Cities xxx (2017) xxx–xxx

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Cities

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/cities

Of "city lounges", "bans on gathering" and macho policies - Gender, class and race in productions of space for Rotterdam's post-industrial future

Marguerite van den Berg *, Danielle Chevalier

University of Amsterdam/Sociology, Postbus 15508, 1001 NA Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 30 May 2016
Received in revised form 8 February 2017
Accepted 23 March 2017
Available online xxxx

Keywords:
Gender
Planning
Post-Fordist city
Right to the City
Public space

ABSTRACT

Like many other former industrial cities, Rotterdam (the Netherlands) is engaged in a reinvention for a post-industrial future. The consensus among Rotterdam policy makers, entrepreneurs, economists and politicians has been for some time that the city needs to depart from its industrial, masculine and working class heritage and invest in what is commonly referred to as a post-industrial economy: one of consumption and services. In policy efforts towards this imagined Rotterdam, desired and undesired populations are outlined and targeted, amounting to a reconfiguration of the Right to the City. In this article we outline two particular spatial interventions to investigate the gendered, classed and racial logic of the production of a post-industrial Rotterdam and concomitant gendered Rights to the City. The first is what is called the "City Lounge": an urban planning programme outlining productions of space in the city centre of Rotterdam for leisure and consumption. The second is what is commonly referred to as a "ban on gathering", a safety measure meant to disperse 'problem groups' socializing in public space. From this analysis it appears that what is conceived as lounging for some in thought of as loitering for others and that both target groups are opposites on the axes of race, class and gender. Moreover, using content analyses of policy documents, legal proceedings, urban planning programmes and media reports, we show how in neoliberal urbanism, femininities are actively used as symbolic instruments in entrepreneurial strategies.

1. Moving beyond the masculine industrial past

In 2013, Hamit Karakus, the Rotterdam alderman (Labour) that was responsible for urban 'regeneration', declared: "Rotterdam needs tits". Karakus was not the only politician or administrator that thought about the city in these terms. In 2008, the alderwoman Marianne van den Anker (Liveable Rotterdam, the populist right-wing party of the late Pim Fortuyn) already made a plea for a more "round" and "breasted" Rotterdam (Van den Berg, 2017). These pleas for a more 'feminine' Rotterdam across the political spectrum stand for ambitions of urban administrations to reinvent former industrial cities in quite profoundly gendered ways. Whereas in the modernist planning of the mid-twentieth century (the decades in which Rotterdam was largely rebuilt after WWII) the urban was imagined as a masculine space of production (and its counterpoint of the suburb as a feminine space of reproduction), the city now explicitly wants to produce a more feminine city. In this article, we will investigate concrete spatial interventions of urban public policy in Rotterdam as a case of a former industrial city trying to move beyond its industrial history and its connected working class and masculine image.

Many former industrial cities actively imagine urban futures beyond their industrial past. Deindustrialization hit hard in cities like Liverpool, Marseille, Liège and Rotterdam. These urban economies were booming during decades of Fordist industrial expansion and are now adjusting to new economic realities. Imagining new futures, cities are planning for a new, post-industrial and post-Fordist city. Individual cities compete to attract businesses, visitors and certain groups of inhabitants in order to 'revitalize' and secure economic viability. Following early examples like New York and Glasgow, cities around Europe have developed 'entrepreneurial' strategies (cf. Harvey, 1989). Amidst much economic uncertainty, they envision their future as an important node in international networks, as a centre for highbrow culture, as the place where sellable ideas are thought of and businesses stay put. When local governments develop strategies for desired urban futures, they often employ Richard Florida's ideas of the creative class and find ways to attract artists and bankers. Imagining a new future thus very much entails imagining future populations or imagining how the city could become more 'attractive' for these desired populations.

The city of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, is a case in point. The second largest city in the Netherlands (approximately 630.000 inhabitants) is an excellent strategic case to study how former industrial cities in the

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: m.a.vandenberg@uva.nl (M. van den Berg), d.a.m.chevalier@uva.nl (D. Chevalier).

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.03.006
0264-2751/

West attempt to mitigate the effects of deindustrialization by strategically planning for post-industrial futures. In Rotterdam, desired and undesired populations are quite explicitly outlined and targeted in urban planning efforts. In the most recent plans (that are not exceptional, but a continuation of rather consistent plans, supported across the political spectrum), outlined in the 2030 'Housing Vision', the administration proposes the demolition of 20.000 affordable houses to make room for more expensive new dwellings. Though these plans have been heavily protested (Doucet et al., 2016), they are indicative of the type of large scale state-led gentrification efforts Rotterdam wants to pursue.

Such gentrification policies and entrepreneurial strategies have often been understood in terms of the neoliberal city. In thinking about the gendered aspects of neoliberal urbanism, Phil Hubbard (2004) argued that this often amounts to a re-centring of masculinity or "the phallus" (665). His thesis is that neoliberal urbanism serves to reinforce patriarchy. Our research in Rotterdam shows, however, that neoliberal urbanism can work through femininities to produce more middle class (consumption) spaces that also produce more Whiteness. As we will demonstrate with our two cases below, in Rotterdam, certain working class, (post-) migrant masculinities and their presence in public space are problematized in favour of the production of a more feminized public space that is particularly open to white middle and higher class family consumers. The case of Rotterdam therefore shows that productions of space in neoliberal urbanism can very well work through the (symbolic) use of femininities.

The analysis presented here is based in two bodies of literature. First, it is based in critical urban studies in the way it looks at how in contemporary urban neoliberalism, certain groups of inhabitants are spatially excluded. Rotterdam's plans actively deny the Right to the City (cf. Lefebvre, 1996; compare Harvey, 2008) of some populations, in the sense that through more and less subtle spatial measures, the population itself is a primary object of engineering. So instead of including those that inhabit the city in its configuration, Rotterdam enacts a Lefebvrian dystopia by ensuring the exclusion of some populations from certain areas and certain uses of the city. Second, the analysis in this article is an intersectional one in the sense that it looks at intersections or race, class and gender in these particular productions of space. Originating in *Black Feminism*, intersectionality perspectives allow making visible complex and combined forms of domination (Crenshaw, 1991; Wekker, 2016). The central claim of intersectionality perspectives is that gender, class, race (or ethnicity, religion, age et cetera) takes it shape as a social construct and a category ordering power relations *only* in interaction with other important social constructs and should therefore be understood as axes of domination intersecting in meaningful ways. In the context of this paper, an intersectional approach offers the possibility to move beyond looking at classed or ethnic domination alone, as is most often done in studies on Rotterdam and studies on deindustrializing cities in general. Moreover, the intersectional approach offers opportunity to how gender works (the category most often left out in critical urban analyses, Van den Berg, 2017) in relation to the production of space in a contemporary Western city, in interaction with class and race, and how these axes of domination interact in meaningful ways.

Applying an intersectional approach to a critical urban perspective in the analysis of how the Right to the City holds while Rotterdam faces its post-Fordist challenges, we ask: How are, in the context of entrepreneurial strategies in post-industrial Rotterdam, productions of space gendered, classed and raced? By presenting and analysing two concurrent but (in terms of intersectionality) oppositional spatial interventions practiced by the city of Rotterdam, we will demonstrate how gender figures in relation to class and race in the reimagining of a future Rotterdam and how this in turn genders the Right to the City.

2. Case and approach

The point of studying Rotterdam in some detail is not so much to generalize findings as such (to say, for example, that what goes on in Rotterdam, goes on elsewhere in the same way) but to *learn* from what goes on in this particular case (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006). The case Rotterdam offers lessons that are more generally applicable for European former industrial cities aiming to establish new economies. The analysis offered below of gendered urban policy and planning can serve as searchlights for other scholars and analysis in other locations.

Rotterdam is the second city of the Netherlands, and has been the quintessential Dutch industrial metropolis for over a century. It rapidly expanded in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century as a result of growing port activity and massive flows of people moving to Rotterdam to find work. Rotterdam is still the largest port of Europe and prides itself on this in the marketing slogan 'World Port, World City'. The port offered work in shipping, logistics and petrol-chemical industries for large migrant (at first largely male) populations, first from the Dutch provinces and after WWII from Mediterranean countries such as Morocco and Turkey. Migration has therefore been important in Rotterdam's growth and success for more than a century, but today, the ethnically diverse composition of the population is often considered problematic in public policy and discourse. After the 1970s economic crisis and since much labour moved across the world or disappeared because of robotization and automation processes, unemployment and poverty are real concerns for Rotterdam. For many relatively low-skilled Rotterdammers today, making the connection to the post-Fordist economy where there are jobs in healthcare and consumer services is difficult and indeed, scholars have noted how in Rotterdam there is a mismatch between the labour demand and labour supply (Van der Waal & Burgers, 2011). For many years, mayors and aldermen of various political convictions stressed how Rotterdam is 'on top of the wrong lists', by which they meant that relative to other Dutch cities, Rotterdam was not doing well in terms of unemployment levels, early school leaving, poverty et cetera. In more recent years, city marketing endeavours have been successful in getting Rotterdam on the 'right lists' of tourist guides and international newspapers in attempts to attract tourists and investments. This marks a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism as preferred strategy of urban governance (cf. Harvey, 1989) and this shift has coincided with particular political rhetoric (again from left to right) in which Rotterdam likes to pride itself on being a forerunner in political dynamics and in blazing legal paths. This is often caught in the metaphor the 'laboratory Rotterdam' and indeed, the city is (in) famous for employing legal interventions that are argued by some to skirt the boundaries of what is legally and morally acceptable (Duivesteijn, 2005, see also Schuilenburg & van Swaaningen, 2013). In 2005 the so-called Rotterdam Act was passed by Parliament. Officially named the Act Extraordinary Measures Metropolitan Issues, the Rotterdam Act was instigated by the municipality of Rotterdam to prevent people who have no income from work from settling in certain districts (Van Eijk, 2010; Hochstenbach, Uitermark, & van Gent, 2015).

These are policy examples of how the Rotterdam administration has identified the city's demographic makeup as one of the most important causes of the city's contemporary problems. Policy is explicitly formulated on curbing "selective out-migration" of "prospect rich" (*kansrijken*) (COS, 2010), using an idiom that paraphrases the problem ascertained in the presence of certain populations (working class, migrant background, less educated) and the absence of others (higher educated white families). "Selective out-migration" is a term taken to mean that higher earning inhabitants in the 30–45 age range (the prospect rich) are more likely to leave Rotterdam as a place of residence than other categories of inhabitants. And the attraction of the city for the "prospect poor" (*kansarmen*: typically poorly educated unemployed inhabitants) is considered the other side of the same coin, hindering the development of Rotterdam. Policies are designed to actively attract "prospect rich" and displace "prospect poor", for example in the recent housing vision that is referred to above. Generally, "prospect poor" is a euphemism for "poor" or "precariat", because it is often quite simply defined as people with a very low income or those dependent on welfare (Van den Berg, 2017). In any case, discursive repertoires of machismo

Please cite this article as: van den Berg, M., & Chevalier, D., Of "city lounges", "bans on gathering" and macho policies - Gender, class and race in productions of space for Rotterd..., *Cities* (2017), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.03.006