The symbolic politics of gentrification: the restructuring of stigmatized neighborhoods in Amsterdam and Istanbul

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Abstract: Since gentrification entails significant negative social consequences, one important question is why residents of neighborhoods on the verge of gentrification often do not effectively oppose the process. Why do residents not resist? And, if they resist, why are they not effective? To answer these questions, we attend to the symbolic politics of the gentrification: that is, the ways in which process is framed and experienced. We examine the dynamics of symbolic power as affixed to stigmatized neighborhoods in two radically different contexts: Istanbul and Amsterdam. In spite of stark differences between the cases (with gentrification in Istanbul being more ruthless and contentious), there are also striking similarities in how symbolic politics played out. In both cases the promoters of gentrification adopted a strategy of 'divide and rule' as they differentiated the residents into various groups and fed into territorial, ethnic and class stigmatization. The promoters of gentrification in both cases also strategically used time: they first exhausted residents by having them wait anxiously for a prolonged period of time, and then put intense pressure on them to make them accept they had to leave. Both strategies—'divide and rule' as well as the timing of interventions—undermined or preempted effective resistance against gentrification.

Keywords: gentrification, territorial stigmatization, resistance, symbolic power, Amsterdam, Istanbul

1 Introduction—the politics of gentrification in radically different settings

Many authors have emphasized gentrification's negative consequences for lower income and minority residents (eg, Lees et al, 2008; Slater, 2006). However, in many cases gentrification arouses little opposition or even receives support from the very groups that are under threat of displacement. Where resistance does take place, it is often small in scale and ineffective in actually stopping gentrification. The weakness of resistance to gentrification begs some vexing questions. Why is it that, in spite of its negative effects, gentrification is often not contested? And why is it that gentrification's promoters often succeed even when they face resistance? A large part of the answer to these questions is of course that gentrification's promoters can muster great resources. Another part of the answer is that residents under threat of displacement may sometimes profit from the upgrading of their neighborhoods (Freeman, 2006) or may be entitled to compensation when they are actually displaced (Kleinhans, 2003).

While we acknowledge structural disparities in economic and juridical power, in this paper we especially want to focus on symbolic politics: that is, the ways in which the promoters,

beneficiaries, and victims of gentrification frame and experience the process. Symbolic politics—the struggle over the power to promote visions *of* reality and impose visions *on* reality (Bourdieu, 1991; 1997)—is an integral part of gentrification politics. This is especially evident when one is concerned—as we are here—with state-sponsored gentrification: that is, gentrification that is supported legally, logistically, discursively and financially by the state (see Hackworth and Smith, 2001; Slater, 2004; Smith, 2002; Uitermark, 2014; Uitermark et al, 2007). We find in our case studies that gentrification proceeds by differentiating a population into various subgroups, with some being considered more deserving than others. People resisting gentrification occasionally rejected such differentiations, but we find that their resistance was episodic and could not stop gentrification from slowly but surely proceeding. In addition to the state's ability to differentiate residents, the state's power to time interventions—developing long-term plans, making residents wait in anxiety, rushing them to move out, etc—is crucial to understanding how gentrification proceeds and how resistance is incapacitated.

Stigma factors into the symbolic politics of gentrification in powerful ways. By positing the need for a wholesale makeover, the state imposes a territorial stigma that functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy; as the state and its partners refuse to invest in anticipation of a future intervention, the area suffers from financial disinvestment, which in turn reinforces the urgency to redevelop (Smith, 1979). Residents can respond to the portrayal of their neighborhood as a degenerate habitat by opposing the stigma and mobilizing an alternative discourse of the neighborhood as a place worth preserving. However, residents living in neighborhoods targeted for redevelopment often suffer from multiple forms of stigmatization based on class, ethnicity, or sexuality. As they may have negative views of others living in their neighborhood, collective action—for instance, in the form of resistance against gentrification—is far from trivial. The key question is thus how residents respond to the visions mobilized by the state in its pursuit of gentrification. Do they accept these visions of their neighborhood or oppose them? Do residents work together or oppose one another?

Through the comparison of two radically different settings—Istanbul and Amsterdam—this paper attempts to identify particular as well as more universal features of the symbolic politics of gentrification. Section 2 discusses symbolic politics theoretically. Section 3 presents the methods we used. Sections 4 and 5 discuss Istanbul and Amsterdam, respectively. Section 6 compares the two cases and explains why they are different in some ways (contention in Istanbul, not in Amsterdam) and similar in others.

2 Theory—symbolic power relations and gentrification

What is at stake in the symbolic politics of gentrification are the precise ways in which gentrification is framed and experienced. This, in turn, shapes when gentrification takes place, who reaps the rewards, and who is displaced. Here we consider two dimensions of symbolic politics: the politics of classification and the politics of time.

2.1 The politics of classification

Perceptions and interpretations are not neutral descriptions of reality but imply the classification of some people, interventions, and developments as beneficial while declassifying others. For instance, the stigmatization of a neighborhood as defunct and degenerated legitimates displacement while a description of the same neighborhood as a working-class area with affordable housing works in the opposite direction. To understand stigma—a mark of disgrace or "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (Goffman, 1963, page 3)—we need to explore how certain groups or areas are symbolically excluded. As stigmatization results from highly skewed symbolic power relations, we need to undertake a "*genetic and political* sociology of the formation, selection, and imposition of systems of classification" (Wacquant, 1992,

page 14, original emphasis). The politics of classification involves the ways in which different actors ascribe meaning to the neighborhood and its residents. The stake here is symbolic power: that is, the power to represent oneself and others. It is far from evident that residents in stigmatized neighborhoods targeted for redevelopment collectively represent themselves. In the absence of valued collective identities based on place or class, residents often develop a range of distinction strategies as they "overstress their moral worth as individuals and join in the dominant discourse of denunciation of those who undeservingly 'profit' from social assistance programs, *faux pauvres* and 'welfare cheats'. It is as if they could gain value only by devaluing their neighborhood and their neighbors" (Wacquant, 1993, page 374). Residents often do not have a shared identity or mutual ties that facilitate coordinated collective action. This does not mean that no collective action is undertaken but it does mean that it has to overcome significant obstacles.

In addition to the symbolic power relations among neighborhood residents, we need to consider the state's symbolic power. Bourdieu (1991; 1998) views the state as a field of struggle where different actors compete over legitimate ways of classifying and acting on social reality. Through the structuring it imposes on practices, "the State institutes and inculcates common symbolic forms of thought, social frames of perception, understanding and memory, State forms of classification or, more precisely, practical schemes of perception, appreciation and action" (Bourdieu, 1997, page 175). The state is "a stratifying and classifying agency that wields a dominant influence on the social and symbolic order of the city" (Wacquant, 2010, page 2). This is an important argument to consider in debates on territorial stigmatization because it implies that the state's classifications have *performative power*. When the state declares that an area is lawless, it not only assigns a stigma but *decrees* it a crime zone, which makes it "easy for the authorities to justify special measures, deviating from both law and custom, which can have the effect—if not the intention—of destabilizing and further marginalizing their occupants" (Wacquant, 2007, page 69). In the cases we discuss we show the immediate and long-term effects of state-sanctioned stigma resulting from the designation of territories as 'renewal areas'. First, investments in the housing stock are discontinued the moment an area is targeted as a renewal area (cf Smith, 1979, page 545). Residents, owners, and investors squeeze what they can from the area without regard to the social costs for the neighborhood. Second, the state and its partners not only stigmatize the neighborhood as a whole but draw a line between worthy and unworthy residents, allowing authorities to 'divide and rule'.

2.2 The politics of timing

Within the literature, rent-gap theory (cf Smith, 1979) provides the most systematic account of how time is implicated in gentrification as it explains how neighborhoods become amenable to gentrification due to prolonged noninvestment and the growing disparity between actual and potential ground rent. While a widening rent gap creates the structural condition for gentrification to occur, the exact timing of interventions and noninterventions is subject to tactics. Time is essentially a symbolic construct that allows the manipulation of social reality. To fully grasp the role of timing in creating unequal symbolic power relations "one would need to catalogue, and analyze, all the behaviors associated with the other people's time both on the side of the powerful (adjourning, deferring, delaying, raising false hopes, or, conversely, rushing, taking by surprise) and on the side of the 'patient', as they say in the medical universe, one of the sites par excellence of anxious, powerless waiting" (Bourdieu, 1997, page 228). Control over time involves the power to take the initiative and strategically wait or accelerate to maximize bargaining power at particular intervals. We will see, for instance, that the state and its partners can afford *prolonged nonintervention* in the period leading up to displacement. As long as the plans for renewal are 'not yet final' or, conversely, 'may be executed any moment now' the state abdicates responsibility to address

urgent problems like deteriorating housing conditions. In such conditions of limbo—when a neighborhood is stuck between the conception of a plan and its execution—residents are reduced to anxious waiting (Auyero and Swistun, 2009). The neighborhood limbo is a state that can only be ended only by *taking the initiative*: that is, initiating a new sequence of action. This is typically a privilege of the powerful as they have the ability to impose strict *deadlines* to push forward their plans but also to delay.

3 Methods—a comparative study of symbolic power and gentrification

To examine gentrification politics, we undertake a comparative analysis of Istanbul and Amsterdam. The cities were selected because they represent strongly contrasting cases. Amsterdam is embedded in the strong Dutch welfare state, has a very high share of social housing, and strong tenant rights are enshrined in law. The owners of houses in renewal areas are typically housing corporations that are legally required to consider the housing needs of lower-class and middle-class households. Although the social rights that have been accumulated during the postwar period are now being eroded (Uitermark, 2011; Van Gent, 2012), Amsterdam represents an example of a city where gentrification proceeds by stealth rather than by force (Bridge et al, 2012): the official policy goal is to create 'social mix', not to capitalize on the full market value of a particular area (Uitermark and Bosker, 2014).

Istanbul represents a very different context. The Turkish welfare state is weakly developed, informal solutions to housing problems are common, and tenant rights are weak. During the last two decades the state has embraced a radical neoliberal approach to urban (re)development and the capitalization of ground rent has become a key priority (Bartu Candan and Kolluoglu, 2008; Kuyucu and Unsal, 2010). Lovering and Turkmen (2011) speak of the 'bulldozer approach' to emphasize how the government moves aggressively to appropriate and transform the built environment.

With few exceptions (cf Harris, 2008), comparative work on gentrification has been largely restricted to the cities of the Global North (Carpenter and Lees, 1995; Slater, 2004). By comparing Istanbul and Amsterdam, this study contributes to the emerging literature on comparative urbanism (Robinson, 2006) that has emphasized the need to 'decenter' urban studies and disrupt the flow of urban theory from the core to the periphery (see also Lees, 2012). Although more by accident than by design, field research was carried out first in Istanbul and then in Amsterdam, which meant that—in keeping with comparative urbanism literature—the expectations and questions for Amsterdam were shaped by the research in Istanbul. Since we found that gentrification was highly contentious in Istanbul, it was a surprise to find that in Amsterdam, with its history of strong urban movements and extensive formalization of rights to housing and participation, gentrification proceeded without much resistance.

While we agree with the comparative urbanism literature on the need to use cases from the Global South to rethink familiar (Anglo-centric) concepts, we also feel that there is merit in comparing very different cases through a single theoretical framework. Since the cases are radically different, we adopt a 'most different' case selection (Przeworski and Henry, 1970; Skocpol, 1979). Discussing two radically different cases allows us to identify similarities that may also be found in cases that fall somewhere along the long continuum from the raw gentrification of Istanbul to the soft gentrification of Amsterdam. In other words, similar developments observed in these very different contexts may point to general mechanisms.

3.1 Research areas

The case studies in both cities focused on specific areas. In Amsterdam we looked at two housing complexes: Ceramplein and the Van der Pek Blocks, in Indische Buurt, an ethnically diverse neighborhood in the eastern part of the city. After the suburbanization of large parts of the Dutch working and middle class, the share of ethnic minorities—in particular immigrants

of Moroccan and Turkish descent—increased to 66% (O&S, 2012). The housing complexes consisted exclusively of social housing and were targeted for urban renewal by the government and a housing corporation. The renewal coincided with and facilitated privatization: the number of social houses decreased from 135 to 41 after the renewal operation. We conducted 63 interviews: 39 with regular tenants, 1 with a representative of the housing corporation, 22 with temporary residents, and 1 with a squatter.[1] In Istanbul we focused on a renewal area within Tarlabaşı, an ethnically diverse neighborhood in Beyoğlu, close to the central Taksim Square. This neighborhood traditionally had a large presence of non-Muslim minorities but, since their exodus due to xenophobic assaults and policies, the neighborhood has increasingly been a home to Kurdish immigrants, informal workers (including mussel sellers, transgender sex workers, recyclers), and other impoverished and stigmatized groups. The area we studied consists of 9 building blocks compromising 278 buildings and was the first in Tarlabaşı to be targeted by the urban renewal law (Law no. 5366) enacted in 2005 (Sakizlioglu, 2007). The government worked with a private investor, GAP, to transform the renewal area. We conducted 48 interviews: 9 with formal tenants (4 shopkeepers, 5 households), 9 with informal tenants (1 shopkeeper, 8 households), 21 with property owners (10 shopkeepers, 11 owner-occupiers), 3 with squatters, 2 with representatives of the municipality, and 1 with a representative of GAP.

4 The contentious politics of gentrification in Istanbul

The gentrification of the Tarlabaşı renewal area did not take place overnight or without a fight. Property owners established the Association for Solidarity with Tarlabaşı Property Owners and Renters (Tarlabaşı Association hereafter) in 2008 and could prevent massive displacement from the renewal area until 2011. In line with the perspective we sketched above, we first provide a general picture of the neighborhood and relations among residents before the intervention. Then we investigate how the state and its partners perceived and represented Tarlabaşı. Subsequently, we look at the ways in which residents were differentiated into groups and highlight the role of time in shaping power relations. Finally, we consider how the politics of classification and time produced particular forms of collective (in)action and determined the trajectories and experiences of gentrification.

4.1 Tarlabaşı before renewal: a delicate balance

The relationships in Tarlabaşı prior to the urban renewal can best be described as a delicate balance. Many residents belonged to stigmatized groups such as Roma, Kurds, sex workers, African immigrants, or recyclers. Mutual stigmatization within the neighborhood was strong. For example, the Turkish residents in the area often reproduced stigmas circulating in the national media, referring to Kurds in interviews as 'backward', 'illiterate', 'unmannered', 'unadjusted', 'criminal', or 'terrorist'. Almost all respondents spoke about other residents they found indecent or repulsive. An Armenian tenant, for instance, recalls an idealized past where "Everyone used to sweep their doorsteps", whereas now people "throw garbage from the windows and hang their underwear on the laundry ropes in the street" (Abraham, tenant, August 2010). In a similar fashion, Roma residents blame the deterioration of the neighborhood on Kurdish residents, while families accuse the sex workers of moral degeneration. In spite of such mutual stigmatization, many respondents emphasized that residents generally did not have problems with 'other' groups. Even though conflicts and tensions did occur, people watched out for each other and were careful not to let conflicts escalate. There was, in other words, a 'live and let live' mentality and quotidian form of tolerance that made the neighborhood a relatively safe place even for transgender sex workers. The neighborhood not only provided a refuge but also represented an important site for economic activities.

[1] To protect our respondents' privacy we use aliases.

Tarlabaşı residents often worked in the nearby, richer areas of Beyoğlu, small landlords rented out rooms for modest prices, and store keepers profited from relatively low property prices in a relatively central location.

4.2 State-sanctioned stigma

In the media and in policy discourses Tarlabaşı is often represented as an 'uncivilized' place, full of people who have not 'adjusted to city life' or who are 'criminals'. The district mayor of Beyoğlu, for instance, argues that in places that are well maintained and beautiful "people see and learn what being a city-dweller is" (TGRT, *Basbasa Programi*, interview with the mayor of Beyoğlu, 2006). The restructuring of Tarlabaşı is thus framed as a struggle against incivility. In interviews, representatives of the municipality indicate that they want to protect the area against the people currently living there:

> "A suit that is bought from Vakko [an expensive store] should not be used as pajamas. This place must be cleansed from these groups. Beyoğlu used to be a drastically different district. Then it became a place for the common herd [ordinary people, *avamlaştı*]. Especially Tarlabaşı became a center of negativity .… Our aim with this [new urban renewal project] is to renew this redundant urban center … and reveal the hidden treasury" (Mustafa, municipal authority, March 2006).

Protecting civil order and cultural heritage thus go together with, or even require, the removal of the people living in the area. In addition, the municipality feels that the operation is necessary to get rid of a crime-inducing environment over which it has little control:

> "You cannot solve the security problem under the current conditions. There are underground passages, tunnels under the buildings. They [criminals] hide there .… What we want to do is to remedy this illegal condition. If we do not do this, the bulldozers will talk. … Under the new conditions [after renewal] they'll understand that they cannot reside here and go away" (Kamil, municipal authority, April 2006).

In an echo of Haussman who sought to redesign Paris to curb revolts, GAP promised to turn Tarlabaşı into the 'Champs-Élysées of Istanbul' and bring its cultural heritage back to life.

Tarlabaşı's stigma was not purely a state fabrication—Tarlabaşı was widely known as an area of relegation. The stigma is also not merely imposed from outside—as we noted, respondents often stigmatized other inhabitants. The state stigma thus feeds from and feeds into images that circulate widely. But it does so selectively: only the past population is represented as having cultural diversity while the diversity of the present population is ignored; the reputation of the area as a crime zone is adopted and amplified while the sense of security it offers to many of its residents is ignored. The stigmatization of Tarlabaşı and the projection of a cleansed future thus paved the way for the transformation. But to actually expropriate and transform the neighborhood, the government and its partners strategically differentiated the residents and carefully conducted a politics of timing.

4.3 State-sanctioned differentiation

The main line of differentiation was between stakeholders with and without formal tenure rights. Only the property owners were formally recognized as stakeholders. This group, in turn, was subdivided into different subgroups. As Mrs Nalan, GAP's project manager, straightforwardly states, the company and the municipality adopted different approaches to different groups of owners. The first group consists of non-Muslim minority foundations that historically had a presence in the neighborhood, including the Syrian and Armenian community. The municipality and GAP considered these minority foundations as having a legitimate presence in the renewed Tarlabaşı. The second group is comprised of formal small business owners and shop-owners, who work in but usually do not live in the neighborhood. These enterprises were initially not offered any commercial space to relocate but after the negotiations GAP offered to accommodate them in the renewed neighborhood if they would

adjust their profile to the desired clientele. For instance, a bakery could stay if it would transform into a restaurant, a teahouse was not accommodated but a café would be. The third group of owners was what GAP referred to as the 'urban poor'[2] who owned rundown or modest houses. These poor owners live in their properties and often have informal businesses. These poor owners were considered an obstacle to development and they were thus pushed to sell their properties.

While owners were at least in principle acknowledged, residents without property rights were mostly ignored. Some tenants with good connections received modest financial assistance (for moving, for instance) but most were not recognized as stakeholders. The government, moreover, targeted residents it associated with illegality. In the runup to the renewal operation the government intensified its surveillance, including raids on undocumented migrants. The government organized inspections of businesses, checked for business licences and tax liabilities, prohibited street sellers, and so on.

The government and GAP thus divided the neighborhood into different groups and subgroups according to their property rights and the degree to which they fit into the image of the future Tarlabaşı. The differentiation was made from the outset but in the course of the process became more pronounced—the government and GAP projected different time regimes on the different groups and thereby shaped the (im)possibilities for collective action. Thus, the differentiation was produced in part through timing and crystallized into differential possibilities and practices of collective action.

4.4 Timing

In 2006 residents of Tarlabaşı for the first time heard that renewal might take place. Following rumors that something was about to happen, the municipality organized a meeting for the property owners about the possible renewal operation. Attendees recall being told that the government aimed for a renewal project in cooperation with the World Bank and that no one would be displaced. Most property owners welcomed these plans and eagerly awaited further news. Murat, a small property owner, talks about his first impressions:

> "They called us to the municipality … and said that they were getting 20 billion TL [roughly €10 billion] in credit from the World Bank …. I thought 'how nice that they will renew the neighborhood' …. We also do not want it to deteriorate like this …. We thought it was good, our properties would be revaluated and we would hit the jackpot …. The deputy mayor said that everyone will renovate their own place; they would give credit to the ones who cannot afford it. We thought that was perfect, we said that was great" (Murat, property owner, June 2010).

Meanwhile the government and private investors were actively planning behind the scenes how they would expropriate the neighborhood. A year-long wait on the part of the residents with raised hopes was suddenly interrupted by the news that the municipality had issued a tender and that GAP—a project developer that is a part of Çalık whose CEO is the son-in-law of the Prime Minister and former Istanbul mayor Tayyip Erdogan—had won with their plan to transform Tarlabaşı into the 'Champs-Élysées of Istanbul'.

After winning the tender, GAP moved in different gears. GAP immediately set forth to liaise with the minority foundations. Through individual talks it persuaded each of the three minority foundations to become partners in the project, even if it meant altering the plans. The owners with small enterprises were all engaged at the same time, which provided these owners with considerable advantages—even though initially they were not part of the future of Tarlabaşı as projected by the government and GAP, they managed to work together and formulate collective demands (see below). The owners categorized as 'urban poor' suffered a very different fate. They were initially shocked to hear that their

[2] Interview with Mrs Nalan, 15 February 2011.

properties would be expropriated. Deception transformed into panic when the municipality and the GAP started rushing the property owners to accept the offer. Mahir, who operates his hardware shop at his father's property, talked about how his elderly father was intimidated by the project coordinator of the GAP:

> "When he [his father] went to talk, Mrs Nalan scared him a lot. She told him to decide in 5 minutes. He came back with a red face and he said 'I am selling the building'" (Mahir, property owner, June 2010).

The municipality increased pressure by threatening to expropriate the properties; property owners would be forced to sell their property for a low price and would then have to wait for five years to get the monetary compensation. Those who felt too pressured sold their properties and moved out. Others started court cases to object to the (conditions of) expropriation. Aziz, a Kurdish low-income property owner, talks about his tiring wait during the juridical process, which lasted for more than two years:

> "This long-lasting juridical process tired us a lot. We have been tackling the same problems for years already. It is not yet clear if I will get an increased price for my house …. I am very exhausted and do not have any patience anymore. I wish the court case will be over soon and we can move out after getting our money (Aziz, property owner, June 2010).

In sum, the property owners were subjected to effective temporal politics. The municipality and its partner first had the owners wait and then suddenly accelerated the process to force them into quick decisions. A number of owners,[3] mostly absentee landlords and landlords who wanted to move out of the area anyways, sold their places immediately. Some others,[4] who wanted to stay in the area but were scared to lose their properties, could not resist the pressure and signed agreements without being fully aware of their legal rights. The owners who did not give in were then forced into tedious and costly juridical processes that extended the period of uncertainty and slowly eroded their morale to resist.

Tenants had much fewer rights than property owners. They were also not called to meetings and therefore had to rely on rumors circulating within the neighborhood. The Tarlabaşı Association asked for compensation for the renters, which provided a ray of hope, especially for tenants who had no place to go and would become homeless the day they were displaced. Asiye, a low-income tenant and proprietor of a second-hand shop, was among the very few tenants who became members of the association. She expected that the TarlabasşıAssociation would help the tenants in the process but she ended up with empty hands:

> "The neighborhood association told us in the beginning to become members and promised that if the buildings were sold they would also ask for rent compensation for us. We became members and waited but they did not do anything concrete for us" (Asiye, tenant, June 2010).

As time progressed, it became clear that the tenants would not be compensated but they were also not yet physically removed. They entered a twilight zone: it was clear they had to move but not when. Both official statements and rumors turned out to have little value; it often happened that announced evictions did not materialize. They were forced into an anxious wait for official announcements, decisions of their landlords to sell their building, the outcomes of court cases, the eviction papers, and finally the bulldozers. Moving out of the neighborhood often meant paying much higher prices for much less attractive locations, but some tenants decided to relocate to at least have some certainty. Tenants who could not afford to move were forced to stay in a place where they knew they could not stay. Many lived under

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[3] Though it is difficult to provide an exact number, we estimate that 5–10% of the owners sold their properties immediately.

[4] Our estimate would be that this figure is around 5%.

this pressure for as long as six years, from 2005 until 2011. Waiting for others' decisions (or nondecisions) imprinted the tenants' experiences of feeling powerless.

4.5 Collective (in)action

The resistance against the renewal originated with a couple of property owners of Turkish descent who were early (before 1980) immigrants to the area as well as one Kurdish real estate agent, who migrated to Istanbul in the 1980s. They established the Tarlabaşı Association in 2008 to challenge the municipality's plans. Their primary goal was to engage in collective negotiations. Although the founders of the association were mostly relatively well-off people from nonstigmatized groups, they expressly reached out to everyone living in the area. The association mobilized beyond Tarlabaşı as it called upon the help of many activist experts, including lawyers, journalists, planners, and organizers. The lawyer of the association successfully called on UNESCO to oppose the aggressive displacement carried out under the pretext of cultural preservation, opened a court case at the European Court of Human Rights, and got Amnesty to speak out against the evictions. The mobilization was impressive and it seemed that all the ingredients for successful collective action were in place.

However, the opposition was not effective for two reasons related to classification and time. The first reason is that the opposition was divided. Although the residents in the area first appeared to unite in the face of an external threat, the differentiation of the residents further amplified already existing tensions. The weak presence of tenants, for instance, was seen by some of the activist owners as proof that the tenants were 'illiterate' or 'ignorant' about what was about to happen. They moreover felt that that their situation was much more difficult. One owner remarked (incorrectly) that

"tenants can take their stuff and move somewhere else … it is easier for the tenants. You take your stuff and leave. But the municipality is ruining us" (Ali, property owner).

Rather than taking the municipality up on its promises to deliver compensation for owners as well as tenants, the Tarlabaşı Association decided to push the municipality to first take the owners seriously:

"tenants were not talked about anymore as the municipality did not even take the property owners seriously. You think someone who does not take property owners seriously would take the tenants into account?" (Sadet, property owner, June 2010).

The municipality effectively pushed a wedge between the small enterprises which would be able to return to the area if they changed their profile and the 'urban poor'. Some owners of the latter suggested direct action, like street blockades, but the enterprises strongly opposed such methods. Throughout the meetings, the proposals for direct action of a nonviolent nature were rejected as they would allegedly confirm the image that residents were 'Tarlabasşı terrorists'.

The second reason for the weakness of the opposition is that the resistance mobilized all sorts of resources and groups but had difficulty in creating and keeping momentum. The owners and a small group of tenants initially mobilized together but the owners gave up representing the tenants as they saw that the government was slowly eating away their base by pressuring some owners into selling. While the negotiations and court cases revolved around the conditions of the expropriation, protests by external groups centered on the human costs of the destruction of Tarlabaşı. Ironically, by the time activists staged protests to protect tenants' rights, tenants had been entirely marginalized.

In sum, while the potential for effective resistance was certainly there, the politics of classification and timing took the sting out of the mobilization and made it possible for the government to fragment the opposition. Mutual stigmas existed before the renewal operation started but these were activated and amplified as the more resourceful residents feared they would be tainted with Tarlabaşı's stigma and loathed the residents they formally represented. Instead of dealing with the entire opposition at one point in time, the government differentiated

the residents and developed a temporal politics, sometimes having people wait while at other times pressuring them, depending on the strategic demands of the situation. The residents' collective power eroded even as they were finding allies beyond the neighborhood and were jumping scales by engaging in national and international protest. In 2011 and early 2012, the last properties were expropriated and the residents were evicted.

5 The routine politics of gentrification in Amsterdam
In contrast to Tarlabaşı, state-sponsored gentrification in Indische Buurt proceeded smoothly. The right of tenants for collective representation was enshrined in regulations and tenants also felt they could benefit from collective bargaining and yet passively accepted or actively cooperated with the sharp reduction in the share of social housing and the displacement of tenants. To explain this (lack of) response to gentrification, we first provide a sketch of the neighborhood before the intervention. Then we look at how the state and its partners represented Indische Buurt and targeted it for renewal. We then discuss how residents were differentiated and examine the politics of timing. Finally, we explain collective (in)action in response to gentrification.

5.1 A multicultural working-class neighborhood
Indische Buurt was built in the beginning of 20th century as a working-class area. The Van der Pek Blocks, one of the two housing complexes we study here, were built as the first social housing complex in Amsterdam with a communal garden (Bohl, 2010). In the 1960s the neighborhood started to suffer from physical dilapidation and the suburbanization of the more prosperous residents. In the 1970s a broad coalition of communists, shopkeepers, squatters, and resident groups protested against the dilapidation and called for neighborhood-based urban renewal (Heijdra, 2000). The resident resistance largely succeeded in the sense that the government agreed to provide renovated or new affordable housing to the residents, but the outflow of more prosperous workers did not stop. Their places were taken by immigrants from Morocco, Turkey, and Surinam in the 1970s and 1980s, making Indische Buurt a very multicultural and relatively poor neighborhood.

When residents in Indische Buurt speak about their neighborhood, the conversation quickly focuses on ethnicity. Some of the native Dutch tenants feel that immigrants have taken over the neighborhood. For instance, Michael, one of the interviewed tenants, says that
> "Javastraat [the main shopping street of Indische Buurt] has been taken over by Moroccan and Turkish shops. It used to be an old working-class street with butchers and bakers and all. But it is now all butchers and grocery shops—you stumble over the eggplants on the pavement. I think this is what has changed, you know. We lost all the milk shops, pet shops. I think a lot of people living in this neighborhood they don't need pets, they eat them so they don't need pet shops" (Michael, regular tenant, Ceramplein, December 2009).

Many residents mention the street presence of immigrant and especially Moroccan youth and consider them annoying, intimidating, or dangerous. However, most respondents liked the neighborhood. The strong presence of immigrants and immigrant shopkeepers as well as the parks and public spaces are often mentioned as advantages of the area. In our interviews, 28 out of 37 respondents said they felt at home in the neighborhood. To understand why they nevertheless passively accepted or actively cooperated with the sharp reduction in the share of social housing and the displacement of tenants we need to understand the politics of classification and timing.

5.2 State-sanctioned stigma

In the early 1990s the Indische Buurt acquired the reputation of a 'failed neighborhood' where the neighborhood-based renewal had obstructed rather than promoted the area's rejuvenation. Rob Engelsdorp-Gastelaars, Professor of Urban Geography at the University of Amsterdam, said that "The renewed neighborhood with renovated housing is a negative environment with very low attraction and a very high concentration of problems …. It's a disastrous neighborhood" (cited in Anderiesen and Reijndorp, 1990, page 15). Journalists in search of stories of urban decline and cultural tensions often found their way into Indische Buurt.

The negative stories contributed to the idea that Indische Buurt had to be drastically restructured. Whereas before the consensus had been that social housing was the solution to urban ills and an important public provision, it now came to be seen as the cause of urban problems and a financial burden (Uitermark, 2011). In the course of the 1990s the central government developed the so-called restructuring policy that targeted neighborhoods with high shares of low-income groups and minorities (Uitermark, 2003). The goal was to make neighborhoods 'livable' by renewing and privatizing the housing stock.

Indische Buurt was targeted by this policy and has since the 1990s been a priority area for urban renewal. The government and its partners tainted the neighborhood with the stigma of a marginalized neighborhood (an *achterstandswijk*) that had to be drastically restructured, not only physically but also demographically. They emphatically rejected the idea to physically improve social housing because this does not offer a solution to "indifference, poverty, unemployment, poor schooling and language problems" (Stadsdeel Zeeburg, 2008, page 5). According to the government and its partners these problems require social mixing:

> "The Indische Buurt has the potential to become a neighborhood where people like to live and are able to develop themselves. The Indische Buurt now scores below the Amsterdam average with respect to livability. This should be increased to at least the Amsterdam average. For the rest, we don't want Indische Buurt to be an average neighborhood—we want to turn it from a marginalized neighborhood (*achterstandswijk*) into a vibrant cosmopolitan neighborhood (*wereldwijk*). By that we mean a mixed neighborhood of high quality, with a mixed population composition, a mixed housing composition, and a diversity of economic, social and cultural provisions" (page 5).

The local government and the housing corporation felt that there were too many social houses and aimed for a more balanced neighborhood: that is, a neighborhood with a higher share of middle-class and native Dutch households. The idea that the Indische Buurt was *potentially* a vibrant cosmopolitan neighborhood declassified at least a part of the population and excluded from public imagination the idea that the neighborhood could be upgraded without displacing the residents. But the residents were not simply removed all at once. Rather, the transformation proceeded by differentiating the residents and conducting a politics of timing.

5.3 State-sanctioned differentiation

The restructuring policy is hegemonic in the sense that it is supported by almost all political parties, the tenant organization, and the housing corporations. The formulation and execution of the renewal plan were carried out as a matter of routine because all parties had agreed to the general goals of the policy. At the basis of all the plans is the very strong position of regular tenants. An individual lease can be discontinued only under specific circumstances and the landlord is required to provide a proper alternative. Collective rights are also enshrined in the law and in regulations, both at the national, city, and complex levels. Regular tenants are entitled to consultation at each stage of the policy process and, if a complex is targeted for renewal, at least 70% of the regular tenants have to agree before the owner can proceed. Regular tenants are, however, only one among various resident groups.

Precisely because the status of regular tenant afforded so many rights, the government has since the 1990s allowed different types of contract to be made. One such type is the status of 'temporary tenants'. Temporary tenants are directly selected by the housing corporation and not (as is the case for regular tenants) through a centralized distribution system. Landlords can discontinue the lease of temporary tenants without having to provide alternative housing. The 'antisquatter' is another new tenure type. 'Antisquatters' do not have a 'tenant contract' but a 'user contract'. They usually obtain their accommodation through a firm that is hired by the owner to guard the house against squatters or others in the period up to demolition or renovation. Yet another type of tenure involves the so-called 'campus contract'. This type of contract is meant only for students, can be used only for houses smaller than $40\,m^2$, and is discontinued when students graduate. All these contracts were used in the cases under investigation here and the housing corporation treated the different groups in very different ways.

The regular tenants were considered by the housing corporation as stakeholders in the process. They were offered priority status in the social housing system. In Amsterdam's system this means that they can register for social housing that becomes available through Woningnet (the centralized distribution system) and will receive priority over people on the waiting list. The regular tenants also received a 'moving fee' of €5000. The temporary tenants and antisquatters received entirely different treatment. They were not informed or consulted but only received notice a couple of months before they had to leave. The antisquatters received even shorter notice. A few temporary tenants and antisquatters with good contacts with the housing corporation did manage to acquire a new house in another renewal complex (favoritism is more common for temporary contracts because they are allocated directly by the housing corporation, not through the centralized distribution system). The tenants with campus contracts had a somewhat different position as they rented their apartments through the University of Amsterdam which in turn leased them from the housing corporation. The tenants with campus contracts were displaced but then offered other accommodation through the same constellation.

The government and its partners thus differentiated the residents into different categories. Residents did not resist the categorization—all the groups felt entitled to what they got based on the status accorded to them. The differentiation into different groups was made from the outset and did not change through time; the categories were both strongly institutionalized and strongly internalized. Yet time played into collective (in)action in specific ways.

5.4 Timing

Gentrification politics in the Indische Buurt started long before the actual implementation of the plans and this prerenewal period is important to understand why the renewal proceeded so smoothly. Some of the tenants had already been told in the early 1990s that renewal would take place. For more than ten years—until 2003 for Van der Pek Blocks and 2008 for Ceramplein—tenants knew something was about to happen but not what. The housing corporation in the meantime did not do any work on the buildings, which consequently deteriorated in quality. Tenants talk about damp, leaks, doors that can not close, and so on. While most were happy with the neighborhood, few (9 out of 37 permanent renters) were pleased with their house, which greatly increased their willingness to relocate. Some tenants, in fact, had wanted to move out because of the bad state of their house but decided to stay so that they would obtain the rights associated with forced relocation. For most, the announcement of renewal felt like a liberation rather than a threat as they wanted to be done with moving. With each regular tenant gone, the demand for social housing in the renovated complex decreased, so the housing corporation was eager to reinforce this attitude and urged the regular tenants to use their priority status to obtain social housing elsewhere:

"They were pushing everyone to move out, and to start looking for another apartment through Woningnet, even though there was still a lot of time" (Daniella, regular tenant, VDP Block, December 2009).

The precarious residents—people with a campus contract, temporary tenants, and antisquatters—experienced the process almost in the opposite way; they were hoping they could stay as long as possible and felt very privileged. Beatrice, a temporary tenant at Ceramplein, recalled how grateful she was when the housing corporation informed her that she could stay longer.

"For me, it was the first time that I was given a date for when I have to move out from a house in Amsterdam. I have always lived antisquat before. For that you never know when you move in how long you've got, so I came in here and they said 'you have two years', it was a gift" (Beatrice, temporary tenant, Ceramplein, October 2009).

Feeling very privileged, the precarious tenants tried to cause as little nuisance as possible. Kevin, a low-income temporary tenant at Ceramplein, emphasizes that he pays his rents on time and wants to be a good tenant so that the housing corporation might provide him with a place in the future; Beatrice says she wants to stay as long as possible and does "not hope but pray" that the corporation would again accommodate her.

Even more than the regular tenants, the precarious tenants look to the housing corporation for information and security. Only after the renewal operation of these two complexes was complete, were a number of temporary tenants and residents with campus contracts living in similar (to be renewed) blocks informed of their rights and found out that they were often getting less security or paying more money than they were supposed to (De Wit and Flintoff, 2010). The precarious residents in the blocks we studied, however, fully internalized their precarious status and were at no point inclined to seek support from lawyers or social workers.

During the entire process, the housing corporation and the government clearly had the initiative—they defined the problem and stipulated the solution. After not intervening for many years, the housing corporation pushed the regular tenants to use their priority as soon as the plans were being executed. This strategy of first having people move out slowly because of a deteriorating house and then pushing them to move because of the urgency of the plans reduced the share of regular tenants in the complexes at first gradually and then quickly. Only a small percentage of tenants were patient enough to go through the entire process and insist on being allocated a (relatively luxurious) house in the renovated block. In the long period until the actual renewal, the housing corporation gradually replaced regular with precarious tenants who were dependent on the housing corporation.

5.5 Collective (in)action

The comprehensive regulatory and legal frameworks for urban renewal in the Netherlands provide considerable rights to individual tenants and offer extensive possibilities for collective representation and bargaining. The most basic rule underlying collective bargaining is that at least 70% of the households in a renewal area have to agree with the operation before it can be executed. Because of this rule, tenants collectively resisted renewal plans involving displacement and proposed alternatives (Huisman, 2013). In most cases, however, the question of collective decision making is not on the table. The renewal of the two complexes in Indische Buurt shows why this is so. In the runup to the intervention, the base of regular tenants had been slowly eroded. While in theory 70% of the tenants could have objected to the plans, the percentage of people with regular contracts was already well below this number at Ceramplein when the exact plans were communicated to the residents. The remaining tenants in both complexes, moreover, were living in houses that had been deteriorating for a long time and many wanted to leave their houses. By the time the renewal operation was announced, there was no substantial base of regular tenants capable or willing to negotiate collectively.

Moreover, when attempts were made to develop collective responses, interethnic tensions arose. One regular renter of Turkish descent, for instance, says that

"There were some Moroccans; they even did not let us say a word. They said 'I want it like this, like that'. … The representatives could not find a moment to deal with our questions and demands" (Fadime, permanent tenant, Ceramplein, October, 2009).

Here we see how the lack of collective action is further reinforced by strained relations between different groups of tenants. Rather than turning to each other to think about collective responses, residents compete for the housing corporation's attention in an attempt to get the most out of the process.

Although most residents were dealing with the housing corporation individually, there were some tendencies towards more collective strategies and it is interesting to see why they were so constrained. In accordance with general rules, the housing corporation created consultative platforms to represent tenants. The platforms were supposed to represent all (regular) tenants but in practice the few tenants who participated were isolated from the others. When the platform in one of the complexes informed other residents through a newsletter, a member of the platform recounts, the housing corporation

"was for some reason unhappy with this initiative as it was done without informing them and they liked to deal with everyone directly. So the platform didn't continue with it" (Henk, VDP Block, regular tenant, January 2009).

The representatives on the platform experienced that:

"Although in the platform we were asked our opinion, in the end the corporation would be always right. Our part was getting the information clear … and we could sometimes show little mistakes or small things like electricity plugs that had to be in other places on the wall, etc. But the plans themselves were already all thought out" (Daniella, VDP Block, regular tenant, December 2009).

Meanwhile, the housing corporation consulted intensively with individual tenants to inform them about the possibilities of acquiring another house through Woningnet and convincing them to discontinue their lease. The housing corporation thus individualized the negotiation process over renewal and created a platform that was isolated from the other tenants. In this constellation, all tenants enjoyed considerable rights but what they got out of the process depended largely on their individual strategies and persistence. In the end, 24 households returned to live in the renovated complexes (out of a total of 133 prerenewal houses). These were mostly middle-class households who were well aware of their strong legal rights and had skillfully negotiated the conditions of the move and return.

The restructuring of Indische Buurt was, in a sense, a routine process. The housing corporation classified the residents into different categories and treated each group according to its assigned status. The group of regular tenants with entitlements gradually decreased until a few persistent and skillful tenants were left. The differentiations were internalized by the residents themselves. The housing corporation recognized only the regular tenants as having a say in the process and the regular tenants also felt entitled to the rights and status accorded to them. In contrast, the precarious tenants, having fully internalized the idea that they should be thankful and complacent, oriented themselves fully with the housing corporation, not with other residents or official resident representatives.

6 Conclusion—commonalities in radically different cases

In this paper we have examined the modalities and practices of state-sponsored gentrification in two radically different contexts: Amsterdam and Istanbul. While in both contexts powerful structural forces push governments to facilitate the gentrification of centrally located yet impoverished areas, we contend that there is a need to look at symbolic politics to understand the exact nature of gentrification and its effects for different groups of residents.

The comparison of Amsterdam and Istanbul highlighted some differences and, perhaps more remarkably, some commonalities in how symbolic politics plays into the gentrification of stigmatized areas.

The differences between Istanbul and Amsterdam are striking and obvious when it comes to the intensity of the process. Gentrification in Istanbul proceeds by brutal force, whereas in Amsterdam it proceeds by stealth. These obvious differences, however, do not explain why the process was contentious in Istanbul and not in Amsterdam. The reason for contention in Istanbul is *not* that residents in this city were more badly affected; there is no straightforward relationship between hardship and resistance. In fact, in both contexts, residents who suffered most were almost entirely silent while the more privileged groups were most assertive in making claims. What explains the difference in the level of contention seems to be the extent to which rules and roles are defined. The rules were clearly defined and strongly institutionalized in the Dutch case. At the basis of these rules was a sharp distinction between regular tenants and other tenants, with only the former enjoying considerable privileges. While in the Dutch case the differentiation of residents was strongly institutionalized and inscribed into residents' perceptions, in the Turkish case the various differentiations imposed upon the residents—between different types of owners and tenants—were initially not institutionalized and internalized. As a consequence, residents did not, at least initially, simply accept the differentiations and rules imposed upon them and some of them mobilized against the government's portrayal of the neighborhood and the renewal plans.

The commonalities between the two cases are at least as instructive as the differences. Since we observed these similarities in two radically different cases, we can hypothesize that they will be found in other cases too, which is for future research to ascertain. State-sanctioned territorial stigma played a key facilitative role in both cases. By attributing the blame for decline to the areas' residents, the government legitimated displacement and full-scale gentrification. However, gentrification does not involve a straightforward opposition between its promoters and victims. In the course of the process there were complex alliances and oppositions. People who were displaced were already divided along the lines of class or ethnicity, and promoters of gentrification further reinforce these differences by imprinting a stigma on the neighborhood and classifying some of its residents as worthy of involvement while declassifying others. In sum, the governments and their partners managed to smooth the process by making concessions to carefully delineated groups (the regular tenants with a wish to return in the case of Amsterdam, the enterprises with a wish to return in the case of Tarlabaşı) while excluding others.

With respect to time, in these two cases (and possibly in general), it is essential to recognize that the period leading up to (the final decision to undertake) renewal is marked by a long period of decay. This not only enlarges the rent gap but erodes the social base from which opposition may spring as the more resourceful residents leave the area and social cohesion declines. The long period of decay is followed by a period where the promoters of gentrification impress a sense of urgency upon residents and give them the impression that they have to move immediately. The combination of anxious waiting and being rushed is too much for at least a share of the residents and they therefore give in, further tilting the balance of power in favor of the promoters of gentrification. In sum, the inequalities of class power that underpin gentrification also involve control over time—those in power generally have greater endurance and the ability to let others wait or to rush them. The symbolic politics of classification and timing thus have very real consequences for the ways in which gentrification plays out. Taking account of these aspects of gentrification politics can help us to better understand the process and respond to it.

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