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# From Politicization to Policing: The Rise and Decline of New Social Movements in Amsterdam and Paris

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**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the rise and decline of social movements in Amsterdam and Paris, focusing in particular on the organizations of left-wing immigrant workers. These organizations performed crucial roles for new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s but were isolated and coopted in the 1990s and early 2000s. To explain why this is so, we engage in a dialogue with Jacques Rancière and develop an understanding of cities as strategic sites for both politicization and policing. Cities serve as sites of politicization because they are incubators of the relational conduits that enable activists from different sectors to engage with one another's struggles and look beyond narrow temporal and spatial horizons. However, cities also serve as sites of policing because authorities constantly attempt to reconfigure governmental arrangements in such a way that civil society serves as an extension of the government and comes to fulfill an instrumental role in the development and implementation of policy. Just as politicizing implies the widening of temporal and spatial horizons, policing implies the narrowing of such horizons. The analysis shows the social movements of the 1960s lost steam in two of the major hubs of the new left and reveals some of the more universal mechanisms through which cities generate or quell dissent.

**Keywords:** police, the political, Amsterdam, Paris, social movements, urban theory

## Introduction

Amsterdam and Paris were epicenters for new social movements during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Radical political activism grounded in these cities generated new ideas and swept up revolutionary sentiment. The student movement revolted in and outside the university. The squatting movement established countless autonomous social centers. Anarchist and far-left political parties challenged the dominance of the center left. Immigrants and minorities spoke out against racism and discrimination. The social struggles against imperialism, racism, labor exploitation, alienation, and sexism did not originate in these cities or these times but they did come together in powerful, even explosive ways. Cities during this time anchored and incubated broader social movements, politicizing actors through constant engagement in the struggle to find radical alternatives to the order of things (Duyvendak et al. 1992; Mamadouh 1992; Van der Valk 1996).

By the 1990s, we see a dramatically different picture. The squatting movement had contracted, students were more interested in affirming rather than challenging the status quo, and the presence of anarchist and far-left political parties had become marginal. Many of the intellectuals who participated in the new social movements had shifted alliances as they were advising on how to promote the integration, cohesion or prosperity of society rather than questioning its foundations. As activists, associations and intellectuals increasingly focused on the management of populations and territories, the public sphere had been largely depleted of political contestation. Cities had become incubators for policing strategies as governments developed new governmental rationalities, technologies, and institutional methods of control.

How did movements lose their power to politicize and how did state administrators regain their power to police? How did the spirit of radical change and the demand for social justice evaporate from the streets, associations and universities in the brief period between the late 1980s to the late 1990s? There are many popular accounts of the decline of new social movements. Some attribute the loss of momentum to the aging of the baby boomers, others locate the explanation in the structural transformation of capitalism and yet others argue that since the collapse of communism radical political alternatives have lost credibility. All these explanations have *prima facie* plausibility and we do not seek to reject them. However, we do want to bring out the spatial dimension of movement decline and specifically explore how politicization and policing are constituted in and through urban space.

We conducted research into various movements in Amsterdam and Paris but here we mainly discuss the mobilization of left-leaning Mediterranean guest workers as an entry point into more general patterns of politicizing and policing.<sup>1</sup> Our account is deliberately broad. By identifying how immigrants became *politicized* and then *policed*, we hope to shed light on some of the generic mechanisms affecting many activists during these two different periods of time. We seek to make generalizations because we think that dynamics in various fields are interrelated. Our interest is with the spaces in which movements formed and connected, not with their specific claims in their respective fields. We are also not interested in scrutinizing the differences between Amsterdam and Paris. Both cities obviously have very different histories and socio-spatial fabrics but that makes the synchronization of movement activity as well as the simultaneous shift to policing all the more remarkable. The *same* developments in these *different* contexts can be explained in part by the *same* mechanisms.

The argument unfolds in several steps. We first provide a theoretical account of politicization, policing, and the role of (urban) space. Second, we use immigrant rights activism as a prism to identify the socio-spatial conditions and relational mechanisms that made Amsterdam and Paris into particularly fertile soil for the development of movements struggling for social justice. Third, we analyze how the relational conduits of movements were short-circuited as the state refigured the spatial and temporal horizons of movement organizations and aligned them to assist in the policing of deprived urbanites and territories.

## Politics, Police and the City

### *Politics and Police*

We provide a specific conceptualization to examine the role of the city in fostering politicization as well as policing. Before we develop this conceptualization we discuss theorizing inspired by Jacques Rancière on “the police” and “the political” (Dikeç 2002, 2005; Swyngedouw 2009; Rancière 2006). For Rancière, “the police” represents the status quo. The police order defines what is visible and sayable, what is noise and what is voice. Referring to the activities of the state and the ordering of social relations, the police is “both a principle of distribution and an apparatus of administration, which relies on a symbolically constituted organization of social space” (Rancière, cited in Swyngedouw 2009:606). “The police”, in Rancière’s understanding, thus refers to “an established social order of governance with everyone in their ‘proper’ place in the seemingly natural order of things. It is based on a partitioned spatial organization” (Dikeç 2005:174). The political is instantiated when the police order is negated in the name of equality. For Rancière, politics is a statement of dissensus, it “is the arena where the principle of equality is tested in the face of a wrong experienced by ‘those who have no part’” (Swyngedouw 2009:605). Claims to equality provoke dissensus because they destabilize the consensus over the proper methods of administering people in space. “There is dissensus when there is something wrong in the picture, when something is not at the right place. There is dissensus when we don’t know how to designate what we see, when a name no longer suits the thing or the character that it names, etc.” (Rancière 2007:559). Politics originate from and feed into a desire to negate the police order; the search is for “foundational gesture” when “a properly political moment” is evoked (Swyngedouw 2009: 604, 601). Rancière rules out that the causality of politics can be deciphered since the political itself is *the* cause. In the same way, for Rancière, political subjects do not act or emerge but are instantiated by their contradictory positioning as equals cast out by the existing order of things: “If there is something ‘proper’ to politics, it consists entirely in [the] relationship . . . between two contradictory terms through which a subject is defined” (Rancière 2001:2). While this contradictory position enables the outcast to become a subject of politics, their incorporation into the order transforms them into an agent of the police order. This is exemplified by the working class’s transformation from a political “proletariat” in the mid-nineteenth century into a corporatist partner in the mid-twentieth century. Political subjects cease being a subject of politics when they move into the realm of power and connect to powerful actors within this realm (unions, intellectuals, parties, nonprofit associations, etc.).

Rancière provides a powerful understanding of politics and policing. However, the theory has more limited use when addressing empirical questions about actual political mobilizations: When do people realize that a wrong has been committed? How do these people create a disruptive voice? How do political acts become absorbed into the policing order? The theory does not allow for these questions because politics have nothing to do with power and everything to do with equality. According to Rancière, politics occur when a wrong (denial of equality) has been identified by a subaltern group. The subaltern group has inherent intellectual capacities that allow it to identify the wrong on its own and in spontaneous and

unpredictable ways. This theory leads Rancière's supporters to employ interpretations that stress the spontaneous nature of political mobilizations, stating that "everyone can occupy the space of politics, if they decide to do so" (Swyngedouw 2009:605), that "there is no way to be able to say where politics might emerge from" (Dikeç 2005:178), or that "all individuals have the equal ability to express and defend their own rights" (Deranty 2003:140). A "properly political moment" is therefore momentary, spontaneous, and pure; with any move into the world of real power polluting the political by making its subjects accept a place within the order of things.

We agree that identifying the violation of equalities is a necessary condition of politics. However, subjects do not identify a wrong and act on it in a spontaneous or isolated way. In some of his own work, Rancière in fact recognized that people often do not realize their own equality. The emancipatory pedagogy of the nineteenth century schoolmaster Joseph Jacotot asserted the equal intelligence of all (Rancière 1991). However, students continued to believe in their own incapacity to learn on their own, their own inequality, which impeded the emancipatory potential of Jacotot's method. A group that has long assumed its subordinate place within the police order as natural and normal therefore does not *suddenly* realize its equality, identify how a wrong has been committed, and move to voice its disagreement with existing consensus. This is a complicated process that needs to be explained rather than assumed as a spontaneous and momentous event.

We maintain that the probability that politicization occurs depends on the precise socio-spatial processes in which people develop their sensibilities and perceptions. It may be difficult to pinpoint exactly under what conditions claims for equality are made but we can identify how certain mechanisms interact to favor politicization in one place and time and not another. We therefore suggest politics is a gradual, incremental, and partial *process* of building alternative networks and imaginaries, resulting in the recognition of one's inherent equality and the alienation of this equality by the existing order of things. The urge to politicize (identify a wrong, disagree with the consensus, give voice) results from the incremental formation of relations within interstitial spaces that are outside of effectively policed spaces (cf Fraser 1990). The slow process of assembling relations with diverse actors makes it possible for subalterns to question what was previously regarded as natural and push for change through disruptive acts. For instance, while the refusal of Rosa Parks to sit at the back of the bus (Rancière 2006) did indeed negate the police order and dramatically evoked the political, she could only do so because she had cultivated her political dispositions through prolonged interactions in the budding civil rights movement. "The political" in this instance emerged not from a spontaneous or random "gesture" but from an incremental process of stitching together radical people and ideas through space and time, with this slow process providing the relational and ideological foundations that made it possible for Rosa Parks to disagree with the "police order". Because the process of becoming political is enabled through the development of relations with diverse and sometimes powerful actors, it can never be separated out from policing. Rather than conceiving politics as a moment that is opposed to the police, we believe politics and police to be two distinctive processes that intersect and intermingle with one another in countless ways, with one constantly disrupting and disturbing the full

realization of the other. “The police” should also be understood as an ongoing process, as projects undertaken by a range of different forces and actors that attempt to regulate and channel the unpredictable interactions taking place beyond their immediate and full control. To properly account for the shift from politicizing to policing and vice versa we therefore need to first conceptualize both as processes and then assess how they intermingle and negate one another through specific times and places.

### ***The City as Politicizing Machine***

*Politicizing* is taking an explicitly antagonistic stance against extant institutions, values and practices. To politicize, it is necessary to step out of the existing order of things and judge situations against standards and by values suppressed or inconceivable in the immediacy of the situation. Once reconceived as a matter of global and historical significance, everyday practices and notions lose their triviality and particular symbols come to condense universal struggles (Jasper 1997:155)—a drilling platform comes to stand for the pollution caused by the oil industry (Hajer 2003), a janitor’s job security for social justice (Harvey 2000), the removal of homeless residents from a park for the gentrification of urban space (Smith 1996). Struggles thus undergo a process of *time-space condensation*, whereby activists perceive particular instances as inextricably linked to broad historical struggles—they come to “think global, act local”, to invoke a popular activist slogan. As politicizing enables activists in different times and locations to identify and connect with one another, notions like “international solidarity”, “social justice”, or “the right to the city” provide overarching political imaginaries to weave disparate struggles together.

The defining features of cities—the presence of large numbers of diverse people within small spaces (Fischer 1975; Wirth 1938)—make them strategic sites for politicization. Large cities are likely to possess a range of different activist clusters engaged in various issues, which increases the probability that activists go out of their particular worlds and get in contact with others operating in their urban environments. When activists from different clusters (eg labor, immigrants, intellectuals, squatters, etc.) work with one another for an extended period of time, they develop webs of exchanges. Well networked activists develop reciprocal relations and feel compelled to contribute to campaigns outside their immediate areas of interest. Reciprocal exchanges and structural interdependencies therefore bind the fate of these activists together into more generalized struggles. For example, immigrant rights activists and squatters in Paris during the 1980s developed strong relations, drawing squatters directly into battles for immigrant rights and immigrant rights activists into battles for the de-commodification of housing (Péchu 2004). Similarly, in Amsterdam in the 1970s and 1980s, squats became hotbeds of radical anti-fascism, environmentalism, anti-imperialism and so on—while different clusters specialized in one issue or another, they were tied together in networks. As Nicholls (2008:847) argues, “these webs of network ties are not social movements per se, but rather relational conduits that make a wide variety of resources available for different coalitions, mobilizations and campaigns”.

These interlacing and interdependent networks encourage diverse activists to interrogate the commonalities of their various struggles. Are “we” squatters simply demanding decent housing for our group or are “we” fighting the same systemic forces that exclude immigrants? Each of these interrogations—big and small—contributes to a process of incrementally crafting common mobilizing frames or political imaginaries (Benford and Snow 2000). Cities again play a strategic role in stitching together these political imaginaries because they contain the connecting points (Sennett 1971) where diverse groups assemble and debate with one another over ideas of justice and what is to be done. In salons, bars, coffee houses, living rooms, or university cafeterias, activists from different clusters come together in loose exchanges to discuss and debate their differences and commonalities. The emerging political imaginaries are crucial cognitive frames that enable activists to envision their particular struggles as intimately linked to broad movements for radical change.

The process of politicization reaches beyond the urban locales as activists rooted in the same city connect to comrades elsewhere through formal and informal networks (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Diani 2003). Well connected activists often broker relations between local allies and their more geographically distant comrades (Tarrow and McAdam 2005). The process of connecting distant struggles permits the diffusion of analyses, tactics, and repertoires across space, with these extended networks functioning as conduits that enable a flow of practices, ideas, and resources between different urban hubs (Routledge 2003). The inherent unevenness of the social movement space is extended out when activists throughout the network adapt ideas and practices from distant battles to their own particular contexts. For example, during the Arab revolutions, relational and cognitive connections permitted activists in Tripoli and Bahrain to imagine their struggles in very similar ways to those in Cairo, in spite of very different and uneven political opportunities, mobilization capacities, and cultures. Common connections and imaginaries can enable activists in very different contexts to transcend temporal and spatial particularities and view their own battles as inextricably tied—historically and spatially—to broader struggles.

In short, interconnected urban hubs of activism become the material and ideological backbone of emergent *political* movements. Through interactions within and across hubs, activists can step outside narrow everyday practices, identity and denounce a wrong, and imagine that a different world is possible. While urban relational attributes make cities potential sites for politicization, whether the potential is realized depends in part on strategies of activists and the governments they interact with.

### ***The City as Policing Machine***

*Policing* is the opposite of politicizing as it aims to neutralize and pre-empt challenges to the legal and social order. Historically, the concept of policing has a broad meaning and refers to the range of governmental technologies, rationalities and arrangements—partly centrally orchestrated, partly self-organized locally—developed to align subjects with the state (Foucault 1991, 2009). “Police government”, Colin Gordon notes, “does not limit its actions on the governed to the general forms of laws: it works

by means of the specific, detailed regulation and decree” (Gordon 1991:10). Cities are again strategic spaces where policing strategies are created and unfold. Governments and state bureaucracies generally attempt to manage social life by ordering space and time (Bourdieu 1997; Scott 1998) and these attempts at policing become especially important where contentiousness might bubble from the grassroots, as is the case in cities. Just as cities are spaces that support innovations in politics, they also become sites for the innovation of techniques to monitor subjects and maintain social order (Foucault 1977).

To properly understand the role of the urban in incubating strategies of control, we have to return to the historical notion of policing and delve into the symbolic and practical labor state administrators undertake to fabricate social order (Neocleous 2000). The constitution of civil society is central to these efforts (Neocleous 1996). Contrary to total institutions where complete surveillance by design is possible, the effective policing of a city relies on the capacity of state administrators to enlist civil actors—such as associations, activists, and intellectuals—in their programs of government (Raco and Imrie 2000; Rose 1999) so that civil society becomes part of a seamless web of governance rather than an uncontrollable site of multiple resistances. Policing is successful when civil society serves as an extension of the state by diffusing its categories and supplementing its actions. The essential rupture—the transition between politicizing and policing—occurs when civil associations forgo their roles as representatives of marginalized constituencies and become agents that police “problem groups” targeted by the state (immigrants, youths, homeless, etc.). One sign that this is happening is that actors put less effort in organizing constituents and focus instead on managing concrete social problems in cooperation with state administrators. Examples include resident groups who shift their attention from fighting against gentrification to consulting with governments on how to manage citizen participation; development agencies ceasing resistance against structural dependency to help companies employ impoverished workers; anti-racist organizations which no longer protest against structural discrimination but instead counsel the police on how to treat minorities.

Coopting through partnerships has been a common method to incorporate civil associations into policing plans (see Mayer 2000; Sites 2007). As the material basis of civil associations becomes tied to government funding, the margins to argue outside the boundaries of “acceptable dissent” (Mitchell and Staeheli 2005) is significantly reduced. Partnerships with states also transform the rationalities of civil associations by imposing an administrative logic on their operations. To obtain funding and recognition from the state, they must employ a pragmatic discourse with clearly defined target groups, projects, and goals. They must demonstrate that they are professional service providers with expertise in managing the unique social problems of targeted groups (homeless, immigrants, youths, etc.). This compels civil associations to specialize themselves and narrow the scope of activities to distinct issue areas (housing, immigration, etc.). Coopting civil associations therefore narrows the margins of dissent and channels the activities of civil associations into narrow and specialized areas of social management. Effective policing presupposes a process opposite of the time–space compression associated with politicization, namely the segmenting of the temporal and spatial horizons of activists. The process of *spatio-*



*temporal segmentation* of urban civil society is achieved through two principal mechanisms: *temporal delimitation* and *territorial encapsulation*.

By *temporal delimitation*, we mean that activists, intellectuals and associations focus on problems that can be solved in the nearby future instead of self-consciously engaging in historical struggles for equality. As associations adopt government sanctioned rationalities and practices into their daily operations, they pursue projects that fit within the tightly regulated funding cycles of the state. Constant auditing and application procedures reinforce the caging of civil associations, with government officials extending their disciplinary reach into their daily activities and micro-practices. Temporal delimitation narrows the scope and visions of associations and activists, constraining them to prioritize short-term projects and forego real commitment to amorphous and long-term struggles for equality. They no longer think about long-term fights for abstract ideals of social justice but instead focus on the daily management of social problems associated with their target populations.

By *territorial encapsulation*, we mean channeling of activists, intellectuals, and associations into delimited territories. By introducing districts and zones within cities, states are better able to gather information, survey activities within these spaces, and enact geographically tailored forms of governance (Dikeç 2007). When civil actors work in partnerships with local state officials, their geographical activities are often circumscribed to the street, block, or neighborhood and to particular target groups and issue areas (eg the homeless, at-risk youths, etc.). Instead of mobilizing constituents who share the same sort of ideals or interests, they become part of a joint effort to govern territories and promote “cohesion” or “integration” within them. Their attention turns towards specialized local administrative units rather than the central state, let alone the world system. In such instances, the fragmentation of state spaces serves as a political circuit breaker as associations deprioritize forming relations within and between activist clusters and instead develop relations to and within local administrative units.

To sum up, the propensity of civil actors to engage with one another to form radical counterpublics decreases as their dependence on the state increases. Incorporation into governance structures propels civil actors to focus on specific territories where they form partnerships based on territorial proximity and policy domains instead of ideological affinity. As civil associations increasingly serve as the eyes, ears, and hands of the state, their spatio-temporal horizons are truncated. Having committed to showing their effectiveness within a specific territory for a specific target group and within a specified time frame, they effectively become outposts of the state within urban civil society, focusing their attention on managing injustices rather than denouncing wrongs, contesting the order, and projecting radical alternatives.

## **The City as Politicizing Machine: Space–Time Condensation**

To illustrate the mechanisms through which cities play these roles, we focus on radical left immigrant workers in Amsterdam and Paris. The development of

reciprocal relations with other activists in their urban surroundings expanded the temporal and spatial horizons of all activists (immigrants and non-immigrants) involved. The case of the immigrant workers thus shows how claims for equality were enabled by relations developed incrementally within and between different urban-based activist clusters.

## ***Politicized Amsterdam***

1. *The movement milieu.* Amsterdam in the 1960s and 1970s had a particularly vibrant movement milieu. While the more traditional middle-class households rapidly moved out into newly constructed suburbs, the city itself concentrated an increasingly young and secularizing population that used the city as a terrain for experimenting with new ways of organizing society as manifested in paintings, designs, pamphlets, and living groups. Students, housing activists, hippies, communists, and feminists each socialized in their own circles but there were many ties between these different activist clusters, as they came together in struggles against Apartheid, (the Vietnam) war, and modernistic urban renewal. Intellectuals and activists drew inspiration from struggles across Europe and Amsterdam itself became one central node where intellectuals—including urbanists like Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord and members of the COBRA group—flocked to exchange ideas and articulate hopes of a free, egalitarian and exciting city.

### *2. Integration into movement milieu*

The guest workers who migrated to the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s arrived in a society in full flux. While most anticipated a quick return after having earned some money, a small yet vocal group imported into Amsterdam radical dissent cultivated in the resistance against the autocratic regimes of (first) Spain, Greece and Portugal, and (later) Morocco and Turkey. Despite considerable language barriers and different cultural backgrounds, these radical vanguards were easily absorbed into the Amsterdam movement milieu. Native Dutch activists and journalists, both amateur and professional, reported on the plight of migrant workers while volunteers assisted them with language courses and legal counseling. The radical dissidents among the immigrants could capitalize on the resources available within the movement milieu. The Committee for Moroccan Workers in the Netherlands (KMAN), one prominent example of a radical left association we will follow throughout this paper, was established in a squatted canal house in 1975 and it could use a progressive church for its first major hunger strike to protest against the refusal of the Dutch state to grant full citizenship to guest workers.

3. *Generalizing reciprocity and frame adjustment.* While immigrants initially received a lot of charitable and paternalistic support, they increasingly gave and received solidarity—they turned from recipients into partners and came to function as a central node in a diverse yet densely woven web of activists, associations, and

intellectuals. The radical dissidents were uniquely positioned to frame immigrants in ways that resonated with the new social movements blossoming in Amsterdam at the time. The minority associations improved legitimacy of struggles around racism, imperialism, war, housing, and labor. While immigrants were expected and keen to emphasize their cultural particularities, the radical left minority associations framed guest workers and their families as fighting the same fight as other activists in the city and around the world, emphasizing how people of all backgrounds should fight together against injustices. The integration of the radical left minorities in the movement milieu and the mutual adjustment of frames created relations of generalized reciprocity with left-leaning political parties, progressive broadcasting associations, activist journalists, and many prominent people (presenters, intellectuals, church leaders) eager to show their support to these disenfranchised groups. The confluence of the various movements is illustrated when we consider one broker who tied together different clusters: Abdou Menebhi, one of the leaders of the KMAN. He was rooted in the small and tightly knit milieu of Moroccan dissidents and had strong ties with similar groups abroad, yet he also formed an integral part of the local chapters of the anti-racist movement, the peace movement, and the labor movement. An anecdote of a former student leader illustrates the connections of those times. The student leader recounted the shock reverberating through the social movement scene when, for the first time since the Second World War, an extreme-right party had been elected into the municipal council in 1986. Various groups and parties had taken their stances individually by writing pamphlets or physically assaulting sympathizers of the extreme right but activists from various groups also came together to discuss a joint response. At some point in the preparations, the students and the squatters found themselves in conflict. The former proposed to block access of the extreme-right politician to city hall to demonstrate against her views while the squatters insisted that the whole of city hall should be blocked for all politicians in a bid to delegitimize the very nature of parliamentary elections. As tensions mounted, Abdou Menebhi raised his hand and said “the students are right”. That settled the issue. The example illustrates that there were conflicts among different clusters but that nevertheless they were in strong contact. Such cooperation is manifested in many publications, meetings, and protests which represent hubs where different groups come together for a limited period and single purpose.

4. *Diffusion.* The cultivation ties among different clusters was facilitated by the specific conditions provided by the center of Amsterdam—a strong presence of various activist clusters in close proximity—but the radical momentum diffused from this epicenter throughout the city and the country. The support by native activists enabled the dissident fringe among immigrants to develop an organizational infrastructure that involved large numbers of immigrants. An association like KMAN had its epicenter in the center of Amsterdam like so many other associational hotbeds of radicalism but it spread its tentacles through increasing numbers of affiliates in neighborhoods and other cities, all the time with the help of progressive activists of Dutch descent and often with support from funders like welfare organizations. Many activities organized by cadres did not have an explicitly political character (language

lessons, sewing, music, cooking, legal help), but exactly for that reason they helped radical associations to incorporate and influence constituents who would otherwise have been dependent on associations collaborating with autocratic or conservative institutions from their home countries, like the Moroccan Amicales or, for the Turkish case, mosque federations and Grey Wolves. The infrastructure provided an everyday counter public for micro-interactions which could spawn large-scale campaigns at irregular intervals.

5. *Institutionalization.* The expansion of the associational infrastructure provided a major impetus to the radical left groups and enabled them to institutionalize their influence. They reached out to immigrants outside of their own radical circles. They also received substantial financial and practical support to set up their infrastructure. Furthermore, in the late 1970s, their influence within the government was institutionalized: the government established a consultative body for “Moroccans and Turks” that was in practice completely dominated by the radical left. However, the expansion and integration into government also confronted the radical left and their allies with the dilemmas of institutionalization. Supportive native Dutch activists had helped with subsidies and support but now that the infrastructure was there, it had to be maintained and subsidies had to be accounted for. The radicals who had originally served as brokers within a movement milieu would eventually be expected to operate like managers in a policy field.

## ***Politicized Paris***

1. *The movement milieu.* Like Amsterdam, Paris in the late 1960s and 1970s was filled with a diverse range of activists and had established itself as a major hub of the new social movements. Activist clusters proliferated around the city, employing new and innovative technique to address a wide range of grievances. The emergence of countless post-1968 communist groups (from libertarian communists to Maoists) was succeeded by many small activist clusters addressing specific forms of injustice affecting women, minorities, tenants, prisoners, psychiatric patients, and gays. Prominent radical intellectuals had also become implanted within the city, with many taking active roles in these various struggles. These included prominent sociologists like Henri Lefebvre and philosophers like Jean Paul Sartre and Gilles Deleuze. Moreover, Louis Althusser’s long-term position at the *École normale supérieure* helped produce a tightly knit generation of radical and highly politicized intellectuals, including luminaries like Michel Foucault, Alain Badiou, Étienne Balibar, and Jacques Rancière. The diverse range of activists and intellectuals operating through this urban space had many opportunities to attend the same social and political functions, read many of the same radical journals and newspapers, and engage in constant face-to-face debates over the tactics, strategies, and meanings of radical politics. The intricate webs of ties between activists permitted

the circulation of resources and ideas among radical Parisians and helped stitch together a collective imaginary for their different struggles.

2. *Integration into movement milieu.* During this time, the Paris region had become an important receiving center of immigrant guest workers from Southern Europe, North Africa, Turkey, and later West Africa. As in Amsterdam, most of these immigrants remained “outside” politics or operated within highly policed home-country associations like the Amicales. Among this larger pool of immigrants, an important minority had been politicized in their home countries through Marxist, anti-colonial, and student movements. Once settled in Paris, these immigrant activists connected to Parisian radicals through political meetings, public actions, and various left-wing social events (eg pro-Palestinian meetings, book events, etc.). These initial contacts provided immigrant activists with a range of acquaintances across the Parisian activist scene and permitted many Parisian radicals to get to know immigrant workers and the specific modes of exploitation and oppression facing them. However, immigrants were able to build their reputations as strong and capable activists. In this sense, individual connections between established activists and these immigrants served as the basis for introducing and integrating a new activist cluster (radical immigrants) into the city’s diverse activist networks. The encounters through various “connecting points” in the city permitted immigrants and Parisian activists to lay the relational foundations (recognition, information flows, reputation, and trust) necessary for more sustained forms of collective action.

3. *Generalizing reciprocity and frame adjustment.* In 1972, two young immigrants in Paris were targeted for deportation by the French authorities. They were accused of violating the principle of foreign “political neutrality” which forbade immigrants from taking political stances in the public sphere (Withol de Wenden 1994). The targeted immigrants immediately worked with their closest immigrant comrades to defend them from deportation. The first French supporters also served as strategic brokers, placing the immigrants into contact with influential activists and personalities in the city. The Defense Committee of the Life and Rights of Immigrant Workers came to be dominated by Maoists and activist intellectuals like Michel Foucault, Jean Paul Sartre, Roland Barthes, and Jean Genet (Artières 2002; Cordeiro 2001). The immigrants and their supporters crafted a representation of the struggle that directly resonated with the political imaginaries of the French left. On the one hand, their French supporters thought this was a case of free political speech and association, whereby the French state was illegitimately denying a universal right to a minority group. On the other hand, they were also represented as the most exploited members of the working class. For French radicals, this was a population that had not been pacified by factory regimes, trade unionism, and middle class values. This publicly crafted figure of the “immigrant worker” gained great prominence in many currents of the French left, which helped attract prominent human rights associations and the country’s second largest union (CFDT). The latter group embraced the generalizing slogan, “French and immigrant workers, same boss, same combat”. The discursive strategies therefore both

connected the particular struggles of immigrants to the broader activist networks while producing language, symbols, and performances that reinforced the radical imaginaries of the radical Paris movement milieu.

4. *Diffusion.* Radical imaginaries and practices spread outwards from the Parisian epicenter as immigrants and support groups organized hunger strikes in other cities, including Lille, Montpellier, Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon, Nice, etc. The support networks that had originally emerged in Paris were transplanted, with cities across the country forming coalitions to support the struggle of “immigrant workers”. These mobilizations raised the profile of the “immigrant worker” but also diffused frames that linked the struggle of immigrants to the general struggle for justice and equality. The struggle also spurred the rise of one of the first distinctly Marxist immigrant association in the country, the Movement of Arab Workers (MTA). The aim of the organization was to establish an autonomous and explicitly Marxist association for North African immigrants. The national associational space of North African immigrants had been dominated by the Amicales sponsored by home country consulates and the MTA was seen as a way to break their dominance. As KMAN, MTA competed with the Amicales and provided immigrants with parallel services, such as language support, social events, afterschool support for children, etc. As the MTA was able to attract and build its base, it provided new recruits with political training while connecting them to the broader activist networks within their cities, France, and their home countries. In this way, immigrants came out of their daily lives into this new associational space, learned new discourses about their community’s position in the broader terrain of struggle for social justice, and made direct connections with diverse activists operating in their cities and countries.

5. *Institutionalization.* While the central government during the 1970s continued to deny MTA and other immigrant associations with formal legal recognition because of their status as “foreign” organizations, individual immigrants with these associations were becoming seasoned negotiators with state officials. Moreover, activists had also become tied to elements of opposition Left parties, including the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the Communist Revolutionary League. These parties incorporated core elements of immigrant rights activists, with the Socialist Party becoming a particularly strong advocate of immigrants within the country. The denial of legal recognition for the associations also increased the importance of native-based support associations to become the primary representatives and advocates of immigrants in France. Thus, the process of institutionalizing movement occurred in a rather ad hoc way, with immigrants becoming more fluent in the rules of state power and political parties and developing a resourceful network.

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Amsterdam and Paris are used here as illustrations of how the city can function as a “politicizing machine”. By the early 1970s, both cities had become important hubs of radicalism in Europe. A web of ties connected different activists to one

another and circulated discourses, ideas, and symbols between them, stitching together a loose yet common political imaginary. Activists with particular grievances (immigrant guest workers) built support for their cause by making connections with others in the milieu. Their abilities to sustain connections with other activists in their milieu required them to craft representations of themselves and their cause that resonated with political ideals, feelings, and moralities of those other activists. This process resulted in the spatio-temporal condensation of struggles, whereby a particular struggle with narrow temporal and spatial horizons (eg rights for immigrants) became indistinguishable from the struggle of all people pursuing social justice.

## **The City as Policing Machine: Narrowing Space— Time Horizons**

Paris and Amsterdam had become robust hubs of radical politics in the 1970s but the momentum rather abruptly declined in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The leaders and radicals found their way into organizations, professions, parties, universities, and governments, enticing them to pay tribute to the status quo they had so passionately challenged before. This process of institutionalization entailed more than a simple change of incentives—new technologies and arrangements of governments designed to combat crime, restore order, etc. enlisted civil society in policing efforts and changed their operational rationalities. This contributed to an important change in the goals of associations, activists and intellectuals; there was a shift from bringing about social justice toward managing specific social problems within narrow spatial and temporal confines. Here we detail the ways in which governments set up institutions to deal with urban problems greatly contributed to the negation of politics in urban civil societies.

### ***Policing Amsterdam***

1. *Institutionalization.* The incorporation of the radical left minorities into the state bureaucracy provided them with excellent possibilities to maintain their organizations and voice their grievances; at least at first. The associations that had now been formally recognized and included experienced soon enough that they were not just closer to the government but that the government was also closer to them. While the radical left used resources and influence to extend their organizational reach and promote their radical agenda, the government demanded more action on pressing policy issues. The broad framing of immigrants' problems that had been developed during the heydays of the new social movements was pushed to the background as the government demanded concrete advice and practical support in solving what were increasingly framed as pressing "integration problems". The left minority leadership certainly did not just adopt the government's framing. On the contrary, it entered into an extended and sometimes grotesque dialogue with the government where both sides tried to find ways and words to cooperate. While some words were found—"citizenship" and "emancipation", for instance—most of the times relations were strained at best and the activists regularly

challenged and irritated the government with protests and accusations. The stated goal of the government was to entice these associations to “innovate” and “contribute” but in practice they were subsumed into new schemes to promote efficient government and maintain social order. Temporal delimitation and territorial encapsulation were two of the preferred governmental technologies to achieve this goal.

2. *Temporal delimitation.* The incorporation of contentious civil actors into the state initially provided them with the opportunity to look ahead. They received structural subsidies on a yearly basis, which enabled them to build up their organizations in relative autonomy from the government. However, the government also provided subsidies to entice the associations to work on specific projects for a limited period of time. Especially these latter subsidies required the associations to give prominent positions to people with good lobbying skills and administrative competence. Associations which failed to make this shift suffered from an outflow of qualified members. In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, many of the people who were active in KMAN or other radical groups joined smaller, leaner associations designed to offer expert advice or carry out projects. The KMAN veteran and long-term leader of the Moroccan council, Abdou Menebhi, finally left to establish his own organization in 1998, Emcemo, which develops projects with organizations ranging from charities to the police. Building a base and fostering connections to other groups became less of a priority as the activists slowly but surely came to adapt to the rhythm of the state—they gathered at city hall at regular intervals, handed in project proposals according to government-sanctioned time schedules, and organized their activities around the major events of the calendar of the municipal and neighborhood councils. Politicians and administrators typically called upon minority associations after scandals to take action and involved them in ad hoc policymaking, further narrowing their time horizons. For most associations and individuals dealing with minorities and integration this had become a process of perpetual crisis management where the immediate demands of the situation are so pressing that there is little or no scope for projecting ideals of an entirely different society. The combined effect of these developments was that the associations now responded to government initiatives rather than the other way around.

3. *Territorial encapsulation.* Almost immediately after the main minority players within the movement had been absorbed into ethnic consultative bodies, the national government moved away from policies targeting ethnic groups (Entzinger 2002). Forcing very different and often openly hostile associations with different political backgrounds into the same ethnic institutions had created strong tensions, but now these ethnic institutions themselves were regarded as obsolete (Uitermark, Rossi and van Houtum 2005). They were labeled as “categorical” institutions and supposedly locked ethnic groups into isolation. Instead of having parallel policy fields and separated groups, the newly established “integration policy” (established in 1994 but anticipated for almost a decade before the official adoption) was supposed to promote “integral” forms of policymaking.



Integration policy was merged with territorial policies, a development starting with the adoption of the social renewal policy in 1990 and reaching its climax with the appointment of a Minister of Big Cities and Integration in 1998 (Uitermark 2003). By bringing together various parties and groups at the neighborhood level, “social cohesion” was to be achieved.

This process of territorial encapsulation meant that, if associations were to survive at all, they had to rebrand themselves as neighborhood associations. For minority associations, this meant that they were supposed to connect to other associations and government agencies in specific administrative units. In Amsterdam, this typically happened at the level of the neighborhood district. These urban jurisdictions—usually between 25,000 and 100,000 residents, with an elected government—were gradually established over the course of the 1980s. Though neighborhood councils have very limited discretion to make policies of their own, their purported aim was to bring government closer to the people. They did so among other ways by bringing together a variety of neighborhood groups into inter-associational platforms managed by civil servants. In some cases these platforms consisted exclusively of minority associations; in other cases they included voluntary associations of various kinds. However, in all cases they drastically increased the intensity of strongly formalized interactions among associations and neighborhood councils. Since they were not uniting on their own initiative or on the basis of ideological affinity, the platforms were strongly self-referential: the goals invariably were to bring different groups together, promote neighborhood cooperation, and streamline interactions between the associations and the government. To keep the platforms going and commit the volunteers, associations received small amounts of subsidies and large amounts of political and administrative attention. Some associations highly appreciated the recognition and resources, others were deeply frustrated about what they perceived as tokens—either way, the enthusiasm and the frustration were put in a territorial straightjacket and contained within the neighborhood.

These shifts in the geographical focus and socio-spatial networking coincided with a growing emphasis on *governing* and *policing*. Now that they were regarded as “partners” and represented “the neighborhood”, minority associations were increasingly called upon to connect the government to groups that were out of reach, such as illiterates, youth at risk, and women who are kept at home by their husbands. Employed, assertive, responsible, well connected, and literate people were emphatically *not* considered as target groups. While they may have been an asset for associations, they were not problematic enough to warrant policy attention—the government rewarded associations for reaching out to exactly those groups that it could not handle itself. The people within the associations’ reach were transformed from constituents united according to mutual reciprocity and ideological affinity into the target groups composed of problematic cases within a particular neighborhood. Countless initiatives were taken, ranging from house visits by social workers and “street coaches” to boot camps and martial art courses. Naturally the remaining associations can count on little support from prospective constituents and supporters—they after all are no longer organized to represent or serve constituents but to reach out to problematic target groups.

## *Policing Paris*

1. *Institutionalization.* The election of a Left coalition (Socialist Party and Communist Party) to government in 1981 introduced a break with the policies of the past. Soon after the elections, the Left government introduced a large-scale amnesty which resulted in the legalization of approximately 200,000 immigrants over a 2-year period. The government also legalized immigrant associations and removed all restrictions on political speech. As in Amsterdam, however, the institutionalization of politicized immigrants did not immediately pacify contentious actors, who continued to struggle in highly unpredictable ways. For example, between 1982 and 1984 immigrant factory workers were at the forefront of a series of highly disruptive wild-cat strikes in the Paris region. Adopting the discourse of the 1970s, supportive left-wing unions and immigrant associations framed these struggles as part of the general working class struggle (Gay 2010:10).

The strikes wore on for 2 years and spread across the country, becoming highly disruptive events, both politically and economically. The government responded by hardening its line. Next to stigmatizing protesters, the government developed fine-grained ways of colonizing the associational worlds of immigrants. The government provided subsidies to associations through the agency charged with immigration affairs, the Social Action Fund (FAS). Both intentionally and unintentionally, subsidies were used to steer associations away from politics and toward apolitical cultural and social activities in immigrant neighborhoods (Withol de Wenden 1994). Rather than exclude immigrant associations from engaging in national politics (as was the policy with previous governments), the Socialist government redirected the energies of first-generation immigrants into non-threatening activities like multicultural events. The government pursued its efforts to exert control and enlist support through methods of temporal delimitation and territorial encapsulation.

2. *Temporal delimitation.* The FAS provided associations with valuable resources yet restricted their time horizons by requiring them to meet new bureaucratic and professional standards. Competitive project-based funding introduced important temporal limits on associations by providing funding only to specialized projects on a yearly basis. As part of receiving project-based funding, immigrant associations were required to rationalize their daily operations. They were compelled to identify specific social problems and target populations, the geographic areas of operations, and time lines that delineated the implementation of projects on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis (Nicholls 2006). To supervise how subsidies were used, the government introduced an elaborate set of instruments to closely monitor and survey the activities of these associations. Officials from FAS were empowered to perform random audits of immigrant associations and these associations were required to submit details of their operations. As government restraints on associations became more burdensome, it became more difficult for volunteer activists to perform basic functions and compelled many to turn to professional managers. The

prominence of these professionals reinforced the rationalization of associations because they readily accepted government categories and rationalities. Thus, the incorporation of immigrant associations into the institutional web of FAS sharply narrowed their temporal horizons, encouraging most recipients of FAS funding to focus on short-term service-delivery projects instead of long-term social change.

3. *Territorial encapsulation.* In addition to integrating immigrant associations through the funding programs of the FAS, the government also introduced territorially based urban development policies in 1981 (*politique de la ville*) (Dikeç 2006; Estèbe 2004). This program aimed to redevelop neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and immigrants. The program was envisioned as a form of territorial affirmative action which would provide deprived neighborhoods with additional public resources (eg schools, public services, infrastructure, etc.) to help them catch up with the rest of the metropolitan area (Estèbe 2004). The government encouraged partnerships between associations operating in these neighborhoods and between these associations and local mayors. Partnerships were forged in specific issue areas such as policing, youth services, elderly services, and economic development. Partners in these issue areas were expected to work with one another to identify problems, devise plans to treat these problems, and pool their collective resources to achieve common goals.

The territorialization of public policy had several important effects on the operational rationalities of associations. Geographic proximity made it easier for government officials to enforce expectations and rules. In particular, “project managers” were assigned to specific territories and charged with monitoring the daily operations of partner associations (Estèbe 2004). While FAS projects provided associations with greater discretion to identify the geographic scale and location of their projects, the *politique de la ville* required associations to design projects within neighborhoods designated by the project. This meant that if they were going to become a partner and gain access to public subsidies, they had to become neighborhood associations. Their engagement with other partners in issue areas in their neighborhoods only normalized the localization of their geographical imaginations, focusing on the management of neighborhood territories and populations.

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Immigrant associations, which had become an important component of activist milieus in both Paris and Amsterdam in the 1970s, quickly became enmeshed in the web of new policing technologies introduced during the 1980s. Both in the Netherlands and France, governments introduced territorial policies directed at deprived areas in response to fears of ethnic, political and social tensions. Both countries also implemented comprehensive schemes, including project subsidies and neighborhood platforms, to enlist the support of civil society. These technologies did more than simply coopt these associations by shifting incentive structures. They succeeded in penetrating the life worlds of associations and rewiring their basic operational rationalities. As their temporal horizons were delimited, associations focused more on immediate and concrete service delivery projects instead of long-term

struggles for social justice. In encapsulating them territorially, immigrant associations became bound to neighborhood-specific issues and problems, detaching these issues from the broader structural and political forces responsible for producing them. These changes in the space–time horizons of associations significantly affected the types of networks they sought to develop. As their worlds narrowed to concrete projects in their immediate vicinities, they developed instrumental partnerships with other stakeholders who also worked in specialized policy areas in their immediate vicinity. The associational clusters emerging in newly policed cities now reflected the bureaucratic and compartmentalized categories of the state.

## Conclusion

Cities do not simply form the backdrop of social movements but offer crucial socio-spatial conditions for the formation of activist networks. The size, diversity, and density of cities enable strong and fluid relations between different activist clusters. As activists move out of their daily and individual practices and into entangled relations with other activists, they construct counter-public spaces incrementally through repeated interrogations with one another over what brings them together and over what is to be done. Such a networked counter public helped to broaden and deepen activist ties and set into motion a process of collective politicization; while Amsterdam and Parisian activists may not have agreed with one another, their continued emotional and intellectual exchanges did ignite the sentiment that another world is possible. These social and ideological exchanges made these cities particularly robust spaces for driving mobilizations and producing counter-hegemonic ideas. We have shown how new actors on the scene, ie radical left immigrants, were absorbed into this activist space and further strengthened the political and symbolic power of the movement milieus of Amsterdam and Paris. While we chose radical left immigrants as our entry point into the analysis of activist hubs, similar mechanisms could be observed for other clusters, such as feminists, squatters, psychiatric patients, and so on. Indeed, our argument is that relational spaces, not individual actors or acts, are key to understanding movement activity.

Just as the formation of a relational space where different clusters are connected through hubs is crucial for politicization, the organization of space critically contributes to policing. We have shown how governmental innovations, like the introduction of territorial government and project subsidies, initially changed the incentive structures for contentious associations and later their very rationalities. As their work horizons shrunk to specific neighborhoods and specific issues, they had no reason to build bridges with activists outside their immediate circle of specialized partners. The consequence was that they became less dependent upon allied associates within their broader networks. Interactions between activists from various clusters, ie the crucial mechanisms for creating the relational spaces that spawn movements, were now temporally delimited and territorially encapsulated. Participating in larger campaigns for city, national, or global causes still happened occasionally, but the strongly depoliticized concept of “the neighborhood” dominated the everyday routines of many central figures within civil society. These changes redirected attention away from the cultivation of broad alliances in

the search of social justice and towards solving policy problems through issue-specific partnerships.

Through our analysis of the spatial and temporal dimensions underlying politicization and policing we have hoped to contribute to the explanation of the rise and fall of the new social movements. The mechanisms of politicizing and policing identified in our two case studies most likely exemplify more universal dynamics of contention and control. While we focused on associations, most of the arguments apply to intellectuals as well. When movements surge, they typically form linkages between various clusters and craft frames connecting different struggles. Both celebrity intellectuals like Michel Foucault or Pierre Bourdieu and everyday intellectuals operating in the grassroots of society can thus perform crucial roles as brokers. But intellectuals, too, have largely succumbed to or incorporated the temporal and spatial confines set by governments. Many of the former activist intellectuals now take up crucial roles in advising the government how to deal with rebellious youths, deviant ethnics, and unruly territories. One response to such depoliticization has been to search for political gestures that negate the existing order of things, as we noted above. It follows that politics “has no specific place” but “takes place”. As Deranty (2003:137) argues, in such a Rancièrian understandings of the political the “role of the philosopher is not to give his/her voice to the silent aspirations of the dominated, but to add his/her voice to theirs, therefore, to hear their voices, rather than interpret them, and to help them resound” (Deranty 2003:137). Rancière thus postulates that subjects are created by political gestures and that, once they have manifested themselves, the task of philosophers and others is to amplify their voices. Our analysis suggests, to the contrary, that politicizing is an incremental and grounded process that proceeds through time and in space. The identification of domination is the emergent outcome of interactions among heterogeneous actors rooted in different worlds. Our analysis draws attention to relational mechanisms—the conduits and clusters—through which political subjectivities emerge. From this relational perspective, the role of engaged philosophers and social scientists is to facilitate the processes that open up particular worlds and enable actors to articulate universal aspirations for equality and freedom. The political not only “takes place” but emerges from space. The challenge is thus not to negate social order by the ultimate or foundational political act but to create the sort of spaces that enable people to think and connect beyond the immediacy of the situation and contemplate alternative worlds.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> The discussion on KMAN and Amsterdam immigrant associations is based on Tinnemans (1994), Van der Valk (1996), archival research, and c 40 interviews with associations, activists, academics and professionals active in Amsterdam’s political field conducted as part of a PhD-project (Uitermark 2012). The analysis of Parisian immigrant organizations is based on Siméant (1998), Cordeiro (2001), Zancarini-Fournel (2002), and Péchu (2004). The research also draws on 27 interviews with Parisian associations and activists and archival research of the Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France, and the Fédération des Associations de Solidarité avec les Travailleurs Immigrés.

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