M4H in Rotterdam Makers District: On the Edge of a Future

Destabilizing place-making processes of imagined urban futures

Source: Narrative Walk 1

Student: Seline Aukelien Westerhof, 572990sw

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Willem Schinkel

Second Reader: Dr. Bonnie French

Date: June 2021

International Sociology Master

Master Track: Engaging Public Issues

Erasmus University, School of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Wordcount: 10900 - Narrative Walk 1100

Table of Contents

Abstract

In this thesis, I aim to destabilize the imagined futures of place-making in M4H, as part of Rotterdam Makers District, and imagined by Rotterdam Port Authority and Rotterdam Municipality. By employing the concepts Sociotechnical Imaginaries, Place Bundling, Processes of Place-framing, and The Right to The City, I generated a four-fold analysis on the *edge of a future.* A future, that is not only an imagined or idealized future, but also a future very much materialized and normalized into existence. Next to applying a Critical Discourse Analysis of interviews, social-media posts, the website of M4H, and the Spatial Framework, I conducted a Narrative Walk, with which another outlook on M4H, from the street level up, came into light. It is an area substantiated in its promises for a future-proof future. A future that is at the same time contrasting with, as well as embedded in this desolated, raw edge of the historical Merwevierhavens in Rotterdam.

Keywords: *Futurity, Innovation, Makers District, Place-making, Sociotechnical Imaginaries*

1. Introduction

1 Narrative Walk

Standing in the windswept Merwehaven in Rotterdam, I no longer saw the numerous big cranes that once composed the hustle and bustle of one of the 1930s built ports on the North-West waterfront of the Maas. I found myself gazing over a sober looking harbor, with here and there a crane slowly lifting goods from a modest ship. I saw a few men finding their way on their decks, and a few figures disappeared in grey barracks that appeared desolated, empty. Further down the road, however, colorful artworks adorned the facades of the barracks. When I followed the road even further to the right, I noticed a dry empty field with an old train track on my left, while on my right the wind rippled the water, soaring between some industrial looking boats and against the waterside.

Walking down the Marconistraat, I passed many parked cars standing along the wharf, and next to me was a road where loaded trucks, as well as occasionally a biker, a car and some people calmly having a walk enjoying the sunny weather, passed me. I carefully crossed the road, to look at a gathering of benches and containers I spotted, standing on the end of that empty field. One of the containers was covered with stickers saying: 'Re-place', 'Hello I am In Transition' and 'Hello, I am A Re-Maker'. A few meters further, towards the end of the road, the 'floating farm' came into sight, and just around the corner of the street, painted on a brick building, I read: 'Welkom in M4H' (Narrative Walk, Marconistraat, Merwehaven. Tuesday, April 13th, 2021).

1.1 The Merwevierhavens, M4H

The Merwehaven is the only still active port in Rotterdam that is situated near the city center, but the industrial harbor activity that remained present, is also rapidly decreasing. With the new Maasvlakte as main port, a man-made piece of land reclaimed from the sea, the predominant port activity of Rotterdam is since the 90's transferring to the far West up towards the sea, far away from where it once all began. Especially when in 2013 the Maasvlakte 2 opened, there was not much left to see of that hustle and bustle of the port in (and nearby) the city center of Rotterdam itself (Ter Avest, 2021). The relation between the city of Rotterdam and the port is a historical one, around 1270 the first fisherman settled near the Rotte, and already in the 17th century Rotterdam was known for its international port industry (Castigliano, 2017). Not only the geographical setting was bringing this mingling about, also the many (laboring) people did. In the 1930's the Merwehaven especially, made for many new job opportunities for the people living in the surrounding neighborhoods. But ever since the decrease of port activity in the city harbors the (social) connection between the surrounding neighborhoods, the Merwehaven area (and other historical city-port area's) and the city of Rotterdam is said to be very weak (Ter Avest, 2021).

Fortunately, big plans lay ahead. Since 2017 the Merwehaven is, together with the Vierhavensgebied, referred to as part of the Merwe- Vierhavensgebied, or in short M4H (Gemeente Rotterdam & Havenbedrijf Rotterdam, 2019). M4H, in turn, makes up half of the plans for the innovative Rotterdam Makers District. The empty barracks and offices in the area are opened for new input. Innovative ideas and creative start-ups slowly find their ways in being part of the new interpretation of the former port-area. On the other side of the Maas, Rotterdam Port Authority already transformed parts of the former Heijplaat harbor area into the RDM (referring to the former company 'Rotterdamsche Droogdok Maatschappij', or Drydocks), the other half of what is supposed to make up Rotterdam Makers District. RDM, on the Heijplaat, is now mostly occupied by educational institutes like Hogeschool Rotterdam, Techniek College RDM and Innovation Dock in the RDM Campus. RDM is considered as the already 'finished' part of the Makers District. The newly named M4H stands in the starting blocks towards the innovative, creative urban area of the future that the Municipality of Rotterdam and the Rotterdam Port Authority, this time together, proudly promise: Rotterdam Makers District (Gemeente Rotterdam & Havenbedrijf Rotterdam, 2019).

Standing there on the Marconistraat, I stood on a place on the threshold of transforming to something new, a new innovative future that gives hope to a future-proof district with a port-city mentality (Ter Avest, 2021). I found myself on *the edge of a future*, and wondered: *How*

are futures imagined in M4H, as part of Rotterdam Maker Districts? On the edge of who's future did I stand?

1.2 Innovation and Makers Districts

As unique as it may seem, innovation and makers districts are not one of a kind. On the premise of innovation and progress, parts of cities all over the world, and sometimes even cities as a whole, are (re-) named as 'makers districts' or 'innovation districts' where the mingling of science, technology, creativity and innovation are promised to give rise to new flourishing urban life. Implementing such urban rehabilitation policies has become a trend that seems, by now, to embody the one and only true city ideal (Kartstens, Kool & van Est, 2020). We can find numerus plans alike for smart cities, innovation cities, urban makers districts and so on, in major metropole cities around the globe. For example, in the United Arab Emirates on Abu Dhabi's Reem Island we find a brand new makers district that is being built from the ground up. But also in Barcelona, Stockholm and Tokyo bright futures are being made.

As a 'new urban model' Innovation Districts, and Makers Districts alike, arose in the United States as a response to the traditional science parks like Silicon Valley where companies and offices were isolated from the residential areas, mostly only reachable by car. In contrast in these new districts, as Katz and Wagner (2014) argue, local businesses, artists, residents, knowledge institutes and retail are put together to create attractive urban spaces as it also encourages the local economy. What does this then mean, as Rotterdam Makers Districts so strongly seems to engage with the ideal city where Jane Jacobs's once pleaded for: a city that encourages the mixing of different peoples, knowledge(s), ideas and spaces: *the living city*? (Center for the living city, n.d. in Gemeente Rotterdam & Havenbedrijf Rotterdam, 2019).

In this thesis I will focus on the urban rehabilitation project of M4H as part of Rotterdam Makers District, with its own practicalities, situatedness and contextualities. And look at how the major stakeholders (Rotterdam municipality, Port Authority) imagine M4H and its desired future, how they articulate and speculate, and reveal the power they have in their hands doing so. It leaves me no more than to ask: *How* are futures imagined in M4H, as part of Rotterdam Maker District? What futures are imagined, and for whom?

I study the urban rehabilitation processes and plans of Rotterdam Makers District in three ways: by conducting a Narrative Walk inspired by Carpotti (2013), by holding an interview with a researcher of M4H and a 'maker' at the Keilewerf. And thirdly, by analyzing with the help of Blommaert's account on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the Spatial Framework (policy document) and the website and social media post(s) of M4H. This is

particularly important since it seems we forget to look at the ones who decide what those new urban areas actually look like, or want them to look like: the businesses and institutions, may it be governments, who more and more present those plans for creating and maintaining those districts in certain ways with certain ideals and goals to begin with. I will mainly refer to Scholars like Doreen Massey (2005) and Pierce, Martin & Murphy (2010) who allow me to dissect these specific place making and framing processes. As such, Jasanoff's concept of sociotechnical imaginaries highlights how the Makers Districts are "at once products of and instruments of the coproduction of science, technology, and society in modernity" (Jasanoff, & Kim 2015: 19). On a critical note, David Harvey (2003), argues that when we recognize that cities are shaped, and in turn that they shape us, there precisely, lays the opportunity to re-claim our socialist democratic right to shaping the city, the right to the city (Harvey, 2003).

2. Theoretical Framework

2 **Narrative Walk**
This time I parked my bike at the Vierhavenstraat and from thereon I set forward my journey afoot to another part of M4H, the Keilekwartier. Once on the other side of the busy Vierhavenstraat, I saw how a gray fence, covered in lifeless bushes, casually divided the field from the sidewalk and the surrounding terrains. According to a small a map of M4H attached to the fence, the field I was looking at, was part of the Makers District, of M4H. A bit further on my right, I saw red painted letters on the fence that confirmed me that I indeed I was at right place, this was the Keilewerf I looked at, the (soon to be) heart of M4H. The simple entrance and signage, however, didn't particularly welcome me to enter at

first sight, it didn't really feel like I was supposed to be there.

Upon entering the field, I saw the Keile-Café, which I could recognize from the way several containers where placed in a half circle, with in the center tables and chairs used by some people drinking beers. I continued my quest and followed a gray concrete road further into this wide stretched area and noticed a bulky green-white painted art work of artist Joep van Lieshout, a figure that resembled the colossal silhouettes of the port machinery. And a bit further I noticed a sign telling me that I was entering the Voedseltuin. There, I saw plants, trees and flowers, planted in circles and other peculiar looking set-ups - some with sponge- or complex layered bases - decorated with small paths in between them. It looked small but promising, alive and growing, an oasis of a possible green future.

When I looked around, I saw how the garden was surrounded by big square buildings, again those old barracks. On the balconies, and in the front of the buildings, I noticed small groups of people hanging around, comfortably having a beer in this sunny afternoon. I sat down on a bench in the small garden, and felt like I was where I needed to be to see who truly made this place: the makers that were already 'making' before the Spatial Framework (plan) existed, before the Municipality of Rotterdam and Rotterdam Port Authority renamed the place to Makers District, and I wondered: what does it mean for them? (Narrative Walk Keilekwartier, Friday April 23rd, 2021).

2.1. Sociotechnical Imaginaries

As those Innovation and Makers Districts opt so vigorously for making a certain future in specific places, those imaginaries about that future, are situated and actively performed (Jasanoff, 2015). It seems that particularly in those districts governmental institutions, companies and geographers have a major hand in what those futures are planned to look like

and how the imagined futures are intended to unfold. Sheila Jasanoff (2015) proposes to recognize such imaginaries as 'sociotechnical imaginaries'. Sociotechnical imaginaries bring in the importance of materiality and power structures that are at play in imaginaries wherein certain choices for possible futures are made, and others are ignored. As such, the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries allows me to see how futures are presented and how institutions and organizations that promote these districts, neutralize ways 'of thinking about possible futures' (Jasanoff, 2015: 35).

Sociotechnical imaginaries specify in how futurity and the normativity of imagination within the materiality of networks and social reality comes about. It stresses the importance on that how futures imagined has direct impact on 'reality' with its the robust forms of social life, that are often ignored. More specifically Jasanoff defines Sociotechnical imaginaries as "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order attainable through, and supportive of, advances in science and technology." (Jasanoff, 2015: 6). The word 'desired' is emphasized here, as "efforts to build new sociotechnical futures are typically grounded in positive futures of social progress" (Jasanoff, & Kim 2015: 4).

This perspective is interest for my inquiry to uncover the construction of the very idea of 'M4H'. For instance, when Jasanoff points out the notion of *change,* she emphasizes how in the construction of sociotechnical imaginaries references to past achievements are made and reflected upon future aspirations. Similarly, the notion of *space*, is interesting because it "allows for spatial imaginations to preexist and channel the spread of science and technology, instead of only vice versa." (Jasanoff, & Kim 2015: 22). Both allow me to pick up existing sociotechnical imaginaries, and see who play what role in composing and constructing the sociotechnical imaginaries within material and social orders.

2.2 Space and Place-Making

Notions of space and place also open up opportunities for further theoretical exploration in the robust situatedness of the innovation and makers districts. Doreen Massey describes how places are made as 'bundles' that attainted meaning through processes bounding them together through not only space but also time (Massey, 2005). That is, people make places through active bundling that is manifested by cognitive and emotional processes of referring and re-configurating. As such, the place bundles are 'socially negotiated, constantly changing and contingent' (Massey, 2005 in Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2010). Where they then are temporally

situated and culturally particular, in turn being a characteristic of sociotechnical imaginaries mentioned by Jasanoff earlier (Jasanoff, 2015: 19).

Pierce, Martin and Murphy (2010) take those notions of i.e. place bundling at heart but argue that there is need for a more close-up and informal view on community politics of place making. Pierce et al. (2010), propose the notion of 'relational place-making' where "explicit, systematic and simultaneous interlinkage of place, networks and politics" are integrated (Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2010). They add to place-making and studies of political and human geography the importance to consider relationality and underlaying networks that make up the 'making' of a place. By first taking place-framing as a process, Pierce et. al. (2010) show how certain frames that are taken into account, are utilized in the 'making' (sense of) place, with certain goals in mind (Pierce, et al. 2010: 63). Relational place-making combines the political and urban geography concepts of place making and situate it within the broader conversation about place and politics of place (Pierce, et al. 2010: 55). In line with the focus on how futures are imagined, these concepts particularly come in handy when we look at how place comes to matter, how and by whom they get assigned meaning. Highlighting place-making processes shows how place gets a specific function in these futures.

2.3 Right to the City and Ecologies of Gentrification

David Harvey (2003) follows this line of thinking, on a more critical note in his essay 'The Right to the City', he calls for recognition of our "active right to make the city different, to shape it" (Harvey, 2003: 941). For imagining it is shaping it (Jasanoff, 2015). But who is allowed to imagine it? Harvey's account on the right to the city, is embedded in a Marxist democratic socialist view on shaping a city where no longer the neo-Liberal tendencies of free market rules take over, but where we acknowledge our democratic power to imagine and shape the city the way we would like it to be. Which implies that, when we acknowledge the city is shaped and imagined, we can also change or 're-imagine and re-make' it in more socialist democratic terms.

That is, however, challenging as the current neoliberal free market ideal follows the same reasoning over and over again where the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. As Harvey importantly notes, "nothing [is] more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals." (Harvey, 2003: 940). In the end, it makes that only a few people really get to shape and imagine the city as they would like it to be. The right to the city, then, comes down to question: "who's right and who's city?" (Harvey, 2003: 941).

Quastel (2009) notes these neo-Liberal market workings as 'ecologies of gentrification' to recognize how cities are deployed as a commodified artifact, and more and more become centers for the wealthiest, with as inherent process that it pushes the poorer people towards the peripheries (Quastel, 2009). Quastel (2009) argues that the rise of such (makers, innovation) districts, is a typical symptom of these gentrification processes, where in those urban transformation plans wider socioeconomic and messy social reality of a city is ignored (Quastel, 2009). As Farías and Wilkie (2015 in Marres et al., 2018) add, Makers Districts are "presumed to enable experimental intervention into an external object (society) – as for example in recent policy preoccupations where creativity as an economic object can be stimulated by urban planning" (Farías and Wilkie 2015 in Marres et al., 2018). Understanding those plans for Makers Districts as the layout of new experimental urban areas, changes the way we understand and see 'social life as performed', as presumably makeable (Marres, Gugenheim & Wilkie, 2018.). Grunwald (2018) argues that in this paradigm, "economic growth and technological progress are considered at least politically if not morally desirable and are the subject of political rhetoric and public encouragement" and are consequently not questioned or critically looked upon by policy makers (Grunwald, 2018: 1854). There, Grunwald states that cities and districts look for solutions within promises grounded in classical modernity and enlightenment principles where "naïve techno-optimism" and "innovation" are promoted for urban transformation (Grunwald, 2018).

It is here, to consider the idea of a 'Makers District' as a framing tool for the purpose of city branding. As is typical for those plans for new urban districts to carry terms like 'innovation' and 'makers' as a tool to push the narrative that promises better futures. Söderström, Paasche and Klauser (2014) explain that precisely because there is no clear definition of those districts, it reveals that terms like innovation, technology, and presumably also 'Makers District', are used as mechanisms to boost economic advances. Such terms are competed over amongst companies and institutions. Subsequently it all comes down who gets to define what those terms mean for a city or district, who can claim to be part of the city's innovation, and who doesn't, as they introduce "a new moral imperative where smartness becomes, like creativity, a new necessary asset of cities." (Söderström et al., 2014: 318). It seems that those places drive on notions of technical progress that solely show that the ecology of gentrification is taken shape with a powerful nuance as urban revitalization (Quastel, 2009).

3. Methodology, Case Study and Data Collection

3 **Narrative Walk**

I followed the Galileistraat towards the Keileweg and passed, on this quiet empty road, a few businesses, as well as port industries. There was no one to be seen on these wide streets. At the bend of the road, I saw bulks of goods and containers, behind fences that carried blue and yellow signs, warning me that I was watched.

Repeatably I noticed trash from the MacDonald's and KFC on the sidewalks in this street. Signs of live, I thought. But not much seemed alive when I walked there, other than a Check sharing-scooter, I noticed. The scooter was parked in front of a building with a sign saying: 'home of the unlikely'.

I followed the road further towards the Keileweg and saw a the big blue round building appear in sight: the Ferro Dome, an old electricity factory. I recognized its typical round shape, from the stories I heard about the underground parties that were held there before. Next to the Ferro Dome, I saw the broken buildings from close by, also here the walls were covered with graffiti. The field next to it was fenced. Here as well, M4H looked abandoned.

(Narrative Walk, May 1st, 2021).

3.1 Case: M4H as Part of Rotterdam Makers District

To answer the research question: *How* are futures imagined in M4H as part of Rotterdam Maker District?, I conducted a qualitative research with a multi-method approach that allowed me to illustrate a broader picture for this rather new phenomenon of 'innovation' and 'makers' districts. Specified on one single case: M4H (Merwevierhavens) in Rotterdam Makers District.

M4H, Merwevierhavens, is a particularly interesting case as it is still a part of the Rotterdam Maker District that is a place 'on the edge' of being what the plans ought them to be. The building of the final district should be finished partly in about 10-15 years, up until 30 years, from now. During the release of the plans in 2015, the name of the supposed-to-be place has already changed a few times from 'Rotterdam Innovation District' to 'Rotterdam Makers District', here I wondered, for instance, what the reason for this as a whole different course of marketing could tell me about the particular place-framing and -making. Focusing on a specific case allowed me to distill how local politics and networks play in with broader global processes of place-making from a more relational and close-up level just as Pierce et. al. stated for (Pierce. Et. al. 2010). Additionally, Rotterdam as a city has a remarkable history in terms of architecture and the historical harbor that attracts not only thousands of tourists every year but also still is part of one of the biggest harbors of Europe. And especially this fact seems to play a big role in establishing the transformation processes and the articulation of the new futures towards making M4H as part of Rotterdam Makers District.

3.2 Interview(s)

The first research method I applied was an in-depth semi-structured interview with an official advisor of Rotterdam Makers District, which took place in the last week of March 2021. This interview I approached as an orientational interview to hear about the plans in more detail, without relaying too much on previously gained (textual) information. Interviewing someone who is part of creating but also critically reflecting upon the imaginaries, can tell me (may it be implicitly) why certain things are deemed important and others not, and see what arguments substantiate these ideas. The second interview I conducted with a team-member, 'maker', working at Joep van Lieshout's atelier in the Keilekwartier, at the heart of M4H. This second interview took place during the time I already started analyzing the Spatial Framework and had done my finishing Narrative Walk. Interviewing an employee of artist Joep van Lieshout was of much interest here to see how the plans are seen from a 'makers' perspective. And, as Joep

van Lieshout is one of the biggest artist in the region, he can also be deemed as one of the more important stakeholders in the transformation process of M4H.

For analyzing the interviews, I applied a Critical Discourse Analysis (see next section) and from there on worked towards a thematic analysis to extract the core themes reoccurring in the data (Bryman, 2012: 579). This allowed me to relate the ways the interviewees constructed their story around the topic, as well as to the data I gathered with the other methods. We will see then what is deemed important in the eyes of someone with a role in the broader picture of the construction of the imaginary of Rotterdam Makers District. It allows to understand how, with sociotechnical imaginaries, as Jasanoff puts it, institutions, "corporations [read: stakeholders] increasingly act upon imagined understandings of how the world is and ought to be" (Jasanoff, 2015: 39).

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis of the Spatial Framework, Website, Social Media

The data gathered for this account on the quest to identify the sociotechnical imaginaries and place-making processes, I retrieved from the official communication of M4H and Rotterdam Makers District. It consists of mostly the analysis of the public Spatial Framework (138 pages, Gemeente Rotterdam & Havenbedrijf, 2019), the website of M4H (m4hrotterdam.nl) and two social media posts from Facebook and Twitter. I interpreted them with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as formulated by Blommaert (2005). CDA allowed me to focus on the specific elements that make up those imaginaries. It is a tool to dissect the documents in parts with a language and visual based approach: how symbols, colors, speech and text, make up the whole, the sociotechnical imaginaries, the imagined futures. We see how language and sings (e.g.) operate 'at higher levels than the single sentence'." (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Tannen 1984 in Blommaert, 2005). CDA allows for identifying linguistic and symbolic elements that 'are crucial to the production and uptake of sociotechnical imaginaries.' (Jasanoff, 2015).

3.4 Narrative Walk

Narrative Walking as method, is a way of collecting data inspired by Federico Caprotti (2013) who conducted a qualitative research to eco-cities in China where he combines his observation in the streets of the city with pictures and short interactions with people. Caprotti uses 'the narrative tool of a visit to' the place and make sense of it by focusing on scale, definition, internal social resilience and the fringes of the eco-city he studies. With those (or similar) socio-

spatial questions I can bring in the notion of place and also relate to sociotechnical imaginaries, as they are multidimensional, where especially materiality comes about in new ways.

As a form of ethnographic observation, for this part, I went to the Merwevierhavens four times. Equipped with a camera, a notebook and a voice recorder (M4H, Makers District), allowing for a detailed description of the environment while walking where it is this all takes 'place'. With this method, I could depict those specific urban landscapes to create a fuller picture, to immerse myself, and show an 'in situ' and embodied perspective. Es and Lange also emphasize this certain form of 'walking' as a method to find how the things we (or others) write and theorize about, are "material and situated, and constitutive of everyday life." (van Es & de Lange, 2020: 279). Walking then, is specifically "embodied, situated and generative" as the method allows for 'experiential, spatio-temporal and performative' forms of knowledge production, to understand the space and place-making from the bottom-up, or 'street-level up', as Es and Lange put it, to stress the social experience of urban life (van Es & de Lange, 2020: 280).

During the first narrative walk I went to the Marconistraat and the Merwehavens. The second walk I went to the Keilekwartier, de Keileweg and the Vierhavenstraat and visited the Voedseltuin in the area, where I spoke to some 'makers' during the walk. The third, walk I went to the Merwehaven again, and from there to the Galileistraat and the Keileweg. The fourth and last walk, I walked into a bicycle path to the Galileistraat. The Narrative Walks are presented throughout the thesis in such manner that they make up a coherent narrative, providing the reader for a detailed and in depth representation of the place.

3.5 Ethical- and Privacy Considerations

The interviewees remain anonymous, however, names are known by the researcher. Both signed a document with the terms of privacy considerations specified (see appendix). I will refer to them as 'Official Advisor' and 'Maker' at van Lieshout. The makers I spoke to during my narrative walks I will refer to as simply 'makers'. All interviews, were conducted in Dutch but translated to English when presented in the analysis. The data I retrieved from the Spatial Framework and the M4H website were publicly available on the official website of M4H (also in Dutch).

4. Analysis

Narrative Walk

4 I walked back into the Galileistraat, towards the Marconistraat and found, situated at the end of a short bicycle road, a sort of outlook platform. It was a huge staircase, an artwork meant to rise one above the roads, as it elevated me from my 'human perspective'. Once up above, on the staircase, the Straatkijker ('streetviewer') a sign told me: "this is a place to stand still and look around. This is where the Makers-industry already blooms and impacts the city. A place where there is plenty room for experiment, creation and growth. … The 'proeftuin' (testing ground) for the new economy."
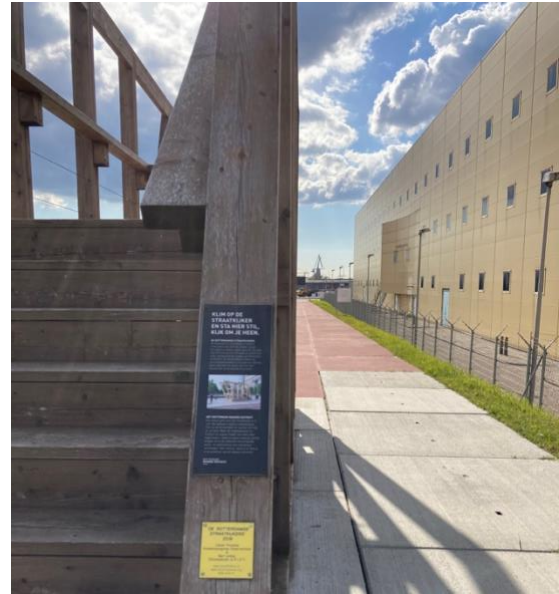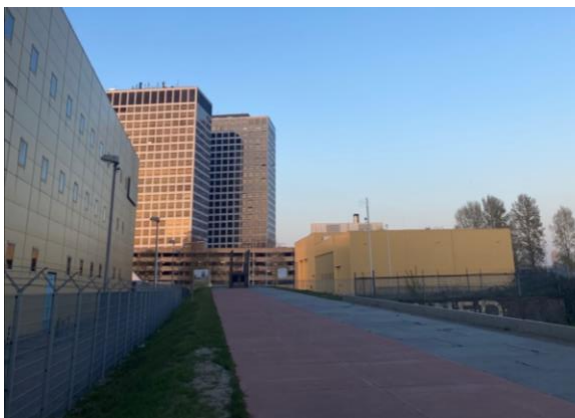
From there, I looked over the bicycle path that was once meant to engage the public with plans of M4H. It lay there stretched before me, unused, un-biked, un-walked, as it seemed. The signs next to the road, attempting to explain M4H, where broken. Further, from this quiet place up above, I could see fabrics of once hustling buildings, now covered in colorful graffiti, on their sides the cement slowly crumbling.

This particularly desolated part of M4H, carried a new atmosphere. It was just around the corner of the Marconistraat. Standing, there, at the end of a bicycle road, in the middle of buildings, the Lee Towers appeared behind me, peaking over my shoulders.

I found a place in M4H with, as it seemed, no people, nor plans yet. Was this the 'raw edge' so many people talked about? Was this what attracted artists like Joep van Lieshout back in the days?

I went to take a look at the 'ruins' as, indeed that 'raw-ness' had something tempting, to look at something that once *was,* now seemingly undefined. I carried on, through the dry grass fields, among the cement remains, found old tiles, and parts of the broken signs, scattered around (Narrative Walk, April 29th, 2021).

4.1 Relational Place Bundling, a Thematic Analysis

There are a few themes that re-occur in the way futures are imagined by the Rotterdam Port Authority and Rotterdam municipality as part of the M4H program-office. Something interesting happens when we hold them against how I experienced being there during the Narrative Walk and when I spoke to the 'makers'. In such manner, a thematic approach will allow me to spot similarities, differences and thematic repetitions that tell me something about how those specific futures are imagined in M4H as part of Rotterdam Makers District (Bryman, 2012: 580). These futures are formulated and made substantive in various ways with particular images, words and ideas, people, histories, buildings and so on.

The four themes, in which I divided this chapter, are intertwined and interconnected, they are all building blocks of the sociotechnical imaginary that is Rotterdam Makers District, and as such can be understood as part of the place making processes of what M4H is supposed to be. That means, that they do not particularly stand on their own, but for the sake of clarity I will, in this chapter, break the larger story down into the four separate themes. But, as Jasanoff rightly puts it: "In reality, things happen in mixed-up ways." (Jasanoff, 2015: 23).

This four-fold focus is specifically fitting because doing so, this will allow me to constructively take on Massey's (2005) notion of the 'bundles' that make up what comes to be imagined and understood as 'place'. And as Pierce et al. (2010), showed earlier, there is a need for highlighting certain place-making processes to recognize and comprehend how place gets a specific (political) function in these imaginaries. As such, I will lay out the processes of referring and re-configurating by which place comes to matter and "reveal, and destabilize … the naturalized logics of functioning, self-contained, and self-replicating social and political systems." (Jasanoff, 2015: 36).

The four themes in which I divide the analysis are:

1. A Future-proof Future;
2. Making and Pioneering;
3. The Raw Edge;
4. Rotterdam, Make it Happen.

4.1.1 A Future-Proof Future

The imagined future of M4H as part of Rotterdam Makers District is a future-proof future. That is already embedded *in* the very idea of the Spatial Framework (Ruimtelijk Raamwerk) document itself, that the municipality of Rotterdam published together with Rotterdam Port Authority in the summer of 2019. As Blommaert explains: "Every utterance not only says something in itself … but it also says something *about* itself" (Blommaert, 2005: 48). The 138 pages long Spatial Framework is publicly available on the website of M4H and is the first publicly published document illustrating and summarizing the ambitions for the transformation of M4H. Ambitions specifically, as they note, the document is meant to draw the outlines, give directions but stay flexible. It is there to clarify the main principles of what M4H is supposed to be, but at the same time remain open and global. It should be adaptable to what the future will bring: "Each of the principles speaks of the ambition to develop M4H into a future-proof area." (Gemeente Rotterdam & Havenbedrijf, 2019: 99).

The area of M4H, as material space, is framed as the 'breeding ground' for that future proof future (Pierce, et al., 2010). It is defined by this one ambition, that should, in turn, be established by five principles for the Makers District as stated in the Framework: The first principle is to the create an innovative industry by attracting and facilitating start-ups and cooperate businesses, then secondly, M4H should generate employment opportunities for the whole of

Rotterdam, thirdly, an urban living environment should be created where, fourthly, an open innovation-milieu with a mix of business and knowledge institutions can thrive. As last, the area should function as 'testing ground' (proeftuin) and showcase (etalage) for the circular future of the city and the port (2019: 14).

When we look at the specific discourse wherewith this future-proof-future is pictured, we see how words (like ambition, future-proof, flexibility) are deemed a specific function in the Spatial Framework. They are bundled to create a discourse, where they are, together with the framework itself utilized to make sense of the space as 'testing ground' for that future (Massey, 2005). Where it seems that the future they go for is seemingly a-political, as if we have to prepare for that one future. As Blommaert puts it: "Every 'model' offered as a blanket explanation should be critically checked against the specifics of the case we are investigating. This goes for language, its structure, and functions, but also for society, power, history, and so on." (Blommaert, 2005: 14). This normative inference of talking about *the* future as if they are just preparing for it, then, neutralizes the idea of (creating) possible futures. This discourse of a future-proof future, experiment and flexibility (e.g.) suggests that there is only *the* future, where it is subsequently an imagination of *a* future. We should thus, focus on the specific choices being made, that are deemed fitting in this future (Jasanoff, 2015).

This turn to openness and flexibility, came back in the way the Official Advisor told me about M4H during the interview. It was a way of narrating where 'not knowing' how the future will be like, combined with a gaze of 'uncertainty' came back in his use of language as well as attitude towards the transformation process of M4H. Noteworthy is that, while framing M4H within this tendency, he also took the Spatial Framework as a leading document, in the sense that it was treated it as the decisive 'outcome' of the conceptualization of M4H as part of Rotterdam Makers District. Likewise, the advisor told me that they are working on a 'monitor' to measure the development and progress of the area that are in turn divided in sections to be evaluated by 'the numbers'. 'Compare it with the corona-dashboard' he said, so you can see in the numbers when things go wrong, it is 'not data driven but supported by data'. Here M4H is depicted if it is already there, it is brought into existence by measuring it, by attaching new abstract meanings to it (Massey, 2005). On the other hand, and clearly contrasting with this, his main emphasis was again on the idea that:

"no-one knows what the world will look like in 20 years"

"you have to deal with insecurity"

"you don't know enough to say that this or that will be the future"

"we just don't know yet"

... and so forth. Doing so, just as in the Spatial Framework, he mentioned all the 'ambitions' they have, keeping the future 'open':

"ambition means that you don't know how you will realize them."

We see how the Advisor makes certain investments in the language he uses and "that this is a crucial part of what they believe language does for them and what they do with language" as Blommaert puts it "we need to find out how language matters to people" (Blommaert, 2005:14).

A prime example of what M4H means as this experimenting and testing ground is the floating farm, the Advisor explains. A farm that is indeed, literally floating on water, with cows and everything on it. He tells me how precisely this experimental innovative idea shows what is possible in the area. M4H is the area where we can experiment with and for the future. When possible, a circular, inclusive and future proof future. If it will work out? He doesn't know…

…"Um, so actually it's also a kind of big experiment."

- Interview Official Advisor, April 2021

In the interview with the maker working at Van Lieshout, the maker also referred to the floating farm as example for what M4H meant according to her, but in a rather divergent way. She called it out as an example of why she found these changes and plans for M4H a bit 'weird', and 'forced':

"I don't know if you've heard of the floating farm, it only exists because Rotterdam gives a super large subsidy, I heard. It's also a stupid concept, a cow on a boat, that's not really appropriate at all. A cow just jumped into the water a few weeks ago!"

- Interview Maker, May 1st, 2021

The floating farm, seems to embody and materialize that idea of experiment and all the possibilities in how that future-proof-future comes to life. At least, as Rotterdam municipality

and Port Authority imagine it to be. Interesting here, is the different story that comes to the surface, when we ask people that take on interest in this place from a whole different perspective. Different processes of place bundling make for how this place comes to exist and function in a story (Massey, 2005). That shows as well, that different futures are imagined by different people and different realities then *the* future exist (Jasanoff, 2015).

4.1.2 Making and Pioneering
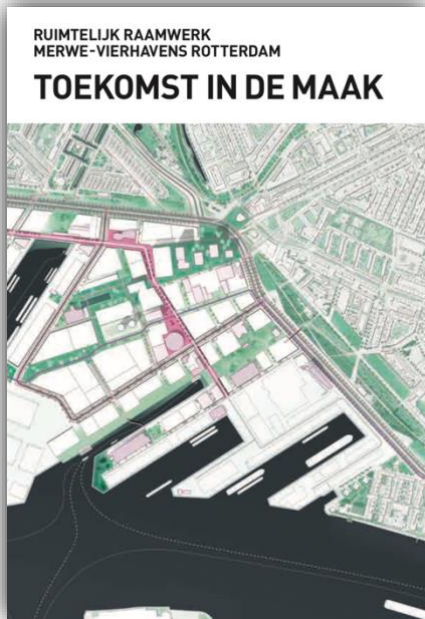
Fig. 1, Title page Spatial Framework

By now, it is clear that 'making' in this Makers District is emphasized a lot. Even so, the Spatial Framework is titled, in thick capital letters: 'Future in the Making' (fig. 1) . In the document they lay out five types of makers, for different forms of 'making' that take place in M4H, varying from artisan makers to big industry makers. This 'making' refers to the idea of making in the sense of experiment as mentioned in the previous section, but is also regarded to a certain industry, a certain public.

Fig. 2, Picture from Spatial Framework

(Source figure 1 & 2: Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019)

Both ideas of making, are in the Spatial Framework connected with the 'pioneers' that once started this 'making' in the area. And that pioneering, illustrates an idea of 'discovering' and trying out futures, at the same time. That could as well be the people of the (former) port industries, but also the creative people coming to the area, or the artists that once came there before. In the Framework they are not quite clear about this, but still cherish the idea of

'pioneers' (fig. 2). As such, we can see that the message is "organised, mediated, modulated, and reconstructed by the ideological actors using it" (Blommaert, 2005: 163). Those actors, the municipality and the Port-Authority, are, however, not solely ideological, as imagining this future has 'real' effects and influences the way the future will unfold, for imagining it is shaping it (Jasanoff, 2015).

I asked the Official Advisor why these makers are so important, and why emphasis on innovation only wasn't deemed fitting anymore in the naming of the area. He explained me that Innovation happens in the city center as well. This 'making' just makes the area unique, he said, and he told me:

"Look, the innovation district was still something that belonged to the municipality and the port authority, and the entrepreneurs in the area were not very involved with it."

The idea then, is that now the 'makers' have a say as well in the area development. By this new name, the advisor argues, they feel more connected. Just as in the Framework, he treats those first 'makers' as pioneers of the area, and they are deemed quite important, however, recently.

"Because now it's actually said for the first time that, okay, those creators, the area, has really been put on the map like that. It's just like that Joep van Lieshout was already here in 1987 or so. He made a really important contribution to getting the Merwevierhavens known to a wider public and made it a bit hip. Only then did the municipality and the port get involved in developing it. I mention that to emphasize the responsibility, so to speak. But now it's simply been said that we want to give those pioneers a permanent place in the area development. And that's actually also an inclusiveness question, not on the residents but on the entrepreneurs."

I asked, who belongs to the making, who are those makers, who will they be?

"Those makers, artists, they are not the companies that can afford to be in a super expensive space. They are in M4H for a reason, of course. On the one hand because it is such a raw area, so to speak, that attracts them, and on the other hand also because the prices are low... And for instance, such an innovation environment needs cafes, needs coffee bars. ... They really belong but I don't see them as part of that manufacturing industry."

- Interview Official Advisor, April 2021

Where the makers, entrepreneurs and pioneers, are deemed central to the whole area, it seems things like café's and shops are more or less ingredients of the whole functioning of the innovative milieu that is desired. Here, M4H is treated as a make-able area that requires ingredients for the innovation-milieu to 'function'. (Farías and Wilkie 2015 in Marres et al., 2018).

Therein, Van Lieshout is truly deemed as one of those pioneering makers, not only as mentioned by the advisor, but also via the Facebook page of M4H he is admired. He embodies the story of the local artist, re-discovering this area as a true pioneering maker already back in the 1980's. As a true success story, he is deemed being part of the 'established order' of M4H (fig. 3).

It was of good use to interview the makers working at Van Lieshout, to see and come a step closer to this ideal maker. Upon location, previous to the interview, I

Fig. 3. Facebook-post Joep Van Lieshout (Source: M4H Rotterdam, 2020).

was shown around at Van Lieshout's workplaces. The Maker showed me the buildings in the street, the Keileweg, which Van Lieshout (and his team) use for storage, ateliers and office spaces. Inside one of the buildings I saw a gigantic space filled with random stuff, artworks and tools. The Maker told me this wasn't even half what Van Lieshout owns in M4H. And in about a few years, these old-halls will be demolished and three big towers will be built instead, all part of Van Lieshout's plans for M4H.

Van Lieshout's story is an interesting one in the first place, as the maker told me about how Van Lieshout once began as a 'hippie' in these buildings, because it was so cheap, and in the city center wasn't much to find in the 1980's. The artists he worked with back then, all lived, worked and slept here, it was a true art manifestation. Mostly because of this intriguing image, the Maker wanted to work here, she told me, to be part of this story. However now, as she puts it:

"*It's just a company now, I used to have a very romantic image of Van Lieshout, then I came here and yes, it's also just a company you know, an art factory.*"

Van Lieshout has big plans for the transformation of 'his' part of the area. As the maker tells me about the ideas for art galleries, the towers, a museum and a café's, she adds:

"*Joep will just earn a lot of money with this. The idea of art then here, is also romanticized as it is sometimes just making beautiful things and sell it to rich people."*.

While Van Lieshout is deemed a prime example of those makers, he seems to not fit anymore in this romanticized picture of the small creative, but 'poor' talents. To the question what the Maker thinks about the ideas for a makers district, the Maker explains this idea as something that is 'forced' upon the people, and asks rhetorically *'how can you force creativity?'*. That is also what her colleagues think about it:

"*Van Lieshout actually has to convince the municipality that it's primarily in the interest of Rotterdam that this is coming. But a lot of the colleagues just say, like, who will live there?, super rich people... people with dough (poen) ...*"

- Interview Maker, May 1st, 2021

Something similar I encountered during my Narrative Walk at the Keilewerf-area (see Narrative Walk 2). I asked a few makers who were drinking a beer outside, if they felt being a 'maker'. Most of them immediately told me that no, they didn't feel as such, "it's the smaller places that are the makers, we aren't, it's not for us.". Interesting, as they worked at, what I thought was a small wood-design company. As they showed me around in their workplace, I saw machines, wood, and all that would define creating and making something, in many ways. When I asked them what they thought about the plans for the Makers District, some of them were enthusiastic, some weren't, and some looked at me like they really didn't know where I was talking about: "it could be good for the area, they finally take things seriously here" but also someone said "it could be dangerous, as the change will bring more people, more money, and thus everything will be expensive" (Narrative Walk 2). Luckily, the place they worked at, as they proudly noticed, was a monumental building, and their boss owned part of it, so they were 'safe'. And what about the others? They didn't know.

I noticed how this narrative, carried by terms like 'making and pioneering' changed depending who I asked. What this making means in Rotterdam Makers District, is made substantive and official mostly, by Rotterdam Municipality and Port Authority. But, as we saw, it is not the only way M4H is understood. The Official Advisor argued that by changing the

name, they would connect more to those makers, entrepreneurs in the area, they wanted to make it more something 'for them'. In any way, however, the municipality and the Port Authority are still the most powerful stake holders in the process, the area is in the end owned and defined by them. So, who's story is that 'making' exactly? (Harvey, 2003).

Furthermore, Söderström, Paasche and Klauser (2014), demonstrate that the fact that the name changed already a few times (from Merwevierhavens, to M4H, to part of Innovation District and then Makers District) shows that those names are carefully chosen to pick up the desired contextualization of the area. It depends on who gets to define the terms for what making and innovation mean in this district (Söderström et al., 2014). There is a competition element, and an importance to communicate but also 'brand' this district for sake of 'boosting economic advances' (Söderström et al., 2014). This is also what Quastel (2009) refers to as part of the 'ecologies of gentrification', where creativity, making and pioneering become new moral imperatives, as a required element for such urban rehabilitation plans (Söderström et al., 2014: 318). The entirety of this place-framing is materialized within a paradigm where this creativity, and ideas of progress alike, are considered 'at least politically if not morally desirable' (Grunwald, 2018).

4.1.3 The Raw Edge

In the Spatial Framework the historical qualities of the M4H-area get a lot of attention. As is promised in the Framework, the current M4H-area will transform into a thriving Makers District, "leaving the beautiful city-ports behind while transforming to cool, sturdy new urban neighborhoods." (Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019: 3). Doing so, the "characteristic qualities" of the area are "utilized to the fullest" (2019: 15). These characteristic qualities, are referred to in the Framework as the 'monumental' buildings and the 'image-defining' buildings and objects. At least for those two categories it is certain that, in case of a 'monumental' building, the building will be part of the final zoning-plan, and for the 'image-defining' buildings and objects, it depends on the additional values it has to the area, if they are worth keeping. With these values then, is explicitly mentioned if the buildings and objects are 'spatially' and 'financially' worth keeping. What that means is, however, not elaborated further in the document.

The monumental as well as image-defining elements are also put as identity bearers of the area. For example, they are the barracks and quays, the stones on the pavements but also the old train tracks and factory halls that are still left in M4H. They are quite so important

because they carry powerful historical and visual values, according to the Spatial Framework (Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019). This idea of 'important' cultural and historical elements, shows how by referring to past achievements the space consequently be understood as a specific place, with a materialized history, that unfolds, and is bundled, as the place's identity (Massey, 2005). Those material elements "allow[s] for spatial imaginations to preexist.." (Jasanoff, 2015: 33)

In the Spatial Framework, a map is drawn out where we can see which buildings and objects are deemed monumental or image defining. The Ferro, Citrusveiling, Keilepand and Katoenveem, for instance, are deemed monumental (marked in dark on the map). The Lee Towers, Fruitvis and the ruins with graffiti (see Narrative Walk 4) on the Galileistraat (marked in pink) are put as 'image and identity defining elements' of M4H (fig. 4). These are promised to add up to the historical value of the area, kept alive by appearing 'raw' and 'sturdy'. It fits within the ambition to mix the port with the city, the idea that they, this time they will not merely replace the port with the urban, but seek for a mix of both within a 'port-city mentality' (Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019).

Fig. 4. Map Buildings M4H
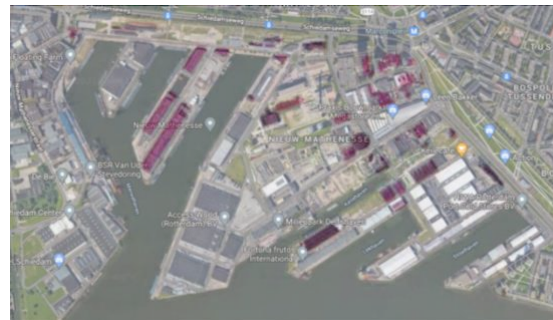
Fig. 5. Map Buildings M4H & Google-Maps

(Source figure 4 & 5: Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019)

Again, the choice for certain words becomes interesting here. The idea of 'history' and 'historical qualities' but also the 'raw-ness' and 'sturdy' character of the area come to light. They are particularly mentioned as image identifying, and as such chosen and utilized with a reason, made fitting within a certain context (Pierce et. al. 2010). This time the idea of 'raw-ness' is added to the mix (next to future-proof, making and pioneering..) to make sense of the broader narrative of what M4H is supposed to be.

On the home-page of the website of M4H there is an artist impression of the area, where the Ferro, as monumental building, takes its pride as being part of the rawness, a left-over, but ever so important part of the history mixed with the 'new urban'.

Fig, 6. Ferro Dome, Website M4H.

(Source: M4H Rotterdam, n.d.)

The Ferro Dome becomes in itself a linguistic and symbolic element by which its historical qualities are emphasized, but also an particular understanding of this 'raw edge' is made important (fig. 6).

Fig. 7. Twitter-post, M4H

(Source: M4H Rotterdam, 2021)

Also in a Twitter post (fig. 7), we see a good example of where Pierce et al.'s notion of place framing comes in quite obvious. Such frames, as rawness become interesting, because they are "explicated in order to adequately interpret the making of a neighborhood." (Pierce. Et. al, 2010: 56). That is, a neighborhood that is not yet there, where this raw edge also explicates a reason for it to 'become', as the state of a future in the making.

We see that also when the Official Advisor tells me about the buildings that will remain for sure because of their cultural historical importance. They are important, they have a certain 'value', he tells me. Is that the same value the makers give to those buildings? According to him, what the makers seek is a 'culture of freedom' that the area carries, that 'raw edge'. He explains that it is something the municipality and port authority want to take serious, to keep this raw edge for the makers:

"So there has already been a conscious decision, of yes, we're not just going to focus on the residential urbanity, but we also want to give entrepreneurs a place and actually retain that raw edge, in part. But, yes, I am afraid of that, in that sense, yes, a little bit perhaps, I just don't know if that will work out."

- Interview Official Advisor, April 2021

Here also this raw-edge is mentioned, but then as something that is for the makers. Later, however, he again refers to it as something important for the historical values of the area. This place-framing is political and relational, because the Port Authority as well as Rotterdam municipality seem to make sense of this history for specific reasons, there is a sentiment that needs to be shared with others to speak a certain language about the area. We see how the Port Authority and municipality share the same rhetoric goals in the place-framing processes to create this idea of M4H as part of a unique Rotterdam Makers District (Pierce. Et. al, 2010).

It depends, what this raw-edge truly is according to whom, and who values it as such. When I ask the makers, they speak about another kind of 'raw-ness' the municipality, and Port Authority do not mention. That difference is also interesting when we look at it with the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries in mind. The concept is allows to recognize how that idea of rawness is not fixed, but is part of an imaginary. Seeing M4H as a Sociotechnical Imaginary allows us to see the material space in which this imaginary is embedded. As such, we see how Rotterdam Makers District frames the existing state of rawness, but indicates it for their own rhetorical goals (Pierce. Et. al. 2010). The rawness becomes for them now a tool to tell, and legitimize their reason for why this area needs transformation, as if it is needless to say, self-evident even, that it has to become that future, that future-proof M4H (Jasanoff, 2015).

The maker tells me during the interview, about another kind of 'raw-ness' or 'freedom culture', and explains that in terms experiences of safety. She tells me that in day time it is all fine, but…

" at night it is little.. Eh... We had these small buildings here, and they were always locked because junks go to sleep in these buildings. So it is properly locked here. And you also see syringes lying around and so on, so I understand that the municipality, that they really do want to try something, they want to make it a place to live here.. because it's a bit of a bleak neighborhood."

What this particular place, then, makes it interesting to work at, is not per se any 'raw-ness' but also just because when Joep came here, …

… "the space was very cheap, the city drove artists out of the center, so this was also just a cheap place, and maybe even the only option. I personally think that Joep really just came here because the land here was very cheap. We have one of the sheds here, that used to be a prostitution, an illegal prostitution place."

- Interview Maker, May 1st, 2021

A few days later, one of the maker calls me to tell me about how 'some homeless people' left candles near one of Van Lieshout's buildings, and there was a fire that morning. Earlier, during my Narrative Walks, I found sleeping bags behind buildings at the Marconistraat, more signs that indeed, other people (than the 'makers') also found their way of making use of M4H in their own terms. This shows, that Massey's notion of place-bundles, comes to its right quite accurately. This idea of what the 'rawness' means, is temporally situated and culturally particular. It is negotiated, socially conditional and is manifested by emotional processes of referring and re-configurating. It shows how precisely it comes that different bundles come to exist and matter in different contexts (Massey, 2005). Through the lens of Sociotechnical imaginaries, we see how the idea of one normative meaning of experiencing and framing this raw-ness in the area is destabilized (Jasanoff, 2015). This allows us to understand this framing of 'rawness' is used in order to make sense of this area as being in a state of something 'in-progress'. The rawness, here, demands the transformation, and deems the place makeable (Farías and Wilkie, 2015 in Marres et al., 2018).

4.1.4 Rotterdam, Make it Happen

As we already saw, the historical port area in M4H, is remembered and admired for its raw edge. Combined with the notion of 'resilience' this makes up part of the 'port-mentality'. A mentality, by which Rotterdam is internationally known, and quite proud of. This mentality

refers to the hard work, the discipline and innovation that happens in the port industries, already for hundreds of years and counting. It is mostly referred to in terms of how Rotterdam grew from a fishers-town to now being the largest port-city of Europe. It has also something to do with the fact that the larger part of the city center of Rotterdam was bombed during the second world war. The perseverance and the innovativeness and all that was much needed during that time to rebuilt the city, is now still part of the city's cultural historical identity (Ter Avest, 2021). This port-mentality is also embraced by Rotterdam municipality and Rotterdam Port Authority, as now the new slogan of the city goes: 'Rotterdam, Make it Happen' (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). Therein, Rotterdam Makers District is, as said in the Spatial Framework, is the way to reconnect the port and the city, and hold onto a 'port-city-mentality'. That is, to reconnect a 'historical relation', that will make us 'ready' for the new economy, the new tomorrow. Rotterdam, as a city, is as such defined by the history of the port-industries. Proud of its achievements, celebrated for its innovations and 'sturdy' and 'robust' character (Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019).

M4H, as part of Rotterdam Makers District is involved in this idea of 'Make it Happen', not only as a rhetorical investment, but also as part of a broader brand alliance initiated by the municipality and the Port Authority as a 'growth-model' to promote the image of the city of Rotterdam (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). In terms of M4H, we see how this branding is also a political investment, as the Makers District is part of this brand-alliance. The municipality and port Authority as M4H's major stakeholders, take part of the city branding purposes of this organization (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). That is precisely what Pierce et. al. wanted to show with the notion of 'relational place-making', as we see how "places are produced through bundling and that place-framing draws on these bundles and expresses elements of them for collective strategic and rhetorical goals." (Pierce et al, 2010: 60).

As Jasanoff shows, it is a characteristic of sociotechnical imaginaries as they "point[ing] back at past cultural achievements and ahead to promising and attainable futures, or to futures to be shunned and avoided." (Jasanoff, 2015: 32). The same time, what happens here is that a certain form of nationhood, as being a Rotterdammer, is taken on, made important for the construction of this imaginary, and also the place (Jasanoff, 2015). That is seen in how this mentality, is drawn hand in hand with ideas about inclusivity, working together 'as one', as Rotterdam, 'reinforcing a nationhood' (Jasanoff, 2015).

The term 'collectivity' is stressed by the Official Advisor in the interview, in the way the cooperation between the municipality and the Port Authority organically flourished in M4H. This collaboration makes M4H a truly unique area, and…

"...In M4H, there are people from both the municipality and the Port Authority because they really do it together."

He later acknowledges, however, it is more of a 'forced cooperation', resulting from the land positions that are mixed in the area, owned by the port authority and some by the municipality. He tells me that RDM part of the Makers District was fully in the hands of Rotterdam Port Authority, and the municipality didn't have much say in the development of that part of the Makers District. This mixed area M4H, will make for unique Makers District precisely because it allows for new opportunities to behold wider shared principles, and not only look at money and investment. However, he later says, in a quite neo-Liberal fashion:

"The municipality, of course, is always bound by the rules of competitive bidding, which means that you have to give everyone a fair chance to develop. Um, and when that happens, so to speak, there are always parties in front who have the most money."

The latter is exactly what Harvey argues, echoed in the interview as "nothing [is] more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals." (Harvey, 2003: 940). In like manner, we find how in the Spatial Framework the idea of collectivity and inclusivity are stressed repeatedly. As for one of the leading principles for the sustainable development of M4H is 'collectivity as basis of circularity' (Gemeente & Havenbedrijf, 2019: 99). Here we see how the idea of a 'port-city mentality' is reconstructed and mediates the idea of a unity, of a certain bringing together of the city. This inclination is handled in three ways throughout the framework with aims to: 'including' the entire city, 'including' the surrounding neighborhoods and 'including' the makers. For example, the Framework indicates infrastructural changes that are needed for achieving inclusivity with the neighborhoods surrounding M4H. Those, as they put it, 'vulnerable' neighborhoods, have to become part of the broader tissue of what M4H is supposed to be. To connect these neighborhoods, roads, bridges and bicycle routes will be put in place and more public places will be created. The Official Advisor also stressed that the 'uniting and inclusivity' should be highlighted in the social efforts that are made for M4H. He told me that he and his colleagues are working on terms for a social strategy for M4H, something which the municipality and Port Authority didn't take into account yet.

"That's about thinking about work for the people who live there, I mean if you look at the neighborhoods around it, they are quite vulnerable in the sense that there are a lot of

problems, many people with low education, and yes, does that connect so well with the whole innovation environment? ... that doesn't connect by itself I think. .., there are things like education, internships involved. There is also an interesting side to it, I think, precisely that making also offers opportunities to connect people."

- Interview Official Advisor, April 2021

It seems, however, that this is a particular neo-Liberal understanding of 'inclusivity' as the main tendency shows that those 'vulnerable' neighborhoods should made fit for this transformation, instead of the other way around. When the Advisor talks about those 'surrounding' neighborhoods and that it 'doesn't connect by itself', shows an idea that the area wasn't made for them in the first place (Harvey, 2003). Here is where we precisely see what Harvey argued for a social democratic right to the city. Inclusivity here, doesn't seem to immediately rhyme with the Marxist socialist democratic ideals of inclusivity Harvey presented earlier. Those surrounding neighborhoods don't seem to have the 'right to the city' (Harvey, 2003). The city is defined as an inclusive city, as a '*We'* Make it happen. Nonetheless, the choices and final stories are made by the larger institutions working in a neo-Liberal interpretation of what democracy and inclusivity means. M4H is made fit best within a streamlined image of this 'proud' Rotterdam, to make this the city's image function economically as well as rhetorically worthwhile (Söderstörm, et. al, 2014).

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The future of M4H, as part of Rotterdam Makers District, is imagined as a future-proof-future where, with innovative making and pioneering, the robust and historical rawness of the former port industries will be reignited. It is a future, collectively held and shaped by the Rotterdam Port Authority and Rotterdam Municipality, as they are both the legal owners of the very physical space that makes up what is deemed as M4H, as part of Rotterdam Makers District. Jasanoff's concept of sociotechnical imaginaries allowed me to look at M4H as such, in "order to do justice to the myriad ways in which scientific and technological visions enter into the assemblages of materiality, meaning, and morality that constitute robust forms of social life." (Jasanoff, 2015: 5). We saw then how, for one, the spatial framework in itself makes up part of this materiality and social mixture. As well does the website, the interview, the words used, the idea of pioneering embodied by local artist, Joep van Lieshout and so forth.

In the construction of M4H's imaginary, place has, and is deemed a quite important function, where ideas like experimentality, breeding ground and openness, are materially and ideally manifested within an inclusive port-city mentality. There, the port-mentality is a political one, chosen and framed in such manner to put the city in a certain light, with emphasis on the transformation, on that positive future that is promised to be (Massey, 2005 & Pierce. Et. al. 2010). Those qualities, as is described, are specifically embedded in how M4H currently looks like, are shaped by the buildings, roads, train tracks and so on that are left of the historical port-industries. At the same time, where this place is so deemed so important, many things about the Merwevierhaven area are also not mentioned, that is: the broken buildings, the history of illegal prostitution the makers told me about, the many homeless people that currently find shelter in the area, and how quiet and left alone the area appeared in the present day.

There, the Narrative Walk allowed me for experiential, spatio-temporal and performative understanding of this contrast, of the present space-place of the Merwevierhavens. Parts of the narrative walk I spread out deliberately throughout the (written) thesis, as such providing for a representative analogy of the case study as examined, and to present next to the analyzed 'official' communication. We see how doing so, the normalized future-proof-future is destabilized, we see that there is more what meets the eye, and a different story arises (Jasanoff, 2015). During the Narrative Walk, I didn't see much yet, about that future of M4H as part of Rotterdam Makers District, it seemed merely desolated and left alone, or as I noted earlier: I felt like I was solely on the *edge* of a future. From the street level up, on that edge, everything looked more or less dreary, raw maybe even in one way or the other (Van Es & De Lange, 2020). Especially when you compare, how the municipality and the port authority, as well as the advisor amplified the promising future of M4H so much. However, precisely that could be the reason why that future is emphasized so greatly. There is something about the present of this place and about the history as well, that needs to be overshadowed, changed even. The future needs to prevail something new, something bright and different. Other than the gloomy somewhat lifeless present, the future is aspired to be a new flourishing urban-neighborhood, with happy creative people everywhere, as a place to invent and innovate, to be creative. We see then M4H, as a sociotechnical imaginary is raised to "operate[s] as both glue and solvent, able— when widely disseminated and effectively performed—to preserve continuity across the sharpest ruptures of innovation..." (Jasanoff. 2015: 42). At the same time, by accentuating the present 'rawness' and deeming the surrounding neighborhoods as 'vulnerable', the place is made as if it is truly on the edge of the future, it becomes to exist in a state of not being that future yet, of becoming. This idea of rawness, for them, is needed to legitimize the promise of

transformating to become a fruitful and self-functioning district in the future. Notions of creativity, pioneering and innovation function within place framing processes as a form of branding, that take form in these typical ecologies of gentrification (Quastel, 2009). Therein, the city is understood and framed as something makeable, an external entity to be measured and perfected (Farías and Wilkie, 2015 in Marres et. al., 2018) 'grounded in promises of classical modernity and enlightenment' (Grunwald, 2018: 1854), where creativity and the collective are emphasized but solely realized in terms defined by Rotterdam Port Authority and Rotterdam municipality (Harvey, 2003).

Altogether an example of how, within the current neo-Liberal traditions, ecologies of gentrification continue to push more and more poorer people towards the margins, while emphasizing creativity and collectivity for the making of those future-proof futures. We should keep asking questions about how wealth, knowledge and power relate to how those Innovation and Makers Districts are imagined within those paradigms of naïve techno-optimism. And thereupon find ways to 're-imagine and re-make' the city in more Marxist socialist democratic terms, in our own terms (Harvey, 2003).

References:

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse, A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge, University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods,* Fourth edition. Oxford University Press Inc., New York

Caprotti, F. (2013). *Critical research on eco-cities? A walk through the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, China*. Cities, 36, 10-17.

Castigliano, M. (2017). *Designing a Metropolis. Rotterdam looks ahead.* Edizioni - Sustainable Urban Transformation, Italy

Gemeente Rotterdam & Havenbedrijf Rotterdam. (2019). *Ruimtelijk Raamwerk Merwe-Vierhavens Rotterdam. Toekomst in de maak.* Retrieved from https://m4hrotterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/190627_Boekwerk-klein-voorwoord.pdf

Gemeente Rotterdam. (n.d). *Rotterdam Make it Happen. Uniek in de wereld en typisch Rotterdams*. Retrieved from https://www.rotterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/make-it-happen/

Grunwald, A. (2018). *Diverging pathways to overcoming the environmental crisis: A critique of eco-modernism from a technology assessment perspective*. Journal of Cleaner Production, 197, 1854-1862.

Harvey, D. (2003). *The right to the city.* International journal of urban and regional research, 27(4), 939-941.

Jasanoff, S. (2015). *Future imperfect: Science, technology, and the imaginations of modernity.* Dreamscapes of modernity: Sociotechnical imaginaries and the fabrication of power, 1.

Jasanoff, S., & Kim, S. H. (Eds.). (2015). *Dreamscapes of modernity: Sociotechnical imaginaries and the fabrication of power*. University of Chicago Press.

Karstens, B., Kool, L., & van Est, R. (2020). *De slimme stad: grote beloften, weerbarstige praktijk*. Justitiele Verkenningen, 46(3).

Katz, B., & Wagner, J. (2014). *The rise of urban innovation districts.* Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, Washington D.C., USA

Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. Sage.

Marres, N., Guggenheim, M., & Wilkie, A. (2018). *Introduction: From performance to inventing the social. Inventing the Social.* Manchester: Mattering Press, 17-37

M4H Rotterdam, (n.d.). *Toekomst in de Maak.* Retrieved from https://m4hrotterdam.nl/

M4H Rotterdam. (June 18th, 2020). *Internationaal bekend, lokaal begonnen. 'Vanaf 1980 zit ik dus al in dit havengebied.'...* Facebook-post M4H, retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=258578478755320

M4H Rotterdam. (May 21st, 2021). *Waar de haven en nieuwe technologieën samenkomen …* Retrieved from https://twitter.com/M4HRotterdam/status/1395642337158696960

Pierce, J., Marthy, D. G., and Murphy, J. T. (2010). *Relational place-making: the networked politics of place.* Royal Geographical Society. Worcester, USA

Quastel, N. (2009). *Political ecologies of gentrification.* Urban Geography, 30(7), 694-725.

Söderström, O., Paasche, T., & Klauser, F. (2020). *Smart cities as corporate storytelling. In The Routledge Companion to Smart Cities.* Routledge, 283-300

Ter Avest, D. (2021). *Toegang tot M4H. Naar een Sociaal Raamwerk voor een nieuwe stadswijk.* Hogeschool Rotterdam Kenniscentrum Duurzame HavenStad

Van Es, K., & De Lange, M. (2020). *Data with its boots on the ground: Datawalking as research method.* European Journal of Communication, 35(3), 278-289.

Appendix I:

CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: *M4H in Rotterdam Makers District: On the Edge of a Future*

Name, email of student: *Seline Westerhof, 572990sw@eur.nl*

Name, email of supervisor: *Willem Schinkel, schinkel@essb.eur.nl*

Start date and duration: *11-01-2021 till 20-06-2021, 4/5 months*

Is the research study conducted within DPAS   **YES** - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1.   Does your research involve human participants.   **YES** - NO

   If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research?   YES - **NO**

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

2.   Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants.   **YES** - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3.   Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary   data that has been anonymized by someone else).   YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?
- *Spatial Framework, Ruimtelijk Raamwerk M4H* https://m4hrotterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/190627_Boekwerk-klein-voorwoord.pdf
- Website of M4H: https://m4hrotterdam.nl/
- *On site, Merwevierhavens, Rotterdam*
- *Interview Official advisor M4H*
- *Interview Maker at Makers District M4H*

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?
- *Interview with 2 people, transcripts of two one-hour interviews*
- *Observation location; notes, recordings*
- *Analysis of 1 website, 1 policy document, interview*

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?
Not applicable

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

For on-site notes of location, I will use paper and pencil data as well as voice and video recordings and photographs which I will store on my personal computer, on an external hard drive and online on OneDrive. This also goes for the interview transcripts, that are saved as a Word-file on my personal computer, external hard drive and online, OneDrive.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

Seline Westerhof

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Once a week on an extra external back-up.

Original data / sources (like audio recordings) will be retained on a private secured external hard-drive until 02-07-2021, when the thesis is graded. The raw data will be deleted after this date.

The transcript of the interview (in which all identifying information has been removed) will be retained for 11-06-2024, and deleted after.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

I will collect personal data from the 2 persons I will interview. In the data transcripts of the interviews I will not use their names but refer to them as Officials Advisor and Maker. For both goes that there are plenty of people at location that could be labelled such. Thus, referring to them this way, they cannot be identified.

The makers I spoke to during my Narrative Walk were anonymized immediately in the notes I made about the short interviews.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.
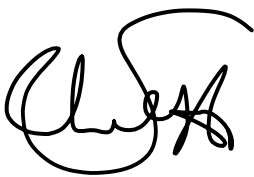
Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Seline Westerhof   Name (EUR) supervisor: Willem Schinkel

Date: 19-03-2021   Date: 19-03-2021

Appendix II:

Informed Consent Form

Consent to take part in research: Thesis, Public Issues: Innovation & Makers Districts

I... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves providing information about the projects and role as advisor for Rotterdam Makers District

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the written documented form in which the thesis will appear.

I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained on a private secured external hard-drive until 11-06-2021

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for 11-06-2024

I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Information:

Thesis Seline Westerhof (572990sw@student.eur.nl)

Thesis Supervisor: Willem Schinkel

MA Sociology: Engaging Public Issues, Erasmus University.

Signature of research participant

Signature of researcher

Date

Date