Urban strategy or urban solution?: Visions of a gentrified waterfront in Rotterdam and Glasgow

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Abstract

The transformation of old inner-city harbour areas into mixed-use, high-end flagship developments is one of the biggest processes of urban change impacting port cities. These spaces are part of the gentrified urban landscape, which, as recent scholarship has demonstrated, is largely state- or municipally-led. Our currently knowledge on the goals of gentrification focuses on three objectives: urban entrepreneurial policies of growth and place promotion, creating liveable cities and neighbourhoods and 'revanchist' attitudes towards poor and marginalised groups. However, we lack a deep understanding of the visions and ideas of key initiators of municipally-led gentrification; these first-hand accounts tend to get ignored when examining gentrification as an urban strategy more broadly. Therefore, the aim of this article is to gain more insight into these visions which drive municipal leaders to promote gentrified spaces along their urban waterfronts. It will examine the specific cases of high-end, mixed-use developments in Rotterdam and Glasgow. Both waterfronts were championed by individual leaders whose visions led to the transformation of their respective waterfronts from industrial or abandoned places to post-industrial, consumption-oriented spaces. A detailed analysis of these visions reveals that they are clearly rooted in addressing key social and economic problems of their cities: in Rotterdam this is centred on the divisions between the northern and southern halves of the city; in Glasgow, it is focused on employment opportunities. This article will examine these visions in more detail, how they are related to wider issues in their respective cities and also how these social visions become transformed into gentrified spaces which cater almost exclusively to affluent users.

Keywords: urban waterfront, flagship, gentrification, visions, Rotterdam, Glasgow

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Introduction

In 2002, Neil Smith famously decreed that gentrification was a global urban strategy. By stating this, he crystallised what had been up to that point a long tradition within the academic community, led by scholars such as David Harvey (1989), Tim Hall and Phil Hubbard (1996), Loretta Lees (2000), Tom Slater (2004) and others who argued that neoliberal urban governance and urban entrepreneurialism, to which gentrification is an important component therein, is used by cities to stimulate economic growth, create a more favourable post-industrial image and attract the 'right' kind of inhabitants, investors and visitors. In more than ten years since Smith's article was published, it has been cited over 600 times, making it among the most important works, not only in the field of gentrification, but in contemporary urban studies as well.

Gentrification is now seen to be at the heart of municipal strategies for urban redevelopment. The net has certainly widened to include much more than the traditional upgrading of older, working class neighbourhoods such as those first described by Ruth Glass in 1964. Gentrification as a municipal strategy has been used to explain the stimulation of the process to create new-build housing on old brownfield sites (Davidson and Lees, 2005), the creation of mixed-use waterfront developments (Doucet, et al., 2011), the use of gentrification as a mechanism for social control and cohesion in problematic estates (Uitermark et al., 2007) and the restructuring and regenerating of post-war housing developments. Most recently, it has been argued that gentrification represents social mixing policies, and that the latter is a more subtle and less politically-powerful word for gentrification (Bridge, et al., 2012). Each of these uses of the term further expands the physical form and spatial locations of what we now conceive of as gentrification, yet what they all have in common, something which was also at the heart of Glass' initial observations is an inherent upward class transformation and some form of displacement (Marcuse, 1986). Another similarity of these new forms of gentrification is that the state, in various forms, plays a leading role in its development and implementation (see Hackworth and Smith, 2001).

Much of the research which examines the municipal strategies of gentrification make their conclusions based on an evaluation of policy documents, or interviews with different stakeholders from a variety of parties involved in the stimulation of the process. In some cases, the notion that gentrification is the strategy comes from the author's own conclusions in their own research, rather than any official documents or words from policy leaders. However, in many cases, particularly when gentrification is part of a wider strategy of urban regeneration and renewal, there are key urban leaders who spearhead this process; they are the ones with the vision of a high-end, gentrified city which guides urban policy and lies at the heart of the gentrification strategy.

While the political economy of state-led gentrification and the broader policy goals are well understood, less attention has been given to specific discourses of these individual leaders. This is one of the shortcomings of research into gentrification as a policy tool, first called for by Jan van Weesep in 1994: specific, first-hand accounts of the reasons and rationales for pursuing such a strategy – the specific discourses and storylines *from the key actors involved* – are largely absent from these academic debates. It is this specific aspect of our understanding of contemporary gentrification which this article seeks to shed more light upon.

Two central questions will be addressed in this article:
1. What are the visions which key urban leaders have towards waterfront redevelopment in different political-economic contexts?
2. How do these visions play a role in the process of state-led gentrification?

This article will use two case studies of mixed-use, new-build gentrified waterfronts in Rotterdam and Glasgow. Both cities have been active for several decades in transforming their waterfronts from vacant industrial lands into new post-industrial spaces to live, work and play. These waterfronts have both been guided largely by the vision and leadership of one individual. Both held strong beliefs about the future of their respective cities, what kind of waterfront they wanted to see and their ability to mobilise public- and private-sector forces to help implement these visions. Each leader had different powers based on the local political-economic context. The aim of this article is to better understand what drives municipal leaders to promote new-build gentrified spaces in their city as well as to gain a more complete understanding of the mechanisms, structures and processes involved in implementing the strategy of gentrification.

This research relies on in-depth interviews with the respective visionaries and other key stakeholders associated with each project. In Rotterdam, this is Ms Riek Bakker, who was head of the city's urban development department and responsible for the creation of the Kop van Zuid, the city's largest and most comprehensive waterfront development. In Glasgow, the main visionary was Mr Charlie Gordon. As head of Glasgow's City Council from 1999 – 2005, he spearheaded new developments along the Clyde Waterfront, including the International Financial Services District and Glasgow Harbour. The primary topics of these interviews were the visions and rationales for pursuing the strategy of creating high end spaces along the waterfront. In addition to these interviews, this research also builds on previous work examining the goals, including the ways in which the goal of gentrification was implemented and positions of actors in both projects.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. We will begin by examining the reasons why gentrification is pursued as an urban strategy and how waterfronts fit into this framework. The paper then shifts to the empirical cases, first focusing in Glasgow and the Clyde River regeneration strategy, followed by Rotterdam and the Kop van Zuid. In both cases, the background and rationale for these visions, the specific content of them and their relationship to gentrification will be analysed in detail. The final section will outline how these findings suggest a new approach to understanding the municipal goals of gentrification.

THREE REASONS BEHIND THE MUNICIPAL GOAL OF GENTRIFICATION
That gentrification is a goal of many municipal governments in both the Global North and the Global South is well known. In many cases, it is still seen as a 'dirty word' (Smith, 1996; see also Slater, 2006) and does not appear in local policy discourses. In other instances, particularly in countries such as the Netherlands, gentrification does not have such a negative connotation amongst urban leaders and policy makers (see Aalbers, 2009; Uitermark, 2009; van Gent, 2012). Because gentrification has become 'normalised' and, outside critical sections of academic largely seen as a positive, the goal of gentrification, even in Anglo-Saxon countries, can be pursued in a more open way. This section will examine the three main reasons why gentrification is pursued.

Gentrification and the entrepreneurial city – This is the most common reason cited for pursuing gentrification; that the politics and processes of gentrification are caught up in wider discourses surrounding urban entrepreneurialism. The city becomes a product which is sold to investors, tourists and high-income residents. Gentrified spaces, including high-end waterfront developments, become the locations within the city where the entrepreneurial city takes hold. These spaces are, in the words of Moulaert et al., (2003), where globalisation becomes urbanised.

This represents a fundamental shift in urban policy away from using large urban redevelopment projects for wealth redistribution or collective consumption (Harvey, 1989;

Cochrane et al., 1996; Brenner, 2004). The goals now focus on wealth creation and place promotion (Loftman and Nevin, 1995; Hubbard and Hall, 1996).

Creating places for (high-end) consumption becomes a primary goal. This can be in the form of housing, but also in leisure, retail, cultural and office spaces (see Harvey, 1989).

An important part of this is using the built environment to change the image of a city or part thereof. This is particularly relevant for older, industrial cities which have suffered from poor image due to the effects of deindustrialisation. In many cases, the old port locations lie at the heart of both the causes of this negative image (deindustrialisation) and the potential remedy through their re-use as high-end consumption spaces (Rodriguez, et al., 2001; Seo, 2002). The goal is that these spaces, such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Baltimore's Inner Harbor or countless revived old industrial districts and neighbourhoods become the new 'face' of their cities (see Bianchini et al., 1992; Doucet, 2012; Healey et al., 1992; Smyth, 1994). Intended effects of these goals are rooted in neoliberal beliefs of trickle-down economics and these spaces becoming a catalyst, or safe-haven for further inward investment (Bianchini et al., 1992; Cook, 2004; Moulaert et al., 2003). In many cases, this is used to justify the initial public-sector outlay into such costly investments which do little to directly tackle more pressing urban problems centred on poverty or allocation of scarce resources (Doucet, 2009)

In short, with the goal of urban entrepreneurialism municipalities have the aim of stimulating gentrification in diverse neighbourhoods and creating high-end waterfront spaces to make their city attractive to three, largely external groups: investors, tourists and (potential) high-income residents.

Gentrification as a way towards social mixing and liveable cities – Gentrification is used as a tool to encourage middle-class households to settle in cities with the aim of creating more liveable, diverse and cosmopolitan spaces. This approach can be seen in different forms of gentrification, from traditional neighbourhoods to new-build developments.

Loretta Lees has been examining this aspect of gentrification policy for more than a decade. She states that it: 'is increasingly promoted in policy circles on the assumption that it will lead to more socially mixed, less segregated, more liveable and sustainable communities' (2008, p. 2449). She critiqued the UK government's urban white paper on cities, which focused on liveability and creating an urban renaissance. She, and others (Atkinson, 2004; Lees et al., 2008) have argued that this policy document reads exactly like gentrification: 'the UTF (Urban Task Force) report assumes that we are all middle-class. The 'general population' referred to throughout the report is always a middle-class one' (2003, p. 71). And it is these middle-class groups which this policy document seeks to attract to cities. The previous UK government was committed to reducing socioeconomic and spatial polarisation and saw brining middle-class households back to the city, thereby creating socially-mixed communities as the solution. In essence, this is state-led gentrification. But as Lees (2003: 2008) and others (see Slater, 2006) concluded, the word 'gentrification' needed to be removed from this policy discourse, and be replaced it with terms such as urban renaissance, urban revitalisation or urban sustainability. This then neutralised and cleansed the process away from of the negative images associated with the word gentrification.

Perhaps the most heavily adopted urban theory of the past decade has been Richard Florida's creative class concept (2002). It has become widespread among planning and policy circles across the world, with cities reshaping their built environment and crafting policies to cater the these footloose middle-class groups. As scholars such as Rose (2004) note, cities have focused policy on building inclusive neighbourhoods which cater to a variety of tastes, lifestyles and incomes.

Recent work on the link between gentrification and social mixing has challenged commonly-held beliefs (in policy circles in any event) that social mixing brings benefits to

low-income communities (Bridge, et al., 2012). They outline three main critiques: that social mixing tends to be one-sided, occurring in lower-income areas, rather than brining poorer residents into more affluent areas, the idea that different groups do not actually mix with each other and finally, thy challenge the idea that mixed communities will actually lead to a more cohesive and harmonious society. Like many others, Paton (2012) is also critical of this goal of creating socially mixed communities through gentrification, arguing that middle-class groups offer 'a cultural solution to fix economic and structural issues of poverty, unemployment and the decline of the built environment' (p. 255).

Similar critiques have been launched in the Netherlands, where the process of 'housing differentiation,' or areas-based approaches have been on-going since the mid-1990s (see Bolt and van Kempen, 2008; van Kempen and Bolt, 2009). Both Van Bergeijk et al. (2008) and Uitermark (2003) found social cohesion tended to decline after housing differentiation took place. Other research found that many problems were simply moved to other parts of the city – so called 'waterbed effects' (Posthumus, et al., 2012; Slob, et al., 2008). In the Netherlands, gentrification is not a 'dirty word' and it is used to create liveable cities. In this discourse, this means 'rebalancing' populations away from high-numbers of low-income households and housing stock away from a perceived oversupply of social-housing (see Dignum, 2011; Uitermark, 2009).

Gentrification and the revanchist city – In 1996, Neil Smith challenged the academic community yet again to think about the meaning of gentrification, with his book *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city.* Smith's argument first centres on actions by police and other groups to 'take back' Tompkins Square Park in New York from homeless people. He broadens out his thesis to focus on how middle-class groups enact revenge on the poor and marginalised, who they believe to have stolen the city from them. While this is not done directly, but rather with notions of civil society, family values and neighbourhood security (Lees, et al., 2008). The revanchist city was enacted by implementing measures such as criminalising or demonising the homeless or panhandlers, as well as creating the image of the 'pioneer' myth in low-income areas, thereby sweeping clean the old images of an area and creating a blank slate for middle-class consumption. Gentrification, therefore, becomes the spatial manifestation of revanchism (Lees, et al., 2008). While Smith's empirical work was based in 1980s and 1990s New York City, with its populist and 'zero-tolerance' mayors Dinkins and Giuliani, he also argues that it is not exclusively New York-oriented, but rather a characteristic of all late capitalist cities.

Numerous scholars have examined to what extent revanchist urban policies are present in other cities throughout the world. Uitermark, et al's., (2007) study of the reasons behind the state-led gentrification of a low-income housing estate in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam, has elements of the revanchist city present. The authors argue that in this case, gentrification is pursued by the municipality and housing associations in order to bring in middle-class households not, as the previous section explained, to create a more liveable and vibrant neighbourhood, but rather as a means of pacifying the local, low-income and ethnic minority population. They envision gentrification as a means of social control. In response to a remark from the chair of the association for owner-occupied housing in the area, the authors state that: 'Here we clearly see sentiments that Smith (1996) would describe as 'revanchist.' In this instance, the call for gentrification derives from the idea that 'less adapted' people cause the social problems and that bringing in middle-class households will help revitalise the neighbourhood' (p. 131). Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008) examine wider policies of anti-segregation and social cohesion in Rotterdam more generally and also conclude that there are some, although more less severe, evidence of the revanchist city present.

Also in the Netherlands Aalbers (2009) examined revanchist approaches to urban renewal in Amsterdam's Bijlmer neighbourhood. He found that they were indeed present and called for by investors as a means of restoring social order and paving the way for inward investment. However, he also found that revanchist policies were welcomed by many of the low- and middle-income residents in the neighbourhood, particularly among the new 'black middle-class.' Aalbers also takes a different stance than Smith, arguing that European revanchism is less punitive and that hard policies can co-exist around 'soft' policies. He concludes that in addition to goals of civilising and controlling populations, the stimulating middle-class formation remains a key policy objective.

In Glasgow, MacLeod (2002) examines to what extent revanchist policies are evident through a mix of urban entrepreneurial approaches to city-centre regeneration and the treatment of city's homeless. While he finds some evidence of revanchist approaches, he is also cautious to place Glasgow within the same league as New York, and argues that the revanchist city can be used as a heuristic device to better understand urban change.

Much of the work examining revanchist city ideas in Europe has reached a similar conclusion: that where present, they reflect much more mild, or mixed policies. That does not mean they are not present, but rather we need to understand the geography of revanchism when studying these urban goals. The same can be said for the goals of gentrification more broadly. To what extent do we find differences in municipal strategies of gentrification? This will be the focus of the remainder of this article. It will do so by delving deep into the visions held by key urban leaders spearheading new-build waterfront gentrification projects. This will give us a first-hand account of their key conceptual aims and ambitions, something which is currently lacking from academic debates on the topic.

GLASGOW: A VISION OF EMPLOYMENT ALONG THE WATERFRONT

In the industrial era, Glasgow's waterfront developed into one of the great workshops of the world. The banks of the River Clyde were lined with shipyards and factories and the neighbourhoods situated behind them housed their workers and their families. By the late 19th Century, Glasgow was a rich city, as exemplified by many of the grand public buildings and collections of both public and private art which were being amassed by the city's industrialists. It became the Second City of the British Empire and its shipbuilding and railway industries led the world. Just prior to World War I, more than 60,000 men were employed in the city's shipyards (Keating, 1988). However, the working and living conditions for many of the factory and dockworkers were poor. The city faced chronic overcrowding and sanitation problems.

The process of deindustrialisation was long; as Keating (1988) notes, this decline took place throughout much of the Twentieth Century and was only temporarily halted by two World Wars. The shipyards of the Clyde closed and large sections of the riverfront became vacant. As Tiesdell (2009) states: "the Clyde had regressed from being Europe's most industrialised and exploited waterfronts to possibly its most neglected."

In the neighbourhoods surrounding the Clyde, poverty increased and populations fell dramatically. Some left the region in search of work; others were moved to the new large peripheral estates, such as Castlemilk or Easterhouse, built to provide new and better housing for slum clearances. Upwardly mobile families moved to new towns and more salubrious suburbs around Glasgow such as Bearsden. The city's decline population, once close to one million inhabitants and now around 580,000, reflects this industrial decline and decline both within importance in Britain, and globally.

Governance, local politics and regeneration policy in Glasgow since World War II have all followed similar shifts from managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism as outlined by Harvey (1989). Politically, the city has remained a Labour-party stronghold since World War I. Militant strikes in 1919 gave rise to the myth of 'Red Clydeside.' Keating (1988)

describes the post-war ideology of the local Labour party as 'municipal labourism:' councillors were concerned primarily with local issues for their constituents, such as housing, but paid little attention to wider issues. Even in the 1980s, Glasgow's housing stock was overwhelmingly council-owned, though a new trend of rehabilitation rather than demolition had emerged.

The transition to urban entrepreneurialism began in the early 1980s, with the city marketing campaign 'Glasgow's Miles better' (see Laurier, 1993; MacLeod, 2002; Paddison, 1993; Struthers, 1986). While the city was beginning to portray a new, post-industrial image, this did not necessarily reflect the situation on the ground in many of the deprived neighbourhoods. One of the creators of the slogan noted that "I've always said 'Glasgow's Miles Better' only referred to the centre of the city. It was a sick joke for people living in the damp houses in Easterhouse" (from Financial Times, 25 June 1992, as quoted in Paddison, 1993).

In addition to events, festivals and city marketing, by the late 1990s, the city took a decidedly developer-friendly approach to urban development, which emphasised building on brownfield land, particularly along the waterfront. This development focused on three themes: consumption (both local and tourism), business services and residential uses (Teisdell, 2009). Because of its scale, one of the most challenging areas to redevelop has been the waterfront, particularly the land downriver from the city centre, where many of the former shipyards were built. Various isolated and single-use developments have been built since the 1980s, such as the Scottish Exhibition and Convention Centre, but it was not until 2002 the Clyde Waterfront Regeneration was created. It is a partnership between the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow City, Renfrew and West Dumbartonshire Councils. They created a comprehensive, broad-brush master plan for more than 20 kilometres of the Clyde waterfront. While many projects have stalled during the current economic crisis, the decade leading up to 2008 saw considerable new investments in housing, offices, leisure, culture and recreation along the Clyde. Yet the fundamental vision of a prosperous waterfront for living, working and recreation remains in place, despite the economic downturn.

Charlie Gordon's vision for the Clyde
Much of this activity can be attributed to the vision and leadership of Mr Charlie Gordon, head of Glasgow City Council from 1999 – 2005. He welcomed development within Glasgow and became a 'champion' or 'booster' of the city's waterfront, announcing the launch of the city's International Financial Services District (IFSD) from the roof of the London Stock Exchange. By the time he left power, the waterfront would be markedly changed; not only was the IFSD up and running, employing more than 15,000 people, but a start had been made on the luxury Glasgow Harbour housing development and approval given for the new Riverside Museum, designed by Zaha Hadid, which opened in 2011. The landscape which was has been created has been socioeconomically oriented towards more affluent groups and users; offices and flats cater to the city's growing financial services industry. Spatially, the waterfront remains a patchwork of developments without adequate connections to each other or the rest of the city. This trend has been evident since waterfront redevelopment began in the 1980s.

The River Clyde was once on of the world's great industrial sites. It helped make Glasgow the 'Second City of the British Empire,' and its shipyards were a great source of wealth and jobs. Since World War II, this landscape has changed, with all but one of the shipyards now closed. This legacy of deindustrialisation and economic change is central to understanding Glasgow's challenges today and its approach to urban regeneration and economic development.

As someone who grew up near the waterfront, this economic and social transformation lies at the heart of Mr. Gordon's vision for the Clyde. He noted this change from his childhood:

> in my street was a powerhouse that generated electricity for the tram system and then there was a newspaper distribution centre, a coal distribution centre, a railway station with a goods siding, a shipyard and a flour mill. And when I was growing up, they all closed. So I went from as a little boy seeing the trains come into the railway station and the streets being black with workmen, to seeing absolutely nothing at all. Most of the Clyde was like that.

This economic decline, with its related social problems, was seen by Mr. Gordon as the most pressing and severe problem in Glasgow.

Therefore, at the heart of his vision for the waterfront was a strong desire to reduce unemployment; as he stated: the best cure for poverty is a job.' He went on to say that the biggest challenge for Glasgow was:

> jobs ... We've got to get to true full employment. That means creating opportunities for everybody. Everyone's got to share in the city's success ... We need to create full employment because that's the key to eradicating crime and antisocial behaviour.

This line of argument largely fits with prevailing discourses over Glasgow's economic and social problems: the dramatic loss of industrial employment, combined with severe population declines, created a situation of chronic, intergenerational unemployment and significant sections of the population cut off from mainstream society.

If a lack of jobs and employment opportunities was the root of the city's problems, how did the waterfront fit into this strategy and ambition of providing full employment? Mr. Gordon stated that: *'it is a place where there are more opportunities for more jobs to come along, whether [these] jobs are leisure or service related.'* Promotion of the waterfront is primarily an economic issue which seeks to encourage growth and development within the city. One of the biggest employment successes has been the International Financial Services District (IFSD), situated on the Broomielaw, just west of the City Centre. It has created more than 15,000 jobs along the waterfront, mostly through firms relocating to Glasgow (IFSDG, 2012).

With employment growth lying at the heart of this vision, other common uses for waterfronts and other brownfield sites were rejected. In particular, the idea of creating parks or large open spaces was seen as unproductive and in fitting with these economic aims:

> I remember there was an architectural conference in the city a few years ago and they had some architect students from around the world and they were asked to come up with their own visions. And the results were surprisingly disappointing. They said stuff like 'here's a former shipyard; we'll landscape this and turn it into a park.' I said to them, look per head of population, Glasgow has more parks than any other European city. We don't need parks, we need jobs.

While economic growth was the main factor underpinning this vision, other elements, such as bringing people back to the river and using the waterfront to link up the city, were also important. The vision, first laid out by Charlie Gordon, was for a series of high quality walkways and riverside paths connecting up the various developments along the river

including the city centre the IFSD, the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, the new Transport Museum and Glasgow Harbour, the largest housing development along the Clyde waterfront. This has led to some new improvements in the public realm, though it is far from being complete. However, the vision of linking up the waterfront has remained central to Clyde Waterfront's redevelopment plans (Clyde Waterfront, 2012).

While the primary aim of the Clyde Waterfront regeneration was based on the premise of attracting jobs to the city and creating employment opportunities, there are other aspects with feature prominently in this vision. The idea of a mixed-use area was something first promoted by Charlie Gordon, which now is central to the official regeneration policy. The official vision from Clyde Waterfront is 'to develop a thriving, vibrant River Clyde, with people and communities at its heart.' Housing has played a major role in this. In the housing sphere, the main emphasis has been on the types of new-build gentrification which authors such as Davidson and Lees (2005) argue are part of the 'mutations' and evolutions of the phenomenon from small-scale upgrading of working-class housing, to a complete class-based remake of the inner-city landscape (see also Lees et al., 2008; Smith, 2002).

Glasgow Harbour is the largest such housing development. It features a mix of luxury one- and two-bedroom apartments, situated in high rise buildings constructed right beside the water's edge. While construction has slowed due the economic crisis, the city's plans are still very much open for this type of high-end development to take place when the economic situation improves. Developments such as Glasgow Harbour, which are aimed at young professionals with no children, affluent retirees and investors, fit squarely within Mr. Gordon's vision for the waterfront, contributing to the vibrant mix of uses which he, and Glasgow City Council more widely, are seeking to build along the Clyde. In these circles, gentrification is not a 'dirty word,' and is, in fact, seen as an antidote to the problems associated with a poor population and lack of higher-income households (Doucet, et al., 2011). Gentrification is encouraged, either directly or indirectly, because it brings, or keeps affluent households within the city. This can therefore be seen as an example of urban entrepreneurial goals for gentrification outlined earlier.

When asked whether or not those living in Glasgow Harbour were economically better off than in the adjacent working-class neighbourhood of Partick, Mr. Gordon stated that:

> Yes. They probably are. Now before Glasgow's regeneration, these people would have lived in the leafy suburbs outside Glasgow like Bearsden and Newton Mearns. My view was we should create middle class neighbourhoods in the city and then they would pay their local taxes to the city and we would have more money to regenerate the poorer neighbourhoods. So it seems that other cities are allowed to have middle class neighbourhoods but not Glasgow. You'll find that most of our critics live in quite nice middle class neighbourhoods too ... Glasgow's middle class is too small. I think it's a problem for our city: not to have enough educated and professional people. Should they be made to feel unwelcome and guilty? Most of them are the sons and daughters of Glasgow working class people. I think there is almost an inverted snobbery about this.

Under this vision, gentrification is welcomed as change which improves neighbourhoods, the city as a whole and gives opportunities for social advancement. It is seen as a positive; negatives associated with the process are either not seen or not adequately conveyed by critics of gentrification:

> I never hear them say why gentrification is bad. What is gentrification, does it mean we cannot let working-class areas get better? Is it a bad thing if house

prices go up? Most people I know feel better off if house prices go up if they own their own house. I think what the critics miss out is the great thing about full employment is that it gives everyone the chance and the choice to be socially mobile. That's what I want. There's plenty of Glaswegians who were brought up in poverty who are quite well off now ... I'm suspicious of critics who talk about gentrification because essentially they're opposed to change. And I think there is a lot of fear of change among Glasgow people because a lot of change has been bad news. Closing the shipyards; a new government who are going to do less for Glasgow. I think in some ways change is inevitable and what you have to do is manage change. Embrace it and try and take it in the right direction.

What becomes clear with these statements is that the underlying academic critiques of gentrification – that they further inequalities in the city, cause displacement and class-conflict – do not feature as part of this vision of gentrification. The vision for a gentrified waterfront in Glasgow is one which looks more towards the former Labour government's national White Paper on cities, which, as other scholars have argued, was a de-facto endorsement of the gentrification of British inner-cities through the promotion of speculative, high-end developments on brownfield lands and other urban sites (see Lees, 2003).

When understanding Glasgow's history as a declining industrial city, with chronic unemployment, social problems and an oversupply of derelict sites, this vision, focusing on employment at virtually all costs and the promotion of middle-class housing within the city boundaries, has a political rationale to it. It also fits within the character of Mr. Gordon's tenure as head of the Council, which Tiesdell, (2009) described as very 'developer friendly.' Central to this vision was the idea that the role of the city should be to make it easy for the private sector to invest along the waterfront.

The operationalization of this vision had two distinct elements. The first was a focus on 'pump priming' where the Council would inject money to stimulate further private investment and prepare sites for development.

The second focused on relaxed planning regulations and a mentality which welcomed private sector investment with open arms.

We've had some bad experiences over the years with town planners given too much power and who failed ... I saw the town planners in Glasgow – most of them saw themselves as regulators: fifty different reasons why nothing should be done. I merged them with Economic Development and Property Departments and we called it Development and Regeneration and there's a clue in the name. Get development, facilitate it, regenerate the bloody city, don't just sit there with your book of rules and chase people away.

This approach for Glasgow's waterfront has been heavily criticised. Initial optimism about opening up the waterfront and Glasgow Harbour acting as a catalyst for further regeneration (Abrahams, 2003; Alexander, 2007; Lundy, 2008; Penman, 2006) evolved into media discourses questioning this high-end housing development strategy, also worrying about the gentrification of adjacent areas (Braiden, 2007; Briggs, 2005; Thomson, 2004). Glasgow Harbour was also criticised as being 'one of the worst examples of late 20th century developer led nonsense,' and was nominated for a Carbuncle Award for worst planning decision in Scotland (BBC, 2009; Paterson, 2009). From within academic circles, it has been criticised for being too mono-use, isolated, without social housing and exclusive (Paton, 2012; Tiesdell, 2009).

In response to this criticism, the focus returned to the core vision and aims of the waterfront strategy.

> *Criticise the detail if you want because with a 20/20 hindsight you can always pick out mistakes that the city fathers have made. But don't impugn our motives because our motives were all about full employment. So if you've got a better vision that achieves the same thing, you might convince me, but a lot of the criticism that I've seen is utopian style nitpicking, it's not big ticket stuff. Regeneration of a so-call post-industrial city is tough … So I'm not saying we haven't made any mistakes, but I'm saying that any mistakes have been done in the name of trying to eradicate unemployment, poverty and the associated social problems.*

Along Glasgow's waterfront, we can see elements of the first two reasons for pursuing gentrification as an urban strategy: attracting inward investment through urban entrepreneurial policies, and creating attractive places for the middle-classes to live and consume. This can be gleaned from policy documents and interviews with planners and developers (Doucet et al., 2011). But we delve deeper, something which is only possible through uncovering the visions which have shaped these goals, we see an approach which is shaped much more by the ideas of full-employment. True, turning this vision into reality involves place promotion and the creation of middle-class spaces, but by understanding what guided Mr. Gordon on his quest to transform Glasgow's waterfront, we see much more redistributive ideals than is often portrayed in the literature.

ROTTERDAM AND THE VISION OF THE 'UNDIVIDED CITY'
Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands, with 617,000 people. It is situated on both sides of the River Nieuw Maas, along the southern flank of the Randstad, the large urban area in the west of the Netherlands. Like Glasgow, Rotterdam has historically been a city centred around its port. Large expansions to the harbour began in the late 19th Century, when the medieval harbours on the north bank of the river (Oude Haven – Old Harbour, in English) were supplanted by expansion on the south bank. These include the Maas and Rijnhavens (harbours) which today form the focal point of post-industrial regeneration. The neighbourhoods initially constructed adjacent to these harbours housed dockworkers and other labourers many of whom migrated to Rotterdam from farming communities in the south of the Netherlands.

Over the course of the 20th Century, the port of Rotterdam became much larger and spread westward towards the North Sea (van der Laar and Jaarsveld, 2006); the most recent addition – the Second Maasvlakte - is currently being built forty kilometres west of the city centre. As the industrial and logistical harbours spread to new facilities to the west, the medieval and subsequently 19th Century harbours in and near the city centre fell into disuse. The Oude Haven area, with its medieval harbours, was first regenerated in the 1970s and turned into housing, including Piet Blom's famous Cube houses, as well as museums, offices and educational facilities.

The most comprehensive and largest redevelopment of an old harbour into post-industrial uses is the transformation of the late 19th Century harbours on the south side of the river (Doucet, 2012; Meyer, 1999; Romein, 2005). These lands came to be known as the *Kop van Zuid* (Head of the South). The site is immediately opposite the historic city centre. By the 1980s, this land had largely fallen into disuse, and, despite its physical proximity to the heart of the city, was poorly connected to the rest of Rotterdam. The only bridge over the river at that time was further upstream and even though the city's first underground metro line ran directly underneath this area, there was no stop built in the original line (it

would come later as the Kop van Zuid was being built). Being originally constructed as a working harbour, these connections to the economic, cultural, retail and residential centres of the city were not needed, though, as will be described shortly, building these links was part of the wider regeneration vision of helping to unify the city.

Like Glasgow, Rotterdam has also been active in urban entrepreneurialism, promoting itself through culture, sport and housing. These first two themes can be seen in its hosting of the European Capital of Culture in 2001, the Red Bull Air Races and its hosting of the start of the Tour de France in 2010 as well as other festivals and events. This focus on culture is one of the city's official strategies (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007a).

Housing is another major flank of the city's entrepreneurial governance model. Rotterdam actively tries to attract and retain middle- and upper-income households, a process which has been on-going for two decades (see Doucet et al., 2011). During the 1960s and 1970s, Rotterdam, like many cities in the Netherlands and many older industrial cities worldwide, was losing population. This was not just in absolute terms, but also those with higher-incomes and levels of education (Karsten, et al., 2006). The city's Urban Vision, published in 2007 and still widely adhered to, emphasises creating housing types which are attractive to different types of professional and more affluent households. As this urban vision states that:

> *to keep playing a significant role in the international competition among urban regions, Rotterdam will have to employ a strategy that not only aims at developments of the knowledge and service economies but can also guarantee an appealing residential and social climate capable of attracting more graduates and creative workers. (from van Kempen, 2009, see also Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007b).*

THE VISION FOR THE KOP VAN ZUID

Initial plans on what to do with the abandoned harbours on the south side of the Maas River were developed in the early 1980s. These plans stemmed from the local political-economic context of that period in Rotterdam's – and the Netherlands' more generally – history (see Uitermark, 2009 for an excellent description of Amsterdam). Rotterdam was dominated by a Labour-government council and, like many industrial cities in Europe, had a housing policy based on providing social housing for the masses. So the initial proposals for the area which would become the Kop van Zuid centred on social housing. Specifically, this housing was to be an overspill area – a site of temporary accommodation – for residents of other, existing neighbourhoods whose social housing was being refurbished or demolished and rebuilt. This was the era of 'bouwen voor de buurt,' (Building for the neighbourhood) where housing policies focused on the local populations within neighbourhoods. During this era, many working-class neighbourhoods with housing stock from the late 19th or early 20th century were demolished, and new, better quality housing (for the existing residents) was constructed in its place. Within this framework, areas were required to temporarily house social housing tenants as their neighbourhoods were being restructured. As the Kop van Zuid area contained no existing residents, under this context and vision, it would make a suitable location.

There were some aspects of this vision which were constructed. The 'peperklip' (paperclip – named because of its paperclip-like shape), designed by Carel Weeber, is one of the best examples of the implementation of this vision. However, this mentality was called into question in 1986 with the arrival of Riek Bakker, who became head of the Rotterdam's Urban Development department that year. She was an outsider to Rotterdam, and when she arrived in the city, she stayed in a hotel on the north bank of the river for two weeks, in order to get to know the city. As she explained, upon returning to the hotel each evening,

she would stare across the river to the abandoned terrain on the opposite side of the river and question the existing development visions within the city:

> Why don't you guys do anything there? What is that? This area is still up for grabs, isn't it? Because this area was entirely an old harbour … I see an old industrial area on the other side of the river … why are you leaving that there? And why do you only talk about social housing? In that time there was an enormous mental division between what happened on the north side of the river and what happened on the south side.

As an outsider, Ms. Bakker came with a different perspective about the city and how to regenerate it. Specifically, there were two elements of the city's development and mental framework which she called into question. The first was the fixation with social housing. Ms. Bakker saw that social housing did not always solve the problems it was intending to, and building low-income housing directly opposite the city centre was a missed opportunity to put the land to better use.

> *There are too few spin-offs [with social housing]. With all due respect those people in social housing, it doesn't provide enough amenities. They have too little to spend. So you need to ensure that you get other activities here which create this added value and more money.*

> *You have to build more expensive housing, not only social housing, but also housing for wealthier inhabitants … Everyone had the idea that that was not true; you had to build social housing. I said then, if 90% of your whole housing supply is social housing, then you have to ensure that the last 10% that you build is also not social housing. You have to have to take care to have a balance; ensure that the 90% becomes 80% and go from there so that you get a good mix. Now, that idea is finally accepted. But there was a mental 'click' necessary in order to both see that and to want it. But it has happened.*

While this approach is commonplace today, and reducing the percentage of social housing units in favour of more owner-occupied dwellings lies at the heart of many urban restructuring strategies (particularly those with gentrification as its aim) (Bridge et al., 2012, van Kempen and Bolt, 2009), this was quiet a revolutionary idea in 1980s Rotterdam. In Rotterdam specifically, this turn away from social housing towards more market-driven approaches can thus be directly attributed to the different vision which Riek Bakker brought to the city.

   The second existing development idea which she challenged was questioning the mental divisions between the north and south sides of the city. While Rotterdam North had always contained the economic, social and cultural hearts of the city, these divisions were also reflected in the perceptions of both ordinary Rotterdammers, and their politicians and business leaders. As Ms. Bakker noted:

> *In that time there was an enormous mental division between what happened on the North side of Rotterdam and what happened on the South side. [The idea was that] the South was another world; the South was worse.*

> *People did not see [the opportunities in the South]. There were no developers or private-sector groups that believed in the area. Even people here [in Rotterdam South] did not see it themselves, they accepted that they were on the verge of*

disaster. So yeah, I guess I did not suffer from the feeling that South was nothing. I was an outsider; I came from Amsterdam.

Related to this was the question of how Rotterdam would grow? In this debate, Ms. Bakker was in favour of strengthening the centre, rather than building on the edges of the city. To do this, she argued that because the areas adjacent to the centre on the north side of the city were already filled with existing housing, both original and recently restructured estates, new city-centre functions would need to cross the river and develop in the recently-vacated harbours opposite the centre.

This is related to her vision for using the Kop van Zuid to help unify Rotterdam North and South. A new development at the *head of Rotterdam South* would bring the two halves of the city physically, economically, socially and psychologically closer together. Two elements were important here. The first was providing infrastructure to physically join the city in a more cohesive way; the iconic Erasmus Bridge was the most important piece of infrastructure built in the Kop van Zuid.

The bridge was essential. If the bridge was not built, then I do not know how the area would have developed. It helped to set the wheels in motion because it brought it literally and figuratively closer to the rest of the city.

A second part of this vision was the idea of bringing city centre function to Rotterdam South, with the river acting as the new centre of the city. For years, Rotterdam turned its back on the river and focused its developments closer to the Central Station and the Coolsingel. As part of brining Rotterdam South closer to the rest of the city, Ms Bakker's vision was for one city centre spanning both sides of the river

My vision is that you have to have the river as the centre; you have to have a centre in the two parts of the city. A centre is just as important for the South as it is for the North. We have approximately 350,000 inhabitants on the North side and 350,000 inhabitants on the South side. Why should those 350,000 in the South not have a centre?

In terms of implementing her vision, the strategy became: *'Everything that couldn't find a place in the centre [on the north side] must come here.'*

Specifically, this would involve not only new cultural and recreational facilities, but also the relocation of civil servants to new offices in the Kop van Zuid. Under Ms Bakker's vision, this was necessary in order to kick-start the regeneration process, particularly since private-sector groups were less willing to invest in the project in the beginning.

The interesting thing about the [local] government is that they have something like 25,000 civil servants. Now, they don't all have to move here, but if you send 10,000,this means you will keep this area active and in play.

What is clear from these statements is that not only does this vision involve a new focus for the city of Rotterdam, but that the municipality would play a leading role in implementing it (see Doucet 2012; Doucet et al., 2011). We can also see clear links to urban entrepreneurial ideas of such flagship projects acting as a catalyst for further inward investment.

Another part of the vision was that the Kop van Zuid should bring real benefits to the lower-income people and neighbourhoods of Rotterdam South. The idea of social return – that residents would benefit from the development of the Kop van Zuid – was central to this vision. Having developed as working-class neighbourhoods for dockworkers, much of

Rotterdam South was, and is today poorer than Rotterdam North. The three neighbourhoods adjacent to the Kop van Zuid – the Afrikaanderwijk, Katendrecht and Feyenoord – are among the three poorest neighbourhoods in Rotterdam. Brining benefits to these people was a leading part of the vision for the Kop van Zuid, which is reflected in official goals and policy documents, as well as in the words of Ms Bakker herself.

> *Therefore, we said that where we have to take care is that people are more mobile in every respect: socially mobile, in terms of housing … It is one of the main tasks of a city council to keep up the vitality of a neighbourhood, isn't it? So, what should happen? It has to be, what we called, social return. There has to be something in it for those people. It could be work, that is dependent on the job market, but why should the people who live here not also be able to grab a coffee? Because they don't come over to the North [where the cafés are]. Why shouldn't they also be able to eat here?*

One of the key reasons for the successful implementation of this vision over a period of decades was that Ms Bakker firmly believed in this vision. She spent much of her years as head of Urban Development working to convince others – politicians, business leaders and the public – that this flagship was what Rotterdam needed. These communication skills were relayed many times during interviews with other key stakeholders as well as in literature about the Kop van Zuid.

This vision, which lay at the heart of the Kop van Zuid, led to the creation of four explicit goals which the project was meant to achieve. These goals, which were formulated in official documents, reflect this initial vision of Ms Bakker: unifying the north and the south, creating new housing for the middle-classes, creating a new international business centre and social return (see also Kop van Zuid 1994; 1999; Doucet, 2012).

Again, as with the example of Glasgow Harbour, these goals can be easily uncovered. However, what the specific goals for the Kop van Zuid do not reveal are the key beliefs and visions underpinning them, in this case from the project's long-term director, Riek Bakker. Her vision centred on three elements, which, when understood, help to place the Kop van Zuid in greater context. Ms. Bakker's vision for the Kop van Zuid site focused on three main aspects: maximising the economic potential of the land, physically unifying the city by building infrastructure and giving Rotterdam South city centre functions and brining social benefits for the inhabitants of Rotterdam South.

While both the Kop van Zuid and Glasgow's waterfront can be partially understood from their political-economic contexts which give vastly different powers to different actors – with the local government playing much more of a leadership role in Rotterdam and a facilitating role in Glasgow – this only tells us part of the explanation. To fully understand these spaces, we need to understand not only the roles which different stakeholders have, but also their visions. But a key question remains: once we have uncovered these visions, what do they reveal to us about the goal of pursuing gentrification as a municipal strategy? The concluding section will address this issue.

CONSLUCIONS AND DISCUSSION

That gentrification is a global urban strategy (Smith, 2002) largely goes without saying in 2013. Where there is still debate is on the question of why this strategy is pursued. Section two outlined three main reasons found in the literature why local governments aim to stimulate gentrification – either in existing neighbourhoods or in new-build developments such as waterfronts. The first is related to strategies of urban entrepreneurialism aimed at attracting inward investment, tourists or (high-income) residents. The second is a approach which focuses on creating an attractive middle-class housing environment. In some cases,

this is intertwined with social mixing policies – making areas more 'liveable' by introducing the middle-classes to formerly low-income or monolithic social housing areas. The third reason is related to revanchist ideas of taking back the city from the poor by the middle-classes. While first postulated by Neil Smith, Aalbers (2009) and Uitermark et al. (2007), among others, have shown have shown concrete examples of this phenomenon.

In both Rotterdam and Glasgow, the goal of gentrification (read: high end consumption, residential and employment landscape; the creation of affluent space) can be found along their waterfronts. However, if we go deeper and delve into the visions from the key leaders which have guided and spearheaded these projects, we can see a much more social, redistributive and collective agenda than the end product of a gentrified space would suggest. In Rotterdam, one of the key driving factors in pursuing the Kop van Zuid was to bring the southern half of the city – historically the poorer cousin to the northern half – physically, economically, socially and psychologically closer to the rest of the city. In Glasgow, the politician championing the Clyde redevelopment did so because of his unrelenting belief in full employment.

Therefore I would like to put forward a fourth reason why gentrification is pursued as an urban strategy: its leaders are searching for answers to key social problems in their cities. Gentrification is therefore conceived less as a strategy for growth, liveability or revenge against the poor, but rather it is a solution for the major economic and social problems plaguing cities and their inhabitants. Addressing these key issues is fundamental to both Riek Bakker and Charlie Gordon. Gentrification is less of a goal in-and-of itself but rather a means to an end: a way of creating an undivided city or reaching that dream of full employment.

In the two examples presented here, noble and socially-oriented visions have been transformed into goals which aim to stimulate gentrification (either implicitly or explicitly) and into places which have reinforced (or moved slightly) the existing socioeconomic and spatial divisions within their respective cities. How do we get from one end of this spectrum to the other?

It is true that key urban leaders do not see gentrification in the same negative and critical light that many scholars do. Many of them embrace it and encourage it. It is seen, in their eyes, as a pathway towards building a better and more prosperous city *for all inhabitants*. Those last three words are important in our understanding of the visions behind gentrification. Despite much of the academic literature which is critical towards municipally-led gentrification (and ample evidence which shows its negative consequences (Bridge, et al., 2012; Slater, 2004; Smith, 2012; Uitermark et al., 2007)), when we actually engage with the key leaders promoting gentrification, we find that at least on paper, these words are indeed important to them. They believe that creating gentrified spaces will create a better city for all, not just for the rich.

So yes, gentrification is a global urban strategy. But it is far more complex than that. By uncovering these visions and going much deeper into the origins of such spaces, we can see that gentrification is not a direct strategy, but a response to urban crises of unemployment and urban divisions. The initial visions are not to create exclusive spaces and high-end enclaves. These spaces, be they housing, shopping centres or offices, are the answers which key urban leaders have come up with to solve the urban challenges they initially set out to fix. In other words, gentrification is not the starting strategy for these spaces; it is, according to their visionaries, the solution to the key urban problems of unemployment, social, spatial and economic divisions which plague post-industrial cities. It is out of visions to create full employment and an undivided city that gentrification has become an urban strategy along the waterfronts of Glasgow and Rotterdam.

This is where alternative visions and strategies are needed from those of us who see gentrification as a process which leads to conflicts and tensions; one where there are clear

negative consequences for some. Few would argue with the noble aims of full employment and an undivided city, therefore scholars with more socially-just visions must be more assertive in formulating alternative strategies which can actually help achieve the goals of reducing socioeconomic and spatial inequalities and create meaningful jobs so that these visions can actually be achieved. This will be an uphill – though by no means impossible – struggle for two major reasons. First, gentrification has become so ingrained and so much a central part of urban policy that it becomes difficult to stop (van Kempen and Bolt, 2008b). Second, gentrification is an easy sell. Gentrified landscapes have become mainstream and normalised, the types of spaces which cities aspire to create and replicate. Richard Florida and the 'creative class/city' movement have convinced planners, politicians and policy makers that this is the key to urban success. Gentrification is sexy; dealing directly social inequalities through targeting the most disadvantaged is not. But the on-going economic crisis has also given us an opportunity to put forward new solutions which go beyond maximising profit and 'trickle-down' urbanism. There is growing appetite, particularly among members of the public, for ideas and solutions which move beyond the neoliberal mantra which has dominated debates, and more importantly, policy, for three decades.

In the arguments brought forward in this article, which evidence from Rotterdam and Glasgow have empirically demonstrated, the strategy of gentrification is regarded as the best the answer urban leaders have to solve the problems of unemployment and wider urban divisions. But while the solutions may further exacerbate the problems they are intending to solve, the challenges and visions which lie at the heart of both the Kop van Zuid and Glasgow Harbour remain noble and socially just. However, as scholars, practitioners and society more generally, we must ask ourselves: can we not find a better answer to issues of unemployment, socioeconomic and spatial polarisation than the relentless pursuit and promotion of gentrification within our cities?

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