GENTRIFICATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION

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Voor mijn ouders

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Gentrification and the struggle for recognition

We live in an age where homes are wasted on investors and denied to many others. *Wasted*, indeed, on investors, for they may buy homes to leave them uninhabited, hoping that price increases and a later sale will lead to high returns (Rozena, 2024). And *denied*, indeed, to lower income groups and increasingly also to the middle class (Forrest & Hirayama, 2015), for the mechanisms via which housing is distributed are not given by nature; rather, these mechanisms are forged and thus they can be forged again.[1] Therefore, the unavailability of affordable homes cannot cogently be understood as 'bad luck' that merely befell someone, but should rather be approached as a moral and political problem (cf. Honneth, 1997). And since no individual alone can reasonably be held accountable for the mechanisms via which homes are distributed, finding a home can neither coherently be understood as an individual's responsibility (or at least, not alone). Access to a home should thus be approached, not as a "private problem", but as a "public issue" (cf. Mills, 2000).

This does not only hold for the differentiated access to housing, but also for the stability of one's residence in a home or neighbourhood. One way in which this stability can come under pressure is through gentrification. Gentrification is the process whereby land-users of a higher socio-economic status displace former land-users of a lower socio-economic status and thereby close the rent gap, i.e., the gap between a place's actual rent and its potential rent (Clark, 2010 [2005]; Smith, 1979).[2] Displacement should be understood in a broad manner here, referring to inhabitants who have to move out of their neighbourhood (physical displacement), but also to cultural, social, economic and political transformations of the neighbourhood that disrupt people's relations to their place when they manage to stay put (Davidson, 2009; Hyra, 2015; Marcuse, 2010 [1986]). This conception of displacement thus also refers to spatial transformations that may bring about a subjective experience of a "loss of 'place'" (Fullilove, 1996: 1517; cf. Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020).

Gentrification constitutes a problem that is analytically distinct from the general lack of affordable and adequate housing: gentrification is about having to move out or witness the transformation of a place that is *already* connected to, and often

1. The term "distribute" is used as a morally neutral term in this dissertation. It does not necessarily refer to the deliberate redistribution of goods. The outcomes of exchanges on the market are thus also denoted as "distributions" and the market is understood as a mechanism to distribute goods. In this dissertation, the term distribution thus does not imply a central authority that brings about the distribution.

2. This is a preliminary definition of gentrification. This definition will be elaborated on in Chapter 2. In that chapter, I will also argue why I think displacement should be understood as an essential element of gentrification.

constitutive of, one's personal history, personhood and place-based social and cultural practices (e.g. Hyra, 2015; Nine, 2018; Radin, 1986). For this reason, the political philosophical literature that tries to assess how gentrification should be morally evaluated emphasises the importance of people's attachment to the place that gentrifies (see e.g. Kohn, 2013; Huber & Wolkenstein, 2018). The social-theoretical and empirical literature similarly emphasises displacement as the central harm that gentrification brings about (e.g. Atkinson, 2015; Marcuse, 2010 [1986]; Valli, 2015).

Without denying that displacement has a far-reaching impact on people's lives, the current dissertation starts from the assumption that not only the *consequences* of gentrification matter, but also what the process itself *means* to the people involved. More specifically, this dissertation zooms in on the moral experiences of people living in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Do they perceive this process as unjust, and if so, why exactly? Do people who live through gentrification interpret the process as an expression of disregard for them, and if so, in what different ways? And can these moral experiences be understood as (derivatives of) displacement? Although scholars have studied the moral experiences of people living through gentrification, the aforementioned questions have not yet received detailed answers, yet they should be answered if we want to better understand how gentrification bears on people's lives. Studies thus far have typically focused on one aspect of this moral experience: they focused for example on displacement (e.g. Atkinson, 2015; Valli, 2015), class inequality (e.g. Smith, 1996) or racism (e.g. Bloch & Meyer, 2023; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022). Because of this focus, these studies do not describe comprehensively how a variety of moral experiences may all simultaneously play a role in the process of gentrification.

To develop such a more comprehensive account of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification, this dissertation takes Axel Honneth's (1995) theory of recognition as a theoretical starting point to approach these questions. According to Honneth, people's experiences of injustice, which he conceptualises as experiences of misrecognition, are the motivation behind social protests and, ultimately, societal transformations. This experienced misrecognition may assume different forms, depending on the recognition sphere that is at stake. This will be further elaborated on in Chapters 3 to 6. For now, it is important to note two things. First, Honneth focuses on how people experience injustice. He argues that such experiences should be understood, not as deviations of abstract moral values (like Habermas' ideal of speech free from domination), but as experienced violations of expectations for due recognition (Honneth, 2007a). Secondly, Honneth provides a "plural theory of justice" (2004) in which different spheres of recognition relate to different aspects of people's

personhood – also to aspects of persons (like the capacity for self-legislation or talents of individuals) that do not relate primarily to people's relation-to-place. Honneth's theory of recognition (and extensions thereof) can therefore be used to investigate in what different ways people who live through gentrification morally assess the process and if all these experiences can be understood as derivatives of displacement.

The central research question around which this dissertation is organised is the following:

> **In what ways do people living through gentrification experience recognition and misrecognition, and how do their experiences of misrecognition induce struggles for recognition?**

In order to answer the research question, both theoretical and empirical work had to be done. Chapters 2 and 3 comprise the theoretical part of this dissertation. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are based on the empirical study of two cases of gentrification, namely in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. In both these cases, gentrification was going on, but whereas the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt had to move out of their neighbourhood, the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime could largely stay put. This makes for an interesting comparison, both regarding the inhabitants' moral experiences and with respect to the resistance that emerged in both neighbourhoods.

In order to answer the central research question, several matters required clarification. First, I had to elucidate conceptually how people in gentrifying neighbourhoods understand their own role in gentrification via their knowledge of the process. Secondly, the concept of "struggle for recognition" needed to be explicated. I did this by elaborating on how struggles for recognition can be distinguished from other types of social struggle. After this conceptual clarification, I focus on the case studies. Here, I first present the variegated forms of misrecognition that people in the Tweebosbuurt experienced when living through gentrification. The inhabitants felt misrecognised in all spheres of recognition that will be distinguished in this dissertation. In the Quartier Maritime, inhabitants felt misrecognised as well, but homeowners also benefited financially from gentrification there. Moreover, inhabitants perceived gentrification as a way to get more amenities in the neighbourhood, which could be seen as a form of recognition of the locals. I tried to understand this with the notion of "enfolding", which captures how concerns about recognition, misrecognition and (re)distribution may be implied by each other in the context of gentrification. Finally, in order to study how experiences of misrecognition

induce struggles for recognition, I compare the different forms of resistance to gentrification in both neighbourhoods.

The central research question of this dissertation is therefore divided in the following five sub-questions:

1. How do people's self-understandings of their role in gentrification affect how the process unfolds? (Chapter 2)
2. How can the concept of "struggle for recognition" be delimited? (Chapter 3)
3. In what ways is gentrification experienced as injustice by the people living through it, and what does their resistance to the process mean to them? (Chapter 4)
4. How are issues of recognition, misrecognition and (re)distribution enfolded in the context of gentrification? (Chapter 5)
5. In what ways is the relationship between gentrification and social protest mediated by the particularities of gentrification? (Chapter 6)

In the remainder of this introduction, I will first place gentrification in the wider context of a lack of available affordable housing (1.2). I will then elaborate on the relation between gentrification and experiences of injustice, i.e., experiences of misrecognition (1.3). In order to do so, I will draw on the social-theoretical, empirical and political philosophical literature on gentrification. This section also serves as an *a priori* assessment of the relevance of the theory of recognition for a better understanding of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. After that, section 1.4 explains how the theory of recognition, in turn, can benefit from being employed in the study of gentrification. Section 1.5 introduces the cases, and section 1.6 discusses the methodology. Finally, section 1.7 presents the outline of this dissertation.

1.2 Placing gentrification: the wider context of a lack of affordable housing

To properly understand gentrification as a moral problem, it should be placed within the context of the broader context of a lack of affordable housing. There is a wide consensus that finding affordable housing has become increasingly difficult in recent years in many countries (see e.g. Aalbers et al., 2021; Forrest & Hirayama, 2015; Lennartz et al., 2016; Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020). With a social housing sector that has been downsized in the last decades, the market has come to occupy a more prominent place in the provision of housing in many places in the world. Rising rents and house prices have been the result. It could therefore be tempting to say that the free market is at the root of the problem of the lack of affordable, adequate housing, but that claim needs some qualification. The distribution of housing does not come

about on the free market; indeed, there is no such thing as a free market, except in the models of economists (cf. Adams & Tiesdell, 2010; Honneth, 2014a; Miller & Rose, 2008; Polanyi, 2001). This is true in general, but the housing market is a regulated market par excellence. In this regard, one can think of zoning plans, fiscal policy, and rent regulations (among many other factors), which all affect how many homes are produced and how they are distributed (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022). This section will therefore discuss the most important trends in the regulation of housing markets. It considers how the distribution of housing has been organised in the recent past, whereby it focuses on the Netherlands – but similar trends can be discerned in many other countries.

The inaccessibility and high costs of housing are not only issues in the Anglo-Saxon world where the state traditionally plays a smaller role in public service provision; it also constitutes a problem in European countries, like Sweden and the Netherlands, where the state has played a larger role in the provision of public housing in the past (Arundel & Hochstenbach, 2020; Baeten et al., 2017; Forrest & Hirayama, 2015; Lennartz et al, 2016; Pull & Richard, 2021). It was only in 2010 that Susan Fainstein (2010) portrayed Amsterdam as coming close to being a just city: she described a city that embodied ideals of equality, diversity and democracy relatively well. With high levels of social housing, a mix of people with different ethnic backgrounds and a local government responsive to the needs of inhabitants, Amsterdam was a good place to live for many different groups of people. However, much has changed since then: in Amsterdam (Hutak, 2020; Uitermark, 2009), but also in the Netherlands more broadly.

Let us have a look at some recent developments and start with the shrinking social housing sector. In 2013, a legislative proposal to tax social housing corporations (the so-called landlord levy) passed the Dutch parliament. As a result of this new tax, it became increasingly difficult for social housing corporations to invest any longer in new rental housing (Priemus, 2014). Moreover, the corporations had to sell off a part of their social housing stock, with long waiting lists as a result (Aalbers et al., 2021: 553-554; Boelhouwer & Priemus, 2014). Next to that, stricter income criteria for social housing were introduced, meaning that middle-class households were no longer eligible for it (Van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020).

At the same time, housing prices skyrocketed, meaning that real-estate owners accumulated wealth, whereas prospective homeowners faced higher debts (Aalbers et al., 2021: 549-550; Adkins et al., 2021; Boelhouwer, 2020). The rise of housing prices did not come out of the blue, but was rather facilitated by a variety of factors, such as

cheap credit (the ECB's quantitative easing measures) and government policy to make Dutch real estate an attractive investment: investors were stimulated to buy Dutch real estate on real estate fairs, while rental incomes remained untaxed and temporary rental contracts made it easier for landlords to manage their estate (Aalbers et al., 2021; Boelhouwer, 2020; Hochstenbach, 2022a; 2022b). Private rents, moreover, were liberalised, leading to the situation that renters often have higher monthly housing costs than homeowners, both in absolute terms and in relative terms, i.e., as housing costs as a percentage of one's income (Aalbers et al., 2021; Boelhouwer, 2020: 450). Market concentration on land markets (i.e., a limited number of parties with the financial means and capacities to acquire land in an early stage) may furthermore have brought about financial speculation by market parties, which could have slowed down the realisation of new-build housing projects, with higher housing prices as a result (Van der Krabben, 2021).

However, as middle income groups earned too much to be eligible for social housing, but too little to buy a home, they had no choice but to turn to private rental homes. Consequently, the demand for private rental homes has increased, making buy-to-let real estate an even more attractive investment opportunity for wealthy individuals (Hochstenbach, 2022b). Nonetheless, despite the clear division that emerged between those who benefited from these policies (homeowners, investors) and those who suffered from it (prospective homeowners, middle class private renters, prospective social renters on waiting lists, and homeless people), the beneficiaries of this policy remain, via the generous mortgage interest deduction, the most subsidised group (Hochstenbach, 2022a: 86ff.).

With these policy measures in mind, scholars have described the housing market in the Netherlands as a "driver for social inequalities" (Boelhouwer, 2020: 447) and as bringing about "secondary exploitation [which] takes place in the sphere of exchange, and refers to the ability of capital owners to capitalise on their investments" (Wigger, 2021: 452). Dutch housing policy has enabled "'the return of the rentier' who primarily extracts rather than creates value" (Aalbers et al., 2021: 558). Many vested interests were served by this policy: investors got high returns on their investments, homeowners accumulated wealth via rising house prices, and landlords could extract higher rents. At the same time, many people also suffered from the same policy: they had to pay higher rents or could not find adequate housing at all and, as a consequence, had to put their lives on hold. Some of these policy measures have very recently changed, though: the government has now introduced rent controls and abolished the landlord levy (Aalbers et al., 2021: 551-552). Nonetheless, adequate housing still remains inaccessible for many people. It is therefore problematic to describe the Netherlands

any longer as a country where the "equal concern" for all looms large as the "sovereign virtue", to employ Dworkin's (2000: 1) terms.

Gentrification is not the only spatial manifestation of this unequal concern – but it may be the most clearly visible one, since a neighbourhood often conspicuously changes when people of a higher socio-economic status arrive there and close a rent gap, i.e., close the gap between a neighbourhood's potential rent and its actual rent (Smith, 1979).[3] Gentrification is characterised by what we, generalizing Simmel's concept of "the stranger", may call the arrival of "the strange" in a neighbourhood. "The stranger", Simmel writes, is "the man who comes today and stays tomorrow" (Simmel, 2012: 361). The strange, then, can be analogically understood as referring to everything that comes today and stays tomorrow: new people, but also new buildings, new social and cultural practices, new shops and new amenities. They all arrive in a gentrifying neighbourhood, and they come to stay. And the people of a lower socio-economic status who used to live in the neighbourhood? They are the stranger's opposite. They do not come to the neighbourhood: they were there already. And more importantly: they often cannot stay.

Gentrification thus turns a neighbourhood into a space where the needs of long-term inhabitants no longer seem to matter. This manifests itself in restricted access to the neighbourhood due to price increases. It often also comes down to the disappearance of a neighbourhood *as* a neighbourhood that provided space for people with tight budgets: for their shelter, for their local support networks and their distinct social practices (Hyra, 2015). This sometimes leads to feelings of bitterness and grief among the inhabitants of a gentrifying neighbourhood, which can be taken as an experience of injustice that manifests itself on an affective level (Atkinson, 2015; cf. Honneth, 1995). It is not only the past neighbourhood that is lost; the disappearance of a neighbourhood can also be experienced as a loss of a projected future that was intimately connected to that place (cf. Lloyd, 2023; Radin, 1986). If, furthermore, the people who are negatively affected by gentrification had a normative expectation that their attachment to their neighbourhood would be respected, a breach of this expectation can be experienced as an expression of disregard for them.

Now we have placed gentrification in the wider context of the lack of affordable housing, the next section further unpacks this relation between gentrification and

3. It should be emphasised that this is not always the case. Gentrification may also take place without investments in the built environment and consequent spatial transformations (see Knieriem, 2023). Moreover, gentrification sometimes proceeds in a slow and uneventful manner, such that the incremental transformations of a neighbourhood "escape ethical recognition" (Kern, 2016: 445).

injustice and argues that the theory of recognition provides an apt starting point for the study of the moral experiences of people living in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

1.3 Gentrification as injustice

How is the relation between gentrification and injustice conceptualised in the literature? I will address this question in three steps. The first subsection focuses on how philosophers have conceptualised gentrification as a moral problem. Secondly, I will introduce the social scientific literature that discusses resistance in the context of gentrification. The third subsection will discuss why the model of struggles for recognition, rather than alternative models of conflict, are chosen as the starting point for the study of the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

1.3.1 Gentrification as injustice

As said before, displacement is typically described as the central harm that is brought about by gentrification. Displacement, in this respect, is understood as a complex, variegated concept. Ever since Marcuse (2010[1986]) distinguished between four forms of displacement, the notion has come to refer to a range of phenomena: it includes situations in which people have to move out of their home, cases wherein people are excluded from entering a neighbourhood because of price increases, and transformations of a neighbourhood which make it more difficult for people to stay put. This latter phenomenon, which Marcuse calls "displacement pressure" (335), has been taken up by other scholars. They emphasised how displacement can take place when people actually manage to stay put in a neighbourhood that has been rigorously transformed through gentrification; however, they then stay put in a neighbourhood that has changed so much that they do not feel at home there anymore (Davidson, 2009; Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020; Pull & Richard, 2021).

Empirical research on the lived experience of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods has often focused on one element of the process. Many studies have emphasised displacement (broadly understood) as the central moral problem at stake in how people experience and morally assess the process (Atkinson, 2015; Doucet, 2009; Kern, 2016; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015). Others have focused on class inequality (e.g. Smith, 1996) or racism (e.g. Bloch & Meyer, 2023; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022) that is manifested in the process of gentrification. The variety of reasons why gentrification-induced displacement is experienced as injustice by the people living through it remains underexplored in these social scientific endeavours, though.

There is, however, a small but growing body of philosophical literature that focuses, not on people's *experiences* of injustice in the context of gentrification, but rather on

whether and for what reasons gentrification should be seen as unjust. These political philosophical studies try to understand if, why and in what ways gentrification is morally wrong. Although some authors have argued that we should cheer for gentrification (Byrne, 2003; Whyte, 2010), most scholars think that gentrification is, overall, the outcome of, and leading to, unjustifiable inequalities (for overviews, see Dawkins, 2023; Lloyd, 2023).

Most political philosophical analyses of gentrification also emphasise displacement as the central harm of the process. Huber and Wolkenstein (2018) argue that gentrification should be morally repudiated, because it distorts people's located life plans, which can no longer be pursued when they are displaced. Similarly, Nine (2018) has argued that not only one's neighbourhood, but also one's home, enables in important ways if and to what extent one can realise the goals that one pursues. Relatedly, Radin (1986) has conceptualised the home as a "personal good". A home embodies "future projects or plans, as well as past events and feelings" (363) and is therefore constitutive of, and (partially) expressing, who one is and who one can be in the future. This argument, Lloyd (2023) argues, can be extended to locations, as one's neighbourhood can in the same way be thought of as "self-invested" (6). Moreover, when a neighbourhood changes, the long-term inhabitants may feel estranged from what once was *their* place and observe that their place-bound histories and memories are erased (Dawkins, 2023). Van Leeuwen (2025) emphasises in this regard that homes and neighbourhoods are not primarily instrumentally valuable, but rather may have an intrinsic worth for the people living in them. These arguments provide reasons for protecting the stability of a place, which, as Imbroscio (2004) maintains, is a necessary condition for the choice between places being meaningful.

Other authors argue that the moral evaluation of gentrification should not only focus on displacement per se. They argue that displacement should also be seen in the light of additional moral considerations. Sundstrom (2023) argues that we should not only look at what happens after capital flows into a neighbourhood, but also consider how the period before that, i.e., the period of disinvestment may violate people's equal standing. Kohn (2013), building upon a luck-egalitarianist perspective, argues that long-term residents who are attached to their neighbourhood are treated unjustly, because they are punished for the expensive tastes (wanting to live in a gentrifying neighbourhood) that they did not choose and that they cannot reasonably be held responsible for. Hence, the luck-egalitarianist argues, these residents should not suffer from their brute, bad luck (cf. Dworkin, 1981). Moreover, Zimmer (2018) argues from a relational-egalitarian perspective that tenants stand in a relation of subordination to their landlords. This subordination takes three forms:

1) exploitation, which refers to landlords who can extract net benefits from tenants by instrumentalizing the latter's economic vulnerability; 2) marginalisation, which refers to the situation where tenants are treated as (to be displaced) obstacles for the realisation of higher rents; and 3) political expulsion, when people have to move out of an area (city or neighbourhood) and lose political rights attached to that area (e.g. voting rights).[4] Hoover (2023), who did fieldwork in gentrifying cities, makes additional distinctions and maintains that the injustice of gentrification comprises, next to displacement, also exploitation, dispossession, marginalisation and violence.

Some scholars have also argued that the role of the state in enabling gentrification is important for the moral evaluation of the process. Wells (2021; see also Moulden, 2021) has emphasised that state-led gentrification can be seen as especially harmful, as it expresses a disregard to the interests of some citizens. As people expect to be treated as equals by the state, this disregard can threaten their sense of self-respect. Putnam (2021) and Jenkins (2022) also emphasise that the state enables landlords and potential gentrifiers to dominate long-term, lower income residents. They understand domination as "the capacity to interfere arbitrarily with another person's morally weighty interests" (Putnam, 2021: 172), and the state, making this domination possible, is culpable in this respect. Moreover, the homogenisation of neighbourhoods that may result from gentrification is also an impediment to democratic communication that is fostered by diversity in neighbourhoods (Draper, 2022).

The political philosophical literature thus shows multiple aspects of gentrification-induced injustice. Even before displacement has taken place, ongoing processes of gentrification can induce feelings of fear and insecurity when one risks losing one's home and/or neighbourhood. These aspects of injustice are all associated with gentrification; however, they are not necessarily salient in all gentrification processes, but only in some of them (Draper, 2022; Lloyd, 2023).

What these studies do not sufficiently discuss, though, is how people in gentrifying neighbourhoods morally experience gentrification. The only exception is Hoover's study (2023). However, Hoover does not zoom in on concrete cases of gentrification, but instead tries to "develop a generalisable evaluation of gentrification" (932). This approach thus necessarily abstracts from how different forms of gentrification relate

4. One's political rights may already be undermined before the actual displacement takes place. The interests of the to-be-displaced may no longer matter much for politicians who anticipate, or actively try to bring about via policy, that these to-be-displaced are no longer around during the next elections (cf. Zimmer, 2017: 65). This dynamic has been empirically confirmed for the UK (Chou & Dancygier, 2021).

to specific experiences of injustice. Since Hoover, and the other researchers discussed in this subsection, try to assess what is wrong with gentrification in the abstract, people's lived experiences of injustice and their accompanying moral emotions are not considered in detail.

For a full understanding of the ways in which gentrification bears on people's lives, it is necessary to take their moral evaluations and moral emotions related to gentrification into account. This is not to say that we should take these emotions and evaluations at face value and accept them as providing direct access to knowledge of what justice requires: that would amount to the naturalistic fallacy of deriving an "ought" from an "is" (Elster in Zacka et al., 2021). Despite this danger, philosophers have argued that normative theory should learn from empirical research. Rawls, in developing his method of "reflective equilibrium", already maintained that moral philosophers should attend to whether abstract principles of justice "match our considered convictions of justice" (1999: 18). Herzog and Zacka (2019) build on this idea and argue that empirical research may shine a light on how moral norms and values are and should be applied, but also on how these moral values themselves ought to be understood (see also Longo & Zacka, 2019). Moreover, empirical evidence may focus attention on important values that have hitherto gone largely unnoticed. Herzog and Zacka (2019) mention Young's (2011) political philosophy in this respect. Young adopts Jacobs' (1992) description of the sociability of city life to argue for a togetherness of strangers that steers away from both liberal individualism and communitarianism. The point here is that "the very ideal of sociability that Jacobs offers is one that most of us only came to recognise by reading her work" (Herzog & Zacka, 2019: 767). This illustrates how empirical research may be essential for the development of normative theory.

Normative theory thus risks staying incomplete and abstract if it does not sufficiently engage with the actual, empirical phenomena it is concerned with. This also holds for normative evaluations of gentrification. Attending to the moral experiences of people living through gentrification is thus important to fully appreciate the impact of this process on the lives of people. Although the primary aim of this dissertation is to better understand how gentrification impinges on people's lives, the full extent of this impact should also be considered if one wants to morally evaluate gentrification and take all morally relevant factors into account. This dissertation therefore attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the moral evaluations of people living through gentrification and of how their moral experiences manifest themselves on an affective level. As a next step towards that goal, the next subsection discusses resistance to gentrification.

1.3.2 Gentrification and resistance

The concept of gentrification was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964. She described how the working-class quarters in London had "been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower … Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass, 2010 [1964]: 7). Ever since then, this concept has been used in research that emphasises the class dimension in people's struggle over the access to space (e.g. Smith, 1979; 1982).[5]

However, despite the critical edge that the concept of gentrification has had since its beginnings, several scholars have lamented the absence of research on gentrification's adverse consequences (Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008). They argued that gentrification research, focused as it was on the causes of gentrification and the characteristics of gentrifiers, failed to produce the critical knowledge on how gentrification affected the lives of people who got displaced in the process. Wacquant eloquently described this situation as "the gentrification of gentrification research" (2008: 198). Although more recent gentrification research has developed critical perspectives on the process, there are still themes related to the adverse consequences of gentrification which remain underexplored.

An important subject in this respect is resistance to gentrification. Although there is a growing body of literature studying resistance to gentrification, there is still much to learn here (Goetz, 2016; González, 2016; Lees et al., 2018: 346-347; Lees & Ferreri, 2016: 14; Slater, 2014: 521). Resistance to gentrification is understood in a broad manner here, referring to e.g. the overcrowding of homes in order to bear higher costs, the mobilisation of support networks, overt protests, the promotion of referenda and attempts to get elected to affect policymaking (Annunziata & Rivas-Alonso, 2018; Card, 2024; González, 2016; Lees et al., 2018; Rodríguez & Di Virgiolio, 2016; Smith, 1996; Tattersall & Iveson, 2022). At a policy level, gentrification can be resisted through the provision of public housing, the use of rent controls, or the introduction of building conversion regulations (Annunziata & Rivas-Alonso, 2018; Radin, 1986; Rodríguez & Di Virgiolio, 2016). Such policy measures can all be seen as attempts at "making rent gap theory *not* true" (Clark, 2014: 394, emphasis in original; cf. Schipper & Latocha, 2018).

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5. This is not to say that class is the only relevant dimension of people living through gentrification. Scholars have argued how, in the process of gentrification, class intersects with gender (e.g. Bondi, 1991), sexuality (e.g. Lauria & Knopp, 1985), and race (e.g. Cahill, 2007; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2021; Taylor, 1992), among other things.

These studies, though, have not considered how people's experiences of misrecognition may provide the motivational basis behind social protests. The current dissertation tries to bring about a better understanding of this issue in two ways. First, by investigating the multiple forms of misrecognition that play a role in the experiences of people living through gentrification. And secondly, by developing a recognition-theoretical perspective on why resistance to gentrification assumes different forms in different cases.

There is thus still much to learn about the relation between gentrification and resistance, but how should this study be approached theoretically? The next subsection argues that the theory of recognition is well-suited to fulfil this task.

1.3.3 Why struggles for recognition rather than other models of conflict?

Social struggles can be conceptualised in different ways. Why, then, is the notion of struggles for recognition chosen as the theoretical starting point of this dissertation? This subsection will explain the reasons for this choice. It does so by comparing the model of struggles for recognition to alternative models of social struggle: models to which Honneth's theory has been compared in the literature. By means of this comparison, I will argue that Honneth's model of struggles for recognition provides a particularly apt framework to capture the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. The goal here is not to establish the superiority of the theory of recognition *vis-à-vis* these other models in general. If such a thing were possible, much more argumentation than can be presented here would be needed, and that falls beyond the scope of this dissertation. My aim here is more modest: I only want to argue that the theory of recognition is an *a priori* apt starting point for the study of the moral experiences and resistance of people living through gentrification. To make this argument, I will compare the theory of recognition with other political philosophical models of conflict (see Senf [2023] for a similar approach). A more detailed examination of the theory of recognition will be provided later in this dissertation (Chapter 3).

The basic idea behind Honneth's theory is that people are motivated to struggle for recognition because they wish to put an end to a situation that they perceive to be unjust (Honneth, 2007a). Here, a sense of injustice is understood as an infraction of people's legitimate expectations to be recognised in specific ways. Honneth (1995) distinguishes between three institutionalised spheres of recognition in this respect: 1) care or love, where people's primary needs are relevant; 2) respect, where people's (assumed) equal capacities for self-legislation and equality for the law are at stake; and 3) esteem, which relates to individuals' talents and capacities that are valuable to

society at large. Van Leeuwen (2007) has argued that this tripartite scheme should be complemented by a fourth sphere of recognition, namely difference-respect, where people's social attachments are the morally relevant traits that ought to be properly recognised. If someone's expectations for due recognition are violated in one (or more) of these spheres, this person may have moral feelings of anger and resentment which may motivate her to put an end to this perceived disrespect. The theory of recognition thus posits that people are in an important sense looking backward: their moral experience, i.e., their experience of injustice is based on expectations for due recognition that are *already* shared. People struggling for recognition draw on resources from the past to criticise the present, so as to make a different future possible. For Honneth, people's violated expectations for recognition explain why the motivation to engage in a social struggle is a truly *moral* experience, i.e., an experience of injustice; and the goal of those who struggle is to end the perceived injustice. The motivation behind, and the goal of, social struggles as conceived by Honneth are what distinguishes his model from other views on social struggles. In the remainder of this section, I will discuss four other theoretical perspectives that also attempt to understand social struggle and to which Honneth's approach has been often compared: agonistic pluralism, Rancière's theory of disagreement, prefigurative politics and class (or interest-based) struggle.

Honneth's theory is often compared to that of agonistic pluralism. Philosophers like Ernesto Laclau (1990), Chantal Mouffe (2005) and James Tully (1999; 2000; 2004), inspired by thinkers such as Arendt (2018), Foucault (1997), Huizinga (1997) and Schmitt (2015), have argued that one cannot understand social struggles without analysing how these struggles unfold in practice. The identities of the participants of the struggle, as well as the rules governing recognition, are not determined before the struggle takes place, but rather *in* and *through* the struggle. Tully puts it poignantly: "The forms of recognition that individuals and groups struggle for are articulated, discussed, altered, reinterpreted and renegotiated in the course of the struggle. They do not pre-exist their articulation and negotiation in some unmediated or ascriptive pre-dialogue realm" (2004: 93). True as this may be, such a perspective on social struggles loses sight of how the outcomes of a struggle relate to the source of the discontent which motivated people to struggle in the first place. The initial violation of a shared norm that may motivate people to engage in social struggles is not necessarily addressed by the ultimately accepted outcome of an agonistic struggle if the norm itself is determined in the process. The initial stakes of a social struggle thus lose their central place in the course of an agonistic struggle. In the case of gentrification-induced conflict, though, it is likely that there is, at least for a part of their demands, a clear relation – we should maybe even speak of an identity –

between what people require at the beginning of their struggle and what they deem an acceptable outcome: they want to stay put. The perspective of agonistic pluralism, which emphasises the transformation of goals and norms during struggles, does not seem to capture this aspect of gentrification conflict very well and is therefore not the most fruitful perspective to grasp social conflict around gentrification. A recognition-theoretical framework, which does posit a clear relation between people's initial goal when they get engaged in a struggle (to end a perceived injustice) and this struggle's acceptable outcomes (the actual end of this perceived injustice), seems to be a better candidate for this job.

Recently, Honneth's theory of recognition has also been confronted with Rancière's theory of disagreement (*mésentente*) (see Genel & Deranty, 2016). Rancière's conception of politics is a very specific one. "All political action", he writes, "presupposes the refutation of a situation's given assumptions, the introduction of previously uncounted objects and subjects" (Rancière, 2004: 7). In Rancière's understanding, politics is an irruption that unhinges the social and its distribution of social positions: it unsettles the distribution between rulers and ruled, between dominators and dominated, between master and enslaved. In any society, such a distribution reflects a principle (e.g. virtue, age, knowledge, wealth, etc.) that is ultimately contingent, because its justification rests on nothing other than itself (Rancière, 2004: 6; cf. Deranty, 2016: 65-66). Hence, for Rancière, the social and its inequality is always haunted by a principle of equality that denies the contingent principle via which social positions are distributed. Equality, then, is "the power that is already at work in all our relations" (Rancière, 2016b: 95) and as soon as it breaks out it brings about a "reconfiguration of the sensible", through which invisible bodies are made visible, unheard voices become heard and uncounted people get counted. In reconfiguring what is seen, heard, felt, and understood, Rancièrian politics is intimately linked to aesthetics (Rancière, 2016a). Only these moments of irruption and reconfiguration count as truly political, according to Rancière.

Despite its originality and power, there are two reasons why a Rancièrian perspective may not be the most useful one for the study of the moral experiences of people who live through gentrification. First, as Honneth argues, the idea that politics always has to entail an irruption that unhinges the whole of society is a too narrow conception of politics. It loses sight of those struggles that do not try to replace a society's normative order by a completely new one, but rather struggle for a reinterpretation of this order (Honneth, 2016a). These are "internal struggles for recognition", as Honneth (105) calls them, and they draw on the norms of recognition that one already finds in society. It seems likely that social struggles in gentrifying neighbourhoods – where people

are often not invisible, unheard and uncounted, but rather, according to themselves, *not properly* visible, heard and counted – assume this form of internal struggles for recognition. The struggles in gentrifying neighbourhoods do not necessarily hinge on a dramatic eruption of Rancièrian politics. Secondly, the moral issues at stake in gentrifying neighbourhoods cannot be completely understood with mere recourse to a principle of equality. After all, not everyone can live in the same neighbourhood. Hence, there needs to be a principle of difference at work that distributes access to the neighbourhood. Struggles in gentrifying neighbourhoods often revolve around the question *which* principle of inequality should be chosen. Should access to space be distributed on the market, or should the place-based attachments to the neighbourhood of long-term inhabitants prevail (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022)? Hence, moral issues in gentrifying neighbourhoods are not only concerned with equality, but also with which principle of difference is appropriate.

A third model with which Honneth's is contrasted is that of prefigurative politics (Senf, 2023). In the case of a gentrification conflict, a prefigurative struggle may take the form of squatting (Novák & Kuřík, 2020). The prefiguration literature emphasises that the practice of resistance itself already enacts a possible new world, such that resistance may also be considered to be successful and important, even if it does not bring about lasting changes in society (Maeckelbergh, 2011; Van de Sande, 2013). The goal, so to say, is already achieved in the practice of resistance itself. However, in the case of resistance to gentrification, this conceptualisation does not seem to adequately capture the goals of the people involved in this resistance (see also Senf, 2023: 103ff.). In gentrification, it is often people's "survivability" (Lees et al., 2018) that is at stake: their goal and their practice of resistance do not coincide. Rather, they struggle to still have a roof above their head when the struggle ends. A temporary world, that is enacted in a struggle, does not suffice for them.[6] Hence, the goal of struggles against gentrification is not the resistance itself; rather, the goal is to end the threat of an impending loss of one's home, i.e., to end a situation that, for various reasons (which will be discussed later in this dissertation) may be experienced as unjust.

Finally, struggles for recognition are often depicted as class struggles, and in important ways they are that (see e.g. Smith, 1979; 1982). However, a focus on class alone (that is, on groups with different incomes and/or wealth) would also lose sight of important aspects of conflict around gentrification. First, coalitions that

6. It should be noted that Tattersall and Iveson (2024) argue that prefigurative politics may also be part of a broader constellation of strategies that aims at bringing about lasting changes in housing policy. In that way, prefigurative politics may have longer lasting effects.

object against gentrification are not necessarily divided along lines of class: people of different classes may work together to resist gentrification (see e.g. Brown-Saracino, 2004; Werth & Marienthal, 2016; cf. Polanyi, 2001: 162-163). Secondly, the variegated forms of moral disregard that people may experience in gentrification processes (see section 1.3.1) cannot be reduced to economic matters alone. Here, Honneth's distinction between struggles for recognition and interest based struggles is informative. Struggles for recognition aim at restoring the "intersubjective conditions for personal integrity" (Honneth, 195: 165), whereas interest-based struggles are motivated by "the securing of economic survival" (*ibid*.), i.e., the securing of scarce material resources. As conflict in gentrifying neighbourhoods cannot be reduced to the latter: one needs a theory that is able to also capture other aspects of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. Honneth's theory of recognition, with its different spheres of recognition and its emphasis on the intersubjective relations of recognition as conditions of personal integrity, is well-suited to fulfil this task.

This subsection has argued that Honneth's theory of recognition is particularly apt for the tasks set out for this dissertation, i.e., to better understand the variegated experiences of injustice of people living through gentrification and how these experiences instigate resistance to the process. As said, this should not be taken as an argument saying that the theory of recognition is in general superior to the alternative models of social struggle discussed here, nor should it be taken as a rejection *tout court* of these other models for the study of gentrification. Rather, the goal was to argue that the theory of recognition provides a distinct perspective on social struggles and also on gentrification-induced conflict. The theory of recognition highlights aspects of these struggles that are not properly captured by these other perspectives. A recognition-theoretical framework emphasises how people's perceived violations of shared norms, which may also occur in the process of gentrification, evoke moral emotions and motivates people to struggle against this perceived injustice. The study of the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods, as well as of their resistance to the process, may therefore benefit from being studied from a recognition-theoretical perspective.

Now that the choice of the theory of recognition for the study of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification has been argued for, we can also reverse the issue: how may the study of gentrification contribute to the theory of recognition? This question will be dealt with in the next section.

1.4 The theory of recognition through the lens of gentrification

The theory of recognition is not only a relevant theoretical perspective to study gentrification; conversely, studying conflicts around gentrification may also contribute to new insights regarding the theory of recognition. This section presents four of such contributions.

First, gentrification provides a concrete, messy case to study how the variegated moral experiences that the theory of recognition describes manifest themselves. The theory of recognition features different recognitional spheres with their own standard of justice. Experiences of injustice can consequently come about for a variety of reasons: people can be disrespected in all the different spheres, and it is to be expected that all these spheres play a part in gentrification. Moreover, gentrification often has redistributive effects, as gentrification leads to higher house prices and rents (cf. Fraser, 1995). Hence, studying gentrification from a recognition-theoretical perspective may provide insights into how the different recognitional spheres, as well as issues around redistribution, are enfolded. These spheres and issues can be analytically distinguished from each other, but when studied, not in the context of an abstract, philosophical discussion, but rather in a real-life context, misrecognition in one sphere may turn out to be the condition of possibility of recognition in another sphere or of advantageous distributional outcomes (cf. Fraser, 2000; Sebrechts et al., 2019). In the context of gentrification, one could think for example of how urban transformations without due consultation of locals (which would entail disrespect of their capacities for self-legislation) may also be financially beneficial for them (through higher house prices from which local homeowners could profit).

Such enfolding would pose a challenge to Honneth's theory of recognition. This theory has been characterised as a "positive" theory of recognition, because of Honneth's emphasis on recognition as an enabling condition for people's self-realisation (Bertram & Celikates, 2015; Lepold, 2019). However, if recognition is enfolded in misrecognition and redistribution, then being recognised does not necessarily brings about a fuller self-realisation of the recognised person, since this recognition may imply a simultaneous form of misrecognition. This idea of enfolding dovetails with recent discussions about whether recognition should be conceptualised as an ambivalent phenomenon (Butler, 1997; Ikäheimo et al., 2021; Lepold, 2019). Discussions about the ambivalence of recognition have mainly taken place at a philosophical, theoretical level thus far, and seeing how these ideas fare in the context of gentrification contributes to how recognition may, or may not, be understood as an ambivalent phenomenon in concrete, real-life cases. I therefore study how recognition, misrecognition and redistribution are enfolded in the context of gentrification.

Secondly, in his theory of recognition, Honneth (1995) hypothesises a link between experiences of misrecognition and social protest. Experiences of misrecognition, he believes, are the motivation for social protest and, ultimately, for societal transformations. However, this theorisation remains somewhat rudimentary. Honneth emphasises that he does not believe that a struggle for recognition automatically and necessarily follows from an experience of injustice. He mentions, for example, that the emergence of social protest "hinges on the existence of a shared semantics" (1995: 163) through which individual experiences of injustice can be interpreted as experiences that are shared with others. However, it is likely that the emergence of social protest depends on more factors than experiences of misrecognition and the availability of a shared semantics. Studying the relation between experiences of misrecognition and social protest in the context of gentrification thus allows us to put some more empirical flesh on the recognition-theoretical bones.

Thirdly, Honneth argues in his discussion with Nancy Fraser that patterns of recognition and misrecognition do not only manifest themselves in face-to-face interactions. They can also manifest themselves in laws, norms and institutions that are reflections of recognitional patterns (Honneth, 2003a). According to this view, the economy should not be seen as an autonomous realm, but rather as embedded in norms and institutions that reflect recognition and misrecognition (see also Honneth, 2014a). Recognition and misrecognition, then, can be expressed or embodied in something else. Gentrification provides an interesting case to study this embodiment. Misrecognition, for example, may also be embodied in the built environment if certain buildings are taken as signs of disregard towards people living next to these buildings. Here, one can think of new-build housing that only caters to the needs of a richer population. Alternatively, one can think of transformations of a neighbourhood, whereby new shops, bars and restaurants for a richer clientele displace the places that long-term inhabitants frequented. Hence, gentrification provides a case wherein recognition and misrecognition are not only embodied in laws and institutions, but possibly also in the built environment (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022). The study of gentrification may thus contribute to insights in how misrecognition and misrecognition can be expressed and embodied in a variety of ways.

Fourthly and finally, the spheres of recognition are theorised at an abstract level in Honneth's formulation of his theory of recognition. Hence, it remains to be seen what forms the different recognitional spheres assume in the context of gentrification. How are the concepts of care, respect, and esteem understood by the people living through gentrification? And what counts as a violation of these standards of justice in

the context of gentrification? In itself, the theory of recognition does not tell us much about that. This rather has to be clarified by means of the empirical research that was conducted for this dissertation. Recognition and misrecognition in the context of gentrification, then, do not simply mirror the theory. Instead, empirical research should show how the abstract recognitional concepts assume concrete forms in the experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Now that has been discussed how the theory of recognition is expected to lead to new insights into gentrification and, vice versa, how the study of gentrification is expected to further the theory of recognition, it is time to further introduce the two cases that have been studied.

1.5 The cases

I have studied two cases of gentrification for this dissertation, namely in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. This section first discusses how these cases have been selected, before it describes the cases in some more detail.

1.5.1 Case selection

I selected Rotterdam and Brussels as cities to study gentrification, as these cities share some interesting features, but also differ in important respects.[7] Parts of both cities have been gentrified already (e.g. Katendrecht in Rotterdam and St. Gilles in Brussels), while other parts of both cities remain, despite their central location in the city, working-class areas. While both cities used to provide jobs for the working class (through the port in Rotterdam and industrial activities in Brussels), the process of deindustrialisation turns them into service-oriented economies (Custers & Willems, 2024; Vermeulen & Corijn, 2013). This development exerts pressure on politicians to attract new, middle- and high-class inhabitants. Gentrification thus takes place in both cities, and both are also prone to further gentrification.

An important difference between both cities concerns their respective levels of social housing. Rotterdam is a city with high levels of social housing, namely 43.6% of all homes in Rotterdam in 2023 (Statistics Netherlands, 2024). In the Brussels Capital Region, on the other hand, the different municipalities had much lower levels of social housing, ranging from 4 to 18 social housing units per 100 households in 2022 (Wijkmonitoring Brussels, 2024). The institutional context in which gentrification

7. In this dissertation, I use Brussels as a shorthand for the Brussels-Capital Region, which consists of multiple municipalities. Molenbeek, which I studied in depth, is one of these municipalities.

unfolds is thus different in both cities, and this may also be reflected in how people morally experience the process.

In order to study how different aspects of the theory of recognition fared when this theory is used to study gentrification, it was also important that the neighbourhoods had certain features. I therefore formulated five selection criteria:

1. The process of gentrification had to be going on, so as to make sure that those who were negatively affected by the process would still be there to be found. As Atkinson remarks: "Displacement is marked out by its near invisibility; where it has happened no indicators remain" (2000: 309). It was thus important to study neighbourhoods where this process of physical displacement or dislocation had not yet been completed.
2. The neighbourhood must be a place to which (at least some of) its inhabitants are socially attached; otherwise there would not be any social attachments to be misrecognised and this part of the recognition-theoretical framework could not be studied.
3. There must be a (perceived) risk of displacement, so that these social attachments are seen as potentially in danger due to the process of gentrification.
4. The neighbourhood must physically change as a result of gentrification. In this way, it can be studied if, and in what ways, experienced (mis)recognition can be embodied in the built environment.
5. I made an attempt to find one neighbourhood in which public sector actors (governments and social housing corporations) were the most important driver of gentrification, and one neighbourhood in which market actors (e.g. real estate developers) were mainly responsible for gentrification. This distinction between public sectors actors and market actors should not be seen as absolute: gentrification is often the result of cooperation between these actors (cf. Hackworth & Smith, 2001). The distinction is nonetheless important when studying gentrification from a recognition-theoretical perspective, for it may be easier for inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods to assign responsibility for gentrification to public sector actors than to anonymous market forces (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022).

With these selection criteria in mind, I started analysing newspaper articles and policy documents. I also visited Brussels and Rotterdam to walk around in neighbourhoods that might meet these selection criteria. Moreover, in both cities I spoke with people who were in some capacity or another concerned about gentrification (e.g. as researchers, activists, employees of non-profit organisations, etc.). This

exploratory research led to the selection of the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime. Both neighbourhoods fulfilled the first four criteria, and gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt was mainly driven by public sector actors, whereas market actors played a bigger role in the Quartier Maritime. The next subsections further introduce both cases.

1.5.2 The Tweebosbuurt

In the summer of 2018 the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt received a letter from social housing corporation Vestia, saying that their homes would be demolished. For many of the inhabitants, this letter came out of the blue. They enjoyed living there and thought that their building was in too good a state to be demolished. Nonetheless, Vestia proceeded with its plan. The corporation ultimately demolished 524 rental homes, which are to be replaced by 177 new social housing units, 101 private rental units, 29 middle rent homes (*middenhuur*) and 143 owner-occupied homes. This means that, once the demolishment and the construction works are finished, the total social housing stock in the Tweebosbuurt will be diminished by 347 units. Many of the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt will thus be displaced, for there will simply not be enough social housing units for everyone to return to the neighbourhood.

The Tweebosbuurt is located in Rotterdam South and is close to the city centre. Its proximity to the city centre makes it an attractive location for many people. However, Rotterdam South is since at least two decades perceived as a region with many problems, such as poverty, criminality and unemployment. A national program, in which national and local governments, social housing corporations and other partners worked together, was set up to address these problems. Attracting "promising groups" (NPRZ, 2011: 16) of inhabitants to Rotterdam South is part of this program, and this is to be achieved *inter alia* by building homes that cater to the needs of these inhabitants. By demolishing social housing and building private rental units and owner-occupied homes, Vestia played its part in realizing that goal.

A more detailed discussion of the case of the Tweebosbuurt, and how the demolition of the social housing units there should be understood in relation to Rotterdam's urban policy and the financial incentives of Vestia, will be given in Chapter 4. I will now continue by further introducing the second case, namely that of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime.

1.5.3 The Quartier Maritime

The Quartier Maritime is a neighbourhood in Molenbeek in Brussels, Belgium. It is close to the city centre of Brussels 1000. In that respect, it resembles the

Tweebosbuurt's location. Like Rotterdam-South, Molenbeek is also seen as a place with many problems. Especially after the attacks in Paris in November 2015, Molenbeek became a territorially stigmatised place (cf. Wacquant et al., 2014) – some of those held responsible for the attack were *Molenbeekois*. Despite this reputation, parts of Molenbeek have been gentrifying in recent years.

Two developments stand out in this respect: Tour & Taxis and the Canal Plan. Tour & Taxis provides a new-built site where an old train station has been refurbished and turned into a centre for events, shops and restaurants. New apartment buildings are also built on this site. The Canal Plan aims at redeveloping the a large part of the area bordering Brussels' canal. Both Tour & Taxis and the Canal Plan provide housing and facilities for the middle and higher classes. The needs and wishes of a large part of the population of the Quartier Maritime are therefore not addressed by these developments.

I will discuss gentrification in the Quartier Maritime discuss in more detail in Chapter 5. This introduction continues with a reflection on the methodology of this dissertation.

1.6 Methodology

This section focuses on three things. First, I will reflect on the interdisciplinary nature of this research and discuss how this necessitated engaging in some theoretical work. Secondly, I will discuss the empirical methods that were employed. Thirdly and finally, I will reflect on my positionality.

1.6.1 Reflections on the interdisciplinary nature of the research

To better understand gentrification-induced conflict and the moral experiences of the people living through the process, the theory of recognition was used in this dissertation. How could these two central elements of this dissertation – the theory of recognition and the process of gentrification – be combined? This is a specific case of a more general problem that every kind of interdisciplinary research has to face: the integration of knowledge from different fields. Two problems stood out in this respect. The first one was: if, as the theory of recognition posits, people start to struggle for recognition when they are treated unjustly in a situation, then how do people exactly understand their own position in the process of gentrification? The second problem was: if we want to know if gentrification-induced conflict can be understood as a struggle for recognition, then what does a struggle for recognition exactly entail? These questions, I believe, had not yet been answered satisfactorily in the literature and theoretical work was therefore in order.

To deal with the first question, I used the work of philosopher of science Ian Hacking. He has studied how social scientific concepts have an effect on the phenomena they describe, since the people who are described (or labelled) in a certain way may, in a response to this description, alter their comportment. I applied this perspective of dynamic nominalism to gentrification. How do people understand their own position in a process of urban change if they perceive it *as* gentrification? And how do they respond to this classification? This had to be clarified in order to get a better idea of how gentrification may constitute a situation in which people may feel treated unjustly. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 2.

The second question focuses on the concept of "struggle for recognition". Although this is a central concept in Honneth's theory of recognition – the title of one of his most influential books is, after all, *The Struggle for Recognition* (Honneth, 1995) – it nonetheless remains somewhat unclear how people exactly struggle for recognition. How do they proceed if they try to get the recognition that they believe is due to them? Although the theory of recognition is also a social theory and Honneth formulates some conditions that have to be fulfilled if a struggle for recognition is to come about, more clarification was needed on what struggles for recognition exactly entail. Chapter 3 attempts to provide this clarification.

After this theoretical work was done and these two central elements of the research project were clarified, I was well-positioned for the empirical research. The methods used in the empirical part of the research are discussed next.

1.6.2 Empirical methods: data collection and analysis

To study how people morally experience gentrification, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt and also with 15 inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime. Semi-structured interviews are an apt method for this research, as they allow the interviewer to ask the interviewee about elements of gentrification that are relevant from a recognition-theoretical perspective, while they leave the interviewer with some latitude to ask follow-up questions when the interviewee mentions something unexpected that may be important (cf. Bryman, 2012: 212). Moreover, in the interaction between interviewee and interviewer, moral emotions like anger and resentment may become manifest and thereby provide insights in how misrecognition is experienced on an affective level by inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods (cf. Gilhuis & Molendijk, 2022). As moral feelings are an important element of experiences of misrecognition, interviews are an important method for the empirical study of how gentrification brings about experienced misrecognition.

Next to the interviews with the people living in gentrifying neighbourhoods, I also remained in contact with them after the interviews. Some sent me documents after the interview, and I also organised feedback sessions in both neighbourhoods. Here, my supervisors and I presented the results of the research project in order to corroborate the findings and to report our conclusions back to the people who helped us with our research.

I also had conversations with researchers and activists concerned with gentrification and displacement in both cities. In Brussels, I also spoke with inhabitants of other parts of the metropolitan region. In Rotterdam, I attended the Rotterdam edition of the national housing protest (*Woonopstand*) on 17 October 2021. This protest started at the Afrikaanderplein, close to the Tweebosbuurt, as the latter had become a symbolic place for resistance against demolishment of housing. Inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt also appeared on the stage at the Afrikaanderplein. Moreover, I used descriptive statistics regarding the percentages of social housing in both Molenbeek and Rotterdam to better understand the different housing tenures in both cities. These conversations, observations at the housing protest and descriptive statistics all served to develop a better understanding of the wider context in which the processes of gentrification took place.

Finally, I analysed several types of documents to gather additional information and to corroborate what I heard in the interviews and additional conversations. These were newspaper articles, policy documents, court rulings and rapports of the United Nations. The analysis of these documents helped to get a better grasp of how gentrification unfolded in both contexts and to understand how the neighbourhoods were depicted in different media.

The interviews with inhabitants were transcribed verbatim and subsequently analysed by means of qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. The analysis followed an abductive approach (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). This approach starts from extant theory – in this case the theory of recognition and the literature on gentrification– and searches for empirical findings to contribute to further developing or amending this theory. The collected data was used to concretise the abstract theoretical concepts of the theory of recognition to see what meanings they assumed in the context of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. Moreover, the data was used to elaborate on the literature on the lived experience of inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods by focusing on the variety of ways in which this was experienced as injustice. The theory of recognition and the

literature on gentrification thus served as the lens through which the collected data were analysed and that provided the background for how I made sense of the data.

1.6.3 Positionality

Interviews are interactions between persons and the identity of the interviewer may therefore have an effect on the data collection and analysis. In this subsection, I will therefore reflect on my positionality. I will discuss three elements here: the languages I speak, my identity as a researcher and my own housing tenure.

I am a native Dutch speaker, I use English on an everyday basis and I took it upon me to learn French to conduct my research in Brussels. The interviews were held in the language that the interviewee preferred. Despite my efforts, I have not felt as comfortable speaking French as I felt speaking Dutch or English. This may have had an effect on the interviews I conducted. In the interviews I held in Dutch and in English, I could easily pose follow-up questions and respond to what the interviewee told me. This was more difficult in the French interviews. I do not believe, however, that my level of French limited my access to interviewees in Brussels. They saw that I tried to speak their language and I think that this was often appreciated. Moreover, at the time of the interviews, my French was at a sufficient level to have detailed conversations about gentrification and I do not think that interviewees refrained from telling me about their experiences because my level of French would not be sufficient to understand it. The length of the interviews in French were also comparable to the length of the interviews in Dutch. However, there were also people in both neighbourhoods who did not speak Dutch, English or French. I have not been able to interview these people. As a result, I could not take their stories into account in my research. The account of the experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods that I will sketch in this dissertation is therefore incomplete in this respect.

A second aspect of my position was my identity as a researcher. This has had different effects on the access I had to interviewees and other people I spoke with. On the one hand, I was sometimes approached with some suspicion. People asked me why I did my research, for whom and whose interests my research would serve. Disappointment in authorities, which was extended to me as a researcher, seemed to play a part here. In these cases, I explained that I was doing research for Radboud University, that its only interest was that my research would be as good as possible and that I operated independently from any other party, like a government or a social housing corporation. This usually sufficed to take away the suspicion.

On the other hand, my identity as a researcher also opened some doors. When I approached people for interviews about the transformations in their neighbourhood, they often also told that they found it important to share their view on that matter with me. They sometimes seemed to perceive it as a moral duty to share their story, because they believed that their stories ought to be heard by as many people as possible. This helped to get access to interviewees.

Moreover, my identity as a researcher sometimes helped to build a rapport with the interviewees. Many of them were interested in gentrification and also very knowledgeable about it. They often knew a lot about the process, had knowledge of cases of gentrification in other cities and countries and were aware of urban policy that stimulated gentrification. They sometimes also referred to the names of urban studies scholars. It was thus often easy to understand each other, as the interviewees and I had some of the same concepts and language at our disposal.

However, regarding my identity as a researcher, it should also be noted that both the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime have often been studied before. Students of social and economic inequality have often done research in these neighbourhoods. This may have made it more difficult to find interviewees, as people may had been fed up with interview requests and did not feel motivated to talk to another researcher.

Thirdly and finally, my own tenure as a renter sometimes helped to create a rapport with the interviewees. As we were often speaking about precarious housing and the housing shortage in general, my own position as a renter of an attic sometimes seemed to signal to the interviewee that I could easily understand their point of view, as I faced some of the challenges that the interviewees also worried about. This sometimes seemed to help to gain the trust of the interviewees.

In this subsection, I tried to reflect on my positionality as a researcher. I have mentioned three aspects of my identity that I believe to be important in this respect, and although I think that it is valuable to reflect on how one's positionality may influence one's findings, it should also be mentioned that a reflection on one's positionality can never be complete. It is impossible to accurately describe a person, including – or especially – oneself. As Hannah Arendt writes:

> The moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him; we begin to

> describe a type or a "character" in the old meaning of the word, with the result that his specific uniqueness escapes us. (Arendt, 2018: 181)

I thus cannot claim to have achieved complete clarity about my positionality, but I do hope that these reflections have at least removed some obscurity about it.

1.7 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured as follows. It contains seven chapters. The introduction is followed by two theoretical chapters. After that, the three empirical chapters will be presented. Each of the theoretical and empirical chapters is concluded with a short epilogue. The dissertation ends with a conclusion.

Chapter 2 focuses on the concept of gentrification and provides a review of the literature. It concentrates on the transformations that the concept and the phenomenon of gentrification have undergone and tries to understand why gentrification is so difficult to grasp. I use Ian Hacking's philosophical perspective of dynamic nominalism to argue that gentrification should be conceptualised as a moving target. The concept of gentrification has left the confines of academic discourse and has been taken up by people who perceive processes of urban transformation through the lens of gentrification. They may alter their actions in response to this understanding of processes of urban change and of their own position in these processes. People's responses to urban transformations may affect how these processes unfold and this may, in turn, necessitate a change of the concept of gentrification. The interaction between the concept of gentrification and the phenomenon it describes means that both the concept and the phenomenon change and gentrification should therefore be understood as a moving target. The perspective of dynamic nominalism helps to clarify how people experience gentrification, how this is mediated by their knowledge of the process and how this influences their understanding of their own role and position in the process.

Chapter 3 discusses the theory of recognition in detail. More specifically, it tries to delimit the concept of "struggle for recognition". It therefore emphasises that recognition is a an affirmative response that is *due* in a given case. It is the right response, i.e. the response that is owed to the one demanding recognition. But how can one struggle for recognition? How can one convince the addressee of the demand for recognition that recognition is due in a given case? By formulating an answer to these questions, I tried to specify what struggles for recognition exactly entail. This helps to distinguish more clearly between struggles for recognition and other kinds of social struggle.

Chapter 4 is the first empirical chapter of this dissertation. It presents the findings of the research that I have conducted in the Tweebosbuurt. Many people of this neighbourhood lost their home after Vestia decided to demolish a large part of the neighbourhood. Based on interviews with (former) inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt, I argue that the moral experiences of people living through gentrification may be much more complex than has been described in the gentrification literature thus far. Their moral experiences are not only related to displacement, nor do they only cover one aspect of people's identities, like race or class. Rather, the moral experiences of inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods are multifaceted and cover various forms of misrecognition.

Chapter 5 discusses another case of gentrification. The Quartier Maritime has been significantly transformed through the reconstruction of an old train station and the new-build apartment buildings on the site of Tour & Taxis. These developments largely cater to the needs of a new, wealthy population, rather than to the needs of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime. Interviews with inhabitants of this neighbourhood showed that they saw the developments in their neighbourhood as an expression of misrecognition of locals, although they were not only negative about it. Tour & Taxis also provides a space for events and local homeowners also profit from the rising house prices in their neighbourhoods. These rising prices come, however, at the expense of prospective buyers and renters. Moreover, if the opinions of the inhabitants were taken seriously, the developments in their neighbourhood would have looked rather differently: the neighbourhood would have become less attractive to wealthy newcomers and the house prices would not have increased as much. I therefore argue that the recognition and financial benefits that materialise in the process of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime are enfolded in misrecognition. This notion of enfolding of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition is useful for the conceptualisation of processes of urban transformation that are not perceived as being purely "good" or "bad".

Chapter 6 compares gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime and focuses on resistance to the process. Resistance to gentrification assumed quite different forms in both contexts. In Chapter 6, I discuss these differences and try to understand where these differences come from. Based on the theory of recognition, I developed a framework that identifies 15 factors that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. These factors help to better understand why resistance to gentrification may manifest itself in different ways in different contexts. The particularities of the process of gentrification are important in this respect, e.g., with regards to the form of displacement that gentrification gives rise to and regarding

the extent to which different inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods face the same consequences of the process. The framework that is developed here can also be used for the study of gentrification in other contexts. It moreover shows that the relation between feelings of misrecognition and the emergence of social protest is more complex than is assumed in Honneth's theory of recognition. There are many factors that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of this dissertation. It provides an answer to this dissertation's sub-questions before it answers the central research question. The conclusion reflects on the limitations of the research that is presented in this dissertation, it discusses the scientific and societal relevance of the findings and suggests different pathways for future research.

Chapter 2

Why can't we grasp gentrification? Or: Gentrification as a moving target

Abstract

Since the term "gentrification" was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964, this concept and the phenomenon it referred to have been subject to change. This paper reviews the literature and employs Ian Hacking's work to investigate how two types of changes – i.e. changes of the concept and of the phenomenon – are implicated by each other. By investigating the interaction between a classification and its class, it becomes possible to understand gentrification as, in Hacking's terms, a "moving target". This paper argues that gentrification can be conceptualised as such and explores the consequences of this for gentrification research.

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2.1 Introduction

Gentrification research faces a paradox. This paradox is reminiscent of a paradox described by Plato in his Meno. It concerns the endeavor to discover the truth. Meno asks how one can even begin to investigate something if it is not clear what one is looking for. This leads Socrates to the formulation of the paradox:

> The claim is that it's impossible for a man to search either for what he knows, since he knows it and that makes the search unnecessary, and he can't search for what he doesn't know either, since he doesn't even know what it is he's going to search for. (Plato, 2005: 80e)

In order to start an inquiry, the object of it has to be known and unknown at the same time; and this, of course, is an absurdity (cf. Polanyi, 1966: 22).

We can discern a similar problem in gentrification research. The term gentrification was coined by Ruth Glass to refer to the influx of the gentry to the city (Glass, 2010 [1964]). Since then, however, much has changed in cities. Hence, Slater (2006) asks whether scientists should remain faithful to the original concept and notes:

> it is worth reminding ourselves that we are *over forty years* beyond Ruth Glass' coinage! So much has happened to city economies (especially labour and housing markets), cultures and landscapes since then that it makes no sense to focus on this narrow version of the process anymore, and to insist that gentrification must remain faithful to the fine empirical details of her geographically and historically contingent definition. (Slater, 2006: 744, emphasis in original)

If the phenomenon of gentrification has changed – and it has now been nearly *sixty years* – we should no longer hold on to the original concept; the concept, so it seems, no longer describes the phenomenon. However, if the phenomenon does not fit the definition of gentrification, then how can we identify it as such? That does not seem to be possible. But if we cannot identify it as gentrification, then how can we conclude that gentrification research should concern itself with this new phenomenon? Hence, gentrification research is also faced with an apparent paradox: the new phenomenon has to be known as gentrification (in order to become an object of gentrification research) and as not-gentrification (for it does not fit the definition of gentrification) at one and the same time.

This paper proposes a framework for understanding the relation between, on the one hand, the fact that gentrification is a changing phenomenon and, on the other hand, the ongoing debate on how gentrification should be defined. It contributes to these discussions by describing how two types of changes – i.e. changes at the level of the concept and at the level of the phenomenon described by it – are implicated by each other. It will do this by using the ideas of what philosopher of science Ian Hacking calls "dynamic nominalism" (Hacking, 2007). Drawing upon this perspective, it will be argued that gentrification can be fruitfully conceptualised as a "moving target". This means that there is an interaction between a concept and the phenomenon described by it and, consequently, that both the concept and the phenomenon are always on the move. This paper thus approaches the persistence of the debate around the correct definition of gentrification as a research puzzle that needs an explanation.

By using the insight that gentrification is one of the most politically loaded words in geography (Lees et al., 2008: 155), I will argue that the way in which scholars understand gentrification has an effect on the social world; gentrification research is not "outside" of gentrification, but becomes part of how the phenomenon is understood by social actors. This implies that processes of urban renewal can change by virtue of being identified as gentrification. Taking up such a perspective provides the tools to study why gentrification sometimes invokes more powerful reactions than other processes of neighborhood change (Brown-Saracino, 2016: 223). I will elaborate on all this in the remainder of this paper.

Beyond its particular goal, this paper tries to show how dynamic nominalism can be useful for geography. According to Hacking (2007), his ideas are applicable to many social phenomena. Gentrification, because of its contentious nature, may be a paradigmatic case of a moving target in geography; it is nonetheless to be expected that the interaction between concept and phenomenon can also be discovered with respect to other geographical topics.

This paper is organised as follows. First, it discusses several definitions of gentrification, followed by an examination of how we can think of gentrification as a changing process. I will then introduce the work of Ian Hacking and discuss dynamic nominalism. After this, I will argue that gentrification can be understood along these lines and consider what the implications of this new conceptualisation are for gentrification research.

2.2 The concept of gentrification

This section will be concerned with different definitions of gentrification. The goal of this section is not to give an exhaustive overview of the definitional issues surrounding gentrification, but rather to show how the concept has changed since it first appeared in print. In this section, it will also be considered why the (changing) definitions of gentrification matter.

The concept "gentrification" was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964, in order to describe the changes that were going on in the working-class quarters in London at that time. These quarters had "been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower … Once this process of "gentrification" starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass, 2010 [1964]: 7). As the term "gentrification" describes the displacement of working-class occupiers as a result of the influx of the "gentry" to the city of London, the concept clearly bears the traces of the place and time in which it originated.

This origin, however, has not been an obstacle for the employment of the term in other contexts and at other times. As Beauregard (2010 [1986]) notes, several different (though related) phenomena have received the label of gentrification. In this respect, the marginal gentrifiers described by Rose (1984) are a case in point. Marginal gentrifiers are people with moderate incomes who buy old dwellings and renovate them before they start living there. They do not possess the wealth that is often associated with gentrifiers; instead, they use their "sweat equity" to make living in inner-city neighborhoods a viable option for themselves (Rose, 1984: 61). A more recent example of marginal gentrifiers is provided by the urban gentrifiers who – in search of an authentic urban lifestyle – want to live in cities, but lack the money to do so without sharing apartments and living ascetic lives (Zukin, 2008: 727). Not all gentrifiers are wealthy and thus, Rose argues, gentrification researchers should keep in mind that there are different "forms of 'gentrification' and some types of 'gentrifiers'" (Rose, 1984: 62). Hence, Beauregard concludes, "'gentrification' must be recognized as a 'chaotic concept' connoting many diverse if interrelated events and processes; these have been aggregated under a single (ideological) label and have been assumed to require a single causal explanation" (2010 [1986]: 13).

The gentrification literature exhibits two strategies to deal with this "chaos". The first strategy is to opt for a very narrow, precise definition of gentrification, so as to be able to distinguish gentrification from other, distinct processes of urban change. This option is chosen by Van Criekingen and Decroly (2003). They argue

that one can only speak of gentrification when the process starts with a decayed and impoverished neighborhood; when this neighborhood undergoes transformations via improvements to the built environment, social status growth and a change of the population; and when the outcome of these transformations is a wealthy neighborhood (Van Criekingen & Decroly, 2003: 2454). Hence, according to these authors, marginal gentrification does not fit this description (Van Criekingen Decroly, 2003: 2454).

The second strategy is to use a broad and open definition of gentrification (Clark, 2010 [2005]; Smith & Williams, 2010 [1986]). Smith and Williams (2010 [1986]: 10) provide a complex definition which mentions the different aspects of gentrification. They argue that gentrification does not merely affect housing; instead, they contend that gentrification can only be fully understood if the development of recreational spaces, hotels and inner-city offices are also considered. Clark's (2010 [2005]) influential and often-used definition of gentrification is equally broad, but much simpler. He builds upon Beauregard (2010 [1986]) and Rose (1984), but emphasises instead that the chaos of the concept is a problem to be solved. The concept's different elements should be disentangled in order to hold on to the essential, and remove the accidental, elements of gentrification. Clark therefore argues that gentrification consists of the combination of investments in the built environment and the displacement of original land-users as a result of the influx of wealthier people:

> 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. The greater the difference in socio-economic status, the more noticeable the process, not least because the more powerful the new users are, the more marked will be concomitant change in the built environment. It does not matter where, and it does not matter when. Any process of change fitting this description is, to my understanding, gentrification. (Clark, 2010 [2005]: 25)

As it is only implicit in this description, it should be added that for Clark, gentrification is by definition the result of what Neil Smith described as the rent gap (see Clark, 1992: 360; 2010 [2005]: 27). The influx of land-users of a higher socio-economic status thus results from an earlier "disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use" (Smith, 1979: 545).

Despite the many attempts to define gentrification, there is no consensus on what should be meant by the concept (cf. Lees et al., 2010: 3-6). Nonetheless, the debate around the definition of gentrification remains important, because how gentrification is defined influences how its effects are measured empirically, as well as how it is evaluated morally (Marcuse, 1999). Given the different definitions of gentrification – and the different conceptions of displacement, which is often considered to be the most severe consequence of the process (see e.g. Atkinson, 2015; Baeten et al., 2017; Davidson, 2009; Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Hyra, 2015; Marcuse, 2010 [1986]) – different studies have come to diverging conclusions about the magnitude of displacement caused by gentrification (e.g. Atkinson, 2000; Freeman & Braconi, 2004; Newman & Wyly, 2006). With the different findings on the effects of gentrification (see Brown-Saracino, 2017), it is no surprise that gentrification has been fiercely criticised by some (e.g. Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008), as well as supported by others (e.g. Byrne, 2003; Whyte, 2010 [1988]).

A clarifying remark is needed at this point. Given the different definitions in the literature, it might have become unclear what the term gentrification is taken to mean here. In the remainder of this paper, gentrification will be understood according to Clark's (2010 [2005) broad definition (unless stated otherwise). This definition is used as a heuristic device, because this broad definition can be used to discuss the different phenomena that are subsumed under the term "gentrification". I will reflect on the usefulness of this definition in the discussion. At that place, I will also discuss how Clark's definition can be adapted in order to be able to capture recent manifestations of gentrification. In the next section, though, it will first be considered how gentrification as a phenomenon has been subject to change.

2.3 Gentrification: a process in process

As Doucet notices, gentrification is "a process of change and a changing process" (Doucet, 2014: 125). And indeed, several studies have provided insight in the changing nature of the phenomenon of gentrification. A first branch of literature in this respect is provided by the writings on stage models of gentrification. One of the first of these models is offered by Clay (2010 [1979]). He argues that gentrification starts when pioneers take the risk to fix up their houses. This stage is followed by the influx of new gentrifiers and accompanied by promotional activities that highlight the perks of the developing neighborhood. While the early stages are not accompanied by much displacement, eventually the middle-class enters the neighborhood and, consequently, displacement occurs at a rather large scale. Clay envisions the possibility of this process to go on until an end stage of "completed gentrification" (2010 [1979]: 38) has been reached.

Berry (2010 [1985]) and Bourne (2010 [1993]) share Clay's view that gentrification takes place in consecutive waves, but argue against descriptions that are overly general. Rather, they assert that one should consider the historical and geographical context in which gentrification unfolds. Berry argues that one important factor contributing to gentrification was given by "excessive scrappage of inner-city housing" (2010 [1985]: 50) in the 1970s. Bourne (2010 [1993]) argues that gentrification has resulted from a complex of historical factors, like demographic trends and economic booms and busts. The factors responsible for stimulating gentrification were on the verge of disappearing in the 1980s; hence, Bourne predicted that the importance of gentrification might be significantly reduced (2010 [1993]: 63).

With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that this latter prediction has not become true. Gentrification has not vanished. What has happened, however, is that it has changed its form. Hackworth and Smith (2001; see also Aalbers, 2019a; 2020) argue that the role of the state has grown more important in the course of the history of gentrification. This is, *inter alia*, due to the fact that the neighborhoods that were relatively easy to gentrify had been "fully reinvested" (Hackworth & Smith, 2001: 469). The consequence of earlier gentrification was that "gentrifiers and outside investors have begun to roam into economically risky neighbourhoods … which are difficult for individual gentrifiers to make profitable without state assistance" (Hackworth and Smith, 2001: 469). Because of earlier waves of gentrification, the process of gentrification could thus only continue if it transfigured itself, so as to fit the different environment.

Another example of how gentrification has transfigured is given by the phenomenon of "super-gentrification" (Lees, 2003; Butler and Lees, 2006). This concept refers to "the transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighbourhoods into much more exclusive and expensive enclaves" (Lees, 2003: 2487). Super-gentrification also presents a challenge to the idea that neighborhoods can be completely gentrified (Lees, 2003: 2506). Even in already prosperous neighborhoods that appear to be completely gentrified, gentrification can occur again. However, it then appears in another form, for it has to build on the neighborhood that is already gentrified, though not yet super-gentrified. And of course, the super-gentrified neighborhood can, at least in theory, be gentrified again (super-super-gentrification), and so on and so forth (cf. Lees, 2003: 2506).

Earlier forms of gentrification can also have a more indirect effect on the conditions wherein new forms of gentrification take place. Wyly and Hammel (1999) argue that earlier processes of gentrification can affect new occurrences of gentrification via

changes in housing policy. For, on the one hand, "three decades of gentrification have altered the context for certain facets of housing policy" (Wyly & Hammel, 1999: 715) and on the other hand, revisions of public policy and modifications in housing finance "have also transformed the environment in which gentrification, quite literally, takes place" (Wyly & Hammel, 1999: 721). The effect of earlier gentrification can thus be mediated by public policy and housing finance (cf. Hochstenbach, 2017a; Van Weesep, 1994).

The discussion of the several studies in this section shows how gentrification has undergone changes. It has changed because of earlier processes of gentrification that have altered the conditions in which new processes unfold. Gentrification, then, appears to be an elusive phenomenon. The remainder of this paper will investigate this elusiveness by considering the following questions: how does the changing phenomenon affect the concept? And: how does the concept affect the phenomenon? The next section discusses the ideas of philosopher of science Ian Hacking, who has studied the interaction between concepts of the social sciences and the phenomena they intend to describe.

2.4 The objects of the social sciences as moving targets

Gentrification's elusive nature is not a characteristic that is unique to it; rather, it is a characteristic of many social phenomena. Philosopher Ian Hacking has drawn attention to the interaction between social scientific concepts and the phenomena they purport to describe (see e.g. Hacking, 1999; 2007). Hacking mentions Nietzsche and Foucault as his predecessors in the tradition he calls "dynamic nominalism" (Hacking, 2007: 294-295). This is a species of nominalism, for it argues that social phenomena are categorised together because they share a name; and it is dynamic, because it is concerned with "how names interact with the named" (Hacking, 2007: 294).

We can see dynamic nominalism in action in Foucault's first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978). In this work, Foucault attempts, among other things, to analyze how homosexuality came into existence in 1870. At first sight, this may appear as a surprising, or even downright false, claim; it suffices to read Plato's *Symposium* (2008) to ascertain that erotic relations between men were a common practice in ancient Greece. However, Foucault's point is that homosexuality only emerged after a new categorisation saw the light of day:

> We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was

> characterized … less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself. (Foucault, 1978: 43)

And he adds: "Westphal's famous article of 1870 on "contrary sexual sensations" can stand as its date of birth … the homosexual was now a species" (Foucault, 1978: 43).

The invention of a category can have an effect on how people are understood, both by others and by themselves. On the one hand, with the medical category of homosexuality, it became possible to be diagnosed as such by physicians and to be understood as a patient in need of treatment. On the other hand, it became possible to identify oneself as a homosexual human being and to be proud of that.

Before the concept of homosexuality existed, it was not yet possible to understand oneself by means of this concept as a homosexual being; a homosexual person was not yet a distinct *kind* of person and one could thus also not yet be of this kind. This became a possibility only when there was a category available which provided the necessary description. Therefore, this is a case in which, according to Hacking, "our classifications and our classes conspire to emerge hand in hand" (2006a: 106). The self-identification as a homosexual person was not possible before the category of homosexuality existed in the space of possible self-understandings. Drawing upon Anscombe (2000), who argued that intentional actions are actions under a description, Hacking concludes that "if a description is not there, then intentional actions under that description cannot be there either: that, apparently, is a fact of logic" (Hacking, 2006a: 108). A peculiar characteristic, then, of "human action is that by and large what I am deliberately doing depends on the possibilities of description … Hence if new modes of description come into being, new possibilities for action come into being in consequence" (Hacking, 2006a: 108). Foucault's statement about the date of birth of the homosexual should thus be taken quite literally: the birth of the homosexual person coincided with the invention of the concept of homosexuality; this concept made it possible to be a new kind of person. As Hacking explains: "our spheres of possibility, and hence our selves, are to some extent made up by our naming and what that entails" (Hacking, 2006a: 113).

The invention of this category made new expert knowledge and lay self-understandings possible. These effects, in turn, "flow back" in the meaning of the concept; this is the dynamic that results from the invention of concepts. Indeed, while originally invented as a medical category, homosexuality had become a concept around which people could build organisations, construct places to meet and

coordinate political struggles to demand the same rights as heterosexual couples (Hacking, 1995: 38). As such, the meaning of the concept changed. The concept has made new social practices possible; thereby, it has changed the object to which the concept originally referred; and in turn, the concept had to be adapted in order to be able to describe its new referent. This interaction between concept and referent can continue to the point that it is no longer sufficient to change the meaning of the concept; instead, a new concept has to be developed, for the discrepancy between the original concept and that to which it intends to refer, has grown too large.

Because of the interaction between concept and phenomenon, Hacking (2007) describes the phenomena of the social world as "moving targets". There is a "looping effect" (Hacking, 2007: 286) between the concept and its referent, which ensures that the described object transforms by virtue of being described in a certain way. This is the result of, on the one hand, the self-understandings of people, who may understand and experience themselves in a different manner as a result of the new description at hand. The new actions and behavior that result from a new self-understanding of people can in turn "loop back" and "force changes in the classifications and knowledge about them" (Hacking, 1999: 105). On the other hand, the interaction between concept and referent result from new institutions and practices that are made possible by a new category (Hacking, 1999: 105). In this case, a fully articulated new self-understanding which is formed directly by the new concept is not necessary; instead, new ways in which people experience themselves and their place in the world are embedded in an institutional apparatus and practice made possible by the new categorisation. This latter point suggests that scientific categories alone are not sufficient to interfere with people's self-understandings and experiences. As long as the scientific categories strictly remain within the realm of scientific discourse, they will not influence social practices (Hacking, 2004). Only when these concepts are taken up by the actors involved (e.g. practitioners, the categorised people, policy makers, etc.), they can affect social practices (Hacking, 2006b: 19).

The active role of all the different actors highlights how dynamic nominalism builds upon a Foucauldian conception of power (Hacking, 2006b). For Foucault, the exercise of power is "a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action" (Foucault, 1982: 789). Using of a new concept is one way in which power can be exercised, since new concepts allow for new ways in which people can "constitute [themselves] as subjects acting on others" (Foucault, 1983: 237; cf. Hacking, 2006b: 19). New self-understandings give people new possibilities for action that would not have been available to them if the new concept had not been at their disposal (Hacking, 2006a). Such a conception of power does not imply

that everyone has the same means to change a concept and alter the corresponding phenomenon, but it is to say that no passivity should be assumed on the part of any of the actors involved. Those who do the describing, but also those who are described by the new concept, have new possibilities for action as a result of the new concept.

Hacking's ideas are influential in the philosophy of science, but they have been criticised as well. Two criticisms are of particular relevance for this paper.[8] The first is concerned with the relation between language and intentional action. According to Hacking, intentional action is action under a description; hence, if the description of an action does not exist, one could not intentionally execute this action. Rachel Cooper (2004) questions this argument. She evokes the imaginary case of a caveman who – before language developed – made a fire. As the caveman did not have language and thus no descriptions at hand, Hacking's argument would imply that the caveman could not have intentionally made the fire. However, as Cooper (2004: 82) contends, this is false: even though the caveman cannot express in words that he wanted to light a fire, we can still maintain that he did so intentionally. We can infer his intentions, for example, from the fact that it is cold outside or from the smile on the caveman's face when the fire gets started. Some intentional actions are thus also possible *without* a description. The emergence of a new description would then not necessarily affect the phenomenon. In the case of the caveman without language, having a concept of fire making at his disposal would presumably not significantly influence his actions; he would continue making fires in the same way as he did before he knew the concept. Therefore, the coming into being of a concept does not *necessarily* change the phenomenon it describes; a concept is not necessarily constitutive of the phenomenon. It thus has to be shown in individual cases that the description actually affects the described phenomenon and that this change in the phenomenon occurred because of the existence of the concept (R. Cooper, 2004: 84).

The second criticism is concerned with Hacking's argument that feedback loops mean that objects of the social sciences should be understood as moving targets. As Tsou (2007: 340) points out, some classifications may only slightly change the behavior of individuals, such that the criteria of this classification do not have to be revised as a result of this change. In those cases, it does not seem correct to speak of moving targets, since the target remains where it was. This is all the more important,

8. A third important criticism – though not directly relevant for this paper – is directed at Hacking's argument that the existence of looping effects distinguishes the social from the natural sciences. As a result, one could make a distinction between human kinds (affected by looping effects) and natural kinds (unaffected by looping effects). This claim has been criticised, because non-human kinds can also exhibit looping effects – e.g. dog breeds that change as a result of human interference on the basis of concepts of how the breed should look (Khalidi, 2010; see also Bogen, 1988; R. Cooper, 2004).

because the interaction between classification and class can also proceed via feedback mechanisms that are stabilizing, rather than destabilizing (Kuorikoski & Pöyhönen, 2012: 195ff.; Laimann, 2020: 1054-1056). Laimann (2020: 1054-1056) mentions the example of gender. Due to gender categories and the social expectations that come with them, individuals can "come to fit their classifications" (Laimann, 2020: 1055): they comply to gender norms. This norm-confirming behavior, in turn, may be taken as a cue that the classifications can be specified more precisely, which can lead to even more stringent and narrow norms of what proper masculine and feminine comportment entails. Concepts can thus also bring about stability, rather than instability, of objects of the social sciences. In those cases they are not moving, but rather stationary, targets.

As we have seen in this section, Hacking has emphasised the interaction between a classification and its class. This interaction can make that objects of the social sciences change. He argues that these objects should therefore be understood as moving targets. However, as others have pointed out, this is not necessarily the case. Sometimes the concept does not, or only hardly, affect the phenomenon, such that a modification of the concept is unnecessary. In other cases, a description can stabilise, rather than destabilise, the object of description. In order to say that a phenomenon is a moving target in Hacking's sense of the term, there are thus three conditions that need to be fulfilled. A concept needs to:

1. Alter the phenomenon and not leave it unchanged;
2. Affect the phenomenon in a destabilizing way; and
3. Change the phenomenon to such an extent that this change, in turn, necessitates a change of the concept.

We will now return our attention to gentrification, in order to see whether this process can be usefully conceptualised as a "moving target".

2.5 Gentrification as a moving target

This section will discuss the interaction of gentrification as a concept and as a phenomenon. Section 2.5.1 considers how the concept affects the phenomenon. In section 2.5.2 the case of social mix will be discussed. Here, it will be argued that the concept of gentrification has changed the phenomenon to such an extent that the original concept of Glass (2010 [1964]) had to be adapted in order to be applicable to the changed phenomenon. All in all, section 5 will thus argue that the three above-mentioned conditions are met in the case of gentrification and that it should hence be understood as a moving target.

2.5.1 How the concept of gentrification affects the phenomenon

Several studies show that the concept of gentrification can indeed affect how the process of gentrification unfolds – at least at some moments and at some places. In section 2.2 it was already argued that the moral evaluation of gentrification is dependent on how it is defined. This is not only an academic, but a sociopolitical issue as well: the concept of gentrification has also become part of the language of policy makers, tenants, activists, real estate developers, etc. Some authors argue that the concept bears the traces of the neoliberal reality of the Anglosaxon world in which the concept originated (e.g. Butler, 2007; Maloutas, 2018; Smith, 1996). One can say of the concept of gentrification what Berger and Luckmann say of language in general: "[it] is capable of becoming the objective repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then preserve in time and transmit to following generations" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 52). With the multiple layers of meaning it incorporates, what does the concept of gentrification do in practice?

One particular effect of the concept of gentrification on social practices is given by Smith's (1996: 28-32) description of gentrification as a "dirty word". Gentrification, he argues, had become a word that was widely used by activists, tenants and others to make sense of what was going on in inner city neighborhoods. The word described how the changes in the built environment negatively affected their daily lives. The concept of gentrification had found its way from academia to the self-understandings of city inhabitants, and "this new word, gentrification, captured precisely the class dimensions of the transformations that were under way in the social geography of many central and inner cities" (Smith, 1996: 30). Hence, the image of gentrification deserved some polishing – at least, that was what the Real Estate Board of New York, Inc. thought in 1985. This group published an advert in the *New York Times*, stating that it was gentrification that would bring about a bright future: "We also believe that New York's best hope lies with families, businesses and lending institutions willing to commit themselves for the long haul to neighborhoods that need them. That's gentrification" (cited by Smith, 1996: 28-29). Spending a large sum of money on an advert defending gentrification in fact proved the opposite of what the Real Estate Board aimed for: it showed that gentrification was indeed a dirty word that bred resistance.

Gentrification is, at least sometimes, still considered to be a dirty word – although it is sometimes also framed in more supportive ways in newspapers (Brown-Sarcino & Rumpf, 2011; Tolfo & Doucet, 2021). Whether or not a process of urban change is called "gentrification" and how this process is framed in turn, influences if and to what extent the process invites opposition – at least in the Western world, where the

concept of gentrification occupies a prominent place in urban discourse (cf. Lees, 2000). Only this prominence can explain the surprise of Ley and Teo (2014) when they find that (a translation of) the term "gentrification" is not used in the newspaper coverage of urban renewal in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, what was happening in Hong Kong could be aptly described as "gentrification" – and Ley and Teo predict that the term will be used more often, once a "dissemination of class analysis" has taken place there (2014: 1301). When the term gentrification becomes part of the urban vocabulary, it is to be expected that it will affect how the inhabitants of Hong Kong experience what is going on in their city.

Two studies show that the term gentrification has come to occupy a more prominent place in public discourse in the Global North in recent years. Hochstenbach (2017b) analyses Dutch newspapers between 2000 and 2017 and finds that the term gentrification (or its Dutch equivalent *gentrificatie*) had rarely been used between 2000 and 2010, but that its use has skyrocketed from 2015 onwards. The findings of Tolfo and Doucet (2021) show that a similar process happened in Canada: in the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail*, the term gentrification was used with an increasing frequency between 1980 and 2017. These studies show that there is a growing tendency among newspapers to use the term gentrification to describe processes of urban change in the Global North. As such, the concept may, via looping effects, have a bigger impact than it had in earlier years on how the process unfolds in the Global North.

A recent debate revolves around the question whether the concept of gentrification should also be applied to other places than those in the Global North. Some scholars argue that capital easily crosses national borders and can thus take advantage of rent gaps everywhere. This process, they argue, is therefore best captured by the concept of gentrification – even though we should account for the different contexts in which the process unfolds (López-Morales, 2015; Slater, 2017; Smith, 2006). Moreover, urban policy that brings about gentrification is diffused from Western cities to other parts of the world; hence, it makes sense to use the same label to describe the outcome of such policies (Lees, 2012; Lees et al., 2016: Ch. 5; Smith, 2002). A concept related to gentrification can also be employed, though: in Mexico, for example, the expression *blanqueamiento* ("whitening") is used by activists (López-Morales, 2015: 567). This term captures three linked phenomena, namely "the arrival of affluent white middle classes both culturally and physically displacing low-income *mestizo* communities, the actual whitening of buildings imposed by the new "middle-class' aesthetic taste and the money laundering which real estate investment enables" (López-Morales, 2015: 567). As such, activists use and adapt gentrification theory for the purpose

of understanding the transformation of space in other contexts than the Anglo-American world in which the concept finds its origins (López-Morales, 2015: 567). Gentrification, as a concept, may thus "be translated into an expression that is more useful for local populations, while retaining the core principle of gentrification in the translated version" (Shin & López-Morales, 2017: 16). With the concept gentrification (or its translation) at hand, activists in the Global South can not only understand how capitalist forces transform their neighborhoods, but the concept also helps them to politicise these processes, so that the course of these developments can be shifted (López-Morales, 2015: 567). The concept of gentrification could thus be used by activists to ensure that, through a looping effect, the process unfolds in a way that does not conform to its original description. In this way, the concept can affect the phenomenon. At the same time, the term *blanqueamiento* shows that the concept of gentrification was not simply adopted, but also adapted, by Mexican activists to make it useful for the local context.

Other scholars have argued instead that the concept of gentrification – or a translation retaining its core principle – is not well-suited to understand urban transformations in the Global South, where large portions of land are not commodified. Rather, as they argue, the term gentrification distorts our understanding of processes of urban change in the Global South (Ghertner, 2015; Maloutas, 2018; Smart & Smart, 2017). Moreover, in using concepts originating in the Global North to understand processes in other places, there is a risk of reproducing dominant theories of how the world works, at the cost of alternative idioms (Smart & Smart, 2017). Concepts make up people, but they may make them up for the wrong situation, thereby making them ineffective in political struggles. This is why the concept of gentrification – while useful for the description of processes in capitalist societies – should not be used in a context of non-commodified land, according to Ghertner: "The limitation of gentrification, as an analytic, is that it fails to grasp transformations in the peri-urban and outer areas of post-socialist and post-colonial cities where the most violent displacement is taking place and where non-fully privatized tenure endures" (2015: 559-560).

Whether or not it is considered useful to frame a process of urban change as gentrification is thus also a matter of political strategy: a looping effect, whereby the concept affects the phenomenon, is sometimes deliberately sought. Reframing an urban development plan as gentrification can radicalise ongoing debates on processes of urban change and thereby serve politically strategic purposes (Lees & Ferreri, 2016: 22; cf. Maeckelbergh, 2012: 670). However, the outcome of such a strategy is sometimes hard to predict. Werth and Marienthal (2016) argue that gentrification is

a polyvalent "grid of meaning" and that the specific interpretation of the concept by protesters influences which groups are, and which groups are not, deemed worthy of protection during struggles against gentrification (see also Lee, 2020). It therefore does not merely matter *if* something is understood as gentrification, but also *how* gentrification is then understood. If the harshest consequences of gentrification are downplayed in public discourse, resistance to gentrification may be severely constricted (Ellis-Young, 2020).

When the term gentrification is available in one's culture, it can be used as a symbol around which people can organise themselves (cf. Joas, 2002; Pull & Richard, 2021). Brown-Saracino (2021) reports how the loss of dyke bars in four American cities was considered to be the result of gentrification and how this explanation, in turn, was used to forge a collective which otherwise, in a situation of "post-identity politics", may not have come about. As she writes: "activists strategically deploy "gentrification" as a symbol to generate a sense of shared vulnerability" (2021: 1029). The multiple layers of meaning attached to the term gentrification make it especially useful as "a flexible symbol for calling out a sense of shared fate" (Brown-Saracino, 2021: 1053). Gentrification provided the lens through which people understood the loss of the bars they frequented in the past and, consequently, how they evaluated urban change.

Experiences of gentrification are also mediated by knowledge of the process, e.g. that it may lead to displacement and can alter the ambiance of originally working-class neighborhoods. As a result of this knowledge, the process can be experienced as a problem, not only by those at risk of being displaced, but by gentrifiers as well. Brown-Saracino (2007) describes gentrifiers who act as social preservationist, trying to preserve the authentic nature of the neighborhood they have come to inhabit. They view their own presence in the neighborhood as a danger to the community and hence believe that it is their duty to fight against possible displacement. Moreover, since they are not part of the community they appreciate so much, they believe they should not interfere too much with it; their interference would only contaminate it. The result is that the preservationists keep themselves at a distance from the people they have deemed authentic, in order to protect this community. The self-understandings of social preservationists, i.e. that they might endanger a community worthy of protection, thus explains that the preservationists are committed to a position of "virtuous marginality" with respect to the authentic community (Brown-Saracino, 2007: 460). How the process of gentrification unfolds and what its effects are (e.g. the levels of displacement and of social interaction between different groups) is thus influenced by how the gentrifiers understand themselves *qua* gentrifiers and by how they understand their role in the neighborhood (cf. Bridge, 2001). The

self-understandings of social preservationists are constituted by their knowledge of gentrification and, in turn, they actively tried to act *not* in accordance with the standard image of the gentrifier.

As was argued in this section, the concept of gentrification has made new self-understandings and social practices possible and these, in turn, have affected how the process unfolds. Moreover, the effect of the concept on the phenomenon has to a large extent been destabilizing: activists and social preservationists deliberately tried to ensure that descriptions of gentrification (as e.g. leading to large-scale displacement and a loss of authenticity of the neighborhood) became not true (cf. Clark, 2014; 2015). The first two conditions that have to be met in order to speak of a moving target are thus fulfilled in the case of gentrification.

With the predominantly negative connotations of the word "gentrification", policy makers are well advised to avoid this term (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020: 494). A proposal to "stimulate gentrification" seems to be a recipe for failure, for it will very likely provoke resistance. Policy makers have better chances of success if they employ a different term. An ostensibly more benign concept is that of "social mix", which will be discussed in the next section. There it will be argued that the definition of gentrification had to be changed in order to include social mix policies.

2.5.2 The case of social mix

Given that gentrification had become a dirty word, policy makers have used the concept of social mix instead. Policy aimed at stimulating social mixing avoids associations with displacement of the lower socio-economic class. It suggests instead that the original inhabitants and the newcomers live harmoniously together. The actual results of social mix policy are, however, often the same as the results of gentrification: it can lead to the displacement of the lower income class and be detrimental to informal support networks in neighborhoods (Lees, 2008). Scholars have therefore criticised policy aimed at increasing diversity and interpreted it as gentrification "rhetorically and discursively disguised as social mixing" (Bridge et al., 2012: 1). In other words: social mix is gentrification, but just harder to detect; it is "gentrification by stealth" (Bridge et al., 2012).

Conceptualizing gentrification as a moving target, however, suggests a different interpretation of social mix policy. Social mix should not be seen as merely a rhetorical device to disguise gentrification; rather, this discourse affects what actually happens in gentrified neighborhoods. In her description of the process, Glass predicted that gentrification "goes on rapidly until all or most of the original

working class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass, 2010 [1964]: 7). If a policy aims at a social mix in terms of income of inhabitants, such an outcome would not be feasible: if (almost) the whole working class would be displaced, there would simply no longer be any mix of different income groups in that neighborhood. A justification in terms of social mix would then no longer be feasible.[9]

It is true that justifications can be employed pragmatically by social actors, but they cannot be used as one pleases. A justification is not convincing if it does not hold up when it is "confronted with the real world" (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005: 167). The same holds for social mix policy: if it would not live up to its promise, it would lose all credibility and could no longer be used as a justification for urban policy. A justification of urban renewal in terms of social mix would not be credible if it would come with an (almost) complete displacement of the working class. For the same reasons, Tissot (2011; 2014) argues that gentrifiers' taste for diversity should not be reduced to hypocrisy; even though gentrifiers try to control diversity by defining what counts as acceptable behavior in the neighborhood, this does not mean that they aim for homogeneity. Rather, their taste for diversity structures the space of their possible actions. In the same vein, we cannot understand social mix policy as gentrification – at least, when we use Glass' original definition of gentrification. Social mix can be interpreted as gentrification, however, when gentrification is understood in a broader fashion, as Clark's (2010 [2005]) definition intended.

We can thus describe the evolution from early gentrification to social mix policy as the history of a moving target. Since its first description, gentrification was associated with high levels of displacement of the working class. As a result, gentrification became a dirty word. This, in turn, necessitated policy makers to develop a policy that addressed critique on gentrification; social mix policy could do this job. Here, we see the interaction, theorised by Hacking (2007), between the concept and the phenomenon. When original inhabitants understood developments in their neighborhoods as gentrification, this bred resistance. As a result, the phenomenon changed; resistance to gentrification was something to be reckoned with by policy makers and project developers. Hence, the name affected the named. In response, a new policy was developed: that of social mix. With a policy aiming at social mix, a complete disappearance of the working class was no longer feasible; at least, not

9. This is not to say that social mix policy does not lead to *any* displacement. Indeed, it has been found that displacement occurs in neighborhoods aiming at a social mix (Walks & Maaranen, 2008). However, (almost) complete displacement has, to the best of my knowledge, not taken place in neighborhoods where policy makers aimed at creating a social mix.

without the justifications for that policy losing all credibility. This suggests that we cannot understand social mix policy as an ideological masquerade to enhance gentrification by stealth; social mix policy does not (merely) distort our view of what is "really" going on in the real world, but rather influences what kind of urban policy is feasible. If social mix is still to be understood as gentrification, however, the definition of gentrification had to mutate in turn and become something like the one Clark (2010 [2005]) proposed. Here, we thus see how the phenomenon affects the concept. Social mix could only be included in the class described by the classification "gentrification" at the moment that this classification was adapted. The changed phenomenon thus also affected the concept; thereby, the third condition that has to be satisfied to speak of a moving target is also fulfilled.

From its earliest forms to its latest, both the concept and the phenomenon of gentrification have changed significantly. This is partially explained by the interaction between the concept and the phenomenon. As such, gentrification can be fruitfully conceptualised as a moving target. The next section explores what this conceptualisation of gentrification implies for gentrification research and more recent discussions in the gentrification literature.

2.6 Discussion

As was argued above, the definition of gentrification has changed from describing a rather specific phenomenon in England (Glass, 2010 [1964]) to describing a broad range of phenomena (Clark, 2010 [2005]). The downside of such a broad definition of gentrification is that it leads to a collection of quite different phenomena, such that including all these phenomena in the class of gentrification contaminates that class, instead of bringing about a greater understanding (Maloutas, 2018; Marcuse, 1999). The benefit of this broad definition is that it makes it possible to connect different phenomena to each other that would otherwise be studied in isolation. Clark's broad definition can also capture phenomena like social mix policy, which were not captured by Glass' original definition. It thus allows one to say, for example, that social mix policy is "gentrification by stealth" (Bridge et al., 2012). The broadness of the definition is probably one of the reasons why the concept of gentrification is taken up by so many people and is, in this respect, so successful. But is the concept of gentrification still changing? Is gentrification still on the move?

To include all phenomena that are now labeled as gentrification, Clark's broad (2010 [2005]) definition may still not be broad enough. This becomes clear when we look at the financialisation of housing, which has brought about what Aalbers (2019a) calls a fifth wave of gentrification. However, it is difficult to call this gentrification

when we use Clark's definition, since the element of "a reinvestment in fixed capital" (2010 [2005]: 25) is often absent from it. When more capital flows to real estate, this can drive up house prices and rents – even without investments that enhance the quality of the property. Wachsmuth and Weisler (2018) argue that this is aggravated by technological innovations like Airbnb, which create an alternative and potentially more profitable use of real estate, also without significant investments in the quality of the property (see also Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2021; Grisdale, 2021; Paccoud, 2017). This gentrification through financialisation (Aalbers, 2019a, 2019b) has become possible on a larger scale as a result of austerity urbanism (Peck, 2012). Through government budget cuts and neoliberal reforms, leading to welfare cuts and the dismantling of public housing, numerous dwellings have become available on the market and have been turned into objects from which profits are reaped (August & Walks, 2018; Boelhouwer & Priemus, 2014). This has contributed to higher house prices and rents and an overall lack of affordability (Aalbers, 2019a; Forrest & Hirayama, 2015). As a result, an augmenting number of people are left vulnerable to displacement (Annunziata & Lees, 2016; V. Cooper & Patton, 2021; Mösgen et al., 2019; Walks & Soederberg, 2021).

If we want to understand these developments as gentrification, it is necessary to adapt Clark's (2010 [2005]) definition, while retaining what is arguably its core. A "change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital" (Clark, 2010 [2005]: 25) would then no longer be a necessary component of the definition of gentrification. Gentrification should then rather be understood as the process involving displacement (in all its forms) of land-users as a result of market developments that create a rent gap, such that the new land-users are of a higher socio-economic status. Displacement should be understood in the broadest possible fashion, ranging from last-resident displacement and exclusionary displacement (Marcuse, 2010 [1986]), via cultural and political displacement (Hyra, 2015) to the experiential process of un-homing (Davidson, 2009; Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). Market developments, in this definition, refer to changes *in* the market (e.g. higher rents or real estate prices), changes *of* the market (a new organisation of the market, resulting from e.g. new policies and regulations or technological innovations such as Airbnb) and/or the introduction of market mechanisms in formerly non-commodified spaces. Such a definition of gentrification seems to be able to capture the broad range of phenomena that currently go by this name.

I want to draw attention to three aspects of this definition of gentrification. First of all, this definition highlights that gentrification is no longer always clearly visible in the built environment. If a rent gap can be created without investments in fixed

capital, such that this latter aspect of earlier gentrification should no longer be understood as an essential component of gentrification as such, this implies that gentrification manifests itself differently in the built environment than it did before. With gentrification through financialisation, it is no longer necessary that a real estate owner invests significant amounts of money in the quality of his property to make it profitable. Hence, one would expect that gentrification would no longer unfold in the manner depicted by Smith (1982): as the result of capital reinvestments in a place which follow after a period of disinvestment at the same location. In Smith's depiction of the process, gentrification should be clearly visible in the enhanced quality of buildings; in gentrification in its new form, this is no longer necessarily the case. Through financialisation of housing, new land-users can pay a lot more than former land-users, without the quality of the dwelling being enhanced. Gentrification through financialisation has resulted in an increasing number of people who are faced with the problem of precarious housing – no longer only the working class, but increasingly also segments of the middle class. Ironically, though, as socioeconomic inequality has increased, gentrification – as the most visible spatial expression of this inequality – may no longer always be as clearly visible in the built environment as it was during earlier waves.

Second of all, by including struggles over space due to an introduction of market mechanisms in formerly non-commodified spaces, this adapted definition is (partially) the result of studies of gentrification in formerly non-capitalist contexts in the Global South. As some scholars have pointed out, this can help to avoid hegemonic theorisation: gentrification theory would then not only be applied to, but also informed by and adapted as a result of, research in the Global South (Bernt, 2016; Gonzáles, 2016; Lee, 2020; Waley, 2016). Moreover, this broadened definition would make it possible for a broader coalition of precariously housed people in different parts of the world to organise themselves around the notion of gentrification (cf. Annunziata & Lees, 2016). Through the above discussed looping effects this can, in turn, inform resistance to gentrification and affect how the process will ultimately unfold in different places.

Third of all, this proposal to adapt Clark's (2010 [2005]) definition intends to shows that gentrification is still on the move, but this does not mean that anything goes: if gentrification no longer includes displacement and the rent gap in its definition, it seems to have lost its distinctive usefulness as a concept. Conceptualizing gentrification as a moving target thus does not preclude it from having a stable core (cf. Clark, 2010 [2005]). At the same time, though, it should be emphasised that this adapted definition must not be taken as the ultimate one. Current discussions

show that the definition of gentrification is also being questioned by scholars who investigate the relation between gentrification and racial capitalism. These researchers argue that gentrification should be defined more precisely. They have emphasised that gentrification is always a racialised process and that this should be captured in its definition (Danewid, 2020; Ramírez, 2020; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2021). These scholars thus suggest that the definition of gentrification should be adapted by the addition of an essential element. Roy (2017) argues, though, that the concept of racial banishment, rather than gentrification, should be used to study evictions under racial capitalism, since "the public means of evictions as well as forms of racialized violence, such as slavery, Jim Crow, incarceration, colonialism, and apartheid … cannot be encapsulated within sanitized notions of gentrification and displacement" (Roy, 2017: A3). However, recent research that depicts gentrification as a violent process (Baeten et al., 2017; Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020; Kern, 2016), as well as Moulden's (2021) proposal to view gentrification as a crime, suggest that gentrification is maybe not such a sanitised notion after all. In short, we can say that gentrification keeps on moving, because it keeps evoking new ideas that can, via looping effects, influence how the process unfolds.

Because the notion of gentrification keeps arousing new ideas, it is, according to Clark (2015), a useful concept and an "adventure of ideas". Viewed through the lens of dynamic nominalism, the latter phrase suggests that gentrification is at the same time an adventure of practices. The new ideas and questions that the notion of gentrification evokes, can also give rise to new social practices (of resistance, of policy making, etc.) that are influenced by these ideas; this happens through looping effects and through the making up of people. This seems an apt way to describe the promise inherent in the concept of gentrification: by its effect on social practices, the concept of gentrification may "contribute to making rent gap theory *not* true" (Clark, 2014: 394, emphasis in original). It can transform the way in which land-use is distributed and thereby, in an ultimate feedback loop, help in "making the notion of gentrification irrelevant" (Clark, 2015: 455).

With the different actors (scholars, activists, policy makers, journalists, etc.) that make use of the concept of gentrification, we can also discern different registers in which it is used. The concept can be used, for example, to describe changes in a neighborhood; the concept can be used to analyze the causes and effects of these changes; or the term gentrification can be used to politicise and problematise these changes. The term gentrification serves all these purposes. Indeed, one of the reasons why gentrification changes, both as a concept and as a phenomenon, is that the concept switches between these different registers. It started out as a scholarly

concept to describe changes in inner-city London; it then became a "dirty word" in public discourse and bred resistance; policy makers avoided the term and suggested social mixing as a more benign concept and process; and scholars, in turn, broadened the concept of gentrification to subsume social mixing under it, thereby broadening the class of phenomena that together constitute the class of gentrification. This is not to say that the histories in these different registers are coterminous with each other; for example, activists may not accept all the definitions that scholars propose and vice versa. It shows, though, that the history in each of these registers cannot be understood in isolation from the histories in other registers and that the multiple ways in which different actors use the term should be considered.

If the concept of gentrification can affect processes of urban change by politicizing and problematizing them, some caution is warranted when the concept is applied in retrospect. As Massey (1995) argues, places have multiple pasts and these pasts are forged in the present. One way in which such a past can be forged, is through the use of new concepts. A new concept, like gentrification, makes a new interpretation of the past possible: it allows past events to be understood in a manner that was not possible during these events. As Hacking writes: "redescriptions may be perfectly true of the past; that is, they are truths that we now assert about the past. And yet, paradoxically, they may not have been true in the past" (Hacking, 1995: 249). Indeed, it is possible to say that a process of urban change that happened in the past can be described as gentrification – also when this concept was not yet available to the people involved. However, these people could not have understood themselves via this concept – it was, for example, not yet possible for new inhabitants to understand themselves *as* gentrifiers, because a description of this kind of person did not yet exist. This also means that people may interpret their own past actions differently after they come to perceive their actions as, for example, bringing about gentrification; what may in the past have been experienced as a completely innocent decision about where to live, may in hindsight be interpreted as an action that instigated gentrification. This may alter people's sense of what they have done in the past and it can alter how they interpret their own life history (cf. Hacking, 1999: 162). Before knowledge about gentrification was widespread, gentrification was not yet a category that could make up a pressing moral problem – as it does now, for example, for Brown-Saracino's (2007) social preservationists who actively try to avoid that their presence disturbs "authentic" communities. This new way of problematizing and politicizing processes of urban change, made possible by the availability of the concept of gentrification, may go some way in explaining differences between how gentrification unfolds in contexts where the concept is, and contexts where the concept is not, available.

If how the process of gentrification unfolds is affected by it being categorised in a certain way, it is important to study how the category is understood, both by experts and lay people (cf. Atkinson, 2003; Brown-Saracino, 2016). Hacking (2006a: 111), in this respect, makes a distinction between experts who categorise from above and categorised people who respond to this categorisation from below. By their categorisation, experts create a new reality for the people affected by it. In the case of gentrification, this could lead to different outcomes. If policy makers define a neighborhood as disadvantaged and in need of improvement, inhabitants may embrace this policy and welcome changes that increase available amenities (Doucet & Koenders, 2018; Uitermark et al., 2007). However, inhabitants can also interpret a need for improvement of their neighborhood as a territorial stigma, which can invoke resistance to urban policy that targets this neighborhood (Wacquant et al., 2014; Pinkster et al., 2020). This, in turn, confronts policy makers with a new reality. Do inhabitants, for example, understand this policy as tacitly provoking their displacement or not (cf. Kern, 2016; Lagendijk et al., 2014)? And if policy makers think that interventions in the neighborhood are necessary, do inhabitants feel that their contributions to the neighborhood are misrecognised (cf. Honneth, 1995)? The interpretations and experiences of what is going on in their neighborhoods and whether or not it is gentrification, affects the ways in which the policy can be implemented and thus what its ultimate results will be.

This ambivalence also holds for social mix policy (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015). Long-time residents of originally working-class neighborhoods can embrace a social mix discourse and welcome a more diverse neighborhood (Van Eck et al., 2020). When social mix is interpreted as "gentrification by stealth" (Bridge et al., 2012), however, social mix may in time become just as dirty a word as gentrification already is. It should therefore be determined via empirical research what the precise effects are of targeting a neighborhood for social mix policy, but it is to be expected that there will be an interaction between the category and the categorised. The same holds for adjacent concepts like "urban renewal" and "urban renaissance": these concepts may also interact with the phenomena they describe, which should then be understood as moving targets as well.

2.7 Conclusion

This paper argued that gentrification can be fruitfully conceptualised as, in Ian Hacking's (2007) terms, a moving target. Hacking, working in the tradition of dynamic nominalism, provides the tools to theorise how a concept and its object reciprocally influence each other. In order to argue that this is also applicable to gentrification, this paper has discussed different branches of the gentrification literature. It has

discussed how the concept of gentrification has been modified; how the phenomenon of gentrification has been subject to change; how the concept affects social practices, so that the phenomenon changes; and how these changes of the phenomenon can feed back into the concept. As of yet, there has not been a theoretical framework in which these different branches of the gentrification literature were explicitly connected to one another. This paper has argued that dynamic nominalism provides a framework in which these connections can be drawn. Dynamic nominalism provides the concepts that can be used to study the interaction between the concept and phenomenon of gentrification in concrete cases. It also draws attention to the long-term evolution of the concept. As such, it can be a valuable resource for gentrification research.

The goal of this paper was not to argue that the interaction between gentrification as a concept and as a phenomenon is the only reason for its elusiveness. Rather, the perspective of dynamic nominalism shows that we cannot fully understand the changing nature of the phenomenon of gentrification if we do not take the changing meaning and evaluation of the concept of gentrification into account; and vice versa, we cannot fully understand how the different meanings and evaluations come about if we abstract from gentrification as a changing phenomenon. Dynamic nominalism provides a framework that helps to understand the interaction between the concept of gentrification and the phenomenon it refers to. This framework helps to comprehend how knowledge production and social practices are intertwined in the struggle over access to space.

As this paper's discussion of the gentrification literature has shown, gentrification has been used more often in newspapers in recent years. It has become part of the conceptual repertoire of an increasing number of people in different parts of the world; thereby, it has come to play an increasingly important role in the shaping of people's self-understandings. Gentrification thus becomes more and more inevitable as a moral problem that demands consideration, e.g. when one decides (not) to rent an Airbnb, (not) to live in a certain neighborhood, (not) to protest against investments in the built environment, or (not) to invest in real estate. This suggests that the concept of gentrification is more important in making up people than it was ever before and that it will therefore have an increasingly important effect on how the phenomenon unfolds. Therefore, I believe, the use of the concepts of dynamic nominalism in gentrification research would be opportune.

At this point, we should return to the problem that was introduced at the beginning of this paper: how can we deal with the paradox faced by gentrification research, i.e. that gentrification research has to deal with phenomena that – at least when using

Glass' (2010 [1964]) original definition – cannot be identified as gentrification? As we have seen, dynamic nominalism says that there is an interaction between social phenomena and the concepts used to describe them. This can change a phenomenon to such an extent that a new definition is necessary in order to still be able to use the same word for the changed phenomenon. Gentrification is a moving target and therefore both the concept and the phenomenon are subject to change. Hence, with reference to Wittgenstein (1953: §133), we could say that from the perspective of dynamic nominalism, the paradox of gentrification research is not solved, but rather disappears.

Now that we have seen that gentrification can be understood as a moving target, it is also clear why we cannot grasp gentrification. The reason for this is that the phenomenon changes as a result of the grasping. After all, a description of a process as gentrification influences how this process unfolds. Using the term "gentrification" makes it possible to describe what is going on in some changing neighborhoods, but at the same time, this description alters the phenomenon it refers to and thereby ensures its elusive character. The move that makes knowledge of gentrification possible is thus the same move that ensures that gentrification always eludes the researcher to a certain extent. Dynamic nominalism provides the tools to study this elusiveness. Therefore, we should investigate the moving target that gentrification is and describe the looping effects between concept and phenomenon. Approached in this way, the question of what gentrification is, should no longer only be a starting point of empirical research, but also an always provisional outcome. Attention should be paid to how terms like gentrification and social mix are used by the people involved in the process (policy makers, project developers, people who are displaced, shop owners, gentrifiers themselves, etc.), how these usages alter the phenomenon and how this interacts with the concept's meanings.

Epilogue Chapter 2

Both the concept of gentrification, as well as the phenomena that the concept refers to, are hard to grasp. In Chapter 2, I argued that the concept of gentrification has left the confines of academia and has been taken up by people who play a part in the process, for example as activists, as gentrifiers or as people who are displaced as a result of gentrification. They perceive the process of urban transformation through the lens of the concept of gentrification and may adapt their comportment in response. For example, a decision to move to a neighbourhood may be seen in a different light when it is thought that this move contributes to gentrification. What may at first sight have seemed to be an innocent decision about where to live may turn into a morally loaded decision after it is seen through the lens of gentrification.

The concept of gentrification may thus change how people perceive their own role in the process of urban transformation. It may also affect people's self-understandings: with the use of the concept of gentrification, they may start to understand themselves as gentrifiers, as people who are displaced through gentrification, or as activists struggling against gentrification. The concept may also be used as a symbol that may help people to organise themselves against a process of urban change. In that capacity, the concept of gentrification is an example of what Honneth calls "a shared semantics that enables personal experiences of disappointment to be interpreted as something affecting not just the individual himself or herself but also a circle of many other subjects" (1995: 163-164). With the use of the concept of gentrification, the phenomenon it refers to may appear as a process that affects many people. In that way, the concept of gentrification can be used by activists to politicise the process. Similarly, urban policy makers, planners and developers may wish to avoid the term in the description of their plans, as the term may evoke resistance they may want to avoid.

The employment of the term gentrification is thus not without consequences. When the term is used by people who live through processes of urban change, their use of the concept of gentrification may affect how the process unfolds. Gentrifiers may worry about how their presence may spoil the alleged authenticity of the neighbourhood they move into. Displaced people may feel empowered to struggle against urban change when they understand their displacement as the result of gentrification rather than as a part of a normal course of events. Activists, moreover, may mobilise other people by means of the symbol of gentrification.

If the process of gentrification changes by the effect that the concept of gentrification has on the social reality it describes, then gentrification is also difficult to grasp as a phenomenon. Chapter 2 has therefore argued that gentrification should be understood as a moving target: the concept affects the phenomenon it describes and, in turn, the altered phenomenon may also have an effect on how the concept is understood. Resistance to gentrification, which may emerge as a result of the use of the concept by social movement actors, may alter how the process of gentrification unfolds. This may subsequently necessitate a change of the concept.

However, the question remains why people exactly resist gentrification. It is true that gentrification affects people in a material sense through enforced displacement and higher rents, but that may not be all there is to it. The theory of recognition posits that people resist social transformations they deem unjust because these developments are considered to be at odds with people's expectations for intersubjective recognition. This theoretical perspective thus suggests that there may be much more to people's motivations to resist gentrification than merely the displacement and higher prices that are the result of gentrification.

Before we can delve into the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods, it is necessary to develop more conceptual clarity about recognition and especially about the notion of "struggle for recognition". Recognition is a rather abstract term and we need to develop a more concrete understanding of it if we are to employ it for the study of the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. The next chapter therefore focuses on the concept of recognition and, more specifically, tries to provide an answer to the question of what struggles for recognition exactly entail.

Chapter 3

The limits of recognition

Abstract

The concept of recognition has been pivotal in critical theory in recent years. This paper discusses how two goals of a critical theory of recognition – to explain *and* to morally evaluate social change – are interrelated. In doing so, this paper draws the limits of the concept of struggles for recognition. It is argued that if a social movement can be deemed illegitimate, this movement can no longer be understood as struggling for recognition. This implies that the two goals of a critical theory of recognition cannot be fulfilled simultaneously: a moral standard that distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate social struggles cannot distinguish between different types of struggles for recognition, but only between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggles. Drawing the limits of the concept of struggles for recognition in this way helps to better distinguish between different types of social struggle and contributes to a more precise understanding of what struggles for recognition entail.

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3.1 Introduction

Recognition sometimes has to be struggled for, but what does that exactly entail? Despite philosophy's long discussion of recognition (see Honneth [2020] for an overview of this history), more clarity on the concept of struggles for recognition is still needed. In particular, it is important to scrutinise in more detail which social struggles can, and which struggles cannot, be explained with reference to (mis)recognition. This is a timely endeavour, given the recent attempts – in both philosophy and sociology – to use recognition theory to make sense of populist right-wing movements (Hochschild, 2016a; 2016b; Lamont, 2018; 2019; Popescu, 2022; Senf, 2023; Zurn, 2023). By drawing the contours of a coherent notion of a struggle for recognition, I will argue in this paper that the protests of what may be deemed morally regressive social movements cannot cogently be understood as struggles for recognition. Thereby, the limits of what a theory of recognition can do should become clear.

Contemporary philosophers like Judith Butler (1997; 2021a; 2021b), Nancy Fraser (e.g. 2000; 2003a; 2003b), Avishai Margalit (1998; Honneth & Margalit, 2001) and Charles Taylor (1994), all in one way or another inspired by Hegel, have made important contributions to the debate on recognition.[10] It is critical theorist Axel Honneth (1995), though, who has arguably provided the most elaborate theory of recognition. The remainder of this paper will therefore focus on his theory and extensions thereof, but the arguments that will be presented are more widely applicable to research on recognition.

This paper takes the Fraser-Honneth debate as a starting point. In their well-known exchange, Fraser and Honneth (2003; cf. Fraser, 2001; Honneth, 2001) have discussed how the concepts of recognition and redistribution relate to one another. Honneth (2003a) argues that struggles for redistribution are a special case of struggles for recognition, since – according to him – patterns of redistribution are the result of underlying recognitional patterns. Fraser, on the other hand, thinks that this view follows from Honneth's overly broad conception of recognition. According to Fraser, this broad conception turns recognition into a catch-all term; saying that a social struggle is a struggle for recognition would then be a mere tautology, for it would be true by definition (Fraser, 2003a: 35; 2003b: 199). Fraser thinks instead that recognition and redistribution are two dimensions of social conflict that are irreducible to one another.

10. Butler fits somewhat uneasily in this list. Unlike the others, she conceptualises recognition as a condition of subjection. Therefore, recognition seems to have another meaning for her than it has for the other authors (see Honneth, 2020: 141ff.).

The current paper argues that recognition is not a catch-all term and, as a result, some social protests cannot be properly understood as struggles for recognition. In order to make this case, this paper proceeds by investigating how two parts of Honneth's theory – the explanatory and the normative part – are related to one another. Honneth has tried to make a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate struggles, but – as will be argued – it is necessary to pay more attention to how this distinction, in turn, delimits the scope of struggles that are properly called struggles *for recognition*. The aim of this paper is to show that – since demands for recognition need to be convincing to others – some putative struggles for recognition can, upon reflection, not be understood as such. The reason for this is that the demands that are brought forward in these struggles do not appeal to others and thus cannot convince them that due recognition had been withheld. As a result, those who struggle for social change know that their demands will not be recognised as valid and hence, their struggle cannot be understood as a struggle *for recognition*. A standard that distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate social struggles can therefore only distinguish between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggles; it cannot make distinctions *within* the class of struggles for recognition. Consequently, the two goals of a critical theory of recognition, i.e. to both explain *and* morally evaluate struggles for recognition, cannot be fulfilled simultaneously.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 3.2 sets the stage by discussing what Fraser and Honneth say in their debate about morally regressive social movements. The third section introduces the most important concepts of Honneth's theory. In section 3.4, it will be argued that these concepts do not give a sufficiently precise explanation of social conflict, because they cannot discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate demands for recognition. Section 3.5 argues that Honneth's explanation of social conflict implicitly relies on the existence of some higher-order moral standard towards which participants of social struggles are oriented. Section 3.6 will discuss what form this standard has to assume and how this delimits the class of social struggles that can be deemed struggles for recognition.

3.2 Setting the stage: the Fraser-Honneth debate

Despite their many differences, Fraser and Honneth agree that a theory of recognition should not merely explain social protests, but also discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate demands for social change (Fraser, 2003a: 37ff.; Honneth, 2003a: 182ff.). Not every claim for recognition can be justified and, hence, such a claim should be rejected.

Fraser, in this respect, mentions the problem of white supremacist groups that seek recognition for their "racist identities", which would enable "some poor 'white' Europeans and Euro-Americans to maintain their sense of self-worth by contrasting themselves with their supposed inferiors … Unfortunately, cases like this one, in which prejudice conveys psychological benefits, are by no means rare" (Fraser, 2003a: 38). Honneth is also aware of the need to morally distinguish between different social movements: "The social movements today demanding recognition of their value convictions include not only peaceful groups like feminists or marginalised minorities, but also racist and nationalist groups such as Farrakhan's Nation of Islam and German skinheads" (Honneth, 2003a: 121).[11]

Fraser and Honneth agree that the demands of racist and nationalist groups are illegitimate. Both theorists also believe that these social movements are struggling for recognition. Hence, according to Honneth, they should be explained with the same means that are used for the explanation of social movements with legitimate demands for recognition. Honneth criticises Fraser's analysis for failing in this respect. Fraser starts her analysis from "folk paradigms of justice", "which are sets of linked assumptions about the causes of and remedies for injustice" that inform present-day social struggles in civil society (Fraser, 2003a: 11). However, Honneth argues, if Fraser takes these folk paradigms as the starting point of a theory of justice, she can only end up exclusively defending the progressive paradigms if she arbitrarily omits social movements with illegitimate demands from her analysis (Honneth, 2003a: 120-122). Honneth argues, though, that one cannot first select the social movements one deems legitimate, provide a social scientific explanation for them alone and subsequently claim that one has given a general explanation of social conflict; a whole subset of conflicts would then be left out of the set of conflicts that is in need of an explanation (Honneth, 2003a: 121-122).[12]

The need to also explain morally regressive social movements is all the more pressing, since social movements do not emerge in isolation. Different social movements often feed off each other; the success of one social movement may provoke increased activity by a social movement with opposite demands (Collins, 2001: 38ff.). As Randall Collins observes: "The White Citizens Councils and organizations of night

11. This paragraph is not meant to suggest that struggles for recognition are always struggles around identity. Honneth (2003b) also understands e.g. struggles for a welfare state as struggles for recognition.

12. In this paragraph, I merely want to highlight that Honneth considers it important to explain social struggles in general and not merely those that can be deemed progressive. A discussion of Fraser's response to Honneth's critique is beyond the scope of this paper, but the interested reader is referred to Fraser (2003b: 201-211).

riders in the south were surely mobilizing in parallel to, indeed in counterpoint to, the burgeoning civil rights movement" (Collins, 2001: 39). An explanation of social struggles should thus be able to account for all social movements, independently of the legitimacy of their demands.

Fraser and Honneth both think that morally regressive social movements are struggling for recognition. An accurate theory of social conflict should thus be able to also explain these struggles. In the remainder of this paper I will argue that – when we try to distinguish between progressive and regressive movements – the demands of morally regressive social movements can no longer be understood as demands *for recognition*. In order to arrive at this conclusion, the next section first introduces Honneth's theory of recognition.

3.3 Elements of Honneth's theory of recognition

Honneth considers his theory to be part of the Critical Theory tradition of the Frankfurt School, but he also makes clear where he deviates from his predecessors (Honneth, 2007a, 2007b). In his essay "The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today", Honneth locates his own work in the left-Hegelian tradition in which "it was considered self-evident that a theory of society could engage in critique only insofar as it was able to rediscover an element of its own critical viewpoint within social reality" (Honneth, 2007a: 64). Hence, for Honneth, there is a need for "a diagnosis of society that could bring a degree of intramundane transcendence to light" (*ibid*.). Honneth criticises two of his predecessors in this tradition, Adorno and Horkheimer, for having abandoned this search for an emancipatory potential within society: they thought that capitalist domination had become too powerful to believe any longer in emancipation from it (65-66). A third critical theorist, Habermas, did find this emancipatory potential in society, namely in the ideal of communicative action. Honneth criticises this move as well. It might be true that a deviation from the ideal of domination-free communicative action provides a reference point for critique, but, according to Honneth, it is not at all clear "which moral experiences within social reality are supposed to correspond to this critical standpoint" (70). For Honneth, a deviation from the ideal of domination-free communication is too abstract an idea; it is not at the basis of the *moral experience* of being treated unjustly.[13]

Moreover, Honneth argues, experiences of moral disapproval are often not clearly articulated and therefore do not even appear in a power-free discourse (Honneth, 2007b; see also Stahl, 2022). Honneth refers to the experiences of the working class in

13. For a more comprehensive overview of Honneth's critique on Habermas, see Deranty (2009: Ch. 3).

this respect. It is not because of some kind of cognitive inferiority that working class people do not articulate their experiences in terms of a positive theory of justice, but because there are class-specific differences in how people deal with normative problems (Honneth, 2007b: 84). One reason for this is that there is no need for someone from the working class to develop a consistent system of beliefs, for "[w]e may characterize his meaningful life as being largely on an everyday level … only those actually sharing in power need develop consistent societal values" (Mann, 1970: 435). Those without power do not face such a demand, as Honneth explains: "The members of socially suppressed classes are not subject to any social pressure to legitimate their social standing" (Honneth, 2007b: 85). Hence, according to Honneth, a critical theory of society should not start from already articulated demands for justice, because it would then lose sight of how normative conflict plays out in socially suppressed strata: "the ideas of justice according to which social groups morally evaluate and judge a social order are more likely to be found in typical perceptions of injustice than in positively formulated principles of value" (87).

Honneth finds these perceptions of injustice in the subject's awareness of being misrecognised in her self-understanding. This is experienced as a violation of one's "intuitive notions of justice" (Honneth, 2007a: 71). People's intuitive notions of justice consist of their expectations to receive due recognition from others; recognition a person believes to deserve, based on the different qualities she possesses as a person (Honneth, 1997: 23). In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth (1995) elaborates on this idea. In this book, he makes a distinction between three spheres of recognition that have emerged in the course of Western history: care (or love), respect and esteem. The sphere of care is concerned with one's primary needs (like nutrition and shelter); the sphere of respect with each person's equal capacity for self-legislation; and the sphere of esteem with one's individual abilities and talents that are valuable to society.[14] If one's needs, capacities for self-legislation or talents do not receive the care, respect or esteem, respectively, that they deserve, a person can perceive this as misrecognition and experience accompanying moral feelings like anger, shame or resentment. As the three spheres are concerned with different aspects of persons, one has to appeal to a different principle of justice (care, respect or esteem) in each sphere. Therefore, Honneth calls his theory a "plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004: 351).

14. Honneth's tripartite scheme may not be enough, though. Van Leeuwen (2007) has argued that a fourth sphere, namely the sphere of difference-respect, is necessary to be able to grant due recognition to an individual's social attachments. See also Ikäheimo (2002), who provides an illuminating analysis of the different forms of recognition that Honneth's tripartite scheme allows for.

Now that Honneth's tripartite scheme of recognition is introduced, we are in a position to consider his definition of recognition. Honneth defines it as follows: "recognition is to be conceived of as the genus comprised of three forms of practical attitudes, each reflecting the primary aim of a certain affirmation of the other" (2002: 506). Recognition is thus an *affirmative*, and not a merely neutral, attitude towards an evaluative quality (need, capacity for self-legislation or talent) of someone; and it should be understood as an *attitude*, and not as a single act or a series of acts, for the expressions of this attitude do not exhaust it (Honneth, 2002: 505-506; Ikäheimo & Laitinen, 2007; Lepold, 2019: 247).

According to Honneth, who follows Hegel and Mead in this respect, recognition is so important for humans beings, because people can only develop a positive self-relation if their evaluative qualities are recognised by others: "the integrity of human subjects, vulnerable as they are to injury through insult and disrespect, depends on their receiving approval and respect from others" (Honneth, 1992: 188).[15] It is therefore that Honneth's model can be called an "anthropology of vulnerability" (Petherbridge, 2016: 595; see also Deranty, 2009). As human beings are dependent on the recognition of others to see their evaluative qualities in a positive light, which fosters their capacity to act, the absence of due recognition impairs people's capacity to pursue their goals (Anderson & Honneth, 2005). As such, withholding recognition can be seen as harmful. If someone also thinks that this withholding of recognition is unjust, this harm can be aptly described as a moral injury (Honneth, 1997: 23). Accompanying moral feelings like anger and resentment may, in turn, motivate her to demand social change.

15. Some authors (e.g. Bertram & Celikates, 2015; Celikates, 2021; Kompridis, 2007; Markell, 2007) have been critical of this idea. If – so they reason – being properly recognised is a precondition for agency, then how can people even begin to struggle for recognition if they are in a situation in which they are not properly recognised? In such a situation, they would not have the agency necessary to start a struggle for recognition. This problem seems to disappear, though, as soon as it is noted that recognition is not granted solely in one context; instead, "[m]ultiple processes of recognition will cross and overlap" (Pizzorno, 1991: 221). For example, when a child develops a sense of self-respect through interactions with her family members, this sense of self-respect may be enough to stand up for herself when she experiences disrespect later in life, for example at the work place. If one is recognised in one context, this may thus ensure this person's agency in another context in which she is misrecognised. Honneth also points to the importance of different contexts of (mis)recognition, e.g. when he refers to a "counterculture of compensatory respect" (1995: 124; 2007b: 93-94) where participants of a social struggle grant each other the recognition that they cannot find elsewhere in society. This may also make someone aware of qualities that she did not know to have before. In that sense, aspects of a person that ought to be recognised may also develop during the struggle.

These moral feelings, though, should not be taken at face value; one can be angry, without having good reasons to be so. Moral feelings thus do not possess some sort of inherent moral value: only some of them are based on underlying, legitimate normative expectations.[16] Groups with illegitimate demands can also be angry and resentful, but these feelings in themselves do not imply that recognition had unduly been withheld from them. Indeed, someone may have feelings of anger or resentment when she expected to be affirmed by someone else, but was in fact disregarded; however, she may, upon reflection, reach the conclusion that these expectations were unjustified in the first place (Lepold, 2019: 255; cf. Honneth, 2019: 700). As a result, her anger or resentment may disappear, for these feelings turned out to be unjustified. Indeed, people are not merely led by their emotions, but also attempt "to ascertain what emotional reaction is appropriate in evaluating a specific self-definitional situation" (Tavory, 2011: 284). It may be true that not all feelings of being disrespected lead to fully articulated proposals to expand society's relations of mutual recognition and thus may "contain untapped resources for moral progress" (Honneth, 2007b: 87); but this does thus not imply that *all* such feelings contain these resources. Some moral feelings must be considered, upon reflection, to be based on unjustified expectations.[17]

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16. Several authors would disagree with my interpretation of Honneth's theory on this point. These authors have claimed that Honneth conceives moral emotions as self-evident phenomena that are not mediated by social processes. Fraser (2003b: 204), for example, writes that Honneth, in his reliance on moral feelings, falls victim to "the myth of the given". Alexander and Lara (1996: 131ff.) argue that the concept of symbolic mediation is missing from Honneth's theory. McNay (2008), finally, argues that, in Honneth's theory, "[t]he prepolitical realm of social suffering is seen as some unmediated realm of experience characterised by spontaneous and authentic feelings with inherent moral status" (278). I disagree with these assessments on several grounds. First of all, Honneth tries to distinguish legitimate demands for recognition from illegitimate ones. If moral feelings would have some intrinsic moral worth and provide privileged access to some form of undistorted knowledge of what the right thing to do is in a given case, Honneth's efforts to make this distinction would be superfluous. Secondly, Honneth does pay attention to how moral feelings are expressed and hence mediated by symbolic forms, or, as he calls it, by a shared semantics (see the discussion below). Even though this mediation remains somewhat underdeveloped in Honneth's theory, he cannot be said to bypass it. See Basaure (2011: 264-266) for a useful discussion of this point. Finally, Honneth has discussed how the existence of moral feelings themselves can be the result of the social categories available in one's culture. His essay on ideological recognition is a case in point (Honneth, 2012a).

17. In their otherwise astute and important paper on recognition, Deranty and Renault (2007) do not seem to allow for the possibility of correcting one's feelings after a reflection. They write that "being the victim of an injustice is a feeling rather than a rational conviction" (98). However, if a person may believe, upon reflection, that her initial feelings of being a victim of injustice were misguided, then *the feeling* of being a victim of injustice on the one hand, and *actually being* a victim of injustice on the other hand, do not necessarily coincide.

If someone still believes, upon reflection, that she is misrecognised, this is in itself still not a sufficient condition for a struggle for recognition to come about. After all, this realisation and the accompanying feeling of social shame may as well result in resignation, rather than in a social protest. Whether or not a feeling of social shame turns into an action to transform society depends, according to Honneth, on the availability of semantic categories that translate an individual's social shame into an experience she shares with others: "Hurt feelings of this sort can … become the motivational basis for collective resistance only if subjects are able to articulate them within an intersubjective framework of interpretation that they can show to be typical for an entire group" (Honneth, 1995: 163). In other words – and to use C.W. Mills' apt phrase – subjects need to possess a "sociological imagination" that allows private troubles to be connected to and translated in public issues (Mills, 2000: 3ff.). As Honneth writes:

the emergence of social movements hinges on the existence of a shared semantics that enables personal experiences of disappointment to be interpreted as something affecting not just the individual himself or herself but also a circle of many other subjects … Thus, as soon as ideas of this sort have gained influence within a society, they generate a subcultural horizon of interpretation within which experiences of disrespect that, previously, had been fragmented and had been coped with privately can then become the moral motives for a collective 'struggle for recognition'. (Honneth, 1995: 163-164)

By formulating a private experience of misrecognition in such a way that others can relate to it, individuals can coordinate what they are doing and collective action can come about.

If people, after having found a shared semantics, organise themselves collectively in a social movement, their claim for recognition proceeds via a "moral dialectic of the universal and the particular" (Honneth, 2003a: 152). People struggle for recognition by pointing out how the general recognitional patterns (care, respect and esteem), which exist at a certain moment in society, do not appropriately consider a particular aspect of a person (need, capacity for self-legislation, contribution) (Honneth, 2003a: 186; 2004: 361). By directing others' attention to the inaccuracy of contemporary recognitional patterns, one may demand that the general recognitional concepts (care, respect and esteem) will be interpreted differently so as to realise more expansive relations of mutual recognition. This is possible, according to Honneth, because the different recognition spheres possess a validity overhang which points beyond the facticity of social relations towards a situation in which more expansive relations

of mutual recognition are realised (Honneth, 2002: 517; 2004: 355).[18] One can then demand another interpretation of a recognitional concept, for example by symbolically presenting an aspect of a person (e.g. a contribution) in a new light to show "that the institutionalized evaluative system is one-sided or restrictive, and thus … does not possess sufficient legitimacy according to its own principles" (Honneth, 2003a: 154-155). In this way, Honneth tries to explain why moral conflicts come about and how they unfold: conflictual models like his own "trace the emergence and the course of social struggles back to moral experiences of social groups who face having legal or social recognition withheld from them" (Honneth, 1995: 165).

To recapitulate this section, we can say that someone may struggle for recognition if this person has been morally injured and thinks that due recognition had been withheld from her. This initially private experience may become a public issue if it is interpreted, by means of a shared semantics, as an experience that is shared with others. This may lead to collective action in the form of a social movement struggling for recognition. This struggle proceeds through the provision of alternative interpretations of what due recognition entails. This also holds when struggles for recognition are not directly aimed at changing others' recognitional attitudes, but rather at the transformation of institutions. After all, Honneth argues that institutions like legal constraints on labour contracts (Honneth, 2003b: 251), but also civil rights and marriage rights, reflect institutionalised patterns of mutual recognition. In order to change institutions, one thus also has to offer an alternative interpretation of a recognitional principle.

Honneth believes that all social conflicts are at least partially motivated by a demand for recognition. This is also true for social struggles that are driven by people's motivation to secure their material interests, for the distribution of goods is influenced by recognitional patterns.[19] Therefore, Honneth thinks that his theory

18. Moral progress entails more expansive relations of mutual recognition, according to Honneth. In this respect, he uses the concepts of inclusion and individualisation. This will be elaborated on in sections 3.5 and 3.6.

19. Sometimes Honneth seems to suggest that feelings of misrecognition are the ultimate motivation behind *every* demand for social change, e.g. when he argues that the distribution of wealth is dictated by underlying patterns of recognition (Honneth, 2003a). Fraser (2003b) rightly observes, though, that distributional patterns are also determined by e.g. foreign exchange rates and interest rates, which have nothing to do with patterns of recognition. Zurn (2015: 138-143) concludes therefore that this strong version of Honneth's thesis is not feasible; a weaker thesis can be defended, though, namely that distributional arrangements are always embedded in laws and norms that reflect recognitional patterns. This is also in line with Honneth's initial view, namely that the idea of a struggle for recognition complements, rather than replaces, alternative theories that explain social struggles in terms of interests (Honneth, 1995: 164ff.). In both the strong and the weak thesis, however, Honneth holds on to the idea that demands for recognition are necessarily a *part* of the demands of all social movements.

should be applicable to all social conflicts. That, in turn, means that his theory should provide an explanation for the emergence of progressive social movements *and* for the emergence of morally regressive social movements. After all, Honneth criticised Fraser for arbitrarily excluding morally regressive social movements from the class of phenomena that a social theory should be able to explain. In this sense, we can say that Honneth wants to formulate a theory that features a symmetry principle: with reference to the same concepts, Honneth wants to explain both the existence of social movements with justified demands and the existence of social movements with unjustified demands.[20] However, as will be argued next, Honneth's explanation of social struggles falls short of its goal to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate demands.

3.4 The interpretation of recognitional principles

For a recognitional pattern to be altered, social actors must justify their demand for change to others. After all, struggles for recognition proceed via a search "for the others' normative approval" (Honneth, 1986: 65); struggles for recognition are not simply attempts to increase one's utility. If you struggle for recognition, you thus want others to agree that a demand for recognition is legitimate and that due recognition had been withheld before; not only outcomes matter, but also the reasons for these outcomes do (Honneth, 2002: 507; Laitinen 2002; cf. Strawson 2008).

Moreover, recognition should come about without the exercise of any force vis-à-vis the one granting it; otherwise it would not count as true recognition. As a result, struggles for recognition come with – to use Rainer Forst's (2007; 2010) terms – a right to justification. The one of whom recognition is demanded can ask for convincing reasons to grant recognition. To be more precise, these reasons should not only be normative or justifying (i.e. normatively approvable), but also motivating (i.e. these reasons should instigate the addressee of the demand for recognition to assume an affirmative recognitional attitude) (cf. Alvarez, 2009). If these reasons are not given to her, she cannot grant recognition except by being forced to do so; and this cannot count as true recognition, i.e. as the social acceptance that is aimed for when one searches to be recognised.[21] Someone can only grant recognition if she is convinced by

20. This symmetry principle is adapted from Bloor, who uses it in the sociology of science. In that context, this principle refers to the requirement that a sociological theory of science should be able to explain, with the same principles, the existence of both true and false scientific statements (Bloor, 1991).

21. Social movements that try to achieve their goals by means of violence or other non-argumentative pressure can for that reason not be understood as struggles for recognition. One may also force others (e.g. with legal means) to accept the results of social struggles that they do not approve of (e.g. same-sex marriage), but the need to use force already shows that these others do not recognise (i.e., normatively approve) these results. This will be elaborated on in section 3.6.

a compelling reason that granting recognition is the appropriate response in a given case (Honneth, 1997; 2002: 507; 2014b: 823; Laitinen, 2002). It is in this sense that individuals are morally, intersubjectively vulnerable: they are ultimately delivered to others' conceptions of what good reasons to grant recognition entail.

Now the question becomes *how* exactly participants justify their struggle to others. This is an aspect of struggles for recognition that remains undertheorised in Honneth's theory. Honneth argues that a struggle for recognition proceeds via "a moral dialectic of the general and the particular … [in which] claims are made for a particular perspective (need, life-situation, contribution) that has not yet found appropriate consideration by appeal to a general recognition principle (love, law, achievement)" (Honneth, 2003a: 186). For Honneth, a struggle for recognition thus unfolds as a struggle over how the different recognitional principles should be applied and interpreted (*ibid*.).

However, rather than providing an explanation, this only shows what is in need of an explanation, namely how a specific application or interpretation of a recognitional concept is ultimately selected as the better one. This problem becomes manifest when we consider an example of a social struggle that is discussed by Honneth: the struggle for the construction of the social-welfare state (Honneth, 2003a: 149-150, 188-189). Honneth argues that his model of moral conflict explains why the social welfare state came about:

> Here we have an especially vivid example of how historical changes can be brought about by innovations whose origins lie in *nothing other* than the persuasive power – or better, the incontrovertibility – of moral reasons: thanks to their underlying principles, the social spheres of recognition that together make up the socio-moral order of bourgeois-capitalist society possess a surplus of validity, which those affected can rationally assert against actual recognition relations. (Honneth, 2003a: 149-150, italics added)

As a result of the welfare state, the social status of classes threatened by poverty had been partially decoupled from their achievements; instead, their social status was now protected by the equal legal treatment to which everyone was entitled. In this case, the sphere of esteem has been invaded by the sphere of respect. The construction of the social-welfare state can thus be interpreted as an expression of respect that everyone deserves. However, such an explanation begs the question. Saying: "*True* respect for everybody entails a social-welfare state," does not explain

anything, for what was at stake in this struggle for recognition was exactly what the proper interpretation of respect entails. Therefore, the resulting interpretation of respect does not provide an explanation; rather, it needs to be explained why this, and not another, interpretation of respect is ultimately selected as the better one. A description of struggles for recognition as struggles over the correct application or interpretation of recognitional concepts is in itself thus not sufficient to explain why a certain interpretation ultimately wins out.

This remains a problem in Honneth's theory, also in his later work where he has grounded his theory of recognition in a new way. The culmination of this new phase in Honneth's work is his book *Freedom's Right* (Honneth, 2014a). Here, Honneth has largely left behind the anthropological foundation of his earlier work and argued instead that institutions ground people's reciprocal expectations for recognition (Deranty, 2016: 44). Honneth, following Hegel, now argues that one can only put one's freedom into practice if this is made possible by social institutions that can be seen as embodiments of rationality (i.e. universalizability) (Honneth, 2012b; 2014b; 2016b).[22] According to Honneth, institutions can only function properly and reproduce themselves if the universal values that they embody are respected. When one participates in these institutions (like the market or democracy), one is therefore already implicitly committed to the universal values that these institutions embody. As a result, the factual workings of institutions can be criticised for not completely living up to these values; other people, who are also participating in these institutions, would have to find such an argument compelling, because their participation in the institution already binds them to these underlying universal values. In this way, an appeal to these values provides the foothold for critique on social practices.

However, this new strategy of critique faces the same problems as the strategy discussed above: it has to refer to concepts that are too abstract to explain why a specific interpretation ultimately wins out. This becomes clear when we see this new strategy at work. In his essay "Labour and Recognition", Honneth argues that the labour market should be understood as an institution that embodies moral norms (2012c). The division of labour makes that everyone is dependent on everyone else for one's means of subsistence. Hence, in order to participate in the division of labour, everyone should be able to expect to receive a living wage, for if this would not be provided, it would make no sense to participate in the division of labour in the first place (64). Hence, according to Honneth, participating in the labour market comes

22. The requirement that institutions embody rational (i.e. universalizable) choices is the Kantian moment in Honneth's (and Hegel's) theory. Honneth has elaborated on this in *Freedom's Right* (Honneth, 2014a; see also Honneth, 2012b).

with normative expectations to which every participant is bound and to which she can appeal in order to criticise the labour market's functioning.[23] In the case of the labour market, this normative expectation is that "every adult member of society is entitled to make a contribution to the common good and to receive an appropriate living wage in return" (69). However, as before, we are now faced with the question of how the abstract value should be interpreted. What does an appropriate living wage consist of? How much do people need? This is where the controversy begins, but not where it ends. As Fraser argues, there is a "politics of need interpretation" (1989: 292); how needs should be defined is contested. Mere reference to the idea of an appropriate living wage, then, does not seem to be able to settle this issue. More generally, one can say that the values or norms that one can refer to and to which others are implicitly committed by virtue of their participation in a social institution are in themselves too abstract to decide on such matters (Mann, 1970: 424). Hence, also with reference to the values that are embodied in social institutions, one is not able to explain how social struggles exactly unfold and why a specific interpretation of this value is ultimately selected.[24] The next section therefore tries to construct how Honneth's theory of recognition should be amended in order to explain how struggles for recognition precisely unfold.

3.5 A higher-order moral standard

As was argued thus far, Honneth's explanation of social conflicts, i.e. that they are struggles over the correct application or interpretation of values, norms or recognitional principles, is an insufficient explanation of how social struggles unfold. Honneth's explanation thus needs at least to be complemented by additional elements. I will now discuss two possible responses to this challenge and argue that the first one fails, because it does not sufficiently acknowledge how the notion of a *struggle* for recognition delimits how recognitional conflicts can manifest themselves. I will then go on to argue that only the second response, which emphasises that

23. Jütten (2015) argues that this is not an accurate description of markets; he maintains that market mechanisms are often criticised with reference to norms that are *external* to the market, rather than with reference to norms that are internal to markets themselves.

24. At some places Honneth pays attention to the problem that abstract values are, in themselves, not sufficient to explain how struggles for recognition unfold. Honneth discusses, for example, the new forms of capitalism, in which values like flexibility and creativity are used as legitimations for the organisation of labour (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005; Hartmann & Honneth, 2012). Despite their apparently progressive character, these values legitimise higher requirements on and less freedom for employees. The extant organisation of labour thus cannot be explained with mere reference to these values, because they can be used to justify different ways of organising labour. Hartmann and Honneth call these situations "paradoxical contradictions", where "elements of an emancipatory vocabulary … lose their original content and thus in complex ways promote precisely the utility-based logics of action they were meant to contain" (Hartmann & Honneth, 2012:177).

participants of social struggles have to refer to reasons that are convincing to others, provides a coherent account of struggles for recognition.

A first way to further specify how struggles for recognition unfold is by saying that those who struggle try to show another person, from whom recognition is demanded, that an extant interpretation or application of a recognitional principle is unjust. By telling someone else about one's own situation, the other person becomes aware that the recognitional principle should be interpreted or applied differently. Honneth sometimes suggests this way of understanding struggles for recognition. He writes that one can critique a certain interpretation or application of recognitional principles, when, "[a]s against the dominant interpretive praxis, it is shown that there are particular, hitherto neglected facts whose moral consideration would require an expansion of the spheres of recognition" (2003a: 186-187). Hence, offering new perspectives could sometimes be sufficient to change others' views on whether recognition should be granted. One can think here of a Wittgensteinian "aspect change", whereby e.g. formerly undervalued housework becomes seen as a valuable contribution to shared goals (cf. Honneth, 2003a: 154; Owen, 2023; Wittgenstein, 1953). However, if it were sufficient to show these particular, neglected facts or aspects of a case in order to convince someone else that an extant interpretive praxis should be altered, then there must already be mutual agreement on what *true* respect (or care or esteem) entails and that this understanding implies an obligation to cater to the life-situation, needs or contributions that come to light after the neglected facts are shown. However, in that case, it is no longer possible to speak of an actual *struggle* for recognition, since there is no longer any conflict (Bertram & Celikates, 2015; Deranty, 2003). There was just incomplete knowledge about one's situation and when this knowledge comes to light, it is a matter of course that the recognitional principle will be applied differently, i.e. in such a way that this situation is catered for. In this case, the recognitional struggle could no longer be properly called a struggle. Hence, this explanation does not tell us how *struggles* for recognition unfold.

It is thus necessary to find another solution. The second way to complement Honneth's explanation of social struggles is by emphasising the intersubjective vulnerability of people: if people ask to be recognised, they are ultimately dependent on someone else (or a group) who has to approve this demand. A proposal to apply or interpret a recognitional concept differently thus has to appeal to others. Now, this cannot merely be an appeal to the other's emotions, for this would be at odds with the reason-governed nature of recognition (as was discussed in section 3.4). Rather, the one that demands recognition has to be able to show that recognition is the right response in a given case; she has to provide reasons that others can accept in order to show that another interpretation or application of a recognitional concept is required in a given

situation. The task that participants of social struggles thus have to face is to come up with reasons that can convince others that their demands are justified.

Before proceeding along this line, it is necessary to consider in some detail how this relates to Honneth's emphasis on unarticulated experiences of injustice. If participants of social struggles have to refer to reasons that can convince others, this seems to contradict what was discussed in section 3.3, namely that one of the reasons for Honneth to develop his theory of recognition was to grasp the consciousness of injustice of the working class – experiences which are often not translated in demands that refer to reasons that others may deem acceptable. Saying that participants of a social struggle have to refer to such reasons therefore seems misguided; it is a too rationalistic, too Habermasian, understanding of how social struggles unfold. Honneth explicitly developed his theory of recognition to avoid this all too rationalistic understanding of social struggles and thus one should avoid an explanation which refers to participants of social movements who clearly articulate the reasons for their demands.

However, this contradiction is only apparent. It is important to be precise here: it is true that Honneth has argued forcefully that people often *become aware* of injustice in a specific situation, sometimes without clearly articulating it (it may simply remain a feeling of frustration); and even when they articulate it, they may refer to their specific situation and their lifeworld, rather than to abstract principles of justice that appeal to others. This, however, is only the context of discovery of injustice. When a struggle for recognition comes about and a social movement is formed, this context of discovery does not suffice. Already in the paper in which Honneth argued for the importance of grasping the often unarticulated consciousness of injustice, he notes the following:

> Although these [unarticulated indications of moral condemnation of the existing social order] may have the potential of becoming universalizable justice claims, since they indirectly illuminate socially established asymmetries, so long as they have not yet become demands capable of rational support they will continue to form the basis of broadly varying convictions, from anticapitalist conservatism to attitudes critical of capitalism. (Honneth, 2007b: 93)

The individual's consciousness of injustice thus may, but oftentimes does not, become the impetus for a social movement. Sometimes, the necessary shared semantics, which turn the private issue in a public problem, are lacking; at other times, some semantic categories (like the ideal of "the good housewife") actually hinder that a social

struggle comes about (Allen, 2010; Honneth, 2012a; McQueen, 2015). However, when these difficulties are surpassed and a social movement emerges, this movement has to translate its demands in claims for justice and show that its demands are capable of rational support. Hence, when a social movement tries to argue its case, it has to show that it has good reasons for these demands and that these demands deserve support.[25] A social movement has to show that a specific interpretation of a recognitional concept is required and it can do this by providing reasons for its demand that are convincing to others. In Honneth's theory of recognition there is thus also a rationalistic moment. There are different phases in struggles for recognition: people may become aware of injustice without clearly articulating why they experience it as injustice (the context of discovery); but when the struggle for recognition comes about and a social movements asks for the rational support of others, they have to be able to articulate reasons for their demands (the context of justification) (see also Senf, 2023: 56ff.). When we keep these phases apart, there is no contradiction between Honneth's emphasis on an unarticulated consciousness of injustice and the (rationalistic) requirement that demands for recognition need to be justified with reasons that convince others.

As was argued before, the recognitional concepts themselves are not sufficient to determine what counts as a good reason; in themselves, these concepts are too abstract to discriminate between demands that can and demands that cannot get the support of those to whom the demand is addressed. Hence, one needs a higher-order standard that can further specify how a recognitional concept is to be interpretated or applied. Honneth refers to such a standard when he develops the notion of moral progress. According to Honneth, this consists of two elements: inclusion and individualisation (Honneth, 2003a: 184ff.). Inclusion is enhanced when the number of recognised people increases; individualisation increases when more aspects of individuals are recognised. These, then, are the concepts that Honneth invokes as a standard to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate demands for recognition.

This standard, though, should not only be employed by the social theorist who evaluates these struggles, but also by the participants of struggles for recognition themselves. After all, participants of struggles for recognition need to construct arguments of which

25. This is how social theorists can help social movements, namely by helping to articulate the arguments by means of which a social movement's demands can be justified (Honneth in Boltanski, Celikates & Honneth, 2014: 576). The requirement to provide reasons that others may deem convincing also means that those who demand recognition cannot remain willfully ignorant of what others may consider to be good reasons. An honest attempt to convince others should be accompanied by an attempt to think about what reasons these others may find convincing.

they believe that they are convincing to others.[26] They can do this when there is a higher-order moral standard that is shared with those of whom recognition is demanded and towards which participants of struggles for recognition can orient themselves in order to construct arguments that appeal to these others. The notion of moral progress can fulfil the role of this higher-order moral standard.[27] As a result, Honneth can describe the history of Western societies as a history of moral progress that is deliberately brought about by social actors that struggle for recognition (Honneth, 2009; 2014b; see also Allen, 2016).[28]

Before discussing the form of the higher-order moral standard in more detail in the next section, it is important to consider what role this standard fulfils in a theory of recognition. First of all, it should be emphasised that we do not need to interpret this notion of moral progress as a transhistorical standard of which the validity is beyond all doubt.[29] As Congdon argues, drawing upon an Aristotelian perspective, it is also

26. Sometimes the addressee of a demand for recognition may be willing to accept the demand without having heard convincing reasons for it, for example when the addressee and the claimant belong to the same social group (e.g. whites). The addressee may then accept the demand, not because she is convinced by a good reason that this is the right thing to do, but instead out of e.g. self-interest. In that case, however, what is granted is not genuine recognition, because the demand is then not approved out of normative considerations; it is rather approved out of other motives.

27. Honneth sometimes suggests there is a categorical distinction between, on the one hand, social actors involved in social struggles and, on the other hand, social theorists evaluating these struggles (e.g. Honneth, 2003a: 183ff.; 2019: 700). If the arguments presented in this section are convincing, such a categorical distinction is not tenable, and there would not be a clear-cut separation between an explanatory and a morally evaluative moment in the theory of recognition (see also Congdon, 2020). After all, the social actors and the social theorists employ the same standards to consider whether a social struggle can be justified. It might be true that social theorists, from a distance, perceive the stakes of a struggle for recognition differently (and maybe more clearly) than the participants of the struggle. However, the difference between the theorist and the participant would no longer be a difference in kind, but only a difference in degree. A categorical distinction between social theorists and social actors, then, is not viable. It may be a "scholastic fallacy", as Bourdieu (1990) notes, to assume that social actors use the same categories (like social class) and methods (like game theory) as social theorists; but it would be equally fallacious to think that social actors do not at all use the same means (e.g. concepts, logical reasoning, etc.) as social theorists. Indeed, as was argued above, in the context of justification of a struggle for recognition, participants of this struggle cannot avoid playing theoretical games. In the case of struggles for recognition, this is not a matter of a theorist "injecting meta- into practices" (Bourdieu 1990: 382), but rather a description of how a part of the practice of recognition looks like.

28. Throughout his book, Deranty (2009) also emphasises Honneth's consistent rejection of "functionalist explanations that ignore the participants' point of view" (49).

29. Honneth's position regarding the historicity of the standard of moral progress is not entirely clear. On the one hand, he speaks of a "historically emergent space of moral reasons" (Honneth, 2002: 503), but on the other hand, he also says that, in order to avoid relativism, we need "transhistorical standards for judging" (510). In an illuminating discussion of this issue, Congdon argues that Honneth is "oscillating between historicised and transhistorical notions of evaluative objectivity" (Congdon, 2020: 593). See also Holden (2016) and McNay (2021) for discussions of the difficulties that emerge when a transhistorical standard has to account for variegated, historically situated social practices.

possible to distinguish between demands that are deemed legitimate and those deemed illegitimate with reference to "historically situated practices of reflexive criticism" (Congdon, 2020: 597) rather than with reference to a transhistorical moral standard which would reflect "a view from nowhere", to borrow Nagel's (1986) phrase. For the purposes of this paper, we can remain agnostic regarding the question whether this higher-order standard should be interpreted as a transhistorical one or rather as historically situated. It is only important that such a higher-order standard plays a role in social struggles, so that participants of these struggles can distinguish demands for social change that can gain support from those that cannot.

Second of all, without a higher-order moral standard, it is impossible to determine what should be done when the standards of justice in the different recognitional spheres conflict (see Sebrechts, Tonkens & Da Roit, 2019).[30] This happened, for example, in the construction of the welfare state (discussed in section 3.4). Here, the sphere of respect invaded the world of work, where the achievement principle of the sphere of esteem ruled. This cannot be justified with mere reference to the standards of justice of the different recognitional spheres, because they conflict. A higher-order standard is thus necessary to determine the right course of action when there is a conflict between different recognitional principles (Honneth, 2003a: 188). This higher-order standard is thus not only used to morally evaluate social struggles retrospectively; this standard also provides the "normative criteria … by means of which contemporary developments can be criticized in light of future possibilities" (183).

To summarise this section, we can say that a higher-order moral standard is a necessary component of a coherent theory of recognition. This higher-order moral standard is necessary, so that participants of social struggles can construct compelling reasons for their proposals to interpret or apply recognitional principles in a different way. This standard is not necessarily a transcendent, transhistorical one of which the validity is beyond all doubt; it can also be a historically situated standard, as long as it serves to distinguish between demands for recognition that can gain support and those that cannot. Only with reference to such a standard is it possible to explain why a specific interpretation or application of a recognitional concept is, in a struggle for recognition, ultimately selected as the better one; and only with reference to such a standard can participants of social struggles come up with arguments that are convincing to others of whom recognition is demanded. Moreover, without a higher-

30. For a classic statement of how the requirement of generality, which Honneth locates in the sphere of respect, can clash with the requirements of other spheres, see Young (1989).

order moral standard, a theory of recognition would leave unexplained how conflicts between different recognitional spheres can be solved.

Although a higher-order moral standard is thus necessary for a coherent theory of recognition, the introduction of this notion creates new difficulties. It is to these difficulties that I will now turn.

3.6 The general form of the higher-order moral standard and its implications

In this section, I will not discuss Honneth's specific standard of moral progress (more inclusion and/or more individualisation) in detail. As we will see when we consider Popescu's (2022) critique, Honneth's standard may, like the recognitional concepts, be too abstract to make any meaningful distinctions. Instead of focusing on the content of the standard, I will therefore consider what *form* this standard has to assume. This approach makes it possible to draw more general conclusions about the role of a moral standard in theories of recognition – conclusions that should hold, independent of the specific content of the standard. The conclusions should thus also hold with respect to e.g. Fraser's (2001) standard of "participatory parity" and Popescu's (2022) more recent proposal to find a moral standard in the conditions of communicative deliberation.[31]

The first characteristic of the standard to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate demands for recognition is that the standard should be *interpreted*. This need for interpretation is a necessary condition for the standard to fulfil some function in a theory of recognition. At one extreme end, we could think of a standard that simply *dictates* what counts as a good reason to grant recognition. However, if a standard of moral progress could serve as a simple yardstick against which different demands for recognition could simply be measured, it would be unclear how there could ever be a conflict over the question of how the standard should be applied (cf. Walzer, 1993: 22, 47-48). In other words, if there would not be a need for interpretation and discussion, it would be impossible to speak any longer of a *struggle*

31. Two other influential proposals suggest that we do away with determinate standards altogether. Charles Taylor invokes Gadamer's concept of a "fusion of horizons" to argue that we should not judge another culture with our own standards, but rather let our standards themselves be transformed by the encounter with this culture (Taylor, 1994: 67ff.). Amy Allen argues that the notion of progress itself is problematic and that we should replace the content of this standard with an attitude of openness towards otherness and a commitment to "radical questioning" (2016: 205ff.). However, absent any articulation of how far this fusion of horizons should go or of what level of openness is appropriate, these proposals do not help to determine what the *right* response to a given demand is – and thus when recognition should be granted and when not. For a more elaborate argument along these lines, see Honneth's (2003c) paper on Gadamer.

for recognition (cf. Bertram & Celikates, 2015; Deranty, 2003). Therefore, there needs to be some flexibility in how the standard can be interpreted.

However, there also need to be limits to this interpretive flexibility. Popescu (2022) argues that the standards of both Honneth and Fraser are abstract enough to enable groups with opposing claims (e.g. LGBTQ+ activists *and* Christians who oppose to same sex marriage) to justify their struggle with reference to these standards.[32] Popescu calls this "the problem of symmetric interpretation" (2002: 10). If the standards are this ambiguous, they cannot distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate claims and hence they do not help in determining what counts as a good reason to grant recognition. With such flexible standards we cannot say anything about what moral progress entails. In other words: the class of struggles that may be deemed illegitimate – irrespective of the interpretation of the standard – should not be empty. A standard that can be interpreted as one pleases thus cannot do the job that it has to do in a critical theory of recognition, i.e. distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate demands for recognition.

Moreover, if the moral standard could be interpreted as one pleased, the specific outcome of social struggles would be left unexplained. If two social movements with opposite demands can both construct reasonable arguments that refer to the higher-order moral standard, then both social movements can expect to be normatively approved. However, the demands of only one social movement are ultimately granted (*either* same sex marriage is legal *or* it is illegal). In that case, the notion of a struggle for recognition, i.e. the search for others' normative approval, would no longer do any explanatory work, since both claims would be normatively approvable. It would then no longer matter which claims are clothed with reasons that are convincing to others, because *all* claims could be presented in such a way. If the moral standard would be too flexible, the notion of a struggle for recognition would thus be unable to explain how outcomes of social struggles are determined and therefore be obsolete.

In order to have a coherent notion of struggles for recognition, the higher-order moral standard thus needs to have a specific form. The standard that is used to determine what counts as a good reason to grant recognition and which can therefore be used to distinguish between morally progressive and morally regressive social movements, needs to allow for some differences of interpretation, but not for too many. There need to be differences of interpretation, because otherwise there is nothing to discuss and struggle about; but there also need to be limits to this interpretive flexibility or else the standard could not fulfil its role in determining

32. See Allen (2021) for a discussion of the ambivalent effects of the recognition of same sex marriage.

which social movements have demands for recognition that may appeal to others and may therefore be deemed legitimate.

We can draw two conclusions from this general form of the moral standard. First of all, it means that it is always uncertain whether a demand for recognition will be granted *before* the actual struggle for recognition takes place; one may think that one provides good reasons to convince someone else that due recognition had been withheld, but another person may interpret the moral standard differently and conclude that good reasons are lacking. This may be due to the fact that people "often have a flawed perception of the extent to which their own views on a particular issue are shared by others" (McVeigh, Cunningham & Farrell, 2014: 1147). In other words, people may be mistaken about whether others will be convinced by the reasons in which a demand for recognition is clothed. The success or failure of a social movement is in itself thus not decisive in determining whether it makes sense to interpret the demands of that movement as demands for recognition. A social movement can demand recognition by proposing a different interpretation of a recognitional principle; even if others ultimately do not grant this demand, the demand can still be interpreted as a demand for recognition, since receiving recognition was the goal of this social movement. The movement merely did not succeed in providing reasons that others found convincing (cf. Laden, 2007: 283-289). Hence, even when a social movement's demands are ultimately deemed illegitimate, this does not necessarily preclude that this movement was struggling for recognition.

This also means that, in Honneth's theory, the actual *struggle* for recognition remains somewhat of a black box. Since the standard of moral progress cannot help in determining which specific interpretation of the recognitional concepts will ultimately be the one that wins out in struggles for recognition, it is left unclear how struggles for recognition actually proceed and how a verdict is reached in these struggles. Hence, the higher-order moral standard does not offer a complete explanation of the outcomes of struggles for recognition. Honneth also provides no other concepts that can do the explanatory work, but with a higher-order moral standard which is able to say of at least some demands that they are illegitimate (i.e. the class of illegitimate social struggles is not empty), the notion of a struggle for recognition at least helps to explain why some demands *do not* win out in social struggles. Therefore, it has some explanatory power.[33]

33. This suggest that a theory of recognition should be complemented with other elements to better explain how struggles for recognition precisely unfold. Jaeggi's (2018) idea, that moral developments can only be explained when we also study how well certain norms fit other social practices, might be useful here. Ikäheimo, Deranty and Goris (2023) provide an interesting attempt to develop this idea along the lines of recognition theory.

The second conclusion is more problematic for a critical theory of recognition. If we need a standard that cannot be interpreted as one pleases, i.e. a standard that is able to say – without any further interpretation or discussion – of at least some social movements that their demands are clearly, beyond reasonable doubt, illegitimate and that there are thus no convincing reasons for their demands, then these social movements cannot be understood as struggling *for recognition*. After all, a struggle for recognition is aimed at convincing others that due recognition had been withheld before; and to do this, one needs reasons that others find convincing. If a social movement does not have these reasons that appeal to others and knows this, it also knows that it will not get any recognition (cf. Cohen, 2003: 349). In that case, getting recognition cannot be what participants of the social movement are after and hence this conflict cannot be understood as a struggle *for recognition*. Therefore, one cannot say – as both Fraser and Honneth do (see section 3.2) – that 1) a social movement is without any question illegitimate and thus unable to give compelling reasons for its demands; and say, at the same time, that 2) this movement is struggling for recognition. The standard that is employed to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate struggles thus turns out to distinguish, not between different types of struggles for recognition, but *between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggles*.

Two consequences follow from this. First of all, it means that the simultaneous fulfilment of the two goals of a critical theory of recognition, i.e. to both explain struggles for recognition and to determine which of those are legitimate, is foreclosed from the start. If a moral standard allows one to say, before any discussion and interpretation, that a social struggle is illegitimate, then this struggle cannot be understood as a struggle for recognition. Some putative struggles for recognition should then be understood as struggles for something else (like power or domination). For example, Fraser's (2003a) and Honneth's (2003a) interpretation, namely that racist social movements like the German skinheads are involved in morally regressive struggles for recognition, would be wrong. These struggles would not be struggles for recognition, because if these social movements knew in advance that they could not clothe their demands with reasons that appeal to others, they would also know that their demands would not be recognised as justified demands; struggling *for recognition* would then be idle. Or, alternatively, if these social movements were able to construct arguments that appealed to others, then it were no longer possible to say that their demands were obviously illegitimate. This implies that we no longer have any means to morally evaluate struggles for recognition. After all, the struggles of which we can simply say that they are illegitimate are not struggles for recognition; and of the struggles for recognition, none can simply be deemed illegitimate.

The second consequence is that, if this standard distinguishes between struggles for recognition and other types of social conflict, this allows us to say that recognition is not a catch-all term. If a struggle for recognition proceeds via providing reasons that are potentially convincing to others, then a social struggle in which those reasons are absent cannot be understood as a struggle for recognition. This insight makes it possible to make distinctions between different types of social struggles. Not all social movements that are concerned with culture or identity are necessarily struggling for recognition; if participants of such a movement cannot or are unwilling to provide potentially convincing reasons for their demands and know this in advance, they cannot be said to be struggling for recognition.

This implies that the more powerful the standard is, i.e. the more precisely it can say what counts as a morally progressive social struggle, the smaller is the scope of struggles for recognition. The more precise the standard, the greater the scope of social conflicts of which we can say that they are illegitimate, and the smaller the scope of conflicts in which there can still be a struggle and discussion over what due recognition entails. There is thus a trade-off to be made: if a theory of recognition is able to say of more social movements that they are clearly morally regressive, a smaller range of social struggles can be understood as struggles for recognition.

The way in which social movements frame their arguments is not decisive in this respect. The fact that a claim is framed as a demand for recognition does not necessarily imply that recognition is what they were after; a demand for recognition can also be employed as a useful cultural script in the social movement's strategy of action, without it necessarily reflecting the movement's goals (cf. Bader, 2007: 258; Swidler, 1986: 282ff.; Voswinkel, 2012: 36-38). The reasons that participants of a social movement provide in the context of justification do not necessarily coincide with their motivation to get involved in the movement (cf. Davidson, 1963: 697-699).

This implies that one cannot determine whether a social struggle is a struggle for recognition merely by looking at what is demanded in the struggle (e.g. the recognition of one's distinct identity); one also has to investigate if participants of a social struggle believe that they can actually provide reasons that are potentially compelling to those of whom recognition is demanded. Whether a social struggle is a struggle for recognition thus also depends on the social context in which it unfolds. For example, it may be difficult to construct reasons that the other party finds compelling if there is a high level of polarisation, which, following DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson (1996) can be defined as a situation in which "opinions are diverse, 'far apart' in content … [and] people with different positions on an issue cluster

into separate camps, with locations between the two modal positions sparsely occupied" (DiMaggio et al. 1996: 694). If there are high levels of polarisation with respect to the debated topic and people with one view on the topic know that they are unable to provide reasons that appeal to people with the opposite view, this social struggle cannot be understood as a struggle for recognition. If participants of social movements find out during their struggle that it is impossible to clothe their demands with reasons that convince others, the participants should also, in a self-reflexive moment, realise that – if they continue their struggle – they are not struggling for recognition, but for something else.

It is this self-reflexive moment that distinguishes my interpretation from Senf's (2023) and Zurn's (2023), who both argue that some social movements (like populist, xenophobic, right-wing movements) should be understood as *unjust struggles for recognition*. In his astute dissertation, Senf (2023: Ch. 7) asks: "Can struggles for recognition be evil?" He answers this question affirmatively: some struggles can be understood as expressing feelings of misrecognition, but since the movements' goals are unjust, these struggles are unjust – and sometimes even evil – struggles for recognition. However, if a theorist, and those who share the theorist's views, can ascertain that a social movement is unjust or evil, then the participants of this social movement should also be able to find out that their social movement is perceived as such. Hence, they would know that their views will never be normatively approved (i.e. recognised) by those who deem these views unjust or evil. Participants of a social movement would in this way become reflexively aware that their demand for recognition is an idle one. They may then choose to stop their struggle – but if they continue with it, then they struggle for something else than for recognition. It is true that people may struggle on the basis of a perceived injustice, as both Senf (2023) and Zurn (2023) hold, but this does not automatically imply that they struggle *for recognition*.

This paper has argued that it is a condition of possibility of struggles for recognition that participants of social struggles believe that they can provide compelling reasons to those from whom recognition is demanded. One may believe to have those reasons at one moment of the social struggle, but not at another moment. This implies that there may be "distinct combinations of motivations at different periods of the movement" (Woods, 2001: 268). It is thus possible that a topic that once has been at stake in a struggle for recognition can no longer be understood as something around which people struggle for recognition, because it is no longer possible to provide reasons for one's demands on this topic that appeal to those to whom this demand is addressed. Abortion seems to be a case in point, as it has been a topic on which the US has become

more polarised (DiMaggio et al., 1996). As a consequence, it seems difficult to interpret the struggles around this topic any longer as struggles for recognition.[34]

Someone's conviction that her demand is legitimate is thus not decisive in determining whether she struggles for recognition. Someone may believe that she ought to be recognised and at the same time know that she cannot give reasons that the others, from whom recognition is demanded, find convincing. In that case, she can still struggle to achieve something, but not for recognition.

Now, one might retort that one can never be sure that it is impossible to convince others of one's demands. Moral concepts are complex and thus always open to contestation; this ensures that one's interpretations of moral concepts are never set in stone and hence that participants of social movements may always hope that others will – ultimately – be convinced of the movement's demands (cf. Moody-Adams, 1999: 169-170). Davidson seems to be right when he writes that "the clarity and effectiveness of our concepts grows with the growth of our understanding of others. There are no definite limits to how far dialogue can or will take us" (2001: 219). Although this may be true in theory, one cannot always hold on to it in practice; when faced with a situation that one deems unjust and wants to put an end to, one has to act (cf. Williams, 2006). A dialogue cannot be continued indefinitely, save by perpetuating the perceived injustice. That is why, even if our understanding of moral concepts is fallible, struggles for recognition can nevertheless come about; if people would endlessly reflect on how their own moral understandings should be altered, they would never even begin to struggle for recognition. The fallibility of one's moral knowledge has to be bracketed, so to say, if one wants to put an end to what one perceives to be an unjust situation. However, if the awareness that all moral understandings are fallible do not preclude struggles for recognition from being started, this should also not preclude them from being ended. When the exchange of reasons is idle and does not bring about the desired transformation of an unjust situation, the continuation of the exchange of reasons (i.e. of the struggle for recognition) is the perpetuation of the perceived injustice. When those of whom recognition is demanded are not susceptible to one's arguments, what one deems moral progress can only be realised with other, sometimes coercive or violent, means (Moody-Adams, 1999: 174) – and indeed, social struggles often are violent. However,

34. Conversely, a social struggle may also *become* a struggle for recognition, depending on historically contingent factors that determine whether or not the addressees of demands for social change are susceptible to the reasons given for those demands (cf. Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001: 17; Stahl, 2021; Young, 2001).

as should be clear by now, such struggles cannot cogently be understood as struggles for recognition.

If social movements know that they are unable to justify their demands with arguments that can convince others, the participants of these movements should be motivated by something else than the search for recognition. Participants of social movements may also struggle for power or domination, out of fear or to secure their interests. They may also want to show *in* their struggle that other social relations than those of the status quo are possible, like in the case of prefigurative political struggles that do not necessarily lead to long-lasting changes in society (Van de Sande, 2013). Someone may also protest as a way to assure herself, rather than others, that she is a self-respecting person (Boxill, 1976). Alternatively, the affective ties with one's fellow protesters may motivate a person to continue to participate in a social struggle, even when the protesters do not believe that the desired result will come about (cf. Goodwin, 1997). There may be many reasons to protest: "Participation carries many pleasures, which may be great enough to motivate participation without relying on a cognitive belief that success is possible or likely" (Goodwin et al., 2001: 18). All these types of struggles may also have the *effect* that others get convinced that recognition had been unduly withheld before, e.g. by instigating an aspect change through which an evaluative quality is seen in a new light (cf. Owen, 2023). However, convincing others that recognition was due was not the goal of these movements; they were rather inspired by other motives.[35]

Moreover, if social movements are not struggling for recognition, then the immediate positive effect of participating in these social movements should not necessarily be sought in the anticipation of being recognised in the future, as Honneth (1995: 164) believes. Participating in a social protest may have other immediate, positive psychic effects, though. One can think, for example, of the "emotional energy" (Collins, 2001) that the social protest endows its participants with; or of the "collective effervescence" (Durkheim, 1995: 216ff.) that is generated in the protest; or of "the pleasure in agency" (Woods, 2001: 280) experienced in protesting. Participating in a social protest may thus suffice in order to enjoy the protest's immediate, positive psychic effects. An expectation to be recognised in the future is unnecessary to explain these effects.[36]

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35. These struggles should therefore not be understood as struggles *for recognition*. Moreover, if a social movement would use a strategy of providing new perspectives and/or new images to instigate an aspect change in the addressee of the demand for recognition *and* if this would be sufficient, then this would not be a genuine *struggle*, for there would already be mutual agreement on the interpretation of the relevant recognitional concept. This has been discussed in more detail in section 3.5.

36. This implies that there are more dimensions to social struggles than just recognition and redistribution. This further complicates the task of morally evaluating these struggles (cf. Deranty, 2009, 350; Zurn, 2005).

These latter points suggest that there are limits to what can be explained with reference to a Hegelian social ontology. As Deleuze (1983: 119-124) has mockingly remarked, Hegel only affirms something after a double negation. In the case of a theory of recognition, this means that people are motivated to demand social change, because they want to negate the other's negation of their evaluative qualities. However, if people can also be motivated to participate in social movements, not because of an experience of injustice, but rather because they are motivated by e.g. curiosity, playfulness or a desire for collective effervescence, then one needs another social ontology, that is, a Spinozist (Spinoza, 2015) or Nietzschean (Nietzsche, 2001: §276) one that is based on direct affirmation. After all, as this paper has argued, there are limits to what can be explained with reference to the notion of struggles for recognition.

3.7 Discussion and conclusion

This paper has argued that the attempt to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate demands for recognition presents a serious challenge to a critical theory of recognition. As was argued, participants of movements in which illegitimate demands are expressed may know in advance that they cannot cloth their demands with reasons that are compelling to others. Since recognition is reason-governed, they also know in advance that these others will not recognise their demands as valid. Hence, their struggle cannot be understood as a struggle *for recognition*; the participants of the struggle already know, before the struggle takes place, that their efforts will not bring them any recognition. The result is that the two goals of a critical theory of recognition, i.e. to explain and morally evaluate struggles for recognition, cannot be fulfilled simultaneously. A moral standard that distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate social struggles cannot distinguish between different types of struggles for recognition, but only between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggle.

Now that the limits of the concept of a struggle for recognition are drawn, we have also reached the limits of what can be achieved by mere philosophical reflection in this domain. Empirical research should ultimately show which social struggles can be properly interpreted as struggles for recognition and which struggles should be explained by alternative means. This empirical research should show in which social struggles the participants believe that they have reasons that are convincing to those to whom their demands are addressed and in which social struggles this is not the case. As such, the notion of a struggle for recognition remains an important one; not because all social struggles are struggles for recognition, but precisely because only some of them are.

Epilogue Chapter 3

Not every struggle around culture or identity can be understood as a struggle for recognition. There may be other reasons to engage in a social struggle, and in Chapter 3 I tried to provide more clarity about what conditions have to be fulfilled before one can speak of a struggle for recognition. In a struggle for recognition, people try to convince the addressees of the demand for recognition that there are good reasons for this demand. Those who struggle for recognition believe that recognition is due in a given case. Recognition is the right response in that case, i.e., the response that the one demanding recognition believes is owed to her.

Whether or not recognition is due is based on reasons. Can the person or group that demands recognition provide reasons for it that the addressee of this demand may deem acceptable? If such reasons are not available to the one demanding recognition, or if she is unwilling to provide these reasons, she knows that she will not be able to convince the addressee of the demand that recognition is due. The one demanding recognition would then already know that requesting recognition is idle and would, if she would nonetheless struggle, struggle for something else instead.

Is it possible to say something about the kinds of reasons that someone needs to provide when she is struggling for recognition? In Chapter 3 I have argued that we can further specify the standard that determines whether a reason may be acceptable to the addressee of the demand for recognition. This standard should have a certain form. On the one hand, it cannot be too vague, for if that were the case, every reason that is given when someone asks for recognition would be acceptable, and then recognition would lose its meaning. On the other hand, if the standard would be very precise and it would be completely clear what reasons may be accepted by the addressee of a demand for recognition, then there would be no doubt about which demands for recognition are acceptable and which are unacceptable. In that case, there would be no disagreement and there would be nothing to struggle about.

This means that the reasons that can be provided in struggles for recognition need to have certain characteristics. It needs to be *somewhat*, but not entirely, unclear if the reasons that are provided in a struggle for recognition may convince the addressee of the demand for recognition. If such reasons are lacking – for example, when participants of a social movement know that they do not have any reasons that might convince the addressees of the rightness of their demands – then the participants of this movement also know that they will not get any recognition. In that case, struggling for recognition would be idle and the participants of the social movement

could only struggle for something else than recognition. This insight helps to distinguish struggles for recognition from other types of social struggle.

In Chapters 2 and 3 I have tried to provide more clarity on the main concepts of this dissertation, namely gentrification and recognition. I have conceptualised gentrification as a moving target and argued that the concept of gentrification may have an effect on how people understand their own role in the process of urban change. I have also tried to discuss in more detail what struggles for recognition exactly entail and in what ways they proceed.

This conceptual clarification has paved the way for the next steps in this dissertation. The next three chapters use the theory of recognition to empirically study the moral experiences of people who live in gentrifying neighbourhoods. I will first focus on gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, before discussing gentrification in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. After that, the two cases will be compared.

Chapter 4

Beyond displacement: gentrification, misrecognition and resistance in Rotterdam's Tweebosbuurt

Abstract

Gentrification produces a variety of experienced moral wrongs. This paper develops a new framework to assess these wrongs through the lens of (mis)recognition. On the basis of interviews with people living through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, this paper investigates the variety of ways in which people consider this process to be unjust. What mattered to the inhabitants was not only that they were displaced, i.e., that they had to move out of their home or witness neighbourhood transformation, but also the perceived intersubjective disregard that was expressed towards them in a variety of other ways during the process of gentrification. Our recognition-theoretical framework thus highlights the various moral aspects of gentrification that are all essential for a full understanding of how people morally experience the process, not just as passive victims but also as active protesters.

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Contributions of the authors

This chapter is the cooperative work of Arnoud Lagendijk, Bart van Leeuwen and me. I have collected the data and analysed it. I also wrote the first version of this chapter. Arnoud Lagendijk and Bart van Leeuwen have revised parts of this chapter. We all contributed to the design of the study.

4.1 Introduction

Why is gentrification unjust, according to the people living through it? Why do people resist gentrification and what does this resistance mean to them?

Despite the critical edge that the concept of gentrification has since its coinage by Ruth Glass in 1964, there is still much to learn about the question why people who live through gentrification consider it to be morally wrong. The moral aspects of gentrification have been studied primarily from a philosophical and normative perspective (see e.g. Dawkins, 2023; Kohn, 2013; Lloyd, 2023; Van Leeuwen, 2025; Zimmer, 2018), while empirical studies of displacement have focused primarily on how locals affectively experience the disruption of their relation to their neighbourhood (e.g. Atkinson, 2015; Kern, 2016; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015). Other studies have typically focused on people's experiences of injustice related to one specific dimension of people's identity, like class (e.g. Smith, 1996) or race (e.g. Bloch & Meyer, 2023; Doucet, 2020; Kent-Stoll, 2020; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022). However, there has been little empirical research that shows how gentrification entails a variety of perceived moral wrongs experienced simultaneously. The kaleidoscope of types of normative resentment that are in play in these gentrifying settings has thus not received due attention. Getting to grips with this is not only relevant for a better social-scientific understanding of the *nature* of resentment in gentrifying settings, but also helps policy makers to avoid more effectively said experiences through a carefully designed policy mix. Although this paper will be about the former, we do think that this project could be crucial for the latter.

An expanded version of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition (Honneth, 1995; Van Leeuwen, 2007) is well-suited to grasp the variegated character of gentrification-induced experiences of injustice. This recognition-theoretical approach to justice involves a differentiated conception of justice as well as an emphasis on the subjective experience of different types of misrecognition. Honneth's critical theory thus allows us to capture different dimensions of people's sense that legitimate anticipation to being recognized is violated in the process of gentrification. We will use this "plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004) to make sense of the experiences of people who lived through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Although much of the gentrification literature emphasizes displacement as the main problem of gentrification, our findings show that this is only one of multiple expressions of the intersubjective disregard that people living through gentrification experience.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section discusses literature on gentrification and recognition. After that, the case of the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam

and the empirical research methods are outlined. We then present the empirical findings by showing how gentrification is experienced through different types of misrecognition. After a section on the social response and protests to perceived misrecognition, we conclude the paper with a discussion of these findings and their relevance for gentrification research and urban policy.

4.2 Literature review

This section presents an overview of the relevant scientific literature on gentrification and recognition. First, the literature on gentrification will be discussed; second, attention will be paid to the recognition-theoretical framework. After that, we discuss what that theoretical framework adds to the current state of gentrification scholarship.

4.2.1 Gentrification

The term "gentrification" describes how neighbourhoods change in such a way that they start catering to the preferences and needs of wealthier, new occupants. In turn, this prompts the physical and/or social-cultural displacement of the existing occupants of a lower socio-economic status. The concept of gentrification thus captures how socio-economic inequality is translated in differentiated access to space. Although some authors argue that gentrification is a good thing (Byrne, 2003; Whyte, 2010; see also Zijlmans & Custers, 2023), most theorists insist that gentrification should prompt critical perspectives on spatial transformations (e.g. Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008). Despite this, there is still much to learn about *why* people living through gentrification see it as an *unjust* process (for reviews of the gentrification literature, see Knieriem [2023], Lees [2000] and Shaw [2008]).

Gentrification comes with several negative consequences for the people who live in gentrifying areas. One consequence is the risk of eviction (Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020). Another consequence is the loss of one's place when the arrival of new, more affluent inhabitants changes a neighbourhood, often including its ethnic and cultural composition (Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022; cf. Taylor, 1992). This may happen even when newcomers have a taste for diversity (Tissot, 2011; 2014) or want to protect the authentic nature of the neighbourhood (Brown-Saracino, 2004; 2007). Long-term inhabitants may feel estranged from their neighbourhood when they are confronted with class differences there (Valli, 2015). The new social practices and activities that cater to the preferences of newcomers in gentrifying neighbourhoods disrupt locals' relations to their neighbourhood and may consequently lead to moral feelings like anger, grief and resentment among long-term inhabitants (Atkinson, 2015; Kern, 2016; Pinkster & Boterman, 2017; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). Displacement, then,

may also occur if one manages to stay put physically at a place that no longer feels like home because of social, economic and/or cultural transformations (Davidson, 2009; Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020; Marcuse, 2010). We adopt this broad notion of displacement, as both forced relocation and socio-cultural alienation due to drastic local change contribute to an experienced loss of place (for an overview of the different conceptions of displacement, see Phillips et al., 2021). However, as we argue below (section 4.2.3), the moral experiences of people living through gentrification are not *solely* related to physical or socio-cultural displacement.

How people interpret gentrification and their own role in it may influence how the process unfolds (Knieriem, 2023). In this regard, gentrification has been described as a "dirty word" (Smith, 1996) that may function as a signifier around which people can mobilize to resist urban transformations (Brown-Saracino, 2021; Werth & Marienthal, 2016). However, not much research has focused on the question why exactly and to what extent people think that gentrification should be resisted: in what ways do they consider the process to be unjust and what does their resistance to the process mean to them? Several authors have argued that whether or not gentrification is resisted is influenced by how urban transformations are framed and understood by the people involved (Ellis-Young, 2020; Lees & Ferreri, 2016; Maeckelbergh, 2012). The perceived risk of displacement is important in this respect, but not the only thing that matters. What also counts is how those involved are treated in their capacity as autonomous citizens, for example during participatory processes in which local authorities try to discipline inhabitants who may otherwise protest to proposed developments (cf. Huisman, 2014; Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014). In this paper, we try to further unpack this variety of moral experiences of people living through gentrification by means of the theory of recognition.

4.2.2 (Mis)recognition

In his theory of recognition, Axel Honneth (1995; 1997) argues that experiences of injustice are the fuel for social protests and, ultimately, societal transformations. He understands these experiences of injustice as unfulfilled expectations for due recognition (Honneth, 1995; 2007).

What due recognition entails in a specific situation, depends on which sphere of recognition is relevant in that situation. Honneth (1995) distinguishes between three spheres of recognition. The first one is *care* or *love*: this form of recognition is concerned with people's primary needs and vulnerability, like the need for shelter and food. The second one is *respect*: this form of recognition bears on people's equal capacities for self-legislation and their equality before the law. The third sphere is

the sphere of *esteem*: esteem relates to people's individual contributions to society, for example via formal labour. In these spheres, different aspects of individuals are relevant (needs, capacity for self-legislation and contributions, respectively). Consequently, people have to refer to various standards of justice (care, respect and esteem, respectively) when they demand recognition. Honneth describes his theory therefore as "a plural theory of justice" (2004:351).

Honneth's theory may not yet be differentiated enough, though. Van Leeuwen (2007) has argued that Honneth's tripartite scheme needs to be complemented with a fourth sphere of recognition, namely that of *difference-respect*. Difference-respect is concerned with people's social attachments, which – although important to people themselves – are not necessarily valuable to society at large. Hence, recognition of people's social ties and their belonging to a social group should be formal, i.e., non-evaluative. At the same time, this difference-respect cannot be subsumed under Honneth's notion of respect (or, to be more precise: autonomy-respect), as it is not concerned with people's capacities for self-legislation or equality before the law, but rather with people's social attachments and cultural differences, i.e., with their sense of place and belonging. Hence, difference-respect counts as a fourth sphere of recognition. According to Van Leeuwen (2022), an expanded theory of recognition helps to understand issues of urban justice, taking into account the spatiality of urban transformations, the urban social tissue, and the diversity in both.

Recognition is so important for human beings, because people can only fully develop their capacities and see them in a positive light if these capacities are first affirmed by others (Honneth, 1992). This affirmation can also come from institutions that express patterns of recognition. For example, Honneth argues that the capitalist market-economy is not an autonomous realm, but rather embedded in laws and norms that express if and how (re)productive activities should be remunerated (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Honneth, 2014). Although distributive effects of market dynamics might not be fully *explained* in terms of "(mis)recognition" (Fraser in Fraser & Honneth, 2003), political and legal institutions either violate or acknowledge the principles of recognition for the way that they *deal with* those effects, and the degree to which markets are given leeway in the first place (Van Leeuwen, 2022). For the real-estate market, we can in particular think of tax-incentive scheme's for private developers and regulations concerning rent-stabilization and eviction, to name a few. Hence, these institutions can be evaluated from the normative point of view and that is, we hypothesize, precisely what inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods do.

If people are not duly recognized, this misrecognition hinders people from seeing their capacities in a positive light, from fully developing these capacities and thereby from pursuing their goals (Anderson & Honneth, 2005). In that sense, not being duly recognized can be harmful. This absence of due recognition can evoke moral emotions, like anger and resentment, that provide the motivation to change this situation, i.e., to struggle for recognition. The goal of this struggle is to get the intersubjective recognition that is due, so as to be able to develop positive self-relations regarding the aspects of oneself that are relevant in the different recognitional spheres (Honneth, 1995; Knieriem, 2024). These self-relations are self-confidence (care), self-respect as a moral equal (autonomy-respect), self-respect as a sense of social belonging (difference-respect), and self-esteem (esteem) (Van Leeuwen, 2007: 191). This positive self-relation may already (partially) develop during the struggle. An example is how social movements offer a "counterculture of compensatory respect" in which participants of the movement provide each other with the recognition that they do not find elsewhere (Honneth, 1995: 124).

Honneth's expanded theory of recognition provides an apt outlook to study the experiences of injustice of people living through urban gentrification. First, the recognition-theoretical framework is a differentiated framework that is able to identify different aspects of gentrification-induced moral indignation. Second, while this framework involves a theory of justice, the recognition-theoretical framework also includes — in the tradition of critical theory — a social theory that enables us to study and better understand empirical phenomena, such as gentrification and resistance to it.

Our expectation is that all four aspects of recognition — care, autonomy-respect, difference-respect, and esteem — have a role to play here: care resulting from the basic provision of proper housing in a good environment; autonomy-respect granted by fair and equal access for all inhabitants to processes and policies of urban transformation; difference-respect through the due recognition of social attachments to a particular place, the neighbourhood and its inhabitants; and esteem through the valuation of inhabitants' work and activities for the physical and social development of a neighbourhood. The next section details what this recognition-theoretical perspective contributes to the current knowledge of gentrification.

4.2.3 Gentrification and misrecognition

This paper's recognition-theoretical framework, which distinguishes four spheres of recognition, extends research on how people experience gentrification psychically, affectively and morally. Much of the extant work in this domain focuses

on displacement, which we — as we explained before — understand in a broad fashion here, referring to both physical dislocation and to political, cultural, social, symbolic and economic transformations that disrupt people's relation to their home and neighbourhood (Davidson, 2009; Hyra, 2015; Summers, 2021). Research of both psychiatrists (Fried, 1966; Fullilove, 1996; 2001) and geographers (e.g. Atkinson, 2015; Frank, 2021; Seitz & Proudfoot, 2021) show how displacement leads to feelings of grief, melancholy and resentment. Our recognition-theoretical framework, on the other hand, emphasizes that the moral experiences of people living through gentrification cannot always be understood as derivatives of displacement, for it is not always someone's relation-to-place that is morally at stake. For example, when people feel misrecognized in the sphere of respect through insufficient opportunity for democratic influence, it is not primarily their relation-to-place that is disregarded, but rather their moral accountability. And when locals perceive that they are misrecognized in the sphere of esteem, they feel that their abilities and talents are undervalued, not their ties to their home or neighbourhood. Our interviews show that such elements unrelated to place are important in the moral evaluations of people living through gentrification. Research on the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods should therefore move beyond a focus on displacement.

We hereby do not mean to imply that displacement is not inherent to gentrification: we hold on to the widely shared view that there cannot be gentrification without displacement. We merely want to emphasize that, if we want to fully understand the moral experiences of people living through gentrification, a focus on displacement alone does not suffice. People's moral experiences are variegated and not always directly related to displacement. Our recognition-theoretical framework highlights moral aspects of gentrification that are all essential for a full understanding of how people morally experience the process, not just as passive victims but also as active protesters.

Furthermore, while there is ample gentrification literature focusing on aspects of injustice, this focus is generally confined to one recognition sphere. For instance, the sphere of care relates to the loss of shelter and of support networks that may result from evictions (see e.g. Desmond, 2012; Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020). The sphere of autonomy-respect relates to misrecognition of inhabitants' moral accountability – e.g. in flawed practices of participation (Huisman, 2014; Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014) – and of their equality as bearers of rights – e.g. when gentrification is conceptualized as a racialized process where people's equal moral worth is contested (e.g. Kent-Stoll, 2020; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022). The sphere of difference-respect covers the meaningful relations that inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods may have to

each other and to a place (see e.g. Kern, 2016; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015). Finally, the sphere of esteem concerns how locals in gentrifying neighbourhoods are sometimes perceived as a burden that has to be dispelled (Smith, 1996; Uitermark et al., 2007). One-sided foci, however, obscure that the experiences of injustice of people living through gentrification can be all-encompassing. By all-encompassing we mean that the perceived moral wrongs cover all of the recognition spheres that our recognition-theoretical framework distinguishes. These perceived injustices may all emerge in one and the same process. A narrow focus on only one dimension of gentrification thus loses sight of how *comprehensive* the experience of injustice can be for people who live through gentrification. Gentrification is in that case not related to one, but to all their practical self-relations.

In short, our recognition-theoretical framework allows for two extensions of the literature on how people experience gentrification: first, by emphasizing the aspects of injustice that are not primarily related to people's relations-to-place, induced by displacement (threats); and second, by drawing on a plural theory of justice, it refrains from focusing on one dimension of gentrification and instead emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the experienced injustice that gentrification may bring about.

4.3 The case and the empirical methods

To better understand gentrification-induced experiences of injustice by means of the recognition-theoretical framework, we have applied this approach to gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam. This section first describes the case and subsequently the empirical methods we have used.

4.3.1 Case: Demolition of the Tweebosbuurt, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

The Tweebosbuurt is located in the Afrikaanderwijk in Rotterdam South. Rotterdam South has, since at least two decades, been considered to be an urban region with many problems, like unemployment, poverty and criminality. Legislation designed to deal with these and related issues, the Act on Extraordinary Measures for Urban Problems (hereafter: AEMUP — in Dutch: *Wet bijzondere maatregelen grootstedelijke problematiek*) — sometimes referred to as the "Rotterdam Act" — passed the Dutch parliament in 2005 and was subsequently applied to Rotterdam South, allowing the city to bar people who relied on unemployment benefits or social assistance from moving into specified neighbourhoods (Uitermark et al., 2017). These neighbourhoods were selected, based on how they scored on "liveability", which was negatively associated with the occurrence of social housing, low-income groups and non-western, non-native residents (Uitermark et al., 2017: 64; see also Arkins & French, 2023).

This urban policy in Rotterdam-South has been described as exceptional, as the AEMUP allowed for the temporal suspension of rights and laws that normally apply (Schinkel & Van den Berg, 2011; Uitermark et al., 2017). An important vehicle has been the National Program Rotterdam South (*Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid* — from here on: NPRZ), an initiative of the national and local governments, social housing corporations and other partners. The NPRZ was agreed on in 2011 and aimed at *inter alia* an improvement of housing, education and work in Rotterdam South. Attracting "promising groups" (*kansrijke groepen*) was one of the strategies to realize this goal (NPRZ, 2011: 16; see also Custers & Willems, 2024). This goal is also reflected in Rotterdam's housing vision (*woonvisie*), which aims to decrease the number of lowly priced homes and to increase the number of higher priced homes (Municipality Rotterdam, 2016: 16). Gentrification in Rotterdam has accordingly been described as a "governmental strategy" to manage the municipality's population (Uitermark et al., 2007). Many people of the Tweebosbuurt were well aware of the AEMUP and the NPRZ (R01, R04, R05, R07, R08, R12, R13). Their knowledge of these policies and their exclusionary underpinnings provided the background of how they evaluated the demolition of their neighbourhood.[37] That provided a reason why they did not only hold social housing corporation Vestia responsible for the demolishment of their neighbourhood, but also politicians and policy makers.

The Tweebosbuurt is part of the Afrikaanderwijk, which is designated as a so-called "focus area" of the NPRZ, i.e., a neighbourhood "where problems cumulate" (NPRZ, 2011: 4, authors' translation). The NPRZ's "policy perspective" (*handelingsperspectief*) for the Afrikaanderwijk says that "negative associations with the neighbourhood are crowdedness, unsafe [*sic*], immigrants and parking" (*drukte, onveilig, allochtonen en parkeren*) (Handelingsperspectief Afrikaanderwijk, 2013: 3, authors' translation). At the same time, the Tweebosbuurt is centrally located, close to the city centre and to the gentrified Katendrecht and the flagship Kop van Zuid development, and in that sense attractive to many people (cf. Doucet & Koenders, 2018).

Most of the homes in the Tweebosbuurt were owned by the social housing corporation Vestia. Prompted by financial speculation in the past, resulting in huge debts (see Aalbers et al., 2017), Vestia was reorganized and recently renamed into *Hef Wonen*. The corporation decided to demolish 524 social rental homes, which will be replaced by 177 new social rental homes, 101 private rental homes, 29 middle rent homes

37. Although the AEUMP has been mainly applied, not to the Afrikaanderwijk itself, but to adjacent neighbourhoods (Hochstenbach et al., 2015). At the moment of writing, though, the AEUMP allows for the police screening of prospective renters of the Transvaalstraat, which is part of the Afrikaanderwijk, but not of the Tweebosbuurt (Municipality Rotterdam, 2022).

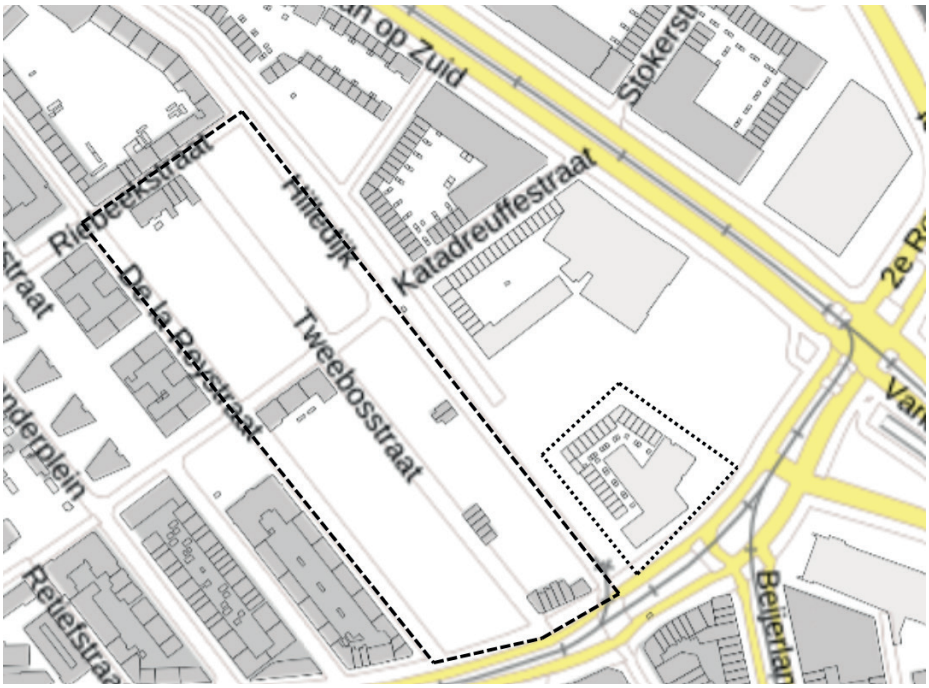

Figure 1. The Tweebosbuurt. The area within the dashed line is the demolished area; the area within the dotted line captures the new-build social housing. The lines are drawn by the authors. Source of the image: Kadaster (2025).

(*middenhuur*) and 143 owner-occupied homes (Hef Wonen, 2024; see also Figure 1). Hence, there is a net loss of 347 social housing units: many households thus cannot return after the demolishment. Vestia had a financial incentive to quickly demolish the homes in the Tweebosbuurt, as that made them eligible for a reduction of the tax that social housing corporations had to pay in the Netherlands: the so called Landlord Levy (Dutch: *verhuurdersheffing*; the reduction of this tax is called *RVV* or *Regeling Vermindering Verhuurdersheffing*) (Raad van State, 2022; Municipality Rotterdam, 2018). The UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing has, together with his colleagues, concluded that the demolishment of the Tweebosbuurt — resulting from Vestia's financial risk taking — "may be in violation of the human right to adequate housing" (Rajagopal et al., 2021: 1).

These developments in the Tweebosbuurt are not exceptional: they are congruent with broader trends in Rotterdam, where the social renting comprised 57.3% of the total housing stock in 2000 and decreased to 46.9% in 2013 (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018: 34). It also fits broader trends in the Netherlands. Notwithstanding the fact that Fainstein (2010) described Amsterdam as coming close to being a "just city", this

seems to be an outdated description of Amsterdam specifically (Uitermark, 2009) and of the Netherlands more generally, where — in the context of austerity measures after the global financial crisis (cf. Peck, 2012) — taxes for social housing corporations (like the Landlord Levy) have led to a decrease of the social housing stock and long waiting lists (Boelhouwer & Priemus, 2014).[38] This, together with other factors like a general housing shortage and rising house prices, have made housing an important driver of inequality in the Netherlands (Boelhouwer, 2020; Wigger, 2021).

4.3.2 Empirical methods

Providing insight into this broader political, legal and economic setting is necessary to adequately interpret the moral experiences of people living through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt. For this purpose, we have analysed relevant documents, such as the ones referred to, and we have had conversations with several people who were working on or were concerned about gentrification, urban transformations, evictions and demolishment in their city Rotterdam. Next to that, one of us attended the housing protest (*Woonopstand*) of Rotterdam, which took place on 17 October 2021. This protest started in the Tweebosbuurt, as a symbolic place of resistance against housing demolition. Observations made there, as well as other observations in the neighbourhood, together with the conversations and document analysis, helped us to better understand the ongoing developments in Rotterdam.

The main body of empirical research is comprised of interviews with 15 (former) inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt. The first interviewees were approached via email; later interviewees were found through snowballing and through meetings at the housing protest. The interviews started when the demolishment of the homes had begun, and the demolishment continued during the process of gathering more interviews. At the time of the interview, some interviewees continued to live in their old home or in a permanent new home in (or close to) the neighbourhood; others were still awaiting a new home; some lived in temporary homes and were promised to be able to return to the new social rental homes; there were also interviewees who had left the Tweebosbuurt for good. We stopped with interviewing when new interviews no longer provided new insights. We do not claim representativeness for our findings; the goal of our research was instead to provide a rich, detailed, checkered picture of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification, without making any claim on how widely shared such experiences were.

38. Despite this decrease, the Netherlands generally still has high levels of social housing (accounting for over 30% of the housing stock), with an important share owned by housing corporations (70%) (Boelhouwer 2020; Boelhouwer & Priemus, 2014; Jonker-Hoffren, 2023). Historically, social housing corporations have played an important role in managing existing and building new housing units in the Netherlands (see Boelhouwer & Priemus, 2014).

The interviews were held in Dutch. They were semi-structured and focussed on the interviewees' experiences of living in their neighbourhood and what they thought about the neighbourhood's transformations. To evoke themes related to recognition, the interviewees were asked (among other things) how they thought about their neighbourhood and if they felt at home there (difference-respect), whether they thought that their opinions were listened to (autonomy-respect), how they thought that their contributions to the neighbourhood were valued (esteem) and to what extent their new housing situation met their needs (care). They were also asked whether they felt treated unjustly in the process and what they thought of Rotterdam's urban policy. Some interviewees were clearly angry or sad about what happened in their neighbourhoods, whereas others showed less emotions during the interview. These moral emotions (or their absence) provide insights into the question which types of (mis)recognition affected the interviewees most in the process of government-led gentrification (cf. Gilhuis & Molendijk, 2022).

All the interviews were fully transcribed and subsequently analysed in Atlas.ti. The coding process was a combination of a deductive (theory-driven) and an inductive (data-driven) approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This meant concretely that we had the recognitional concepts in mind during coding, and that the latent concepts gained substance through the interviews. The interviews showed what specific form experiences of misrecognition assumed in this context of gentrification.

The next sections discuss the different types of misrecognition that the interviewees experienced in the process of gentrification. We present each recognitional sphere in turn, in order to show how each of the four types of misrecognition are relevant for a full understanding of the moral experiences of the people living through gentrification.

4.4 Autonomy-respect

The demolishment of the Tweebosbuurt was accompanied by a lot of resistance from the inhabitants. They protested in their neighbourhood. They went to court and spoke to various local and national media to get attention for what many of them considered to be an unjust process. The interviews bear out different aspects of this perceived injustice. One important aspect was that the interviewees saw the demolishment as a denial of their equal moral status. They felt discriminated against and thus not being taken seriously as full-fledged citizens. To put it in terms of the recognition-theoretical frame; their sense of misrecognition can be identified as a lack of autonomy-respect. We start the analysis here, given the crucial moral importance for this type of recognition, not just in the intersubjective sphere of

social relations but also in the institutional sphere of legal norms and government action (Honneth, 1997:33).

Many interviewees mentioned the perceived racist and discriminatory urban policy behind the demolishment. One person talked about social tenants that apparently had to be replaced on the basis of the negative associations with the Afrikaanderwijk as a place of "immigrants": "People who look like me" (R07). This underpins Rucks-Ahidiana's (2022) notion of gentrification as a racialized process.

Another interviewee explained how the municipality's policies of displacement and dispersal can only be understood as expressions of racist or class-based rejection that we normally teach our children to avoid:

> You don't know me and you have an opinion of me based on what? Ethnicity? Income? Terrible, terrible. What do we teach our children? Not to judge too quickly right? (…) And adults do it themselves and then they expect little children not to do it themselves. Start with yourself first. (R12)

Other respondents lamented the ambition of Rotterdam's actual right-wing coalition to make the city "liveable" (*leefbaar*) primarily for what they consider "rich" people (R08). So feelings of neglect and junking emerged from the way urban planning created new divisions and shifts between poor and rich. Some new houses built just outside of, and visible from, the Tweebosbuurt, signified this inequality that was expressed in space and also *through* space (cf. Dikeç, 2001):

> Because it's only new construction, all owner-occupied properties, and if you see those prices of those houses, it's five tons, five and a half, six tons. Yes, plus, here an old construction and here a new construction, hey, it seems like there is (…) a wall in between (…): these are rich and these are poor. Yeah, it feels like that. (R06)

New houses are not just objectively there in geometrical space, but they also *express* the class difference as a daily reminder hard-wired in the city. It is perceived as misrecognition embodied *in* a spatial form, expressing the sense that the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt do not matter as much as others. The racism and class discrimination signalled by the interviewees are a paradigmatic form of disrespect, i.e., the denial of people's equal moral accountability, because they deny that the discriminated person deserves a justification that he or she can deem acceptable.

This denial harms "the self-respect we acquire in seeing the value of our judgment recognized by other persons" (Honneth, 1997: 26).

Some interviewees also mentioned how their moral accountability was more directly violated, because they were not listened to. One inhabitant objected to the negative picture of the Afrikaanderwijk in policy documents, which did not include inhabitants' voices: "There were no surveys or anything, nothing. We as a group I think, were just targeted. That's how I see it" (R05). They felt that important choices, like where to live and how their neighbourhood should look like, were made *for* them, instead of *with* them.

The language used here is often one of indignation for having been reduced to an object of government plans, instead of being a subject of communication and involvement in these far-reaching neighbourhood transformations. As one interviewee puts it, when a neighbourhood is completely demolished, people should have some sort of say in the process, yet this did not happen. Rather, "it was: your neighbourhood should be demolished and you just have to fuck off," adding: "I do not accept that" (R04). Others stress the fact that, as local stakeholders, their views on the matter were simply ignored, although their interests in terms of housing and location were clearly at stake:

> Yes, actually I am being *forced* to move again (…). If it were up to me, I wouldn't move, no. Because the other neighbourhoods where I was offered housing, they were much worse, smaller and more expensive. And also remote, so outside the neighbourhood. (R05)

Many inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt expressed how the practices of Vestia basically compelled them to accept a new home elsewhere. Inhabitants received a letter announcing the termination of rent, and this letter had to be signed. Interestingly, the refusal to sign was sometimes interpreted as a way to resist injustice (R02).

Inhabitants were not given the opportunities they felt entitled to in order to discuss the need or form of the move. As indicated in the "Social plan relocation" that Vestia had made for the Tweebosbuurt, the following rule applied for "non-cooperative" respondents:

> From the moment you receive your priority declaration, we track your responses to the housing offer. It is important to start looking for another property as soon and actively as possible. If you wish, we will

> be happy to help you in your search. You can make an appointment with the housing supervisor to do so. It may happen that a tenant, in Vestia's opinion, does not cooperate or makes insufficient effort to find another place to live. At that point, we will initiate legal proceedings to terminate the tenancy agreement. (Section 2.5, "Monitoring your responses to the housing offer", Vestia, 2018: 7)

Understandably, the interviewees considered these instructions and practices as forcing the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt into accepting something they did not want and would not choose. This sense of objectification was articulated as feeling treated like a "toy" (R07). Others expressed similar sentiments: "they've taken people from there, dumped them somewhere they want," adding: "Vestia has no heart for the people" (R10). Or as someone else put it: "everyone feels swindled, deprived and as if they don't matter. A disposable product" (R01).

As such, the expressions of indignation and resentment by the interviewees can be interpreted as coming from a sense of being misrecognised in the sphere of autonomy-respect: on the one hand, as a *subject of equal rights* by being discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity and socio-economic class and on the other hand, misrecognized as a *responsible actor* whose viewpoints and interests ought to be given sufficient consideration. Huisman (2014) and Sakizlioglu and Uitermark (2014), amongst others, point out how authorities may, in their attempts to suppress active resistance against gentrification, bypass locals' opinions. Our framework vindicates how such treatment is experienced as an expression of misrecognition.

4.5 Difference-respect or respect for social attachments

Several interviewees also mentioned that they felt a lack of respect for their social attachments. The sense of indignation we encountered here is related to the shared experience of the neighbourhood as a valuable place that interviewees identified with and that provided them with a sense of home and belonging, however implicit that may have been before the process of gentrification started. Here we refer to the second type of formal respect, namely respect for social attachments or difference-respect.

In this respect, several interviewees mentioned the importance of the social relations in the neighbourhood. One of them said about the neighbourhood: "it is a place where you have your connections ("*contacten*") (…) it is your second home" (R06). He continued to talk about the activities the inhabitants organized — like sewing classes, cooking classes and language classes — and where many neighbours met. Another inhabitant said: "I could not have chosen a better neighbourhood (…) I had very good neighbours

(…) We knew one another and everyone was like family of each other. That is how we treated one another" (R05). A third inhabitant mentioned the TV show "Cheers" as an example of a type of community that this neighbourhood lived up to:

> Look, when the programme starts, they sing about the name 'Cheers', right, the programme itself and then they also say 'where everybody knows your name'. You know, everybody comes together there and everybody knows each other (…) You are recognised (…) you know (…) you are somebody there. (…) And in another neighbourhood, yes, they walk past you and if they say good morning or good afternoon, you're already happy. But there you meet people you haven't seen for a while and then you have a chat; that's the neighbourhood, that's the area. And you can also fall back on that if there is something. So that's what made it so special in the Tweebosbuurt too. There really was a strong social structure. (R12)

The claim here is not that this place is or should be of value for other actors outside of it that fail to acknowledge that value. The claim is that this neighbourhood provided *its inhabitants* with a sense of belonging.

This sense of belonging was made possible by the patterns of mutual recognition present in the Tweebosbuurt. A feeling of belonging is not an autonomous act, but is deeply dependent on such patterns of mutual recognition: if people know who you are and chat with you, as one of the interviewees says, you are being acknowledged as part of that neighbourhood. So what is being misrecognized by government action, according to many of the interviewees, are those attachments. "Social attachments" are after all identifications of oneself and particular others as part of a social group on the basis of a shared and valued good, such as a particular culture or neighbourhood, without this belonging being the direct result of individual choices or certain achievements (Van Leeuwen, 2007). When Vestia, with approvement of the municipality, decided to demolish the homes and disperse the residents, it did not take these existing patterns of social attachments sufficiently into account, is the feeling that is expressed.

Many interviewees describe the demolishment for that reason as a painful process. One of them told how he liked to walk around in the neighbourhood and how this has changed because of the demolishment: "there is nothing left to see (…) which just hurts my heart" (R04). Someone else recalls that her attachment to the place was not just to the networks of people there, but also to physical aspects like "your

playground" or a particular gate. However, after the destruction "everything is flat (…) Although I took pictures (…) You start missing many things (…) I do not feel like going that way anymore, because nothing is left. It is gone" (R05). This shows how people's memories, and thereby a part of their personal past, were upheld by particular physical markers. Hence, demolishing persons' homes undercuts their personhood (cf. Nine, 2018; Radin, 1986).

When Vestia organised a bus tour to Hoogvliet, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Rotterdam, to view homes there, an interviewee lamented the fact that a home is more than a house to store belongings and find shelter:

> I was born and raised here. (…) I don't need to go to Hoogvliet at all. This is my home base. And then you are told: yes, but there are houses there too. Yes, but wait a minute. Where are you from then? I'm from Noord Capelle. I say: shall we swap then? Because that won't work really. (R07)

And this sentiment was expressed by others as well: "The neighbourhood is more than just a roof over your head; it is the (…) social network" (R12). Accordingly, this misrecognition of social relations sheds further light on how far the impact of gentrification reaches beyond physical displacement (Chen et al., 2022; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015).

4.6 Esteem and care

There is a morally significant difference between misrecognition in the sphere of difference-respect and in the sphere of esteem. Difference-respect for particular social attachments to a shared good can be granted without a substantial evaluation of that good: difference-respect is formal and non-evaluative (Van Leeuwen, 2007). In the case of a claim to esteem for particular contributions, though, what is being asked is whether these contributions are valuable *to society*.

Several interviewees mentioned that the working-class contributions to the reproduction of society were ignored or downplayed by those who were perceived to be in control of the transformations of the neighbourhood. Another worry was that people on welfare were perceived as a problem. They were presented as a "burden" to be dispersed over the city. In particular, there was a strong sentiment that the NPRZ and the municipality expressed disdain towards people with vocational education and practical skills, such as car mechanics (R02) and cleaners (R04), as well as to other people without higher education:

> I look around me and I see who lives there, then I think: yes, that's a lot of older people. And a lot of people also just work here. And what does it matter if they are bricklayers or cleaners or rubbish collectors or I don't know what? Kindergarten teacher, courier, postman, we had jobs like that (…) Yes, and of course there were people on welfare like me (…) Because I have a low income, I am immediately associated with a socio-economic problem. Why? Do I look like a problem? (R12)

Related to the identification with the working-class status by some of the interviewees, is not only the fact that society needs people who do these kinds of jobs. Also, working-class people in this neighbourhood take up responsibility for each other's practical problems and help each other. They thus do not only feel misrecognized for their crucial role in the societal division of labour, but also in the smaller social structure of the neighbourhood. The practical abilities and reciprocal relations of this class were part and parcel of its social value:

> And that is what policymakers don't want to see (…) The neighbourhood is (…) a (…) social network. You depend on each other, especially if you have less income, you depend on people. Yeah, you can't just call a mechanic and say 'hey, electrician, can you come over tomorrow', or a locksmith 'can you come over', because that will cost you €250. We don't have that kind of money (…) So, then you depend on each other, and so you do that together. And that's what they don't want to see. (R12)

Interviewees feared that the demolishment would destroy this network of support and social structure, and this is where lack of esteem flows into a lack of care for the basic needs of the people living there. Interviewees stressed that government officials destroyed the *informal* system of care that is crucial for people who do not have sufficient resources to hire paid professionals. By tearing apart the social structure, the government not only expressed insufficient appraisal for the valuable traits of this community, notably its professional and informal contributions to the reproduction of society. It also ignored the vital needs of those who were dependent on these care-relations:

> The informal care (*mantelzorg*) was very present and also strong. With shopping for example, cooking, all sorts of things. Walking to the GP. I had a neighbour, who passed away, Mrs [name]. I even had her PIN number, it can go that far. (…) And grocery shopping (…) these kinds of things happened. These are things that (…) were not appreciated. (…)

> those policymakers, they need to see these things. But also appreciate them. (R06)

That inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt were forced to move was thus also interpreted as misrecognition of the vital importance of mutual care. This compounds the notion of Uitermark et al. (2007) that gentrification undermines social cohesion and the self-help capacities of a neighbourhood. It may also, at a larger scale, increase poverty and inequality (Desmond 2012, Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020).

Moreover, in the eyes of respondents, Vestia was now going to provide the care to new inhabitants previously denied to the former inhabitants. While the new inhabitants will live in new houses, some displaced inhabitants dwelled in inadequate houses receiving little care for their needs (R10). This care asymmetry was significant for some interviewees: "Look, there are improvements, but the people who were living there, they are being replaced" (R07).

Other interviewees pointed out that, for Vestia, money was more important than people (R01, R02, R06, R13). This neglect, furthermore, stemmed from the fact that Vestia and policy-makers showed little interest in the practical living conditions and requirements of inhabitants. In a stark example, an elderly person talks about a new home offered to her:

> But I have to say, the houses they then offer you (…) on the second floor with no lift. And then, you have to live at home longer, so you think: that's a very wrong move. Also on a second floor with an interior staircase to a third bedroom floor (…) and then over here on the other side, which are very narrow stairs, they offered me a house on the second floor there once. (…) I said to the woman (…) 'I'm not going to do that.' I looked on the outside, I saw those steps. Then she said: 'yes, those are really scary stairs, I even find them scary.' That was a woman of, well, not yet forty. Then I think: are they going to offer that to someone of almost [age]! (R02)

Others also brought up the higher rents they had to pay. One inhabitant had to pay 650 euros more per month, leaving little to spend for daily sustenance (R11). Someone else told that the new home was not properly ventilated. It was too small as well, so they had to throw away a lot of their furniture (R10). Moreover, several interviewees mentioned the nuisance caused by the demolishment of empty homes, while they still lived next door (R05, R08). Vestia, however, did not seem to care about it.

In summary, asking (former) inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt about their opinions and feelings concerning the area's transformation covers the four types of misrecognition identified before. Could their resistance to the process counter this experienced misrecognition and restore their sense of self-respect? We will deal with this question in the next section.

4.7 The effects and meanings of the struggle against demolition

According to Honneth's theory of recognition, experiences of misrecognition may be a vital impetus to social protests. In addition, if subjects feel that their legitimate expectations to be recognized are thwarted, engaging in active protest and resistance may contribute to a "positive relation-to-self" (Honneth, 1995: 164). This section focuses on these effects of the protests for the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt involved.

Our findings show that they tried to resist the demolishment in a number of ways. Some of them went to court; others hung banners on their homes and fences; and many protested in the neighbourhood. Various local and national media paid attention to the struggle. These efforts were clearly related to the different ways in which people felt misrecognized. Yet these expressions of resentment and resistance had limited impact on the actual extent and form of the demolishment. Except for a few blocks, the protest did not achieve a shift from demolishment to refurbishment. Resistance, however, had a more significant impact in an *affective* sense. Some protesters explicitly told that they were proud of their struggle: "we achieved a lot and we can be very proud of that, really very proud, with those who really fought for it" (R04). As such, the struggle itself provided participating inhabitants with a source of pride, despite the fact that they did not succeed in preventing their homes from being demolished. This sense of pride and self-respect is clearly present in the following response:

> People from Amersfoort, Utrecht, Gouda, Leeuwarden, Groningen, they came to us and said, 'Hey, if it hits us, what should we do?' Start a residents' organisation, explain it all to those people, go and tell the housing corporation that you want to become a residents' organisation, you need five people to do that. And then they say: 'yes, that's a very good idea, we'll do that' (…) whether they do it remains to be seen. But we set an example for the whole of the Netherlands now; like: go against it, try to get everything possible out of it. (R04)

This conveys the sense that the organised protest has set an example for other communities in the Netherlands that are exposed to similar challenges of

gentrification. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt could thus see themselves as an example to be followed, as an inspiration for collective action.

What's more, some people even referred to the joy they experienced in their struggle. One interviewee described his struggle as "Much fun. Yes, I think it's exciting. Yes. I don't have any problem with it. You get some attention again, right" (R08). Other interviewees also voiced their gratitude to other inhabitants for their efforts in the social struggle, thereby showing a "counterculture of compensatory respect" (Honneth, 1995: 124):

> It was also a, yes, a trigger for me to show the people, say, who all live in this kind of housing, social housing, that what occurred to us can occur to them. With regard to that, I was able to send that signal, together with a lot of others who live there, and for that I just thank, yes, I thank everyone for that, who contributed to that. (R07)

The struggle against demolition thus contributed to the inhabitants' self-respect, be it without much objective results. The struggle itself apparently had *intrinsic* social significance beyond its possible political effects and real world consequences. However, this is not true for all participants. The lack of material results from their struggle left some participants with a sense of frustration: "I know that a lot of people have been put under pressure; I also know that people have not moved to good places, yes, and we still feel discredited. We are indeed not taken seriously, still." (R12) Another interviewee puts it as follows: "Well, it drains you more than it yields anything (…) where you achieve things, then it also generates energy. But this is just negative. And you see the demolition just continuing" (R01).

Several inhabitants also mentioned the costs of this struggle in terms of the toll on their lives and well-being, which Honneth's recognition theory seems to overlook when it stresses the relationship between protest and self-respect:

> This has really caused health issues. This has really just cost health years, something that people – policymakers – also don't want to see (…) I was working on this every day, almost day and night, it was at the expense of my social life (…) And I slept very badly, really very badly. I went to bed angry, dreaming about Vestia (…) And I wasn't the only one. Some people had real health issues. The stress got too much for them, heart problems got them, that they just got a doctor's advice: you have to move, this is not good for you. (R12)

These findings thus paint a mixed picture of how inhabitants experienced and read their struggle against demolishment. Some were proud of their resistance. They enjoyed the attention from different media and being an example for other neighbourhoods. Other people, however, lamented the sacrifices of their fight against the neighbourhood destruction. They suffered from stress and negative health effects. For them, it was extra disappointing that their struggle has been to little avail.

4.8 Conclusion and discussion

This paper discusses the experiences of injustice of people who lived through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam. We argue that these experiences cannot simply be subsumed under blanket moral responses to displacement. Our interviews expose the experienced disregard prompted by gentrification, covering different types of perceived moral wrongs.

We use a recognition-theoretical frame to understand the different dimensions of the inhabitants' gentrification-induced experiences of injustice. This yields four insights. First, the inhabitants' felt that their views on the matter were not taken seriously, disrespecting their equal moral accountability. This also speaks to the discriminatory, even racialised policy and housing practices found in the gentrification literature. Second, their sense of social belonging to the neighbourhood was not properly recognized. Third, their contributions to the neighbourhood and to society at large were not appropriately valued. Fourth, inhabitants did not feel that their needs in terms of housing and mutual care were duly considered. The latter dimensions affect social commitments, cohesion and capacities, underpinning how gentrification undermines a neighbourhood's social fabric and values. In sum, the findings confirm the importance of *all* four types of recognition distinguished in our theoretical framework. This demonstrates that the experience of people living through gentrification may encompass much more than displacement. Gentrification infringes upon the different dimensions of people's personality that ought to be intersubjectively recognized: their equal moral accountability; social attachments; accomplishments and abilities; and vital needs. Not only a valued relation-to-place was thus at stake for the residents. Our recognition framework helps to move from a reasoned moral assessment of one aspect of gentrification, namely displacement, to a plural valuation of moral experiences induced by gentrification.

Moreover, even if one takes into account the fact that some of these other aspects of perceived moral injury — that is, in the spheres of care, autonomy-respect, difference-respect or esteem — have been addressed in the literature (see section 4.2.3), these studies cannot simply be aggregated to a comprehensive plural account. One cannot just

add them up. Focussing on one aspect of a more comprehensive account can in itself be meaningful, provided that the isolation of one dimension of gentrification-related injustice is explicitly acknowledged as a deliberate methodological choice. There is nothing wrong with a concentrated focus on, for instance, racial discrimination as a particular manifestation of gentrification. In fact, such a focus can be productive as long as one acknowledges that the experience of injustice is generally more variegated. However, such a concentrated focus can lead to *typological impoverishment* if researchers do not pay enough attention to the inherent pluralism of moral values that residents under pressure of gentrification use to articulate their sense of misrecognition. What is characteristic of our recognition-theoretical hypothesis is that we assume, from the outset, that the experience of injustice is plural and multifaceted in nature. That assumption informed both the interview questions and the process of coding. Questions guide what is said and what remains unsaid in interviews, while coding guides what one draws out of the data. Only by assuming multifaceted experiences of injustice as a *possibility* when developing the research design, we argue, does one really get at that diversity.

An additional problem to that of typological impoverishment is the problem of *conceptual reduction*. Here, the concepts of moral monism and moral pluralism are instructive. "Moral monism" refers to the idea of morality as being one-dimensional, for instance in terms of care (care ethics), personal autonomy (liberalism) or community (communitarianism). "Moral pluralism", in contrast, argues that the realm of morality is multi-dimensional, as is the case with our recognition-theoretical approach. By breaking down the experience of gentrification-related injustice into different moral aspects, we avoid conflating experiences of injustice that essentially imply different moral logics and thus different responses from politics and society. For instance, in the recent normative literature on the injustice of gentrification-related displacement, there is a tendency to take personal autonomy (autonomy-respect) as the beginning and the end of the moral analysis by *reducing* communitarian concerns to the sphere of autonomy (see e.g. Hofmann, 2020; Huber and Wolkenstein, 2018).[39] Such a reduction of respect for social attachments to respect for personal autonomy occurs not simply because the recognition-theoretical account has been neglected in this field; other plural accounts of justice could be suitable as well in this regard (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Taylor, 1989; 2001; Walzer, 1983).

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39. These theorists basically argue that physical displacement as a result of gentrification ought to be morally rejected on the basis of the principle of personal autonomy: displacement violates the option to exercise "place-based" or "located life-plans." What is adversely violated in this view is the neighborhood as a spatial background condition for the ability to realize embedded pursuits. Van Leeuwen argues in a critical review (2025) that this attempt to morally value social attachments to a particular place as *means* or *resources* to realize plans, is unconvincing and subject to moral risk because it *instrumentalizes* social attachments instead of recognizing their intrinsic significance for those concerned. This is the type of conceptual reductionism that our moral-pluralistic approach avoids.

This analysis comes with two caveats. First, it is important to stress that on the subjective level of a particular individual, these moral experiences are mostly intertwined and thus occur simultaneously. One can separate those aspects of morality conceptually, but not so much on an existential level of lived reality. The task of a theoretical analysis is to bring clarity to that diffuse experience of misrecognition by differentiating, identifying and making sense of its different layers rather than reducing everything to one concept, such as "racism" or "alienation."

Secondly, there is a body of literature based on Marcuse's differentiation of the concept of gentrification-displacement that is highly sensitive to plurality (Chen et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024; Marcuse, 1985; Phiilips et al., 2021; Twigge-Molekey, 2014). Marcuse famously draws a distinction between: (1) direct last-resident displacement; (2) direct chain displacement; (3) exclusionary displacement; and (4) displacement pressure (1985). This is sometimes abbreviated as "direct" (1 & 2) versus "indirect" displacement (3 & 4). The distinction between direct displacement and displacement pressure (4) resembles the one we have already addressed as the distinction between *physical* and *socio-cultural* displacement (section 4.2.3). The difference, however, is that Marcuse refers with "displacement pressure" still to the notion of physical relocation that takes place as an *effect* of what we have called socio-cultural displacement. The alienation that people experience makes them want to move; hence the idea of "indirect" displacement (1985: 207).

What we have not yet discussed is exclusionary displacement (3). This type of exclusion refers to the demographic changes in a neighbourhood that take place because low-income groups move out while similar households are prevented from moving in, typically because they cannot afford increased rents and sales. Whereas this differentiation introduces a certain conceptual "multi-dimensionality" within *socio-geographical* studies on *gentrification-displacement* (Phillips et al, 2021), our framework specifically details a *moral* typology of different aspects of the *experience of injustice*. The whole range of moral experiences we distinguish can occur in principle in each and every case of displacement other theorists distinguish, although the mix is likely to be different per case. For instance, it is not to be expected that in the case of exclusionary displacement injustice is experienced as a lack of difference-respect. After all, social attachments with the neighbourhood have not yet been able to develop. Feelings of resentment are more likely related to autonomy-respect, given that equal opportunity seems at stake. Yet, the dimensions of care and esteem might also play a role.

The bottom line is that these conceptual distinctions are of a very different kind. And this also applies to other well-established ways of distinguishing between different types or aspects of gentrification, such as between "disinvestment displacement," "reinvestment displacement" and "displacement under heightened housing market competition" (Grier and Grier, 1978). Our argument thus recommends that each type of displacement can be researched from the point of view of three basic empirical questions: What kind of moral emotions do residents experience in terms of perceived recognition or misrecognition? Do we find that certain categories of experienced (mis) recognition are dominant compared to other types of gentrification-displacement? And what does this tell us about the way responsibility is being assigned (rightly or wrongly) to the different actors in the process of gentrification in those cases?

What should also be noted is that all forms of displacement are concerned with people's relations-to-place, whereas the different forms of misrecognition are concerned with people's different relations-to-self. As we saw, inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt felt that their opinions were not taken seriously and that they were discriminated against: they felt misrecognized in the sphere of autonomy-respect. This experience of misrecognition did not draw on the inhabitants' relations-to-place. Rather their capacities for self-legislation and their equality before the law were at stake. A sole focus on displacement would thus obscure the diversity of how people morally experience gentrification, as some elements of these experiences are unrelated to their relations-to-place. Our recognition-theoretical framework helps to capture this diversity of moral experiences related to gentrification.

We also find diversity in the way the protests against the neighbourhood destruction were experienced. In their struggle against the demolishment, some inhabitants said that the struggle itself provided them with a sense of self-respect that was initially undermined by the demolishment. For others, the struggle did not have this positive effect, or only to a smaller extent. The counterculture of compensatory respect that this struggle manifested thus only partially made up for the experience of misrecognition that the interviewees talked about.

If policy makers and housing corporations, in response, want to avoid that citizens who are subject to state-led gentrification feel morally disregarded, they would better pay attention to the variety of ways in which misrecognition can be expressed in policy. Effective consultation is important to recognize citizens as full-fledged partners to interaction (autonomy-respect), but public participation is not enough. Housing must meet basic needs, both for residents who stay and residents who need to move, and these needs might be different for different individuals (care).

A public "spreading the burden" logic violates a sense of being socially valuable (esteem) or even morally equal (autonomy-respect) and also destroys social relations that provide people with a sense of belonging (difference-respect). Feelings of being misrecognized were also fostered by investments in the neighbourhood that were seen as only catering to new, richer inhabitants. Investments that also benefit long-term inhabitants may, on the other hand, foster their sense of being recognized. Finally, this paper's findings suggest that a social housing provider that is primarily driven by financial motives, might not be sufficiently equipped to pay due attention to its tenants' needs, also in terms of recognition. A social housing provider that considers people's variegated vulnerabilities of feeling misrecognized will likely fare better in this respect.

We have argued in this paper that the theory of recognition helps to better understand the experiences of people living through gentrification. As an experience of misrecognition always refers to institutionalized normative expectations of what due recognition entails, experiences of gentrification may be different in contexts with other institutionalized normative expectations. We hope that our use of the theory of recognition inspires future research that may shine a light on how gentrification is experienced as injustice in other contexts.

Epilogue Chapter 4

Chapter 4 showed that the moral experiences of people who lived through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt were variegated. The demolishment of 524 social housing units in the Tweebosbuurt was seen as an expression of disregard for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The recognition-theoretical framework used in this chapter distinguished four different spheres of recognition, and interviews with inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt showed that they felt misrecognised in all four spheres, i.e. in the spheres of care, of autonomy-respect, of difference-respect and of esteem.

Gentrification is morally significant for the people living through it, because of what the process signals to them. Are they being listened to? Are they taken seriously as full-partners-to-interaction? Are investments in the neighbourhood also meant to serve the long-term inhabitants? Is their sense of social belonging to the neighbourhood sufficiently recognised? Do they feel that their contributions to the neighbourhood and society are properly valued? Issues and concerns like these were part of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt. These findings underline the importance of intersubjective misrecognition in their understanding of the demolishment as an act of injustice.

In this respect, it is essential that gentrification and the demolishment were seen as developments that result from deliberate choices that could have been otherwise. The interviewees referred to politicians, policy makers and the housing corporation that have made these choices that reflect misrecognition of the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt. That is why the interviewees do not only see the demolishment as harmful, as an event contrary to their best interests, but also as a *moral wrong*.

In Chapter 4 it was argued that the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods cannot be understood as being solely related to displacement, which is what most of the scientific literature emphasises as the main negative aspect of gentrification. People's practical self-relations were affected in all four spheres of recognition, and the disregard that people experienced did not solely relate to people's relations-to-place. Moreover, the experienced misrecognition was not related to one aspect of people's identity only; it did not only bear on e.g. class or ethnicity, but rather on various aspects of people's identity simultaneously.

The experience of injustice of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods is hence more encompassing than has been described thus far in the literature. The employed

recognition-theoretical framework, which distinguishes four spheres of recognition, helped to identify the various experienced moral wrongs. Based on the interviews with inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt, we argued that gentrification may be experienced as an expression of misrecognition that is comprehensive: it is comprehensive in the sense that it relates to all four recognition spheres and bears on all four of people's practical self-relations.

These findings may be the result of how gentrification unfolded in the Tweebosbuurt. People's homes were demolished; their opinions were not taken into account; their social relations in the neighbourhood were not duly considered; and their contributions to society were not seen as particularly valuable and worthy of esteem. In Chapter 2, however, I argued that gentrification comes in different forms and the process may thus develop in different ways. Our findings in the neighbourhood may thus not be generalised to other contexts. How, then, do the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods look like when the process assumes a different form? This will be discussed in the next chapter, which will focus on the experiences of people in the gentrifying Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium.

Chapter 5

Enfoldings of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition in gentrifying Molenbeek, Brussels

Abstract

How is gentrification experienced by people who cannot be clearly identified as "winners" or "losers" of the process? This paper focuses on how homeowners experience gentrification in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. Homeowners may benefit financially from gentrification, while they may at the same time oppose the process because of how it negatively affects their neighbourhood and local inhabitants. This paper employs a recognition-theoretical framework to study homeowners' experiences of gentrification and argues that these should be understood as enfoldings of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition. More precisely: misrecognition is the condition of possibility for the financial benefits and recognition as they materialised in their specific forms in the process of gentrification that we studied. Enfoldings of (mis)recognition thus present a useful concept to enrich our work on gentrification.

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Contributions of the authors

This chapter is the cooperative work of Arnoud Lagendijk and me. I have collected the data and analysed it. I also wrote the first version of this chapter. Arnoud Lagendijk has revised parts of this chapter. We both contributed to the design of the study.

5.1 Introduction

Gentrification, the process of neighbourhood transformation whereby land-users are displaced by new land-users of a higher socio-economic status (Clark, 2010 [2005]), is sometimes depicted as a process with clear winners and losers (see e.g. Chapple, 2017: 85; Smith, 2002: 445). Qualitative research on the experiences of people living through gentrification has shown a more complex picture though. New land-users may be ambivalent about their presence in the neighbourhood, as their presence may spoil the neighbourhood's authentic character (Brown-Saracino, 2004; 2007). Long-term inhabitants, on the other hand, may experience estrangement from their gentrifying neighbourhood, even if they manage to stay put in a neighbourhood that has more amenities (Atkinson, 2015; Kern, 2016; Pinkster & Boterman, 2017; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015). Hence, people in gentrifying neighbourhoods may experience both negative and positive aspects of gentrification, and therefore they often cannot be neatly divided in "winners" and "losers" (Doucet, 2009). As such, the experiences of people living through gentrification may be complex, and that also holds for their moral evaluation of the process. People's experiences and interpretations of gentrification influence how gentrification unfolds, and better comprehending these experiences and interpretations is therefore critical for understanding that development (Knieriem, 2023).

This paper tries to contribute to this better understanding of the lived experiences and interpretations of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. It does so by focusing on a hitherto underexplored perspective, namely that of homeowners in a gentrifying neighbourhood. While homeowners may appreciate how gentrification increases their property values (Bridge, 1994; Doucet, 2009; Levine & Aharon-Gutman, 2023; Newman & Wyly, 2006), gentrification may also confront them with unwanted and opposed changes of their neighbourhood. Homeowners of gentrifying neighbourhoods may thus feel misrecognised in the process and face dilemmas and trade-offs in their moral evaluation of the process. They may therefore hold complex views on the issue and tell how redistribution, recognition and misrecognition are mutually entangled in the process of gentrification. This research thereby shines a new light on which moral aspects of gentrification are salient from the perspective of the people living through the process.

To investigate the moral experiences of people who live through gentrification, we employ an extended version of Axel Honneth's (1995) theory of recognition. We also draw upon Honneth's exchange with Nancy Fraser, in which they discuss if justice should be understood as a matter of recognition (Honneth's position) or rather as a combination of recognition and redistribution (Fraser's position) (Fraser & Honneth,

2003). Using these theoretical perspectives, this paper enhances our understanding of how recognition, misrecognition and redistribution are enfolded, not in the context of an abstract, philosophical discussion, but in the context of a real-life, messy case. The paper thus makes a double contribution, in which empirical observations of people's moral stance towards gentrification are conceptualised as enfoldings of recognition, misrecognition and redistribution.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section introduces the theory, followed by the explanation of methods and our case, the gentrifying Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels. We then discuss our findings and end with a conclusion and a discussion.

5.2 Theory

This section first discusses the issue of gentrification (5.2.1), before it turns to recognition and redistribution (5.2.2) and enfolding (5.2.3).

5.2.1 Gentrification

As there is a vast and wide-ranging literature on gentrification, we focus here on the literature that is directly germane to our paper (for more detailed reviews, see Brown-Saracino [2017], Knieriem [2023], Lees [2000] and Shaw [2008]). Displacement is often depicted as the central harm resulting from gentrification, and we therefore start with a discussion of this notion.

In a seminal paper, Marcuse (2010 [1986]) has described four forms of displacement: 1) direct last-resident displacement, when the last residents of a building have to move out; 2) direct chain displacement, which refers to households that were already displaced before that happened to the last residents of a building or neighbourhood; 3) exclusionary displacement, when rising prices prevent a household from moving into a neighbourhood; and 4) displacement pressure, when a neighbourhood changes, inhabitants' friends and acquaintances leave, businesses start to cater to a new clientele, and it is only a matter of time before households who still managed to stay put would also have to move out. The latter idea, that there may already be a form of displacement when a household is not yet dislocated, has been taken up and further developed by others. These scholars argue that displacement may also occur without out-migration, i.e. when people manage to stay in a neighbourhood that changes to such an extent that it no longer feels like home (Davidson, 2009; Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Pull & Richard, 2021). This can happen when gentrification leads to social and cultural transformations of the neighbourhood when new inhabitants arrive who manage to control the placemaking practices there (Hyra, 2015; Tissot, 2011; 2014).

Hence, gentrification not only redistributes scarce resources (like houses and land), but also affects the social tissue of neighbourhoods and cities and thereby the places to which people are attached.

Since knowledge about these adverse consequences of gentrification has become widespread, this has also influenced people's self-understandings and their own role and position in the process of gentrification; and this, in turn, may influence how the process unfolds (Brown-Saracino, 2004, 2007; Knieriem, 2023). One such factor that affects people's self-understandings is arguably the financialisation of housing, which, according to Aalbers (2019a), has led to a new wave of gentrification. The financialisation of housing refers to a broad set of developments through which finance has taken a stronger foothold in the housing market, e.g. via an expanded mortgage market made possible through the use of increasingly complex financial instruments (Aalbers, 2008). As a result, homes are more and more seen, not from the perspective of their use-value, but rather as financial investments in asset-based wealth (Adkins et al., 2019; Grisdale, 2021; Heeg, 2013a; Levine & Aharon-Gutman, 2023). Homeowners may therefore welcome gentrification and urban renewal as an opportunity to increase the value of their real estate and their own accompanying socioeconomic status: Levine and Aharon-Gutman have called this homeowners' "self-gentrification" (2023: 789). However, the rapidly increasing housing prices that have resulted from *inter alia* the financialisation of housing have also led to a rising inequality between the housing market's insiders and its outsiders (Boelhouwer, 2020; Forrest & Hirayama, 2015). Hence, even though gentrification may increase the value of one's property and thus be beneficial from an individual's financial perspective (redistribution), this person may nonetheless still be critical of the process because one considers it to be unjust: it may be taken as an expression of misrecognition *vis-à-vis* oneself and/or others (cf. Bridge, 1994; Doucet, 2009). To the issue of (mis)recognition we will turn now.

5.2.2 Justice, recognition and redistribution

The concept of recognition made a revival in social theory from the 1990s onwards, notably through the work of Nancy Fraser (2001), Axel Honneth (1995) and Charles Taylor (1994). They argued that intersubjective recognition is a necessary condition for human beings to see themselves in a positive light, and people need that positive relation-to-self to effectively pursue their goals (Honneth, 1992). Axel Honneth (1992; 1995; 1997) is the theorist who has given recognition the most central role in his work. In his book *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth (1995: 164ff.) argues that social conflict often starts when people feel that they are treated unjustly, i.e. when they feel that they are not duly recognised, rather than out of an attempt to secure one's interests.

Struggles for recognition try to restore "intersubjective conditions for personal integrity" (Honneth, 1995: 165) by pointing out that recognition is the appropriate response in a given case (Knieriem, 2024). Interest-based struggles, on the other hand, are motivated by "the securing of economic survival" (Honneth, 1995: 165). In struggles for recognition, people thus commence a struggle because of violations of their moral expectations (discussed in the next paragraph). Interest-based struggles, in turn, are about securing scarce material resources (Zurn, 2015: 55-59).

Recognition is a complex, multiple phenomenon. Honneth (1995) distinguishes three spheres of recognition, where different aspects of persons are relevant: 1) people's primary needs and physical vulnerability in the sphere of "care"; 2) people's equal moral accountability and their equality as bearers of rights in the sphere of "autonomy-respect"; and 3) individuals' talents and capacities in the sphere of "esteem". Van Leeuwen (2007) has argued that one should also look at the formal recognition of people's social attachments that are important to themselves, but not necessarily esteemed by society at large. Here, one can think of attachments to other people or to specific places. This recognition, labelled as "difference-respect", is formal, because it is non-evaluative. "Difference-respect" cannot be subsumed under Honneth's category of autonomy-respect, because it is not concerned with people's equal moral accountability, but with their different social attachments. The combination of recognition spheres amounts to a "plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004). This extended version of Honneth's theory of recognition, we argue, can aptly capture different dimensions of the experiences and moral evaluations of people living through urban gentrification (Van Leeuwen, 2022).

The different recognition spheres, moreover, may contradict each other in practice. For example, the practice of recognition may be such that being duly recognised as a hard-working employee (esteem) comes at the cost of fulfilling one's tasks as a parent (care); hence, recognition and misrecognition may be enfolded and implicated by each other (Deranty & Renault, 2007; Sebrechts et al., 2019). In other words, misrecognition of one aspect of a person may be the condition of possibility for the recognition of another aspect of this person's life (and vice versa) (cf. Butler, 1997; Ikäheimo et al., 2021). Recognition, then, is not always necessarily an *enabling* condition; it can also hinder a person in pursuing some of her goals (cf. Althusser, 2004; Lepold, 2019).

This implication of recognition and misrecognition is particularly relevant in the case of gentrification, especially in combination with the redistributive consequences discussed above. What concept of justice is fitting to address these various aspects

of gentrification? In their philosophical exchange, Fraser and Honneth (2003) have discussed whether justice should be understood in terms of redistribution, recognition, or a combination of the two. Fraser argues that redistribution and recognition are two dimensions of justice that are irreducible to each other, since, for example, exchange rate fluctuations may have redistributive effects, but are not directly caused by (mis)recognition of some people; hence, distributional patterns cannot be fully explained with mere reference to the concept of (mis)recognition. Yet, Honneth argues that issues around redistribution ultimately reflect recognitional patterns. He contends that laws and institutions that have redistributive effects also reflect if individuals, or groups of people, are (mis)recognised and in what ways (Honneth, 2003a; Honneth, 2014a; Zurn, 2015: 127ff.). A downside of this view is that it may lose sight of the different causal factors behind maldistribution, notably how they pertain to different domains, like political economy, culture, and electoral politics, among others. Subsuming all domains under the rubric of misrecognition thus comes at the cost of losing useful distinctions between these domains (Zurn, 2005). Hence, we follow Fraser (1995) here and hold on to the first-order distinction between redistribution and recognition. Although Fraser and Honneth (2003) do not reach an agreement in their exchange, they do agree that recognition and redistribution are often interlaced: recognition often has redistributive effects – e.g. when being esteemed leads to a higher salary – and vice versa – e.g. when economic disadvantage hinders partaking in democratic processes. We think that recognition and redistribution are also interlaced in gentrification, since gentrification also has serious distributive *and* recognitional effects. Displacement, in particular, causes a major redistribution of access to scarce space and expresses misrecognition towards people's place-based attachments.

Although there has thus been an extensive philosophical discussion on the relation between recognition and redistribution, there has, to the best of our knowledge, not yet been much empirical research on the interrelationships between the two. The current research contributes to filling this gap in the literature by studying the links between redistribution and (mis)recognition in the context of gentrification. Two additional considerations provide reasons why this perspective may apply well to gentrification. First, as Honneth (2007b) argues, people often become aware of their idea of justice via its opposite, i.e. via an experience of injustice, and – as several philosophers have argued – gentrification can be understood as injustice, i.e. as an expression of inequality and oppression (see e.g. Kohn, 2013; Lloyd, 2023; Zimmer, 2017). Secondly, people tend to develop ideas or culture around a topic when there is a necessity to do so, i.e. when they are confronted with a problem that requires reflection and the development of ideas (see e.g. Foucault, 1985: 3-24; Heidegger,

2006; Swidler, 2001: 128-132). Through gentrification, a neighbourhood loses its self-evident character and becomes such a problem. Gentrification may therefore induce inhabitants to reflect on how recognition, misrecognition and redistribution are implicated by each other. We study this through the notion of "enfolding".

5.2.3 Enfoldings of redistribution and (mis)recognition in gentrifying neighbourhoods

People living through gentrification may have mixed and contradictory feelings about their experiences. As a form of urban renewal, gentrification may be experienced as an expression of recognition for long-term inhabitants of the gentrifying neighbourhood. Investments in a neighbourhood may, especially after long periods of neglect, create a neighbourhood that is safer, cleaner and endowed with more amenities. This can be taken as recognition for the inhabitants' primary needs (care), especially when the locals are consulted about and involved in these developments (autonomy-respect), when the social tissue in the neighbourhood is duly recognised in the process (difference-respect) and gentrification and social mixing are not used as a means to disperse "unproductive" or otherwise unwanted inhabitants (esteem).

It is highly unlikely, though, that processes of gentrification can ever express recognition of all aspects of the locals' personhood. Displacement of inhabitants leads to the destruction of local social networks (difference-respect). Higher rents may make evictions more likely (care). Locals' opinions about urban developments are often not listened to (autonomy-respect) (Goetz, 2016) and gentrification is also used as a governmental strategy to get rid of "undesirable" populations (Uitermark et al., 2007).

For these reasons – and especially when focusing on homeowners' perspectives – it is unlikely that gentrification is only evaluated as a purely "good" or "bad" development. Homeowners may welcome the price increase of their assets, as well as living in an improved (cleaner, safer, more beautiful) neighbourhood; at the same time, they may lament the inaccessibility of their neighbourhood for others due to high prices, regret that neighbours have to move out and feel that their opinions are not taken seriously in the process. In that sense, people living through gentrification may have mixed, and contradictory, feelings about the process.

The crucial point here is that financial gains, recognition and misrecognition come about *in one and the same process*. The beneficial redistributive effects for and the recognition expressed towards homeowners living through gentrification are therefore enfolded in misrecognition that is also expressed through gentrification. Misrecognition, then, is often the condition of possibility for the financial benefits and recognition as they materialise in their specific forms in the process of

gentrification. Misrecognition is then not accidental to, but constitutive of, the financial gains and recognition that gentrification brings about. We will show this in more detail in our empirical analysis, but we now first turn to a discussion of our case and of the methods we employed.

5.3 Case description and methods

We first consider the case in order to sketch the context of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime. After that, we discuss our methods of fieldwork and analysis.

5.3.1 Case: Transformation of the Quartier Maritime, Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium

Our case is gentrification in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, a municipality in the Brussels-Capital Region in Belgium. Since the 1990s, the Brussels-Capital Region's urban policy aimed at creating a social mix, especially through attracting middle-class households to the city, rather than through promoting upward social mobility of its inhabitants (Van Criekingen, 2012). Nonetheless, the city is characterised by marked patterns of socio-economic segregation: it has neighbourhoods where the rich cluster, as well as neighbourhoods where low-incomes do (Costa & De Valk, 2021). Although it has since long been observed that middle-class inhabitants leave Brussels for the suburbs, also working-classes move out of Brussels, which suggests that it has become increasingly difficult for them to find affordable housing in Brussels (De Laet, 2018). Due to low quantities of public housing in the Brussels-Capital Region, most people who want to live in Brussels have to buy a home or rent privately (Costa & De Valk, 2021: 274; Godart et al, 2023: 2; Van Criekingen, 2012: 178). With an average rent increase of 80% (excluding inflation) on the private rental market between the mid-1980s and early 2020s, it has become increasingly difficult for many households to pay their rents, with on average 11 households per day having received an eviction order in Brussels in 2018 (Godard et al., 2023: 2, 5).

Gentrification in the Brussels-Capital Region proceeded slowly in the past and the city has been described as only showing "pockets of gentrification" (Van Criekingen & Decroly, 2003: 2459). However, some municipalities, like St. Gilles, clearly show signs of having been severely gentrified by now. Molenbeek has not yet been gentrified so considerably, but one should be careful with generalisations: Molenbeek is a large municipality that cannot simply as a whole be described as "gentrified" or "ungentrified". It is nonetheless plausible that Molenbeek's reputation played a role in slowing down gentrification processes there: some of the people who are held responsible for the attacks in Paris in November 2015 came from Molenbeek. Molenbeek, in short, is a territorially stigmatised place, seen as a centre of lawlessness and jihadism (cf. Wacquant et al., 2014).

Our study includes a focus on Tour & Taxis, which borders the Quartier Maritime. Tour & Taxis provides a site where an old train station has been renovated. This station has been turned into a large hall which provides place for shops, companies, a food court and events and was opened in 2020. Because of its attractive looks, it has won an architecture prize (Hope, 2020). New-build apartment buildings have also been, and are still being, constructed on the site of Tour & Taxis, providing homes to middle-class households. The park on the site has been renovated as well. As the site of Tour & Taxis was largely unused before these developments took place, this project can be described as contributing to "new-build gentrification" (Davidson & Lees, 2005).

Next to Tour & Taxis, the Quartier Maritime also changes through the "Canal Plan" (Canal Plan, 2021). This plan aims at transforming different places located around Brussels' canal, making the surrounding areas more attractive for young households of a higher socio-economic status targeted by the real estate projects (Costa & De Valk, 2021: 286). This "arrival of better-off young households … might be fuelling socio-spatial fractures in central neighbourhoods" (Costa & De Valk, 2021: 289). As we will see, our interviews attest of this latter effect.

5.3.2 Methods

Since we study people's perceptions of (re)distributive effects and (mis)recognition as they come about in gentrification, the subjective experiences of people take centre stage. We have therefore had semi-structured interviews with 15 inhabitants of the gentrifying area: 12 of them lived in the Quartier Maritime; three on the new site of Tour & Taxis. 13 of the interviewees were homeowners. All the interviews were fully transcribed and subsequently analysed in Atlas.ti. The shortest interview lasted 40 minutes; the longest 2 hours and 35 minutes. The interviews were held in Dutch (4), English (3) or French (8), depending on the preferences of the interviewee. Ten of the interviewees from the Quartier Maritime were long-time inhabitants: they lived there for 12 years or more (up to 55 years) at the time of the interview – and thus long before the Gare Maritime was opened. One renter and one homeowner had lived in the neighbourhood for a shorter period of time (eight and six years, respectively). Most interviews therefore also featured references to long-term transformations and the past of the neighbourhood. Next to the interviews, we also organised a feedback session in the neighbourhood to present and corroborate our findings.

Next to the interviews, we had conversations with 12 other people to get a better grasp of the wider Brussels context. These conversations were held with other inhabitants of Brussels and with representatives of organisations that were concerned about

gentrification, housing and evictions in Brussels. We have made notes during these conversations.

We analysed our interviews on the basis of statements regarding how gentrification affected the (re)distribution of scarce resources. We also analysed the different ways in which gentrification was seen as unjust and at odds with expectations for due recognition. The next section will successively discuss (re)distribution, the four recognitional spheres and their enfoldings. We should emphasise, though, that we only present our findings in this order for the sake of analytical clarity. As explained above (section 5.2.3), we do not expect that issues of redistribution and different forms of (mis)recognition are neatly divided empirically, but rather that they cut across these different domains.

5.4 Findings

5.4.1 Redistribution

A recurring theme in the interviews was that housing prices rose as a result of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime. Some interviewees were happy about the rising prices of their property and depicted their home as a financial investment (cf. Heeg, 2013b). As one inhabitant of the site of Tour & Taxis said:

> I got it at the right price, a very low price, very good loan. If in 10 years I want to move out, I will rent it and not sell it likely, depending on life, but I think so too. I think so because it will be financially very smart, I think, and always good, I think, to have a real estate profit asset in the centre of Brussels. I think it's a good thing. (B09)

Another interviewee mentions the bad reputation of Molenbeek in this respect. This made it possible to buy his home at a good price:

> If I look at it opportunistically, then it was a good chance, because you could buy a very beautiful, huge house for little money at the time. Its value has probably doubled (…) at that time, it was a very good investment. (…) So for me it was actually advantageous, that bad reputation. (B10)

Two interviewees also refer to the transformation of the neighbourhood as a development that serves their own interests:

> Given the evolution (…) the fact that here the neighbourhood changes, I will maybe be able to sell my home at a higher price than before. (…) Since the neighbourhood changes positively and we can gain a lot more than what we have paid for the house. (…) That's advantageous. (B06)

> It's good, because it changes, right? All the better. Our property, it is more worth than it was ten years ago (…) There's a bit more cleanliness, security, Tour & Taxis. So if someone wants to sell or wants to rent out, we are going to say: very close to Tour & Taxis [laughing]. (B13).

Some people, though, were ambivalent about the higher prices. An interviewee, who said that he was critical of gentrification, described it also as follows: "And when I sell, in my own interest, gentrification, it works out for me, because it will increase the value of my property (…) that's where it's paradoxical" (B11).

Some interviewees also emphasised that higher prices did not matter to them. Some rented out a part of their home, but did not increase rents, nor adjusted them for inflation (B01, B11). Another interviewee also explained not to use her home to reap maximal profits:

> I choose to rent it to people I know and of whom I know that they don't have so many financial possibilities, and so I take that into account. (…) I once visited the neighbour across the street and I was flabbergasted [*verschoot van*] because of the rental prices he asks. (…) Yes, so I have received I don't know how many letters from developers to sell the house. I don't want that; I am the owner of one house. I manage it to the best of my ability (…) and the renters are very content if they have an owner who takes care of the house and asks reasonable rents, that takes their incomes into account. (B02)

Our findings are thus mixed. Some interviewees embraced the higher value of their property. Others were more ambivalent about it and emphasised that they did not increase the rents for their renters and did not try to maximise the profits they reaped from their property. Many interviewees were also aware of the inequality that rising prices bring about. This was clearly expressed by an interviewee (not a homeowner), who mentioned the arrival of new inhabitants in the neighbourhood: "And if all those persons come and rent with us, that will also increase prices (…) for the owners, that is always profitable. It is like we always say: the renters are the ones who are going to suffer" (B17). There was thus also a clear sense that material inequality was

aggravated by gentrification. As we will see in the next subsections, when we focus on different types of misrecognition, this inequality provides one reason why many interviewees criticised the developments in their neighbourhood.

5.4.2 Autonomy-respect

We start our discussion of misrecognition with the sphere of autonomy-respect. Autonomy-respect is concerned with people's equal moral status: people expect to be treated as equals before the law and that their (assumed) equal capacities for self-legislation are recognised. Our interviewees explained how misrecognition in this sphere was expressed in two ways in the process of gentrification. First, the developments made it more difficult or impossible for many people to use (public) spaces in the neighbourhood. Secondly, the opinions of the inhabitants were not duly considered. We discuss these two forms in turn.

Several interviewees mentioned that public spaces in the neighbourhood were seen as becoming more and more the exclusive domain of richer people (cf. Chaskin & Joseph, 2013). This can be understood as misrecognition of the equal moral status of all inhabitants, for it deprives some inhabitants of the use of public space. Some interviewees mentioned the canal in this regard:

> The canal, of course, can provide a lot of enjoyment. But if it will only provide enjoyment to our stratum of the population that is posh [*bourge*], and that has a lot of money (…) and the others, we will deprive them of the canal. (B01)

> What I see in the canal is just that they built stuff for the rich people. I don't see anything else (…) they put this huge museum, they put these huge buildings, there are other sorts of people coming in (…) they have a plan for Brussels, obviously, to make it a kind of touristic, expensive, another expensive European city like Amsterdam, Paris. (B07)

Others also mentioned the food market in Tour & Taxis as an example of how the new developments only cater to richer people. One interviewee said: "It's different. It's a different quality and everything. But for the population here, it is too expensive" (B12). These quotations thus show that the interviewees considered the developments to be not for everyone. The developments only catered to the preferences of richer people, thereby expressing a denial of the equal moral status of people with less money.

Several interviewees also mentioned that these developments could have been different. If other (political) choices would have been made, everyone could profit from new developments in the neighbourhood. The canal, an interviewee mentioned, could also be turned into a green space, which would benefit everyone in Brussels:

> Instead of approving the construction of grand buildings, they should buy everything, everything that is in a radius of 50m, and demolish it, to give oxygen to the working class neighbourhood [*quartier populaire*] that is just behind it (…) at that moment, you think of the poor, you think of Brussels in general, right, you understand me (…) But like that, no, I don't think so. I think they want to valorise it just for a layer of the population. (B01)

This interviewee thus clearly views the developments as the result of deliberate political decisions. These decisions *could* and *should* have been different, though. These decisions are only as they are, because the preferences and interests of a large group of inhabitants are not duly considered. Hence, the developments in the neighbourhood are not only contrary to this group's interests, but they are also an expression of intersubjective disregard towards them, i.e. as a denial of their equal moral status.

Our interviews also show that the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime felt disregarded for another reason. Many interviewees felt that they had no control over the developments in their neighbourhood. They said that their views on how the neighbourhood should develop were not taken into account. As one interviewee explained:

> Our reactions to the big projects here in the neighbourhood around Tour & Taxis are essentially negative, because we have the feeling that we as inhabitants (…) hardly have an impact on those big projects, because we just get involved at the end of the process. (B02)

In this respect, several interviewees also mentioned that it was difficult to know when there were opportunities to voice one's opinion (for example during participatory meetings for the *commissions de concertation*). These moments were often only announced by red affiches hung in the neighbourhood, which the inhabitants did not always see in time. Even if inhabitants learnt timely about the meetings, the time to prepare for them was too often short to be effective during the meetings (B11,

B12, B13). As a result, several inhabitants felt like they were not taken seriously. One interviewee described it as follows:

> I find that disgraceful (*honteux*), to not being able to give one's opinion. Because they come to a neighbourhood, and they come as conquerors, right (…) Do you see it? The conquerors, they have conquered the territory when they have bought it (…) but in the end, the people who were there, the peaceful ones [laughing], I want to say, they even don't have the right to give their opinion. I find that disgraceful. (B12)

Several interviewees thus did not feel that their opinions were sufficiently considered when decisions were made about the developments of the neighbourhood and this also constituted an important element of the misrecognition they experienced during the process of gentrification in their neighbourhood. They not only felt that the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime were disregarded because the new developments only catered to the preferences of a new, richer group, but also because the inhabitants' opinions were not duly considered in the process.

5.4.3 Difference-respect

We will now discuss misrecognition in the sphere of difference-respect. As explained before, this sphere is concerned with the formal, non-evaluative recognition for people's social attachments, e.g. to other local people, to a particular home or to a specific neighbourhood. Several interviewees explained why they thought that the developments in their neighbourhood were at odds with due recognition for locals' social attachments.

Some interviewees mentioned how the neighbourhood changed as a result of gentrification. One interviewee mentioned that some ethnic stores were disappearing (B01), while another interviewee (non-homeowner) said about lunch time:

> now when we leave around noon or at 13h, (…) impossible to order, because there is everyone who works at Tour & Taxis and who orders a little sandwich in the shops, and hence one finds persons in a costume, with a tie, in a shirt, while the inhabitants… (B17)

This interviewee thus noticed the distinction between new and old land-users in encounters on the street, which brought about a feeling of estrangement from the neighbourhood (cf. Valli, 2015).

Other interviewees shared similar experiences and explained how diversity became an ambivalent phenomenon to them. Some people mentioned diversity as a strength of the neighbourhood. Because of the diversity of nationalities, everyone can feel at home in the neighbourhood, an interviewee said (B01). Another interviewee mentioned that diversity constitutes richness if this diversity is used well (B10). However, as the process of gentrification proceeded, the diversity of people also became a problem and the source of conflict. A recurring issue in the interviews was the effort to stimulate biking and to make the neighbourhood car-free. Some interviewees were opposed to this, because they needed their car in their everyday lives. Moreover, bikes were regarded as symbols of *Flamands* (Flemish, Dutch-speaking people), who were seen as taking over the neighbourhood. Several interviewees voiced this concern, i.e. that they would lose their neighbourhood to other groups.

Not only the difference in cultural practices contributed to feelings of estrangement: also the transformation of the built environment did. An inhabitant of the Quartier Maritime described it as follows: "We could really say that there is a frontier between the Quartier Maritime and all these new constructions at Tour & Taxis" (B16). An inhabitant of Tour & Taxis expressed a similar sentiment:

> This hump where I am in, that is Tour & Taxis and the park and Gare Maritime, that is actually 1000 Brussels and then the street along my building is actually Molenbeek. You do really notice a line of separation between the two parts. (B03)

Several interviewees thus explained how their sense of place changed due to gentrification: the process has turned the neighbourhood into a place where class differences were more clearly seen and felt than before. They experienced this in interpersonal encounters, in the different practices of new inhabitants and in the transformation of the built environment. The new developments were therefore seen as expressions of disregard *vis-à-vis* the social attachments of local inhabitants to their neighbourhood, which was transformed as a result of gentrification.

Some interviewees also mentioned in this respect that it has become increasingly difficult for local people to find a home in the area, because the new developments do not cater to the needs of local people:

> there are small apartments and luxurious apartments, so not adapted to the needs of the local people, but even not to the needs of the average inhabitant of Brussels, who cannot pay that, luxurious apartments (…)

> while we have families with 3, 4, 5 children, so it does not respond to their needs. (B02)

Another interviewee mentioned her children, who grew up in the neighbourhood, but cannot find a home for themselves there:

> But now that my children look to buy something there, it's impossible, with their salaries. You cannot do it. My children tell me: 'We want to buy there, at Tour & Taxis as well'. It doesn't disturb them. But it's impossible, looking at the price. So it's for people who speculate, and who already have real estate, and who don't care about paying 3-400.000. (…) I would like that this changes, so that the youngsters who study, and who have always lived in Molenbeek, Quartier Maritime, can stay. (B13)

These two quotations single out the needs of *local* people, who have social attachments to their neighbourhood which are not duly considered in the developments that are taking place there. Another interviewee, however, thought that this element of gentrification is not necessarily something to oppose, for he thought that the place-based attachments of local people should not necessarily be prioritised over the needs of others when access to scarce space is distributed (B10). Not all interviewees thus thought in the same way about this.

5.4.4 Care and esteem

About the two other recognitional spheres, care and esteem, we can be brief. They feature much less than the spheres of respect, which were clearly less pertinent in this case. Nevertheless, the last two quotations regarding access to housing arguably also pertain to the sphere of care where people's vital needs are at stake. The interviewees pointed out people's needs for fitting houses and the difficulties that locals face when they want to find a home in the Quartier Maritime. Another interviewee, a renter, also attested of her difficulties in finding a home in the Quartier Maritime (B15). Several interviewees, moreover, mentioned stories of their children or other people whom they knew and who could not find a home in the neighbourhood anymore (B07, B12, B13, B16). However, our interviewees mainly mentioned these needs in connection with the difficulties people had to find a good home *in the neighbourhood*, rather than regarding difficulties of finding a good home *at all*. Hence, we argue that these concerns pertain primarily to the sphere of *difference-respect*, where people's place-based attachments are considered, rather than to the sphere of care. Having discussed the separate spheres of recognition, we now turn to enfolding.

5.4.5 Enfoldings: redistribution, recognition and misrecognition

Our findings so far indicate that people hold complex views in their moral assessment of gentrification. We will now zoom in onto how the enfolding of redistribution and (mis)recognition became manifest in our interviews (cf. Sebrechts et al., 2019). This results in three observations: one on housing manifesting how misrecognition is folded into beneficial distributive outcomes (housing), and two observations (urban renewal and new amenities) that show how misrecognition enfolds into recognition.

The first manifestation concerns the way gentrification induces increasing housing prices. Some homeowners welcomed the increase in wealth (redistribution) and, at the same time, lamented reduced access to housing for relatives and other locals (misrecognition). Earlier quotations described this as "paradoxical" (B11) and detrimental for the children. These interviewees saw that the process brought them material gains, but also understood gentrification as an expression of disrespect *vis-à-vis* the locals, as they did not choose these developments (autonomy-respect) and saw that it became more difficult for others with place-based attachments to still find a home in the neighbourhood (difference-respect). Hence, the material gains were not evaluated on their own, but rather in the light of the misrecognition that they also expressed. Indeed, their material gains *depended* in the process of gentrification on the misrecognition of locals' autonomy and their place-based attachments, and these interviewees were aware of that. The material gains could not have come about without making the neighbourhood less accessible to others with place-based attachments. If it had been up to the locals, the developments in the neighbourhood would have looked quite different, with smaller (or no) price increases as a result. Misrecognition, then, was the condition of possibility for locals' financial gains as they materialised in this process of gentrification.

Similar concerns were voiced by two inhabitants of Tour & Taxis. Buying a home at Tour & Taxis was an opportunity for them in a tight housing market, but they also realised that their presence in the neighbourhood would come with repercussions for the local population. As one interviewee explained:

> I have had many discussions about it … I think that it was just a chance for me at this moment, because I wasn't going to be able to buy anyway, since it is not a good market and that this was a godsend [*buitenkans*] for me, but I realise as well (…) those are discussions we have with friends, the consequences that it can have in the neighbourhood. And yes, I think that everyone who lives here also realises that and also the type of people that come to live here are all people, Dutch-speaking,

> all with higher education, I think that all have received some financial support from their parents. Yes, it is not the people from Molenbeek itself who already live in the neighbourhood that move to this *quartier* [i.e. Tour & Taxis]. (B03)

Another inhabitant of Tour & Taxis navigated this tension by pointing out that Tour & Taxis was a new-build project:

> it will have impact on the prices and everything, but no one was here before. Here where I live, there were wastelands for 20 years etc., so yes, there are new constructions, but we did not literally take the place of other people in building a loft at the place of a family home (…) it has consequences, given the reputation (…) but I feel a bit less bad. (B08)

These quotations show that the inhabitants of Tour & Taxis were aware of the potential negative consequences which their presence in the neighbourhood has for the locals of the Quartier Maritime. They bought in the neighbourhood, because it was difficult to find a home elsewhere in a tight housing market. However, they also understood that the new developments were not accessible to the local community and that it would change the reputation of the neighbourhood. As such, it expressed misrecognition of the locals as moral equals (autonomy-respect) and of their place-based social attachments (difference-respect). In that sense, the beneficial distributional outcome for the interviewees of the new-build project (they got access to scarce housing) was accompanied by their acknowledgment of the misrecognition towards the local community that was expressed in the same project.

The second enfolding strikes at the heart of gentrification as urban renewal. The recognition expressed through urban improvement ties in with the misrecognition expressed through neglecting people's opinions and place-based attachments. As one interviewee said: "We want that the neighbourhood changes for the better. But on the one hand, we don't want that there are changes in the sense that there is another population that comes and that takes over from us" (B13). She depicted how the new developments contributed to a cleaner and safer neighbourhood, but at the same time feared that a new population would take over control, whereby the locals would be delivered to the choices of others. She also described this – seemingly echoing Slater's (2014) idea of "false choice urbanism" – as intellectual blackmail: "if we say no no no to everything, okay, we return to 30 years ago, when everything was neglected (*délaissé*) (…) there will be gangs, there will be riots (…) and that's almost an intellectual blackmail for us" (B13). On the one hand, investments in the neighbourhood were

seen as necessary to solve local problems and thus express that the locals are taken seriously. On the other hand, the interviewee feared that the investments may attract new people who take over the neighbourhood, which can be taken as a form of disrespect towards the moral accountability of the locals (autonomy-respect) and towards their place-based social attachments when the neighbourhood transforms too much (difference-respect). The locals were recognised via these investments in the neighbourhood, but in the process of gentrification this recognition only came about when other aspects of their lives were misrecognised. Recognition thus *depended* on misrecognition.

A related predicament was described by another interviewee. He said: "Gentrification could be a bad thing that is necessary to stop what we call a flight forward into an abyss. But this abyss, it was prefabricated by those responsible, foremost by those politically responsible" (B01). Gentrification might be necessary after a long period of disinvestment in, and neglect of, the neighbourhood, but he considered it to be a bad thing nonetheless. In that sense, investments were preferred to more neglect and were taken as a (meagre) form of recognition of the interests of the local inhabitants. However, *the need* for these investments, and that accepting them was the only real choice locals had after a long period of neglect, shows the misrecognition towards them inherent in the disinvestment-investment dynamic in gentrifying neighbourhoods (cf. Smith, 1979; 1982). Only after a long period of neglect the neighbourhood was deemed worthy of investments again, and this happened only when a new, richer population arrived there. The very dynamic of the rent gap thus embodied both misrecognition and a meagre form of recognition for locals who may, after long periods of neglect, also benefit from the investments in the neighbourhood.

The third enfolding connects a recognition of locals, expressed through more local amenities and neighbourhood activities, with a misrecognition of inhabitants' capacities for access. This revolves around Tour & Taxis. As one interviewee explained:

> I find Tour & Taxis disgusting (…) No, I find it very beautiful. I find that project great. I think it's regrettable that it wasn't there when our children were small, but I find it awful that you don't take the people of Molenbeek into account, that it's too expensive for them. I don't understand why it has to be like that, that when you have to eat something there, it's all overpriced. (…) We are very happy that there's something, but we regret that it isn't for our neighbours, for some of our neighbours. We would have liked it a lot better if all our neighbourhood was sitting there (B05).

Another interviewee mentions that it is valuable and important that Tour & Taxis provides space for new types of events. Yet she adds: "Tour & Taxis is a very ambiguous phenomenon in my life because it's really the gentrifier of the neighbourhood" (B07). This, she continued, led to higher housing prices and rents there. However, the events and an atelier in the Gare Maritime help "to bring the community in there. This is interesting for them [Tour & Taxis] and is also for the community a kind of access to enter and to feel welcome in the big monster" (B07). So, on the one hand, Tour & Taxis is a space that provides a positive contribution to the neighbourhood: it fulfils a function in the neighbourhood that otherwise would be left unfulfilled, e.g. for the organisation of events, also for the local community. On the other hand, Tour & Taxis excludes locals from the food market through its high prices. Moreover, the presence of Tour & Taxis leads to higher housing prices and rents in the surrounding neighbourhood, which makes continued residence in the neighbourhood for locals more precarious. Tour & Taxis thus fulfils a function in the neighbourhood that was neglected before and could thus be seen as a form of recognition of the equal moral status of the locals. Yet, it only does so by neglecting other needs of the local community and is as such also an expression of misrecognition. Again, recognition and misrecognition are enfolded here, because one single project simultaneously expresses recognition *and* misrecognition: recognition comes about *via* misrecognition (cf. Sebrechts et al., 2019: 184).

5.5 Conclusion and discussion

This paper has used a recognition-theoretical framework – entailing care, autonomy-respect, difference-respect, and esteem – to better understand the lived experiences of people living through gentrification in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels. We focused on the moral experiences of homeowners, who, via rising housing prices, benefit from gentrification in a material sense, while, at the same time, object to other aspects of gentrification. As such, the experiences and moral evaluations of homeowners in gentrifying areas showed how redistribution, recognition and misrecognition are enfolded in the process of gentrification. This paper thereby contributed to a better understanding of the complex experiences of people living through gentrification, where not everyone involved can be clearly categorised as a "winner" or "loser" of the process (cf. Doucet, 2009). It did so by empirically investigating this enfolding in a real-life, messy case.

Two forms of misrecognition loomed large in the interviews, namely those related to autonomy-respect and difference-respect. Inhabitants' autonomy-respect was misrecognised in two ways. First, the new developments only catered to preferences of the rich, thereby denying the equal moral status of those with less financial means.

Secondly, the opinions of inhabitants were not duly considered, which breached the expectation that their moral accountability would be respected. Violations of difference-respect were also voiced in two ways. First, the transformations of the neighbourhood were considered to be at odds with proper respect for the place-based social attachments of local inhabitants. Secondly, through rising housing prices and rents, it became more difficult for local people with place-based attachments to find a home in their neighbourhood. This was also seen as a violation of due respect for the locals' social attachments.

The interviews showed various enfoldings between redistribution, recognition and misrecognition. Beneficial distributional outcomes for homeowners were not unequivocally welcomed by them, because these developments hindered the access of other locals with place-based social attachments to housing in the neighbourhood. Interviewees also mentioned how investments in the neighbourhood were a form of recognition for the problems of the neighbourhood and the interests of the locals, but at the same time misrecognised other aspects of the lives of the inhabitants. In particular, inhabitants missed recognition for the wish to be in control of how the neighbourhood develops and to secure locals' access to housing in the neighbourhood. Recognition and misrecognition were also enfolded in the dynamics of urban renewal. There, periods of disinvestment were considered to be a denial of inhabitants' equal moral status, while investments were seen as a (meagre) form of recognition for the problems that resulted from this disinvestment. Finally, Tour & Taxis provided functions to the neighbourhood that it otherwise lacked and was hence seen as a recognition of the inhabitants' interests and moral status. At the same time, Tour & Taxis' role in stimulating the rise of housing prices and rents, and the high food court prices, were seen as exclusionary and hence as a denial of inhabitants' equal moral status. These enfoldings show that beneficial distributional outcomes for, and recognition of, inhabitants in gentrifying neighbourhoods came at the price of misrecognition of other aspects of the lives of these same inhabitants. In so far as they were recognised, their recognition depended on their misrecognition or on the misrecognition of other inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

So, where does this leave the concept of recognition and its significance for addressing displacement in the context of gentrification? Our findings show empirically that recognition can be ambivalent, for recognition may imply misrecognition of other aspects of someone's life or of other people (cf. Ikäheimo et al., 2021). Being recognised, then, is not always evidently a desired outcome. The enfolding of the spheres of recognition, as well as of redistribution and (mis)recognition, thus warrants careful conceptual as well as empirical attention. At this point, the joint

work of Fraser and Honneth (2003) and follow-up is still largely wanting. Our focus on enfolding in the context of gentrification and displacement has sought to provide one direction to further this debate, yet many questions remain. How are redistribution, recognition and misrecognition enfolded in the moral evaluations of people living through gentrification in other contexts? What are people's moral experiences when gentrification assumes a different form? How is this influenced by different institutionalised patterns of recognition in other parts of the world? How are redistribution, recognition and misrecognition enfolded there? We hope to inspire further research on how complex moral evaluations of gentrification unfold and enfold across time and space.

Epilogue Chapter 5

Gentrification in the Quartier Maritime assumed a different form than it did in the Tweebosbuurt. While gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt proceeded via the demolition of social housing units, gentrification in the Quartier Maritime occurred largely via the refurbishment and new-built construction of buildings on vacated land. People thus did not had to move out of their homes and they did not have to witness how their homes got torn to the ground.

The moral experiences of the people in both neighbourhoods were also in important respects different. Where all four spheres of recognition featured in the experiences of injustice of the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt, the experiences of injustice of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime related mostly to the two spheres of respect: autonomy-respect and difference-respect. Regarding the sphere of autonomy-respect, the inhabitants felt that their equal standing was misrecognised. They said that their opinions about the developments in the neighbourhood were not taken seriously and they felt that these developments were largely excluding them: the developments catered to the needs and desires of a new, wealthy population, but not to the needs of the long-term inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime. Misrecognition in the sphere of difference-respect concerned the social, cultural and economic transformations of the neighbourhood, as well as the difficulties of people with social relations to the neighbourhood to find an affordable home in the Quartier Maritime.

Despite these critiques of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime, some inhabitants also mentioned positive aspects of gentrification. Tour & Taxis provides a space for events, there are more facilities in the neighbourhood and the homeowners in the Quartier Maritime can profit from the rising real-estate prices in the neighbourhood. Gentrification was thus not seen as a univocally bad process, but also featured developments from which the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime could benefit. Gentrification led to beneficial financial outcomes for the inhabitants and also brought facilities to the neighbourhood, which could be seen as a form of recognition for the needs of the inhabitants.

At the same time, these developments only came about through the simultaneous misrecognition of the neighbourhood's inhabitants. If their views on the developments in the neighbourhood were taken seriously, the neighbourhood would have looked quite different and would not have been as attractive to wealthy newcomers. The price increases in the neighbourhood would then not have been so large.

The notion of enfolding tries to capture this complexity: the recognition of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime, as well as the beneficial financial outcomes that gentrification brings about for them, are enfolded in misrecognition. The misrecognition that was expressed in the process of gentrification was the condition of possibility for the recognition and material benefits which materialised in their specific forms in the process of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime. In this case, misrecognition was thus not incidental to the recognition and financial benefits that came about in the process of gentrification, but rather an essential element of these outcomes.

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed how people morally experience processes of gentrification in two different contexts. We saw that the process of gentrification assumed different forms in both cases, and the accompanying moral experiences differed significantly as well. What do these differences mean for the resistance to the process in both contexts? The next chapter focuses on this question. It compares the two cases of gentrification and discusses how the differences between the two cases translated into different forms of resistance to gentrification. In doing so, it builds a recognition-theoretical framework for the study of resistance to gentrification.

Chapter 6

Towards a better understanding of the gentrification-resistance nexus: a comparative case study

Abstract

This paper studies resistance to gentrification from a recognition-theoretical perspective. It discusses two cases of gentrification, namely in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, The Netherlands and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Belgium. Resistance to gentrification assumed different forms in these neighbourhoods. Based on a comparative case study and in order to better understand these different forms of resistance, this paper identifies 15 dimensions that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. This list of 15 dimensions can serve as a heuristic device for the future study of the gentrification-resistance nexus in other contexts. In focusing on the types of gentrification, this paper also makes a programmatic point, namely that research on the gentrification-resistance nexus should consider systematically how this relationship is mediated by the particularities of processes of gentrification.

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6.1 Introduction

If there is one word in geography that can be described as politically charged, it is gentrification (Knieriem, 2023; Lees et al., 2008: 155). Gentrification is the process leading to the displacement of people from their neighbourhood following the arrival of new, more affluent land users (Clark, 2010; Knieriem, 2023). Here, displacement refers not only to outmigration, but also to the transformation of a place resulting from the arrival of newcomers who impose their tastes, cultural practices and political views on a place (e.g., Brown-Saracino, 2007; Hyra, 2015; Kern, 2016; Tissot, 2014; Valli, 2015), such that it no longer feels like home to long-term inhabitants (e.g., Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020; Marcuse, 2010). The term gentrification, then, captures how socio-economic inequality is translated into unequal access to space and describes how those with little financial means are – absent effective institutional mechanisms to protect their place – delivered to the choices of the rich (Kohn, 2013). Political philosophers have therefore argued that gentrification is unjust (Dawkins, 2023; Lloyd, 2023). Social scientists, moreover, have argued that gentrification research should contribute to the development of critical perspectives on the process (Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008). It is therefore surprising – especially given the large body of gentrification literature – that resistance to gentrification has only recently become a focus of research (Lees & Ferreri, 2016: 14-16; Slater, 2014: 521).

The current paper tries to contribute to this relatively small, albeit growing, literature on resistance to gentrification. It does so through a comparative case study of two cases of gentrification, namely in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. In these cases, gentrification unfolded in different ways and there were also significant differences in how gentrification was resisted. In the Tweebosbuurt, public actors (the municipality and a social housing corporation) played a large role in inducing gentrification (cf. Hackworth & Smith, 2001). Through large protests and other forms of coordination, inhabitants collectively tried to resist this process. In the Quartier Maritime, where gentrification largely assumed the form of new-build gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2005), resistance mainly proceeded via institutionalized channels and was the work of a small number of inhabitants.

This paper interprets the different forms of resistance from the perspective of Honneth's (1995) critical theory of recognition. Experiences of misrecognition take centre stage in this theory and are conceived as the motivation behind social protest. As Honneth formulates his theory at a rather abstract level, the recognition-theoretical concepts will gain substance through a comparative analysis of the studied cases. The findings thus do not mirror the theory, but rather emerge from the

empirical analysis which proceeds through the method of "comparative conversation" (Teo, 2023). Through the comparison, I develop a framework with 15 dimensions that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. This comparative approach allows me to detail the particularities of the two processes of gentrification and how they relate to opposition against the process. I do not claim that the 15 dimensions constitute causal mechanisms (as I will elaborate on in the discussion), but I do believe that they mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus and that they should be considered for a better understanding of the complexity of resistance to urban transformations. The framework then serves the purpose that Elinor Ostrom described: "From a framework, one does not derive a precise prediction. From a framework, one derives the questions that need to be asked to clarify the structure of a situation" (Ostrom, 1990: 192). Although I do not claim full generalizability of the framework developed in this paper, I do believe that it has exploratory potential beyond the cases studied here.

In developing the framework and through emphasizing the particularities of the gentrification processes studied, I also make a programmatic point regarding the study of resistance to gentrification: to understand such resistance, one should attend to the specific features of gentrification. Gentrification should thus not merely be understood as the object of resistance (i.e., that what is resisted) or the abstract context wherein resistance takes place. Rather, researchers should also consider how resistance to gentrification is embedded in the process itself. This means that the specific characteristics of processes of gentrification should be considered systematically. The framework developed in this paper is a step towards that goal.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section discusses the relevant literature and discusses how struggles for recognition are expected to work out in the context of gentrification. Section 3 introduces the cases and discusses the methods. Section 4 presents the findings and the 15 dimensions that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. The paper ends with a discussion and a conclusion.

6.2 Theory

This section first discusses the literature on resistance to gentrification (6.2.1). It then turns to a discussion of the theory of recognition (6.2.2) and positions this theory in the broader literature (6.2.3). After that, it explores four aspects of struggles for recognition that should be considered in the study of resistance to gentrification (6.2.4).

6.2.1 Resistance to gentrification

This subsection focuses on resistance to gentrification (for more extensive reviews of the gentrification literature, see Brown-Saracino [2017], Knieriem [2023] and Lees [2012]). I first discuss that resistance to gentrification may assume different forms, before turning to explanations of mobilization and housing movements' success. After that, I consider the need to focus on the particularities of gentrification when studying resistance to this process.

Despite the critical edge of the concept of gentrification, resistance to the process has only recently become a focal point of research (Goetz, 2016; González, 2016; Lees & Ferreri, 2016: 14; Lees et al., 2018: 346-347; Slater, 2014: 521). Several studies have discussed the different forms this resistance may assume and have pointed out that the concept of gentrification can be used to mobilize people to struggle against processes of urban transformation (Annunziata & Rivas-Alonso, 2018; González Guzmán, 2024; Huning & Schuster, 2015; Janoschka et al., 2014; Lees & Ferreri, 2016; Lees et al., 2016; Lees et al., 2018; Maeckelbergh, 2012; Polanska & Richard, 2021; Robinson, 1995; Rodríguez & Di Virgilio, 2016; Shin & López-Morales, 2017; Shin et al., 2016; cf. Knieriem, 2023). Moreover, *how* the concept of gentrification is understood also influences which groups are deemed worthy of being protected against the adverse consequences of the process (Lee, 2020; Werth & Marienthal, 2016; cf. Ellis-Young, 2020).

As Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso (2020) have emphasized, resistance against gentrification is not necessarily always overt; people may also try to stay invisible and engage in informal practices to stay put. Overt resistance, furthermore, may follow after periods of latent resistance during which networks are forged and resources are maintained (Accornero & Carvalho, 2023). Although the current paper focuses on overt resistance in which people try to alter or stop processes of gentrification, it is important to note that resistance may also be less visible and proceed without articulating political goals (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). There exists a broad range of repertoires of contention to resist gentrification (Polanska & Richard, 2021; cf. Della Porta, 2022).

Some studies attempt to explain how people are mobilized to resist gentrification. Accornero and Carvalho (2023) argue that marginal gentrifiers played an important role in mobilizing people to resist gentrification in Lisbon. Vollmer and Gutiérrez (2022) describe how tenant initiatives against gentrification and high rents in Berlin learned and expanded their mobilization tactics through experimenting and sharing best practices. Although there are thus successful examples of mobilizing

people against gentrification, mobilizing may be harder when neighbourhoods and specific groups of inhabitants are stigmatized (Kadıoğlu, 2024) or long processes and uncertainty exhaust inhabitants (Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014).

Several authors have also focused on how the achievement of housing movements' goals can be explained. Many of these movements attempt to change public policy to stop gentrification (cf. Bernt, 2012). Tattersall and Iveson (2022) discuss how housing movements in Cape Town, Barcelona, Sydney and Moscow assemble power in pursuing their goals. They distinguish between five "people power strategies" of movements: "playing by the rules"; mobilising; organising through rebuilding institutions; prefiguring; and forming political parties. According to Tattersall and Iveson (2022; 2024), housing movements often use a combination of these strategies to achieve their goals. Card's (2024) study of Los Angeles and Berlin also distinguishes five strategies of housing movements: making demands; forging coalitions; promoting referendums; dialogues with government officials; and moving activists to government. Vollmer and Gutiérrez (2022) argue that one should indeed look at what activists do (endogenous factors), but also at the context in which they operate (exogenous factors).

Despite this growing body of literature, there is still much to learn about the gentrification-resistance nexus. In particular, and despite various calls for comparative studies of gentrification (e.g., Lagendijk et al., 2014; Lees, 2012), most studies do not systematically compare the particularities of the gentrification processes to which people oppose; or, if they do, they focus on one or two aspects of gentrification, like timing and symbolic politics (Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014). Gentrification thus often features as the reason for resistance or as the abstract context wherein resistance takes place.[40] Yet, considering how the specific features of gentrification mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus is important, for, as Elliot-Cooper et al. (2020: 503) argue, the process of gentrification and displacement "can ultimately wear down individuals, leading to an inertia that makes effective resistance to displacement impossible". To study how this works out in concrete cases, they hold that "any investigation of gentrification-induced urban displacement

40. It should be noted that Mösgen et al. (2019) also discuss how particularities of gentrification relate to resistance. They compared gentrification in Vancouver and Frankfurt along five dimensions, namely causal drivers, policy instruments, legitimation strategies, forms of displacement and protests. Only in Vancouver, where there was direct displacement (people had to leave their homes), protests against the developments emerged; in Frankfurt, where there was mainly exclusionary displacement (high prices excluded new households from entering homes), protests were virtually absent. This study focused on the different faces of state-led gentrification, though, rather than on resistance to the process.

must consider the type of gentrification" (504). Hence, research should systematically consider how the particularities of gentrification may make a difference to the possible forms of resistance.

As gentrification manifests itself in variegated forms at different places (Knieriem, 2023; Lees, 2012), comparative case studies seem particularly fruitful to study how the specific characteristics of gentrification mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006; Robinson, 2016). The current paper provides such a comparative case study and identifies 15 dimensions that mediate this relationship. Before turning to those findings, I will first introduce the theory of recognition.

6.2.2 Recognition

The idea that recognition is important for human beings has a long philosophical history (Honneth, 2020; Taylor, 1994). Honneth (1995) has turned this insight into the central element of his theory of recognition. One of his reasons for developing this theory was to account for the moral consciousness of socially suppressed groups. Their claims are often closely connected to their everyday lives and should be understood as responses to specific situations of perceived injustice, for example in the workplace (Honneth, 2007). Honneth's theory is therefore apt to understand people's concrete experiences of injustice, also those related to gentrification.

Honneth (1995) understands experiences of injustice as unfulfilled expectations for due recognition. Recognition is pivotal for human beings, because people are in important ways dependent on it. According to Honneth (following Hegel and Mead), human beings can only fully develop their capacities and see them in a positive light if these capacities are first affirmed by others (Honneth, 1992). People are in that sense intersubjectively vulnerable: not being duly recognized can be harmful. If, moreover, the person who has not been recognized thinks that withholding recognition has been unjust, she may understand it not merely as harmful, but as a moral misdeed; consequently, one can speak of a "moral injury" in that case (Honneth, 1997: 23). Such experiences may be accompanied by moral emotions like resentment, which may provide the impetus for social protest (Honneth, 1995). During these struggles for recognition, participants could already feel proud and develop a positive relation-to-self, which they achieve via a social movement's "counterculture of compensatory respect" (Honneth, 1995: 124). Such a counterculture also helps movements to forge a collective identity (cf. Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

People's normative expectations, i.e., expectations of what due recognition entails in a given case, result from different institutionalized spheres of recognition that

one finds in society. Honneth (1995) distinguishes three spheres of recognition: 1) care, where people's primary needs and vulnerability, like the need for shelter and food, should be recognized; 2) autonomy-respect, where people's assumed equal capacities for self-legislation and their equality before the law are at stake; and 3) esteem, where people's particular abilities to contribute something valuable to society (e.g., via formal labour) should be duly appreciated. Van Leeuwen (2007) has argued that Honneth's scheme should be supplemented by a fourth sphere, the sphere of difference-respect. Here, people's social attachments – which are valuable to themselves, but not necessarily to society at large – should be recognized. Since these social attachments are not evaluated as such or for society, recognition in this sphere is formal, i.e., non-evaluative. In each sphere, people have to refer to different standards of justice; therefore, Honneth provides "a plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004: 351). Given the complexity of gentrification, different forms of misrecognition may provide the impetus for social protest in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

As some authors understand recognition in a narrow sense as cultural recognition (e.g., Fraser, 2001; Lamont, 2018), it should be noted that Honneth conceives of recognition in a much broader fashion. For Honneth, recognition is not only about being affirmed in one's cultural identity, but about being duly regarded in all the different recognitional spheres. Hence, according to Honneth, how one's contributions to society are rewarded is not merely a matter of how goods are distributed, but also of which contributions are recognized in a society. Honneth thus argues that the economy should not be seen as an autonomous realm, but rather as embedded in laws and institutions that express patterns of (mis)recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Honneth, 2014). Similarly, one may hypothesize from this perspective, urban policy that fosters gentrification can be evaluated from the moral point of view.

Honneth's theory of recognition and extensions thereof thus emphasize how different forms of misrecognition may bring about social struggles. However, moral feelings of indignation (like resentment) do not automatically, nor necessarily, lead to social protest. Honneth has pointed out that "the emergence of social movements hinges on the existence of a shared semantics" (1995: 163), via which personal experiences of moral disregard are interpreted as affecting a larger group. Moreover, a struggle for recognition is more likely to come about when there are no institutionalized channels (e.g., political parties, elections) via which this grievance could be expressed effectively (Della Porta, 2017: 464; Senf, 2023: 24-25). The emergence of struggles for recognition also depends on the existence of resilient individuals who have not been crippled by feelings of shame (Senf, 2023: 28) or dispiritedness, i.e., by what

social psychologists call the "why try effect" (Corrigan et al., 2009). Furthermore, a struggle for recognition can only come about if people involved in the struggle believe that they have arguments to convince others that due recognition has unjustly been withheld (Knieriem, 2024).

The theory of recognition thus suggests different factors that influence if social struggles take place. The next subsection considers how the theory of recognition should be positioned in the urban justice and social movement literature.

6.2.3 Positioning the theory of recognition

Several scholars have argued that the theory of recognition is useful for urban studies. Barnett (2014: 156) notes that normativity is a "thoroughly routine, ordinary dimension of everyday practice". He suggests that the theory of recognition, emphasizing lived experiences of injustice, provides a valuable approach to study this everyday normativity in geography. Echoing Barnett, Buchholz and Kuzmanić (2024) argue that the recognition-theoretical perspective provides a "moral architecture of urban conflict" (209), which considers the restoration of relations of recognition, rather than only the material stakes of conflict (see also Buchholz, 2016). Van Leeuwen (2022), moreover, argues that a recognition-theoretical approach can deal with urban relationality, diversity and spatiality, which should all be considered in thinking about urban justice. I agree with these assessments. In what follows, I will try to clarify what the theory of recognition adds to political philosophical perspectives that prevail in urban studies. To do so, I will consider the work of Lefebvre, Hartman, Fainstein, Rancière and Mouffe.

Lefebvre's (1996) often used concept of the right to the city features in both normative analyses of urban transformations (e.g., Brenner et al., 2009; Harvey, 2008; Marcuse, 2009) and as a credo of social movements (e.g., Mayer, 2009). However, as the right to the city remains rather unspecified in Lefebvre's work, the term has been interpreted in multiple and incompatible ways (Attoh, 2011; Purcell, 2002). Hence, the concept of the right to the city does not provide the analytical distinctions necessary to clarify the various moral issues in cities. Hartman's (2010) "right to stay put", has similar shortcomings. It emphasizes the importance of being protected against dislocation, but does not properly capture the variety of moral issues regarding gentrification. For example, it does not capture forms of misrecognition that are not directly related to people's relations to place, but rather to their self-respect, which may also be under siege in gentrification (Wells, 2022). Recognition, as a plural concept, seems better able to distinguish the different moral principles at work in city life (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022). Moreover, as mentioned, (mis)recognition may be expressed in something else;

not only in laws and institutions, but also in space (Van Leeuwen, 2022). Hence, the theory of recognition contains the resources to develop a geographical imagination, according to Harvey (1973) necessary for thinking about urban justice. The theory of recognition could thus capture moral struggles relating to people's space and place, but also those related to other aspects of persons.

Another influential view on urban justice is Fainstein's (2010). She develops a plural theory of urban justice which "presses for the maximization of the three values of equity, diversity, and democracy" (166). Fainstein's aim "is to develop an urban theory of justice and to use it to evaluate existing and potential institutions and programs" (5), but not to investigate how the three values feature in social struggles in urban contexts. Unlike the theory of recognition, Fainstein's theory of justice thus does not contain a social theory that tells how these normative concepts work out in social struggles. Instead, the theory of recognition also provides the tools to study normative struggles empirically.

The political theories of Rancière (2004) and Mouffe (2005) have been taken up by geographers as well (e.g., Dikeç, 2001; 2017; Swyngedouw, 2009). The theory of recognition also deviates from these perspectives in important ways. First, Rancière's "method of equality" should be noted (Davidson & Iveson, 2015). Rancière believes that every distribution of positions in a social order is ultimately contingent, because it rests only on itself (Deranty, 2016; Rancière, 2016). Politics, for Rancière, consists of a disruption of this order via the method of equality that denies the contingent principle of the social order. For the study of gentrification, however, a method of equality does not suffice. After all, not everyone can live in a single neighbourhood and one should thus also consider via which principle of difference access to a neighbourhood is distributed. For example, should access to a neighbourhood be granted based on people's purchasing power or on people's place-based attachments (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022)? When studying gentrification, moral issues are not only related to equality, but also to difference. A recognition-theoretical framework is able to capture this (Van Leeuwen, 2007).[41]

Secondly, Mouffe (2005) emphasizes the agonistic dimension of political struggles. In agonistic struggles, the goals of a movement are not determined beforehand, but rather *in* and *through* the struggle (see also Tully, 2004). This loses sight of how the goals of struggles against gentrification are, at least partially, set beforehand: people want to stay put in their neighbourhood. A recognition-theoretical perspective,

41. For a more extensive comparison of Honneth and Rancière, as well as for an exchange between the two authors, see Genel and Deranty (2016).

which posits a clear relation between a movement's initial goals (to end a perceived injustice) and what the movement deems an acceptable outcome (the actual end of the perceived injustice), seems to capture this aspects of struggles against gentrification better than an agonistic-pluralist perspective.

A recognition-theoretical perspective thus complements other perspectives on urban justice in several ways. As a "plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004), it provides the theoretical resources to study empirically in what different ways misrecognition is expressed through space and urban transformations. It hereby considers how claims to gentrifying neighbourhoods are (in part) based on principles of difference. It also posits a clear relation between a movement's initial goals and what it deems an acceptable outcome. The theory of recognition is therefore particularly apt to study struggles in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Having placed the theory of recognition in the urban justice debate, I now want to briefly position the theory of recognition within the social movement literature. Since the 1970s – and contrary to the theory of recognition – resource mobilization theories have argued that not people's grievances, but rather the resources they mobilize, explains the emergence of social protest (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). However, scholars have more recently argued that this perspective loses sight of the *why* of social movements, as well as on the role of emotions and culture in mobilizing people (Goodwin et al., 2001; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Political process theory, which studies political opportunity structures, has been criticized for similar reasons (Goodwin & Jasper, 2004). The theory of recognition, which posits experiences of misrecognition and moral emotions as motivational and pays attention to shared semantics, helps to better understand the emotional and cultural aspects of social struggles. Moreover, in line with collective identity theory, it considers how social struggles may affect its participants' self-understandings (cf. Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The theory of recognition thus aligns with more recent developments in social movement theory.

The theory of recognition does not, however, deny that resources or the political context are important in understanding social movements. In the next subsection, I will discuss how the recognition-theoretical perspective is expected to work out in the context of gentrification. Here, I will also pay attention to the role of resources and the political context. In doing so, I formulate four aspects of struggles for recognition that have guided the analysis.

6.2.4 Gentrification and struggles for recognition

First, the theory of recognition hypothesizes that experiences of injustice (i.e., of misrecognition) motivate people to demand social change. Hence, it should be researched if and in what ways people become aware of injustice in the different cases of gentrification (e.g., what institutionalized normative expectations are breached and who they hold responsible for that), and how this experience of injustice manifests itself on an affective level (e.g., via moral feelings like resentment) (cf. Goodwin et al., 2001).

Secondly, the experience of misrecognition can be symbolically mediated, for example by the aforementioned shared semantics. The experience of gentrification induced injustice can also be symbolically mediated by legitimizing discourses like that of social mix (Mösgen et al., 2019).

Thirdly, for people to apprehend their shared vulnerability, a shared semantics may not be enough. Their awareness of shared vulnerability may also be affected by how the process of gentrification unfolds, e.g., by if people are directly displaced or can stay put, if it is sufficiently clear to them what an announced urban development entails, and if people have the same structural position (if they are all renters or home owners or if this is mixed).

Fourthly, whether or not a struggle for recognition comes about also depends on whether people believe that a social struggle is an appropriate method to achieve set goals. This means that there need to be people who are not crippled by the "why try effect" (Corrigan et al., 2009); otherwise, they might not believe that struggling will lead to any desired result. Moreover, if there are alternative methods to achieve the same goals (e.g., via institutionalized political channels), then people may choose an alternative method and not engage in a social struggle at all. Political opportunities are thus important (Koopmans, 2004). Finally, if a struggle is consuming too much time and energy, people may not believe that struggling against gentrification is worth the while, for it would only deplete their resources (cf. Klandermans, 1984). Hence, whether or not people engage in a social struggle is influenced by whether people believe that it is their best course of action.

Applying the recognition-theoretical framework to resistance to gentrification thus means that four aspects of this resistance must be investigated:

1. Experiences of misrecognition;
2. Symbolic mediation;
3. Awareness of shared vulnerability; and
4. Whether people believe that a social struggle is an appropriate method to achieve their goals.

These four points have guided the current research. In themselves, however, they remain abstract. This paper's empirical analysis therefore shows how these aspects of resistance to gentrification work out in two real-life contexts. I discuss this research approach in the next section, where the cases and methods are introduced.

6.3. Description of cases and methods

To better understand the gentrification-resistance nexus, two cases were studied. The first is the demolishment of the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. The second is the transformation of the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. These neighbourhoods were selected to study experiences of misrecognition in the context of gentrification. In both neighbourhoods, gentrification was going on, there was a risk of displacement (so that people's place-based social attachments were at stake in the process) and the neighbourhood physically changed in the process (which was important to study whether changes in the built environment were experienced as expressions of misrecognition). Moreover, I made an attempt to find one neighbourhood where public actors played a larger role and another neighbourhood where market actors were mainly responsible, as it may be more difficult to hold the latter accountable (cf. Della Porta, 2009; Van Leeuwen, 2022). The Tweebosbuurt provides an example of gentrification induced by public actors, whereas market actors played a larger role in the Quartier Maritime (although this is not an absolute difference; cf. Hackworth & Smith, 2001). I will now briefly introduce these case, before turning to the methods.

6.3.1 Case 1: Demolishment of the Tweebosbuurt, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

The Tweebosbuurt is located in Rotterdam, a city where 43.6% of all the homes consisted of social housing in 2023 (Statistics Netherlands, 2024). Social housing corporation Vestia (now, after a reorganization, called Hef Wonen) decided to demolish 524 social housing units in the Tweebosbuurt. They are to be replaced by 143 owner-occupied homes, 101 private rental homes, 29 middle rent homes (*middenhuur*) and 177 social rental units (Hef Wonen, 2024). There is thus a nett loss of 347 social

rental homes in the neighbourhood. Most households of the Tweebosbuurt are consequently displaced by wealthier households. Some inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt got worse new homes or had to pay significantly higher rents after moving.

Vestia had a financial incentive to demolish these social homes. Due to its financial speculation in the past, the social housing corporation had huge debts (Aalbers et al., 2017). The demolishment of social homes made them eligible for a reduction of a tax for social housing corporations (the Landlord Levy) (Municipality Rotterdam, 2018). Therefore, the demolishment had to happen quickly for Vestia, and this has led to vehement resistance among inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt, which will be discussed in more detail in the findings section.

6.3.2 Case 2: Transformation of the Quartier Maritime, Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium

The second case is the transformation of the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. An important difference between Rotterdam and Molenbeek concerns the level of social housing: there were 9.11 social housing units per 100 households in 2022 in Molenbeek (Wijkmonitoring Brussels, 2024). The Quartier Maritime is situated along a canal and borders 1000 Brussels, where the city centre is located. Adjacent to the Quartier Maritime, in 1000 Brussels, one finds a new-build project: Tour & Taxis. At the Tour & Taxis site, an old train station has been refurbished and turned into a large hall that provides office space for companies, as well as space for shops, a food court and events. This refurbishment has been completed in 2020. New apartment buildings are also being constructed on the site of Tour & Taxis. These apartments provide homes to middle-class households. The site of Tour & Taxis had been largely unused before and these developments can thus be described as "new-build gentrification" (Davidson & Lees, 2005).

Other developments that changed the Quartier Maritime were the projects related to the Canal Plan (Canal Plan, 2022). This is a plan for the transformation of different places that are located along the canal in Brussels. This plan caters to the needs of especially younger, wealthier households and makes living along the canal thereby more attractive for this group; however, this may also lead to "socio-spatial fractures in central neighbourhoods" (Costa & De Valk, 2021: 289).

This paper's findings attest of this latter effect. Some of the people of the Quartier Maritime resented the developments in their neighbourhood. Nonetheless, resistance against gentrification assumed a quite different form in the Quartier Maritime than in the Tweebosbuurt. Before turning to that, I will first discuss the employed methods.

6.3.3 Methods

Different methods were used for this research. The main body of data consists of interviews held with inhabitants of the gentrifying neighbourhoods. Next to that, I had conversations with other people concerned about gentrification, displacement or urban transformations in the two cities, so as to better understand the broader context in which these developments took place. These were inhabitants of other parts of the researched cities, activists, employees of organizations concerned with displacement, or researchers. I took notes of these conversations. In total, I spoke with 20 people about gentrification in Rotterdam (between September 2021 and July 2022) and with 27 people about gentrification in Brussels (between July 2022 and May 2023). I furthermore attended a protest in the Tweebosbuurt. I also analysed various documents (policy documents and newspaper articles) to get a better grasp of the developments in both cities.

The interviewees were recruited via the method of snowballing. I approached them to talk about how they experienced gentrification. Many of them were eager to talk about this topic, as they thought that it was an important subject and that it was important that their stories and viewpoints would be shared with the world. Many were very knowledgeable about the process as well (I will consider this in more detail below). In Rotterdam, I interviewed 15 (former) inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt – some of them could stay in their homes, some could return in the new social housing that is being build, and others had left their neighbourhood for good. Also 15 inhabitants from Brussels were interviewed – 12 from the Quartier Maritime and 3 from the new-build apartments at the Tour & Taxis site. Two of the interviews from Brussels were held online. All the interviews were fully transcribed and subsequently analysed in Atlas.ti. The shortest interview lasted 30 minutes; the longest 2 hours and 40 minutes. The interviews in Rotterdam were held in Dutch. In Brussels, the interviews were conducted in Dutch (4), English (3) or French (8), according to the interviewees' preferences.

I would like to continue with some words about my position. For this research, I have been involved in the neighbourhoods as a researcher, rather than as an organizer or active participant of the resistance against gentrification. This position may have helped me to get access to some interviewees, as I was not seen as someone occupying a clear position in the debates around the transformation of the neighbourhoods. Potential interviewees were thus not discouraged to talk with me due to my opinions on the matter. On the other hand, my relatively detached position limited my access to what happened "behind the scenes", e.g., to how the organization of resistance came about (e.g., Vollmer & Gutiérrez, 2022). I was not able to observe such elements of resistance myself, but I did gain insight in such matters in the interviews.

Even though I did not have an active role in organizing resistance in the neighbourhoods, my presence may nonetheless have had an effect there. Simply by introducing myself as a gentrification researcher and using the concept of gentrification to label the transformation of the neighbourhoods, my research may have influenced some of the people I spoke to: the concept of gentrification may have led them to see the transformations of their neighbourhood, as well as their own position in these transformations, in a different light (Knieriem, 2023). Despite this, my presence in the neighbourhood had limited effects and my position should thus be distinguished from the position of researchers who were more actively involved in resistance to gentrification as participant-observers (e.g., Card, 2024; Vollmer & Gutiérrez, 2022).

The analysis was a combination of an abductive approach and comparative conversation. Proceeding abductively, the four aspects of social struggle that the recognition-theoretical framework suggests drew attention to aspects of gentrification (theory-driven), but these recognition-theoretical concepts only got substance through the analysis of the cases (data-driven) (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The theory of recognition thus provided the general direction of this study, but the list of 15 dimensions is the result of a detailed comparative conversation (Teo, 2023). In this method, going back and forth between cases should allow "their differences to throw up interesting points of analysis" (905). This comparison has resulted in a framework which distinguishes 15 dimensions that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus.

6.4 Findings

The findings focus on the different aspects of gentrification that could mediate if, and in what ways, resistance against the process comes about. The different forms of resistance in both neighbourhoods will be discussed first. After that, I consider 15 dimensions that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. They are organized around the four aspects of resistance to gentrification (experiences of misrecognition, symbolic mediation, awareness of shared vulnerability, and whether social struggles are seen as an appropriate method to achieve set goals) that were identified in section 6.2.4.

6.4.1 Resistance against gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime

Although there was resistance against gentrification in both neighbourhoods, the differences between the two cases were remarkable. Many inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt vehemently and persistently contested the imminent demolishment of their homes. There were several protests in the neighbourhood, and the Rotterdam

edition of the national housing protest started close to the Tweebosbuurt, as this neighbourhood had become a symbolic place for the resistance against precarious housing. Several interviewees talked about the organization of their resistance: they mobilized neighbours, organized meetings and divided labour between a "writing group" and a "doing group". Many inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt appeared in local and national media to share their point of view about the demolishment of their neighbourhood. Some inhabitants went to court to try to prevent the demolishment. There were also people with banners on their windows to show their discontent about the demolishment.

Several interviewees mentioned that they were proud of their efforts to resist the demolishment of their homes (although this was not the case for all the inhabitants). Some even told they enjoyed their struggle (R04; R08). There was also a clear "counterculture of compensatory respect" (Honneth, 1995: 124) in the Tweebosbuurt: interviewees said that they appreciated the efforts of other inhabitants and that they were grateful for the role that others fulfilled in the attempt to prevent the neighbourhood from being demolished. In short, resistance against gentrification was a collective effort in the Tweebosbuurt; many inhabitants joined this resistance and they shared tasks, which resulted in several large-scale protests and other acts of resistance against the impending demolishment. Even though the demolishment ultimately took place and their resistance thus had little material effect, the resistance itself made inhabitants proud of their own and others' efforts. Some even mentioned that they missed their involvement in the resistance after it ended (R04). Others, though, were more ambivalent about their involvement in opposing the demolishment (R12) or downright negative about it due to the meagre results, i.e., the continuing demolishment (R01). This shows that resistance against gentrification is often complex and can be accompanied by contradictory experiences and "shifting identities of agents of resistance" (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016: 424; cf. Annunziata & Rivas-Alonso, 2020; Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020: 502-503).

In the Quartier Maritime, resistance against gentrification was quite different. Since the site of Tour & Taxis stopped being a distribution and customs centre in 1993, inhabitants of surrounding neighbourhoods, together with local organizations concerned about gentrification, housing and urban issues more generally, have been trying to influence the site's development plan. They did so through objecting to proposed development plans in discussions and negotiations with politicians and project developers. They also provided alternative plans (BRAL, 2017). Some inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime also played a role in this process. Despite some results – such as preventing the original plan of Musiccity and having ensured that

the park remains open to the public – many inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime were unhappy about what Tour & Taxis turned out to be.

However, notwithstanding this discontent, it was difficult to get people together to resist gentrification. In a publication from 2017, in which a local organization looks back at years of urban resistance around Tour & Taxis, people active in this resistance talked about the need to mobilize a larger group of people, and they identified this as the main challenge for the future (BRAL, 2017: 28). Five years later, during my interviews, inhabitants from the Quartier Maritime still mentioned the difficulties of mobilizing others to resist gentrification (B01, B02, B11, B17).

To be sure, there has been collective action in the Quartier Maritime. In recent years, there were two meetings for inhabitants of working class neighbourhoods (among which the Quartier Maritime) to organize themselves against gentrification (*journée des quartiers populaires contre la gentrification*); the first of these took place in the Centre Communautaire Maritime (IEB, 2022; 2023). There has also been a protest against building a tower with apartments at Square Sainctelette (the Dockside tower), which is just outside the Quartier Maritime (BX1, 2022). However, compared to the protests in the Tweebosbuurt, these protests were rather small, and some of the interviewees from the Quartier Maritime lamented the lack of protests against the new developments in the neighbourhood (B01, B11).

It was thus difficult to mobilize large numbers of people in the Quartier Maritime. Instead, resistance here was mainly the work of a few inhabitants who – often together with local organizations – wrote letters with objections against proposed projects and attended participatory meetings (during the *commissions de concertation*). These inhabitants were not very vocal about being proud of their contributions and they did not describe their resistance as bringing them enjoyment. A counter culture of compensatory respect was, although not completely absent, also clearly less prominent in the Quartier Maritime than in the Tweebosbuurt.

In sum, we could say that inhabitants of both neighbourhoods were involved in claim-making: the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt wanted to stop the demolishment and the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime wanted to alter new-build projects. The claims were thus adapted to the respective settings (Lichterman & Dasgupta, 2020). The way in which collective claims were made varied as well: the form that resistance against gentrification assumed was different in both neighbourhoods (cf. Tilly, 1999). In the Tweebosbuurt, there were large-scale, enduring protests in which many inhabitants played a part and worked together. In the Quartier Maritime, resistance mainly took

the form of attempts to alter new urban projects via institutionalized channels through which citizens could voice their opinions. This was the work of a few individuals, rather than of many neighbours together. The next subsections discuss how the four aspects of resistance to gentrification (identified in section 6.2.4) manifested themselves in the studied contexts, so as to better understand the emergence of these different forms of resistance.

6.4.2 People's experiences of misrecognition

This subsection discusses if and in what ways people experienced gentrification as misrecognition, i.e., as injustice. In what ways was misrecognition expressed to them in the process, how did they become aware of it and how did they experience it? Who did they hold responsible for it? And which normative expectations for due recognition were breached?

1. Moral feelings and moral evaluation of the process. In both the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime, the inhabitants of the gentrifying neighbourhoods expressed their dissatisfaction with gentrification in a variety of ways (cf. Atkinson, 2015). Many inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt expressed that they felt treated unjustly and misrecognized during the process. Their feelings of misrecognition pertained to all four recognitional spheres. Regarding care, inhabitants lamented *inter alia* the loss of a network of mutual care and support: "you depend on each other, especially when you have a lower income" (R12). Autonomy-respect was violated through not involving locals in the process: "that didn't happen here. Here it was: your neighbourhood has to be demolished and you have to fuck off" (R04). Respect for the inhabitants' social ties to each other and to the neighbourhood was also breached through the demolishment. As an inhabitant explained about the neighbourhood: "Everyone gets together there and knows each other … You are someone there" (R12). This social tissue would disappear after the demolishment. Finally, the demolishment of social housing, while building owner-occupied homes, was experienced as a sign that the municipality "looked down upon [working class] people" (R02), signalling the absence of esteem of the inhabitants' contributions. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt were thus unequivocally critical of the demolishment of their homes. Although the reasons for moral indignation of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime were less variegated and less widespread, several interviewees from there also expressed feelings of misrecognition: they found it "disgraceful" (B12) that they did not have the opportunity to voice their opinion on the process, and they resented that the new developments only catered to the needs of a new, richer population, rather than to the needs of the locals. Hence, the moral feelings of resentment which may "become the motivational basis for collective resistance" (Honneth, 1995: 163) were noticeable

in both the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime. The interviewees also provided justifications for their moral feelings, which indicates that they believed to possess the arguments to convince others that expectations for due recognition were unjustly breached (Knieriem, 2024). However, some inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime mentioned that they, as home owners, also profited financially from the higher housing prices that gentrification brought about (cf. Levine & Aharon-Gutman, 2023). Others said that Tour & Taxis, with its space for events and a food court, fulfilled a function that was otherwise lacking in the neighbourhood. Hence, while the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt saw gentrification in their neighbourhood as clearly unjust, the moral evaluations of the people in the Quartier Maritime were more variegated.

2. Actors responsible for gentrification. An experience of misrecognition implies that others are held responsible for a perceived injustice. In the Tweebosbuurt, it was social housing provider Vestia that, with the approval of Rotterdam's city council, decided to demolish the homes in the Tweebosbuurt and to build less social housing on the same territory. Here, gentrification was thus very much driven by the decisions of two public institutions. In the Quartier Maritime, however, the new developments were largely driven by market actors (like real-estate developers) who were looking for profitable investment opportunities – although such opportunities exist, of course, only by the grace of political decisions that forge favourable conditions for these opportunities (cf. Adams & Tiesdell, 2010). Even though interviewees in the Quartier Maritime also noticed the responsibility of political actors in allowing gentrification, it was nonetheless more obvious for inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt to hold public actors responsible for gentrification in their neighbourhood and to hold them accountable for the misrecognition they experienced (cf. Della Porta, 2009).

3. Clear distinction in the built environment. In both the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime the built environment showed a clear distinction between the new and the old part. In the Quartier Maritime, an interviewee spoke of a "frontier" (B16) between Tour & Taxis and the Quartier Maritime (cf. Smith, 1996). In the Tweebosbuurt, an interviewee mentioned newly build homes just outside their neighbourhood: "it seems like there is (…) a wall in between (…): these are rich and these are poor. Yeah, it feels like that" (R06). In both cases, gentrification – and the distinction between new (rich) and old (poor) inhabitants that it highlights – was thus clearly experienced by the inhabitants via the transformation of the built environment.

4. The form of gentrification: demolishment of homes vs. transformation of a neighbourhood. The form that gentrification assumed was very different in both cases. In the Tweebosbuurt, 524 social housing units were demolished. In the Tweebosbuurt, gentrification was a process of destruction: the destruction of a neighbourhood and of homes that were held dear by the inhabitants (cf. Pull & Richard, 2021). For this reason, inhabitants described the process as painful: "I like to walk in the neighbourhood all day long, but yeah, there's nothing left to see. Yes, the demolishment, which only hurts my heart" (R04). Moreover, the homes also provided support to inhabitants' memories, as an interviewee explained: "they have demolished everything (…) everything is flat. So the memory, the thoughts I had, they are gone. While I made pictures, but it is different. You start to miss many things" (R05). The home and the neighbourhood were, in other words, supportive and constitutive of people's memories and their personhood (cf. Nine, 2018; Radin, 1986). A part of their past, constitutive of who they were, would be destroyed by the demolishment. That provided a reason for their grievances. Such sentiments were not voiced in the Quartier Maritime, because gentrification assumed another form there: it was not a process of destruction, but one of new-build construction and transformation. There was no large scale demolishment of people's homes; rather, the neighbourhood was transformed by new-build projects like Tour & Taxis. People thus did not have to fear that their home would literally disappear, and in that sense, gentrification was less clearly inimical to people's personhood in the Quartier Maritime than it was in the Tweebosbuurt.

5. Social housing provision (other institutionalized normative expectations). An important difference between Rotterdam and Brussels is the supply of social housing. In Rotterdam, 43.6% of all the homes in the municipality consisted of social housing in 2023 (Statistics Netherlands, 2024). In Molenbeek, there were only 9.11 social housing units per 100 households in 2022 (Wijkmonitoring Brussels, 2024). Social housing was thus available for a larger part of the population in Rotterdam than in Molenbeek. Hence, in Rotterdam there was an institutionalized normative expectation that the provision of social housing is a public service mission, and several interviewees referred to the ideal of "public housing" (*volkshuisvesting*) (R07, R12) in this regard. The protests in the Tweebosbuurt can therefore be understood as "rebellion … against the betrayal of rights" (Della Porta, 2017: 462), i.e., as an attempt to defend the rights people expected to enjoy (cf. Senf, 2023: 158). Due to its low numbers of social housing, similar normative expectations did not exist in Brussels. Hence, the normative expectations regarding people's rights to social housing provision were much less strong in Brussels than in Rotterdam and the people in

Brussel did not expect as much from public actors as the people in Rotterdam (cf. Vollmer & Gutiérrez, 2022: 57-58).

6.4.3 Symbolic mediation

The former subsection discussed how people experienced misrecognition in the process of gentrification, but in what ways was this experience mediated by symbolic forms? This subsection pays attention to that question.

6. Shared semantics. Resistance to gentrification could only be collectively organized if people would not consider their experience of injustice as only pertaining to their own life, but rather as representative for a larger group (Honneth, 1995: 163). They needed symbols or concepts which endowed them with the "sociological imagination" to translate private troubles into public issues (Mills, 2000: 3ff.). These concepts were available to many of the interviewees in both cities. They often (though not always) knew the word gentrification, and one interviewee in Brussels explained Smith's (1979; 1982) rent gap theory to me (without actually mentioning the concept "rent gap"). In Rotterdam, the slogan "*wijken voor de rijken*" was voiced, which, drawing on the homonym *wijken*, means both "displaced for the rich" and "neighbourhoods for the rich". In short, many interviewees had a repertoire of concepts or symbols at their disposal which allowed them to understand that the larger process of urban transformation affected themselves as well as others (cf. Huning & Schuster, 2015; Jacobs & Manzi, 1996; Knieriem, 2023). Both the people in the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime possessed the sociological imagination and the cultural repertoire necessary to turn gentrification into a public issue around which a social protest could be organized.

7. Legitimation strategy: social mix. However, gentrification was also symbolically legitimized through a discourse of social mix in both cities. In Rotterdam, this was clearly expressed in the policy goal to attract "promising groups" to Rotterdam-South (NPRZ, 2011: 16; cf. Kadıoğlu, 2024), as well as in the city's housing vision, which aimed at decreasing the number of social rental homes and at increasing the number of higher priced houses (Municipality Rotterdam, 2016). Brussels also aimed at creating a social mix through attracting middle-class households to the city (Van Criekingen, 2012). These legitimation strategies did not seem to be effective as ideological devices, though (cf. Bridge et al., 2012). An interviewee of the Tweebosbuurt said that Rotterdam wants to balance neighbourhoods: "But that is just a disguised way of: the poor out, the rich in. Yes, that hurts (…) As if we are not good enough" (R13). Some interviewees of the Quartier Maritime were also sceptical about the prospect of social mix (B01, B16). They pointed out that they knew no one from Tour & Taxis: there was

only spatial proximity, but no social interaction with the new inhabitants (cf. Butler & Robson, 2001). However, others in the Quartier Maritime also mentioned that they saw social mix as an ideal to pursue, even when the reality in the neighbourhood did not (yet) correspond to that.

6.4.4 People's awareness of shared vulnerability

The availability of a shared semantics may not be enough for people to realize their shared vulnerability in the process of gentrification. This subsection therefore discusses how particularities of the process of gentrification influence whether people feel (and are) vulnerable to the adverse consequences of the process.

8. Different forms of displacement. As a consequence of the different forms of gentrification, displacement also assumed different forms in both contexts (cf. Mösgen et al., 2019). Direct displacement, i.e., where occupants have to leave their homes, occurred in the Tweebosbuurt (Marcuse, 2010). All of the inhabitants of the demolished homes in the Tweebosbuurt had to move out, whereas at most 177 households could return to a new social housing unit at the same place. Resisting gentrification was therefore an urgent matter for them: it directly affected their lives. In the Quartier Maritime, however, displacement largely took the form of exclusionary displacement, i.e., when a similar household as the one that moved out of a home no longer has access to it, due to circumstances beyond the individual household's control (like rising prices) (*ibid.*). The current inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime could thus largely stay in their homes. Many of the interviewees were home owners, and also renters were not as immediately threatened with losing their home as the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt. Gentrification impacted the inhabitants of both neighbourhoods therefore in different ways: in the Tweebosbuurt, gentrification meant that the inhabitants had to move out; in the Quartier Martime, the inhabitants could largely stay put. Resisting gentrification was accordingly a less urgent matter for the latter group.

9. Structural position of inhabitants. Another difference is the structural position of the inhabitants: in the Tweebosbuurt, everyone was a renter, whereas the Quartier Maritime consisted of both renters and home-owners. Hence, everyone in the Tweebosbuurt faced the same predicament when the demolishment was announced. Inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt thus had a shared interest which was instrumental in forging a collective identity (cf. Polletta & Jasper, 2001). In the Quartier Maritime, though, home owners profited in a material sense from gentrification (cf. Levine & Aharon-Gutman, 2023), whereas only renters and prospective home owners were afflicted by higher rents and housing prices. Hence, given their similar structural

position, it was easier to mobilize inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt for large scale protests, because they all shared the precariousness of their housing condition (cf. Della Porta, 2017: 460). This precariousness was not as widely shared in the Quartier Maritime.

10. Temporality of the process. The temporality of the process also differed between the two cases (cf. Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020: 502-503; Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014). In the Tweebosbuurt, the demolishment of the neighbourhood was announced to all inhabitants at the same time. They thus simultaneously faced the imminent peril of having to move out of their home. In the Quartier Maritime, there were different new-build projects that were realized at different moments. Moreover, the rents in the surrounding neighbourhood will not all rise at the same time, but are rather expected to do so after current inhabitants move out. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt thus all faced the negative consequences of gentrification at the same time, whereas this was not necessarily the case for the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime.

11. Clarity of the process. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt knew very clearly what was going to happen to them: their homes were going to be demolished. They received a letter from Vestia with this announcement. In the Quartier Maritime, the situation was altogether different. An interviewee explained that it was very difficult to get an overview of the project of Tour & Taxis: "That is such an enormous project and it was realized in a piecemeal way. They have presented a little piece every time, such that you respond to that small piece and don't see the whole of it" (B02). Hence, it was easier for the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt to know what was happening to their neighbourhood than it was for the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime; in the Quartier Maritime, gentrification could somewhat "escape ethical recognition" (Kern, 2016: 445). This also made the emergence of resistance against gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt more likely, because it was clearer to the inhabitants of that neighbourhood what exactly they had to contest (cf. Della Porta, 2017: 465).

6.4.5 Struggles for recognition as the appropriate method to achieve set goals

This subsection discusses the factors that influence if people living through gentrification believe that struggling against it is their best course of action. Are there resilient individuals to initiate social struggles? What are the costs of engaging in a struggle? And are there alternative ways to achieve set goals?

12. Moral entrepreneurs. Moral entrepreneurs, according to Howard Becker, are people who try to change existing, or install new, rules in society to improve people's lives (Becker, 1966). In the Tweebosbuurt, as well as in the Quartier Maritime,

there were people who acted as such moral entrepreneurs. They believed that gentrification was unjust and that the rules and mechanisms via which housing was distributed in society should be changed: people should be better protected against the demolishment of their homes and against precariousness due to rising housing prices. These moral entrepreneurs spent significant amounts of time and effort in writing letters and mobilizing others to alter what they considered to be unjust rules governing society. In both cases, there were thus people who tried to initiate resistance against gentrification.

13. Time and energy that struggle costs. Several interviewees, of both the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime, mentioned that their efforts to contest gentrification was time and energy consuming (cf. McCarthy & Zald, 1977). People in the Tweebosbuurt talked about the stress they experienced and that their struggle came at the cost of their social lives (R01, R02, R12). The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime also mentioned the time and effort it took to stay up to date about new developments in the neighbourhood and to develop the knowledge and skills to clearly formulate objections against these developments (B02, B11). Despite these costs, several inhabitants of both neighbourhoods thought it was worth the while to continue their resistance against gentrification.

14. Dispiritedness. This was not true of everyone, though. In the Tweebosbuurt, many interviewees explained that they found it important to struggle against what they considered to, be an unjust process. They believed that this made sense, even though they did not manage to avert the demolishment of their neighbourhood; they thought that the struggle was important in itself to show that such a process of demolishment should not take place in other neighbourhoods. However, this picture was rather different in the Quartier Maritime. Here, several interviewees mentioned that it was useless to try to influence the developments. Others noticed that the belief in the futility of resistance was also a reason why they could not mobilize neighbours to resist gentrification. Several interviewees mentioned the complex governance structure in Brussels in this respect, where the different municipalities and the overarching regional government all play a part. This makes it difficult to change things in Brussels. Hence, even though not completely absent in the Tweebosbuurt, the "why try effect" (Corrigan et al., 2009) seemed to loom larger in the Quartier Maritime (although it did not affect everyone there).

Table 1. Summary of findings

	Tweebosbuurt, Rotterdam	**Quartier Maritime, Molenbeek**
Outcome in terms of resistance	Large, vehement protests; shared efforts of many inhabitants; organization of protests (division of labour); counter culture of compensatory respect	No large protests; a few individuals resisted via institutionalized channels to voice discontent; difficult to mobilize others; hardly any counter culture of compensatory respect
Experiences of misrecognition		
1. *Moral feelings and moral evaluation of the process*	Anger, resentment, indignation; negative evaluation	Anger, resentment, indignation; variegated evaluation
2. *Actors responsible for gentrification*	Social housing corporation and the municipality	Market actors, facilitated by political actors
3. *Distinction in built environment*	Clearly visible	Clearly visible
4. *The form of gentrification*	Destruction of homes	New-build constructions
5. *Social housing provision*	High: normative expectation that social housing provision is a public service mission	Low: weak normative expectations that there was a right to social housing provision
Symbolic mediation		
6. *Shared semantics*	Available	Available
7. *Legitimation strategy*	Social mix	Social mix
Awareness of shared vulnerability		
8. *Form of displacement*	Direct displacement; inhabitants had to move out	Exclusionary displacement; inhabitants could stay put
9. *Structural position of inhabitants*	Similar: all renters	Different: some renters, some home owners
10. *Temporality of the process*	One big event	Developments spread over time
11. *Clarity of the process*	It was clear what was going to happen: demolishment	Unclear: developments took place in a piecemeal fashion
Social struggles appropriate method for set goals		
12. *Moral entrepreneurs*	Yes	Yes
13. *Time and energy that struggle costs*	A lot	A lot
14. *Dispiritedness*	Hardly: conviction that struggle was useful	Belief that it was futile to struggle
15. *Institutionalized channels to voice discontent*	Perceived as ineffective	Some inhabitants had confidence in these channels

15. Institutionalized channels to voice discontent. Another difference between gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime was the perceived presence of effective institutionalized channels to voice discontent (cf. Della Porta, 2017: 464; Senf, 2023: 24-25). In the Tweebosbuurt, most interviewees did not have any confidence in the local politicians in power. They voiced their appreciation for some politicians from smaller parties, but did not believe that these politicians would

be able to make a difference for them. Hence, voicing concerns to local politicians was not seen as very effective. In the Quartier Maritime, some interviewees voiced similar concerns, but others believed that politicians would ultimately listen to the concerns of local inhabitants. This happened for example when the municipality, following criticisms of local inhabitants and organizations, ultimately objected against the building permit for Dockside (Post, 2022). In other words, some people of the Quartier Maritime believed that there were effective political channels to voice discontent and their claims therefore remained more "inside" these channels (cf. McAdam et al., 2001). The sentiment that effective channels did not exist at all was more widespread in the Tweebosbuurt. Hence, the inhabitants of the latter neighbourhood had to look for other means, like protests, to voice their discontent.

6.5 Discussion and conclusion

This paper has argued that the relation between gentrification-induced experiences of injustice and resistance can be better comprehended by means of the theory of recognition. In order to substantiate the abstract concepts of the theory of recognition, two cases of gentrification were compared: the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, where the demolishment of social housing brought about large scale protests by the neighbourhood's inhabitants, and the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, where new-build gentrification has not led to large scale protests, but rather to resistance in the form of smaller protests and objections that a few individuals voiced via institutionalized channels. These differences can be better understood with the help of the 15 dimensions that were identified as mediating factors in the gentrification-resistance nexus (schematically summarized in table 1). Through zooming in on the processes of gentrification in both cases, this paper also made a programmatic point: the study of resistance to gentrification should not abstract from the particularities of gentrification, but rather study systematically how these particularities mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus (cf. Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020).

As said before, this paper makes no strong claim about the extent to which these findings can be generalized. Further empirical research should show how the in this paper developed framework might be expanded by other factors that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus in other contexts. Given the different forms of gentrification in different places and at different times, it is not to be expected that the scheme of 15 factors is exhaustive. Future studies can therefore hopefully use and expand upon the framework outlined here, so as to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the relation between gentrification and resistance, also in other contexts like the Global South. I hope that the developed framework is a useful tool

to embark on this endeavour and helps researchers in clarifying the structure of the situation in which resistance to gentrification is embedded (cf. Ostrom, 1990: 192).

Future research on resistance to gentrification could moreover follow three other paths. First, it could try to investigate how the particularities of gentrification work out in other contexts. For example, this paper's findings suggest that a similar structural position of inhabitants is conducive to mobilization, but one may also argue that the presence of home-owners among renters could foster mobilization, as home-owners have a more secure tenancy, may have more secure place-based relations and may therefore be more motivated to defend their neighbourhood. The point here is that a certain dimension of the framework may have ambiguous or contradictory effects on resistance, depending on the case in question (cf. Goodwin & Jasper, 2004: 20). Future case studies are thus necessary to gain insights into these matters and to see if it is possible to identify causal mechanisms here (Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Tilly, 2001).

Secondly, future studies could look at how the particularities of gentrification mediate the relationship between gentrification and more covert, everyday forms of resistance (Annunziata & Rivas-Alonso, 2020; Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). The current article focused on more overt resistance, but it is likely that the particularities of gentrification also affect if and in what forms people try to resist gentrification in more covert ways.

Thirdly, future studies could quantify protest events (Accornero & Carvalho, 2023; Hutter, 2019; Kriesi et al., 2019). In this way, insights of qualitative studies could be corroborated by numbers. Quantitative studies may also help to systematically compare how resistance to gentrification differs numerically, e.g., between cities, neighbourhoods and over time.

There is thus still a lot left to learn about resistance to gentrification. I hope that this article has provided a useful recognition-theoretical framework to continue this research and that it has convincingly argued that the particularities of gentrification play a mediating role in the gentrification-resistance nexus.

Epilogue Chapter 6

The theory of recognition posits that feelings of misrecognition are the motivation behind social protests and, ultimately, behind societal transformations. However, such feelings of misrecognition are not enough for social protests to come about. Much depends on the context and the possibilities that people have to coordinate their actions. If people succeed in doing that, a social struggle may come about. The thesis about the relation between feelings of misrecognition and the emergence of social protest remains rather rudimentary in the theory of recognition, though, and Chapter 6 therefore tried to elaborate on this relation in the context of gentrification.

The relation between gentrification and resistance to the process also needed to be specified. Although gentrification is approached critically by many researchers, the relation between gentrification and resistance has only become a focus of research in recent years. This research focused on the different forms that resistance to gentrification assumes, but had not yet paid much attention to how the particularities of gentrification mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. I argued in Chapter 6 that the theory of recognition provides a theoretical outlook which allows for the development of a better understanding of the emergence of different forms of resistance to gentrification.

Based on a comparison of gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime, I developed a framework for the study of the gentrification-resistance nexus. The development of this framework was based on the theory of recognition. It looked at people's experiences of misrecognition, the symbolic mediation of these experiences, people's awareness of a shared vulnerability and whether social struggles were seen as the appropriate method to resist gentrification. However, these recognitional concepts, as well as the hypothesised relations between experienced misrecognition and the emergence of social protest, remain rather abstract in the theory of recognition. Using this outlook to compare two cases of resistance to gentrification made it possible to concretise the abstract recognition-theoretical concepts, which led to the identification of 15 factors that mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus. The resulting framework provides the concepts that can be used in future studies of the relation between gentrification and resistance and may help researchers to formulate questions that need to be asked to identify aspects of gentrification that play a role in how resistance to the process comes about. The framework also shows that the relation between experienced misrecognition and the emergence of social protest is more complicated than Honneth's theory of recognition assumes. The framework may thus also be used for future studies of social protest

that employ a recognition-theoretical outlook. This framework shows what specific meanings the abstract concepts of the theory of recognition may assume in the context of real-life cases.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 described in detail the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. To that end, it studied gentrification in two neighbourhoods where gentrification assumed different forms. Despite the differences in the moral experiences of inhabitants of these neighbourhoods, people living through gentrification in both contexts experienced misrecognition. Nonetheless, resistance to the process assumed quite different forms in both neighbourhoods. In Chapter 6, I therefore used the theory of recognition to better understand the emergence of these different forms of resistance.

With the discussions on the moral experiences of people living through gentrification in Chapters 4 and 5 and the focus on resistance to gentrification in Chapter 6, I have dealt with the different elements of this dissertation's central research question. We are therefore now in the position to provide an answer to this question, which will be done next in the conclusion.

6

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Gentrification and struggles for recognition

Gentrification, as this dissertation showed, affects people in a variety of ways. Their moral evaluation of the process is consequently often also complex, which is to say that different dimensions of justice play a part in it. This dissertation tried to develop a better understanding of this moral experience of gentrification. Honneth's theory of recognition is particularly apt for this job for two reasons. First, Honneth's theory of recognition emphasises people's lived experience of injustice: Honneth does not conceptualise injustice as the violation of abstract moral ideals (like the Habermasian ideal of domination-free speech), but rather as the violation of concrete expectations for due recognition (Honneth, 2007a). Such a violation relates to people's concrete, everyday realities, and can thus also be put to work to investigate how people experience gentrification.

Secondly, Honneth's theory is a "plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004), as it distinguishes between different spheres of recognition. The recognition-theoretical framework used in this dissertation – which distinguishes, next to Honneth's three spheres of care, autonomy-respect and esteem, also the sphere of difference-respect (Van Leeuwen, 2007) – helps to better comprehend the different types of experienced moral wrong that gentrification may entail for the people living through the process (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2022). By using this framework, it was possible to develop a detailed, multilayered account of the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Although the gentrification literature already features studies on the moral experiences of people who live through the process, these studies typically focus on one aspect of this experience, e.g. class (e.g. Smith, 1996), race (e.g. Bloch & Meyer, 2023; Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022) or displacement (e.g. Atkinson, 2015; Valli, 2015), but do not develop a more comprehensive account of how people morally experience gentrification. Moreover, studies that focus on resistance to gentrification tend to discuss the practices of resistance, but not the moral motivations behind them (e.g. Annunziata & Rivas-Alonso, 2018; Lees & Ferreri, 2016). To better understand how people morally experience gentrification, a more comprehensive account of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification was thus necessary. The research presented in this dissertation therefore approached people's views on, and experiences with, gentrification from a recognition-theoretical perspective and tried to answer the following central research question:

> **In what ways do people living through gentrification experience recognition and misrecognition, and how do their experiences of misrecognition induce struggles for recognition?**

To answer this question, this dissertation presented both theoretical and empirical work. First, to study how people experience living through gentrification, it had to be clarified how people's self-understandings are affected by their knowledge of gentrification and their perceptions of their own position in the process. Chapter 2 therefore concentrated on gentrification and on how this concept may affect the self-understandings of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods and thereby influence how the process unfolds. Chapter 3 focused on the concept of struggle for recognition and tried to explicate what struggles for recognition exactly entail. This theoretical work provided the conceptual clarification needed to study the moral experiences and conflicts in the setting of two cases of gentrification, namely in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. Chapter 4 looked at the experiences of misrecognition of the people who lived through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt, as well as at what their resistance to the process meant to them. The experiences of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime took centre stage in Chapter 5. Here, their views on gentrification were conceptualised as the result of enfoldings of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition that materialised in their specific form in this process of gentrification. The sixth chapter took the relationship between gentrification and resistance against the process as its focal point. How could it be understood that resistance to gentrification assumed such different forms in the two studied cases? This chapter developed a framework, based on the theory of recognition, to study the gentrification-resistance nexus.

This dissertation provided five distinct contributions to the scientific literature: 1) it provided the conceptual tools for the study of the interactions between the scientific concept of gentrification, the phenomenon this concept describes, and the self-understandings of the people involved in this process; 2) it developed a more precise understanding of the concept of struggle for recognition; 3) it produced insights into the varied moral experiences of people living through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt; 4) it showed how issues of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition were enfolded in the context of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime; and 5) it showed how a recognition-theoretical framework may enhance our understanding of the gentrification-resistance nexus. This framework highlights how this relationship is mediated by the particularities of processes of gentrification. The remainder of this conclusion elaborates on these five contributions, discusses the societal relevance of the findings, reflects on this study's limitations and provides suggestions for future research.

7.2 Research findings and scientific contributions

This section presents the main research findings of this dissertation and further details its scientific contributions. It will do so by first answering the five sub questions. It subsequently answers the central research question.

7.2.1 The interaction between the concept of gentrification and the phenomenon

To arrive at a better understanding of how people experience gentrification, not only morally but in general, it was critical to investigate if and in what ways people experience the transformation of their neighbourhood *as gentrification*. The second chapter of this dissertation therefore dealt with the following sub-question:

1. How do people's self-understandings of their role in gentrification affect how the process unfolds?

The concept of gentrification has left the confines of academia in recent decades. Newspaper articles and popular scientific books are written about it, podcasts discuss it, and it features in pop songs (e.g. *Four Out of Five* by the Arctic Monkeys), movies (e.g. *The 40-Year-Old Version*) and novels (e.g. Johan Harstad's *Max, Mischa & het Tet-offensief*). Most of the people I interviewed in Rotterdam and Brussels also knew the term gentrification, and some of them were also aware of some of the scientific literature on this topic. If the concept of gentrification is at the disposal of an increasing number of people and if they start to use the concept to make sense of the world and of their place in it, then how does this influence how gentrification processes develop?

In Chapter 2, I employed the ideas of philosopher of science Ian Hacking. He has argued that social scientific concepts transform the objects they purportedly describe, because the people who are categorised via these concepts alter their comportment in response to this categorisation. As a result of this interaction between social scientific concepts and phenomena, the objects of the social sciences may be elusive: they change as soon as we try to grasp them, and, as a result, they should be understood as moving targets. Based on a review of the gentrification literature, I argued that gentrification should also be understood along these lines. The people involved in the process, like (potential) gentrifiers or social movement actors resisting gentrification, change their ways because of what they know about gentrification, e.g. about how it affects the social networks of long-term inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods. Understanding urban change as gentrification may therefore induce resistance, which may in turn affect how the process of urban change unfolds. On the other hand, wealthy newcomers in a neighbourhood who know about the possible effects

of gentrification (like physical and cultural displacement) may also try to avoid to spoil the authentic character of the neighbourhood when they arrive there (Brown-Saracino, 2007). This could lead to a preservation of certain cultural practices which would otherwise be threatened by gentrification.

The altered self-understandings and actions of the people involved in gentrification thus affects how the process unfolds. The use of the term gentrification – or related terms that retain the core of the concept of gentrification – in contexts where this term had been absent may also have an effect on how processes of urban change develop there. The use of the term gentrification could for example help to evoke resistance to urban transformations. This also influences how these transformations unfold. The conceptualisation of gentrification as a moving target thus helps to tie several branches of the gentrification literature together: on how gentrification as a process mutates; on how the concept changes; on how the concept of gentrification affects the phenomenon; and on how changes in the phenomenon, in turn, impact the concept.

This conceptualisation of gentrification as a moving target helps to explain why gentrification is difficult to grasp, both as a concept and a phenomenon. The concept is sometimes strategically used by social movement actors who try to politicise and thereby alter the process. The transformation of the process through labelling it gentrification is sometimes thus actively sought. This is also what I witnessed in the cases I studied: many people understood the transformation of their neighbourhood and their own place in this process via the lens of gentrification. They used the term gentrification to make sense of and frame the developments in their city. The concept of gentrification was also employed in resistance against the process.

Ideas about how the concept and the phenomenon interact thereby provide insights into why academic discussions about the definition of gentrification are not so easily resolved. Moreover, by emphasizing how the self-understandings of people change when they see themselves and their own situation through the lens of gentrification helps to better comprehend how gentrification actually unfolds. Hacking's theory therefore provides the conceptual resources necessary for the study of how people's lived experiences are affected by, and in turn affect, the process of gentrification.

The study of the interaction between scientific concepts and the phenomena they describe – what Hacking (2007) calls "dynamic nominalism" – may also be useful for urban studies and geography more broadly considered. The perspective of dynamic nominalism provides insights that are critical for better comprehending how spatial

transformations and placemaking practices are influenced by new concepts and accompanying changing self-understandings of people. Ideas and concepts may change the world, and dynamic nominalism provides insights into how they do that. Different branches of the geographical literature that study the role of concepts in the production of space may therefore benefit from taking up the perspective of dynamic nominalism.

Finally, in order to argue that gentrification should be understood as a moving target, I needed to engage with critiques on Hacking. After all, not all social scientific concepts necessarily interact with the phenomena they describe to such an extent that the phenomena change; a concept may also affect the phenomenon in a stabilizing, rather than a destabilizing, way (e.g. when labelled people start to behave in accordance with expectations about how these labelled people behave); or the concept may affect the phenomenon only slightly, such that a change of the concept is not necessary. Hence, Hacking's idea of a moving target had to be further specified. Chapter 2 therefore argued that one can only speak of a moving target if a concept 1) alters the phenomenon; 2) in a destabilizing way; and 3) to such an extent that the change in the phenomenon necessitates, in turn, a change of the concept. This more precise conceptualisation of what moving targets entail may also elucidate discussions in philosophy of science about which phenomena should be understood as moving targets.

7.2.2 The concept of struggle for recognition

Recognition was, next to gentrification, the second main concept of this dissertation. Drawing on Honneth's (1995) theory, I tried to understand if and in what ways the experiences of people living through gentrification, as well as their resistance to this process, can be understood along the lines of the theory of recognition. However, in her exchange with Honneth, Nancy Fraser has criticised Honneth's broad conception of recognition as a catch-all term which would turn every explanation in terms of recognition into a tautology (Fraser, 2003a: 35). Developing a precise understanding of recognition, and more particularly of the concept of struggle for recognition, was therefore essential for this dissertation. The third chapter of this dissertation hence tried to answer the following sub-question:

2. How can the concept of "struggle for recognition" be delimited?

Although the concept of recognition has been discussed extensively in philosophy, more clarity on what struggles for recognition exactly entail was still needed. This investigation started from the idea that recognition is reason-governed: one can

only be recognised when there are good reasons to do so (Laitinen, 2002). If these reasons are lacking, true recognition of someone is impossible, for affirmative responses towards this person would then not be based on a proper evaluation of her qualities. At the same time, though, it cannot be completely clear what good reasons for granting recognition are: if that were entirely clear, it would also be clear when recognition should be granted and there would be nothing left to struggle about. If it were completely unclear, on the other hand, what counts as a good reason for granting recognition, then recognition would lose its meaning entirely, for then there would be no way to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate demands for recognition. Struggles for recognition thus have to proceed via the provision of reasons of which it is *somewhat*, but not completely, unclear whether they can be deemed acceptable by the addressee of the demand for recognition.

This conceptualisation of struggles for recognition has two consequences. First, it delimits the class of social struggles that can be understood as struggles for recognition. If a social movement cannot clothe its demand for recognition with reasons that can convince others that recognition is due and if this social movement knows that it does not have such reasons (and it may know this in some cases, since what counts as a good reason cannot be entirely unclear), then its struggle cannot be understood as a struggle *for recognition*. After all, the participants of the movement would already know that they would not get any recognition, since reasons for its demand that the addressee of the demand may deem acceptable would be lacking. Secondly, it means that one cannot distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate *struggles for recognition*. If a social movement knows that it has no reasons for its demand that the addressee of the demand may find acceptable, it cannot struggle for recognition – it would know that struggling for recognition would be idle. Conversely, if a social movement does have reasons for its demand that the addressee may find acceptable, then it can be struggling for recognition, but then it cannot simply be deemed illegitimate. It has, after all, reasons for its demands that the addressee may find acceptable. Hence, the requirement that struggles for recognition need to proceed via the provision of good reasons only distinguishes between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggle (like struggles for power, over interests, or any other kind of struggle). It cannot, however, distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate struggles for recognition.

This understanding of what struggles for recognition exactly entail contributes to a more precise delineation of the class of struggles for recognition. For example, the racist groups that are depicted by both Fraser and Honneth (2003) as movements engaged in illegitimate struggles for recognition, can upon reflection no longer be

understood as struggling for recognition. If it is true that their demands are clearly illegitimate – as both Fraser and Honneth claim – which is to say that they do not have reasons for their demands that others may deem legitimate, then these social movements should also be able to know that recognition will not be granted to them. Such a struggle therefore cannot be understood as a struggle *for recognition*. It should rather be understood as a struggle for something else, e.g. to secure their interests or to gain power. If, on the other hand, the participants of the movement may think that they can clothe their demand with reasons that may convince the addressee of the demand that recognition is due, then this movement can struggle for recognition – but then it can no longer be straightforwardly called illegitimate. This conceptual clarification furthers discussions in philosophy about how struggles for recognition should be understood and which kind of struggles can be labelled as such.

The case studies of this dissertation showed that the social struggles against gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime could both be understood as struggles for recognition. In both neighbourhoods, inhabitants believed to have reasons for their demands that could convince others. They referred for example to expectations concerning the tasks that social housing corporations should fulfil, to the importance of having a voice in transformations of one's neighbourhood, and to the proper evaluation of individual contributions of inhabitants to the neighbourhood and to society at large. They believed that these expectations and values should also appeal to others and thus that others could be convinced that locals were misrecognised in the process of gentrification. The stories and arguments of the interviewees could thus aptly be interpreted as elements of struggles for recognition.

The distinction between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggle is also relevant for the empirical social sciences concerned with social movements broadly understood. For example, the concept of recognition has been used to understand struggles around cultural issues (Fraser, 2000) and to comprehend the demands of Trump voters (Hochschild, 2016b). These movements can only be understood as struggles for recognition, however, if the participants of these movements believe to be able to provide reasons that can convince others of the legitimacy of their demands. Only detailed empirical research can therefore tell which social struggles can cogently be understood as struggles for recognition. Such research has to clarify to whom a demand for recognition is addressed, whether the social movement actors believe that the addressees of their demands may possibly think that there are good reasons to grant the demand for recognition, and what the goals of the social movement actors are. Chapter 3 has argued that a necessary

element of struggles for recognition is that they proceed via the provision of reasons that are potentially acceptable for the addressee of a demand for recognition; these reasons should at least not be clearly unacceptable for the addressee of the demand. Social scientists doing empirical research can use this insight to distinguish between struggles for recognition and other types of social struggle that they encounter in their research.

7.2.3 The moral experiences of people living through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt

After a clarification of the two central concepts of this dissertation, Chapters 4 and 5 presented the results of the empirical research on the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. The first case that was studied was the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. This case study provided an answer to this dissertation's third sub-question:

3. In what ways is gentrification experienced as injustice by the people living through it, and what does their resistance to the process mean to them?

The interviews with (former) inhabitants of the gentrifying Tweebosbuurt showed that their moral experience was variegated. The four spheres of recognition (care, autonomy-respect, difference-respect and esteem) all played an important role in how they lived through gentrification. Their expectations for due care were violated in the process of gentrification, as they were offered housing that did not fit their situation. Here, one can think of apartments in a bad state (e.g. affected by mould) or that did not have enough rooms for all the children. Moreover, the interviewees mentioned that the importance of the local network of care-relations in the Tweebosbuurt was neglected by policy makers. Their autonomy-respect was also violated in multiple ways. They felt discriminated against, both based on their ethnicity and on their income, by Rotterdam's urban policy. The inhabitants also experienced a lack of respect for their capacities for self-legislation: they felt that they were forced to follow what housing corporation Vestia and the municipality of Rotterdam had decided. They felt treated as objects in the process, rather than as subjects whose viewpoints deserved due consideration. The process of gentrification also expressed a disrespect of locals' social attachments. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt described their neighbourhood as a place that felt like home: the locals knew each other and were attached to the place that was constitutive of their personal histories and personhood. They saw gentrification and the accompanying transformation of the neighbourhood as being at odds with the proper respect for these social attachments. Finally, Rotterdam's housing policy, which aims at a decrease of the social housing stock and an increase of the homes available for middle

class households was interpreted as misrecognition of working class contributions to the reproduction of society. In short: the normative resentment of people living through gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt came in various forms and consisted of four types of misrecognition. At the same time, some interviewees mentioned that they were proud of their resistance to gentrification. As such, their reaction towards the perceived injustice of gentrification was also a source of pride.

These findings show that the harm caused by gentrification consists of much more than displacement alone. Without denying that displacement should be an important focal point of research on gentrification, the interviews with inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt attest to how gentrification may express misrecognition of various evaluative qualities of people. They felt that their primary needs, their equal moral accountability, their social attachments and their individual talents and abilities were all not duly recognised in the process of gentrification. These various experiences cannot be understood as a (derivative of) displacement per se. The gentrification literature – and hereby I mean both the social scientific, as well as the political philosophical literature – should therefore expand its view on how gentrification harms people. The multiple forms of normative resentment that came across in the interviews with people from the Tweebosbuurt show that much more than displacement and people's relations-to-place may be at stake in gentrification.

The wide variety of moral experiences that played a role in the Tweebosbuurt can be partially explained by the particularities of how gentrification unfolded there. To mention some core features of gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt: the inhabitants of the neighbourhood had to move out, they had to witness the demolishment of their homes, the decision to demolish came as a big surprise to them, and they did not feel that their opinions on the matter made any difference. In short: the inhabitants felt that the demolishment of their neighbourhood expressed disregard for them on many levels, and at least some of this disregard could have been avoided, for example through better communication with inhabitants. In that sense, the Tweebosbuurt can be seen as an extreme case of gentrification (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006). Nonetheless, these findings suggest more broadly that the moral experiences of people living through gentrification cannot (at least not always) be understood as being primarily related to only one aspect of the process, like class, race or displacement. Many aspects of a person may be disregarded simultaneously in the process of gentrification. Future research on gentrification and evictions should therefore consider the various experiences of disrespect that may all play a part in gentrification processes.

7.2.4 Enfoldings of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition in the Quartier Maritime

In the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium, the situation was quite different. Gentrification assumed a rather different form here and this was reflected in the inhabitants' moral evaluation of the process. The case study of the Quartier Maritime was employed to answer the fourth sub-question of this dissertation:

4 How are issues of recognition, misrecognition and (re)distribution enfolded in the context of gentrification?

Interviews with the people experiencing gentrification in the Quartier Maritime showed that gentrification is not necessarily *only* taken as an expression of misrecognition vis-à-vis the locals. Gentrification was also seen as improving the neighbourhood that had deteriorated after long periods of neglect and disinvestment. Moreover, the interviewees – most of whom were homeowners – also mentioned that the house price increases that resulted from gentrification were financially beneficial for them. What became clear in the interviews, though, was that they felt that their equal moral accountability was disrespected in two ways. First, because public space became increasingly exclusionary through gentrification: interviewees thought that the new developments in their neighbourhood only catered to the needs of a new, richer population. Secondly, because their opinions were not duly considered in the process. The interviewees also mentioned that locals' social attachments to the neighbourhood were not properly recognised. The neighbourhood transformed due to gentrification and it became more and more difficult for local people to still find a home there. Two forms of misrecognition (namely with respect to autonomy-respect and difference-respect) were thus important elements of the experiences of the people in the Quartier Maritime.

The crucial point here is that the beneficial distributive outcomes, the recognition of locals *and* the misrecognition of them came about *in one and the same process*. Hence, we conceptualised the moral evaluations of the interviewees as enfoldings of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition. Misrecognition was the condition of possibility for the financial gains and recognition as they materialised in their specific forms in this case of gentrification. For example, if the opinions of locals were taken seriously and their wishes to find a home in the neighbourhood were catered to, the transformations of the neighbourhood would have assumed a rather different form. The neighbourhood would then not have become as attractive to a new, wealthy population and the upward pressure on house prices would have been lower. Misrecognition was thus not accidental to, but rather constitutive of, the beneficial

distributive effects for and the recognition of the inhabitants of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime. The specific positive outcomes (for some) that materialised in this process of gentrification could only come about in their specific forms through the misrecognition of (aspects of the identity of) the neighbourhood's locals.

These findings show the complexity of the moral experiences of people who cannot be clearly identified as either "winners" or "losers" of gentrification. The fact that most of the interviewees could stay put and did not face the imminent risk of having to move out may have played a role in how the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime morally assessed gentrification. Compared to the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt, the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime were not as straightforwardly negative about the process. Gentrification in the Quartier Maritime did not imply the demolishment of the homes there and proceeded relatively slowly. The complexity of the experiences of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime nevertheless suggests more generally that gentrification is not always a process that those who live through it experience as something that is unambiguously "good" or "bad". People may instead simultaneously attend to both the good and the bad elements that are all part of one and the same process. The conceptualisation of gentrification as an enfolding of (mis)recognition and redistribution tries to capture that, and that may also be useful for the analysis of gentrification in other contexts, as well as for the study of other processes of urban change.

The enfolding of recognition and misrecognition also furthers discussions on the ambivalence of recognition (see Ikäheimo et al., 2021). There have been few empirical studies of this ambivalence (see Sebrechts et al., 2019, for an exception). Literature on the ambivalence of recognition argues that recognition is not necessarily only an enabling condition; recognition of one dimension of one's personality may imply misrecognition of another dimension of one's personhood. Hence, recognition is not necessarily in every case something to strive for. This rather depends on the misrecognition that may be implied by the recognition that one attempts to get. The findings of Chapter 5 showed what this enfolding of recognition and misrecognition looked like, not in an abstract philosophical discussion, but in the concrete, real-life case of gentrification. Next to this, it was shown how misrecognition may not only be enfolded in recognition, but also in distribution. To properly understand people's moral experiences, it is thus important to take the potential enfoldings of these three aspects of justice, i.e., redistribution, recognition and misrecognition, into account.

7.2.5 The gentrification resistance-nexus

The differences between gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime were significant, and resistance to gentrification also looked quite different in both neighbourhoods. In the Tweebosbuurt, there were large-scale protests. Here, resistance was a shared effort of many inhabitants together. Inhabitants divided tasks and showed a counterculture of compensatory respect via which they expressed appreciation for other's efforts to resist the demolishment of the neighbourhood. In the Quartier Maritime, resistance looked quite different. Resistance to gentrification mainly came about through the efforts of a few individuals who used institutionalised channels to voice their discontent. The protests that took place were smaller, interviewees mentioned that it was difficult to mobilise others and a counterculture of compensatory respect was, although not completely absent, less prevalent in the Quartier Maritime than it was in the Tweebosbuurt. The sixth chapter tried to better understand why these differences occurred by answering the following research question:

5. In what ways is the relationship between gentrification and resistance mediated by the particularities of gentrification?

Since resistance to gentrification assumed such different forms in the studied cases, a comparison of gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime provided insights into how the gentrification-resistance nexus is mediated by how the process of gentrification unfolds. The theory of recognition served as a starting point for the development of a framework that identifies 15 factors that affect if and in what ways gentrification leads to resistance. Four sets of factors were identified. The first set focuses on the experiences of misrecognition of the inhabitants of both neighbourhoods. This led to the formulation of five factors, related to inhabitants' experiences of misrecognition, that influence if and in what ways gentrification leads to resistance. The gentrification-resistance nexus is mediated by 1) the inhabitants' moral feelings and their moral evaluation of gentrification; 2) which actors are held responsible for the perceived misrecognition; 3) whether gentrification leads to a clear distinction in the built environment; 4) whether gentrification leads to the destructions of homes or not; and 5) whether there are institutionalised normative expectations that social housing should be provided. The second set of factors looked at how experienced misrecognition was symbolically mediated. This set identified two factors that affect resistance to gentrification. Resistance to gentrification may be affected by the availability of 6) a shared semantics to translate a private issue into a public problem is available; and of 7) a legitimation strategy like that of social mix. The third set of factors focused on whether inhabitants were aware of a shared

vulnerability. This set identified four factors that influence if and in what ways gentrification brings about resistance. Large-scale, coordinated resistance is more likely to take place when 8) there is direct, rather than exclusionary, displacement; 9) the inhabitants' structural position is the same for all affected (e.g. everyone is a renter); 10) gentrification happens as one big event (like a large-scale demolishment), rather than as a process spread over time; and 11) when it is clearer for the inhabitants how the process will unfold. The fourth and final set of factors focused on whether social protest was seen as the appropriate goal to achieve set goals. Here, the gentrification-resistance nexus was mediated by 12) the presence of moral entrepreneurs that may mobilise people; 13) the time and energy that a struggle costs; 14) whether people were dispirited or not; and 15) the availability of institutionalised channels to voice discontent.

Feelings of misrecognition are the motivation behind social protest, according to Honneth's theory of recognition. However, experienced misrecognition does not necessarily, nor automatically, lead to social protest. I argued in this dissertation that whether this happens in the context of gentrification also depends on the particularities of gentrification: on how this process is experienced as misrecognition, on how this experience is symbolically mediated, on if people are aware of a shared vulnerability and on if a social struggle is seen as the appropriate method to achieve set goals. Based on the comparative case study, Chapter 6 showed how these four aspects of resistance – experiences of misrecognition, symbolic mediation, awareness of shared vulnerability, and if social struggles are seen as the best method to achieve set goals – played a role in both cases. This has led to the identification of the 15 factors mediating the gentrification-resistance nexus.

The framework developed in this thesis can also be used for the study of the relation between gentrification and resistance in other contexts. The goal was not to develop a framework that can simply be generalised to other contexts, but I believe that the framework may help to further explore the gentrification-resistance nexus in other cases. Based on studies of other cases of gentrification, it might be necessary to expand or adapt the framework, so as to take into account the particularities of those cases. The goal of this framework is thus not to predict what form resistance to gentrification assumes in specific cases; rather, as Elinor Ostrom writes, "[f]rom a framework, one derives the questions that need to be asked to clarify the structure of a situation" (1990: 192). The hope is that this framework can in this capacity be a helpful tool for the study of the gentrification-resistance nexus.

The comparative case study also showed that Honneth's theorisation of the relation between experiences of misrecognition and resistance can be further developed. The 15 factors mediating the gentrification-resistance nexus show that the hypothesis that feelings of misrecognition bring about social protest can be unpacked much further. Chapter 6 has shown how this can be done in the case of gentrification. This may inspire future research on practices of social resistance, e.g. in the field of social movement studies. The theory of recognition provides a useful starting point for such research, but only detailed empirical analyses may show how the abstract concepts and relations in the theory of recognition take shape in the messy reality of social resistance.

7.2.6 Answer to this dissertation's central research question

Now that the sub-questions have been answered, it is time to deal with this dissertation's central research question:

In what ways do people living through gentrification experience recognition and misrecognition, and how do their experiences of misrecognition induce struggles for recognition?

In both the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime, many of the inhabitants knew the word gentrification and perceived what happened in their neighbourhood through the lens of this concept. They saw the developments in their neighbourhood as a process through which a new, wealthier group of people came to take over the neighbourhood from the people who were already there. They often also believed that this was at odds with due recognition of the people who already lived in that neighbourhood and thus that they had good reasons to feel indignant about it.

This dissertation has also shown that the experiences of people living through gentrification may differ from case to case. The particularities of the process of gentrification play an important role in this respect. In the Tweebosbuurt, normative expectations pertaining to all the four recognition spheres were violated. This shows that the moral experiences of inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods cannot (or at least not always) be reduced to being related to one aspect of someone's identity (like class or race) or be conceptualised as a derivative of displacement. The moral experiences of people who live through gentrification are much more comprehensive and affect people's different practical self-relations that pertain to the four different spheres of recognition.

In the Quartier Maritime, on the other hand, the spheres of autonomy-respect and difference-respect loomed large, while the spheres of care and respect were less salient. This can be understood when we look at how gentrification unfolded in both cases. With respect to care, it should be noted that the homes of the people of the Tweebosbuurt were demolished, that they were dislocated and that the informal networks of care in the neighbourhood were not duly considered by policy makers and the housing corporation. Such consequences of gentrification did (as of yet) not occur in the Quartier Maritime. The homes of the inhabitants were not demolished and most of them could stay put. Hence, the fulfilment of inhabitants' primary needs, which pertains to the sphere of care, was not immediately put under pressure here.

With respect to the sphere of esteem, the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt felt that their contributions to the reproduction of society were not properly valued. They thought that they were considered by policy makers as people without abilities that deserved to be esteemed. This misrecognition towards the working-class was expressed in policy documents and translated in the demolishment of their homes. The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime did not mention similar concerns, as they were not dislocated from their neighbourhood. In the Quartier Maritime, displacement largely took the form of exclusionary displacement, while gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt brought about direct displacement.

The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime did not always see gentrification as purely a "good" or a "bad" thing. Rather, issues of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition were enfolded in how they morally experienced gentrification. Although they felt that gentrification also led to distributional effects that were beneficial to them (like higher house prices) and as a form of recognition (through the provision of more amenities in their neighbourhood), these perceived positive aspects of gentrification were made possible through the misrecognition of locals. Their opinions were not taken seriously (autonomy-respect) and their social attachments to the neighbourhood were not duly considered (difference-respect). It was only through the misrecognition of locals that the beneficial distributive outcomes and the recognition of these same locals could materialise in their specific forms in the process of gentrification. Misrecognition was therefore an intrinsic part of these positive outcomes and this dissertation tried to capture this through the notion of enfoldings of redistribution, recognition and misrecognition.

The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime thus did feel misrecognised in the spheres of autonomy-respect and difference-respect. These feelings of misrecognition could, according to Honneth's theory, motivate people to start a struggle for recognition.

The absence of the other forms of misrecognition is irrelevant in this respect. A shared semantics, for Honneth necessary to turn private experiences into a shared struggle for recognition, was also available. Nonetheless, resistance to gentrification assumed different forms in the studied neighbourhoods. In the Tweebosbuurt, there were large-scale, coordinated protests, whereas these did not occur in the Quartier Maritime. This suggests that Honneth's thesis on the relation between experienced misrecognition and social struggle should be further developed (or amended). The findings presented in this dissertation show that this relation is mediated by other factors that also influence if and how people struggle for recognition. Honneth's thesis that feelings of misrecognition provide the motivation for social struggles thus appears rather rudimentary when applied to concrete cases. In this dissertation, I have attempted to elaborate on the relation between feelings of misrecognition and social resistance. I did so by developing a framework with 15 dimensions that should capture how the theory of recognition fares when applied to the study of resistance to gentrification. I hereby tried to show what different factors mediate the gentrification-resistance nexus.

7.3 Societal relevance

This dissertation has shown that gentrification affects people's lives in a variety of ways. People may understand themselves (partially) via the concept of gentrification. Their self-understanding may be partially constituted by how they view their own position in the process of gentrification. This is all the more important if people view gentrification as an unjust process or, more specifically, as a process via which misrecognition of them is expressed. Even though the experiences of the people living through gentrification differed across the two cases that were studied, the inhabitants of the gentrifying neighbourhoods in both cities experienced gentrification as an expression of variegated forms of misrecognition of the neighbourhoods' long-term inhabitants.

The interviews with people in gentrifying neighbourhoods highlighted how the process of gentrification affects the inhabitants' lives in profound ways (cf. Fullilove, 2001). If policy makers want to avoid these negative experiences, they should consider the different forms of misrecognition that may be expressed via urban transformations. I will first (7.3.1) discuss what the conceptualisation of gentrification as an expression of misrecognition implies for urban policy. I will thereby also discuss how different urban policies can be experienced as discriminatory, exclusionary, negligent and insulting. After that, I discuss what the conceptualisation of urban policy as an expression of misrecognition implies for social housing corporations (7.3.2). I will end this section with a checklist, based on the findings presented in

this dissertation, that identifies 15 questions that policy makers and social housing corporations could consider when engaging in urban renewal projects (7.3.3).

7.3.1 Implications for urban policy

The urban policy that paved the way for the demolishment of the Tweebosbuurt was discriminatory in nature: low-income inhabitants of the policy's focus areas had to be scattered over the city and the ethnic background of people of the Afrikaanderbuurt was depicted as one of the negative connotations of the neighbourhood. It is not surprising that the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt experienced this as an expression of disrespect for them. The discriminatory nature of this policy was seen as a denial of their status as moral equals, i.e., as equal subjects endowed with moral accountability. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt were objectified and seen as a burden that had to be scattered over the city. They were consequently also not taken seriously when they voiced their concerns about other forms of misrecognition: when they did not get an adequate new home (care), when they worried about the social tissue of the neighbourhood that would be destroyed (difference-respect) or when they lamented the lack of appreciation for the contributions of the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt to the reproduction of society (esteem). Using Kantian parlance, we could say that an urban policy should always treat people as ends and never merely as means, and even though this formulation is notoriously vague, it is clear enough to establish that urban policy that respects this imperative looks quite different from the policy that shaped Rotterdam in the last decades.

The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime also experienced the transformation of their neighbourhood as exclusionary and as an expression of misrecognition. They considered the investments in the neighbourhood as catering only to the needs of wealthy people, thereby neglecting a large part of the people who already lived in the Quartier Maritime. If policy makers want to avoid that inhabitants of neighbourhoods feel misrecognised, it is important that they take these different forms of experienced moral disregard into account. If investments follow after the consultation of locals and also cater to their needs, these investments are likely to lead to more acceptance and less resentment on the side of inhabitants of neighbourhoods undergoing transformation.

Relatedly, the dynamics of investment also play a part in people's experiences of misrecognition that come about in the process of gentrification. The problem is not only that the investments in gentrifying neighbourhoods often serve the interests of a new, richer population moving into the neighbourhood, but also that these investments take place after periods of neglect and disinvestment (Sundstrom,

2023: 94-95). Not only the period of investment matters in people's moral evaluation of gentrification, but so does the prior period of disinvestment (cf. Smith, 1982). Investments in a neighbourhood that cater to the needs of a new, richer population stand in starker contrast to the treatment of long-term inhabitants when this neighbourhood has endured long periods of disinvestment. Locals' feelings of being treated unjustly may be aggravated as a result. If policy makers want to avoid that people feel misrecognised through gentrification, they would therefore do well to not only look at the investments in the neighbourhood and the consequences thereof, but also consider the prior period of disinvestment and the possible misrecognition that this expressed. Investments in a neighbourhood should then also improve the lives of formerly neglected residents.

To be clear: the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods that were studied in this dissertation were often not opposed to investments in their neighbourhoods per se. They did not think that the neighbourhood should remain the same or that it could not be improved. Rather, they criticised the *specific* investments in the neighbourhood. The experiences of the people living through gentrification thus underlines the "false choice" (Slater, 2014: 518) between gentrification on the one side and disinvestment and neglect on the other. Gentrification and the displacement of local people are thus not necessary as solutions to perceived problems in neighbourhoods. It is also possible to invest in a neighbourhood in such a way that the long-term inhabitants' needs are catered for and their basic well-being is guaranteed. If no serious attempt is made to do this, local inhabitants may feel treated unjustly twice: first because they are neglected in the period of disinvestment, and then because they are neglected in the period of investment.

The neglect of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods also comes to the fore in social mix policy. This policy is often justified by saying that the concentration of poverty leads to a downward spiral in neighbourhoods which should thus be countered by the influx of people with higher incomes (Lees et al., 2012). This would also improve the lives of long-term inhabitants of these neighbourhoods. At such an abstract level, social mixing can thus appear as a form of recognition for working class people. However, there is no clear evidence that social mixing policy works, as spatial proximity does not necessarily lead to social interaction between inhabitants (Blokland & Van Eijk, 2012; Butler & Robson, 2001; Manley et al., 2012). Moreover, social mixing may harm people in working-class neighbourhoods, since it can lead to the destruction of local support networks and bring about conflict, rather than harmony, between the different groups that are supposed to mix (Elliot-Cooper et al, 2020; Lees et al. 2012). The idea of social mix is nonetheless intuitively appealing:

a diverse group of people who live together and help each other, who exchange their points of view and learn from one another, who meet each other on the sidewalks and on block parties: why would someone be against that?

One important objection against social mix policy is that it is applied asymmetrically: working-class neighbourhoods are partially demolished to build homes for the middle and upper class there, whereas wealthy neighbourhoods can remain enclaves for the rich (Lees et al., 2012). This implies that only the people in working-class neighbourhoods are seen as a problem: only they need to mix, because *they* need to be fixed. It is understandable that working-class people experience this as an insult. Moreover, if social (or otherwise inexpensive) housing is demolished in working-class neighbourhoods to make room for more expensive homes, but no new social housing is constructed in rich neighbourhoods (or elsewhere), then there are effectively less homes available for people of a lower socio-economic status. In this way, social mix policy makes the lives of working-class people more precarious.[42]

The asymmetric application of social mix policy therefore makes it problematic to interpret it as a genuine expression of recognition of working-class people. If social mix policy is not applied in all neighbourhoods, but only in working-class neighbourhoods, then it is not credible that this policy expresses recognition of working-class people's needs for housing and of their contributions to society. If a social mix policy could – at least in theory – constitute a form of recognition for the needs of working-class people, then the asymmetric application of this policy could only count as a form of what Honneth calls "ideological recognition", because this asymmetric application shows that the symbolic recognition of people in working-class neighbourhoods expressed in the ideal of social mix is not accompanied by concrete actions that confirm this recognition (Honneth, 2012a: 92).

42. To be sure, there are neighbourhoods were problems like unemployment, drug trafficking and violence cluster. However, even in these neighbourhoods, social mix policy is not necessarily the best choice, because there is no clear evidence that such a policy would help the people living in these neighbourhoods. People who get displaced as a result of such a policy may simply take their problems with them to another place, while they have also lost their home and their support network in the process. It should furthermore be noted that the bad reputations of neighbourhoods may be performative. Uitermark et al. (2017: 64) discuss that in the calculation of liveability scores of neighbourhoods in Rotterdam, burglaries are not considered, because these take place less frequently in deprived neighbourhoods. As such, so-called "objective" liveability scores that stigmatise deprived neighbourhoods merely reproduce already existing territorial stigmas. Such stigmas are often used to legitimate gentrification. Kadıoğlu (2024) therefore argues that destigmatisation is an important strategy in struggles against gentrification.

A credible social mix policy, in which the interests of the people in working-class neighbourhoods are duly considered, should therefore target *all* neighbourhoods. This means that not only the composition of working-class neighbourhoods would change, but also the composition of middle-class and rich neighbourhoods. Building social housing in wealthy enclaves would be one way to achieve this. The total stock of social housing would then not diminish as a result of social mix policy. Moreover, it would signal that not only working class people may have something to gain from encountering people with other backgrounds, but that the same holds for people in middle-class and wealthy precincts. This would take out the sting of the insulting character that social mix policy has when it is applied asymmetrically. A credible social mix policy should therefore be applied to all neighbourhoods, so also to those neighbourhoods where the well-to-do cluster. Given the lack of evidence for the effectiveness of social mix policy, it is an open question whether social mix policy is recommendable at all, but *if* such a policy is chosen, it should be applied to all neighbourhoods.

Misrecognition in the sphere of autonomy-respect was an important part of the experiences of the inhabitants of both studied neighbourhoods. They felt that their opinions did not matter and that they did not have any real chance to influence policy decisions. Researchers have criticised participation processes around gentrification before and described how these processes mainly served as means to curb resistance to the process, rather than as genuine attempts to take the views of long-term inhabitants seriously (Huisman, 2014; Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014). Merely organizing a consultation round in order to tick the box "participation" is thus not enough to express recognition for people's moral accountability – it would only amount to an ideological form of recognition (Honneth, 2012a). The participants should rather experience such participation processes as genuine attempts by policy makers to duly consider the participants' points of view.[43]

7.3.2 Implications for social housing corporations

The variety of perceived moral wrongs that came across in the interviews is also relevant for how social housing corporations conduct their business. Indeed, one pertinent problem in the Tweebosbuurt was that social housing corporation Vestia made decisions as if it *was* doing business. Financial motives loomed large in its decision to demolish the social homes in the Tweebosbuurt. The demolishment had to happen quickly if Vestia was to be eligible for the reduction of the landlord levy. Consequently, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood felt that they were not given the

43. Theuwis and Kindt (2024) show that participatory processes may have real effects on how participants view the workings of democracy.

opportunity to have a say in what happened to their home and did not experience that their perspective on the consequences of the demolishment were duly considered.

This casts doubt on whether a social housing corporation is always able to fulfil the goal of providing sufficient housing to people who need it when this goal is weighed against the financial targets it also has to fulfil. The goal of social housing provision may be – and as the case of Vestia shows: has been – contrary to the corporations' financial goals. If social housing corporations are thus supposed to provide sufficient social housing, also when this would imply a financial loss on their behalf, then its financial goals – to be profitable or to at least reach a break-even result – should be given up (or at least relaxed). This is, of course, a political decision, but the case of Vestia shows that the goals of sufficient social housing provision and profitability cannot always be fulfilled simultaneously.

Table 2. Checklist for urban renewal

Aspect of justice	Questions to consider
Care	1. Are the new homes of displaced people of sufficient quality (sufficient number of rooms, fitting for someone's age and situation, etc.)? 2. Are the consequences of urban renewal for networks of neighbours who mutually care for each other considered?
Autonomy-respect	3. Is inhabitants' equality before the law respected? Is the proposed urban policy non-discriminatory? 4. Are the opinions of inhabitants duly considered? 5. Is it possible to avoid that public space is turned into an exclusionary enclave for the rich? 6. Is it possible to avoid that people have to do things they do not want to do (like moving out of their neighbourhood)? 7. Is it possible to avoid legal threats (like forced evictions or suspending rights to alternative accommodation)?
Difference-respect	8. Are the social bonds in the neighbourhood sufficiently taken into account? 9. Are people's place-based memories and place-based aspects of personhood duly considered?
Esteem	10. Are inhabitants' contributions via formal labour to society at large sufficiently appreciated? 11. Are inhabitants' contributions to the neighbourhood and to alleviating neighbours' problems duly esteemed?
Redistribution	12. What are the (rental) costs of a new home for displaced people? 13. What are the costs of moving to a new home? 14. Do higher rents and house prices lead to unacceptable levels of socioeconomic inequality?
Enfoldings	15. How are the aforementioned aspects of justice enfolded? Does recognition of one aspect of inhabitants lead to misrecognition of other aspects of them?

7.3.3 Checklist for urban renewal

Many authors mention displacement – broadly understood as ranging from forced eviction to cultural, social, economic, symbolic and political transformations that disrupt people's relations-to-place – as the most important harm of gentrification (e.g. Davidson, 2009; Elliot-Cooper et al., 2020; Huber & Wolkenstein, 2018; Hyra, 2015; Lloyd, 2023). However, the emphasis of this dissertation on the variegated forms of misrecognition that may be expressed in the process of gentrification highlights that the harms of gentrification cannot be reduced to (derivatives of) displacement. This is not to deny that displacement has profound consequences for the people who experience it: the loss of one's place often comprises financial costs, as well as the deprivation of an element constitutive for one's identity, which may lead to feelings of alienation and grief (Atkinson, 2015; Davidson, 2009; Fullilove, 1996; 2001; Radin, 1986). The research presented in this dissertation has shown, though, that the moral harms associated with gentrification cannot be subsumed under the heading of displacement. People living through gentrification may also feel misrecognised in their capacity as subjects endowed with the abilities for self-legislation. The interviews with people in gentrifying neighbourhoods showed that many of them found it unjust that their opinions about their neighbourhood's transformations were not duly considered. Gentrification may also be experienced as an expression of misrecognition vis-à-vis locals' contributions to the reproduction of society, e.g. when working-class contributions are looked down upon and not seen as important. In these experiences, which relate to the spheres of autonomy-respect and esteem, it is not the loss of one's place that takes centre stage.

This shows that not only people's relations-to-place may be morally relevant for people in gentrifying neighbourhoods; other aspects of their personhood may also be misrecognised in the process of gentrification. If urban policy makers and representatives of social housing corporations thus want to avoid that people who have to live through urban transformations experience these as unjust, they should consider the different aspects of people that may be harmed in these processes. This requires a perspective on urban policy that does not only look at displacement, but rather considers the complete kaleidoscope of moral experience in this respect.

For the sake of convenience, I have composed a checklist with 15 questions that policy makers and social housing corporations could ask when they engage in new projects of urban renewal. These questions are clustered around six aspects of justice that played a role in this dissertation: the four spheres of recognition (care, autonomy-respect, difference-respect and esteem), redistribution and enfoldings. This checklist can be found in table 2.

The questions in the checklist highlight a number of factors that should be considered when engaging in urban renewal. When these factors are taken into account, it is not straightforward how the questions in the checklist ought to be answered in specific cases, though. Let us look at the first question: are the new homes of displaced people of sufficient quality (sufficient number of rooms, fitting for someone's age and situation, etc.)? Different people may answer this question differently: when is a home of sufficient quality? And what counts as a fitting home for someone's age? People can have different opinions about these topics. The checklist should therefore not simply be answered by policy makers or social housing corporations; it should rather serve as a tool they can use to consult other stakeholders (like inhabitants) in urban renewal processes.

This points to the importance of the value of the sphere of autonomy-respect. Honneth has argued that autonomy-respect should prevail when it conflicts with the other spheres of recognition, "because we have to recognize all human beings as persons who enjoy equal rights to autonomy" (1997: 33). To this we could add another argument to underline the value of autonomy-respect: through taking the perspectives of other stakeholders seriously, one can learn something about their situation that might otherwise remain unknown. In the case of urban renewal, this would mean attending to the opinions of people affected by the transformations. We could thus say that autonomy is not only a moral value, but also has epistemic value (cf. Scheman, 2009).

7.4 Directions for future research

The work presented in this dissertation suggests different alleys for future research. I will discuss three directions for future research here. The first discusses the normative evaluation of gentrification: I will consider the contours of such an evaluation if it is to be based on a recognition-theoretical framework. Secondly, I will discuss the alleys for future empirical research on gentrification and urban change more generally. Thirdly, I will present possible alleys for research on recognition.

7.4.1 The normative evaluation of gentrification

A recognition-theoretical approach towards gentrification invites the development of a moral evaluation of the process. After all, Honneth's project, and that of the tradition of critical theory more broadly, consists of the development of an empirically grounded normative theory. In this subsection, I discuss the outlines of a viable normative evaluation of gentrification based on the theory of recognition. I do this by discussing four points that, taken together, should provide an outline of such an evaluation.

First, gentrification does not take place in isolation, but should rather be placed in the wider context of a lack of affordable, adequate housing for many (see Chapter 1). Gentrification is nonetheless a moral problem distinct from the lack of affordable housing more generally, because gentrification displaces people who have *already* developed attachments to a particular place. Still, if gentrification is to be morally evaluated, one needs to take this larger context into account. Without this larger context, one can at most formulate *prima facie* reasons for or against gentrification, but not arrive at an evaluation in which all morally relevant aspects of the situation are considered. Those looking for a home in inner-city neighbourhoods may also have morally relevant needs that could at least in theory trump the reasons for the protection of people in inner-city neighbourhoods against gentrification. Hence, a full-fledged moral evaluation of gentrification that aims to formulate more than *prima facie* reasons for or against gentrification should take the wider shortage of affordable, adequate housing into account. Much of the current scholarship that tries to morally evaluate gentrification nonetheless considers gentrification as an isolated moral problem (e.g. Dawkins, 2023; Huber & Wolkenstein, 2018; Kohn, 2013; Zimmer, 2017). A full-fledged normative evaluation of gentrification should also take the larger context of a shortage of affordable housing into account and consider if the interests of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods trump the interests of people looking for a home in an inner-city neighbourhood.

Secondly, Honneth has emphasised the importance of relations of mutual recognition – whereby the recognised person also recognises the recogniser as the subject of recognition (Ikäheimo, 2002: 450) – as a necessary condition of people's autonomy (Anderson & Honneth, 2004). The empirical research presented in this dissertation shows that different intersubjective relations of mutual recognition may be threatened by processes of gentrification. A recognition-theoretical framework thus suggests that a normative evaluation of gentrification should pay due attention to how gentrification affects the intersubjective relations of mutual recognition and how this, in turn, impacts people's possibilities to pursue their goals. In this respect, one should not only consider people's relations-to-place, but rather how all of their practical relations-to-self are affected by gentrification.

Thirdly, as I argued in Chapter 3, struggles for recognition proceed via the provision of arguments about what due recognition entails, i.e., about how recognitional concepts like care, respect, and esteem should be interpreted. This interpretation is the outcome of struggles for recognition, and the theory of recognition cannot precisely predict what the outcome of such struggles will be, for if it could, there would be nothing left to struggle about. The theory of recognition therefore does not

provide the concepts to univocally determine what justice requires in a particular situation. It can reject instances of clear injustice, but that still leaves many just options on the table between which it cannot discriminate. A recognition-theoretical normative evaluation of gentrification should thus aim at identifying a range of just options that may all be possible outcomes of struggles for recognition. A recognition-theoretical normative evaluation of gentrification cannot discriminate between these possible outcomes and would leave it to the social struggle to determine the actual outcome.

Fourthly, the notion of enfolding further complicates the moral evaluation of gentrification. As I argued in Chapter 5, misrecognition, recognition and distribution may be enfolded in the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. Gentrification may lead to both positive (e.g. financial benefits and recognition) and negative (misrecognition) outcomes for locals simultaneously. A normative evaluation of gentrification should thus consider how these different elements (recognition, misrecognition and distribution) may be normatively integrated, so as to be able to provide "strategic guidance" in concrete situations (Zurn, 2005: 117). The need to consider this enfolding, which was identified through a case study, also illustrates how empirical research may provide input for normative work (cf. Herzog & Zacka, 2019).

Future research that attempts to morally evaluate gentrification by means of a recognition-theoretical framework should thus provide an evaluation that 1) also considers the wider context of a shortage of affordable, adequate housing; 2) discusses the relations of mutual recognition that are threatened by gentrification; 3) aims at providing a range of possible just options rather than at identifying one best option; and 4) considers how issues of recognition, misrecognition and distribution are enfolded.

7.4.2 The empirical study of urban transformations

This dissertation has studied gentrification from the perspective of the theory of recognition in two Western-European cities. Honneth (1995) has also developed his theory of recognition as an explanation of Western-European social and moral history, but there is no fundamental reason that prevents a theory of recognition to be used – *mutatis mutandis* of course – for the study of gentrification in other parts of the world. Experiences of misrecognition would then be based on violations of other institutionalised normative expectations, but apart from that difference, these experiences could be interpreted along the lines of a theory of recognition. An example of such research is given by Gransow (2014), who argues that conflict

about redevelopment in Guangzhou, China, should be understood as a struggle for recognition. Gransow argues that the institutionalised spheres of recognition in China are not, as in Honneth's Western-centric story, care, respect, and esteem. According to Gransow, three different patterns of recognition have emerged in contemporary China, namely those of paternalist care, market-like exchange and pluralisation. This research shows how one could study what forms of misrecognition loom large in gentrification processes in non-Western parts of the world. In such studies, it should not be assumed that spheres of recognition resemble those described by Honneth.

Moreover, as was argued in Chapter 2, the introduction of the concept of gentrification – which originates in an Anglo-American context – in the Global South may affect how the process unfolds there. It is therefore not only possible to study how people's self-understandings in the Global South are affected by misrecognition that may be expressed towards them via gentrification, but also how their self-understanding changes as a result of the use of the concept of gentrification.

Further research on the moral experiences of people living through gentrification in the Global North can also benefit from a recognition-theoretical perspective. This dissertation showed that the moral experiences of the interviewees in Molenbeek and Rotterdam were in important respects different, which can be explained by the different ways in which gentrification unfolded in both cities. As the processes of gentrification in the two studied neighbourhoods do not collectively exhaust the variety of forms that gentrification may assume, the recognitional-theoretical framework may also be put to use for the study of the experiences of people living through other forms of gentrification. An example of such a case would be a process of gentrification that mainly displaces private renters, or when gentrification assumes the form of super-gentrification, where already gentrified areas are gentrified again by wealthier land-users than the original gentrifiers (see Lees, 2003). When gentrification takes that shape, locals' experiences of misrecognition may be quite different than those described in Molenbeek and Rotterdam.

The different forms that gentrification assumes and the multiple contexts in which it unfolds also means that the relations between gentrification, experiences of misrecognition and resistance may look different than in Molenbeek and Rotterdam. The framework presented in Chapter 6 may be used for, and expanded as a result of, the study of resistance to gentrification in these other contexts. In this way, a more systematically developed understanding of the gentrification-resistance nexus could come about.

Finally, just as the use of the concept of gentrification may affect how the processes described by this term unfold, so may other social scientific concepts interact with the phenomena they describe (Hacking, 2007). This idea of dynamic nominalism can be put to work for the understanding of how geography as a discipline affects the phenomena it describes. The perspective of dynamic nominalism provides an outlook for the study of the role of geographical knowledge production in the transformation and/or reproduction of social practices, which also affect the organisation of space. As such, I think that dynamic nominalism deserves a place in the geographer's toolkit.

*7.4.3 Research on recognition*The findings of this dissertation suggest a third direction of future research that focuses more directly on recognition. Chapter 3 argued that participants of social movements who know they cannot provide reasons which may appeal to the addressee of their demand do not struggle for recognition, since they already know that recognition will not be granted to them. This makes it possible to empirically study whether the actions of people who display discontent should always be understood as parts of struggles for recognition. If these people are unable or unwilling to provide reasons that possibly appeal to the addressee of their demand, then such struggles cannot be understood as attempts to get recognised. For this reason, as was argued in Chapter 3, the racist groups that Fraser and Honneth (2003) refer to may not be struggling for recognition. If it is true that we live in a time of polarisation and groups with opposite demands currently find little common ground on which arguments can be exchanged, can the demands of these groups then be understood as struggles for recognition? Do the people involved in these groups believe to have reasons that may convince the addressee of their demand? Empirical research should show to what extent the notion of recognition is helpful in understanding such struggles. Even though the revived attention for recognition in philosophy in the 1990s partially came about as an attempt to understand cultural, rather than interest-based, struggles, the mere fact that the stakes of a struggle are cultural in nature does not assure that this struggle is a struggle for recognition. Detailed empirical research on such movements should show whether participants of social movements believe to possess arguments that may convince the addressees of their demand and thus whether these struggles can be interpreted as struggles for recognition.

Finally, more research should be done on the coherence of the project of critical theory. The theory of recognition has been developed by Honneth (2007a) to deliver on critical theory's promise to find the resources to criticise society within this society itself. Honneth found this critical resource, also referred to as "intramundane transcendence" (2007a: 64), in the concept of recognition. I argued in Chapter 3

that this project cannot fulfil both of Honneth's goals simultaneously, i.e., to use recognition social scientifically as a concept to understand people's motivation to engage in social struggles *and* to use it critically to morally evaluate such struggles. This raises the question whether this argumentation can be generalised to the project of critical theory more broadly understood. Is it possible to develop an empirically grounded normative theory that finds the foothold for critique in society itself? Or should such a theory limit itself to finding the source of people's experiences of injustice, without trying to determine what justice requires in such a case? The arguments in this dissertation suggest that the normative resources that people draw on in struggles for recognition are necessarily contentious, such that an outside political philosopher cannot determine what they precisely entail for the normative evaluation of a struggle. If that were possible, the struggle itself would be redundant; the correct interpretation of the norms should then indeed be clear already. Future research should therefore consider whether this dissertation's argumentation in Chapter 3 also holds for critical theory more generally. The work of the Frankfurt School's first (Adorno, Horkheimer) and second generation (Habermas), as well as more recent developments (e.g. the work of Forst and Jaeggi), should be considered in this respect. In that way, the cogency of the project of critical theory can be better evaluated.

7.5 Final reflections: on the interdisciplinary study of gentrification

As I argued in this dissertation, an extended version of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition is apt to better understand the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. This framework was used for the study of the moral experience of inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium. The varied forms of moral resentment that the recognition-theoretical outlook distinguished turned out to be important in the understanding of the lived experiences of the people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. I thereby hope that this dissertation contributed to a better understanding of how gentrification affects the lives of people who undergo this process: it does so in a variety of ways, and the recognition-theoretical perspective helps to sensitise researchers to the different moral dimensions that all play a part in how people experience gentrification.

A better understanding of these experiences is important to be able to anticipate, and thereby possibly also to attenuate, what people see as the negative consequences of urban renewal. Inhabitants of gentrifying neighbourhoods may feel disregarded in the sphere of care (e.g. when their homes are demolished and they are not offered proper new housing); in the sphere of autonomy-respect (when their points of view

and rights are not taken seriously); in the sphere of difference-respect (when their social and place-based attachments to the neighbourhood are not duly considered) and in the sphere of esteem (when policy portrays inhabitants as a burden, rather than an asset, to society). This dissertation has shown that gentrification may therefore lead to feelings of disappointment, resentment, anger and grief (see also Atkinson, 2015; Valli, 2015). More sensitivity to these issues may help to develop urban policy that may be evaluated more positively by the people affected by this policy.

The recognition-theoretical perspective used in this dissertation was not meant, however, to replace the other perspectives that were already used, or that might be used in the future, to understand gentrification. I only think that the lens of the theory of recognition helped to capture aspects of gentrification that have not been the focal point of research so far, and as such, has contributed to a fuller comprehension of the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. The theory of recognition thus provides a useful perspective on gentrification, but it is one of many perspectives that are all necessary to properly understand gentrification.

For students of gentrification, the recognitional-theoretical framework particularly highlights the complexity of how gentrification is experienced morally by the people living through the process. These experiences cannot be completely understood if they are conceptualised as derivatives of displacement alone or as only covering one aspect of identity, like class or race. Moreover, feelings of misrecognition may be enfolded in experiences of recognition and beneficial distributive outcomes, which emphasises that gentrification is not always experienced as a straightforwardly "good" or "bad" process. Finally, the theory of recognition helped to develop a framework that can also be used for the study of gentrification in other contexts. As a "plural theory of justice" (Honneth, 2004) that also contains a social theory, it allows for an operationalisation of the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Because of the distinction of different spheres of recognition, the theory of recognition helps to not only say generically that gentrification is experienced as injustice by people who live through it, but it also helps to formulate specifically in what different ways people experience gentrification as unjust. I therefore believe that the recognition-theoretical perspective provides important tools for the future students of gentrification.

Although the study of gentrification has already been shaped by different scientific disciplines (like geography, economics, and sociology), I hope that this dissertation also showed – behind its particular goal – that there is still much left to discover about this phenomenon. Only the field of social philosophy, which was most

extensively used in this dissertation, already provides ample resources that may lead to new insights when they are adopted by gentrification scholars. When I started my research, it was a challenge to find my way in the interdisciplinary field of gentrification studies, but despite this practical difficulty, this dissertation ends with a call for more interdisciplinarity in this field. A proliferation of viewpoints: that, I think, is the only way forward when studying something as complex as gentrification.

If it is true that there is still much to learn about gentrification when the field opens up to other disciplines and will start to employ new concepts, then this also implies that some modesty about gentrification research, and thus also about this dissertation, is in order. I do not want to claim to have provided a final story about gentrification; indeed, not even about gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt and in the Quartier Maritime. In this dissertation, I have rather tried to show the usefulness of a recognition-theoretical perspective on gentrification by highlighting aspects of the process that have hitherto gone unnoticed. My hope is that this perspective will inspire researchers and policy makers, so as to bring us one step closer to realizing urban justice in the near future.

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Research data management statement

At the start of this research project, I followed a course on data management and wrote a data management plan. In this plan, I have described how I was going to collect and store the data. All the steps regarding data management were coordinated with the Data Steward of Radboud University's Institute for Management Research.

Before the interviews took place, I informed the interviewees about the goals of my research, about how I would process the data and about how the data would be stored. I then asked them to sign a form in which they confirmed their informed consent to participate in the research.

After the interview, I transferred the audio recording of the interview as quickly as possible to my work laptop and then immediately deleted it from the recording device. I have pseudonymised all the transcripts of the interviews and the fieldnotes I made. I have moreover tried to anonymise all the data that is presented as evidence in the empirical chapters I have written.

The data collected for this research project is stored in the Radboud Data Repository (RDR), where it will be stored for a period of at least ten years. The data is not, and will not be made, publicly accessible, as these are personal data which cannot be shared with others.

Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Gentrificatie is het proces van opwaardering van een wijk. Deze opwaardering gaat gepaard met de verdringing van degenen die de wijk al gebruikten. Bij gentrificatie behoren de nieuwkomers in een wijk tot een hogere sociaaleconomische klasse dan degenen die er eerder waren. Dit proces heeft vaak verstrekkende gevolgen voor die laatste groep. Het kan leiden tot gedwongen verhuizingen, hogere kosten voor levensonderhoud en het verlies van een sociaal netwerk waarin mensen elkaar hielpen. Dat zijn enkele praktische en financiële gevolgen van gentrificatie, maar gentrificatie kan op nog meer manieren ingrijpen in het leven van de mensen in gentrificerende wijken. Gentrificatie kan namelijk ook ervaren worden als een uitdrukking van miskenning van de mensen die zich sterk aan een wijk verbonden voelen.

In dit proefschrift heb ik geprobeerd de morele ervaringen van mensen in gentrificerende wijken beter te begrijpen. Hiervoor heb ik gebruikgemaakt van Axel Honneths theorie van erkenning. Volgens deze theorie moeten ervaringen van onrechtvaardigheid begrepen worden als ervaringen van miskenning. Miskenning wordt ervaren als men verwacht dat men op een bepaalde manier erkend wordt, terwijl dit uitblijft of deze verwachting anderszins wordt geschonden.

In dit proefschrift is gebruikgemaakt van een erkenningstheoretisch kader dat vier sferen van erkenning onderscheidt. De eerste sfeer is die van zorg en heeft betrekking op de erkenning van de primaire noden van mensen. In dit verband kan gedacht worden aan primaire behoeften aan bijvoorbeeld warmte, voedsel en onderdak. De tweede sfeer is de sfeer van autonomie-respect. Hierin staat de gelijkheid van mensen centraal. Mensen worden in deze sfeer gelijk geacht als wezens met meningen die serieus genomen dienen te worden. Ook gaat het in de sfeer van autonomie-respect om de gelijkheid van mensen voor de wet. De derde sfeer van verschil-respect gaat juist over de verschillen tussen mensen die erkend dienen te worden. Mensen hebben sociale relaties en behoren tot sociale groepen die vaak waardevol zijn voor henzelf, ook als deze sociale verbanden niet per se intrinsieke waarde hebben of waardevol zijn voor de samenleving als geheel. De waarde van deze verbanden dient dan ook niet geëvalueerd te worden, maar omdat ze van belang zijn voor degenen met die banden, dienen ze wel formeel gerespecteerd te worden. De vierde sfeer van erkenning is die van waardering. In deze sfeer draait het om de capaciteiten en talenten die individuen kunnen inzetten om bij te dragen aan collectieve projecten en daarmee aan de reproductie van de samenleving als geheel. Als mensen in een (of meerdere) van deze sferen niet de erkenning krijgen die ze verwachten, kunnen ze strijden om

erkenning. Gevoelens van miskenning zijn volgens Honneth de motivatie voor sociale strijd en staan aan de basis van maatschappelijke transformaties.

Met behulp van dit theoretisch kader heb ik geprobeerd om de morele ervaringen van mensen in gentrificerende wijken in kaart te brengen. De centrale onderzoeksvraag van dit proefschrift luidt als volgt:

> **Op welke manieren ervaren mensen in gentrificerende wijken erkenning en miskenning, en hoe leiden hun ervaringen van miskenning tot een strijd om erkenning?**

Om deze vraag te beantwoorden heb ik zowel theoretisch als empirisch onderzoek verricht. Het theoretisch onderzoek richtte zich op de een verheldering van de twee centrale begrippen van dit proefschrift, namelijk gentrificatie en erkenning. Nadat deze concepten verduidelijkt zijn in het tweede en derde hoofdstuk, heb ik in de daaropvolgende hoofdstukken (4, 5 en 6) mijn empirisch onderzoek gepresenteerd. Hiervoor heb ik onderzoek gedaan in twee gentrificerende wijken, namelijk in de Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, Nederland, en in het Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussel, België.

Theoretisch onderzoek

Het theoretisch onderzoek beslaat twee hoofdstukken. Het eerste focust op het concept gentrificatie; het tweede onderwerpt het begrip "strijd om erkenning" aan een nadere beschouwing.

Gentrificatie

Sinds Ruth Glass het begrip *gentrification* in 1964 introduceerde in de wetenschap is er veel discussie geweest over wat het precies betekent. Hoe moeten we gentrificatie precies begrijpen? Het beantwoorden van deze vraag werd bemoeilijkt doordat het fenomeen dat het begrip gentrificatie probeerde te beschrijven zelf veranderde: onderzoekers stelden vast dat gentrificatie verschillende vormen aannam in verschillende contexten en het proces ook over de tijd aan verandering onderhevig was. Op welke manier moeten we dit moeilijk te vatten begrip en fenomeen van gentrificatie dan benaderen?

In Hoofdstuk 2 heb ik betoogd dat het werk van wetenschapsfilosoof Ian Hacking verheldering kan bieden. Volgens Hacking moeten we ons rekenschap geven van hoe sociaalwetenschappelijke concepten een effect kunnen hebben op de fenomenen die met deze concepten worden beschreven. Mensen die op een bepaalde manier

gecategoriseerd worden, kunnen als reactie hierop anders gaan handelen: ze kunnen zich bijvoorbeeld gaan omringen met gelijkgecategoriseerden en zich verzetten tegen een aan de categorisering verbonden stigma; of ze kunnen de categorisering juist omarmen en zich volgens stereotypen van deze categorie gaan gedragen. Een categorisering kan dus een effect hebben op de categorie die ermee wordt beschreven, omdat de mensen die erdoor worden beschreven hun handelingen en gedragingen aanpassen als reactie op de categorisering.

Ik heb betoogd dat Hackings perspectief, dat hij zelf heeft aangeduid als "dynamisch nominalisme", ook van toepassing is op gentrificatie. Gentrificatie is niet meer alleen een term die men tegenkomt in academische verhandelingen of hoort in collegezalen; de term wordt ook buiten de academie gebezigd. Mensen gebruiken de term om processen van stedelijke verandering aan te duiden en om hun eigen rol en positie in die processen te begrijpen. De term wordt gebruikt door activisten om anderen te mobiliseren om te hoop te lopen tegen wijkveranderingen. Welvarende nieuwkomers in een wijk kunnen hun eigen komst gaan beschouwen als een bijdrage aan de gentrificatie die de vermeende authenticiteit van een wijk bedreigt. Mensen die verdrongen worden uit hun wijk kunnen dit met behulp van het concept gentrificatie gaan zien als een proces waartegen ze in verzet dienen te komen.

Het concept gentrificatie kan op deze manieren een effect hebben op het fenomeen dat met deze term wordt aangeduid. Het fenomeen gentrificatie kan daardoor veranderen. Ik heb betoogd dat gentrificatie daarom als een *moving target* (bewegend doel) begrepen moet worden. Door de interactie tussen categorie en categorisering zijn beide aan verandering onderhevig. Dit is een van de redenen waarom gentrificatie zo moeilijk te vatten is.

Met deze focus op het begrip gentrificatie heb ik geprobeerd te verduidelijken hoe mensen hun eigen positie en rol in processen van stedelijke verandering begrijpen via het concept van gentrificatie. Dit speelt een rol in hoe ze opwaarderingen van wijken ervaren en of ze deze beschouwen als onrechtvaardige processen. Het onderzoek naar het concept gentrificatie dient zo als achtergrond bij de studie van de ervaringen van miskenning van mensen in gentrificerende wijken.

Strijd om erkenning

Het tweede begrip dat centraal staat in deze dissertatie is erkenning. Erkenning is iets waarvoor men soms moet strijden, maar wat houdt zo een strijd om erkenning precies in? In Hoofdstuk 3 heb ik geprobeerd het begrip strijd om erkenning preciezer af te bakenen dan tot dusverre was gebeurd.

Hoe kan men strijden voor erkenning? Om deze vraag te beantwoorden moet het begrip erkenning eerst nader bekeken worden. Hierbij is het van belang vast te stellen dat erkenning niet met brute kracht of machtsuitoefening afgedwongen kan worden. Erkenning is in een bepaald geval de gepaste reactie; het is de affirmatie van een kenmerk van een persoon, bijvoorbeeld van haar bijdragen aan de reproductie van de samenleving. In dit geval zou erkenning de vorm aannemen van waardering, maar als die waardering niet wordt gegeven door een ander, kan deze erkenning niet afgedwongen door de ander onder schot te houden en haar te dwingen om iets waarderends te zeggen over de bijdrage van de persoon in kwestie. Ze zou dan best iets waarderends kunnen zeggen, maar zou dat dan uit angst doen en niet vanuit de overtuiging dat de bijdrage daadwerkelijk waardering verdient. Werkelijke erkenning kan dus niet met brute kracht worden afgedwongen, maar moet gebaseerd zijn op de overtuiging van degene die de erkenning verleent dat het verlenen van erkenning in dit geval op zijn plaats is. Er moeten dus redenen zijn, die in principe gearticuleerd kunnen worden, waarom erkenning in een bepaalde situatie de juiste reactie is.

Maar hoe kun je een ander ervan overtuigen dat erkenning in een bepaald geval op zijn plaats is? Wat voor redenen kunnen worden aangevoerd om een ander te overtuigen dat erkenning in een bepaalde situatie gepast is? Bij de beantwoording van deze vragen speelt de notie van strijd een belangrijke rol. Als de redenen voor het verlenen van erkenning kraakhelder zouden zijn, dan zou er niets overblijven om over te strijden. Aan de andere kant, als het volstrekt onduidelijk zou zijn om welke redenen men erkenning moet verlenen, dan zou het verlenen van erkenning op willekeurige basis gebeuren en daarmee iedere betekenis verliezen. De strijd om erkenning moet dus geschieden volgens de uitwisseling van reden waarvan het *enigszins*, maar niet geheel, onduidelijk is of ze acceptabel zijn voor degene aan wie de vraag om erkenning is gericht.

Deze conceptualisatie van de strijd om erkenning maakt het mogelijk om onderscheiden te maken tussen verschillende vormen van sociale strijd. Als degene die om erkenning vraagt weet dat ze geen redenen kan aanvoeren die acceptabel kunnen zijn voor degene van wie erkenning wordt gevraagd – en dat kan ze in bepaalde gevallen weten, want het is niet volstrekt onduidelijk wat geldt als een acceptabele reden voor erkenning – dan weet ze ook dat ze niet kan strijden voor erkenning. Ze weet dan immers dat ze de ander er niet van kan overtuigen dat erkenning op zijn plaats is. Ze kan dan nog wel strijden, maar niet meer voor erkenning. Niet elke sociale strijd rondom cultuur of identiteit kan dus simpelweg als een strijd om erkenning worden uitgelegd. De noodzaak van de uitwisseling van redenen voor erkenning die acceptabel kunnen worden gevonden door degene

aan wie de vraag om erkenning gericht is, maakt het mogelijk om een strijd voor erkenning te onderscheiden van andere vormen van sociale strijd, bijvoorbeeld van een strijd om macht of om het beschermen van eigenbelang.

Empirisch onderzoek

Na de verheldering van de centrale concepten in dit project zijn de empirische onderzoeken gepresenteerd. Hoofdstuk 4 bespreekt gentrificatie in de Tweebosbuurt, Hoofdstuk 5 gentrificatie in het Quartier Maritime en in Hoofdstuk 6 zijn de gentrificatieprocessen in beide buurten vergeleken. Bij deze vergelijking lag de focus op de verschillende vormen van verzet tegen gentrificatie.

Gentrificatie in de Tweebosbuurt

In de Tweebosbuurt zijn 524 sociale huurwoningen gesloopt. Op de plaats waar deze woningen stonden, worden 177 nieuwe sociale huurwoningen gebouwd, alsmede 101 private huurwoningen, 29 middenhuurwoningen en 143 koophuizen. Dat betekent een nettoverlies van 347 sociale huurwoningen in deze buurt. Ondanks vele acties en protesten van bewoners om de sloop tegen te houden, heeft de sloop toch doorgang gevonden.

Op basis van interviews met (voormalige) bewoners van de Tweebosbuurt heb ik in kaart gebracht hoe zij de gentrificatie van hun buurt moreel ervaren hebben. Uit de interviews bleek dat verschillende vormen van ervaren miskenning een rol speelden in het proces van de sloop van de woningen. De bewoners ervoeren onvoldoende erkenning van hun nood aan een goede woning (zorg). Ze vonden dat hun mening over de sloopplannen niet serieus werd genomen en dat ze gediscrimineerd werden op basis van klasse en etniciteit (autonomie-respect). De sociale verbanden in de wijk werden volgens de geïnterviewden ook niet erkend door beleidsmakers (verschil-respect). De geïnterviewden vonden bovendien dat uit het Rotterdamse woonbeleid bleek dat werd neergekeken op de bijdragen die de bewoners leverden aan de samenleving (waardering). Kortom, miskenning werd ervaren in alle vier de sferen van erkenning die in deze dissertatie zijn onderscheiden. In die zin was de ervaren miskenning alomvattend.

Sommige geïnterviewden gaven daarentegen aan dat de strijd die ze tegen de sloop gevoerd hebben wel een bron van eigenwaarde was. Ze zagen zichzelf als voorbeeld voor de rest van Nederland en vonden dat ze trots mochten zijn op hoe ze zich hebben verzet tegen de sloop. De bewoners van de Tweebosbuurt konden de miskenning die ze ervoeren soms dus via hun strijd omzetten in een gevoel van eigenwaarde.

Gentrificatie in het Quartier Maritime

Het Quartier Maritime omringt het terrein van Tour & Taxis aan twee kanten. De afgelopen jaren is veel nieuwbouw verschenen op dit terrein. Een oud treinstation is omgebouwd tot een open ruimte: hier hebben restaurants en winkels zich gevestigd en worden evenementen georganiseerd. Ook zijn er meerdere nieuwe appartementsgebouwen op dit terrein verschenen. Met de hoge prijzen van de restaurants en de appartementen komen deze ontwikkelingen vooral tegemoet aan de wensen van een nieuwe, welvarende groep mensen en minder aan de noden van de inwoners van het Quartier Maritime.

In interviews gaven de inwoners van het Quartier Maritime aan vooral miskenning te ervaren op het gebied van autonomie-respect en verschil-respect. Ze vonden dat hun gelijkheid onvoldoende werd erkend op twee vlakken: enerzijds ervoeren ze dat hun opvattingen over de ontwikkelingen in de wijk niet serieus werden genomen, anderzijds meenden ze dat hun gelijkheid ook werd geschonden doordat de publieke ruimte in de wijk steeds meer veranderde in een exclusieve ruimte voor een rijkere laag van de bevolking. Daarnaast meenden ze dat de sociale relaties van de inwoners van het Quartier Maritime onvoldoende werd erkend. Dit kwam tot uitdrukking in de sociale en culturele transformaties van de wijk en in de hogere huizenprijzen en huren, waardoor het moeilijker werd voor de lokale bevolking om een woning in het Quartier Maritime te vinden.

Tegelijkertijd gaven sommige geïnterviewden aan dat er ook positieve kanten aan de wijkontwikkelingen zaten. Na jaren van ontbrekende investeringen in de wijk zijn er dankzij Tour & Taxis in elk geval meer faciliteiten en mogelijkheden om evenementen te organiseren, ook voor mensen in de wijk. Dit kan ook gezien als een vorm van erkenning van de behoeften van de lokale bevolking. Daarnaast stijgen de huizenprijzen, wat in het belang is van de huizenbezitters in het Quartier Maritime. De ontwikkelingen in de wijk zijn dus in financiële zin profijtelijk voor de lokale huizenbezitters.

De erkenning van en het financiële profijt voor sommige inwoners van het Quartier Maritime kon in deze vorm alleen tot stand komen via de gelijktijdige miskenning van die bewoners: als naar de lokale bevolking was geluisterd, hadden de ontwikkelingen in de wijk er anders uitgezien, was de wijk minder aantrekkelijk geworden voor nieuwe, rijkere inwoners en waren de huizenprijzen niet zo sterk gestegen. Dit hebben ik geprobeerd te vatten met behulp van het begrip vervlechting (*enfolding*): in het proces van gentrificatie in het Quartier Maritime, zijn erkenning, distributieve effecten en miskenning onlosmakelijk met elkaar vervlecht.

Verschillende vormen van verzet: een vergelijking

Gentrificatie nam verschillende vormen aan in de twee wijken waar ik onderzoek heb gedaan. Dit geldt ook voor het verzet tegen de ontwikkelingen. In de Tweebosbuurt was het verzet een onderneming van vele bewoners gezamenlijk, wat zich uitte in een aantal grote protesten. In het Quartier Maritime was verzet juist veeleer het werk van enkele individuen die via institutionele kanalen probeerden het beleid te beïnvloeden.

Op basis van de theorie van erkenning heb ik een raamwerk ontwikkeld met 15 factoren die helpen om te begrijpen waarom verzet tegen gentrificatie een bepaalde vorm aanneemt. Deze mediërende factoren dragen bij aan een beter begrip over waarom het verzet in de twee buurten verschillende vormen aannam. Het erkenningstheoretisch raamwerk focust op hoe ervaringen van miskenning verschillende vormen aannemen, hoe deze symbolisch gemedieerd worden, hoe mensen zich bewust worden van een gedeelde kwetsbaarheid en of zij een sociale strijd als beste methode zien om gestelde doelen te bereiken.

Het raamwerk dat is ontwikkeld op basis van de vergelijking tussen de Tweebosbuurt en het Quartier Maritime kan ook gebruikt worden voor de studie van verzet tegen gentrificatie in andere contexten. Daarnaast heb ik in dit hoofdstuk een programmatisch punt gemaakt: om de relatie tussen gentrificatie en sociaal verzet te begrijpen, moeten onderzoekers de specifieke eigenschappen van gentrificatieprocessen in ogenschouw nemen.

Conclusies

Het erkenningstheoretisch perspectief dat in dit proefschrift is gebruikt om de morele ervaringen van mensen in gentrificerende wijken beter te begrijpen laat zien dat deze ervaringen complexer zijn dan tot dusverre is beschreven. Om tot deze conclusie te komen heb ik vijf stappen gezet. Ten eerste heb ik betoogd dat het begrip gentrificatie een rol kan spelen in hoe mensen hun positie in processen van wijkverandering ervaren: dit begrip kleurt hun ervaringen en dat kan op zijn beurt invloed hebben op hoe het proces zich ontvouwt. Ten tweede heb ik geprobeerd te verduidelijken wat verstaan moet worden onder een strijd om erkenning. Hiervoor heb ik onderzocht aan welke voorwaarden een sociale strijd moet voldoen om een strijd om erkenning genoemd te kunnen worden. Vervolgens heb ik deze theoretische inzichten aangewend om de morele ervaringen van mensen in gentrificerende wijken inzichtelijk te maken. De derde stap bestond in een analyse van de morele ervaringen van inwoners van de Tweebosbuurt. In stap vier heb ik onderzocht hoe kwesties rond erkenning, miskenning en de financiële gevolgen van wijkvernieuwing vervlecht zijn in de morele ervaringen van inwoners van het Quartier Maritime. Ten slotte (stap

vijf) heb ik geanalyseerd hoe de strijd om erkenning, die in beide buurten gevoerd werd, verschillende vormen aannam.

Het empirisch onderzoek in dit proefschrift laat zien dat het in de morele ervaringen van mensen in gentrificerende buurten niet alleen draait om het verlies van een plek – doordat men moet verhuizen of omdat de plek zodanig verandert dat die niet meer als een thuis voelt – maar ook om een gebrek aan erkenning dat zich op verschillende manieren kan manifesteren. In de Tweebosbuurt bleken de inwoners zich miskend te voelen in alle vier de erkenningssferen. De inwoners van het Quartier Maritime voelden zich vooral miskend in de sferen van autonomie-respect en verschil-respect. Gentrificatie wordt dus niet alleen als onrechtvaardig ervaren omdat het in kan druisen tegen de belangen van mensen in gentrificerende wijken, maar ook omdat het wordt gezien als een uitdrukking van intersubjectieve miskenning.

De strijd om erkenning nam verschillende vormen aan in de beide wijken. In de Tweebosbuurt was dit een meer collectieve strijd van veel mensen gezamenlijk, terwijl dit in het Quartier Maritime veeleer het werk was van enkele individuen. Ik heb betoogd dat dit verschil begrepen kan worden door de karakteristieken van de verschillende gentrificatieprocessen in beide buurten in ogenschouw te nemen. De veelvormigheid van gentrificatieprocessen gaat daarom ook gepaard met verschillende vormen van verzet tegen gentrificatie.

In dit proefschrift heb ik geprobeerd aan te tonen hoe diep en op welke verschillende manieren gentrificatie in kan grijpen in het leven van mensen. Met de grote vraag naar woningen in steden valt niet te verwachten dat er in de komende jaren een einde zal komen aan gentrificatie. Om processen van wijkverandering in de toekomst beter te laten verlopen, dat wil zeggen met minder schendingen van normatieve verwachtingen, is het daarom van belang dat beleidsmakers rekening houden met hoe wijkveranderingen ervaren kunnen worden als uitdrukkingen van verschillende vormen van miskenning. Gentrificatie moet dienovereenkomstig niet alleen worden benaderd als een proces dat mensen en hun praktijken van hun plek verdringt, maar veeleer als een proces waarin verschillende vormen van miskenning een rol kunnen spelen.

Summary

Gentrification is the process through which land-users are displaced by new land-users of a higher socio-economic status. This process of gentrification often has severe consequences for the displaced people. It can mean forced relocation, higher costs of living and the loss of a social network of people who helped each other. These are some of the practical and financial consequences of gentrification, but gentrification can also intervene in other ways in the lives of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Gentrification may also be experienced as an expression of misrecognition of people who feel strongly attached to their neighbourhood.

In this dissertation I tried to better understand the moral experiences of people living through gentrification. I have used Axel Honneth's theory of recognition for that purpose. According to this theory, experiences of injustice should be understood as experiences of misrecognition. Misrecognition may be experienced by people when they expect to be recognised in a specific way, while this expectation for recognition is violated or remains otherwise unfulfilled.

In this dissertation I used a recognition-theoretical framework that distinguishes between four spheres of recognition. The first sphere of recognition is the sphere of care or love and relates to the recognition of people's primary needs. Here, one can think of primary needs to have access to sufficient warmth, food and shelter. The second sphere is the sphere of autonomy-respect. This sphere bears on people's equality. In this sphere, people are assumed to be equals as beings with opinions that deserve to be taken seriously. The sphere of autonomy-respect also relates to people's equality before the law. The third sphere of difference-respect involves differences between people that ought to be recognised. People have different social relations and belong to different social groups that are often valuable to themselves, also when these social bonds do not have any intrinsic worth or are not valuable to society at large. Therefore, the worth of these bonds should not be evaluated, but since these bonds are important for the people with these bonds, they need to be formally respected. The fourth sphere of recognition is the sphere of esteem. This sphere relates to people's individual abilities and talents which they can use to contribute to collective projects and thereby to the reproduction of society as a whole. If people do not get the recognition they expect in one (or several) of these spheres, they may struggle for recognition. Feelings of misrecognition are, according to Honneth, the motivation to engage in social struggles and are the basis of societal transformations.

With this theoretical framework I have tried to better understand the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. The central research question of this dissertation is the following:

> **In what ways do people living through gentrification experience recognition and misrecognition, and how do their experiences of misrecognition induce struggles for recognition?**

To answer this question, I have done both theoretical and empirical research. With the theoretical research I tried to clarify the two central concepts of this dissertation, namely gentrification and recognition. After these concepts had been elucidated in the second and third chapter, I presented my empirical research in the following chapters (4, 5 and 6). For the empirical part of this dissertation I conducted research in two gentrifying neighbourhoods, namely in the Tweebosbuurt in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and in the Quartier Maritime in Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium.

Theoretical research

The theoretical part of this dissertation comprises two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the concept of gentrification; the second deals with the concept of "struggle for recognition".

Gentrification

Since Ruth Glass coined the term gentrification in 1964 there has been a lot of discussion about what this term meant exactly. How should we understand gentrification exactly? Answering this question was complicated by the fact that the phenomenon, which had to be described by the concept of gentrification, changed itself: researchers found that gentrification assumed different forms in different contexts and that the process also changed over time. How, then, do we need to approach this hard to grasp concept and phenomenon of gentrification?

In Chapter 2, I argued that the work of philosopher of science Ian Hacking may provide clarification. According to Hacking, we need to attend to how social scientific concepts may have an effect on the phenomena that are described with these concepts. People who are categorised in a specific way may in response to this categorisation alter their comportment: they may surround themselves with similarly categorised people and struggle against stigmas associated with this categorisation; on the other hand, they may also embrace this categorisation and act according to stereotypes of this category. A categorisation can thus have an effect on the category

that is described with it, because people that are accordingly categorised may alter their actions and comportment in response to the categorisation.

I argued that Hacking's perspective, which he himself called "dynamic nominalism", also applies to gentrification. Gentrification is no longer only a concept one encounters in academic treatises or hears in lecture halls; the term is also used outside of academia. People use the term to identify processes of urban change and to understand their own position in such processes. The term is used by activists to mobilise others to come together to resist transformations of their neighbourhood. Prosperous newcomers in a neighbourhood may start to conceive of their own arrival as a contribution to gentrification that threatens the alleged authenticity of a neighbourhood. People who are displaced from their neighbourhood may start to see this, by means of the concept of gentrification, as a process to which they should organise resistance.

The concept of gentrification may in these ways have an effect on the phenomenon that is described by this term. The phenomenon of gentrification may change as a consequence. I therefore argued that gentrification should be understood as a moving target. Through the interaction of the category and the categorisation, both are subject to change. That provides one of the reasons why gentrification is so difficult to grasp.

With this focus on the concept of gentrification I have tried to clarify how people understand their own position and role in processes of urban change via the concept of gentrification. This plays a role in how people experience processes of urban renewal and whether they perceive these processes as unjust. This investigation of the concept of gentrification forms the background of the study of the experiences of misrecognition of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Struggle for recognition

The second concept that plays a central role in this dissertation is recognition. Recognition is something that people sometimes have to struggle for, but what does such a struggle for recognition entail exactly? In Chapter 3, I tried to delineate more precisely what struggles for recognition entail than has happened thus far.

How may one struggle for recognition? To answer this question, one first has to pay attention to the concept of recognition. In this respect, it is important to establish that recognition cannot be compelled by the use of brute force or violence. Recognition is the appropriate response in a given case; it is the affirmation of a trait

of a person, for example of her contributions to the reproduction of society. In that case, recognition could be granted in the form of esteem, but if another person does not grant that recognition, this recognition cannot be enforced by holding a gun to this person's head and forcing her to say something that sounds like an appreciation of the one who is looking to be recognised. The one with the gun to her head would then quite likely say something appreciative, but she would do that out of fear, rather than out of the conviction that the contribution indeed deserves to be appreciated. True recognition thus cannot be enforced by violence or brute force, but must be based on the conviction of the one granting recognition that granting recognition is the right response in this case. There must be reasons that can, in principle, be articulated why recognition is the right response in a given situation.

Then the question becomes: how could someone convince another person that recognition is appropriate in a given case? Wat kind of reasons can be invoked to convince the other person that recognition is due in a certain situation? The notion of struggle plays an important role in answering this question. If the reasons for granting recognition would be crystal clear, there would be nothing left to struggle about. On the other hand, if it would be completely unclear for what reasons one is supposed to grant recognition, then granting recognition would be granted randomly and would lose its meaning entirely. The struggle for recognition should thus take place through the exchange of reasons of which it is *somewhat*, but not entirely, unclear whether they are acceptable to the addressee of the demand for recognition.

This conceptualisation of struggles for recognition makes it possible to distinguish between different forms of social struggle. If the one asking for recognition knows that she cannot invoke reasons that may be acceptable for the addressee of the demand for recognition – and she may know that in certain cases, for it is not entirely unclear what counts as an acceptable reason for recognition – then she also knows that she cannot struggle for recognition. After all, she knows in that case that she cannot convince the addressee of the demand for recognition that recognition is due. She may then still continue to struggle, but she can no longer struggle for recognition. Not every social struggle around culture or identity could thus simply be interpreted as a struggle for recognition. The necessity to exchange reasons for recognition that may be found acceptable by the addressee of recognition is a condition that can be used to distinguish struggles for recognition from other forms of social struggle, like struggles over power or struggles to secure one's interests.

Empirical research

After clarifying the central concepts of this dissertation, I have presented the empirical parts of this research project. Chapter 4 discusses gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt, and Chapter 5 considers gentrification in the Quartier Maritime. Chapter 6 compared processes of gentrification in both neighbourhoods. This comparison was focused on the different forms of resistance to gentrification.

Gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt

524 social rental homes have been demolished in the Tweebosbuurt. At the place where these homes used to be, 177 new social rental homes will be built, together with 101 private rental homes, 29 middle rent units (*middenhuur*) and 143 owner occupied homes. That implies a nett loss of 347 social rental units in this neighbourhood. Despite many actions and protests of inhabitants to prevent this from happening, the demolishment has nonetheless taken place.

On the basis of interviews with (former) inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt, I have described how they morally experienced gentrification in their neighbourhood. The interviews showed that different forms of misrecognition played a part in the process of the demolishment of the social rental homes. The inhabitants experienced insufficient recognition of their need for a good home (care). They thought that their opinion about the plans for the demolishment was not taken seriously and that they were discriminated against based on class and ethnicity (autonomy-respect). The social bonds in the neighbourhood were also not recognised according to the interviews (difference-respect). The interviewees thought moreover that Rotterdam's housing policy expressed disregard for the contributions of the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt to society (esteem). In short, misrecognition was experienced in all the four spheres of recognition that are distinguished in this dissertation. The misrecognition that the inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt experienced was in that sense comprehensive.

Some interviewees also noted, though, that the struggle against the demolishment in which they engaged was a source of pride for them. They saw themselves as an example for the rest of the Netherlands and found that they could be proud of how they struggled against the demolishment. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt could thus sometimes, via their struggle, experience a sense of self-worth despite the sense of being misrecognised.

Gentrification in the Quartier Maritime

The Quartier Maritime surrounds the terrain of Tour & Taxis on two sides. Many new constructions have appeared on this terrain in the last couple of years. An old train station has been converted into an open space: it accommodates restaurants and shops and offers room for the organisation of events. New-build apartment buildings have also been constructed on this terrain. Due to the high prices of the restaurants and apartments, these developments mainly cater to the needs and wishes of a new, prosperous group of people and less to the needs of the inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime.

The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime mainly experienced misrecognition in the spheres of autonomy-respect and difference-respect. They thought that their equality was insufficiently recognised in two respects: on the one hand, they felt that their opinions about the developments in the neighbourhood were not taken seriously; on the other hand, they believed that their equality was violated because public space in the neighbourhood transformed more and more into an exclusive space for a more prosperous group of people. Next to that, they thought that the social relations of the inhabitants to the Quartier Maritime was not duly recognised. This misrecognition was expressed in the social and cultural transformations of the neighbourhood and in the higher house prices and rents, which made it more difficult for local inhabitants to find a home in the Quartier Maritime.

Some interviewees also noticed the positive sides of the developments in their neighbourhood. After years of disinvestment in the neighbourhood there are, also because of Tour & Taxis, at least more facilities and possibilities to organise events, also for people in the neighbourhood. That can also be seen as a form of recognition of the needs of the local population. Next to that, interviewees also mentioned that house prices rose, which serves the interests of homeowners in the Quartier Maritime. The developments in the neighbourhood are thus financially beneficial for local homeowners.

The recognition and financial benefits for some inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime could only materialise in its specific form through the simultaneous misrecognition of those inhabitants: if the local inhabitants were listened to, the developments would have looked differently, the neighbourhood would not have become as attractive for new, more prosperous inhabitants and the house prices would not have risen as much. I tried to capture this by means of the concept of enfolding: in the process of gentrification in the Quartier Maritime, recognition, distributive effects and misrecognition are enfolded.

Different forms of resistance: a comparison

Gentrification assumed different forms in the two neighbourhoods where I conducted my research. Resistance against the process also assumed different forms. In the Tweebosbuurt, resistance was an endeavour of many people together, which led to some large-scale protests. In the Quartier Maritime, resistance to gentrification was rather the work of some individuals who tried to influence urban policy via institutionalised channels.

Based on the theory of recognition, I developed a framework with 15 factors that help to understand why resistance to gentrification assumes a certain form. These mediating factors contribute to a better understanding of why resistance to gentrification assumed different forms in the two neighbourhoods. The recognition-theoretical framework focuses on how experiences of misrecognition assume different forms, how these are symbolically mediated, how people become aware of shared vulnerability and if they consider engaging in a social struggle as the appropriate method to achieve set goals.

The framework I developed on the basis of the comparison between the Tweebosbuurt and the Quartier Maritime can also be used to study resistance to gentrification in other contexts. I moreover made a programmatic point in this chapter: to understand the gentrification-resistance nexus, researchers should take the particularities of gentrification processes into account.

Conclusions

The recognition-theoretical perspective that is used in this dissertation to better understand the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods shows that these experiences are more complex than has been described thus far. To arrive at this conclusion, I have proceeded in five steps. First, I argued that the concept of gentrification may play a role in how people understand their position in processes of neighbourhood renewal: this concept influences how they experience such processes and that may in turn affect how these processes unfold. Secondly, I have tried to clarify how struggles for recognition should be understood. I therefore investigated which conditions a social struggle has to fulfil if it is to be called a struggle for recognition. I subsequently used these theoretical insights to better understand the moral experiences of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods. The third step consisted in an analysis of the moral experiences of inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt. In step four, I investigated how issues around recognition, misrecognition and financial distribution are enfolded in the experiences of people living through gentrification

in the Quartier Maritime. Finally (step 5), I analysed how the struggle for recognition, that took place in both neighbourhoods, assumed different forms.

The empirical research in this dissertation shows that the moral experiences of people living through gentrification do not only revolve around the loss of one's place – because one has to move or because the place transforms to such an extent that it no longer feels like home – but are also about a lack of recognition that may manifest itself in different ways. The inhabitants of the Tweebosbuurt experienced misrecognition in all four spheres of recognition. The inhabitants of the Quartier Maritime felt especially misrecognised in the spheres of autonomy-respect and difference-respect. Gentrification is thus not only experienced as injustice because it may go against the interests of people in gentrifying neighbourhoods, but also because it is seen as an expression of intersubjective misrecognition.

The struggle for recognition assumed different forms in both neighbourhoods. In the Tweebosbuurt, this was a collective struggle of many people together. In the Quartier Maritime, resistance was rather the work of some individuals. I argued that this difference in resistance can be better understood when we take the differences between the processes of gentrification into account. The multiple forms that gentrification may assume may therefore be accompanied by different forms of resistance against the process.

In this dissertation I have tried to show gentrification may in different ways intervene in the lives of people. With the high demand for homes in cities, it is not to be expected that gentrification will come to an end in the coming years. In order to have better processes of urban transformation in the future, that is, with fewer violations of normative expectations, it is important that policy makers consider the ways in which neighbourhood transformations can be experienced as expressions of different forms of misrecognition. Gentrification should accordingly not only be approached as a process that displaces people and their practices, but rather as a process in which different forms of misrecognition may play a part.

About the author

Marijn Knieriem was born on 26 February 1992 in Ermelo. He also went to high school there. He did his bachelor's degree in Bèta-gamma and master's degrees in Economics, Sociology and Philosophy, all at the University of Amsterdam. After finishing his studies, he has worked for almost two years at the Government Budget Inspectorate at the Dutch Ministry of Finance.

In 2020, he started as a PhD candidate at Radboud University. He worked at the department of Political Science and at the department of Geography, Planning and Environment. His PhD research project on "Gentrification and the Struggle for Recognition" was supervised by prof. dr. Arnoud Lagendijk, dr. Bart van Leeuwen and prof. dr. Marcel Wissenburg. Parts of this doctoral research have been published in *Progress in Human Geography,* in *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* and in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. An earlier version of Chapter 2 has been awarded the Best Paper Award during the IMR Research Day of 2021.

For his PhD research project, Marijn has conducted research in Rotterdam and Brussel. He has also spent six weeks in Frankfurt am Main for a research stay at Goethe University's *Institut für Humangeographie*. He continues his academic path with a postdoctoral position at the University of Twente, where he conducts research on trust, recognition and vulnerability.

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