Gentrification as a governmental strategy: social control and social cohesion in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam

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Abstract. The emergence of gentrification as a 'global urban strategy' (Smith, 2002, "New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as a global urban strategy" *Antipode* **34** 427 – 451) is clearly visible in the peripheral boroughs of Dutch cities. We suggest, however, that the driving force of gentrification in these areas is not the local government's need to strengthen its tax base or developers' pursuit of profit. Gentrification is also not a response to the housing demands of a new middle class. Instead, we conceive of state-led gentrification in the Netherlands, and perhaps elsewhere as well, as an attempt by a coalition of state actors and housing associations at generating social order in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Gentrification is used to pacify tensions and to reduce concentrations that pose a problem for authorities. In many cases, residents support this strategy, either actively or passively. But, at the same time, interaction between low-income and higher-income households, and between renters and homeowners, in restructured neighbourhoods are often superficial at best and hostile at worst. Thus, gentrification undermines social cohesion and thereby reduces the chance that residents will find solutions for tensions in the neighbourhood.

1 Introduction

In the Netherlands, state actors and housing associations ambitiously pursue a project of state-led gentrification in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The state induces housing associations and seduces private developers to invest in the construction of middle-class, owner-occupied housing in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods with many low-cost social rented dwellings. Researchers refer to this form of government intervention as 'urban restructuring' (Kleinhans, 2003; MVROM, 1997; 2000; van Kempen and Priemus, 1999). Even though Dutch housing policy is subject to constant revision, it is clear that, over the next two decades, hundreds of neighbourhoods will experience such restructuring. First of all, this means that the share of social rented housing in the neighbourhoods designated for restructuring will decline from around 62% in the year 2000 to 45% in the year 2010. National and local state agencies, together with housing associations, are responsible for urban restructuring that aims to improve the economic appeal as well as the 'liveability' of designated neighbourhoods (see Tunstall, 2003). In the discourse about this policy, a 'liveable neighbourhood' refers to a 'balanced' neighbourhood with a low level of crime and a sizeable share of middle-class households. It does not refer to a neighbourhood where government agencies develop policies to ameliorate the social conditions of the most disadvantaged groups.

Restructuring policy attempts to promote gentrification in even the most disadvantaged and peripheral boroughs of Dutch cities. As we will show, however, conventional explanations of gentrification do not fully explain the scope, scale, and form of the processes involved. In the absence of profit motives or significant consumer demand, why do Dutch state actors and housing associations promote gentrification? Our response will focus on the institutional networks that promote it and on the discourse

that legitimises it. Thus, we will show how the notion of liveability emerged out of a new institutional constellation where state actors and housing associations increasingly consider gentrification as the only conceivable solution to urban problems.

We develop our theoretical framework in the next section. Then we discuss why a massive programme of urban restructuring started in 1997 and has since received support from various coalitions of political parties, both nationally and locally. We also touch on the changing discourse on urban restructuring, urban decay, and marginality in Rotterdam, a city that is very much a focal point in urban developments and policy in the Netherlands. In the following section, we focus on the neighbourhood level and show how gentrification plays out in Hoogvliet, a peripheral borough of Rotterdam. We demonstrate how different actors pursue various goals by promoting gentrification. Our empirical data draw on three independent but comparable neighbourhood studies from 1998, 2003, and 2005. The final section presents our conclusions.

2 Reasons behind state-led gentrification

While gentrification research initially focused on specific forms of neighbourhood change, now it deals with such diverse issues as office development, changes in the retail environment, city marketing, and zero-tolerance policing strategies (eg Atkinson, 2003; Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; Smith, 2001; 2002; Zukin, 1995). In a review of the literature, Slater et al (2004, page 1145) argue that the term 'gentrification' now encompasses all processes related to the "production of space for—and consumption by—a more affluent and very different incoming population." This definition leads us to reconsider the image of gentrification as a process that takes place exclusively in inner cities or historic neighbourhoods. Clark (2005, page 258) suggests that gentrification "is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital." If we adopt this definition, it becomes clear that many urban policies are attempts to promote gentrification by encouraging middle-class households to move into working-class neighbourhoods. Indeed, Smith suggests that the language of urban renaissance in British urban policy "bespeaks of the generalization of gentrification in the urban landscape" (2002, page 438). This remark applies as much, or even more so, to the Dutch context, where the restructuring policy for promoting liveability by increasing the share of middle-class households involves practically all disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods.

This transformation of gentrification from a piecemeal process in inner cities to a large-scale urban strategy forces us to reconceptualise the role of governance networks (eg Slater et al, 2004; van Weesep, 1994). With some notable exceptions, few authors have attempted a systemic explanation of why and how state agencies shape gentrification processes in different places and periods (see Slater, 2004a; 2004b; Ward, 2003). Hackworth and Smith (2001) take a step in the right direction by indicating that the role of the state depends on a number of factors. They demonstrate that, paradoxically, the state is increasingly involved in gentrification in a time of purported 'privatisation':

> "First, continued devolution of federal states has placed even more pressure on local states to actively pursue redevelopment and gentrification as ways of generating tax revenue. Second, the diffusion of gentrification into more remote portions of the urban landscape poses profit risks that are beyond the capacity of individual capitalists to manage. Third, the larger shift towards postKeynesian governance has unhinged the state from the project of social reproduction and as such, measures to protect the working class are more easily contested" (page 464).

Following this line of reasoning, observers often assume that measures to generate social order which harm the interests of poor urban dwellers are ultimately attempts to reconquer the city for the middle class and to increase the profit margins of developers and the tax bases of local governments (Smith, 1996). According to this view, the state acts in the interests of capitalists and legitimates itself by stigmatising the victims of its policies (eg Smith, 1999). Many gentrification researchers even define the very process by the harm it causes among lower-class households, precluding the possibility that these households support gentrification or benefit from it (Slater et al, 2004).

This conceptual framework explains some of the gentrification processes in the Netherlands, but not the kind we want to explore. We focus on forms of gentrification involving housing associations and local governments, which are not as subordinate to market forces as the agents analysed by researchers such as Neil Smith. Though housing associations have been financially independent institutions since January 1995, they do not primarily pursue profit. They are legally bound to reinvest all their profits in housing for the target groups of social housing policies. Municipal agencies, moreover, do not have to attract middle-class households to strengthen their tax base, as in the United States, since cities receive most of their resources from the national state (Terhorst and van de Ven, 1998). In short, there must be something else that drives gentrification strategies in the Netherlands.

Explanations that focus less on capital flows might be more appropriate, although arguments that regard gentrification as the outcome of changing lifestyles and of the emergence of new groups of urban consumers (see Ley, 1996) are not persuasive. Such groups would probably be more interested in spacious suburban housing or luxury apartments in central areas. Instead, we observe that in the Dutch case state actors and housing associations promote gentrification in areas that are currently least in demand. Developers would normally *not* invest in areas like Hoogvliet.

For a better understanding of state-led gentrification, we need to look beyond the economic dimension (eg Smith and DeFilippis, 1999) and address governmental and institutional dimensions as well (compare Flint, 2004). As in other countries, the Dutch government and its allies strive to create social order in places where the state appears to have lost its grip on social life (Dikeç, 2006). Thus, in order to understand the form, scale, and scope of state-led gentrification (Lees, 2000), we develop a theoretical framework that emphasises the *operational goals* of government agencies and their institutional partners (see Allison, 1971; March and Olsen, 1996). With respect to these goals, we show below that neighbourhood degradation negatively affects the ability of these actors to carry out routine tasks in poor districts, which include renting out, maintaining, and selling housing and preventing civil unrest. Serving the middle classes, we suggest, is not their ultimate *goal*. Instead, gentrification is a *means* through which governmental organisations and their partners lure the middle classes into disadvantaged areas with the purpose of civilising and controlling these neighbourhoods.

Of course, changing the social composition of a neighbourhood is not the only way or even an effective way to combat incivilities. Theoretically, state agencies and their partners could also pursue such a goal by increasing social cohesion or by combating the marginalisation that arguably causes civil disorder. We will show how the first of these alternatives failed. Explaining why combating marginalisation is not considered a viable solution to neighbourhood problems would take us far beyond the discussion on gentrification. Let us say, though, that the crisis of the Fordist state produced high levels of advanced marginality (Wacquant, 1999), which in turn led to social crises in many poor neighbourhoods, including Hoogvliet. Powerful actors in these neighbourhoods, especially housing association and local governments, have been unable to

solve the problems that emerged and, as a result, urban policy has turned into crisis management (Brenner, 2004; Jones and Ward, 2002).

While postwar disadvantaged neighbourhoods clearly face a social crisis, this does not necessarily mean that state-led gentrification is the appropriate response. The word 'liveability' is key to understanding this project (compare Lees, 2000, page 301). For housing associations, liveability means that neighbourhoods are orderly in the sense that they exhibit a low level of crime, vandalism, and nuisance. Basically, it refers to the ambition to create social order in neighbourhoods that are prone to degradation. We will show below why housing associations and state agencies now consider gentrification a sine qua non for promoting liveability.

3 The Dutch and Rotterdam context

While many authors have emphasised that the American state has largely withdrawn from ghettos (see Wacquant, 1998; 2001), the picture in the Netherlands is quite different. Public schools, the police, and benefits and community workers are all paid, directly or indirectly, by the national government. In their race for electoral success, politicians often visit disadvantaged neighbourhoods. If disorders break out in these neighbourhoods, the national media immediately cover the developments and local as well as national politicians seek to restore order. In short, there are many interdependencies between institutional actors in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (for example, state institutions, housing associations, and civic associations) and powerful national actors (Uitermark, 2003; 2005).

The nature of these interdependencies has changed substantially during the last two decades. We can roughly discern three phases. In the first phase, until the beginning of the 1990s, the national government financially supported municipal governments in the provision of social rented housing and other services. Housing associations were basically state organisations that were used as an intermediary between the government and residents. Authorities considered social housing a right at this time and viewed a high share of social rented housing as an asset to their city. In the second phase, which began around 1990 and lasted until about 2000, authorities started seeing social housing as a problem. Economic motives played an important role in this change of perspective. Rent subsidies demanded more financial resources than the national state was ready to grant. Furthermore, the government white paper *Housing in the 1990s* (MVROM, 1989) fundamentally changed the relation between the state and housing associations. The latter no longer received state subsidies, but acquired more discretion in formulating and executing their own housing-stock policies. As private companies with a public task, housing associations are supposed to sustain themselves financially. In this context, another development took place as well. Participants in the policy discourse increasingly associated social housing with social dislocation and disorder, and associated disadvantaged neighbourhoods with 'unliveable' conditions. In the 1970s and 1980s residents had argued against large-scale demolition of social housing because this would reduce the liveability of their neighbourhoods. During these years, urban renewal policies threatened liveability. In the 1990s, however, the term's meaning changed and began to refer to the disruptions of daily life caused by antisocial or criminal behaviours of neighbourhood residents. State actors as well as housing associations adopted the term 'liveability' and argued that the concentration of social problems in urban neighbourhoods inevitably caused incivilities. By this time, everyday incivilities had become the main threat to liveability. This discursive shift signals a major change in the role of urban renewal. Whereas policy makers previously saw social provisions as solutions for social ills, by the 1990s they argued that concentration itself was the problem. Hence, they began attributing

incivilities that undermine liveability to the high share of social rented housing in many disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Whereas the central state used to support local governments and housing associations with the provision of social housing, now it started to encourage local governments and housing associations to construct owner-occupied housing and to demolish social housing in order to create neighbourhoods with a balanced social composition (eg MVROM, 2000). In the third phase, which we have just entered, social housing has become a social ill in itself. Participants in the urban policy discourse now associate owner-occupation with freedom and active citizenship, and associate social housing with dependency (see especially MVROM, 2000).

The transition from one phase to the next is particularly visible in the city of Rotterdam. For a long time, this city was a social-democratic bulwark with a strong commitment to social housing. In the 1990s, however, the city adopted a policy of social mixing and selling social housing. This policy faced little resistance, because demand for social housing was in decline and because most people involved agreed that owner-occupied dwellings were beneficial for the city. In 2002 Rotterdam adopted a more assertive and even aggressive approach (cf City of Rotterdam, 2003b), largely as a result of the electoral victory of the late Pim Fortyn's 'Liveable Rotterdam' (*Leefbaar Rotterdam*) and the loss of the social-democratic party and its Green coalition partner (see Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2005). The city now actively markets itself as a good place for affluent residents and especially targets the so-called creative class (see Florida, 2005). The city has boosted both the construction of owner-occupied dwellings and the demolition of social rented housing. Each year, developers add about 3000 new owner-occupied dwellings to the total of 250 000 dwellings, while demolishers destroy about 4000 social houses (City of Rotterdam, 2003a). In language that hardly requires textual deconstruction, the government of Rotterdam declares that it aims to attract "desired households" to "problem areas" (City of Rotterdam, 2006, page 15), thereby reinforcing and politicising the connection between owner-occupied housing and liveability. This discourse no longer only involves the right-wing parties that were in office since 2002. The Labour Party that won the local elections of February 2006 supports similar policies. A document produced by top civil servants to articulate a new vision after Labour's victory explicitly argues that gentrification needs to be 'enhanced' and that large investments should be made "to improve the quality of life" by building more owner-occupied housing in order to meet the demand of the "new middle classes" (City of Rotterdam, 2006, page 15). How do these developments on the national and city level translate into local policies? How does the relation between the state as an agent of gentrification, housing associations, and residents in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods evolve?

4 Local practice: gentrification and social control in Nieuw Engeland, Hoogvliet
4.1 Background: a Keynesian suburb
Until the 1950s Hoogvliet was a small village in the southwest of Rotterdam. When in the 1930s the construction of a harbour created a demand for housing, Rotterdam annexed Hoogvliet with the intention of turning the village into a working-class suburb. This plan came to fruition in the 1950s and Hoogvliet became a typical Keynesian suburb of Rotterdam, with its own borough authority.

Urban planners cooperated with companies such as Shell and worked according to modernistic architectural principles in the renewal of Hoogvliet. This resulted in the sharp division of functions, many apartment blocks, and extensive green public spaces. At the time, more than 70% of the housing stock consisted of social housing. The new borough was very stable, mostly because of a structural demand for industrial labour.

However, in the course of the 1980s the economic recession hit Hoogvliet particularly hard, generating structural unemployment among poorly qualified and industrial workers. According to Heeger and van der Zon (1988), Hoogvliet exhibited a subculture of unemployed youth that celebrated lawlessness, vandalism, and so forth. As an extensive informal and illegal economy of clandestine bars, drug dealing, and other types of criminal activity emerged, the idea took hold that Hoogvliet might be turning into a 'ghetto'.

At that time, Nieuw Engeland was one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the borough of Hoogvliet. It consisted of around 1200 dwellings, of which 900 were social rented housing. Probably due to the common identity and mutual social bonds that had survived the economic recession, many residents felt strongly attached to the neighbourhood and resisted further decline and accelerating vacancy rates. They developed a plan for demolishing some of the flats and when other residents joined them established the action committee "There is no such thing as 'can't do'" (*Kenniet Bestaat Niet*). Since the Housing Association Hoogvliet (*Stichting Volkshuisvesting Hoogvliet*) favoured its plan, the action committee tried to convince the borough authorities of the necessity of demolition. It enjoyed the support of the local political party, IBP (*Initiatiefgroep Boomgaardshoek en Platen*), which had gained a strong position in the borough council. The goal of this coalition was *not* to disperse poor households or to solve disorderly conduct. During a protest action at city hall, residents indicated that they primarily wanted to improve the quality of their houses. They constructed an imitation of a Hoogvliet flat and asked the mayor to try to fit himself and his family into a living area of 16 m^2. In addition, residents wanted to do something about rising vacancy rates and they considered renovation, demolishment, and reconstruction as possible solutions to this problem.

However, at the end of the 1980s the idea of demolishing social rented housing was not popular among politicians and civil servants. They wanted to maintain a large amount of social housing and were simply not accustomed to the idea that demolishing social houses could be part of a programme for urban renewal. Moreover, other residents in the targeted demolition blocks (who were not involved in the action committee) resisted the coalition's plans.

In the end, the central city government of Rotterdam decided to demolish 400 multifamily dwellings in the Hoogvliet neighbourhood Nieuw Engeland, which was far less than the 1000 dwellings favoured by the Housing Association Hoogvliet. It opted to renovate rather than demolish the remainder of the multifamily dwellings. This was also the case with 'De Waaier', a bow-shaped block of multifamily dwellings at the northern border of Nieuw Engeland suffering from nuisance and other social problems. Another element of the compromise was the replacement of demolished housing by more expensive social housing.

After demolition in 1990, developers constructed 222 new houses, mainly single-family dwellings. Half of the residents who moved to these new dwellings in 1991 and 1992 came from within Nieuw Engeland itself. Thus, many original residents 'returned' to the same neighbourhood, while renters of the new dwellings had to meet standards for financial stability. Still, more than 75% of the relocated households from the demolished housing had left the neighbourhood.

In short, most of the households held responsible for the disorderly conduct that inspired the intervention moved out of the neighbourhood, even if this was not a stated goal of the organised residents. At the same time, the poor were not exactly "swept out through demolition" (J Smith, 1999). Not only were the new social rented houses affordable for many of them, the initial resistance of other residents in the targeted demolition blocks quickly evaporated when they could move to social housing elsewhere in Rotterdam. Since the new residents in Nieuw Engeland were generally only

slightly better off than the old residents, the form of gentrification was relatively mild in this case. What were the long-term effects of gentrification? More specifically, how do residents and other stakeholders in Nieuw Engeland perceive urban renewal and the resulting social order?

4.2 Disidentification and revanchist sentiments
Our first inquiry into Hoogvliet started in 1998, about six years after the construction of 222 new dwellings. We wanted to evaluate the effects of restructuring efforts and focused on the neighbourhood of Nieuw Engeland, which had a relatively high number of problematic housing blocks. We conducted seven interviews with stakeholders in the urban restructuring process, including community workers from the Welfare Foundation Hoogvliet (*Stichting Welzijn Hoogvliet*), staff members of the borough authorities and the Housing Association Hoogvliet, the neighbourhood police officer, representatives of the residents' council (*Bewonersraad Nieuw Engeland*), and a representative of the small residents' association (BOOT) representing the interests of the small block of owner-occupied houses in Nieuw Engeland. We also conducted a small survey that we will explain below.

Our questions to the key informants concentrated on the motivations behind, and the effects of, the urban restructuring operation. All our key informants related the urban restructuring to the social conduct of former and current residents. While the stated goal had initially been to upgrade the housing stock and prevent vacancy, at this point they judged the intervention according to a very different criterion: had it succeeded in removing or keeping out undesired households? They no longer perceived housing as a provision that could be improved but rather as a mechanism for selecting certain types of residents. The chair of the association for owner-occupied housing (BOOT) argued:

"The renewal is going too slow. The core of dilapidation is still there. A lot of nuisance is caused by Antilleans. The cause of decline is the influx of less-adapted people. Many of the original residents have moved because of the decline. The only durable solution is to increase the share of owner-occupied housing."

Here we clearly see sentiments that Smith (1996) would describe as 'revanchist'. In this instance, the call for gentrification derives from the idea that 'less-adapted' people cause the social problems and that bringing in middle-class households will help revitalise the neighbourhood. Other informants are equally outspoken on these issues. Two representatives of the residents' council said that the biggest problems in the neighbourhood were:

"a strong influx of ethnic minorities and a high vacancy rate in the housing stock. The residents in the newly-built housing are dissatisfied and are leaving."

The residents who had originally pushed for the restructuring operation play an interesting role here. They strongly identified with the neighbourhood. Soon they experienced disillusion with the results of the intervention. Their response was to leave the area or to call for more drastic measures. One of our informants at the borough authorities concluded:

"The operation has failed. A few blocks of new housing is not enough to upgrade the neighbourhood. It might have worked if De Waaier had also been demolished before the completion of the new houses."

The complex De Waaier appeared as an island of decay in a neighbourhood that was otherwise going in the right direction (compare Wyly and Hammel, 1999). As our informants from the residents' council at that time remarked:

"The new housing does not work because of the rotten living environment. De Waaier is still there."

Thus, the parties responsible for the intervention (the local government and the housing association) claim that restructuring failed as a solution for the pressing social problems. Nevertheless, they believe that more intense measures along similar lines could have had the desired result: social order through exclusion and dispersion.

However, informants from the borough authorities and the Welfare Foundation Hoogvliet, and the neighbourhood police officer reported their awareness that physical measures alone could not address the social problems. These informants argued for an alternative strategy to gentrification. The police officer said that people who had moved into the newly built housing felt betrayed when they found out that social problems had not disappeared but had only been relocated. Consequently, the police officer and local community workers wanted the new residents to play a pivotal role in the neighbourhood. They tried very hard to integrate the residents of the new housing with the residents of De Waaier. Here we see the beginning of an alternative strategy to gentrification: these actors tried to promote a strategy that was meant to increase social cohesion. By bringing people into contact with each other, they hoped they would identify with each other and with the neighbourhood to increase their collective efficacy in efforts to counter incivilities. Among such efforts was the establishment of a neighbourhood management board, with residents from all parts of Nieuw Engeland, a garden association, neighbourhood parties, and so-called stairway discussions (*portiekgesprekken*). According to the Welfare Foundation Hoogvliet and the borough authorities, these initiatives initially raised the frequency of social contacts between residents and their identification with the neighbourhood.

In sum, two strategies prevailed at this point. On the one hand, participants attempted to change the composition of the neighbourhood and attract more-affluent households. Many tenants in less attractive social housing were considered as a nuisance to other neighbourhood residents. On the other hand, participants tried to build social cohesion among the new and the old residents. This second strategy, however, was doomed to failure since the restructuring operation created a cleavage between the residents: the social cohesion that neighbourhood activities aimed to promote was undermined by the restructuring operation that was taking place at the same time.

The acceptance of demolition as a solution for social problems pitted residents of new and old housing blocks against each other. In a sense, there is a self-fulfilling prophecy at work here. Demolition of a large block of social housing initially appears more effective and concrete than a long-term strategy of social investment. As soon as demolition starts, tensions in the neighbourhood increase between those who bear the costs of forced relocation and those who (expect to) receive the benefits. This in turn produces anomie which, in the prevailing policy discourse, authorities seek to reduce through further gentrification.

At this point, our survey in Nieuw Engeland becomes relevant. We distributed and recollected written questionnaires in a door-to-door campaign. Out of a 'population' of 862 houses, we received 216 completed questionnaires (25%). Subsequently, we acquired census data for Nieuw Engeland—on variables such as age, ethnic background, and tenure—from the Centre of Research and Statistics in Rotterdam. We compared those data with the equivalent survey variables. This analysis showed that the response is a fairly representative sample of the population in Nieuw Engeland (Kleinhans et al, 2000). We also compared the response from different blocks with their share in the total housing stock. We found that the response rates from the newly constructed and the older owner-occupied housing correspond to their shares in the neighbourhood housing stock. However, the response from De Waaier is slightly underrepresented, mainly because of high vacancy rates in those blocks at the time

Table 1. Perceived changes in the neighbourhood due to restructuring, according to long-term stayers ($n = 216$) in Nieuw Engeland and in percentages (1998).

Indicator	Better	The same	Worse	Net change
Social cohesion	4	71	25	−21
Social involvement	4	76	20	−16
Population composition	16	59	25	−9
Neighbourhood facilities	17	60	23	−6
Social atmosphere	17	62	21	−4
Neighbourhood reputation	35	42	23	+12
Liveability [a]	47	40	13	+34

[a] Defined as clean, safe, and well maintained.
Note: Missing values (about 2%) are excluded from the table.

of the survey. Here we are particularly interested in the opinions of residents who witnessed the situation before and during the restructuring efforts, and who still lived in Nieuw Engeland at the time of our survey. More than half of the 216 respondents fall within this category. Table 1 indicates their evaluation of the long-term results with regard to seven aspects of neighbourhood quality. The respondents could indicate whether each aspect had improved, got worse or remained the same.

As table 1 shows, liveability has increased substantially but social cohesion and social involvement seem to have suffered from the changes. The social ties and networks that could have supported a strategy of social investment (see above) have eroded. This in turn makes it less likely that neighbourhood residents will collectively solve their problems.

Such *disidentification* makes it likely that more-established residents will develop even stronger revanchist sentiments (see de Swaan, 1997; Elias and Scotson, 1965). To put it concretely, once mutually antagonistic sentiments and interests had formed in response to the first intervention, the residents of the new dwellings could argue for the demolishment of De Waaier so that 'all' residents could enjoy a liveable environment. In fact, the very name of De Waaier symbolised the purpose of intervention. It made sense to designate that particular complex of buildings as an isolated and desolate space within the neighbourhood once the surroundings had been improved. Many residents in Nieuw Engeland perceived residents of De Waaier as unadjusted intruders, even though many of them had lived in the area longer than the residents in new dwellings. In particular, representatives of the association of homeowners in the neighbourhood, the housing association, and the neighbourhood borough felt that the restructuring operation was not complete as long as De Waaier still existed.

As a result of this changing balance of forces, the borough authorities and housing association increasingly focused on social control and demolition of social rented housing. In line with general Dutch trends, tenant protection and maintenance of public housing became less and less of a concern (Priemus, 1995). Instead, the borough authorities argued that "large concentrations of similar housing types are undesirable from the viewpoint of controllability" (Ds+V, 1994). They announced the demolition of 620 of the remaining 1460 maisonnette dwellings in other neighbourhoods of Hoogvliet and soon afterwards developed additional plans for demolition. These plans intended to increase the share of owner-occupied and single-family dwellings in the housing stock, while decreasing the share of multifamily, social rented dwellings (Woonbron-Maasoevers Hoogvliet, 1998). What had initially started as an isolated restructuring intervention had now become a substantial gentrification programme that is currently

still underway. In Nieuw Engeland, authorities decided to demolish the remaining old social housing blocks in 1999 and spread the gentrification process throughout the entire borough.

4.3 The Nieuw Engeland intervention fifteen years later

For our recent interviews with eighteen stakeholders, conducted in early 2005, we went back to Nieuw Engeland to study the long-term effects of the intervention that we studied in 1998. We interviewed a similar range of actors as seven years before. We talked to representatives of the housing association, civil servants from the local borough, community workers, the local police officer, a representative from the shop-keepers association, and residents who are active in the neighbourhood as volunteers.

The most striking event that occurred in the meantime was the demolition of De Waaier. In our 2005 study, we again asked questions to professionals and current residents about the interventions that had taken place in Nieuw Engeland fifteen years ago. Now that the whole area of Hoogvliet is subject to intensive urban restructuring, we also asked respondents to compare that specific intervention to current interventions in other neighbourhoods in Hoogvliet. The civil servant responsible for the restructuring operation in Hoogvliet is quite clear in his judgment of the lessons learned from earlier urban restructuring efforts:

"The Nieuw Engeland neighbourhood you researched some years ago represents a good example of how you should not do it. The social rented blocks with lower classes have remained and so the place is still a mess. Those people have just been put back, so there is no differentiation in the composition of the neighbourhood population. In Digna Johanna [the adjacent neighbourhood] it has been done in the right way. It has a mix of owner-occupied and social rented housing. That is a vital neighbourhood ... it is more cohesive."

A staff member of the housing association, now called Woonbron Hoogvliet, shares his view. She says that the housing association wants more diversity in Hoogvliet:

"The residents should be more diverse in terms of income and background. A one-sided composition of the people causes problems. We do not want to make a connection between income and residential behaviour but it is better if people have more things to do during the day-activities. Owner-occupied houses offer advantages: the residents are usually more involved with the neighbourhood. That is why we mix."

Even though we only spoke to a limited number of informants, a clear pattern emerges from the results. Respondents representing the institutional actors that are part of the coalition promoting gentrification (that is, the housing association and the local borough) do not mention any disadvantages. According to their view, mixing not only addresses and prevents social disorder, it also creates an involved and cohesive community of residents. However, others only partly share this view. Respondents who are professionally responsible for social cohesion, such as community workers, as well as active residents argue that Hoogvliet has not become an integrated district since the restructuring operation started. For example, the enthusiasm for government-initiated neighbourhood events is now notoriously low. The neighbourhood police officer of Nieuw Engeland remarks:

"You can organise all you like in this neighbourhood. But then you are told: the Antilleans are there, so we won't come. So then it just becomes another Antillean party. I myself go to these initiatives but there are only a few whites."

He confirms that new residents in particular are not very eager to participate in neighbourhood activities. Two community workers experience similar difficulties:

"We want to strengthen social cohesion. The neighbourhood population is very diverse: Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans. The Dutch feel they are a minority and that is indeed the case….We invite everybody but it is just a tiny group of people that participate…. If community workers do not take the initiative, nothing would happen here anymore."

Joint activities are clearly no solution for a lack of social cohesion. When activities do take place, they tend to exacerbate rather than resolve social tension in the neighbourhood. Rosanna (white, female) remarks that:

"Nowadays you see more groups that belong together and to which I do not belong…. In the past, when I had a dark-skinned partner, they more or less accepted me but now it is very difficult. I have to watch very carefully what I say or else I'll get a knife in my back. I am not allowed to say anything about nuisance caused by other groups. The whites are being held down in this neighbourhood."

The quotes of the community workers and Rosanna illustrate that the perceived lack of social cohesion is strongly associated with interethnic relationships. The diversity and high share of ethnic minorities fuel the anxiety of institutional state actors and some of the residents, who fear that the remaining social housing in Hoogvliet will attract the type of people who gave the now demolished Waaier its bad reputation. As Tessa, who herself lived in De Waaier, remarks:

"Neighbourhood safety has improved. Nieuw Engeland has improved. We hardly see police cars nowadays; we used to see many. It is more quiet. But the problems are still in Hoogvliet. In Oudeland there are many former residents of De Waaier—you do not want to be there at night. There are a lot of vacant houses and demolition is still going on. It is comparable to De Waaier. The problems are relocating."

For the local borough and the housing association the only conceivable strategy to deal with the fact that problems tend to be relocated rather than solved is to intensify the restructuring process, to build even more owner-occupied housing, and to attract new middle-class residents. The housing association Woonbron publicised this strategy in 1998 when it issued a borough-wide plan for urban restructuring (see section 4.2). Both institutional actors and homeowners in Hoogvliet support the discourse in this plan. A representative from the association of homeowners has a strong viewpoint on this matter:

"Owner-occupied housing should be radically promoted; otherwise this neighbourhood will turn into a ghetto. Already we are on the verge of becoming caught in a downward spiral. If no action is undertaken now, the white and affluent households will leave the neighbourhood en masse."

In this discourse, the homeowners, who are more active and involved than renters, appear as saviours of the neighbourhood. To test this assumption, we analysed data from a recent residents' survey (2003) in Digna Johanna and Westpunt. These neighbourhoods are adjacent to Nieuw Engeland and experienced restructuring after the intervention in Nieuw Engeland. The survey methodology is the same as the procedure described in section 4.2. Here, out of a population of 981, we received 448 completed questionnaires. The response rate (46%) is highly representative for the population in Digna Johanna and Westpunt, and for the tenure distribution (see Kleinhans, 2005). Our analysis distinguished not only between renters and homeowners, but also between long-time stayers and newcomers—who arrived in Digna Johanna and Westpunt after completion of the new dwellings. The reason is that the tenure distinction does not fully overlap the difference between long-term stayers and newcomers, because there are still social rented dwellings. Nevertheless, the restructuring raised the already existing share of owner-occupied housing. This is reflected in the higher share of homeowners among newcomers than among stayers (see table 3).

Table 2. Involvement of renters versus homeowners, in percentages (2003). The table depicts the share of respondents who answered affirmatively to the corresponding question (source: own research).

Indicators	Renters (n = 192)	Homeowners (n = 256)	Total (n = 448)	Difference tests[a]
Tenure	42.9	57.1	100.0	
Collective action with other residents (in the past year)	6.4	8.7	7.7	Pearson $\chi^2 = 0.8$ (ns)
Active member of a neighbourhood association	6.8	11.7	9.6	Pearson $\chi^2 = 3.1$ (ns)
Has offered help to neighbours in last two months	60.0	64.7	62.7	Pearson $\chi^2 = 0.9$ (ns)

[a] ns not significant.

We measured resident involvement with three binomial indicators. First, we evaluated whether respondents actively cooperated with other residents to achieve something useful or beneficial for the neighbourhood (for example, cleaning public greens or jointly organising a street barbecue party). Secondly, we observed whether respondents are active members of resident or neighbourhood associations. And, thirdly, we measured to what extent residents supported their neighbours in practical ways. Tables 2 and 3 show the results. For each category, the tables depict only the share of respondents who answered affirmatively to the corresponding question.

Table 3. Involvement of 'original' longtime residents versus newcomers, in percentages (2003). The table depicts the share of respondents who answered affirmatively to the corresponding question (source: own research).

Indicators	Longtime stayers (n = 257)	Newcomers (n = 191)	Total (n = 448)	Difference tests[a]
Home owners	48.2	69.1	57.1	
Renters	51.8	30.9	42.9	
Collective action with other residents (in the past year)	7.2	8.4	7.7	Pearson $\chi^2 = 0.2$ (ns)
Active member of a neighbourhood association	14.4	3.1	9.6	Pearson $\chi^2 = 16.0**$
Has offered help to neighbours in last two months	68.3	55.1	62.7	Pearson $\chi^2 = 7.8*$

* $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.001$ (two-sided); ns = not significant.

While table 2 seems to indicate that homeowners are more often involved, the differences with renters are not significant for any of the three indicators. Thus, our data do *not* provide evidence for the assumption that homeowners are more active and more involved than renters. But if restructuring measures have increased the influx of owner-occupiers, as in Digna Johanna and Nieuw Engeland, there might be a difference between newcomers and long-term stayers that weighs heavier than tenure difference. This is what we tested in table 3. The test results show that newcomers are not more involved than long-term stayers. In fact, long-term stayers are significantly more often active members of neighbourhood associations and report higher levels of helping neighbours than newcomers.

Of course, these data cannot provide a comprehensive picture of social cohesion in Hoogvliet. Our interview informants, however, sketch a general picture with regard to social cohesion in Hoogvliet, showing that the result of restructuring efforts in several neighbourhoods is not a cohesive living environment, but rather a neighbourhood where people live their own lives and avoid confrontations with members of other groups.

The main reason why the housing association and borough regard homeowners as assets is not that they contribute much, but rather that they do not cause nuisance and mind their own business. The role of new owners is generally one of limited involvement.

From our perspective, previous rounds of gentrification have increased the contrasts in lifestyles in such a way that collective action becomes increasingly unlikely. Slater (2004a) and Robson and Butler (2001) report similar findings. They show that gentrification produces a situation that can be characterised as 'social tectonics', by which they mean that relations between different social and ethnic groups in an area are parallel rather than integrative. The ambition to create social cohesion gradually becomes more illusory as lifestyle differences increase. The success of urban restructuring is almost exclusively measured in terms of liveability. The housing association, local borough, and homeowner representatives consider the operation successful if people feel that they live in a clean and safe environment.

4.4 A third wave?

Recently, arguments related to social control have become somewhat less important than economic arguments for promoting gentrification. Could it be that liveability is no longer 'enough' and that Hoogvliet wants to attract owners not so much to keep the neighbourhood stable but to boost property prices? At this point, we can give only a tentative answer to this question. For our respondents, economic motives do not yet seem to play a significant role. However, it appears that local authorities, together with private developers, are currently taking the restructuring of Hoogvliet to a higher level. These developers advertise Hoogvliet as a 'green and safe place' where you can play tennis and ride horses in the direct vicinity. They also boast that Hoogvliet has the character of a village and a vibrant associational life. Whereas in previous rounds of restructuring, most renters from demolished dwellings could return to the neighbourhood, this is now increasingly difficult. As one long-term resident remarks:

"There are new projects in Nieuw Engeland. People who move into this area have to join the association of owners—you are obliged to pay for this membership. In another project that is currently under construction, you are obliged to rent parking space. Renters are being pushed aside ....I have always said: after the restructuring nothing but carton boxes remains for the poor people. Less affluent people cannot afford this, so they move out. They just won't get it."

We observed in both rounds of interviews that restructuring is used, quite effectively, to disperse or dissolve disorderly behaviour. It does so, however, at the cost of deepened social cleavages and growing indifference. Already, there is a strong feeling among respondents that neighbourhood contacts and social cohesion have suffered from the operation. The current restructuring efforts tend to increase the polarisation that is at the basis of this erosion since they attract households who differ strongly in terms of income and lifestyle from residents in the remaining social housing in Hoogvliet. New entrants into owner-occupied housing tend to dissociate themselves from their less-affluent neighbours in the social rented housing. From this perspective, we may speculate that the new wave of gentrifiers currently entering Hoogvliet is likely to call for even more gentrification.

5 Conclusion

In order to grasp the specifics of state-led gentrification in the Netherlands, it is necessary to study the evolution and nature of the governance networks that promote urban restructuring in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Unlike in the United States, it is not self-evident that economic motives are primary in the Dutch context. In general, explanations for gentrification that are derived from the US case are not fully applicable in countries where local governments receive most of their funds from national governments, and where housing associations play an important role in the housing market, such as the Netherlands but also France or the United Kingdom. Because the existing gentrification literature cannot fully account for these policies of enforced social upgrading, we developed an alternative framework that stresses the need to examine institutional linkages and the discourse of the key agents behind state-led gentrification in the Netherlands. Initially, interventions in the housing stock aimed to meet demands of residents and to ensure the availability of rental houses. In the course of the 1990s, though, urban restructuring became a way to alter the social composition of neighbourhoods. At present, gentrification enjoys public legitimacy. Authorities pursue it mainly as a means to improve the 'liveability' in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

This goal often conflicts with the interests of residents, but resistance by tenants against gentrification was relatively low in the 1990s, especially if one takes into consideration the high levels of neighbourhood activism in the Netherlands during the 1970s and 1980s. Residents themselves by and large accepted the dominant discourse that equated gentrification with neighbourhood improvement. In the case of Hoogvliet, working-class residents as well as more-affluent residents favoured housing policies that dispersed groups associated with social disorder. They perceived gentrification in the 1990s not as a 'class war' (compare Smith, 1996), but as the only conceivable way to improve conditions in the neighbourhood.

As Clark (2005) rightly suggests, we should not analyse gentrification as a simple confrontation between perpetrators and victims. Yet, this process of state-led gentrification has its price. Forced relocation, for instance, has become increasingly common. A more problematic aspect of state-led gentrification, however, is that the influx of middle-class residents does not increase social cohesion, contrary to the suggestions of its proponents. Contacts between low-income and higher-income households, and between tenants and homeowners, in restructured neighbourhoods tend to be superficial at best and outright hostile at worst—a finding anticipated by Gans (1990; compare van Beckhoven and van Kempen, 2003; Veldboer et al, 2002). Even though the influx of even more and even richer homeowners is likely to increase the mental and social distance between neighbourhood residents, the parties involved promote this strategy as the main solution to remaining urban problems. It is important to recognise that this solution reflects the interests and working methods of the main agents behind gentrification: housing associations and local government agencies, backed up by the national state. For these parties, social cohesion in the neighbourhood or profit margins may be important, but their first priority is to create a neighbourhood with a stable social order. We have shown that these institutional actors achieve their operational goals by sometimes acting against sound business logic (they do not invest in the areas with the best potential for profitable investment) and against the interests of neighbourhood residents (the interventions are so drastic that they reduce social cohesion and force residents to relocate). Attracting middle-class households, is, for the institutional actors, a legitimate and perhaps the only conceivable way to civilise the neighbourhood. While this holds true for almost all actors involved (no actors argue against restructuring per se), promoters of gentrification and gentrifiers do not

identify any negative effects, while those on the receiving end (professionals in the neighbourhood and residents of social housing) express doubts about the social effects of gentrification. However, the very process of restructuring has undermined the collective identities and identifications that could have facilitated resistance or produced alternative strategies to combat urban problems.

This tendency of both lower-class and middle-class households, and of migrants as well as indigenous Dutch, to (passively) support further gentrification has emerged in the context of a relatively novel situation: the local government of Hoogvliet now actively promotes gentrification, not only for reasons related to liveability but also to promote economic growth. Even though it is too early to argue that this is a funda-mental change in policy and to speculate about its consequences for residents of social housing, there are signs that gentrification is now becoming a goal in itself. In the past, policy makers have always seen Hoogvliet as a problem area that could benefit from an influx of gentrifiers. Now their position is the reverse: they currently advertise Hoogvliet as an interesting and exciting place for potential gentrifiers. In this context, they will increasingly assume that social housing is a burden rather than a necessary provision.

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