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Governing the global locally: Agonistic democracy practices in The Hague's Schilderswijk

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Abstract

Cities have become stages for (inter)national conflicts over political and religious identity, democratic values and ownership of place. These 'glocal urban conflicts' challenge local actors to respond immediately and effectively in ways that prevent escalation and strengthen democratic relations. The theory of agonistic democracy provides a valuable model that celebrates difference and inclusiveness to foster democracy. There is, however, little understanding of how these agnostic ideals are practiced in rapidly unfolding situations. This article provides a case study to further our understanding of dealing with conflicts where global tensions are enacted at the street level. It proposes an interpretative approach that brings into focus how a decentred network of local professionals practice agnostic democracy in action. The local government of The Hague was challenged to 'govern the global locally' when young Muslims waved flags allying with ISIS on the streets of the Schilderswijk neighbourhood. A series of local demonstrations required appropriate responses in a highly mediated conflict. The analysis provides three 'critical moments' that function as a lens to study governance practices that underscore diversity as a political resource. Practices of 'governing meaning' and 'governing the street' addressed concerns about security, ownership and local grievances.

Keywords

agonistic democracy, glocal urban conflict, governance practice, mediatisation, Schilderswijk

摘要

城市已经成为围绕政治和宗教认同、民主价值观和地方所有权的全国性（国际性）冲突之舞台。这些“全球地方性的城市冲突”促使地方行动者立即有效地作出反应，防止其升级并加强民主关系。论争民主理论提供了一个崇尚差异和包容性以培育民主精神的有价值模式。然而，如何在快速发展的形势中实现这些论争理想，学界却鲜有理解。本文提供了一个案例研究，以进一步了解如何在街道层面处理全球紧张局势带来的冲突。文章提出了一种解释方式，重点关注分散化的当地专业人士网络如何用行动来实践论争民主。当年轻的穆斯林在史欧德斯维克（Schilderswijk）街区的街道上挥舞着与 ISIS 结盟的旗帜时，海牙地方政府面临着“在当地治理全球”的挑战。一系列地方示威需要在高度斡旋的冲突中作出适当的反应。本文的分析给出了三个“关键时刻”，透过这些“镜头”，可研究将多样性作为政治资源的治理实践。“意义治理”和“街头治理”实践应对了对安全和所有权的担忧，也应对了地方不满。

关键词

论争民主、全球城市冲突、治理实践、斡旋、史欧德斯维克

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Challenges of glocal urban conflict

'Islamic State fears take hold in the Netherlands' was the headline of an Al Jazeera article on 5 September 2014 (Lageman, 2014). Three weeks earlier, a group of young Muslims had taken to the streets of The Hague's infamous neighbourhood Schilderswijk:

They come from Schilderswijk neighbourhood, which the media have renamed the 'sharia triangle'. This neighbourhood primarily houses immigrants, as do many neighbourhoods in large Dutch cities. Over the past few months, several pro-Gaza demonstrations have been held in the district, at which a number of people were seen waving Islamic State flags. The radical anti-immigrant, right-wing organisation Pro Patria (for the fatherland) then held counter-demonstrations. (Lageman, 2014)

Al Jazeera was not the only international media covering the protests in The Hague. In China, a newspaper stated: 'The newly arrested suspects are part of a group which held a pro-ISIS demonstration in July this year in the Schilderswijk quarter in The Hague. This demonstration caused uproar after anti-Semitic slogans were [shouted]' (Minxi, 2014). The Irish Times reflected on the response of The Hague's mayor, Van Aartsen:

During the Gaza conflict last summer, IS flags (since banned) were repeatedly flown at anti-Israel demonstrations there. That led to plans for a march through the area by the extreme right-wing group in August – before the protest was banned by the mayor, Jozias van Aartsen, despite howls about civil liberties. (Cluskey, 2014)

These news reports reveal how a local event is both initiated and evaluated across local, national and global levels of society. In our globally connected world, local conflicts that emerge in the specific context of the street in one city quickly spread to the streets of other cities (AlSayyad and Guvenc, 2015). Recent demonstrations like the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and Gezi Parc show a similar pattern of this rapid spread. Consequently, local governments' attempts to deal with these conflicts are evaluated across international audiences (Uitermark and Gielen, 2010).

Global connectedness, however, does not only evaluate the practices of local governments; it also shapes the topics of, reasons for and unfolding of conflict. In The Hague, the conflict was sparked by rising tensions in Gaza and the emergence of Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq. Thus global issues that spark demonstrations and globally inspired practices to engage in or mediate conflict make local urban conflicts increasingly 'glocal'.

We now live in 'glocalities'. Each glocality is unique in many ways, and yet each is also influenced by global trends and global consciousness. Although we continue to live in particular physical localities, we now increasingly share information with and about people who live in localities different from our own. (Meyrowitz, 2004: 23)

Glocalities are characterised by the duality of global flows of information on the one hand and the locality of lives, practices and struggles on the other. Nevertheless, glocal urban conflicts become real on city streets. The term glocal in this sense describes an emerging glocal form of citizenship (Brodie,

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2000) in which individuals simultaneously identify with local and global grievances that merge together in the performance of a street demonstration. Conditions of global interdependence imply that the actions of distant others of some people in one nation-state presume or affect the actions of distant others in other states (Young, 2000: 9). In this article, I seek to understand how the global is governed locally when connectedness disperses local concerns over global audiences and vice versa.

Cities have long been central to the rise and maintenance of democratic structures and practices (Castells, 1983). On the other hand, globalisation and migration have made cities more likely to become the locus of conflicts over political and religious identity, democratic values and ownership of place. 'The terrain of everyday political struggle over who has the legitimacy to govern and on the basis of what identity categories, seems to be scaling down from the nation state' (Davis and Libertun de Duren, 2011: 2). Such 'glocal urban conflicts' challenge local actors to enact immediate and effective responses that prevent escalation and strengthen democratic relationships.

As cities are at the frontline of conflict, the street can also be understood as the prime level of intervention for dealing with these conflicts. The actions of political leaders, street-level professionals and communities are therefore insightful points of reflection, which contributes to understanding the 'urban' in terms of 'a revolution from above, from below and in a global connectedness' (Sheppard et al., 2015). In the case study below, we will see how governance actors are challenged to deal with a chain of agonistic actions and reactions when a minority group performs identity politics on the city streets of The Hague. The black ISIS flags on the Dutch urban streets provoked an already existing fear of international terrorism and radicalisation.

The local government was challenged to deal with that fear, but also sought ways to transform the negative stigma of a minority group and to address underlying questions of ownership and identity in a multicultural urban neighbourhood.

Conflict occurs when underlying tensions and pluralistic values come to the surface and are expressed in the public sphere. Not only policy, but also the everyday choices and decisions of stakeholders shape policies and turn them into tangible practices of what Mouffe (2000) has called agonistic democracy. The key challenge for governments dealing with conflict lies in the response to plural voices (Ranciere, 1999; Tilly and Tarrow, 2006). Theories of agonistic democracy provide a valuable model for analysing how governments deal with glocal urban conflict and what challenges they face in developing inclusive responses. There is, however, little understanding of how the agonistic model is practiced in rapidly unfolding contentious situations. This article contributes to the emerging literature of how governments can put the agonistic democracy at work in practice. Following Wagenaar, I will analyse how a local government tried to collectively address a public problem by including a network of constantly shifting alliances of actors, each with his or her own capacities, skills and responsibilities (Wagenaar, 2014: 235).

Urban governance has become increasingly difficult in the age of mediatisation. There are numerous examples of urban conflicts or moments of urban dissent that highlight the role of the media. The use of social media during the Arab Spring allowed for the development of new repertoires of contentious performances (AlSayyad and Guvenc, 2015: 2028). The movement protecting Gezi Parc in Istanbul and the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York gained support through the international media. Reciprocal relationships between social

media, urban space and traditional media do not just reproduce relations between actors but also incrementally transform them (AlSaiyad and Guvenc, 2015: 2028). The role of the media in situations of conflict can be understood as that of an active performer that can have a constitutive role (Cottle, 2006: 9). In the case study of The Hague, the media also played an important role in discursively shaping and diffusing the meaning of conflict and transforming relationships among case actors. Mediatisation 'dislocates' political routines from their solid institutional hinges (Hajer, 2009: 5). As the media is an increasingly important actor in 'glocalising' urban conflict, it is important to empirically study its force and the way local actors deal with that force. In order to include discursive and tangible practices of a variety of stake holders in my analysis, I will adopt an interpretative approach that allows me to identify 'governing meaning' and 'governing the street' as key practices to manage glocal urban conflict and foster democracy.

I start with a discussion on the role of conflict in democratic practice, then address my methodological approach. Next, the empirical case study provides a basis for my interpretative analysis of the practices that unfold during three critical moments and that underscore how governments can govern diversity as a political resource in glocal urban conflict.

Practices for agonistic democracy?

As local governments are challenged to deal with urban conflict and dissent, conflict has become prominent in debates about urban politics that are concerned with new modes of representation in plural and diverse societies (Norval, 2009). In response to these concerns, two approaches developed with distinct conceptual and theoretical understandings of the role of conflict in urban

democracies (see Gualini, 2015 for an overview of this debate). The first is a perspective embedded in a Habermasian approach to communication. In this approach, conflicts and difference can be actively mediated through deliberative models (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1997). The deliberative model has been widely criticised for its focus on consensus and for thereby undermining the inherently conflicting nature of democracy (Laclau, 1996; Mouffe, 2000). In response, political theorists have proposed a perspective that understands democracy in terms of conflict. In this view, democracy is shaped through agonistic pluralism that establishes the 'us-them divide' in a way that is compatible with plural values (Mouffe, 2000: 101). Agonistic pluralism sees collective passion as a channel through which citizens express themselves (Mouffe, 2000: 103). It therefore provides a valuable perspective for rethinking the meaning of conflict as inclusive and stakeholders as mutually interdependent. In order to understand conflict as a moment of agonistic democracy, however, the field of urban studies needs a body of practice-based knowledge that offers in-depth reflections on the mechanisms of the agonistic democracy (Metzger et al., 2014). What are the practices that foster agonistic democracy? How do they work?

In order to develop a practice-based account of agonistic governance, I adopt a third approach to democracy that was developed by Iris Marion Young (2000), who values inclusion, pluralism and conflict, but adds tangible practices to negotiate a sense of the common good. Young argues that both the deliberative and the agonistic approaches understand democracy as a process of competition among divergent policy preferences (Young, 2000: 50). She criticises this view because it does not endorse norms of justice or legitimacy, and it functions as mere ideology (Young, 2000: 51). She advocates instead for an inclusive approach that

uses certain lessons from the deliberative model. Democratic decision-making is ‘the challenge to arrive at acceptable formulations of the common good despite inevitable value pluralism’ (Benhabib, 1996: 73). For Young and Benhabib, the deliberative model arises not only from a conflict of values, but also from a conflict in social life in terms of interests and cooperation. The approach to inclusive democracy allows articulating the conditions under which cooperation is mutually acceptable.

Three central propositions will guide my analysis of practices to ‘govern the global locally’. First, difference should be understood as a political resource. Second, representation should be developed through decentred governance that allows decision-making and meaning-making of events to work in consonance through a variety of non-state institutions, civil society and state institutions (Young, 2000: 46). Third, inclusive democracy requires moving beyond a norm of order that excludes creative forms of protest and demonstration from the repertoire of political action. The latter is the starting point of my analysis because the case study starts with an unexpected public demonstration. As urban governments are increasingly challenged to deal with glocal urban tensions, urban scholars can draw on the analysis of practice that I will develop using Young’s principles of inclusive democracy.

Studying agonistic practices of governance requires a decentred approach to governance because ‘society is bigger than politics and thus democratic politics must be thought of as taking place within the context of large and complex social processes’ (Young, 2000: 46). A decentred approach analyses ‘practice’ in terms of: (1) how governance is acknowledging the deep pluralism of the public domain; (2) how actors make sense of the world and make meaning; and (3) how said actors shape that meaning

through action and practices – in other words, how they ‘find out about the world by acting on the problem at hand’ (Griggs et al., 2014: 14). Situated practices of the decentred local government network in The Hague will reveal how global tensions manifest locally and how case actors respond through a contingent process of meaning-making. This pluralist approach ‘has two implications for my conception of politics; it puts both political identity and contingency at the centre of my conception of politics’ (Griggs et al., 2014: 21). A plural and decentred approach to governance thus provides me with a conceptual framework to analyse the elements of difference and contingency that case actors lay to bear in their responses to glocal urban conflict.

A method to learn from practice

I employ an interpretative approach to policy analysis that focuses on the meanings that shape actions and governance and the ways in which they do so (Bevir and Rhodes, 2004; Wagenaar, 2014). My interpretative approach combines a variety of qualitative data. To enter the subjective experiences of case actors, I took a narrative approach to interviewing to allow case actors to recount experiences in detail by describing actions and spaces. By drawing a timeline, the respondents identified ‘critical moments’ in the sequence of events (Verloo, 2015: 103). The interview transcripts provide a detailed and chronological reflection on the intricacies of practice. The case study features the network of practitioners – the mayor, policy officials, street-level professionals – as the acting agents.¹ I used newspaper reports as a ‘surrogate for interviews that provide me with accounts of key actors and their views along with more general sentiments at the time for periods I could not be present or actors I could not interview’ (Yanow, 2007: 114). News reports highlighted 12 events as

critical moments over the period of 29 June to 25 September 2014. I compared these to the three critical moments identified in interviews, and compared the accounts using a frame analysis.

Frame analysis is a method to analyse how 'people define their situation' in accordance with the principles of organisations that govern these events (Goffman, 1974: 10). Frames reveal how 'actors express beliefs through normative-prescriptive stories that interpret uncertain, problematic, or controversial situations' (Laws and Rein, 2003: 174). I understand 'framing' as an active practice that allows for a dynamic analysis of change over time and across communities of meaning (Rein and Schön, 1996; Van Hulst and Yanow, 2016; Yanow, 2000). I interpreted the process of selecting, naming, sense-making and storytelling in three critical moments throughout the sequence of events. Critical moments shift the meaning and sequence of events (Cobb, 2006) and function as a lens to interpret meaning and action as a conflict unfolds (Verloo, 2015). The case study crosscuts the levels of governance chronologically by telling the story of street demonstrations, then reflecting on local practices and political decisions, analysing these in the context of media reports, and ultimately returning to the street level as the most important site for learning.

A case study of glocal urban conflict

Context description

Schilderswijk used to be a typical blue-collar, inner-city neighbourhood in The Hague, the Netherlands. Owing to urban renewal and an influx of ethnic minorities, 'the neighbourhood moved into a downward spiral of physical decay, crime, and loss of social cohesion' (Wagenaar, 2007: 19). Today, the immigrant community

constitutes 92.3% of the neighbourhood, with 83% being of so-called 'non-Western descent', which is unique considering that non-Western immigrants only comprise 34.6% of the city as a whole (Municipality of The Hague, 2016). The neighbourhood is also one of the poorest in the city (Municipality of The Hague, poverty monitor, 2016). Although most of the immigrant youth in the neighbourhood is now second or third generation, there are still socio-economic, linguistic and occupational inequalities between this group and the native Dutch residents (Bruijn, 2012). Structural inequality has led to high unemployment rates among youth of immigrant descent, and the lack of opportunities engenders frustration within this demographic, who feel unable to participate in Dutch society (Cengiz, 2017). Social housing apartments are small and often house large families, forcing youngsters to socialise on the street. Consequently, tensions and inequalities in the neighbourhood come to the forefront at the street level.

One must understand these numbers in the context of growing national concerns over the failure of the integration of Muslims and emerging assimilation politics (Entzinger, 2006). Incidents of international terrorism and a series of violent events in the Netherlands have intensified the fear of a radicalising youth. Although a political concern, the radicalisation of Muslim youth remains quite rare and is largely an implicit association between 'Muslims' and 'violence' (Veldhuis and Bakker, 2009). Schilderswijk became the central focus of this debate when journalist Ramesar of the national newspaper *Trouw* published a report in which he described the neighbourhood as a 'sharia triangle' where local youth was quickly radicalising (Ramesar, 2013). In December 2014, *Trouw* retracted Ramesar's article and publicly apologised for his description of Schilderswijk after a special committee had

proven that the article was not based on evidence. Nevertheless, Schilderswijk had become a symbol of the radicalisation of Muslim youth.

The Netherlands has numerous social and physical policies for improving disadvantaged urban areas and handling diversity (Hoekstra, 2017). The municipality of The Hague implemented a local policy called ‘the deal’ for Schilderswijk, which focused on policing and securing the public domain (Municipality of The Hague, 2012). Loitering youth and growing crime rates were key issues that prompted the initiative to secure the neighbourhood (Municipality of The Hague, 2012). In response to concerns about radicalisation, the municipality and police department developed a relatively informal ‘community policing network’ consisting of municipal leaders, social workers, local policy officers and schoolteachers, who investigate youth networks from the bottom up. This network can be understood in terms of decentred governance because each of its actors functions on the basis of her own capacity, skills and responsibilities (Wagenaar, 2014: 235). ‘The network informs each other in times of social unrest and tries to intervene in a soft manner and on an individual scale’ (interview, police officer, 23 June 2015). This approach contrasts with the usual response to unrest, in which the military police contains or ends it rather aggressively. During the protests in the summer of 2014, the network played a vital role in governing the global locally.

The crisis

As described in the international media reports, the case started in July 2014 when a group of local youth organised a small protest against the occupation of Gaza. The protest, however small, escalated underlying tensions into an episode of urban conflict. The prime actors in this conflict were civil

servants and politicians of the municipal government of The Hague, professionals from the aforementioned network and youngsters of different ethnic backgrounds. The small demonstration was organised by a group of youths who wanted to protest against Israel. Within this protest, however, an even smaller group of radicalised Muslim youths proclaimed support for the militant group ISIS, which had emerged in Iraq. They made their first public appearance in the demonstration, where they shouted slogans in Arabic, including ‘Death to the Jews’ (NOS, 25 July 2014) and waved the flag of ISIS. The national media quickly reported the demonstration. In the context of a highly polarised Dutch public and political debates about Muslim immigrants, the local events instantly became a national concern. The demonstration legitimised the fear of radicalising youth and, once again, ascribed a location to this fear: Schilderswijk.

In response, another citizen group called Pro Patria, a right-wing nationalist group of people of Dutch origin, decided to rail against what they understood as an increasing Muslim threat in the Netherlands. On 10 August 2014, Pro Patria held a counter-demonstration in Schilderswijk. During the march, they proclaimed ‘We are the Netherlands’ and ‘No Jihad in our streets’. They chose the route of their demonstration strategically, marching from the central station to the Hoefkade in the middle of Schilderswijk because ‘[it] is the safe haven of those Salafists. If we stood at the [usual place for demonstrations] Malieveld, they wouldn’t care. If we use their territory, it hopefully creates a shock effect’ (Rijlaarsdam, 2014). When the march arrived in Schilderswijk, the following happened:

Harsh confrontations did not happen, but both groups were ready for it: around 200 politically engaged soccer supporters versus Muslim youth. ‘Here reigns Sharia’. Suddenly

[two opposing groups] stand face to face. Faces sharp and strong. Right in front of the local coffee house is the 'battle over Schilderswijk', as local residents started to call it. (Efting, 2014)

Pro Patria was ordered to re-route its march, but Muslim protesters challenged them by throwing rocks and shouting 'Allahu Akbar'. The grim atmosphere escalated when riot police were sent to the site of the demonstration and used baton charges and snatch squads to disperse the crowd. Six people were arrested: two demonstrators and four counter-protestors (*Omroep West*, 2014a).

Citizens of the neighbourhood felt the need to counteract the negative media attention and proposed a different interpretation of what was going on in their neighbourhood. They hung a banner at the Hoefkade to draw attention to the effects the demonstrations have had on Schilderswijk, stating: 'We are not ISIS!! We are Schilderswijk. No ISIS but CRISES!' (*Omroep West*, 2014b). This local concern for the reputation of the neighbourhood deepened as citizens, street-level professionals and local leaders knew that many of the protesters who took part in the escalations were not originally from Schilderswijk. To them, neither the demonstration with ISIS flags nor the Pro Patria demonstration represented the neighbourhood:

And what also didn't get through in the media, while we've regularly raised the issue, was you had the march but you also had a number of, let's say, counterparts at the Hoefkade. But nowhere in the media did it say that those people were for 90% not from Schilderswijk. (Interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015)

The grievance about the neighbourhood's identity had its roots in the ongoing struggle between local actors and the national media, which did not challenge the pre-dominant view of the neighbourhood as a 'sharia

triangle'. The construction of the neighbourhood identity as a place where young Muslims were quickly radicalising was one of the biggest concerns for local actors, as a local youth worker explained: '[When] the entire Schilderswijk is ISIS (...) it confirms everything for someone who doesn't come from Schilderswijk' (interview, Ibrahim, youth worker, 13 May 2015). According to the local practitioners, the retracted article about the 'sharia triangle' had a great social impact on the neighbourhood. Community worker Caroline adds that although the newspaper retracted the article, 'the damage is done, and it will take a long time before it is fixed' (interview, Caroline, community worker, 21 May 2015). The bad reputation and negative media attention deepened tensions in the neighbourhood and fuelled the anger of the local youth. Youth worker Ibrahim explains that the local youth was not there because of their alliance to ISIS, but because they wanted to stand up against the negative reputation:

I'm not denying that there were a few with extremist ideas or who support extremism – but over half of those guys were from the neighbourhood and just wanted action, to throw rocks at the police and stop Pro Patria and their statements. (Interview, Ibrahim, youth worker, 13 May 2015)

In this context of diverse interpretations, fear, anger, inequality and (inter)national media attention, the local government was required to act. They were challenged to take a position that would address the national fears on the one hand, and the grievances of the local community on the other.

Practices of agonistic democracy

Governing the street

The glocal tensions in the neighbourhood underline the importance of a network of

governance actors who have ‘eyes and ears in the neighbourhood’. The ‘community policing network’ played a central role in developing agonistic practices. As its members were embedded in the everyday experience of the neighbourhood and its inhabitants, they were in a position to develop ‘local knowledge’ that is often viewed as mundane (Durose, 2009), but which proved to be crucial for dealing with the crisis in Schilderswijk. Street-level professionals can use their position as ‘situated agents’ to translate local experiences and needs to government interventions and vice versa:

Those working in the immediacy of local situations, in the specific settings of such cases, need to diagnose the context and the problem at hand together in order to design actions that draw on the features of the case to address concerns for respect, for fairness, for democracy. (Laws and Forester, 2015: 348)

Because the community policing network was embedded in the neighbourhood, they were able and trusted by both citizens and government to develop local knowledge while acting in a rapidly escalating context. Their practice of actively listening to local knowledge informed agonistic practices throughout three critical moments.

Critical moment 1: Informal tactics. The first practice was a tactic that is characterised by its ad hoc, improvised and informal nature (De Certeau, 1984). As tensions were escalating rapidly, street-level professionals had to use their creative capacity to improvise in the midst of receiving information from their network (Laws and Forester, 2015): ‘A colleague of mine received a WhatsApp message from one of the girls in the classroom who was only 14 or 15 years old, saying: “Miss, miss, the war has started!”’ (interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015).

Youth worker Jamal used his local knowledge to intervene tactically and immediately:

And during the march, I went with a colleague to the Wijkpark, where the demonstration had begun, and we literally picked kids out of the crowd ... and we just sent them away. Kids that we know: ‘hey you, get out, there’s nothing for you here!’. They were given a flag, I said ‘here’s your flag’ to the organisers, ‘don’t use my kids!’ (Interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015)

Jamal’s embedded position in the community allowed him to contingently learn what was at stake and to improvise an intervention on the spot. The capacity to learn while tensions are rapidly escalating and to use this local knowledge to inform interventions is crucial in dealing with conflict (Verloo, 2016). Jamal knew the youngsters personally and could distinguish between those whose presence was politically motivated and those who were present because of peer pressure or for fun. The practice of selecting individual youngsters stems from Jamal’s situated position and local knowledge that tells him and his colleagues that for many of the local youth, the events do not have the political meaning which the media frame portrays. If the youth would simply not take part in the demonstrations, their absence would counteract the framing that gave the demonstration a glocal political meaning and that stigmatised Schilderswijk as radicalising.

Critical moment 2: Offering alternatives. The network wondered, ‘how can we prevent the youth from taking part in the next demonstration’ (interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015). Jamal was responsible for coordinating all of the information among participants in the network and developing a plan for intervention. He explains, ‘one of the key concerns of the local government was that they were not amused by the fact

that children were featured in the media' (interview, 19 May 2015). The escalating cycle of action and reactions demanded a more formalised strategy (De Certeau, 1984). Based on embedded knowledge, street-level professionals organised alternative events that sought to prevent youngsters from participating in escalating violence on the street:

We were facing the fact that kids wanted to come to the [next] demonstration. I decided to host a really nice water festival at the Jacob van Campenplein. And that was huge; I think we had like 300 or 400 visitors ... That was during [the demonstration on the 25th] (...) Yes, that's strategic, hey! (Interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015)

And also during the Pro Patria demonstrations, they organised a local alternative: 'During Pro Patria, we organised a football tournament at the Jacob van Campenplein. (...) that was in cooperation with the municipality as well' (interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015). The alternative events, however, did not provide a resolution during the Pro Patria protest:

Teenagers weren't going to come to the tournament, because they wanted to stop the Pro Patria march at the Hoefkade, or witness it. So we organised it for the younger kids, around 10–14 years old (...) That went really well at first, until ehm, until it escalated on the Hoefkade. (Interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015)

The second protest was experienced as a direct provocation. Ibrahim explains that the route Pro Patria chose went straight through Schilderswijk's main street, Hoefkade: 'that's just provoking!' (interview, 13 May 2015). The local street-level professionals were realistic about their ability to prevent teenagers from confronting the Pro Patria demonstrations:

Look, I understand their situation and I understand the viewpoints of the teenagers ... during the day there were a lot of people from outside Schilderswijk. But when things escalated and the riot police became involved, the people from Belgium and other cities of the Netherlands were [clicks with his fingers] gone. So who remained? Our boys, the teens from Schilderswijk, because they felt like, 'I'm not going to get evicted from my own neighbourhood'. (Interview, Jamal, youth worker, 19 May 2015)

The broad media attention had attracted many people from outside the neighbourhood who sided with Pro Patria. At the same time, the negativity of said media attention increased the incentive to take part in the demonstrations and counter the dominant stigma of the neighbourhood. While many of the youngsters who took part in the first demonstration were not there for political reasons, when Pro Patria provoked them on their own territory, they felt the need to respond. In the context of ongoing grievances and negative stereotypes, the provocation of the Pro Patria demonstration in the space of the neighbourhood was too strong for the youth to ignore. Stakes were rising contingently through a negative media frame and ongoing threat at the street level. In that context, the strategy of the professionals failed to distract the youth from attempting to counteract the negative stereotype.

During the Pro Patria demonstration, the alternative activity only worked to prevent younger youths from participating. Most of the older youth was present at the demonstration; the only action left was to use the alliance with the military police to temporarily contain the escalation: 'We were able to influence the military police on the one hand and the youth on the other saying; 'guys, please be careful! There is military police around the corner and they will beat you up' (interview, Johan, police officer, 23 June 2015). The provocations at the street level

shaped a tense situation between two groups of youths. Usually the military police would be responsible for intervening, but experience told the professionals that an intervention by the military police would end rather aggressively. They wanted to prevent further escalation and legitimisation of the stigmatised identity of the neighbourhood in the media. Established relationships and so-called 'short lines in the communication' enabled them to incrementally prevent further escalating violence at the street level.

During the first two critical moments, the network functioned through a decentred governance that allowed for interventions and meaning-making of events through a variety of non-state institutions, civil society and state institutions (Young, 2000: 46). The street-level professionals had a profound role in developing a process of situated learning. Their embedded position enabled them to include the local knowledge of people in the neighbourhood in their practice. This informed their strategy to stop further stigmatisation by preventing youths from taking part in the demonstrations.

Governing meaning

The protests produced a crisis of meaning, as different interpretations of meaning construed different ideas about 'what was at stake' in the summer of 2014. After the first demonstrations took place, two interpretations of meaning emerged simultaneously. These interpretations can be understood in terms of frames (Goffman, 1974; Van Hulst and Yanow, 2016). Local actors framed the demonstration in the context of ongoing stigmatisation and local struggles for representation. Professionals interpreted the actions of youngsters in terms of grievances that were provoked by the negative stigma about the neighbourhood. This interpretation, however, remains bounded to local

meaning-making that was not represented in the national debate.

This case study underscores the role of the media in discursively shaping the dominant meaning of urban conflict. The national media framed the demonstrations in terms of threat or conflict (Hajer, 2009: 4), centring on radicalising Muslim youth and focusing on the symbolic meaning of the flags carried by some. Subsequently, the international references to ISIS and national references to the neighbourhood as a 'sharia triangle' (Ramesar, 2013) legitimised that frame, which consequently became the dominant interpretation of what is at stake.

By shaping this dominant meaning, the media also generated agenda-setting. It discursively ascribed a national significance to the local events in Schilderswijk. The organisers of the Pro Patria demonstration utilised the media frame to legitimise their anti-Islam statements and attract others to their cause. The local government could not choose one interpretation because they represented both groups, and local government actors and street-level professionals were required to govern both the media and the street level. In other words, in glocal urban conflicts, local governments need a practice for governing the street as well as for mediating between different interpretations of meaning.

The case study reveals how a decentred government network can govern meaning through contingently acting on the problem at hand (Griggs et al., 2014: 14). In the midst of action, meaning is mediated through a practice of reframing. The practice of reframing 'shifts attention from the contest among conflicting frames to the interplay between belief and doubt within a frame viewed as a struggle that generates efforts to make sense of a changing situation and to coordinate action' (Laws and Rein, 2003: 174). Reframing is thus a shift in the interpretation of meaning because it allows for

the inclusion of an element of doubt, which is usually lacking in the dominant frame. Second, reframing shifts the appropriate actions repertoire that comes from a particular frame. In The Hague, the local government was required to balance between the dominant frame of glocal threat and the local frame of speaking out against stigmatisation, as well as to delegate the responsibility for the appropriate level of intervention to the neighbourhood.

Critical moment 3: Official restrictions. On 14 August 2014, Mayor van Aartsen held an emergency meeting with the city council to address the situation. In the meeting, members of the community policing team shared with the local authorities their local and street-level knowledge. The possibility of a second Pro Patria march was discussed. Based on the network's experience, everyone agreed that they had to prevent a third demonstration that could attract angry people to the neighbourhood. They decided to develop a response that was specific to the demonstrations in the neighbourhood:

The only legitimate reasons for a mayor to stop a demonstration are public health, traffic, and the public order. In addition, restrictions may be imposed on the way in which people execute a demonstration. The municipality, police, and judiciary institutions make, if necessary, agreements with the organisers of a demonstration regarding this. When the organisers say they will abide by the agreements, the demonstration must go ahead (...) In response to the demonstration of July 24, including its despicable anti-Semitic incidents, the decision was made at my request to strengthen restrictions: there are general restrictions on hate speech, racism, etc., and we formally added: no face coverings and no ISIS-flags. (Municipality of The Hague, 2014)

The local government officially banned demonstrations in the neighbourhood. The

mayor argued that if people wanted to demonstrate, they could go to the square where demonstrations usually take place, which is somewhere else in the city. With this statement, the local government underlined that protest is a legitimate repertoire of political action (Young, 2000: 47), but at the same time, it governed the stigmatisation of people and places:

Chairmen, I will not abandon the great majority of well-intentioned Schilderswijkers. They had to watch, to their sorrow, how their district was once again portrayed badly in the media (...) They, too, are the victims when radicals from different areas want to fight each other (...) I want to prevent these people from any further suffering (...) I have therefore decided to temporarily disallow any demonstration in Schilderswijk, of whatever organisation. The Public Prosecution supports this decision, to my delight. (Municipality of The Hague, 2014)

The intervention of the local government governed meaning in three important ways. First, the words of the mayor brought in an element of doubt by acknowledging both frames as legitimate fears. He addressed the fear of Muslim radicalisation by speaking of 'despicable anti-Semitic incidents', restricting face coverings, ISIS-flags and public demonstrations in general (Municipality of The Hague, 2014). He also addressed the frame of local grievances by stating that 'the great majority of well-intentioned neighbours had to watch how their district was once again portrayed badly in the media' (Municipality of The Hague, 2014). Acknowledging both frames is important because, as we saw in the international and national news, governance actors in glocal conflict are forced to consider their local constituents or supporters exclusively as well as remote audiences that might have different interests and concerns (Uitermark and Gielen, 2010: 1327). By addressing all these audiences, the mayor

reframes the certainty that is communicated by the dominant frame and raises doubts about meaning. The practice of reframing thus incrementally transforms the relations between actors (AlSayyad and Guvenc, 2015: 2028).

Second, the mayor practiced reframing by creating a new narrative. He addressed the majority of people living in Schilderswijk who did not identify with the small group of protesters carrying flags. The media attention to ISIS flags and the small group of protesters deepened the negative association between the identity of Schilderswijk and its residents. This narrative reframed the stigmatised identity of Schilderswijk from a hotbed of Muslim radicalisation to a place where citizens strive for security. The mayor added legitimacy to the new narrative by referring to 'innocent citizens who are the victims when radicals from different areas want to fight each other' (Municipality of The Hague, 2014). Constructing these two frames underlines the deep pluralism of the public domain (Young, 2000) and reframes the narrative of threat to one of security.

Third, the mayor's statement redirected the level of appropriate action from a global threat to a local intervention, arguing that his responsibility is the security of his city. Laws and Rein argue that reframing 'emerges out of concrete situated interactions' (Laws and Rein, 2003: 205). In this case, the mayor's reorientation to the street level emerged out of situated knowledge he gained from the network of street-level professionals, who informed him about their interpretation of 'what was at stake'. The mayor thus ensured that his decision-making and meaning-making of events worked in exchange with a variety of non-state actors (Young, 2000: 46). From this perspective, the streets of Schilderswijk were no longer a legitimate stage to play out a glocal threat or fear. The new narrative thus discursively

appropriated a new action repertoire that secured the street level.

Thus, interventions at the street level mediated between plural voices that express political and everyday concerns. The ban brought a sense of security back to the streets of the neighbourhood (Vente, 2015: 46). That sense of security is necessary to temporarily disrupt the escalation of violence and stigmatisation during a period of glocal conflict. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these practices do not address underlying grievances of poverty and marginalisation. Structural problems demand structural governance. However, the case study provides insightful practices for governance in times of conflict that temporarily shape a sense of security and restore ownership of public spaces. By taking the youth to another place, banning demonstrations in the neighbourhood and halting the stigmatising portrayal of youngsters in the media, street-level interventions discursively disrupted the negative identification of people and places.

Conclusions

This article proposed an in-depth reflection on the practice of 'governing the global locally'. Glocal urban conflicts challenge cities to deal with global tensions that are enacted at the street level. A case study of 'glocal' demonstrations in The Hague revealed how a local conflict can quickly escalate in the context of global mediatisation. In the process of meaning-making that emerges after a local event, local concerns are interpreted in the context of a global threat. Consequently, the local government, street-level professionals and the community are required to mediate between local, national and international concerns. Local actors need to respond immediately and inclusively so that escalation is prevented

and democratic relationships are fostered. How did they do that?

The scholarly debate on urban conflicts has emphasised the political demand for plural voices. The agonistic approach underscores the importance of conflict as a democratic tool (Mouffe, 2000), but there is little understanding of discursive and tangible practices for enacting this ideal in moments of glocal urban conflict. I proposed using the work of Young (2000), which emphasises inclusiveness, to analyse how governments practice agonistic democracy. The interpretative approach to decentred governance practice brings into focus how the actions of political leaders, policy makers, police and other street-level professionals and communities can manage episodes of conflict inclusively. The article provides practices for dealing with glocal conflict that fosters agonistic democratic governance.

The case study describes three critical moments of practice. First, local professionals improvised an informal tactic that targeted specific individuals. The second critical moment reveals the strategy of local professionals to organise alternative events and use their network to strategically intervene at the street level. In a third critical moment, the local government banned all demonstrations from the neighbourhood. These interventions addressed both the fear of escalating violence as well as the grievances of the local community. The critical moments function as a lens to deepen our understanding of agonistic practices in four ways. The practice of 'governing meaning' allows, first, for the governing of plural interpretations of meaning inclusively and, second, for the reorientation of the repertoire of action to the level of the street. The practice of 'governing the street' in turn reveals, third, the crucial role of a decentred governance network that is situated in the neighbourhood, and fourth, the trust and space to develop a contingent

process of learning whilst acting in a rapidly escalating context.

The local government is required to govern meaning both at the street level and also in the media. In the ideal of an agonistic democracy, this governance of meaning should allow plural voices to be represented in the public domain. The local government governs meaning through the practice of reframing (Laws and Rein, 2003). In his public statement, the mayor reframes the dominant story by introducing an element of doubt. He acknowledges both frames as legitimate fears, thereby incrementally transforming the relations between actors (AlSayyad and Guvenc, 2015: 2028). Frames and stories are aspects of informal structures of everyday communication. Understanding that there are two legitimate frames changes the way we see ourselves in relation to others. Therefore, agonistic practices should foster plural frames and translate them into 'actions and policies in discursive language that appeal to commonly shared and accepted public reasons' (Benhabib, 1996: 83). Local knowledge articulates the conditions under which cooperation is mutually acceptable. Consequently, decisions were made that addressed plural voices within a contentious and mediated context.

The mayor's new narrative mediates between the two frames and replaces the perception of glocal threat with one of local security. That new narrative shapes a new action repertoire that includes a decentred approach to governance and reorients the appropriate level of intervention to the street level. Although the temporary ban of demonstrations in the neighbourhood did not structurally address problems like poverty, it temporarily created security, restored ownership and de-escalated violence at the level of the street.

Two interventions at the street level underscore the importance of an inter-organisational

network in which professionals of government, police and welfare work together to articulate local concerns. The situated position of street-level professionals enables them to diagnose the context and the problem at hand (Laws and Forester, 2015). Contingent learning allows actors to address a public problem by including a network of constantly shifting alliances of actors, each with his or her own capacities, skills and responsibilities (Wagenaar, 2014: 235). The embedded knowledge of the network informed both their informal tactic of selecting youngsters whose motivation was not political and their strategy to organise alternative events that partly de-escalated the riots. In the mediatised and rapidly escalating context, these tactics and strategies were not sufficient. Nevertheless, their continuous process of learning was trusted by local authorities to inform the intervention of restricting protest during the meeting at the city council. In other words, learning in action by members of a decentred network provides street-level knowledge that can inform local governments about the plural meaning of events. Such knowledge is necessary for inclusive and appropriate responses to escalating conflicts.

The interpretative analysis of the case study provides a basis for understanding the ideal of agonistic democracy in the practice of managing glocal urban conflicts. The obvious limitation of this case study is its contingency with the particular Dutch context, in which urban governments have a relatively strong mandate for decision-making. Nevertheless, the strategy of reframing and embedded street-level practices can be valuable for a multitude of contexts. They can never serve as a blueprint and should always be developed within the discursive reality of each city and episode of conflict. As urban governments are increasingly facing the challenge of dealing with glocal tensions, I argue that the urban studies agenda should emerge in more interpretative analyses of governance. A multitude of interpretative

case studies could identify other practices and strategies for making the agonistic claim tangible and improve inclusive responses to glocal urban conflict.

Interpretative policy analysis reveals that governance is both a discursive as well as tangible challenge that is produced in action. Governing the global demands practices locally that underscore plurality and contingency. These practices should understand diversity as a political resource and thus govern meaning in a way that allows plural voices to be represented in the media as well as at the street level. Furthermore, practices should include diverse stakeholders that can produce a safe space for contingent learning. In governing glocal urban conflict, the street level can be a site for learning as well as a site for interventions that foster agonistic democracy.

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1. Because the focus of the article is on the practices of governance, to include the voices of the youth and of the counter-demonstrators would go beyond the scope of the article. The interpretative approach, however, understands governance in contingency with its context. Therefore, the voices of the youth are not excluded, but come into play in the case description.

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