SAVING THE STREET?

A CASE STUDY OF COMMERCIAL GENTRIFICATION AS AN URBAN STRATEGY

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SAVING THE STREET?

A case study of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy

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SUMMARY

Commercial gentrification is a relatively new field of research (Hubbard, 2017). In an age where gentrification is often used as an urban strategy (Smith, 2002) and consumption becomes more and more important in urban economies (Jayne, 2006), commercial gentrification forms a connection between two important developments in urban planning issues. This thesis explores commercial gentrification as an urban strategy, thereby looking at the aims of the process and its impacts on commercial areas and surrounding neighbourhoods. Additionally, it reinforces the notion that context is of vital importance in (commercial) gentrification processes (Lees, 2012). As Doucet (2014) describes, gentrification in the Netherlands has always been characterised by extensive governmental influence. However, not only policies and legislation in administrative areas are key in setting a context: the physical, economic and social characteristics of a gentrifying area and its surroundings play a large role as well.

The case examined in this thesis, is the Amsterdamsestraatweg in Utrecht. This commercial street has seen a long period of disinvestment. Despite numerous attempts in the past years, the municipality thinks the contemporary process of gentrification in its surrounding neighbourhoods will enable them to develop the street now. However, alderman Kees Diepeveen stated that shops for the less affluent residents of the neighbourhood of Noordwest should remain (Obbink, 2017). On the one hand promoting commercial gentrification, and on the other seeking to mitigate the process' impacts indicates that the municipality is convinced of the manageability of gentrification. In the scientific debate however, there is not much consensus on this topic (e.g. Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017; Slater, 2006).

Doing qualitative research, this case study serves as an exploration of commercial gentrification in the Netherlands, thereby also looking at the manageability of the process. The methodology used in this research combined interviews, document analysis, an online cognitive mapping tool and — to some extent — observations to collect data. Partly because of the context of the ASW, commercial gentrification proves to be difficult to direct. Due to many different property owners and stakeholders on the ASW, the manageability of the process is low. This means that directly stimulating the process is not an easy task. However, by more indirect measures, the municipality has been trying to make the street more attractive, which could indirectly new 'trendy' businesses. When looking at managing — or mitigating the impacts of commercial gentrification — the municipality of Utrecht has no ambitions to do so — which does not connect to the statements made by alderman Diepeveen. Furthermore, commercial gentrification proves to have rather large impacts on the social structure of the ASW and its surrounding neighbourhoods. However, this does not follow the typically alleged patterns of many (commercial) gentrification studies (e.g. Blasius *et al.*, 2016; Deener, 2007; Glass, 2010). Besides new and 'long-term' users, a certain 'mid-term' group has a large influence on how residents and entrepreneurs see the process of commercial gentrification. Long-term residents often see new stores as a welcome alterative for the mid-term businesses, of which some have caused a lot of nuisance in recent years.

The results of this thesis lead to the conclusion that commercial gentrification is indeed difficult to manage, especially due to the lack of effective public-private partnerships. The combination of the low manageability and the impacts on social life in a neighbourhood, makes it important that local authorities are aware of what promoting the process might bring about. The implementation of commercial gentrification then again becomes a subject for normative debates on whether or not gentrification is a desirable process.

SAMENVATTING

'Commercial gentrification' is een relatief nieuw onderzoeksveld (Hubbard, 2017). In een tijd waarin gentrification vaak wordt ingezet als een 'urban strategy' (Smith, 2002) en consumptie steeds belangrijker wordt in stedelijke economieën (Jayne, 2006), vormt commercial gentrification een connectie tussen twee belangrijke ontwikkelingen in stedelijke planningsprocessen. Deze thesis onderzoekt commercial gentrification als een stedelijke strategie, waarbij wordt gekeken naar de doelen van dit proces en de invloed die het heeft op winkelgebieden en aangrenzende wijken. Daarnaast wordt de veronderstelling dat context van essentieel belang is in (commercial) gentrification-processen (Lees, 2012) bevestigd. Zoals Doucet (2014) beschrijft, is gentrification in Nederland altijd onderhevig geweest aan overheidsinvloed. Maar niet alleen beleid en wetgeving bepalen de context: de fysieke, economische en sociale eigenschappen van een 'gentrificerend' gebied spelen ook een belangrijke rol.

De case die in deze thesis centraal staat is de Amsterdamsestraatweg (ASW) in Utrecht. Deze winkelstraat is lange tijd achteruit gegaan. Ondanks verschillende mislukte pogingen in de afgelopen jaren, denkt de gemeente Utrecht dat de huidige gentrification in omliggende wijken het mogelijk maakt om de straat nu echt te ontwikkelen. Aan de andere kant moeten er volgens wethouder Kees Diepeveen winkels blijven voor de minder koopkrachtige huishoudens in Noordwest (Obbink, 2017). Het aan de ene kant promoten van commercial gentrification, en aan de andere kant willen beperken van de gevolgen van dit proces laat zien dat de gemeente overtuigd is dat gentrification controleerbaar is. In het wetenschappelijke debat blijkt dit nog maar de vraag (zie bijvoorbeeld Ghaffari et al., 2017; Slater, 2006).

Deze kwalitatieve case study dient als een verkenning van commercial gentrification in Nederland, waarbij ook wordt gekeken naar de 'maakbaarheid' van het proces. De methodologie die is gebruikt combineerde interviews, documentenanalyse, een 'cognitive mapping'-tool en — tot op zekere hoogte — observaties om data te verzamelen. Deels door de context waarin de ASW zich bevindt, blijkt commercial gentrification moeilijk te sturen. Door verschillende pandeigenaren en belanghebbenden op de ASW is het lastig dit proces direct te sturen. Aan de andere kant probeert de gemeente met behulp van meer indirecte maatregelen, zoals het aanpakken van de openbare ruimte en het verbeteren van de veiligheid, de Straatweg aantrekkelijker te maken, waardoor er meer 'trendy' zaken kunnen worden aangetrokken. Als we kijken naar het managen — of beperken — van de gevolgen van commercial gentrification heeft de gemeente Utrecht geen ambities. Dit strookt niet met de beweringen van wethouder Diepeveen. Daarnaast blijkt dat commercial gentrification invloed heeft op de sociale structuur van de ASW en omliggende wijken. Dit gebeurt niet volgens de patronen die meestal worden genoemd in literatuur over (commercial) gentrification (zie bijvoorbeeld Blasius et al., 2016; Deener, 2007; Glass, 2010). Naast nieuwe en 'long-term'-gebruikers (mensen die er al lang wonen of ondernemen), heeft een zekere groep die kan worden beschreven als 'mid-term' een grote invloed op hoe bewoners en ondernemers het proces van commercial gentrification beoordelen. Long-term-bewoners zien nieuwe winkels vaak als een welkom alternatief voor mid-termzaken, waarvan sommigen de nodige overlast hebben veroorzaakt in voorgaande jaren.

De resultaten van deze scriptie leiden naar de conclusie dat commercial gentrification inderdaad moeilijk te sturen is — zeker door het gebrek aan effectieve publiek-private samenwerking. De combinatie van weinig controle en de gevolgen die het proces heeft op het sociale leven in een wijk maakt het belangrijk dat lokale overheden zich bewust zijn van wat het promoten van commercial gentrification teweeg kan brengen. Het inzetten van commercial gentrification als een 'urban strategy' wordt dan weer het onderwerp van de normatieve discussie of gentrification wenselijk is, of niet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENT

FIGURES AND TABLES

List of figures

List of tables

"There is a certain quality, vibe and energy that is SoDoSoPa. From the independent merchants and unique cafes, to the rustic charm of a mixed-income crowd. Where else can you let loose your wild side while still helping the local economy? And now, a chance to own a piece of this most exciting area of South Park. Announcing: the Lofts, in SoDoSoPa".

(Parker, 2015)

This quote has been derived from an episode of the TV cartoon *South Park*. The story line of this episode more or less follows this path: the residents and mayor of the small fictional village of South Park decide to gentrify their town. The epicentre of the changes in the town is Kenny's house — the poorest family in the TV show. Kenny decides to go to work at a Chinese restaurant of a long-term storeowner who has lost all his clients to the new retail and restaurants in SoDoSoPa (South of Downtown South Park).

Despite being a satirical TV show, *South Park* succeeds in capturing the essence of contemporary gentrification in two ways: first, the mayor of South Park is involved in inducing gentrification. The role of governments in gentrification has seen an enormous increase in the past decades. Second, the way in which the new part of town is being sold in the fictional TV commercial above resembles the view of gentrification nowadays. To many, trendy bars, cafes and boutiques are the physical representations of gentrification (Slater, 2006).

1 INTRODUCTION

Gentrification. The publicity of this process has far exceeded the field of geography and planning. However, gentrification has changed over the years. First described by Ruth Glass in 1964 (Glass, 2010), its form has seen large transformations two times. Hackworth and Smith (2001) argue that three 'waves' of gentrification can be distinguished. An important aspect of the third wave — which is going on now — is the fact that governments play a larger role than ever in promoting and steering gentrification processes. Therefore, gentrification nowadays is often seen as an 'urban strategy' (Smith, 2002). According to several scholars, local (and national) authorities see gentrification as a solution for numerous urban problems (e.g. Wyly & Hammel, 2005; Zuk *et al.*, 2017). Another characteristic of 'third-wave' gentrification is 'commercial gentrification'. According to Doucet (2014), this is one of the spatial manifestations of contemporary gentrification. While literature on gentrification traditionally mainly focusses on the upgrading of dwellings and displacement of residents, the perception of gentrification has slowly changed. Although these signs of 'retail' or 'commercial gentrification'[1] have been around for a long time, the role of retail in gentrification only recently gained serious attention among — mostly North American — scholars (Hubbard, 2017).

Gentrification is a widely debated concept, of which the debate often turns normative. For instance, authors like Byrne (2003) argue that gentrification brings positive changes to neighbourhoods and cities, and therefore should be encouraged. On the other hand, authors such as Slater (2006) argue that gentrification can also cause numerous negative impacts (for an overview of positive and negative effects, see Atkinson, 2004). As described, municipalities often see gentrification as an opportunity to tackle urban issues. An example of such a municipality is Utrecht, in the Netherlands. Utrecht wants to develop the Amsterdamsestraatweg (hereafter referred to as 'ASW') (Obbink, 2017). This shopping street forms the spine of the district Noordwest, and stretches five straight kilometres from the city centre to the neighbouring town of Maarssen. According to former alderman Kees Diepeveen[2], 3 million euro is to be invested to improve this mixed shopping and residential street. In earlier attempts, the ASW did not significantly improve, but the ongoing process of (residential) gentrification in the surrounding neighbourhoods is thought of as a chance for successful transformations. However, Diepeveen states that shops for lower incomes should remain: gentrification should not go too fast. A mixed street should be the goal (Obbink, 2017).

This last sentence brings us to another debate concerning gentrification processes: the question whether gentrification can be controlled. Some state that gentrification can be managed (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). Others argue that gentrification should be fought by all means because is it not manageable (e.g. Slater, 2006). Alderman Kees Diepeveen of Utrecht clearly belongs to the first side: he states that the ASW should be improved by attracting new investors, but that shops aiming at low-income consumers should be preserved (Obbink, 2017).

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1   Both 'commercial' and 'retail' gentrification are used in research concerning the changes in services and stores in gentrifying neighbourhoods. However, the term 'commercial gentrification' is used in this research, since it also encompasses broader commercial activities such as bars and restaurants – which are not marked as retail (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS] & Kamer van Koophandel [KvK], 2017).

2   New aldermen have been installed in June 2018 (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018a). However, the policies for the ASW are still being carried out.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Noticing that gentrification is often seen as an urban strategy (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Smith, 2002; Wyly & Hammel, 2005; Zuk *et al.*, 2017), and taking the debates on gentrification into account, some questions can be asked about why municipalities tend to promote this process. Since the view of gentrification seems to have shifted to a process in which retail and consumption play a key role — but this aspect of gentrification is still less prominent in academic literature (Hubbard, 2017) — the role of commercial gentrification in urban policies seems specifically underexposed. While commercial gentrification on the one hand can be expected to be used by authorities, the negative effects of gentrification processes can also have unwanted impacts on neighbourhoods or shopping streets. The interplay between both the promotion of gentrification and the actual impacts this has on areas herein is especially interesting. To study commercial gentrification as an urban strategy, the case of the ASW in Utrecht will be examined. To understand how the process of policy-making promoting commercial gentrification in this area works, and what impacts it has on the shopping street, the main question that will be answered in this research, is:

How does the use of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy influence the case of the Amsterdamstraatweg?

In order to answer this rather broad question, the following sub-questions have been formulated. These questions together form four relevant aspects of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy.

1. *Which actors play a role in the policy-making concerning commercial gentrification?*
   As Blasius *et al.* (2016) describe, numerous actors are involved in gentrification processes. Thereby, Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) and Harvey (1989) state that partnerships between different actors are necessary to successfully carry out policies. Especially with a growing role of developers in gentrification processes (Hackworth & Smith, 2001), it is interesting to see what parties play a role in developing the shopping street, and what their perceptions of this process is.

2. *What are the goals of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy?*
   Literature on gentrification as an urban strategy mainly focusses on residential gentrification (e.g. Bernt & Holm, 2009; Lees & Ley, 2008; Smith, 2002; Wyly & Hammel, 2005). What goals are central to commercial gentrification policies remains rather unclear. Getting insights of the goals of the municipality of Utrecht concerning the ASW will help to understand this.

3. *How do the involved actors aim to reach the goals of commercial gentrification?*
   Although scholars do not agree on the manageability of gentrification (e.g. Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017; Slater, 2006), the municipality of Utrecht seems to aim at managing the displacement of long-term storeowners (see Obbink, 2017). This question will answer how the set goals of different actors are tried to be reached.

4. *How have the Amsterdamsestraatweg and its surroundings changed as a result of the policy of commercial gentrification?*
   Commercial gentrification processes can have several effects on shopping streets and surrounding neighbourhoods (e.g. Deener, 2007; Mermet, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009). This does not necessarily mean that

all possible impacts will be visible in all cases of commercial gentrification. Therefore, the actual effects of commercial gentrification on the ASW and its surroundings will be described. This will be done in two ways. First, the more tangible physical and economic changes will be investigated. Second, the social changes will be discussed, digging into the perceptions of local entrepreneurs and inhabitants.

1.2 RELEVANCE

In the academic world, attention has been paid to processes of gentrification and the displacement of former residents in a neighbourhood. However, what has been neglected in most academic research are processes of commercial gentrification (Ferm, 2016; Hubbard, 2017; Mermet, 2017). Commercial gentrification potentially has enormous impacts on neighbourhoods, reaching far wider than just affecting storeowners (e.g. Deener, 2007). Although some studies do show some impacts of commercial gentrification, the differences between the extensive knowledge of impacts of residential gentrification and its counterpart are striking. This general gap in literature on commercial gentrification can partly be filled by this research. Besides that, studies by Zukin *et al.* (2009) and Ferm (2016) have shown some parts of governmental influence in commercial gentrification processes. However, the reasons these authorities have to promote these processes are unclear. Although some reasons might be very similar to those to promote residential gentrification, literature on changes in the economy hints to more, sometimes underlying reasons (e.g. Jayne, 2006; Harvey, 1989). Another aspect is that gentrification literature mainly focusses on the Anglo-Saxon context, while gentrification nowadays is spread far beyond this area (e.g. Hubbard, 2017). Lees (2012) argues that the policies in different countries need much more attention, because they create a different context in every country. Because the case central to this research is situated in the Netherlands, it adds to a broader understanding of gentrification processes. Finally, because of the lack of knowledge of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy, this research is exploratory, rather than testing theories in practice. The results therefore can help to form a basis for further research on (commercial) gentrification processes in which the government takes on a leading role, and add to the already extensive discussion on gentrification.

In addition to the academic relevancy, this research also is relevant in a more practical way. For instance, an often heard critique of gentrification is that displacement of residents can occur (e.g. Atkinson, 2004; Davidson & Lees, 2005; Mazer & Rankin, 2011; Zuk *et al.*, 2017). For lower incomes rising rents are a problem and such households often see themselves forced to move to cheaper neighbourhoods (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018). More specifically, displacement of residents and entrepreneurs due to rising rents and changing living environments has also been noted as a result of commercial gentrification (Ferm, 2016; Gonzalez & Waley, 2013). These different downsides oppose the often-mentioned benefits of gentrification processes. Within a context where authorities often promote (commercial) gentrification, it is necessary to be aware of the broader impact which can be caused by these processes. The focus of this research — commercial gentrification as a urban strategy — thereby bridges the often seen gap between the academic world an planning in practice. Studies on gentrification often are much more geographical, whereas this study tries to connect urban geography to planning practice. This connection will make it easier to apply the results in planning practice.

1.3   STRUCTURE

This thesis is structured as follows: first, in the theoretical framework (chapter 2), relevant literature on (commercial) gentrification and its role as an urban strategy will be presented. This framework will serve as a base for the research itself. Then, the research approach and methods will be discussed in chapter 3. Before presenting the results, some context will be given on the ASW and its surrounding neighbourhoods, while also exploring the role of gentrification in the Netherlands (chapter 4). In chapter 5, the results will be presented, following the structure of the sub-questions of this research. Finally, these results lead to the answer to the main question, which will be formulated in chapter 6.

2 THEORY

Research on gentrification has been around for a long time. However, the process of this phenomenon is complex and diverse, and has changed over time (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). Although gentrification has changed, the overall process has some characteristics which have always been around. In order to understand the policy side of gentrification, one should have an understanding of the process itself. Therefore, the first paragraph of this chapter starts with a brief overview of the process. After this overview, the policy side of gentrification is being discussed, thereby also referring to the impacts gentrification can have on a neighbourhood or city. Then, the chapter explores the relatively unknown literature on commercial gentrification, keeping an eye on its similarities to residential gentrification. Finally, the last paragraph goes into detail on different posed ways to manage (commercial) gentrification.

2.1   THE PROCESS OF GENTRIFICATION

The term 'gentrification' was first posed by Ruth Glass in 1964, who described the process as the invasion of working class quarters in London by the upper and lower middle classes. She noticed that workers' houses became expensive residences, which attracted new, more affluent residents. Glass stated that "once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass, 2010, p. 23). Although Glass wrote down her observations more than 50 years ago, gentrification is still relevant today. According to Doucet, "gentrification [even] is one of the biggest forces shaping contemporary cities" (2014, p. 125). Placing it into a wider context, Schaffer and Smith (as cited in Hamnett, 1991) suggest that gentrification should be seen as part of the changing international spatial division of labour and the rise of global cities. They state that these developments lead to a restructuring of the urban hierarchy and space.

Derived from the original definition by Glass, the term 'gentrification' nowadays is often used to describe any case of landscapes of long-term disinvestment which are being upgraded (Hubbard, 2017). According to Hackworth and Smith (2001), there have been three waves of gentrification. Before 1973, gentrification was sporadic. It occurred mainly in small neighbourhoods in the north east of the United States and in western Europe. Although the process of gentrification was sporadic, it often was significantly funded by the public sector. The second wave was characterised by the anchoring of gentrification. This wave — mainly in the 1980s — showed the spread of gentrification to smaller, non-global cities. The second wave also saw the integration of gentrification into a wider range of economic and cultural processes at global and national scales (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). In this period — in the United States at least — gentrification became seen as the only realistic cure for abandonment in cities. According to American policy, not the public but the private sector had to provide the resources necessary to counter abandonment (Marcuse, 1986). After slowing down, in the second half of the 1990s gentrification returned in a third wave. This wave not only influenced neighbourhoods near city centres, but brought gentrification to neighbourhoods further away from urban cores. Nonetheless, gentrification still tends to happen more often in specific neighbourhoods. According to Freeman (2005), gentrifying neighbourhoods are most often located central in the city. Further characteristics are an initial population of low-income households, disinvestment and a later influx of relatively affluent households. This finally leads to increasing private investments. These private investments do not only come from the new, more affluent households, since the restructuring of cities and globalisation have set a context in which larger developers have become more involved

in the process of gentrification. Besides the grown role of developers, the role of governments further increased, compared to phase two of gentrification (Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

In the process of gentrification, different actors are involved. Blasius *et al.* sum up numerous involved actors in gentrification processes: "different social groups and corporate actors such as real estate agents (e.g. Bridge, 2001), investors, banks, public utility suppliers, local organisations of residents, urban planners, urban and national policy-makers" (2016, p. 50). They also add 'pioneers', 'gentrifiers' and the displaced 'victims' of gentrification. Actors in gentrification processes are often divided into a demand and supply side (see also Byrne, 2003, p. 407). Governments and developers, as described by Hackworth and Smith (2001) are part of the supply side: they provide housing or enable gentrification to occur. However, the demand side is also of importance in gentrification. This demand side is often divided into different classes, based on profession (e.g. Smith, 2005), socio-demographic indicators (e.g. Blasius *et al.*, 2016) and attitudes (e.g. Bridge, 2001; Cameron & Coaffee, 2005). Many times, young, highly-educated individuals are central in gentrification processes. The named different categorisations show that gentrification is a complex process, with numerous possible distinctions that can be made among actors. However, most authors divide the process of gentrification into two stages. The first stage is characterised by pioneers moving in (see for example Blasius *et al.*, 2016; Cameron & Coaffee, 2005), who pave the way for further gentrification. After these pioneers, other gentrifiers enter the stage. The role of pioneers is crucial, as described by Ley (cited in Hamnett, 1991): "most developers are risk averse and will not risk entering an area until demand is proven" (p. 181). Pioneers take the first risky step by moving to less affluent neighbourhoods, and developers and gentrifiers follow (Blasius *et al.*, 2016).

2.2   AN URBAN STRATEGY

Pioneers, developers and gentrifiers. Blasius *et al.* (2016) seem to forget to mention one crucial actor here. It has been noted already that, although gentrification always has been subject to a certain amount of government influence (Hackworth & Smith, 2001), it is now often seen as a policy tool. This view has especially been strong for the last 10 to 15 years (Doucet, 2014). According to Smith (2002), gentrification has become generalised as an urban strategy — not only in Europe, North America and Oceania, but all over the world. He puts this development into a wider context of 'neoliberal urbanism'.

2.2.1   Neoliberal urbanism

To explain this term, it is necessary to zoom out a bit. Jessop (2002) states that a neoliberal course in governments has been around since the 1970s and 1980s, in practically the whole Western world. This neoliberalism "that carries the twentieth into the twenty-first century therefore represents a significant return to the original axioms of liberalism, albeit one galvanized by an unprecedented mobilization not just of national state power but of state power organized and exercised at different geographical scales" (Smith, 2002, p. 429). Consequently, the third wave of gentrification and the role governments have in contemporary gentrification processes seem to fit into this trend. Correlating with this grown mobilisation of state power, Smith argues that compared to the first stage of gentrification as described by Glass (2010), the scale of ambitions for urban rebuilding has expanded drastically.

He furthermore states that the comparatively recent wave of gentrification is a central feature of 'new urbanism'. In order to explain this, he connects globalizing forces to developments on an urban scale. As Smith (2002) describes, in the past few decades, cities have been playing an increasing role in the globalizing economy. In this more service-oriented economy (see for example, Friedmann & Wolff, 1982; Hall, 1996), global capitalist restructuring has been a key force in reshaping cities (see also Chang, 2014). In his influential paper *From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism*, David Harvey (1989) describes urban entrepreneurialism, which focusses mostly on economic aspects of cities like fostering local development and employment growth. He argues that urban entrepreneurialism can be carried out in four different ways. One of these options is improving a city's competitive position regarding consumption. Consuming has become an important part of people's lifestyle, and investments to attract consumers have been rising since the 1950s. "Gentrification, cultural innovation, and physical up-grading of the environment (…), consumer attractions (…), and entertainment (…)" have all become prominent facets of strategies for urban regeneration" (Harvey, 1989, p. 9). In this globalising and consumption-focussed context, gentrification has also globalised. Smith argues that "as cities became global, so did some of their defining features. The emerging globalization of gentrification, like that of cities themselves, represents the victory of certain economic and social interests over others, a reassertion of (neoliberal) economic assumptions over the trajectory of gentrification (Smith and DiFilippis 1999)" (Smith, 2002, p. 446). To sum up the changes in governments and state and city influence, Smith (2002) provides us with five interrelated characteristics of 'third wave gentrification':

1. "The role of the state became more direct as urban governance became more pronounced and local governments could engage in regeneration through public-private partnerships within the context of urban policies which seek higher returns on economic activity and thus urban growth.
2. State and corporate powers and practices have become more determined and ambitious in their efforts to gentrify the city.
3. Gentrification is no longer limited to urban centres, but increasingly manifests itself outwards towards peripheral neighbourhoods.
4. Political or grass-roots opposition to gentrification, more pronounced during the second wave, have been effectively marginalised, oppressed or ignored.
5. Global capital often acts as a direct financier in the production of space, especially in global nodes such as New York or London" (Van Gent, 2013, p. 506).

It should be noted, however, that these characteristics are heavily based on the North-American situation, and sometimes on the United Kingdom. The lion's share of gentrification studies are based in the Anglo-Saxon world, which has to be taken into account[3]. For instance, in European literature, there are claims that the mostly American-based research on gentrification is not applicable to the European — and especially Scandinavian — context, since the American context is much more extreme. According to Larsen and Hansen, "in this view, Scandinavia supposedly has superior planning legislation and rent regulation that prevent the kind of urbanism practised in North American cities" (2008, p. 2432). Lees (2012) adds that researchers have to pay much more attention to government policies on gentrification and neoliberal models of governance, which creates a different context in every administrative area.

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3   For a great example of a very different context, see the case of Belgium (Uitermark & Loopmans, 2013).

2.2.2 Promoting gentrification

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that many studies on the American situation show that gentrification processes are often influenced by state agencies. This might even be more so in the Dutch context, where gentrification always has been characterised by state interventions (Doucet, 2014). Zuk *et al.* (2017) argue that the public sector invests to stimulate living in cities (which could also be seen in the Netherlands in the late 1980s (Doucet, 2014)), and to respond to a renewed trend of living in urban environments. However, they warn that this puts governments at risk of becoming an "agent of gentrification and displacement" (p. 1). Still, the popularity of gentrification among policymakers seems evident. The question rises why governments tend to promote gentrification, while many academics warn about its downsides (e.g., Slater, 2006; Zuk *et al.*, 2017).

According to Wyly and Hammel, at the start of the twenty-first century, in the United States "more than ever before, gentrification [was] incorporated into public policy — used either as a justification to obey market forces and private-sector entrepreneurialism, or as a tool to direct market processes in the hopes of restructuring urban landscapes in a slightly more benevolent fashion" (2005, p. 35). Already in the 1960s and 1970s several public policies in the United Kingdom and the United States aided gentrification, like government improvement grants and policies facilitating the gentrification of neighbourhoods (Lees & Ley, 2008). Bernt and Holm (2009) argue that in Berlin, gentrification became seen as a 'normal' form of urban development, which lead to a notion that state intervention would only be necessary in extreme, individual cases. In the Netherlands, gentrification has been part of housing policy for more than twenty years. Although it is often more regulated and managed than in other countries due to a large influence of municipalities in planning processes, the process still occurs. Especially since the 1990s, when the building of social housing became too expensive for the authorities and cities saw a declining affluent population (see also Doucet *et al.*, 2011), the importance of developers grew, and with it the promotion of more expensive residences (Van Kempen & Van Weesep, 1994). Because gentrification sometimes is seen as a 'dirty' word (Smith, 1996), policy makers often choose different terminology when promoting gentrification. For instance, in the Anglo-Saxon world, a term like 'urban regeneration' is often used to describe *de facto* gentrification (Doucet *et al.*, 2011). Other terms are for instance 'urban renewal' (Larsen & Hansen, 2008) and 'neighbourhood revitalisation' (Byrne, 2003) .

It seems contradictory: governments seem to know that gentrification has downsides — or at least is politically loaded. Otherwise, they would not use different words to promote the process. Still, they are using gentrification as a strategy to develop the urban landscape. The suggestion of Smith and Difilippis (as cited in Smith, 2002) therefore seems to be reasonable: local authorities value certain economic and social interests as more important than others. One of the reasons why municipalities support gentrification, is the prospect of more affluent residents. Doucet *et al.* (2011) studied the municipalities of Rotterdam and Glasgow, and found that policymakers in these two cities believed that the easiest way to address the imbalance between wealthy and poor residents was creating gentrified spaces to attract these people. Larsen and Hansen (2008) argue that gentrifiers are seen as the "embodiment of global cultural and economic flows" (p. 2431), which leads to growing competition between cities to attract these people. According to Peck (2005), this "nouveau-bourgeois war for talent" causes more competition over urban space. Overall, more affluent residents means more residents who can pay taxes and purchase local goods and services (Byrne, 2003). Byrne argues that this increase of taxpayers also leads to the ability to build more social housing, so the influx of richer residents does not have to mean that there will be less housing for lower-income households. These argumentations are economically oriented, rather than socially.

However, economic benefits are not the only reason for local authorities to promote gentrification processes. For instance, the Dutch urban renewal policies are often (officially) aimed at improving the social situation of residents (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008), for instance by battling polarisation or providing new housing.

2.3   IMPACTS OF GENTRIFICATION

Policymakers aim for different goals when promoting gentrification. Still, the argumentations to use gentrification as a tool often focus on the economic benefits of the process. However, as Glass (2010) already described, gentrification can change the social character of neighbourhoods. This implies that there are more sides to gentrification than the often emphasised economic one. To give a definition of gentrification, Hamnett (1991) cites Smith (1987b, p. 463): "the crucial point about gentrification is that it involves not only a social change but also, at the neighbourhood scale, a physical change in the housing stock and an economic change in the land and housing market. It is the combination of social, physical, and economic change distinguishes gentrification as an identifiable process/set of processes". The impacts of gentrification often turn into a normative discussion on whether gentrification is desirable. Nonetheless, if gentrification is chosen as a strategy to counter certain urban problems, it is necessary to understand what implications this might have on a city or neighbourhood. Atkinson (2004) presents a comprehensive overview on the positive and negative neighbourhood impacts of gentrification, based on 118 publications — mostly from the United Kingdom and North America. By sorting them along the classifications of Smith (Hamnett, 1991), the overview in table 2.1 appears.

2.3.1 Physical impacts

The impacts of gentrification that are presumably the easiest to notice, are the physical impacts. These can be seen in the urban landscape. Doucet (2014) sums up spatial manifestations of contemporary gentrification — in other words, the third wave of gentrification (as described by Hackworth & Smith, 2001). One manifestation is the restructuring of housing estates, both in central areas and on the periphery, in which a strong role is being played by the state. By redeveloping residential areas the danger of 'under-occupancy' emerges, among others because of the conversion of subdivided units into larger units. On the other hand, gentrification decreases urban sprawl, since affluent residents move to the city centre instead of the suburbs. Despite this grown interest in cities, gentrification has also moved beyond the city — being called 'rural gentrification' (see Phillips, 1993), which according to Doucet (2014) is the third spatial manifestation of third wave gentrification. Although rural gentrification already was mentioned in the 1980s, the phenomenon nowadays has attracted more academic attention. Besides housing-oriented gentrification, a rise in other forms of gentrification can be noticed. Doucet mentions commercial gentrification as the fourth spatial manifestation. A partially linked manifestation is tourism gentrification, which focuses on how promoting tourist destinations can lead to gentrification (Doucet, 2014). A final manifestation is the transformation of old industrial areas into — often high-end — residential areas. It should be noted however, that there is some discussion about whether this can be called gentrification, since there are no residents being displaced by this process (Davidson & Lees, 2005). Nonetheless, displacement can still occur because of these developments. Atkinson (2004) mentions that industrial and commercial displacement is also an effect of gentrification.

2.3.2 Social impacts

Gentrification changes the social character of neighbourhoods (Glass, 2010). A large part of this change can be explained by displacement processes: when a part of the original population of a neighbourhood gets displaced and new residents arrive, the social character changes. Among academics, this is often seen as a negative change. However, positive social changes are also possible. In literature, different positive and negative social impacts of gentrification are pointed out. For instance, community conflict has been a theme in gentrification research (Atkinson, 2004), and can increase when people are getting displaced and new residents are moving in. On the other hand, Byrne (2003) argues that by mixing poor and affluent residents, gentrification can actually help to decrease social isolation of the poor. According to him, this social mixing (see also table 2.1) can lead to newcomers exhibiting possibilities of social mobility by interaction, instead of creating conflict. However, besides showing some similar results in literature, Atkinson (2004) found that some studies on gentrification show that the process actually also can decrease social mixing, because of the development of well-of ghettos in formerly poor neighbourhoods. To research social mixing in gentrifying neighbourhoods, Mazer and Rankin (2011) used cognitive mapping techniques to capture people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods and city. They divided

Table 2.1 Summary of neighbourhood impacts of gentrification (source: adapted from Atkinson, 2004, p. 112).

Positive	Negative
Physical	
• Reduction of suburban sprawl	• Under-occupancy and population loss to gentrified areas
• Rehabilitation of property both with and without state ownership	• Displacement through rent/price increases
	• Displacement and housing demand pressures on surrounding areas
	• Secondary psychological costs of displacement
Social	
• Stabilisation of declining areas	• Community resentment and conflict
• Increased social mix	• Loss of social diversity (from socially disparate to affluent getthos)
• Decreases crime	• Increased crime
Economic	
• Increased property values	• Loss of affordable housing
• Reduced vacancy rates	• Unstustainable speculative property price
• Increased local fiscal revenues	• increases
• Encouragement and increased viability of further development	• Homelessness
	• Greater draw on local spending through lobbying by middle-class groups
	• Commercial/industrial displacement
	• Increased cost and changes to local services

their respondents into homeowners and rooming-house tenants. By making this division, they found that these two groups live "parallel but separate lives" (Mazer & Rankin, 2011, p. 836). This mostly divided society is also described by Van der Graaf and Veldboer (2009), in a case study on the Netherlands. The dilemma appearing in these argumentations on either social mixing or polarisation is also appearing when looking at crime: is gentrification increasing or decreasing crime? According to Atkinson, studies on gentrification provide evidence of both sides of the medal. This contradiction is illustrative for the debate on gentrification: it is often normative and to a certain extent, there is evidence for both positive and negative impacts. However, the negative social impacts of gentrification are emphasised more in scientific literature (Byrne, 2003), while the positive effects are often promoted in policy circles (Lees, 2008).

2.3.3 Economic impacts

A possible explanation for the popularity of gentrification in policy circles is that gentrification is ought to have economic benefits for cities. One of the more direct effects is the increase of property values in gentrifying areas. The counterpart of this effect is the loss of affordable housing (Atkinson, 2004), which is one of the essential causes of further gentrification. The loss of affordable housing due to for instance rent increase is one of the driving forces behind displacement (Marcuse, 1986; Zuk *et al.*, 2017). On the other side, research points out that gentrification can reduce vacancy rates. This could be true, especially when looking at developments of brownfields (e.g. Davidson & Lees, 2005; Doucet, 2014). However, gentrification can also lead to under-occupancy of houses (Doucet, 2014). Overall, it can be stated that the positive economic impacts of gentrification such as increased local fiscal revenues and encouragement and increased viability of further development (see table 2.1) are mostly beneficial for the supply side, and to a lesser extent gentrifiers. Seen economically, the original population of gentrifying neighbourhoods therefore does not benefit much from these economic impacts.

2.3.4 Displacement

Despite maybe not entirely caused by the process itself, displacement is an important part of gentrification[4]. Displacement is often the result of increasing rents, which results in unaffordable houses for the original population of gentrifying neighbourhoods. Zuk *et al.* (2017) divide displacement into three categories: direct (or physical) causes, indirect (or economic) causes and exclusionary causes (see table 2.2). Displacement also puts pressure on surrounding poor areas, since the displaced population will seek a new home in these areas (Atkinson, 2004). A final — yet important — note is that displacement may or may not result from gentrification. It is difficult to say whether gentrification is the main cause in displacement processes (Zuk *et al.*, 2017). Yet, displacement is an often noted effect of gentrification.

The exclusionary causes are less tangible than the physical and economic ones. However, it is of an at least similar importance. Mazer and Rankin (2011) state that 'displacement pressure' in gentrification is a symptom of the social, emotional and symbolic dimensions of displacement. They argue that when places to which people are used are not welcoming, meaningful or liveable anymore, people will move as fast as they can. In this case, people are not getting displaced physically at first: they get excluded socially, while still inhabiting a place. Displacement

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4   Displacement can be seen as a physical impact of gentrification, but as it is one that deserves particular attention, it is being treated separately from the other impacts.

Table 2.2 Categories of displacement (source: adapted from Zuk *et al.*, 2017, p. 5).

Forced	Responsive
Direct or physical causes	
• Formal eviction	• Deterioration in housing quality
• Informal eviction (e.g. landlord harassment)	• Neighbourhood violence or disinvestment
• Landlord foreclosure	• Removing parking, utilities, and so on
• Eminent domain	
• Natural disaster	
• Building condemnation	
Indirect or economic causes	
• Foreclosure	• Rent increase
• Condo conversion	• Increased taxes
	• Loss of social networks or cultural significance of a place
Exclusionary causes	
• Section 8 discrimination	• Unaffordable housing
• Zoning policies (restriction on density, unit size, etc.)	• Cultural dissonance
• NIMBY resistance to development	• Lack of social networks

does not only affect those who are actually displaced. The impact is much broader. When social contacts are leaving, shops go out of business and new stores are too expensive, non-directly displaced people may also move. This is the already mentioned 'pressure of displacement', which according to Marcuse can be measured by combining both demographic or mobility figures, and housing-unit figures.Nonetheless, it is difficult to measure displacement caused by gentrification. For instance, mobility figures do not provide adequate information on the causes to move. Other figures are often limited to physical displacement, while leaving economic displacement unseen. According to Marcuse (1986), exclusionary displacement can be deduced from demographic figures. However, one would have to rely on broad assumptions about what would have happened without gentrification. It is important to note that displacement is not only physical or economic. It also has an important social component, excluding people who do not fit into the new character of a gentrifying neighbourhood.

Gentrification is a complex process, which can take many forms, can involve different actors and can have varying physical, social and economic impacts on neighbourhoods and cities. Some of the impacts of gentrification found by Atkinson (2004) are contradictory to each other, while others can be positive for one party, and negative for another. Therefore, the normative debate on gentrification (see for instance Byrne, 2003; Slater, 2006), will probably be around for years to come. However, displacement is a more or less taken-for-granted effect of gentrification (Atkinson, 2004; Zuk *et al.*, 2017). This displacement does not only imply the moving out of inhabitants: industrial, and commercial displacement are also impacts of gentrification (Atkinson, 2004).

2.4 COMMERCIAL GENTRIFICATION

So, commercial displacement can occur when a neighbourhood is gentrifying. According to Doucet (2014), commercial gentrification is one of the spatial manifestations of contemporary gentrification. This trend is not only noticed by Doucet, but also by Davidson and Lees: "third-wave gentrification is no longer always residential: it can also be commercial (see Carroll and Connell, 2000; Curran, 2004; Kloosterman and Van Der Leun, 1999) or for example, live-work units (Lees, 2003b)" (2005, p. 1168). Ferm describes commercial gentrification as a "process by which business are replaced by either higher value, more competitive businesses or more profitable residential conversion/redevelopment typical of the post-industrial era" (2016, p. 402). The research field of commercial gentrification has only been expanding since the last few years, primarily among North-American scholars (Hubbard, 2017). Consequently, the perception of gentrification has been broadened, from rent increases, landlord harassment and working-class displacement to trendy bars, fancy cafes, 'black gentrification', 'greentrification' and 'studentification (Hubbard, 2017; Slater, 2006). Other than that, commercial gentrification has often been neglected in scientific research (Ferm, 2016; Hubbard, 2017). According to Rankin and McLean (2015), retail spaces have been imagined as strictly distinct from residential spaces. It could be argued that the assumption made there is not entirely true, since already in 1986, Smith and Williams put residential gentrification into a wider context: "in reality, residential gentrification is integrally linked to the redevelopment of urban waterfronts for recreational and other functions, the decline of remaining inner-city manufacturing facilities, the rise of hotel and convention complexes and central-city office developments, as well as the emergence of modern "trendy" retail and restaurant districts" (Smith & Williams, 1986, p. 3).

Furthermore, the relationship between retail and gentrification has often been noticed: "at least since the 1970s, certain types of restaurants, cafés, and stores have emerged as highly visible signs of gentrification in cities around the world. Although the archetypal quiche-serving "fern bars" of the early years have long since yielded to wine bars and designer clothing boutiques, these stylish commercial spaces still embody, serve, and represent a powerful discourse of neighbourhood change" (Zukin *et al.*, 2009, p. 47). Sullivan and Shaw (2011) argue that this new focus is vital, since retail gentrification influences the goods and services available to both long-term and new residents. Boutiques easily become a first indication of gentrification. For instance, Freeman (as cited in Zukin *et al.*, 2009) states that low-income black and Latino residents think of upscale stores and restaurants as 'white' interests. This racial aspect left aside, residents of poor neighbourhoods often feel uncomfortable when new stores open up, which creates a different 'sense of place'. Literature on commercial gentrification often emphasises terms like 'lifestyle', 'identity' and 'boutiquing' (e.g. Deener, 2007; Hubbard, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Commercial gentrification therefore seems to be closely connected to experiences of both gentrifiers and original residents. In Sydney, Bridge and Dowling (2001) investigated gentrification and its relationship with retail. In order to do this, they identified what sorts of retailing spaces and practices are associated with gentrification. In doing so, they cite Ley, who analysed the forms of retail change coincident and related to gentrification. Ley (1996) found that retail districts become important markers of the identity sought by gentrifiers, which matches the presumption that commercial functions often connect to lifestyle. In his research, Ley noticed that anti-mass merchandise and 'healthy' stores predominated in gentrifying areas. However, this 'hippy' retailing — as Ley calls it — had a limited lifespan. The retail landscape quickly changed into a luxury, high-end shopping area, again with an emphasis on lifestyle and identity-building.

The commercial landscape of an area herein seems to follow the same path as the residential situation in gentrification processes. First, pioneering retail arrives, which in its turn gets taken over by more luxurious commercial spaces. Bridge and Dowling connect the relationship between commercial functions and lifestyle to a wider context of increasing importance of consumption for the middle class (see also Jayne, 2006). thereby stating that "the visibility of the consumption practices of the new middle class is a key characteristic of gentrification" (2001, p. 95). The importance of this characteristic is visible in more literature on gentrification (e.g. Zukin *et al.*, 2009). The 'lifestyle' and commercial activities become a more focal point in research on the process. As Tom Slater puts it: "the perception [of gentrification] is no longer about rent increases, landlord harassment and working-class displacement, but rather street-level spectacles, trendy bars and cafes, i-Pods, social diversity and funky clothing outlets" (2006, p. 738).

2.4.1   Commercial gentrification as a policy

This perception connects well to literature concerning consumption spaces. According to Jayne (2006), consumption has become a driving force of the economy, and plays an important role in building identities and lifestyles. Thereby, there is increased competition between cities to attract investments, jobs and tourism. This competition can partly be attributed to the declining urban economies and the connected rise of urban entrepreneurialism described by Harvey (1989). Jayne argues that this increased competition often results in efforts of cities to create new images in order to attract businesses and consumers (2006).

This is extra relevant when looking at how cities try to achieve this: Jayne cites Landry (1995), who considers promoting a 'creative city'. This means that cities aim for "aesthetic improvements of 'soft infrastructure', ranging from building of squares and fountains to the greening of streets, the provision of benches and improved public spaces, and the establishment of late-night shopping, 'happy hours', cultural events and festivals such as music, literary or street theatre — all designed to make the city more 'liveable'" (Jayne, 2006, p. 62). Boosting a creative environment herein is seen as crucial to add to the competitiveness of cities, and can be achieved by building theatres and galleries, but also by encouraging the presence of bars, restaurants and boutiques. Especially the term 'boutique' must ring a bell, since the process of 'boutiquing' is often central to literature on commercial gentrification (e.g. Zukin *et al.*, 2009). And, as Harvey (1989) already described, both gentrification and consumer attractions have become important strategies for urban regeneration. McLean *et al.* indeed connect these 'creative city' ideas to the behaviour of planners, urban officials and consultants, and state that: "the expectation is that these processes [of *de facto* state-led commercial gentrification] will transform disinvested neighbourhoods into spaces of consumption attractive to investors and middle-class professionals, thereby sparking economic development that will improve the area for all (Barnes *et al.*, 2006; McCann, 2007; Zukin, 2009, 2010; August and Walks, 2012; August, 2014)" (McLean *et al.*, 2015, p. 1284).

2.4.2   Defining commercial gentrification

When looking at the presented literature, there are three ways to look at commercial gentrification. First, it can be seen as a sign — a characteristic — of 'regular' gentrification (e.g. Bridge & Dowling, 2001). Second, the change of low-income shops into more expensive consumption spaces can be seen as a first step towards residential gentrification (e.g. Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Or as Hubbard puts it: "the replacement of corner cafés by coffee shops, convenience grocery stores by delis and pubs by wine bars is depicted as a vital first stage in gentrification

processes which culminate in the upscaling of entire neighbourhoods" (2017, p. 3). Third, commercial gentrification can be seen as a form of gentrification (Doucet, 2014), along with other forms of gentrification like 'studentification' and 'greentrification' (Hubbard, 2017; Slater, 2006). Arguably, all of these three views are correct. Research shows that the changes in retail spaces can foster further residential gentrification because of increasing rents, thereby increasing the chance of displacement of both local shop owners and long-term residents (Mermet, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Also, the pioneering role of certain shops cannot be neglected. On the other hand, new shops are also attracted by changes in the social character of neighbourhoods (e.g. Zukin *et al.*, 2009), reflecting the 'new identity' of a gentrified area (see Bridge & Dowling, 2001). This would mean that commercial gentrification is a 'symptom' — an effect — of residential gentrification. Seeing commercial gentrification as separate form of gentrification is also a viable option, when looking at the broader context of consumption culture (Bridge & Dowling, 2001; Jayne, 2006). The lesson learned from this, is that it is valuable to look at commercial gentrification as a booster for residential gentrification, as an indicator of gentrification, and — last but not least — a process on itself. In case of this research the process itself will be central. It is therefore of importance to have at least some kind of definition to use. Drawing on the definition from both Glass (2010) and Hubbard (2017), and the impacts of gentrification found by Atkinson (2004) (see table 2.1), commercial gentrification can be defined as 'the upgrading of a commercial landscape of long-term disinvestment, which leads to physical, social and/or economic changes of the surrounding area'.

2.5   IMPACTS OF COMMERCIAL GENTRIFICATION

Gonzalez and Waley (2013) warn that the quest for authenticity in consumption patterns inevitably leads to gentrification. This assumption is backed by Jayne (2006), who argues that promoting consumption can increase segregation in cities. The already mentioned process of 'boutiquing' takes place, which is characterised by chain stores displacing local stores (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). The terms 'authenticity' and 'chain stores' seem to contradict to each other at first, but according to Zukin *et al.*, retail space 'opens up' a neighbourhood. When a new, upscale bar or shop opens, it helps developing a new 'face' of that particular neighbourhood. In this regard, commercial gentrification follows the same pattern as residential gentrification (see Blasius *et al.*, 2016; Cameron & Coaffee,

Table 2.3 Summary of impacts of commercial gentrification.

Physical	Social	Economic
• Displacement of long-term storeowners and residents • Aesthetic changes of shopping areas	• The creation of new communities • Alienation of long-term residents	• Increasing rents and property prices • Increase in development because of 'hip' new stores and bars • Healthier retail landscape in areas characterised by disinvestment • More innovation to respond to global competition

2005; Hamnett, 1991): first, pioneering entrepreneurs arrive, who "signal to private developers and state agencies that a neighbourhood is ready for larger investments and grander redevelopment" (Zukin *et al.*, 2009, p. 62). So the 'authentic' shops arrive, which eventually sets the right environment for more upscale chain stores to arrive. This process is also visible in Le Marais, Paris, where commercial gentrification followed a temporal scheme. Common shops are getting replaced by stores related to artistic activities, which are finally replaced by chain stores (Mermet, 2017). Since this pattern is so similar to residential gentrification, the question rises whether the same impacts can be noticed here. Therefore, the already used categorisation of physical, social and economic impacts (see Hamnett, 1991) will be used to describe the impacts of commercial gentrification. Table 2.3 gives an overview of the different impacts of commercial gentrification, found in literature on this specific form of gentrification.

2.5.1 Physical impacts

By referring to the authentic working-class history, economic and cultural entrepreneurs establishing retail businesses in 'poor' neighbourhoods seek to create a certain vibe that attracts 'hipsters' at first, followed by a broader clientele (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). One of the inevitable effects of the arrival of high-end shops, is the displacement of retail spaces owned by long-term shopkeepers. Zukin *et al.* (2016) state that a small investment in a shopping street can cast large changes. Displacement due to commercial gentrification has two faces: on the one hand, entrepreneurs can get displaced. On the other, the long-term effects can also displace residents. The displacement of entrepreneurs is mostly caused by economic effects (as described by Zuk *et al.*, 2017). These economic causes are for instance rent increase and increased taxes (see table 2.3), but also cluster effects (Ferm, 2016; Zukin & Kosta, 2004). Zukin *et al.* (2009) state that often individually owned boutiques, started by new local residents, tend to support the interests of more affluent and more mobile residents. In the end, this leads to higher rents, which are often above the level many of these pioneers can afford. Mermet argues that commercial gentrification has similar causes to residential gentrification — namely a rent gap and a changing consumer environment (2017, p. 1176). In Le Marais, the arrival of retail corporate capital led to displacement of local entrepreneurs on the one hand, while at the other hand also increasing the sale of retail spaces due to increased real estate and lease right prices (Mermet, 2017). The displacement of residents is a more indirect impact of commercial gentrification, since the increased rents can affect not only rents of commercial spaces, but also housing prices. The displacement through rent and price increases is actually the only physical impact of residential gentrification (Atkinson, 2004; see table 2.1) that clearly counts for commercial gentrification as well. According to Ferm (2016), commercial displacement can also take place because of conversion or redevelopment for residential use. Displacement, along with the mere aesthetic changes of shopping areas can be seen as the most important physical impacts of commercial gentrification.

2.5.2 Social impacts

"Despite three decades of studying residential gentrification, only now are researchers and community groups starting to wonder how commercial gentrification may play into broader dynamics of social inequality (e.g. Deener, 2007)" (Zukin *et al.*, 2009, p. 49). The broader social aspect of commercial gentrification has not been widely debated yet. When looking at the social aspects of gentrification, its social impacts (Atkinson, 2004; see table 2.1) only partly overlap with its commercial counterpart. The overall tendency of research concerning the social impacts of commercial gentrification is to some extent connected to the loss of social diversity. As

described earlier, an important characteristic of commercial gentrification is the emphasis on identity and lifestyle (e.g. Deener, 2007; Hubbard, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Besides economic and cultural motives to open shops, authors like Lloyd and Patch (as cited in Zukin *et al.*, 2009) describe that new retail entrepreneurs may be, in a sense, 'social' entrepreneurs. They help to create the new community in a gentrifying neighbourhood. At the same time, processes like 'boutiquing' attract investments and redevelopments. "These risk disrupting social life and may alienate and displace long-term residents" (Zukin *et al.*, 2009, p. 62). Hereby, the forming of 'affluent ghettos' becomes a realistic prospect, which tallies with the loss of social diversity in gentrification processes (described by Atkinson, 2004). As Hubbard states: "the replacement of an 'ethnic' food store by a wholefood deli or upmarket boutique is not just a cultural transformation or 'whitening' of a local retail environment; it's also a class transformation that can be a harbinger of a more fundamental change in a locality" (2017, p. 6). On the other hand, Ernst and Doucet (2014) describe that switches made by ethnic restaurants in order to serve new middle-income residents, actually had a positive effect on the attitude of non-ethnic, long-term residents of the Indische Buurt in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The class transformation mentioned here can also be found in Venice, California. Andrew Deener studied Abbot Kinney Boulevard in this coastal community in Los Angeles, which is known as "the city's original bohemian quarter" (Deener, 2007, p. 291). Abbot Kinney Boulevard is free from big retail chains, but has undergone some serious changes since the 1970s. Whereas Venice first was a working-class neighbourhood, it slowly changed from an active hippy enclave into a bohemian neighbourhood. This also stirred change in the retail landscape, but other than the often seen development — from 'pioneer' stores to chains (Mermet, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009) — Abbot Kinney Boulevard remained a shopping street with 'anti-corporate' storeowners (Deener, 2007). The new residents of Venice longed for authenticity, which was a key driver behind the development of the shopping street. So instead of chain stores, the 'authenticity' of Abbot Kinney Boulevard was preserved. However, this does not mean that the neighbourhood is one coherent community. Deener describes that "by taking symbolic ownership over the street, integrating new stores with expensive products and services making it into a central site of neighbourhood interaction, [the new residents and merchants] generate a border between distinct economic classes and racial groups" (2007, p. 294). The long-term residents of Venice often are of lower socio-economic standing, and define authenticity differently than the gentrifying newcomers. This leads to a feeling of exclusion from the new commercial spaces. This feeling of exclusion is not always present in neighbourhoods with a changing retail landscape. Sullivan and Shaw (2011) state that long-term residents are more favourable towards new stores when they are not displacing established ones. They argue that it is clear that long-term residents not only dislike the loss of established retail spaces because of the loss of products of services, but also because of their role as vital neighbourhood institutions.

Studies like the ones by Deener (2007) and Sullivan and Shaw (2011) show that commerce is a structure and symbol of neighbourhood life. This assumption is being underpinned by work of numerous researchers from the past decades (e.g. Florida, 2002; Jacobs, 1961; Zukin & Kosta, 2004). One of the possible factors that contributes to the influence of commercial activity on neighbourhood life, is symbolic ownership. This term is an extension to a theory by Lofland (as cited in Deener, 2007), who argued that spaces can be controlled either by regulation or design. Deener argues that symbolic ownership can also control space. Therefore, the influence of consumption is much broader than the economic impacts that are often highlighted.

2.5.3 Economic impacts

Speaking of which, the economic impacts of commercial and residential gentrification are arguably the most similar to each other. As discussed, commercial gentrification is characterised by an increase of rents and property prices (Mermet, 2017), which is also the case when looking at residential gentrification (Atkinson, 2004). This increase in prices can cause displacement of long-term shop owners, who cannot afford the new standard of rents in a gentrifying shopping street. Another important economic impact of commercial gentrification has already been mentioned: the presence of 'hip' new stores and bars can attract more investments, and thereby encourage and increase further development. And because of the fact that most low-income neighbourhoods suffer from retail disinvestment, the arrival of new stores often gets welcomed by local residents (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). These effects are quite direct. However, literature on the process shows that there are also more indirect effects of commercial gentrification. For instance, Zukin and Kosta (2004) argue that retail concentration of designer stores may be a territory for innovation. According to them, the agglomeration of different shops in the East Village in New York City is able to innovate successfully in response to global economic competition. They state that commercial gentrification can actually increase the diversification of retail areas. However, they state that the nature and amount of certain shops should be managed by building owners and city authorities, in order to achieve 'healthy' consumption spaces.

2.6   MITIGATING IMPACTS

Managing gentrification. Whether this is possible, is debatable (e.g. Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017; Slater, 2006). Still, governments have a vital role in shaping gentrification processes. Wacquant states that the important role of the state in shaping spaces makes it a "generator of sociospatial inequality" (2008, p. 203). He furthermore argues that the popularity of gentrification in policy circles fits into a broader pattern of 'invisibility of the working class' in the public sphere. He states that this, along with a 'growing heteronomy of urban research', confirms that authorities are no longer providing social support for lower-income households, but supply business services for the middle- and upper-class. Ferm (2016) argues that not only the lower-income households, but also the middle-class eventually will feel the impacts of gentrification. According to her, due to rising prices and displacement by higher-value commercial occupiers, neighbourhoods will lose the characteristics that made them attractive in the first place. She states that this fact suggests "that the challenge for urban policy makers is to protect lower-value businesses from displacement in order to preserve an urban area's unique identity" (2016, p. 403).

Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) state that there are almost no academic studies on how gentrification and displacement might be controlled or mitigated — although the need for these strategies has been stressed by numerous authors. Despite this argued lack of solutions from the academic world, Ghaffari *et al.* have been able to analyse 64 texts that show some solutions to displacement problems of gentrification (see table 2.4). These solutions are divided into three categories: solutions that aim to protect tenants (1), try to control ownership and development (2) and seek to empower communities (3). Although these three categories are mainly aimed at residential gentrification, it is also a useful categorisation for its commercial equal.

Table 2.4 Strategies and tools for controlling gentrification-induced displacement (source: adapted from Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017, p. 5).

Tenants' protection	Controlling ownership and development	Community empowerment
• Relocation assistance • Tax exemption/relief • Laws against harassment • Home purchase assistance • Tenants' first right to purchase • Location efficient mortgages • Rent skewing • Rent subsidies • Rent control	• Municipal land-use control • Inclusionary zoning • Housing cooperatives • Affordable housing provision • Housing trust fund • Property transfer taxes • Anti-speculation taxes • Luxury housing taxes • Progressive real property taxes • Expropriation • Community land trust	• Participation • Social movements • Local job creation • Educating local population • Legal assistance • Community benefit agreement • Social function of the property

2.6.1 Protecting tenants

A first step to stop residents from being displaced is to protect them (especially tenants), and their surroundings. According to Ghaffari *et al.*, "tenants are the most vulnerable group in the process of gentrification" (2017, p. 6). They argue that one of the biggest problems these tenants face, is rent increases. For this problem, there are four possible solutions: rent skewing[5] , rent subsidies, rent control and tax exemption (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). For instance, in New York, landlords who rent out apartments to the elderly under market prices can receive tax cuts (Newman & Wyly, 2006). This however, gets more and more difficult as gentrification drives the difference between market prices and these lower rents apart. Different authors have proposed rent control to battle the displacement of tenants as the result of rising rents (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Van Gent, 2013). Another appearing problem for tenants is eviction by sale of the property they live in (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). By offering tenants 'first right to purchase', tenants could have the option to buy the property they live in. However, Bryant and McGee (1983) state that this measure is not effective, especially among low-income households: they cannot afford to buy the property for sale. To solve this, strategies like 'home purchase assistance' could be of help. In Washington, D.C., the city created policy structures to help tenants buy the houses they were living in (Lloyd, 2014). In home purchase assistance programs, the share of the housing price financed by the government often goes up to 95% (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). Also, measures that counter vacancy or exploitation of poor households by slumlords (Uitermark & Loopmans, 2012) can be seen as measures to battle gentrification.

Mazer and Rankin state that protecting social space for poor and marginalised groups must also be a goal for policymakers. They argue that "social space plays a key role in entitling people with a right to access the city in its present form — the right to secure housing; the ability to acquire the goods and services necessary for everyday living (if not opportunities for appropriate employment); the stability of communities and social networks; and the right to feel welcome and safe" (2011, p. 837). This connects well to commercial gentrification. Some state

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5   Rent skewing is the subsidisation of lower-income tenants by higher-income ones (Stegman, 2012).

that everyday goods should be available for residents, while processes of commercial gentrification actually takes these goods away for long-term residents (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Ferm (2016) argues that the challenge for urban policymakers is to protect lower-value businesses from displacement. This is usually done through reinforcing zoning or protecting land uses. Ferm discusses the preservation of small businesses in four London boroughs: Camden, Hackney, Newham and Wandsworth. She states that the role of financiers limits what local authorities can legally do to protect lower-value businesses. Because municipalities rely on private-led development to achieve planning gain, they cannot — or do not want to — counter market forces. In the case of London, to achieve planning gain, the boroughs even sometimes promote commercial gentrification to attract creative businesses. They primarily aim at boosting the creative economy, rather than being concerned with the loss of long-term businesses. This, along with the role of financiers, make it difficult to actually protect small businesses from being displaced. Ferm (2016) partly attributes this to the fact that existing policies are not designed for the current situation, in which residents are the financial driver of commercial gentrification.

2.6.2 Controlling ownership and development

So, protecting long-term businesses might prove to be difficult. The other option stated by Ferm (2016) — reinforcing zoning — is a tactic which is also used to counter residential gentrification impacts. In controlling development and the affordability of neighbourhoods, land ownership is a critical aspect. Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) state that in neighbourhoods where most ownership is private, it is difficult to steer changes. Thereby, interest-driven ownership is one of the driving forces of gentrification processes (see also Mermet, 2017). Many solutions to counter more interest-driven and private ownership lay in tax-based measures. However, zoning can also play an important role in mitigating private-led gentrification. Ghaffari *et al.* even argue that "zoning-related strategies are considered the main regulating solution for interest-driven development" (2017, p. 8). MacDonald (1983) proposed a policy to mitigate impacts of gentrification in which municipalities used their land use control power. He argues that, because the conversion of properties changes the character of entire neighbourhoods, municipalities are allowed to use their land use control to address problems caused by gentrification. A possible solution is to make purchasers of conversed condos bear the relocation costs instead of the displaced lower income residents. The money earned can then be used to coordinate the relocation of displaced tenants. MacDonald states that this will benefit both developers and tenants, because it would allow gentrification to continue "in a socially responsible manner" (MacDonald, 1983, p. 982). It is questionable, however, if this offered solution actually solves the problems of gentrification, or rather relocates them. By merely paying for new residences for displaced tenants, the social character of neighbourhoods can still change. The negative economic effects of gentrification may be solved by this solution, but the social and physical effects remain (see also Bryant & McGee, 1983). In New York, the city's community development corporation and other non-profit organisations have built thousands of affordable dwellings. The so-called 'Third Party Transfer' allowed these organisations to obtain buildings with unpaid property taxes at risk of abandonment, but these organisations now face fierce competition of private developers (Newman & Wyly, 2006). Many measures against displacement of people and gentrification have its limitations, with losing support for public programmes and a diminishing informal private market. Newman and Wyly state that inclusionary zoning[6] has the best potential to actually counter gentrification and its negative impacts (2006, p. 51).

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6   Inclusionary zoning is an American term concerning municipal rules for developments. "In essence, an inclusionary ordinance requires the developer of new housing units to set aside a certain fraction of the units for occupancy at reduced prices by moderate-income and, less often, low-income families" (Ellickson, 1981, p. 1169).

2.6.3 Empowering communities

Ghaffari *et al*. (2017) argue that empowerment is an essential strategy for mitigating displacement. According to some, empowerment can partly be reached through preserving social space for less wealthy residents, as "a first step toward liberating people's capabilities and building inclusive communities" (Mazer & Rankin, 2011, p. 837). However, one of the most important parts of empowerment is participation. Enabling citizens to participate in decision-making processes, makes it possible for them to influence plans for their own neighbourhoods. This can be connected to a theory like LeFebvre's 'right to the city', which states that citizens should be able to shape everything about their city (Harvey, 2008). This concept is often named in relation to gentrification processes, since more affluent actors seem to have taken the upper hand in framing gentrification. For instance, Bernt and Holm (2009) state that counteracting gentrification is especially difficult because of these power relations. The actors who profit from gentrification have the resources to frame the process as an urban 'renaissance', while the ones who are affected negatively, do not have such resources and will therefore lose support (see also Newman & Wyly, 2006). According to Arnstein (1969), citizen participation is the way for less affluent citizens to foster social reform, which in turn enables them to also benefit from economic growth. Participation in this sense might offer the long-term residents or storeowners of a neighbourhood a chance to bring their experiences forward.

2.6.4 Governing gentrification

The described motivations to promote gentrification and measures to mitigate its impacts are mostly concerned with residential gentrification. The fact that there are not many studies on the role of state intervention in commercial gentrification processes can partly be attributed to the imbalance between the amount of research on residential and commercial gentrification. In general, according to Wacquant (2008), many theories concerning gentrification leave out the role of the state in producing space. Meanwhile, he states that this role of the government is crucial. To illustrate this, Wacquant cites Bourdieu (2005), who has shown that the state shapes the context for builders and sellers via fiscal, banking and regulatory policies on the one side. On the other side, authorities also influence residents' capabilities to buy or rent a house. Rose (2010) also argues that there is still ground to cover when looking at research on local state involvement in 'urban revitalisation', especially regarding policies on municipal level.

Her research of new-build gentrification in Montréal shows that a revitalisation programme for central neighbourhoods — ran by provincial and municipal governments — enabled the city to boost new developments. The neighbourhoods that were seen as problematic were characterised by population decline, low incomes, decayed dwellings and low rates of homeownership. By implementing private housing as a component of trying to upgrade neighbourhoods, 'instant gentrification' occurred in small areas, which led to a mix of lifestyles, economic activities and demographics (Rose, 2010). Another good example that shows the role of state agencies in gentrification processes can be found in Harlem, New York. This neighbourhood — a predominantly black district — has seen an increase in chain stores, and more upscale restaurants, shops and cafes (Zukin *et al*., 2009). In the 1980s, the situation in Harlem could be described as hopeless, with banks not even giving loans to restore degraded houses. However, since the 1990s, different state agencies like the New York City government, the Harlem Community Development Corporation and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, have implemented numerous policies to foster reinvestments in Harlem. These state agencies have supported commercial investment by making available $300 million, which is for instance used to grant loans to new retail

stores in the area. Also, New York State subsidized a banking district in order to stimulate the opening of banks, which would invest in local projects. Besides these economic incentives, also planning instruments were used to change Harlem. The municipality rezoned the avenues in Harlem, which enabled the building of high-rise apartments with retail stores on street level. The side streets were spared, in order to protect the brownstone houses — popular among gentrifiers (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Zukin *et al.* state that "the boutiquing of Harlem seems to reflect a specific kind of state-sponsored redevelopment: oriented toward the new middle class and tourists, and dovetailing with residential gentrification" (2009, p. 52).

2.6.5 Actors in managing gentrification

Zukin *et al.* (2009) describe that there are two paths to gentrification: one market-led, and one state-led. However, the two cases described above seem to show a rather hybrid form. Also, according to Harvey, "urban entrepreneurialism typically rests (…) on a public-private partnership" (1989, p. 8). Rankin and McLean (2015) state that commercial spaces are formed by an assemblage of actors, practices and institutions. Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) state that, in order to mitigate impacts of gentrification, public-private partnership seems to be essential. So, it seems clear that local authorities are not the only important actor in managing gentrification. There are often much broader networks that aim to govern urban processes in general, and gentrification in particular. In the already mentioned example of Harlem, not only local authorities and public agencies had a role in fostering changes in the retail landscape. There is also a private organisation which consists of commercial property owners, paying for security and cleaning services, and organising different meetings and promotion campaigns (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). Also in New York, in Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Community Action was created to build leadership among people who were possibly facing displacement (Newman & Wyly, 2006).

Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) summarize six different important forces in mitigating displacement by gentrification. First, "public intervention and political will seem to be a key factor for controlling gentrification-induced displacement" (p. 9). However, it has been shown that public authorities do not always have the power they desire or need to counter gentrification processes (e.g. Ferm, 2016). The second driving group of driving forces are community participation and bottom-up planning processes. Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) state that these are crucial to foster local support for neighbourhood changes. Building on community participation, an embedded local community is the third driving force. However, when gentrification processes go on, the local community might change, and the overall image of the neighbourhood's identity might follow. This is what happened in Venice, Los Angeles, where there still is a strong local community, but this new community's view of what is authentic for Abbot Kinney Boulevard is very different from the 'original' community's view (Deener, 2007). The fourth important forces are community movements and political activism. These can push decision-makers towards including local communities (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). Zukin and Kosta (2004) state that in managing an attractive shopping district, building owners need to set limits to the kinds of businesses that can rent their properties. In addition, local authorities also need to assure a mix of old and new buildings, and subsidise innovative businesses. As discussed earlier, these "public/private/community partnerships seems to be essential in mitigating negative effects of gentrification" (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). As a final force rather obvious, financial resources are mentioned. Taking these forces into account, three actors are crucial to come up with and execute effective strategies. These are the local and state (1) government, (2) community organisations and (3) housing associations (Ghaffari *et al.* (2017). So, whether gentrification can be managed or not, it seems evident that it can at least not be managed by authorities on their own.

2.7 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Taking a step back to overlook the literature concerning (commercial) gentrification as an urban strategy, one could argue that the source of this phenomenon lies in the 1980s. In this period, characterised by the urban crisis and declining economies, cities started to form a more entrepreneurial way of governing (Harvey, 1989). One of the characteristics of this 'urban entrepreneurialism' is increased public-private partnership, with a growing role for private actors such as developers. This larger role of developers in its turn is one of the key elements of third-wave gentrification (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). Besides the source of contemporary residential gentrification, the 1980s can also be seen as the breeding ground for commercial gentrification. Although it is not often named 'commercial gentrification', literature on consumption in cities often goes into elements which connect almost seamlessly to contemporary studies on this phenomenon. The important role of consumption as a way to create an identity or lifestyle can be found in literature of consumption spaces (e.g. Jayne, 2006) and commercial gentrification (e.g. Deener, 2007; Hubbard, 2017; Ley, 1996; Zuk et al., 2009). Since consumption has become an important economic driver, cities tend to focus on attracting more visitors and consumers. Therefore, the nature of commercial spaces changes: whereas shops for long-term residents function as providers of daily goods, municipalities often see shops as a way to attract people from outside such neighbourhoods — as tools to gain a competitive advantage over other cities.

Because the birth of both residential and commercial gentrification as urban strategies can be traced back to a time where the economic context in which local authorities had to change their ways of governing, it is not strange that these strategies often focus on the economic benefits. However, it is important to take into account that (commercial) gentrification has a much broader impact that just an economic one. When looking at commercial gentrification, the displacement of long-term storeowners and residents is the most important physical impact (e.g. Ferm, 2016; Gonzalez & Waley, 2013; Mermet, 2017; Zukin et al., 2009). An important social impact is the creation of new communities that have little to no binding with the 'original', long-term community of a neighbourhood (e.g. Deener, 2007). This may in turn also alienate long-term residents (Zukin et al., 2009). It has to be noted that these social and physical impacts are connected to economic effects: due to rising rents, displacement can occur, which in turn can create more divisions between communities. This is a far more negative view of commercial gentrification, which is — understandably — not often seen in the reasoning of authorities promoting gentrification processes.

Despite its possible negative impacts, it seems hard to get rid of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy in an era in which consumption has in important function in urban economies and morphologies (e.g. Jayne, 2006). Especially when gentrifiers themselves are seen as "the embodiment of global cultural and economic flows" (Larsen & Hansen, 2008, p. 2431). However, according to Ghaffari et al. (2017), gentrification processes can be managed to become 'socially acceptable'. It should be mentioned that the solutions mentioned by Ghaffari et al. are focussing on residential gentrification. Measures for effects on commercial gentrification can hardly be found in literature — possibly because of the lack of attention for the phenomenon as a whole (Hubbard, 2017). However, the similarities between commercial gentrification and its residential counterpart (see paragraph 2.5) enable the use of the measures aimed at mitigating impacts of residential gentrification as a framework for those caused by commercial gentrification. These measurements are aimed at protecting tenants (or in this case storeowners), controlling ownership and development and empowering communities (Ghaffari et al., 2017). In taking measurements, partnerships between authorities and private organisations seem to be crucial.

3 METHODS

After examining the theory on (commercial) gentrification and its place in the policy arena, this chapter discusses the methods used to carry out this research. First of all, the type of research is being explained, while also providing the argumentation of choosing a case study as approach. This is followed by a more detailed insight in the used methods used to collect data. Finally, the quality of this research will be discussed.

3.1   RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is an umbrella term which encompasses different forms of research methods. Despite the differences, these methods have in common that they seek to describe, interpret or explain behaviour and experiences of the subjects of research (Boeije *et al.*, 2009). When not much is known about a topic, qualitative research can be explorative and lead to new insights. This is the reason why qualitative research is useful to understand commercial gentrification as an urban strategy, but also why the execution of qualitative research cannot be determined in a detailed manner. However, Boeije *et al.* (2009) state that qualitative research should balance a good preparation and a kept 'open', unprejudiced view in order to get all relevant results. The theoretical framework of this research therefore served as a provider of sensitising concepts, which gave direction to generate outcomes. In this sense, the research carried out is deductive. Deductive research generally uses existing theories to set certain expectations. According to Bryman, in deductive research, "the researcher draws on what is known about in particular domain and on relevant theoretical ideas in order to deduce a hypothesis (or hypotheses) that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny (2012, p. 21). In this research however, the presented theories in the theoretical framework served as 'handles' to set up the research methods, due to the relatively unknown nature of commercial gentrification (Hubbard, 2017) – especially in the Netherlands.

3.1.1   Case study research

The main question focusses on one particular case. There are numerous debates on whether or not (single) case study research is a useful scientific tool. However, to form an opinion on this topic, first the term 'case' should be defined. In order to do this, Lund provides a useful description: "a case is an edited chunk of empirical reality where certain features are marked out, emphasized and privileged while others recede into the background. As such, a case is not "natural," but a mental, or analytical, construct aimed at organizing knowledge about reality in a manageable way" (Lund, 2014, p. 224). In this sense, case studies provide for a more feasible reality to analyse. Some authors argue that case study research is not a good research method. For instance, a common view on case studies is that they only produce context-dependent knowledge – as they show just a fraction of reality. However, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that context-dependent knowledge can actually help to create insights, which context-independent research often cannot. Part of the reason for this lies in the fact that predictive theories cannot be found in the study of humans. According to Flyvbjerg, the context-dependent knowledge generated in case studies in this case is more valuable than the search for predictive theories and universal knowledge (2006, p. 224). Keeping in mind that Lees (2012) argued that researchers have to pay more attention to context in gentrification research, the point made by Flybvjerg about case study research enables doing just that.

There are three types of case studies. First, descriptive case study research answers 'what' and 'how' questions. Second, explanatory cases studies answer 'why' question. The third type are predicting case studies. These answer 'what will happen if' questions (Swanborn, 2010, p. 28). According to Yin (2008), 'how' and why' questions are the most valuable questions to answer using case study research. Because the main question of this research is a 'how' question, and context-specific, the descriptive case study has been chosen as the research tool in this thesis.

3.1.2 Case selection

The case analysed in this research is the ASW in Utrecht. As discussed in the introduction, the municipality of Utrecht has progressive plans in order to improve the shopping street. Ongoing trends of gentrification, together with such progressive plans, change the ASW. As literature shows, this often comes with rising land rents and a change of residents and entrepreneurs (e.g. Deener, 2007; Mermet, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009). However, shops and dwellings for lower incomes should remain in the opinion of Alderman Diepeveen (Obbink, 2017). Commercial gentrification should therefore not go too fast and should in some way be controlled. The municipality seems to be aware of the possible effects of the process which they do not call commercial gentrification. However, when looking at the definition given in chapter 2.4 — the upgrading of a commercial landscape of long-term disinvestment, which leads to physical, social and/or economic changes of the surrounding area, the process foreseen for the ASW fits very well into the description of commercial gentrification.

The contradiction between on the one hand wanting commercial gentrification to happen, while on the other hand seemingly not wanting it to happen too fast, makes the ASW an interesting case to examine commercial gentrification as an urban policy. First, it can show what moves urban policy makers to promote commercial gentrification. By stating that the process should not have a too big impact, this case could also show which ways work (and which do not) to mitigate impacts of commercial gentrification. Another possibility is to see what impacts actually are noticeable when commercial gentrification is promoted by local authorities. The case therefore investigates the process in its context, which — according to Yin (2009) — makes it a relevant case study.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

To investigate the case of the ASW, multiple ways to collect data have been used. These will be discussed in the following paragraph. As mentioned before, the research methods are mainly qualitative. The first method used is a document analysis of different municipal policy documents of Utrecht, concerning the ASW in particular, and relevant topics. Following the document analysis, interviews have been conducted with numerous respondents. These two qualitative methods have been supplemented with observations of the shopping street. Finally, a mapping tool and survey filled in by respondents living in the neighbourhoods surrounding the ASW has given an image on how these respondents use the shopping street and see recent changes.

3.2.1   Document analysis

Document analysis entails the systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (Bowen, 2009). According to Altheide *et al.* (2010), qualitative document analysis (QDA) is a emergent methodology, which gets used more often in this mass-mediated age. They state that the emphasis of QDA is on "discovery and description, including searching for contexts, underlying meanings patterns, and processes" (2010, p. 128). In this sense, it is far less focussed on mere quantities, which is the emphasis of more traditional quantitative analysing methods. However, the surge of organisational and institutional document analyses in research often was characterised by not optimally using the method, because of a lack of details about followed procedures and outcomes (Bowen, 2009). There are two types of analysis, which are combined in document analyses: content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is the process of dividing the content into categories, based on the research questions. Thematic analysis more or less turns this around, since the data from documents in this type of analysis are being used to make categories for further analysis. One could say that content analysis is deductive, and thematic analysis inductive. Although the prescribed form of document analysis encompasses both content and thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009), the main type used in this research is content analysis. It is used as a way to conduct triangulation to enhance the credibility and mainly serves as a way to provide background information on the subject in order to be able to conduct more specialised interviews (Bowen, 2009).

The documents which have been analysed are mainly policy documents of the municipality. These documents concern plans for the ASW itself, but also more general policies concerning relevant topics such as the Economic Agenda for the entire city of Utrecht, retail policy, et cetera. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the analysed documents.

3.2.2   Interviews and observations

The main part of the data has been collected via interviews. In this research, the choice has been made to use semi-structured interviews, so that the gathered literature could be used as guidelines to get results from the respondents. Semi-structured interviews are usually organised around a few open questions (DiCiccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). These open questions were divided in four categories, resembling the four sub-questions of the research. In table 3.2, the different respondents are shown. In order to interview them, topic lists have been developed using the insights from the theoretical framework. For the main group of respondents — local entrepreneurs and residents — the same topic list has been used. These were mainly focused on the experiences concerning the physical, social and economic situation of the ASW, and present or absent changes. For other organisations, such as the municipality or a large retail investment company, different topic lists have been made. All topic lists can be found in appendix 1.

Observing as a data collection tool has not been a large source of information. Observations have been limited to taking notice of what kind of stores there are on the ASW — enabling to see the actual physical changes, and attending a gathering of local residents and civic servants. An advantage of this latter observation is the fact that respondents are less likely to act differently when they are being observed than in an interview (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). The fact that observations did not play a large role gathering results, does not mean that they were useless. They were in fact a way to reach out to respondents, as will be explained later.

Table 3.1 List of analysed documents.

Name	Description	Publication
De economische agenda – Utrecht 2012-2018	Visionary document concerning the economy of Utrecht	January 2012
Wijkambities 2014-2018: Noordwest	Visionary document formulating ambitions for the district of Noordwest	October 2013
Ontwikkelingsstrategie Amsterdamsestraatweg	Strategic document concerning the ASW	April 2014
Brancheplan Amsterdamsestraatweg	Strategic visionary plan on land use of the ASW	June 2014
Actualisering woonvisie Utrecht	Visionary document concerning housing in Utrecht	April 2015
Wijkactieplan 2017 – Noordwest	Implementation program concerning the district of Noordwest	August 2015
Detailhandel Utrecht 2015 – Stand van zaken, Beleid en acties	Visionary document concerning retail in Utrecht	October 2015
Straatwegmeter	Research report concerning citizens' opinions on the ASW	January 2018
Uitvoeringsprogramma: doorpakken op de Amsterdamsestraatweg	Implementation program concerning the ASW	March 2018
Ontwikkelingskader Horeca Utrecht 2018	Strategic document concerning the catering industry in Utrecht	March 2018

Table 3.2 List of interviewed respondents (for a more detailed overview, see appendix 2).

Respondent	Role
Respondent 1	Real estate director, municipality of Utrecht
Respondent 2	Communication advisor, municipality of Utrecht
Respondent 3	Retail portfolio manager, private investor
Respondent 4	Future storeowner/local resident
Respondent 5	Local resident
Respondent 6	Storeowner/local resident
Respondent 7	Storeowner/board member of the entrepreneurial assocation
Respondent 8	Customer/local resident
Respondent 9	Customer/local resident
Respondent 10	Social worker/local resident
Respondent 11	Storeowner
Respondent 12	Storeowner
Respondent 13	Storeowner
Respondent 14	Restaurant owner/local resident
Respondent 15	Restaurant owner
Respondent 16	Storeowner/local resident
Respondent 17	Store employee
Respondent 18	Economic advisor, municipality of Utrecht

Table 3.3 Asked 'spatial' questions used in the emotional mapping tool.

Number	Question
1.	Which shops do you regularly visit?
2.	Which restaurants/bars do you regularly visit?
3.	In what area(s) do you feel at home?
4.	What area(s) has/have changed the most recently?
5.	What area(s) do you think will change the most in the near future?

3.2.3 Mapping

To understand how commercial gentrification affects social patterns on the ASW, a mapping tool has been an additional method. The idea to use this method was sparked by a study by Mazer and Rankin (2011), who used cognitive mapping to investigate the social aspect of gentrification in Toronto's Downtown West. They state that "cognitive mapping arose as part of the 1960s psychological turn in geography that was concerned with questions of environmental perception and mental configurations of place" (Mazer & Rankin, 2011, p. 825). In this sense, cognitive mapping lends itself well to commercial gentrification research. As discussed, new stores can create new communities in commercial areas (Zukin et al., 2009). Mazer and Rankin (2011) took this method and applied it to gentrification research, asking residents about places they frequently visited or avoided.

Along the same lines, residents from the neighbourhoods Pijlsweerd, Ondiep and Zuilen have been asked to point out which shops and restaurants they frequently visit, where they feel 'at home', and which places have changed the most, or are most likely about to change in the next years (see table 3.3). To find out if the commercial gentrification process actually helps shape new communities, several 'general' questions were asked as well, such as questions about how long respondents have been living in the neighbourhood or their income (for an overview of all asked questions, see appendix 3). To do this, an online tool named *Pocitové mapy*[7] (translates to: Emotional maps) has been used. This tool (see Pánek, 2016) has mainly been used in e-planning initiatives in Czechia, and enables respondents to digitally map their perceptions of a neighbourhood or city. The main way to do this, was to put 'points' on the map. Additionally, comments could be attached to these points, in order to explain why they were placed in specific places.

2.3.4 Sampling methods

In order to reach out to potential respondents, both strategic and random sampling methods have been used. In case of respondents for interviews, a strategic sampling has been taken. In this, contrasting respondents have been chosen. Using this method, it is possible to compare respondents based on a certain quality (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). Drawing on this, the storeowners who have been interviewed have been chosen based on how long they have been situated on the ASW. Because the age of a certain commercial space is not always visible, the 'snowball sampling' has also been used. Using this method, subsequent cases are being selected by looking at the previous case (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). In this research, this meant that respondents were

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7   See https://www.pocitovemapy.cz/index-en.html.

being asked whether they knew stores that have been around for a long time, and new stores. This enabled the researcher to get a good balance between 'long-term' and new commercial spaces. Furthermore, also along the lines of variety in respondents, it has been assured that storeowners from shops and restaurants all along the ASW have been interviewed. This is of relevance, since the municipality divides the ASW into several pieces (as will be discussed in later chapters).

A more random sampling approach has been used when it comes to the mapping tool. Respondents for this tool 1have been reached out to in two ways. First of all, social media have been used. There are two Facebook pages connected to the ASW: Amsterdamsestraatweg and Bewonersgroep (resident group) Amsterdamsestraatweg Utrecht[8]. With a joint potential reach of about 3.500 people, it seemed a good idea to reach out to people who live near the ASW. Thereby, cards with a short description of the research and a link to the website where the mapping tool was situated have been handed out at the attended gathering and at the Wijkservicecentrum (neighbourhoord service centre) Noordwest. It is impossible to say via which way the most respondents have been reached, since the way in which the respondents were reached has not been recorded. However, by using both digital and non-digital channels, the luring danger of focussing on a younger — more digitally active — sample group has been tried to be diminished as much as possible. Still, the elderly has not been reached via this online tool (see appendix 4), possibly because of the digital nature.

2.3.5 Ethics and privacy

Two important aspects have been taken into account when it comes to the ethics of this research and the privacy of respondents. First of all, ethically, the subject and goals of the research have always been revealed before an interview started. This means that all respondents knew how their answers would be used, and why they had been selected as a data source. According to Bhattacherjee, this is an important ethical aspect of research: "respect the rights of research subjects, particularly their rights to information privacy, and to being informed about the nature of the research and the types of activities in which they will be asked to engage" (2012, p. 141). When observing the gathering of local residents and civic servants, the presence of the observer was also revealed beforehand. Besides this substantive consideration, a more procedural measure to guarantee privacy and ethics has also been taken. Before starting the interview, all respondents were asked if they agreed with being recorded for research purposes. All respondents but one agreed to being recorded, which means that unfortunately one interview has been 'recorded' using field notes.

To ensure their privacy, the identity of all respondents will not be given away. It has been stressed to them, that they would remain anonymous. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), keeping the identity confidential might increase the response rate. This might be true, but the main reason for keeping them anonymous is the fact that urban planning issues often contain sensitive subjects. Therefore, the risk of giving away individuals opinions — thereby possibly stirring conflict has been minimised. For instance, when trying to triangulate — checking certain statements of respondents, their precise identity has not been revealed to other respondents. Giving away detailed information on who said what, could endanger the planning process on the ASW.

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8   *Amsterdamsestraatweg*: https://www.facebook.com/straatweg/. *Bewonersgroep Amsterdamsestraatweg Utrecht*: https://www.facebook.com/Bewonersgroep-Amsterdamsestraatweg-Utrecht-359288454246928/.

3.3   QUALITY OF RESEARCH

The quality of research is important. This means that gathered results must be verifiable. Boeije *et al.* (2009) state that scholars and researchers need to have a reflective attitude towards their own research, in order to preserve for instance reliability and validity.

3.3.1   Reliability

According to Hox (2009), reliability of research is mainly concerned with the precision of research methods. When the reliability of research is optimal, repetition of data gathering will get the same results (Boeije *et al.*, 2009). In this sense, open interviews in qualitative research are less reliable than structured ones. Open interviews are useful to get authentic, unexpected input out of respondents, but they increase the chance of non-systematic errors in research (Boeije *et al.*, 2009). The reason for this lies in the fact that open interviews make it difficult to cover the same subject with all respondents. However, as discussed earlier, unexpected information might be relevant. When structuring interviews too much, these unexpected results will not be found. Therefore, the intermediate semi-structured interviews has been chosen as a method. Because theories and concepts already had been gathered before these interviews, the chance of systematically asking the wrong questions to respondents has been diminished as much as possible. This increases the reliability of the research.

Another reliability-increasing method which has been used is 'method triangulation'. According to Boeije *et al.* (2009), this means that different methods are being used to investigate the same topic. By carrying out document analyses, interviews, observations and mapping queries, different perspectives have been taken. This way, claims by respondents could be checked by looking at documents, or observing the ASW itself, and vice versa.

3.3.2   Validity

This connects well to the validity of the research. Two kinds of research validity can be distinguished: internal and external validity. Internal validity mainly concerns the researcher himself, and is mainly being determined by the accuracy of interpretation of data (Boeije *et al.*, 2009). Triangulation also plays a role in internal validity of research. When for instance documents and respondents in interviews show the same results, this is an indication of validity. To guarantee internal validity as much as possible, different experiences heard in interviews were (without mentioning the source) submitted to other respondents in later interviews. This enabled checking different allegations and assumptions.

Besides maximising internal validity, external validity is also important. External validity mainly concerns the question whether results can be generalised to other contexts (Boeije *et al.*, 2009). As discussed earlier, this is often doubted when it comes to case study research. Although the results of this research of course cannot be copied to other cases, the connection made between this case and existing theories and concepts enables others to see them in a wider context. Thereby, when it comes to 'substantive generalisation', the results from this study can probably be generalised to comparable shopping streets — at least in the Netherlands. However, one should always remain cautious when generalising results.

4 CONTEXT

The context in which a gentrification process is situated is of vital importance. When it comes to commercial gentrification, this might even be more so, taking the assumed relations between residential and commercial gentrification (Bridge & Dowling, 2001; Hubbard, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2017) into account. It is necessary to take notice of the different government policies on gentrification, because it influences the context of a gentrifying area (Lees, 2012). Therefore, gentrification in the Netherlands will be discussed first. Then, the chapter will zoom in to the neighbourhood of Noordwest, in which the ASW is situated. Finally, a description of the shopping street itself is given.

4.1   GENTRIFICATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Gentrification has been part of Dutch housing policy for more than twenty years. In the Netherlands, it has always been more regulated and managed than in other countries. A central tendency in Dutch housing policy has been the movement away from the construction of social housing, which quickly led to much more market-driven solutions to housing problems (Doucet, 2014). Van Kempen and Van Weesep (1994) noticed that in the early 1990s, Dutch housing policy changed from providing social housing to promoting more expensive residences. In this period, the government set out to deregulate the housing market, partly due to the expensive provision of social housing. This could well be a part of the reason of the rise of gentrification in the Netherlands: especially with the growing roles of developers in the third wave of gentrification (as described by Hackworth & Smith, 2001). According to Van Kempen and Van Weesep, another reason was the absence of more expensive housing in Dutch cities. Musterd and Van der Ven (as cited in Doucet, 2014), suggested a different explanation of the change in urban housing policy in the late 1980s: they argued that Dutch cities suffered from the prevalent suburbanisation of middle-class residents. However, jobs for these people were still in the city, which led to a mismatch. In reaction to this mismatch, local authorities sought for ways to attract middle-class residents. For instance, "central to this policy was the hope that more of the money earned in Amsterdam would also be spent there by a growing number of more affluent residents" (Doucet, 2014, p. 133). This notion is also reflected in a chapter by Van der Graaf and Veldboer (2009), who argue that a central aspect in Dutch urban policy is preventing the urban middle class from moving by offering them the opportunity to start a housing career in the city.

All of these reasons might be true, as they are reflected in the broader, national housing programs from the last forty years (see Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008, p. 79). Despite this growing role of developers in Dutch gentrification processes and housing developments in general, the government is still important. Doucet (2014) cites Van Weesep and Wiegersma, who argued that national or local policies for promoting gentrification are still a defining force in the process. The urban policies of the Netherlands show that at least since 1994, the Dutch government has been aiming to attract higher incomes to less affluent neighbourhoods (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008).

There are more reasons why Dutch gentrification stands out from the process in other countries. One of these is the generally strong role of central and local governments and housing associations[9] in urban housing markets (Doucet, 2014): gentrification in for instance the United States or the United Kingdom is often much more *laissez-faire* and developer-led (Doucet *et al.*, 2011). The 'strict' governmental influence in Dutch urban renewal

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9   Note that Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) stated that housing associations have a vital role in mitigating displacement.

projects results in a rather large portion of original inhabitants that are able to stay after new residents have moved in. Van der Graaf and Veldboer (2009) describe that urban renewal in Dutch cities often takes place in deprived, post-war neighbourhoods, in which large-scaled conversion and construction programs are embedded in a broader collection of social plans for original residents. Often, a 'return' guarantee is given to these original residents, which in turn is often used.

Comparing the Dutch — in this case Amsterdam's — context to the international, Van Gent (2013) sees differences, but also similarities. For instance, the municipality of Amsterdam has indeed become more focussed on transforming the built environment, thereby pursuing gentrification. In Amsterdam, but also in the Netherlands as a whole, state-led gentrification is seen as a way to gain winners on two sides: on the one hand, more affluent residents get the housing they desire, while on the other hand lower-income households profit from economic and social resources that are being brought in by the higher incomes (Van der Graaf & Veldboer, 2009). Another similarity is the fact that Amsterdam's gentrification has spread beyond the city centre, without too much political resistance (Van Gent, 2013). This is where the similarities stop. According to Van Gent, corporate actors play a smaller role in Amsterdam than Smith (2002) describes in his work on gentrification. Although these actors are present in the gentrification processes in the Dutch capital, the municipality and housing associations take a leading role. Furthermore, global financial players are hardly directly involved (Van Gent, 2013). Still, Van Gent states that despite the differences between 'regular' third-wave gentrification and the Dutch situation, the same neoliberal tendencies can be found in Amsterdam. He attributes this to privatisation from the late 1980s onwards, and the rise of the idea that owner-occupied dwellings are the most favourable form of housing.

4.2   UTRECHT AND NOORDWEST

The Amsterdamsestraatweg is a street built in the Napoleontic age, and stretches five kilometres straight from the city centre of Utrecht to the neighbouring town of Maarssen (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018b). Utrecht is the fastest growing city in the Netherlands, seeing its population grow with 15.9 percent between 2009 and 2018 — from 299,862 to 347,574 inhabitants (WistUData, 2018a). The city has a relatively large share of highly-educated inhabitants (46%, compared to a national average of 25% (CBS, 2014)). The ASW is situated in the neighbourhood of Noordwest. When it comes to inhabitants, Noordwest is the second largest neighbourhood of Utrecht. It is important to notice here that — according to the municipality of Utrecht — inhabitants do not feel like Noordwest is a neighbourhood (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013). Rather, it exists of three sub-neighbourhoods: Pijlsweerd, Ondiep and Zuilen (see figure 4.1). Within these three smaller neighbourhoods, large differences can also be found.

According to alderman Diepeveen, residential gentrification is going on in Noordwest (Obbink, 2017). This assumed positive trend is a big difference compared to the image of a part of Noordwest ten years ago. In 2007, the Dutch minister of housing, neighbourhoods and integration Ella Vogelaar selected 40 problematic neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, which would get serious (national) attention in order to improve them (Permentier *et al.*, 2013). One of the most notorious neighbourhoods was Ondiep, which has even seen large scale riots in 2008 (Radio Televisie [RTV] Utrecht, 2017). Zuilen-Oost, part of the sub-neighbourhood of Zuilen, was also on the list of neighbourhoods selected to get national attention. Between 2008 and 2012, Noordwest
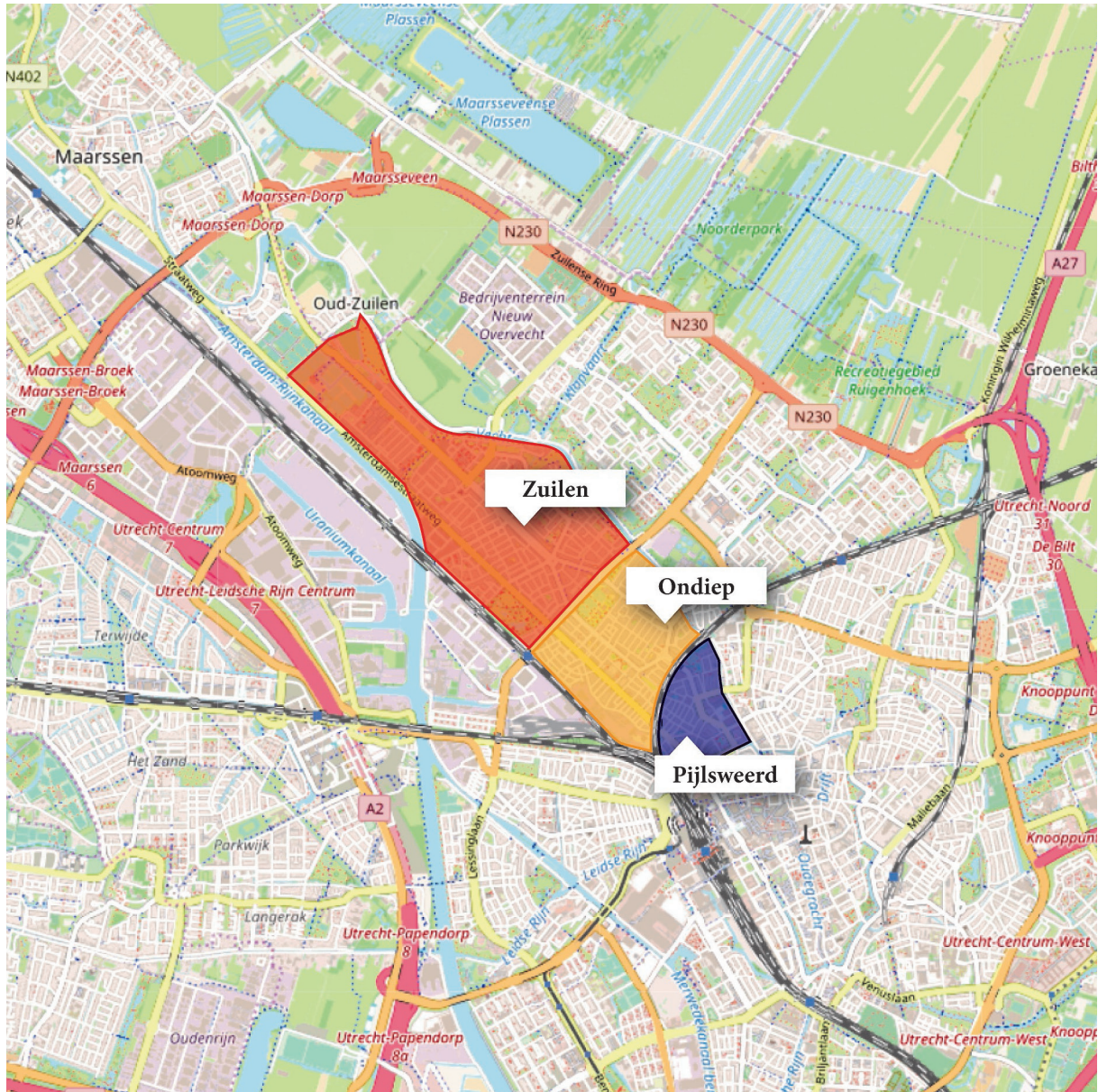
Figure 4.1 The neighbourhood of Noordwest, with its sub-neighbourhoods (sources: Gemeente Utrecht, 2015a; OpenStreetMap, 2018).

improved. For instance, unsafe feelings among residents and violence numbers dropped. Also the amount of households with social security payments also decreased from 6.7% to 5.5% (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013). It should be noted however, that these improved numbers are still higher than the average in Utrecht. Also, the amount of people who suffer from youth nuisance and home burglary numbers have risen in the given period.

Demographics

Nonetheless, the neighbourhood of Noordwest has changed. This is for instance shown by the percentage of social housing within the total amount of dwellings. Table 4.1 shows that the share of social housing in the housing stock has decreased between 2008 and 2013. Meanwhile, the relative number of private rental homes has increased significantly. The share of owner-occupied homes has also increased. The growing numbers of private rental homes, and decrease social housing fit into the wider trend in Utrecht, although these numbers are more extreme than the city-wide ones. More interesting is the fact that the percentage of owner-occupied homes in Utrecht has decreased, while this percentage in Noordwest has risen (WistUData, 2018b).

Table 4.1 Numbers of types of housing in Noordwest and its sub-neighbourhoods in 2008 and 2013 (%) (source: WistUData, 2018b).

	Pijlsweerd		Ondiep		Zuilen		Noordwest	
	2008	*2013*	*2008*	*2013*	*2008*	*2013*	*2008*	*2013*
Owner-occupied	46.1	43.3	42.3	43.2	46.1	48.3	44.9	45.9
Private rental	13.9	24.1	11.2	16.0	9.9	12.1	10.9	15.1
Social rental	38.4	30.9	44.1	37.7	41.5	37.7	41.9	36.6

The growth of owner-occupied and private rental homes connects well to the assumption of Van der Graaf and Veldboer (2009), who stated that Dutch municipalities often try to maintain the middle class by offering them the start of a housing career in the city. The increase in owner-occupied and private rental homes might indicate that the young middle class indeed has started to settle in Noordwest. When looking at the age structure of the neighbourhood, the percentage of residents between 25 and 34 indeed has grown from 24.2% to 27.1% between 2008 in 2013. In Pijlsweerd, this growth was even 6.8 percentage points. As Blasius *et al*. (2016) argue, many gentrifiers are young, middle-income and childless individuals. Looking at these statistics, the assumption of the municipality of Utrecht seems reasonable: Noordwest (and especially Pijlsweerd) is a gentrifying neighbourhood. Nonetheless, only Pijlsweerd-Zuid (a neighbourhood within Pijlsweerd) has a higher average income than the average of the city of Utrecht. The other sub-neighbourhoods of Noordwest have a lower average income (Draaijer *et al*., 2014).

Table 4.2 Age structure of Noordwest and its sub-neighbourhoods in 2008 and 2018 (%) (source: WistUData, 2018c).

	Pijlsweerd		Ondiep		Zuilen		Noordwest	
	2008	*2018*	*2008*	*2018*	*2008*	*2018*	*2008*	*2018*
Under 18	12.3	10.5	13.0	14.1	17.2	18.0	15.3	15.8
18-24	18.6	15.9	18.7	15.0	16.2	12.3	17.1	13.5
25-34	30.0	36.8	23.9	28.2	23.1	24.1	24.2	27.1
35-54	24.0	22.4	23.6	23.6	25.8	27.5	24.9	25.6
55-64	7.1	6.8	9.4	8.0	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.0
65 and older	8.0	7.7	11.4	11.1	9.8	10.0	10.1	10.0

4.3   THE AMSTERDAMSESTRAATWEG

The Amsterdamsestraatweg is generally shortened to ASW in policy documents, but many residents and storeowners talk about just the 'Straatweg' when they mention the shopping street. As mentioned, the ASW stretches five kilometres, forming the spine of Noordwest. However, the research area is limited to the part between the city centre and the Marnixlaan (see figure 4.2), because the most well-defined plan for the ASW — the so-called Brancheplan — limits itself to this area (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014). In other words, policies concerning the ASW focus on this part of the street. Thereby, most commercial activities take place at this part of the street.

Figure 4.2 The different parts of the ASW (sources: Draaijer *et al.* ,2014; OpenStreetMap, 2018).

As can be seen in figure 4.2, the part of the ASW central in this research can be divided into four areas. The first area — when taking the city centre as a starting point — is characterised by supermarkets and all kinds of commercial activities. Some more 'trendy' activities, such as an organic restaurant and a new bakery have opened up in recent years. This part, traversing Pijlsweerd, is separated from the rest of the street by a railway overpass. The second part of the ASW has a lot of small buildings, giving shelter to mainly ethnic entrepreneurs, mostly owning restaurants and cafés, hairdressers and beauty salons. About a third of the real estate is occupied by retail. In 2014, about 16.5% of the retail spaces stood empty (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014).

The third part of the ASW is a mixed area with retail and catering industries. A square bordering the ASW — the Plantage — houses several stores which mainly provide for daily shopping needs. A Bagels & Beans is situated at this part of the ASW itself, and other cafés and restaurants occupy some smaller commercial buildings (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014). Other retail spaces in the area are for instance a flower shop, a store specialised in photography and a 'concept store'. The fourth part of the ASW is a mix of residential and commercial spaces. A supermarket, pharmacy and some specialised stores like bicycle shops and an optometrist fill the commercial spaces.

Figure 4.3 The ASW: on the left, an organic restaurant on part 1. On the right, hairdressers and ethnic grillrooms and services on part 2 (source: own work).

Figure 4.4 The ASW: on the left, an overview of part 3. On the right, different commercial activities on part 4 (source: own work).

Concluding, the ASW is a mixed in a mixed neighbourhood. Many types of commercial activities take place at a street which forms the spine of one of the largest neighbourhoods of Utrecht. This neighbourhood however is a conglomeration of different sub-neighbourhoods, rather than one coherent district (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013). Nonetheless, Noordwest as a whole has a low average income compared to the rest of the city, and parts of it have been appointed as problematic neighbourhoods which needed national attention in order to improve (Permentier *et al.*, 2013). In this sense, the neighbourhood fits into the tradition of Dutch authorities trying to improve neighbourhoods. Increasing numbers of owner-occupied and private rental houses, and a decreasing social housing stock indicate that this is done by attracting higher incomes to a less affluent neighbourhood — which is in line with the findings of Musterd and Ostendorf (2008). It can be argued that therefore, *de facto* gentrification (Doucet *et al.*, 2011) is used as an urban strategy in the neighbourhood surrounding the ASW. Taking the context into account, the ASW seems an unavoidable cog in the machine of improving the neighbourhood of Noordwest.

5 RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of this study will be presented. In order to give a comprehensive and clear overview, the chapter follows the structure of the sub questions. These results will thereby be compared to the literature presented in the theoretical framework. The chapter starts with giving an overview of the different actors and stakeholders, because this context will prove to be essential in understanding the planning process surrounding the ASW and the neighbourhoods which are attached to it. Then, the goals of these different actors are being examined. After these goals are clear, the tools which are being used to achieve the set ambitions will be discussed. The final paragraph of this chapter goes into the actual changes — both physical, economic and social.

5.1 ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The municipality of Utrecht is clear about what actors have been involved in the process of developing plans for the ASW, and what role these actors played. They start the *Ontwikkelingstrategie Amsterdamsestraatweg* (which literally translates to 'development strategy Amsterdamsestraatweg') from 2014 with the sentence that storeowners, entrepreneurs, property owners, residents, experts and civic servants have been participating (Gemeente Utrecht, 2014). Asked about the goals of developing the ASW, the vastgoedregisseur (which roughly translates to 'real estate director') of the ASW — emphasises this by stating:

> **"(…) this motivated by a long process with entrepreneurs and residents. So we actually really co-operate with the Straatweg".**

> Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)

The real estate director serves the municipality of Utrecht. She mainly has a advising role, and has contact with property owners and future storeowners. On the one hand, the real estate director tries to help property owners with transforming commercial spaces to dwellings, while on the other hand trying to connect future entrepreneurs to vacant property. According to one of the larger property owners, this proactive role taken on by the municipality of Utrecht is rather unique in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, it fits into the notion that authorities are often involved in contemporary gentrification processes (Hackworth & Smith, 2001), especially in the Netherlands (e.g. Doucet, 2014).

As Hackworth and Smith (2001) stated, the third wave of gentrification has seen an increase in developers' involvement in gentrification processes. However, on the ASW, large developers do not play a significant role when it comes to the development of commercial space. The supply side (Blasius *et al.*, 2016; Byrne, 2003) at the ASW is fragmented. Virtually every store has a different — private — property owner, who rents out retail space to the local storeowners, many respondents say. Nonetheless, two larger real estate owners can be named: first, the municipality owns some property — be it together with a housing association called Mitros. These two organisations formed the *Wijkontwikkelingsmaatschappij Noordwest* (from now on: WOM), which translates to 'Neighbourhood Development Co-operation Noordwest'. However, Mitros is forced to leave this cooperation, because housing associations are bound to stricter rules since the new Dutch housing act from 2015. They should primarily focus on providing social housing, while their other — commercial — activities should be

decreased (Rijksoverheid, 2018). It is not sure how the leave of Mitros will be moderated, but with one of the two financers gone, this might have implications on future endeavours. Another larger actor when it comes to property is an Amsterdam based real estate investment company. This company owns several stores surrounding the Plantage. According to the municipality, there are a few more private investors who own some buildings, but large institutional investors are absent. This means that the allegedly large role of developers in gentrification (Hackworth & Smith, 2001) is not present on the ASW — at least not directly. This creates a more difficult context for the municipality to plan in. This will be further discussed in paragraph 5.3.

5.1.1 Local residents

The municipality of Utrecht and property owners can be seen as the supply side in the commercial gentrification process taking place on the ASW (see Blasius *et al.*, 2016). Authors such as Deener (2007) and Zukin *et al.* (2009), distinguish two important groups of actors on the demand side of commercial gentrification: storeowners and local residents. Although commercial gentrification distinguishes itself from residential gentrification by looking at commercial spaces, local residents play a vital role in the process. Many studies on (residential) gentrification mention two groups when talking about residents: the ones who displace, and those getting displaced (see for instance Glass, 2010; Zuk *et al.*, 2017). However, in the neighbourhoods surrounding the ASW, several respondents argue that three groups can be distinguished. First, the 'original' population of the neighbourhoods were mainly workers. Some respondents call these the 'real' *Ondiepers* (which translates to 'people from the neighbourhood of Ondiep'). Second, young, highly-educated households are seen as a distinct group. This group can be seen as the gentrifiers in the contemporary residential gentrification process. Third, respondents distinct migrant residents as a group. In the light of 'long-term' and 'new' residents (see for instance Zukin *et al.*, 2009), it can be argued that both workers and migrants can be characterised as long-term, lower class residents. However, as will become clear in later paragraphs, it is of importance to notice that migrant residents actually could be characterised as some kind of 'less long-term residents'. For the sake of the argument, they can be called 'mid-term residents'. These 'mid-term residents' should not be mistaken for 'pioneers' (e.g. Blasius *et al.*, 2016): they did not pave the way for gentrifiers. They rather form a distinct group in the actor network in Noordwest.

The ways in which all residents have been, and are being involved in the process of planning the regeneration of the shopping street differ: the municipality states that they are trying to gather as many opinions as possible, in numerous ways. Part of the reason for this is to also hear people who do not come to more regular participation sessions:

> **"When it comes to kinds of people we reach out to, we try to use as many instruments as possible to reach people who are not going to 'design evenings' and 'drawing evenings'. So we have a process where we go talk to people at barbershops, using maps. Just at places where people come. And usually, you then have a more informal conversation, but you also hear what their experiences and feelings of the Straatweg are".**

Respondent 2 (communication advisor, municipality of Utrecht)

This involvement has also been mentioned in the municipal plans for the ASW. These state that around 400 people have been talked to in the participation process concerning the developments (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018b). However, part of these 400 respondents are entrepreneurs or passer-by, so it is difficult to say how many residents actually took part in the planning process.

Besides the municipality reaching out to residents, this also works the other way around. The municipality states that the development of the ASW mainly comes from the desires of entrepreneurs and residents. This also happens in a more organised form. For instance, residents organise meetings, where local residents and entrepreneurs discuss different topics. At an attended meeting in a community building, these topics varied from local initiatives like festivals or a food bank for less affluent households with pets, to a discussion on the traffic situation of the ASW. At this meeting, two civic servants were also present to discuss their plans and listen to input. A social worker from a local foundation helping local initiatives is involved in trying to keep the discussion on the infill of the ASW going:

> **"Well… It think: if you want to satisfy those residents, you have to keep the conversation going for a long period of time, and make sure that you get into the capillaries of the Straatweg. To place those shops that fit".**

> Respondent 10 (social worker/local resident)

It should be mentioned that there are also residents who do not feel heard in the planning process concerning the ASW. The interviewed social worker states that there is a rather large section that does not trust the institutions. Judging by just interviews with numerous residents and storeowners, this might be jumping to conclusions too easily. However, many respondents show that they do not believe in a positive future for the ASW, since the municipality has been trying to improve the street for years in numerous ways. Among some citizens and entrepreneurs, this has led to a certain degree of resignation. For instance, when asked if he thought the ASW would improve, a local resident said:

> **"No, no. I only see it deteriorating further (….) I would love to get pleasantly surprised — luckily I am not a policymaker. (….) But I do not think [improving the ASW] is possible in the way it is happening right now".**

> Respondent 5 (local resident)

The different views on the developments of the ASW will be discussed in the following paragraphs. It is important to understand however, that some long-term residents (and storeowners) have seen the shopping street deteriorate, and generally do not have much faith in a better future caused by municipal interventions.

5.1.2 Storeowners and commercial actors

As discussed in chapter 4, there is a wide variety of businesses present on the ASW. Divisions can be made by looking at sectors, and time that these stores are located on the shopping street. This second division can be done along more or less the same lines as the local residents in Noordwest: long-term storeowners, new entrepreneurs,

and the (mainly ethnic) 'mid-term' storeowners. A large share of the entrepreneurs on the ASW is a member of the *Ondernemersvereniging #ASW030*, the entrepreneurial association. This organisation and entrepreneurs themselves should be a partner in developing the street, if we are to believe the municipality of Utrecht. However, the entrepreneurial association states that they are not being involved in the process as much as they want to be:

"We sometimes by accident hear that at meetings with residents, the municipality has been presenting plans for the Amsterdamsestraatweg, which are unknown to us. Residents are then being asked how [the municipality] can improve facades. While we know nothing. That causes a really dismal feeling for entrepreneurs. So we are basically — we feel like the last conversation partner, when all decisions have already been made".

Respondent 7 (storeowner/board member of the entrepreneurial association)

It does not help that many entrepreneurs are not the owner of the property they occupy. While entrepreneurs are allegedly being involved in the planning process, many real estate owners are not. However, the real estate director of the municipality of Utrecht mentions that she can co-operate really well with the already mentioned involved large investor. The connections between the municipality and this party are tight, as is also being confirmed by the retail portfolio manager of this investor, who is responsible for the occupation of the company's property on the ASW. This does not mean that this investor, or other property owners are actively involved in developing the ASW. The initiative for co-operating lies with the municipality: they link up possible storeowners with real estate owners. In this process, the linkages with the large investor are the easiest to make, says the real estate director. The retail portfolio manager of this investment company however, states that he thinks it would be a wise idea to try to get more property owners involved:

"You know, I think this is the moment to sit down with everyone, saying: 'Okay, we now have the opportunity to really achieve something. We are seeing the changes, so let us make sure that we work together to achieve [something]. And do not directly look at the fastest way to fill a store with good rent incomes, but also look at what would fit best for the future of that street'. I think you need each other to get to that point".

Respondent 3 (retail portfolio manager, private investor)

It can be concluded that the supply side on the ASW is fragmented, as there are not many large investors. In case of the demand side, local residents and the storeowners are the most important groups of stakeholders. As the municipality argued, these users have been taking part in the planning process from the start. This notion however is not shared by everyone. While the municipality states that residents and entrepreneurs are the main initiators of the redevelopment of the ASW, opposite experiences can also be noted. This, together with the leading role that the municipality of Utrecht has taken on, does however correlate with findings on Dutch — residential — gentrification processes (see Van der Graaf & Veldboer, 2009; Doucet, 2014). It seems that also in commercial gentrification, authorities play a rather direct role in the process. In addition, direct influence from global financial players is effectively absent in this context, which connects well to the findings of Van Gent (2013).

5.1.3 Broader context

The direct influence on the developments on the ASW mainly lies with the municipality, who also involve the residents and local entrepreneurs — be it not always as much as these parties would like. However, there is one large developer who in the future could indirectly influence the development on the ASW. This developer is going to develop the terrain of a former railway factory, situated between Ondiep and the railway system (Synchroon, 2018):

> **"Because of the choices they make, what kind of dwellings are going to be built there — in consultation with the municipality of course. That happens in consultation. And you can imagine: the choice you make there, a certain type of residences, will or will not stimulate gentrification".**

<div align="right">Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)</div>

Another indirect influence comes from the municipality of Utrecht itself. That is, because different departments form policies that affect the development of plans for the ASW. For instance, more general economic policies (Gemeente Utrecht, 2012) are of influence on the developments on the ASW, as is policy concerning retail in Utrecht (Gemeente Utrecht, 2015b). Besides those two subjects, other developments within Utrecht play their part (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018c), and there are policy documents concerning the catering industry (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018d), living (Gemeente Utrecht, 2015c), the district of Noordwest (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013; 2015a), and Utrecht as a whole (Gemeente Utrecht, 2004). All these different policy levels have an indirect influence on what is going to be developed on the shopping street.

5.2   POLICY GOALS

The fact that different policies affect the policy-making for the ASW, means that the direct goals of the redevelopment of the ASW are part of a greater context. When it comes to the shopping street itself, the goal of the leading actor — the municipality — is rather clear. In the development strategy document, the main goal is formulated as follows:

> **"First and foremost is a vision of the future with a pleasant, diverse residential and shopping street, and with a viable retail landscape".**

<div align="right">Gemeente Utrecht (2014)</div>

This goal is rather broad, but does not say anything about the more underlying goals of the municipality. As has been discussed in the theoretical framework, (commercial) gentrification is often used as a tool to solve certain urban problems (e.g. Wyly & Hammel, 2005; Zuk *et al.*, 2017). The goal stated by the municipality does not give away what the problems are that have to be tackled, or what other purpose the redevelopment of the ASW has.

5.2.1 Experience economy

When looking at the wider policy context, the most comprehensive policy document concerning economic activities in Utrecht is the *Economische agenda* (Economic agenda). This agenda immediately sets an important context: when the document was released, the economic crisis had decreased consumers' confidence and demand for commercial space (Gemeente Utrecht, 2012). Besides this development, the municipality noticed that:

> **"Consumers attach more and more value to 'experience'. Not only when spending their free time, but also when assessing their working and living environment. This is further reinforced by the emergence of the 'new way of working' and the 'new shopping'. The experience value of areas can be increased by offering a mix of functions which leads to more liveliness".**

<div align="right">(Gemeente Utrecht, 2012)</div>

This connects well to the assumption by Jayne (2006), who stated that local authorities often try to make cities more liveable in order to boost consumptions. Additionally, the municipality states that the high liveability of Utrecht is one of the city's strong characteristics, which should be maintained and strengthened in order to keep their strong competitive position. This again correlates to the findings of Jayne (2006). He argued that increased competition between cities (also see Harvey, 1989) leads to cities trying to attract businesses and consumers by creating new images of 'creative cities'. However, an economic advisor of the municipality states that this motive has not been leading when developing plans for the ASW. She argues that the developing of plans started when entrepreneurs and residents came to the municipality with the problems they perceived. Some of these problems were traffic related (such as speeding), messy public spaces and nuisance at certain businesses — mainly on the part of the ASW which is situated in Ondiep (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013).

The problems stated by residents and entrepreneurs have led to a plan called *Wijkambities 2014 - 2018: Noordwest* (Neighbourhood ambitions 2014 – 2018: Noordwest). In this plan, the municipality states that an integral vision for the ASW is the start of the renewal of the entire neighbourhoods of Noordwest (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013). Also, the ambitions set for the ASW are to make residents and entrepreneurs from the creative sector more visible, and develop certain squares bordering the street into greener areas. These steps to improve the ASW show a remarkable resemblance to the steps summed up by Jayne (2006), which are often taken by cities to get a better competitive position when it comes to consumption.

5.2.2 Catering industries

Another important reason for taking on the negative developments on the ASW is the change in consumption patterns. The municipality states that traditional shops do not have a sufficient answer to tackle the problems caused by increasing numbers of internet shoppers or changing consumer preferences (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018d). To meet the demands of contemporary consumers, the municipality sees an important role for the catering industry. For instance, it is a goal to facilitate restaurants and so-called 'food services' within residential areas. This goal has multiple purposes. First of all, the municipality argues that catering industries in the vicinity of residential areas increases the social cohesion, because it enables citizens to meet each other. Second, plans have been made to develop the city centre to areas outside of the historic boundaries: the canals. Facilitating

the development of food services within residential areas helps to achieve this goal (Gemeente Urecht, 2018d). Although the ASW is not seen as the first area to develop into an extension of the city centre, the real estate director of the ASW says that the shopping street is a possible location for future inner-urban development:

> **"If you just look at other cities and the 'stage of life' of the Amsterdamsestraatweg, the pressure on the city centre of Utrecht is really high. So you can see that on certain radians, [the city centre] expands. (….) And I think it that it is for instance really important, what will happen on the Daalsepark, which is now still a park with trees – what type of urban development will take place there. (….) When many residential developments take place, the Amsterdamsestraatweg is actually the most logical radians to expand. And one of the following questions then is: 'Will a hotel be developed? Or some bed and breakfasts? Or will there be more Airbnb's? I think it is important to look at the future of the Straatweg like that."**

<div align="right">Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)</div>

In its turn, the policies concerning the catering industry fit into the plans for both the city's economy and living environment in numerous ways, by allegedly improving neighbourhood economies, stimulating employment opportunities for lower-educated workers, and increasing an environment of 'meeting each other' (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018d). So despite not explicitly naming it a goal of the redevelopment of the ASW, it seems like the plans for the street fit into wider goals of — mainly economic — policies of the municipality of Utrecht.

5.2.3 Serving the neighbourhood

Looking at the goals of the municipality, the relationship between the development of the ASW and the neighbourhood of Noordwest has an economic character. In other words, the social aspect of commercial areas and its relations to residents is hardly reflected in the plans and ideas of the municipality. Social improvements maybe are considered as additional benefits, but they are not the main aim of the redevelopment of the ASW.

According to the municipality, the main purpose of 'upgrading' the ASW should serve the neighbourhood of Noordwest. In this sense, the plans for the shopping street do not explicitly serve a greater — citywide — purpose. The communication advisor of the municipality of Utrecht states that most people who go to the ASW go their with a clear goal. She explains that 80% of the people who visit the ASW have to be there: be it for going to a store, living or working. The municipality therefore argues that the shopping street does not have recreational 'shopping' function. Because the businesses located on the ASW have a strong 'neighbourhood function', it can be assumed that the neighbourhood changes discussed in chapter 4 will in the end have an influence on the commercial landscape of the street. The municipality at least does think that the interplay between residential and commercial gentrification works this way:

"There are municipalities who choose to first invest in new commercial services, thereby helping gentrification of dwellings. While here, it is the other way around. Here, a lot is happening in the residential areas, and commercial services follow. So it is a less conscious, strategic choice for those commercial services".

<div align="right">

Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)

</div>

In this sense, the process of commercial gentrification on the ASW seems to resemble the view of Bridge and Dowling (2001, see paragraph 2.4) more than the one by Zukin *et al.* (2009): the neighbourhood changes, and with it, commercial spaces change. This conclusion is in any case the starting point of policy-making by the municipality. Commercial gentrification on the ASW then is not a top-down process, being forced by the municipality. Rather, the municipality facilitates the more bottom-up upgrading of the shopping street. This attitude confirms that the goal of commercial gentrification in Utrecht is similar to the goal of many (residential) gentrification processes steered by local authorities — it obeys market forces and private-sector entrepreneurialism, and is used to direct market processes in the hopes of restructuring an area in a more desirable way (Wyly & Hammel, 2005).

5.3   REACHING THE GOALS

Now that the more underlying goals of the municipality are clear, it is time to look at how the municipality wants to achieve these goals. In a sense, these are the sub-goals in the process of commercial gentrification. At this moment, these sub-goals are the leading force in restructuring the ASW, as there is no shared ambition to develop the street. However, such a shared ambition might be developed in the near future:

"If you look at it from for instance an economic perspective, and ask: 'Is there a strategic goal, or has an ambition been formulated for when we think it is a success?' No such thing has been formulated in the Ontwikkelstrategie [development strategy (Gemeente Utrecht, 2014)]. And we are slowly starting ask ourselves if it is going to help us to yet formulate that [ambition]. And carefully, 'yes' is starting to be the answer, because it helps to know better which tools must be used, and which choices have be made".

<div align="right">

Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)

</div>

5.3.1   Sub-goals and tools

Nonetheless, the fact that there is no clear goal has led to three smaller goals which would create a more liveable, safe and economically vital shopping street. The idea is to get this done by investing in (1) public space, (2) safety and (3) real estate (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018c).

Public space

One of the key aspects of improving the ASW does not have too much to do with commercial gentrification at first sight. Because the ASW is an approach route into the city, there is a lot of traffic on the street – thousands of cars and bicycles, busses and mopeds crawl through the street each day. This does not make walking past shop fronts easier. Therefore, the 'staying areas'[10] for consumers at three locations on the ASW had to be redeveloped into squares with a public function (Gemeente Utrecht, 2014). Two of these locations already have been developed in recent years. Another aspect of redeveloping the street is restructuring the road itself. Part of this restructuring is decreasing the maximum speed, and creating more space for pedestrians. The overall goal is creating a more tranquil and uniform look of the street, which in turn would lead to a more liveable and enjoyable environment for pedestrians and cyclists (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018c).

Another way to reach this enjoyable environment is by aiming for "well-maintained buildings with a nice appearance" (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018b, p. 8). According to the *Brancheplan*, it was a wish of certain entrepreneurs on the ASW to 'polish' the facades of the ASW (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014). This mainly concerns excessive advertising on facades. However, it is difficult to actually achieve this:

"(…) the facade approach – and that indeed is a difficult [goal]. Because, being the municipality, do you choose to really strictly monitor advertising, or do you try to do that in cooperation with entrepreneurs and property owners? Well, we have chosen for the latter, but it is still a search. Because when will you be strict, and when will you be nice?".

Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)

Thereby, not all entrepreneurs are in favour of this approach by the municipality. As a local entrepreneur says:

"And I also think it is a bit crooked — and [the municipality] does that — to say: 'We invest a lot in that street, and then those buildings are so ugly'. That really breaks an entrepreneur's heart. An entrepreneur that tries his best every day to nicely present his store and do his best for his neighbourhood, and the customers. And then [the municipality] is saying that my store is not beautiful".

Respondent 7 (storeowner/board member of the entrepreneurial association)

The future will tell whether the municipality actually will be able to achieve their goal of 'cleaner' facades. However, the plans for restructuring the street are already being made, in co-operation with residents and entrepreneurs. The economic advisor of the municipality tells that some entrepreneurs find the plans of the municipality threatening. A long-term storeowners explains why. When he was young, in the late 60's and 70's of the last century, customers of the store — then owned by his father — came from the neighbourhoods surrounding the ASW. However, this changed with the years. The storeowner thinks the reason for this is the concentration of lower-income housing in Ondiep. Therefore, the social structure of the neighbourhood changed, which meant that more and more stores could not survive. In order to survive, some stores had to become more

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10   Literally translated from the Dutch '*verblijfsgebieden*'. These spaces are the (semi-)public spaces where people can reside.

specialised — including his own store, thereby getting a more regional function. This is where the friction with the municipal plans for a more 'liveable' street arise. Part of creating more liveability will most likely lead to less parking spots:

> I: *"So, what you are saying is that you had to look for another target group, because local residents…*
>
> R11: **Just do not have the money for us.**
>
> I: *Exactly. So maybe that particular fact has led to more need for parking for certain entrepreneurs. Because customers just did not came from the neighbourhood.*
>
> R11: **Exactly! Yes.**
>
> I: *And now they actually want to get rid of those cars again…*
>
> (….)
>
> R11: **Then you do not think it through. Then you do not think from the perspective — and that is just what I think, and I of course have a different political preference. But I am noticing that politicians acts in a way which is unfavourable for a business environment. But they do want entrepreneurs! Because they do think it is important to have entrepreneurs in Utrecht".**

<div align="right">Interviewer & respondent 11 (storeowner)</div>

This example shows the complexity of the redeveloping of the ASW. Although this storeowner is in favour of many plans of the municipality, the ways in which these plans are meant to be reached cause discussions.

Safety

This is also the case when looking at the second 'sub-goal': safety. Looking at the plans of the municipality, the main instruments to achieve a safe ASW are surveillance and enforcement (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018c). Many residents experience nuisance from certain stores and services. However, on the other hand, some people actually like the 'raw edge' of the ASW and do not feel unsafe at all. Nonetheless, the municipality highly prioritises countering nuisance and criminal activities.

According to some storeowners, the image of the ASW is worse than the actual situation. Many entrepreneurs state that creating a good image of the street is an important way to improve the ASW itself. One of these entrepreneurs states that part of creating a better image can be achieved by attracting new businesses, such as some new restaurants or lunchrooms that have been settling on the ASW. Another strategy to attract visitors is to organise a yearly fair. However, as with most goals and tools, many entrepreneurs disagree on how exactly this fair should be organised. As of now, the entrepreneurial organisation is in charge of organising the fair. However, many respondents do not like the fair in its current form. Part of this lies in the experience that mainly one of the described three groups attend to the fair: the migrant population. Both long-term and new entrepreneurs and residents do not like the fact that the fair does not live up to their preferences, and would like to see a more 'trendy' fair, with for instance food trucks. The differences between long-term and new users of the ASW on the one hand, and the 'mid-term' users on the other will prove to play an important role in the social structure of the shopping street, as will be further discussed in paragraph 5.4.

Putting the image aside, the municipality has been trying to decrease nuisance by tightening up opening hours for businesses on the second part of the ASW. According to the economic advisor of the municipality, most nuisance came from a few services on that particular stretch of the shopping street. Again, the strict opening hours also led to some opposition. One restaurant owner close to the rail overpass says:

> **"On this side, we can only work until one o'clock. And on the other side… That does not make sense, does it? Ha ha ha. Ridiculous, is it not? We have regular customers. We are not the troublemakers. Why do they only try to make it more and more difficult. Less cosiness".**

> Respondent 14 (restaurant owner/local resident)

Nonetheless, most respondents are in favour of the safety procedures of the municipality. These procedures are for instance a 'tit for tat policy': violators are being punished as soon as possible. Cleaning the street is also part of creating a more safe environment, says the communication advisor of the municipality. These policies are implanted in hope of creating different dynamics than the negative direction of the last decades.

Real estate

It can be argued that the past two main goals are not necessarily part of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy, since it does not directly affect the filling in of the property. However, they could indirectly influence this aspect, if we look at indirect displacing forces (Zuk *et al.*, 2017). A sub-goal which influences the actual retail landscape more directly is aimed at real estate.

To some extent, this goal has connections to the first two. For instance, the policy concerning facades is also part of this real estate goal, as is monitoring unwanted activities (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018c). In order to have more control over what types stores will settle on a street, one could use financial aid. In the example of Harlem, New York (see paragraph 2.6), loans were given to entrepreneurs who would settle in (Zukin *et al.*, 2009). According to the municipality, such subsidies are not available in Utrecht. The tools used on the ASW are more similar to guidelines, rather than financial incentives. An important plan in the sub-goal of controlling real estate is the already mentioned *Brancheplan*:

> **"The *Brancheplan* has been really important, because it has formed the basis of the zoning plan. And the new zoning plan facilitates new developments, which [respondent 2] just mentioned. One of these developments is the extension of 'D2-catering'. That means daytime catering, such as lunchrooms".**

> Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)

The vision in the *Brancheplan* starts by stating that the residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods, multicultural citizens and passing traffic are the main target groups of de ASW. Thereby, it divides the ASW into four different parts (see chapter 4, figure 4.2). It uses the described changes in the economy and shopping behaviour as assumptions to develop a vision on how the ASW should be developed (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014). One of the key aspects of this plan is the clustering of commercial functions, and filling up the spaces between the separate parts with residential zones. Also, the plan proposes to give each part of the ASW its own character — as the street is already characterised by wide varieties between the different segments. It is proposed to maintain the

retail function of the first and third part of the ASW, but the second and fourth part are labelled to become more mixed zones. More specifically, part one has to become a 'groceries centre', part two an 'ethnic specialities street', part three a 'living room for the neighbourhood' — the square along the ASW is seen as a place where public functions can be situated – and part four a 'enterprising neighbourhood' — meaning that more functions such as workplaces for the creative class, social workplaces will be situated on this stretch of the street (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014).

The difficult part of this plan however, is that the municipality does not have much influence on what the exact commercial landscape will look like. As discussed, the *Brancheplan* was leading in the development of a new zoning plan, which enables the municipality to direct different land uses. However, it is difficult to direct what type of venture will occupy the buildings zoned as commercial space. The municipality can assign a building as a place for catering, but has no influence on whether it will become a trendy café or a shawarma joint. It is here where the abundance of small property owners becomes an important factor. Many respondents argue that most landlords do not care much about what kind of storeowner pays the rent, as long as they actually do pay. The larger investor, who owns some property near the Plantage is more concerned with its occupants than many of the smaller property owners:

> **"You know, I mainly look at the long term. Because we have some vacancy, and I am getting quite some requests from for instance a hairdresser or nail studio — who can also pay the rent for long lease term. Which is good for our investors. But if that adds value to the Straatweg for the other entrepreneurs… And then we say: we will keep it vacant for a while. That will cost us money, but then we do know that at a certain point, a good entrepreneur will fill that vacancy. And I think you should achieve just that: entrepreneurs who strengthen each other. Then, you can really bring about a change. And I think that if you just fill it with entrepreneurs who can just pay the rent, you are not doing it sustainably".**

<div align="right">Respondent 3 (retail portfolio manager, private investor)</div>

Because of this more long-term view, the real estate director of the municipality has successfully brought two storeowners into contact with the investor. These two entrepreneurs can be characterised as more 'trendy', and say that they mainly focus on young, highly-educated families as their target groups. This example shows that potentially, the role of the real estate director can be very beneficial for the plans of the municipality. However, the lack of contact between the municipality and many owners, and the indifference of many property owners about the occupants of their property makes it hard to manage commercial gentrification. As the municipality states, they aim to facilitate market forces, but only a share of the market forces present on the ASW seek to actually develop the street into a more 'liveable' area.

5.3.2   Managing commercial gentrification

It is here where the debate on the manageability of gentrification becomes relevant. As Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) stated, mitigating impacts of gentrification asks for public-private partnerships. Although the municipality aims to serve the needs of local residents and entrepreneurs, the actual influence on commercial activities is small. One organisation that could potentially get a grip on developments on the ASW, is the WOM. A storeowners tells:

"This [building] was owned by the municipality of Utrecht. So I said: go start with your own properties. And then they said: 'Okay! What is your plan then'? 'Well, such and such. Otherwise I will leave'. And then, I actually became the first one in the whole procedure where they renovated their own property".

Respondent 11 (storeowner)

The WOM is also an important organisation when it comes to transforming commercial space to residential units. The *WOM Noordwest* is an organisation made up by a public and a private actor — although housing associations in the Netherlands are private organisations with a de facto public function (Centraal Planbureau, 2010) — and has the following goal:

"Promoting urban restructuring in the district of Noordwest in the municipality of Utrecht in order to improve the quality of life and socio-economic development in that district, as well as obtaining, alienating, encumbering, developing, managing, improving, operating and renting out property and rights to which they are subject, and finally everything related to the foregoing in the widest sense or which may be conducive thereto. The spearhead of the WOM is aimed at improving the socio-economic development of the Amsterdamsestraatweg".

Gemeente Utrecht (2018e)

Both the municipality and the housing association Mitros have invested approximately 1.6 million euros into the WOM. With these investments, three stores have been bought, which have been transformed to houses – along with two other stores already owned by the WOM. These houses eventually will be sold (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018e). However, as discussed, Mitros has to leave the cooperation due to legislation. It is unsure in what form the WOM will be continued. The municipality states that this is a question that remains to be unanswered as of yet. The economic advisor of the municipality expects that the WOM will remain as an instrument.

Mitigating impacts

Nonetheless, Mitros leaving the WOM dismantles the most robust public-private partnership in the context of the ASW. With this cooperation gone, the key aspect of managing gentrification according to Ghaffari et al. (2017) is gone. However, looking at the possible tools to control displacement induced by gentrification (table 2.4), some of these can be found in the process on the ASW. The first way is protecting tenants (Ghaffari et al., 2017). In case of commercial gentrification, 'tenants' could be replaced by 'entrepreneurs'. The municipality does not intend to protect existing entrepreneurs in any way. Asked if the municipality has thought of protecting entrepreneurs from displacement, the real estate director and communication advisor answer:

R1: **"Yes, that is a good question. Because another interesting question is: how bad is [displacement of entrepreneurs]? (….) Are those not just market forces at play? And is that not depending on the customer's demand?"**

R2: **And do we have an influence on that, being the municipality?**

R1: **No, but you could choose to – if you think it is important to maintain certain things – to subsidise that. That has happened in other places before".**

<div align="right">Respondent 1 & 2 (real estate director & communication advisor, municipality of Utrecht)</div>

This is also partly due to the fact that, in the Netherlands, rents cannot suddenly rise. Laws concerning rents already protect tenants and occupants in commercial spaces. Landlords cannot suddenly increase rents or dismantle lease contracts. Property owners can most of the time only increase rents according to the annual inflation, and to market prices at the end of each lease term — which in many cases is every five years (Allgemeine Rechtsschutz-Versicherungs-AG, 2018). In this sense, tenants' protection might not be as much of a need as in more *laissez-faire* societies, such as the United States or United Kingdom. Therefore, the municipality does not find it necessary to further protect contemporary users of the ASW. When it comes to controlling ownership and development, it has been discussed that the municipality cannot influence the process of commercial gentrification much. However, as Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) name zoning as one of the most used tools to keep control on developments, it can be stated that the municipality of Utrecht tries to keep control. It is difficult to say if this is in favour of or countering displacement of long-term storeowners.

The third category of mitigation tools summed up by Ghaffari *et al.* (2017) — empowering communities — can undoubtedly be found in the case of the ASW. Participation is key in the process of redeveloping the shopping street, as the initial step to improve the street has been taken by local residents and entrepreneurs. This enables locals to shape their own environment (Harvey, 2008). The influx of wealthier citizens in Noordwest can however lead to a particular frame of commercial gentrification, as Bernt and Holm (2009) state. The framing of changing the ASW as being 'improving' it, might be a result of the ongoing gentrification in its surrounding neighbourhoods. Looking at the ASW, it seems reasonable to say that empowering local residents and entrepreneurs does not decrease commercial gentrification. Many entrepreneurs and residents actually want the street to change, because of its problematic past. Nonetheless, this opinion is not shared by every respondent. Two entrepreneurs — from the second part of the street — would like the ASW to stay the same. It might not be coincidence that both these storeowners were non-ethnically Dutch. Keeping in mind that many respondents see former migrant residents as a distinct group — the 'mid-term' residents and storeowners — might indicate that the view of commercial gentrification on the ASW as a positive development is not as broadly shared as many policy documents state. Taking this into account however, the social worker tries to keep the conversation going:

"Well, that is the danger. That [developments on the ASW] are for a certain group, and the other group will be excluded. Well, and that is why I am often discussing it, hoping that people will take that into account. (….) But I have no instrument to do anything about it. I am not sitting at the table with those entrepreneurs. I am not at the table with civic servants. I have no influence on God knows who…".

<div align="right">Respondent 10 (social worker/local resident)</div>

It can be concluded that the municipality tries to empower the community as much as possible, by enabling citizens and entrepreneurs to leave their mark on the plans for the ASW. In this, however, the changing population of the neighbourhood might increase the differences between perceptions of the redevelopment of the street. This will make a successful commercial gentrification process more difficult (Bernt & Holm, 2009). Difficulties are also emerging because of the lack of control over actual occupation of the real estate present on the ASW. This makes both increasing and decreasing commercial gentrification a difficult task. The goals set by the municipality therefore are hard to reach by the available tools.

5.4   CHANGES

With the actors, goals, and tools used to reach these goals, the context is set to discuss the actual changes on the ASW. A part of this paragraph will go into the – tangible – physical and economic changes which have taken place over the recent years. It should be noticed that it is difficult to distinguish which changes were caused by the policies used to generate commercial gentrification, and which changes had other causes. The physical changes are rather straight-forward, which makes it more easy to see whether they are caused by policies. However, the exact causes of economic and especially social changes are harder to trace back.

5.4.1 Physical changes

There is no doubt that the ASW changed physically since the municipality came up with a strategy to foster new developments. According to the municipality of Utrecht, the process of change goes rather gradually:

> **"(….) Because does that process of commercial gentrification go fast on the Straatweg? (….) I think it does not".**

<div align="right">

Respondent 1 (real estate director, municipality of Utrecht)

</div>

The interesting thing here, is that the perceptions on how fast the ASW is changing differ enormously. According to numerous respondents, the street has changed over the past two or three years. They mention the arrival of new stores, thereby mostly naming the more 'trendy' stores, restaurants and lunchrooms. However, another share of the respondents sees little change in the retail landscape and 'vibe' of the street.

> **"But well, I think – the Amsterdamsestraatweg is changing really quickly. We bought [these stores] a year ago. Yes, you can already see several changes occuring".**

<div align="right">

Respondent 3 (retail portfolio manager, private investor)

</div>

> **"Well it goes slowly. (….) So I think, in ten years, it will have been developing nicely, but slowly. But [the municipality] will have invested eight million euros by then."**

<div align="right">

Respondent 10 (social worker & local resident)

</div>

A research among 400 respondents who live at, work at, or use the ASW mentions something along the same line. According to this research, many respondents are happy with the changes that have occurred (also sometimes praising the work of the municipality), but still see many potential improvements (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018b). As Zukin *et al.* (2009) state, the process of commercial gentrification will lead to the opening up of a neighbourhood, signalling that is safe for chain stores to arrive. This is not the case on the ASW. Rather, chain stores have left in recent years. However, the fact that not many chain stores have arrived (yet), might also be caused by the relatively recent adoption of commercial gentrification as a strategy to upgrade the ASW.

Aesthetic changes

As discussed in the theoretical framework, the physical impacts of commercial gentrification processes on the retail landscape are twofold (see table 2.3). On the one hand, the displacement of long-term storeowners is argued to be an imminent effect (Zukin *et al.*, 2009; Zukin *et al.*, 2016). A second, more general physical change is the aesthetic change of a shopping area. The plans of the municipality to improve public spaces on the ASW have not been fully carried out yet. However, some squares bordering the street have been redecorated (for an example, see figure 5.2). These squares are the also the places which are regarded as the most changed parts of the ASW (see figure 5.1).
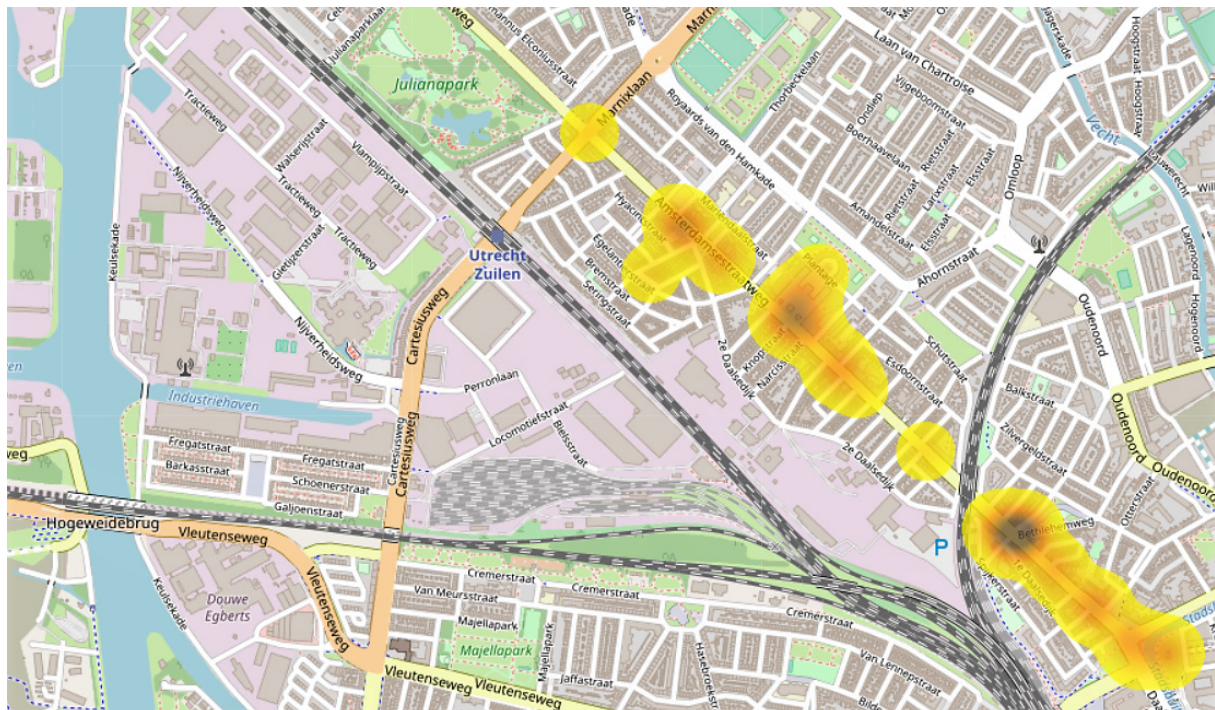
Figure 5.1 Heatmap of residents' perceptions of what areas have recently changed the most (sources: Esri, 2018; OpenStreetmap, 2018; own data).

Figure 5.2 Public space on the crossing of the Amsterdamsestraatweg and Bethlehemweg, 2014 and current situation (sources: Google Maps, 2014; own work).

Figure 5.3 Upgraded facade on the Amsterdamsestraatweg, old and current situation (sources: Google Maps, 2010; own work).

Figure 5.4 Bakery with daytime catering function in former fish store (sources: Google Maps, 2009; own work).

Although this fits into the plans of the municipality, the owner of the restaurant cornering the square and ASW states that surrounding residents and entrepreneurs — him being one of them — took the initiative to redevelop this public area. The municipality then adopted the plan, and came up with the financial resources to actually execute the plan. Other aesthetic changes are also visible when looking at the facades of the ASW. Figure 5.3 and 5.4 show some examples of the most recent Google Maps Streetview pictures, and the same spots in 2009 and 2010.

So, some aesthetic changes are visible. Still, these are only sporadic. The example in figure 5.3 shows one of the buildings restored by the WOM. However, according to the storeowner there, not many buildings followed this example. The overall look of the ASW is broadly the same as many older Google Streetview images show. This observation gets backed by several respondents, since they mention that there are not too many differences. However, several entrepreneurs mention that the vibe of the street has actually been changing slightly over the past few years – especially the last two or so. They name new restaurants and lunchrooms as one source of this development. The example in figure 5.4 shows a former fish store being transformed into a bakery with a catering function. This catering function is one of the functions enabled by new policies concerning daytime cafés and lunchrooms (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018d). Another source has the feeling that the street has become cleaner than in the foregoing years. For instance, asked about changes in the vibe of the ASW, one entrepreneur answers:

> **"Well, I think that the only thing which is going into the right direction, is that it is clean. So on that aspect it is going into the right direction. Its going into the right direction when it comes to catering. We do not have twenty shawarma joints anymore. We do not have 'coffee shops'[11] which just create a bad image".**

<div align="right">Respondent 11 (storeowner/former local resident)</div>

Displacement

When it comes to the other expected physical impact of commercial gentrification processes, the answer proves to be much more difficult to answer. The displacement of long-term storeowners does not happen on a large scale — at least, it is not possible to say that the process of attracting new stores causes the disappearance of certain shops. It is at this point, that context turns out to be crucial.

Asked about disappearing stores, many long-term storeowners and residents who have lived in surrounding neighbourhoods mention that several stores have left, and several new stores have come to the ASW. A notable share of the entrepreneurs who have left were long-term storeowners. However, it is unlikely that these storeowners had to leave because of rising rents caused by commercial gentrification. As discussed in the last paragraph, landlords in the Netherlands are bound to certain rules when it comes to rents. They cannot suddenly raise the rents — only to compensate inflation rates — and dismantle rent contracts. Probably partly due to this, the displacement of existing stores due to increased real estate and lease right prices as described by Mermet (2017) has not been found in the case of the ASW. According to numerous respondents, the explanation for disappearing long-term stores can be found in two developments: on the one hand, the changes in customer behaviour. People do not go to separate groceries, butchers and bakeries anymore — they go to the supermarket

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11   'Coffee shops' is a Dutch term for a joint that legally sells soft drugs.

instead. On the other hand, retiring storeowners often do not have anyone who will continue their stores. Another form does occur however. As Ferm (2016), commercial displacement can also be characterised by stores being transformed into dwellings. According to the *Brancheplan* (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014), the areas which are not appointed as 'focus areas', are slowly being transformed into residential areas. This process is already ongoing. So, in this sense, some stores are being displaced on the ASW. Another form of displacement might happen soon though. As Ferm (2016) and Zukin and Kosta (2004) state, a more indirect form of displacement of long-term storeowners lies in cluster effects. Various entrepreneurs have the feeling that more 'trendy' and higher-end stores will arrive in the near future. As one new storeowner states:

"(…) but when others see that there are new stores are opening, who actually serve the needs of new residents, and actually are stores instead of cannabis plantations or phone-whatever. Yes, you can see it then. It will all be alright. I believe so. You know, Bagels & Beans and Satriale's are also located here. You can see, when they are here, people will come. So the demand is really high".

Respondent 6 (storeowner/local resident)

This is consistent with the view of the municipality — namely that the new composition of the neighbourhood will create a demand for other commercial activities. Nonetheless, when looking at the assumed physical changes of commercial gentrification in scientific literature (Ferm, 2016; Mermet, 2017; Zukin *et al.*, 2009; Zukin *et al.*, 2016), these only partly overlap with the situation on the ASW. Aesthetic changes are present, but these do not occur on a large scale yet — also because the plan of the municipality to restructure the street itself is still largely in the planning phase. Displacement as a result of gentrification is hard to measure (Marcuse, 1986). However, when taking the different types of displacement into account (Zukin *et al.*, 2017; see table 2.2), it can be said that forced direct causes for displacement are hardly present on the ASW. The policy of the municipality to transform certain stores into dwellings however, could lead to forced indirect and exclusionary displacement: by zoning for residential areas, already existing buildings can change, which in turn can lead to people having to leave their current place on the ASW. However, the main goal of converting retails spaces into dwellings is to decrease vacancies. Taking this into account, forced displacement on the ASW does not seem a probable effect of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy. The presence responsive displacement forces will be further discussed in the paragraph on social changes. However, one direct responsive cause should be named here. As discussed in paragraph 5.3, the possible removal of parking will create the danger of displacing certain specialised storeowners, who have changed their activities and target group due to past changes in population and – as will be discussed in the next paragraph — the economy.

5.4.2 Economic changes

When it comes to economic changes, numerous are named when looking at literature on gentrification. Economic results found in commercial gentrification processes are (1) increasing rents and property prices, (2) an increase in development because of 'hip' new stores and bars, (3) healthier retail landscape in areas characterised by disinvestment and (4) more innovation to respond to global competition (see table 2.3).

Increasing rents and prices

As has already been discussed, the increase of rents is virtually not a problem on the ASW, because of tenant protection in the Netherlands. However, rents have increased on the ASW. A restaurant owner states that one of the reasons to settle on the street three years ago has been the low rent he would have to pay — along with the feeling that the neighbourhood could be the next 'place to be'. Other entrepreneurs say that the rents now are according to market prices. This also has to do with the fact that the economic tide has changed: when the plans for the ASW were developed, the financial crisis was still having its impact on property prices. As an entrepreneur who is looking for a place to start her own store states:

> **"Well, a real estate agent told me that I was just too late. So a year ago, or one and a half, the prices were lower. Because the economy is starting to pick up again. So the prices will increase".**

<div align="right">Respondent 4 (future storeowner/local resident)</div>

So, rising rents and property prices are probably rising due to the economic situation. Also, rent increases due to commercial gentrification processes are unlikely to occur in the Dutch situation. These two facets enable us to conclude that — if they even exist — 'increasing rents and property prices' are most likely no effect from the policies used by the municipality.

Development and investments

When it comes to the increasing developments, no unequivocal answer can be given. As discussed, the views on whether the process of new stores settling on the ASW is going fast or not, differ. Some respondents state that they have seen changes in the last few years:

> **"It is okay again now. If you look at this this year, I think the amount of stores is picking up again".**

<div align="right">Respondent 4 (future storeowner/local resident)</div>

Others do see some new developments, but also see other stores disappear. Their overall view of the developments on the ASW — also the transformation of commercial spaces into residential units — are a bit more sceptical. For instance, a local resident says:

> **"You can see the following happen: commercial spaces become vacant. Well, in the best scenario, it will be transformed and some students will move in. Well, I think students are a quite fun, but they also have their particularities — so to say. Ha ha. But those stores are leaving. And if it remains a retail building, most of the times — well right now bicycle stores are hot — or a hairdresser comes in. You can see that wave motion all the time. So you can see the diversity decrease. And then a building gets abandoned, and what comes in… We have had the hairdressers. We have had shawarma joints. We have had Polish or Romanian stores for a long time. Well, and when the [red light district close by] had been closed, we all of a sudden had massage salons. You know. Well, and then we have some tearooms where certain things happened of which we thought: 'Is that necessary?'".**

<div align="right">Respondent 5 (local resident)</div>

This respondent sees no clear indication that the ASW has been improving in recent years. Furthermore, he states that the retail landscape is actually worse than nine years ago — when he moved to the neighbourhood of Ondiep. He partly connects this to the fact that many stores are just not economically viable anymore. For instance, an often-heard desire of residents is that the 'old' specialised stores like butchers and groceries should return to the ASW. In earlier times, the street was a real shopping street, where local residents would do window-shopping on their days off. This by far not the case anymore. Many storeowners mention that long-term residents want the old types of stores to come back. The board member of the entrepreneurial association mentions that the disinvestment of the ASW is for a large part caused by 'time'. Asked about what the reason is for the ASW not being a real 'shopping street' anymore, she answers:

> **"Time. Times are changing. Yes, I mean, you can order anything you want with your phone, while laying down on your favourite chair. And of course, that was not the case before. So, time".**

> Respondent 7 (storeowner/board member of the entrepreneurial association)

However, with the emphasis on the 'liveability' of the street (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018c), connected to the 'experience economy (Gemeente Utrecht, 2012), the municipality notices this problem and tries to direct the ASW toward being a real 'shopping street' again. With commercial activities more aimed at 'experience' coming in, such as restaurants and lunchrooms, the ASW slowly seems to start moving into that direction. In this sense, the street is starting to fit the needs of both new and long-term residents. This assumption is backed by research on vacancies on the ASW, which have decreased in the last years:

> **"Half way through 2016, vacancy rates on the ASW dropped to 8%. According to counts by the real estate director, the amount of vacant buildings has decreased from 37 to 15 between February 2016 and July 2017. The decrease of vacant buildings is caused by new entrepreneurs and the transformation of stores to facilitate living or other uses. Especially the expanded possibilities for daytime catering industries in the new zoning plan causes new entrepreneurship".**

> Municipality of Utrecht (2018d)

Innovation and global competition

It is exactly this facilitating role that enables the ASW to better connect to new economic developments – just as the municipality wants in its economic vision (Gemeente Utrecht, 2012). Nonetheless, it cannot be said if the process of commercial gentrification causes innovation on the ASW to respond to 'global competition'. As discussed, this is also not directly the goal of the municipality. However, when looking at literature on the urban entrepreneurialism and the role of consumption in contemporary urban environments (Harvey, 1989; Jayne, 2006), enabling commercial activities which are more in line with contemporary economic trends and consumption demand can indirectly strengthen the competitive position of Utrecht.

It should be noted though, that not everybody will be able to profit from this trend — or this at least should be considered. Zukin and Kosta (2004) state that commercial gentrification will increase diversification in retail areas, which will make them more innovative and economically viable. However, innovating for many long- or mid-term storeowners is difficult. They find it hard to choose between their 'old' customers or the new residents

of the neighbourhood of Noordwest. One of the storeowners mentions that there are two kinds of entrepreneurs on the ASW. The new, and some long-term businesses are focussing on the new population, while some long-term or mid-term storeowners are not:

> **"Those are either still sitting in their own 'bubble', having their own customers from all over Utrecht, who go there for that special hairdresser or whatever. And other old entrepreneurs are really torn between two sides. On the one hand, they want to go with the new clientele, losing their older customers. But they also do not have the new customers, because they are not fully coming along. And that is very difficult".**

> Respondent 6 (storeowner/local resident)

This connects really well by the findings of Lloyd (as cited in Zukin *et al.*, 2009), who argues that by going along with new customers, storeowners risk to lose their old clientele. This also seems the case on the ASW. This is an indication that indeed, a distinction can be made between the preferences of different social groups in the neighbourhood of Noordwest. When focussing on one group, storeowners might not fit the needs of the other(s).

5.4.3 Social changes

Noticing this leads us to the, less tangible, social impacts of commercial gentrification. The hypothetical changes due to commercial gentrification are (1) the creation of new communities and (2) alienation of long-term residents. As Deener (2007) and Sullivan and Shaw (2011) argued, commerce is a structure of neighbourhood life. Having seen that gentrification affects entrepreneurs located on the ASW, the question rises if that has an influence on the social structure of Noordwest.

Creation of new communities
Lloyd and Patch (as cited in Zukin *et al.*, 2009) both argued that the first group of new entrepreneurs in a deprived area can sometimes be seen as 'social' entrepreneurs. They help to create the new community in a gentrifying neighbourhood. Judging by the attitude of numerous new entrepreneurs on the ASW, they certainly plan to do so. For instance, a storeowner of one year says:

> **"I get more and more people from [the eastern part of Ondiep], who got scared to death when they settled there, by what kinds of comments they got. But they also say: 'We can see that [change] is happening'. So that goes much quicker than the stores. (….) And that is why I dared to settle here. (….) And I think that at a certain point, the people living here will not tolerate other stores anymore".**

> Respondent 6 (storeowner/local resident)

She expects that the ASW and Noordwest will develop into a 'yuppie' neighbourhood — also because a Bagels & Beans and a pizza restaurant aimed at higher incomes have settled on the street in the past few years. According to her, these examples show that the demand is there, which will eventually lead to commercial gentrification. This aligns with the expectations of many respondents. As discussed earlier, the municipality thinks that the ASW can ben developed because of the change of the population of Noordwest (see also Obbink, 2017). Several

storeowners also have the feeling that the arrival of more high incomes and higher-educated residents have led to more stores and other commercial activities aimed at these people. In the case of the ASW, entrepreneurs do not seem to create new communities. Rather, they reinforce the already existing social developments in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Part of the changing population can also be attributed to the fact that many long-term inhabitants move to nursery homes, or pass away. Several storeowners state that long-term residents often have left to live in neighbouring towns. It is not proven that this is due to displacement, but the fact that this group decreases causes some problems for storeowners who focussed on these people. A storeowner mentions that she used to have many people in their fifties until their seventies as her clientele. This has changed over the years:

"It is mainly the fact that you see new faces all the time. But also new styles. People want other things than ten years ago. It really changes in that sense. But also the amounts of money that are being spent. You can just notice that a more trendy neighbourhood is about to emerge, so you get people who follow the trends more, do not come for the old-fashioned bouquets of flowers. Instead, they want for instance a pineapple plant. I have to really get used to that, because I have been working in this store for thirteen years, and have had older costumers for at least eleven years. These older people start to disappear more and more".

Respondent 12 (storeowner)

So, innovating to meet the demands of the new residents takes some effort, but as this example shows, the loss of old customers might not be solely caused by a focus on the new community. Because the amount of long-term residents decreases, so do the numbers of customers. This research was not aimed at finding out whether the decrease of long-term residents is a 'natural' process or should be seen as displacement due to gentrification. However, indications of both causes for the diminishing of older inhabitants ('*Ondiepers*') have been found. Therefore, the reality probably should be sought somewhere in between.

Physical communities

As discussed, the ASW has been divided into four different part, each with its own character (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014). It is interesting to see whether this also creates physical communities. In other words, if for instance long-term and new residents visit different parts of the street. This has been measured by asking numerous respondents to map their consuming behaviour on the ASW. The maps in figure 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 show the locations of the stores and catering businesses regularly visited by residents. These respondents have been categorised by how long they have been living near the ASW (figure 5.5), their incomes (figure 5.6) and what sub-neighbourhood they live in (figure 5.7). It can be seen that no real physical divisions can be found when dividing people according to their income or whether they are new or relatively long-term inhabitants of Noordwest. Only when it comes to sub-neighbourhoods, it can be seen that people from Zuilen seem to visit the part of the ASW close to their neighbourhood more than the other parts. Furthermore, no clear physical divide can be found when looking at the cognitive mapping tool — at least not on the scale of the entire ASW.

Years in Noordwest
🔴 Less than 10 years
🔵 More than 10 years

Figure 5.5 Regularly visited businesses, respondents divided by years in the neighbourhood (sources: Esri, 2018; OpenStreetMap, 2018; own work).

Income
🔴 € 30,000 or less
🟠 € 30,001 - 40,000
🔵 € 40,001 or more

Figure 5.6 Regularly visited businesses, respondents divided by income (sources: Esri, 2018; OpenStreetMap, 2018; own work).
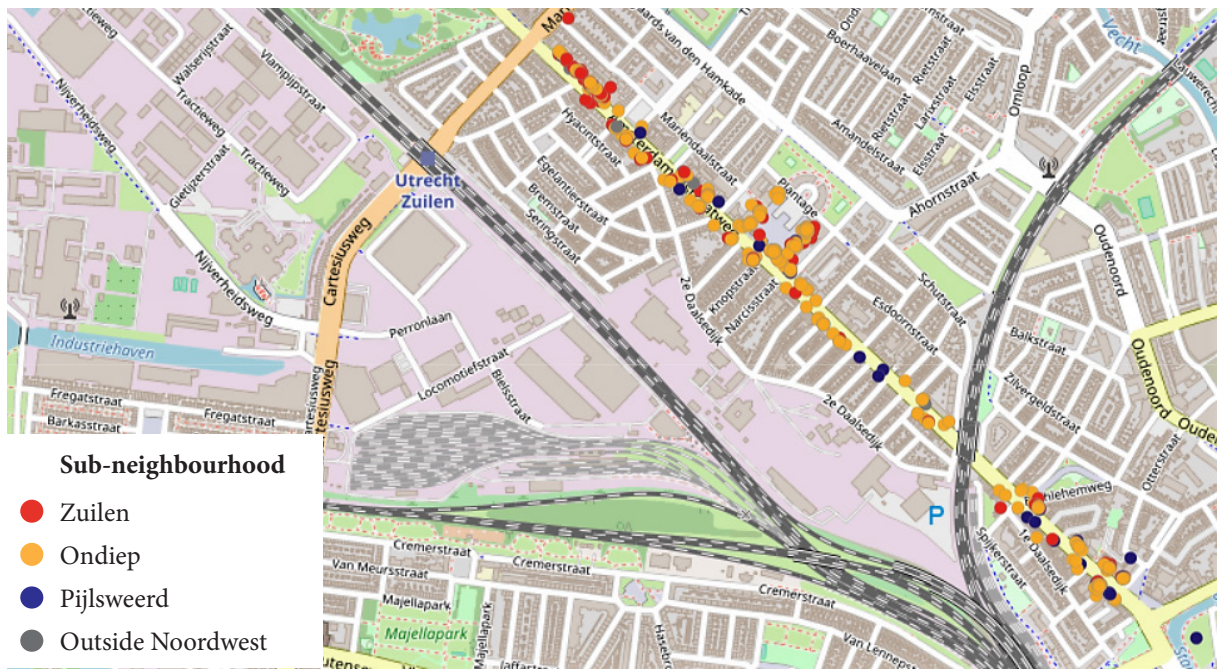
Figure 5.7 Regularly visited businesses, respondents divided by sub-neighbourhood (sources: Esri, 2018; OpenStreetMap, 2018; own work).

Long- and 'mid'-term residents

When it comes to the alienation of long-term residents, something peculiar can be noticed. Asked about what long-term residents thought of the arrival of new — trendy — stores, they mentioned that they were happy with them. However, storeowners mention that long-term residents do not often visit new businesses. The owner of an organic restaurants states that he mainly sees 'yuppies' and students in his restaurant, and that visits by long-term residents are only sporadic. The same pattern is seen by another store aimed at higher incomes. Numerous storeowners argue that long-term residents feel a certain initial hesitation to go to new stores (the opposite happens far less: new residents go to old businesses more often than vice versa):

> **"Some stores survive, because I think that new residents do go to such an old store once and again. Because they know where they are settling. So they go to such a bakery or bicycle shop. And yes, they try that once, and if the service is good, that is not a bad thing. But I think the other way around, the threshold is too high. And because they simply do not have the money".**

> Respondent 6 (storeowner/local resident)

So, long-term residents often do not dare to go to new businesses, or simply cannot afford to go there. Still, they welcome these businesses. There are two explanations for this seemingly contradicting given. On the one hand, it has already been noted that a nostalgic element sure plays its part in the desire to have more specialised stores. A resident who has been living in the neighbourhood for more than fifty years says:

R9:   "You can see that it is changing. That more young people are settling in this neighbourhood. Because it is so close [to the city centre].

I: *And according to you, that is positive?*

R9:   Yes, certainly! Yes.

I: *And the next step would have to be that the stores…*

R9:   Yes! Like the Plantage. In earlier days, we had a centre for fresh food there, with a butcher, a cheese store… And the 'Zeeman'[12] is gone".

Interviewer & respondent 9 (local resident)

Another local resident states that — when he was young — people used to stroll on the ASW. The more experience-oriented future of the ASW with more trendy stores might help to get more strolling pedestrians back to the street. However, another presumable reason for the positive attitude towards new stores has a more ethnic component. As discussed, the 'mid-term' population is one of the three distinguishable groups in Noordwest and on the ASW. Several local residents do not seem too fond of this group. For instance, a resident mentions:

"Without immediately being called a racist or xenophobe: when more than half of the customers are ethnically non-Dutch, you know that the retail landscape will diminish. You will get low-end budget stores. (….) That is also noticeable right here. And look, the average Moroccan does not integrate. Not in this neighbourhood. You can see 'hi' sometimes, and maybe exchange a recipe for couscous or hutspot. But that is no integration. You can see it goes past each other: we go to white stores, they go to theirs".

Respondent 5 (local resident)

Judging by the attitude of certain storeowners and residents, the fact that the 'gentrifying' stores are often owned by ethnically Dutch storeowners, is positive enough. A side note must be made here: the fact that many ethnic businesses are situated in the part where most nuisance takes place. The dislike for the ethnic businesses might very well be related to this nuisance: in this sense, long-term residence might see new entrepreneurs as a welcome alternative for those businesses causing nuisance. However, more entrepreneurs see that the mid-term population and businesses form a separate community on the ASW. One respondent thinks this actually has more to do with the socio-economic situation of many ethnic inhabitants. Asked about if there are any distinguishable groups when it comes to shopping behaviour, he says:

Absolutely. Extreme segregation. Just like everywhere in the Netherlands. (….) There is no geographical border. (….) Het is of course partly based on ethnicity. But for the largest part – and for a part, ethnicity has an effect on to which socio-economic class you belong. So it is more [based on socio-economic class] than ethnicity, actually".

Respondent 15 (restaurant owner)

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12   The *Zeeman* is a Dutch clothing store, mainly aimed at lower incomes.

The ASW is changing. Depending on who you ask, this process goes fast or slowly. Physically, it can be said that the municipality has had some influence on what stores arrived on the ASW, and some buildings have been transformed into homes due to the Brancheplan (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014). Due to legislation on rents, large-scale displacement of entrepreneurs is not possible in the Netherlands. Economically, the new developments have been made possible by the new rules concerning catering industries (Gemeente Utrecht, 2018d). Partly due to these loosened rules, vacancy rates have dropped. New economic activities which have arrived, might strengthen the competitive position of Utrecht indirectly. Socially, the process of commercial gentrification reinforces a dichotomy on the ASW. Not between long-term and new residents and entrepreneurs, but between the 'mid-term' population and the other two groups. The long-term residents actually do not seem to dislike commercial gentrification, since more businesses fitting to their perceptions of a liveable street are settling down. This does not mean that long-term residents visit the new stores and restaurants often: they cannot afford it, or the threshold to visit them is too high.

6 CONCLUSION

How does the use of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy influence the case of the Amsterdamsestraatweg? Having looked at the actors, goals, tools and impacts of commercial gentrification policies, it can be concluded that this is a complex question to answer. There are many different factors influencing the outcomes of this urban strategy.

The goals of state-led commercial gentrification on the ASW resemble the goals pointed out in scientific literature. The municipality of Utrecht wants to develop an economically viable street, in order to serve the surrounding neighbourhoods. To serve the neighbourhood, the ASW has to become more focussed on creating an 'experience'. While not explicitly stating that this is the goal, policy documents concerning the economy of Utrecht, retail and catering industries (Gemeente Utrecht, 2012; 2015b; 2018d) are aimed at creating an economy which fits better into the consumption economy focussed on 'lifestyle'. This reflects the assumption of McLean *et al.*, who argued that planners and urban officials often think processes which can be described as commercial gentrification will improve an area by transforming them into spaces of consumption attractive to investors and middle-class professionals (2015, p. 1284). In this, the municipality facilitates already ongoing processes in Noordwest, and on the ASW. Remembering Jayne (2006) stating that consumptions spaces are often being 'upgraded' by improving public spaces, it can be concluded that the goals of the municipality for the ASW are very similar to wider international trends.

However, it is difficult to achieve these goals on the ASW. One of the main reasons for this is that direct influence on economic developments is hard — especially in the context of this shopping street. Because the largest share of the real estate on the ASW is owned by individuals or small — local — investors, effective governance to direct the types of commercial activities occupying the buildings can hardly be established (see also Ferm, 2016; Ghaffari et al., 2017). An alternative tool set by the municipality is the Brancheplan (Draaijer *et al.*, 2014), which has been the source for the new zoning plan of the ASW. Other indirect policies concern the upgrading of the street and public places on the ASW, and creating a more safe environment. In doing this, the municipality hopes to improve the image of the street, attracting more businesses. However, not all actors involved agree on how the plans for the ASW want to tackle certain problems. For instance, more specialised stores, who had to aim for a larger service area due to the changing population of Noordwest in the 1980s, are afraid to actually lose customers due to foreseen changes in parking policies. It is here where the first contradicting goals start to emerge: while almost every respondent wants the ASW to improve, new and long-term businesses disagree on how exactly this has to be achieved.

The division between long-term and new storeowners has been described by numerous respondents. The long-term businesses see a decrease of their 'old' customers, and some struggle to find a way to meet the demands of new customers. Because the 'original' population leaves, these businesses risk to get out of business (Marcuse, 1986). However, the division between long-term and new communities (e.g. Deener, 2007) is not the most distinctive one. The specific demographic changes and the economic degradation of the neighbourhood of Noordwest and the ASW play an important role here. Long-term residents perceive the arrival of new 'hip' businesses as positive for two reasons. First, it resembles the old character of the street: it used to be a shopping street where residents used to wander around, shopping at small scale, specialised stores. Second, the new, often ethnically Dutch entrepreneurs are seen as a welcome alternative for the often ethnic businesses in the part of the ASW where most nuisance can be noticed. The paradox in this is that long-term residents do not visit new stores often. In this sense, it can be argued that for long-term residents, the arrival of new businesses brings back the

feeling of 'symbolic ownership' (Deener, 2007) over the ASW. This means that indeed, the function of commercial spaces is far broader than just an economic one: the social component is just as important. Also, it can be noted that the process of commercial gentrification does not seem to mix different communities: yes, they do exist side by side, but not together. In fact, the three different groups live and use the ASW more or less separated. It therefore does not respond to the statement of Byrne (2003), who argued that gentrification processes could increase social mixing.

Symbolic ownership over the ASW seems to fall into the hands of the new population of Noordwest. As the municipality stated, they see the influx of young, well-educated families into the neighbourhood, and want to develop the ASW to serve this new population. The statement by former alderman Kees Diepeveen — 'stores for the lower incomes must remain' (Obbink, 2013) — does not meet a response in the plans of the municipality. No measures are taken to try to keep contemporary businesses aimed at lower incomes on the ASW. The municipality sees this as a natural process of supply and demand. It should be stated however, that displacement due to commercial gentrification might not be as big of a threat as in other contexts. This is due to the legislation on rents in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, it seems likely that more and more 'old' stores will disappear. As discussed, this can be explained by changes in consumption behaviour and retiring long-term storeowners. To add a third reason, the fact that many respondents state that the 'old' residents of the neighbourhood are disappearing, the stores aimed at these customers will probably have a hard time ahead of them – especially when they cannot find a way to fit the demands of the new population. If this becomes the case, the municipality is not planning to support the storeowners in trouble. Rather, the policies aimed to develop the ASW are "used either as a justification to obey market forces and private-sector entrepreneurialism" – just as Wyly and Hammel (2005, p. 35) described. Managing the process is difficult either way, since the municipality does not have much direct influence on what types of entrepreneurs are settling in the properties on the ASW. This lack of manageability might partly be related to the fact that no effective public-private relationships are organised on the ASW — which is often noted as vital in managing commercial spaces (see Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017; Harvey, 1989; Rankin & McLean, 2015). The only partnership with actual executive power — the WOM — has to be remodelled after the housing association had to terminate its commercial activities.

So, how does the use of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy influence the case of the ASW? The answer to this, is that commercial gentrification is hard to manage. This at least is the case on the ASW. Because of the fragmented character of property ownership, it is hard to directly steer developments on the street. Thereby, different actor might have the same final goal, but the question of how to get to this goal leads to discussion. Nonetheless, indirectly, promoting commercial gentrification by improving the image and redesigning public space might be the most effective policy possible. It should then be noticed, that commercial gentrification has an impact on the entire social life of Noordwest.

Discussion

The kinds of impacts caused by commercial gentrification as an urban strategy strongly depend on context. As Lees (2012) stated, this is partly because of the differences in policies, governance and legislation between administrative areas. As Doucet (2014) argued, in the Netherlands, the (local) government is strongly involved in processes of – in this case commercial – gentrification. In addition, Dutch legislation protects tenants from rent increases, which decreases the probability of commercial gentrification. Context is alto important when looking at social impacts. Bluntly said, the most common view on gentrification is that one group displaces

the other: the original population gets displaced by the new one (e.g. Glass, 2010). However, as this example has shown, reality might be more complex. In Noordwest, three groups can be distinguished: besides the long-term and new residents and entrepreneurs, the mid-term, ethnical population might just be the group with the least interests in the developments going on. Demographic developments also have an influence on the amount of customers visiting businesses on the ASW. These developments may be partly caused by residential gentrification, but the 'natural' decrease of the original population must not be forgotten. It is not sure whether the decrease of long-term stores can be called 'displacement' — that assumption is hard to prove (see Marcuse, 1989). Often being depicted as the most important physical impact of commercial gentrification (see Ferm, 2016; Gonzalez & Waley, 2013; Mermet, 2017; Zukin et al., 2009), the context seems to make the ASW not totally fit into broader academic insights. However, this might also be caused by the rather recent implication of the plans of the municipality. Economically, the developments on the ASW are also part of more general economic trends, such as the economic crisis of 2008 and the regeneration period after that, and changing consumption behaviour. Taking all these factors into account, it seems fair to say that the developments of the ASW are exposed to numerous developments on demographic, economic and social level. Carefully generalising this, commercial gentrification might not always be the most important force shaping commercial areas: the context in which these areas are situated might be just as — if not more — important. Nonetheless, it has been proven that commercial gentrification is a valuable process to investigate, since it connects to two of the most important forces in contemporary urban development: gentrification (Doucet, 2014) and the focus on consumption (Jayne, 2006). Also, this case has proven that residential gentrification might be an important stimulator of commercial gentrification. Commercial gentrification in this sense is dependent on its residential counterpart (see also e.g. Bridge & Dowling, 2001). In case of the ASW, it is not a first step towards residential gentrification.

In the normative debate on gentrification processes, this thesis does not pick a side. On the one hand, it can indeed be argued that the process of commercial gentrification has both winners and losers. Some entrepreneurs have difficulties when it comes to keeping their old customers, or might not be able to meet the demands of the new socio-economic classes moving to the neighbourhood. On the one hand, one could say that this is just the mechanic of supply and demand. On the other hand, one could say that deliberately promoting the ASW as an upcoming street might reinforce the process of 'trendy' businesses displacing others. The municipality clearly looks at the process with the first assumption in mind. A more critical stance can be taken by looking at what the municipality does to actually manage negative effects of commercial gentrification. Forming one of the main motives to conduct this research, the expressed desire to keep some stores for the socio-economic lower inhabitants of Noordwest (Obbink, 2017) have not led to any policies actually trying to mitigate the impacts of commercial gentrification. Also, no indication has been found that the municipality is thinking about the negative aspects of the process. And yes, the majority of the entrepreneurs and residents participating in the development of plans for the ASW might be in favour of the deployed trajectory – the majority does not always reflect the total population. In this sense, the municipality of Utrecht indeed has favoured certain economic and social interests as more important than others (Smith & Difilippis, as cited in: Smith, 2002). Then again though, the effectiveness of commercial gentrification as an urban strategy is — in case of the ASW — not particularly large.

Further research

Further research on commercial gentrification as an urban strategy first of all should focus on contexts. As discussed, the context in different areas has a vital influence on how processes of commercial gentrification develop — and how effective they can be as an urban strategy. The call by Lees (2012) to focus more on the context of gentrification has been reinforced by the results of this research. Looking at the described context of increasing inter-urban competition and focus on consumption (Harvey, 1989; Jayne, 2006), it might be valuable to take these into account in further research on (commercial) gentrification. Also, future research might take into account that more than two groups are playing a key role in gentrification processes. The classical view of one group displacing the other might be too oversimplified. The group of 'mid-term' actors in gentrification processes are different then 'pioneers' (see Blasius *et al.*, 2016), and could well cause different dynamics in numerous cases (one example is actually shown by Ernst and Doucet, (2014)). The role of these 'mid-term' residents might play a part in more gentrification processes, so research on this group will be a valuable addition to understand (commercial) gentrification better. In case of the ASW, the future will have to show what will actually happen when the policies by the municipality of Utrecht are in effect for a longer period of time. The relatively short period in this research was useful to see what underlying assumptions and goals are present in setting commercial gentrification as a policy goal — the final outcomes are yet to be discovered. Research on the situation of the ASW in a few years will have to provide us with that knowledge. More research should also aim at the displacement of storeowners. As Marcuse (1986) stated, displacement is hard to measure. As this research has shown, other causes can also be the reason for residents or storeowners to leave. As he discusses, quantitative research on users, housing-units an mobility figures might give an answer to the question how many storeowners actually got displaced.

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APPENDICES

90

APPENDIX 1   TOPIC LISTS

Topic list interview municipality of Utrecht
Real estate director & communication advisor

1. **Goals of commercial gentrification**
   - What does the municipality want to achieve by upgrading the ASW?
   - Liveability, safety and economic vitality?
   - Is the development of the urban economy a goal of developing the ASW?
   - Is attracting more consumers (from outside of of Utrecht) a goal?

2. **Involved actors**
   - What actors are involved in the changes of the ASW?
   - With what actors is being co-operated?
   - Are there many public-private partnerships?

3. **Achieving goals**
   - Which measures have been taken to achieve the goals?
   - Public space, safety and real estate?

   Real estate:
   - What is the WOM? En what does it do?
   - How does the real estate director help transformation?
   - What is the goal of improving the facades?
   - What is the *Brancheplan?*

4. **Managing impacts**
   - Is something being done to mitigate losing entrepreneurs?
   - To what extent are entrepreneurs being involved in planning?
   - To what extent are residents being involved?

Topic list interview municipality of Utrecht

Economic advisor

1. ***Economische agenda***
   - "Increasing importance of experience"
   - "High-end living and work environment — competitive position"
   - "It is important to stimulate entrepreneurs, make them flourish and attach them to our city"

   Are these things that are at play, looking at planning for the ASW?

2. ***Ontwikkelstrategie ASW***
   Clear focus on "initiated by residents and entrepreneurs". Is that really the case, or is there a strong desire of the municipality involved?

3. ***Brancheplan ASW***
   - Changing retail market: are these the developments that led to the plans to redevelop the ASW?
   - WOM: what now? And how many buildings does it own?

4. ***Ontwikkelingskader horeca Utrecht***
   - Does safety go before economic development or attractiveness?
   - Does the ASW fit into the plans to develop the city centre outside of its current area?

5. ***Straatwegmeter***
   Does the plan to increase liveability also intend to improve the situation for contemporary residents, or is it aimed to attract new entrepreneurs and residents?

Topic list interview private investor

1. **Goals of commercial gentrification**
   - What does your company do?
   - Do you have an interest in the changes on the ASW?
   - At what part of the ASW is your property situated?

2. **Involved actors**
   - With what actors are you co-operating?

4. **Managing impacts**
   - Are there long-term entrepreneurs in your property?
   - Do you rather have new entrepreneurs, or long-term ones?

Topic list entrepreneurs/local residents

1.   General (for entrepreneurs)
- What kind of business do you own?
- How long have you been situated on the ASW?
- What is your target group?

2.   Physical changes
- What is the original vibe of the ASW?
- Is that vibe changing? How?
- Have many 'original' entrepreneurs or residents left?
- How would you characterise new entrepreneurs?

3.   Social changes
- Has the population of Noordwest changed?
- Did any groups leave or come?

4.   Economic impacts (for entrepreneurs)
- How much rent do you pay (if you do)?
- Have rents increased?

APPENDIX 2   LIST OF INTERVIEWS

No.	Respondent	Role	Organisation	Date
1.	Respondent 1	Real estate director	Municipality	7 May 2018
	Respondent 2	Communication advisor		
2.	Respondent 3	Retail portfolio manager	Private investor	23 May 2018
3.	Respondent 4	Future storeowner/local resident		6 June 2018
4.	Respondent 5	Local resident		11 June 2018
5.	Respondent 6	Storeowner/local resident		12 June 2018
6.	Respondent 7	Storeowner/board member of the entrepreneurial association		12 June 2018
	Respondent 8	Customer/local resident		
	Respondent 9	Customer/local resident		
7.	Respondent 10	Social worker/local resident	Social work	12 June 2018
8.	Respondent 11	Storeowner		12 June 2018
9.	Respondent 12	Storeowner		4 July 2018
10.	Respondent 13	Storeowner*		4 July 2018
11.	Respondent 14	Restaurant owner/local resident		4 July 2018
12.	Respondent 15	Restaurant owner		4 July 2018
13.	Respondent 16	Storeowner/local resident		4 July 2018
	Respondent 17	Store employee		
14.	Respondent 18	Economic advisor	Municipality	12 July 2018

(*) There is no recording available of this respondent, since he did not want to be recorded.

APPENDIX 3   QUESTIONS OF THE ONLINE MAPPING TOOL

Thank you for being interested in this research*! By answering the questions mapping tool, the perceptions of the Amsterdamsestraatweg will be measured. These data will be used to get an insight in how the commercial landscape of the Amsterdamsestraatweg is changing, and how surrounding inhabitants feel about these changes.

The research exists of some general questions about your age, income and household, and questions which you can answer by adding points on a map and optionally adding comments to these points. For any further questions or comments, you can e-mail me on k.klouwen@students.uu.nl.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation!

Koen Klouwen

(*) This research is being carried out for my master thesis for spatial planning, at Utrecht University. All data will be used anonymously, and not for commercial uses.

General questions

What is your age?
…….

What is your gender?
☐   Male
☐   Female

What is your occupation?
☐   Working full time
☐   Working part time
☐   Student
☐   No occupation

What is the income of your household per year?
☐   No income
☐   Less than €10.000
☐   €10.000 to €20.000
☐   €20.000 to €30.000
☐   €30.000 to €40.000
☐   €40.000 to €50.000
☐   More than €50.000

What type of house do you live in?

☐　　　Sale house
☐　　　Private rental home
☐　　　Social rental home
☐　　　Other (e.g. student dorm)

In what neighbourhood do you live?

☐　　　Pijlweerd
☐　　　Ondiep, 2e Daalsebuurt
☐　　　Zuilen
☐　　　Outside Noordwest, in …………………………………

How long have you been living there?
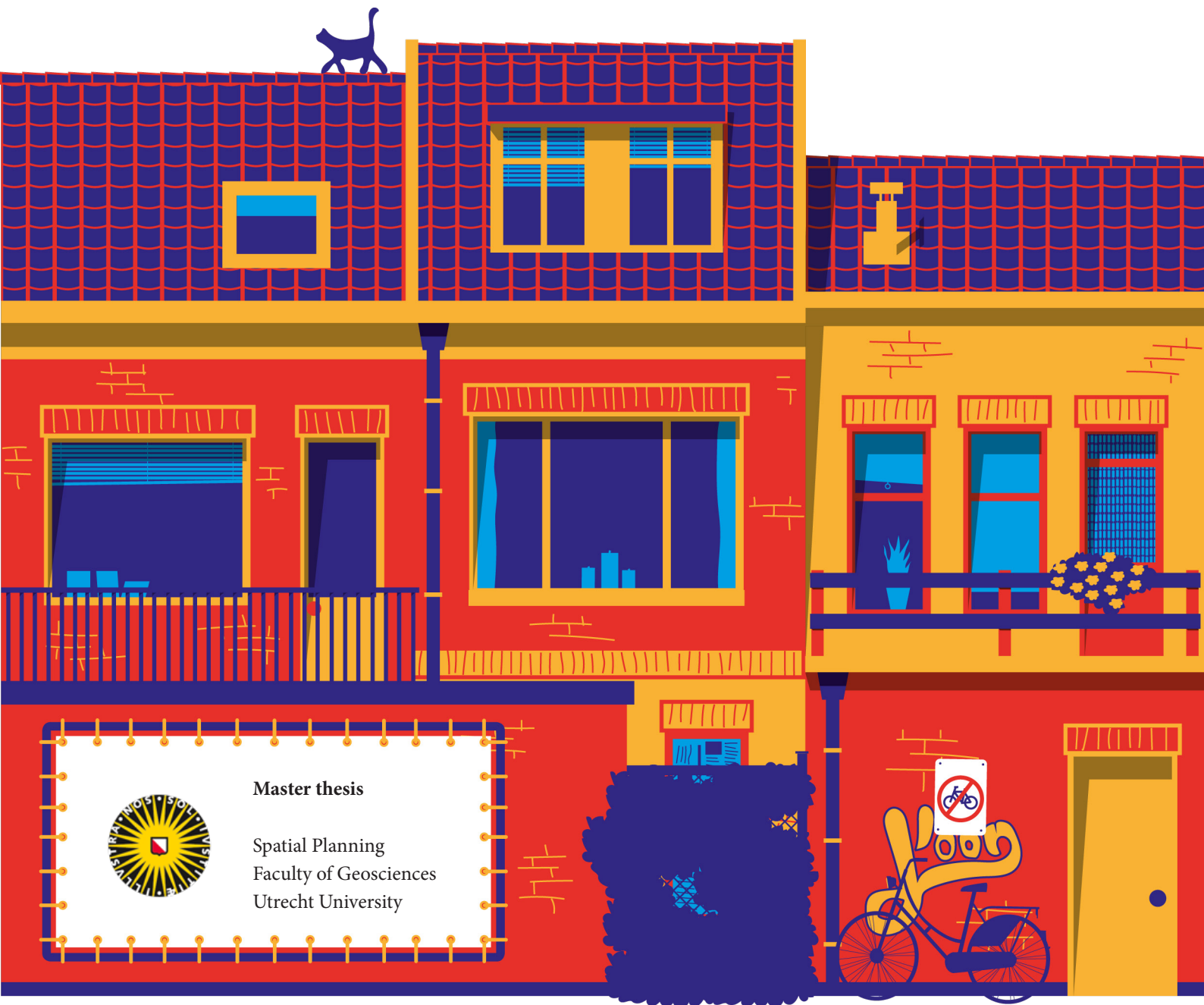Since …………………………….

Mapping questions

1.　　　Which shops do you regularly visit?
2.　　　Which restaurants/bars do you regularly visit?
3.　　　In what area(s) do you feel at home?
3.　　　What area(s) has/have changed the most recently?
5.　　　What area(s) do you think will change the most in the near future?

APPENDIX 4 DATA OF RESPONDENTS ONLINE MAPPING TOOL

No.	Age	Sex	Occupation	Income	Housing	Neighbourhood	Since
1.	25	M	Working full time	More than €50.000	Private rent	Ondiep	2017
2.	25	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Private rent	Ondiep	2017
3.	23	M	Student	Less than €10.000	Private rent	Ondiep	2013
4.	43	M	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2011
5.	30	M	Working full time	€30.001 to €40.000	Other	Ondiep	2008
6.	22	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Ondiep	2016
7.	60	F	No occupation	€20.001 to €30.000	Sale house	Ondiep	1997
8.	26	M	Working full time	€30.001 to €40.000	Sale house	Zuilen	2017
9.	35	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2014
10.	43	F	Working full time	€30.001 to €40.000	Private rent	Ondiep	2005
11.	27	F	Working full time	€30.001 to €40.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2016
12.	29	F	Working full time	€40.001 to €50.000	Sale house	Zuilen	2016
13.	50	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2008
14.	37	M	Working full time	€30.001 to €40.000	Other	Ondiep	2015
15.	55	M	Working full time	€40.001 to €50.000	Social rent	Ondiep	1990
16.	22	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Zuilen	2015
17.	25	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Ondiep	2017
18.	32	M	Working full time	€40.001 to €50.000	Private rent	City centre	2016
19.	50	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2007
20.	30	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2016
21.	23	F	Working part time	Less than €10.000	Private rent	Pijlsweerd	2018
22.	40	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2007
23.	50	M	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Pijlsweerd	2014
24.	31	F	Working part time	€40.001 to €50.000	Sale house	Zuilen	2016
25.	23	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Pijlsweerd	2015
26.	26	F	Working part time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Pijlsweerd	2017
27.	41	F	Working part time	€40.001 to €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2018
28.	22	M	Student	€20.001 to €30.000	Other	Pijlsweerd	2016
29.	30	F	Working part time	€20.001 to €30.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2011
30.	36	M	Working part time	€10.000 to €20.000	Private rent	Ondiep	1981
31.	25	M	Student	No income	Private rent	Ondiep	2017
32.	26	F	Working full time		Sale house	Zuilen	2016
33.	43	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2003
34.	32	F	Working full time	€30.001 to €40.000	Social rent	Zuilen	2013
35.	30	M	Student	€10.001 to €20.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2009
36.	27	F	Working full time	€10.001 to €20.000	Sale house		
37.	23	M	Student	Less than €10.000	Private rent	Ondiep	2018
38.	35	F	Working part time	€20.001 to €30.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2008

No.	Age	Sex	Occupation	Income	Housing	Neighbourhood	Since
39.	42	F	Working full time		Sale house	Ondiep	2013
40.	42	F	Working part time	€40.001 to €50.000	Sale house	Ondiep	2005
41.	28	F	Working full time	More than €50.000	Sale house	Zuilen	2015
42.	34	M	Working part time		Private rent	Ondiep	2015
43.	25	F	Student	€10.001 to €20.000	Private rent	Zuilen	2017
44.	25	M	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Zuilen	2015
45.	20	F	Student	No income	Other	Zuilen	2016
46.	22	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Private rent		2018
47.	23	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Zuilen	2017
48.	21	M	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Zuilen	2016
49.	19	F	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Zuilen	2017
50.	22	M	Student	Less than €10.000	Other	Ondiep	2017

Master thesis

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