male breadwinner family (Wilson 1991; Caulfield 1994), an embrace of left-liberal politics (Ley 1996), and alternative lifestyles (Rose 1984).

The choice for the city is, however, no longer a rebellious one. It has become the 'default' option in the residential arrangements of many young middle class households in Western countries. The city plays a key role in the residential and life course trajectories of ever more young people belonging to, or on their way to, the middle classes (Smith & Holt 2007; Boterman 2012a). These developments are related to changing population dynamics, which are propelled by the ongoing expansion of education, labour market restructuring, and destabilizing life course trajectories.

The ongoing expansion of higher education plays a pivotal role in this, as it brings growing numbers of young people flocking to the city (Smith & Sage 2014). As students typically look for affordable but centrally located housing, they may play an important direct role in driving gentrification, particularly its early forms (Ley 1996, 2003). In addition, and perhaps more fundamentally, the presence of higher education institutions assures cities of an annual production of future gentrifiers who may remain in the city after graduation (Smith 2005). Studenthood as such constitutes a formative period during which young people become acquainted with urban living and develop a preference for it that informs their future residential behaviour (Smith & Holt 2007). There is an intergenerational dimension to this as well. With the ageing of the baby boom generation, a growing share of parents of new generations of students have been a student in the city themselves. Consequently, they may pass on the preference for specific urban environments to their children (Smith & Holt 2007; Rye 2011). This is important. It signals a shift in urban living from a decision that ran counter to dominant societal patterns, to an almost standard choice among the contemporary middle classes, and one that is reproduced across generations.

The increasing middle class presence in the city is, furthermore, linked to broader economic restructuring related to the transition towards a post-industrial economic structure. It is within this context that Hamnett (1994a, 1994b) forwarded the notion that the occupational structure of major Western cities has been subject to processes of 'professionalization'. Formulated in response to Sassen's social polarization thesis (1991), Hamnett argued that in these urban contexts, the number of highly skilled professional and managerial jobs rapidly increased at the cost of blue collar jobs. As such, the labour market became fundamentally professionalized, a process that opposed the growth of low-end jobs alongside high-end jobs envisioned in the polarization thesis, as proposed by the social polarization thesis. Though the professionalization thesis is primarily concerned with structural transformations in the (urban) economy, it is also implicitly linked to demographic shifts. Professionalization may occur along generational lines, with older working class generations being succeeded by younger higher educated age cohorts as they reach employment age. This holds important implications for gentrification: professionalization



of the labour force implies that gentrification is not so much about the *displacement* of working class households as it is about their gradual *replacement* by middle class professionals (Hamnett 2003; Butler & Hamnett 2009). This is especially the case when professionalization occurs in combination with demographic succession. Although this argument has not gone without criticism (Slater 2006, 2009), and class inequalities and the existence of different forms of direct and indirect displacement (Marcuse 1986) should indeed not be lost from sight, the professionalization thesis is important for understanding the profound changes to the class map of contemporary cities.

Apart from these changing structural conditions, it is also important to note that young people's life course trajectories have changed in crucial ways. Young people increasingly prolong a transitory life course situation and postpone settling down. These shifts are commonly associated with the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe 2010), of which a steady increase in single-person households, a delay in child rearing, and an increase in female labour market participation are all markers. Spatially, this has resulted in a revival of inner city living (Buzar et al. 2005). This has longer-term implications too. While for many middle class people prolonging a transitory life stage may imply merely a delay in suburbanization, increasing numbers of middle class residents actually remain urban even after settling down and having children (Boterman et al. 2010). Increasing demand for specific urban residential environments is thus occurring not only because more middle class residents are moving to the city, but also because they stay there for a longer stretch of time.

This section has highlighted how expanding higher education, labour market restructuring, and destabilizing life course trajectories have strengthened an urban orientation among middle class households, which in turn fuels gentrification processes. It should be emphasized that these changes have long had a profound influence on urban change and gentrification in one way or another (cf. Ley 1996). Where they might have initially explained a reversal of fortunes for inner cities, now, in contemporary urban landscapes, these changes help to explain how gentrification advances and expands.

### **The state**

In recent decades, state involvement in pushing gentrification has become ever more pronounced. Third wave gentrification is marked by pro-gentrification policies accompanied by intensified private investments, which have allowed the process to spread and become much more pervasive than before (Hackworth & Smith 2001; Smith 2002). It must be stressed, however, that pro-gentrification politics go a long way back. In fact, early studies of gentrification in the UK and US of the 1960s and 1970s ascribe an important role to the state in facilitating the process (Smith 1979; Hamnett 1973). Institutional context also plays a role in determining the scope of state involvement. In strong welfare state contexts with a highly regulated market, the state and liaised parties may play a crucial though often ambiguous role (Van Weesep 1994). Different urban and housing policies that simultaneously push and impede gentrification often coexist. In the domain of housing, the state takes

the hard edges off gentrification through tenant protection and the provision of social housing. This limits direct displacement and slows down gentrification. However, at the same time it actively pushes the process through housing market liberalization and social housing sales, accelerating indirect exclusionary displacement (Van Gent 2013; Hochstenbach et al. 2015). In this form, gentrification is very much a controlled and guided process, where the most negative impacts are mitigated but its constant progress is also ensured.

Despite the common perception that gentrification has taken the form of a mass produced blueprint policy (Smith 2002; Davidson & Lees 2005), there are different reasons why states engage in pro-gentrification politics. Policymakers may consider gentrification an instrument to improve the economic base and wellbeing of their city. This fits within a broader stream of new urban economist thought, highly influential in policy circles (for critical explorations see Peck 2005, 2012a, 2016; Engelen et al. 2016). This thought espouses a route to urban economic growth through fierce inter-urban competition over capital and talent (Harvey 1989). To do so, policymakers are encouraged to redevelop the city according to the tastes, preferences, and desires of the new middle classes, to remove barriers to capital investment, and to rid the city of undesirable elements (Smith 1996). Gentrification is considered a key policy tool to achieve this.

Gentrification may, however, also be a governmental strategy that serves goals other than economic ones. In an alternative reading, Uitermark, Duyvendak, and Kleinhans conceptualize gentrification as “a means through which governmental organizations and their partners lure the middle classes into disadvantaged areas with the purpose of civilizing and controlling these neighbourhoods” (2007: 127, original emphasis). The policy rationale is that strong poverty concentrations and the potential accumulation of social problems in such areas pose a threat to social order. Social mixing through gentrification constitutes a strategy to dissolve these concentrations, which allows for the control of problems, the reinstalling of social order, and an easing of the burden of management (Uitermark 2003). In more recent work, Uitermark (2014) has conceptualized this as control through integration, which opposes control through segregation whereby the urban poor are removed out of sight through containment in areas subject to intensified policing and surveillance. It is argued that the former approach is more dominant in Western Europe, where states have invested heavily in the renewal of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Yet the use of gentrification as a policy strategy to mix low income neighbourhoods has become ubiquitous all across the Global North, including in the US (Newman 2004). This policy strategy is, however, often disguised by different policy rhetoric (Bridge et al. 2012), and has been criticized for aiming to create predominantly affluent gentrified enclaves rather than a stable social mix (Lees 2003).

States have a plethora of policy options at hand to facilitate gentrification, including policies that support or subsidize middle class amenities (Zukin et al. 2009), policies that upgrade or privatize public space (Atkinson 2003), and policies that amount to hard punitive measures such as zero tolerance policing (Smith 1996, 2001). Housing policies are often at the

heart of state-led gentrification (also Wyly & Hammel 1999; Cameron 2003; Uitermark et al. 2007). Housing liberalization, the sale of social or public housing, and regulatory reforms may all serve to push gentrification in selected neighbourhoods. An important strand of urban policies may seek to spark gentrification through costly programmes of extensive renewal that include the demolition of affordable housing and the construction of more expensive dwellings.

It is important to bear in mind that state actors may promote gentrification in different neighbourhoods at the same time to serve different goals. Under these conditions, gentrification has been able to expand across neighbourhoods and cities as a 'successful' policy instrument. Stakes are therefore high for the state to ensure the continuity of the process. This may be threatened, however, by ongoing welfare state restructuring, the global financial crisis, and austerity measures, all of which constrain the state in its capacity to intervene. Consequently, state-led gentrification may have to change face, for example by using different policy instruments, by targeting different areas for gentrification processes, or by relying on private investment. How and where states intervene and promote gentrification influences the relationship between gentrification and social-spatial inequalities. Intervening in disadvantaged neighbourhoods may in the short-run reduce segregation levels, while intervening in well-performing neighbourhoods may amplify them (Walks & Maaranen 2008; Uitermark & Bosker 2014).

### **Capital and housing wealth**

Although state support for gentrification continues to be central in contemporary gentrification processes, it is suggested that global capital flows, financial markets, and available mortgage credit are also of growing importance. The combined and intensive push by both state and capital is captured by fourth wave gentrification, as formulated by Lees, Slater, and Wyly (2008). Capital reinvestment in real estate and land markets, both by institutional investors and private households, has always been at the very heart of gentrification (Smith 1979; Lees et al. 2016). However, due to housing restructuring and new finance systems, speculation on housing – and on gentrification – has seen a huge boost (Lees et al. 2008). Housing in general forms an increasingly important domain for the strategic investments of institutions as well as private households. This is due in no small part to the fact that housing prices typically increase over time, making it an attractive vehicle in which to store capital (Aalbers & Christophers 2014). In times of over-accumulation, excess capital can effectively be switched to – and stored in – housing and the built environment, leading to speculation in these domains (Harvey 1982, 1985). For private households, the accumulation of assets has become more important over time, and housing represents a common way of doing so. Welfare state restructuring has typically led to the gradual erosion of collective social security systems, making private assets progressively more important for securing future welfare: accumulated wealth may, for instance, serve to augment future pensions or cushion the impact of job loss or unexpected life events (Kemeny 2005; Doling & Ronald 2010; Ansell 2014).

Western states have actively pushed private homeownership for decades, leading to rapidly increasing homeownership rates across Europe up until the onset of the global financial crisis (Doling & Elsinga 2012). This was enabled by the increasing availability of ‘easy money’: relatively cheap mortgage credit was expanded through low interest rates, mortgage interest tax deductibility schemes, and lenders’ willingness to take on higher risks, frequently backed by state guarantees (Aalbers 2011; Van Gent 2013). Through re-regulation, governments across contexts removed barriers to investment and increased lender protections, leading to a boom in mortgage markets and mushrooming household mortgage debt (Schwartz & Seabrooke 2008). House prices also exploded – at least up until the global financial crisis of 2008 (which will be discussed in the following section). Crucially, however, there is a distinct geography related to the restructuring of housing finance. Mortgage markets have played an important role in linking local neighbourhoods to global capital markets (Newman 2009). In New York in the 1990s, mortgage credit in particular expanded in urban areas and even more so in gentrifying neighbourhoods (Wyly & Hammel 1999). There are various dimensions and geographies to this. Easier access to cheap mortgage credit made it less risky and more profitable to invest in previously low status neighbourhoods, which helped to kick off incipient gentrification there (also see Aalbers 2007). Furthermore, wealthy households and investors typically channel their capital into those segments of the property market that are ‘hottest’ and where large rent gaps can be closed, usually neighbourhoods already gentrifying (Lees et al. 2008). Housing finance restructuring has, together with widening rent gaps and housing liberalization, opened up new neighbourhoods as possible niche markets for capital to wash into, and while it has accelerated house price inflation across the board, it did so especially in selected gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Investment in gentrifying neighbourhoods may take different forms. In many cases, it will simply take the form of relatively affluent households purchasing a dwelling in a gentrifying area, both as a place of residence and as an investment (Butler & Robson 2003; Butler & Lees 2006). However, investment may also take the form of private landlordism. Recent years have seen a notable increase in investment in rental housing by large institutional investors as well as small-time private landlords (Fields & Uffer 2016; Ronald & Kadi 2016; Beswick et al. 2016). Regulatory reforms and increasing demand from specific population groups have triggered increasing investment in rental housing (Leyshon & French 2009; Kadi & Ronald 2016; McKee 2012). Especially when these investments are combined with residential turnover, they are set to spur gentrification. Although the effects of increasing capital investment in rental housing on urban space have not yet been closely examined, Fields and Uffer (2016) suggest that it has worsened housing affordability and accentuated social-spatial inequalities. Finally, capital investment in gentrifying neighbourhoods may also take on a host of other forms, which may include the purchase of second homes such as *pieds-à-terre* (Paris 2009; Chevalier et al. 2012).

## The crisis

Because this dissertation focuses on gentrification processes in early twenty-first century cities, it is crucial to take into consideration the importance of the 2008 global financial crisis. Without going into details regarding the root causes of the crisis, this section aims to chart the effects of the crisis on the housing position of various groups. For one, housing market reforms have made access to mortgage credit and therefore homeownership more difficult. This includes the imposition of stricter mortgage lending criteria and the lowering of maximum loan-to-value ratios. Forrest and Hirayama therefore argue that “[t]he home ownership systems which have emerged from the crises are ones which favour the financially privileged – the *primes* rather than the *subprimes*” (2015: 237, original emphasis). It has, in other words, become more difficult for lower income and middle income households to buy. In many countries, the global financial crisis has also legitimized further welfare state reforms and austerity measures. This typically entails a further reduction in, and sobering of, social housing provision. This also goes for the Dutch context, where the social rental sector has traditionally been relatively strong, but current policies are gradually enforcing a more modest social rental sector (Elsinga et al. 2008; Boelhouwer & Priemus 2014; Musterd 2014). As a consequence, low income households are likely to become more vulnerable on the housing market – also because ongoing labour market restructuring leads to a greater dependence on precarious, often temporary employment. This may take the form of decreasing housing options, increasing rent burdens, a greater dependence on precarious or illegal housing arrangements, and a stronger spatial concentration in neighbourhoods low on the urban hierarchy, where affordable and accessible housing remains.

Sharper divides also come to the fore, not least along generational lines. While older homebuyers typically accessed homeownership under relatively favourable conditions and have been able to accrue substantial housing wealth, younger generations struggle to buy and have to deal with stronger housing and labour market insecurities (Arundel 2017). Consequently, many young adults have to prolong their stay in the parental home (Lennartz et al. 2016) or increasingly resort to precarious housing arrangements (Clapham et al. 2014; Hochstenbach & Boterman 2015). Intergenerational financial and non-financial support has in turn become more important in mitigating or avoiding these insecurities, with the consequence that socio-economic divides based on familial background become sharper (McKee 2012; Forrest & Hirayama 2015). It is important to note that many of these trends were already in place before the crisis, but have since been amplified in many cases.

Because the 2008 crisis has amplified insecurities in housing and labour markets, it is likely that the negative consequences of gentrification on individuals and households will become more pronounced, for example regarding displacement, rent burdens, and housing accessibility. Yet it is unsure the extent to which gentrification processes themselves have been hit by the most recent crisis, and how this translates into social-spatial inequalities. As housing bubbles burst, housing prices as well as the number of sales plummet (Ronald & Dol 2011), with the possible consequence that the progress

of gentrification through residential moves – e.g. successively higher income households moving in – may stagnate. Conversely, gentrification processes that progress through *in situ* social mobility may become more pronounced (cf. Bailey 2012; Teernstra 2014a). The crisis may necessitate middle class households to prolong their stay in a neighbourhood, for example due to an inability to sell and move up the housing and neighbourhood ladder. Likewise, young upwardly mobile households may also be unable to buy and as a consequence will have to prolong a transitory life stage typically associated with inner city living. In other words, these developments prolong or solidify an urban orientation during periods of upward socio-economic mobility, perhaps particularly fuelling forms of marginal gentrification (Van Crielingen & Decroly 2003).

## **The research**

### **Structure of the research**

The different strands of literature point towards a growing prominence of gentrification, and an increasingly forceful impact of gentrification on cities and their populations. However, although the literature helps us conceptually to grasp and explain these developments, few studies actually chart them. The main aim of this dissertation is therefore to gauge and understand the impact of gentrification processes on changing social-spatial inequalities at the urban-regional scale. This means that the effects of gentrification are not studied only at the neighbourhood level, but more broadly. As a first step, this requires taking into account the variegated expressions of gentrification that have enabled the process to expand. I therefore hypothesize that gentrification should be understood as a process that takes on various guises, and thus occurs in different forms across urban space simultaneously. Furthermore, the study of social-spatial inequalities can be approached from a range of scholarly positions. I argue that a focus on gentrification is not only crucial given gentrification's increasingly prominent role as a force of urban change, but it is also highly illuminating because it shows how changing social-spatial inequalities come into being.

This research consists of six sub-projects that focus on different aspects of gentrification processes in order to highlight the conceptually and geographically differentiated nature of gentrification. These chapters seek to understand how different aspects or dimensions of gentrification play out in urban space, and how they leave their mark on urban space in the form of changing social-spatial inequalities.

The first two empirical chapters of this dissertation focus on the role of institutional context in facilitating or alternately mitigating gentrification processes. Urban and housing policies often target specific areas and therefore by definition have spatially uneven implications. Furthermore, these policies are not constant but change over time as they are amended, augmented, or dissolved. **Chapter 2** therefore sets the scene by analysing how urban policies of tenure restructure change over time, and what their specific spatial impacts are. Especially in strong welfare state contexts, such policies have a pronounced influence on where, how, and in which tenures gentrification

processes are able to take hold. This study specifically considers the decline of social rent, focusing on the rate at which this occurs, but also on where and how this takes shape. Urban renewal and the marketization of previously regulated housing are often crucial ingredients of local housing policies. Yet ongoing welfare state restructuring and crisis-induced austerity measures have made it more difficult to intervene in disadvantaged neighbourhoods at large. This chapter investigates how local policies have changed, and links these policies to shifting strategies of state-led gentrification. Howe

Subsequently, **Chapter 3** studies how such urban and housing policies, as well as gentrification, are represented by key stakeholders. A premise of this chapter is that it matters who policymakers think should move into a neighbourhood. More specifically, it is hypothesized that when young upwardly mobile residents move in, gentrification processes are represented as softer, or even non-existent. Stakeholders consider gentrification as normal due to demographic and population shifts. Other factors, such as the perceived control that key state actors have over gentrification processes, may also play a role.

Building on this policy context, the subsequent chapters turn towards investigating the rise of new forms of gentrification, and understanding the links between these different gentrification processes and social-spatial inequalities. **Chapter 4** aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how social-spatial inequalities and segregation come into being, and are influenced by gentrification. It challenges the often assumed dominance of residential moves in driving neighbourhood-level socio-economic population composition change. Other drivers may also play an equivalent – or even a more important – role in propelling socio-economic changes and thus gentrification processes. More specifically, this research forwards *in situ* social mobility and gradual demographic shifts as important drivers that exist alongside residential mobility. *In situ* social mobility here refers to income gains achieved while staying in the same neighbourhood. Demographic shifts refer to ageing processes and the succession of cohorts. Through an innovative method to anatomize population composition change, this study is able to determine the extent to which these different mechanisms produce population composition change. Furthermore, I investigate the extent to which a specific geography of these different mechanisms produces neighbourhood change. In so doing, this chapter highlights the conceptual and spatial diversity of gentrification processes, and shows how social-spatial inequalities are deepening.

Young upwardly mobile and higher educated residents are typically ascribed a key role in gentrification processes, and as ‘marginal gentrifiers’ they may drive neighbourhood change through *in situ* social mobility. However, as gentrification processes have progressed and housing affordability continues to worsen, it is unclear how such initially low income marginal gentrifiers are able to acquire housing in gentrifying neighbourhoods at all. While gentrification research has paid ample attention to the different forms of capital that gentrifiers draw on, I argue that it has so far insufficiently recognized the importance of the intergenerational transmission of capital. **Chapter 5** therefore asks the question of how parental background influences young people’s neighbourhood outcomes, focusing specifically on young people leaving the

parental home. Parents may lend direct support through financial transfers, or also for instance by brokering housing. Focusing specifically on family wealth and residential background, this study investigates where young people with 'wealthy' parents move to, comparing this with the neighbourhood outcomes of young people with 'asset-poor' parents. This provides novel insight into the intergenerational transmission of inequalities as an increasingly important driver of social-spatial divides, and as a force to be considered in fuelling gentrification.

The role of generational dynamics and divides in gentrification processes can be further unravelled. The global financial crisis has particularly restricted young people when it comes to entering homeownership or acquiring secure housing in general. While Chapter 5 stresses the importance of parental support in shaping housing and neighbourhood outcomes, **Chapter 6** focuses on the importance of different housing tenures for different age groups, and how this relates to gentrification processes. This chapter therefore investigates the post-move housing tenure outcomes of gentrifiers of different ages. Accentuated intergenerational inequalities may lead to the formation of different forms of gentrification associated with different age groups. Decreasing access to homeownership may imply that young gentrifiers are increasingly entangled in what can be called the *rise of rental gentrification*. In questioning the extent to which there is indeed a rise in rental gentrification among different age groups, this chapter also draws attention to spatial variation. That is, rental gentrification may pop up in different (types of) neighbourhoods than homeownership gentrification.

While the preceding chapters focus on variations in gentrification processes across urban space, **Chapter 7** focuses on the combined impact of these different forms of gentrification on social-spatial inequalities at the urban-regional level. It does so by studying how and to what extent the residential moving patterns of low income households have been subject to change over time. This gives insight into the extent to which different forms of displacement take their toll on the housing position of low income households. Subsequently, by considering the post-move destinations of low income households, it crucially illuminates how these patterns of displacement reshape and reshuffle social-spatial inequalities. Importantly, it considers the extent to which gentrification and displacement are linked to a *suburbanization of poverty*. Rather than considering lower income households as a homogeneous group, this study highlights diversity by distinguishing between unemployed, working poor, and low-to-middle income households. It also considers temporal variation, highlighting differences between the pre-crisis boom period and the bust period that followed. Finally, it considers differences regarding urban and housing market context.

Figure 1.1 identifies how these different sub-projects tie into each other and together help our understanding of how different forms and expressions of gentrification have reshaped social-spatial inequalities. In this model, gentrification is understood as a combination of housing policies, housing market changes, and population composition changes. Chapters 2 and 3 seek to unravel the policy context shaping gentrification and residential



behaviour. While Chapter 4 stresses the combined influence of residential moves, social mobility, and demographic shifts, subsequent chapters (5, 6, and 7) zoom in on residential moves specifically. Residential moves arguably constitute *the* key moment when individuals or households are confronted with constraints and opportunities on the housing market in the most direct manner. It is therefore to be expected that at this point the ability to tap into parental resources has the most influence on housing outcomes, and it is also at this point that households are confronted with an inability to enter homeownership. Likewise, for low income households, issues of displacement, exclusion, and housing unaffordability or inaccessibility come to the fore when moving. Housing policies typically also aim to intervene in the housing stock to enhance housing accessibility for specific groups, with the ultimate aim of altering residential flows.

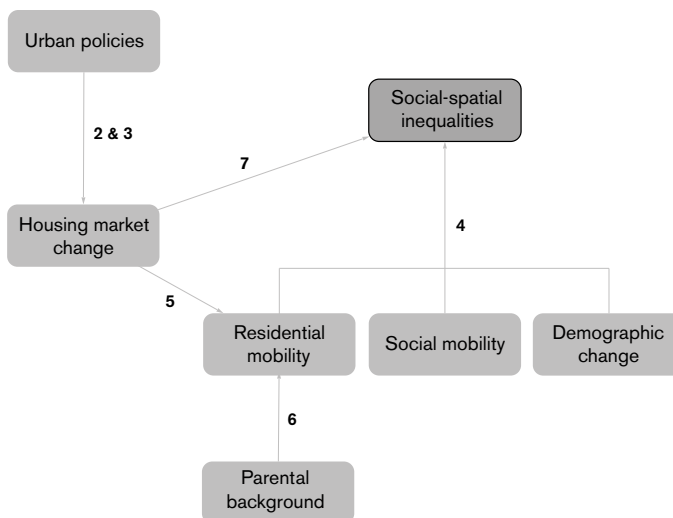


FIGURE 1.1. Conceptual model of how gentrification processes impact social-spatial inequalities. The numbers correspond to the chapters dealing with the specific relationships.

## Data

Although the research approach of each sub-project in this dissertation is discussed in detail in the individual chapters, it is worthwhile paying some attention here to commonalities in the data used and some of the overarching methodological considerations. The lion's share of this dissertation uses quantitative data and methods to investigate how gentrification processes have developed over time. I mainly draw on tax and register data available from the System of Social statistics Databases (SSD) of Statistics Netherlands. These anonymized datasets are individual-level and cover the entire population registered in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the data are geocoded and longitudinal, so it is possible to track individuals, but also neighbourhoods,

over time. These two qualities – data covering the entire population and their longitudinal character – allow for highly detailed and dynamic analyses to be conducted at low spatial scales. This means that it is possible to define very specific sub-categories in the population based on socio-economic and demographic characteristics, while retaining a sufficiently large number of cases to conduct neighbourhood-level analyses. At the neighbourhood level<sup>3</sup>, it is subsequently possible to monitor changes in population composition over time, to unravel how these changes came about, and to track changes with regard to in-movers and out-movers. There are also some disadvantages to the SSD. It is a relatively ‘narrow’ database, meaning that although the entire population is included, the only data available is what is registered by official institutions. Data on stated preferences or other survey-type data is, for instance, typically not available, at least not without having to resort to a substantially restricted population. Furthermore, although the data are longitudinal, they do not go very far back in time. Although the available time span depends on the data used, most of this dissertation relies on SSD data from 2004 onwards.

In this dissertation I seek to provide a firm contextual basis for the quantitative analyses of individual residential trajectories and their relationship to gentrification. I do so by paying attention to housing market structure and changes therein, for example regarding tenure composition, real estate values, and the demolition or conversion of affordable rental housing. Likewise, I also pay attention to state policies regarding housing and gentrification.

The study of gentrification processes implies the study of class change. Most British gentrification studies have a tradition of using occupational categories to distinguish between classes (see for instance Hamnett 2003). However, the use of occupational categories as a proxy for class has been criticized as being too crude, too context dependent, a weak predictor of social outcomes (e.g. voting patterns), and substantially different from income or wealth (Savage 2016: 477). Income or wealth groups have been forwarded as a suitable alternative for occupational categories, although it should be emphasized that both income and occupational categorizations have their pros and cons (ibid.). Dutch class or gentrification studies more often draw on income or educational attainment (Boterman 2012a). Because education is not very well registered in the SSD, this dissertation relies on income measures. More importantly, income is best suited to capture social mobility<sup>4</sup>. This is especially pertinent to this dissertation because it builds on recent studies that have highlighted the importance of *in situ* social mobility to neighbourhood change (Bailey 2012; Teernstra 2014a; Hochstenbach et al. 2015; Bailey et al. 2016).

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3. This dissertation follows the official neighbourhood classification of Statistics Netherlands, which generally means areas clearly bounded by major infrastructure or waterways. Chapter 7 uses four-digit postcode areas because of changes in the official neighbourhood classification during the studied period. This was not an issue in the other chapters.

4. Education tends to remain stable for the adult population after entering employment. A move between occupational categories can indicate social mobility, but this is more fuzzy than income and ignores mobility within a category.

The research in this dissertation is based, in the first place, on a comparison between Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Simply put, Amsterdam represents a booming city whereas Rotterdam continues to struggle in the post-industrial economy. This is reflected in economic structure and performance, population composition, and housing market pressures. The two cities therefore function as contrasting cases. The next section will further excavate important commonalities and differences between the two cases. Chapter 3 departs from this perspective to conduct an international comparison of gentrification processes in Amsterdam and Berlin (Germany) in order to better understand the influence of state context.

### **Methodological considerations**

The use and interpretation of register data comes with a cautionary note. By focusing on the individual level, one might be inclined to locate the causes of neighbourhood change at the individual level as well. It is certainly true that gentrification processes *are* to a certain extent the product of residential practices of individuals belonging to different classes. Furthermore, I do also argue that it is indeed crucial to garner a better understanding of how gentrification processes come about and progress at this material level. However, this should not come at the cost of recognizing that there are also important broader explanations for gentrification that focus on political economy and “the key structural question of why people live where they do in cities” (Slater 2013: 367).

More broadly speaking, quantitative methods and positivism are often associated with conservatism, the status quo, and an uncritical approach to the topic under research. Mistakenly so, according to Wyly (2011), who calls for a better integration of positivist research methods into critical urban studies. The dire need to do so in gentrification research is illustrated by Lees, Slater, and Wyly (2008: 78-80):

Very few gentrification researchers are able to integrate quantitative and qualitative methods [...]. Even fewer have the specialized expertise to engage in neoclassical analyses on the terrain of multivariate modelling and longitudinal sociospatial analysis. As a consequence, when a series of studies based on government databases seemed to provide evidence that gentrification was not actually displacing low-income renters in gentrifying neighborhoods few researchers were able to respond. [...] Many community activists shouted, “No!” and provided detailed accounts of the individual experiences of poor people whose lives were damaged by gentrification. But in mainstream public and policy discourse, such cases are always dismissed as ‘anecdotal’.

On a personal note, only recently has the ongoing gentrification of Amsterdam aroused substantial attention and concern in mainstream public debate. Of course concerns had long existed, but they were not as widespread nor were they discussed in terms of gentrification. My own experience from contributing to the debate, at various occasions and through different outlets, is that

the use of ‘numbers’<sup>5</sup> has indeed helped to question the previously, mostly uncritical, accounts of gentrification in public debate. With this dissertation I thus hope to answer the call for critical quantitative research.

## **Spatial context**

As highlighted in the previous sections, at various points in this dissertation I compare gentrification processes in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the two largest cities of the Netherlands. They may be considered two rather contrasting cases. Amsterdam represents a city that has successfully made the transition to a post-industrial economic structure. It is a second-tier global city with strong service and leisure sectors and an international financial centre (Burgers & Musterd 2002; Engelen & Musterd 2010). The harbour city of Rotterdam constitutes a city that is struggling to leave behind its industrial legacy and make the transition to a post-industrial economy (Doucet 2013). Because of these different economic profiles, both cities have served as comparative cases to study how urban context influences socio-economic and social-spatial inequalities (e.g. Kloosterman 1996; Meulenbelt 1997; Burgers & Musterd 2002). In this dissertation the two cities are compared in a similar vein. The Dutch context provides an interesting overarching institutional setting, especially the highly regulated housing market.

## **Population**

The differences between the two cities are noticeable in various domains, although there are also important similarities. Both cities show similar historical trends in population size (Figure 1.1), with a steep loss in population during the period from the mid-1960s up to the mid-1980s, as suburbanization processes were in full swing. Between 1960 and 1985 the population of both cities decreased by 22 percent. Since then the population of both cities stabilized and saw a return to gradual growth. Only in more recent years, more or less since 2005, have the two cities shown diverging trends. While population growth accelerated in Amsterdam, especially since the 2008 crisis, Rotterdam only recorded modest population increases (the jump in population size in 2011 was due to the annexation of the bordering municipality Rozenburg). As of 2015, Amsterdam and Rotterdam are home to roughly 820,000 and 620,000 residents respectively.

Differences in both cities’ economic structure are reflected in the employment position of the residents. Not only are unemployment rates structurally lower in Amsterdam than in Rotterdam, but the working age population is also relatively more often employed in highly skilled jobs (typically requiring a higher education degree). Although the number and share of residents employed in highly skilled jobs increased in both cities between 2003 and 2013, this was stronger in Amsterdam (CBS 2015). Yet compared to the Dutch average, both cities are characterized by above average unemployment rates but also above average shares of the working age population employed in highly skilled jobs. Amsterdam not only has a stronger economic and labour market

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5 Many of which can be found in the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

structure than Rotterdam, it also hosts more higher education institutions. This is clearly reflected in the number of students in higher education living in both cities: in 2014, a total of 54,720 higher education students officially lived in Amsterdam (OIS 2016), while this number was 23,447 in Rotterdam (Gemeente Rotterdam 2016a).

## Housing

Differences between the two cities clearly crystallize when looking at housing market dynamics. Amsterdam's housing market is considerably tighter, as is reflected, for example, in average sale prices for owner-occupied housing (Figure 1.2). These are substantially above the national average in Amsterdam, whereas they are structurally below the national average in Rotterdam. In the years leading up to the 2008 global financial crisis, the formation of a housing bubble can clearly be seen in Amsterdam, while price increases remained more modest elsewhere. The housing market crash and the 'double dip' (housing price decreases in 2008 and 2012 respectively) did, however, hit Amsterdam hardest in terms of average sale prices. Nevertheless, at the time of writing this introduction, housing prices are exploding once again in Amsterdam and increasing at unprecedented rates, with Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands increasingly being left behind.

Developments on the owner-occupied market only tell part of the story. At the national level, the Dutch housing context is still marked by high levels of social rent when compared to other countries, and it has traditionally been characterized as a unitary rental market (Elsinga et al. 2008). This means that social rental housing is, up to now, not reserved only for the lowest income households, but instead serves a broader segment of the population. Furthermore, Dutch social rental housing is of relatively high quality, is relatively dispersed within cities, and tenant rights are well protected (the same goes for tenants in the private rental sector). Nevertheless, in the Dutch context homeownership has also rapidly expanded under state support: while the share of homeownership stood at around 30 percent in the 1960s, it increased up to 50 percent in the mid-1990s, and to around 60 percent in 2010 (Doling & Elsinga 2012; Musterd 2014).

In Amsterdam and Rotterdam, rental dwellings in fact still constitute the majority of the housing stock. Most rental dwellings are social rent, which here refers to ownership by not-for-profit housing associations. These are effectively semi-private associations that are legally committed to rent the majority of their dwellings in the rent-regulated sector to lower income households<sup>6</sup>. Private rental dwellings can be owned by large investors as well as small-time landlords. Nevertheless, many private-rental dwellings are also rent-regulated.

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6. Rent regulation is determined on the basis of a point system related to quality. All dwellings that score below a set threshold are regulated so that their monthly rents do not exceed roughly €700 (subject to yearly incremental changes). EU regulations stipulate that the majority of these dwellings should be reserved for households earning below €34,000 (also subject to yearly incremental changes).

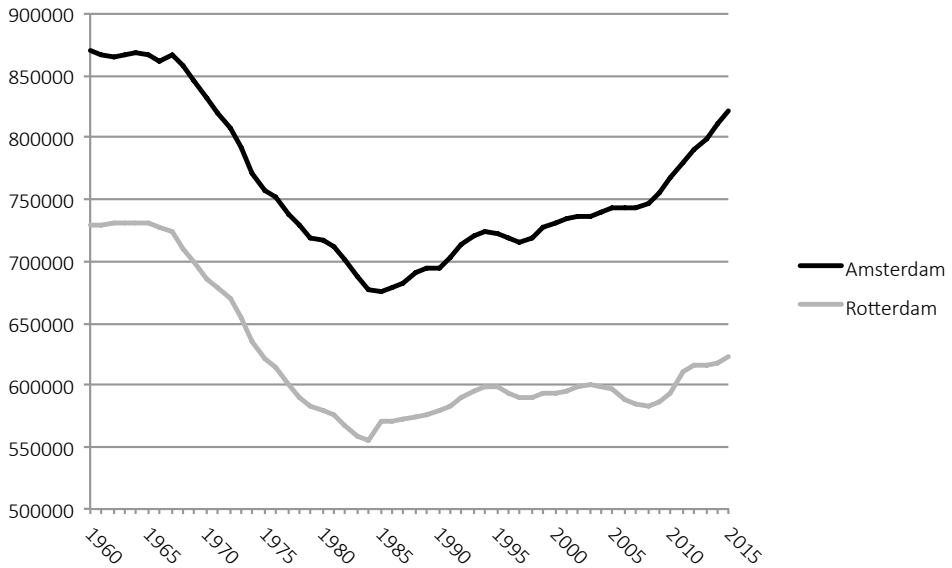


FIGURE 1.2. Population size Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 1960-2015. *Note:* y-axis truncated; population growth in Rotterdam in 2011 due to annexation of Rozenburg. *Source:* Statistics Netherlands, Statline (2016); own adaptation.

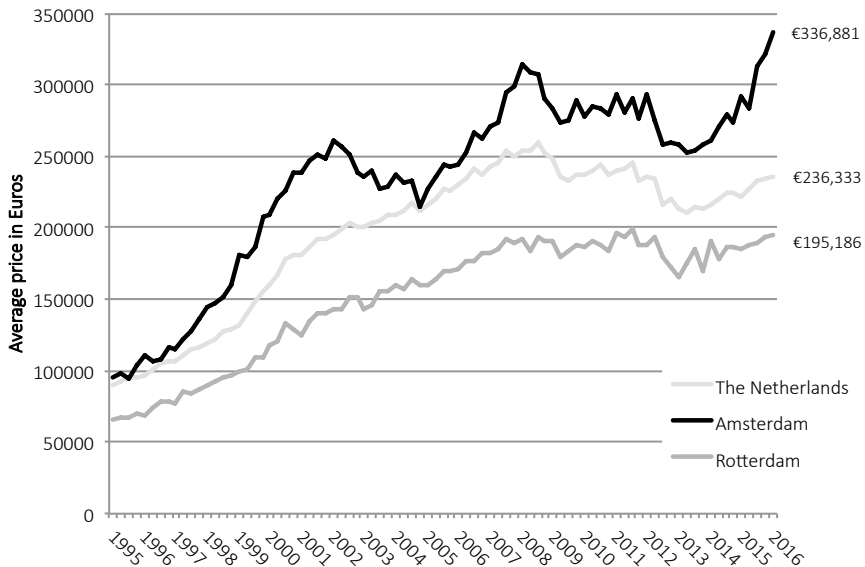


FIGURE 1.3. Average sale price of existing dwellings per quarter 1995-2016 in Amsterdam, Rotterdam (cities), and the Netherlands. *Source:* Statistics Netherlands, CBS Statline (2016); own adaptation.

The tenure composition of the housing stock as well as changes therein during the 2000-2013 period are rather similar in both cities (Figure 1.3). The social rental stock owned by housing associations is still the largest share in both cities, but has been subject to substantial absolute and relative decreases over time. Moreover, accessibility of the social rental stock is relatively low, especially in Amsterdam. Most social rental housing is allocated on the basis of waiting time (or urgency status). In Amsterdam, the average waiting time for a social rental dwelling is over nine years (AFWC 2016), compared to around four years in Rotterdam<sup>7</sup>. Policies of urban renewal that typically involve the demolition of social rental blocks and the sale of social rental housing are at the heart of these decreases. Furthermore, rental housing is increasingly often rented out in the free market sector, where rents are relatively high and maximum income criteria are absent. Indeed, both Amsterdam and Rotterdam actively aim to reduce the number of social rental dwellings in an attempt to expand housing for the middle classes.

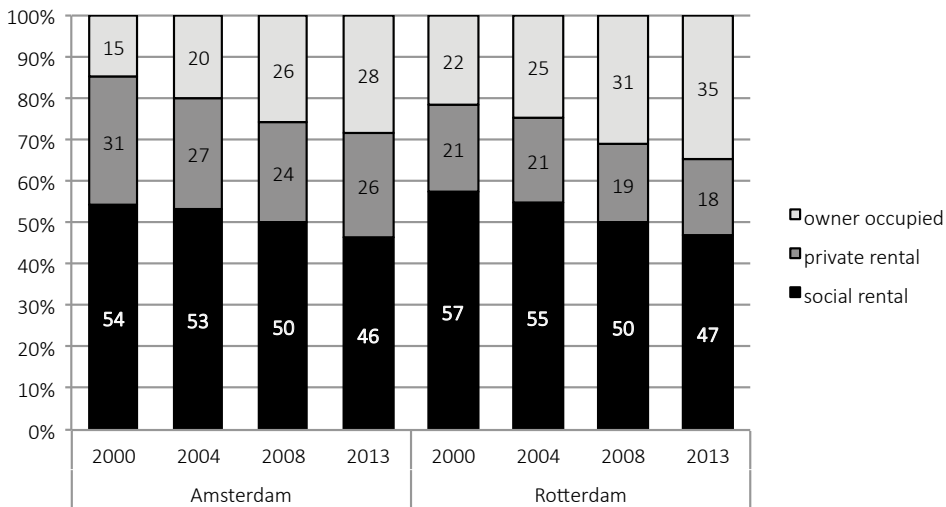


FIGURE 1.4. Tenure composition of the Amsterdam and Rotterdam housing stock 2000-2013. *Source:* Data provided by OIS Amsterdam and OBI Rotterdam. *Note:* Social rental is owned by housing associations; private rental is owned by private landlords.

## Geography

Amsterdam and Rotterdam are rather different in terms of their spatial layout. Amsterdam is renowned for its seventeenth century traditionally affluent canal belt. The earliest examples of gentrification in the Netherlands can also be found in neighbourhoods close to the canal belt, such as the Western Islands – with its many seventeenth century warehouses – and the former working

7. The average waiting time refers to the number of years registered on the waiting list of a central allocation system. The 'active' search period tends to be shorter.

class Jordaan neighbourhood from the same era (Cortie et al. 1982). These neighbourhoods fit the ‘gentrification aesthetic’ with their old housing stock, converted warehouses, and proximity to the inner city and amenities. By now, gentrification has matured in these neighbourhoods, which are among the most expensive in the city. Since then, the nineteenth and early-twentieth century neighbourhoods, which form a belt around the city centre, have become popular among gentrifiers for similar reasons (Wagenaar 2003). In addition, Amsterdam hosts a range of high status neighbourhoods popular among middle class families staying in the city (Boterman et al. 2010). An important physical and mental barrier in the city is the A10 motorway. This motorway separates the central boroughs, where much of the housing stock dates from before the Second World War, from the peripheral boroughs built up during the post-war era. Municipal policies seek to accommodate gentrification processes in centrally located erstwhile low status neighbourhoods through policies of ‘rolling out’ the city centre milieu and liberalizing the housing stock (Van Gent 2013).

Rotterdam, in contrast, lacks a historic core because the Nazi bombings of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1940 levelled much of the city centre. Furthermore, the city has a lower concentration of consumption- and service-oriented facilities and amenities than Amsterdam (Musterd & De Pater 1992). The New Meuse river divides the city into a northern and a southern part, with the city centre and the city’s most affluent areas located north of the river. The local state aims to put the city on the map through flagship development projects as part of a wider attempt to attract and keep hold of more middle class households. Although several new flagship projects such as the renewed central railway station and the Markthal have been realized in recent years, the most prominent is the Kop van Zuid waterfront on the south bank of the river (Doucet 2013; Doucet et al. 2011). The redevelopment of this former harbour area combines landmarks – e.g. the Erasmus bridge – with new high-rise residential and office towers and converted warehouses. Kop van Zuid may be considered a form of new-build gentrification (cf. Davidson & Lees 2005), not only given the generally high-end developments, but also because it has kicked off gentrification processes in the adjacent Katendrecht neighbourhood. Apart from these exceptions, Rotterdam South is one of the poorest areas of the Netherlands, and in recent years various controversial urban policies have been implemented to alter the population composition and tackle social problems in several neighbourhoods there. These include hotspot policing (Schinkel & Van den Berg 2011) and the so-called ‘Rotterdam Act’, a controversial measure that bars unemployed newcomers from moving to a select number of poor neighbourhoods (Uitermark, Hochstenbach & Van Gent 2017; Van Eijk 2010; Ouweland & Doff 2013).

### **Reading guide**

The remainder of this book is structured as follows. The six sub-projects introduced in this chapter are each dealt with in a separate chapter. Each chapter is a standalone paper published in, or submitted for publication in, a peer-reviewed journal. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the role of housing policies



and urban policies in gentrification processes. Chapter 2 shows that the social rental sector is shrinking at an ever increasing rate in Amsterdam. Moreover, while renewal used to be concentrated in low status peripheral areas, the sale of social rental housing in gentrifying neighbourhoods has now become a dominant practice. This is likely to accelerate gentrification and amplify social-spatial inequalities. Chapter 3 uses interview data to look at stakeholder representations of gentrification in Amsterdam and Berlin, highlighting important differences between both cases: Amsterdam's policymakers explicitly discuss gentrification as a positive policy instrument, while the term is avoided in Berlin due to its contested nature.

The four chapters that follow (4, 5, 6, and 7) use longitudinal quantitative data to establish the pervasiveness and geography of different forms of gentrification. These chapters also link these different forms of gentrification to social-spatial inequalities in different forms. Chapter 4 does so by anatomizing neighbourhood population composition change in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, making a distinction between the impact of residential moves, social mobility, and demographic change. Chapter 5 subsequently forwards the importance of taking into account parental support and the intergenerational transmission of inequalities in terms of how they drive very specific forms of gentrification. Chapter 6 charts the rise of rental gentrification alongside progressive homeownership gentrification. Both forms have their distinct geographies and reflect generational divides. Chapter 7 considers the combined influence of the different variations in gentrification processes on social-spatial inequalities, focusing specifically on low income households' residential behaviour. It shows that gentrification drives an overarching suburbanization of poverty towards urban peripheries and the surrounding regions. The suburbanization of poverty is both a direct process of poor households moving from city to suburb, and a broader indirect process caused by exclusion.

Chapter 8, the final chapter, synthesizes the most important findings from the preceding six empirical chapters. It discusses how and to what extent new forms of gentrification processes are on the rise and how this reshapes social-spatial inequalities in urban regions. It also considers the theoretical contributions of this dissertation, as well as its societal implications.