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REMAKING URBAN CITIZENSHIP

ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

COMPARATIVE URBAN AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH, VOLUME 10

MICHAEL PETER SMITH &
MICHAEL MCQUARRIE, EDITORS

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Rights *through* the City: The Urban Basis of Immigrant Rights Struggles in Amsterdam and Paris

Walter Nicholls and Floris Vermeulen

How are cities strategic spaces through which immigrants struggle for general rights? We assert that immigrant struggles in cities are not necessarily about a "right to the city." Instead, battles over urban issues are often proxy battles for broader rights in the national society. As these battles are fought through urban policy areas like zoning, housing, and transit, immigrant activists must develop new alliances with organizations in possession of specialized resources and knowledge. Location in sizable cities with high organizational diversity provides immigrant activists with an opportune environment to identify and develop relations with specialized organizations in various policy areas. As campaigns come and go within the same city, relational bridges between diverse organizations broaden, creating a web of weak-tie connections between diverse actors within the activist environment. This can facilitate the flow of information between these activists while providing each with a reservoir of allies to call upon for successive campaigns. Activists embedded in those few cities that have developed rich and overlapping networks can draw upon the social, material, and cultural resources from these environments to engage in battles over threatening national legislation or policies. Thus, rather than stress the right *to* the city, we emphasize the right *through* the city: urban policies are proxy battles for larger rights struggles, and these struggles over time *can* (but do not necessarily) nurture complex and resource-rich activist networks that can be deployed for broader rights campaigns.

We explore these arguments through a comparison of immigrant rights struggles in Amsterdam and Paris. In both cases, urban policy was used to restrict the broader rights of immigrants, which transformed these cities into central arenas of contentious immigrant struggles. Whereas immigrants in Amsterdam fought for religious rights through urban planning and zoning, immigrants in Paris fought for their right to live with their families through housing. In both cases, immigrant activists struggled through the urban policy arena to attain general rights. Through these struggles, activists created new connections to organizations in possession of specialized knowledge and resources in these policy areas. These cases largely confirm our central proposition: cities are central spaces through which struggles for broader rights are fought, and through these 'urban' struggles immigrant activists build connections with a diverse range of supportive organizations and individuals.

However, while these cities have functioned as cradles of immigrant contentiousness, differences between them also show that not all contentious activities evolve in the same direction. In the Paris case, complex activist networks were cultivated through several campaigns

and these strong relations allowed activists in the city to go on and fight a national battle against restrictive legislation in the 1990s. By contrast, in the Amsterdam case, activist relations were disrupted at the end of the campaign because of conflicts between key organizations. The fragmentation of ties left the immigrant activists in Amsterdam isolated, undermining their abilities to call upon allies for campaigns unfolding at urban and national scales. Based on observations from our cases, we conclude that many cities are crucial spaces through which immigrant rights are fought, but not all these cities foster the kinds of relations that make them into driving hubs of national immigrant rights struggles.

The chapter develops these arguments in several sections. The first section outlines the major points of our theoretical argument. The second and third sections analyze the Amsterdam and Paris cases respectively. The final and concluding section of the chapter draws out similarities between our cases and attempts to explain some of the differences between them. We finish by arguing that cities should not be viewed as a domain of politics apart from the national but rather as one front (with its own unique qualities) in a broad and complex geopolitical field.

Rights through the City: The Importance of Cities for Immigrant Rights Movements

The concept of the "right to the city" is rooted in Henri Lefebvre's theoretical explorations of cities in a capitalist world (Harvey, 2003; Gottdiener and Feagin, 1987; Isin, 2000; Lefebvre, 1996; Soja, 2000). The concept provides important insights into how cities shape contentious mobilizations and give rise to new understandings of citizenship. Lefebvre argued that the commodification of urban space transformed the functions and uses of urban space. Urban space was not only a commodity that could be bought and sold like any other but it also provided capitalists with an outlet to switch investments from productive sectors in times of crisis. The importance of urban space for the capitalist system opened the floodgates to large investors, resulting in the commodification of urban space and the dominance of market logic. The commodification process subordinated alternative uses of urban space to market forces, ultimately alienating people from the means of producing and appropriating their lived space. This, for Lefebvre and others, was the principal grievance precipitating contentious struggles in the modern capitalist city (see Castells, 1977; 1983; Fainstein and Hirst, 1995). As diverse people faced these forces of displacement and alienation, they would form alliances between themselves, resist systemic market forces, and create an alternative vision of the city based on the de-commodification of urban space. He believed that such struggles would make it possible for all urban residents to have an equal right to engage in decisions and practices concerning the production of their common urban space. Thus, the 'right to the city' was a theory that identified the processes that caused *urban* mobilizations and the formation of alternative political communities based on distinctly anti-capitalist values.

The interpretations of the "right to the city" have varied markedly from these theoretical foundations, with some sticking closely to Lefebvre's radical project and others incorporating it into more reformist and liberal visions of the urban world (Mayer, forthcoming). In spite of these very different interpretations, they all assume that *urban processes* are a cause of distinctive grievances. Aggrieved activists develop frames and discourses that reflect their urban roots, and these activists target institutions and policy arenas that are directly charged with urban issues. In this sense, the city is conceived as a spatial unit that gives rise to a very distinct *type* of social movement: it is an *urban* movement which seeks to assert the rights of marginalized people to stay, live, and appropriate the city (Castells, 1983; Isin, 2000; Mitchell, 2003; Pickvance, 2003; Soja, 2010). For example, Mitchell's treatment of the "right to the city" is firmly grounded on such assumptions. He highlights how neoliberal urbanization denied certain people access to public spaces in the city, which precipitated struggles to regain access and develop alternative imaginings for how cities should operate (Mitchell, 2003). Mayer's most recent work has shown that the "right to the city" has become the battle cry of a transnational alliance of urban activists, with cross-border networks serving to circulate information and reinforce a common identify among activists in countless localities (2009, forthcoming). Though Mayer's insightful work shows how the "right to the city" travels across space and scales, the city continues to be conceived as a unique site that gives rise to distinct types of grievances, targets, and identities.

We argue that the "right to the city" too narrowly defines the arena of activists' struggles. While many urban social movements maintain their singular focus on enhancing rights *to* the city, activists who mobilize in cities may view the urban arena as one front in a broader struggle to gain basic labor, sexual, minority, and immigrant rights (Nicholls, 2008; 2009). For example, in the case of the Gay Rights movement in the United States, the city (San Francisco in particular) played a strategic role in nourishing powerful activist ties and serving as a political arena to initiate innovative gay rights reforms. The aim was not to gain rights to this one city and stop the struggle at the city gates but to build on the relational and political advances made in this city to sustain the broader goal of gay rights in the country (Armstrong, 2006). This was not necessarily an *urban* social movement, but the *urban* did serve as the strategic space through which broader rights claims could be made. Thus, rather than simply focus on 'rights to the city,' we should conceptualize cities as important arenas *through* which diverse activists make their claims for general rights in complex citizenship regimes.

We make four basic assertions for how cities become strategic spaces through which broad immigrant rights movements are fought. First, the general rights of immigrants are often regulated and restricted *through* urban policy processes. Liberal states are bound by international and constitutional norms to provide immigrants with a basic set of rights, including the right to practice their religion, live with families, receive basic social supports, and so on (Joppke, 1999). While national governments are bound to protect the *abstract* rights of immigrant and minority residents, they exercise a wide degree of latitude over how rights are *substantively* distributed and regulated in their countries. It is in this context that the urban policy arena plays a uniquely important role. While liberal states may meet their formal obligations to respect the rights of immigrants, they also carry out restrictions on immigrant rights through the urban policy arena. Shifting the execution of immigrant policies to the urban arena transfers the responsibility of passing illiberal measures to local governments and justifies illiberal restrictions on 'technical' grounds (i.e., zoning violations, housing restrictions, etc.). For example, national courts may guarantee religious freedoms for all, but local officials can employ local zoning ordinances to impose severe restrictions on how and where actual mosques are built (Bowen, 2006; Maussen, 2009). As the general rights of immigrants are enabled, regulated, or restricted *through* the city, the city becomes a space where grievances concerning rights are concretized and made real to immigrants. Thus, restrictions on actual rights through urban policy turn the 'urban' arena into the political frontline of immigrant rights struggles. Second, as the urban becomes an important space for generating immigrants' grievances, it is also a distinctive environment that facilitates the emergence of complex alliances between diverse organizations. Large cities contain rich and heterogeneous social movement environments, constituted by diverse activists and organizations with specialized resources and knowledge in different policy areas (see Nicholls, 2008; Vermeulen, 2005; 2006). Moreover, immigrant grievances that arise in response to restrictive

urban policies encourage the formation of alliances between the diverse organizations in the city. When policies concerning the rights of immigrants are shifted into the urban arena, grievances can arise in different policy areas, including housing, zoning, transit, and economic development, among others. Aggrieved immigrants facing restrictions on their rights in one policy area (e.g., transit) will often lack the sufficient skills and resources in this area to mount a successful campaign. This will require them to establish connections with organizations in possession of those specialized skills. Moreover, proximity between these diverse actors reduces the transaction costs between them, permitting them the time to experiment with new multi-actor coalitions and learn how to trust and work with one another. For example, contacts that first emerged in one-off, small-scale campaigns for the rights of various groups, such as street vendors, renters, day laborers, or religious minorities, can give rise to a web of weak-tie relations between various activist organizations. These networks provide the connected activists with information about their complex political field and a reservoir of potential allies to draw upon for successive campaigns. These ties are by no means free of personal, ideological, and power conflicts, but when the benefits of cooperation are seen to outweigh the costs, participants are likely to stay connected in spite of the various misgivings they may have about their allies. Thus, as central states shift immigration policies to the urban arena, immigrant grievances arising in a range of policy areas constantly spur complex networking processes in the city. The city in this instance is conceived as a 'relational incubator' that helps cultivate networks between the diverse supporters of immigrant rights (Nicholls, 2008).

Third, while most large cities are sites of contentious political activities, only a handful of these cities can evolve into powerful hubs and drivers of national social movements. New connections created through urban-based campaigns can evolve into strong and rich ties, which can then be drawn on in successive local and national mobilizations. However, ties that may emerge in one campaign may be cut at the end of it, with the various organizations going back to a state of relative isolation. To explain these contrasting networking trajectories, we suggest that organizations participating in local coalitions are often dependent on affiliations with broader organizations and institutions for resources, support, and legitimacy.

Some may receive subsidies from the local municipal council; others may be section affiliates of large national and transnational organizations; and still others may have important connections to national political parties. The broader dependencies of local coalition partners play an important role in influencing their relations with one another. While local organizations may respect their coalition partners and agree on a common strategy, parent organizations may believe that these partnerships and their strategies depart from broader goals and norms. Moreover, the *perceived* disjuncture between local maneuverings and broader organizational goals may be exacerbated when non-local patrons have not had the opportunity to engage in long deliberations with the diverse local coalition partners. These intimate and relationally intensive deliberations enable local partners to recognize the mutually beneficial possibilities of collective action. In this sense, the social or ideological *distance* of non-local patrons to local coalition work can be exacerbated by their geographic distance, with non-local organizations not being privy to the tacit and nuanced understandings that arise from intimate and grounded negotiations. This can result in superficial interpretations of local agreements, distrust for allies, and a misunderstanding of how local adaptations can contribute to achieving the broader goals of the parent organization. This is often the case when national labor unions or transnational religious organizations interpret the innovative practices of local affiliates as deviating from broader organizational norms and goals (Milkman, 2005). In other instances, however, the strategies and

struggles of 'local' coalition partners may coincide well with the goals and norms of broader organizational patrons. Under such conditions, patrons may permit or even encourage local activists to continue their cooperation in these multi-actor coalitions. Thus, whether or not rich relations develop across local activist communities depends partly on the degree to which local actions coincide with or depart from the goals and norms of broader supporters.

Fourth, rights coalitions and mobilizations often begin and coalesce in cities, but they do not necessarily stay there. Issues concerning immigrant rights may shift back to the national level when new laws and regulations are introduced by the central state. When relations between urban activists are well structured and relatively cohesive, they can shift their targets from local restrictions on rights to broader national issues (Leitner, *et al.*, 2008; Nicholls, 2009; Sikkink, 2005; Tarrow and McAdam, 2005). This type of 'scale shift' is made possible because actors within urban coalitions may lobby their national organizations, allies, or supporters to back national campaigns. In such instances, national organizations can employ their infrastructure and networks to connect local coalitions of immigrant rights activists throughout a country. They can also help to set up information networks, sponsor meetings, and participate in organizing national protests. Once these networks are in place, activists in different urban coalitions contribute their own resources to the broader struggle while the national network coordinates how these resources are strategically circulated and deployed. Thus, when policies concerning the rights of immigrants shift to the national scale, participants in local activist networks can scale up and deploy their locally acquired social movement resources for these broader campaigns. In such instances, these powerful cities become the drivers of national social movements.

This section has maintained that cities are important political spaces through which immigrant activists struggle for broader rights within receiving societies. Cities are political sites through which general rights are restricted, making them into frontline arenas for catalyzing rights mobilizations. Urban struggles for rights, such as access to housing, building permits, parks, and improved transit, must therefore be considered proxy battles for general rights within receiving societies. Through these constant urban struggles, immigrant activists are compelled to draw on support and develop alliances with diverse organizations in their local activist environment. Lastly, if institutional forces permit the maturation of these horizontal activist ties, they can later be deployed to fuel and steer national immigrant rights campaigns. It is in this sense that the city becomes the strategic terrain through which broader rights to the country (not just the city) are made.

Rights through the City: The Amsterdam Case

Regulating Religious Rights through Urban Planning

Muslim immigrants have set up a range of religious institutions in the Netherlands over the last decades. The development of these religious institutions is primarily the result of interactions between different actors, with local and national Muslim organizations negotiating with a broad range of actors to establish an institutional foothold in the receiving context. Muslim immigrants set up relations of collaboration and conflict with a range of actors in order to claim certain basic religious rights (Maussen, 2009, pp. 16-7). The acquisition of places of worship plays an important role in the emancipation of these groups. The symbolic significance of places of worship cannot be overestimated. Places of worship, especially when they have been built for this purpose, materialize religious presence. At the same time, the building of new religious

buildings provides local authorities the opportunity to exert control over religious demands (Sunier, 2009). In the Netherlands local authorities have tried to control these demands mostly by downplaying religious meanings, avoiding any ideological discussion, and regulating the building of mosques into urban planning (Lindo, 1999; Maussen, 2007; Rath, *et al.*, 2001; Sunier, 1996). This was possible because most mosques were built in poorer rundown immigrant neighborhoods, which had become the focus of attention of Dutch urban planners in the early eighties. Urban planners identified the primary problems of immigrant neighborhoods as poor housing, concentrated poverty, the chronic lack of space, and the perceived overconcentration of immigrants who lived isolated from the Dutch mainstream. Often, the construction of large visible houses of worship did not fit into their original plans, as the next example demonstrates.

The Beginning of the Conflict: Plans for an Orthodox Mosque in Amsterdam

The conflict over the Wester Mosque started as a typical local conflict over the building of a mosque. A group of Muslim immigrants, affiliated with the orthodox Turkish Islamic transnational movement, Milli Görüs, demanded the right to have their own place of worship in their neighborhood. The group had just purchased a vacant factory building in the middle of the neighborhood for the eventual construction of a large new mosque. At first, they were denied permission by the local authorities who said that the mosque was not included in the new zoning plan of the city district and that the factory was to be used for other purposes. Having been prohibited from using the building during the month of Ramadan, several hundred men marched to the district town hall in February 1994 and protested by kneeling in front of the building for a collective prayer. Six months later an even larger group of Turkish men, women, and children marched from their neighborhood to the city center to protest against a new decision to allow the organization to use only a small part of the factory for religious activities. In the following years the conflict between the Turkish immigrants and the local authorities escalated further; in one instance the use of police force to evict worshippers from the factory-turned-mosque was only barely avoided (Lindo, 1999). Now, more than 16 years later, the factory has been demolished, but the prestigious mosque that is supposed to replace the old factory has still not been built. It probably never will be.

One of the main reasons for this is the nature of the orthodox group that wants to build the mosque and the perceived mismatch between their values and those of mainstream Dutch society. The general Milli Görüs movement has been one of the most important oppositional forces to the state-led Turkish Islam from the 1970s to the 1990s. It is considered a conservative movement strongly linked to the dominant religious Islamic party in Turkey, the Refah Party, which for the last two decades has been in conflict with the Turkish authorities over the future direction of Turkish Islam. As Turks migrated to Western Europe as guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s, they brought the Milli Görüs ideologies with them. These can be summarized as a strict following of the Islamic norms and rules: no alcohol, clear separation of gender roles, rejection of other religious beliefs, and support of the Islamic judicial system. European authorities have reacted differently to the transnational Milli Görüs Movement. In Germany, where Milli Görüs established their European headquarters, authorities have always been very critical toward the movement since they considered it to be fundamentalist and anti-democratic. In some instances organizations affiliated with the movement were banned (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). In the Netherlands, especially in Amsterdam, it seemed that Milli Görüs had developed somewhat independently from the political and religious influences proceeding from either Turkey or Germany. However, while the leadership in Amsterdam became more open for dialog with the authorities and expressed 'modern' opinions on social and religious matters, the constituency in the city seemed to remain far more traditional and conservative in their opinions (Vermeulen, 2006).

Leadership of the local Milli Görüs movement in Amsterdam has not always been open and liberal. In the beginning of the conflict, Milli Görüs was just mainly interested in building their own prominent mosque, which represented their orthodox religious beliefs. Local authorities resisted the building of this "Turkish orthodox bastion," as they called it, because they feared that it would influence the neighborhood negatively (Lindo, 1999). They were concerned that it would reinforce conservative and ethnic Turkish identities among the Turkish immigrants in the neighborhood. This would, according to local officials, lead to more segregation and an inward looking immigrant community, which would hamper social and cultural integration. The claim of the Milli Görüs movement to have their own place of worship was perceived by authorities as a claim to have an orthodox sectarian worldview and to make it publicly visible.

As mentioned before, local authorities used the neighborhood urban restructuring plan to successfully block the building of the mosque. After many court cases on different technical issues (which were tried and appealed as high as the Dutch Supreme Court), it became clear to the local Milli Görüs leadership that they would not win. The mosque would not be built in the middle of the neighborhood, and in addition to that, Milli Görüs would lose the entire factory as well. This insight led to a new strategy among the local Milli Görüs leadership. They tried to convince local authorities that the mosque would not become a Turkish bastion; on the contrary, they argued that it would become a symbol for the successful and peaceful integration of Islam in the Netherlands. In order to do this they needed to build coalitions with powerful actors outside their own community.

The Relational Advantages of the City: Building Alliances across Religious Differences

One of the board members of the Milli Görüs had established contacts with an influential local Dutch NGO, the Amsterdam Center for Foreigners[1] (ACB by its Dutch initials), an organization founded in the early 1970s to support immigrants settling in Amsterdam. Through this contact, the board member also came into contact with one of the largest housing corporations in the city, *Het Oosten*. The housing corporation owned many buildings in the neighborhood in which the mosque was supposed to be built and had a large number of Turkish tenants. They were interested in the plans of Milli Görüs since many of their tenants were affiliated with this transnational movement. The Milli Görüs board member, together with the contact person of the ACB, was eventually able to convince the housing corporation that Milli Görüs—contrary to the perception of those who would view the mosque as a Turkish bastion—would follow a path toward establishing a first, exemplary, Dutch Islamic mosque. The idea was to create a new mosque, named Wester Mosque after the famous Wester Church in the center of Amsterdam, in close collaboration with the housing corporation. The property owned by Milli Görüs around the factory would be used by the housing corporation to build luxurious apartments. The mosque would be built in the same architectural style of the luxurious apartments and the rest of the neighborhood, reflecting the aesthetic form of the internationally renowned Amsterdamse School. The entire complex would consist of a central mosque, conference halls, sporting and shopping facilities, and the housing complex.

The housing corporation contacted the local authorities, who were very apprehensive about entering into any type of collaboration with Milli Görüs given the history of conflict. However, the new coalition between Milli Görüs and the housing corporation and the ambitious new plans

led the local authorities to reconsider. At first, negotiations between Milli Görüs, the Housing Corporation, and local authorities were held in secret. The parties worked on the new designs for more than two years before they publically announced their willingness to collaborate. Most people were impressed by the ambitious and expensive plans for this massive complex, which was held up as a symbol for the integration of Muslims in Dutch society. The new alliance and the plans themselves were an illustration of this integration: an Islamic organization working closely together with a respected housing corporation to make a Dutch mosque in which everyone would be welcome and all distinctively Turkish signs would be silenced. A French Jewish architect was even hired to design the mosque in a typical Dutch Amsterdam style.

The alliance of the Milli Görüs organizations with the housing corporation did not only provide access to the decision-making process, but it also provided Milli Görüs with essential information and knowledge on how to reframe the mosque project and how to integrate it into an overall urban vision for the neighborhood. In addition to that, the alliance provided symbolic capital that increased the legitimacy for their claim to be visibly present in the public sphere. In the negotiations between Milli Görüs, the housing corporation, and the local authorities, the Milli Görüs organization received external expertise and knowledge in city planning matters while also gaining cultural capital from their influential partners. These acquired resources made it easier for local Milli Görüs leadership to present the plans for the new mosque as something that would be a contribution to the neighborhood, the city, and even the entire country. This would not just be another Turkish mosque in an Amsterdam neighborhood; it would be a Dutch mosque in a neighborhood in which people of different backgrounds and religious beliefs could be properly integrated. The housing corporation would now also speak on behalf of Milli Görüs when explaining and presenting the new plans. Again, this increased the credibility and reliability of the Milli Görüs organization significantly, as many people were not convinced in the beginning whether the appearance and purpose of the mosque would indeed be different from the original plans.

The alliance remained mostly local, with only local actors involved, except for the transnational Milli Görüs movement; the alliance did not shift to the national level. However, it did gain national appeal. National actors were looking as well for more liberal forms of Islam that could be integrated more easily into Dutch society. The character of the Dutch public debate on Islam had become more negative after 9/11. Increasingly, national politicians from all parties (from both the left and the right) were questioning the possibility of a peaceful coexistence of Islam with mainstream liberal Dutch norms and values. The more orthodox Islamic movements were perceived to be especially irreconcilable with a Western worldview. Within this national debate there was a great demand for a version of Islam that would encompass more liberal ideas. For proponents of this line, the Wester Mosque seemed to reflect a prime example of a more liberal and Dutch version of Islam. This prompted more national actors to publicly support the attempt to build this mosque. Another important factor enhancing the national resonance of this local struggle was the emergence of a new president of Milli Görüs in Amsterdam, Haci Karacaer, who is the son of a Kurdish guest worker. He happened to be an appealing liberal and progressive spokesperson who, within a few years, was able to develop a strong and influential position in the Amsterdam political system. He almost managed to get on the electoral list of the Amsterdam Labor Party for the elections of the City Council of Amsterdam in 2002. Five years earlier, it would have been inconceivable that a local president of the orthodox Milli Görüs organization would be considered as a candidate for the left-wing, secular Labor Party. This example illustrates how local alliances and the different framing of their missions had shifted the opportunities for this group.

Within just a few years, the moderate and progressive leadership of Milli Görüs was able to change the public perception of their movement completely. The entire city district council supported and approved the new plans, and only a few neighborhood residents showed signs of protest. This protest was able to slow down the process, but it proved to be rather ineffective against a powerful coalition made up of a large religious organization, a rich housing corporation, and the city district's authorities. After the final court case on the height of the minaret in 2005, which was won by Milli Görüs and the housing corporation, the building of the mosque could begin. The original problems of the city district with the size of the mosque were not problems anymore, and the zoning plans for the neighborhood were adjusted. Whereas in the beginning the zoning plan was used by officials as a tool for blocking the building plans of Milli Görüs, now it was used to block the protests of native neighborhood residents.

The festivities for laying the first stone were illustrative of how the plans for the mosque had changed, how extensive the new powerful alliance had become, and how the entire project had received national attention and support. The cornerstone was placed by the national minister for Justice of the Christian Democratic Party, who spoke about the beauty of the project and how it would be a symbol for the integration of Islam in Dutch society. After him, different religious leaders—Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim—provided their blessings for the new mosque. The whole neighborhood seemed to be there; people of all different national backgrounds were celebrating the beginning of the construction of a mosque that would be an asset not only to the neighborhood but to the entire city. No one from the transnational Milli Görüs movement was present. Nevertheless, Milli Görüs was still an important actor; they served as the official owners of the factory property and as major contributors to the project. Indeed, the new project plans were much more expensive than the original plans. The city council would even provide substantial additional subsidies for the mosque construction, even though it was very difficult to finance a religious building under Dutch church-state relations. This illustrates again how eager the local authorities were to integrate the orthodox, inward-looking Turkish Milli Görüs community into Dutch society and how powerful the new alliance had become.

Network Fragmentation: Status Quo in the Neighborhood

In spite of the abilities of Milli Görüs to develop a robust coalition of supporters for the mosque project, it remained unclear how its strategy to gain acceptance in Amsterdam would be received by the movement's conservative leadership in Germany and Turkey. In fact, the transnational Milli Görüs leadership abruptly decided to disrupt the local project. The transnational leadership felt that the local liberal leadership had gone too far in designing a mosque devoid of Turkish references. Also, they viewed the liberal religious views of the Amsterdam group as highly problematic. Finally, it was an insult to them that a Christian Minister of Justice was asked to start the construction process, whereas they themselves seem to have had no official function in the mosque even despite their ownership of the ground. In April 2006 the German leadership of Milli Görüs replaced the liberal board of the Amsterdam Milli Görüs with a more compliant one. The housing corporation and the local authorities in Amsterdam tried to ensure continuity with previous agreements by introducing additional contracts and agreements. However, the new conservative board of the mosque resisted these efforts and pulled out of their alliances with their local partners. Contacts between the housing corporation and Milli Görüs dissolved, and soon after the city district pulled out of the

collaboration. The powerful local coalition that had successfully overcome local resistance, ushered into being a new mosque project, and presented the Netherlands with a model of religious integration had now come to an abrupt end.

At present, the mosque has not yet been constructed and probably never will be. Court cases have started again over technical issues, building permits, and other legal matters. Recently, members of the Milli Görüs organization again occupied the city district hall to protest the fact that they still do not have an adequate mosque. In this contested field of citizenship, the conflict was not just about the character of the neighborhood and the position of newcomers in it, but it was also about the nature of Dutch society and its perceived incompatibility with conservative and orthodox religious worldviews. Local authorities explicitly mentioned that they did not want a "Turkish bastion" in the neighborhood and referred to the fact that the Dutch way of living would be threatened by these conservative Muslim ideologies. The urban became the space from which Turkish immigrants could generate claims for visibility and equality in Dutch society without changing their beliefs and opinions. However, Amsterdam authorities also used urban institutions as a way to deal with and to regulate, primarily using urban zoning ordinances to deny these immigrants and their Milli Görüs organization a prominent position in the neighborhood. The conflict was not about the position of immigrants in general or Islamic immigrants and Turkish immigrants in particular; it was about conservative orthodox Muslim immigrants and their position in Dutch society.

Rights through the City: The Paris Case

Paris: Regulating Family Rights through Housing

In France during the years following World War II, housing became a key policy area for regulating and shaping the rights accorded to immigrants. The Social Action Fund for Immigrant Workers and their Families[2] (FAS by its French initials) was created in 1958 to regulate the settlement process of immigrants. The FAS was charged with providing a range of welfare services, but the majority of its resources were dedicated to fund housing for immigrants (Heins, 1991). A semi-public housing agency, the National Society for the Construction of Housing for Workers[3] (SONACOTRA by its French initials), assumed responsibility for producing, distributing, and managing immigrant housing while FAS provided the financing. The SONACOTRA provided housing only to males because this would restrict the possibility of family migrants and ensure the temporary nature of migration. Housing was not only used to produce a desirable population of migrants (i.e., temporary, male, non-reproductive), but it was also used as a technique to discipline and civilize this population (Hmed, 2006). Hostel managers were recruited from among non-commissioned officers and veterans from France's colonial wars for the purposes of disciplining and civilizing the migrant residents (Hmed, 2006; 2007).

The use of housing to manage migrant populations took on additional importance in the 1970s. The national government responded to the economic crisis by introducing severe restrictions on labor and family migrants in 1973. In spite of the government's efforts, the Constitutional Council pronounced that the ministerial decree restricting the right to family migration violated international law and demanded that the government reverse course (Wihtol de Wenden, 1994). Although the government was forced to formally recognize the right of family reunification, it also introduced a number of restrictive criteria for obtaining family visas. The head of the family in France had to present, among other things, a certificate of 'decent housing' with the visa application for his family. Another ministerial decree in 1977 required

mayors to certify the housing conditions of immigrant applicants. This decree introduced an additional hurdle for immigrants while providing mayors with a tool to block migrants from settling in their jurisdictions. Facing severe housing shortages in the public and private sector, many immigrant families were denied their right to live together in France, compelling them to enter the country without their visas and settle in dilapidated hotels or abandoned buildings in the city. Having settled in these accommodations, the families could not acquire the certificate of decent housing needed to regularize their immigration status. "For immigrants, housing takes on a dimension that it simply does not have for French families. It affects the right to live as a family and to obtaining papers for the family which are in order" (Péchu, 1999, p. 734).

Urban housing policy was therefore a critical instrument for regulating the rights accorded to immigrants in the country. While agreeing to formally grant immigrants the right to live with their family, the government was able to retain its power to limit these rights by introducing onerous housing requirements on visa applicants. This act of dissimulation was of great strategic importance because it allowed the state to abide by legal and normative obligations while also allowing it to exercise control over how 'real' rights were distributed within the national territory. In doing this, the mayor (charged with distributing public housing and housing certificates to immigrants) was transformed into one of the most important gatekeepers in the country. When grievances arose amongst immigrants, the mayor's authority over housing made him an important target for these campaigns.

The Relational Advantages of the City: Building Alliances across Ideological Differences

During the 1980s and 1990s, immigrant mobilizations unfolded throughout Paris, and housing was a central arena of contention (Ireland, 1994; Péchu, 2001; 2004; Wihtol de Wenden, 1994). As noted above, immigrant families continued to come to the country (without residency visas) and settled in dilapidated Parisian hotels or abandoned apartment buildings. Several fires prompted the city to launch a campaign to evict immigrant residents from these establishments. Families in one building resisted these measures and called on the mayor to provide them with public housing and a certificate of decent housing (Péchu, 2004). Housing was viewed by these families as a means to regularize their status. The city, in this instance, became the principal arena through which these families would need to struggle in order to obtain their rights to settle together in the country.

This initial struggle drew the support of Housing First[4] (ULA), a well-established housing rights association in the city. While the immigrant families were prepared to fight an extensive struggle with the city, ULA possessed the resources, specialized knowledge, and connections necessary for a successful campaign. ULA activists settled in the occupied building with the immigrant families and worked closely with them to devise a general strategy for their struggle. These intimate conditions placed very different activists into constant contact with one another, building up stronger ties between them while also building their knowledge of how to mobilize together around these issues (Péchu, 2004, p. 305). In addition to strengthening ties between these actors, ULA employed its own networks to mobilize additional support for their campaign (i.e., media support and support from prominent associations). The association gained the support of a number of strategic groups, including the country's most prominent housing association, Emmaus, the immigrant rights association Movement against Racism and Friendship between People[5] (MRAP), and the trade union branch of the Office for Public Housing. Each of these supportive organizations contributed different sets of specialized resources and expertise to the campaign.

In 1990, ten immigrants in the occupied building initiated a hunger strike. The leaders of ULA used the hunger strike to enlist more political, associational, and media support for the struggle. At this stage, MRAP played an important brokering role by connecting these immigrant families to some of the most prominent immigrant rights and anti-racist associations in the country, including FASTI, LDH, GISTI,[6] and *SOS Racisme*. These associations provided legal expertise in the area of immigration rights, and they also provided the campaign with more material resources and better political connections. This networking strategy succeeded in pressuring the government to concede and provide families of the building with housing and a certificate of decent housing. In 1993, the leaders of ULA launched another campaign to support an occupation by immigrants of an apartment building on the *rue de Dragon*. The accumulated experience of these activists permitted them to quickly turn this new campaign into a national media event and to frame this action as a struggle against social exclusion. As a part of this strategy, the organizers of the campaign created a new association, Rights First,[7] which was charged with leading the general struggle against social exclusion (with Paris leading the charge, of course). As this campaign became a focal point of media attention, the rights and anti-racist associations, unions, and parties threw their support behind these efforts.

In sum, housing was a proxy battle for a larger struggle to obtain residency rights for immigrant families. Because of this, the battle for immigrant rights largely unfolded through the city, with the city being both the target of the struggle (obtaining decent housing for immigrants) and the strategic space for nourishing powerful relational exchanges between activists. The urban nature of the immigrant grievances (i.e., access to housing) required immigrant activists to develop ties with diverse Parisian organizations that possessed more specialized resources. Housing associations, unions, and immigrant rights associations formed the backbone of a coalition to secure housing for these families. Spatial proximity allowed these actors to meet repeatedly through these various struggles, with these repeated interactions permitting the different actors to learn how to carry out a housing campaign on behalf of undocumented immigrants. Thus, the *urban* character of this struggle provided an opportunity for nurturing a complex and enabling relational web.

Paris: The City as a Platform of National Social Movements

In 1993 the Minister of Interior introduced a series of restrictive reforms that restricted the number of visas available to immigrants, limited the criteria to qualify for a 'family reunion' visa, imposed random identity checks on foreigners, and implemented measures to accelerate deportations (Berezin, 2009; Hayward and Wright, 2002). The Pasqua laws closed down the path to regularization for many immigrants while amplifying the risk of immanent deportation. These measures increased the barriers to regularization far beyond the restrictions on housing. These changes would precipitate a shift in the struggle from the urban (housing policy and the mayor) to the national (legislation and the government) political arena.

In 1994, undocumented immigrants throughout the Paris region formed informal collectives (*collectif de sans papiers*[8]) to demand the regularization of their status from the department prefect (the official charged with processing immigration applications). Although they had sought out the support of rights and anti-racist associations, these associations remained locked in the housing campaign at the *rue de Dragon*. Their inability to gain broader support from other activists undermined their capacities to exert pressure on the Paris prefect. Facing this impasse, Foreign Parents of French Children[9] embraced a direct action approach by occupying a public building and initiating a hunger strike during the presidential elections. Moreover, rather than target the prefect with their demands, the *collectif* shifted its target to the national government. Their aim was to use the presidential campaign to raise the national profile of their struggle and to pressure the government to compel the prefect to regularize their status. The tactics (i.e., hunger strike) and the timing (i.e., presidential election) drew the attention of the media and Paris's most prominent rights and anti-racist associations into the campaign. While many of these associations had been mobilizing in support of the squatters at the *rue de Dragon*, the end of that campaign and the growing media attention on the *collectif* resulted in a rather quick shift of support to this new front in the immigrant rights struggle. The same associations that had been providing support to immigrant squatters seeking housing from the mayor now found themselves providing similar support to immigrant hunger strikers demanding their rights from the national government.

The Paris associations provided Foreign Parents of French Children with crucial supports that enabled the *collectif* to continue its struggle. In addition to providing the *collectif* with access to basic resources (e.g., an office, telephone, photocopy machines, fax), the associations (GISTI and LDH in particular) provided extensive legal support to help them identify major inconsistencies in the Pasqua laws. Moreover, the prominence of the associations and the cultural capital of their leaders immediately enhanced the legitimacy of the *sans papiers* struggle. The associations possessed important insights into the nuances of national cultural politics and were able to craft representations of immigrants that resonated with national norms. They drew from the discursive tradition of *misérabalisme* to create a compelling moral narrative of the striking parents (Passeron and Grignon, 1989). These were hard-working, family-loving migrants who had been made 'illegal' and 'clandestine' by an arbitrary and unjust state. The human rights and anti-racist associations also had extensive contacts with national print, radio, and television media, which enabled them to disseminate this representation throughout the country.

Many of the rights and anti-racist groups involved in the campaign were national organizations with branch sections located throughout the country. They encouraged local sections to launch their own campaigns to support immigrant rights in their respective cities. The infrastructure of the national associations was not used to micromanage local sections but to encourage their engagement in local mobilizations and the dissemination of information and discourses across the country. This information included legal analysis conducted by expert lawyers from LDH and GISTI in Paris and analyses concerning the dynamics of mobilization and the shifting positions of the government. The specialized information was used by activists in provincial sections to develop their own mobilizations in support of the *sans papiers*. Moreover, the national headquarters of the associations provided their sections with the discourses for framing their local struggles and claims. In words taken from FASTI's minutes: "You can, if you wish, employ the texts emanating from the *intellectuals* and *writers* that affirm, 'The procedures of expulsion are unjust and render hardworking families into clandestine criminals....' You can even take up the pen to write something along these lines." By employing infrastructure and networks of national associations to extend the movement beyond the walls of Paris, there emerged homologous coalitions across the country, each employing structures, frames, and strategies similar to that of their parent organizations in Paris.

Although these successive campaigns in Paris strengthened relations between important immigrant rights advocates, these relations were by no means trouble free. On the contrary, different political affiliations, ideologies, and strategic preferences presented constant tensions and challenges throughout this period. The political context (a right wing government from 1993-1995) provided the associations with a common adversary to mobilize against. However,

once the government changed to the Socialist Party in 1997, the dynamics of these relations changed significantly. While all the associations continued to pressure the new Socialist government to modify or rescind the Pasqua laws, there was disagreement over how far they should criticize the government. Associations strongly affiliated with the Socialist Party (LDH and FAST in particular) argued that the movement should pressure the government through protests but should not alienate their most influential allies in the government. Others in this coalition believed that the coalition needed to retain its autonomy from the government and continue placing maximum pressure on the government through disruptive protests. While all parties agreed to stay unified at least until the Left government made several important concessions, the coalition split when the more autonomous associations objected to the limited character of the government concessions. Their desire to continue the struggle until the Pasqua laws were totally rescinded did not gain the support of the more moderate associations. The more moderate associations accepted the government concessions and withdrew from efforts geared toward a total revocation of the Pasqua laws. Thus, important political and strategic divisions existed between the main partners in this coalition, but the organizations were able to override the divisions as long as they operated in a political environment with a common adversary. Once the Socialist Party came to power, the political environment became more complicated. So too did the organizational relations, which contributed to the movement's fragmentation after 1997.

The relative success of extending the rights of immigrants in France was partially the result of the strong relational exchanges forged in the Parisian activist community. The relations between immigrants and their supportive advocates were largely nourished through a series of urban-oriented struggles. Working through these various campaigns, they also learned how to mobilize and work together as a unit; this cluster of activists was thus provided a certain degree of collective expertise in the area of immigrant rights mobilizations. While the 'urban' played a strategic role in both catalyzing and nurturing these relations, these place-based relations were by no means confined to the city. The momentum of the housing campaign at the *rue de Dragon* certainly motivated the rights associations to keep focused on the urban policy arena, but the emergence of another struggle targeting national legislation and national officials resulted in a rather prompt shift to the national scale. Thus, political and associational ties forged through the city eventually enabled actors to engage forcefully in a national level campaign for immigrant rights.

Struggling for Rights in Amsterdam and Paris: Concluding Remarks

This chapter has examined how the city became a strategic space for making broader citizenship claims in receiving countries. By gaining the rights to build mosques and access to public housing, immigrants were asserting their broader rights within their new countries. We maintain that the localization of immigration policy in the city transformed urban policy areas, (such as zoning, planning, and housing) into key fronts in the struggles for broader immigrant rights. Both cases reveal that aggrieved immigrants developed alliances with supporters in possession of specialized resources. In both instances, these supporters provided scarce knowledge and expertise in the different policy areas and they also served as brokers who connected immigrants to other strategic actors in the urban milieu (i.e., parties in Amsterdam and human rights associations in Paris). The spatial proximity between these various actors permitted them to work closely with one another over extended periods of time. Their enhanced capacities to work and politic together enabled these coalitions to make rather powerful rights claims in their respective cities. In both cases, the city was a strategic space through which immigrant grievances were first catalyzed and which facilitated the formation of innovative multi-actor coalitions.

In spite of these important similarities, we have also identified several striking differences between the cases. Most importantly, relations within the urban-based coalition broke down in Amsterdam but they evolved into the central hub of a national immigrant rights movement in France. We explain these different trajectories by highlighting the types of dependencies local activists have on broader organizational and institutions supporters. In Amsterdam, the local section of Milli Görüs had embraced the local liberal discourses of the city in order to achieve its goal of creating a mosque. This strategy enabled members of the local movement to develop ties with the local political elite and make important inroads in a restrictive cultural environment. However, the more conservative parent transnational movement objected to the maneuverings of Amsterdam leaders, resulting in their replacement with a more conservative leadership team. In Paris, the main actors in the coalitions also had different and conflicting ideologies and positions. However, supporters in the larger Socialist Party saw the activities of their allied associations as conforming to their own political goals. In this instance, the broader political context favored and supported the urban coalitions. Thus, immigrants struggled through both cities to achieve their broader rights; however, institutional contexts favored their consolidation and growth in Paris while blocking and derailing them in Amsterdam.

We conclude by arguing that using the "right to the city" framework to conceptualize the urban basis of immigrant rights struggles is limiting. The city is a terrain for broader rights struggles, which serve to catalyze and foster powerful immigrant rights coalitions. Cities are the spaces that enable stigmatized immigrants to concentrate their collective resources and deploy them in broader political struggles. Moreover, the rights coalitions that arise through the city can also become hubs of important national mobilizations. Just as the coalition in Paris became a hub of the national immigrant rights movement in France, cities like Los Angeles and London have become the driving hubs of movements in their respective countries. The perspective taken here, however, breaks with urban social movement and "right to the city" positions. Rather than see urban movements as a distinctive *type* of social movement, we argue that cities play distinctive *functions* in broad based social movements seeking to expand the rights of people. In the case of the immigrant rights movement, we argued that these are generative sites for these movements because they are the first sites for spurring grievances and for fostering multi-actor networks.

By identifying how broader social movements unfold through cities, urban sociologists can begin making a contribution to the more general social movement literature. This literature has largely dismissed the city as either a backdrop of social movements or a site of particularistic struggles (e.g., NIMBYism, "reactive utopias," etc.). The arguments developed here and elsewhere (see Nicholls, 2008; 2009) outline a conceptual framework that identifies the processes and mechanisms that make the 'urban' a particularly unique space for movements that unfold at a variety of spatial scales. The 'urban' ceases to be a backdrop or container of contentious political activities and instead becomes a strategic site for activating and incubating complex activist networks. Moreover, this particular perspective also lays the conceptual ground for analyzing the spatial contours of broad social movement networks. As activist relations flourish in certain cities (e.g., Paris, Los Angeles, San Francisco), key social movement resources—including money, knowledge, cultural capital, and legal skills—become geographically concentrated there. The geographically uneven character of these movements introduces powerful cleavages and rivalries between more and less powerful cities in dispersed social movement networks. Geographically-driven rivalries and conflicts affect the interaction

between activists within the network. Thus, the arguments developed in this paper provide the tools for explaining how cities matter for broader social movements, and they also provide insights into the geographical underpinnings of national and transnational social movements. We believe that conceptual schema like 'rights to the city' and 'urban social movements' block scholars of urban contention from seeing beyond the city walls and examining how relations forged through cities enable activists to play strategic roles in broad anti-systemic movements.

Notes

1. *Amsterdam Centrum voor Buitenlanders.*
2. *Fonds d'action sociale pour les travailleurs immigrés et leur familles.*
3. *Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs.*
4. *Un Logement d'Abord.*
5. *Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples.*
6. Respectively: *Fédération des associations de solidarité avec les travailleurs immigrés*, *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*, and *Groupe d'examen des programmes sur les étrangers en France.*
7. *Droits Devant.*
8. Translation: Collective of the Undocumented.
9. *Parents Etrangers d'Enfants Français.*

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PART III

ORGANIZING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY: ORGANIZATIONS, CITIZENSHIP, AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF BELONGING