The creation of a sustainable urban "green oasis"

A qualitative study of the discursive making of an ecological social enterprise

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ABSTRACT

This master thesis aims to contribute to the broader study of ecological initiatives that need to play by the rules of media and markets due to the neoliberal context. Their status of 'social enterprise' thus seems to be the mode to address ecological issues. The latter appellation is an ambiguous one that suffers from a gap in empirical qualitative research because of its relatively recent emergence and complexity. The aim of this thesis is therefore to disentangle the paradoxical concept of 'social enterprise' and reveal what it entails. In order to do so, this research focuses on the case study of Rotterdamse Munt, a four-year old urban herb garden that has grown from a local community initiative into what its urban farmers define as a 'social enterprise'. Using previous research on neoliberalism, promotional culture and mediatization of society, this thesis argues that the status of social enterprise means that initiatives strongly rely on communicative practices, not just to communicate about who they are, but also to constitute their very essence. Accordingly, efforts in marketing through self-promotion and branding become constitutive of the existence of the social enterprise, following the neoliberal business culture. Through combining ethnographic fieldwork with a semiotic approach, this thesis tried to understand how urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiate their status of a 'social enterprise'. In that respect, the ethnographic research was strongly focused on the similarities but also the differences between how they present themselves and how they reflect on those presentations. The research finds that Rotterdamse Munt has not fully transformed yet into a sustainable ecological social enterprise. Instead, urban farmers were constantly negotiating between the altruistic approach and the commercial approach, resulting in not managing to fully do both. It obliged urban farmers to come up with the combination of two contrasting identities, through the duality of visual identity, services and products, to reach two different types of population. Through adopting a media sociological approach to the study of social enterprise and, more specifically, of the phenomenon of urban farming, this thesis provides new insights into the neoliberal societal context where ecological initiatives and campaigns need to negotiate between altruistic and commercial approaches. The thesis, thereby, contributes to understanding the conditions of sustainable transitions in our contemporary, neoliberal societies.

KEYWORDS: *Social Enterprise, Urban Farming, Neoliberalism, Promotional Culture, Mediatization*

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1. Introduction

This first verse of Jean de La Fontaine's poem "The Donkey and the Dog" is a good way to present the subject of this research that is addressing the rise of ecological awareness in neoliberalism through the examination of the discursive construction of a 'social enterprise'. First, it helps introducing the changes that appear in our society where co-creation and co-production are the new *modus operandi*. Second, it dives us in the global healthy and ecological trend that puts nature at the heart of people's way of seeing and living in society.

1.1. Rise of social and ecological awareness in a "postcapitalist era"

These two trends are a matter of interest among journalists, economists and scholars. The journalist Paul Mason, for instance, starts his article "The end of capitalism has begun" by writing:

> "Without us noticing, we are entering the postcapitalist era. At the heart of further change to come [are] information technology, new ways of working and the sharing economy. The old ways will take long while to disappear, but it's time to be utopian". (In *The Guardian*, 2015)

Paul Mason's "postcapitalist era" refers to a new idea of working in which the line between leisure and work – as well as personal and professional – is blurred. Accordingly, self-promotion through the adoption of information and communication logics becomes the way to exist. Postcapitalism also carries the idea that collective work – rather than individual one – is crucial to deal with social issues and improve our societies. These new visions might come from a broader context that should be clarified in order to understand how they originated.

Our contemporary societies are experiencing deep crises: social exclusion, unlimited exploitation of our natural resources, eternal and dehumanizing quest for profit, and growing inequalities (Delannoy, 2016). Indeed, people increasingly realise the danger of our system in terms of environment, regarding the sustainability of our resources. The environmental field is directly linked to social and economic perceptions. As we globally share – but individually consume – these natural assets (i.e. water, food), it is essential to see them as the 'Common Good' (Renouard, 2015). Cécile Renouard, researcher and director of the "Companies and Development", applies economic terms to natural resources in order to explain why we should change our visions and behaviour towards the environment. She

talks about rivalry and exclusion criteria (2015), by arguing that, since we have finite resources on earth, we need to acknowledge the fact that the consumption of them by any person can limit their access to someone else (rivalry). Moreover, she insists we have to wonder whether it is legitimate that certain individuals or group of people are excluded from these resources. Renoir's analogy describes a really accurate situation. In South Africa, for example, Cape Town's government has recently announced the 'Day-Zero', which is the day when the city will run out of fresh water. According to the government, this situation may end by descending into violence and anarchy (Bruek, 2018). This situation will, by 2025, be experienced by two-thirds of the world, according to World Wildlife Fund's estimations (WWF). Renoir's parallel also highlights the necessity to attribute economic value to elements that ought not to be treated as commodities, which is intrinsic to the current neoliberal context (Liverman, 2004; Aronczyk & Powers, 2015).

1.2.   Social enterprise as a mean to address ecological issues in neoliberalism

In these circumstances, some people join together to develop original and innovative initiatives to bring new perspectives for our future. Even though these are usually on a small scale, they aim to raise awareness to then trigger broad social transformation movements (Delannoy, 2016). But, to be able to reach their objectives, such initiatives need to take into consideration the neoliberal context in which commodification prevails. 'Social enterprise' seems thus to be the mode to address such ecological issues. The latter appellation is an ambiguous one that creates "definitional debates" (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2011, p. 5) while suffering from a gap in empirical qualitative research because of its relatively recent emergence and complexity. This concept combines two opposite types of structure with different objectives. On the one hand, the word 'social' can refer to non-profit organisations focused on impact; on the other hand, 'enterprise' defines businesses whose aim is to generate financial benefits. It thus suggests that these two structures are not in opposition but can paradoxically easily go together, though with some dilemmas (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2011). The duality of the concept of social enterprise comes indeed with challenges concerning the structure of an organisation, what it offers and for which objectives, as well as the audience it tries to reach. One the one hand, 'social enterprise' follows an altruistic approach by communicating on its work towards specific societal issues for the public good and so depending on public funds such as subsidies. On the other hand, it suggests a move to a more commercial approach to become independent by serving specific consumers that are reached through the branding of products and experiences.

1.3.   Case study

This master thesis aims thus to understand what this paradoxical status entails in practice. To that end, it looks at the discursive making of a social enterprise in the neoliberal context through the qualitative study of the urban garden Rotterdamse Munt. This four-year old urban herb garden, which rests on the voluntary principle, has grown from a local community initiative to what its urban farmers define as 'social enterprise'. The aim is thus to understand how one can read this transition by analysing how Rotterdamse Munt presents itself. Rotterdamse Munt is an interesting case to study as it takes part in a growing ecological phenomenon that is urban farming, which is a good example of ecological initiatives that increasingly requires commercial sustainability – that is the balance between economic, environmental and social impacts through the effective management of resources while maximising organisational profitability.

Urban farming can be defined as the production of food in cities intended for citizens' food consumption, with the aim of returning biodiversity in urban areas (Rouquette & Stokkink, 2017). The maintenance of biodiversity is done through initiatives such as collective gardens, which often transform abandoned urban spaces into green spaces (*ibid*). While cities used to have a negative image, especially in relation to ecology due to their concentration in CO_2 and other pollutants, but also their high temperature due to "urban heat island effect" (Farrell, Szota, & Arndt, 2015, p.597), they are becoming more and more subject of positive statements. Indeed, scholars began noticing their potential (Sassen, 2012). Cities now have a strategic importance in relation to sustainable development and the green economy. Nowadays, importance is thus put on the development and branding of smart cities (Engelbert & van Zoonen, 2017). Thanks to its innovation, Rotterdam moved from 6th to the 2nd place of the Cities & Regions Brand Research ranking (Macausland, 2017). Rotterdam is nowadays a dynamic municipality that puts great effort in encouraging citizens to "co-develop their city" (Mulder, 2012, p.39). Indeed, Rotterdammers participate in urban innovation and sustainable solutions in order to build a "resilient city of the future" (Peters, 2016). In that regard, "[u]rban farming is a multifaceted phenomenon in Rotterdam" (Gemeete Rotterdam Factsheet, n.d., p.1): farmers market, vegetables gardens, community kitchen garden, but also start-ups that work towards the 'new economy', such as BlueCity[1].

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[1] BlueCity is a former swimming pool transformed into a business incubator in which start-ups and corporates work towards a circular economy where waste does not exist. (See http://www.bluecity.nl/)

Urban farming is about adapting the urban space to a place where one can cultivate, process and distribute food, without having to go through a third party (i.e. supermarkets). Accordingly, this phenomenon promotes more ecological and conscious ways of producing and consuming food (Biel, 2016). It respects biodiversity and public health by following the seasons, refusing to do intensive farming or using transportation in order to avoid pollution. Besides, research shows that air pollution had a negative impact on food security (Sun, Dai, Yu, 2017). With these principles, urban farming in Rotterdam seems to follow the Blue movement of the city. The latter consists of a new economic system that takes the circular economy one step further by being based on the principles of nature (http://www.bluecity.nl/). This movement is driven by private corporations who want to be sustainable and responsible. Indeed, climate change has become a business in Rotterdam (Kimmelman, 2017), which may be related to the fact that the city has been under a liberal government for decades.

Although Delannoy's observations mentioned earlier appear to be the 'ideal' solutions for a better future (2016), it lacks to highlight certain limits to such freedom of action. This vision conforms to Cheshire and Lawrence's scepticism about the development of communities in the perspective of environmental structural changes (2005). The authors argue that the destabilisation of neoliberalism had indeed led to alternative voices to contest and be heard as a community. Yet, the authors show that this *a priori* "free sphere of civil society in which neoliberalism is challenged" (p. 442), is actually "a means of government, [for] encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own fate and that of their families and communities" (p. 442). To put it more simply, what seems to be a choice resulting from a bottom-up process comes actually from a top-down strategy. Consequently, small-scale initiatives in Rotterdam need to be aligned with government perspective in order to have the right to exist. It is also a condition to be eligible for subsidies, for which they need to prove they can be scaled up.

Following the two authors' conclusion, one can see that contemporary urban farming is a growing phenomenon that comes historically at an interesting point in time in which social initiatives need to follow the rules of capitalism or neoliberalism. We can recall Mason's relevant statement: "[t]he old ways will take long while to disappear" (2015). On the one hand, we can see a pacifist resistance to such "old ways", which gathers together people who genuinely want to make a difference and who are convinced that alternative modes of envisioning the economy and of consuming products are the way for it. On the other hand, we see a world in which everything is commodified and everything needs to be

branded (Aronczyk & Powers, 2015). So, any initiative needs to have a business model to exist. These are the two contexts that are pressing on social organisations that aspire to a 'green' lifestyle, such as urban farms. Indeed, urban farming is claimed by neoliberalism as much as by green ecological movements that would like get rid of the logic of financial profit. Consequently, two types of urban farms can be observed in Rotterdam. A first one that results from big professional and entirely advertised initiatives, such as DakAkker or Uit Je Eigen Stad, which can let the second type – small-scale initiatives, such as Rotterdamse Munt – in the shadow. These need therefore to put great effort in an original communication to be visible enough to compete with well-established urban farms. All these challenges push us to wonder how small bottom-up green initiatives manage to coexist along with big green companies. It seems that such initiatives need to follow commercial and media logic as a frame while adopting the status of social enterprise. Indeed, as Aronczyk and Powers attest, the brand logic has gained such power that it is nowadays applied to previously unbranded areas (2015). Accordingly, a shift has occurred: it is no longer about selling a product, but rather about selling symbolic value through the construction of a brand and the experience of it. This is done through practices that follow media logic, which goes together with the emergence of new technologies that changed the way we behave and interact in our private and professional life, which led to the mediatization of society (Livingtsone & Lunt, 2014). In other words, media becomes the social context: a condition to exist, be visible and be popular in society.

1.4.   Research question

These challenges seem to correspond to the ones Rotterdamse Munt is facing. It appears that Rotterdamse Munt's transition to a social enterprise results from such pressures and thus requires constant negotiation between the two approaches. The objective is to reveal the complexity of this nowadays-accepted concept, which can illustrate our contemporary society's view on working standards. This thesis thus aims to unpack the appellation of 'social enterprise' in order to extract the main challenges urban farmers at Rotterdamse Munt are dealing with. More precisely, I try to figure out if we can see the dilemmas which becoming a social enterprise brings, whether they are acknowledged, resolved or neglected. Through a qualitative study of the discursive making of Rotterdamse Munt, I try to uncover the way urban farmers understand and present their social enterprise. To put it differently, this thesis asks: ***how do urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiate their status of 'social enterprise'?*** That is to say, I try to uncover

how this organisation brings about the status of a social enterprise through a range of discourses that highlight how they present themselves and how they reflect on themselves. Therefore, I look at how Rotterdamse Munt is semiotically constructed, that is to say the multimodal examination of who and what they are, which thus includes the analysis of a range of discursive means such as discourses, behaviour and actions, and visual elements. This semiotic approach is used to first study the characterisation of the organisation itself, taking into account the space in which it is developing – the municipality of Rotterdam – and all that it involves (i.e. administration, policies, urban planning). Second, the multimodal approach helps defining the nature of their product, which goes beyond the concrete product that is herbal tea by expanding it to a whole social and green experience.

1.5. Academic and societal relevance

This master thesis aims to contribute to the broader study of ecological initiatives that need to enter the laws of media and markets through the transition to the status of social enterprise. A lot of scholarships criticize the rise of social enterprise from a socio-economic perspective in the context of neoliberalism that has rather troubling consequences on work-life balance (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010). Indeed, "the rise of barely remunerated or unremunerated forms of work must be situated within the context of the crisis of work […] as well as the crisis of the state, which today deploys cheap labor in privatizing welfare and care sectors" (Muehlebach, 2011, p.64). Other studies focus on the tensions between the social missions and business ventures as part of having the status of social enterprise (Smith et al., 2013). Yet, research lacks of qualitative insights on the actual conditions of the transition from governmental initiatives to social enterprise from a communication perspective. Indeed, research on the importance of symbolic value through the study of branding and lifestyle remain on the observation level. Here, I am showing how and why the symbolic value through media logic practices are central these types of organisations. In other words, I try to explain how the transition goes by emphasising the long and complex process of it that requires new skills, new structures and new challenges. More importantly, I am doing so by arguing that media and communication are the core of this transition. Therefore, I am highlighting the deep connections between the fields of media, sociology and ecology. With a media sociological approach of social enterprise within the phenomenon of urban farming, this thesis provides new insights on the neoliberal societal context where actions towards environmental solutions need to negotiate between altruistic and commercial approaches. It helps understanding the conditions of sustainable transitions

in our contemporary societies marked by the urgency of finding environmental solutions. I argue that Rotterdamse Munt's position is not a unique case but illustrates the complex transition to the status of social enterprise initiatives go through with restricted budget and knowledge. So, I believe this study can be useful for organisations similar to Rotterdamse Munt that are also facing challenges regarding the tensions between impact and business.

2. Theoretical Framework

The following section focuses on the nature of social enterprise and how one should read it as part of neoliberalism. I will introduce concepts that help me look at the discursive construction of Rotterdamse Munt as a social enterprise. More precisely, I will explain in three sections particular theoretical consequences of having the status of a social enterprise in the context of neoliberalism. First, 'social enterprise' suggests that Rotterdamse Munt would move from the creation of a small initiative to the celebration of a citizen-led initiative that has to deal with the administrative space it develops in: the city. Second, having the status of a social enterprise suggests a shift from public remit to commercial purposes, that is to say being able to be commercially sustainable. Finally, the status of a social enterprise means that communication is not just a peripheral means of promotion but becomes the very core of the kind of business Rotterdamse Munt is and wants others to perceive. Before diving into the tensions that the status of social enterprise brings, it is important to provide an explanation of what this concept is.

Social enterprise is in itself difficult to define. "Social entrepreneurship, and its connection to social enterprise creation, is continually the subject of definitional debates" (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2011, p. 5). After having looked at different theoretical perspectives, Ridley-Duff and Bull recognised a distinction between "a *socialisation perspective* that emphasises collective action and mutual principles to develop an alternative economy […] and a *social innovation/purpose perspective* that focuses on the missions and innovations of individual social entrepreneurs" (p.7). The first perspective focuses on "educat[ing] members for participation in the social economy" (p.7); the second one aims attention at "the social goals of [the] enterprise" (p.7).

The difficulty of defining social enterprise seems to come from the construction of the concept itself, which puts together two *a priori* opposite structures, forming thus a paradox. On the one hand, the first term 'social' relates to activities "intended to result in a change in the institutions or conditions of social life" (Oxford dictionary). Organisations with such intention are often devoid of desire for financial profit (i.e. non-profit organisations). On the other hand, the word 'enterprise' refers to an "entrepreneurial economic activity" (Oxford dictionary) whose aim is related, by definition, to the creation of wealth. One can see that the main difference between the two terms concerns 1) the relation to money, and 2) the desire to have an impact on society. Therefore, put together, "social entrepreneurship lies in its ability to combine social interests with business practices to effect social change" (Pirson, 2012, p.34), answering "its dual objectives – the depth and

breadth of social impact to be realized, and the amount of money to be earned" (p.34). The balance between these two objectives influences then the model of a social enterprise. Pirson (2012) presents Alter's three main types of social enterprise (2006):
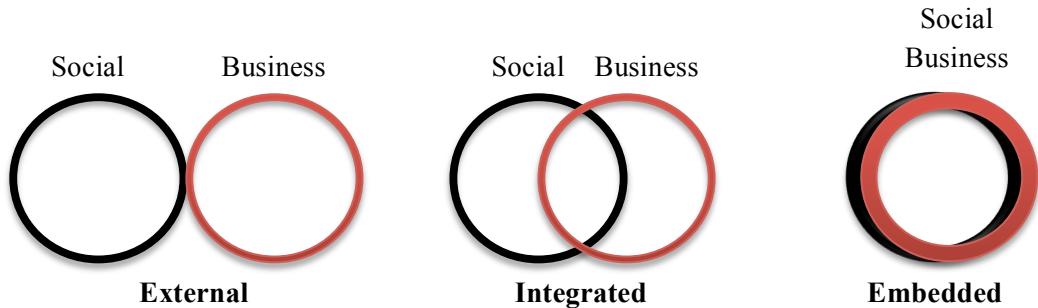
1) External, which characterises organisations that collaborate with other business activities with the sole objective of creating impact (e.g. through partnership); 2) integrated social enterprises where "social programs overlap with business activities, but are not synonymous" (Pirson, 2012, p.36); and 3) embedded social enterprise where the organisation enjoys full independence by self-financing "social programs [...] through enterprise revenues" (*ibid*).

Overall, one can gather major aspects to define social entrepreneurship. It consists of owning a non-profit organisation – whose structure depends on the balance between social and financial value creation – that focuses on mutual (and often non-remunerated) effort with (a) specific social mission(s). Rather than pursuing maximum profit, these missions work towards social innovation through an alternative economy. The latter description is a good starting point to tackle the phenomenon of urban farming, especially in the context of the Blue Movement of Rotterdam that operates under the slogan "surfing the new economy".

Rotterdamse Munt, whose managers attest it has grown into a "social enterprise", seems to be part of this introduction of working practices that strive for a circular economy in a "green & healthy city" (http://rotterdamsemunt.nl/). The questions behind the study of this particular urban herb garden concern 1) the reasons why it is considered as a social enterprise, including its purpose(s) as well as the challenges behind its existence (e.g. business model), and 2) following Alter's models of social enterprise as described by Pirson (2012), what model of social enterprise it represents and how it influences the initial project. In order words, the following will disclose concepts related to what the status of social enterprise entails in the context of neoliberalism.

2.1. Social enterprise: from small initiatives to the celebration of citizen-led initiatives in the neoliberal city

'Social enterprise' suggests that ecological initiatives move from small-scale public organisations to the celebration of influential citizen-led initiatives. It triggers interrogations regarding the right to the city such as, who has the right to participate in the decision-making of the evolution of the city? In other words, this section tackles citizens' participation in the development of Rotterdam as a dynamic, smart and green city in the neoliberal politico-economic context.

By definition, the phenomenon urban farming invites to look at the spaces where it is developing: cities. Thanks to their potential, cities became increasingly popular among scholars. Sassen, for instance, identifies key features of the cities, "incompleteness, complexity, and the possibility of making" (2012, p.1), which make them "strategic sites for the exploration of many major subjects confronting society" (p.1). Cities play a dominant role in the global consumption, production and pollution. Since they are big and densely populated, cities are the hotbeds of societal problems (poverty, crime, effect of climate change). But, at the same time, they are 'living laboratories' for great innovative urban and lifestyle changes, which are often related to ecological solutions (Farrell et al., 2015; Karvonen & van Heur, 2014; Streiff, & Ramanathan, 2017). Cities are the most challenging spaces in which ecological action plans need to be urgently developed, which paradoxically makes them the best place to develop ecological response models. For instance, Farrell et al. (2015) argue that cities are great places to start researching on solutions to climate change. Indeed, due to their inhospitable environment for nature (e.g. concentration in pollutants, high temperature), they are the extreme illustration of what our future global environment will be. So, through urban planting, cities "provide opportunities to study climate change impacts on a wide range of species at different timescales and life-cycle stages, without the need for complex and often compromised experiments." (Farrell et al., 2015, p.597). Yet, these experiments need to be organised and academics noticed an issue regarding city governance: inequality in the decision-making power.

Governance involves multiple public and private actors in debates, conflicts and power struggles. But, citizens' voices are frequently unheard, even though they are vital to the city. For instance, Engelbert and van Zoonen (2017) noticed that, "in smart city research governance and development […], citizen perspectives have often been ignored". It seems that citizens do not always have the chance to participate in the organisation and development of their own environment. This perspective goes in the direction of Henri

Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, who introduced the concept of the right to the city (1968). David Harvey extends this idea by exploring what the right to the city really means in terms of agency.

> "The right to the city is […] far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."
>
> (Harvey, 2012, p.4)

One of the main ideas one can retain from Harvey's statement is the link between creation of the city and the notion of power. Here, power is not interpreted as domination but as participation. That is to say, it is a matter of common effort from citizens that work towards the same objective: making their city as dynamic and popular as possible. To reach this power, public organisations need to work with very little budget (e.g. subsidies) – for which they need to show they are eligible by aligning with government responsibilities – and rely on voluntary activities of citizens with the objective to promote the idea that the public health is growing (Engelbert & van Zoonen, 2017). These challenges rely a lot on marketing strategies. Rotterdam, for instance, has changed a lot in the last couple of years. Until 2009, a large part of the city was undeveloped in Rotterdam South (where Rotterdamse Munt Is located), such as the current 'Parkstad area' developed by Palmbout Urban Landscape (2006-2009). All these efforts were then acknowledged thanks to a large investment in the city marketing, which made Rotterdam a fantastic brand. From a grey industrial harbour Rotterdam became an attractive, audacious and energetic city. With the current slogan "*Rotterdam. Make It Happen*", the city wants to show its dynamism as well as its citizens' drive. Undeniably, great efforts were put together to foster citizens to participate in the development of a "resilient city of the future" (Peters, 2016).

However, scholars notice the inequality of power in the decision-making of city development (Engelbert & van Zoonen, 2017). This observation triggers questions regarding the construction of the city such as "whose is it, and under which conditions, through which 'methods' and on which social issues citizens (may) participate in it" (Engelbert & van Zoonen, 2017, pp.16-17). In other words, who has the right to participate in the decision-making concerning urban development and social matters, and how? These interrogations

can be found in the rise of urban farming. The assumption is that urban farming that one may see arise in Rotterdam is truly connected to the development of the city and its repossession by (some) citizens in the context of neoliberalism. It illustrates the dilemmas Rotterdammers (may) have to face while developing such urban green initiatives due to the nature of the space which they are emerging in: the city of Rotterdam. The latter is characterised by a central authority (i.e. City Government), which establishes various policies through a legislative body (the City Council) and an executive body (the City Executive). Since 2014, the government of Rotterdam predominantly consists of a coalition of three parties: Liveable Rotterdam (Dutch: Leefbaar Rotterdam, a conservative liberal party), Democrats 66 (Dutch: Democraten 66, a social-liberal party) and Christian Democratic Appeal (Dutch: Christen-Democratisch Appèl, a Christian-democratic party). The City Government has great influence on what is happening in Rotterdam, including urban development, economic activity and cultural activities (Gemeente Rotterdam). Consequently, citizens who carry urban green initiatives in Rotterdam may have to take into consideration the City Government's views and policies while developing their own projects, which this thesis tries to emphasize through the qualitative study of Rotterdamse Munt.

Urban farms seem thus to result from citizen's actions that (need to) follow the path of Rotterdam in becoming a glorious brand. Urban farming is the illustration of citizens' active participation in 'reclaiming the city' to have power over its evolution (Harvey, 2012). In that regard, initiatives, while having to deal with certain municipality policies, celebrate citizen-led organisations with the growing desire of independence through social entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is an important theme when focusing on the city of Rotterdam. "Stimulating economic activity and innovation, in cooperation with the knowledge institution in the city, is an important motive for the municipality" (City of Rotterdam Regional Steering Committee, 2009, p.80). The dynamism of the city carried by innovative businesses is one of the most marketed aspects of Rotterdam's city branding. *Rotterdam. Make it Happen.*'s philosophy emphasizes the transformation of Rotterdam into "a city of collaboration and connection" (https://www.rotterdammakeithappen.nl/). One area of entrepreneurship that the municipality puts a lot of effort in is ecology. Rotterdam Programme on Sustainability and Climate Change (2010-2014/2015-2018) fosters people's collective participation in the creation of a "clean, green and healthy city" (Rotterdam Programme on Sustainability and Climate Change, 2010-2014, p.11). This programme

evolved from 'Investing in sustainable growth' (2010-2014) to 'Making sustainability a way of life for Rotterdam' (2015-2018). The city encourages and supports green initiatives by setting up funds, such as Climate and Innovation Fund, which are used to financially participate "in particularly innovative start-ups." (p.80). The development of start-ups illustrates the professionalization and growing independence of citizen-led ecological initiatives that foster a change of lifestyle within a community in the neoliberal context.

2.2.   Social enterprise: from public remit to commercial accountability

Having the status of a social enterprise suggests a move from public responsibility to commercial purposes, that is to say being able to commercially sustain an organisation. More precisely, the transformation into a social enterprise leads an organisation to move from its commitment to public remit that comes from the public funds it receives to the consolidation of a solid revenue model that ensure its operational and financial independence. To find the right balance between their commitment to public responsibility and their financial needs, social enterprises need to develop a sustainable business model that helps them reaching their non-financial objectives. In that regard, it is important to tackle already existent parameters, such as 'genderfication' and the neoliberal business culture, while looking at the transition to a social enterprise as part of the phenomenon of urban farming.

If Rotterdam makes efforts in trying to include citizens in the urban development, these efforts are often oriented towards a specific type of population. To clarify a little more this idea, one can look at the concept of 'genderfication' introduced by Van den Berg (2013; 2018). This term "refers to the production of space for different gender relations" (2013, p.524). That is to say, the process of gentrification – which the term 'genderfication' takes inspiration in – went from a patriarchal vision (Fordism) to a more feminist view of urban planning that included women and families in a context of post-Fordism (2018). In that respect, "[w]omen and their families now play an important role as gentrification pioneers in gentrification policies" (2013, p.524). In this thesis, I argue that Rotterdamse Munt follows this parameter while transitioning to a social enterprise. More precisely, the organisation can be linked to Van den Berg's 'genderfication' thanks to its female management – which can be characterised with "'feminine' performances (such as empathy and deference)" (2018, p.758) – and the presence of women and children at the urban herbal garden. This goes together with Rotterdam's wish to get rid of the masculine working-class image that its industrial economy of the harbour established (2018). Instead, Rotterdam wants a more

modern and feminine image that includes families and children (*ibid*). Going in the direction of social class, Van den Berg affirms however that the process of genderfication triggered other type of domination: the one based on social class. "The genderfication-project may help to overcome inequalities along gender lines; it underlines those along class lines." (2018, p.751). That is to say, the attraction of middle-class families participate in the revitalisation of an area where families with less financial means live. Therefore, the latter might experience difficulties adapting to this new environment because of their social class.

These insights are important within the framework of this thesis as I am focusing on a social enterprise whose location connects the borders of two very different neighbourhoods: Kop van Zuid and Afrikaanderwijk. They are the subjects of attention of revitalisation plans for Rotterdam South but remains almost opposite in terms of development and populations. On the one hand, the first district was renewed as part of a housing programme developed by Palmbout Urban Landscape (2006-2009). It thus gathers together rather new and large buildings (see the Laan op Zuid architecture comprised of modern and tall buildings), which attracted middle-class Dutch people, also called 'Young Urban Professional Parents', or 'YUPPs' (Karsten, 2014). This term is meant to replace childless middle class families (i.e. yuppies) by emphasising "the increase in family and child directed consumption spaces" (p.175). In other words, it describes young parents who combines "work and care" (*ibid*) by living in areas that offer them opportunities to do so. Accordingly, "the consumption of parks and sidewalks reveals new practices of public parenting in urban contexts." (*ibid*), which emphasises the fact that this population is part of the transformation of the city. It also highlights the fact that "unequal class relations appear to continue" (*ibid*). Indeed, the Afrikaanderwijk, on the other hand, is an old neighbourhood that mostly includes houses built before 1930, and ones from the 1980s and 1990s (Van Duin, Tzaninis, Snel, & Lindo, 2011) and poorer populations. Historically speaking, this neighbourhood is characterised by a majority of non-Western population, coming from Morocco, Turkey and South European (*ibid*). Even though the potential of this neighbourhood can be found in its multicultural identity, it is overshadowed by a rather negative perception due to problems of low education, insecurity and unemployment (*ibid*). Although the image of 'ghetto' seems to be decreasing (Doucet & Koenders, 2018), some work still needs to be done. To respond to the negative appearance of the neighbourhood, the municipality of Rotterdam has in fact recently launched a new Parkstad development with "a new layout for a large residential area" surrounded by green areas (The Green City, 2016).

As "Rotterdam-based policy practices that are expected to enhance gentrification and

social mixing" (Van den Berg, 2013, p.524), this thesis questions whether Rotterdamse Munt adapts to these urban policies while transitioning to an impact-driven sustainable business. The latter would result in a gendered, classed and even raced strategy that combines the participation to the development of Rotterdam South that wants to be inclusive, and its financial needs by connecting different cultures and social classes thanks to its location, the nature of the organisation (i.e. an attractive urban garden), and the duality of the product it offers, that is both 'free' through volunteer work and the public characteristic of its space, and 'paid' through the selling of natural products.

The context of neoliberalism comes with an implicit belief that nature can be commodified, privatized and monetized to be efficiently managed (Liverman, 2004). The right to pollute for instance can be purchased through payment of fines. Accordingly, "[m]arkets in environmental services are becoming the dominant approach to managing and protecting the environment in the twenty-first century" (p.736). Small urban farming initiatives are developing in this context; but they seem to go against privatization of the land by claiming different environmental governance that would include other local-scale actors such as consumers (Himley, 2008; Liverman, 2004).

> "Consumers are emerging as important new agents in environmental policy, choosing to exercise collective power to boycott polluters and poor labor practices and purchasing products from companies with better environmental and social standards. Often coordinated by transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 'shopping to save the planet' responds to information about environmental practices and workplace conditions"

(Liverman, 2004, p.735)

Urban farming seems to fit Liverman's statement by encouraging people to participate in a collective change of consumption habits, which goes together with a broader ecological lifestyle. However, such impact-driven organisations are competing with powerful multinational institutions, which often have different views on ecological and social issues because of their profit-oriented wealth creation. Such pressure might influence non-profit organisations to give way to the temptation of playing the same game by having "closer relationships with corporations and government and thus working within the system rather than to overthrow it" (Liverman, 2004, p.736). This concern goes together with the French writer, farmer and environmentalist, Pierre Rabhi's viewpoint on initiatives (2016). According to him, initiatives' characteristic of freedom relies on the fact that they do not belong to any market system. Besides, he believes that initiatives are the products of

personal creativity, which "embodies a fundamental value of change" (p.85), and thus their freedom needs to be cultivated.

These are dilemmas young initiatives such as Rotterdamse Munt might be facing while trying to develop themselves and deepen their impact. Therefore, social enterprises need to build an efficient business model, which starts with the development of a solid network. 'Network' is one of the key words in entrepreneurship and creates the dynamism of the organisation in development (Greve, 1995). The size of the network can be influenced by the entrepreneur's professional and personal background (Greve, 1995), but also by domain in which the social enterprise is taking place. In the field of ecology, shared values are important in the collaboration of a few organisations that, together, create a real community with similar cultural and environmental opinions. The pursuit of shared value creation rather than financial value, proper to social enterprises, is increasingly popular in the business management culture. The financial crisis of 2007-2008, together with the environmental urgency, has triggered the idea that business systems needed to be redefined (Pirson, 2012). Pirson notices, "many authors are suggesting that business needs to reinvent itself to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century" (p.31). Thus, companies make great effort in building their image and displaying the values they carrying, which results in the transformation of the nature of the product sold.

Indeed, the historical and economic contexts in which I am studying urban farming observe a shift from the promotion of products to the one of experiences (Jakob, 2013). This goes together with the emergence of creative industries that put an emphasis on offering a symbolic value rather than a material one, moving the priority from the product itself to the elaboration of strong and original marketing strategies. "The cultural products they supply serve aesthetic, broadly educational or entertainment purposes rather than any immediate 'technical' function (Throsby, 2001, p.4). Content and symbolic value becomes essential in the selling process of a product. "In that respect, creative industries play an important role in the development and maintenance of lifestyles and cultural identities in society" (Stam, De Jong, & Marlet, 2008, p.120). They gather people together and create a community who agrees with the symbolic values expressed through marketing strategies. Regarding the communication of urban farming, it indeed seems that it gathers together people with shared beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards social and environmental issues, in a process of coalescing cultural, symbolic and economic value. We can therefore wonder if urban farmers at Rotterdamse Munt feel they have to deal with a tension between these symbolic and cultural values and the business constraints (economic values), while fostering a

healthier and greener lifestyle.

With the symbolic value predominating, companies have the imperative to think about their identity as featuring in people's lifestyle. Therefore, they increasingly adopt the concept of branding and identity creation by focusing on the target's lifestyle to create a stronger link with the consumers. A 'lifestyle brand' is a company that orients its marketing strategy to its target audience's lifestyle in order for the latter to reinforce its identity through the purchase of the company's product (Schmitt, 2012). Accordingly, the consumption of a particular brand's product helps the consumer feel associated to a certain social group. The purchase of a product is therefore seen as a cultural practice that elevates one to a certain cultural status. Even further, companies opted for new communication strategies such as ""consumer cocreation" where consumers are encouraged to create ads for a brand or otherwise record their brand consumption activities" to increase the public value of the brand (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010, p.8). In this thesis, I follow Aronczyk and Powers's perspective to take the concept of 'lifestyle brand' even further by showing how it is used within the framework of social entrepreneurship. In the following section, I argue that the lifestyle itself of social entrepreneurs can become the brand that fosters a "sense of community through the creation and circulation, of meaning" (p.10). As Aronczyk and Powers state, "brands have become structuring elements of our everyday lives" (2010, p.3). They are now "forms of self-expression" (*ibid*) that is part of a lifestyle. They have a role "in meaning-making as well as status, class, and identity" (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010, p.5). In that respect, everyday life enters the "promotional culture" (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010, p.4), where every part of social life needs to be branded to exist and be considered by following media logic practices that highlight the fact that symbolic value predominates.

2.3. Social enterprise: from communication as a periphery to media logic as the central principle

The importance of the symbolic value as part of being a social enterprise means that the communication dimension is not a peripheral means but becomes the very core of the kind of business the social enterprise is and wants others to perceive. In other words, social enterprises need to follow the media logic while promoting themselves to reach the objective of influencing people's social practices.

Asserting the status of 'social enterprise' starts from the very fact of naming it. In other words, instead of pitting 'speech' against 'action', it should be considered that speech is in itself a form of action. This argument is based on the early communication theory that

focuses on the performative function of speech. In particular, Austin's 'speech act theory' (1962) states that speaking equals doing. More precisely, the very action of speaking modifies the reality by provoking specific effect depending on what is said. Therefore, by stating that Rotterdamse Munt is a "social enterprise", urban farmers publically affirm the status of their organisation. It is thus a way to define the guideline they need to follow while developing their organisation and the promotion of it. This thesis thus argues the doing of being a social enterprise is a discursive operation that uses a range of discourses. This does not mean that Rotterdamse Munt is a deceptive appearance of a social enterprise but it highlights the challenges behind 1) acknowledging what it implies; 2) publicly affirming it (how they pitch themselves); and 3) being recognized as such. In that regard, communication is not reduced to the act of speaking; instead, it is enlarged to broader discursive practices that follow media logic.

The way in which we need to understand media and communications today is different from how it was two decades ago. The early 21st century theories on media and communications were limited to a rather straightforward exchange of information through a certain channel. Even though media can still be defined as any support or technological medium that allow conveying a message (Rieffel, 2005), or as tools to express thoughts in any form and with any purpose (Balle, 2012), these insights limit the understanding of media and communications. Indeed, they solely refer to their technical aspect, without taking into consideration their sociocultural characteristics.

Nowadays, we are immersed in a world of communication and media, which has rather important consequences on people's daily life. The easy access to the Internet has changed our way of perceiving privacy, particularly with the usage of social media. We are increasingly following a logic of self-presentation, presentation of one's intimacy that can be seen by thousands of strangers. Media have facilitated the creation of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1993), which foster "theorising the formation of collectivities that cross ruptures of space and are outside formal definitions of 'culture'" (Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, & Larkin, 2002, p.5). Scholars realised it was therefore important to study the diversity of media (Ginsburg et al., 2002) by not only focusing on the technological development of media but also on the effect it can have on society.

From a sociological approach, one can refer to Elias (1973) who shows that, in the communication society – formed with the emergence of new technologies of information and communication – keeping quiet is no longer the standard. On the contrary, it is about showing and expressing oneself everywhere, all the time. One's personality – more precisely

one's distinction (originality) – and the lifestyle that goes with it, becomes the basis of self-promotion. This communication imperative requires high sense of self-control – in order to protect one from stigmatisation – and great knowledge of symbolic tools for communication. Going in the same direction, Bourdieu talks about socio-cultural capital (1979). This concept comes from his study of social classes, and in particular the middle-class that does not owe its social position to education but to social network. The latter gave opportunities for cultural knowledge that is not academically recognised but characterised by being capable to project one's own way of life as a work activity. In other words, the art of self-presentation becomes a professional activity that allows influencing one's environment. This particular practice refers to one of Bourdieu's three types of cultural capital as Lamont and Lareau mention: the "embodied (or incorporated) cultural capital (i.e., the legitimate cultural attitudes, preferences, and behaviors [which he calls practices] that are internalized during the socialization process)" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p.156). The relational practices link to the self-promotion exercise is thus a prime know-how to manifest legitimate forms of cultural expression (Bourdieu, 1979).

Moreover, some theories recognise the importance of social and contextual negotiation of meaning in the process of communicating. For instance, Schirato and Yell (2000) define communication as "the practice of producing and negotiating meanings, […] which always takes place under specific social, cultural and political conditions" (as cited in Burns, O'Connor, & Stocklmayer, 2003, p.186). The authors stress the importance of the message sender's background. Indeed, the social factor of media and communications is crucial to understand the content that is being communicated, the way it is delivered, as well as the person who produces the message. It was not before the end of the 20th century that anthropologists recognised media as a "social practice" in their studies (Ginsburg et al., 2002, p.3). They understood that studying media was a good element to better understand cultural practices, especially because media are not only about transferring information. They are used to persuade, convince, and draw attention of the public one is addressing the information to. This idea reveals a strategic aspect of communication whose steps are: 1) defining the message, 2) determining the public one wants to address the message to, and 3) choosing the best way and medium to get your message across (Cornelissen, 2017). These three steps can be revealed through the study of what semiotic theories call 'signs'. Signs are "used to provide an information, to say or indicate something that someone knows and wants others to know as well" (Eco, 1988, p.27). In semiotics, two parts of the construction of a sign are distinguished. Chandler (2002) explains Saussure's (1972) signifier – what we see

or hear for instance – and the signified – what this image or sound means. This allows understanding that, the observations and interpretations one makes of the elements around are not a coincidence, but are usually constructed. Even though it is undeniable that these theories allowed adding certain complexities to the study of media, they are restricted to a unidirectional impact from media to society through the use of specific signs such as texts, sounds and images.

To fulfil this gap, we can look at what the mediatization theory has allowed us to understand about the media. This theory suggests studying the media not simply as a social practice but as social product. That is to say, media become the social practices.

Mediatization entails that media have become an integral part of institutions' operations. They have achieved a degree of authority that forces other institutions' to submit to their logic (Livingstone & Lunt, 2014). The mediatization theory thus stresses the idea that the media orientation of practices is a condition to exist, be visible and popular. More precisely, mediatization is about changing and controlling the looks, practices, principles and premises of social processes and social institutions. Accordingly, every sign is carefully used and follows media logic to define the broader nature of an institution and the way it should be seen by its audiences. In other words, the mediatization theory reinforces the connection between semiotic performances and media logic while defining the nature of an organisation through various and complementary discursive practices. The aim of this theory is not to cancel the legacy of previous theories, on the contrary, "mediatization research […] is precisely concerned to bring together our knowledge of the history of media and the history of mediation across diverse fields so as to attempt a distinct account of the changing role and significance of the media in society, even while recognizing that such an account will be far from simple, linear, or self-sufficient" (Livingstone & Lunt, 2014, p.704).

This theory helps us understanding that media are not just a marginal aspect of communication; they determine a whole social process that aims to reach a certain objective, which often touches upon making people see an institution in a predefined way and make them act according to it. To reach this purpose, communication can have a multimodal approach. That is to say, the media orientation of social practices is not limited to 'traditional' ways of communicating such as the use of online platforms, the creation of pamphlets, but are expanded to the entire construction and management of an organisation (e.g. the visual aspect of the space of the organisation, the activities performed within this organisation). Media are thus not only the tools that show the identity of an organisations but become the social practices that create a certain image of an organisation through the use of

signs, in any form. Semiotics is a good way to study these social practices since it seeks to study "any system of signs, in any substance, whatever its limitations: images, gestures, melodic sounds, objects, […] which form systems of meanings" (Barthes, 1964, p.1). Therefore, the social practices become themselves signs that can be studied as if they were images or texts.

Within the framework of my research, I thus adopt the mediatization theory with a semiotic approach to allow me discussing the transition of Rotterdamse Munt into a social enterprise on a multimodal level. By basing my research on the mediatization theory, I am arguing that the status of social enterprise strongly relies on communicative practices that define the type of business it really is. Accordingly, efforts in marketing through self-promotion and branding become constitutive of the existence of the social enterprise, following the neoliberal business culture.

Indeed, it appears that urban farms' promotion is not limited to the product (herbs, vegetables), but consists of advocating urban farming as a general lifestyle, through the use of media communications techniques. Consequently, it seems that the practice is becoming increasingly professionalised. With the importance of symbolic value rather than product value, urban farmers' lifestyle appears as a brand.

Using the previously mentioned theories, I start from the assumption that, in practice, urban farmers' lifestyle is the bridge between media and ecology. Indeed, to encourage social change in the city in terms of ecology, urban farmers need to be visible and influent. Rather than promoting the material product of their practices, they work towards advancing a whole lifestyle. The general product of urban farming is not limited to the presentation of the products they grow; it displays everyday life practices that work towards a sustainable and ecological approach of the city. In other words, it is not about product marketing, it is about the branding of entire ways of living. Following the path of marketing strategies, lifestyle becomes thus a source of advertisement and visibility. Besides, every urban farmer becomes both "consumers [and] promotional intermediaries […], working in the service of the brand yet without the financial remuneration that its owners enjoy" (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010, p.11). This logic leads to "the thorough marketization and commodification of everyday life" (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010, p.3), where "the systems of commercial media […] constantly link nonpromotional to promotional message"(p. 4). Indeed, the line between the two types of information becomes blurred. This goes together with the small budget social organisations are facing due to business models that often rely on public subsidies or other forms of external financial contributions. For example, "[h]umanitarian NGOs are

increasingly faced with significant competition for government funding and private donations; as a result, organizations need to distinguish themselves in order to receive popular exposure, which is necessary for successful fundraising" (Cottle & Nolan, 2007, p. 865). The distinction of such organisation is therefore advertised through their own ways of living that illustrate certain values, which are meant to influence a broader community.

To summarize, the previously mentioned concepts are the foundation of my qualitative study in the discursive making of Rotterdamse Munt as a social enterprise. Based on these previous researches, I am interested in discovering the ways urban farmers discursively negotiate the status of social enterprise while developing their urban garden in the challenging area that combines two opposite neighbourhoods and so, require two opposite promotion logics. The theory related to the power of discursive means gives valuable insights to reveal the media orientation of urban farmers' practices and discourses to deal with the neoliberal convergence of the altruistic and commercial approaches that constitutes a social enterprise. Thus, my analysis included elements from the entire management of the urban garden to the way they promote it, to how they reflect on the decision-making regarding Rotterdamse Munt. This enabled me to figure out the elements that permit urban farmers to embody their urban farm as a social enterprise, as well as the purposes and challenges behind such appellation.

3. Method

In this chapter, I describe the methodology I chose to answer my research questions and the motives behind my sole focus on Rotterdamse Munt. I also explain the reasons behind my choice by arguing the perks of using a qualitative methodology that involved ethnographic work, in which I combined different methods for the sake of reliability, and how it helped me fulfilling the objectives of my study. For clarification purposes, I divided this chapter in four sections: research method, case study, data collection and data analysis.

3.1. Research method

As this thesis aims a qualitative in-depth analysis of how urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiate the status of 'social enterprise', I chose to do ethnographic fieldwork at this urban herb garden with a semiotic analysis of their range of discourses (see scheme 1).
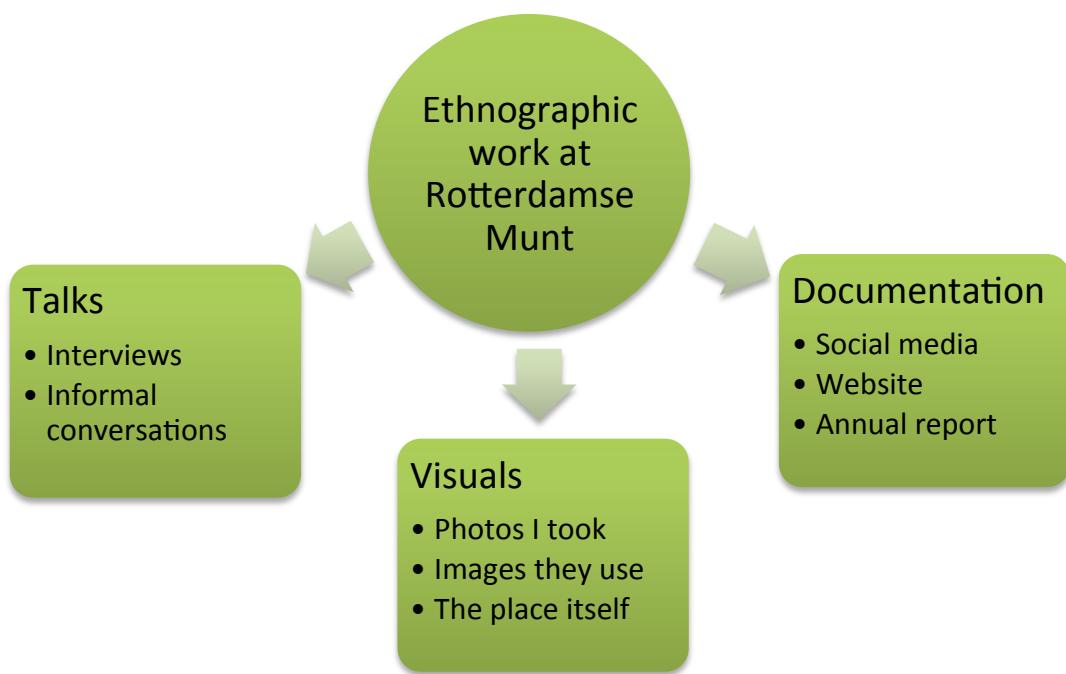
Scheme 1 Types of data used as part of the research

Qualitative research is a good method "to observe social life in its natural habitat" (Babbie, 2011, p. 302). It allows getting a thorough understanding of a particular social phenomenon (*ibid*). With an orientation to qualitative research, I chose ethnographic fieldwork which entails "up-close involvement of the researcher in some form of participative role, in the natural, "everyday" setting to be studied" (Stewart, 2013, p.6). This method is useful for in-depth explorations of a particular phenomenon since it allows adopting multiple approaches to data collection with "one focal research instrument", which

is "the ethnographer's own inquiring experience, in joint, emergent exploration with people who [are] called […] *actors* or *insiders*" (p.6). In other words, ethnographic work does not have a strict approach or specific expectations. It lets the researcher be guided by what is happening in the element to be studied, with or without his or her own active involvement. That is to say, ethnographic work can gather together observations where the researcher remain 'passive' regarding the activity he or she is observing, and participation during which the researcher immerse himself or herself by joining the activity observed and interacting with the participants in question. The aim of such method is to associate several types of observations and interpret them to create a clear understanding of the complete view of subject studied (Stewart, 2013). It coincides with this study since it seeks to gather relevant details that can highlight urban gardeners' media orientation practices and their reflection about them. In that sense, this thesis contributes to the understanding of how lifestyle as a brand can work with the adoption of the mediatization practice. So, with the eyes of a media sociologist (which refers to the mediatization theory previously mentioned), I read Rotterdamse Munt as a text, in which some choices were more likely to be made than others.

As part of this method, I used the social semiotic analysis, which is interested in the way discourses and visual elements are used in social context to create meaning (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Indeed, "[t]hrough the individual semiotic choices that they make, [people] are able to encourage us to place events and ideas into broader frameworks of interpretation that are referred to as 'discourses'" (p. 20). Here, discourse consists of the use of language forms in a specific social context to express certain ideologies. In my research, key discourses took the form of informal conversations as well as semi-structured interviews with urban farmers at Rotterdamse Munt. Discourses are intertwined with the visual aspects, which results in a multimodal communication technique. In my observations of Rotterdamse Munt, I therefore included the settings, which "are used to communicate general ideas, to connote discourses and their values, identities and actions" (p. 52). More precisely, I tried to figure out important elements – and the reasons behind their establishment – which construct Rotterdamse Munt not only as an urban farm but also as a brand that promotes a certain lifestyle. To be able to reveal all the important elements, I completed my fieldwork with a semiotic analysis of Rotterdamse Munt's public and formal presentation through their online content and their 2017 annual report.

Overall, I applied a multimodal perspective (discourses and visual elements) to understand meaning making in Rotterdamse Munt. In that respect, my ethnographic research was strongly focused on the similarities but also the differences between how they present

themselves and how they reflect on those presentations.

3.2.   The case study

After some fieldwork and a few informal conversations to discover urban farms in Rotterdam, I quickly turned my attention to small-scale emerging initiatives to figure out their challenges behind the transformation into sustainable businesses. Because of my interest in media sociology, I decided to focus on bottom-up initiatives to illustrate new neoliberal business culture where work and lifestyle intertwine.

As stated before, I focused on the urban herb garden Rotterdamse Munt ('Mint leaves from Rotterdam'). It illustrates the voluntary type of social and ecological initiatives that highlights non-profit purposes, which can be part of participants' broader lifestyle. I call my focus on this urban garden 'case study' because it was not meant to be representative of ecological initiatives. The intention was, instead, to focus on this particular urban garden's story through various methods, not to identify general trends, but to contribute to the understanding of sustainable transitions through the status of 'social enterprise'.

3.3.   Data collection

As my thesis aimed to understand how urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiated their status of 'social enterprise', it was important to have a thorough understanding of the functioning of this organisation. In order to do so, I planned to be fully involved in their daily practices as an observer but also as a participant. Due to its relative freedom of operationalization, the nature of my fieldwork work was inspired by methodology literature on ethnographic work (see Stewart, 2013), and other studies that used the same method (see Awad, 2014).

Fieldwork at Rotterdamse Munt occurred during the months of April and May 2018. I spent most of my time walking around the garden, or sitting on the terrace, while taking notes about the visual elements, the discussions I had with volunteers and the actions that was happening during my observations (e.g. volunteers' activity and behaviour, visitors passing through). With the increase amount of conversations I was having and activities I was observing (due to the improvement of the weather), it quickly became necessary to start recording the conversations (with an iPhone 5S) and taking photographs of the activities (with a Nikon D3200 and an iPhone 5S). This helped me to remember and be accurate while taking notes about my observations during and especially after they took place.

Ethnographic work enabled me to develop relations with some urban gardeners,

especially the initiator who has been my guide in terms of condition of participation. She indeed helped me defining the ethical limits of my research approach, which prevented me from doing a misstep during my observations and discussions with other volunteers. Thanks to my repetitive presence at Rotterdamse Munt, I got to trigger some volunteers' curiosity about my work and managed to established trust between us. Consequently, some volunteers helped me getting feedback and clarifications on my observations and interpretations. This was very valuable for my analysis in order not to be too personally biased. Overall, I managed to have interesting and insightful conversations with 13 volunteers, in English, French and Spanish. Our conversations were not all recorded because of contextual reasons but I always took note right after having them. In total, I recorded 7 conversations. Also, out of the 269 photos taken, I selected 115, to semiotically analyse them. The selection was done following a few characteristics: the quality of the photo, the quality of the information on it (how much it showed, how relevant it was), and the unique aspect of it (the fact that it did not show the same information as another photo).

My method relied thus on my regular presence at Rotterdamse Munt and my daily writing report, with the purpose of disentangling the appellation 'social enterprise'. This objective followed two underlying interrogations. First, who (has the right to) define(s) the nature of Rotterdamse Munt and the city in which it is developing? Second, who (has the right to) define(s) the nature of Rotterdamse Munt's product (i.e. lifestyle)? In other words, the purpose of my work was to reveal the condition behind the construction Rotterdamse Munt's space and work as a social enterprise.

The most valuable field information I managed to collect happened around the end of my ethnographic work, which was a sign of the trust I had developed with the participants. By 'valuable field information', I mean the insights I received from my conversations with volunteers as well as my own participation in their daily activity. Indeed, my initial plan was to fully immerse myself in Rotterdamse Munt as a volunteer, to get a sense of the purpose and the management of the urban garden. This would have helped me fulfilling the objective of my thesis, as well as contributing to their project by helping in any way I could. After a few talks with the initiator to organize my contribution, the plan was eventually cancelled. This challenge did not however prevent me from reaching my goal. Since Rotterdamse Munt is a public space, the initiator confirmed there was no problem behind my presence and observations. I therefore reduced my immersion to 'external' observations during my regular presence at Rotterdamse Munt, which the volunteers felt more and more confortable with. Indeed, after seven weeks, I was eventually spontaneously invited to join the garden team on

a day where I planned to continue my observations. This day led to a second invitation the morning after. During two days, I therefore managed to participate in Rotterdamse Munt's daily activity as part of the garden team. This means that I did some gardening with other volunteers from 11am until 3pm (on a Tuesday) and from 9am until 2pm (on the next day); I had two tea breaks (per day) and one lunch break (per day) with them during which I got to have informal conversations about the place. This late invitation was the proof of the trust developed during my observations that made urban farmers more comfortable with my presence after realizing the lack of risk of my project.

This part of my research thus led me to get in contact with the volunteers and start looking for interviewees. As part of my thesis, the interviewees were selected according to their 'status' in the urban garden. It was necessary to talk to urban farmers who had a management position within Rotterdamse Munt since my research focused on the definition of the nature of their work and space gather together in the term 'social enterprise'. My interviewees were four people who actively and regularly participate in Rotterdamse Munt. The four interviewees included the three managers (i.e. the initiator of the project, the coordinator of all the volunteers and the event manager), and the coordinator of the gardening team on Thursdays. Each interview lasted between 36 minutes and one hour. Out of the four interviews, three were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. Even though all the interviews were conducted at the space of Rotterdamse Munt (one inside the shop, the other three outside at the terrace), they varied in style. Two of them appeared quite formal from the beginning until the end (with the initiator of the project and the coordinator of all the volunteers). The interviewees were waiting for each question, even though they felt free to add information that the questions did not mention. I was taking notes to pick up on an idea they came up with. The other two interviews felt more casual. The conversation I had with the event manager (non-recorded because of technical reasons) started in a formal manner but ended up as a relatively casual discussion with exchange of ideas. I was writing down valuable information she was giving me since the conversation was not recorded, but this did not impact the flow of our exchange. Concerning the interview with the coordinator of the garden team, it was from the start a very casual conversation, which started spontaneously as it was not scheduled contrary to the three others. Even though I had questions prepared, the interview turned out to be an interesting conversation with varied subjects that were answering my questions but without me having to ask them. The interviewee was very confortable and open up easily about her own interest in urban gardening and her vision of Rotterdamse Munt. None of the interviewees requested anonymity

Finally, since Rotterdamse Munt was first open three days a week (winter schedules), four days a week from April 14th, and five days a week start from April 17th (summer schedules), I managed to easily divide my week between fieldwork and collection of public (online) content that was necessary for my full understanding of the urban herb garden. This content included their social media platforms, their website, and their annual report, which the initiator send to me by email after our interview. Regarding their social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), each post from the months of April and May was collected and translated from Dutch into English through Google Translate. This allowed me to respect the timeframe of my in-depth exploration of Rotterdamse Munt. Moreover, my data collection included each section of their website that was automatically translated from Dutch into English through the use of Google Chrome automatic translation. Finally, the 44-page annual report of 2017 was also translated into English using Google translate. The translation was then verified by two native Dutch acquaintances for reliability reasons.

Overall, the amount and variety of data gathered helped me building a clear understanding of Rotterdamse Munt that was revealed through my data analyses.

3.4. Data analysis

As my thesis combined different methods to reveal the discursive construction of the social enterprise through a thorough understand of the nature of Rotterdamse Munt, I decided to first separately analyse the different types of data I had gathered and eventually combine the entirety of my data to come up with different main themes that would clearly illustrate how urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiated the status of a social enterprise. In other words, the overall analysis of my entire data corresponds to a thematic analysis.

The study Rotterdamse Munt was meant to provide one of the first in-depth ethnographic case studies of a social enterprise in the being. The questions asked to the data were overall to reveal the dilemmas that being a social enterprise was bringing; whether they were acknowledged, neglected or resolved. For clarification purposes, I have created a table in which I have listed the different kinds of data I have gathered and the questions I wanted to answer through these different data (see table 1). The final question corresponds to the research question that guided the operationalization of this thesis project.

ETHNOGRAPHIC WORK - DISCOURSES			
Type of data	**Subtype of data**	**Focus/Questions asked about this data**	
Talks	**Interviews**	How do they reflect on their 'communication'? Do they acknowledge the challenges behind being a social enterprise? What story do they give about Rotterdamse Munt? What are the choices behind the construction of this place?	**How do urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiate their status of 'social enterprise'?**
	Informal conversations	How do they describe the nature and purpose of Rotterdamse Munt? Why are people participating in the project?	
	Their own interactions	What is the atmosphere of the place between the volunteers? How are people welcomed at Rotterdamse Munt?	
Visuals	**The place**	What *identity* can be revealed through the visual choices they made? What sort of place they want people to think it is when they walk in/see it from outside?	
	Images of their own	What message do they want to send by putting this specifc type of image?	
	Photos I have taken	What is happening at Rotterdamse Munt and what does that say from it? What identity can be revealed through the visual choices they made? (// backup of the place)	
Documentation	**Annual report**	How did they write it / What are they emphasising on? What does it say about Rotterdamse Munt? What is the purpose of Rotterdamse Munt that they want to highlight?	
	Social media	What message are they trying to send to their audiences? What does it say about the place?	
	Website	What does the content has to do with the strucutre of Rotterdamse Munt? What identity can be revealed through the content? What purpose does it empahsize?	

Table 1 Data collected through ethnographic work on Rotterdamse Munt and focus of analyses

To analyse my data, I used semiotic and anthropological approaches that helped me combine visuals, texts, oral speeches and behaviours/actions. More precisely, as part of my semiotic analysis, I used an iconographical analysis (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This means that I "explore[d] the way that individual elements in images, such as objects and settings, are able to signify discourses in ways that might not be obvious at an initial viewing" (p.31). Taking inspiration in Lou's method of analysis (2009), I "put [the discourse] back into its physical context, and investigate[d] how text and context mutually constitute[d] each other" (p.105). I thus analysed the semiotic choices that urban farmers used while building Rotterdamse Munt and communicating on it through their different platforms to achieve their communication objectives (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

I first analysed visual elements by looking at the observations I wrote during the time I spent at Rotterdamse Munt, but also by analysing the photos I took, and the images urban farmers used on their communication platforms (i.e. annual report 2017, social media, website). The photos I took included ones of the place itself, as well as the activities urban farmers were doing. That is to say, I looked at their daily activities and speeches as if they were images and text. This step helped me having a clear image of Rotterdamse Munt to understand the one urban farmers wanted people to see of it as well as what people were actually interpreting. In order not to miss out on anything, I used Barthes's denotation and connotation that helped me look at every relevant detail that could help developing the story

behind Rotterdamse Munt. I established a table with three columns where I divided the nature of data I was analysing (e.g. photo, observation, online content), the elements I was seeing and describing, and the interpretation I could make out of them. In other words, I described each signs that I could see and wrote the ideas they could communicate (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.50). For the sake of transparency, I have included a table with a few examples of my analysis (see appendix 1).

Then, I focused on the analysis of a valuable data I received from Ingrid, that is the annual report. I performed a thematic analysis that helped me understanding the important themes urban farmers were stressing while publically presenting themselves.

Regarding the informal conversations I had with the volunteers and the interviews I conducted, all the recorded discussions were entirely transcribed and coded. To analyse them, I followed a lexical analysis (Machin & Mayr, 2012). That is to say, I looked at what sort of words people were using to reveal which ones they tend to use or avoid. This helped me determining lexical fields to reveal, "certain kinds of identities, values […], which are not necessary made explicit" (p.30).

These different parts of my analysis were very valuable to understand the functioning of Rotterdamse Munt. They helped me increasing the reliability of my study as they took into account every communicated aspects of Rotterdamse Munt. Eventually, all the data analysed was put together to perform a thematic analysis to reveal main themes that would reveal how urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt discursively negotiated the status of 'social enterprise'. I therefore compared all my data to examine similarities and differences between the 'front stage' (i.e. how urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt wanted to publically present their social enterprise) and the 'backstage' (i.e. what is happening at Rotterdamse Munt and how people talk about it while participating in it). The themes are presented in the next chapter.

4. Results

This study addresses the discursive construction of Rotterdamse Munt as a social enterprise. This section describes the consequences of a range of discursive practices (the interviews, talks, online platforms, annual report, visuals) that construct the social enterprise. In other words, it uncovers what is being communicated – explicitly or implicitly, consciously or not necessarily intentionally – about Rotterdamse Munt. In the following, the results of the research reveal themes that highlight tensions between the professional aspect and the more altruistic approach, which is intrinsic to the making and being a social enterprise.

Figure 1 'Back' side of Rotterdamse Munt, facing the Laan op Zuid

4.1. History of the project

In order to understand the discursive construction of Rotterdamse Munt, it is important to provide a description of it that is relevant in the light of the research question. I will thus first mention the origin of the project, how it is organised and who governs it, as well as Rotterdamse Munt's income structure that goes together with the conditions in which they receive funds.

The initial project in line with the city's urban and social objectives

Rotterdamse Munt is an organisation in the process of becoming an independent social enterprise. The urban herb garden "originated from a residents' initiative and was built up by and together with local residents" (Rotterdamse Munt website). Thanks to government subsidies and other partners' financial support (see figure 2), and after a year of looking for a space (without the government's input), the project came to life and has been growing for four years.

Figure 2 Panel with the partners from the beginning of the project hung at the terrace of Rotterdamse Munt. "They were [our partners] at the beginning when the project started" (conversation with Ingrid)

From top left corner to the bottom right corner:
Stadsregio Rotterdam
Stictching Doen
Gemeeten Rotterdam
GGD Rotterdam – Rijnmond
Fonds DBL
Skanfonds (geeft mensen de kans)
Mara
IMd (Raadgevende Ingenieurs)
Deel Gemeente Feijennoord
Stichting Job Dura Fonds
Stichting voor Bevordering van Volkskracht
Unilever SU Nassaukade
Kookpunt (Kookwinkel voor heel Nederland)
Vestia

The particularity and success of this project can be found in the fact that the initiator's objectives match with Rotterdam's aim to become a dynamic, healthy and green city where people feel integrated. Indeed, the initiator of Rotterdamse Munt told me about the ideas behind the origin of the project:

> "Actually, I created this…It's…It started because of the…of this…because of the…because of the big difference between the both parts of the city, because, there…This [North Rotterdam] is a new part, it's a new built…there, there are a lot of people who have…they live in wealth, they have all jobs, and they're highly educated, and that's like, mostly people live, they have that all not: so, they don't have jobs, they don't have an education […]. A lot of people who live in, in a kind of isolation, they don't have anything to do during the day. So my idea was, 'now, we have to make the city greener, because the environment gets healthier then, and more lovely, I think, because, in a greener city, people…people behave differently, so I think it's…in a social way." (Ingrid)

Ingrid's explanation reveals the dual objective of the project. It is first about making the city greener in an area where everything is "grey" and "stony" – as most of the volunteers present it – and, accordingly, creating a better and healthier environment for Rotterdammers who can thus gather together and enjoy it through volunteering and/or visiting. This dual aim is summarized in Rotterdamse Munt's philosophy: "We want to connect citizens of the city with their urban nature" (Annual report, 2017; interviews with the core team). It is thus often mentioned on their communication platforms such as their website or their annual report

(2017) given to organisations who financially participated in the project, but also during conversations while talking about the project.

Therefore, Rotterdamse Munt participates in the broader objective of the city to become more healthy and green for its inhabitant. As mentioned earlier, Rotterdam South underwent a series of renovation to revitalise the neighbourhood of Kop van Zuid and Afrikaanderwijk. The project is also part of the government's philosophy, which would like citizens to participate in an activity and not feel isolated no matter what their living conditions are. Besides, one of Rotterdamse Munt's partners is The Province of South Holland (Provincie Holland Zuid) whose aim is to "to strengthen the bond between the inhabitants of Zuid-Holland and the green in their surroundings. This in order to preserve the green in Zuid-Holland sustainably, so as to be an attractive province to live, work and recreate." (Rotterdamse Munt website). It is therefore not surprising that the project was easily accepted by the municipality and could receive subsidies to be launched.

Rotterdamse Munt appears thus as a result of the government's approach that encourage citizens to develop initiatives that tackle social and environmental issues. It reminds of Cheshire and Lawrence's scepticism about the development of communities in the perspective of environmental structural changes (2005), where what seems to be a choice resulting from a bottom-up process comes actually from a top-down strategy. Small-scale initiatives in Rotterdam need to be aligned with government perspective in order to have the right to exist and eligible for subsidies. In the case of Rotterdamse Munt, this necessity is, to a certain extent, not seen as a burden. I will discuss this idea further later.

The close connection between the municipality and Rotterdamse Munt can be justified, among others, by the profile of its members who are currently developing the project into a sustainable social enterprise.

The necessity of becoming a social enterprise…

…to maintain the project

After seeing the success of the project in terms of financial and human investment – Ingrid mentions, "a lot of people […] were very enthusiastic about it" – the initiator was expecting the participants to take over the project so she could have more time for her job as a landscape designer. Eventually, her position was requiring too many responsibilities and thus did not find any replacement. Instead of quitting the project and accordingly put an end to it, Ingrid decided to leave her job to be able to be fully committed to Rotterdamse Munt. She currently works around 60 hours per week for the project. This new situation obliged

her to grow the initiative into a social enterprise so she could receive income from it. She also hired two other women to manage the project with her. They take care of the daily management of the organization and work with around 30 volunteers.

> "In 2015, the various business activities in the garden were started by a number of independent entrepreneurs from the neighbourhood. They are now - together with a number of involved volunteers - united in a core team that ensures continuity, professionalization and development." (Rotterdamse Munt website)

To guarantee the professional aspect of the organizations, the three managers associated with three other professional women who share their expertise for the management of Rotterdamse Munt. Therefore, the latter is carried by 6 women who are divided in two teams: the core team and the board. During my ethnographic I only met and discussed with the core team as it is the one who regularly comes working at Rotterdamse Munt:

- Ingrid (46 years old), Initiator. As an impact-driven entrepreneur, she has final responsibility for the execution. She used to work for the municipality, for which she mainly worked on inner-city transformation assignments. This experience helped her developing a network for Rotterdamse Munt and knowledge and participation in Rotterdam's urban development projects.
- Patty (39 years old), Coordinator and event manager. She has good experience in organizing events, coordinating and initiating projects and facilitating workshops and courses. Within Rotterdamse Munt, she takes care of education programs and projects for children and young people. She coordinates events such as the summer and autumn festivals, guided tours, workshops and children's activities.
- Joke (61 years old), Volunteer coordinator & location manager. She welcomes all visitors and customers and look after volunteers by taking care of their working environment (such as the team structure, the schedules and the division of tasks). Joke used to work with volunteers and "with entrepreneurs and looking how they can become better entrepreneur". Also, Joke runs a Rechtstreex neighbourhood, which is useful for Rotterdamse Munt's finances as the organisation sell products through Rechtstreex, as I will explain later.

As one can see, their position fit their experience backgrounds, which goes together with Rotterdamse Munt management to improve people's already existing skills rather than implementing new one (see section 4.4.1.). Together, they are responsible for the execution of activities and assignments (i.e. result agreements with partners); the development towards an independent impact-driven company; the ecological management of the urban her garden;

the coordination of jobs at the organizations and the financial management.

To complete and refine their missions, the core team conveys the expertise of the board team that includes (their name are not revealed as I did not meet them):

- The President, an entrepreneur specializes in personal development, coaching and talent development. In a distant past, she has been trained to be a biological-dynamic farmer at the Warmonderhof, a training institute for biological and biodynamic agriculture.

- Board member 1 has worked in the field for more than 15 years from marketing and communication. The last 5 years she worked for a large international family business that is consciously engaged with sustainability. In addition, she is an independent entrepreneur with a Rechtstreex neighbourhood where she sells local products and is a social contact point for her clients at age. Advises on business plans, positioning and communication issues and target groups

- Board member 2 has over 12 years of experience as an entrepreneur and marketing manager.

Together, the unpaid board supports and advises the core team with knowledge on business plans, positioning and communication issues and target groups. It thus illustrates the development of social enterprises that work with little budget and knowledge. Instead of paid contract, each side benefits from this non-financial collaboration: the board members profit from it by being able to reach a certain public position; and Rotterdamse Munt benefits from the experts' knowledge to improve their image.

More importantly for the analysis of the status of social enterprise, the board members' expertise in marketing strategies highlights the need for the social enterprise in progress to deeply integrate media logic to fulfil the imperative of self-branding (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010). Besides, the inclusion of a board emphasizes the need for professional input and thus the initial 'amateurism' aspect of the initiative. That is to say, the managers of Rotterdamse Munt have valuable external knowledge about how to develop their project but still need professional input to diminish risks of failure thanks to well-thought plans.

On the other hand, the definition of a hierarchy at Rotterdamse Munt illustrates the organization's growing professionalization, often mentioned by the managers during our conversations. This transformation goes together with the desire to become financially independent in order to strengthen their social and ecological impact.

…for financial independence

Through the documentation analysis as well as well as the analysis of my

conversations with the managers and volunteers, I have noticed that being a citizen's initiative could be affected political and financial dependence, which Rotterdamse Munt is currently trying to grow away from. Indeed, one of the difficulties behind depending on subsidies relies on the political and economic context. That is to say, the organization need to constantly adapt itself to the external context that sees different political parties with different priorities that can either be in favour of social and ecological initiatives or can slow down their development. Besides, the economic situation the government is facing can also have great influence on such initiative (e.g. budget cuts). Accordingly, Rotterdamse Munt's development was weaken and unstable. Therefore, the initiator along with her team members decided to develop a sufficient business model.

> "In 2016 we worked on streamlining the organization and on developing a solid revenue model so that Rotterdam Mint can consolidate without (or with limited) financial dependency. This development process involves a number of partners such as Social Enterprises NL, Rechtstreex van de Boer and the schools in the neighbourhood." (Rotterdamse Munt website)

In other words, Rotterdamse Munt's business model currently relies on both internal and external financial revenue.

External revenues

The external revenues come from different parts: the government, partners and other foundations.

1. The government: Rotterdamse Munt offers educational programs, which they organise with schools from the neighbourhood. From 5 years old until 14 years old, children follow lessons to learn about the soil, the growing process and healthy food and taste. Since these educational programs are fostered by the government, as Ingrid mentions, "in Rotterdam, I think for 30 years already, the municipality [is] responsible that every kid, every child in Rotterdam gets natuur- en milieueducatie, that is natural and environmental education" through the "educational and environmental", Rotterdamse Munt receives financial contributions.

2. Partners: The organisation works with partners, which "contribute in different ways; with advice, knowledge, network & experience; with a financial contribution for investments and education programs and by having paid assignments carried out by us" (Rotterdamse Munt website). The reasons behind the development of partnerships were clarified during my conversation with Patty. She explained that they realised their organisation was provided similar services as private companies but, contrary to the latter,

was not benefiting from any financial contribution out of it. With the purpose of being financially independent, they thus decided to change the status of their organisation in order to be able to commercial their services.

3. Foundations: Rotterdamse Munt organises a festival twice a year. These festivals are financed by "foundations who wants to invest in community building" (Ingrid). In that sense, Rotterdamse Munt works as "a kind of consultant in the area, because they want to make green with people and we have the knowledge and the know-how" (Ingrid). These external revenues are a good financial support to Rotterdamse Munt and are combined with internal revenues, which are not generating enough benefit for Rotterdamse Munt to be entirely independent.

External revenues illustrate the close connection between the government of Rotterdam policies and Rotterdamse Munt's services, as well as an ambiguous connection between the social activities done by the social enterprise, which aim to gather together the citizens of Rotterdam, and the money such activities are generating. This duality will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Internal revenues

The internal revenues can be divided in three categories: products from the shop, consumption at Rotterdamse Munt and services.

1. Products from the shop: Rotterdamse Munt has developed concrete products: organic herbs and edible flowers. They are currently selling them to visitors at their own location along with other products, related to green lifestyle (e.g. books about sustainability). They are also selling them in bigger quantities to external distribution points such as butchers, flower shops, restaurant (e.g. Yama; Fenix Food Factory), or other shops specialised in organic products considered as "fancy" (i.e. expensive) according to a volunteer at Rotterdamse Munt.

2. Consumption at Rotterdamse Munt: The organisation settled a terrace where people can consume their products on the spot (i.e. tea), but also other products from other places such as juices, and vegetarian food such as toasties and salads.

3. Services: The urban herb garden is a space that welcomes people during workshops and guided tours. Both individuals and businesses can make an appointment with Patty to organise such events during which people get knowledge about the organisation (i.e. their method of working, how they make their products), and about the planting process.

Rotterdamse Munt's internal revenues show the organisation is following a specific marketing strategy, that is meeting the demand. Indeed, Rotterdamse Munt is selling its

products to consumers who need them and can afford them, which emphasizes the strong desire to generate money rather than the beliefs carried by the organisation. Indeed, the points of sale the social enterprise is focusing on are not necessarily in line with the value they are trying to promote. For instance, while they are promoting vegetarian and local diets (recently carried by the neologism 'locavore') – Ingrid explains, "we serve only vegetarian food […] that's part of our philosophy" – they are selling their signature product (i.e. mint) to butchers. The mint demand in such meat shop is high due to cultural reasons. Indeed, Moroccan or Turkish people, for whom mint tea is part of a cultural tradition, often own butchers in Rotterdam (Kloosterman, Leun & Rath, 1999). Therefore, it appears that selling great quantities of mint to them solely serves financial needs to develop the social enterprise rather than promoting specific food consumption values.

This overview of Rotterdamse Munt shows a rather complex structural duality between a commercial orientation and a more altruistic approach carried by the managers of Rotterdamse Munt. The latter's business model puts this social enterprise in a position where it cannot be entirely independent due to financial pressures, which has an impact on the development of their initial project in terms of possibilities but also of desires and objectives. This duality can be seen in the range of communicative elements that construct Rotterdamse Munt. It touches upon the outlook of the place, the public to which their services are attended, and the nature of their product.

4.2. Outlook of Rotterdamse Munt

One of the main characteristics and promoted elements of Rotterdamse Munt is the nature of the space: an urban garden. As shown in figure 3, the garden is meant to create great contrast between the "stony city" (Joke) and the natural and green aspect created by the growth of "Rotterdam's mint and more than 100 other types of herbs and edible flowers" (annual report 2017, p.40). The garden created in the city is the identity of Rotterdamse Munt and thus everything in the structure and promotion of it revolves around it. It is meant to create a cosy green space for a wide community that is characterised by its almost 'fantasy' aspect, highlighting the originality of the space which still belongs to a rather trendy vintage phenomenon.

Figure 3 Overview of Rotterdamse Munt garden that contrasts with the city

Rotterdamse Munt as a cosy green space for a wide community

This green space is part of the urban farming phenomenon where abandoned places are transformed into green spaces (Rouquette & Stokkink, 2017). "The urban herb garden has started on a wasteland in the development area 'Parkstad'" (website). It used to be train tracks as mentioned by Vibeke, the coordinator of the garden team. It thus corresponds to the typical reappropriation of a space in the city where initiatives develop original plans. In the case of Rotterdamse Munt, creating a garden in such area appears quite challenging since the soil is spoiled and full of water since it is built on a dike. Their former initiative characteristics can still be seen today with "cheap solutions" (Ingrid) used to build the space. Vibeke explains, "originally, they wanted this building [the shop], also to have a roof or so, but it was too expensive (laughs), they started with the container". Indeed, the shop is a container that was covered with wood to make it look more natural, which shows a clear emphasis on the natural identity of Rotterdamse Munt.

Even though it is part of the urban farming phenomenon the managers make sure that their space is differentiated from urban *farms*, by promoting a green garden where people are inspired in working towards "the green & healthy city" (website) rather than green place where intense production is the main focus. Ingrid mentions: "I think it's not a farm, it's, it's

actually a garden. A farm…With a farm, I have a kind of…Yeah, it's, it's more to production and animals, so it's a garden, yeah". This non-intense production identity can be seen in the visual of the space for which efforts are put in the originality of it, as Vibeke explains. The asymmetry of the space positively surprised her, as it is different from farms where everything is big and rectangular to facilitate the production. At Rotterdamse Munt, the use of small triangle beds prevails (see figure 4). Accordingly, it doesn't allow having a large amount of products inside. Instead, it serves the purpose of creating "neat" and "comfortable" places for people, even when it is "messy inside", as Ingrid explains.

Figure 4 Plant beds at Rotterdamse Munt that illustrate the non-intense production purpose

The garden as the identity of Rotterdamse Munt starts with the fact that it takes about two thirds of the entire space and is the element that requires the most work. Most of the daily activities of Rotterdamse Munt follow the seasonal cycles that involve taking care of the plants (e.g. watering them; planting new ones; getting rid of weeds; getting rid of beetles through an ecological technique that consists of vacuuming the insects rather than killing them with toxic products), in spring and summer. In autumn and winter, the garden activities consist of harvesting and drying the herbs to create the "very concrete product [that] show[s] how people can green their footprint" (annual report, 2017, p.13).

The discursive emphasis on the ecological characteristic of Rotterdamse Munt is also found in the efforts put in the visual aspect of the space. Rotterdamse Munt's visual identity is built through the use of raw materials such as wood, and follows a specific colour code that corresponds the ones of the planet: brown, green and blue. Apart from the natural elements, the space gathers together objects that follow the same colour code and whose function reinforces the ecological values of the organisation. For instance, the space is filled with blue, green and brown barrels that illustrate the fact that urban farmers collect rainwaters to water their plants (see figure 5).

Figure 5 Rotterdamse Munt's visual identity that illustrates its ecological values

All these efforts are made to create a "nice", "beautiful" and "tasteful" garden (Ingrid) "to inspire people, to get to know different herbs for example, or edible flowers, or vegetables from the season. So, the garden is our base point" (Ingrid). It is the strongest promotional tools for this social enterprise as it is the element that attracts most of the visitors and the urban farmers. Indeed, through my conversations with them, I have noticed the repetition of reasons why they liked Rotterdamse Munt. It mainly concerns the visual aspect and values carried by the space, which is considered as "beautiful", "organised", "nice", "beautiful", "tasteful", "ecological" by the volunteers and visitors.

Overall, the adjectives used to describe the space conform to the promotional vocabulary used by the managers on their communication platforms: "a green oasis", which seems to have entered people's mind while describing Rotterdamse Munt. Vibeke for instance uses the exact same description while talking about the space to her friends. The use of such lexicon illustrates the managers' promotional discourse that stresses the extraordinary aspect of the place where abundance of nature prevails even in an *a priori* unfavourable environment: the city.

The garden is actually built very close to the streets and thus combines the silence characteristic of the country side, softly broken by wooden noises from the stepped inside the shop and the sounds of birds; and the city's daily noises (e.g. cars, trams, street lights). The combination of such opposite noises reinforces the visual contrast this public space provokes in the neighbourhood and the very nature of Rotterdamse Munt: an urban garden. The latter appears to bring the feeling of a country house back to the city by offering citizens a place "to enjoy the view and be relaxed and enjoy the place" (Ingrid).

However, the efforts put in fostering the citizens of Rotterdam to enter are tarnished by the impression of private property through the high fence that encircle the whole garden and prevent people from truly understanding they can enter the place. Vibeke confirms it: some people are a little bit afraid because there's a fence and…'Is this allowed?', and many

times they ask 'Can I go through?'". Indeed, even though Rotterdamse Munt has two big entry points that are supposed to guide people into using the space as a crossing route thanks to the indication of the exit panel (see figure 6), volunteers noticed people could be discouraged of entering because of the high fence.

Figure 6 Delimitation of the space

The delimited space sends a message of 'private property' where specific behaviour and use of space is defined. It sets rules that need to be followed and thus encourage a specific vision of a specific part of the city. Even the fact that there are one entrance and one exit shows what behaviour is expected from the visitors and where the space has been created. People who are pursuing their fast daily routine – typical of urban life – are encourage to walk through the whole garden to discover it without 'wasting' time by having to backtrack. In that respect, Rotterdamse Munt is both transforming and adapting to the space where it is developing.

Patty explains that the fence had to be put to prevent people from degrading the place or cutting off the plants. Therefore, if the fence is specifically meant to protect the garden, it also illustrates the commodification of nature, intrinsic to neoliberalism (Liverman, 2004), where the green space is there to be transformed into a purchasable product. The nature as a product and the nature of Rotterdamse Munt's product will be further discussed in the last section of this chapter. The desire to create a beautiful green space where people can "enjoy and be relaxed", to use again Ingrid's words, enters in opposition with the second approach

of the space that illustrates its desire to be part of a promoted cultural community that relies on symbolic value such as attractive vintage looks.

Rotterdamse Munt as a trendy 'vintage look' that sells

The unusual aspect of Rotterdamse Munt's space – carried by the "green oasis" identity – is combined with its entrance in a specific symbolic position through the visual similarities with successful places such as Stroop Rotterdam. For clarification purpose, figure 7 compares visual elements of Rotterdamse Munt (left) and Stroop Rotterdam (right).

Figure 7 Visual comparison of Rotterdamse Munt (left) and Stroop Rotterdam (right).
(Source for Stroop Rotterdam photos: Instagram account and Your Little Black Book website)

As one can see, the two places have similarities in terms of visual elements. Even though their products are different and their values do not necessarily match, they seem to be part of a specific branding image that attracts a specific target. As Stroop Rotterdam,

Rotterdamse Munt gathers together elements that appear as old (fashioned), such as the retro cutlery, the baskets, and the framed plants drawings, which one would easily find in an old country house. Yet, these are actually new productions that replicate old objects with the desire to create a popular vintage decoration. Such conclusion could be done thanks to the addition of a few modern and nowadays trendy elements (e.g. lights on the terrace, wood material, hanging planters). The whole decoration is made to look eclectic to look more authentic. Ingrid in fact talks about "an organic process". However, the similarities between Rotterdamse Munt and Stroop Rotterdam show that these types of decoration are not the result of a random gathering of objects, but the one of a specific organisation that is meant to look chaotic. The latter corresponds to a well-thought symbolic positioning that is quite successful among different target groups. Indeed, while the elderly population can find the copy of traditional objects that brings earlier memories, younger generations – YUPPs (Karsten, 2014), or 'hipsters' – are attracted to such retro and authentic atmosphere. These targets are hard to reach but are very valuable since they are cultural leaders who participate in the revitalisation of urban spaces through their consumption of it (Karsten, 2014).

Rotterdamse Munt thus to follows specific cultural templates to guarantee the attraction of a wide range of customers that will be interesting in the purchase of these kind of products that create a retro atmosphere. The social enterprise illustrates well the use of symbolic value related to "the development and maintenance of lifestyles and cultural identities in society" (Stam et al., 2008, p.120). Urban farmers put great effort in the visual aspect of the place, as it is the first thing visitors experience from Rotterdamse Munt. This applies to the shop, which includes the goods that are indirectly related to their own activity (e.g. books about urban agriculture), but also to the prime products they sell, such as the plants. Indeed, in the garden, the plants are arranged in a specific way that underscores the abundance of it and makes it attractive and photogenic (see figure 8). Besides, the capture of patterns – the repetition of a specific element in an image – is a popular technique in photography. It relates to the repetitive pattern used in Pop Art, a typical 'retro' art movement and thus relevant for Rotterdamse Munt's vintage decoration. The managers of Rotterdamse Munt use this technique while arranging their products. The plants become part of the visual identity of the organisation, which is then shared on their online platforms (see figure 9).

Figure 8 Arrangement of the plants sold by Rotterdamse Munt
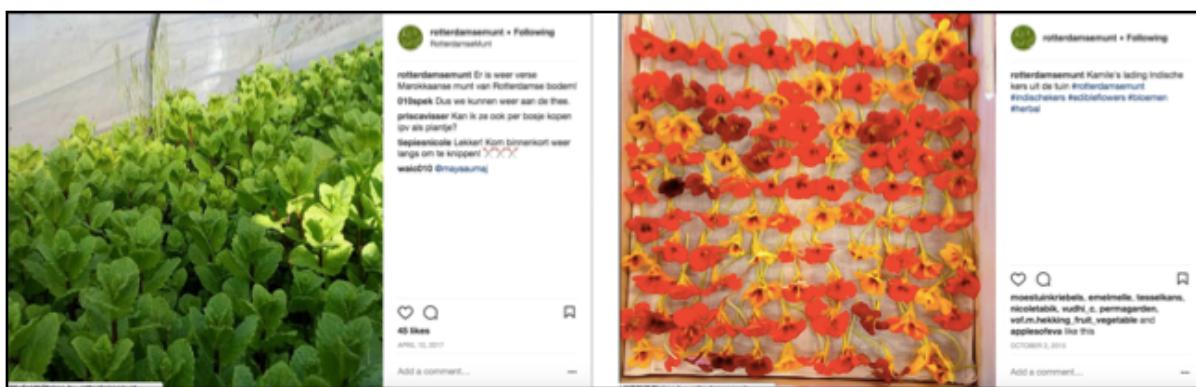

Figure 9 The use of the pattern photography technique (source: Rotterdamse Munt Instagram account)

This strategy attracts the visitors' eyes and works as a 'free marketing tactic'. Indeed, during my observations, I have noticed visitors were taking pictures of these plants on their phones. It is possible that they shared these photos on their social media as part of the self-promotional culture that manifests legitimate forms of cultural expression (Elias, 1973; Bourdieu, 1979). Consequently, Rotterdamse Munt might appear in a broader social network than its own. This technique illustrates thus the mediatization theory in which media becomes a social product. In other worlds, urban farmers follow media logic by arranging their product in a certain way. They create a photogenic – or more recently called '#instagramable' due to the increasing popularity and influence of Instagram (Leonard, 2017) – basis for an image that is will be posted on social media. This action illustrates urban farmers' effort to create a link between offline and online content. Even more relevant to the link between Rotterdamse Munt and the mediatization theory, the managers built wooden hashtags fixed on the fence facing the Laan op Zuid (see figure 10).

Figure 10 The online symbol '#' (hashtag), typically used on social media, on the fence of Rotterdamse Munt

It appears that Rotterdamse Munt has defined a marketing position based on a symbolic value that is the rather trendy appearance of the space. Rotterdamse Munt's visual message is far more complex than the sole 'green space' where citizens can walk through to enjoy nature. The space is carefully maintained and arranged to illustrate and affirm Rotterdamse Munt as a brand through its look. The latter is thus used to achieve long-term purposes (Throsby, 2001) by defining the consumer's perception of the brand in relation to competing brands. In that regard, Rotterdamse Munt emphasizes both its originality – through a positive discourse about the contrast and the extraordinary nature of its space (i.e. "a green oasis") – and its affiliation to a broader culture carried by the middle-class citizens. The close relation between the inclusion of Rotterdamse Munt in a broader culture and the attraction of the middle-class illustrates the gentrification process (Zuchin et al., 2009). If we apply Zuchin's study on the role of boutiques in the gentrification in New York, it appears that Rotterdamse Munt occupies the same role as such commercial shops by contributing to the revitalization of Rotterdam South. Indeed, the development of a 'purchasable public green space' at the boarder of two opposite neighbourhoods (i.e. Kop van Zuid and Afrikaanderwijk) is meant to attract people from the North and the South of Rotterdam, changing the social and ethnic character of this part of the city.

Therefore, on the one hand, Rotterdamse Munt's space appears as a nice public space to welcome a wide community where production and financial benefits is not the prime message sent; and on the other hand, the space belongs to a popular outlook that attract a population who can afford the purchase of such products. The duality of Rotterdamse Munt's outlook is in line with the duality of the services offered by the organisation that tries to reach two different types of population.

4.3. Service of Rotterdamse Munt

Through my ethnographic work, I have observed the investment in two kinds of efforts. Rotterdamse Munt would like to serve the city and integrate all the citizens of Rotterdam, especially the ones who are isolated from society, hence their location; but at the same time, Rotterdamse Munt serves a particular target that carries a specific vision of the city through the process of gentrification, or more precisely, genderfication (Van den Berg, 2013).

Rotterdamse Munt as a public service to citizens of Rotterdam

Rotterdamse Munt's discursive presentation of the project starts with its deep connection to the city and its citizens. The presented purpose of this social enterprise is to develop an inclusive, green and healthy city by and for all Rotterdammers. The first sentence of their website's 'about' section refers in fact to Jane Jacobs, an activist who influenced, among others, urban studies by criticizing urban planning that did not respect citizens' needs but rather disrupted their environment.

> "Cities have the opportunity to offer opportunities for everyone, just because and only when these cities are made by everyone," says Jane Jacobs, city sociologist from New York. She is known for her plea for creative cities where there is plenty of room for dynamism and citizens' initiative; she advocates inclusive urban development." (Rotterdamse Munt website)

By quoting Jane Jacobs, Rotterdamse Munt affirms its role of developing an enjoyable green place in South Rotterdam where everyone can participate and feel included. It emphasizes the fact that Rotterdamse Munt respects the population of the location where it is developing but wishes to improve their lifestyle through the consumption of healthier products in a healthier city. In that regard, Rotterdamse Munt's communicative presentation of the project focuses on two elements: the participation in the wider creation of a healthy and green city where people can improve their lifestyle and health; and the creation of a inclusive multicultural community.

The creation of a healthy and green city…

The urban garden is the base of the social enterprise's project that allows them to participate in the creation of a greener city. The latter starts with the repetitive description of its purpose through various communication practices such as the writing of their annual report "we want to connect citizens of the city with their urban nature. We know that every person feels healthier and happier in a beautiful, green and lively environment" (annual

report 2017, p.7). As stated earlier, the repetition of this idea transforms it the social enterprise's philosophy.

In the annual report, the managers describe the environmental situation to highlight the necessity of their project to solve the social and environmental issues in Rotterdam. To stress this point, they start by describing the challenges they are facing while describing the nature of their project: "An experimental residents' initiative on a special switching point in the toughest district of the Netherlands" (preface of the annual report 2017, p.5).

These challenges are linked to the location of Rotterdamse Munt (the boarder of two opposite districts in the South of the city), and illustrate the nature of Rotterdamse Munt as a social enterprise. They first describe the focus of the impact-driven company, and, second, they highlight the notion of 'experiment', which underscores the youth of this social enterprise that is undergoing constant changes with the wish to deepen its impact and settle its independent structure.

The aspect of "experiment" is highlighted in their discursive practices and can be link to the increasing popularities of cities that are seen as "living laboratories" (Farrell et al., 2015; Streiff, & Ramanathan, 2017). Managers of Rotterdamse Munt thus see their city garden as a "space for experiment and exhibition [where they] make sure there is always something new to experience and learn" (annual report 2017, p.15). This vision shows a rather altruistic approach of this social enterprise. In other words, the organisation of Rotterdamse Munt genuinely wishes to serve the public and the city and in order to do so, it constantly deals with changes to improve itself. It highlights the youth of the project and adds a rather 'amateur' image of its management. 'Amateur' is here understood as the management of an organisation that does not emphasize the professional and strict structure of it but is instead always subject to change. Besides, the 'theme' of 2017 at Rotterdamse Munt was "On the move". This theme gathers together two things: Rotterdamse Munt's inducement to a healthier lifestyle through the physical activity of gardening; and the fact that the social enterprise will move from their temporary location to their new permanent one in Rosestraat. Indeed, since the government sold the space to private companies for a housing program, Rotterdamse Munt needs to move. This change shows the challenges the social enterprise is facing due to the nature of its place: a public space, thus subject to the city government laws. The announced relocation triggered divergent reactions among the urban farmers. Joke for instance believes that reaching people from this new location will become even more challenging because it is more isolated. Her concerns are in line with Vibeke's who adds the fact that "everything…what's green will disappear, there'll be

houses, houses, houses". Ingrid and Patty, on the other hands, are satisfied with the move. Ingrid explains, "because it's a permanent location, so we don't have to move anymore. And, yeah…It's a kind of a…It's 500 meters that way [on Rosestraat], it is more connected to the red bridge, and maybe more direct to the city centre. And, because it's permanent, we can invest more in a more…in better facilities, and we can work more commercial". Accordingly, the physical settlement of Rotterdamse Munt symbolises the managers' desire to promote a more professional image of Rotterdamse Munt, which starts with the participation to a green network.

The annual report continuously refers to the project's attachment to the city and the wider network that participate in a green movement. As written, "there is a lot of movement in the Rotterdam green sector." (p.20). Rotterdamse Munt is part of this movement through their connection to a network that works towards a sustainable city. Indeed, thanks to the help of other organisations such as Wijkcoöperatie Afrikaanderwijk, Buytenplaats Brienenoord, de Voedseltuin, Pluspunt and de Tafelvanzeven, Rotterdamse Munt is "helping to shape the green learning work chain in Rotterdam" (annual report 2017, p.18). The annual report itself is the illustration of the professionalization of this social enterprise since it illustrates the traditional companies' obligation to inform the shareholders about the company's activity during the past financial year.

…for a healthier and more inclusive multicultural community

In addition to Rotterdamse Munt's connection to the city and the green movements that develop in it, urban farmers want to serves the citizens of Rotterdam, especially in the South. Through the creation of a green place, the managers want to develop the South area by influencing people towards a healthier lifestyle and a more inclusive behaviour. Ingrid explains the focus on South Rotterdam:

> "the people who live here, they live about 10 years shorter than average. […] And that's a lot to do with the environment, it's not healthy, but they don't eat healthy […]. The participation in sports in very low here. If you look to the public space in this area, that's not much attractive for even children or adults to go outside, and to become active. So yeah, there's a lot of attention to it and to bring people in a kind of movement, and that they're going to look…to better take care of themselves".

Urban farmers' draw a clear link between a green environment and social issues such as health and inclusion. Indeed, in addition the impact on health, their discursive practices stresses the multicultural aspect of their social enterprise. "People who register are different; people, with different cultural backgrounds and ages. You hardly see that anywhere. People

get a face" (annual report 2017, p.9). This statement from a volunteer was included in Rotterdamse Munt annual report (2017). It illustrates the desire of the social enterprise to promote a multicultural place where all citizens of Rotterdam feel included and respected, no matter where they come from and what social status they have. The photos included in the annual report reinforce such statements. They show interactions between people of different ages, different skin colours and different religious beliefs (see figure 11).

Figure 11 Multicultural community at Rotterdamse Munt (Source: Rotterdamse Munt Annual report 2017)

The multicultural characteristic of Rotterdamse Munt is indeed one of the most promoted and appreciated one in urban farmers' discursive practices. Vibeke for instance, talks about how she enjoys the diversity in Rotterdamse Munt:

"It's very nice to work with different people in the garden. As you see, a lady over there is from originally…not a Morocco, but Turkey. And, two years ago, we had a lot of people from South America working here, but that is changing. Oh, and the other lady is from Pakistan for instance. They work here, they have children here, so they're not...they're living here permanently. And, it's nice to exchange stories with each other. Yes. For me, I don't have neighbours who come from the other part of the world, well, not the other part of the world, but not from these lands, not from Morocco, or Turkey, or… It's nice to actually exchange."

The vision of Rotterdamse Munt as a multicultural place goes together with their desire to conform to Jane Jacobs' vision of urban planning which needs to be respectful of the complexity of the different city environments and dwellers (Jane Jacobs in Van den Berg, 2018). Overall, Rotterdamse Munt's objective is to: "develo[p] and manag[e] public space that contributes to a more resilient city through: the involvement of fellow citizens, the promoting ownership and strengthening cooperation in the green public domain; and strengthening urban diversity in the broadest sense, in terms of biodiversity, spatial, social, cultural and economic diversity." (p.11).

However, the diversity at Rotterdamse Munt does not result from the attraction of foreigners by the urban garden, but mostly from government policies. Indeed, half of the

volunteers at Rotterdamse Munt are actually people who are unemployed and so receive a financial benefit from the government. In exchange, they are asked to participate to an activity – such as volunteer work, lessons to learn the Dutch language – as a return of this financial aid (Ingrid). This illustrates the professional aspect of Rotterdamse Munt: the government asks companies to provide jobs and activities for isolated people. This social enterprise appears thus as an instrument of the government to include citizens of Rotterdam in the society, which is both challenging and beneficial for Rotterdamse Munt.

On the one hand, the managers of Rotterdamse Munt would like to work with people who are genuinely interested in urban gardening in order to help them to "develop themselves". Ingrid explains, "our approach is that people have to do the things they like most and then you can develop the things they are good in. […] My experience is that people are happier with that". Therefore, the form of obligation volunteers can feel while working at Rotterdamse Munt seems to go in contradiction to what the managers want to establish.

On the other hand, it is beneficial for Rotterdamse Munt as such volunteers are encouraged to be "faithful" (Vibeke). Indeed, urban farmers recognise that, as a social enterprise that thus works on the basis of volunteer work, it is difficult to create structural and services stability. Vibeke explains:

> "That is my private opinion, that working with volunteers [compared to employees], it's so hard. It's so difficult. And, many people, or they are older, or they are from abroad and they are students, and they don't speak Dutch and they want to learn Dutch and they stay here a year, and follow courses and they learn Dutch, of course and then they have a job, and then it's 'See you later, I come and have a cup of tea once'. Yes (laughs). That's working with volunteers. And, it [Rotterdamse Munt] doesn't deliver enough money to pay people."

Financial value appears indeed to be the solution to stabilise the number of people working at Rotterdamse Munt and create continuity in the quality of their services. Patty, for instance, mentions that the perk of having a paid job is the obligation of the employee to transfer his or her knowledge to the person who takes over the position. This is the case for paid jobs at Rotterdamse Munt such as event manager and volunteer coordinator, which create a stable management basis for the social enterprise. Such positions are however limited because of Rotterdamse Munt's small revenue. That is to say, they cannot afford to hire a new volunteer coordinator and consequently welcome more volunteers. Therefore, to fulfil Rotterdamse Munt's desire to grow and become more professional and stable, the

social enterprise needs to generate more money by reaching target groups that can afford investing in its products.

All these challenges make one wonder: who, then, is 'genuinely' participating at Rotterdamse Munt? It seems that most of the people who are genuinely coming to Rotterdamse Munt are "lot of students, young people, intellectual people, […] [who] are also interested in doing things biological instead of 'no, the cheapest there, the market'" (Vibeke). Vibeke's statement reveals the process of gentrification in which Rotterdamse Munt is participating. This question is even more relevant as one cannot help but notice the gender gap at Rotterdamse Munt. Indeed, during my observations, I have noticed an overwhelming majority of female participation (i.e. as managers, volunteers or visitors) in the urban herb garden. The photos included in the annual report (see figure 10), as well as Vibeke's statement, in which she mainly talks about women while mentioning the multicultural characteristics of Rotterdamse Munt, can confirm it. If the managers did not find a clear explanation to this configuration, Van den Berg's genderfication concept can help clarifying it.

Rotterdamse Munt as a commercial service to a specific target

As stated earlier, Rotterdamse Munt plays a role in the revitalisation of Rotterdam South (see section 4.2). It follows the process of gentrification and more specifically the one of genderfication that serves a more feminist view of urban planning, which includes women and families in a context of post-Fordism (Van den Berg, 2018). Rotterdamse Munt illustrates such process as it is managed solely by women entrepreneurs and mostly attracts women and families, which are linked to the reappropriation of space by the middle-class (i.e. YUPPs).

As "women and their families now play an important role as gentrification pioneers in gentrification policies" (Van den Berg, 2013, p.524), Rotterdamse Munt is increasingly oriented its services to these specific targets that help them earning money. For instance, Rotterdamse Munt's most stable service is the implementation of educational programs that have been organised for three years. These programs conform with the government's natural and environmental education policy. Therefore, the social enterprise receives financial benefit from organising them with schools in the neighbourhood, as I will discuss further in section 4.4.

To combine the reach of such targets with Rotterdamse Munt's need for independence, the managers are developing ideas for their new location that will serve that

purpose: they are going to build a pavilion and an area for children at their new permanent location. That is to say, Rotterdamse Munt will increasingly become a place for families to stay and consume organic products, which could have consequences on the 'type' of population that will be attracted by the urban garden. Indeed, by building a place where people consume rather than a garden where people are only crossing shows the target groups Rotterdamse Munt is trying to reach. The pavilion is the illustration of the social enterprise's objective to generate more money independently – especially because it will also serve as a renting space for businesses – to be able to grow, following a virtuous circle. In other words, the pavilion will help the social enterprise to earn more money, and thus to be able to hire volunteer coordinators, that will enable them to welcome more volunteers and so they can better manage the production of their garden and, therefore deepen their social and ecological impact. However, it seems that such impact is oriented to a specific kind of city that a specific type of population will be able to enjoy (i.e. middle-class families).

Rotterdamse Munt's citation of Jane Jacobs on their website seems thus ironic. The use of Jane Jabobs iconic figure in urban studies seems to justify Rotterdamse Munt's participation in gentrification processes. It should be recalled that gentrification is the process of the renovation and improvement of a district so that it conforms to the middle-class taste. But, Jane Jacobs view on urban planning was actually against this process as she strongly criticized urban planning that were disrupting city-dweller's environment. Van den Berg actually clarifies Jane Jacobs's view on what urban planning should be:

> "Jacobs's alternative involved respect for the vitality and diversity of what was already there. It also involved a truly thorough understanding of the complexity of urban life: of social interactions, safety, spontaneous organisation, informality and the uses of old buildings." (Van den Berg, 2018, p.752)

If Rotterdamse Munt promotes a more inclusive and green Rotterdam by fostering the improvement of isolated people's lifestyle, it appears that it is also paradoxically serving the process of gentrification, and more particularly the one of 'genderfication' (Van den Berg, 2013), by attracting a specific target: middle-class intellectuals, women and families, who are more and more interested in green initiatives and who influence the environment through their consumption habits.

The duality of Rotterdamse Munt purpose provokes a lack of harmony in the presentation of the social enterprise while answering the question: 'what is the purpose of Rotterdamse Munt?' After having talked to the managers, I have noticed that they had their

own vision of Rotterdamse Munt. For Joke, Rotterdamse Munt is a place where people can develop themselves, stressing the social impact of the place. For instance, Joke mentions, "it's not that we…that people think, 'well, Rotterdamse Munt is *the* ecological place'. No, that's not…that's my opinion. [But more that people] see that you learn about nature, that you see nature, and that people can develop themselves". For her, "gardening is a tool […] to learn to communicate and, they [volunteers] learn to be on time. Gardening […], it's a way of doing these things". On the contrary, for Ingrid, the main purpose of Rotterdamse Munt is to "first have the environmental impact and the social impact". Finally, Patty believes that the urban garden is a way for people to reconnect with nature and consequently themselves. Overall, even though discourses about Rotterdamse Munt's purpose vary, a common idea emerges: the deep connection between nature and social solutions that serves two opposite populations for two paradoxical objectives.

Ultimately, Rotterdamse Munt plays an important part in the development of Rotterdam South by connecting different social classes thanks to its location and the nature of the organisation (i.e. an attractive urban garden). But, it appears that certain people are more likely to participate than others, especially women. To combine the purposes of solving social issues through ecological solutions, and developing the social enterprise by generating an increase amount of money Rotterdamse Munt has created a binary product that is both 'free' through volunteer work and the public characteristic of its space, and 'paid' through the selling of organic products.

4.4. Product of Rotterdamse Munt

Rotterdamse Munt's product follows the neoliberal business culture. That is to say, it goes beyond the simple sale of a concrete product to offer a whole experience that is adapted to their dual target.

A pedagogical mentality to educate and bring people closer together

One of Rotterdamse Munt's main communicated purposes is educating the citizens of Rotterdam by promoting a healthier and greener lifestyle. The education dimension of this social enterprise is expressed as its identity. For instance, on Facebook – their main social media platform – Rotterdamse Munt is labelled as "Education in Rotterdam" (see figure 12). In addition, the "about" section includes two categories, first "Education" and second "Urban farm". The order of these categories is not arbitrary; instead, it reflects the managers' vision of Rotterdamse Munt as a place "where not only plants grow and bloom

[but], also people; both the people who work of [them] (most of them with limited/no access to the labour market) and the pupils/students who follow [their] nature education program" (Patty).
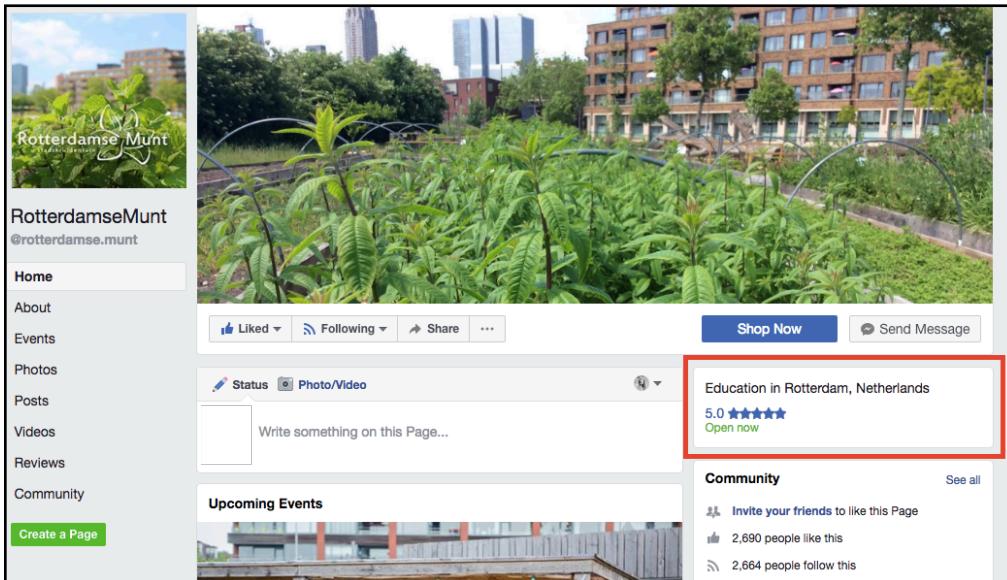

Figure 12 Screenshot of Rotterdamse Munt Facebook Page

The urban garden is therefore a medium to reveal a pedagogical mentality where entertainment is also meant to educate. One can relate this idea to the growing awareness that entertainment media products are not just sources of distraction and fun but can also have important political and socio-cultural implications. For example, Ouellette and Hay (2008) argue that reality television is not only a source of entertainment but has also the power to shape people's vision of society, becoming a source of education, leading to the emergence of the concept of 'edutainment'. Patty in fact mentions the importance of "having fun" so that the knowledge stays longer and that people learn better. Rotterdamse Munt thus follow this media logic by offering an 'edutaining' product to develop green talents that together form a green community.

The development of "green talents"...

Rotterdamse Munt tries to develop green talents through various 'products' to reach various targets. More precisely, Rotterdamse Munt implemented educational programs for children, 'green talent development program' for adults, and other activities to include isolated people.

As stated earlier, children are an important target group for Rotterdamse Munt, which goes together with the social enterprise's role in the genderfication of Rotterdam South where families play an important role. They are also a necessary one as it corresponds

to Rotterdam government's policies to educate children about the environment (see figure 13). In that regard, educational programs are also a mean for social enterprise to grow. Indeed, Ingrid explains that these educational programs are a valuable source of income for Rotterdamse Munt. She writes in the annual report, "[w]e worked for the first time in 2017 <u>commissioned</u> by the nature and environmental education department of the city of Rotterdam and in collaboration with three schools we have provided the experience lessons within school time." (p.31).

Figure 13 Visit of children at Rotterdamse Munt within the framework of the educational program

The educational programs are a way for Rotterdamse Munt to participate in the change of behaviour and views on consumption habits in the city by offering "all the beautiful, special, tasteful or clever aspects of the edible urban nature" (annual report 2017, p.15). At the same time, it helps developing their social enterprise by receiving financial contributions. To renew the contracts (i.e. 'commissions') that generate valuable income for Rotterdamse Munt, the managers need to emphasize the legitimacy and impact of their educational programs. This is done through their annual report, sent to every financial contributor, in which the managers stresses the high number of children reached thanks to their programs. One can thus read, "we reached 882 children in 102 lessons on natural growth, real taste and healthy eating" (annual report 2017, p.6).

More over, in 2017, Rotterdamse Munt "started the implementation of the three-year green talent development program". The latter allows volunteers to improve their professional skills related to responsibility (e.g. being on time, working in teams), communication (e.g. welcoming visitors) and green knowledge (e.g. gardening). The objective is to help the unemployed participants finding jobs, in the 'green domain' mostly. Through this program, participants can work on projects they find they find most interest in rather than things they are not eager to discover. Ingrid explains, "we focus on the things

people are good in, and they have…they can get better then, therein. And I think it's better than to make people good on a sort of basic level. […] [Y]ou can focus on a few things and you can be the best to do that". Ingrid justifies this soft development approach by her experience that showed her "people are happier with that". To reach this purpose, Rotterdamse Munt gives the choice to the volunteers to either participate in the hospitality team (see figure 14) – which takes care of the shop and visitors – or the garden team, which takes care of the garden (see figure 15).

Figure 14 Daily activities for the hospitality team (giving a tour to visitors, help them picking up plants, sell the plants, serve them something to drink and eat)
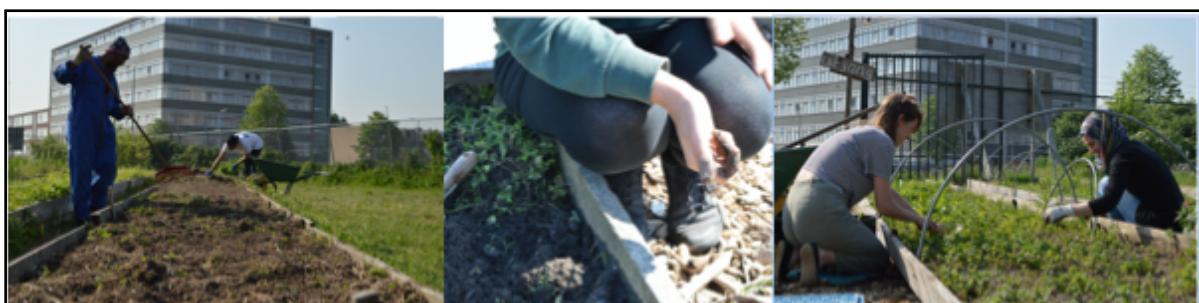
Figure 15 Daily activities of the garden team (planting, getting rid of weeds, cleaning the plant beds)

This approach corresponds to a rather feminine one – characterized by empathy and deference (Van den Berg, 2018). It is visible through the attitude that managers have towards the volunteers and consequently foster volunteers to have towards each other and themselves. That is to say, urban farmers at Rotterdamse Munt favour a positive and respectful attitude that triggers a feeling of gratification. For instance, during lunch breaks (see figure 16), Joke (the volunteers' coordinator) asks to each volunteer what they have accomplished during the day; in addition, volunteers thank and give a compliment to the volunteer(s) who prepared the food.
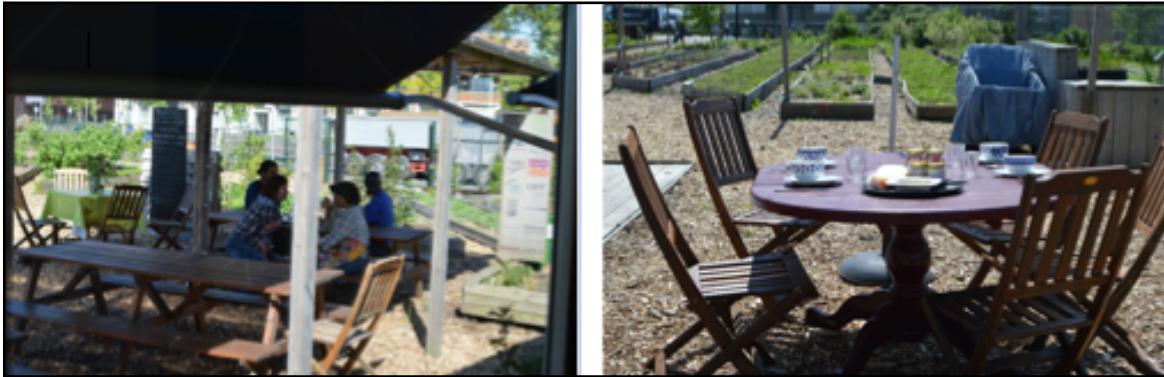
Figure 16 Volunteers' tea and lunch breaks

The feminine approach goes together with the fact that Rotterdamse Munt is managed by women only. Indeed, one cannot help but notice that all leadership positions at the social enterprise are held by women. This configuration illustrates the shift of the female image and position in the post-Fordist business culture in which the government promotes a more female approach (i.e. 'affective labor'), especially among social work (Muehlebach, 2011). While studying the labour culture in Italy, Muehlebach observed:

> "[T]he labor regime is heavily mediated by the Italian state, which has begun to redeploy affective labor across public and private domains, shifting responsibility away from women as the sole presumed affective laborers in the domestic sphere toward a summoning of so-called passive populations (in particular, unemployed youth and retirees) as affectively laboring citizens." (p.60).

Her observations are easily applicable to the city of Rotterdam for which the government is trying to promote a more feminine image (Van den Berg, 2018). It draws again a close connection between Rotterdamse Munt and the city that the social enterprise is trying to transform into a greener and healthier space through citizens' activity.

Besides, Rotterdamse Munt's activities consist also of integrating isolated people in the green movement by encouraging them to participate in green activities. According to a volunteer, the social enterprise is in the process of developing a program called 'Munt for munt'. The volunteer explains:

> "So, the area I live in – it's quite far South – there's a lot of unemployment, so they're going to start – and they've not been producing enough mint too for the amount they need – so they're going to get the people from my neighbourhood to start growing them and then sell it back and do sort of like different workshops to teach them how to grow mint organically, because it has to be of a certain quality".

This program serves therefore two purposes: the insertion of unemployed people in society by participating in an activity where they can learn skills that they can use on their own; and

the development of social enterprise since it helps them producing more to sell more.

Generally, the previously mentioned activities' purpose is to create a long-term impact by giving a valuable green experience to participants who can feel part of a community by getting together at the space of Rotterdamse Munt during events.

...for the development of a 'green' community

Rotterdamse Munt's popularity rests on the snowball effect. That is to say, the "green talents" who work at Rotterdamse Munt talk to their acquaintances about what they do at this social enterprise. The green talents' contacts become consequently interested in discovering and participating in the 'green movement'. To reinforce the relations with the participants and convince other people to join Rotterdamse Munt, the managers organise a festival twice a year. The latter happens during the months of June and September, while the garden is at its best thanks to the growing season. Patty explains the main elements that need to be taken into consideration to organise the festival: music and workshops. She is the one who organise the whole festival, with the help of the 'hospitality team'. Indeed, following their feminine management methods, the managers want to promote the participation of all 'types' of participants (i.e. volunteers, coordinators, managers), to promote the cancellation of hierarchy (i.e. paid jobs versus unpaid jobs; difference of responsibilities). While organising the festival, Patty would like volunteers to feel as involved as the managers. But, in reality, she notices that hierarchy is an important aspect for people to feel comfortable. Indeed, Patty observed that people needed guidance from a 'top authority'. That is to say, one guide(line) is necessary for people to know what they have to do. While answering my questions 'who organise the festival? Who can pitch ideas? Who feels involved in it?', Patty explained that they had a meeting with about 5 people during which a few people wanted to give ideas, but the majority preferred being told what to do during the event. Eventually, they would feel they made the festival happened even though they did not actively contributed to the creation phase. This situation illustrates the challenges social enterprises face by functioning on the base of volunteer work. Indeed, most of the volunteer participate in Rotterdamse Munt as a 'hobby'; it is a way for them to participate in an unpaid activity different from their daily routine. Therefore, they prefer being exempt from all responsibilities, which means important duties are divided up between a few paid people only. It thus makes it challenging for the three managers who need to invest a lot of time in the social enterprise and do not have the financial means to hire someone else. Ingrid, for instance, invests 60 hours per week in Rotterdamse Munt because of all the accountabilities she is handling.

The purpose of the two festivals is to build the image of Rotterdamse Munt as a "meeting place" (Patty) where people can connect and learn through an enjoyable activity where "they don't feel they're learning" (Patty). It thus promotes the idea of Rotterdamse Munt being a social enterprise that works towards a new lifestyle that would cancel social isolation and improve ecological behaviour. Nonetheless, what is not communicated to the public is the fact that such festival are actually financed by "foundations who wants to invest in community building" (Ingrid). It is thus another way for Rotterdamse Munt to develop the social enterprise.

Overall, all these 'products' belong to the promotion of a healthier and more respectful lifestyle in an inclusive and greener city through 'edutainment'. Rotterdamse Munt "work[s] on three levels, which eventually come together to become a more resilient city. […] Inspiration, discovery & learning about nature: the urban herb garden is a green oasis in the middle of the stony city" (annual report 2017, p.17). If their purpose is *a priori* characterised by an altruistic approach, they are actually also a mean for the social enterprise to grow while building a powerful image that underscores intentional effort to contribute to society by fighting against social and environmental issues. Indeed, for each activity organised, the social enterprise is enable to develop itself through the increase of people reached, products made, money received. It appears that Rotterdamse Munt is therefore following a neoliberal logic of 'growth' rather than a more ecologist approach that promotes a movement towards "less" (production, consumption). This conclusion conforms to Ouellette and Hay's vision that argues media whose purpose is to 'edutain' have invested a dominant neoliberal ideology (2008). That is to say, the social aspect of television programs combines education and entertainment purposes with financial needs.

Moreover, Rotterdamse Munt's implementation of various pedagogic products' shows that the year of my research on Rotterdamse Munt corresponds to a breaking point of this organisation in terms of professionalization. Such programs reinforce Rotterdamse Munt's image, quality of services, and legitimacy as it helps the social enterprise to grow. The importance of income is reinforced with the second type of product Rotterdamse Munt is offering: the commercial one that goes beyond the simple purchase and consumption of their concrete product (i.e. herbs and tea).

A purchasable lifestyle

Along with their products that are destined to educate, Rotterdamse Munt offers products meant to be purchased and consumed, in order to influence a greener way of

consumption. The sales of tea and herbs are for Rotterdamse Munt an entry point into the 'enterprise' aspect of a social enterprise, it means entering the law of markets, which are about short-term consumption rather than long-term impact. However, it is a way to build the brand that will stick in people's mind. Besides, Rotterdamse Munt's main product, the mint, forms the identity of the social enterprise. Along with the name of the social enterprise, its brand logo that one can see on all their communication tools, such as their space, pamphlets, online platforms or annual report, reinforces the branding image of Rotterdamse Munt as a 'green place' (see figure 17).

Figure 17 Logo of Rotterdamse Munt on their pamphlets

Therefore, the flagship product determined the marketing image of this social enterprise, to the point of becoming itself the brand of Rotterdamse Munt. For instance, while talking about the place, the managers use the word 'Munt' instead of the entire name of the social enterprise (see figure 18).

Figure 18 The product as a brand

This panel also shows the organisation of the space. Rotterdamse Munt is organised in three parts: the shop, the terrace and the garden, which combine different actions of purchase. In other words, the social enterprise generates its internal income and deepens its impact by selling their concrete product, meaning tea and herbs, as well as products from other organisations, and by organising paid workshops to learn about plants.

The proximity between the shop and the terrace foster visitors to come seat and discover Rotterdamse Munt's products. During my ethnographic work, I have noticed people of the neighbourhood were coming to the place to enjoy the sunny days. They would come either alone to read the newspapers, with a friend or their families (see figure 19).
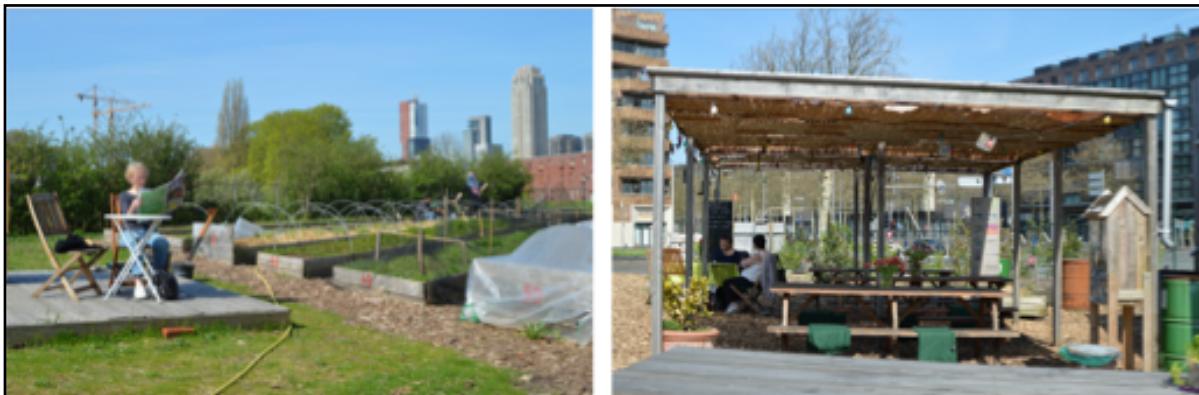
Figure 19 Visitors consuming tea at Rotterdamse Munt

If they would not stay, they would come to visit the garden and often purchase Rotterdamse Munt's product such as the plants of the garden or a packet of tea found in the shop (see figure 20).
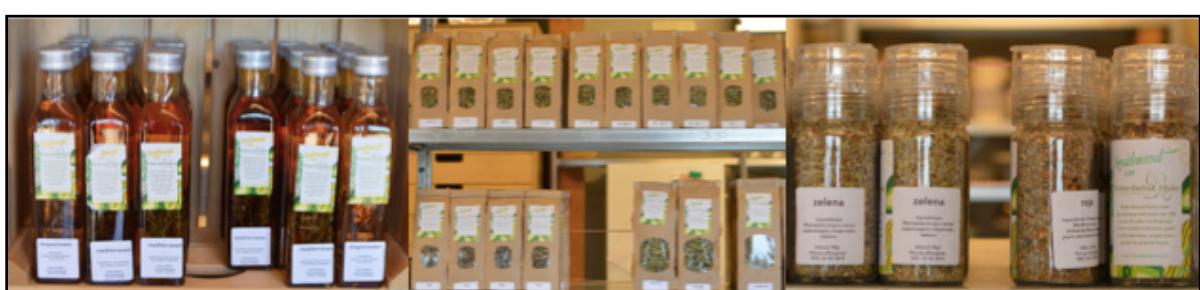
Figure 20 Internal products sold at Rotterdamse Munt

The purchase of such products is not a random action; it corresponds to specific values carried by the social enterprise, which the consumers want to support. Indeed, buying Rotterdamse Munt's products does not serve the simple need of consumer to buy tea. Such purchase could be done at the supermarket for cheaper. Instead, choosing to buy tea at Rotterdamse Munt equals making a statement about the type of urban environment the consumers want to live in and about their own identity. In other words, the consumption of

Rotterdamse Munt's products allows people to belong to a specific community that supports ecological solutions. The purchase of this product is therefore seen as a cultural practice that elevates one to a certain cultural status. It is a way to testify one's cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979) and to participate in the promotion of Rotterdamse Munt and thus increase the public value of the brand (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010). The social enterprise fosters this behaviour through discursive practices such as talking to their visitors about the values they are supporting during workshops for which people pay, but also through marketing actions such as the packaging of their products (see figure 20), that belongs to a wider marketing strategy. Indeed, Rotterdamse Munt combine the sales of its own herbs and tea with the one of external products that show signs of specific values such as the production of organic goods revealed by the term "Bio", the transparency of production indicated by the mention of where the product comes from and who made it (see figure 21).

Figure 21 External products sold at Rotterdamse Munt

The similarity of symbolic value between Rotterdamse Munt's products and other companies' products emphasizes the social enterprise's marketing position, reinforcing the aspect of community through a network, essential to a social enterprise (Greve, 1995). That community is made through the specific model of marketing that is promoting specific values. For instance, Rotterdamse Munt is selling the products from Rotterzwam, a start-up that works towards the new circular economic at Blue City. It demonstrates that the managers of Rotterdamse Munt support the same values. The importance of such values are

promote during workshops where people can make their own tea packets, learn about the growing process, learn about the functioning of the organisation.

Overall, consumers of Rotterdamse Munt appropriate the social enterprise's values through the consumption of organic products and the knowledge gain during the lessons. It appears that the action of purchasing Rotterdamse Munt's wide range of product showcase a specific consumer lifestyle. The latter becomes a purchasable lifestyle that is thus not affordable by everyone.

The nature of Rotterdamse Munt as a social enterprise and the scarcity of organic products and their expensive production, the organic the managers are obliged to fix a high sales price for the activities and products they offer. But, it does not necessarily match the financial means of their targets, especially in the neighbourhood. A volunteer explains,

"But, here, in the neighbourhood, I think it's [the product] expensive in an area where people don't have the means. And you can't expect people that live from [governmental benefits, to buy]...Because, once, we learned in a meeting […], that it's too expensive and that you can say like 'yeah but who's paying the price if you buy a mint from the market, you know, from some farmer, or like…yeah'. But if you have only 40€ a week and you have 5 kids, you don't care about these things, it's a bit elitist to preach. I don't feel confortable doing that".

The volunteer statement shows the obligation of the social enterprise to keep high prices on the products they sell even if it means not being able to reach the target they actually want to help through their actions. The high costs of production do not allow Rotterdamse Munt to lower the prices of their products and thus, it cancel the attraction of a wide population "who live here [Rotterdam South], who buy in the cheapest stores or on the market over there [Afrikaanderplein markt]" (Vibeke).

The necessity to generate money seems to take over the altruistic approach of Rotterdamse Munt, especially considering their future projects at their new space. Indeed, at their permanent location, the managers are planning to build a pavilion where people will be able to eat vegetarian and organic food. The importance of such diet will be emphasized by the development of a menu card in which the origins of the product will be revealed and Rotterdamse Munt's values explained. By building a "restaurant", the managers want Rotterdamse Munt to become a place where you can meet and work. It will be a way for the social enterprise to solve the issue of the location and the need for financial income. Ingrid explains: "because this is not a very good place for a real restaurant, then we [would] have to go to the other side of the river to make it successful, so, we made a decision to target more

to the business groups. So, in the new garden we are going to build a pavilion". The space will therefore be rented so that businesses can have meetings, or do some team building activities, for instance. Even though it has not happened yet, the consequences of such target orientation might dissuade marginalised people to come and participate to the development of Rotterdamse Munt.

Overall, the social enterprise draws a close relation between the pedagogic and rather altruistic approach and the commercial objectives that seems to become predominant. Rotterdamse Munt's future projects seem to follow economic models of growth. Even though Rotterdamse Munt's intentions are genuinely working for the good of the city and its citizens, they are still all premised on markets logic rather than ecologists logic that promotes a movement towards 'less' through the conscious and moderated consumption of nature. Beyond the fact that Rotterdamse Munt promotes the growth of green areas and the growth of people through self-development, it does it through generating always more (products, consumers, money), for more impact.

Moreover, it confirms that Rotterdamse Munt is not limited to the selling of a concrete product that is the herbs. Instead, the social enterprise is selling a much larger product through the emphasis on symbolic rather than material value (Jakob, 2013). It commercially promotes a way of life that corresponds to a more conscious, green and inclusive behaviour in the city of Rotterdam.

5. Conclusion & Reflection

This study started by acknowledging the on-going debate regarding the definition of 'social enterprise' and its legitimacy in the charity and business cultures (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010; Muehlebach, 2011). The reason comes from the construction of the concept itself, which puts together two a priori opposite structures, forming thus a paradox. The lack of empirical qualitative research of this concept fostered the creation of this thesis. The aim of this thesis was therefore to disentangle the paradoxical concept of 'social enterprise' and reveal what it entailed. In order to do so, the study focused on a young social enterprise held by three female managers who are constantly trying to improve it. After two months of thoroughly examining Rotterdamse Munt to understand ***how urban farmers discursively negotiated the status of social enterprise***, the thesis highlighted the paradoxical relation between the various discursive elements that construct Rotterdamse Munt, which is emblematic for social enterprises.

5.1. Summary of results

Overall, one word can summarize Rotterdamse Munt as a social enterprise: duality. Indeed, while looking at their discursive practices, the analysis showed that urban farmers were constantly dealing with the balance between their prime purpose that is the ecological and social impact, and the need for financial resources. This constant negotiation between the altruistic approach and the commercial approach of Rotterdamse Munt obliges urban farmers to come up with the combination of two contrasting identities, through the duality of visual identity, services and products, to reach two different types of population. On the one hand, Rotterdamse Munt is a public place – that relies on external incomes – whose aim is to serve the public of Rotterdam by participating in the transition of Rotterdam into a green sustainable city and the development of its citizens. On the other hand, Rotterdamse Munt is a commercial organisation that generates income by encouraging the participation of a specific population who can afford seizing the green inclusive lifestyle they are promoting.

This constant duality illustrates their transition into a social enterprise, which is perceived through their practices that follow media logic by emphasising the symbolic value of their organisation. It helps them belonging to a specific cultural community that comes to life through marketing strategies and corresponds to the middle-class's tastes, or "YUPPs" (Karsten, 2014). The analyses showed indeed that urban farmers put a lot of efforts in marketing and communication strategies through various means. It displays that their status of social enterprise strongly relies on communicative practices that define the type of

business it really is. But, the constant negotiation has consequences on the communication strategies the managers have to define. The variety of missions and objectives makes it difficult for urban farmers to communicate on the purpose of their social enterprise. It can thus weaken their promotion since a good communication strategy needs to be focused on a dominant objective in order to create a clear image in the mind of the target and so be effective. With the different approaches, one can gather together three perceptions of Rotterdamse Munt:

1. A place to be more conscious about ecology and health (Food consumption, Green city).
2. A place to develop oneself socially (Social inclusion).
3. A place to consume and buy (Restaurant and Shop).

The first two perceptions belong to the social aspect of the social enterprise. It illustrates the social and ecological impact objectives carried by Rotterdamse Munt. As demonstrated, the latter aims to participate in the great transitions of Rotterdam into a sustainable, green city, which goes together with Rotterdam's wish to get rid of the masculine working-class image that its industrial economy of the harbour established (Van den Berg, 2018). Instead, Rotterdam wants a more modern and feminine image that includes families and children (*ibid*). Rotterdamse Munt illustrates this broader urban plan. Indeed, the topic of urban farming appeared very gendered as it relied on particular kinds of audiences: women (as managers, volunteers and visitors or consumers), illustrating the process of genderfication (Van den Berg, 2013, 2018). Besides, results showed that it was also classed and raced, which reinforces Van den Berg's argument that genderfication triggered other type of domination: the one based on social class. In Rotterdam, the latter is linked with race as the majority of isolated people come from the Middle East as shown by the Afrikaanderwijk neighbourhood. It shows that Rotterdamse Munt's objectives are still based on exclusion schemes, even if it is not the intention. Indeed, according to Rotterdamse Munt's future projects (building of a restaurant), their altruistic objectives seem to become overshadowed by the third perception, which belong to the commercial aspect of this social enterprise. Urban farmers' growing desire for financial independence shows that Rotterdamse Munt is trying to follow a gradual shift from an external social enterprise – where financial resources come from the collaboration with businesses – to a embedded social enterprise that characterised a self-financed company, including the integrated social enterprise that is a combination between the last two (Alter, 2006). If their business model started from only receiving subsidies, it evolved in combining external and internal income

and is progressively trying to become entirely financially independent. The high prices of Rotterdamse Munt's products as well as the increasing consumption function of their urban herb garden might dissuade socially isolated people to come and participate to a project that promotes a lifestyle they cannot afford.

It thus seems that as well intentioned as urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt are, the status of social enterprise means that they cannot fully orient their effort towards the prime social and ecological impacts they work towards. That is to say, this impact-driven enterprise still needs to follow the rules of neoliberalism to be able to be sustainable and maintaining the project. Ultimately, the question is: how sustainable is this transition if it is still based on a form of exclusion? In other words, can we really be socially and ecologically aware in a world that is still dictated by the logic of the markets? In general, results show that Rotterdamse Munt had not fully transformed yet into a sustainable ecological social enterprise. Instead, urban farmers are constantly negotiating between the altruistic approach and the commercial approach, resulting in not managing to fully do both.

5.2.   The possibilities within neoliberalism

The growing concern regarding social and environmental issues led to the development of research on how we could "accelerate transitions towards more just, sustainable and resilient societies" (DRIFT website). The Dutch Research Institute For Transitions (DRIFT), for instance, is providing insights to help cities and organisations in sustainability transitions. It believes that if organisations want to be sustainable, they need to follow an inclusive approach. However, what research fails to disclose is the politics behind the transformation into a sustainable organisation such as social enterprises. As part of the broader research of social enterprises, there is limited analysis of the neoliberal system that prevents non-profit organisations from giving up on certain media and commercial imperative. It should be noted that neoliberalism is not a simple social, political and economic background that needs to be theoretically acknowledged; it is what determines, in practice, the nature of impact-driven organisations' transformation into sustainable businesses. Neoliberalism sets the conditions that citizen-led initiatives need to adapt to in order to be able to accomplish their prime impact-oriented objectives. To do so, they constantly need to prove their legitimation by showing they can be sustainable through, for example, the development of annual reports that show the commercial value of their organisations. These imperatives lead organisations to transition to the status of social enterprise, which comes with consequences: the constant negotiation between altruistic and

commercial objectives, intrinsic to the status of 'social enterprise'. Social enterprises' structural adjustment corresponds to broader governance policies, which follow the neoliberal rules of market and media based on systems of growth and exclusion. Social enterprises are thus limited in their action; what seems to be a choice resulting from a bottom-up process comes actually from a top-down strategy (Cheshire & Lawrence, 2005). Social enterprises thus appear as a "miniature firm[s]" (Ferguson, 2010, p. 172) resulting from "new constructions of "active" and "responsible" citizens and communities […] to produce governmental results that do not depend on direct state intervention" (*ibid*). Therefore, sustainability transition does not only involve finding enthusiastic people with the right ambitions but it also includes having specific structures and systems that properly define what transitions should be about. It means that social enterprises need to meet the expectations of the market and the media while structuring and presenting themselves. These conditions encourage a rather competitive atmosphere where social enterprises need to stand out to sell themselves to the right target through efficient communication strategies. These strategies are done through media practices that influence the attitude of social entrepreneurs towards the self-promotion culture where everything needs to correspond to media perspective in order to exist (i.e. mediatization, self-branding). Efforts in marketing through self-promotion and branding become constitutive of the existence of the social enterprise, following the neoliberal business culture. Consequently, the social and ecological awareness remains in the background to make way for a commercial and rather elitist approach that is not always efficient (hence the constant need for more financial resources).

Overall, while social entrepreneurs are the most suitable actors to deal with local problems due to their close connection with the environment they are trying to deal issues in, their ideas are weakened by the broader political and economic context. Social enterprises' consequently need to 'follow the system' rather than using other means of power (Liverman, 2004). This draws a rather pessimistic view of ecological and social initiatives that try to be influential while being more and more independent. Therefore, it seems that Rabhi's description of initiatives (2016) – in which he explains freedom relies on the fact that they do not belong to any market system – cannot be accomplished in the neoliberal context of our contemporary society. The latter makes it almost impossible to develop an urban initiatives that is truly oriented towards social and ecological impact, especially within the framework of a space filled with strict policies that one needs to respect and adapt to in order to be able to exist (i.e. the city). However, one should wonder what could we do for social and ecological despite neoliberalism.

Indeed, falling into the trap of ending on the cynical note that 'neoliberalism is bad and one cannot do anything about it' would be illustrative of unconstructive "politics [that are] largely defined by negation and disdain, and centered on […] "the antis" [a]nti-globalization, anti-neoliberalism, anti-privatization" (Ferguson, 2010, p.166). It is therefore essential to point out some studies that are trying to imagine social and ecological change despite neoliberalism. The anthropologist James Ferguson points out that, while it is important to acknowledge the accurate neoliberal situation and its unfair consequences in order to denounce it, these remarks do not contribute to finding solutions. According to him, one can "appropriat[e] key elements of neoliberal reasoning for different ends" (2010, p.174). So, it is important to approach the matter differently by defining what we rather see happening instead of asking, "what are we against?" (2010, p.167). It would thus be interesting for future research to provide more empirical research by focusing on the mediatization of larger successful organisations that do not agree with the rules of neoliberalism but are trying to work despite it while offering clear progressive social, political and economic plans. This could be done in other countries than the Netherlands in order to keep drawing a wider understanding of ecological and social initiatives' challenges in different historic, economic, political and social contexts. For example, one could focus on the mediatization of French ecologically and socially engaged organisations such as the Colibris movement. The founders, Pierre Rabhi and Cyril Dion, are trying to foster a broader change by not only focusing on consumption changes but also on collective actions, and broader political and economic transformation (see Colibris website). They used media logic to promote change through the successful documentary *Demain* (2015), a worldwide investigation of solutions to environmental and social issues, by Cyril Dion and Mélanie Laurent. The latter calls for an "ecological revolution" that would eventually reverse our current systems.

5.3.   Reflection

The entire process of the thesis project faced a few obstacles that should be noted as part of the study of social initiatives. The initial plan was to become a volunteer at Rotterdamse Munt to be able to fulfil the objective of the thesis as well as contributing to their project by providing any kind of help. Unfortunately, after a few discussions with the initiator, my full participation was not possible. I did not receive the reasons behind this decision but, from the talks I had with the initiator, I assumed the reasons rely upon, 1) my lack of experience in gardening, which means I would have to be guided by someone and

they were lacking of coordinators; 2) the fact that I do not speak Dutch, which could make them uncomfortable since they would have to switch to their unnatural language; 3) the maximum number of volunteers was reached, however during the period of my 'external' observations, I have noticed three new volunteers had registered. So, this let me believe the main reason was the fact that my main objective was to write my thesis and not (only) volunteer, added to the invasive characteristic of my research (ethnographic work). This contradicted my first thought that Rotterdamse Munt would be characterised by openness and community spirit since it was relying on volunteer work. Besides, during my upstream work, I had been talking to the initiator of the urban herb garden who confirmed my participation would be appreciated and that interviews would not be an issue. The refusal was therefore quite a surprise. However, it is still relevant of they dual identity as it shows particular conditions of participation even though they strongly communicate on being inclusive. Nevertheless, these obstacles were overcome thanks to perseverance and respect that led to the construction of a trusting relationship between urban farmers of Rotterdamse Munt and me. I got to receive valuable information through informal conversations during which people were opening up easily. This thesis relies thus on in-depth knowledge that was gained from fully involved participant in Rotterdamse Munt. It thus allowed the collection and analysis of high-quality data.

6. References

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Appendix 1 – Semiotic analysis

Photograph/Note taking & Date	Denotation (who/what is depicted)	Connotation (interpretation)
	Iconic signs & Linguistic signs	
	Exterior: Colours: three main colours: brown, blue, green; + colours from the flowers (purple, green, yellow, red, pink) Outside RM: grey, some green, red/brick colour (from the cycling road) High buildings around. Large road: main road. Logo of RotterdamseMunt in white Big entrance: two main doors open BUT Very high green fence. On the fence, in wood: #streekproducten; #verse kruiden en bloemen Entrance and Exit indications on piece of wood. Uphill. Linguistic signs: Logo of Rotterdamse Munt on a colourful and big panel. "**Welcome** to Rotterdamse Munt, here everything revolves around **sustainably grown herbs**. In this **urban herb garden, fun, insight and expertise grows about natural growth & true taste.** Come in for **walking, shopping, picking** and **tasting, discovering** and **learning.**"	Colours of the planet. Typical of green/eco places. Big contrast between inside/outside -> inside much more colourful than outside. Outside: much more grey/stony VS inside: dense vegetation & wood. Logo stands out because of the bright colour: white. However, oriented in such a way that you can see it more when you come from one side than the other (more when you walk south to north than north to south). Lots of inhabitants around. Connects to the bridge, connection North/South of Rotterdam. Respect the colour 'code'. Inviting BUT can also discourage people from going inside -> idea of private property. #regional products #fresh herbs and flowers: Adaptation to the common way of talking nowadays because of social media, when you make a statement to sum up something, you say "hashtag something". It puts helps knowing what they put the emphasis on. But at the same time, sort of hard to read because of the colour and the fact that it's put on the fence: sort of same colour, + letters quite separated -> you need time to see what is written.

Reason behind the high fence: people were ruining/taking things from the garden, but they won't put such a high fence at the other place.

Natural material. -> Purity.

Invite people to take a walk crossing the garden without disturbing their walking direction. + Emphasis on how big is the place -> indication of WHERE the exit is.

You can see it from far; it's lifted. You can see the panel from far. Logo of the place -> professional. Flower gives an indication on what this place is: a garden. Bee on it -> natural, no insecticides! Organic products. Message of welcoming people -> emphasis on ecology, city, purity, food. -> A summary of what they do. Accumulation -> all the activities that you can do in it. Create curiosity, you need to know exactly what you can actually do here. Words that give you an idea of what you can do, but not exact description -> may invite people to go in and ask, or take information on their online platforms. -> also left contacts number to encourage people to reach them. Show a professional aspect of their organization.

Emphasis on the complete aspect of the garden, abundance.

	The terrace Blue, green and brown barrels in a few places Linguistic signs: 'Munt' -> name of the place. Wooden panel. Colours: black, white and green. Plants painted on the side. "delicious tea with herbs from our garden"	Colour -> matches with the main three colours of the place. + Show that they collect rainwater -> **ecological**. Harmony of colours. **Main product that they sell becomes a brand**. -> something we also see in the Annual report. 'Munt' -> don't say the full name. Named the place 'terras'-> **separation of different spaces. Clear organisation**. -> PROFESSIONAL/BIG Very positive vocabulary "delicious" -> gives people wanting to try. Emphasis on taste and on 'local', 'DIY' -> 'our' -> we made it, you can see it. Proximity between people and the products they consume. Adds colour to the place + reinforce the activity of the place -> they grow plants and herbs.
	Flowers on the tables Some of them are tulips, so not from their garden. Tablecloth: green, white dots, plastic.	Sign of the Netherlands -> representation of Dutch nature -> LOCAL: a very important aspect of their philosophy. Also just an inviting place: flower n the tables considered as nice and neat decoration. Typical outdoor furniture. But plastic: not very 'green'. Though it looks like a typical country house.

	Strings of colourful lights little blanket for cold. Magazine about ecology/gardens/food	Very trendy and modern as one can see on Pinterest -> one of the main elements in a decoration. Gives a charm to a place. But, RM closes at 5pm, so never lit, but the light bulbs are colourful. Modern. Natural material, typical outdoor furniture, like in the woods. for picnics for instance. Furniture where you have to be together, a lot of people sitting close to each other. Feels outside of the city while being actually in Rotterdam itself. Can welcome a lot of people. Quite big. For different groups: couple, family, friends, etc. Not straight but you don't feel it when you The thing on the floor stops weeds from coming.
	The shop Entrance with a wooden green coloured door. Blue barrels on the side. Little sticker "Fête de la nature" Sticker 'Muntterras' -> one letter is missing, replaced by paint. Little green notice 'knip & pluk' 'thee kruiden'	Matches the main colours. Positive -> celebrating nature. Confirms that they're part of something very particular: a distributor that focuses on local food. Philosophy of being close to the customer -> you can easily visit the place where the food is coming from. Closeness also it terms of price -> it seems to be a sort of agreement between the producer and the customer. + People tend to be more generous when they feel a connection between them and the producer ->

		they want to support them, contrary to supermarket where you feel no connection at all and believe that they're making so much money that you're not willing to make an effort in the price => COMMUNITY, we're all in this together.
		Sort of 'cheap' looking -> maybe don't have the money to replace it, or it's maybe because they're moving to another location so this will be destroyed anyway.
		'cut and pick 'tea herbs' -> very small sign for people. They might don't even notice it and cannot know what they can do except for buying packets that are already made by the hospitality team.
	Sounds A mix of sounds from the city (tram bell, pedestrian lights, cars) and sounds from the garden (birds, footsteps on the wood, volunteers' activity	Really feels like inside the city but at the same time in a relaxing place. The sounds are further, so it still feels quite, but you can hear them in the background.

RotterdamseMunt
5 May at 13:47 · Instagram · ⊙

Vandaag vieren we Bevrijdingsdag in onze groene oase.. tussen de kruidenplanten. In de groene stad groeit respect en waar respect begint, eindigt geweld. Dus vandaag een goed moment om een begin te maken met jouw eigen groene oase.. voor je balkon of geveltuin hebben we allerlei soorten munt en meer. Welkom!

> Today we celebrate liberation day in our green oasis between the herbs. In The Green City, respect is growing and where respect begins, violence ends. So today a good time to start with your own green oasis.. for your balcony or geveltuin we have all kinds of coin and more. Welcome!

⚙ · Rate this translation

Saturday 5 May. 13h47 / 5 likes.

Nature of the post: share from Instagram.
Contextual posts: it's about a special date in the Netherlands.
"The green city"
"respect begins, violence ends" ->.
"Good time to start with your own green oasis"

Photo: close-up with a specific kind of mint.

Hour way after lunch. Maybe did not reach that many people.

They adapted their concept to something that is not directly related to them but that they can link to the philosophy of their place.
It's a means to invite people, make them know about their garden.
They don't say Rotterdam, might be the ideal concept of a green city, hence the use of 'the' and not 'a' ->
A bigger image of what a green city is, it's a concept that comes with a whole lifestyle and behaviour.
Strong link between the green city and people's well-being "
style of the writing kind of poetic. It wants to be philosophical, it's about big ideas / mind-sets.
-> invite people to join the lifestyle by building the same in their garden with the products of Rotterdamse Munt.
The last sentence (before 'Welcome!') connects to the photo
It's a type of mint that people are not used to see: the "chocolate mint" (I think). They don't give the name of the plant though. It's really just an illustration.

Appendix 2 – Semi-structured interviews' questions

How would you describe Rotterdamse Munt?

Your role at Rotterdamse Munt

How did you start working at Rotterdamse Munt?

Who did you first meet?

Did you have to sign any form?

What questions were you asked?

What is your role at Rotterdamse Munt?

Does it change sometimes?

Is it what you expected when you first started working there?

The nature of Rotterdamse Munt

Name:

I hear 'garden city', 'urban herb garden', 'herbal farm', 'social enterprise': how would you define Rotterdamse Munt really? And why is it important to define it that way?

What does 'social enterprise' entail?

Then, is it important for you to sell?

Would you like to grow into something bigger?

Business model:

What is your business model?

Where do you find funds?

How do you find them? Do you need to justify anything?

Is it enough for what you would like to achieve?

The impact of Rotterdamse Munt

What is the purpose of Rotterdamse Munt?

What would you like to achieve?

On the website: emphasis on food + community feeling + green city. What are the reasons behind this?

What is the meaning of 'green city' for you?

Do you think citizens can have great impact on the city transformation?

Who do you want to reach?

Who are you really reaching?

What effect are you looking for and how do you manage to provoke them?

Visual elements:

How did you decide on the 'look' of Rotterdamse Munt (the choice of materials/colour/arrangement?

- What were the reasons behind these choices?
- Was the fence a requirement to mark out the ground?

How about the location?

- How did you decide?
- What were the reasons behind this choice? Does it affect positively/negatively your project?

Events

- Workshops: I saw, on your website, the variety of your workshop: drawings, information, trainings.

How did you come up with the idea of workshops?

What do you talk about during workshops?

Who takes care of it? Who is planning them and how do you come up with the topic of them?

- Festival:

How many times does the music festival happen?

How did you come up with the idea of the festival?

Who organises it?

What is the purpose of it?

What effect are you looking for through the organisation of the festival?

Online platforms

Who created the website? Did you have a clear idea of what should have been done on it or did you let someone do it for you?

Who is currently taking care of the website? How do you decide what content should be put on it?

What is the purpose of the website?

Visual content: who takes the photos? Volunteers? How do you decide which photos go on it?

Is there a reasons why one section of your website is in English? Are you planning your translating your website in English?

Cohesion between the initial plan and the reality?

How do you consider the impact you have?

Do you think the initial project matches with what is happening today?

- Are you happy with how the project came about?

What do you think needs to be improve and why?

Is there any comment you would like to add?