Lynn Owens

Solidarity and Identity

Cracking Under Pressure

Narrating the Decline of the Amsterdam Squatters' Movement

Amsterdam University Press

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SOLIDARITY AND IDENTITY

Recent social, cultural and economic developments in Western society are at the basis of increasing cultural and ethnic diversity. People's social and cultural identitities are becoming more varied. What are the consequences of these developments for social bonds and solidarity? Finding answers to this question is the aim of the series *Solidarity and Identity.*

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Cover illustration: Inversion of the international symbol of the squatters' movement

Cover design: Neon, design and communications | Sabine Mannel
Layout: JAPES, Amsterdam

ISBN 978 90 8964 059 8
e-ISBN 978 90 4850 644 6
NUR 741

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Acknowledgements

This book presents a story about decline. As central as decline is to the narrative of the book, the narrative of writing the book actually embodies a very different trajectory. Things do not always get worse. In this case, all the substantial improvements comes from help and assistance offered by others along the way. Whatever staying power this book might have directly follows from their contributions. I, of course, accept the customary blame for all errors and poor thinking contained within. Without everyone's help, there would have certainly been more.

First, I want to thank Eric Duivenvoorden. Without him this book simply would not exist. Part of this is due to his tireless efforts to study and collect the movement. Eric's vision led him to spend over a decade of hard work assembling the archive, which I, as well as countless others, used to explore the squatters' movement. Eric collaborated in making the documentary that helped frame my initial questions, as well as serving as the framing device for the introduction of this book. Finally, Eric wrote the definitive history of squatting in the Netherlands, a work that allowed me to deepen my understanding of the movement and to focus my investigation. Thus, my intellectual debt to him is immeasurable – I could not know what I know without his efforts. And yet these are not my primary reasons for needing to acknowledge his contributions to this project. Instead, I must thank him for his generosity as a person and friend. When I first contacted him for information on the squatting archive, he invited me to Amsterdam to sort through the extras that were not being transferred to the International Institute of Social History (IISH). Upon arrival, Eric was out of town, but he sent a friend to meet my wife and me and take us back to his apartment, where a bed, a bottle of wine, a bouquet of flowers, and a map to the city awaited us. He offered up his home to us, total strangers, just to help. Since that first visit, I have been back to Amsterdam multiple times, and Eric has always welcomed me into his home and life. Not even the time when I accidentally set his carpet on fire could test his patience and kindness. He,

along with Margreet and Sam, never made me feel like I was inconveniencing them, even when I know I was. Thank you, Eric. I only hope the time comes when I can at least start to return the favors.

Of course, I need to thank my professional supporters. Charlie Kurzman first suggested studying the movement's decline, helping me turn what seemed like a liability – a movement long past its glory days – into an advantage. Along the way, he gave me all the rope I needed to hang myself, while still encouraging my thinking in productive directions to help me ultimately escape the noose. James Jasper answered a request from an unknown graduate student, unwittingly signing up for a long-term process of providing advice and help. Everyone at the IISH provided significant assistance in directing me to the nooks and crannies of the archived information, not to mention the important work they do in simply storing and maintaining all their collections. I cannot express enough my gratitude to Mary Ann Clawson, as well as the entire Wesleyan sociology department, who went far out on a limb and gave a clearly unqualified applicant a chance at a wonderful job. Wesleyan provided a fertile setting to complete this work. I was sad to leave, but happy to move to my new colleagues at Middlebury. Special thanks go to Rebecca Tiger, whose sympathetic ear and comfortable floors have proven invaluable, and Laurie Essig, who not only takes me to school every day, but also provides just the sort of warm, dependable friendship needed to survive the cold Vermont climate. My editors, Erik van Aert at Amsterdam University Press and Sandy Thatcher at Penn State University Press, have been extraordinarily supportive of this project, not to mention patient with a first time author who works at a pace often somewhat slower than desirable. Jaap Wagenaar at AUP guided me through the final stages of publication with great care and attention. Bart Plantenga's shrewd editing helped me clarify and elaborate my ideas, and overcome my tendency towards murkiness. Thanks to Milla for her excellent photo. Additionally, there are simply too many students, from UNC, Wesleyan, and Middlebury, to thank by name, but it was the joys of sharing the classroom with them that got me through this long march. When things seemed bleak, at least my students wanted to believe things would work out for the best.

My family never faltered, even as I frequently did. My parents, Emmett and Linda Owens, were always there when i needed them. My wife, Kay, suffered through what must have felt like a never-ending story, from graduate school to dissertation to finding a job to publishing the book. She was even willing to quit her job and come to Amsterdam with me as I did this research, which shows just how much she was willing to sacrifice to support my work. Perhaps most important to this book is someone who unfortunately did not survive to see its completion. My uncle Brooks Warren left the United States to move to Amsterdam around the same time I was born. I rarely saw him growing up, but he held a special place in my life. I was always told how similar we were, so to build a connection to him, I developed a deep interest in Amsterdam and the Netherlands; every grammar school project on a foreign country gave me another excuse to learn more. When my mother returned from her first visit in 1981, she brought back Dutch chocolate and chotchkes, but also stories of squatters and their struggles to find and make and keep a home. Sadly, Brooks took ill and died nearly twenty years ago, ironically at just about the same time the squatters' movement was fighting what seemed like its final battles. Squatting survived this moment, emerging in a new shape. Likewise, my relationship with Brooks survived his death, and I feel closer to him now having spent time living and learning in the city he so loved.

The emptiness of the building at Grote Wetering reveals both the challenges and potentials of squatting.

Introduction

The mood in Amsterdam in 1982 was tense, but electric. An economic slump, coupled with a severe housing shortage, bogged down the city. Amsterdammers were tired and frustrated. But change was in the air. The squatters' movement challenged this dreary status quo, demanding housing for everyone – housing as a space to live, but also as a place to *live*. They made big promises, and with their massive protests and clever tactics, they were beginning to deliver. They had convinced not only themselves but also many in the larger public that they stood on the threshold of toppling the existing social order in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, and, in their headier moments, the Western world. Over 10,000 squatters filled the city, spinning off not just other radical movements, but also spawning strong alternative communities in nearly every Amsterdam neighborhood. By all appearances, a new day was truly dawning. But after the sunrise the sunset rapidly arrived. Having reached their apex of power and influence, the squatters faltered. Within a year, the movement was barely recognizable, standing in disarray, leaving activists and commentators wondering how they had lost their way. Increasing evictions, fragmenting solidarity, a more determined and fierce government response, and a public that was running out of patience and understanding all strained the political and mental health of the squatters' movement. By the end of the decade, the movement was merely a shadow of its former self. What went wrong? How should we explain their dramatic decline? The result of too much confrontation or too little? Of a lost way or a new path? As a mark of failure or sign of success? More importantly for this work, how did squatters describe their own decline, how did their analyses develop over time, and how did their changing understandings influence their ideas and actions?

Decline is a difficult, and often discouraging, subject in social movements. After all, a movement's appeal is often anchored in either its exhilarating newness or its venerable traditions and staying power. Vitality, whether sudden or enduring, provides a source of power and production for movements, striking fear into the

hearts of opponents and attracting sympathizers and new participants. Decline, on the other hand, is often treated by activists and observers as the opposite: a sign of lost influence, of lost chances, of lost hope. Thus, it would come as no surprise to learn that activists would prefer to ignore such a dismal subject altogether. But that is not the case at all. Activists do think and talk about decline. They think and talk about it a lot. Decline is such a difficult yet important subject – threatening to damage the health and image of the movement and its goals – it is impossible to ignore and simply wish away. Activists rarely close their eyes to the issue; in fact, there are times where it can seem like decline is the only thing activists talk about. Decline demands attention. To avoid it, to reverse it, or even on rare occasions, to foster it, activists must keep the issue squarely in their sights.

Decline is a constant threat, requiring eternal vigilance. True in the objective sense – regardless of the successes of yesterday and today, tomorrow might always bring the tactical misstep that brings the entire movement crashing down – it is even truer if we consider the fluid nature of understanding and defining decline. That is, decline is always already present. It is the Other against which activists frequently define the state of the movement. Emergence initially sets itself off from the absence of movement, but activists' attention soon shifts towards decline as the state to avoid, and thus the point of primary evaluation. This holds even truer as the movement settles into a stable routine. Movements persistently skate the line between rising and falling, between steady and stumbling. Further complicating the situation is the fact that while most would agree that decline is a negative (although this opinion is far from universal), not everyone agrees just what constitutes decline. What some activists see as a glorious triumph, others would consider a humiliating setback. Moving beyond movement participants – to opponents, to the public, to researchers – the number and complexity of definitions grows exponentially. Before decline can be managed, it must first be defined.

But what exactly is decline? Simply defined, decline is deterioration, a downward trajectory, or, more terminally, death. For movements, signs of decline can manifest everywhere: shrinking participation, fewer and/or less successful actions, loss of public support, dropping political influence, etc. Importantly, decline is relative, always compared to some time before, as well as some time after (such as when asking is this a short downturn or the

beginning of a large drop off). No matter how many indicators of decline we compile – and the previous lists give only a fraction of the possibilities – decline itself remains an elusive concept. Not simply an objective fact, it also describes a subjective experience. That is, there is more to measuring and determining a movement's decline than just counting the number of participants, the frequency of protests, swings in public opinion polls, or the amount of concessions won from the authorities, and then merely marking the point when they start to decrease. While these may certainly be significant elements for determining whether a movement is in decline or not, they prove far from definitive. Furthermore, even these "objective" measures are left open to interpretation, from outside as well as within the movement. Who counts as a participant? What types of protest matter? What qualifies as a concession? Is compromise clever face-saving or craven selling out? Even time proves slippery. The definition might relate not only to the standards of the real past and future, but also the movement's legendary glorious past and its mythical triumphant future. Nothing is obvious; interpretations compete. To further complicate matters, decline not only opens the movement up to interpretation, it tends to splinter the very foundations that previously formed the basis for reaching agreements. The stakes are high: while decline may be defined as the loss of power, to define decline can prove a significant way of grabbing or holding onto power.

Thus, decline can mean many things. But one thing is certain: it does not mean a lack or loss of strategic and cultural richness within movements. In fact, as I argue in this book, the prospect of decline, not to mention the project of decline, frequently operates as a powerful motivating factor driving strategic innovation, identity transformations, emotional turns, and political realignments. Decline, rather than being the absence of vitality, carries its own form of vibrancy and creativity. Given both the stakes and the stimulus of decline, it is natural that both the condition and the concept would occupy such central attention in the minds of activists.

Curiously, however, the same cannot be said for the bulk of researchers studying social movements. While at times it might seem that activists can't talk about anything but decline, most academics, on the other hand, continue to remain silent on the topic. Twenty years ago, in their overview of social movement research, Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Meyer Zald argue that one of

the "most glaring deficiencies" in the field is the lack of attention devoted to social movement dynamics after the period of initial emergence (1988, 728). Few took the challenge, though, and, a decade after their call for more work on the subject, movement decline remained, as Lynn Kamentisa pointed out, "under-examined and under-theorized" within academic research (1998, 246). Kim Voss argued that, given this dearth of attention, "theories of movement emergence are much more sophisticated and convincing than our models of movement development and decline" (1996, 227). The works of Voss and Kamentisa appeared to signal a newfound interest in decline in the late 1990s. But these studies, unfortunately, did not spark much new research in the subject. Alas, the academic study of decline again declined. Another decade later, and the topic of decline is still being ignored.

But why? Certainly few would question that periods of decline are central to the development pattern of most movements. William Gamson's (1990) comprehensive study of the outcomes of social movements in the United States found that over half of the organizations he studied failed, either partially or completely. Even those that successfully institutionalized, thereby achieving some semblance of continuity and stability, did not totally free themselves from the traces of decline. Long life is frequently a reward exchanged for compromising on key principles held by at least some movement actors. Moreover, institutionalization is not immortality; institutions have a lifecycle of their own, which includes their eventual decline. Yet, as Voss points out, "failure is an unpopular subject among social movement scholars. Like death and taxes at social gatherings, it is a topic that many of us avoid" (1996, 227). And, much like death and taxes, social movement failure and decline are often unavoidable. Therefore, if for no other reason, researchers should pay closer attention to the "backside" of movements, since it is a phase most, if not all, go through. And even escaping the objective fact of decline will not spare a movement from having to confront decline as a threat and as a discourse. Therefore, decline is equally important to understanding social movements as the initial mobilization stage of activism.

If this were the only reason for focusing more on decline, then it would sufficiently justify additional research on the topic. Holes in the literature are there to be filled, like a young Hans Brinker plugging the hole in the dike with his finger to hold back the

North Sea. But better reasons exist. By continuing to focus exclusively on the emergence of movements, research and theory artificially divides activism into discrete, unrelated blocks, treating mobilization as an end in itself, rather than part of a larger whole. While theories of emergence may very well be "more sophisticated and convincing" (Voss 1996, 227), they nevertheless remain incomplete treated in isolation from the full development of the movement. If social movement theory is to deepen its understanding of social movements, then researchers must pay equal attention to the entire movement cycle. For example, Voss (1996, 1998) has shown how the trajectory of the decline of social movements can have far-reaching implications for future attempts at collective protest. Besides, the period of decline is simply full of interesting and sophisticated activist work.

Given these reasons, the question remains: Why has decline been so ignored? Well, the easy answer is that it hasn't been, at least not completely. While it is true that researchers have not paid social movement decline the attention I believe it warrants, they have not been completely quiet on the subject. A review of the literature reveals that current research on decline falls into several main categories. First, and most prominent, is the use of decline to build models. Noteworthy, though, is just how rarely the models are of decline itself. Instead, they are much more likely to use decline as a test of the rules of emergence. Given that the absence of social movement activity is the assumed baseline, decline is treated as a return to normal. Thus, it offers a test of the conditions that made social movement activity initially possible in a kind of natural social experiment. The reasons shift with each new social movement paradigm, but the basic test remains the same. Resource mobilization theories explained decline by a loss of resources. Political process theories point to changes in the political process. For example, Doug McAdam (1982), in his seminal work on the US Civil Rights Movement lays out his reasons for decline: "a significant contraction in political opportunities; the decline of organizational strength within the movement; the decline of certain cognitions essential to sustained insurgency; increased repression by movement opponents" (63). Two points worth noting about this work, which was not only a trailblazer in social movement theorizing, but also embodies a common framework for treating decline. First, the reasons for decline are the complete inverse of his explanations of emergence. Second, de-

cline occupies a somewhat perfunctory final chapter, acting more as an afterthought and a conclusion for both the argument and the movement. As researchers add more theoretical tools to build ever-more complicated models, decline continues to play the role as test case, such as both Voss's (1996) and Kamenitsa's (1998) work showing the importance of framing in explaining decline. The hypothesis is simple. If something is required for movements to emerge, when it is gone, movements will decline. Unfortunately, this has a bit of a circular rationale. If a movement is deemed in decline, then it must mean the proper conditions, whether they be political opportunities (McAdam 1982), framing (Voss 1996; Kamenitsa 1998), collective identity (Gamson 1995), legitimacy (Jessup 1997), or some other "key" to movement success, must be absent or lost, even if it may not appear that way to the untrained eye. Decline is, literally, the end of a larger narrative, the place where the movement universe collapses in on itself. When conditions of emergence invert, it brings everything to an end. Why? Because decline does not need an explanation of its own – after all, it is merely the return to the "normal" state of things. But this feels too neat and clean to give a full understanding of the complexities of decline.

Another prominent line of research on decline investigates cycles of protest. Most famously studied by Sidney Tarrow (1989, 1998), here decline is part of the common cycle of protest – activism rising and then falling, which in turn sets up the next cycle of rising and falling. This perspective again normalizes decline by making it part of the natural, and seemingly inevitable, sequences movements move through. Moreover, Tarrow posits a theory of decline, which focuses on internal splits that divide moderates and radicals, weakening movement unity, splits that are both encouraged and exploited by opponents. Ruud Koopmans (1993) has offered a more refined analysis of this process, proposing a model that effectively joins political opportunities external to the movement with the dynamics and choices within it. "While prospects for success are favorable, different factions may find common ground, or at least agree on a 'peaceful coexistence.' Once things go wrong, however, strategic debates often erupt full force, and these internal conflicts can substantially weaken a movement" (655). Koopmans importantly links the external to the internal in his analysis. Still, while creating this space for internal affairs, he does not fully explore the way this process works on the ground.

Choices explain outcomes, but the choices themselves are not treated as outcomes. This process, which these explanations place such importance on, continues to be largely unexplored.

This is a fatalistic treatment of decline. What goes up must come down; even if it may someday again arise, it must again come back down as well. While the trip up is filled with questions and excitement, the trip down is treated more matter-of-factly, bound as it was to happen. Given the seeming inevitability of decline, one wonders how activists cope with the issue. The work of Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor (1987) on the periods of reduced activity in the US women's movement deftly highlights how movement decline is not synonymous with movement death. They found that even during the years when the movement was in deep decline, abeyance structures protected and sustained connections between activists, laying the stage for the next large-scale feminist mobilization. Although organizational structures matter, strong relationships between activists keep people involved. "Personal ties of love and friendship among members were an important cultural ideal. A willingness to shape personal relationships around the cause was, in large measure, what made possible the intense commitment of members" (Taylor 1989, 769).

Activists handle decline by crafting strategies to get themselves through the lean times, maintaining the hope that the good times will return. Sarah Maddison and Sean Scalmer (2006), in their fascinating book investigating contemporary Australian activism, found that movement decline disrupts the balance activists craft between feelings of hope and despair. They deal with decline by managing emotions. Activists develop differing perspectives on decline to reframe it in more productive terms. These include taking on a historical consciousness, that draws on the past as a source of pride and hope, or taking a long view that recognizes setbacks as part of the longer progression towards ultimate victory. Measured acceptance is another option, where activists take decline as a part of a package, as well as an opportunity to regroup and reorient their efforts. While some perspectives seek explanations, a view of chaotic sensibility allows for the fact that sometimes, no matter if you do everything right, things do not work out. Thus there is no need beating oneself up over the decline and the search for invisible answers. Finally, even as the movement enters its decline, activists take refuge in their own activist identity to get them through the periods between movements, internally reproducing the abeyance

structures described by Rupp and Taylor. Naturally, none of these perspectives are mutually exclusive and the "proper" take on decline often presents itself as one of the major questions confronting activists, sparking both conversations and confrontations.

This book explores this question of decline in social movements by analyzing the case of the squatters' movement in Amsterdam. The illegal occupation of buildings, squatting – *kraken* in Dutch – emerged as a response to the housing shortages plaguing Amsterdam in the 1960s. After experiencing a sudden and dramatic rise in the late 1970s and early 1980s, both in size and in political prominence, the movement has appeared to be in a period of decline ever since. Today, squatting still goes on, albeit in a much smaller form. Squatting today hardly represents the squatting of 25 years ago, but that does not mean the movement is no longer viable or influential. The lengthy period of decline, the relative prominence of squatting on the local and national political landscape, as well as the activists' particular focus on conceptualizing and analyzing the movement's decline, combine to make this an exceptionally fruitful case for study.

Rather than focusing primarily on explaining *why* the movement declined, my objective is to better understand *how* activists constructed, coped with, and clashed over the meaning and implications of the decline of the movement. I wish to build upon the insights of Maddison and Scalmer and focus my argument primarily on how the activists themselves think about decline. Activist are not only actors – they are also theorists of activism, producing and employing activist wisdom (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). That is, while researchers may have the luxury of deciding whether or not they wish to consider decline, activists have little choice. In fact, it may be that, just as emergence is the primary focus of social science movement theorizing, activist theorizing is heaviest through the lens of decline. Still, activist wisdom, while it sounds positive, is not always an obvious "good." Knowledge and wisdom vary in the extent to which they are shared and accepted within groups. They can just as likely inflame tensions as resolve them. My interest is to investigate how these understandings develop and how they are used to reframe, redefine, and reorient the movement over time.

In exploring this process, I concentrate on four primary themes: narratives, strategies, identities, and emotions. Narratives are stories activists tell about the movement and the world around

them. They explain the world, as well as serving other ends, such as forging shared identities and plotting strategies; they also mobilize and unify emotional responses among activists. Narratives shape reality, as well as the appropriate responses to that reality. Hence, they can be key to both the doing and undoing of the movement. Strategies and identities are intimately tied together. Strategies are selected not just for their instrumental value, but also for how effectively they express and sustain specific identities. They cannot be judged independent of the identities of the actors. Emotions are central to understanding social movements. Certainly, they motivate and sustain action. They also create both friends and enemies. Hence, movements actively organize and institutionalize appropriate internal emotional cultures, in order to channel this force.

My research investigates how these lines intersect during periods of social movement decline. Given the strength of the trope of decline, it is frequently, if rarely effortlessly, incorporated into social movement narratives. How decline is defined acts as a symbol of the greater movement. This definition forms the basis for efforts to exert social control over the movement in order to "turn things around." Activists reevaluate their strategies to discover what is and is not working, asking themselves what they – or perhaps more often, others – are doing wrong. Sometimes strategies are adapted to match the new reality. Sometimes the understanding of reality is adapted to match old strategies. Changing strategies sets off a chain reaction within the movement, as strategies are tightly coupled with identities. Asking what we have done to deserve this soon leads to asking who we have become to deserve this. Thus, debates over decline always have a moral component. Decline encourages identity crises inside the movement, undercutting and disrupting solidarity and collective identities. Decline also loosens control over established emotional patterns. In turn, the experience of decline touches off new emotions that must be handled, prompting attempts to fix or adapt institutions for emotion management within the movement.

To better illustrate how decline is not just about ups and downs but, just as importantly, about the back and forths and the ins and outs, I want to share a relatively small episode in the history of the Amsterdam squatters' movement. This event, the release of a documentary film made long after the point when many people considered the movement over, sparked a fiery debate amongst squat-

ters and former squatters trying to come to terms with the movement's legacy and their own participation in it. The question of decline does not dissipate at the same rate as the movement. These issues can often linger longer than the movement itself.

Documenting Decline

The documentary film *De Stad was van ons: De Amsterdamse kraakbeweging 1975-1988* (It was our city: The Amsterdam squatters' movement 1975-1988) had its world premiere at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam on November 30, 1996. Made by filmmaker Joost Seelen during the spring and summer of 1996, the documentary combines archival footage with interviews with 28 former squatters. The story, split into two equal sections, follows a classic plot line: the movement's heroic rise followed by its tortured fall. The film begins by focusing on the initial conditions of emergence. In the 1960s and 1970s, Amsterdam faced an enormous housing shortage, the result of slow urban renewal projects combined with large-scale property speculation. Young people looking for homes languished on the housing authority's waiting lists for up to 10 years. Meanwhile, buildings sat empty. Eventually, people took things into their own hands, squatting the empty buildings. Tolerant Dutch property laws made it relatively easy to do this successfully. If a building had been vacant for at least a year, to establish residence a squatter needed only move in with a bed, a table, and a chair. Thousands grabbed this chance to find a home and to experiment with alternative forms of living. The film explores the joys and challenges of these efforts to build new communities.

But even as the movement spread and gained widespread public support, problems proliferated. The 1980 coronation of the new queen, Beatrix, came soon after the movement broke onto the public arena. Fearing squatter violence, city authorities tightened security. Most squatters, however, had no interest in disrupting the events, thinking squatting buildings a better protest against what they deemed the offensive wastefulness of the coronation ceremony. More radical groups urged a more aggressive stand against the state. In the end, it was the radical call to arms that carried the day. While the coronation went off as planned, riots broke out throughout Amsterdam between protestors – not

all of them squatters – and the police, stripping some of the luster from a day many Dutch wished to devote to national celebration. Much of the luster was stripped from the squatters' movement that day as well.

The coronation marks an important turning point in the film's story, highlighting the first strains of disagreement within the movement. Although some clearly enjoyed and supported the riots, others were completely put off, certain this black eye for the movement would not be easily overcome. Beginning from this point, the film portrays growing differences among the squatters, with debates over the extent and purpose of confrontation leading to a lurid climax: a conflict over control of a squatters' bar in 1988 erupting into civil war within the movement. Political hard-liners, worried that the movement had lost its way, complained that others were squatting for pleasure, not politics. They intended to restore the movement to its former position of glory, resorting to street fighting and threats of physical torture in order to reassert control of the movement. Other squatters counterattacked, purging the hard-liners from the movement. According to the film, this episode marked the final showdown for an already weakened movement, delivering the fatal blow to political squatting in Amsterdam. In the film's epilogue, former squatters lament the passing of the movement, pointing to a city still plagued by housing woes, but lacking a strong challenging voice.

Given the prominent role of squatting and the squatters' movement in Amsterdam's recent history, the film opened to much anticipation. The premiere was covered in most of the major national and local papers. In general, the first round of reviews for the film in the traditional press were positive, if not stellar. But the reviews were not all good. Four former squatters interviewed in the film, Kees Wouters, Henk van der Kleij, Piet Veling, and Leen van den Berg, were especially displeased. In a series of press releases and letters to the filmmakers, they launched a caustic attack against the documentary's portrayal of the movement, concentrating the bulk of their rage on the depiction of the movement's decline. They accused the filmmakers of showing "little respect for the squatters' movement" and creating "an absolutely incorrect historical image of the Amsterdam squatters' movement," which was "misleading, and in our eyes, historical falsification" (Wouters, Van der Kleij, Veling, and Van den Berg 1996). They demanded the film be withdrawn from circulation, or, at the very

least, that the film be re-edited, with their words and likenesses completely removed.

What angered them the most was the film's story of a movement self-destructing through internal tension and infighting. While admitting such conflicts occurred, they argued that the film wildly overstates their importance. They accused the filmmakers of engaging in deceptive practices, editing the sequence of events in the film to falsely connect internal conflicts and the fall of the movement, when no such connection existed (Wouters et al. 1996). Other former squatters took similar positions in their reviews of the film. The subtext of the film, "squatter attacks squatter," was labeled tabloid sensationalism, not a serious analysis of the decline of the movement (Adriaenssen, 1996). The film's "facile division" of the movement into two camps was said to ignore the complex debates over strategy and goals that played a central part in the movement's development (Gans 1996).

Internal conflict did not lead to the decline, they argued, but rather external repression fostered by military and police aggression, legal changes, and a government campaign to discredit the movement in the public eye (Wouters et al. 1996). Other critics challenged the documentary's explanation for the movement's demise, putting forth their own theories. Rens Broekhuis (1996) argued that the movement was as much a victim of its success as its failures. Having transformed the cityscape for the better, squatters had resolved many of the grievances that had originally fueled their activism, and authorities offered concessions and opportunities that co-opted the movement. Strengths during early stages of mobilization became liabilities over time. Former squatter Evelien Gans insisted the movement was undermined by its own pragmatism, resulting in too little internal debate, not too much:

> The pragmatism of the squatters' movement (we oppose the housing shortage and other forms of social injustice, we foster a number of important ideals, but beyond that we do nothing too difficult, and above all no intellectual chatter) was an important source of strength. But the strength of the squatters' movement was at the same time its weakness. On one hand, through the disproportional growth of violence according to the motto "the ends justify the means...," and, on the other hand, through the lack of deep analysis and meaningful discussion. Most squatters could no longer find satisfaction in the squatter's life and sought

> it elsewhere. And a movement that is not nourished through confrontations concerning meaning is doomed to die (1996, 6).

For Gans, neither the external repression nor the inner conflict did the movement in. Instead, it failed because it could no longer help its participants find meaning in the world.

Although these critics contested the film's explanation for the movement's decline, most agreed that it had reached its end. They did not, however, all agree on precisely when this ending point was. Some suggested that the movement ended much earlier, in 1980 or 1982, marking the end as when squatters' effectiveness first began to wane, rather than when it disappeared altogether (Broekhuis 1996). Others took the opposite view.

> The squatters' movement still lives. Not only through the countless buildings that were and are added to the Amsterdam housing stock, but especially through the many political, social, and cultural initiatives that have come out of the ideas of squatters and which today are still bearing fruit. The film does this a disservice (Vermeer 1996, 11).

Yet even this attempt to argue the ongoing existence of the movement looks toward the lingering effects of the movement, rather than contemporary squatter activism.

Not surprisingly, the filmmakers disagreed with their critics. "I'm guilty of historical falsification?" responded director Joost Seelen, "Nonsense" ("Kritiek van Oud-Krakers" 1996). Eric Duivenvoorden, movement historian and collaborator on the film, argued, "We don't pretend that we are describing the history of the squatter's movement. That does not yet exist. This is one story, a story about people and power. Thus there can be no talk of historical falsification" ("Kritiek van Krakers" 1996). This disagreement reflected a mere "difference of opinion" (Seelen 1996), since the movement is a source of many stories, all open to numerous reasonable interpretations. Seelen and Duivenvoorden argued that their representation should not be judged for not including the whole story, since every story could not have possibly fit into the narrative structure of one film. Still, these disclaimers came only as response to the criticisms launched against their film. The filmmakers did intentionally select this story to tell, and they, at least implicitly, assert that this one story can serve as a proxy for a

broader history of the movement, a narrative that reveals the deeper underlying themes of this history. The film itself gives no indication that it is not intended to be seen as the best explanation for how the squatters' movement developed. This conflict over the accuracy of the documentary found the various sides struggling to present its own narrative as the best way to understand decline, and therefore the movement as a whole.

Defining Decline

Disagreements over how a 90-minute documentary portrays thirteen years of social protest should be expected. Even given an unlimited amount of time to tell the story, a film that would have satisfied everyone involved would be impossible to make. That there was conflict is not the key point of interest here. Rather, the nature of this conflict is what matters, as it reveals constructive insights into how social movement decline is and should be understood. Most notably, it highlights the significance of decline in understanding social movements. Decline matters to social movement activists, and should therefore matter to social movement scholars. A critical period for any mobilization, decline consequently offers a window into larger movement dynamics. What worked before doesn't work now. Plans must change. People must adapt. None of this comes easily. How activists conceptualize the movement's decline shapes their broader conceptualization of the movement, as well as the formation and endurance of activist and movement identities. Positive identities become anchored to a successful movement; decline threatens this connection. The debate over the film reveals many former squatters with a very personal investment in the explanation of the movement's decline. If they had to admit that the movement had failed, they preferred to portray themselves as innocent victims of government repression, rather than in any way responsible for their own downfall.

Decline is a messy business, but this messiness is what makes it such a fascinating and revealing subject for study. Decline is marked by a series of contingencies and negotiations, processes that draw on, as well as draw out, some of the primary concepts of social movement theory, casting them in a new light. Over the course of this book, I will explore these questions in more depth,

but the main themes are already apparent in even this short anecdote. First, decline demands an explanation. Both the filmmakers and their critics felt the compelling need to explain the movement's weakening power and influence, even when it was long past the time when they could actually "do something" about it. To simply say that the movement grew large and powerful and then, later, it shrank and became less important is intrinsically unsatisfying. Decline requires reasons. Perhaps this is obvious. After all, nearly everyone wants to understand why important things happen. But giving reasons is not just a matter of individual understanding. Explanation is social; it produces and reproduces social relations. People give reasons to rework, repair, avoid, or possibly end relationships with others. Charles Tilly (2006) closely investigated giving reasons, showing the need for them and the forms they take. Like Tilly, I am less concerned with the correctness, plausibility, or thoroughness of these reasons. Rather, I analyze how explanations for decline evolve over time, marking how these changing reasons reflect and create other changes – changes of strategy, identity, and relationships – within the movement. While the disagreements over the documentary were ostensibly about who had the right explanation for the decline, it also reflected a social struggle over who had the right to speak (filmmaker vs. activist), the moral position of squatters (violent radicals vs. innocent victims), and the nature of future relations (would the aggrieved squatters ever have anything to do again with the filmmakers and their supporters). The veracity of the competing explanations is less important than which explanation carries the argument, since to the victors go the spoils of personal status and moral superiority, as well as the resources that flow to these positions. People give reasons all the time. That doesn't mean others necessarily have to accept them. Herein lies the primary conflict.

Tilly outlines four different types of reasons: conventions, stories, codes, and technical accounts. Conventions are the default for many explanations. They provide the expected answers for everyday questions. Why were you late? Traffic. With just one word, the entire matter is resolved, as we all immediately recognize that traffic makes people late. Stories, on the other hand, better address unexpected or unknown circumstances, linking together a causal chain of events. These first two types tend to be the province of laypeople. They have their equivalents for experts: codes and tech-

nical accounts. Codes, such as legal judgments or medical diagnostics, provide routine explanations based on a system's rules. These are the answers proffered by bureaucrats. Technical accounts, on the other hand, are the explanations of specialists. Much like stories, they address the new and unexpected. Unlike stories, however, they downplay the narrative power of their explanations, promising more reliable, precise, and systematic connections between cause and effect (14-19). While each of these types of reasons could be applied to social movement decline, from conventions ("Nothing lasts forever") to technical accounts ("Closing political opportunities"), in this work, I will concentrate on activist stories of decline.

Activists are storytellers. They tell stories to explain the world. They also tell stories to explain themselves. Nowhere is this story better told than in the work of Francesca Polletta (1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2006). She argues that narratives help us to

> identify the ways in which culture interacts with structure in shaping the interests on behalf of which people mobilize and thus to avoid the shoals of both structural fundamentalism and a cultural fundamentalism. It would also help us to identify the mechanisms by which culture sets the terms of strategic action, but without treating actors as cultural dupes (2006, 27-8).

Narrative comes into play at every moment of movement action – from first mobilizations, to tactical choices, to deliberations, to competition and compromise between activists and elites (21). Narratives also bridge the chasm between instrumental action and the relative autonomy of culture (Smilde 2003).

Davis (2002) explains that the common themes of social science forms of narrative include an emphasis on plot structure, the unfolding of "events," the central importance of time, the use of beginnings and endings, and morals or points (2002, 11, 13). Frames have been the favorite way for social movement researchers to investigate culture (Snow and Benford 1988, 1992), but narratives offer a richer subject. According to Davis, narratives differ from frames, in that they are not as cognitively anchored and thus are more flexible. Plots twist; more importantly, they can be twisted. Polletta (1998a, 1998b) makes two other important distinctions. First, the "narratives' configuration of events over time makes them important to the construction and maintenance of

individual and collective identity" (1998a, 140). Somers (1992; Somers and Gibson 1994) argues that narratives are fundamental to the process of identity formation, linking events and identities to each other through "causal emplotment." Frames tend to undervalue this temporal aspect, being cast as static (Benford 1998) and stable (Steinberg 1998, 1999). Second, narratives and frames differ dramatically in how they link events and outcomes. While frames are more clear-cut, "narrative necessitates our interpretive participation, requires that we struggle to fill the gaps and resolve the ambiguities. We struggle because the story's end is consequential – not only as the outcome but as the moral of the events which precede it" (Polletta 1998b, 141). Narratives imply not only a narrator, but also an audience and protagonist (Polletta 1998b), thus making them more open to ongoing interpretation and negotiation (Auyero 2002). Narrative analysis demands that changes in discourse be taken seriously (Fine 2002). Despite their complexity, narratives are easily identified and isolated, which means their careers can be traced, their supporters and support systems identified, and their conflicts with other stories for legitimacy analyzed (Polletta 2006).

The emergence of a movement is generally treated as the most critical moment for narrative formation. Benford (2002) claims that narratives are most fluid during the early days of emergence. Yet, this openness is determined not just by the newness of the movement, but also by the newness of the situation. Stories explain new events by situating them within familiar contexts. As Polletta (2002) argues, "plots are derived from a cultural stock of plots. Their canonical quality makes narratives recognizable: we interpret unfolding events as tending towards tragedy or triumph, or we recognize a story of self-discovery or human fallibility" (34). When situations do not make sense, we try to fit them into plot structures we already recognize in order to more fully grasp them. Thus, new narratives should come into play, as well as old narratives changing or losing power, during periods of social movement decline. Of course, they remain constrained by the old narratives, which they might replace, but cannot fully erase.

The flexibility of narratives thereby makes them particularly useful for addressing dynamic processes. Polletta (2006) claims one of the great strengths of narratives is that they contain, rather than resolve, ambiguity. Stories gain sway because they are flexible and ambiguous. Their openness to interpretation allows for

varied groups to see themselves as sharing a similar story. When combined with its strong normative nature and its canonicity, this openness explains how narrative turns "previously settled issues into disputed ones" (19), and vice versa. But too much flexibility comes at a price. Narratives must be coherent and focused enough to bring divergent actors together; they can only bend so far before they break. This was the experience of the squatters' movement. The narrative that knitted together the movement during its period of emergence could not be effectively adapted to the changing conditions of decline. At this point it broke apart, which opened the space for multiple narratives to compete for dominance within the movement. At the same time, old narratives do not easily fade away, given their strong connections to both the movement's history and the identities of the participants. The internal power struggles in the movement were primarily about determining which narrative would become the defining story for squatting in Amsterdam.

This competition for narrative dominance took on such an important dimension in the movement because activists use them as a means for enforcing social control within movements (Benford 2002). Benford describes how activists construct movement "myths," which explain themselves and the movement. Over time, these stories solidify into the "party-line" and are then used to keep participants in line (73). These narratives create a complex web of meanings about what a "good activist" can and cannot do, as well as what the "true" goals of the movement are, and are used to justify censure and punishment. But not everyone finds meaning in the same story. Movements generate different narratives and explanations of decline. Rarely do they co-exist peacefully. Instead, they compete with each other. Not only are other narratives seen as "wrong," but those who hold them are also treated as responsible for the decline. Thus, the competition among narratives is driven by the need for social control within the movement, with narratives used both to identify proper behavior and to prescribe appropriate punishments for deviance.

Examining the use of narratives in the decline of social movements improves our understanding of decline in important ways. As Polletta (2006) points out, "where authorities are unyielding, storytelling sustains groups as they fight for reform, helping them build new collective identities, link current actions to heroic pasts and glorious futures, and restyle setbacks as way stations to vic-

tory" (3). In this research, I show the central role that narratives play in the attempts by activists to explain the decline of the movement, concentrating specifically on how stories change over time and on how they are used as a means of social control. The narrative of the squatters' movement's emergence was based on a story of increasing radicalization of squatters against the abuses and injustices of authorities. Although time is a critical component to the power of narratives, the temporal element of narrative development is rarely a focus of research. Participants produce narratives to explain why events occur the way they do, and these narratives evolve over time, as more and more events are absorbed into them. Narratives explain the past, situate the present, and give direction for the future. The original narrative had to change as conditions changed, focusing increasingly on finding ways of maintaining solidarity within the movement. The problem was no longer "them"; it was also "us." One important development in the squatters' movement was that narratives were not only used as responses to decline, but they became centered on decline as the primary focus of the story.

An important complicating factor with decline is that, while it calls out for narrative explanations, decline is itself a common – even conventional in Tilly's sense – explanation. There exist only a few commonly shared narratives of historical time according to Eviatar Zerubavel (2003), with the downward trajectory a popular trope. One can hardly avoid the constant litany of how things have been going downhill, whether from grandparents, teachers, or political pundits. With decline as both problem and explanation, circular arguments are common. Just as decline can be explained by the falling numbers of participants, the decrease in participants can easily be explained by a movement in decline. This example betrays the power of the decline narrative, and the reason activists display a reticence to initially name decline. Discovering decline is a bit like opening Pandora's box, unleashing the powerful idea into the collective consciousness, with its capacity to seep into anything and everything. Everywhere one looks now becomes a possible clue about decline, whether its propagation or its postponement. Once let out of the box, there is little that can be done to force it back in.

Giving reasons begins, but rarely ends, the debate. For activists, trying to explain decline is not simply an academic exercise. Rather, their intention is to do something about it. However, even

the most compelling explanation of a situation will rarely clarify the proper specific recourse to take. Strategic action is complicated, far more complicated than game theorists with their prisoners' dilemmas would have us believe. James Jasper's work (2006) has greatly expanded our understanding of the complex nature of strategy in social action. At its heart, a social movement is an instrumental act, collective action in order to achieve a goal. Thus, strategy and strategic choices are fundamental to activism. Yet, as Jasper makes plain, strategic action is rarely simple, plagued as it is by not enough information, not enough time, and, most importantly, not enough consensus. Within every choice lie irresolvable tensions, what Jasper labels strategic dilemmas. These tensions are important at every stage of movement activity, but the conflicts and stakes increase during decline, as even formerly resolved questions are opened to challenges. For strategy to do "what works," it must strike the appropriate balance between rival interests. Decline "happens" when this balance is disrupted (which in turn further disrupts the balance). But which balances are thrown off? Between activists and onlookers? Between internal groups? Between compromise and confrontation? Since the strategies leading to decline are never obvious, neither are the strategies of decline; reconciling the dilemmas of decline will always require trade-offs.

While nearly every point on Jasper's extensive list of strategic dilemmas could be incorporated into this discussion, I will concentrate primarily on four. The two closely related dilemmas that best describe the documentary debate are the naughty-or-nice (106) and the radicalism dilemma (153). Squatters confronted the issue of whether to gain influence through fear or love, or more particularly, how to resolve the tension of causing some groups to fear them, others to love them, and keeping the two groups distinct. This provoked the growing factionalization between radicals and moderates, a struggle the filmmakers contend caused the movement's downfall. Radicals argued for more and larger confrontations, while moderates sought compromise. These differences produced significant conflict within the movement, yet they point to a deeper narrative tension: between the story of emergence and the story of decline. While a narrative of rise then fall is so common as to border on cliché, such a narrative nevertheless contains internal contradictions. The explanation of decline rested on the simple question of whether the story and practices that led

to emergence were the same story and practices that led to decline, or if straying from the original path is to blame. Like all religions, movements have their own creation myths – stories that tell how and when the movement came to be. These stories define the movement, and grant causal power to certain strategies and practices that "work" for the movement. For the squatters, their story of creation centered on a relatively short period of time in late 1979 to 1980, marked by a series of growing confrontations with the authorities culminating in significant victories. This period of rapid and profound radicalization set the tone for the consideration and evaluation of all subsequent events and decisions. The same characteristic of stories that supplies their power to movements – the imposition of coherence on a chaotic situation – can also lead to one of its main weaknesses: narratives narrow and, hence, constrain strategic choices.

Yet social movements are more than the sum of their actions. They are also a cluster of unstable and evolving identities, all intimately tied to strategic choices, since "what counts as effective action is likely to be informed by ideological assumptions" (Polletta 2006, 54). To act is not just to do something, it is to be something. Action defines the self. Radicals employed radical tactics; therefore employing radical tactics made one radical. To claim these tactics no longer work is to claim that the identity no longer works either. While it might be simple to exchange a failing tactic for a more promising one in theory, in practice it proves much trickier, and not just because it is hard to know what actually works, whether beforehand or after the fact. No, activists resist changing strategies because they, like all of us, resist reevaluating and recasting their own identities. Thus, for a strategy to "work," it must work on at least two levels; it must achieve the instrumental outcome and it must express the correct identity. Failing to attain both forces a choice. Decline brings questions not only of what you are doing wrong, but, frequently more troubling, who else you have become.

Even without the complicating contribution of strategies, identities remain remarkably muddled. The everyday understanding of identity, with its reliance on oneness and consensus, masks how a social movement's, as well as an activist's, identity is in fact a fragile confluence of various, sometimes complimentary, sometimes competing, identities. While the early successes of emergence iron out obvious differences, creating a sheen of unity, decline destabilizes this condition, dredging up old tensions and

creating new ones. When everything works, differences are diversity and inclusiveness. It is only the onset or introduction of decline that redefines these differences from diversity to divisiveness. Jasper offers two dilemmas that speak to this question, the Janus and the extension dilemmas. Janus, the god of thresholds, asks whether it is better to direct one's attentions inwards or outwards (2006, 125). The extension dilemma is concerned with whether it makes better sense to expand the coalition – to trade depth for breadth (127). Both seek to address the proper boundaries of a movement and the way shifting those around can help, hamper, or halt progress. Boundaries are fluid. Moreover, they are everywhere, not just on the outside edge. One of the strengths of the squatters' movement creation myth and radicalization narrative is that it effectively knitted together disparate groups and social spaces into one tightly organized unity. But the balance was always precarious, and the tighter the lines were drawn, the more sharply they broke under the stress of decline. Two boundaries in particular bore the brunt of this strain, the lines between politics and culture and those between public and private.

The narratives of decline, both within the squatters' movement and in the response to the film, often fractured around one crucial distinction: the correct role of culture and politics in a social movement. Cultural and political goals are complexly related to each other in social movement action. In fact, as T.V. Reed claims, social movements have always "demonstrated, insisted upon, and enacted a political critique of culture and a cultural critique of the social, economic, and political that challenges these boundaries" (2005, 293). The two elements are closely coupled together, since a strong movement culture can facilitate political successes, which in turn create more space and opportunity for developing the movement's culture. During periods of success, this complexity can be read as unity, because permeable borders allow for easy mobility between politics and culture. However, when things go wrong, activists begin to question whether there really can be unity in diversity, whether everything is equally "politics" or "culture." Formerly symbiotic relationships are recast as parasitic, as an overemphasis on one side is blamed for the problems of the larger movement. Squatting always carried this tension within it. For some, it was primarily a means of finding a home or for reclaiming unused space for more culturally relevant activities, whether that meant experimenting in collective forms of living or

increasing the resources for artistic and cultural production. For others, it was a path to larger political goals, such as radically transforming local and national authority structures. This difference fueled much of the factional infighting depicted in the documentary, as well as much of the tactical and identity innovation within the movement. This disagreement is by no means unique to squatting; anarchists worry about punk rockers, anti-war activists worry about hippies, feminists worry about folk singers, even while at the same time they rely on them to a great extent.

One of the most powerful effects of the emergence narrative of the radicalizing movement was that it successfully incorporated the squatter critique of the standard divisions between public and private life, emphasizing the need to do away with the boundaries separating the two. This position is similar to that one held by second-wave feminists, who mobilized around the idea that the personal is political (Echols 1989). While this watchword is most often associated with feminism, its centrality to political activism is actually much more general. Much recent political protest activity has been based on bringing the personal into the public realm. It has become a fundamental premise of all identity politics (Cohen 1996). Tied to this first slogan is a second, often unstated, but still implied premise: The political is personal. The ultimate goal of such protest is to recast the relationship between the two.

The boundaries between public and private have frequently been discussed in terms of either a tool of mobilization or as the ultimate goal of political action. In this research, I look at how this relationship acts as a basis and determinant of strategy. The emotional cultures created within the squatters' movement are strongly tied to social spaces. Reciprocal emotions become associated with the private sphere, while shared emotions dominate the public arena (Jasper 1998). These distinctions start merely as tendencies, but harden with time. These separate emotional cultures provide a source of strength for the movement, and prove effective as long as emotions remain in the proper sphere. Yet the radicalization narrative, which pushes to obliterate the boundaries between the two spheres, threatens this equilibrium, thereby creating a conflict between various ideological goals of the movement.

Decline unleashes and squelches emotions. The public-private divisions in the squatters' movement managed emotions by as-

signing specific emotional cultures to particular activist spaces – public anger and private love. Decline disrupted this neat division. What role might emotions play in the decline of a movement? Jasper (1998) argues that many of the same emotions found in emergence also appear during periods of decline. Frustration can lead to tactical changes or disengagement. Groups can be pulled apart by jealousy, envy, disgust, hatred (Jasper 1998), or even by love and romantic attachments outside the group (Goodwin 1997). But emotions can also help to sustain movements during hard times (Rupp and Taylor 1987). Likewise, emotions can have long term effects on activists' perceptions of the movement after the movement ends, regardless of how successful the campaign was (Adams 2002, 2003). Emotions play an important role in both resisting and facilitating decline; conversely, decline plays an important role in determining which emotions become dominant within the movement (Maddison and Scalmer 2006).

Finally, as the debate between squatters and their documenters makes clear, how decline is understood carries lasting repercussions on the longstanding legacy of the movement. This legacy, in turn, shapes the public reputation and personal understanding of individual activists. Few want to be associated with failures. Fewer still with failures that can only be blamed on themselves. And when the time to act has passed – either because the movement is over or because one's participation in it is, decline is something that it is not only explained, but also explained away. This simply reminds us that all stories of decline are self-interested, from both the activist and movement perspective, not to forget the researcher's perspective as well.

Why the Amsterdam Squatters' Movement?

This book presents the case for studying decline. But in doing so it only studies *a* case of decline, not *the* case. This is in no way an exercise in building a universal model of social movement decline. I have chosen the Amsterdam squatters' movement not because it is the quintessential case, which I do not believe exists, but rather because it offers a particularly clear window into the complicated processes of decline. First, the story itself is engaging, marked by intrigue, backstabbing, disappointments, and disasters, and in a book about stories, it helps to start with a good

one. But as I will show, narrative, while important, cannot do everything. A good story alone is not enough. The movement offers other advantages, such as its relatively small size and local orientation favoring interactions through decentralized face-to-face relations instead of central professionalized organizations (Mamadouh 1992; Van Noort 1988). Thus, average activists had both a high level of involvement and investment, one further amplified by the nature of the movement – in which both the practice and the promise revolved around house and home (Priemus 1983; Tromp 1981). That is, squatters literally lived in their movement, developing a strong movement culture in conjunction (Dijst 1986). Such intensity of experience magnified the debates about decline, bringing them to the surface to be seen and analyzed. Also, the movement's decline far outlasts its emergence and pinnacle of power. This creates a larger period to examine, spreading out the various twists and turns in the developing strands of understanding within the movement as they actively addressed and worked through the issues around decline. The strong emphasis on narrative coherence also makes this an excellent case for studying both the narratives of decline and the decline of narratives. Eschewing most formal organizations, often a strong narrative was the primary source of cohesion in the movement (ADILKNO 1994). Threats elicited passionate responses. Finally, while the squatters' movement was highly localized, it was part of larger, more globalized forms of squatting activism (Katz and Meyer 1985; Kearns 1980, 1981; Pruijt 2003, 2004), not to mention citizen efforts to redefine urban space (Soja 1990) as well as new social movements more generally (Den Boon, 1985; Eckert and Williams 1986; Koopmans and Duyvendak 1991; Kriesi 1995; Wisler and Guigni 1996).

Yet these same advantages can also prove to be liabilities if the goal is to make broad generalizations. Few movements, after all, have been this small and concentrated. Fewer still have the tight integration between political activism and home life, even before factoring in the further differentiating effects of its radicalization. Yes, not many other social movements resemble the Amsterdam squatters' movement. Still, the squatters confront and tackle virtually all of the same issues other investigators of decline have designated as significant, such as factionalism, co-optation, changing political environments, strategic debates, isolation, shifting goals, and despair. Additionally, this case does stress the centrality

of activist wisdom (Maddison and Scalmer 2006) in understanding movement processes. Activists are always both theorists and practitioners, and they must constantly maneuver through the conflicting obligations of these two roles.

Nevertheless, this should not be taken as a one-size-fits-all model of decline. Rather it is an effort to underline the complex and conceptual richness of the decline process, rejecting the common view that decline is without interest. Tension, paradox, and threat are all sources of creative power. And, just as I use narrative, strategy, identity, and emotions to study decline, I also invert the relationship, using decline to study narrative, strategy, identity, and emotions. Of course, these issues are hardly unique to periods of decline, but responding to decline demands hard work, work that lays bare the constructed and constructing nature of movements. Studying decline is not merely interesting – it highlights the processes in social movements that are broader than decline itself. It is both unique and general. Thus, through this study, I explore and analyze social movement decline, but in the process, I hope to contribute to a more general knowledge of social movements and social relations. Still, decline remains important and fascinating in its own right. It is ubiquitous, both objectively and subjectively. Even the most successful movement constantly has to confront the prospect of decline. No matter what other stories are circulating within a movement, the decline narrative is always present, even when it remains unspoken. Once spoken, however, it cannot be unspoken. Decline, as both cause and effect, carries tremendous power and should not be ignored. It demands our attention, and, more importantly, it deserves it.

Chapter Overview

Though this book focuses on decline, I devote the first chapter to the squatters' movement's emergence in the late 1970s. Why? The period of initial mobilization is critical to understanding the development of the movement's narrative, as it is the source of its creation myth. Specifically, I show how disparate groups and political actors are unified through a narrative of radicalization. I document the major events in this narrative, which include unprovoked violence on the part of the police and the squatter response. This moment of creation transformed squatters into the squatters'

movement, by pulling everyone into an increasingly radical stance linking the pleasures of living in a squat with forceful resistance against the authorities. This creation myth and radicalization narrative establishes a working strategy for overcoming fear and turning it into a more "productive" emotion. I show how the movement and its radicalization narrative successfully respond to early potential signs of decline after the coronation riots and maintain a sense of growth and success. While emergence does not determine decline, the way activists think about emergence, through their creation myth, greatly affects and constrains how they think about their own decline.

I then begin a two-chapter analysis of how the radicalization narrative interacts with the boundaries between public and private space within the movement. I make a few key points. First, that there are definable (if not always clear and definite) boundaries between public and private in the movement, boundaries originally drawn using different emotional cultures. Next, I show how the radicalization narrative challenges these boundaries. Radicalization depends on totalization, which erases distinctions. These two elements – radicalization and the public/private split – are both fundamental to the early success of the squatters' movement. Yet, I argue that squatters privilege radicalization as the only source of power, thus undermining both sources in the process.

Chapter two examines the first eviction, re-squat, and ultimate eviction of the Lucky Luijk, a squatted luxury villa, from fall 1981 to the following fall. The first eviction of the Luijk was illegal, performed by a gang hired by the owner to throw the squatters out. The residents framed the first eviction as an invasion of their private space (the home) by outside forces. In response, squatters presented their own campaign, based on principles of the squatter public sphere (most notably violence, strong leaders, spontaneous action) to stave off this invasion. However, the end result is still an invasion, but an invasion of the movement's public values and practices into its private sphere. Fear, overcome during the initial stages of the movement, is now fostered by activists in the movement, as an effort to bring people into line with their strategic and ideological goals. Reaction within the movement is one of outrage and criticism of the leaders of the Luijk defense. Sympathy is lost both within and outside of the movement. Lucky Luijk is treated as the first unquestionable sign of decline. Decline first becomes

an important issue for the movement, which leads to debates over identity and strategy.

Squatted the same month of the first Luijk eviction, the Wijers factory forges a very different path. Wijers was a 17-building complex, which became the cultural center of both the movement and the larger city. When the Holiday Inn chain of hotels decided to build on the property, a battle commenced over the proper use of public space. I argue this is the flip side of the Lucky Luijk case, in that what happens is that, in response to the failure of Luijk, the movement pulls in on itself, focusing more on private life, rather than its traditional political activities and practices. That is, in order to avert decline, they made adjustments in their dominant identity and strategy. At Wijers, I document the growth of the squatters' "live-work culture." In this space, the squatters try to build a feeling of *gezelligheid* (a non-translatable Dutch word meaning approximately "coziness"). While I argue that this is in many ways a reversal of the earlier tracks followed at Luijk, I maintain that this can also be seen as a continuation of the radicalization thesis, only in a different form. If the Luijk exemplified the threat of the public side overtaking the private side, then Wijers does the same for the private side subsuming the public. Again, the balance is lost. What happens here is a debate over public space, in particular, the city center and what it should offer its citizens. Squatters frame the building of a Holiday Inn as the latest step in the privatization of public space by business interests. Wijers is offered up as the model for the city center of the future. The emphasis on this side of the squatters' movement pushes squatters to work in a more collaborative way with the city, with no threat of force. Wijers, despite widespread sympathy and support, was still evicted, and squatters put up little resistance. Decline, rather than averted, continues in the movement. A new conflict arises within the movement, in which some (including many who played a key role in the defense of the Luijk) complain that the movement has lost its political focus, concentrating too much on subculture and individual needs, which has neutered it strategically and politically. All of these debates occur under the larger specter of the original creation myth and radicalization thesis.

Chapter four documents the civil war that rises out of the differences outlined above. In this chapter, I will show three things. First, how narratives and histories of the movement are created in order to justify the future of the movement. Specifically, the PVK

(the "political wing of the squatters' movement") wrote their opposition as based on the history of the movement as an attempt to "rightfully" claim control of the movement. Second, the decline of the movement takes center stage. The competing sides have evolved to this point where neither is interested in "saving" the movement, greeting the movement's death positively. The political hard-liners take this quite seriously – at one point, the PVK threatens to kill the movement in order to reform it in its own image. Lastly, I analyze the way the public/private split gets recast as politics versus culture as the main explanatory cause of the movement's decline. That is, I show how these new terms of culture and politics are more "global" in their use, moving far beyond the realm of immediate strategic choices into defining the attributes of the activists and the movement.

Finally, in the last substantive chapter, I look at what has happened in the past two decades since the squatter civil war. Starting with a brief overview of other treatments of the squatters' movement, which tend to pronounce the movement over around the time of this internal strife, I argue that this is based on a too-narrow definition of movements. The cultural side of the movement grew dramatically in the 90s, as the movement's center moved towards large cultural centers similar to Wijers. Explicit political activities in the movement's wane, only some of which can be traced directly to the defeat of the politicos in the episode, as documented in the previous chapter. I argue instead that the changing emphases within the movement are tied closely to the shifting role of place for the movement. During the movement's heyday, all aspects were very place-based and local. However, with some successes on the political front (at least in an immediate sense, such as the legalization of some squats, increased housing for young people, etc.), the very local political needs dwindled. Radical politics in Amsterdam became ever more place independent and global. That is, political change focused on larger issues beyond the city. This left cultural issues (the culture of life in the city as well as the life of culture in the city) as the primary local issue, and thus it is not surprising that squatting, given its very place-based nature, experienced a cultural turn. I show this as the next step in the ongoing development of movement cultures from public/private to politics/culture to, finally, global/local. I link this back to narratives, showing that place and localness were so firmly entrenched within the squatting narrative, that it encouraged this

type of development. This development affects outcomes, since the shift towards culture makes the movement more amenable to authorities, and they transform from opposition to a key resource for the city in the global tourist market, and thus gain more concessions from the city.

Tanks roll through the streets of Amsterdam following the eviction of the squat at Vondelstraat.

1 Radicalization: The Birth of the Squatters' Movement

Tanks rolled through the streets of Amsterdam early on the morning of Monday 3 March 1980 (Andreisson 1981). They moved toward the corner of the Vondelstraat and Constantijn Huygenstraat, through a normally quiet neighborhood near the Vondelpark. Authorities wanted to clear out the large group of squatters who had occupied the building over the weekend, beating back the police in the process. But negotiations went nowhere, as squatters threw up one obstacle after another to compromise. They then set their aims on the only obstacle they knew they could overcome: the barricades blocking the streets and protecting the squat. Behind the walls, cobbled together with paving stones, garbage, and whatever else they could find, squatters celebrated their strength and victory. The "Vondel Free State" pulsed with joy and excitement. Never before had squatters taken the offensive, and they thought it was going perfectly (Babeliowshy 1980). They refused to budge on their three demands: that the riot police stay back, that they retain custody of the building, and that the police release a squatter arrested earlier for vandalism (Duivenvoorden 2000, 159). As the weekend came to an end, negotiations finally broke down. The joyous mood darkened, as planes flew overhead dropped leaflets warning that the police had received orders to shoot. With both sides refusing to budge, the City Council ordered in the tanks. As the barricades burned, squatters hunkered down for the confrontation. What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object?

Something had to give, and at first blush it appeared to be the squatters. The tanks crashed through the barricades without ever slowing down. The streets were cleared, and the streetcars took advantage of their clear path to shuttle people back and forth to their jobs and homes. But the authorities' victory did not extend beyond these cosmetic changes. In the end, they gave in to all of the squatters' demands. Most importantly, squatters maintained control of the building. They fought and won. By this time, squat-

ting had become a common feature of the city's landscape. Many of those involved at the Vondelstraat squat had been active squatters for some time. Although squatting and squatters were nothing new, something new was born from this conflict. As Willem put it, "It was at the Vondelstraat that I became a real squatter" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 100). But more than squatters were born here, the squatters' movement sprang forth from the rubble of the barricades. The Vondelstraat brought together and solidified many different squatters, the ultimate transformation of disparate individual activists into a collective that saw itself as a movement.

So began the squatters' movement. But why start a story about the decline of the movement at the point of its emergence? Because endings require beginnings. Without a true beginning, the end point remains undefined. More importantly, the form and content of endings are informed by the specifics of the beginning. This is particularly true when analyzing narratives. Narratives lead from a beginning to an ending. The form the beginning takes creates and constrains the possible forms available for the telling of the story of the end. As Polletta explains, narratives told to "make sense of surprising developments" – and the emergence of a new movement is rarely expected – "endow events with the moral purpose, emotional telos, and engaging ambiguity that persuade others to participate" (2006, 35). With narratives, the conclusion rarely makes sense if you arrive in the middle of the story.

The way the beginning is told shapes (although does not necessarily determine) what follows. By selecting the Vondelstraat as the time of birth for the movement, participants selected a story about the movement with far-reaching implications, a story of slow and then sudden radicalization. Reflecting on the movement in the late 1980s, Annegriet Wietsma (1987), an active squatter throughout the decade, identifies two distinct generations in the movement: those who participated at the Vondelstraat, and those who came after. Wietsma traces the many generational differences back to one fundamental cause: differences in their radicalization. According to Wietsma, those who participated in the years leading up to the Vondelstraat did not come with a sense that they were preordained to engage in active resistance. Rather, "it overcame them. It overcame them because at that moment they experienced the situation as a personal injustice" (806). Thus, the older generation's political position developed with changing events. The newcomers, on the other hand, "skipped this intense period of

'collective' and step-by-step radicalization" (806). When they joined the movement, they knew the levels of repression they would face and made the decision to join anyway. Therefore, for Wietsma, the critical generational difference is that the first generation was radicalized through their participation in events, while those who came later chose to be radical. This is a difference that would set the tone for future developments in the movement.

Radicalization was the glue that held the squatters together as a movement. People initially got into squatting for many different reasons. Some needed a place to live, some wanted to make a political statement, while others simply wanted a place to have a good time. Few initially came to squatting to be part of a squatters' movement. But that is exactly what happened. The shared experience of radicalization brought squatters together, providing the movement a source of power, supplying an identity, a strategy, and an ideology. Radicalization formed the movement; radicalization strengthened the movement; radicalization secured the movement.

The Vondelstraat defined the squatters' movement; it "changed everything." Perhaps a better way to understand the Vondelstraat is not that it was the moment that defined the squatters' movement, but rather that squatters defined the movement through this event. By doing so, they simultaneously defined the movement through the concept of radicalization, which was forever linked to the events of the Vondelstraat in the minds of squatters. That is, whether or not the Vondelstraat did indeed "change everything," it is significant that those active in the movement understood it as such. My purpose is not to evaluate the correctness of Wietsma's thesis, but rather to point out the types of resources she uses in her analysis. Her arguments are useful, in that she highlights how the process of emergence can become an important factor in understanding later developments. In other words, to understand how activists envision a movement's decline, one must understand how they saw its emergence.

Squatting: Individual Act or Basis of a Movement?

The Vondelstraat may have been seen as the birth of the squatters' movement, but it is far from the birth of squatting in Amsterdam. It is certainly possible to take a longer view of the squatters' move-

ment, as other treatments have. Two analyses of squatting in Amsterdam exemplify such a perspective. Mamadouh's (1992) research on urban social movements in the city sees the squatters' movement as a part of a longer tradition of protest, beginning in the 1960s with the Provo movement, and then continuing on through the Kabouter and Nieuwmarkt periods in the 1970s, leading up to the squatters' movement. Similarly, Duivenvoorden's (2000) history of squatting in the Netherlands begins in the mid-1960s. His history spans no fewer than six distinct generations, totaling over 35,000 participants and more than 30 years (315). Both authors make valid and convincing arguments for viewing squatting in a larger time frame. Nevertheless, I feel that the shorter time frame, as presented by Wietsma, is the most appropriate for several reasons. First, the 1980s were the most active and influential time of the movement, and, therefore, the most useful for analysis. Second, Duivenvoorden's generations are relatively short, with most of the squatters aging out of the practice within a few years. This turnover separates events from the 1960s and mid-70s from the identities and narratives of the 1980s. Of course, there is no reason why squatters could not refer back to the 1960s and mid-70s in constructing their stories, but most did not. Instead, squatters saw their movement growing out of the events that culminated at the Vondelstraat.

Nevertheless, this history still matters, as it highlights the context in which squatters chose to define their movement, the options they rejected. Although both authors date the roots of the movement to the mid-1960s, Amsterdam's squatting history dates back much further. During the 1930s, the Netherlands suffered through the severe global economic depression. Many workers, unable to pay their rents, lost their homes. Their tenants evicted, the apartments would often sit empty for long periods of time, since no one could afford the rent. Many evicted families, helped by tenants' committees, began to squat these now empty apartments. A decision by the Dutch Supreme Court in 1914 declared that all that was necessary to establish residency in a previously unused building was a table, a chair, and a bed. Families moved back in with their belongings, using the squatting tactic to force the landlord to negotiate a rental agreement. In general, this tactic proved very effective, as the landlords often had few other options (Duivenvoorden 2000, 14). The tenants used squatting as

a tactic, however, they did not think of themselves as squatters, let alone a squatters' movement.

Squatting assumed a different slant with the rise of the youth movements of the 1960s, the most important of which were the Provos. Provo, an abbreviation of the word "provoke," was first coined by the Dutch sociologist Buikhuizen (1966) to describe the Nozems, a youth subculture similar to the Mods in England. Products of the postwar economic boom, they were affluent, bored, and looking for a thrill (Voeten 1990). By 1965, the Provo movement, led by anarchist Roel van Duyn and performance artist Robert Jasper Grootveld, brought together the disaffected youth of Amsterdam through their combination of "Happenings" and protest actions. They fought not only against the government and big business, but also against the traditional left. They blamed all of them for the alienation and blandness of modern life (Voeten 1990). The Provo ranks grew quickly; their weekly "Happenings" on the Spui attracted thousands of participants and onlookers (Mamadouh 1992).

The Provos were a wellspring of ideas. Best known were their "White Plans," which focused on creative ways to improve the quality of life in the city. Their White Bike Plan advocated supplying free white bikes throughout the city to fight the encroachment of the automobile on urban space. The White House Plan proposed fighting real estate speculation by painting the doors of empty buildings white and passing out lists of downtown vacant properties to the growing number of young foreign travelers and campers who were drawn to the city's growing countercultural image. While this did publicize the problems of real estate speculation and led to some camping (i.e., temporary squatting by travelers, also known as tourist squatting (Pruijt 2004)), like so many Provo ideas, this was intended more as a prank than as a viable solution to the housing problems (Mamadouh 1992). But the Provos did bestow one last gift upon the nascent squatting movement. After the Provo movement's demise, former leaders began spreading the rumor that an American university was interested in purchasing the archive of Provo documents. Although this rumor was, in fact, a fabrication (regarding both the existence of the archive and the interest in it), the University of Amsterdam decided it would be terrible to let this historical resource leave the country and quickly offered to buy the archive. An archive was dutifully assembled, and the money earned became an

important financial resource for future social movement activity. One group that was to benefit from the money was the *Woningburo de Kraker* (WdK) (the squatter's housing office) (Duivenvoorden 2000).

The collective wanted to do more than just raise the issue of the housing shortage, they wanted to do something about it. Some people were already squatting houses for shelter. But individuals were often ill equipped to successfully occupy houses and turn them into homes. The WdK organized networks of people interested in helping. Duivenvoorden identifies the rise of WdK as the first sign that squatting was moving from individual responses to a social problem towards a social movement (2000, 24). The collective supplied both the technical know-how and the tools needed to squat a building.

Marking this shift from an individual to a collective response was the birth of a new term for squatting. Historically, the Dutch word for the activity had been *clandestien bezetten* (to occupy secretly). Squatting was to be hidden; success depended on avoiding notice, remaining clandestine. Squatting as an act of public protest required a new name. The first public squatters borrowed a term from underworld slang, *kraken* (to crack), to differentiate their actions from earlier forms (24). The crack signified the first opening of the door, the initial entry into a building. And the verb *kraken* brought with it its own actor, a new kind of political activist, the *kraker*. The media first resisted the new terminology (even creating their own names, such as "house pirate"), but the term eventually forced its way into the language (28).

The WdK's first squatting action occurred in February 1969. Over 20 people, with their tables, chairs, and beds, squatted a Dapper district building that had been empty for over two years. Police quickly arrived, arresting the entire group. Immediately afterward, the building's owner sent a demolition crew to render the building uninhabitable, smashing windows, destroying plumbing, and taking out gas pipes. In response, the WdK distributed a pamphlet through the neighborhood, asking "How is it possible for this to happen in Amsterdam in 1969?" while demanding that neighborhood residents "stand in solidarity with illegal housing occupations!" (26).

Their next attempt proved more successful. Two weeks later, squatters occupied a building slated for future demolition. The city government, with no immediate plans for the property, al-

lowed them to remain, providing shelter for 25 squatters. This first victory was short lived; less than one month later the residents were greeted by the shock of a demolition crew tearing down the roof of the building. The residents managed to delay the demolition briefly, but the building eventually came down, with the last squatters being forced out after only a few months residence (28).

Despite the relatively small size of the initial actions, they successfully exposed the city's housing problems. Furthermore, they offered possible solutions, solutions that had been overlooked by the bureaucratic machine, which many blamed for the mess. Unfortunately, people tended to see the WdK as simply an alternative housing office, asking them to do all the work. Following repeated requests for help, the WdK published the first squatting handbook in May 1969 to encourage others to solve their own housing problems. The handbook was simultaneously a do-it-yourself guide to finding, squatting, and fixing up your new home and a political critique of the housing system (34-35).

Even as the WdK offered a critical foundation for the burgeoning young movement, squatting remained a very small strategic element. However, several important events during the early 1970s provided an added boost. The first took place on the initial national squatting day, 5 May 1970, held on the 25th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazis. This event was done in collaboration with members from the Kabouter party (a political party that rose out of the ashes of the Provos) (Mamadouh 1992), and led to numerous buildings being squatted in cities all over the country to raise awareness about the housing crisis. Despite strong police resistance, many squatters survived the initial confrontation, even gaining limited rights to remain in the buildings (Duivenvoorden 2000, 54).

The Kabouter party was likewise successful, garnering over 11 percent of the vote in the June 1970 City Council elections. These electoral successes spurred the Kabouters to initiate more actions against the worst property speculators. However, much like the Provos before them, the Kabouters failed to fully capitalize on their successes. Infighting over the proper locus for political action – the street or the city council – proved fatal to the party (66). With the collapse of the Kabouters, the Amsterdam activists responded: politics would be decided on the streets through direct action (Mamadouh 1992).

While the actions surrounding the first national squatting days were generally successful, their aftereffects provided one more unexpected boost. In Nijmegen, a city near the German border, the local justice officer evicted a group of squatters, and then brought charges against them as well. Squatting itself was a not a punishable act, as established by the 1914 Supreme Court decision, which stated that the law protected only "the use of the house, but not the house itself" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 64). A house left unused could be legally squatted. The debate centered on the specific meaning of the word "use." The owner argued that, although the house was empty at the time, since it was on the market, this could legally be constituted as use. The first judge sided with the owner, and fined the squatters. However, the case eventually wound up in the Supreme Court, which overturned the lower court ruling. In February 1971, the Court decreed that "on the basis of normal language use, 'a house in use' can only mean 'a house in use as a house'" (65).

Now it became easier for squatters to establish their legal right to residence in an unoccupied building. If a building was empty for at least one year, then all that was necessary to claim legal residence was the aforementioned table, chair, and a bed. Owners retained some rights, however. They could certainly challenge the claim that the building was not in use during the time in question. Owners also had some recourse to evict squatters. However, to do so, they had to prove that they had concrete plans for the building. While owners could often put these means to effective use (and have over time become even more effective, see De Graad, Van Meel, Verbruggen 1999), many would opt for more efficient methods of eviction: gangs hired to throw the squatters out, with little concern about the legality of their actions. However, this ruling still managed to greatly enhance the opportunities for squatting, and thus ultimately stabilized living conditions.

This higher court decision also provoked the first major legislative backlash against squatting. Indignant over this threat to private property rights, members of the *Tweede Kamer* (the Second House of Parliament) proposed the *Anti-Kraakwet* (anti-squatting law) (Duivenvoorden 2000, 75). After failing to make it through the Second House the first year, it passed the following year, 1976, moving to the *Eerste Kamer* (the First House of Parliament). The threatened legal changes galvanized the activists. Up to this

point, squatters were characterized by a very high level of decentralization and independence, less a movement than a group of people engaged in the same practice. These new amendments at the national level prompted squatters from around the country to come together and form the *Landelijke Overleg Kraakgroepen,* the national conference of squatting groups, an organizational structure that linked squatters on a national level to fight a common enemy, the anti-squatting law (115). The battle against this law and its enforcers lasted through the rest of the decade. Neither side made much progress until a surprising ally emerged on behalf of the squatters. In 1978, the Council of Churches published the report *Kraken in Nederland* (Squatting in the Netherlands), which highlighted the massive housing shortage in the country, sympathetically casting squatting as a viable option to address the problems (Duivenvoorden 2000, 132). The anti-squatting legislation never passed the First House, however; thus, efforts to criminalize squatting failed, and, in the process, raised the political profile of squatter activism (138).

Even during this struggle, the squatters' focus never shifted away from their primary goal: to squat buildings. In the mid-1970's, Amsterdam's Nieuwmarkt neighborhood offered a convergence of qualities to make it the perfect squatting target. The neighborhood was undergoing large-scale urban renewal. The city was planning to build a subway line right through their neighborhood, which would require the demolition of all of the buildings that stood on the land above the proposed metro. The city owned many of these buildings and purchased the remainder. The residents were evicted as preparations for construction began, leaving a neighborhood full of empty buildings. Hundreds, and then thousands, of squatters moved in (Mamadouh 1992). But it was not only the empty buildings that attracted the squatters. It was also their outrage over the City Council's plans to spend so much money on a "prestige object" like a metro (Duivenvoorden 2000, 93). They believed the money could be better spent resolving the housing needs of the city's residents, a more serious problem in their eyes. That perfectly good housing stock would be destroyed in the process only added salt to the wound.

After large numbers of squatters had moved into the neighborhood to protest the development, something unexpected happened. Nothing. The actual demolition work did not begin until more than a year later. With no immediate plans for construction,

the squatters were allowed to remain in the Nieuwmarkt without the direct threat of eviction. This provided space for the squatters to develop into something more than a mere protest group. They built a sense of community and experimented with forms of communal living. This marked the first significant time that squatting had been used for something more than simply a protest tactic, or as a strategy for finding homes for people. Squatting had become a means for creating a better world, for building alternative institutions within society. It is not surprising then that the Nieuwmarkt squatters reacted to the news of the beginning of construction of the metro line at the end of 1974 with a sense of panic and anger. This was no longer just about the metro; it was now about their homes and their community. The stage was set for the first large-scale confrontation between squatters and the police. It would be far from the last.

Unwilling to give up their newly created community so easily, the squatters responded to the impending evictions by preparing to fight to the end. Behind the slogan "*Wij blijven hier wonen*" ("We are staying here"), they began fortifying the buildings, erecting barricades, constructing bridges connecting the buildings over the streets, and drawing up resistance plans. When the eviction orders finally came in early 1975, both sides were ready for a fight. Although the squatters were ultimately evicted, and the buildings demolished, the authorities' victory did not come easy, characterized by drawn out pitched battles in the streets (Duivenvoorden 2000, 78-101).

The protests and evictions in Nieuwmarkt were important for two reasons. They gave squatters a taste of freedom, but also a taste for blood. In the Nieuwmarkt, they experienced the freedom of a community established along the lines of social experimentation, resembling a temporary autonomous zone (Bey 1990) in an otherwise oppressive world. But blood was also drawn in the Nieuwmarkt. The squatters wanted to make these temporary spaces more permanent, and they were willing to make a stand to accomplish their goals. Despite their ultimate defeat, their resistance taught squatters important lessons. They gained valuable experience in building barricades, defending houses, and street fighting. All of this experience would prove useful in the near future. Some of the Nieuwmarkt squatters would later defend the barricades on the Vondelstraat, sharing their skills and expertise from their earlier conflicts with the police (Wietsma et al. 1982).

Perhaps more important than this experience, however, was the realization that resistance is not futile; it was possible to battle the authorities.

After the Nieuwmarkt evictions, squatters were on the verge of moving to the next level of engagement. Squatting had evolved into something more than simply a way of putting a roof over your head (Burght 1981). It provided a means for creating a better world, or at least a more livable city. Squatters began emphasizing its opportunities to live an autonomous life of self-development. But self-development requires more than just a home; stability was needed as well. A world afflicted by the constant threat of eviction, either by the police or the landlords' thugs, could not be stable. Squatters began thinking about how to recreate the stability they enjoyed in the Nieuwmarkt, the stability that would allow their communal lives to flourish. Most of them decided that the only way to do this was to refuse to submit to the evictions. While squatters had a history of resistance to the police, it generally took the form of non-violent, civil disobedience. Nieuwmarkt deviated from these strategies, but it did not lead to any immediate shift in tactics (Duivenvoorden 2000; Wietsma et al. 1982). It was an anomaly and not yet the start of something new.

According to Mamadouh (1992), the Nieuwmarkt protests should not be simply equated with the squatters' movement. First of all, squatting in the Nieuwmarkt was still primarily an act of protest, and only secondarily about long-term housing solutions. When the squatters moved in they expected the buildings to be torn down in the short term. Second, the protests remained localized – what happened in the Nieuwmarkt, stayed in the Nieuwmarkt. It did not directly carry over to other squatting actions. Third and finally, although some of the same individuals participated in later actions, this overlap was small and insignificant. Most importantly, however, whatever its role in the formation of the squatters' movement, it was not central to the story that squatters later told themselves and others about the emergence of their movement.

This history recounts a long period of squatting in Amsterdam, including many possible starting points for the squatters' movement. Yet, while many of these events are important in the establishment of squatting in the city, none of these were viewed as the essential starting point by the squatters of the late 1970s and

1980s. These actions were historical predecessors, important moments in related, but separate, movements or events. The high turnover rate of squatters, again, ultimately played an important role in the shortening of institutional memory. The practical nature of squatting also tended to produce a strong personal connection to defining the movement. The point is not that these could not have been starting points for the movement – as noted earlier, several other studies do just that although these events happened earlier they did not emerge as the creation myth of the movement.

Yes, multiple starting points were available for the movement, but they chose one, and that was the Vondelstraat. If they had chosen the Provos and Kabouter movements, perhaps they would have seen themselves as the radical edge of parliamentary politics working within the system. If they had chosen the 1971 Supreme Court decision, perhaps the movement would have defined itself as primarily fighting an unjust housing system. If they had chosen the mobilization against the anti-squatting law, perhaps they would have positioned themselves as principally fighting the legislative system. Interesting scenarios, but they never came to be, because they chose the Vondelstraat, and therefore, they defined themselves as an ever-radicalizing, ever-expanding movement fighting the entire system.

From Squatting to Squatters

Before there was a squatters' movement, before there were even squatters, there were people who squatted buildings. Initially this may have been all they had in common, as reasons for squatting varied widely. Although squatting had been closely associated with many of the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Amsterdam, most squatters did not start out with any intentions of joining a movement. Their goals were much simpler: to find a place to live the way they wanted. For the majority, squatting was initially nothing more than a practical solution to their own housing problem. That is, to live the way they wanted meant nothing more than simply to have a place to live. Beyond this basic goal, other motivations for squatting were quite diverse. The more politically minded sought a space where they could put their ideas into practice; squatting as an extension of their political ideals.

But even they rarely considered squatting the basis for an entire political movement. It was just a personal political statement within a broader lifestyle of political engagement. Squatting did not necessarily always have to primarily be about practical or political goals. Some squatters, for instance, did it just for the thrill. They wanted neither a home nor a political agenda – both of which required too much commitment. Instead, they squatted to find space free of responsibilities and constraints, space full of the potential for fun and excitement. While the other forms of squatting focused on building towards a future, this one privileged the moment.

These three types of squatting were not necessarily embodied by three separate types of people. Indeed, one could, at various times or even simultaneously, be a practical squatter, a political squatter, and a pleasure squatter. Therefore, it is better not to think of these as discrete groups made up of individuals, but rather to see them as three dominant tendencies within the squatter milieu. Despite their numerous differences, all three tendencies shared one thing: the need for a space of their own. Practical squatters needed space they could call home. Political squatters needed space as a political resource. While the pleasure squatters needed space to have fun.

As an activity, squatting easily accommodated this wide diversity of interests and motivations. Disagreements could be solved relatively easily through packing up and finding a new place to squat, because vacant buildings were plentiful during this period. Despite the different reasons that prompted taking a crowbar to a front door, squatting had similar effects on virtually all of these individuals: it transformed them from simply people who squat into squatters. That is, while squatting may have originally been taken as a means to a more immediate end, over time, it became a central part of their lives, an integral part of their self-identity, and the first step towards the eventual collective identity of the squatter. Squatting was not a free ride – it required time to find a space, a commitment to repairing and making a building often in poor condition livable, and vigilance to defend a building frequently threatened by the owner or the police. Squatting demanded time and attention from its practitioners, effort that transformed them. They became squatters. While this transformation is not sufficient to produce the squatters' movement, it provides a crucial first step in the process.

By far the most common route into squatting was the basic need to find housing. Looking for housing through the proper official channels meant three things. First, the housing seeker could expect a very long wait. The housing market in Amsterdam is divided into subsidized and market-rate housing. If you were willing to pay open market prices, waiting was not a probem. If you, however, were like many of the young people in Amsterdam and sought subsidized housing, a five-year and sometimes much longer wait was not uncommon. Second, when the wait was finally over, the apartment would generally be on the city's outskirts, far away from the city center. Third, the housing seeker must also fall into one of the accepted demographic demarcations, such as single person or family – large collectives, for instance, need not apply. For many young people looking for a place to live, these conditions were intolerable. When asked why she initially squatted, Paulien Hilhorst saw herself as having the same motivations as countless others. "There were so many people who had no home. It's a simple story: housing shortage" (*De Stad* 1996). Jonneke, for example, was simply unable to find adequate housing through traditional methods, and was drawn to squatting despite her limited knowledge of what it would entail. After she exhausted all of the legal means, "squatting was all that remained. We found it very scary; we knew a little bit about it, but very little" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 12). The risk, however, was far outweighed by the benefits: a new home.

A home was what motivated those in the early process of a housing search; a better home motivated many who had "successfully" found housing, but were less than satisfied with the outcome. Rob Kuijt, despite having a place to live, still thought he had a "housing problem." He lived in a very small room on the edge of the city. A number of his friends had similar problems.

> We had heard about squatting, and we thought it sounded good for us. One of us researched it. Squatting was pretty easy; you take along a table, a chair, and a bed, go into a house, and you begin to live there. Well, that sounded simple to us, so on a nice Friday morning or so, we rode our bikes through the city, looking through the Canal District to see if we saw any empty buildings (*De Stad* 1996).

Jacqueline was in a comparable situation, living in what she called a "terrible" student apartment her first year out of school. Then,

> at the end of the school year two friends of mine started to squat. I knew very little about squatting. I knew it happened, but what it entailed? I had no idea. I just went along primarily because I liked the people involved. Squatting wasn't a conscious choice (Wietsma et al. 1982, 23).

A common sentiment among these squatters, as well as others, is that before they began squatting, they knew almost nothing about what it would involve. They simply knew that it was possible, that others were doing it, so they decided to give it a try. They were not joining anything; they were just making the best of the situation. With squatting such a tempting option, it made no sense to play by the rules. But to secure housing they first had to overcome their fear of the unknown and take a chance.

Squatting offered a practical solution to an individual's housing problem. This was the dominant tendency during this period. Most squatting first occurred with very little explicit political motivation. As Karen recounts, "Squatting was not a conscious, political act, but more a way of living together with a group for not too much money, and it was exciting" (46). Annegriet Wietsma, a filmmaker who lives in the Handelsblad building near Dam Square, makes it quite clear that politics was the farthest thing from her mind when she first began squatting. When she first arrived in Amsterdam as a student, she had trouble finding adequate housing.

> You want to be close to the center, I thought that I could temporarily get a very small room somewhere very far away, but that was only for a month or so. Then I passed the building where I've lived the last 16 years, wondering if things would ever work out; at the time it appeared to be absolutely empty. There were a few squatters there, and a few days later [after some contact with them] I could move in. Yes, it actually went that smoothly. I had absolutely no political motivation. I was fresh, green, had just graduated – I believe that at that time I was still even voting for D66 – you've just arrived in the big city and you have nothing, you're going to school there and there are no rooms...Thus you have to do something, and then you inadvertently end up in a

> squat. No political motivation at all, that came later (*De Stad* 1996).

Originally, for these people, squatting simply provided a place to live. Political activism was never considered; for most, they didn't even expect to become squatters. They had few concrete ideas about what it meant to squat, let alone becoming involved in a larger squatters' movement.

Although this group did not immediately see the political side of squatting, others did. Since squatting had played a prominent role in earlier protest movements in the city, it naturally drew those looking for some connection to the values and politics of the 1960s. "In high school, I had written papers on the Provos," recalls Piet-Jan Over, "and I was very interested in those sorts of movements. But I had the idea that we lived in a time where nothing happened, but by attending college I met a girl and her friend, who belonged to the squatters" (*De Stad* 1996). He learned about squatting by chance, but this contact spurred him to investigate further. He discovered that he did not have to read about politics in history books. It was going on right then and there. For Piet-Jan, squatting represented an avenue to fulfill his urges for political involvement. Even though squatting had not yet developed into a coherent movement, it was nevertheless a tactic of protest, one with a long pedigree behind it. Squatting offered a connection to past political glories, which was enough for him. Future glories were not necessarily part of the plan.

But other political movements were active in the city at the time, despite Piet-Jan's impression. For Willem, getting involved with squatting was a logical extension of his other political work. He had long been active in efforts to combat police violence, and these political concerns brought him to squatting, which was suffering from increasing police repression. Guus viewed squatting as an extension of his political self. He defined squatting as a means to challenge a system traditionally ordered from top to bottom from the bottom up (Wietsma, et al. 1982, 86). Similarly, Joost Posthast's involvement with anarchist politics in the city introduced him to squatting. Squatting – like his own anarchist ideology – challenged the very notions of property and capital. Squatting allowed him to put his politics into practice (*De Stad* 1996).

Other activists, on the other hand, came to squatting not as a direct extension of their other political activities, but as a rejection of the goals and tactics of the organizations they worked with. Ger, another anarchist, felt that his political organizing did not need to focus exclusively on improving the lives of others. "I find that you don't just have to struggle for the working class or for the oppressed in the Third World; you can also advocate for yourself" (Wietsma, et al. 1982, 18). Other political movements were too distant, too focused on others. Marcel also wanted to make politics more personal, to bring it into his own life. Already active in many different political organizations, such as the peace and student movements, he began feeling increasingly dissatisfied with them. "I wanted to be involved in concrete things, to be working on change and not just simply calling for the masses to do it" (38-9). Squatting offered a more tangible vehicle for people's political aspirations. Other movements were based on a slow process, with potential payoffs put off until the distant future. Squatting, in contrast, was more immediate – if you needed a place to live, you simply went out and got one. It was also more practical – if you wanted to protest the housing shortage or real estate speculation, you just occupied an empty building. No more abstract theories – squatting privileged action. Do it yourself. Politics is something you should *do*, not something you *talk about*.

Still, despite differences in motivation, political squatting had an important common feature with practical squatting. Squatting was a means to an end, not necessarily an end in itself. That is, it was a tactic, not an ultimate goal. Thus, the primary identity did not start out as squatter. They were either activists or residents who squatted.

There was one more reason people squatted, one that, unfortunately, is rarely encountered as explicitly in squatting oral histories – pleasure squatting. Whereas the practical and political squatting were the main building blocks of the future movement, pleasure squatting also had its place. Some were drawn to squatting for the simple reason of finding a space with no rules and no responsibilities. This created difficulties when pleasure squatters shared a building with more practical or political squatters, such as in the first attempt to squat the Handelsblad building in March 1978. Here practical and pleasure squatters continually squabbled over the goals and rules of the squat. Agreements could never be reached, and, after two fires and having the electricity turned off,

everyone left (Mamadouh 1992, 194). The building was resquatted a year later, but encountered similar problems. Of the 30 people living there, a small group of "punks" showed no interest in "making progress" or in legalizing the building (195), which destabilized the entire squat and left everyone unsatisfied.

This strong pleasure principle is less usual than its more common manifestation: the social pleasures of squatting and living with others. Many of the squatters interviewed in these oral histories point to the desire to live with friends, not the absolute necessity of housing or political motivations, as their ultimate reason for going out and breaking down the door to a new life. If the prospect of a new house was not enough to attract someone to squatting, the opportunity to live with friends provided another powerful motive, particularly in a city that did not offer much housing for large groups of unrelated people to live together. Marga van der Schaaf recounts how she was introduced to squatting. She was nineteen and still living with her parents.

> That was actually going quite well, but at a certain moment a friend stopped by and she said she was going to squat a building with a lot of other people; do you have any interest in taking part, since they had also never done it before. She wanted me to come along to help, but not with the intention of living there as well, but only to take part in the experience... I had never actually planned to move out or to live anywhere else. Ultimately, I ended up doing it just because it was just so cool (*De Stad* 1996).

Squatting thus offers both a place to live and a place to live in a way that one likes with whom one likes.

Of course, these distinctions are not absolute. Practical-minded squatters, while not driven by politics, were not averse to them either. Likewise, political squatting did not preclude practical concerns. Activists needed homes, too. And neither the practical nor the political squatter was immune to having fun and enjoying life in the squat. While motivations may have differed among those who engaged in squatting, certain goals were shared. In particular, squatting, whatever the motivations, offered opportunities to explore alternative living arrangements impossible in standard living conditions. The traditional options for most young people in the city included either living at home with their families or living in student flats, places Ger derided as "sources of cynicism"

(Wietsma et al. 1982, 17). Whether or not these living situations were really objectively as bad as they are framed is not the issue. In the eyes of those who squatted, they were unacceptable compromises. Neither option offered much in the way of physical room, let alone room to breathe, room to experiment. Squatting made "other ways of living... possible, which would otherwise be impossible, both instinctively and practically" (Guus, quoted in Wietsma et al. 1982, 86). Piet-Jan argued that the appeal of squatting large buildings was "for me never about the unbelievable amount of space, but more about the manner of living. I knew some people who were living in a squat then, and I found it fantastic, with all of them living together in a living group sharing a kitchen. And to organize such a house together, that was terrific. Officially, that was considered absolutely impossible" (*De Stad* 1996). Squatting creating a space to live; it also created the possibility for developing a new way of life, a way of life open only to those who were squatting, one based on freedom to do what one wanted within a collective ethos.

The gap between the vision of what was possible in a squatted building and the reality of life in a squat could be considerable, however. Many entered these new living arrangements with very utopian ideas of what a communal house would be like. Rineke describes a common experience. She began squatting with "beautiful, beautiful ideals: we would do everything together" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 81). Everything started out nice enough; she found the first year in the squat very enjoyable. Over time, however, naïve expectations of a communal utopia soon gave way to the challenge of running a large household. Some residents began experiencing the liabilities of living in large groups, such as "all the people standing around while you try to brush your teeth" (81). Rineke went so far as to actually move out to find a place on her own, seeking the solitude that this alternative offered. Squatting also gave her the easy option to find a new home. Nevertheless, she still valued her experience and experiment with group living (81).

The situation in the squatted Handelsblad building proved even more contentious. This tension was primarily a result of trying to run a household that included so many residents with different motivations and ideologies about squatting. Still, once the house rules were set, which not only set expectations for each resident, but also set up rules to regulate how new residents were admitted into the house, the collective could run the house fairly smoothly.

While the end product may have been a distant cry from their original idealistic goals, they were still provided a better approximation of the way of life they desired than the officially available options (Mamadouh 1992).

Squatting gave residents first-hand experience in trying out new ideas and ways of life, as well as the practical limitations of doing so. To live in a squat meant more than just making your dreams reality. It also meant dealing with the impositions of others simultaneously making their own dreams a reality. Living in a squat required learning how to secure and repair the physical space itself, in order to make living there even possible. That is, for all the obstacles created by bringing different people together under one roof, often the largest obstacle was the roof itself. Community fades quickly when the roof caves in. The involved buildings had stood vacant for at least one year, which meant they were in varying states of disrepair when they were squatted. Moreover, many landlords would purposely remove kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing, fixtures, chimneys, and even staircases in order to make their buildings "unsquatable" (Duivenvoorden 2000). Ger tells a story about fixing up his squat:

> None of us had any experience, actually none of the squatters in the neighborhood did. We had to totally teach ourselves how to fix up a house. That took an enormous amount of work and trouble. Our house was in bad condition. We put in the chimney, gas, electricity; everything was makeshift. But it also gave us a lot of opportunities to express our creativity. I had an extremely good time! (Wietsma et al. 1982, 19)

Squatters learned new skills, which generated a sense of pride. Brecht, a squatter, after having grown up being taught that this kind of work was inappropriate for women, was very proud that she had installed a toilet in her building (73).

Since squatting involved many of the same activities, regardless of one's motivation, it is not surprising that both political and practical squatting, as well as all but the most extreme pleasure-seeking style of squatting, led to very similar squatter experiences, which, in turn, produced a merging of these different squatters' identities. Most importantly, however, this squatter identity leaned towards the personal end of the "personal is political" spectrum. That is, the notion of squatter was a private identity, one expressed

behind closed (and often locked and barricaded) doors. Squatting might have been a public act of defiance and protest, but squatters lived their lives as squatters in private. A nascent community emerged out of this squatting scene, one that was based on shared experiences, shared values, and shared feelings.

Nevertheless, these squatting experiences were not yet enough to bring them together into a movement. Although squatting was never considered a stable solution to housing needs, the threat was generally perceived as very specific: a specific building would be evicted at a specific time. The residents could then simply move on to another building to squat. Thus, squatting remained an individual solution and eviction was just as often just an individual problem. To become a movement, something else needed to occur. Something that would force the squatter identity into the public sphere, or, more concretely, onto the streets.

From Squatter to Squatters' Movement

The eviction of the house on the corner of the Nicolaas Beestraat and Jacob van Lennepstraat in 1978 set this process in motion. While squatters employed their standard non-violent civil disobedience strategies to protest the eviction, the police introduced a new tactic: massive, indiscriminate brutality. "Squatters standing three rows deep with arms linked in passive resistance to eviction had been beaten up with batons while chanting, 'No violence, no violence!'" (ADILKNO 1994, 114). The importance of this event is in how this changed the rules of the game for squatters. By breaking the unwritten rules that regulated previous confrontations, the police violated the trust of the squatters, leading them to question the other rules they had been abiding by, particularly those that limited their tactics to passive resistance. "This was not going to happen again" (114).

The general strategy for resisting eviction had until then been "passive resistance." This involved people surrounding the building, locking arms and trying to block the eviction. This style of resistance was more symbolic than anything else. The police would then peacefully disperse the crowd, and proceed with the eviction process. There was no reason to suspect that this eviction would go any differently than previous ones. But if the day started out like so many others, it was to rapidly change into something

quite unexpected. Erik Williams arrived at the eviction process with his new movie camera, hoping to film the protest.

> Squatters from throughout the entire city were standing in front of the building... I stood there with my super 8 camera and then came the ME [*Mobiele Eenheid*, the riot police] buses. Well, I had never seen anything like it, and I saw them coming towards me, and they ran at the people and they immediately began beating them up, and I was stunned. But I believe that everyone was really stunned, because the entire group that was standing there had also personally never experienced this before, and they stood their yelling "no violence, no violence" and the ME, yeah, they began to hit them and the people were beaten and I filmed everything from the start in a sort of stupor (*De Stad* 1996).

The morning devolved into total chaos, with the police beating up squatters who had done nothing more than show up to protest the eviction.

However, even during the unprovoked attack, the squatters never fought back, maintaining their non-violent stance in the face of the police beatings. Erik saw a lot of his friends from the neighborhood at the eviction, and was struck by how unprepared they were to even begin to deal with the violence. Violence was foreign to the experiences of most squatters, and watching his friends being beaten up by the police, he saw no indication that they ever considered violence as the right response at that time (*De Stad* 1996).

The real change would happen not during the eviction, but rather in the meetings that followed. Erik's film of the eviction was shown at squatter meetings throughout the city and country, and it had the same transformative effect on viewers as the actual experience had had on those present.

> It circulated among the squatters' circuit in the city. The film very quickly generated discussions regarding the fact that: "Look, if you don't do anything then what you witness in this film can happen to you too. You will get beaten up. The ME will come and then you will be beaten down." And then discussions arose about, well, we don't want this to happen a second time and we have to defend ourselves. And then strategies were drawn up for how we could react differently. So, I knew that everyone was always unbe-

> lievably angry and furious when they saw the film, but when the film ended, people would begin to cheer and yell...Thus the film had an enormous impact, it was actually a nice example of "direct cinema" (Erik Willems, *De Stad* 1996).

Rob confirms the impact of the film, arguing that seeing it convinced him that active resistance was the only viable option left to squatters (*De Stad* 1996). For Erik, this marked a substantial shift in the tactics of squatting.

> At that time in '78, violence was absolutely not an issue; this is why the surprise was so great... squatting was then actually a relatively innocent undertaking. there was a vacant house in a 19th century neighborhood which also often had many nailed-shut apartments, and you came there with your crowbar and you went in and you cleaned it up and the neighborhood always found it positive as well, because people would rather look at lived in-houses than at boarded-up hovels that just sat there for years (*De Stad* 1996).

Squatters now began to seriously consider incorporating violent and confrontational tactics into their repertoire.

The future direction, for Leen as well as many others in the movement, seemed obvious.

> At all of the subsequent protests, we had to do something. We could no longer allow our side to remain nonviolent while we were being beaten up by the police; we would no longer tolerate that. Yeah, in my eyes, I thought that we should, in any case, also always say [we would use violence], threaten. Naturally, we were sometimes bluffing that we would use violent means, although sometimes, as with the Groote Keijser, these threats were carried out (*De Stad* 1996).

The brutal evictions set the stage for the next significant conflict between the squatters and the municipal government; squatters had no intention of passively accepting another beating.

The Groote Keijser was a huge squatted office building located on the Keizersgracht in the canal district. First squatted in the fall of 1978, the building never had a large stable squatting population. A few permanent residents shared the space with a revolving

door of tourists and transients (ADILKNO 1994, 47). When the eviction notice came in October 1979, most of the residents complied and moved out voluntarily. However, the neighborhood squatter groups were looking for a building to use as a homebase for a citywide offensive. "It was time for a speculator's property to be used to take the next step between passive resistance and active defense. The Keijser was big and empty, and everyone fit inside" (47). Although there was initially nothing particularly special about the Keijser, by December, it "had become a national symbol of revolt against Amsterdam's 'betrayal of the fifty-three thousand homeless people and the government's complicity in property speculation, vacancy, and luxury apartments'" (46). Squatters poured in from all over the city to fortify and barricade the building. Training courses were offered in physical fitness and self-defense (Duivenvoorden 2000, 144). Residents came up with elaborate plans to deal with every possible scenario. A pirate radio station, the *Vrije Keijser* (Free Keijser), operated in the basement to keep other squatters informed of the events inside, since access to the building was limited and everyone would need to know as quickly as possible when the eviction process began, so that they could lend their support in defending the building. They stockpiled smoke bombs and Molotov cocktails, as well as anything else, including old kitchen appliances, that could be thrown from the top of the building to keep the police at bay. The Keijser became an armed fortress, ready and waiting for the looming eviction.

This event is critical to the movement's emergence, because it reversed the previous eviction. Taking the offensive, even as an ultimately defensive move, transformed squatters from feeling like victims to becoming an empowered entity. In the process, these actions expanded the scope of action – new possibilities and strategies were introduced – and deepened the squatters' activist identity – a shared goal and threat united them. The Groote Keijser was their response to the new tactics of the authorities: "We will meet violence with violence." All eyes were on the Keijser, as everyone awaited the impending showdown between the government and the squatters.

But the violence never came, at least not at the Keijser. For months the squatters waiting for the eviction, but the authorities chose to avoid an escalation of violence. The Groote Keijser was a powder keg, and the City Council was not interested in touching

off a large-scale conflict, and thus spent its time looking for alternative plans to deal with the issue. When the confrontation everyone was expecting finally came, it came at a place that nobody expected.

In late February 1980, a building on the Vondelstraat, in a nice neighborhood near the Vondelpark, was evicted. Unfairly, according to squatters, who argued that the owner had gained the eviction notice under false premises. They planned to re-squat the building in protest (Duivenvoorden 2000, 160). After the successful re-squat, the police showed up to re-evict the building. But the squatters were ready, driving the police back. Squatters, sympathizers, and spectators crowded in front of the house. Paving stones pulled up from the street became barricades used to block the intersection preventing the police from returning with reinforcements. What started out as a simple re-squatting action of a previously insignificant building swiftly escalated into a standoff between the squatters and the police and the City Council, who were eager to defuse the situation and return life back to normal. The squatters agreed to dismantle the barricades if all of their demands were met, which included allowing them to remain in the house. But the City Council refused to budge. The standoff lasted the entire weekend. Early Monday morning, squatters awoke to the sounds of tanks in the streets. The authorities had called in armored tanks to break through the barricades to allow the police to enter. Ostensibly, this was to clear the street so that the tramlines were not being blocked. But it was a massive show of force by the government to reestablish its control over the situation. This extreme use of force damaged their image, however; public support swung in favor of the squatters. Moreover, the squatters ultimately won all of their demands, and were able to occupy the building, thus proving to themselves that their eviction had been illegal. "The Vondelstraat signaled the beginning of a new period of resistance and new forms of resistance (stones, barricades). For the first time, the ME was effectively beaten back, and squatters felt their own sense of power and possibility" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 143).

All of the discussions regarding tactics and violence in preparing to resist eviction at the Groote Keijser had laid the groundwork for the response at the Vondelstraat. Evelien points out that the Keijser and the violent evictions going on at the time established a "prehistory" of the events (*De Stad* 1996). Guus adds that, "We

had talked so much about violence leading up to the Groote Keijser, that you were – when the Vondelstraat came – you were ready for it" (Wietsma, et al. 1982, 90). Much of the "heavy lifting" was done during the Groote Keijser period, so when the conflict at the Vondelstraat occurred, the resistance was considered quite spontaneous and effortless. This was similar to the narratives involving the sit-ins during the US civil rights movement, where "spontaneity functioned as a kind of narrative ellipsis in which the movement's beginning occurred" (Polletta 2006, 45). Polletta argues that one of the strengths of narratives is that they explain without resolving all of the ambiguity. The "spontaneous" transformation either "forced readers to fill in the missing links, to become coauthors in the story, or the story could not fix the motivation for participation and so required its retelling" (45). Spontaneity is "immediate expressive, and powerfully moral, but also non-political and non-strategic" (47).

The fact that the confrontation occurred here and not at the Keijser gave the transformation, and the simultaneous creation of the movement, a more spontaneous, more natural, and more innocent aura. No one would argue that the squatters' movement did not exist at the time of the Groote Keijser, but it was not yet complete, having not yet taken the shape that would define its ultimate form. The Vondelstraat serves as the completion of the process, and thus is the real starting point and the central determining factor of the narrative of the squatters' movement – the narrative of a spontaneously radicalizing movement. The movement was finally born and the mythmaking had just begun.

Radicalization

The narrative of radicalization forged a strong collective identity among the squatters, knitting diverse groups into a unified, coherent subject by creating a totalizing vision of and for the movement. That is, what began as a group of individuals primarily motivated to solve their own housing issues "suddenly" transformed into a radical social movement. The previous section discussed the pattern of events that formed the basis for this radicalization process; now I turn to how the squatters actually framed this development. In her study of radical leftist groups in Italy and Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, Della Porta (1995) argues that a

central characteristic of these groups, and particularly the most committed activists involved, is the process of radicalization they experienced while establishing their movement and activist identities. The key to understanding radicalization is to see it as a process of increasing totalization (149). By totalization, I mean the process in which the movement subsumes more and more the life of the activist, and the activist identity becomes dominant over all other identities. More generally, totalization collapses distinctions: a single point in time becomes the same as infinite time; a single point in space becomes the entire universe. Della Porta identifies seven primary developments that fuel social movement radicalization: speed of change, growth of time commitment, increase of strong emotions, density of affective ties, politicization of everything, increasing insularity, and shifting definitions of political adversaries (149-150), from which I draw four primary axes of totalization: time, emotions, space, and enemies. What is important to her definition is the role of the subjective experience of the activist. That is, this concerns the way they experienced these changes rather than focusing primarily on the objective measures of these axes.

Time is both compressed and expanded during radicalization. The rapid development of the movement is critical to the process, especially in how it affects the consciousness of activists. As Della Porta has pointed out, "Caught up in this rapid evolution, the militants no longer perceived themselves as making deliberate decisions" (149). In this compressed time, choices are chosen and activists act, but often with little sense of how or why these choices and actions are being made. Hence, individual agency is given over to a greater force, which could be the movement or, in loftier terms, fate or destiny. The speed of transformation has another important effect. It makes the differences between before and after even starker, since the change is perceived as a sudden jump, devoid of gradualism. Speed transforms the activist into a part of the whole, linking him or her to the trajectory of the larger movement and separating her from the past.

While time is condensed, radicalization also expands time in other areas, specifically the amount of time commitment required for active participation. Radicalization and time spent devoted to activism are strongly correlated. Increased time generally translates into an increased commitment to the cause. Increased commitment feeds back into this process, demanding even more time

from the activist. Activists lose themselves in the time processes of the movement. While compressed time takes over the will of the activist, expanded time takes over her life.

Increased levels of commitment are not perceived as the burden they objectively appear to be. Activists want to be working on these projects; they want to be involved, and not simply for ideological reasons. Activists' emotions undergo a parallel transformation, forging an intense connection between the "fleeting" emotions of the moment and the more "stable" emotions of participation. "From the very beginning of the process of political socialization, emotional motivations played a decisive role" (150). Radicalization generates high levels of emotional stimulation. The rapid developments, usually combined with early successes, create a period of extreme excitement for activists. The speed generates a thrilling adrenaline rush. The world appears on the cusp of revolutionary change, and they want to be part of it. These emotional experiences are a strong draw for the activists, laying a basis for future expectations. That is, activism becomes about more than simply reaching rational political goals; it is also concerned with recreating and maintaining these generally short-term, often highly personal, emotional experiences.

These operate at more than the personal level; they also link activists to each other. Della Porta argues that sharing similar intense experiences, both in their confrontations with authorities and in their everyday lives as activists, pulls participants together into a dense web of affective ties. This strengthens the core of the movement, making success not only a matter of ideological agreement, but also of maintaining ties to others. Whereas the other form of emotional experiences stresses the fleeting highs of activism, these emotions are expected to be more stable and long term. This process reinforces the tendency of the movement to take over the lives of activists. Not only does the movement demand an enormous time commitment, but it also is the place where one finds friends and excitement.

Radicalization also affects the activists' relationship to the world, making it simultaneously larger and smaller. The world becomes larger for activists as they politicize everything. Formerly trivial acts, such as choices about food and clothing, language use, etc., now signify political ideology and commitment. Radicalization increases political interaction with the world, as everything reminds activists of their political stance (Kim and Bearman

1997). It is not just political activity, but also political experience that is more and more seen as the central focus of life. Red Army Faction member Klaus Jünschke, for instance, remembers his time as an activist, when "Everything was political in that period." (quoted in Della Porta 1996, 150).

But just as the world gets bigger, it also shrinks dramatically. Affective ties draw activists in, while an increasingly politicized world alienates them from the "normal" people who live in an apolitical world. Thus, the everyday lives of activists rarely involve leaving the small, tight-knit, and increasingly insular community. This yields a paradoxical effect. The increasing totalization and blurring of boundaries also produces a very strong new boundary – the boundary between inside and outside.

These different processes combine to make one radical group. But radicalization also implies movement, both for and against. While radicalization moves toward increasing the positive experiences of activism, as well as reaching the ideological goals of the movement, it must also react against specific other forces. This expanding and shrinking world redefines the enemy. In Della Porta's work, she found that "interactions with the state produced a shift in their definition of the political adversary" (p. 149). The enemy is the outsider who tries to destroy the inside. The enemy is the outside that seeks to destroy the insider. While all of Della Porta's other points also include an opposing force, this one does not. Does this mean that this radicalization lends itself to an easy and unproblematic naming of the enemy? Not quite. Instead, this is a very delicate and tricky process, a point she brings up later in her discussion, which will also come later in this analysis as well. While outsiders may be consistently considered the enemy, the category of outsider remains fluid. That is, any "insider" who disturbs the inside can easily be recast as an outsider, as an enemy. Hence the preponderance of purges from amongst the radical ranks. Purity is a prized trait; traitors, on the other hand, are not. Any outside influence presents a potential threat. Therefore, over time, radicalizing groups tend to withdraw further and further inside themselves.

All of these developments were present and emphasized during this period of the emergence of the squatters' movement. Moreover, I will build on Della Porta's analysis by highlighting the relative importance of the form of political radicalization over the specific content of the politics. The narrative of radicalization, in our

case, helps forge a strong collective identity among the squatters as members of the squatters' movement. It articulated diverse groups into a unified, coherent subject by creating a totalizing vision for the movement. What began as a group of individuals primarily motivated by solving their own housing problems was transformed into a radical social movement. For a movement to coalesce despite the many different motivations and goals of the individual actors, it was necessary for these different goals to be linked together in a meaningful way. While squatting was fundamentally seen as a practical solution to the housing shortage, there were often other meanings and uses attached to this reason, such as the desire to make a protest statement against the City Council's housing policies , to live collectively, or to take control of one's own life. The radicalization process fused these elements into one goal. The previous section discussed the pattern of events that formed the basis for this radicalization process; now I turn to the way squatters actually talked about and framed this development.

Time

Full participation in the squatters' movement fostered, for many activists, a dual relationship to time. The movement is born in a moment, but survives in a much wider time frame. The radicalization process of the squatters is best exemplified by the act of throwing stones. For many squatters, the act of throwing stones symbolized their transformation into a radical activist (de Ruyter 1986). To throw stones or not was an enormous ethical problem. The shift to violence required them to cross an "emotional barrier." Thus, "almost everyone remembers their first stone" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 164).

Although violence had been planned for the defense of the Groote Keijser, it did not occur until the Vondelstraat events. The violence at the Vondelstraat felt spontaneous, not planned. In fact, many who threw stones there not only had not planned to do so, but had been vehemently against this act. For instance, Jonneke found the discussions during the Keijser organizing actions very disturbing. The very thought of violence made her uncomfortable. But the Vondelstraat changed her. She felt angry and betrayed by the Council's decision and her trust in others was shattered, and so Jonneke was overwhelmed by her emotions during the action.

Spurred on by her anger and solidarity with her companions, she suddenly realized she had two stones in her hands and was ready to throw them. Although she did not throw them, she was still attacked by the ME. Afterwards, she noted how, during the event, she got so caught up in the moment that she felt she was losing control (Wietsma et al. 1982, 13-14).

Jonneke did not throw any stones that day, but many others did, most of them for the first time. An anonymous squatter interviewed in the book *Stadsoorlog* [Urban War] explains how he was transformed that day. "I no longer find it wrong to throw stones... I found it wrong up until the day of the Vondelstraat" (Hoffland 1980, 84-88). Another squatter remarked,

> if you had asked me two years earlier if I would ever throw a stone, I would have said "not me." But now I find it the most normal thing in the world, and the only reason I don't do it is because I am terribly afraid of being arrested (105).

These changes did not take long. They were virtually instantaneous. At the Vondelstraat, when the police came back with reinforcements, this same squatter knew he had to act.

> At that moment, I was indeed motivated enough to say: I will not leave this building, so force me out. They did just that, and then I thought: I will not allow myself to be forced out. I was definitely afraid. I had never been in a situation like this before. Afterwards, I thought that the radicalization process took no more than 15 minutes. Afterwards, I said to myself, well, this is how it has to be... and you doubt whether you, in fact, chose violence yourself, but it is still a reaction to how they were treating you. But it certainly worked: they were also scared of you, and became more and more afraid (89-90).

The radicalization process for this squatter was fairly quick: 15 minutes. During the rapid developments of events at the Vondelstraat, he got caught up in the moment and overcame his initial aversion to violence. Equally important, he does not back down from his decision later: stone-throwing has suddenly become a standard tactic in his repertoire. Once transformed, he has no desire to revert back to his former self, but instead he keeps moving in the same direction. Marcel had a similar experience. A pacifist

prior to the Vondelstraat events, he characterized his first stone throwing as "impulsive." He had an "epiphany" and when the heat of the moment got to him, he experienced an "unconscious certainty. When I saw the ME, I knew we had to defend the squat. I threw stones with shaking hands and closed eyes" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 43). He claimed that only afterwards did he fully realize why he had done what he did.

However, not everyone had such strong feelings against violence. When asked if he had any problems with violence, Guus answered, "No, or at least less than others – I see violence as instinctive, when you're threatened at a given moment, you react violently" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 90). Still, even for him, the transformation "just happened." Despite sharing the same fear of losing control and going "too far" that worried Jonneke, Guus conceded that there were "certain moments" when you get "so angry" that the only reaction is to lash back at the police. Even though he had already rationally made up his mind that violence was acceptable under certain circumstances, it took the immediacy of those circumstances, as they are lived rather than just theorized, to push him into throwing stones. While these examples are compelling, the collapse of time for squatters went far beyond this tactical transformative moment. Wietsma et al. (1982) argue that the squatters' movement as a whole emphasized the here and now, the immediate, which tended to make it hard for outsiders to relate to them (133-8).

> After the rapid transformation of the Vondelstaat, the movement took on a dynamic feeling of fast forward progress. This also had the effect of pulling people closer into the movement. One squatter noted the need to constantly stay involved. "If you took time off, you felt that you missed a lot. It makes you feel like you have to take part in order to be up to speed" (60).

Forged in this rapidly evolving moment, the movement quickly came to dominate more and more of the activists' time. A movement based on squatting and finding a home lent itself rather easily to this development. Squatters literally lived in the movement. As Mamadouh (1992) explains, this allowed them to be perpetually involved in the movement. "They were busy with it night and day. They lived in their 'action'" (176).

To be a squatter took up a lot of time. To be influential in the movement took even more time. As Van Noort (1984) describes in his study of squatters, "If you, for example, want to contribute, participate in the development of ideas, organize demonstrations, give interviews to the press, etc. then that means that you actually have to become a fulltime squatter" (147). Tycho confirmed this point, arguing, "The qualification for leadership seems to be most closely tied to the amount of time one has" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 31). A fulltime commitment scared off many interested parties. "Activism is not a career," argued Marcel, "There needs to be time for other involvements – it is not good if you only have unemployed people involved – those with more time can be more involved" (44). This expansiveness selected, and separated, particular types of activists.

The melding of these two time frames was not seamless. Direct democratic forms seemed to work well in "revolutionary situations" (136), however, the majority of those involved were not prepared to devote all of their time or energy toward permanent political activity. These types of conditions produced a tendency for participation in the movement (as opposed to squatting itself) to eventually begin tapering off. One solution to this tension was to "ensure" that there were enough conflicts and "revolutionary situations" at any given time to maintain a high level of participation (136).

Not everyone had the time, energy, or interest to fully devote themselves to political organizing as a fulltime practice. But they often found other ways to spend all their time in the movement. The movement's successes created stability in the squats and the neighborhoods, allowing a subculture and alternative institutions to emerge within and around the movement (Dijst 1986). A report by Angenent and Kuit (1985) reveals just how squatting developed beyond the home. Activities included cafés, restaurants, coffee shops, stores, bookstores, studios, galleries, printers, editorial spaces for media, radio stations, auto repair shops, bike repair shops, collectives for lending tools and *bakfietsen* [cargo bikes], sport schools, diverse courses, theaters, nurseries, shelters for runaway girls, rape crisis houses, movie theaters, discos, and more (5). Within this burgeoning subculture, it was quite easy to spend one's entire life within movement-centered institutions. After waking up in a squatted house, one could work at the squatted bike repair shop, have lunch in a squatted café, browse

through the reading material in a squatted bookstore, meet friends for dinner in a squatted restaurant, have drinks in the squatted bar, finally, capping the evening off with a play in a squatted theater, before returning home to the squat. Wietsma et al. (1982) noted that "Squatting gives time, and time is power" (117). True, squatting does free one from the time constraints many other people experience, most importantly the need to have a paying job in order to support oneself. Yes, squatting gives time, but squatting also demands time.

Emotions

The emotional effects of radicalization are closely linked to its temporal developments. Fast time is linked to "hot emotions," slow time to "cool emotions." That is, the rapid transformation is filled with a combination of fear and anger. These emotions drive the dramatic shifts in consciousness of squatters. These experiences are, importantly enough, not isolated. Everyone present at the Vondelstraat seemed to share the same feelings, connecting everyone to a larger whole. Wietsma et al. (1982) found that most of the squatters they spoke with claimed that they had to pass an "emotional barrier" at the Vondelstraat, where their anger surpassed their fear and they picked up their first stone.

But these shared hot emotions tended to be fleeting; and if they were too frequent and too intense, they ended up being fatiguing. In 1982, Frans-Rein proclaimed that the time of rioting was past, because it was impossible to maintain the emotional levels necessary (Wietsma et al. 1982). To counter the demands of these emotions, squatters sought balance in the more reciprocal cool emotions created and sustained in the "everyday" lives of squatters. As they spent more and more time working together, squatters developed strong feelings of intimacy among themselves. The radicalization of the squatters produced a deepening of emotions in both realms – the hot emotions became hotter, the cool emotions cooler.

The Groote Keijser was the first major locus of confrontation between squatters and the authorities in which the squatters felt that they were taking the initiative. It is a good example of how these different elements were combined. The squatters made sure to convert the Keijser into a powerful symbol of everything

the movement stood for and against. It represented "everything that you resist as a squatter or that is a threat to your existence as a squatter and the manner in which you live" (Joost, *De Stad* 1996). Because it was a building linked to speculation, it offered the opportunity "to do something more than simply say 'We won't leave,' but also to do something really practical, to make a sort of spearhead of it, but still in line with the [neighborhood] residents as far as possible," according to Jack van Lieshout (*De Stad* 1996). But, as Harri pointed out, it was not just the political fight against speculation that made the Keijser such an important squat to defend. It was about its role as a "free space."

> There were two things. First, it was obviously important that they were large buildings, which were in the city and were being used for speculation, [and] that something had to be done with them, that they had to be squatted, and that was, of course, also a form of resistance against speculation. And the other was – and this is always very important with squatting – that you had places in the city where young people could come together and where they could do things that they really wanted to do. They create spaces, where they could try out things they found fun, thus it was also a very important social happening; squatting was not only the fact that you had a house... squatting was also about making places where young people could do things together, be creative, try out things, do all sorts of things together that they otherwise would not be able to (*De Stad* 1996).

Piet-Jan made a similar point.

> Although we never knew that we were going to make revolution, but it was more like we thought we could ultimately have some fun, do some beautiful things. The Groote Keijser was a fantastic convergence point for this. The people who had already assembled there wanted to take their lives into their own hands in order to defend it (*De Stad* 1996).

Willem put it simply: "I just want people to be able to live normally; that is what I am fighting for" (*De Stad* 1996). Unlike other symbols of protest, the Keijser was something one stood for, not just against, a symbol that summed up everything the movement supported (ADILKNO 1994, 50).

The events at the Vondelstraat built on this link. Although the building itself was not the large creative space that the Keijser was, the experience of defending it still managed to create connections between the various aspects of squatting. Hot and cold emotions met in the "Vondel Free State." Here politics, alternative living, collective solidarity, and creative experimentation and expression left the confines of the house, spilling out into the street.

Space

This highlights a related association made through the narrative of radicalization: connecting public and private. The squatters' movement broke down standard barriers between public and private spheres. Living in a squat politicized private lives, a politicization squatters had trouble escaping, because being a squatter became a 24-hour-a-day identity. This blurring of boundaries moved beyond just making the personal political; it also combined other spheres, such as living and working (Wietsma et al. 1982, 110-7). Another link between public and private was the framing of individual problems requiring collective and large-scale actions. Hans felt the need to be present in order to challenge all evictions, even those beyond his neighborhood.

> At the time I was busy living in a squat and experimenting with living in a group and my self-development, doing fun things, living on the dole, and, for your conscience, you went to the protests with the idea that you were partly saving the world (*De Stad* 1996).

Here, collective participation was still an individual act, an effort to relieve one's conscience. With the Groote Keijser, the problem of one building was defined as a problem for all squatters. Frans-Rein, who moved into the Keijser to help defend it, put it thusly: "You shouldn't just squat in the neighborhood," since this limits the field of resistance, weakening the movement. "Squatting becomes harder and eviction will get easier and easier. I see citywide actions as sort of a larger defense of your own building. That's why I went to live in the Groote Keijser" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 36). Guus: "For an entire weekend long, I have felt extremely strong, but because you are getting beaten up, that completely disappears.

It is fantastic when you hear that nearly 10,000 people were demonstrating in the city" (*De Stad* 1996).

What was noteworthy was that the distinction between the self and the movement evaporates. Squatters' own individual processes of radicalization were transferred into a movement-wide development. From witnessing the evictions with all of the police brutality, to helping to fortify the Groote Keijser, and, ultimately, to the street fights at the Vondelstraat, an individual's radicalization was experienced simultaneously and equally to the radicalization of the movement in general, erasing the boundaries between movement and individual activist.

The movement's growth was more than ideological; it was also spatial. Until this period, organized squatting was primarily a collection of individual squatted buildings and neighborhoods. But the Groote Keijser and the Vondelstraat helped transform squatting from a citywide movement into the focus of national and even international attention. After the Vondelstraat events, a group of Amsterdam squatters traveled to Germany to meet with and advise German squatters (Duivenvoorden 2000, 180). Squatters were active in Germany at the time, particularly in Berlin and Hamburg, and the ties between the squatters' movements between these countries solidified the idea that squatters were ready to make significant social changes, both on the local and international fronts.

Spatial expansion had its flip side in spatial contraction. To focus its attention and energy, the movement relied heavily on rallying around strong symbols. As Wietsma et al. put it, "The movement often concentrates its energies on a single point. This is usually a specific squat, which receives symbolic power" (1982, 135). The Groote Keijser was a symbol, a symbol against housing speculation and a symbol for the possibilities of squatting. The Vondelstraat was also a symbol, symbolizing the movement as a whole, its strengths, its goals, and its tactics. Symbols imbued with enormous meaning crystallized the movement's energy and concerns into one focal point. Even as squatting teetered on the edge of taking over the world, it could still be balanced on the head of a pin.

Finally, radicalization drew more stringent boundaries around the movement, deepening the divide between "us" and "them." Before the Vondelstraat, the principle actors were known and had already been judged. Squatters were the heroes; the villains were the city government, the police, and the speculators. But the transformation and emergence of the movement forced these opposing sides even further into two opposite camps. That is, it did not allow anyone to stand on the sidelines. Previously, Leen had been a renter, although he was sympathetic to the cause and he helped out whenever he could. However, it soon became impossible to stand between the authorities and the squatters, and he felt forced to choose a side. The police violence served as "a very big step towards bringing me into the squatters' movement" (*De Stad* 1996). The squatter identity solidified into a more coherent form, leaving less room for ambiguity and fence sitting.

Creating enemies invited a corresponding strategic response. The Vondelstraat proved some important claims. The police, the real estate moguls, and the government were all enemies of the squatters' movement, and violence was the most effective strategy to defeat them. Although the specific details of what the enemy and violence were remained unstable and evolved over the course of the history of the movement, the clarity of the basic premise – outsiders are enemies who need to be defeated using violent tactics – would continue as a dominant theme for the movement.

The radicalization narrative effectively brought together diverse squatters into a more coherent collective identity. Nevertheless, not everyone was convinced. Totalization was not total. Paulien, for example, did not go through the dramatic changes others experienced at the Vondelstraat. She never made the move to the acceptance of violence and continued to think it was the wrong direction for squatters to take. She was married during the Vondelstraat events – trying to maintain a private life separate from squatting and the needs of the movement – and was upset when people came to her wedding reception dressed in street fighting gear. She, along with some others, wanted to maintain their earlier divisions between public and private spaces (*De Stad* 1996).

But it was not necessary that everyone be swept up in the radicalization narrative, only that it was established as dominant. Dissent is a fact of life, particularly within social movements, and it

does not magically evaporate during periods of success. Those who did not see themselves in this narrative, or who, in looking ahead, worried about where the narrative would take them and the movement, still had to confront it. It was the story most squatters employed to understand the movement and it could not be ignored. Therefore, future events were debated and defined through how they could be made to support or challenge the creation myth of a movement born in the belly of the radicalization beast.

Queen for a Day

It did not take long for events to test the radicalization narrative. In March 1980, only one month after the events at the Vondelstraat, Juliana, the Queen of the Netherlands, announced she was going to abdicate the throne to her daughter Beatrix. Beatrix's coronation was scheduled to take place in the capital, Amsterdam, on April 30, Queen's Day. Government officials planned a giant national celebration for the day. There was only one hitch: the increasingly radical squatters' movement. While the government worried about the disruptive threat of the squatters, the law required that coronations be held in Amsterdam. Therefore, they chose the next best plan: to maintain order with a strong police presence.

The upcoming coronation upset the squatters, who saw it as the latest in a string of so-called "prestige items," which included the new combined city hall and opera and the new metro, which the state seemed to prefer over actually trying to solve the problems of the average citizen. These items cost a lot of money, with results – at least in the eyes of the squatters – more cosmetic than substantive. Squatters questioned the logic of spending millions on a one-day celebration, when that money could be better spent on alleviating the housing crisis. As one activist put it, "It is ironic that the best-housed woman in the Netherlands will be crowned in the worst-housed city" (*Een Koningrijk* 1980). In protest, squatters proclaimed April an "action month," under the slogan "*Geen woning, geen kroning*" ("No housing, no coronation"), to bring their own grievances to the larger public.

For the most part, however, the squatters had not planned any special protests for coronation day. The majority simply planned "to do what squatters do: squat houses" (*Een Koningrijk* 1980).

Nevertheless there had been calls for more confrontational protests. A group calling themselves the *Autonomen* (Autonomists, a name linking them to radical political movements in Germany and Italy (Katsiaficas 1998)) put up flyers throughout the city, advertising a demonstration. Although the poster advocated no explicit tactics, the imagery made it quite clear that they were not planning a polite protest. Pictures of Beatrix superimposed on bombs hinted at plans to cause trouble, while hearkening back to the smoke bombs the Provos set off during Beatrix's last public celebration, her wedding (Duivenvoorden 2000).

When squatters were just squatting buildings, few people noticed beyond their neighbors. Although the Vondelstraat confrontation gained much attention inside the city and beyond, such events were relatively rare. But the coronation protest provided a spectacle on a much larger scale. Even as the coronation happened as planned, riots broke out between protestors (not all of whom were squatters) and the police throughout the city, turning the national day of celebration into an ugly, violent mess. Naturally, the government was displeased, their holiday now a public embarrassment. Amsterdammers were equally unimpressed. Although their sympathies had generally been with the squatters, the seemingly pointless destruction caused by the riots turned them off (Duivenvoorden 2000, 168).

Squatters' reactions were mixed. Some found it to be the pinnacle of protest. Piet believed it was the movement's best day yet – an exciting, powerful protest against the ruling class, which included not only squatters, but also many other disaffected citizens, all using this opportunity to make their displeasure known (*De Stad* 1996). Most, however, took a dimmer view. Wietsma described the day's events as simply "terrible" (*De Stad* 1996). Most of the movement's members believed that the protest neither represented the real interests of the movement, nor did it even accomplish anything that had to with their values. It was nothing more than meaningless devastation. Yes, squatter violence was okay – but only when it was used to directly defend a squat. Violence for the sake of violence was something else entirely.

Mistake or First Sign of Decline?

Despite the coronation riots being widely seen as a setback for the squatters, this did not necessarily mean it was immediately seen as a sign of the movement's decline. In fact, the movement successfully distanced itself from the events and preserved the general narrative of radicalization. The primary response from the movement: "What happened today had nothing to do with squatting...We find it pointless" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 172). How did the squatters successfully spin this outcome and argue against this as a sign of radicalization that had gone too far? They used three rhetorical positions to distance themselves from the events. First, they argued that it was not squatters who were actually behind the violence. Second, they maintained that the issue itself was not about squatting, and thus was not reflective of the overall movement. Finally, they asserted that, whatever their responsibility, this was simply a blunder, and not a sign of any significant movement trend.

The coronation events were, of course, not completely attributable to the squatters' movement. The true instigators were two other groups, one that was organized and one that was not. The more organized group was the Autonomists, who had drawn up the initial plans for the protest. Although the full identities of the members of the group were never fully made public, their links to the movement were assumed. Indeed, several prominent organizers of the Autonomists, such as Theo van der Giessen and Henk van der Kleij, were also active in the squatters' movement (*De Stad* 1996). Nevertheless, their dual membership in the squatters' movement and the Autonomists did not necessarily cement the relationship between the movement and the riots. In fact, for the "overwhelming majority" of squatters, the Autonomists were a completely unknown group, who disappeared as quickly as they had arrived (Duivenvoorden 2000, 170). Because of their emphasis on non-hierarchical relations and individual autonomy, squatters distinguished between squatters' actions and the movement's actions. The large number of non-squatter participants in the riots further facilitated this distancing (170). Since most of the participants were not squatters, combined with the lack of direct ties between the leadership of the protest and the movement, the movement could create some breathing room between itself and

the riots. Squatters pushed this divide, hoping to widen it as best they could.

Secondly, this was not a typical squatting issue or action. Squatters had certainly made some effort to connect their own grievances with the high cost of the festivities, but the issues underneath this spontaneous expression of discontent were much broader than housing. Squatter violence was narrowly circumscribed. It only occurred in the defense of squatted buildings. Other violent acts needed to be seen as separate from the movement itself, even if some were committed by people who were squatters. Finally, combining these aspects with the unique nature of the event, allowed the movement to claim, if nothing else, that the riots were simply a blunder, and not a sign of any deeper problems. No one is perfect. One mistake does not necessarily send a movement into decline.

Whether these arguments convinced anyone outside of the movement is debatable, but, for the purposes of my point, that is secondary. The key is that those in the movement convinced themselves that, whatever role squatters played in the riots, however poorly or well they turned out, the movement was still on the upswing. In fact, despite their attempts to distance themselves from the coronation events, squatters nevertheless benefited from their flourishing notoriety. The ranks of the squatting population swelled after the riots, with new squatters attracted by the coronation spectacle (Duivenvoorden 2000, 177).

Conclusion

Squatting was never meant to be the basis for a large-scale social movement. It just "happened." People squatted, not to change the world, but to find a place to live. Even those who wanted to change the world, in the beginning, rarely considered squatting as the best means to do so. But squatting affected those who did it. It transformed many of them from people who squat into squatters. At first, the squatter identity, however strong, was primarily relegated to the private sphere. To be a squatter was to focus on the house, housemates, and the neighborhood. Squatting was a public act of defiance, but the squatter was a mostly private identity. Even evictions, the most direct confrontation between the private identity of the squatter and the public forces of law and order, did not

guarantee the politicization of squatters and the reformation of their public identities. That is, resisting evictions tended to be the problem of individual households, not of a larger organization or group of squatters. Moreover, passive resistance reflected the private squatter's identity with respect and trust of others. The outside world, although often criticized and shunned by squatters, was not treated as that dramatically different that it required a separate public squatter identity.

The cycle of events, which commenced with the violent evictions at the house on the corner of the Nicolaas Beestraat and the Jacob van Lennepstraat and culminated in the spontaneous violent resistance at the Vondelstraat, changed the identity of the squatter, and in the process, it led squatters to create the squatters' movement. This new public squatter identity differed dramatically from the private one. Whereas squatters, in private, were friendly, caring, and trusting individuals, the public squatter was tough, violent, and suspicious. This new squatter identity emerged as a reaction to the aforementioned events. It persisted because it worked – squatters found that these public actions were far more successful than what they had done before.

The radicalization narrative played a significant role in this transformation. The narrative accomplished three important purposes. First, it justified the formation and maintenance of the new public squatter identity. Produced by events, squatters may not have initially wanted it to turn out this way, but, with their backs against the wall, they felt they had no choice. Not only radical, they were radicalized. Therefore, they were innocent in their own eyes. Second, radicalization bound together various types of squatters into the same movement, because this was an experience that they could share with each other, one that united them. Moreover, after bringing the squatters together, it also filled in all of the blanks: who the enemy is, what the best strategy is, etc. Finally, radicalization also reconciled the two separate squatter identities. The private and public identities were no longer opposites; they were two sides of the same coin, each equally dependent upon the other for their strength and effectiveness.

By the end of 1980, the radicalizing movement appeared to be a resounding success, confirming the power and accuracy of the radicalization narrative. The movement was strong and growing, not only in size but also influence. Squatters had successfully weathered a possible tactical blunder at Beatrix's coronation, and

stood on the brink of future successes. But all was not well. The radicalization narrative was not yet complete. Radicalization does not end when you want it to end. It is a process, and it promised to take the movement in directions that not all of the squatters may have wanted to go.

A tram engulfed in flames during the aftermath of the Lucky Luijk eviction riots.

2 Luck Runs Out

Narratives are powerful tools that social movements use to interpret events, forge identities, and plot strategies (Davis 2001; Polletta 2006). People understand the world not simply through ideologies, but through stories. A key strength of narratives is their flexibility. Since they are based on a theory of historical or chronological progression, they lend themselves to smoothly incorporating new events. Plots twist, or, more significantly, plots can be twisted in order to rescue a narrative from seemingly contradictory evidence. This is what happened following the events of April 30, 1980. The movement, and the radicalization narrative that defined it, dodged a bullet. The violent confrontations between the protestors and police on the streets of Amsterdam is an image forever linked to Queen Beatrix's coronation, but squatters managed to create enough distance between themselves and the day's events to provide some breathing room. Instead of this turning point leading the movement into decline, squatters framed it as a stumble on the way up, a combination of a tactical misstep and opportunistic outsiders taking advantage of the political power of the squatters' movement, while at the same time, sullying their image. Did they convince everyone? Certainly not. The documentary, *De Stad was Van Ons*, represents the coronation events as the first sign of decline, and from an outside perspective, perhaps it is. But significantly, within the movement, the dominant narrative continued to be one of progress. And progress meant one thing: increasing radicalization as the way to ever more power.

Thus, the riots were dismissed as a blunder, not as a sign of the movement's decline. And by many objective standards, the movement indeed continued to grow. Whatever tactical missteps can be attributed to their handling of the protests, more importantly, the squatters managed to distance themselves enough from the riots to spare themselves of the worst consequences, while simultaneously claiming enough participation in the events to reap their benefits. The publicity increased the movement's public profile, attracting a large influx of new participants eager to participate in

such radical activities (Duivenvoorden 2000). By the end of 1981, the number of squatters in Amsterdam had swelled to almost 9,000, with national figures reaching some 20,000 (Duivenvoorden 2000, 218-9). Even the areas that seemed in decline, such as the erosion of the influence of the national squatting organizations, were treated more as part of an evolution than as a retreat. The national organizations were formed to orchestrate resistance to changes in the national legal status of squatting. With the legal threat now behind them, these organizations were no longer deemed necessary. The national squatting council met less and less often, with little input from Amsterdam squatters. Squatters in Amsterdam had their own goals; they turned their attention away from the national level and back toward the city (220). While squatting continued to grow, both in size and political influence, it seemed premature to talk about the movement's decline.

Talk of decline was averted, but ultimately it could not be avoided. The realization can come as a shock, even to the most levelheaded activist. Decline may be a "fact of life" for social movements, but most participants prefer not to have to confront it. This may be even more true of radicalizing movements: when anything seems possible, the only impossibility is failure. What makes decline so shocking for the participants is that it often first becomes visible after a period of successes. Therefore, there is often some lag time between changes in the movement and the interpretations of these changes. Fear of movement decline need not be translated into fear of thinking about movement decline, however. In fact, some activists may see talking about the possibility of decline as the best means of averting it. Moreover, the case need not be that interpretations follow the facts. In the case of decline, a discourse of decline can fulfill multiple functions, some of which may have little to do with whether the movement is actually in decline or not. Discussing decline operates as a means to reassess and reevaluate the progress and direction of the movement.

Decline first became a significant point of debate among the squatters following the evictions of the Lucky Luijk in 1981 and 1982. The Luijk, a squatted luxury villa near the Museum district, was first evicted in the fall of 1981. A gang of thugs hired by the owners illegally cleared the building, ignoring the squatters' legal rights to remain. The movement became furious and returned the favor, planning and executing a daring re-squat and evicting the anti-squat thugs who were keeping the building under surveil-

lance. They successfully reclaimed the building; but it also raised some concerns from within the movement itself. The tactics had escalated: the spontaneous violence of the Vondelstraat had morphed into calculated, military-style engagement. The city's efforts to later legally evict the building only pushed things further. The radicalization narrative continued to stimulate the increasing violence and stubbornness of the movement, but ultimately it could not save the building and the defense efforts of the Luijk ended badly for the squatters. The building was eventually lost, the city had been transformed into a war zone once again, and the movement was left in disarray. The squatters wondered what had gone wrong – not only with the loss of the Luijk, but with what the movement was becoming. This time, they only had themselves to blame.

The general consensus was that the recapture and defense of the Luijk "went too far." But what does going "too far" mean in the context of a radical movement? Going too far meant taking radicalization to the point where it undermined its own strengths. Totalization confronted the separate realms of inside and outside, and totalization won. The sanctity of the world inside a squat – and inside the squatters' movement – was threatened, not by the outside forces of authority, but by the outside world of the squatters.

Hardening Narratives, Hardening Tactics

When a narrative works, it makes sense to stick with it. Even when it no longer works, it can still make sense to stick with it. It is difficult to jettison an established narrative at the first sign of weakness. Thus, the resistance to the first accusations of decline following the coronation riots. The usefulness of narratives is sustained by their flexibility and adaptability to new events. But this flexibility can only go so far – push it too far and it becomes a liability. To structure action, narratives require a stable structure of their own. Benford (2001) argues that narrative flexibility diminishes over time, solidifying into more formal structures and taking on mythic qualities. A powerful narrative edits out alternatives, thereby building stronger, more unified identities. Producing a new narrative in the face of information at odds with the underlying story once it has been stabilized can prove difficult. Of

course, narratives are not written in stone and are never totally closed to editing or recasting. But making these revisions practical demands strong contradictory evidence.

Narrative inflexibility points to another important consideration. Rewriting a narrative is risky. The old narrative not only worked, but also formed the basis for many activist identities, as well as the underlying identity of the movement itself. To quickly discard this story of successful emergence at the first sign of trouble is to cast doubt on the foundation of the activists' self-understanding of both their own identities and the movement's. It is more than an admission of failure; it also introduces new unknowns into the equation, which undermines its power to shape future actions.

The narrative must be maintained as long as possible. Therefore, in the period leading up to the first Luijk eviction, the radicalization narrative continued to develop within the movement, even as some groups began raising concerns about this development. Radicalization was not just a story the movement told about itself – it was the movement's identity. But this narrative was only one of the significant properties of the original movement. Initially, the movement effectively organized the life of the squatter into clearly demarcated spheres. These divisions are the result of finding appropriate responses to one of the biggest enemies squatters faced: fear.

Fear Itself

For squatters, fear was all around, even invading their sleeping hours with their "paranoid dreams of evictions and arrests" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 132). According to Wietsma and her collaborators (118), fear was – along with the outrage and sense of injustice felt regarding the housing system – one of the primary emotions underlying the movement. They classify the squatters' fears into three categories: existential fear, fear of violence, and fear of isolation.

Existential fear: the fear of the "end of the word." The late 1970s were not an optimistic time for young people in the Netherlands as elsewhere. Threats materialized everywhere. The Cold War was experiencing heightened tensions; the threat of nuclear war felt very real, particularly in Western Europe. Nuclear war, however,

was only the tip of the iceberg. Environmental devastation, economic troubles, and political inefficacy all combined to create a strong sense of "No Future" for Amsterdam's young people. But these fears were not all negative. Many squatters rejected the notion that fear equaled "irrationality, panic, passivity, and submission" (118). Being afraid is not the same as having fear. Existential fear can actually be converted into something productive. The squatters felt that existential fear could either lead to resistance or surrender depending on three elements: social position, information, and an "action perspective." The social position that best copes with this kind of fear is to be outside of mainstream society. To be outside is to be a threat, which allows for the politicization of fear because they are not invested in the status quo, which uses fear to maintain itself. Information is the key to moving from a passive to an active position. While the outsider status of the activists might offer them easier access to this information, or, alternatively, different tools with which to make sense of the information, squatters were not content with keeping this information to themselves. They were committed to sharing their information with others and keeping it in the public eye.

Finally, the last piece of the puzzle is an action perspective, which provides a means for dealing with, ameliorating, or even eliminating certain sources of fear. Fear doesn't need to be taken for granted, nor must one cede responsibility for dealing with it to the traditional sources of authority, such as the government, especially given that information that condemns them for maintaining the very system that creates fear for its own gain. Instead, one should take responsibility for oneself and actively do something to confront fear. Many of the squatters interviewed cited the growing Dutch peace movement, which organized protest marches to challenge the proliferation of nuclear weapons (see, e.g., Klandermans and Oegema, 1987; Van Noort 1988). To deal with this fear, they believed one had to learn about and understand its sources and then to do something about it, i.e., to get involved in activism.

While existential fear may stimulate action, activism brings its own set of fears. For squatters, this fear primarily involved violence, both from others and from oneself. Being a squatter always involves the danger of encountering violence: from landlords, their hired thugs, or the police. But violence also comes from within, and this violence was seen as even more threatening. Many squatters had originally rejected violence; and it was only in

response to the increasing violence used against them that they opted to use violence themselves. The general uneasiness persisted, and there was always the fear that it would spiral out of control. Furthermore, while the other fears were generally shared across the movement, the fear of violence was decidedly gendered, playing a more central role for women than for men. Women spent more time considering and discussing their fears and its role in their lives as activists (Wietsma et al. 1982, 129).

Women and men often conceptualized fear differently. They also depended on different strategies for dealing with it. One common response was *transformation* (130). Men tended to turn the fear outward, transforming it into rage, aggression, and violence towards others. During demonstrations, one had to "be a man" and not allow oneself to be afraid, thus transforming fear into a strong, productive feeling that prompts action. Women tended to process their fears in a different manner, turning it inward rather than outward. They did not "become a man"; instead they "became sick from fear" (130). Women experienced symptoms like back tension, stomach pains, and headaches as reactions to particularly dreadful confrontations. To better manage these feelings, women generally tried working through their fears before actions, rather than during the events, which was more typical for men. This influenced the type of tactics and actions that women felt comfortable participating in. They avoided "harder" actions, not simply because of the higher levels of fear associated with them, but because by dealing with this fear beforehand, they felt that they were more able to set certain limits for themselves (130). This division also reflects the split between the public and private spheres for squatters. In public actions, fear was transformed into anger towards those who caused their fears, while in private actions, fear was transformed by working through it with others whom one trusted.

The second response is one of *localization*, which brings the source of fear closer to home, making it less abstract and more real (131). Concretizing and localizing fear exposes its sources, which makes challenging them more realistic and effective. To shrink from dreaded events and practices allowed them to gain control over oneself. Thus, it is important to "get back on the horse" after violent and unpleasant actions.

Anticipation is a third strategy for managing fear (131). This is a different way of making the unknown known. It is a confrontation

that involves information, rather than a physical response. That is, they expect bad things to happen and plan accordingly. This can take many forms, from reading and learning as much as possible about a particular source to coming up with practical responses, such as the telephone snowball alarm line.

Fear is more than an emotional response to factors "out there"; it is also a reaction to other emotional responses. That is, squatters sometimes feared their own emotions. Confrontations with the authorities or other opponents can unleash unknown or unexpected responses based on emotions that had once seemed very distant from that person's identity. While some activists felt more comfortable submitting to these powerful emotions, others developed strategies to prevent themselves from being carried away by the heat of the moment. For example, some brought cameras to actions not just to document the event, but also to keep their hands full so that they would not be compelled to start throwing stones (132).

Activists, caught between these extremes, also had a fear of isolation. In a threatening world, no one wants to be left alone. To side with one group makes connections to the other group more difficult. Moreover, these groups were not static, particularly within the movement. As other activists radicalized, to stay the same meant being left behind. To be left behind meant being left alone. To be left alone meant becoming vulnerable to the threats of the outside world.

> Fear of being alone, to be in an isolated position, can radicalize people faster than they would on their own. They continue to take part out of fear that they cannot keep up with developments, and will end up dropping out of the group or be left behind... Out of fear of isolation, people will more quickly conform to group norms and make decisions they may not have made on their own (141).

Thus, the strategy to deal with this fear was to move along with the movement, to radicalize along with the radicalization of the other squatters.

Fear drove radicalization. Radicalization provided an effective strategy to deal with some types of fear, while the fear of being left behind pushed squatters even further down the radicalization path. But safety was needed not only on the streets, but also at

home where a different response to fear was developed, one that was based on trust, solidarity, friendship, and love. The wall between inside and outside was constructed out of alternative strategies for dealing with fear. The successful employment of these strategies allowed the processes to progress without too much conflict between them. But fear is unstable and can come from many sides. The simultaneous opposition to fear and dependence on it would eventually create problems in the movement.

Fear plays a major role in high-risk activism (Goodwin and Pfaff 2001). Fear is a strong emotion and a powerful motivator of action: activists seek ways to avoid and control fear in their lives, but not without having to face an important moment of extreme tension. Fear both inspires and impedes activism. Overcoming fear is sometimes secondary to the ultimate goals of specific actions. Thus, fear should be challenged, but not ever totally vanquished. Lingering fear helps maintain the necessary motivation for future action. This is often simply a side effect of the immense gravity of these sources of fear. Fear comes from so many directions and thus can never be truly eliminated or avoided. But at other times, this fear is actively cultivated as an activist strategy. Fear motivates, both as a carrot (the distinct rush in facing one's fears) and as a stick (fear is still, ultimately, seen as something to be avoided). For social movements, fear is an emotion, which is difficult to balance with the various needs of activism.

The need to keep moving and growing in the movement, while at the same time maintaining separate worlds, created some difficulties. The push towards increased radicalization exposed the many contradictions of the process. In particular, totalization stood in direct conflict with the need to keep some things separate. I will show how the movement's drive towards totalizing its goals and practices began to collapse the boundaries between squatters' public and private worlds. The emotions and accompanying practices deemed appropriate to the inner and outer worlds were originally set up as distinct spheres, but over time, as these boundaries became increasingly blurred, the emotions and accompanying practices originally confined to either the public or private spheres came into conflict, which in turn drew individual squatters into conflict with each other. Subsequently, these boundary violations began threatening the coherence of the squatter identity, as well as the strategic choices that stemmed from it. The totalizing logic that created this conflict left little room to effec-

tively address it without abandoning the idea entirely, a risk few were willing to take until very late in the process.

Unchecked Radicalization and the Loss of Boundaries.

The radicalization narrative survived its first significant challenge because it was rescued by a combination of rhetorical distancing and the power of inertia. The squatters' movement thus remained a "radical" movement. However, it is perhaps more accurate to see them not as radical, but rather as in the process of radicalizing. This is an important distinction. Radicalization is a state of continuous becoming. While one can certainly be "radical," this identity is a product more of a process than of its actual substantive content (see, for example, Bearman and Stoval's (1998) work on Nazi identities). That is, one's radical identity is not based exclusively on its positive aspects. Instead, its meaning arises out of its relationship with other identities. All identities are relational, but all identities are not equally relational. Radical is an identity based purely on relations. To be radical now is to be *more* radical than something else; over time, this comparison generally involves oneself or the movement at a past moment.

Squatters' own accounts support this claim. Wietsma et al. (1982) found that squatters treated radicalism as a relative state without a clear endpoint (138). For many, radicalization became an addiction; satisfaction came only by pushing things ever further (141). Movement is what creates one's radical identity. Each step along the radical path demanded one more step, which in turn required another. This lack of an endpoint made the creation of behavior boundaries difficult because radicalization narratives insist that boundaries be tested and broken. Backing down, or even standing still, did not fit into the accepted story. This push forward was also simultaneously a push towards totalization, a push conflicting with another source of strength for the movement: the separation of private and public worlds. The quintessential squatter mixed the ferocious street fighter with the sensitive homebody. Two sides of the same identity, of equal importance, but very differently realized. The narrative of radicalization, joined with the radical ideology that challenged the accepted definitions of public and private spheres by bringing the outside in and turning the inside out, threatened this neat separation.

This radical identity is one that squatters, literally, wore on their sleeves. The development of the "squatter uniform" nicely illustrates their development. Squatter dress was primarily practical: it makes little sense to wear your "Sunday best" to renovate a dilapidated warehouse, much less live in it. As Miz Ezdanitoff, the self-proclaimed movement "fashion philosopher," proclaimed, "squat dress resembled the work clothes of miners, chimney sweeps and tanker cleaners...only it couldn't be traded in after work for a designer sweat suit. Because the movement was against social power strategies, like the division between the boss' time and free time" (ADILKNO 1994, 237). These were the dirty, old clothes of the squatter life in the private sphere. In creating a clearly defined space and role for life inside the squat, they simultaneously expressed their critique of the divisions being made in the "outside world." At the same time, however, these practical and political choices also reveal how every decision is always cultural as well. Thus, what starts off as a pragmatic choice that minimizes difference can quickly become a fashion statement that fosters exclusion. This tension between politics and culture is one that the squatters would continue to struggle with.

But squatters had their own outside world – a world beyond the walls and barricades of the squatted building. This world was unlike the relatively safe confines of the squat – a world of danger, a danger that was reflected in their uniforms, which were developed in response. A flyer from the early 1980s, "*Krakeruitrusting*" ("squatter outfitting"), distributed to inform people on what to wear to a protest, captures this new squatter dress code, from unisex clothing (dark leather jacket stuffed with newspaper, dark pants, good running shoes, shawl (generally of the PLO variety (ADILKNO 1994, 237)), gloves, dark helmet, and swimming goggles), to a list of things to bring along (smoke bombs, citric acid, marbles, firecrackers, handkerchief, bundle of rope, lighter, and awl) and not bring along (agenda, address book, a lot of money, light pants, flashy jacket, slippers/high heels, camouflage jacket, "Mickey Mouse cap" (a reference to not wearing any clothing that could be easily identified) (Duivenvoorden 2000, 220)). Hair was to be kept short, as a defense measure. "Mine [long hair] came off after April 30th [the coronation riots]. You'd hear stories about plainclothesmen driving through the neighborhood with photo albums of easily identifiable rock throwers. Plus we'd seen that when you got arrested you were pulled into the vans by your hair"

(Karl, quoted in ADILKNO, 1994, 88). This, then, was the uniform of a street fighter. The most important thing about the uniform was that it was just that, uniform. In violent confrontations with the police, anonymity was the key; the ability to blend in with everyone else was crucial to later avoiding identification and arrest.

The squatter uniform collapsed distinctions; the dominant identity shifted from an equal treatment of the two worlds to one that privileged the squatter outside the walls of the squat. The squatter uniform changed from the clothes of a resident of a squat to the defender of squats. Radicalization seeped into all aspects of the squatter world, and one's public identity began to dominate the private identity. Paulien describes her wedding day, which was happening at the same time as the Vondelstraat actions. People came to the party clad in cobbled-together suits of armor, consisting of motorcycle helmets and pipes on their arms (*De Stad* 1996). This image of the squatter soon became dominant, not only in the public's consciousness, but in the consciousness of the movement, as well. In doing so, the uniform established a separate and unique identity for squatters. "What made the squatters nondescript in front of the cameras, however made them more conspicuous to onlookers... All this contributed to the construction of the squatter, as sharply distinguished from other city dwellers" (ADILKNO 1994, 89).

This external world of the squatter crashed into its inner sanctum at the Lucky Luijk. It did not start out this way – the Luijk situation started out fairly normally, with an eviction. It began with a focus on the threat of outsiders invading the sanctity of the squatted home. It ended, however, with some insiders being perceived as an even bigger threat to the domestic peace of the rest of the squatters. The Luijk eviction stimulated the discussion of decline within the movement, a discussion which had been successfully deferred until that point. The discussion itself would focus on three major questions. First, regarding timing, were they now in a state of decline? Second, they sought explanations from a strategic perspective – what were they doing wrong? Lastly, the discussion about decline focused on the evolving identity of the movement – who had they become?

The Lucky Luijk

Jan Luijkenstraat 3 was first squatted on April 4, 1981 by a group of squatters who simply wanted a nice place to live (Mamadouh 1992). Because the building was a luxury villa located in an affluent part of town, near the Museum district, it was considered a plum spot and thus it was dubbed the Lucky Luijk after the popular Belgian comic book cowboy, Lucky Luke. The Luijk had stood empty for several years, while the owner, Ms. Sils-Stroom, served a prison term for embezzlement. Unable to continue paying the mortgage, Sils-Stroom lost the property. The bank repossessed it, then quickly sold the building to real estate speculators Lüske and Bootsma, both already infamous within squatter circles for their speculation practices (Mamadouh 1992, 149). Ironically, because the building was already squatted when it was first sold, the selling price was well below the building's true value. The new owners wanted to turn it around quickly and sell it off, but this time for a price closer to its market value. The squatters had to go. Since they had already established legal residency in the building, Lüske and Bootsma were forced to rely on extra-legal means to force them out.

The movement was already facing some new threats during this time. The ratio of new squatted buildings to evictions peaked in 1980; by 1981, evictions were on the rise again (Duivenvoorden 2000, 219). Landlords were using whatever tactics they could to evict the squatters from their buildings, legally or illegally. In response, squatters countered with harder and harder tactics. In the summer of 1981, the glass and porcelain firm Rosenthal wanted to open a store at 445 Singel, which was squatted at the time. The conditions of sale stipulated that the building's residents had to be evicted. Since Rosenthal had business ties to several glass and porcelain chains in Germany, the residents called on their German squatter comrades for help. One early October night, the office windows of Rosenthal's business partners were smashed in Munich, Frankfurt and Berlin. The damage was extensive and expensive. Rosenthal backed down and withdrew from the purchase of the building. The eviction notice was repealed, and the city negotiated a settlement to buy the building and turn it into subsidized housing for single- and two-person households. "The success created the sense that a voluntary and quiet eviction is nothing more than a cowardly capitulation to a failed housing pol-

icy, a corrupt justice system, and speculation" (220). Buoyed by this success, squatters felt they had the whole world in their hands, and support for violent confrontations increased.

Meanwhile, two major evictions were planned for October 1981, the Groote Wetering and the Huize Lydia, both in the Concertgebouw (Concert Hall) district, near the Lucky Luijk. The days just prior to the evictions, squatters broke into small groups and engaged in *prikacties* (lightning strikes), smashing the windows of numerous banks, consulates, travel agencies, and employment offices (221). In the heat of the moment, the windows of a pastry shop were accidentally smashed. To make up for this "mistake" and manage their public image, neighborhood squatters raised money to repair the window. Violence escalated right up to the moment of the evictions, which happened on October 8th. Confrontations typically included the use of tear gas and Billy clubs by the police and rocks and smoke bombs by the squatters. But a new weapon, the Molotov-cocktail ("Mollies" in the language of movement), made its appearance here. No one was injured in the confrontations, but the use of Mollies crossed an unwritten, but sacrosanct, rule involving evictions: the squatters were not to use Molotov-cocktails and the police were not to use guns. Despite the introduction of this explosive new weapon in their arsenal, the squatters were left with little positive news to show for their efforts, as the buildings were successfully evicted. The situation at the time was one of heightened tension on both sides; with each able to point to examples of their successes. The first eviction of the Luijk came during this tense moment, with the opposing sides struggling for the upper hand.

During the night of October 12, 1981, a gang illegally evicted the Lucky Luijk squatters. Twenty men, hired by the property owners, broke into the house and violently threw the five remaining residents out on the street. Benjamin van Crevel was one of them, and remembers being woken up in the middle of the night by the commotion, overcome by fear (*De Stad* 1996). Although the eviction was illegal, the police offered no help. A group of officers watched the events unfold from the street, choosing not to intervene (Duivenvoorden 2000). The squatters had developed strategies for dealing with legal threats – extra-legal attacks were a trickier matter. They filed charges against the owners for disturbing the domestic peace and they won their case, which forced the eviction of the new renter, the owner of a gym. But, before the squat-

ters could reclaim the building, the owners simply rented it to another tenant, and, because this new rental agreement officially had nothing directly to do with the illegal eviction, the new tenant could not be evicted (Mamadouh 1992, 149).

The squatters were angry because they had been stripped of their legal rights and left vulnerable to these kinds of illegal tactics. They no longer felt safe in their own homes, even when, legally, they should have been able to. This increased level of fear was compounded a few days later, when attacks from outside intensified. During another illegal eviction, a squatter was held down and shot in the neck by a member of a different hired gang that was evicting the building. He ended up in intensive care (Duivenvoorden 2000, 223). At the same eviction, another squatter was beaten with a crow bar. At a moment when the movement was dealing with the mounting pressures to succeed against the formal practices of the authorities, the increase in illegal attacks threatened their ability to defend themselves effectively. Moreover, the threat and danger of physical violence grew more tangible. Squatters throughout the city felt more and more threatened by the growing violence being committed against them ("Gangsterpraktijken" 1981). Jojo van der Spek described how these two events which happened during the same time frame only served to increase the growing anxiety and concern in the movement, which made the next violent attack feel imminent (*De Stad* 1996). In their public response, the squatters wrote, "Tonight's situation has little to do with 'squatting' or 'violent actions' on our side, but everything to do with Mafia methods. We will not tolerate these sorts of practices! Not in our neighborhood and not in our city!" ("Gangsterpraktijken" 1981). A second flyer claimed that the eviction was "not an isolated incident. This recent attack is rooted in the unpunished activities of hired thugs." They demanded that the police start doing their jobs and quit "criminalizing large social movements and minority groups," while ignoring the real criminals, "the speculators and their henchmen" ("Verklaring" 1981). The residences of squatters have always been more tenuous than the average apartment dweller's, but they were now experiencing increasing threats, which might mean not only losing their homes through legal evictions, but, even more frighteningly, via illegal intrusions. At least the police had to obey the law, and follow some kind of protocol, while the hired gang, on the other hand, felt no such compunction.

The boundaries established between the inner and outer worlds of the squatters were vital to the development of the movement, and the upsurge in illegal evictions directly challenged them. Their outer world was defined as the space where squatters interacted with outsiders, who were often seen as hostile and threatening. The hired thugs, through their illegal and surprise attacks on squatters in their homes brought the outsiders inside – literally forcing the public into the private realm of the squatters. The very real boundaries and barricades squatters built between their private space and the outside world were not strong enough to prevent this invasion from outside. Moreover, these attacks generated emotions foreign to their "appropriate" spheres. That is, the fear and anxiety experienced in the street confrontations with the authorities were not supposed to occur within the realm of "everyday life" inside the squat. But the rise in evictions by hired gangs increased their fears in the inner sanctums of the movement. For example, Saskia Bodekke lived in the neighborhood around the Luijk, and experienced the escalating levels of danger of these illegal evictions as an enormous threat to the safety of her own home life (*De Stad* 1996). Squatters viewed these challenges as robbing them of their power to define boundaries. They were no longer the ones contesting and redrawing the lines, their opponents were.

Retaking the Luijk

During citywide meetings following the Luijk's eviction, squatters reached an agreement that they needed to strike back to protest the rise of illegal evictions in order to regain the upper hand in this conflict. A broad consensus emerged that the Luijk needed to be re-squatted (Duivenvoorden 2000, 223). Agreeing on details proved more difficult, however. Jack, one of the leaders of the subsequent re-squatting action, remembered an early disagreement regarding timing. Some squatters wanted to first exhaust their legal options before resorting to more drastic measures. But Jack's group "did not want to wait, could not wait, there were too many evictions by other hired gangs, and we were like, 'This has to happen now, with particular emphasis on the *now*'" (*De Stad* 1996). Luijk resident Benjamin remembered people arguing that time was critical if the re-squat was going to send a strong message.

Because the authorities would not protect their rights, "we stood with our backs against the wall," and, therefore, squatters decided that they had to act as quickly as possible (*De Stad* 1996). Ultimately, those at the meeting decided to immediately re-squat the building; but how to go about it remained unresolved.

To prevent future re-squatting efforts, the gang remained behind to occupy the space. To squat a building being defended by this kind of gang was unprecedented and extremely dangerous. Few had any concrete ideas on how to actually go about it. Once again, Jack stepped up. He recalled how, after it became clear no one knew what to do, he raised his hand and announced that he, along with a handpicked group of others, could retake the building. With no other viable options, people agreed to Jack's plan. He and his colleagues began drawing up elaborate and detailed strategies, which called for multiple teams to attack every side of the house, including the roof. Rumors had been circulating that the thugs inside were well armed, so the re-squatters had to be ready for any possibility. Therefore, for the re-squat "we all had thick clothing, we had bullet-proof military vests, we had helmets, we made plastic shields just like the police carry, clubs, fire extinguishers, [and] we made some mini-fire bombs" (Jack, *De Stad* 1996). Expecting the worst, the organizers included provisions for a first aid squad to tend to the injured (Duivenvoorden 2000, 223). Just over a week after the evictions, on the night of October 20th, over 200 squatters stormed the Luijk. The action took everyone by surprise, including the thugs inside the building and the police (Mamadouh 1992, 149). Contrary to expectations, resistance was minimal; only three people and some dogs were found inside. The squatters had no trouble recapturing much of the house. The thugs nevertheless held their ground in one small part of the building, although more to protect themselves than to defend the house itself. Shortly after the police arrived and their safety was assured, they gave themselves up and vacated the building (Duivenvoorden 2000, 223).

The thought of re-squatting the Luijk was a frightening prospect for many of the squatters. Leen, who took part in the action, recalls, "Most people probably think that it was all courage and bravado, but there was actually a great deal of fear" (*De Stad* 1996). This was the first time that squatters had attempted to evict a hired gang from a house. Even though they had experience confronting the police, these gangs, who did not obey the same laws,

actually presented a larger threat. Furthermore, the offensive nature of this action was unique. Even right before the action, the group had its doubts. Some squatters, although sympathetic to the action's goals, chose not to take part. Benjamin, one of the participants, thought those who chose to stay at home did so for one reason only: fear (*De Stad* 1996). He framed their fear as personal, but not political. In other words, they supported the goals of the re-squatters but were too afraid to help. Any division within the movement was based on emotional not ideological grounds. Of course everyone would agree on the politics of the situation, or so he argued.

Others disagreed, seeing their abstention as politically motivated. Evelien considered the aggressive tactics of the re-squat counterproductive. She even spoke to the re-squatters beforehand, "in a sort of hopeful attempt to engage people in a discussion to convince them that this was not a good way, but, yeah, that was obviously foolish, because everyone there was so fixated that they had absolutely no ears for it. Thus, [the subject] was immediately dropped" (*De Stad* 1996). The dissenters did not fear the dangers of the actual event – e.g., fear of being hurt in the action – but rather the larger issues, that of losing sight of the movement's guiding principles. To re-squat the Luijk using these new tactics was to confront one specific source of fear (the gang inside the building), while at the same time, avoiding or denying other sources of fear (the violation of movement norms or the loss of public goodwill). Even some of the re-squatters agreed that the decision to abstain was based more on politics than emotions, but used this point to critique the dissenters. To them, non-participants used fear as a smokescreen to mask their own larger political doubts. Jack considered this group saboteurs: "It was clear that there were people who wanted to damage the action" (*De Stad* 1996). He believed they were less afraid of the actual re-squatting than they were of losing their political influence within the movement.

The re-squat meant evicting the original evictors and replacing them with the original residents. The masterminds were thus able to declare their action a success. But again there were disagreements. While they did return the Luijk to its "original" squatters – and more importantly for some, the movement – a significant number of squatters questioned whether the outcome justified the costs. And these concerns were coming from more than just

those who disagreed with the entire action. Criticism also came from sympathizers, including people who had participated in the action itself. The tactics employed violated key principles of the squatters' movement, most importantly that violence should only be used in self-defense (Wietsma et al. 1982). Many worried that the re-squat differed very little from the tactics of their opponents. Evelien was one of the most outspoken about the violence of the action: "I found the politics unacceptable." She believed that emphasizing violence would increasingly isolate the movement, ultimately making squatters more vulnerable to government repression. She argued that "the ends did not justify the means. I thought that this course of action would lead to a splitting [of the movement]. You are organizing your own gang of thugs, that's what it came down to, and I was strongly against it" (*De Stad* 1996). The original concern was whether the risks to the physical wellbeing of the participants outweighed the gains. The benefits now safely reaped, the question shifted to whether the costs to the movement's self-identity were too high.

But violence was actually nothing new for the squatters. It was, in fact, an integral part of the movement and its identity. What was new was not the violence itself, but its military overtones. An argument erupted over whether the tactics reflected a broader militarization of the movement, with its organized, mass violence and hierarchical decision-making structures (Vercruijsse 1996). Whereas earlier squatter violence was spontaneous and passionate, the violence of the Luijk re-squat was planned, professional, and "emotionless." Erik, whose aforementioned film of police brutality during an eviction had played such a central role in the emergence of the movement, found the violence of the re-squat too much. "With the Luijk violence stood so much in the foreground. It was also utterly anonymous. I saw the ME as a sort of automated machine that attacked on command. When the squatters themselves started doing that, I just felt no connection with that" (*De Stad* 1996). The squatters' identity could only accommodate a type of ad hoc violence that emerged from an immediate situation, in reaction to a direct threat. To instigate violence contradicted the self-understanding for many inside the movement that they owned the moral highground.

Military-style violence required a military-style chain of command. For many squatters, these authority structures were much more problematic than the violence, since autonomy was such a

central tenet of their ideology (Mamadouh 1992). But a clear group of leaders orchestrated the re-squat, of which Jack and Theo were the most significant. Former squatter Just Vercruijsse recalled his reaction to the emerging leadership:

> At the time, I was also prepared to participate and to risk injury. What I found absolutely intolerable was that this first great "military" action was forced upon the city under a commando structure via a small group of leaders using "*fait accompli* tactics." You could either participate in their plans or not. The influential aspect of this was that the less people who participated, the more dangerous it was for those who did (Vercruijsse 1996).

Questioning the plans was interpreted by the organizers as a threat to the solidarity and safety of the group, as well as the chances for success. Only two options were available: "You are either with us or against us" (Evelien, *De Stad* 1996). Critics complained that to be "with us" did not mean to support and embody the central principles of the movement; instead it meant to violate them, not only committing premeditated violence, but also submitting oneself to the commands of a group of leaders. At the same time, these leaders made overtures to the same sense of community they were considered to be undermining.

Piet-Jan describes a split among the organizers, who came primarily from the Staatslieden district, and the rest of the participants, who were mostly squatters from the Canal district. Whereas the Canal district squatters were mostly students, the Staatslieden group tended to come from more working-class backgrounds. Thus, they were, according to Piet-Jan, considered better fighters. He understood and accepted this division, but did not necessarily think it should endow them with any more influence. "What really upset us was that we were actually being exploited like a can of squatters to be opened and used, without actually having any real influence over the situation. We were just inserted as sort of filler; we clearly realized it, and it really annoyed us" (*De Stad*, 1996). Piet-Jan and his fellow Canal district squatters wanted to talk everything through, which is standard practice in a movement run on the principles of direct democracy (Mamadouh 1992). The organizers of the re-squat, however, would have none of it. "We were supposed to just show up, and we didn't want to work like that" (Piet-Jan, *De Stad* 1996).

This divide highlights the conflict between the "intellectualism" of some squatters and the "practical" ideas of others. The squatters' movement generally privileged practical solutions over intellectualism (Duivenvoorden 2000; Wietsma et al. 1982). Radicalization pushed this preference even further. Radicalization made reflection and democratic debate among members seem like a liability. This process reinforced itself in four ways. First, in redefining time and collapsing it down to the moment, radicalization made time of the essence. Thinking and discussing wasted valuable time, time better spent acting. Second, radicalization redefined boundaries, characterizing the movement's enemies in stark outlines and leaving little room, as well as little apparent need, for debating about whom to act against. Third, radicalization redefined strategy, demanding that activists attack ever more forcefully. Again, discussion was deemed unnecessary, because the demands were "obvious." Finally, radicalization redefined the space of the movement, collapsing the distinctions between inside and outside. For the leaders of the re-squat, this meant that the outside world of the movement swallowed up the inside world, rendering its rules invalid. In sum, by framing radicalization in terms of the subjugation of the inner world of the squatters in favor of the outer, this group was ignoring the need to even entertain a debate. Debate was only necessary when choices needed to be made. Here, the decisions were obvious, at least to the leaders.

Those at the top kept secrets, as well. Jack claimed that this was not primarily to exclude others, but rather to protect the integrity of the action. Success depended on the element of surprise. If the thugs or police were to somehow hear about the re-squat in advance, it would be doomed. Therefore, Jack and the other organizers chose to keep important information as secret as possible. Others, such as Evelien, saw this as something akin to authoritarianism. Direct democracy required informed actors and, hence, full transparency. To restrict the information to a small minority essentially meant handing over power to them over everyone else in the movement.

The military-style hierarchy also dressed itself up in military and war imagery. Training sessions took place outside of town, to help participants train for the re-squat. Evelien thought this was just another example of the re-squatters "playing war." "There were reports that people were training; well, I found it disgusting like some sort of 'male fantasies'" (*De Stad* 1996). The increasing

reliance on war imagery within the movement troubled her. On the one hand, she agreed that there were similarities between war and activism, such as the need to remain alert and vigilant,

> on the other hand, I was very aware that this was not a war, for a war is very different, and I found that incredibly pompous and assuming a position that wasn't useful. So, I always got really angry whenever they casually threw around the word fascist, because that was not appropriate here (*De Stad* 1996).

She felt that the story was getting out of hand. There were plenty of real injustices to get upset about and resist, without creating a caricature of your enemies to wage war on them. She worried that the narrative was taking on a life of its own, moving away from the realities on the ground. Saskia was also disturbed by this development. She wanted to work with the authorities, but the other side, especially those from the Staatslieden district, "were prepared for a sort of war." She wanted to avoid going to war, because she did not believe this would save the Luijk. She also voiced concern about the movement becoming the very thing it was fighting against. "Because of the fear of being evicted by a gang of thugs, we, the squatters' movement, changed into a sort of – yeah, almost fascist – gang with only one focus: we wanted to hold onto the building using violence and war" (*De Stad* 1996).

Despite the war and army imagery, the re-squatters denied that the effort reflected any increased militarization of the movement, which was a touchy subject, given the general anti-militaristic and anti-hierarchical position of most of the squatters (Duivenvoorden 2000). Leen adamantly disagreed that the re-squat was a military action, claiming it could not have been a professional military action for one simple reason: everyone was afraid, even those with the "biggest mouths" (*De Stad* 1996). Evidently, he found fear incompatible with a true military invasion. However, it is well known that even soldiers sometimes feel afraid. But the processes of radicalization justified the war metaphor. It was no longer some garden-variety activism, this was a revolutionary struggle against the status quo. Therefore, the old strategies of activism were no longer appropriate. Moreover, while activism was generally accepted as being the domain of everyone – men and women alike – war was historically the province of men. The gender tensions,

which first arose with the growing militarization of tactics and discourse, continued to flourish throughout this period.

The re-squat of the Luijk certainly reflected the increasing radicalization of the movement, embodying every aspect of the process. Time had been both shortened and expanded. Squatters were required to act immediately, but the effects would last forever. Space was both focused and enlarged. The Luijk was *the* point of action, while simultaneously determining the entire movement. Emotions moved both inward and outward. Squatters pulled in towards each other in order to defend themselves from, while cultivating a shared feeling toward, the outside world. The enemies and the strategy had finally crystallized. The clear delineation of boundaries between squatters and enemies encouraged an increased emphasis on the more radical tactics. But the boundaries were not static. To maintain the clear distinctions between in and out, new boundaries had to be constantly drawn, boundaries with ever-shrinking diameters. As evidenced by the critiques of the re-squat, many in the movement felt they were being ousted. But they were not yet ready to leave. They resisted this increasing radicalization, trying to preserve the balance between radicalization and maintaining separate public-private spheres that had been central to the movement in its infancy. Most importantly, they wanted to preserve the quality of life within the squat and within the squatters' movement. Totalization threatened this balance, bringing the outside world of squatters crashing in on the squatters' private lives.

Although the Luijk re-squat stoked the level of dissent within the movement, it remained both manageable and private. Most of the squatters kept their concerns and misgivings to themselves, hoping this was just a one-off event without any long-term negative repercussions. Others, however, worried that this was only the most visible aspect of a deep-seated problem. Michiel recalled a night at a bar after a meeting about the Groote Keijser:

> I overheard Hein [Theo] talking to somebody, giving them a brief evaluation, and he was using such militaristic terminology... We were absolutely naïve about thinking in terms of power; idealistic that we were. So it was disillusioning to realize that others didn't think that way. Our opinion was that the neighborhoods should make the decisions. Right after the Vondelstraat Hein [Theo] started organizing meetings, where he would unveil his plans for

> the coming months to about twenty-five important people from the neighborhoods...Were we just supposed to carry out these plans invented by some vague mastermind (ADILKNO 1994: 86)?

During the Keijser defense, squatters were already concerned about the power plays of the Staatslieden district squatters (ADILKNO 1994, 79-84). But even these voices remained quiet. This reflected movement norms, where open criticism of fellow squatters was considered poor etiquette. What was also important was that these events occurred in the context of a general sense of the movement's success and growth, making them appear less threatening or important. Having the Luijk back in the hands of the movement could have helped return the situation back to normal, both in the house and in the movement. It did nothing, however, to quell these conflicts. In fact, it only further inflamed them.

Holding on to the Luijk

After retaking the Luijk, the re-squatters quickly went to work fortifying the building to protect it from any future attacks by hired gangs. At the same time, they brought the original residents back in as quickly as possible, so that "normal life" could return to the Luijk, even if it meant living behind the barricades. But the barricades alone were not what kept the residents from returning back to a normal life. The Luijk had lost its status as a simple squatted home. Its prominent connection to the upsurge in "gang terror" and the spectacular re-squatting action had made the Luijk the new symbol that was mobilizing the movement, although not exactly unifying it at the same time.

All movements rely on their symbols, and the squatters were no different. Because of the decentralized nature of the movement itself, the movement only mobilized into a significant coherent form during large events with strong symbolic significance. These symbols served as signposts in the movement narrative. "The loose fragments were lumped together as historical referents, suggesting everyone's experience had been the same: 'Vondelstraat,' 'Dodewaard,' 'April 30th,' and so on" (ADILKNO 1994, 94). As Benjamin noted,

> Well, with the Luijk, and not just with the Luijk, the squatters' movement was made up of very many unities, which changed from moment to moment. The squatters' movement also only existed at certain moments, or was only recognizable at certain moments. There was the moment of the Groote Keijser action and there was the moment of the Vondelstraat action, there was the moment of the Luijk action, and between them everyone did their own thing (*De Stad* 1996).

When these moments had faded, most squatters lived within the movement, but not actively engaging with the outside world as squatters. Only during these threats, framed as symbolic attacks on squatting and the movement as a whole, did a cohesive movement come together to act. Those who privileged these moments as the "real movement" benefited from heightened periods of peril, and were sometimes eager to extend them, in order to extend the moments of movement coherence. These symbols "lost their reality potential, were converted into imaginary idioms, but it made communication between the scenes possible again" (ADILKNO 1994, 94). Symbols grounded the narrative, which in turn grounded the movement. The movement needed its narrative, which needed its symbols. Consequently, those most heavily invested in the narrative were, in turn, the most invested in creating and maintaining these symbols.

This concentrated instant threatened to fade as soon as the situation around the Luijk began to normalize. The City Council sought to buy the building to turn it into social housing. The squatters thought they had a chance to negotiate the legalization of the building and establish permanent residency. Instead, the Council planned not to convert the Luijk into youth single-room apartments, but rather to divide it into 4-room apartments – housing for families. This meant the squatters would, again, have to go. The official eviction notice came in the summer of 1982 (Duivenvoorden 2000, 225). Initially, an eviction by the police seemed unnecessary; the Luijk residents had declared they would vacate the building if there was a "social solution," i.e., if the building would be used for subsidized housing (Mamadouh 1992, 149). But the matter was not yet settled. To resolve the situation this way would diminish the force of the Luijk as a symbol for the movement. The leaders of the requat had much different plans. Rejecting the residents' decision, they thwarted the negotiations

and moved to take control of the process, justifying their claim to power because of their role in retaking the building. They argued that the waiting list was longer for singles and young people than it was for families, and therefore youth housing should take priority over "normal" social apartments. They declared that no one would leave the building and denounced the earlier declaration, claiming it was signed "under pressure." The media criticized the squatters for going back on their word and privileging themselves in the apartment distribution (149). The barricades, which had been meant to keep the gangs out, now acted as a barrier against the city and compromise, while barricading the residents in against their will.

This coup, known as the *staatsgreep* (coup d'etat) since it was orchestrated by squatters from the Staatslieden district, ended the civil dialogue between the squatters and the city. Scuttling the negotiations effectively returned the Luijk's symbolic power. This action would no longer be about making the best use of the space. The Luijk as symbol had to be defended and preserved. Moreover, the Staatslieden squatters had a longstanding antagonistic relationship with the GDH (*Gemeentelijk Dienst Huisvesting*, the city housing department), leaving little possibility that they would agree to converting the Luijk into GDH apartments. They worked hard to torpedo any efforts by moderate squatters to work with the city (Duivenvoorden 2000, 225).

Any hopes for a peaceful outcome were further frustrated by developments of July 1982. A group calling itself the *Militant Autonomen Front* (Militant Autonomist Front, MAF) claimed responsibility for setting off two bombs outside the offices of their political opponents. The first exploded in front of the GDH offices on July 5; the second exploded several weeks later in the early morning of July 31 in front of the headquarters of the PvdA (labor party) (Duivenvoorden 2000, 226). The bombs were small, with damage limited to a few broken windows and doors, but their effect was significant. The Luijk's residents acted quickly to distance themselves from the actions. Angry at this so-called act of solidarity for their plight, they issued a press release that stated, "We can never stand behind actions which, in the name of unknowns, brings our struggle discredit" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 226). Their quick criticism of this act was noteworthy for its public nature. Squatters were not supposed to attack other squatters in public, but the Luijk's residents had had enough.

The Luijk residents were not the only ones upset by the actions of the MAF; outrage spread throughout the movement. The tactics were seen as disturbing, although this had less to do with the actual bombings than with the fact that they were more focused on getting attention than results – less the what than the why. Annemarie, writing in the *Grachtenkrant* paper, argued that if it "came to the point of requiring sabotage and damage," then she "could cause the same amount of damage in a much simpler manner" (1982, 5). It must have been about publicity for MAF then, a group which many squatters feared was trying to create a vanguard within the movement. While Annemarie took an ambivalent position with respect to the MAF, others were more vocally hostile. Ferdinand, in the same issue of the *Grachtenkrant*, compared them to the Red Army Faction in Germany, whose violent tactics increased governmental pressure on all German activists. "These arrogant MAF bastards are determining what is good for a great deal of other people" (1982, 34). He saw the MAF's influence as harmful and forcing it into deeper isolation. But he thought the MAF were the ones who should be isolated, not the movement: "To the MAF, I would just like to say: piss off, revolutionary vanguard idiots. You are a vanguard without a rear guard" (34). Most squatters agreed that the MAF bombings were both tactically pointless and politically dangerous.

However, these critics did not follow the lead of the Luijk residents. Instead of taking their denunciations public, their complaints remained private. They were constrained by two central movement values. First, the importance placed on individual and group autonomy limited criticism of other actions (Mamadouh 1992, 178). Since no one could speak for the movement, it was difficult to fully condemn inappropriate actions, such as the MAF's bombs. As Annemarie argued, "Everyone must be able to act in his or her own way" (1982, 5). This left her with only one choice: to not take part if she did not want to. Second, disagreements were never made public, especially not in the mainstream media. Squatters felt an obligation to maintain their solidarity with other squatters in the movement (Mamadouh 1992, 178). This meant that other activists did not step forward to denounce the MAF tactics and support the Luijk's residents (Duivenvoorden 2000, 226). They could discuss it in the pages of the movement media, but that was where it had to stay. Private strategic decisions

were privileged over public effects. Private concerns were not to be made public.

Despite widespread support for the condemnation of the bombing by the Luijk's residents, no effort was made to find or censure the bombers. This was not permitted by the squatters' rules of etiquette. In effect, the Luijk's residents, by going public and violating movement protocol, ended up being nearly as isolated as the MAF. By refusing to air the movement's dirty laundry, other squatters left the Luijk's residents hanging out to dry. The hardliners, meanwhile, deftly exploited the movement's internal rules of behavior, while simultaneously pushing their radicalization efforts, which undermined these same norms.

No More Luck, No More Luijk

In the end, the squatters and the City Council could not reach a settlement, even though many squatters remained open to a possible compromise regarding the issue of social versus youth housing. Ultimately, the small group that was calling the shots refused to give an inch, preferring to lose the Luijk in battle to willingly handing it over, an outcome that would only further guarantee its symbolic status. War imagery remained dominant. Signs and graffiti covered the city, proclaiming, "Luijk eviction = War" And so it seemed when it finally came to pass. On October 11, 1982, almost a year to the day since the first eviction, the Luijk was evicted. Large-scale riots broke out throughout the city. The most famous image associated with these riots is the number 10 tram engulfed in flames. The squatters denied having actually set the tram on fire, saying it was because the tram crossed over an oily track and a spark ignited the tram (Duivenvoorden 2000, 227). In an interview, Piet even claimed that the tram conductor purposely torched the tram in order to make the squatters look bad (*De Stad* 1996). Whatever the actual cause of the fire, the image became forever associated with out-of-control, violent squatters willing to sacrifice the public safety and the public good for their own private gains.

Mayor Wim Polak responded by declaring a state of emergency in the city, the first one since World War II (Duivenvoorden 2000, 228). This granted the police extraordinary license; they quickly filled the jails with "unsuspecting viewers and innocent bystan-

ders" (228). That night, people demonstrated against the eviction, but everyone who showed up was arrested as a preventive measure, simply because they looked like "radical squatters" (Mamadouh 1992, 150). The police capitalized on the situation, using this as an excuse to evict other buildings in the city (Duivenvoorden 2000, 228). In the end, the movement had lost the Lucky Luijk, as well as several other squats. Further, it had lost the respect and support of Amsterdam's residents, whose generally favorable opinions about squatters plunged when they used violence (226-227).

The squatters immediately shifted into damage control mode. They distributed 10,000 copies of a newspaper titled *Amsterdam ONTLUYKT* (*Amsterdam Un-Luijked*), where they argued their side of the story. Again, they tried to make the case that this was chiefly about "gang terror" and that their position – to have a truly "social solution," i.e., youth housing – was the only acceptable one under the circumstances. The paper was a public relations blitz to reclaim lost support. Squatters did not reframe the problem from how it was framed at the time of the first (illegal) eviction. They tried to solicit the public's feelings of terror and anxiety with regard to the danger of having their homes invaded by outsiders. The point they made over and over was that the boundaries of the movement – the boundaries as defined by the movement – had to be maintained. Any violation on the part of outsiders – authorities or property owners – demanded a strong response from the squatters to defend these boundaries.

The official state of emergency on the streets of Amsterdam lasted three days. But just as it was about to come to an end, a new state of emergency arose from inside the movement. Although they had told the public that the inner world of the squatters should be inviolate, internal criticism, however, noted that the main violators of the movement's private sphere were not their traditional opponents, but the leaders of the militant resistance. Alarmed by how far things had degenerated, people could no longer hold their tongues, and the vow of silence was no longer going to stop them from having their say.

Who's the Boss?

Before addressing the behavior of the leaders, most of the critics wanted to address a more fundamental problem: the existence of

leaders at all. This concern over the emergence of leaders was not isolated to the specific re-squat action. The problem was much larger than that, and had been a growing concern inside the movement for some time. But it took the extreme case of the Luijk to finally spark a massive response, the so-called *bonzendiscussie* (discussion over bosses).

Squatters were beginning to realize that it was not just that a small group was making the decisions at actions, but that it was the *same* group again and again (Duivenvoorden 2000, 228). This hierarchy, neither formal nor explicit, was based on a currency very unevenly distributed throughout the movement: experience. Instead of having to consistently "reinvent the wheel," as Benjamin put it, he believed it made more sense to rely on this group's experience and expertise. This was much more efficient in terms of getting things done. This is why people such as Leen basically never understood the whole boss discussion.

> If you're very intensely involved in something – and I was working on this about three days a week – then you have much more information, you know all the contacts, you know the "ins and outs," [and] you frequently deal with the habits of the press. At a given moment, you just know somewhat more; you have more experience (*De Stad* 1996).

He did not dispute the existence of bosses; he simply disagreed that they were a problem. After all, some people would always have more time and a stronger sense of commitment, and they would therefore accumulate more experience. Activists would be foolish to pretend this difference did not exist and not take advantage of it.

But efficiency was not a prized value in the movement; autonomy and egalitarianism, on the other hand, were. The problem many had was that efficiency was often placed at odds with autonomy and equality. Decisions relying on the ones with the most experience will feed upon themselves, since others will never have the opportunity to gain their own experience. Annegriet Wietsma, writing in *Bluf!*, blamed all of the Luijk problems on the bosses.

> Thanks to them the Keijser became a symbol, thanks to them the terrible re-squat of the Luijk occurred, and thanks to them the

> press knows whom they should talk to. But, in my opinion, the short-term successes cannot guard against the long-term dangers: the [movement] crumbling from inside, people who leave or quit, people who cannot get complete information in order to do their own work, or who do not have the proper authority to speak at meetings (1982: 10).

She blamed the bosses for destroying the internal culture of the movement. Wietsma further argued that they were driving people away: squatters had quit coming to meetings; people were leaving the movement; the public had relinquished their support for the squatters.

The organizational structures of the movement propagated this inequality, a problem difficult to address because these structures were rarely openly acknowledged. In fact, the discourse of equality within the movement, while certainly legitimizing a critique of the power differentials, at the same time made it difficult to even broach the subject. Such problems commonly dog radical egalitarian movements. Freeman (1970) criticized this "tyranny of structurelessness" from her experiences and those of others in the radical women's movement. She argued that an anti-elitist ideology actually lends itself to the creation of its own form of elitism based on a "star-system" determined not by the movement, but by outsiders. She claims that egalitarian movements, rather than rejecting structure, must have a clear, open structure, if they are to successfully fight the emergence of power hierarchies. Likewise, Polletta (2002) argues that the anti-war and women's movements of the 1960s, in some ways ideological precedents for the squatters' movement, depended on the friendship model of direct democracy. While often effective at building close ties between activists, they had serious drawbacks, such as their exclusiveness and resistance to formalization, making it difficult to integrate new members who did not fit the "friend" model. Moreover, friendship became a means to making hierarchy less visible, more acceptable, and harder to acknowledge.

Jojo thought that people quit not because of the violence, but because of the "politics of the organization" (*De Stad* 1996). The way people were organized did not allow them the "space or the freedom" to do what they wanted. One of the strongest principles of the movement was the "do-it-yourself" ethos that allowed and encouraged everyone to find and explore their own choices. How-

ever, the internal workings of the movement were now denying these very same freedoms. People did not mind the violence as much as they minded being compelled to participate in it. Do-it-yourself also cuts both ways. If you didn't like something, instead of having a debate about the issue, it was simply easier to go your own way, avoiding interaction.

The internal debates linked the decline of the movement, measured objectively in buildings lost and squatters quitting the movement, to a decline in the core values of the movement, which was ultimately a more serious charge. Tension between hopeful leaders and hesitant followers had existed all along, but it was only now that it emerged as a serious problem, because now it was being blamed for the movement's larger problems. Problems could no longer simply be ignored; the movement's future was now at stake. Trying to wish these problems away would not turn a movement in trouble around.

Those accused of being bosses did not take this lying down, and they lashed out at their critics. Stans (1982) complained that normally no one had a problem when a small group performed the majority of political functions. People were more than happy to let others do the work of making sure the movement ran smoothly, while they devoted their time and attention elsewhere. He thought it should not surprise them when, during bigger actions, this same small group ended up running things. The rest, he pointed out, did not mind letting others do the work, but wanted to have the right to criticize others during an action, or, "even better, after." The problem was not the leaders, but that people wanted to use leaders – to do all the work during the good times and to accept all the blame during the bad.

Others had even less kind words for the critics. Leo Adriaensson and Theo van der Giessen both responded to those who attacked them in the pages of *Bluf!*, dismissing their opposition as simply petty expressions of jealousy. Leo wrote, "I've had enough of the standoffish and anti-authoritarian grumblings over the bosses... The secret gossip and boasting makes me want to vomit" (1983, 12). Theo similarly assailed his opponents, calling the entire discussion "childish bickering and bar talk" driven "by people with frustrations, intrigues, and sectarian desires" (1983, 12). The overall tone of the bosses' response was dismissive of anyone who disagreed with them.They gendered their opponents in the language they used, calling their complaints "gossip," which is what

"wives" engage in, not activists. They also characterized their opponents as either too immature to understand the workings of the world by referring to "childish bickering" surrounding the boss discussion or as too traditional and out of touch to have a valid opinion. They attacked people like Evelien who tried to stop the re-squat. They dismissed her concerns as the worries of poor "Aunt Evelien," rather than a valid critique of the action (*De Stad* 1996). In general, this strategy built a clear barrier between the public and private spheres of the movement, by demarcating the public sphere as the realm of men, while women, "children," and "old folks" should remain in the private sphere, out of the way of those in charge.

The bosses also complained how little the others had done to actively gain their experience. Stans argued that a serious problem involved squatters seeming to fear that experience gained in planning and running actions would automatically lead to a personal accumulation of power, and therefore, opportunities to learn and grow were avoided. This forced those with the expertise into a very narrow circle. The bosses agreed this was a problem, but claimed they did their best to mitigate the effects of this situation and not exploit it. They argued that they acted only because no one else was willing to do so. They complained that the majority of squatters wanted to keep their hands clean, and to enjoy the life of a squatter without getting too involved in the needs of the movement. Thus, they saw a dual problem at work here. Squatters preferred to remain in the safe private world of the movement. This dereliction of duty, however, threatened the safety of this world, requiring others to act to protect them. Meanwhile, they still complained about others leading the movement, but made no efforts themselves to develop their own leadership skills.

Their critics saw it differently, blaming the bosses for seizing their positions of authority and denying power and experience to the rest. Wietsma (1982) compares the emergence of the bosses as a re-creation of the problems of parliamentary democracy, a toxic insult within squatter circles. She argued that this small group had reached such a "high level" that it was no longer possible to relate to them and they did what was necessary to maintain their positions: "Knowledge is not shared; leadership does not change. This group does not trust others. Autonomy is a farce. Of course, we're all still allowed to take part, but only as followers" (10). By assuming the role of leaders, this small minority effectively took

control over the direction of the movement's dominant narrative. The anonymous authors of *Halte Jan Luyckenstraat* (*Tram Stop Jan Luyckenstraat*, 1983) argued that the lack of formal organization tended to grant too much power to the past, allowing everything to be justified because "this is also the way we did it at the Vondelstraat and the Groote Keijser" (232). A dominant story lends itself to the formation of a dominant leadership – the keepers of the narrative.

The dominant group dominating the dominant narrative was one problem. The narrative they were shaping was another. Their version of radicalization was sending the movement into a variety of directions that directly challenged the foundation of what many squatters prized most – the private sphere of squatting. While the radicalization of the public sphere was being translated into increasingly violent and extreme tactics of confrontation, radicalization of the private sphere had been based on a strengthening of the community through reciprocal feelings, individual autonomy, and mutual aid. For many squatters, the public actions were only supposed to be a means to defend the inner world. The bosses, however, neither respected nor privileged the private world of the squatters. They were ready to sacrifice the private for their larger goals.

You Can't Live in a Symbol

The violation of the autonomy of individual squatters by the rise of the "bosses" also affected another realm: the autonomy of the building. Movement norms stipulated that the residents of the house decide the proper course of action together. Activists from the rest of the city would then mobilize support for their decision. But the Luijk was a different case; because it had become *the* symbol of the squatters' movement, it now "belonged" to the movement as a whole. This meant the fate of the building was an issue to be decided at the city level. The Luijk's residents and the other squatters in the Concert Hall district wanted the situation to be treated as a local issue. The bosses, however, had decided that it had to be a citywide issue, shifting the entire terms of the discussion. "It was an example of when you bite into one action building, into one symbolic building," recalled Jojo, "it, in a certain way, narrows your movement and your room to maneuver, because you

are also forcing people to either go along with you or quit" (*De Stad* 1996). Freedom of choice vanished after the Luijk became the movement's symbol. The autonomy of the building and of its residents had been confiscated.

The neighborhood squatters felt completely subordinate to the demands of the citywide movement. Saskia, who lived in the neighborhood, believed that the leaders had communicated very poorly with the residents. "The bosses, the men of the movement, kept a great deal of information just for themselves" (*De Stad* 1996). They were not interested in discussing important matters with neighborhood residents, whom they no longer considered active participants in the decision-making process. This treatment surprised her, since she thought that her long involvement in the movement would have accorded her more respect and better treatment.

> I think that especially considering my stake in the matter and how I was working there and had always been involved in the struggle, I had the idea that I would be taken more seriously. But when I look back at it I think, no, I was absolutely not taken seriously, I was never listened to, despite my past investment and efforts (*De Stad* 1996).

She also felt that as important as the Luijk was to the movement as a whole, it was at least as important to the residents of the neighborhood, and the bosses never acknowledged that.

The Luijk residents faired even worse. When asked what it was like to live in the Luijk, Erik Heinen responded, "Well, if you call that living. Okay, it was literally living, but it just wasn't really living." The process consumed all of his time, whether it was securing the barricades or meeting with other squatter groups to explain the situation. When the bosses showed up to lend their support, the residents were initially promised that they would remain in command of the affair. This quickly changed. "After the MAF bomb, we actually lost a bit of control over everything. The residents were no longer the generals, and become the pawns in the whole affair" (*De Stad* 1996).

Squatters from other parts of the city found themselves caught in the middle. Piet, for instance, felt torn during the negotiation process over the Luijk. He believed that, even if the building was not going to end up in the hands of the squatters, it could still be

put to use, because it would help working people, "families with kids, bus drivers, taxi drivers, it doesn't matter." On the other hand, he recognized the value of confrontation and holding onto the building. Both sides petitioned for his support. The hard-liners "made me out to be a traitor, because I was willing to talk to the council, but on the other hand, they were trying to appeal to me" (*De Stad* 1996).

Henk helped lead the hard-line effort to "use the Luijk as a political weapon to force concessions.... To force the apartments to remain in our possession and in no way become GDH apartments, it had to become youth housing" (*De Stad* 1996). He accused the Luijk residents of actively sabotaging his group's efforts to save the building. To him, the residents were outsiders, interested only in their own concerns. "They only cared about their own needs, they wanted to get a nice house, and they had no interest in anything regarding what the struggle had been or could be" (*De Stad* 1996). The symbolic power of the Luijk politicized the situation. This group was shocked that the residents would actually choose to live in what was now *their* home; after all, it no longer belonged to the original residents.

Even during normal periods, a squatted home sits in a different location along the public-private divide than other homes. Living in a squat is a political act, and brings with it all the accompanying consequences. However, in this case, making the squat a symbol violated the movement's norms. At this point, the politicization was no longer seen as a means towards greater equality, autonomy, and democracy, but rather as a direct assault on these very core values. Debate focused on whether defending the building equaled defending the movement. After the Luijk loss, many in the movement saw the goals as opposites. The movement's future had been sacrificed for the building, which was nothing more than a symbol of the power and values not of the movement, but of the bosses.

Gender Divides

The Lucky Luijk further inflamed the tensions between men and women, tensions which had been present for much of the movement, but that had rarely flared up so openly (Duivenvoorden 2000; see Meets 1998 for an in-depth treatment of sexism in the

Dutch radical left). In general, this was because women had found alternatives to avoid the issue. In 1980, female squatters were already forming separate women's squatter organizations, because "masculine norms dominate the squatters' movement, which make it more difficult for us to be active, to form our own ideas, and to open our mouths" (Vrouwenkraakgroep 1980, 9). They squatted their own buildings, organized women's nights at squatter bars, squatting office hours exclusively for female squatters, and even started a women's squat radio station (Duivenvoorden 2000, 205). Separation alleviated the tension, but in the aftermath of the Luijk, male and female squatters confronted each other.

Women decried the macho tactics of the re-squat and the subsequent efforts to hold on to the Luijk, complaining that the leadership ignored and trivialized their concerns and suggestions. The gender critique focused on how emotions were managed or ignored by those in charge. For example, women were troubled by the Action Center being "off limits" to emotions, or at least the emotions commonly labeled feminine. In her article, "Women, revolt!" in *Bluf!*, Christine relates an anecdote in which several activists were discussing threats the owners of a building had made against squatters. She ran out of the room when she was told never to act that way again: "There was no room at all in the AC [Action Center] for anything personal, for emotions" (1982, 6). In the Action Center logbook, she wrote something that condemned the decision-making methods and the lack of social interaction. Her statements were mostly ignored; the one reaction came from a man who wrote, "The logbook is not for unimportant things like this" (6).

Saskia complained that this kind of attitude meant that fewer women got involved.

> I was often the only woman there [at the Action Center]. It is not like I only wanted to work with women. On the contrary: I do want to work with men, but with more women around as well. Mostly because with women there is more discussion. Men are more individual, and do not support each other (1983, 246).

She described the problem as one in which men behave in a sexist manner, women get sick of their behavior and quit, and men become even more dominant, and just perpetuate the cycle. At the same time, men were becoming more dependent on the private

sphere – which was maintained primarily by female emotional labor – to support their political activities.

Emotions became increasingly gendered within the movement. The public emotions of anger were labeled masculine, while the emotions considered more appropriate in the home, like love and compassion, were categorized as feminine. The emotions that had once served as the foundation of the squatters' democratic culture were increasingly feminized and marginalized. Wietsma et al. (1982) argued that squatter norms generally discouraged talking about emotions in public. Brecht, meanwhile, claimed that women had begun influencing this aspect of squatter culture, noting that "men are talking more about their feelings at the meetings" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 77). She sometimes even thought it went too far, but she generally found it amusing, thinking to herself, "Go on now, just let it out" (77). While Brecht's comments point to the fluidity of these boundaries, her interview predates the Luijk eviction. Moreover, she mainly focused on the "normal" and not the crisis meetings. In the heat of the Luijk moment, previous strides towards equality within the movement faded away. The movement seemed more capable of accepting feminine values and emotions, as well as the equality and direct democracy that that entailed, when the stakes involved were low.

All of these areas of discontent – the power of the bosses, the power of symbols, the power of men – point to a fundamental questioning of the direction the movement was taking and the growing divide between the so-called core values of the movement and the movement's ground tactics. Fear had always been a salient emotion for squatters. But the dispute at the Lucky Luijk drew attention to the various ways of dealing with it. The bosses felt that there was not enough fear – that most squatters were too comfortable in their lives to do what was necessary to push the radicalization of the movement where the bosses wanted it to go. While they wanted to eradicate certain forms of fear, such as the fear of gang attacks, they did this by actually cultivating this same fear in order to justify their own invasion and destruction of the private sphere, as well as their own power grab. In response, their critics asserted that a strong and supportive private sphere was not a sign of weakness, but was in fact the very practice that provided the best protection against fear. These issues were not new, but their context was. During the time of a serious setback, they took

on a broader meaning, one that pointed to one increasingly inescapable conclusion: the movement was now in a state of decline.

The Luijk as a Sign of Decline

The tensions within the movement needed to be translated into objective losses to qualify as decline. In addition to losing the building, it appeared they had also lost a considerable amount of public support. The media coverage of the riots had been overwhelmingly negative; no attempt had been made to understand the events from the squatters' perspective, which was significantly different from the coverage they received in 1980, which was much more sympathetic. For example, the headline of the left-leaning paper, *de Volkskrant*, read: "In the squatters' movement, formerly a potentially strong and positive power against vacancies and real estate speculation, group egotism has become its guiding principle." The more conservative *NRC Handelsblad* called squatters hypocritical and pointed out how they claimed they wanted to improve the city and living conditions for everyone, but preferred their own narrow goals and interests (quoted in Duivenvoorden 2000, 228).

Public support of the squatters' movement had always been based on its housing and quality-of-life issues. The public supported squatters over the authorities whenever they saw it as a legitimate defense of the squatter home and community. Violence, unless in self-defense, was seen rather differently, but did not fundamentally turn public opinion against the movement. However, when the movements' tactics and goals began to appear to be in direct conflict with its more sympathetic qualities, the majority of the public found it more difficult to support them, although they still sympathized with the squatters' original goals.

While the coronation riots in April 1980 were salvaged from the narrative of success in the movement, the Luijk riots of October 1982 could not be. All of the elements that had made distancing from the events at the coronation possible were no longer present here. For one thing, this was the second, not the first, major setback for the squatters. One's first mistake can be dismissed as simply that, a mistake. It is considered a blunder, from which a strong successful movement will learn and grow. A second setback is something entirely different. It reveals a movement either

unable to learn from past mistakes, too stubborn to change its direction, or just too weak to deal with a growing opposition.

The movement had no outside scapegoats to blame. At the coronation riots, two groups ended up being blamed for the violence: the Autonomists and the other disaffected actors who joined in. Although the Autonomists were not that distinct from the squatters' movement, they at least made their proclamations under a different name and organization. At the Luijk, there was no one else to blame; squatters were the only ones involved. The coronation could be dismissed as a unique event, which had little to do with squatting and attracted many non-squatters to the demonstration; it was not seen as essential to the activities of the movement. The Luijk, however, was a typical squatter event using squatter tactics, the failure of which could not be brushed aside so easily. The Luijk events spoke directly to the ideology, goals, and strategies of the movement, as well as its possible weaknesses.

Of course, one could argue that, even under these conditions, there was a possibility to distance the movement from the Lucky Luijk events. Indeed, as has already been shown, this was going on during the events to a very large extent. The rule had always been that dissent within the movement and intra-movement conflicts were never made public. Thus, even during periods of internal disagreement, the movement was able to maintain an image of unity. But the Luijk shattered this unified image, exposing the growing differences among the various groups of squatters. If the public values of anger and toughness were now invading the private world of squatting, then anyone's private problems within the movement were also fair game. Specific groups within the movement tried to distance themselves from the events, but this tactic did nothing to help the squatters escape the conclusions regarding the Luijk; in fact, they only confirmed them. This time, they were not trying to distance themselves from events that had been, in their eyes, inaccurately and unfairly attributed to the squatters. This time, the squatters were clearly implicated, and attempts to distance themselves only further verified that there were some serious problems within the movement. They were not distancing themselves from events, but from each other.

Thus, the first important question about decline – Is the movement declining? – was answered in the affirmative, and not just by those who disagreed with the bosses and their handling of the Luijk situation. The bosses also saw a movement in decline,

although in their eyes, it was the disagreement between squatters and the rejection of the bosses that was the true sign of decline. Identifying decline, however, is only the starting point; it raised new questions about the strategic and identity-based reasons for the decline. Squatters began asking themselves what they had done to cause their own decline. Both sides offered their own answers. The bosses argued it was because they had not been given the respect and authority they needed to run the movement as it should be run and that the rest of the squatters preferred to live their private lives rather than living in the difficult real world. Meanwhile, their critics focused on the bosses using the movement, its resources, and its members as a way of accumulating power for themselves. Their thirst for power meant sacrificing the movement and the values of its private world, for the sake of their own political aims, while ignoring the possible long-term negative consequences.

The authors of *Halte Jan Luykenstraat* asked, "Everyone agreed that had to be done differently, it was going so badly. How do we get our strong movement back? How do we win back those who have quit, or should we just write them off?" (1983, 247). They rejected the position of bosses like Leo, who claimed that those who quit "did not have the interest, the time, the priorities. They discover their educations, their being a woman, a man, their work, relationships, unemployment, anti-militarism, anti-fascism, etc. In short: they are... returning to their individuality" (Leo, 1983, 12). The critics thought that the movement should not have ignored the interests of those who had moved on.

> We see the rejection on a different level: not as a refusal to be active in the squatters' movement. We do not see squatting as our future. We believe that "squatting" means more than simply trying to force open a door and then proclaim: "We're staying!" We see growth as the connection between different movements, different activist groups, in the city. We believe that this must also be expressed in future forms of the organization (*Halte,* 1983, 247-8).

Decline had become a strategic question for both sides, but it was also a question of identity. By introducing the possibility of decline, squatters began to question what they had turned into. The critics worried that they had become the enemy: a gang of thugs, a

militarized group, a parliamentary democracy, sexists, and power mongers. They not only asked: "Who have we become" but also "Who should we be?" This indicates that there was some sense that being too strongly tied to the squatter identity and the squatters' movement narrative is what led them off course in the first place. This created a desire on the part of some squatters to break out of these narrow spaces. Those who were considering quitting discovered new identities that were incompatible with the squatter identity. The bosses, on the other hand, felt that a rejection of the narrative was the cause of their problems.

While this kind of debate highlights the divisions within the movement, the real sign that there had been an acknowledgement of a decline within the movement was a change in tactics after the Luijk. Until that point, squatting had been inextricably linked to the violent street confrontations in defense of squatted buildings, but these confrontations were to slowly become a thing of the past. Although both sides saw the Luijk as a sign of decline, the bosses were the most closely associated with the failure, which allowed their critics to pursue the next major development in the movement. After the next big eviction had been scheduled, the movement began following a new path.

Conclusion

Duivenvoorden (2000) believes that, "The struggle around the Lucky Luijk ended the highpoint of squatter resistance that began with the barricading of the Groote Keijser at the end of 1979" (229). Violence, and the threat thereof, had proven an effective strategy for squatters during this period. The public even periodically tolerated their strategy, as long as it appeared to be connected to the higher goals of the movement. But the Lucky Luijk marked a turning point, separating violence from their loftier goals, which led to an ideological rift inside the movement. One side took the hard line of revolutionary change. The other side placed more emphasis on self-awareness, evolution and experimentation with alternative lifestyles. During better days, these two goals walked hand in hand. In the wake of the Luijk, attitudes changed. The goals of the hard-liners challenged those who were interested in a better life. Those who focused on the creation of a city that promoted freedom of expression and self-actualization could not re-

concile their vision with violence in the streets, authoritarian decision-making processes, and militarized operations (223-230).

Squatting had since its inception always been about making the personal political. At the same time, however, there remained a need to preserve some private space that was free of the overtly political concerns of the movement. The Luijk's eviction brought these contradictions into the open. The politicization of the squatters' private sphere threatened to destroy it. To turn things around, the movement shifted to a strategy that would not try reestablish this balance. The strategy was to move in the opposite direction, to push private emotions more into the public sphere, as their own interpretation of radicalization.

Squatters confront police at Wijers eviction, February 14, 1984.

3 Holiday Inn, Wijers Out

Wijers is a large Dutch textile manufacturing company, which had operated a factory at the corner of the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal and the Nieuwendijk in Amsterdam since the early 1900s. Due to increasing costs incurred in maintaining an older factory in the city, they relocated in 1978 to a new location outside of Amsterdam. For three years, the sprawling complex, consisting of a seven-story main building and 16 smaller buildings with over 170,000 square feet of floor space, sat empty. The empty building represented the myriad problems of the city: an abandoned downtown, housing shortages, loss of jobs, wasted empty buildings. Then the squatters moved in and, over time, they transformed this cavernous shell into the vibrant center of squatter social life. It became home to more than 100 full-time residents and provided space for many cultural and entrepreneurial undertakings, such as galleries, restaurants, and other small businesses (Mamadouh 1992, 207). The empty, run-down Wijers may have been a symbol of Amsterdam's problems, but the squatted, vibrant Wijers soon became a symbol – for residents, users, and neighbors alike – of a brighter future for the city, an Amsterdam that accommodated not only the housing needs of its citizens, but their cultural and lifestyle needs as well. Unfortunately, while squatters saw this as the perfect place for cultural experimentation, the City Council and real estate developers saw it as the perfect location for a new hotel.

For many in the movement, Wijers symbolized their hope for the future of the city, while the construction of a new hotel represented their worst fears – a city indifferent to the needs of its residents, catering instead to local capital and global tourists. The struggle to save Wijers marked an important development in the squatters' movement, in their visions of what squatting's relationship to the larger city should become. The terms of the debate shifted from a specific focus on housing to a broader view of the culture of the city, which hinged on the subject of tourism to make a larger argument for their vision of urban life . The question was not simply who should be able to live in the city, or even how they

should live in it, but more fundamentally, whom the city was meant for – the rich, the poor, the local residents, or the foreign tourists. The Lucky Luijk conflict highlighted squatting as something that went on inside a building, which kept certain people in, while keeping others out. The Wijers battle, however, pushed the movement beyond the boundary of the squat's front door. A common slogan at the Wijers complex was "Squatting is more than just a roof over your head" (ADILKNO 1994; Duivenvoorden, 2000). Squatting was not just about housing. Squatters wanted to open their doors and look beyond Wijers to understand what their role was in determining the future of Amsterdam, and in doing so, shift the debate from simply squatting buildings to how squatting relates to the city. Squatting, which began with the creation of space for housing by renovating buildings, eventually moved towards the notion of creating a space for living by renovating the community's structure.

In the Wijers complex, squatters privileged the private spaces of the movement, even as they moved beyond its walls into the city at large. Whereas the defense of the Luijk had been driven by an ideology of the ends justifying the means, the movement's new strategy was to focus more on the means themselves, to the point of virtually conflating them with the ends. Ideologically, they crafted a discourse that emphasized compromise and community over conflict. On the practical side, they rejected violence and the behind-the-scenes authoritarianism and hierarchy of "the bosses" and embraced a search for strategies and organizing principles that preserved the private world of the squatters' movement. Duivenvoorden described it thusly: "After the debacle of the Lucky Luijk, the hegemony within the squatters' movement shifted from the fighters to the builders" (231). If squatters were unable to battle their way to victory, then they would build their way there.

The apparent advantages of this move inward were clear. By concentrating on the private realm they increased their own control over their situation. The political stage had proven highly unpredictable; with so many external power players, squatters had trouble maintaining control over the playing field. The space inside a squat, on the other hand, was much easier to manage, despite the constant threats from outside. Ironically, this retreat to the private sphere made the squatters in some ways *less* isolated from the general public. An identity that favored a relatively normal home life over that of a radical political protestor forged a

stronger basis of shared identity between the movement and the outside world. By and large, the sympathy of the Amsterdam population had always tilted toward the practical needs of young people seeking homes and away from street fighting. Barricades may ultimately create safer spaces, but open doors make more friends.

This counter-trend did not, however, represent an abandonment of the underlying dynamic of the squatters' movement: radicalization. Radicalization includes both content and form. By the time of the Luijk eviction, the content of radicalization within the squatters' movement was firmly established: to be radical was to be violent. Again and again in interviews with squatters, they made a clear link between radicalization and violence, which mostly entailed throwing stones at the police (Wietsma et al. 1982). As radicalization progressed, its effects on the movement changed. It was no longer associated with simultaneously deepening the two spheres of the movement, and instead began to privilege public emotions and behavior – anger, fear, and the violence they precipitated – which threatened the sanctity of the private lives and relationships of squatters.

Many recognized this development as one that endangered the future of the movement, but their response was to ignore the need to reestablish the lost balance. This chapter explores the efforts to reroute the radicalization process while leaving the primary underlying process of totalization intact. The chains of radicalization were not so much cast off as recast with different content, turning it on its head. Radicalization remained a key goal, albeit, reoriented towards the private realm. A new form of totalization replaced the old. At the Luijk, the movement's public side invaded the private world, threatening the squatted domestic tranquility of the reciprocal emotions of love, friendship, and trust. At Wijers, the movement sought to rejuvenate itself by reversing the direction of totalization. Rather than the public dominating the private, the private world of the squat would be cast as the model of public space and strategic action: "the whole world is a squat" (Mamadouh 1992, 192).

Squatters reversed the direction of radicalization in the hopes of similarly reversing the movement's decline. After the unfortunate Luijk events, squatters were eager to reestablish the power and presence of the movement. Although decline was taken for granted by this time, this was no time for pessimism. In fact, their declining fortunes motivated squatters to pay closer attention to

the choices being made within the movement. The organizers at Wijers were optimistic that they knew the changes necessary to set the movement back on its course. But they would discover that decline was a more complex issue than originally thought. Recognizing a problem does provide some answers, but not necessarily the correct ones.

Wijers Lives

Lucky Luijk and Wijers: their stories go in opposite directions but were nevertheless parallel in significant ways. First, both stories arose during the same period of time. In fact, less than two weeks before the Luijk was evicted and re-squatted, the Wijers complex was first squatted. Over 400 people participated in the initial squatting action, the outcome of a long preliminary phase, where plans were made to occupy and then to utilize the space (Mamadouh 1992). The squat's first two months were tense; a fulltime sentry system was established to prevent any illegal attempts at eviction (Mamadouh 1992). Despite the obstacles of renovating and defending such a massive structure, the Wijers squatters survived these early trails.

By the summer of 1982, the tense atmosphere of the building's initial months had subsided. The residents began feeling relatively secure and started to more actively explore the space's possibilities. Wijers was the largest squat in Amsterdam and one of the largest in the country (Duivenvoorden 2000), and soon became the focal point of the emerging live-work culture within the movement. Ultimately, more than 100 people took up residence in the complex. But the many uses of the building far surpassed mere residential use, to include many businesses and artistic endeavors. The *Wyerskrant* (the Wijers Newsletter) was a paper published by the residents of Wijers in October 1983 to try to curry public support for the building. It noted that the Wijers had the following: a restaurant, bar, café, cinema, performance spaces, night store, art gallery, convenience store, acupuncture clinic, theater groups, rehearsal studios for musicians, artist studios, printing press, nursery, skateboard park, theater/music electronics workplace, wood recycling center, fine wood dealer, two woodworking studios, guitar builder, piano restoration, wind energy workplace, bicycle repair, ceramics workplace, audiovisual

workplace with a school, taxi collective, delivery service, cargo bicycle rental, silk screening, photography collective, repair services for electronics and clothing, an environmentally friendly store, recycled products store, architecture firm, press bureau, accounting office, book store and printer, Aikido school, tea and herb store, windmill services, first aid services, and information offices for environmental and activist groups ("Bedrijvigheid" 1983). Wijers had clearly become a hub of activity. The residents and those working in the above services paid 100 guilders (approximately $60 to $70 in 1983) per month to maintain the building. Time, effort, and commitment helped convert the Wijers into both a successful cultural center and a strong community.

Jaap Draaisma lived and worked at the Wijers and was one of the main organizers of the resistance against the building's eviction. He remembers the exciting atmosphere during this time with the diversity of types of people and interests, which were assembled in the building.

> There was an architect group, an artist group, bands practiced here, and the Dog Troep [a theater group] held its first rehearsals in Wijers. On weekends, sometimes almost 800 people would come in the evening – the concert hall competed with the Melkweg and Paradiso [two popular performance spaces in Amsterdam]. Divine, the drag queen from New York, performed, Nina Hagen frequently visited, and The Ex, one of the punk bands from Wormer [a town north of Amsterdam], enjoyed their first success here (Poppe and Rottenberg 2000, 18).

Wijers established itself as one of the centers of the Dutch counterculture, creating a forum for the expression of ideas and art forms unavailable elsewhere. "In the margins of the existing social order, a separate squatter realm blossomed, with its own resources and its own (sub)culture" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 231). Squatting had always produced its own culture – its own media, music, pirate radio stations, etc. – but large squats that were open to the public, like the Wijers, fueled a rapid expansion in the output and importance of the cultural side of the movement.

Life in the Wijers was not all fun and games; it also entailed a lot of hard work. The people living in the Wijers did not see it as merely an opportunity to relax, but as a place to work hard doing what they wanted. "A growing work culture reigned within the

squatters' movement" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 240). Although some within the movement questioned the growth of what they referred to as "gratifying self-exploitation," everyone seemed to agree that this "was a long way from the hedonistic lifestyle of the 1960s" (240). The businesses in the Wijers, the restaurants, the night store, etc., were occasions to champion the notion of work in a way contrary to both the counterculture of the 1960s and the dominant youth culture at the time. Young people, suffering from widespread unemployment, had little incentive to work. Welfare gave them enough to get by, especially squatters who paid nominal rents. This freed up the remaining time for leisure. The Wijers' ethos challenged this perspective, encouraging hard work as a response to the problems facing young people in Amsterdam. Draaisma pointed out that working under one's own initiative became, along with housing issues, a primary focus of the movement. "We championed the idea that youth unemployment could be solved by young people themselves, [and it] really took off" (Poppe and Rottenberg 2000, 20). The growth of the live-work culture in the squatters' movement stressed equal attention to both sides of the live-work equation.

The openness of the Wijers, however, made the issue of controlling the behavior of its residents and users more difficult. Draaisma remembers that there were many serious problems in the building, which were primarily blamed on "outsiders," such as drug users and political extremists.

> A heroin floor developed in the building. Many disreputable types made their way directly from Centraal Station to the Wijers. In the Wijers café, De Barbaar, neo-Nazis hung out and filled up on beer before they murdered Kerwin Duinmeyer. We were compelled to improve how we organized. We cleaned up the system. We then broke up the heroin club and redistributed some people into other living groups. Others were evicted and rehoused elsewhere. It was terrible. Twelve- and thirteen-year old children were living there. Sometimes I wonder if they are still alive; I already know that a couple of them did not survive (Poppe and Rottenberg 2000, 18).

The danger of an "open door" policy was that anyone could come in, even "outsiders." Wijers' residents responded not by closing the door, but by developing stronger internal regulations to ensure

that life here could go on in ways that reflected their ideals as much as possible.

Life in the Wijers

Despite difficulties, the people involved in the Wijers built a strong, positive space within the movement and the city. For the residents, the Wijers was a special type of community, at once critical and hopeful.

> I feel at home in the squatters' movement, because I can live, work, and be active in it, with people who no longer entertain illusions about things in general, without at the same time falling into a "no future" sensibility. Here there are few illusions about the "welfare state," which redirects living, working, culture, love towards ever increasing consumerism. We also have few illusions about parliamentary/established politics. These are people who are committed to resist the established order, not for nothing, but because they themselves have ideas about how they want to live, and for that reason want to fight for space. In short: they are people who do not want the principles and perspectives of their lives determined by what society has "to offer," but through their own insights and desires.
>
> Squatting and all that it entails proves, in my experience, that you can accomplish things, simply because they are the right things to do, despite the fact that we stand on an unequal footing with the established order (legal state, marriage, career, and so on). Thus, you unfairly constrain yourself by feeling discouraged (Wijers resident, quoted in "Utopia," 1983, 7).

The Wijers fostered opposition to the dominant society without throwing stones, setting off bombs, or, perhaps most importantly, violating the values of intimacy, friendship, and equality. This sense of community was as much a product of what the residents felt as it was of what they did. The Wijers captured a way of life unique to squatting. Squatting became "more than a roof over one's head."

Due to the vastness of the complex, no one lived alone. Instead, residents were required to be part of a *woongroep* (living group), generally consisting of six to ten people (Mamadouh 1992; Mod-

derman 1983). Each group would claim and renovate an area within the complex of buildings for their own use. These living groups encouraged a strong sense of community. Groups shared kitchen facilities (which were difficult to set up in the building); therefore, they generally ate together. Group members depended on each other for welfare and safety. This community extended beyond individual living groups. While the residents' primary contacts were within their own groups, the job of managing the entire complex required ongoing interactions between the groups. Pierre, who had been a Wijers resident since 1981, shared his thoughts on the living situation there to a reporter in 1983, when the complex was already being threatened with eviction:

> Not every group has its own lifestyle. Everything is a bit more integrated. Of course, you look for people that you can get along with. That's logical. But there are 100 people living here who live with each other... Of course, we have our individual irritations and things we don't like. Just like everyone. But the overall atmosphere is fantastic. It is very relaxed and informal here... It's like a village here. You have your own life, but you also have to get along with others (Modderman, 1983).

Community spirit developed via the living groups. The most important element of the Wijers was that no one was alone. Individuals learned to depend on their living groups. Individual living groups learned to depend on other groups. And the entire building learned to depend on the contribution of the rest of the residents, as well as the larger movement and other users.

Gezellig: A popular Dutch term that does not translate easily into English. It is frequently translated as cozy or snug, or, when applied to a person, sociable, pleasant, or chatty. But the best definition is one that focuses neither exclusively on the situation nor on the person, but on both. *Gezellig* might be best captured as the positive feeling created by the coming together of family, friends, food, and fine conversation. To wrap yourself in a blanket on a cold night is cozy. To wrap yourself in a blanket on a cold night with a friend and talk about old times is *gezellig*. The Wijers was *gezellig*. Community was more than just mutual dependence. It was closeness, intimacy, and trust. The Wijers is not unique in this regard; the goal of most squats was to create a home, to make it *gezellig*. On their own, these experiences in the Wijers, while

noteworthy, were not necessarily dramatically different from the experiences and feelings generated in other squats. What distinguished the Wijers was its scale; *gezelligheid* was not reserved only for its residents, but was shared with the community as well, making it a model for social relations in the city.

The Wijers acted as an outreach headquarters for the rest of the city's residents, since they could not rely on consistent positive coverage from the media. Like many other social movements, squatters had a tension-filled relationship with the mainstream press. On the one hand, they resented the way the media often focused more on their violent tactics than their beliefs or goals (Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, and Augustyn, 2001). For example, a squatter interviewed after the coronation riots complained that the media never gave the squatters a fair shake. The *Telegraaf*, a right-wing newspaper, was known for its particularly inflammatory coverage. After the coronation riots, one squatter recited headlines from memory he thought were unfair. "'Rioters abuse horse until it bleeds.' 'Horribly abused,' read the headline. It was clear what the media is trying to do to us. They want to criminalize us. There was no abuse. On 3 May, the officer declared that all of the horses were completely healthy" (Hofland 1980, 81-82). Angry about their treatment in the media, many squatters lost their faith in journalists' willingness or ability to portray the movement fairly (Wietsma et al. 1982, 139).

On the other hand, squatters needed the media to convey their ideas and actions to the general populace. This was particularly important as the movement began to radicalize, pushing squatters further away from the mainstream. Marcel did what he could to challenge the way squatters were portrayed in the press. Whenever he talked with journalists, he was aware of how he presented himself. "You must present a good image to the outside world. I comb my hair before interviews, speak differently, etc. I don't want to give the people more ammo to criticize us by fitting all the stereotypes" (Wietsma et al. 1982, 40). The fact that the media was unreliable meant that maintaining and building ties to the "outside world" had to go down other paths. Willem felt he had to always be open with others about being a squatter, in order to give them the right information beyond the media's portrayals (101). Individual outreach, however, operated at too small a scale to fully combat the images of squatters that appeared in the media. To overcome this situation, squatters sought out a bigger, but still

personal, form of outreach. The Wijers fulfilled those requirements.

Businesses, in particular, brought people to the movement, building community in the process, both inside the Wijers and with the surrounding neighborhood and the whole city. Peter ran a restaurant in the Wijers named Zoro's Zion that was open three nights a week. An average evening would find some 30 to 35 patrons in the restaurant – from the building, from the larger movement, and from the neighborhood. Peter angrily complained about the difference between his experiences and the media's portrayal of squatters:

> The restaurant is centrally located. You get together, talk a little, get to know each other. And so you notice that the people in the Wijers are actually quite normal. I mean, public opinion makes squatters out to be half criminals. But I think that you are much safer in Wijers than you are on the street. That comes through the media. They paint us as vandals. In the Wijers nothing violent ever happens. And the people need to learn that (Modderman, 1983).

Peter saw the restaurant as a place for people to get together, from both inside and outside the movement, to get to know each other in a way that challenged the stereotypes they had of others. These personal interactions could rebuild the necessary ties between the movement and the community, ties that Peter blamed the media for severing.

The businesses at the Wijers also brought squatters to the people. The Wijers night market catered to the needs of locals who need groceries after 6 o'clock in the evening, when grocery stores traditionally closed in Amsterdam. De Porder, a not-for-profit store, meanwhile, reached out in a different way. Located in the Wijers, it's goal was to provide for the poor in the community (which also included squatters, of course). They sold a variety of goods and services, from haircuts to clothes and records, all very cheap. All of the profits went toward the purchase of more merchandise. Astrid, who worked at de Porder, saw it as a way to contribute to the welfare of those in the neighborhood, without disrupting the livelihoods of other local businesses by not competing directly with these other businesses. "With the store we wanted to show that we can also do something constructive and positive"

(Modderman 1983, 22). Astrid's goals were thus not much different from Peter's. Community building, while an end in itself, also provided a means to improving the opinion that the public had of squatters by building bridges beyond the movement.

Moreover, the businesses gave a sense of hope to the community. Hope was in short supply for young Dutch people during this period, particularly on the economic front. With an unemployment rate of 10 to 11.5% in the period 1982 to 1984 ("Netherlands" 2004), the economic outlook was gloomy. Many survived on government assistance. While this assistance helped, it did not necessarily translate into pride and high self-esteem. Squatting was one way to put one's hands and mind to work to rebuild lost pride. Running a business was another. Jose worked in the restaurant Zoro's Zion, "I find the work in this 'gourmet palace' fantastic. Partly, I do it for myself – to take my own initiative, to come up with my own ideas – but also for others. Then when you fall into bed at night... you have a great deal of satisfaction... marvelous" ("Wyers' Restaurant" 1983, 2). Another employee at de Porder distinguished the work at the store with both living off the dole and working in a mainstream workplace by noting, "The great thing about working here is that you are working for something that you can totally see. Nobody is the boss here – I wouldn't want that either. Every Monday we all meet to discuss and to divide up the chores" ("Bijna-alles" 1983, 3). Like squatting, working at Wijers created a sense of ownership, responsibility, and pride. One of the goals at the Wijers was to encourage these feelings within the squatters' movement, displaying them to the community at large as an effort to win back the sympathy and support lost in the Lucky Luijk riots.

Pierre summed up his thoughts on Wijers thusly: "Well, you shouldn't see it as too rose-colored. At times, life here is very demanding and difficult. But it is worth the struggle. That is simply because it is not just a building, but the Wijers" (Modderman 1983). Because of its size, scope, and success, the Wijers became an important symbol: the living room of the squatters' movement, its source of *gezelligheid* (coziness), a place open and inviting to virtually all, where people built relationships between each other and with the surrounding community. The political aspects of the public conflict over housing in the city seemed very distant.

Holiday Away from Home

The domestic tranquility did not last long. The City Council and the real estate developers had long shown little interest in the Wijers complex – too big, too expensive, and too much trouble. But after the squatters had renovated the buildings and had given them a new lease on life, it did not take long before this central piece of real estate began attracting the attention of others, especially in a city with such a scarcity of space. The City Council began looking into various options for developing the area. Given the size of the building, HAT (*Huisvesting voor Alleenstanden en Tweepersoonshuishoudens*, the city department to develop new one- and two-person housing for young people) deemed it too costly to renovate and convert into single-person housing. In mid-April 1983, HAT reached an agreement with the owner of the Wijers to co-sponsor plans to demolish the complex and build a Holiday Inn Hotel, 31 subsidized apartments, 72 HAT units, and a parking garage. The residents of the squat were not notified before the meeting at which the commission addressed the proposal. They only heard about it by chance beforehand, but by then they did not have the time to effectively react and address the City Council's proposals (Mamadouh 1992).

The squatters were furious when they learned the news, the loss of this building was only made worse by the insult of what was going to take its place. To them, the plans represented the most destructive elements of Amsterdam's contemporary urban development: an important thriving cultural institution replaced by a chain hotel and parking garage, two symbols of a homogenized, culturally barren city. Both threatened to disrupt life in the city. The hotel privileged tourists over residents, while a downtown parking garage encouraged automobile use in a city traditionally friendly to pedestrians and bicycles. Their lifestyle, which they saw as the model for a healthy city, was being threatened to accommodate the "false" needs of those who treat the city like a convenience, a luxury, or a vacation and not like a home.

The movement framed the city's plans for redeveloping the city center as one that focused on three principle areas: housing (primarily luxury apartments), tourism, and parking, "the holy grail of the business world: a city center accessible by automobile" (*Wyers in the city*, 1983, 4). Squatters vociferously disputed the government's claim that these improvements would benefit all Amster-

dammers. They argued that these changes would ruin neighborhoods, destroying the fabric of the community. For example, focusing on areas that had seen an increase in luxury apartments construction, they claimed that new residents bring with them completely different lifestyles than the traditional residents have, and that the stores and businesses will shift in order to better accommodate the new residents, becoming more "opulent and exclusive" (4). The result would be a neighborhood where the original residents would no longer feel at home, and would ultimately be driven out their communities, and often out of the city itself. They warned of the dangers of gentrification.

To the squatters, the choices were stark: Amsterdam for the "average" Amsterdammers or Amsterdam for foreign tourists and the rich. The very soul of the city was at stake. To protect the Wijers was to protect a vision of an inclusive city for everyone who shared its values. The squatters had no intention of giving up their home and relationship to the surrounding city without a fight, but there was a strong consensus that they could not simply use the standard squatter tactics of violent conflict with the authorities. The Lucky Luijk had exposed the weaknesses of this model; thus, they sought another way that could both save Wijers and revitalize a declining movement.

The resistance at the Luijk defended the sanctity of the private sphere from attacks from the public realm. However, this course of action actually had the opposite effect inside the movement. Rather than protecting it, the public strategies and emotions of the movement overwhelmed the private sphere, leading to widespread discord among activists. The Luijk conflict politicized the home; but, in politicizing the home, its hominess was lost. To make matters worse, they lost the building as well. Hoping to avoid these missteps, the activists who wanted to save the Wijers chose to use its strengths: they emphasized the important role the Wijers played in creating a strong private foundation for the public life of the city. Rather than politicizing the home, this time the politics was domesticated.

Residents and supporters of the Wijers wanted to defend it against what they saw as an illegitimate invasion of the public space by private interests by proposing an expansion of their own alternative private sphere. They argued that a strong public life depends on having fulfilling private experiences, which further broadened the movement's critique of the system. No longer satis-

fied with merely making claims based solely on housing issues, they expanded their list of grievances. To that end, they highlighted four themes that are important to a vibrant city and that effectively blurred the boundary between public and private. These themes included housing, work, culture, and the city center. Squatters hoped to show that none of these important issues could be effectively addressed with a traditional concept of the public-private split. To mobilize their new ideas, groups inside the building organized the Wijers Work Congress in the late spring of 1983, at which residents and supporters worked together to come up with alternative plans for the Wijers complex. This opened up the building and the discussion to others in the movement and, more importantly, others in the community. The planners based the meetings on the following premise:

> The use of this piece of the city, as a portion of the inner city and city center with a partly social, cultural, and recreational function, should not be a privilege of one or a few exclusive groups, but must offer possibilities for as many residents and users of the city of Amsterdam as possible, including the less well off. (*Wyers Werkkongressbundel* 1983, 14)

The workshop helped create the foundation of their defense by bringing their ideas to a wider public. This would not be about the Wijers; it would be about Amsterdam.

In expanding the scope of their criticism, the squatters found a new enemy: *cityvorming*. Although the accepted definition of the term is "urban development," squatters used it in a narrower sense, defining it more as bourgeois urban development, suburbanization, or "(capital-) weak functions being driven out of the city center by (capital-) strong functions" (*Wyers in the City* 1983, 3). Money, not people, drives this kind of development, sacrificing the city center's livability of the many for the comfort of the few. They argued that the Wijers-Holiday Inn conflict was merely the latest example of an ongoing larger effort on the part of city government and business concerns to reshape the city center into a more business- and tourist-friendly environment. City Council members did not disagree; in fact, they took the position that this was indeed the inevitable direction that cities follow – resistance was, therefore, misplaced and futile. Council member Van der Viis expressed a common Council opinion, when he stated that

anyone who feared development was like "a Japanese soldier on an island in the Pacific, who still thinks there's a war going on" (quoted in *Wyers in the City* 1983, 3). The squatters resisted the inevitability of this path. They rallied around examples of activist groups who were able to effectively influence such development in the past, either completely stopping or redirecting projects in their neighborhoods (*Wyers in the City* 1983; for examples, see Pruijt, 2002), and sought to work with other groups actively working against these kinds of developments at the time.

The debate centered around the questions of who and how. Who is going to use the city center, and how will they use it? Beyond the standard movement litany over the needs for young and working people to have access to affordable housing, they cast an eye towards those who were moving into the neighborhood. Although the plan for the Wijers space included 31 subsidized and 72 HAT apartments, which would house a number of people roughly equivalent to those living in the squatted Wijers, squatters nevertheless labeled this plan as an effort to build more luxury apartments into a gentrifying city center. They pointed to the housing developments in the northern part of the city center, which were mostly more expensive housing, and how they had affected the neighborhoods. "That the residents of these apartments have a different lifestyle than the traditional population is clear. The character of the stores has become more expensive and exclusive. A strong concentration of these apartments can change the character of a neighborhood" (*Wyers in the City* 1983, 4). Normally, the squatters' movement would be hesitant to call for the preservation of the traditions of the neighborhood simply for the sake of tradition. After all, squatters often redeveloped neighborhoods in their own image as much as possible and the area around the Wijers was no exception. But, here they had chosen to uphold traditional neighborhoods, but not for the sake of traditions themselves. Whatever problems they had with traditional society – and they were plentiful – they still saw it as one of the remaining bastions of relationships based on ongoing, face-to-face relationships, a model they believed was the core of any successful community. Hence, they overwhelmingly rejected the newcomers' main mode of transportation to the neighborhood, the automobile. Squatters called automobile accessibility to the city center the "sacred cow" of the business world (4). The car threatened the human scale of Amsterdam and the relaxed forms

of social interaction that squatters wanted to see more, not less, of in the city.

In their publication *Wyers in the City* (1983), squatters quote a 1982 statement by an independent group, which studied the necessary characteristics for a healthy city center.

> Space must be available for a multiplicity of different shops and places of entertainment... Moreover, the city center remains an important employment center in which the emphasis lies on the more *public specific* and *contact intensive* activities... Wherever possible, housing functions should be reinforced... The intensified production of destination plans are maintained. A contribution is made to reducing speculation (emphasis added by the original authors, 4).

Squatting had renovated buildings so they could be used again and had even helped restrict auto use in the city (4). More importantly, it created an atmosphere encouraging "public-specific" and "contact-intensive" activities by cultivating and maintaining small-scale living, bringing diverse people together in a safe, supportive environment. They concluded, "The great variety of functions and activities realized in the Wijers is the best guarantee for significant livability and diversity and against a further pauperization" in the city center (6). City Council plans to attract wealthier residents were directly contrary to these goals.

Although wealthy residents who lived in luxury apartments and drove big cars certainly troubled the squatters, they reserved most of their contempt for tourists and the tourist industry. At least rich Amsterdammers were still Amsterdammers, and thus maintained an enduring connection to the city's culture and history. Squatters believed that tourists did not come to Amsterdam to visit someone else's home; they came to visit a playground and a museum. The Wijers' residents argued that the Holiday Inn was merely the latest manifestation of Amsterdam's growing reliance on "mass tourism," and the ever-increasing need to cater to them. To learn more about what the hotel's impact would be on the neighborhood, they studied the history of other hotel chains in town. In their report, the Wijers Work Congress reviewed the history of a hotel of similar size, the Sonesta. They did not like what they discovered. They coined the term, the "Sonesta effect," to describe the growth of tourist-related stores, "American-style" cafés, peep-

shows, gambling halls, and other such businesses (*Wyers Werkkongresbundel* 1983, 5).

These changes had a negative impact on the neighborhood and its residents. As an example, they pointed to the cases of Freekje and Marije, who were both born and raised in the neighborhood the Sonesta Hotel moved into. When the Sonesta arrived, the building Freekje lived in was sold, forcing her to move to another part of the city. Marije remained in the neighborhood, but noted the changes that made it less attractive for her family. She complained that the Sonesta had destroyed all the play areas in the neighborhood, and that there was no place left where she and her children could even "lay out a game of hopscotch." Prompted by neighbors' complaints, the hotel eventually put in a small playground, but it only led to new problems because it was in a constant state of disrepair and was taken over by drug addicts, rendering it useless for child's play. The feel of the neighborhood shifted dramatically from a family-oriented area to one that catered to foreign tourists. Marije asked, "More hotels mean less playgrounds, where will we have to go then?" ("Brede" 1984, 8).

Although luxury apartments and hotels may bring disruptive changes to the neighborhood, they also brought new jobs, a prized commodity during the early 1980s, a period of economic downturns and high unemployment. The City Council argued that the jobs would bring needed new opportunities for the citizens of Amsterdam, but squatters disagreed. The hotel promised to bring 200 new jobs to the city. However, these numbers were not borne out by the research done by the squatters. In studying the effect of new Holiday Inns in other Dutch cities, such as one that had recently opened in nearby Utrecht, they found that similar hotels did not create anywhere near the number of jobs the hotel was promising. The Utrecht Holiday Inn employed only 100 people.

Worse than the lower numbers of jobs was the low quality nature of these jobs. Most of the jobs were "boring service work, such as cleaning and other household work" (*Wyers in the City* 1983, 6). In contrast, the Wijers offered "affordable stores, and high-value, work-intensive jobs with a high educational value" (6). Furthermore, the Wijers supplied not only "normal jobs," but also offered meaningful options for the unemployed. The Wijers, allowed people to avoid the common situation of those on assistance, in which they are given pointless work in order to "earn" their money ("Brede" 1984, 14). By supporting creativity and entrepreneurship,

the Wijers contributed significantly to the economic strength of the city, since those working at Wijers wanted to make both their businesses profitable (to support their endeavors) and keep prices low (to help those with lower incomes) (14).The debate inside the movement was not about whether the Holiday Inn or the Wijers offered better job opportunities; they clearly preferred the Wijers model. Instead, they deliberated over whether businesses in the Wijers would be better off remaining in a squat or in a legalized space. While legalization offered more stability and continuity for their projects, it also brought more bureaucracy, lowering the levels of creativity and spontaneity in the Wijers (18).

Money mattered, and so did culture. The Wijers embodied an ideal type of culture squatters wanted to see in the city. Residents argued that the Wijers, with its 30 artist studios, was not an "artist ghetto" because it brought so many different people working on different projects together (10). Peter, who lived in the Wijers, asserted that the building offered "the space necessary for experimentation and developing new possibilities" (11). Culture was alive at the Wijers. In contrast, squatters complained that the culture promoted by Holiday Inn and the larger tourist industry froze Amsterdam into a picture-perfect postcard. In other words, a dead culture. At the heart of this degradation of culture stood its primary consumer: the tourist.

The squatters' anti-tourist position could easily be interpreted as anti-Americanism. Indeed, they often portrayed the archetypal tourist as the "typical" American tourist: a fast-food-eating, wooden-shoe-buying, windmill-visiting, sex-shop-gawking, culturally insensitive traveler. That is, someone who wants to "see" the Amsterdam they have been sold rather than the "living" Amsterdam that actually exists. The tourists' desires exert real pressure on the city's development, producing a tension between satisfying the needs of the tourist and those of its residents. Squatters saw these competing goals as fundamentally irreconcilable. Their criticism was made so effectively, that some in the movement worried that it had gone too far toward a protectionist "municipal nationalism," which was at odds with the egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism of the squatters' movement ("Kraken" 1984).

But the case was actually more nuanced than merely building a wall around the city to keep the marauding tourist hordes at bay. In fact, the arguments for Wijers embraced the importance of tourism to the local economy. Tourism, when encouraged cor-

rectly, could nurture the type of cultural life favored by the squatters. To that end, they distinguished between two types of tourism: mass tourism and "individual" tourism. Whereas the mass tourist stays in the chain hotels and visits typical tourist attractions, "from canal cruises to wooden shoes, from Madame Tussaud to the Rijksmuseum," the individual tourist comes to Amsterdam to experience something new, "to keep up to date with new developments. For them, the capital is the focus of a living culture. Museums, galleries, theaters, libraries, stores and infoshops: spaces displaying the cutting edge" (*Wyers in the City* 1983, 5). The squatters much preferred the individual tourist, since they were drawn to squatter culture. The Wijers was presented as a model of exactly the type of tourist attraction the city should be encouraging, one based on a dynamic city, that engages both residents and tourists, rather than a city stuck in a mythical past, which provides little to its residents, except for the trickle down of tourists' money.

The core of the squatters' argument rested on the basic premise that public space belonged to the public and that to encourage a healthy relationship between the two, public space should be modeled on the example set by the Wijers. The Wijers created free space straddling the border between private and public. It carried the safety and intimacy of a home, but its relatively open door policy and outward looking politics linked it to the broader community. In a traditional squat, doors were well guarded border crossings, managing the flow of people into and out of the building. By eliminating both the literal and symbolic doors between the Wijers and the city of Amsterdam, the squatters aimed to erase the boundaries between public and private space. Life inside the Wijers was close-knit, small-scale, creative, free, autonomous, democratic, and safe. According to its residents, life outside should be the same.

While this position certainly had its own appeal, particularly in how it reached out to those outside the movement, it was not without its own limitations. The radicalization impulse was to erase the boundaries between in and out, which had the ironic effect of making those as-yet-unerased boundaries even more salient. Here, the border initially drawn around Wijers is extended outwards; the entire city center now became a part of Wijers, just as Wijers had become a significant part of the city center. But the borders did not disappear. Instead of the barricaded steel door to bar the hired gang and protect the sanctity of life inside the squat,

there was now an implied boundary around the city center that tried to deter mass tourists in order to protect the spirit and diversity of life in the city.

Strategy

Framing and strategy, while never permanently bound together in a perfect one-to-one relationship, are nevertheless closely connected; to be effective, each should effectively support the other. A shift in the frames used to structure the debate, while not necessarily forcing or even encouraging a new strategic vision, would at least open up space for new strategies to be considered in order to maintain a balance between the two. Such was the case at the Wijers. To promote a vision of a vibrant public life based on a city center open and inviting to everyone was the opposite of the traditional squatters' tactics of violent resistance to evictions. A street filled with teargas, as paving stones rained down from rooftops, does not create a very welcome or safe environment. When someone is invited into someone else's home, one does not want to be reminded to bring a helmet and body armor. A framework based on the warmth of private space should be combined with a similarly inviting strategy of resistance.

The Wijers strategy pushed a lifestyle and worldview based on the private values and emotions of the Wijers community into the public sphere. They sought to make this into a citywide issue, rather than simply one about squatting in an effort to avoid the "selfishness" of the Lucky Luijk defense. Thus, the first strategy was to reach out to the rest of the community, first to convince them that the Wijers needed to be saved and then to bring them in to the process of saving it. Many neighborhood associations came to the defense of the Wijers in its battle. As soon as the plans for the hotel became public, over thirty businesses pledged their financial support for the Wijers' plans to continue developing the complex in the same manner. The City Council met in the summer of 1983 to review the various plans for the space. Although Labor Party members offered some support for the alternative plans, the Council ultimately chose the plan to demolish the Wijers and build the Holiday Inn. The squatters were not, however, completely rebuffed in their attempts. Many on the Council were swayed by the content of the argument and recognized the

plan's value. They pointed out that there was nothing necessarily tying them to a particular location. That is, the effectiveness of making the case on the level of the city, rather than simply the building, allowed the authorities to easily reframe the argument so that as long as the plans came to fruition somewhere in Amsterdam, the specific location, the Wijers, did not matter. With this understanding, the Council reached their so-called "double decision": The Wijers would be demolished to make way for the hotel and the city would offer the residents an alternative location for their projects (Duivenvoorden 2000, 255).

The double decision was, of course, an ambiguous one. On the one hand, it was clearly a significant setback: the Wijers would be lost. On the other hand, there were reasons for hope. The residents had successfully convinced the City Council of the value of the Wijers and their goals. Moreover, they would not have to rebuild Wijers from scratch, they would instead be able to use whatever buildings the city offered. The Wijers would die, but its spirit could still live on in a new location. All the same, the reaction to the proposal within the movement was overwhelmingly negative. The supporters of the Wijers distributed a pamphlet in the summer of 1983 calling the complex "irreplaceable" (*Wyers Werkkongressbundel* 1983, 4). They exhibited the movement's common tendency to get overly attached to symbols, and had thus cast Wijers as the symbol against development and "for meaningful work, for low rents, for a multi-sided city center." For many in the movement, the symbolic power of the Wijers made it impossible to replace (Duivenvoorden 2000, 256). Its soul inhabited a unique body. To destroy one was to destroy the other. At the same time, this sentiment was not necessarily shared by everyone inside the movement, and even less so by those outside. Because they had successfully framed the Wijers as a citywide issue, one could easily support the squatters' vision of the city without seeing the need to save the Wijers. This divide brought the movement to a strategic crossroads, or perhaps a crossroads of strategies: do they proceed with their original outreach and save the vision at the expense of the building, or do they pull back to defend the building, possibly sacrificing their larger vision in the process?

The situation again rekindled disagreements between movement hard-liners and moderates over the appropriate tactics to fight the eviction. The hard-liners, who already saw the building as lost, wanted to reassert the power of the movement to make

evictions as costly and ugly as possible. Defending the Wijers provided a critical opportunity to turn the movement around by showing a renewed expression of strength, to prove that the squatters still had the power to make their presence felt on the political stage. The moderates, however, wanted to work with the authorities, remaining hopeful that the situation could be resolved. They thought that compromise and cooperation would provide a means to rebuild the movement in a new direction, rebuilding the movement by rebuilding its ties to the community and repositioning itself within the mainstream. An intense discussion of the larger implications of the Wijers case for the movement haunted the month-long negotiation process.

In the September 8, 1983 edition of the main movement periodical, *Bluf!*, an article reviewed the debate within the movement over the most viable strategic route to take in this conflict (1983, 11). Written by a group of seven squatters who were not residents of the Wijers, the piece outlined the pros and cons of the two major opposing strategies. Their findings are summarized in table 1. Examining the differences between the two sides, the hard-liners and the compromisers, yields a striking result: they split almost exactly along the lines of identity-based vs. practical-based outcomes. Identity-based outcomes focused on how well the strategy maintained and supported the dominant identity of the movement; while the practical-based outcomes concentrated on the practical gains for the movement. The advantages of the hard line are virtually entirely framed in terms of how it preserves and builds the squatter identity. "We remain principled." "We maintain our identity and clarity." "We avoid all collaboration. We keep our hands clean." These words privilege the image and identity of the movement above all else. Even the practical advantages are linked to building solidarity and identity: "After the eviction, because of the clear legitimacy of the riots, solidarity both within and outside the movement will grow." The disadvantages of the hard line are more tangible. They include physical and emotional injuries, criminalization of the movement, and perhaps most importantly, losing the battle and ending up with "no concrete results."

One entry in particular bears special attention: number ten on the list of advantages, "See *Bluf!* numbers 1-84." Since this was the 85th issue of the paper, this entry refers to the "entire history" of the squatters' movement. The hard line is thus presented as the

Table 1 The debate over tactics at the Wijers

Specific advantages of the hard line

1. We remain principled
2. We will never leave the Wijers voluntarily
3. We will never give up hope on the building
4. We remain autonomous
5. We maintain our identity and clarity
6. We resist all future negotiations where our demands and desires are compromised
7. We avoid collaboration. We keep our hands clean
8. We avoid compromise with the cesspool of the entire HBM-ABP-Holiday Inn and City Council affair
9. The movement is now strong enough to survive the confrontation. After the eviction, solidarity based on the clear legitimacy of the riots both within and outside the movement will grow.
10. See Bluf! 1-84

Specific advantages of compromise

1. Concrete, lasting result. The idea of a live-work culture will be realized in the city center.
2. The Council will invests 10-20 million guilders in a similar project. This is how we have corrected and directed their policy.
3. Bluffing costs money. Their strategy will be punished.
4. Broadening. Something is realized, which doesn't just help the squatters' movement, but also the rest of the population, the unemployed, alternative culture, etc. The movement becomes more credible as a movement which reaches its goals.
5. We clearly take responsibility for the de-escalation. The responsibility for all of the violence is the Council's.
6. We are the party making demands and we can make supplementary demands because political profit have been made: H50, S114, Tetterode, Van der Puttepanden, 30 series and all the large squats
7. The movement is more difficult to figure out and manipulate. Greater unpredictability.

Specific disadvantages of the hard line

1. The council knows this tactic: hundreds physically and mentally wounded.
2. Criminalization via the Council and the press. Witch hunt.
3. No concrete results.
4. Underdog position: you fight against a much more violent and military opponent. You will lose, even if you go down valiantly.

Specific disadvantages of compromise

1. We will not be taken seriously as a discussion partner. We will be voluntarily evicted.
2. It can appear to the public that the squatters' movement only represents its own demands and withdraws in times of crisis. Envy.
3. Loss of identity. "What in god's name are we working for?" Internally, this works out negatively. Practically, this will create insurmountable problems: how do we organize 100 people, so that they relocate together???!
4. Dirty hands.

Source: *Bluf*! 85, 11.

natural continuation of the dominant narrative of the squatters' movement. Everything that has already happened explains, justifies, and almost compels taking a hard line stance in this case. To violently resist the Wijers eviction would be to advance the dominant narrative of the movement and thereby advance the movement itself.

On the other side, the list of advantages and disadvantages of forging a compromise reverse this division. The advantages of a "concrete, lasting result" of a goal, "which not only helps the squatters' movement, but the rest of the population as well, including unemployed, alternative culture producers, etc." would allow the movement to become "more credible as a movement that reaches its goals." The downsides primarily dealt with identity, purpose, and appearance: "Loss of identity. 'What in god's name are we working for?' Internally, this works out negatively," and "We will not be taken seriously as a discussion partner... It can come across to the public that the squatters' movement mobilizes only for its own desires and pulls back in times of crisis." Compromise repudiates the past, which is the source of identity and meaning. It redefines the movement, setting it on a different narrative path.

The article concluded that neither side was tenable in its pure form, and it recommended that the City Council back off from its threats and give the movement more time to develop alternatives, but in a way that it did not put squatters in an inferior position. Although criticizing both strategies equally, as Duivenvoorden (2000) points out, "between the lines, [the work] hid preferences for doing everything possible to take the wind out of the sails of the hard-liners" (257). The authors' analysis of the difference between identity-based and practical-based outcomes can be interpreted as a challenge to the power of the dominant narrative, and its growing tendency to lead the movement in directions it should not follow.

In the end, the Wijers' residents and the moderates held sway. They promoted a strategy to open up the movement, the field of strategic options, the range of successful outcomes, and the numbers of potential participants.

> The intentions of the squatters can be summarized in one word: broadening. A broadening of the goals: not only to create a living space, but also a live-work-culture collective. A broadening of the

> action: not only squat actions, lightning strikes, and demonstrations, but also discussions with the residents of Amsterdam (via the Work Congress, the house-to-house newspaper, and the BAD). Finally, there is a broadening of the strategy of the squatters' movement: negotiations, lobbying, and meek resistance at the eviction, which was a new line after the events surrounding the Lucky Luijk (Mamadouh 1992, 215).

But this did not lead to any more willingness to accept the city's offer. They continued to believe that they could make the case for the Wijers and avoid eviction. That meant trying to save the Wijers and their vision of the city, which meant they had to continue their outreach beyond the movement.

The most radical compromise proposal appeared in the fall of 1983, when a discussion paper, entitled "How YES Can Mean NO," circulated through the movement. The central argument was that the movement should agree to the Council's offer, not because of its value, but in order to "gnaw away at the credibility of Amsterdam's political strategy." Because the city expected the movement to turn down its proposal, by saying yes, the squatters would regain the upper hand. They could then use this power to argue more effectively for more concessions, exploiting the extra time to pursue their goals. The authors were clearly creating a contrast with the strategy employed in defense of the Lucky Luijk, where positive arguments were "completely overshadowed by the so-called unwillingness of the squatters" ("Hoe JA" 1983). They argued that the best way to maintain their influence in this process was to remain seated at the negotiating table. Ensuring the best future for live-work undertakings like Wijers meant squeezing as many concessions as possible from the Council. The more radical elements in the movement were already disturbed by this shift towards a politics of compromise and found this development particularly upsetting. In an attempt to discredit the proposal, they exposed one of the piece's authors, Jaap Draaisma, as a member of the Dutch Communist Party. This was not a McCarthy-esque communist witch hunt, but in a movement that eschewed parliamentary politics, any association with political parties, no matter how oppositional, was taken as a sign of collaboration and political "treason" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 259).

When the offer finally came in December, the majority, unconvinced by the argument to accept the Council's terms as a nego-

tiating tactic, was already inclined towards rejecting the alternative. The actual offer, six warehouses located at the Entrepôtdok, near the Zoo, did little to change their minds. Smaller, more expensive, and less centrally located, the space fell well short of being a worthy replacement for the Wijers. They had three months to make a decision, so the movement mobilized once more to convince the citizens of Amsterdam to save the Wijers. They organized the Broad Amsterdam Discussion (BAD) to make their case one last time.

The BAD took place in December 1983 and January 1984, with four separate weekly, open, public meetings to address the main issues that framed this debate. One night was devoted each to housing, to work, to culture, and to the city center. According to the organizers, between 75 to 100 people attended each of the four meetings, with most of them attending one meeting ("Brede" 1984, 2). This means a total of several hundred people attended the meetings. Organizers intended the BAD to make the case for the Wijers plan over the Holiday Inn plan one more time, and in doing so to "break through the passive and apathetic attitude of many sympathizers, by allowing them to actively participate in 'the events'" ("Wat is de Bedoeling" 1983, 1). The BAD had neither planned to focus on discussing the merits of the Entrepôtdok alternative, nor was it meant as a planning committee for the eviction or a simple "teatime in the run up to the eventual eviction" (1). The planners were still optimistic that this conflict could be resolved by presenting the stronger argument.

Few new ideas emerged from the BAD; it simply served as a place to bring the plans and ideas in support of the Wijers together in one final statement. Although the organizers claimed that this would not be a discussion about the Entrepôtdok plan, the topic came up again and again. The speakers all attacked its shortcomings: Too small to house all the projects housed in the Wijers, expenses would be several times more per person than at the Wijers, which made it additionally unattractive for both residents and users. Finally, the building was too far from the center to play the same kind of leadership role as the Wijers. No one would "happen by" the Entrepôtdok as they did the Wijers; one would have to go out of one's way to visit it, thus making it more exclusive and less open and useful to the larger community. The Broad Amsterdam Discussion was half a celebration of the Wijers and half eulogy. The final conclusion: the only alternative to the

Wijers is the Wijers itself ("Brede" 1984). No compromise was possible.

By the time the Council's offer was rejected, the decision had long been a foregone conclusion. The only ones still arguing to accept the offer did so merely as a means to save the Wijers, not to support the alternative. In the end, the movement's decision was that it was better to take nothing than to accept something that did not fit their needs, and would end up being a financial and political liability. Ironically, this space would later be the location of the squatted Kalenderpanden, which, when evicted in 2000, was seen as the last major live-work squat in the center (a sign that the definition of the "city center" had shifted over the ensuing 15 years). The Wijers had become a symbol against suburbanization, and could not be so easily replaced. The power of symbols clearly cut both ways. Although transforming the Wijers into a symbol certainly helped create momentum and support for the fight against the Holiday Inn, the final result indicates that the more powerful the symbol, the less room the movement had to maneuver at the negotiating table. With the decisions made, all that remained was the final eviction.

Wijers Out, Holiday Inn

The squatters decided against actively resisting the Wijers eviction. No barricades were built, no confrontations were planned, no stones were to be thrown. Non-violent opposition suited the underlying theme of this conflict. To "raise the cost" of the eviction by trashing the building and the neighborhood ran counter to their stated respect for the larger community. This eviction would differ from those that came before. When it finally happened in February 1984, over 1,500 squatters and sympathizers assembled in the building to protest the decision. Despite tense moments, such as when the police began to get tired of having to physically remove each squatter and resorted to force to speed up the process, the overall eviction ran much more smoothly than previous ones, particularly given the symbolic importance of the Wijers (Duivenvoorden 2000, 259-60). Although this action brought out a lot of support, at least some of the participants did not see this as a triumph for the movement, pointing out that the eviction felt like "a memorial for a movement in which they had shared joys

and sorrows, but was no longer of use to them" (ADILKNO 1994, 113). The movement was fragmenting. "The [popular] slogan, 'I'm not part of the movement, the movement is part of me,' indicated that what they had in common was not the context in which they were 'waging a city struggle,' but a sting which had remained behind in each individual" (113).

The loss of the Wijers slowed down the development of the live-work culture in the squatters' movement, but it did not stop it. Most of the building's residents and users simply relocated to other larger squats in the city, such as the Binnenpret, the Emma, the Conradstraat, and the Wilhemina Gasthuis (Duivenvoorden 2000, 261). While not all of them survived, many live-work squats were legalized throughout the city during the 1980s, guaranteeing a continued influence by the squatters on the culture of the city at large.

Squatting or Shopkeeping?

The hard-liners were unimpressed with the way the Wijers went down – without a fight. The Wijers was their second serious setback in the movement. First, they were attacked for the perceived failures at the Lucky Luijk. Now they were relegated to the margins, and their ideas and tactics dwindled in importance and influence within the movement. The hard-liners did not sit back and warmly welcome this new era of compromise because compromise did not fix the problems; in fact, compromise was the problem. A small group located in the Staatslieden neighborhood felt compelled to respond to what they viewed as a movement that had lost its way.

Theo, one of the Lucky Luijk bosses, speaking in an interview shortly after the eviction of the Wijers, stated that he had "respect for the large number of people who spent two years in order to serve a sort of signal function. They wanted to show that the city center lent itself well to a combination of living and working" ("Stelt Orde" 1984, 2). But no sooner had he acknowledged the positive aspects of the Wijers then he proceeded to criticize the way the eviction was handled. "But damn, then you see they immediately agree to leave without any physical resistance. They had no surprise waiting as a back up. Everything went on in total openness" (2). Jelle agreed: "What did we achieve with Wijers? Noth-

ing. We lost the complex and gained nothing in its place. Not even a loss for the city. At least at the Lucky Luijk, the Vondelstraat, the Groote Keijser, we cost the city millions" (2). Critics found the defense of the Wijers not only a strategic failure but it also reflected a deeper failure of the movement as a whole. Playing by the rules of convention would always be a losing proposition. The only power that the squatters had was their ability to disrupt the status quo. Without that, there could be no squatters' movement.

To rectify the problem, under the auspices of calling for the reestablishment of the city organization of squatter groups, the critics, along with other sympathizers, published a series of essays analyzing the failings of the movement and proposing a new direction for the movement. The most infamous of these writings, "*Kraken of Grutten*" ("Squatting or Shopkeeping"), launched a blistering attack on the dominant tendencies within the movement, blaming them for the squatters' declining strength and fortunes.

They looked at the successes in the movement's history for answers. The foundation of the successful movement, according to them, was confrontational politics. Squatting began by pursuing "ludic resistance" to evictions, which successfully generated a media spectacle but did little to stop the actual evictions or develop the movement. But "in 1978-79 a turning point came in response to a massacre in the Kinker district, where squatters, en masse but defenseless, got their asses kicked; the mood swung toward a more consistent defensive attitude, which was to determine the face of the Groote Keijser and of 1980" ("Kraken," 1984). These confrontations not only saved key buildings, but also "large groups of sympathizers outside the squatters' movement were mobilized by ceaseless political confrontations, without (as now) our making concessions to them first. Press and politicians came to us, not the other way around" ("Kraken" 1984). Confrontation provided the movement's primary source of power and was therefore indelibly linked with success and influence.

Politics, however, had lost its position as the basis of the movement and was replaced by work. They regarded this new emphasis on work as detrimental to the movement, stealing valuable time away from activism. "In the work culture you can work yourself to death to earn back the welfare payment you forfeited. And then you have to become legal" ("Kraken" 1984). This created "hordes of attorneys who make a career out of squat cases" ("Kraken" 1984). The growing ties and dependence on the outside world

"undermine[d] quite a bit of the fighting" ("Kraken" 1984). The movement "slid back into theater, fun and games which belied the gravity of the situation" ("Kraken" 1984). The squatter work ethic distracted them from their larger political goals, turning the movement away from tactics that work towards tactics of work, from collective to individual goals, which in turn served the goals of the status quo.

They complained that these developments also reflected a deeper emotional dysfunction within the movement. The dependence on outsiders created a corresponding dependence on the approval of outsiders. The squatters lost their emotional stability, having to constantly cope with "the unpleasant feeling that creeps over many a squatter that he or she isn't liked anymore" ("Kraken" 1984). Doing the right thing became subordinate to doing the most popular thing. Another insidious response to the growing emotional insecurity of the movement, the critics believed, was the increasing role of friendship cliques. These groups created alternative moral and political frameworks, frameworks that competed with the dominant goals of the movement. Most importantly, these intimate ties precluded and avoided serious political discussion.

> [I]n the squatters' movement, an awful habit reigns in which differences of opinion and strategy are swept away or packed away in psychological and moralizing attacks on the person concerned. Through the embarrassing lack of analytical, theoretical, and political power in the squatters' movement you are indeed practically forced to sink to personal attacks. As a reaction to that, a friendship cult has emerged: we must remain nice to each other, even at the cost of critical and illuminating discussion. This friendship safeguards you from criticism, but is ultimately a model of false solidarity. Friendship cliques slide, hand in hand, deeper into the abyss, but abandon each other in the fight against the evil outside world ("Goed Beu" 1984).

These attacks were meant to break through and marginalize friendships in the movement – some might say they were attempting to destroy the closeness fostered by such friendships. To that end, they proposed publishing a black book to

> settle accounts with all reactionary persons and groups, situations and events, beliefs and ideologies. The settling of accounts will be tough (but fair)... The black book shall systematize the abuses and expose the bastards. The black book is not created out of ill will, but is meant to sharpen the clarity. It is not a vengeful attempt to split the squatters' movement, but one of the ways to separate the wheat from the chaff ("Goed Beu" 1984).

This threat reveals their general plan: divide and conquer. They never published their proposed black book. It turns out that they had other plans on how to settle the score.

The solution was obvious for these squatters. First, the political confrontation that made the movement so successful in the past must be returned as the main strategic tool. They demanded that all squatters recognize the power of confrontation. They did not "disapprove of the alternative business activity, the use of legal aid and publicity. It just has to happen politically! ... We have to try to cast out political lines that people and groups can orient themselves to... No reciprocal ban on action, but solidarity! But also no internal lovers' spats, but militant cooperation instead" ("Kraken" 1984). Moreover, this return to politics, not friendship, offered the best cure to the emotional aspects of the movement. Confrontation places the emotional burden on the opponent by "making politicians physically feel our stress." Violence transfers emotions to others, but should itself be without emotion. As Jelle put it,

> Violence must always be used in a strategic, functional manner, never emotional. Naturally, violence stirs up the emotions, it must, however, never be the explanation for it. You must keep this separate, for it causes dangerous confusion. Activism in order to lose your anger is fundamentally unreliable. A movement that rests on emotions is itself not granted a long life ("Er was sprake" 1984).

Emotions, specifically the emotions of the movement's private sphere, were delegitimized and portrayed as antithetical to political efficacy.

Secondly, the movement must be returned to its former self. New boundaries needed to be drawn, this time more tightly to more clearly distinguish who belongs to the movement and who does not, in order to eliminate "collaboration" and "treason." The

authors promised to see this plan through to the end. "In the future, we will work hard to restore the squatters' movement" ("Kraken" 1984). The group, calling itself "the squatters' movement of Amsterdam," closed the essay with the following thought, or perhaps threat: "We will not stop with these words."

When things began to turn sour in the movement, the hardliners looked to the movement's narrative for answers. The problem as they saw it was that others were straying from the story line, a story line firmly established at their preferred point of origin. ADILKNO critiques their position for being stuck in the past, arguing that they held on so tightly to the past because any alternative would inevitably push the movement away from squatting as the primary political cause.

> They proclaimed that the moment that squatting began was its essence. Actually squatting couldn't go on at all, because if it did it could only turn into living. To preclude this, it had to repeatedly start over. The term 'squatting' had to remain vacant, and the restorers called that vacancy "politics" (ADILKNO 1994, 112).

Both sides relied on a form of totalizing discourse: on one side, the public conquers the private; on the other, the private swallows the public. They also disagreed on how best to treat time in the movement. While the "softies" wanted to live in a time that moved forward, the "heavies" wanted to stop time, to go back to the beginning. For them, to keep going forward was dangerous, as the need to "live" and create a broader culture replaced the immediate and focused need to squat.

Wijers Decline, Why Decline?

By the time of the Wijers eviction, the decline of the squatters' movement was fully observable. The Wijers' residents had attempted to reverse the decline of the movement by shifting the focus towards broader issues involving the city and community, while leaving behind the narrow politics of squatting. They introduced strategic innovations, choosing to work with the authorities from a position of compromise, not confrontation. Although many Wijers supporters claim that this was an important step forward for the movement, when we look at concrete achievements,

it is hard to ignore the fact that this new identity and strategic tack produced results similar to those they replaced. In the end, the movement had nothing tangible to show for their efforts, just one more loss and another sign of the movement's decline.

The issue of the movement's decline had already been agreed upon after the Lucky Luijk. But the dominant targets of blame following the Wijers were the very solutions offered to the earlier critiques. The hard-liners complained that the identity of the movement had fully shifted away from the original squatter identity that had been the key to all of the movement's past successes. In a critique similar to that directed at the problems of the Luijk defense, the hard-liners asked the question who the squatters had become, and they did not like the answer. Again, they saw the new identity of the movement as the identity of the enemy, only this time the enemy was not the hired thugs and the military, but rather the petite bourgeoisie and the mainstream. They argued that squatters had become the very thing they should be opposing, and in doing so, made it impossible to actively oppose them. Rather than being an alternative to the status quo, they had become a pale reflection of it.

Squatting's political identity was transforming, which the hard-liners argued made squatters incapable of effective political action. The strategic choices were driven not by practical goals, but by emotional ones: the need to be accepted by others, to get along with each other, to be happy. The anger and outrage originally fueling the movement had been replaced with the need to stay positive. Ultimately, they complained that the means and ends of squatting had been reversed. The private sphere should support and encourage political action, rather than suppressing it.

Just as the hard-liners would dismiss the mistakes of the Lucky Luijk as blunders rather than signs of a deeper malaise, the Wijers supporters, although they recognized that they had little to show for their changes, did not feel that they were left empty handed. They believed that it was critical to reinvent the movement in a new direction in order to save it. While Wijers was lost, squatters had shifted the terms of the conflict, which they considered a necessary beginning to turning the movement around.

The decline debate mostly mirrored the one that followed the Luijk eviction – the opposite strategic choices that had been made led to the opposite charges being leveled. However, one important development is worth noting: decline was becoming more perso-

nal. Although the bosses discussion criticized the actions of individual squatters, the discussion focused primarily on what was being done rather than who was doing it. The hard-liners tended to personalize this conflict even more, particularly with their calls for drawing up guidelines for who was and was not a squatter. While the post-Luijk debate focused on improper behavior, there was never a call to police the boundaries of the movement to exclude those who wanted to join. Autonomy was still being respected at that point. However, the discussion was beginning to collapse the distinction between what was being done wrong and who was doing the wrong things. This division was to increase over time, coalescing into clearly delineated factions. One assumption that all squatters tended to share was that decline was a serious problem that both should and could be solved. Decline carried a negative meaning – no one greeted it with open arms. This speaks to the remaining optimism in the movement. Despite several severe setbacks, they still believed that the movement was worth saving and it was possible to do so. This optimism, however, would not last.

Conclusion

The Wijers is long gone. Today, the Crowne Plaza Amsterdam City Centre Hotel sits at the corner of Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal and Nieuwendijk, in the heart of downtown Amsterdam. An upscale version of the Holiday Inn, it is close to many of Amsterdam's most famous attractions, such as the Anne Frank House, the Rijksmuseum, and the Van Gogh Museum. The 270-room hotel, with its extensive guest services and conference facilities, advertises itself as "the address for business and leisure" (Crown Plaza 2004) in Amsterdam. No trace of the Wijers remains. The Holiday Inn successfully pushed the Wijers out. The movement had turned itself inside out in order to save it, but with no concrete successes to show for its efforts.

Both the confrontations surrounding the Luijk and the attempts at compromise in the Wijers case basically ended in the same manner: an eviction with little to show for it and a movement in disarray. Since neither side could make a convincing case for the effectiveness of their tactics, this unresolved issue again became a point of contention. The debate over whether squatting was a cul-

tural or a political movement also emerged again at this time. This was more than just about culture or politics. It was about the role of the movement itself, and whether or not it still served a positive purpose.

This marked another important change in the movement, according to Duivenvoorden (2000). The decisions and strategies made during this conflict led to a shift of the dominant voices in the movement from a political movement challenging the housing crisis in the city, to one more focused on the creation of cultural spaces. In addition, a new tactic based on compromise rather than open confrontation became more prevalent (262).

The problems during the Luijk defense highlighted the contradictions in the movement's stance on the relation between public and private, and the changes wrought by the return to private life did little to alleviate these tensions. These models of totalization, in which either the public subsumed the private, or the private overtook the public, both reflect a misreading of the base of the power of the squatters' movement, which was the dual power contained within clearly defined public and private spheres. The radicalization that initially linked these two realms in a powerful and engaging manner ultimately destroyed this strength by erasing the boundaries that were necessary to play them off each other. Bringing these separate spheres closer together was a way to mobilize the forces, but when that proximity threatened the separation, this threatened the power of the movement as well.

This transformation did not emerge effortlessly. The radicalization narrative of the movement, because it was grounded in a particular history that emphasized the public defense of private space, was difficult to redirect. The ethic of squatting was based on a strong link between the ends and the means: squatting was seen as both the ends and the means. To transform one would thus require a corresponding change in the other. Moreover, the original narrative carried with it its own inertia. It not only supplied goals and a strategy to reach those goals, it also created the squatter identity. When the time came to defend the Wijers, the question had boiled down to whether to rely on the successful tactics of the past or to apply new strategies in this specific situation. To put it another way, squatters had presented themselves with a choice: either they defend the identity of the movement and themselves as activists or they defend the building, either the past or the future, either ideological tests or practical solutions.

This stark choice between two opposing forms of totalization highlighted the growing divide within the movement. Locked into a vision of the movement based on ever increasing levels of radicalization served to cleave this divide even deeper. The radicalization narrative buckled, but did not break. It was difficult to even think beyond it, it had been so indelibly fixed to both the identity and idea of the movement. They were tightly intertwined and radicalization had become a metonymy for the movement as a whole. Polletta (2006) explains:

> As a kind of shorthand, metonymies both assume the existence of a group for whom the shorthand makes sense and signal membership in the group. That makes them difficult to question, since to do so can be interpreted as a sign of one's ignorance and, possibly, one's insecure place in the group... It is always possible to think outside canonical story lines and the tropes on which they rest. But to articulate those alternatives is risky, whether in a public hearing or in a group of like-minded activists" (56).

Questioning the underlying narrative was much riskier than simply questioning its implementation. That is why a narrative that seems to be failing – either in its ability to deliver the goods or in its accurate description of the world – can last for so long in the face of contradictory evidence. It often takes a crisis to instigate this level of inquiry. And, with common ground between the two sides quickly disappearing, the crisis began to threaten the integrity of the greater movement. The strategy for defending the Wijers had been a test not just for what step to take next, but more importantly, for the movement's narrative, and thus for the movement itself. In the end, the Wijers did not survive. The squatters' movement, on the other hand, *did* survive, but at this point it was only barely holding on.

The cover of the book *Pearls for the Swine* by the PVK signaled just how far they were willing to go to reclaim power in the movement.

4 Death in the Movement, Death of the Movement

Hans Kok was found dead in his jail cell on Friday afternoon, October 25, 1985. Kok, a 23-year-old squatter from the Staatslieden district, had been arrested the previous night, along with 31 other activists, after a failed attempt to re-squat a building recently evicted by the police. A popular fixture in the neighborhood squatting and music scene, Kok had been severely beaten during the struggle with police while being taken into custody. The police claimed he had already been dead several hours by the time he was discovered. Official time of death: 10 a.m. The official cause was a methadone overdose (ADILKNO 1994, 125). Squatters disputed both claims, countering this explanation with one of their own: Hans Kok was a victim of police brutality and negligence. He died only because the police left him to die.

The official time and cause of death for the squatters' movement was also disputed. After the failures of Lucky Luijk and the Wijers, the movement's health was increasingly being questioned by the media and, more importantly, by the squatters themselves. By late 1985, nearly everyone agreed that the patient – the movement – was critically ill. As ADILKNO pointed out, at the time of Kok's death, "the phrase 'the squat movement is dead' had echoed in the inside media for years already" (1994, 113). However, these claims never gained much credence, because "the squatters' movement could never agree on where the terminus was" (113). Given this context, a squatter's death signaled a significant moment. Although squatters had had a long history of violent conflicts with their opponents, this was the first fatality. "He became the one waited for so many years; Hans Kok was 'the other'" (124). Kok's death rattled the movement, raising questions not just about what to do about his death, but what do to about everything else as well. Was it just an unfortunate, freak event or a tragic representation of the decline of the movement, the movement's last gasp? Or was it murder?

The death of an activist is symbolically powerful. But what does the death actually mean? Competing groups sought to promote their own interpretations. Kok's death was read in the context of the larger discussion about the decline of the movement, the narrative of its rise and fall. Narratives do more than give coherence to unfolding events, construct identity and mobilize emotions (Polletta 2006), activists also use them as a means for enforcing social control within movements (Benford 2002). Benford explains how activists construct movement "myths" that over time become the "party-line," which can be used to keep participants in line (2002, 73). This death played a central role in the development of competing narratives within the movement. The groups constructing these narratives were not only competing for the right to define and interpret Kok's death, but, more importantly, for the right to define and interpret his death in the context of defining the movement. To define the movement meant having control over the movement.

Tarrow (1998) argues that death can mobilize a movement in its developing stages, and offered examples of funeral protests in South Africa (38). But death can also have the opposite effect, underscoring the high costs of participation, thereby discouraging rather than encouraging action. The righteous anger that spurred increased activism may be outweighed by the fear of meeting the same fate or by the resignation that those in power will always prevail. How activists interpret death depends on the context. Therefore, death may operate differently at different stages of mobilization. Kok's death came at a critical moment in the narrative of the movement. After suffering a series of very large and very public setbacks, the movement had already begun to view itself as declining. Squatters found themselves at a turning point. Would this rouse the patient from its sickbed, or would it hammer the final nail in the coffin?

Establishing a relationship between Kok's time and cause of death was central to settling the issue for the squatters. It was important to know that he died when he died where he died. Likewise, squatters connected the time and cause of death to the movement's fate. To identify a particular time of death meant identifying the specific causes. When it happened would reveal why it happened. Over time, the death of Hans Kok faded into the background, as the death of the movement increasingly became the focus of the narrative. The question shifted from, "What does

Kok's death mean to the movement?" to "Who or what is responsible for the death of the movement itself?" The various answers to that question helped to solidify and strengthen the factions first born during the conflicts over the Lucky Luijk and Wijers. One group (I call them "the politicos") identified the move away from politics towards cultural production as the cause for the movement's declining fortunes, while the other faction (I call them "the culturellas") saw it as the solution, with a stronger cultural push providing a means to transcend outdated models of political action, bringing with it new forms of action and movements. A quick note on the terminology used: as my nomenclature has changed over time, from hard-liners vs. moderates, to politicos vs. culturellas. For the most part, these groups were the same. The name change, however, reflects the changing central organizing principles of the groups, from tactics to identity.

Explaining decline involves two related elements: assigning blame and drawing boundaries. Placing blame establishes a set of actions beyond the boundaries of effective action, where actions have a negative impact on the cause. It is a short trip from blaming a set of actions to blaming the group of people who performed these actions; boundaries that exclude not only the what, but also the who. Failed actions were best weeded out by eliminating the "failed" actors. The biggest threats to the movement's success used to be obvious outsiders – the government, the real estate speculators, the media. The Luijk initiated the internal search for enemies and the Wijers only intensified it. The gaze had now turned inward, and the boundaries drew tighter. Any threatening group could simply be deemed as unnecessary to the movement and written out of the story. This is what the politicos tried to do; they tried to cut the culturellas out of the movement and claim it for themselves. Erasing characters and characteristics out of the story was no easy task; it created a noticeable discontinuity, leaving gaping narrative holes in its wake. It was perhaps better to go back to the beginning and rewrite the tale, to deny not only the other group's right to participate in the movement, but also claim that they had never really fully participated in the movement anyway. The fall of the movement can thus be attributed not only to the presence of this group, but also to the misguided belief that they ever contributed anything useful to the movement. This is easier said than done. The movement's emergence was driven by the input of both cultural and political forces, a point most squatters

vowed to never forget, immortalized as it was in the movement's creation myth.

Faced with the stubbornness of institutional memories, the politicos tried another approach. If they were unable to revise the beginning, they would simply recreate it. In other words, to save this movement, they had to kill it. A new movement would then arise, Phoenix-like, as pure as the newly cleansed narrative. Activists initially resisted the notion of the death of the movement. But eventually they embraced and enabled it. They would be the mercy killers. Likewise, the culturellas, drifting away from the older forms of resistance and activism, lost their interest in saving "the movement." They also looked to the past, not to restore it, but to escape from it. The narrow radicalization narrative was too constrictive and they wanted to free themselves from its grip. Death, long in the back of everyone's minds, was now on the tip of their tongues. It began to dominate the movement's discourse. The notions of decline and the end of the movement were no longer the problem. It had become the solution.

Fortress of Solitude

The movement became increasingly fragmented over the question of the proper roles of culture and politics. But it did not have to end up this way. In fact, in the beginning the two factions had been much more intimately tied together, so much so that they were generally treated as one and the same entity. There were no different strands, there was only the squatters' movement, a worldview that was perfect during the good times, but which became increasingly deficient as things began to fall apart. But while the debate over which direction to take heated up within the movement, the reality of their mutual dependence did not disappear. Nowhere was this complex relationship more apparent than in the Staatslieden district, the stronghold of the most political faction of the movement, where a political practice was propped up and sustained by the development of a strong neighborhood squatting culture.

The eviction of the Wijers led to further trouble for the squatters' movement throughout the city – more buildings were being evicted than squatted, there were fewer active squatters, and there

was increasing confusion about the appropriate strategies (ADILKNO 1994; Duivenvoorden 2000). Only the Staatslieden district seemed able to weather the storm effectively. The neighborhood is located in Oud West, just to the west of the Jordaan. Originally developed for the working classes in the late 19th century, by 1970 it had fallen into a state of considerable disrepair. In his history of the area, Adriaenssen (1996), a former squatter in the neighborhood, argues that "it had been written off as dead. The City Council practiced a politics of active euthanasia" (1). Despite its neglect of the area and its residents, the Council had already come up with urban renewal plans for the area. Their goal was to demolish the older buildings and replace them with new ones, to reinvent it as another Bijlmer (the modern "neighborhood of the future" built in the 1960s to the south of the city). These were long-term plans, however. Until then, the neighborhood was left to rot.

This less-than-benign neglect created the perfect environment for squatters. They "saved" decaying buildings and dilapidated neighborhoods, bringing them "back to life." They flocked to the area in great numbers, and, over time, the neighborhood boasted one of the densest, most active populations of squatters in the city, with some estimates at 90% of the available housing in 1982 being squatted (Duivenvoorden 2000, 264). A strong cultural foundation emerged out of this population, meeting most of the daily needs of the residents, including tool shops, cinemas, performance spaces, daycare centers, pirate radio stations, publishing houses, services for immigrants, health clinics, annual neighborhood festivals, and much more (Adriaenssen 1996, 83-93). Actually, this list of enterprises compares quite favorably to those in the Wijers. However, the strongest criticism of the developments around the Wijers had originated right here. Why? Two reasons: emphasis and control. While both culture and politics may have been necessary for the success of the movement, the real question was which one should be subordinate to the other. Moreover, the power to make this decision was up for grabs, and the politicos wanted it.

Life in the Staatslieden district encouraged thinking in terms of power and control. Squatters more or less dominated the area. Doubts about the increasing political radicalization of the movement rarely surfaced here. There were few reasons to question its effectiveness. This neighborhood was Exhibit A that their strategy

worked: squatters had revived a dying part of the city, had reshaped it in their own image, and now controlled the outcome. Strength and the unwillingness to compromise with the authorities were the hallmarks of the Staatslieden success story. If others failed in other parts of town, it was not because they were too radical, but because they were not radical enough.

Opportunities to compromise with the authorities, however, seldom arose; the government proved either unwilling or unable to exert control over the neighborhood. Squatters were more than ready to fill this power vacuum (Smeets 1982). The Staatslieden squatters stood defiantly in open conflict with the municipal housing department, virtually replacing them with their own methods of distributing housing in the neighborhood (Duivenvoorden 2000). Gualthérie van Weezel, a member of the Tweede Kamer, the Second House of Parliament, visited the neighborhood in October 1984, and was clearly shaken up by what he found.

> The Staatslieden district is actually no longer a part of the kingdom of the Netherlands. Authority has ceased to exist there; the laws of the squatters reign. Because of safety concerns, the police no longer patrol there. What I experienced there was, in fact, an American situation. There are places in New York where the police are afraid to get out of their cars. They are afraid that someone will be armed, and that people on both sides will be killed (Duivenvoorden 2000, 266).

The political authorities began to strike back. They resented the increasing political autonomy and radical activism of the neighborhood. It reflected poorly on their ability to govern the city. To break the back of the movement meant aiming for its backbone: the Staatslieden district. The officials made plans to loosen the squatters' hold on the neighborhood and to force the citywide movement into submission.

The new mayor, Ed van Thijn, made it a central policy of his administration to clean up the "squatting problem," setting his sights squarely on the Staatslieden neighborhood. When he visited the neighborhood to survey the situation in December of 1984, he fared even worse than his fellow politician. In the days preceding his visit, squatter groups had organized a tribunal to charge the mayor with crimes against the city and the neighborhood (Adriaenssen 1996; Duivenvoorden 2000). Upon his arrival,

he was met by a large group of protesting squatters and residents, who unceremoniously ran him out of the neighborhood, insulting and spitting at him on his way out. The squatters had no intention of ceding their authority to the city government. They had worked too hard for control of the neighborhood to let it be taken away from them. Van Thijn thought otherwise. He proclaimed that "A small group controls the Staatlieden, which was illustrated by the disturbance during my visit. Now, we must ask how this small group can be dealt with. Somehow they must be broken" (quoted in Duivenvoorden, 2000, 276-7). Four days after his visit, he proposed a new police precinct, the 8th, whose primary task would be to deal with the "Staatslieden problem" (Adriaenssen 1996, 104). The increased police presence in the area was a clear statement from the mayor that the forces of "law and order" were serious about reestablishing control over this part of the city. The crackdown began immediately. Evictions rose dramatically, undercutting the squatters' sense of control in the neighborhood (Duivenvoorden 2000, 277). In this time of growing repression, little support came from the rest of Amsterdam's residents. The attack on Van Thijn merely clarified the image the public had of out-of-control squatters who had no respect for the law or their fellow citizens. The Staatslieden district was becoming progressively more isolated, not only from the rest of the city, but from their fellow squatters as well.

Kok Fights: Death in the Movement

The time came to take a stand. The growing frustration of the Staatslieden squatters culminated with the October 24, 1985 eviction of the second-floor apartment at Schaepmanstraat 59. A mother and her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter living in the apartment had been negotiating with the city with the hopes of legalizing their place. But negotiations broke down and the police evicted the family. Local squatters found this "anti-social" eviction particularly harsh, since the unwritten guidelines between squatters and the city forbade evicting families with children during the winter months (ADILKNO 1994, 118). Squatters argued that this eviction once more exhibited how "the city chooses violence instead of a social policy for the poorest in the city" ("A-sociale" 1985). This aggression would not stand.

A large group of squatters assembled quickly at the local squatters' bar de Rioolrat (the Sewer Rat) and decided to immediately re-squat the apartment, despite the fact that the police still occupied the building. Armed with table legs, crowbars, and whatever other weapons they could find, they knocked the door down and, after a brief struggle, managed to drive the police out of the building. The re-squat was hard fought: during the confrontation one squatter was shot in the arm by the police. This was the first time the police had actually shot and wounded a squatter in the course of a squatting action. Still, the squatters successfully reclaimed the building. Their victory, however, was sweet but short. Before long, the police returned, this time with reinforcements. They surrounded the building, ordering everyone to evacuate. The 32 squatters found inside were all arrested (ADILKNO 1994, 118-20).

The police had won the battle, but the squatters were not yet ready to concede the war. The following day, 200 squatters attempted a second re-squat of the building, but were turned back by an equally large group of riot police. When they retreated to regroup, word came over the radio about Hans Kok's death. The initial response to the death, however, was not increased energy, but dejection. "It was like a bomb had dropped on the square," recalls squatter Piet (ADILKNO 1994, 121). "You'd expect that the reaction to the news would be a huge outburst of rage, but instead it seemed like people didn't know what to do anymore. The motivation to go on with the re-squat had disappeared in a flash" (121). Death must be interpreted; it does not necessarily lend itself to a singular reading. The first news of Kok's death offered no obvious tactical response. In fact, it short-circuited the impending violent confrontation. A broader interpretation would only arise with time, and even then, it would become the subject of contention, rather than a basis of solidarity.

The first interpretation came quickly, and it was unanimous: a furious reaction to the injustice of Hans Kok's "murder." Anticipating violence, the riot police infiltrated the neighborhood. By the time the squatters regained their composure and had processed the events, this increased show of force by the police precluded any further direct confrontations. Instead, there were a series of "lightning strikes" that night. Small groups made their way through the city, attacking specific targets. The squatters, inflamed by anger, set the city alight. Fires burned across the city, at the

traffic police station, municipal offices, a tour boat, city hall, and even several police cars (ADILKNO 1994, 123; "Tot," 1985). Windows all over Amsterdam were shattered. By morning, over 40 targets had been hit, and the destruction was substantial: squatters had inflicted close to 1.2 million guilders of damage (over $700,000 in 1985) on the city (ADILKNO 1994, 123). The following night, similar attacks occurred throughout the city, now spreading to other Dutch cities like Nijmegen, Utrecht, Zwolle, Haarlem, as well as the German centers of squatting activism, Hamburg and Berlin. The Staatslieden district, by contrast, remained relatively calm ("Wat is er" 1985).

This moment increased the sense of unity within the movement. After years of infighting and discord, everyone could rally around the outrage over Kok's death. Paul remembers:

> Suddenly everyone seemed to have the same kind of click. Everyone had the idea, now we'll use the ultimate means, just before guns anyway: mollies [Molotov cocktails]. Even people who were generally moderate said, now it's gone too far, this has to stop. Militancy had suddenly set in. That night was really exceptional... The fear threshold was gone. It didn't matter if you got picked up either. I think there was really a feeling of justification, like, I'm within my rights. You can bust me but it doesn't matter a fuck anyway. Normally, you don't set cop cars on fire in front of the police station, you think it over a couple of weeks, how you'll go about it. That night it happened spontaneously, wham, I ran into people Saturday who said, I thought we were the only ones who would do something so heavy. But everyone did it (ADILKNO 1994, 123)

Whatever their previous differences had been over tactics, squatters now shared a sense of indignation over the death of one of their own. These shared feelings transcended the standard considerations that went into choosing tactics; people simply acted "spontaneously." The eruption of spontaneous violence at the Vondelstraat was the point at which the emergence of the squatters' movement became complete. Would this next round of spontaneous violence bring unity to the movement?

This unity was based on those in the movement "assigning a series of fragmentary events the same mass symbol: flames and tinkling glass" (125), which carried over into the next day. Thou-

sands of supporters showed up outside the police headquarters for a demonstration against the "murder" of Hans Kok. They had planned a peaceful rally, to lay flowers in front of the station-house to commemorate Kok's life. The police, fearing that things might become violent, tried to control the protestors and ended up provoking a fight. Their attempts to quickly disperse the crowd led first to resistance, then to conflict (125). The situation was heating up quickly. Kok's funeral did little to defuse the tension. He was buried in his hometown of Velsen, a town just west of Amsterdam, on October 29. To avoid a large public turnout, the funeral was held at 8 o'clock at night with little advance notice ("Wat is er" 1985). This unannounced, late-night burial service only further fueled the increasing theories of a police cover-up.

The fight over Hans Kok's death was initially a simple fight between squatters and the authorities. He was a casualty in the battle over the control of the Staatslieden district, over the question of whether the government could tame the radical elements of the movement. This battle hinged on how blame for the tragedy would be assigned. If Kok was, as the authorities claimed, nothing but a junkie, who overdosed in his cell after being arrested for fighting with the police, then the authorities could portray squatters as marginal drains on society, whose "activism" was little more than selfish opportunism. Such an explanation would further marginalize and criminalize the movement, a path they had already traveled down a considerable distance. On the other hand, if the police were indeed responsible, squatters could make a better case that they were being unfairly repressed by those in power, who would stop at nothing to crush anyone who dared challenge them. This conflict spawned a new conflict. Rather than continuing to rebuild the squatters' sense of unity and solidarity, the struggle to understand Kok's death merely deepened the same rifts in the movement, however briefly they had been temporarily forgotten.

Death and the Movement

The politicos attempted to translate the short-term emotional and unifying response to Kok's death into a longer-term remobilization of the movement. In other words, they wanted to exploit the

symbolic power of death to give squatting a shot in the arm, to transform the spontaneity of the moment into a renewed vitality of the movement. Beyond the larger movement, they were feeling increasingly desperate about the future of their own neighborhood. Duivenvoorden (2000) explains that they felt pressured both from the stick of the increased police presence and from the carrot of more efforts by the authorities to legalize buildings in the neighborhood. Entire housing blocks were purchased and renovated – including locations that had formerly been squatted. Squatters were being legalized en masse and offered rental contracts at bargain prices (280). The squatters' office hours in the neighborhood, founded in 1976, had for a decade been the most active location in the city, seeing approximately 100 people every month who were seeking assistance with squatting in the neighborhood. By this time, however, that number was beginning to dwindle dramatically (280). Even during the most threatening of times for the movement as a whole, the Staatslieden hard-liners could take comfort in their own power and prospects for survival. But they were no longer the exception to movement decline; they now followed the rule. With their own position feeling threatened, they leapt at whatever means they could to turn the movement around.

They attacked the police and City Council for covering up the "murder" of Hans Kok. The day Kok died, the citywide squatters group formally demanded an independent investigation of the death using doctors appointed by the squatters (ADILKNO 1994, 125). The police rejected this demand. At the time, this decision carried few negative political repercussions for authorities, since very few people outside of squatter circles questioned the official version of the story. Therefore, the squatters endeavored to reframe this as an example of the larger problem of police brutality, arguing that Kok was only the most recent victim of a system that had experienced 31 other deaths in jail cells in the previous five years. They compared the situation to authoritarian governments in other parts of the world, seeking to provoke more outrage among the general population. A poster was put up all over town that pointed out that, "When people die in South Africa everyone is indignant. When it happens here, you couldn't care less!" ("Vermoord" 1985). Remco Campert published a poem in one of the major newspapers, *Het Parool*, entitled "Small Chile" ("Klein Chili" 1985), in which he compared Koks' death and the cover up to

tactics used in Chile by the Pinochet government. The squatters refused to allow Kok's death to be forgotten, and hoped that by linking it to problems that most Dutch citizens did care about, they could maintain their momentum.

The desire to get at the truth was widespread throughout the movement, but the Staatslieden squatters pushed the issue the hardest. Their most serious actions took place during the commemoration of the one-year anniversary of his death. In the days leading up to the anniversary, activists threw smoke bombs and paint bombs through the windows of offices and homes of those they identified as the chief culprits: the official who had initially ordered the eviction of the apartment, the government doctor who had treated Kok, the justice officer who had handled the case, and the commissioner who "spread the first lies about Hans Kok being a junkie" ("Laatste Ontwikkelingen" 1986). These attacks were just the prelude to the larger events being planned for the anniversary. On October 25, 1986, between 2,500 and 3,000 people demonstrated against the death of Hans Kok ("Laatste Ontwikkelingen" 1986; Adriaenssen 1996, 112; "Doden Herdenking" 1985). The march began at Schaepmanstraat, where he had been originally arrested, and proceeded through the Staatslieden district to the police station. This demonstration rapidly turned ugly, like the one from a year earlier, although this time the squatters initiated the violence by pelting the police station with stones and paint bombs and smashing more than 50 windows. The ME responded in kind, attacking and arresting the protestors. During the scuffle, the flowers that had been laid to commemorate Kok were trampled (ADILKNO 1994, 128).

During the demonstration, a poster circulated amongst the crowd. The poster listed the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of nearly 40 individuals involved in the Kok case, including the mayor and the chief of police. Across the top of the poster ran the headline "You murdered Hans Kok; we're going to get you." To sustain the energy and unity of the initial response to Kok's death, the poster makers wanted to fan the flames, supplying a list of tangible, attackable enemies. Whereas the initial anger generated by Kok's death led to a direct effort to identify enemies to channel this anger towards, at this point the goal was to provide a set of enemies in the hopes that it could reproduce the anger necessary to hold the movement together.

The police responded to this escalation with one of their own. Treating the making and display of the poster as a serious crime, they set up a special task force to catch its creators. They swept through the neighborhood looking for posters. Homes and businesses displaying the posters in their windows, such as the squatter bars de Guldene Koevoet (the Golden Crowbar) and de Rioolrat, were raided. Posters were taken down and destroyed, and the residents were frequently taken down to the police station and threatened with arrest if they put the poster back up. Jack, one of the leaders of the Lucky Luijk re-squat and a prominent player among the Staatslieden politicos, was attacked on the street and arrested for his suspected role in the creation of the poster (*De Stad* 1996), as were many others, including some who were not even active squatters, but mere sympathizers. Doors were broken down, homes were trashed, and activists were beaten – all without search warrants. The police intimidation tactics continued into early 1987, with 23 people arrested for possession of the poster, although no one was ever charged with any crimes (Adriaenssen 1996, 113).

Despite the authorities' efforts to silence the squatters' calls for an independent investigation, the calls grew louder over time, as others joined the squatters to voice their concerns. The official story did not hold up well under scrutiny. The mainstream press requested more information from the police, exposing problems involving police conduct before and after the death. Ultimately, an independent commission was established to investigate the case, and the findings, which became public in December 1986, in fact, supported some of the squatters' claims. In particular, the investigation uncovered a number of examples of negligence on the part of the police and the government's doctors (ADILKNO 1994, 126). Furthermore, it also found that the police and city officials were aware of these problems and had actively concealed them from the public.

The release of the investigation's findings was simultaneously both a victory *and* a loss for the movement. A victory, because they had successfully forced an investigation the authorities did not want. Moreover, many of the findings, while not fully supporting the squatter version of "murder" by the police, at least implicated the police and doctors in the death. It was now official. Kok did not die just because he was a drug user, although he was still portrayed as a junkie. The police could have saved him but chose

not to. Nevertheless, no one was ever prosecuted for their role in the events ("Laatste Ontwikkelingen," 1986). But this victory was also a loss. It was the loss of control over the issue. No longer were the squatters free to construct their own version of events, the independent investigation had "made the cause of death a problem for the experts" (ADILKNO 1994, 126). It turned out to be the loss of a unifying goal. With this goal accomplished, no other objectives had the unifying power to hold everyone together, leaving the movement to quickly slide back into its earlier divisions. It was the loss of the movement itself. A movement that found itself once again in the outpouring of rage of the loss of Hans Kok and then in the anger at the cover up, now could not seem to find itself at all. The movement was lost, but not everyone mourned this loss.

The Movement is Dead! Long Live Movement!

The hope that the Kok controversy would serve as a long-term shot in the arm for the movement was not universally shared. One group saw the events not as signs of rejuvenation, but rather as marking the end of the movement. ADILKNO (1994), themselves squatters, saw the death of Hans Kok as the official death warrant of the squatters' movement:

> In Hans Kok the squat movement mourned for itself, for its own standstill, for its own death...[Kok's death] was not the only cause for sorrow; that the chronicle of the squatters' movement ended here also came as a relief. The terminus which had been awaited for years had finally been reached and everyone knew it. Two years after his death, Hans Kok was no longer collectively commemorated (128).

Whatever energy had been created by the Kok case would be impossible to sustain in the long term, and, indeed, for this group, it did not need to be sustained.

Besides the convenient rhetorical connection between the death of an activist and the death of the movement, why identify this event as such a significant moment? For the culturellas, Kok's death underlined the ultimate failure of the hard line, political side of squatting. In a movement dedicated to the improvement

of everyday life, dying as an activist's tactic served to negate these goals. The creativity once offered by this kind of radical politics had reached a literal dead end. New ideas had to come from new places if squatting's creativity was to be resuscitated. Kok's death further reinforced the notion that the authorities would always control the means of violence, and that they were willing to exercise those powers to maintain the authority of the status quo. The realization of death as a real possibility changed the activists' battleground. The war metaphor now hit too close to home. Kok's death meant that political activism "had lost its radical naiveté for good" (127).

The death of the movement had been detached from its decline. In fact, instead of being part of a logical, linear progression, culturellas now framed them as opposites: The movement's death may have stopped the decline, but it hadn't stopped the movement. The death of the movement was seen in positive terms as something that liberated activists from its tired politics. Advocating the movement's death is not the same as calling for the end to activism. Geert Lovink and Jojo van der Spek, members of the ADILKNO collective and journalists for the squatter paper *Bluf!*, in 1986, wrote about the need to make a distinction between movement and *the* movement. To them, the movement was represented by the politics of the "classic" period of the movement, which emerged out of the confrontations at the Groote Keijser and the Vondelstraat. "The self-image of what the 'movement' had become quickly existed by the grace of the confrontation 'with the enemy'" (1986, 23). According to them, this identity through confrontation created the movement that could only see itself in terms of being a reaction against the established order, a reaction summed up in slogans such as "Total Resistance," "Squatting is Now War," and "Your Legal Order is Not Ours." While this type of identity was useful and effective during the movement's infancy, over time, it lost its raison d'être. Moreover, it stifled innovations that might have better addressed the evolving situation.

They promoted movement over *the* movement. Lovink and Van der Spek believed that movement should be "incomprehensible to the power machine" (5), something that could not so easily be coopted the way straightforward political activism could. What, then, is movement? Movement is movements. They recommended a multitude of voices making up the oppositional culture that had

emerged out of the squatters' movement. In turn, they wanted more, newer, and more diverse tactics legitimized within the activist world. The movement had become stale because it had become so predictable and narrowly focused. Radicalization led it down a single path, from which it could not escape. Squatting as the only means to social change had reached a dead end; it was time to try new ideas and strategies. They called for a shift away from pure politics, at least in the narrowly defined way that had become dominant within the movement. Opposition existed not only in the streets, but also in words, in art, in relationships. Now that the government had reestablished control over the streets, it was time to move elsewhere.

The development of the extra-parliamentary left in the Netherlands reflects this shift in focus. Although squatting and the squatters' movement were still the stars of the show, the stage was becoming increasingly crowded with supporting actors. Anti-military groups, anti-Apartheid activists, environmentalists, feminists, and many other causes, organizations, and activists sprouted up around the squatters' movement (Duivenvoorden 2000). At first they supplemented it, but over time, they began to supplant it. The changing content of *Bluf!* reveals the decreased attention being paid to squatting per se. *Bluf!* was first published in 1982, replacing the *Kraakkrant* as the main squatters' paper. Although its focus was always broader than the exclusively squatter-oriented *Kraakkrant*, *Bluf!*, nevertheless, in the beginning devoted the vast majority of its coverage to squatting and squatters' movement related issues. By 1986, however, coverage of squatting issues had decreased considerably and had been replaced by other forms of activism. The squatters' movement was in the midst of a transformation, subsumed under what was called the *tegenbeweging* (the counter-movement). Squatting still played a significant role, supplying space, resources, and skills to other causes, but was it now just one movement among many.

Thus, from this perspective, Kok's death signaled the larger death of the movement. In turn, the death of the movement opened up possibilities for new forms of activism suppressed by the norms and narratives of the squatters' movement. To argue that the movement was dead was just another way of reorienting and redefining the identity of squatters. Nowhere in this argument is there any reference to the death of squatting. Squatting still offered an important way to take control over one's environ-

ment, but its role had changed. It was no longer simply a means to overthrow the basic power structures of society and so squatting offered a means to create creative spaces instead. When the movement emerged in the late 1970s, these two goals were two sides of the same squatted building. Now, this tie had been severed, perhaps irreparably.

To put this in terms of narrative, movement created the space for a multiplicity of narratives, while the movement was fixed to one story line. Lovink and Van der Spek (1986) argued that the movement was never able to effectively criticize the myth that had grown up around itself, choosing instead to reinforce this myth. While this was successful in linking together various groups, actions, and symbols into one movement, the narrative "never evolved beyond a list of demands and DIY ethic" (24). This myth prevented the movement from developing a political analysis that would make new forms of activism possible.

> Belief in their own strength was too shaky. Thus, actions in which violence was used could never be argued about. It is revealed through the phrase "we stand with our backs against the wall," with which one's own offensive already is ruled out of the argument by definition (24).

When the old narrative no longer worked as effectively as it once did, it was time for new narratives to be introduced. But this position argued against simply replacing an old narrative with a new one. The content of the narrative itself was not the only issue; it was the single-minded, narrowly focused, and inflexible form that hampers the squatters' mobility. In other words, narrative was not the problem, but rather the single narrative. Let a thousand narratives bloom.

Restoring the Movement

While the culturellas argued that the death of the movement had already occurred, the politicos actively resisted this conclusion. They had provided the driving force behind the push to keep the death of Hans Kok in the public spotlight and as a rallying point within the movement. However, with the independent investigation now wrapped up, the issue had run its course and it was no

longer useful as a mobilizing factor. The politicos denied that the movement was dead, but they certainly recognized its declining health. Critiques from the political hard-liners had been on the table since at least the struggle over the Wijers. The fact that the movement needed to be mobilized around a case of police brutality and negligence and not around the housing issue was yet another sign that it had lost its way. Their goal was to lead others – the wayward flock – back to political action.

The culturellas argued for movement – a loose collection of causes, tactics, and activists unconstrained by the history of the past decade of squatting, which granted the freedom to resist social power however activists felt necessary or pleasurable. For the politicos, this was simply unacceptable. Squatting, or more generally, social activism, on its own does not necessarily lead to meaningful social change. To do so, it must have direction, a direction supplied by the movement, a direction that *creates* the movement. It needed a narrative, and it already had one that had been proven effective. The movement was founded on and united by the narrative forged at the beginning. If Hans Kok's death had inspired a reevaluation of the movement's status, it was not to be seen as a way to twist the plot in a new direction or breaking it into a million pieces, but rather to return to the beginning, to a time when squatters worked together, to a time when the movement worked. The difference between the two groups was the difference between multiplicity and singularity, between open movements and the closed movement.

The independent investigation's findings closed the door to one murder mystery – Hans Kok's death – but another case remained unsolved: the (attempted) murder of the squatters' movement. The politicos believed the movement was not simply dying; it was being killed. The attacks from outside offered obvious suspects. The mayor's new policies, the police crackdown, and the media attacks all had taken their toll on the movement. But besides the usual suspects, new ones could be added to the list. The killer was not simply one of "them"; the killer walked among "us."

October 1986 marked the second, and last, formal commemoration of Kok's death (ADILKNO 1994, 125). The politicos used this event to try to help the movement back up on its feet. But with the independent commission's findings, the momentum that the Kok controversy had lent the movement dissipated. Saving the movement would require a new focus. That same month,

a new issue emerged – activist betrayal – and the politicos grabbed it as the next big tool to invigorate their efforts to revitalize the squatters' movement. During an eviction the same week as the one-year anniversary of Hans Kok's death, several squatters on a rooftop tossed some Molotov cocktails at the police. Their efforts were in vain, as the police successfully evicted the building, arresting all of its residents. Arrested squatters were generally released quickly after being processed, but five of the arrested were detained for an extended period of time because they had been charged with throwing the Molotov cocktails, based on a statement given by one or more of the other arrestees (ADILKNO 1994, 188). Squatters ratting on other squatters was a new development, an egregious violation of squatting protocol. Something had to be done.

The new issue of betrayal seemed like a winner, as it also generated powerful feelings within the movement. After all, the only thing worse than being a police informant, by movement standards, was death itself. The legal rights of squatters were protected in large part by their ability to remain anonymous (Wietsma et al. 1982, 113), so any betrayal of privacy put other individual squatters in danger. Squatters' anonymity, and the strength of the movement, depended upon the expectation of support and trust from fellow squatters. Betrayal within the movement was therefore viewed as a very serious offense.

The politicos framed the problem in a familiar way. Barriers – the same barriers the culturella faction had hoped to dismantle and get rid of – were being breached. At the Lucky Luijk, it was the threat of the hired gang outside the door. With Hans Kok, it was the authorities overstepping their bounds by ratcheting up the intensity of their tactics. In this case, the violated boundaries dealt with the question of who was really a part of the movement, and whether someone who was not fully committed to the "rules of engagement" should be allowed to remain in the movement. While the issues are similar in many respects, they differ in one significant way. Whereas the Lucky Luijk eviction and Hans Kok's death both put the spotlight on external repression and abuses of power, the question of betrayal demanded that the movement look inward to analyze its own problems. Mobilizing around the Luijk and Kok was based on an indictment of "them"; to fight betrayal involved an indictment of "us." Or, more accurately, it was an attempt to find and eliminate the "them" who lived among "us." In

any case, the boundaries needed to be redrawn. Borders needed to be reestablished. Barricades needed to be re-imposed. The politicos feared that without these measures, the movement could no longer offer safe haven from infiltration and betrayal. The boundaries had been set too widely, too inclusively. They needed to be drawn tighter, like a noose around the neck of those who had betrayed the movement.

The informants had to be identified. After the arrests, those involved in the case formed a group to find out who had talked to the police. This group was soon taken over by a small group of politicos. They introduced a larger agenda than simply identifying the informants ("Hier en Daar" 1987). This newly politicized group, called the OZG (*Onderzoeksgroep*, or investigation group), was established in order to investigate all of the facts of the case, and determine the proper response. Identifying the individuals involved proved a relatively simple process; the real issue had more to do with the issue of appropriate punishment. This touched off a substantial debate about trust and allegiance within the movement. While most of the squatters used this event to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of cooperating with the authorities, the investigation group had established other goals. ADILKNO was comprised of outspoken critics of the politicos and they had no desire to

> spark discussion, but to devise criteria for who was and who wasn't allowed to be an activist...From the beginning they required anyone calling themselves a squatter to take a stand either for or against Krijn [pseudonym for one of the alleged informants, Timo] as a symbol of the traitor mentality. Every individual had to clearly declare that traitors must be "isolated, driven away, and eliminated" (ADILKNO 1994, 193).

After having tried a number of other strategies to turn the movement around in the past, the politicos of the OZG now settled on this one litmus test, which sought to eliminate betrayal by purging the traitors and their sympathizers.

They went immediately to Timo's house to confront him.

> On Sunday, November 2nd, a group of "hot-tempered individuals" pushed Krijn's [Timo's] housemates to throw him out. On Wednesday the 5th, they were phoned with an ultimatum: "Krijn

> [Timo] has to have fucked off by Saturday, November 8th, at 8:00 p.m., or else the house will be vacated by the 'city' squat movement" (ADILKNO 1994, 193).

Ultimately, Timo left the movement and moved out of the city, scared off by the many threatening phone calls and visits (193). He knew he could never be safe in Amsterdam, let alone within the Amsterdam squatters' movement. Even with Timo gone, his former squat did not escape their wrath – smashed windows served as a warning not to make the same mistake he had ("Hier en Daar" 1987). Most of the squatters considered this case as fully resolving the bigger issue. Their goals were to return back to normal and get on with their lives. But the OZG had other ideas; the normal state of affairs was, for them, the true source of the problem in the first place. As their critics pointed out, "Obviously this was not just about Timo, but about using betrayal as a purification method for the movement" ("Hier en Daar" 1987). The OZG viewed betrayal as a symptom of deeper problems, which hobbled the movement in its efforts to reestablish its political power and effectiveness.

Running Timo out of town was easy enough, if that were all there was to it. But there was more to be done. The reaction of the rest of the movement surprised the OZG. After the events "a very strange thing happened: there was no discussion about the incident: the only thing people were discussing was the investigation group itself – the methods and integrity of this group" ("Betrayal" 1987). That is, the heroes of the story – the members of the OZG – were being treated as villains. That there would be more sympathy and understanding for police informants than activists committed to improving the movement exposed just how far things had slipped in the movement.

> Betrayal is accepted and encouraged; people who want to act against this find themselves under attack by a barrage of accusations and are vomited from the movement. The A'dam [Amsterdam] activist movement only verbally disapproved of the betrayal, but they had, in fact, protected it ("Betrayal" 1987).

To address this problem, the group worked to keep the movement focused on the issue of betrayal. But no one else seemed interested.

This silence spoke volumes to the OZG. This was not simply an expression of a lack of interest, it revealed that no one else had the courage to solve the problem, and therefore, they were in fact also a source of that same problem.

> To provoke a discussion about betrayal in the political movement was harder than we thought it would be. Betrayal is still protected by the very people whose only political pretension is to keep up and maintain their cliques and an alternative cultural lifestyle under the auspices of the political movement ("Betrayal" 1987).

The squatters' movement had become a "breeding ground for betrayal" because of its "lack of principles, loyalty and solidarity," and, most importantly, the loss of its "political consciousness" ("Betrayal" 1987). According to the OZG, it was more important in the squatters' movement of 1986 to be friends than it was to be a political activist.

> A'dam [Amsterdam] political activists keep silent: activists want to stick to an impossible cooperation, e.g., with the traitors and their cronies. A'dam political activists keep silent: above all, people want to maintain the cliquishness and inbreeding, and people are too afraid and too lazy to act upon nasty incidents. There is a taboo because of the deep emotional links and sentimental relationships between activists, traitors, and the friends of traitors ("Betrayal" 1987).

Standing up against betrayal could easily disturb various friendships that the apolitical nature of the movement nurtured, which, in turn, fostered this growing political apathy. The real danger was not Timo or, more generally, betrayal. The real danger was much more insidious: friends. Earlier, during the Luijk and Wijers evictions, the positive emotions of intimacy were labeled impediments to quick and decisive action, since everyone's feelings had to be considered and every voice had to be heard. Now, these same feminized and demonized emotions were more than just some strategic obstacle, they were the root cause of the moral and political collapse of the movement. Friends became the new enemies.

In this kind of passive and non-responsive environment, the OZG believed they needed to force the issue and stimulate the kinds of discussion they sought. In mid-December 1986, they

plastered the town with posters bearing the headline "Caution: Traitors!" The text read that three activists had been jailed for months because other activists had betrayed them, and that they now faced the possibility of more serious legal actions. Their solution was "isolating, chasing away, and eliminating" those who could not be trusted. What form this purge would take is suggested by their reference to revolutionary groups. Citing the examples of Northern Ireland, Nicaragua, and South Africa, they argued that traitors should be dealt with through violent retribution, "for example, a gunshot to the knees, a gunshot in the neck, or a necklace [a tactic popular in South Africa, which involved placing a tire around a person's neck and setting it on fire]." There was no room for negotiation or tolerance, since "collaboration and betrayal make activism impossible." After all, the OZG saw this as war.

No abstract discussion on betrayal within the movement, this poster was a call to arms to act against the traitors and the culture of betrayal. Consequently, the posters included the photos, names, and addresses of the two police informants identified in the Okeghemstraat incident, similar to the "We will get you" posters distributed following Hans Kok's death. Next to these two photos was a third, or, rather, an empty space for a third traitor. Beneath the empty space was a caption that warned, "Name and photo to follow" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 286). They invited the reader to imagine whose face belonged in that space. They knew other traitors, or potential traitors, were out there. Could it be you? Naming names, condemned by the politicos when used in other instances, was entirely acceptable when attacking their own enemies. And this attack was merely the first; others would surely follow.

The OZG found the traditional avenues of debate and discussion closed to them. This was partly the result of the many people who condemned their actions and marginalized them from their living spaces. But they blamed it primarily on the widespread problems throughout the movement. In an explanation published shortly after the posters were posted – distributed in Dutch, German, and English versions – they argued that the institutions formerly available to confront these issues had disappeared. Now "cliques of friends are the one and only political link between activists" ("Betrayal" 1987). Without proper institutions, individuals must act on their own accord. Since others in the movement do not dare take action against traitors, and because "people al-

ready see themselves in the open place on the poster. This paranoia can be explained in only two ways: either they have a bad conscience or a lack of conscience, knowledge, and political motivation" ("Betrayal" 1987). In the eyes of the OZG, fellow squatters did nothing because they were either politically impotent, lacking both a framework for interpreting events and plans to respond to them, or were overcome by their own sense of guilt for being accessories to the crimes. More often than not, for the OZG, they were guilty of both. No movement problems can be resolved because it is worse to hurt someone's feelings than it is to hurt the movement's prospects.

The OZG made a critical distinction between betrayal and simply squealing to the cops, which they defined as providing information about actions without naming names. Squealing, while never condonable, is sometimes difficult to avoid. Nevertheless, people would be highly unlikely to want to collaborate with squealers in the future. Betrayal, on the other hand, is an entirely different animal, a much more serious breach of trust and safety. "It is different when somebody identifies people from pictures, then asks for police protection and denies his betrayal to his fellow activists" ("Betrayal" 1987). This difference, they argued, should be clear to everyone in the movement. That it was not clear was because "activist groups in Holland have taken on the character of Boy Scout groups: political activism has become a game; therefore, betrayal is nothing more than 'squealing'" ("Betrayal" 1987). Other activists were so confused by this time that they were no longer able to see the forest for the trees. Political seriousness had been traded in for cultural frivolity, which privileged feeling good over political efficacy.

The solutions were obvious, and the choices simple, at least for the OZG.

> It is time to make a choice between just two things: either supporting betrayal or tackling it. There is no alternative. People who prefer not to decide (and so never will) have assumed a detached attitude... Maintaining one's distance equals one's departure. There will always be a group of people who will tackle betrayal and who will try to defertilize the breeding ground of betrayal. Action groups and activists who tolerate betrayal and traitors don't take themselves seriously. For us it is quite impossible to cooperate with these people or these groups. However, it is neces-

> sary to recognize traitors and their friends to be able to continue the isolation and elimination process ("Betrayal," 1987).

Turning the movement around to regain its political focus required isolating and eliminating the negative elements at work within the movement. Like Timo, these people should be kicked out of all squatted buildings and kicked out of the squatters' movement altogether. The political goals of the movement, not friendships and emotional ties, must determine where the boundaries around it were to be drawn. Moreover, the politically minded, not friends and intimates, must determine these boundaries.

They were on a mission to save the movement from itself. The weaknesses displayed in the preceding years in the face of growing attacks from the city, the police, and the landlords, were all linked to a fundamental moral weakness in the movement. The movement was rotting from the inside. The OZG gave up on others "turning themselves around," and thus simply chose to clean house. The movement was now too large to be successful. While increased numbers used to mean progress and growth within the movement, the politicos now feared that the size of the movement was diluting its strengths. To become strong once again required trimming the movement down to its core activists, who would, in turn, return it to its core principles.

These solutions were less obvious to the rest of the movement and the choices were far from clear. Rather than exclude those accused of betrayal from the debate and from the movement, the *Grachtenkrant*, in the name of avoiding censorship, published their side of the story in their November 13, 1986 issue. Rather than trying to isolate and eliminate those who had worked with the police, *Bluf!* argued for an inclusive, supportive atmosphere, maintaining that "a movement that does not take care of its weak has no right to exist" (quoted in PVK 1987, 95). Other squatters, rather than rallying to support the OZG, or even standing idly by, mobilized against them. Old political institutions were dusted off, but not in the manner the OZG had hoped for: the Canal District squatters met for the first time in years to discuss the OZG. New political institutions were set up: a new citywide squatters group was established to respond to the actions of the OZG. The publications distributed by the OZG received numerous responses, many of them in parody form. A new version of the infamous traitor poster began to appear around town. This version – which was

exactly the same as the first – carried a new headline covering the faces of the so-called "traitors," which read "Warning: Police Provocation" (ADILKNO 1994, 194). For the rest of the movement, betrayal was not the most serious problem; opportunistic and authoritarian vanguardism was. The OZG could not provide any solutions, since they were the ones causing the problems.

It was only the politically oriented squatters, originally embodied most forcefully by the OZG, who were talking about tightening the movement's boundaries in order to determine who was a real member of the movement and who was not. The culturellas, on the other hand, were more interested in exploding all boundaries, in making space for differences and innovations. Membership should not be based on ideological and tactical purity; there would be no entrance test for activists. There were limits, however, to this openness. No matter how far out they pushed their boundaries, these boundaries nevertheless continued to exist, and the OZG had definitely crossed them. A movement based on inclusiveness may have to "take care of its weak," but it did not have to include the forces of exclusivity. To maintain its inclusive nature, the movement would have to exclude the excluders. The excluders, in response, demanded inclusion, with one critical condition – that they be in charge. Anything else, they believed, would simply prolong the misery of a movement already in trouble.

The squatters' movement teetered on the edge of collapse. Previously, only the culturellas celebrated the death of the movement as necessary for the continued health of activism in Amsterdam. Now, the politicos were likewise starting to see the value of the movement's death. They had set out seeking the potential killers, but the ultimate act of control would be to perform the deed themselves. If the politicos could not (or would not be allowed to) rebuild the foundation of the movement, they were more than ready to push the whole thing off a cliff.

From OZG to PVK

As a response to the lack of widespread support – not to mention the open hostility – for their goals by others, the OZG isolated itself even further from the rest of the movement, and in doing so, developed into a more coherent faction with a more coherent agenda. In November 1986, the PVK (*Politieke Vleugal van de*

Kraakbeweging, the Political Wing of the Squatters' Movement) first appeared as an outgrowth of the OZG, raising the intensity of their criticism. They proclaimed themselves to be the true heirs of Amsterdam's hallowed history of squatting. They demanded, and felt they deserved, total control over the movement. Moreover, they promised to do whatever it took to take it back. Their first action involved 17 PVK members breaking into the law offices of lawyers who had defended another group of suspected informants. They stole their files, in an effort to find and expose all "rightists disguised as leftists," along with anyone who supported them (ADILKNO 1994, 202).

The rest of the movement was angered by the attack on this group of lawyers who had been assisting squatters in their legal battles with the city for years. An article published in the *Grachtenkrant* condemned the PVK's efforts to destroy the movement to save themselves. It characterized the PVK as comprised of

> former squat bosses, who, because of their lust for power and later their fanatical destructiveness, were blown off long ago by the rest of the movement. They want to destroy the already non-existent movement, so that they can grab control of the New Movement, for which the blueprints, modeled on fundamentalism, are already available. 'We are the New Squat Movement,' boasts the spokesperson on the radio. We're being manipulated by the same guys, who in the past were so good at writing press statements behind everyone else's back (quoted in ADILKNO 1994, 203).

The PVK was fighting over the movement that many others no longer recognized as important, necessary, or as even existing. But this did not mean that their opponents would willingly concede it, since their "non-existent" movement still included many people, structures, and values they wanted to preserve. And when people talked about the movement no longer existing, that only made the PVK angrier, as it dismissed the value of what they wanted to save.

To "continue the discussion" about the movement, the PVK moved from putting up posters around town to publishing their own newspaper. The *Staatsnieuws* had already been the local paper of the Staatslieden district for several years. Beginning in early 1987, however, it became the mouthpiece of the PVK in its on-

going offensive against the larger movement. In the summer of 1987, the name of the paper was changed to the *Stadsnieuws*, a change that reflected an editorial shift in scope, from the neighborhood (Staats-, as in Staatslieden) to the city (Stads-, the Dutch prefix for city). This change was explained quite explicitly in the November 6, 1987 issue, in which the editor, Jack, makes the following declaration:

> Why is *Stadsnieuws* a citywide squatting paper? Well, the squatters' movement has dissolved more and more into nothingness. The residue of betrayal, political and material corruption, fear, cowardice and laziness is becoming more and more apparent. Cowards, the corrupt, the lazy, and cultural maniacs claim and "steal" the image of political activism and militant resistance. Political agitation has become cultivated and institutionalized. It must remain cozy [*gezellig*] and, above all, not dangerous. Moreover, if there is some money to be earned, or the opportunity to build a career, then that is a nice perk. People with real political impact must be purged. Trash papers such as the *Bluf!* and *Grachtenkrant* [the two major papers of the movement] have been propagating this idea for years. Although the *Kraakkrant* [the main squatting paper during the 1976-1981 period] ceased to exist in 1980 [*sic*], we still see points of light. We think we have found the path out of the morass. *Stadsnieuws* will, with the help of politically minded activists, revive the KK [*Kraakkrant*] in order to bring the ideas of activists, squatters, and the squatters' movement to the outside world ("Kolofon" 1987d, 2).

And the PVK showed no signs of backing down – each new issue increased the tenor of the attacks. Despite the fact that the words grew uglier and uglier, the war between the opposing sides remained at this point just a war of words. The first goal of the PVK was to convince everyone else that they were right – a fact they were quite certain of, and a goal they still believed possible. If that effort failed, however, they had other options in reserve. But for the moment, they simply wanted to get their argument across as forcefully as possible.

The shift to a citywide paper expanded their territorial scope, but it also involved an ideological broadening as well, one based on the harsh criticism they had received from the rest of the movement and its media. They sought to impose the Staatslieden

model onto the rest of the city. The PVK were attempting to resituate their own version of the squatters' movement as primary. The above statement by the editor sums up the key elements of the PVK's push to rebuild the squatters' movement. First, it was necessary to acknowledge that a problem actually existed. As has already been discussed, betrayal was seen as the main symptom of larger problems within the movement, a movement that "dissolves more and more into nothingness." But betrayal is merely the tip of the iceberg in their analysis. It is a symptom, not a cause. The real cause involves activists replacing "political activism and militant resistance" with its image, which was being driven by an increase in the numbers of "cowards, the corrupt, the lazy, and cultural maniacs" in the movement, who were too focused on comfort and their careers. These groups had increased in size, threatening to crowd out the "people with real political impact."

However, the PVK still saw a "path out of the morass": reestablishing a commitment to the political activism of the past and bringing radical ideas "to the outside world." More specifically, they were engaged in a dual project. First, they were writing the story of the decline of the squatters' movement. Second, they were (re)writing its successful history to provide an antidote to the failures of the time. The reasons for the decline of the squatters' movement were identified as the growing subculture, the emphasis on careerism, the importance of friendships, the privileging of personal over political, the growing refusal to act, and the increasing isolation of squatters, both from each other and from the general population. In short, a blanket condemnation of the depoliticization and failure of the movement.

Subculture

As already made clear in the discussion paper "Squatting or Shopkeeping" ("Kraken" 1984), after the eviction of the Wijers (or, as they referred to it, "the Wijers fiasco" ("Voetangels" 1987, 7)), the members of the so-called political wing of the movement were upset that the growth of cultural alternatives had taken center stage within the movement. Instead of cultural institutions acting as a support system for the larger movement, they had taken on a life of their own; the movement now served as the support system for

them. No longer a means to an end, they had become ends in themselves. The PVK complained that this diverted attention away from squatting's original political goals, and, in the process, both narrowed the distance between the squatters and the society they were supposedly protesting against, while at the same time increasing the distance between squatters and the people they supposedly stood in solidarity with. This period of "subculturalization," according to this group, had transformed squatters into the petite bourgeois ("Binnenpret" 1987, 5). Again, the threat to the movement was that they were becoming and sharing the values of the enemy, in this case, the middle-class.

But it was not just the middle-class values of the shopkeepers that got under the politicos' skin. They were also angry at the rise of the anti-political strain of nihilism in the movement. This strain was made up of legions of "dumb punks" ("Voetangels" 1987, 8) associated with the growing punk subculture and its fatalistic outlook (Duivenvoorden 2000, 246-9; Mamadouh 1992, 193-4). For the political squatters, punks were synonymous with a disengaged, dropout mentality. Therefore, they often treated "punk" as shorthand for the multiple grievances against their enemies, and it is not surprising that visual representations of their opponents often highlighted their punk appearance. For example, in a series of comic strips in the *Stadsnieuws* critical of the new generation of squatters, those working the squatting office hours were all marked as apolitical and apathetic, as symbolized by their Mohawks and excessive beer consumption. The PVK expressed concern not only about the lower quality of new squatters, but also about their negative effects on the movement's political institutions. Squatting offices had been taken over as hangouts for dropouts.

Squatting had lost its value as an expression of political opposition. The PVK worried that too many people were squatting for their own narrow interests. While repairing squatted buildings was a bit of an obsession within the movement (Mamadouh 1992, 178), this value was not universally held by all squatters. The PVK saw the newer generation of squatters as simply looking for a place to have a good time, not to be part of meaningful social and political change – in other words, a return to the pleasure-squatting mentality. Theo dripped with open disdain for these types of squatters, believing they lacked any understanding of the true nature of his work. "If you ask them why they squat, you

don't get an answer. For a start, they're drunk, but probably even sober they'd have nothing to say... They did not understand me or political squatting" (*De Stad* 1996). This group confused doing their own thing with social protest, forgetting that "political resistance means something more than drinking in a bar and claiming to be autonomous." Therefore, "political arguments, retaliation actions, political resistance are left behind. Not based on tactical considerations but out of shiftlessness" ("Het was een" 1987, 4). These squatters contributed nothing to the needs of the movement, as defined by the PVK. Squatting was not meant to be fun; it was hard work, and should be treated as such.

Whatever problems the PVK had with the culturellas, they at least took squatting seriously, even if they did so for the wrong reasons. The nihilist squatters just looking for a good time were the lowest of the low to the PVK. Of course, this did not stop them from often conflating the two groups, in order to undermine any legitimacy the culturellas might claim. Although they were quite different expressions of culture, both shared the crime of privileging culture over politics.

Careerism

Shopkeeping stood as the symbolic description of the alternative direction of the movement ("Kraken," 1984), but the politicos worried about more than the mere rise of alternative businesses and shops. They were concerned with any attempt to use the movement as a basis for personal gain. While the principal subjects of their ire at Wijers were the shopkeepers, their anger now expanded to include journalists. The politicos considered the media as an integral element of the organizational structure of the movement; the failure of a truly political media led to the failure of the movement (PVK 1987, 66). With the decline of the movement, the importance of the media both shrank and grew at the same time. It grew because other institutions responsible for information transfer had disappeared but it had dwindled because that same information had lost its significance, as the movement became a "lifestyle and not part of social resistance" (66). *Bluf!* became a "springboard to a journalism career" (66), which encouraged the writers to avoid confrontation and prefer compromise so that "political arguments made room for discussions over living

together in a living group, legalization methods, small-scale economies, paying businesses and being busy with the alternative in general" (66). As a result, the movement's media began to look more and more like the "bourgeois" media.

How did this drift toward one's opponents affect strategies? According to them, these developments created a class of activists too invested in the status quo to wage any effective challenge. "These new activists (yuppies) are worried too much about the future, [and they] can't risk a police record" ("Eindelijk" 1987, 6). Specific events highlighted the differences between the two sides. After a riot on the Ferdinand Bolstraat in the fall of 1984, many squatters decried the looting that had taken place during the confrontation. In *Bluf!*, the riot was condemned as "apolitical" (quoted in "Voetangels" 1987, 10), and they found the looting particularly troubling. But, for the editors of the *Staatsnieuws*, this was merely another example of the alternative careerists sticking up for other business owners ("the propertied classes"), instead of standing in solidarity with those on welfare by continuing the ongoing struggle with the government's "crisis politics" ("Voetangels" 1987, 10).

The residents of the Handelsblad building were condemned for embodying these "shopkeeping" principles and their disavowal of confrontational politics. The Handelsblad squatters had long been against the stronger political tactics of the movement, with the PVK still unable to forgive them for their efforts to distance themselves from the coronation riots in 1980. For the PVK, to define them as activists would be "embarrassing." For example, when one city councilor proposed knocking down the building, one of the residents claimed "in the name of the squatters, 'We have become somewhat older and we are respectable squatters and thus we are not angry just sad'" ("Kolofon" 1987a, 2). Sad, indeed, thought the PVK. Respectability was anathema to the politicos; they saw it not as an accomplishment to aspire to, but as an obstacle to destroy.

Friendship

Careerism threatened the political goals of squatting by bringing squatters too close to the mainstream; friendships were equally dangerous to the political wing, bringing squatters too close to each other. Again, their criticism was not that there should be no

room for friendship within the movement. Instead, they argued that intimacy had replaced politics as the goal of activism. Their assessment of activism in the year 1987 was that it was nothing but "a subculture in which it is important to belong to friendship clubs" (PVK 1987, 3). They argued that others were not "well-motivated political group[s]," but nothing more than "clique[s] of friends" ("Pek" 1987, 4). The trouble with friends is that they undermine loyalty to political goals and keep people divided over less important matters. Friendship, according to the PVK, prevented activists from taking the necessary steps to clean up the movement. When betrayal became a problem within the movement, "A'dam political activists keep silent: activists want to stick to an impossible cooperation, e.g., with traitors and their cronies" ("Betrayal" 1986). Friendship is worse than being apolitical; it is antipolitical.

They argued that friendship infects the interactions between squatters and the goals of the movement; it also threatens the effectiveness of the movement's institutions, such as the squatter office hours, held in each neighborhood to provide information and support for squatters, particularly new ones looking for help and advice with their first squat. According to the PVK, the office hours had degenerated into little more than vehicles to help friends find a place to stay ("Het was een" 1987, 3). This increasingly isolated these institutions from outsiders, rendering them less and less useful to those not yet part of the group.

Personal over political

The privileging of personal needs and arguments over political struggles frustrated the PVK. Theo complained, "You couldn't organize anything. You could be betrayed at any point. That also applied to risky actions that involved the police and authorities. It was characteristic of the time, and [the movement] had degenerated into childish and personal attacks" (*De Stad* 1996). This produced a significant tactical divide within the movement, one that was made obvious during the eviction of Singel 114. The politicos believed that Singel 114 was a "symbol for the post-Wijers hard line" ("Voetangels" 1987, 10), with the residents and other groups overruling the offensive strategy proposed by the political wing and opting instead for "a sort of Wijers-line by other means" (9),

which emphasized actions against tourism and suburbanization and for the improvement of the city center. Thus, one camp was emphasizing "the struggle of daily life" (roof over head, the housing shortage and speculation) while the other camp preferred political actions against the tourist industry, a struggle against the "spectacular life." In taking this stand, the protest further eschewed direct confrontation, relying instead on "a propaganda-style struggle" (10). The PVK was not surprised when the housing issue slipped into the background, and the squat itself disappeared behind the tourism issue (10). The struggle over strategy had both direct and indirect effects on the movement for the PVK. The direct result of this division was a growing alienation among many active squatters. They could not relate to the struggle for Singel 114, which was the indirect result of an ever-increasing divide between the different groups that began during the Wijers period. With the eviction of Singel 114, "the bottom dropped out of the symbolic strategy" of the residents. Since they had done nothing to develop neighborhood groups, all the small groups withdrew into their own worlds, their own "bar, neighborhood, [and] subculture" after the eviction (10). The problem with this approach, according to the PVK, is not only that it ignored the original demands of the movement, but that it betrayed political demands for individual ones. Thus, an argument against mass tourism was, in their eyes, little more than a form of "innocent nationalism" supporting "Amsterdam for its inhabitants" at the expense of others (10).

The real irony of this anti-tourism stance for the PVK, was that the "shopkeepers" were not really against tourism per se, only a specific form of it. In fact, as was already the case at the Wijers, these squatters were using tourism as a tool to leverage support from the authorities. Their position on this question is most clearly represented by a cartoon printed in issue 23 of the *Stadsnieuws*. In the first panel, a city councilor has just been informed that some squatters would like to see him. At first he is scared. However, in the second panel, they turn out to be quite "respectable," which is a relief for him. One squatter says, "We are very sad that we are going to lose our live-work spaces." Meanwhile, during the negotiations, another one menacingly points out that a violent eviction will cost everyone a lot, but another squatter knocks him down, and says "Silence." In the final frame, the negotiations have been "successful" for everyone involved; the squat-

ters are allowed to stay because they are now considered a tourist attraction, which will contribute to the city's coffers ("Er is een delegatie" 1987, 3).

Isolation

Things got even uglier when other squatters began to speak out against the PVK. These squatters tried to isolate the PVK faction by excluding them from more and more spaces within the movement. One of these places was the squatter café Vrankrijk, which permanently banned them. They responded with righteous indignation.

> The same activists who insisted that traitors be ousted from the movement, have been found too radical with another (political) vision for the movement than the people who populate the squat café Vrankrijk. We at the *Stadsnieuws* are especially happy with this development. We have distinguished ourselves from the meatballs and the rest of the sorry folks... We are very honored that we are not allowed to come there, where the political relevance goes no further than what kind of beer should be served. We want to distance ourselves from the nihilistic inactive drinking fashion squatters... The ladies and gentlemen of the Vrankrijk are of no consequence ("Watchlist" 1987, 4).

They go on to argue that the number excluded, 15, was too small; they called on others to join them, which would allow each one to "distinguish yourself from the masses and/or the brainless" (4). Inclusion was no longer part of their agenda. Their banishment could now serve as a badge of honor, since they no longer viewed the rest as part of *their* movement.

These criticisms of the direction of the movement sounded familiar. In fact, these developments within the movement were not so much efforts to rebuild the movement, as they were the growth of abeyance structures (Rupp and Taylor, 1987) – buttressing a movement going to sleep, not going to war. They were extending the initial position of the hard-liners first established after the eviction of the Wijers. Although the content was pretty much the same, they dramatically differed in intensity. After the Wijers, the hard-liners identified problems in the movement with the hopes

that other squatters would recognize their own mistakes and work to correct them. That hope was now gone. Although it was the culturellas who first mentioned the positive consequences of the death of the movement – and the politicos who resisted it – the politicos had finally begun to come around to agreeing that death was not only imminent but necessary. While the culturellas were content to talk about the movement's death, the politicos, though late to the party, were much more proactive. Now that they were fully excluded from the rest of the squatters' movement, the PVK could safely employ their next plan: destroying the movement.

Collapsing Old Buildings

Over the course of 1987 and 1988, the PVK further developed these major themes, as they rewrote the narrative of the movement, one that looked forward by looking to the past for answers. To recreate the earlier successes of the movement required recreating the earlier form of the movement, which required both an understanding of that past and a willingness to return.

Even before their name change, the publishers of the *Staatsnieuws* were calling for the destruction of the movement. In the May 1987 article "Teller of Party Stories," they laid out their goals.

> A new squatters' movement, this is what we are working on. But only after the old one has been pulled down. You build new buildings only after the old one has been torn down and the ground is prepared for the new building. We have a perspective and the power to reach what we want to achieve. You can help us to make us achieve it faster. You can work against us, then it will just go slower but also bloodier. We have trust, attitude, a willingness to work, structure, organization, guts, willpower, but above all, we have patience ("Partijdige" 1987, 2).

There are three significant points that jump out of this declaration. The first is their goal of tearing down and destroying the movement. The end of the movement is no longer something to be feared and fought against; rather, it should be welcomed and promoted. They promise that they will go to great lengths to prove to everyone that the movement as they prefer to see it is gone. They also argued that "more and more groups will have to face

the fact that the squatters' movement is politically dead. Only then will it be possible to begin thinking of rebuilding it anew" ("Opheffing" 1987, 15).

The second point is the metaphor they used to make their proclamation. Movement as building is in itself not particularly noteworthy. After all, this is a common way of discussing something in terms of its structure (Lackoff 1987). What is new, however, is how the building metaphor differs dramatically from standard squatter practices regarding actual buildings. The movement now stood politically vacant. Squatters traditionally view vacant buildings as spaces of potential, which are flexible enough to undergo many structural changes in order to accommodate the interests of its residents. The entire movement had been based on the fundamental premise that empty buildings should be saved and that it was their very emptiness that granted them the space to develop and grow their politics and creativity. Squatters had been resisting the demolition of old buildings since the Nieuwmarkt protests. Thus, this metaphorical shift is quite significant. Here the movement, cast as an empty building, appears not as a font of untapped potential awaiting renovation, but rather as a building beyond redemption; the only viable option is to destroy it.

Third, their statement was more than just some threat to destroy the movement. It is also a warning against anyone who stands in the way of "progress." Any resistance will makes things "bloodier." While the movement had long been associated with violence, this was a relatively new development. Violence had always been directed outward: towards the police, the speculators, the government. Here, squatters were explicitly and systematically threatening violence against their own kind.

The following week produced similar statements, but with an additional twist. Not only were they still calling for the destruction of the movement, but they were also claiming they had the moral right to be the ones to do it. How did they support this claim? "That which you have developed, you must in the end tear down yourself" ("De good old" 1987, 5). They had claimed responsibility for the early success of the movement. It was the politically minded activism of the early squatters' movement that produced its early successes and thus the movement belonged to them. They were free to do with it what they saw fit, even if it meant destroying it.

Although there is a definite connection between destroying the old and creating the new, the authors do not always appear to view both goals as equally important. While it would be nice to achieve both, the group letters and proclamations appeared to place more and more emphasis on destruction than on creation. For example, in August 1987, the editor in an introduction asks: "Will we become the paper of the new movement or must we limit ourselves to just being the destroyer of the old movement? We shall see" ("Kolofon" 1987b, 2). These suicide commandos had ultimately decided that if they could not have the movement, then no one would.

Vision of the New Movement

The PVK argued that the movement had lost its way because it had forgotten its way. The past marked the period of success and so the past held the key to any future successes. Too many squatters, in their opinion, had not only forgotten the past, but were happy to erase it. The PVK felt it was time for a history lesson, captured in this imaginary conversation with a newcomer, who was unaware of what squatting used to mean.

> Squatters used to squat, demonstrate, throw stones.
> "Wow, did they really do that?"
> Squatters used to make demands, occupy buildings, had arguments, made no compromises.
> "Go on, seriously?"
> Squatters used to be delirious with rage when an eviction was imminent and they found "commercial" a dirty word.
> "How long ago was that actually... earlier?" ("Kolofon" 1987c, 2)

The PVK's history of the movement looked back at the important years of 1978 through 1981 as the critical period of expansion. Squatting began as a series of individual acts, which provoked government repression, which was in turn met with collective action. Collective action among the squatters required setting up an organizational and ideological framework for the movement. The PVK's members played a decisive role during this period. The structures they developed supported a successful period of activism – the state was on the defensive (PVK 1989).

The movement's culture emerged out of these successes, which allowed larger and larger buildings to be squatted, with room for more than just simple residences. At first, they believed it was a positive development, since it supported political action. Over time, however, culture became an obstacle.

> During these years of expansion (78-81) these spaces were used to strengthen the culture of resistance – squatter office hours, meeting rooms, and work places that had a direct connection to the social struggle in the neighborhood. Furthermore, activities that were scarce in the neighborhood were also developed such as childcare and cultural activities. These cultural activities began to play an increasingly more important role after '81 as the squatters' movement began its contraction. The government gave prizes to the ever-larger growing subculture around the movement forcing the social struggle into the background ("Binnenpret" 1987,6).

When the cultural developments in the movement started outweighing its political activism, it undercut the squatters' political efficacy. The movement "began its backwards slide after the unsuccessful attempts in 1984 to get squatting back on its feet after the Wijers fiasco" ("Voetangels" 1987: 7). Squatters mistakenly assumed that if they took part in large confrontations they would naturally become politicized. This did not occur, however, because activism was too pragmatic and lacked a clear ideology, which undermined the power of resistance. Moreover, the organizational structure of the movement, which was so important to its successful history, was ignored and denigrated. Most squatters did not want to admit that this structure existed, "because of the anarchistic, but in reality pseudo-democratic, bias of the movement" (PVK 1989: 3). Lacking a coherent ideology and an operable framework, recruitment suffered – people used a tactic, they did not necessarily join a movement. Politicization got "stuck at the level of street confrontations" (3). The movement weakened, it came to be seen more as a subculture, and the "liberal, ludic mentality" (3) broke down the squatters' organizational framework.

Those claiming responsibility for this framework – the PVK – responded by attempting to reverse this development, by reformulating the political goals and functions of the movement, as well as trying to restructure the organization. This effort was sabotaged, however, because politics was "not allowed to exist" (4). Neverthe-

less, the PVK remained in the movement, hoping to change it from the inside. But they were unable to stem the retreat from an oppositional politics, and during this time "political goals became more and more unclear...corruption, *cliquism*, and reformism became the rule not the exception" (4). This troubled situation laid the groundwork for informants, infiltrators, and traitors. The squatters' movement survived as a pale shell of its former glory. Only death could save it now.

The PVK rewrote the movement's history, writing themselves into the dominant position, while writing everyone else out. In doing so, they created a vision of what the new movement should look like: exactly like their idealized version of the old movement. The radicalization narrative, having fragmented and degenerated over time, could now only be rescued by going back to its infancy, purged of any deviations which had led the movement to its present "sorry state" ("Voetangels" 1987, 7). But talking about destroying the movement had, up to this point, had little effect on the movement itself. If anything, the movement beyond the PVK was beginning to pull together and create a stronger identity as a response to their threats. If the PVK was going to tear down this structure, they were going to have to push harder.

Crazy Thursday

As powerful as narrative can be in the construction of identity and determining the direction of the movement, narratives have their limits. Try as the PVK did to rewrite the history of the movement so that they would be alone at the top, words alone were not enough to finish the job. This battle, so long a battle of verbal threats, now stood poised to spill out onto the streets. But first, the PVK made one last attempt to set the story straight, and in doing so, set the movement straight. Placing themselves "definitively outside the movement," a movement "bereft of political content" (PVK, 1989, 5), they published their most stinging critique, *Pearls for the Swine: Decline and betrayal inside the activist movement in Holland. A report from the political wing of the squatters' movement* (PVK 1987). The book cast the conflict in terms of older activists versus newcomers to the scene; new squatters, ignorant of the old ideals of the movement, bore the responsibility for the movement having lost its way. In a later interview, Henk remembered how the

new squatters were viewed as a problem: "The older generation was more political, more radical" (*De Stad* 1996). The book was met with a cold shoulder inside the movement. Most bookstores refused to carry it. Attempts to isolate and ignore the PVK increased.

Critics attacked the very foundation of the book: its version of history. A reviewer in the journal *AMOK* (1988) called it a "historical fabrication" and asserted that their argument was based on four key illusions. First, the movement had never been anything but a defensive movement. It had never taken the offensive, as the PVK claimed and had always reacted to the government's actions. Second, the movement did not start seeking publicity only after 1982 – squatters had always considered it important to garner attention for their cause. Third, even if their flawed history was correct, that was exactly what it was, just history. It was impossible to live in the past; the present demanded different tactics. Finally, the PVK's arguments were based on the "arrogance of experience" (30), which claimed that only those who had gone through the radicalizing process of the early movement could have fully developed political positions. In contrast, the author argued that there were many more roads to political awareness, all equally valid. He concluded that the PVK was dangerous for the movement, spreading its lies in a blatant power grab. "Their dogmatic betrayal knows only one logical solution: bullets ... Their ultimate goal is to be the vanguard of all anti-parliamentary movements" (31). Indeed, the PVK was moving further and further down the path to using real violence.

Even if the PVK's beliefs were just illusions, this did not keep them from trying to make them the truth. When a belief system is based on illusions, one way of making those illusions "real" is to force their truth on others, violently if necessary. With the publication of *Pearls for the Swine*, the PVK made no bones about its willingness to take this as far as they thought necessary. The book's contents repeated their earlier claims but this time in a book format. It was as if they believed that repeating their version enough would make it true. The most striking feature of this book was not found between its covers, but on it. The book's cover depicts six people kneeling at the foot of a canal with their backs to the camera. Hooded, their hands are tied behind their backs, all with one piece of rope, tying the six together. Behind them is a masked man with a pistol in his hand. He moves down the line, executing

them one by one. Two are already slumped over dead. All this drama is taking place against a typical Dutch backdrop: a serene canal, with a traditional windmill in the background. Underneath, the caption reads, "Traitors are people of the lowest sort. The sort against which all means are permitted" (PVK 1987). This inflammatory rhetoric and shocking image hinted at what was to come next.

Every neighborhood had its own squat bar. Although most had barred the PVK, one did welcome them. The people who ran the Eerste Hulp (First Aid), located in the Oosterpark area in the eastern part of the city, chose not to isolate the group. They allowed the PVK to come to the bar, and the PVK returned the favor by helping with the bar's renovation plans (ADIKLNO 1994; Duivenvoorden 2000). However, tensions soon surfaced between the PVK and its other patrons, sparking a conflict over who owned the space, although the underlying question was always over who owned the movement. The Eerste Hulp people wanted to host a women-only evening every week. The PVK balked, saying that such matters could wait until "after the revolution." This disagreement effectively ended the relationship between the two groups. After excluding the PVK from the building, the other patrons changed the locks to keep them out.

The PVK had been happy to be thrown out of Vrankrijk, but this time they refused to go quietly. Koos Oosterloo was working at the Eerste Hulp at the time. He remembers when the PVK came to settle the score.

> Theo came with a friend. We stood at the door and said, "You can't come in." He [Theo] wanted to come in and we said it was all over. Then he took out a tin of tear gas and sprayed us. That was really... I'd never seen anything like it. I stood there. I was freaked out. Then he hit me in the face (*De Stad* 1996).

The PVK members broke into the bar, attacking everyone who stood in their way. Jan Müter was one of the targets. "Their self-confidence in using violence shocked me. I mean violence against squatters" (*De Stad* 1996). Beating him with sticks, they threatened to break his legs. Then Jack intervened, telling them he was worth more to them if they took him as a hostage. "Yes, we impulsively took someone defending the building," recalled Jack. "At that moment, anything was allowed. Because our work was dis-

rupted, and when it's made impossible for us to act then you have to do something" (*De Stad* 1996).

When they got him back to the Staatslieden district, the interrogations began. The PVK members pushed him for information about who and what was involved. When Jan refused to name names, Jack came up with a new idea. Pulling out a box with two electrodes, he asked, "You want to feel this?" as he pressed a button and sparks flew (Jan, *De Stad*, 1996). Jack justified his actions by pointing out, "We were the minority and if you're fighting the majority, you have to use other tactics. You have to be clever" (*De Stad* 1996). The threat of torture was enough for Jan. He told them everything he knew. "That was traumatic for me. Under pressure, I cracked. I gave names and addresses of places, friends and acquaintances. Things I never would have said and which upset me later. They pulled me over the threshold" (*De Stad* 1996). Theo dismissed concerns about the tactics. "He was well treated and those electrodes are irrelevant. It only counts if you use them" (*De Stad* 1996).

The rest of the movement did not treat the event quite so cavalierly. They held a citywide meeting after learning of Jan's abuse. Initially hesitating to respond to violence with violence, they saw few other options. They attacked a PVK building and then went after Theo. Marc Hofman remembered the confrontation.

> And we went to Theo's house and broke his windows. What happened next is very important for the course of the controversy. Theo came out alone. There were about a hundred of us. Three or four people went for him... they climbed on his back and hit him. But Theo is a huge bear. He is incredibly strong. On his own, maybe with a couple PVK guys, he cleared the street of 100 people. Everyone was terrified by his incredible power at that moment. One man who is able to chase 100 people off the street, of course feels like a lord and master (*De Stad* 1996).

Theo did feel like the lord and master in defeating his enemies although he attributed his victory as much to their basic weaknesses as his own strength. "There was no real opponent. It was a bunch of drug users, drunkards, people who were flipped out or had lost their way" (*De Stad* 1996).

The PVK, energized by their victories, pursued their advantage. "They walked the street with walkie-talkies, and when they saw us,

they called in the reinforcements... They chased us with chains and cudgels... People were followed by a car with a spotlight on its roof," remembered Marc (*De Stad* 1996). Koos added, "In those weeks, they were acting like a military unit, a political military unit" (*De Stad* 1996). Although they had lost the first confrontation, the culturellas were unwilling to concede. Squatters from all over the country responded to their call for help. They waged a concerted attack on the PVK, destroying their cars, blockading their homes, and physically attacking them.

In the end, the PVK lost, their numbers too small to sustain a long conflict. Convinced of the weakness of their opponents, they most likely did not expect them to survive their challenge. As Koos argued,

> They had a strange view of other people. They were either peasants or cowards, and they were the real political soldiers. And that we reacted and didn't walk away when they chased us, but turned around and defeated them in the direct confrontation. That was an enormous psychological shock for them (*De Stad* 1996).

For their role in the hostilities, Jack and Theo were ultimately arrested, a cache of guns found in their homes, with rumors circulating throughout the movement that they had been planning an armed uprising (Duivenvoorden 2000, 296). Both left the squatting scene. Theo sold his home (ironically, he was not actually squatting), and moved out of the country soon thereafter (Mak 2000).

Feeling Decline

Adams's (2003) study of pro-democracy activists in Chile found that even though the movement had been successful, the women went through bouts of depression when their activism came to an end. Although they were happy with the outcome, they experienced a sense of loss when the movement came to an end, since it had become such an important part of their lives. Decline, regardless of whether it is caused by success or failure, generates intense feelings for activists. It will always be experienced as a loss, even if it has been a triumph. The reaction to the decline and

death of a social movement is not that unlike one's reaction to the death of a person. Kübler-Ross (1997), in her groundbreaking work on the dying process, outlines the five stages of dealing with death: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and, finally, acceptance. This trajectory closely matches the development of responses within the squatters' movement. Following the coronation riots, when the first hints of decline began to percolate through the movement, the overwhelming response was denial. The movement distanced itself from the problems of the riots, successfully denying that there were any problems. They refused to look at what actually happened, continuing in their activities as if nothing was wrong.

At the Luijk, when the decline could no longer be denied, the activists reacted angrily – lashing out both at their enemies – the hired gang, the police, and the City Council – and at each other. But the internal dissent had not yet become that serious. The internal conflicts began by focusing first and foremost on the inadequate anger management regime of squatters, complaining that the primary players in the eviction defense let their own anger get in the way of more reasonable plans of action.

Bargaining was the main strategy employed at the Wijers. Rejecting the anger and violence of the Luijk defense, the Wijers residents chose instead to cooperate and negotiate with the City. They figured that this strategy was the best way to save the movement, literally bargaining for their survival. Whatever strength or pride had managed to keep them from "stooping" to compromise in the past was no longer an obstacle.

Kübler-Ross's next stage, depression, does not, at first, appear to fit in well with the events described in this chapter. But depression can make people act in extreme and unexpected ways. The depression that Adams (2003) described as a passive sadness, more resembles the traditional understanding of depression we have. But Adams's subjects were women, and "feminine" emotions were considered suspect by the politicos. They preferred a more macho route. Desperate and unable to deal well with their depression, the politicos acted in the only way they knew how – they lashed out at anyone they could find to blame for the movement's decline.

The squatters did not all travel down this path the same way. By the time the politicos had become depressed and began reacting violently to the demise of the movement, the culturellas had already reached the point of acceptance, ready to move on after

death. The various rates of the progression through the stages created tension between activists. If one moved too quickly one risked being labeled as lacking the sensitivity and willingness to rescue the situation. Moving too slowly was considered to be living in the past and an obstacle to healthy coping.

Conclusion

Unable to return to the beginning of the movement, to the glory days of politics, the PVK opted for an alternative strategy: create the need for a new beginning by destroying the movement in its present state. This change in perspective was the logical conclusion of the shifts in squatters' views on the decline of the movement. When it was in the early stages of confronting its decline, the movement considered decline as totally negative. Decline was something to be avoided or a wrong to be righted. The discourse of decline had always operated as a form of social control within the movement – identifying the causes and the blame for movement decline created the opportunity to evaluate and respond to the weaknesses of the various strategies and identities. But as the period of decline went on, decline became the solution to the movement's woes. The discourse of decline was not the only means of social control, decline itself was.

The dominant narrative of the movement cracked under the pressure. Dissenters from within the movement, who had already been moving away from and reacting against the dominant narrative, now totally rejected the concept of a single dominant narrative. They wanted the movement "dead," so that new movements could prosper and flourish. The politicos were slower to realize that they wanted to kill the movement, having fought the realization for a long time. But when they ultimately realized it, they channeled the energy they had formerly devoted to saving the movement to destroying it. Unlike the culturellas, the politicos sought to end the movement not to unleash the suppressed forces of difference, but to erase them. They rewrote a past, projecting it onto the future. Writing the future does not make it actually happen. In the end, their predictions of the future were as inaccurate as their portrayals of the past.

Many cite the struggle between the PVK and the rest of the squatters as the official end of the movement. It is easy to see

why. This episode, more than any police crackdown, brought about an end to the militant Staatslieden power bloc. The political side of the movement was devastated, which raised questions about whether politics had any place left in Amsterdam's squatting world.

The door of the Film Acadamie, at Overtoom 301. Once a productive member of the "Breeding Grounds" family, the building has recently been bought by the users.

5 The End: Now, Near, or Never?

Where will it all end? The battles that erupted inside the squatters' movement in the late 1980s centered on whether the movement had reached its end, but also, just as importantly, on the question of when and how the movement had actually emerged. In other words, this conflict went beyond any efforts to merely control the strategic choices of the movement towards an attempt to produce the final word over what the movement was, what it had been, and what it would become. Although the original questions were more tactical ("What are we doing?"), they ultimately became more existential ("Who are we?"). Such questions are of critical importance to both the participants in social movements and the people who study them.

Up to this point, I have concentrated almost exclusively on the answers generated internally, on how squatters defined their own movement. While this is useful in understanding the way activists construct their context for acting politically, it ignores the influence of other voices and opinions on the issue. Movements do not exist in a vacuum; their power to frame their positions effectively depends on the successful engagement with the broader social context. One of the most important outside influences are, of course, political authorities. As the "opposition" to the movement, their position was, even at its most sympathetic, quite clear: the movement needed to be stopped as quickly as possible. But what happens when the authorities change their position? What happens when the successful maintenance of the movement is no longer the sole concern of the activists involved, but has also become the goal of its erstwhile opponent, the government. Just as the movement had changed considerably since its emergence, the Amsterdam of the 1990s had also become a different city from what it had been two decades earlier. The conditions for squatting had changed – harsher laws and fewer empty buildings placed even more pressure on the movement's survival instincts. But, suddenly the city government, which had worked so hard to destroy the movement, seemed to change its attitude. They no longer needed to defeat the movement; now, they simply *needed* them.

Why? Because squatters were a major resource for something the city desperately wanted: they were cool.

Hans Pruijt (2003) recently compared the results of organized squatting in Amsterdam and New York City, focusing on how these movements developed over time. Gamson's (1990) work on movement outcomes argues that there are four primary categories for classifying movements: recognition by elites/new advantages; institutionalization, cooptation, and collapse. While every movement can simultaneously experience aspects of each of these outcomes, Pruijt focuses exclusively on institutionalization and cooptation. Most of the squatters' movement in New York City was co-opted, but not in Amsterdam. The two principle reasons are the differences in the types of government each city has and the squatting methods used. The market-driven system of New York created conditions for co-optation, which was further encouraged by the fact that most of the squatting was more of a tactic than a goal. That is, most, but not all, of New York's squatters squatted in order to draw attention to the housing crisis, rather than trying to solve their own housing crises. In contrast, Amsterdam's social-democratic regime encouraged institutionalization, as did the movement's squatting practices as not only a means, but also as an end in itself, that is, as a stable source of homes. Pruijt, importantly enough, found that institutionalization did not necessarily lead to the termination of the movement, contrary to the way many activists and researchers tend to treat it as a development that comes at the end of the movement life cycle. He argued for an alternative form, flexible institutionalization, where conventional tactics would not fully replace disruption and the two strategies could exist side by side. In other words, the Amsterdam squatters' movement has been able to successfully institutionalize itself throughout its history – most commonly through the legalization of squatted buildings – and still remain a viable oppositional movement. Now as the city once again moved to institutionalize squatting, would they finally tame the activists or would squatters be able to hold on to their ability to act outside of society's conventions as a movement?

Are We Dead Yet?

The civil war within the squatters' movement left the movement virtually dead in the eyes of many, both inside and out. In fact, for many who have studied and written about the movement, this marked its official end. The makers of the aforementioned documentary film about squatting in Amsterdam, *De Stad Was Van Ons*, chose to end their story with these events, moving from a portrayal of this internecine conflict to a concluding epilogue in which former squatters talk about the positive contributions of the movement, which shifted to a sense of regret about the void that has been left by its disappearance. The clear implication is that since this moment, the squatters' movement has devolved from a living entity to a historical remnant. Mak (2000), in his recent history of the city of Amsterdam, cites this conflict as the final blow for squatting in the city, using it to wrap up his multipage treatment of the movement. ADILKNO (1994) name the earlier death of Hans Kok as the death of the movement, but the actual content of their book does not support this claim. Instead, the book continues to document the subsequent years, culminating in a thorough treatment of the showdown between the politicos and culturellas, choosing to conclude their story with this event, not Kok's death.

Academic works have been similarly eager to find a convenient end point for the movement. Their end points, however, do not always match those established in the above works, nor do they necessarily agree with each other. Van Noort's (1988) comparison of the Dutch squatters', environmental, and peace movements cited the end point for the squatters' movement as 1986. Mamadouh's (1992) is less clear. In her section where she defines the squatters' movement, she offers a life span of eight years – 1976 to 1984. Based on this definition and her analysis, she seems to place her end point at the eviction of the Wijers, explaining that after this event the organized urban social movement dissolved into disconnected activist strands. But these attempts to pin precise dates belies the ambiguity of her analysis, since she does examine squatting in Amsterdam into the early 1990s, although she claims that "there is no longer any talk of a squatters' movement" (152). She made another attempt to pinpoint the end of the movement, with an attempt by the VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie or People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, the lib-

eral (in the traditional sense of the word) party in the Netherlands) to establish a squatter museum in the Staatslieden district in 1992, the former heart of the militant squatters' movement, in order to draw visitors and tourists to the neighborhood. Mamadouh claims that this "symbolizes the end of the squatters' movement in a striking fashion" (152). Despite the variations in these claims, one thing is certain. From reading these accounts, one could reasonably assume that by the early 1990s, there was no squatters' movement of any importance in the city of Amsterdam. Of the books on the movement, only the more recently published history of the movement by Duivenvoorden (2000) still sees a viable, although smaller, movement operating during the 1990s, an opinion shared by the analyses of contemporary squatting by Pruijt (2003; 2004) and Uitermark (2004a; 2004b).

Some of these differences can be attributed to the needs and desires of writers to render a complete history in their research. Closed narratives are easier to deal with than open and unresolved ones. Writing contemporary history can be tricky; an unpredictable future creates an unstable past. Movements left for dead may, in fact, have some life left in them. Furthermore, the various dates of these works necessarily affect the cutoff points they choose, explaining some of the variations. It should come as no surprise that there is a correlation between publication date and the movement's end date. My point, however, is not simply to ask whether these assessments are right or wrong, but rather to show that most of the authors felt comfortable in claiming that the end had indeed occurred. Based on their own theoretical, ideological, or practical needs, nearly all of these authors consciously decided to pronounce the movement dead.

I claimed I was uninterested in whether these accounts were accurate or not, but simply that they had made them. However, there is some value in considering how well these subjective distinctions match the objective conditions, understanding that they need not correspond directly. I argue that these various pronouncements of the movement's end generally ignore the realities of actual events, and that the assessments are based on a too narrow definition of a social movement. Many accounts mark the civil war as the end point, and even those not citing this as the end point nevertheless betray a similar bias in their own pronouncements: movements are to be measured by their political power and level of activity. It is instructive, however, to look at how this

interpretation might actually be a contradictory reading of the events. Yes, the political wing "lost" the inter-movement conflict of the late 1980s, yet the movement's fortune as a whole has been judged by the standards of the political wing. Instead, given that the advocates of a more cultural emphasis "won," it would make more sense to judge the subsequent development of the movement by the standards of its cultural impact. By this standard, rumors of the movement's demise have been greatly exaggerated. Contrary to the claims of those who pronounced the movement dead, the cultural side of the movement emerged from this confrontation relatively intact and continued well into the 1990s and up to the present, producing its share of successes and achievements along the way.

Of course, these difficulties are not limited to those writing books on the movement. Those within the movement have to constantly confront them as well. The questions of winning and losing have shifted to deeper issues: is the movement still viable or has it become moribund? This question is not necessarily inescapable for activists going about their day-to-day participation in the movement, but it hangs over their heads and affects the culture and identity of the movement as a whole. Hindsight is not an option; they must arrive at the best analysis with the information at hand, information that invariably exceeds any single interpretation. Yet hindsight is not a panacea. Even in the controversy over the documentary with which we began this book, hindsight could do little to smooth over the competing visions of the movement.

My goal in this chapter is not chiefly to ask and answer the question: (When) did the squatters' movement end? Instead, I explore the relationship between cultural and political action within social movements, how they affect definitions of a movement, and how these affect outcomes. Suzanne Staggenborg's (2001) work aims to "go beyond the debate over whether culture competes with politics to explore complex relationship between cultural and political action in the women's movement" (507). She defines the political as "activities aimed at changing political and institutional structures of power, including... 'discursive politics' within institutions" (528). Cultural activities, on the other hand, privilege the building of "internal community and lack external or institutional targets" (528). This distinction represents the difference between "strategic" and " prefigurative" politics (528).

She argues that the distinction between culture and politics is generally not a significant determinant of the success of movements. Although I agree with her general premise, I contend, however, that this distinction *does* matter for at least two reasons. First, it matters because those in the movement *think* it matters, as evidenced in the preceding chapters. Second, it matters because the direction of the movement has important consequences for the long-term outcomes of the movement. In other words, the balance struck between the two within a movement affects the context of action, as well as the general standards of success. This factor will be treated in this chapter.

I add one more variable into this equation: place. Place matters (Gieryn 2000), and not just in the obvious sense that this movement began as a struggle over housing in a specific city. Place also matters in that it is one of the driving forces behind the development of political and cultural action in the squatters' movement, particularly the increasing split between the two. Specifically, I argue that the place-based nature of the squatters' movement drove political action out of the center of the movement. As politics became less place specific and more globalized in the 1990s, the squatters' movement could no longer provide the most effective center for political action. Instead, the focus of the movement shifted to emphasize more and more the local quality of life and cultural issues. Instead of trying to change the political status quo through squatting, the goal became to make the city more livable and culturally innovative. Squatting, with its potential to create free spaces, could serve these interests much better, particularly if it could be severed from its longtime political connections and connotations.

The squatters' movement has always been a highly decentralized movement, even during periods of its most intensely felt unity. The birth of the movement forged numerous different types of squatters into a more coherent hole, held together by common experiences fed through the narrative of radicalization. As long as this narrative remained dominant, squatters had a shared thread pulling them together. When this thread was cut, the narrative unraveled, awakening dormant differences of goals and experiences. Understanding the squatters' movement as actually being made up of many movements makes it possible to see the decline of one piece of the movement as being fairly independent from the success of the other piece(s). By raising the question of their own

decline, movements also raise the question of their own self-definition – what their movement is. By raising the question of movement decline, researchers also raise the question of their own definitions – what a movement is. To answer all these questions requires a proper assessment of the one posed at the beginning of this discussion: How should we understand the end of this movement?

The Decline of a Political Movement

Although the squatters' civil war did not lead to the end of the movement, it did have significant effects on it. The battle temporarily weakened the movement as a whole, inflicting more serious harm on not only those directly associated with the PVK, but with the more political side of the movement overall. With the PVK leaders ostensibly banished from the squatters' movement, the main advocates of maintaining the movement's radical political focus were gone. Moreover, supporters, sympathizers, and even opponents were painted with the same brush. To be "too political" raised concerns of a repeat performance of this authoritarian power grab. Whatever appeal a primarily political movement might have had for some squatters, the reputation of such activity was tarnished, making revival difficult.

But the downfall of the PVK should not be seen as the sole cause of the waning of an explicitly political focus in the movement. Instead, it might be better viewed as the culmination of a story long approaching its end. The political tendency of the squatters' movement did not fade only because of the failures of the PVK. It also faded because of the movement's successes. Importantly, the housing market for young people has dramatically changed since the late 1970s. The Project group HAT (the housing program for single- and two-person households) was formed by the municipal housing agency in 1981 as a response to the need for affordable housing for young people. The organization was "the symbol of the institutionalization of the squatters' movement. The existence of this group proved the special character of the development around youth housing in Amsterdam" (Mamadouh 1996, 46). In other words, many buildings were legalized, transformed from squats back into normal apartment buildings. Duivenvoorden reports that over 200 buildings were bought by the

city and legalized (2000, 323). Moreover, HAT was also responsible for building new housing in the city, adding over 3800 apartment units to the city's housing stock by 1996 (Mamadouh 1996, 46). Thus, the housing crunch of the 1970s had been alleviated to a significant extent, muting the need for radical political action to address it.

While the housing situation improved, the opportunities for squatting simultaneously shrank. Squatting needed empty buildings, and activists were finding fewer and fewer suitable for squatting. Several changes explain this development. First, the best buildings were already squatted. Empty buildings were a limited resource, and, once squatted, a building was no longer available for future squatting. Two things could eventually happen to a squat, and both options removed them more-or-less permanently from the squatting stock: they were legalized or they were evicted. The number of new vacant buildings did not make up for the difference. With the urban renewal projects of the city center complete, fewer buildings were being emptied. When they were, this was only done at the last minute before renovation work began, rather than years in advance, such as in the Nieuwmarkt. Owners developed new strategies to keep their houses in use, such as the *kraakwacht* (squat watch), which gave short-term leases to students in order to keep squatters out (squatters refer to this practice as *anti-kraak* (anti-squat)) (Mamadouh 1996, 46). Finally, the city was no longer experiencing a population exodus. Instead, people were moving back to the city, in part due to the changes the urban social movements had helped usher in. Vacancy rates correspondingly declined.

Squatters were not merely "victims of their own success." New laws made squatting more difficult and riskier. In 1987, the *Leegstandwet* (Vacant Property Law) was passed into law. This was a variation of the anti-squatting law that was unsuccessfully introduced in Parliament in the late 1970s, the most important element of which was that it allowed squatters to be summoned by the courts anonymously (Duivenvoorden 2000, 300-1). The power of anonymity had long protected squatters in their confrontations with the law (Wietsma et al. 1982). With the passing of the *Leegstandwet* this protection was lost. Additional harsh laws were introduced in 1993 that made it illegal to squat any building that had not been vacant for at least one year. To do so brought the threat of several months imprisonment, if convicted. The legal conditions,

much like the housing conditions, were no longer as amenable to squatting as they once were, let alone for a large-scale political squatters' movement (de Graad et al. 1999).

These changes were detrimental to the political tendencies in the movement. Once many of their political goals had been more or less achieved, they were left at a crossroads: either seek a new direction or continue in the old one. The PVK wanted to push further, but few wanted to follow. The new directions available were plentiful, from quitting activism altogether, to shifting to other movements, to redirecting one's energies within the squatters' movement. Although some did give up on activism, most remained politically active, choosing either to redefine and redirect the squatters' movement or shifting to other forms of activism (Duivenvoorden 2000).

The squatters' movement never operated in a social movement vacuum. It had initially emerged out of the vestiges of the Provo and Kabouter movements (Duivenvoorden 2000; Mamadouh, 1992), had fought alongside environmentalists and the anti-fascist movement, and had helped support anti-militarism and animal rights groups (Duivenvoorden 2000). But not all of these movements are empowered equally, have the same level of influence, or access to resources, and the squatters' movement had lost its dominant position within the politically oriented social movement sector. The depoliticization of squatting did not necessarily result in a depoliticization of the Amsterdam activist scene, however. Instead, the politics drifted to other causes and movements. For example, the driving force of the Dutch extra-parliamentary left is today the anti-corporate globalization movement, having displaced squatting and other local issues from the center.

The politics of the 1990s differed significantly from the 1970s and 80s. Although the housing situation had not necessarily been solved, it had certainly been improved, and so the political terrain shifted. Politics lost its direct grounding in the local. It moved up and out, moving towards a more global, less immediate struggle. Under these conditions, squatting as a political tool took a back seat, but this does not mean that it faded away. In fact, squatting remained necessary for the organization and successful mobilization of many of these political campaigns. Squatting produced resources conducive to building and sustaining social movements. A politics oriented towards globalized places still required localized places to cultivate and support it.

But the local continued to play a secondary role, because, as political activism in Amsterdam began to look outward, the local situation can no longer be so easily portrayed as one of rampant injustice. Compared to the problems facing people in many other parts of the world, the relative number of rights and privileges that activists have here becomes increasingly apparent. Although the political hard-liners tried to make connections between the situation in Amsterdam and more repressive regimes, such as the situations in South Africa, Chile, and Northern Ireland, few in the movement, let alone outsiders, saw these situations as analogous. The politicos once accused the culturellas of Amsterdam "nationalism" ("Voetangels" 1987), because they were too focused on local issues. But squatting was closely tied to the local. Squatters squatted buildings in Amsterdam. For all their talk about squatting as an important aspect of the global revolution, political squatters were not moving into the squatted shantytowns of Soweto. As the political focus shifted away from the local, the lack of a politics that resonated with the local political conditions ultimately undermined the power and presence of the political squatters.

The Ascendance of a Cultural Movement

While politics could be successfully disconnected from the local, culture had a stronger grounding to place, even in the face of how globalization fosters the delocalizing and homogenizing aspects of culture. People still lived somewhere. The cultural tendency in the movement was also affected by changes in opportunities and focus, but not to the same extent. The single, mass movement demanded by the political wing was not as necessary for cultural squatting. Numbers certainly mattered, but in a different way. It was no longer essential to rouse people to storm the barricades, no longer essential to have one coherent movement. Instead, the cultural wing emphasized individual action and the individual building over a reliance on the masses. As long as opportunities for squatting still existed, even if they were more limited, cultural squatters felt they could still make a difference. Moreover, institutionalization was less of a threat to the cultural side of squatting, in fact, quite the opposite in some cases. While legalization certainly threatened to defang radical activism by bringing it into the mainstream and making it part of the system, this same stability

fostered cultural developments by grounding them in the community and giving them a chance to grow (Boon and Emmerik 1997).

Although evicted in 1984, the Wijers can best be seen as a starting point, not an end point, as it is in Mamadouh's book. The residents of the Wijers had to go somewhere, and they took their ideas and projects with them (Duivenvoorden 2000). While they may have argued that the only alternative to the Wijers was the Wijers, their actions after the eviction surely did not reflect this sentiment. In fact, their goal was to set up alternatives and extensions of the Wijers wherever they could find the space. Space was a critical factor, since many of these projects required more than the small rooms afforded by apartment buildings. Much like the residents and users of the Wijers, these squatters sought out abandoned industrial buildings, offices, and school buildings.

During the 1990s, squatting became associated more with large-scale squats that served the cultural needs of the community and less with pitched battles against the police (Uitermark, 2004a). Many neighborhoods had their own squatted cultural center, including the Staatslieden district, where Zaal 100 continues to play host to a bar, a restaurant, a theater, musical performances and more ("Van Krakers" 1999). Zaal 100, as well as many other places around town, such as the Binnenpret, OT301 and the Vrankrijk, have been legalized and have survived and remain contributing members of their community, which further adds to the cultural richness of the city. Two of the largest and most influential squats of the 1990s, however, were not so lucky. The Vrieshuis Amerika and the Graansilo (usually known as simply the Silo) did not survive the growth of the city, ultimately losing out to new developments.

As the city center became less conducive to squatting, particularly with respect to large buildings, squatters looked to the edge of the city, taking over former warehouses, office buildings, and, in one case, a grain silo. They worked to reclaim this "wasted space," transforming these buildings into "true mini-paradises for the underground" (VanVeen, 1998). Vrieshuis Amerika was a cold-storage warehouse on the east of the Central Station, built to store goods imported from the Americas. It had stood empty since the early 1990s and was finally squatted in the summer of 1994. The 17,000 m^2 building housed numerous cultural endeavors: 50 artist studios for painters, sculptors, furniture makers, and others; a vegetarian restaurant – The Fridge, an art gallery, an indoor

skate park and roller-skating rink; a cinema; and a performance space for musicians, theater, and dance parties. All of this was supported and paid for by the users. Better-funded users, such as agencies that filmed commercials in the space, subsidized those with less means, so that the space could help foster new outlets for creativity. For four years, the Vrieshuis played the role of a lively cultural alternative, not only to the staid tradition of the great masters hanging in the Rijksmuseum, but also to the more established venues for youth culture. Thomas Wevers, a spokesperson for Vrieshuis, put it thusly:

> It is really the most paradise-like meeting place for the underground... They don't want to go to the Paradiso or the Melkweg [two famous performance spaces that emerged in the 1960s] with their soulless programming. Here you have the feeling that you are doing something unique. In a building like this, with its mysterious corners and gates, you can lose yourself in dreams (Van Veen 1998).

Unfortunately, reality intruded on this dream. The building was evicted in late 1998. It was quickly demolished in order to make room for a new luxury apartment building.

Silo Down

> The Silo is my everything,
> The Silo is my home,
> Here I can be who I am,
> The Silo is my work, my school,
> I learn building here, boat building,
> I learn how to live with others here, to work with others,
> Everything I have learned in the Silo,
> The Silo is my love,
> All my loves live in the Silo,
> I don't know what I would do without the Silo.
> - Silosoof (quoted in Lemmens and Daniëls 1995, 19)

The Graansilo fared only slightly better than Vrieshuis Amerika. At least it was not demolished – the building was renovated in order to accommodate the luxury apartments that replaced the

squatted chaos. The squatters should be thanked for saving it; without their efforts the building would have been razed long ago. Built in 1896 as a grain storage facility, by the late 1980s the Graansilo Korthals Altes, no longer serving its original function, was abandoned. In 1988, it was placed on the list of buildings to be demolished by the city. But where the city saw a huge, useless eyesore, a group of squatters saw something quite different. Recognizing the beauty of the structure, as well as its importance as a monument to the city's industrial heritage, in May of 1989, they occupied the building to save it (Lemmens and Daniëls, 1995, 6). Saving the past was important to the squatters, but they also had plans for the building's future. By November of that year, they had already repaired and renovated the building so that it could be opened to the public. To celebrate, the residents hosted the Exilo-Project, a large cultural performance, which brought people from all over the city and country to the Silo to see its new features. Their hard work to save the Graansilo paid off in 1992, when the building was placed on the National Monument Preservation list, thus sparing it from being demolished.

By the time the Silo had been officially granted monument status, it had already long assumed its unofficial position as the monument to local alternative culture. The users of the Silo created a center of multicultural underground activity. Within the cavernous expanse of the building, an array of functions took root. Much like other large squats, the Silo was home to over 40 artist studios, as well as a gallery, two sound studios, a bakery, two precious metal forges – as well as a metal working studio, a rehearsal space for bands, a boat wharf, two woodworking studios, a radio station, a dance studio, a garden with chickens and geese, a restaurant, and a multifunctional room, which was used for performances or dance parties. In addition to the 150 users who took advantage of these resources, 50 people lived in the building. Despite being located outside of the city center, the Silo's proximity to Central Station, Amsterdam's main railway station, made it easily accessible. And access it they did. At its height, the Silo welcomed over 5000 visitors every month (Denninger, King, Berck and Kolosin 1997).

Silo residents frequently referred to their home as a living organism. Interaction with non-residents was the key to keeping it alive. Lot described the building's public functions – the parties, the restaurant, the performances, etc. – as the "senses, eyes, and

ears of the Silo. Here is where the Silo communicates with the city" (Lemmens and Daniëls 1995, 16). Mike ter Veer, resident and spokesperson for the Silo, speaking in 1998, explained how the Silo "bristles with activities" and describe a recent "mega-party":

> Seven rooms were thematically made over. In one of the rooms, a complete masquerade ball took place. Guests jumped around in the most outrageous costumes. Next to that we had a cocktail bar, a room with house music, a café with spoken word performances, and a drum 'n' bass dance floor. Improvised music was being performed in every room. There were about 600 visitors. The atmosphere was absurd (Soria and De Vries 1998, 10).

If you were looking for an interesting time in Amsterdam, the Silo was the place to be. According to ter Veer, "people come from near and far to attend the festivals" held in the complex, of which there had been over 300 just in the previous two years (10).

Given the precariousness of being in a squatted building, the users of the Silo began working to stabilize their situation by legalizing their presence. The *Vereniging tot Behoud van de Graansilo* (The Association to Preserve the Grain Silo), which had originally been established to lobby for the Silo's inclusion on the historical preservation list, now turned its attention to preserving the relationship between the building and its users. After the Silo had been fixed up by the squatters, it suddenly became more attractive to real estate developers. The *Buurtontwikkilingsmaatschappij* (Neighborhood Development Corporation, BOM) began looking into a way to develop the property. Their proposal included almost two-thirds of the space being converted to commercial projects, with the vast remainder to become luxury apartments, plus a restaurant and some "free units." The residents responded by devising an alternative plan with another developer, one that would maintain the status quo of the Silo at that time. The neighborhood council, as well as the City Council, sided with the BOM project.

The BOM's director died, stalling their efforts to begin with the project. In the meantime, the Silo's residents kept doing what they did best – they added to and kept pushing the boundaries of their space. Eventually, the Silo was no longer fighting this battle alone. Other parties began to take an interest in saving the building in its

present form, including *Het Gilde voor Werkgebouwen aan het IJ* (The Guild of Work Buildings on the IJ), an organization established to protect older industrial buildings on the river IJ. Working with other likeminded groups, they published the pamphlet entitled *De Stad als Casco* (The City as Ship Hull), in which they argued for less capital-driven and more culture-driven development. The Silo was an important line of defense in their argument. "The Silo, based on what has already been developed, can become a cathedral of the informal culture" (quoted in Lemmens and Daniëls 1995, 21).

Support came not only from Amsterdam, but from admirers abroad as well. London-based architect David Carr-Smith wrote an open letter to Duco Stadig, the alderman for Housing and Environmental Planning, in defense of the building and its users. Because of his combination of in-depth description of the building and his passion for the Silo project, his letter is worth quoting at length:

> The SILO is a very significant cultural site of a type that is extremely rare in Europe and indeed at this level of quality, complexity and scale in the world.
>
> The Silo contains very elaborate examples of in architecture invented and built by people for their own use, a form which in rich industrialised countries is rare and usually trivial (DIY home-improvements and allotment huts), its improvised dwellings represent a true modern urban-vernacular (based on re-cycling of city demolition materials and the debris of its site) – because it is growing in a rich-city environment, its architectural conceptions, expressive inventions, and domestic provisions are far more elaborate than the urban self-made architecture of poorer countries. The Silo is also a uniquely interesting example of site-adaptation.
>
> Though early in its evolution, the Silo's interiors and apartments are already of extraordinary beauty, variety, complexity – often highly original adaptation of this difficult building and of great design interest, its potential as a unique cultural site is just beginning to emerge publicly, and just beginning to be academically and professionally studied and recorded. Nothing so bizarre as the Silo has hitherto been attempted and its development is already startlingly different from its more conventional squatted predecessors (e.g., The Tetterode Factory). It is a painful irony that at the very point when the astonishing quality of this rare

> European example of large-scale design-improvisation is becoming known, it is liable to be destroyed, before most students of architecture, interior design, social anthropology, urban history, and city planning have had sufficient time to discover, visit and learn from it.
>
> The Silo's improvised architecture is a marvelous testimony to the social flexibility, innovative resourcefulness, and design-intelligence innate in Dutch culture. It is one of the most important current manifestations of physical, social creativity in its wonderful city. To turn this spectacular example of a very rare form of design into something ordinary: for instance a housing block which (however architecturally notable) could exist elsewhere, which does not have to destroy something of unique cultural value – or at least could wait its turn, is an act of poverty which such a culturally rich, famous city need not afford (Carr-Smith 1997)!

While Carr-Smith was arguing primarily as an architect, his position goes much further – he believed that function follows form. The Silo was both a reflection and product of the creativity of its users; it was also the foundation for future creativity. Moreover, the building sat at the productive margins, both private and public. Its private side made it a part of its users; its public side made it a part of Amsterdam. The Silo was more than a place to see; it was a place to do.

If the city was unimpressed with the Silo as a marvel of DIY urban architecture, then perhaps they would be more interested in it as a tourist attraction. Carr-Smith's description implicitly points to the touristic advantages of the building; it was left to another group of architects to make this point explicit. Denninger, King, Berck, and Kolosin, architects who worked for the Berlage Institute in Amsterdam, argued that the Silo was the heart of a specific type of tourist experience, one unique to the city.

> The Silo is the essence of which the city of Amsterdam feeds itself. It is the continuation of Amsterdam's typical world famous feature in that it attracts thousands of people every day. Artists, theatre groups and exhibitions all seem to push and break free from laws that exist in society, as well as the prostitution zones, the drugs and gay scene. These all contribute to the culture and identity of Amsterdam. This breaking free from "the law" is what

> captures people's imagination and makes them come and visit the city to become a part of it, to join as well as participate in it. Over the past five years, the Silo has proven itself to be such a free zone.
>
> We envision the Silo to be a site of true experimentation; the individual artist trying to overcome gravity as well as a media center developing networks for sharing information. In relation to the proposal for new luxury flats in the existing plan, we feel this would destroy the quality of the existing energy and would not be in keeping with the Silo's philosophy (Denninger et al. 1997).

Saving the Silo meant saving the exciting life of Amsterdam, an exciting life attractive to the world tourist. Tourists were indeed taking notice of what these large squats had to offer. Time Out, a London-based entertainment and travel publisher oriented towards the young and "hip" traveler, publishes travel guides for major tourist destinations. The 1998 guide to Amsterdam mentioned several "must-see" squats to include on one's itinerary, most prominently the Silo and Vrieshuis Amerika, "the last of the monumental, long-term artist squats" (*Amsterdam Guide*, 1998, 28). The Silo was called "one of the coolest places in Europe," while they portrayed the threatened eviction of the Vrieshuis as a cause of great concern for travelers. The authors advise readers to visit it while they still had the chance.

> The former cold-storage warehouse for goods coming from America is now the most happening squat on the planet, with its many artists' studios, indoor skateboard park, Wild West roller-skating rink, bar-restaurant, and occasional exhibitions and parties. It's an inspired cultural centre that, sadly, is due to be demolished in the near future (66).

In the restaurant section, they recommend dinner at the Fridge, where one can "dine within the apocalyptic splendor of Amsterdam's last great squat, the future of which, sadly, is uncertain" (120).

Residents, users, local visitors, tourists, and architects all supported the preservation of the Silo as it stood. But in the end, none of their voices mattered. The decision was the City Council's to make, and they maintained their support for the plan to turn the building into commercial space and luxury apartments. As ter

Veer lamented, "The largest cultural center in the Netherlands... is going down the toilet." He continued, "This building deserves a public function. It must be accessible to everyone. Not just for a small select group of people with money" (Soria and de Vries 1998, 11). The building was evicted in February 1997, and within a couple years it had been fully renovated into apartments and offices.

Many of the Silo's residents, including ter Veer, moved on to other squats shortly after the Silo eviction, most notably the ADM, an abandoned shipbuilding factory on the harbor squatted in 1997. They worked to reestablish the character and facilities of the Silo and other evicted squats, becoming home to the requisite musicians, theater/actors, artists, boat builders, restaurant, art galleries, traveling artists, etc. It is now 2008 and the ADM has survived, but it has not been easy. The building's owner, Bertus Lüske, was already infamous within squatter circles for his role in the Lucky Luijk evictions. After ongoing struggles with squatters throughout the 1980s and 90s, he bought the ADM complex in 1996. Squatters moved in soon thereafter. Tired of his inability to legally control the squatters, he took matters into his own hands, using a backhoe to break through the wall of one building in the middle of the night while the squatters slept. No one was injured, but Lüske was charged with attempted murder, charges that were eventually dropped. Nevertheless, the squatters stayed, rebuilt the wall, and remain there to this day. Lüske, on the other hand, was shot dead in August 2003 in Amsterdam, reportedly the victim of a Mafia-related killing ("Squat Landlord Shot" 2003).

Clearly, despite conditions being more favorable for cultural squatting than for political squatting, the situation was still fraught with challenges. Fewer buildings, smaller buildings, more remote buildings, all added up to the same conclusion: the squatters' movement was in trouble. At this time, they are receiving some offers of help from an unexpected source: the city, formerly their main opponent in squatting conflicts. Yes, the authorities decided to help the squatters' movement, just when it appeared that the movement could use all the help it could get. Whether this was the type of help they really needed, however, was a question that remains unanswered.

Tourist Traps

So far, this story is much like that old tale of the Wijers. There was one important difference. While the arguments to save the Silo may not have swayed the city, some of its arguments have filtered through. One thesis in particular has taken hold: squatters can be good for tourism. Amsterdam had been experiencing growth in its tourist industry since the early 1990s, and the city saw a role for such projects in encouraging that growth. Amsterdam has a conflicted identity as a tourist location. That is, "visitors regard Amsterdam's historic city center as 'a place to let it all hang out' as well as a cultural Mecca" (Terhorst, Van de Ven, and Deben 2003, 75). There are two tourist sides to Amsterdam: the Amsterdam of Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and Anne Frank and the Amsterdam of sex and drugs. Terhorst, Van de Ven, and Deben describe Amsterdam as an archetypal tourist-historical city. "It has no well-demarcated spaces that have been converted from earlier [non-touristic] activities to touristic ones. Instead, the tourist sites and uses are all built into architectural and cultural fabric of the city" (76). Tourists mix freely with locals.

Much of Amsterdam's draw as a tourist destination is its small scale. The historic city center, made up of small buildings and narrow streets discourage offices and automobile traffic, favoring small shops, intimate cafés, and walking or cycling. This is not the city that city planners of the 1960s and 70s envisioned. They were interested in urban renewal projects that would have included demolishing many older buildings, building wide boulevards, filling in canals, and generally draining the city of much of the character captured in its postcard representations. It was the urban social movements, among them the squatters' movement, that actively fought these changes in the city and therefore contributed to maintaining its uniqueness and charm in the eyes of the modern tourist (Pruijt 2002; Terhorst et al. 2003).

Although the city currently has a reputation as a world-famous tourist destination, one does not have to look back very far into its past to see that this was not always the case. Known as a countercultural center in the 1960s, the city experienced rapid growth in its tourism, many of whom were young backpackers coming to experience the hippie and dropout scene. Moreover, European society had finally regained its economic prowess during this period, leading to increases in leisure time and disposable income and,

consequently, in tourism. The strong US economy likewise contributed to the growing tourism industry. But the development was short lived. The Amsterdam of the 1970s and early 80s was a "city in crisis" – declining population, widespread unemployment, rising crime rates, dirty streets, and dilapidated buildings. To add insult to injury, the city was expensive for tourists (Terhorst et al. 2003). ADILKNO vividly describes the condition of the city in the mid-80s:

> The garbage along the streets, the dog doo on the sidewalks, the torn-up roads, the purse-snatching and car radio theft, the tens of thousands of unemployed, the parking problem, the heroin needles in the doorways, the sluggish bureaucracy, the grouchy Amsterdammers, the run-down houses, the graffiti epidemic, the random violence of the hooligans and other "persistent drawbacks" lost their folkloric aspects and made living in the capital unbearable (1994, 129).

Images of tanks in the streets to evict buildings and squatter riots did little to help this matter. All these factors contributed to the same outcome: tourists stayed away from the city and the growth experienced in the 1960s stagnated and declined (Terhorst et al. 2003, 84).

Given the increasing role of tourism in the world economy – tourism is now the number one industry in the world (Aspostolopoulos, Leivadi and Yiannakis 2001) – city leaders were eager to turn the city's image around. The city launched a campaign to clean up the city and make it more welcoming to visitors. The most dramatic attempt was their application to host the 1992 Olympics. This campaign was met with resistance by the activist community. The No Olympic Games Committee, or Nolympics, actively protested the city government's plans, with squatters playing a significant role (ADILKNO 1994, 129-147). In the end, Amsterdam lost the bid; the 1992 Olympics were hosted by Barcelona. Nevertheless, the larger goal – to clean up and revive the city – continued unabated, and with success. The city's image, and the tourist industry, recovered strongly beginning in the late 1980s and into the 1990s (Terhorst et al. 2003, 83). Increasingly, the segmented tourist market, which divided the market into those who come for "high culture" and those who come for "soft drugs," is changing. The market is not so much segmented as mixed: young

travelers visit the Rijksmuseum and take canal cruises; middle-class tourists stop in the coffee shops and stroll through the Red Light District.

Despite this success, problems persisted. Actually, the problems persisted *because* of this success. Increased growth ironically threatened the very basis of Amsterdam's touristic identity. More tourists

> may disturb the delicate mix of small-scale activities. The increasing dependence on the tourist economy may even lead to less tolerance, since public space has first and foremost to be clean and safe. In short, the key assets of Amsterdam's tourism – the varieties of activities, the liberal outlook – may ultimately be undermined by the exponential growth of tourism (88).

This presented a serious issue for the city. It was important to keep the tourists coming in, while at the same time protecting and further cultivating what they came to experience. To return to our earlier movement-as-building metaphor, the PVK wanted to tear down and rebuild the building, but the City Council took a different view. They wanted to evict the building of its oppositional qualities, leaving the building intact, and then charge admission to its visitors.

Squatters: from Tourists to Tourist Attraction

Squatting has, from its very beginning, had a strained and complex relationship with tourism. During the 1960s and early 70s, which saw both the increase in tourism and the introduction of squatting as a political tactic, the two tendencies intersected at the point of what Pruijt (2004) calls "tourist squatting," which is when tourists sleep in abandoned buildings or outdoors during their visit to a location. "Tourist squatting" was quite popular in Amsterdam at the time, with many people sleeping in the Vondelpark or on the Dam Square, as well as in any empty building they could find. They showed little interest in repairing the building or helping the neighborhood. In fact, their goals were sometimes quite the opposite, since destruction was often more entertaining. Squatters more interested in addressing the housing situation than in no-frills tourism did not appreciate this intrusion into

their physical and political space. In the early 1970s, squatters in the Nieuwmarkt put up posters around their neighborhood proclaiming, in Dutch, English, German, French, and Arabic, that "Our neighborhood is no campground" (Duivenvoorden 2000, 85). As the strength of the movement waned, conflicts with tourist squatters again returned. In 2002, tourist squatters from Southern Europe had several run-ins with local squatters in the Pijp district (Pruijt 2004).

As the wave of squatting tourists subsided in the 1970s, squatters focused their attention on mainstream tourists, most notably in the struggle over the eviction and demolition of the Wijers in the early 1980s. Since that time, squatters have had a string of confrontations with tourists and tourist services. One noteworthy example of these protests occurred around the attempt to stave off the eviction of Singel 114, a building that was evicted and resquatted countless times since it was initially squatted in 1978 (Duivenvoorden 2000, 272). When the final orders came in 1987 to evict the building to make room for luxury apartments, residents and supporters were convinced the eviction was linked to efforts to sanitize the city to make it more tourist-friendly. One of their actions included dumping paint off bridges onto the canal cruises which filled Amsterdam's waterways with tourists (ADILKNO 1994, 130). At times, squatting and tourism mixed as well as oil and water.

But, as it was first argued during the Wijers eviction process, squatting and squatters can be receptive to certain types of tourists, namely tourists who come to Amsterdam to experience what squatters have to offer. The Speculation Research Collective (*Speculatie Onderzoeks Kollectief*) even published an alternative tourist guide to Amsterdam in the early 1980s. The guide not only gave tips about what the squatters' movement and other alternative groups had to offer travelers, it also provided walking tours of "historic" moments from the movement's history, as well as descriptions of locations lost through municipal urban redevelopment projects. To attract these tourists would require preserving the conditions that make squatting possible as well as the squats themselves. The Wijers pitched itself as an alternative tourist attraction, and, over a decade later, squats such as Vrieshuis Amerika and the Silo made similar arguments.

Playing off their cultural cachet, but still privileging more pressing social issues, the residents of the 12 largest live/work squats in

the city, totaling 683 adults (plus an unspecified number of children), made a collective pitch to the City Council to try and save themselves from the wave of evictions going on the city in the late 1990s. In the summer of 1998, they called on the Council to meet with them to discuss the development of a "constructive policy for this target group of young cultural-economic growth instead of the ongoing evictions, continuous income cuts, and social expulsion" ("Adres" 1998). In the case of the Wijers, they used tourism to save a building, and lost. Now, they wanted to save the movement. Would the strategy prove more successful this time?

This time squatters were luckier, although not necessarily these specific squats, as virtually all of them have since been evicted. Still, the general thrust of their argument resonated with those in power. The model of tourism prevailing among the City Council was no longer the segmented market, in which the middle-class, high culture and high profit tourists were opposed to the alternative, youth-driven low culture and low profit forms of tourism. The new model, based on mixed markets meant that both sides needed equal encouragement, since they fed off each other. The City Council had a change of heart. After decades of antagonizing and opposing the squatters' movement, they were now ready to embrace it. But it was not the squatters' needs that prompted this change, but the needs of the tourist industry.

The loss of the major cultural squats and other low-profit, alternative creative spaces left a void in the city; even those at the top could not fail to notice it. Recognizing this as a potentially serious problem, the City Council commissioned Copenhagen-based European Cultural Commentator Trevor Davies to look into the city's cultural decline and make recommendations to address it. His primary criticism was that, driven by its need to preserve a stable image to tourists, Amsterdam was becoming a theme park:

> The image of Amsterdam has two main pillars: the 17th and 18th century which gave the canals and the magnificent townscapes and some of the worlds most prolific artists such as Van Gogh and Rembrandt. The second pillar is Amsterdam as the only surviving hippie colony in the world... However, these two images are so strong that they tend to dominate in the city and perhaps also tend to block alternative images, counter images and the creation of new images. When images become too strong, reality may take the passenger seat. And perhaps this is the danger of

> Amsterdam becoming a theme park, or two theme parks as has been suggested (Davies 1998, 8).

Commenting directly on the squatters' role in the city, Davies expressed concern about how their projects were increasingly being cut short, and that this loss weakened the subculture of the city, which he argued was the foundation for the city's living culture. To prosper, they needed a stable environment to create their disorder – artists need "selective anarchy" (Davies, 1998, 54). With the two pillars of the city frozen in time like exquisite corpses, the squatters' work remained a force of life, providing a vigorous antidote to the constrained cultures of the city's touristic image.

Mayor Schelto Patijn took these findings and suggestions seriously. In 2000, writing in the *Uitkrant* magazine, a publication dedicated to the city's cultural life, Patijn argued that art in the city "cannot flourish if there is no affordable space available for young artists and cultural entrepreneurs." He noted that the buildings which had served this function had been lost to the construction of office and apartment buildings. He pointed to the need to "organize new breeding grounds in other places in the city in buildings and areas that have lost their original functions." He ended his article with the strong claim that the city must "support these cultural starters, because they must be the bearers of our culture. NO CULTURE WITHOUT SUBCULTURE" (Patijn 2000, 78).

Breeding Grounds of Contentment or Contempt?

"No culture without subculture" became a catchphrase of the *Broedplaatsbeleid* (Breeding Grounds Policy), the product of the seeming convergence of the goals of the City Council and the squatters' movement. The policy was first enacted in December 1998, and received a budget of 90 million guilders (approximately $45 million) in funding over five years, and meant to support, maintain, and regenerate the cultural functions previously performed by the major squats. The money was intended to subsidize rents in order to keep costs as affordable as possible, and to create over 2000 artist studios throughout the city (Duivenvoorden 2002).

While the city viewed this policy as a magnanimous move on their part, those inside the squatters' movement were of two minds. It did offer some means to continue the projects and goals that had become central to the movement at this time: cultural and artistic creation in self-run free spaces. Squatting and stability are almost always at odds with each other. As Corr (1999, 136-139) argues, nearly all squatters eventually end up negotiating with the authorities at some point. Because of their lack of legal rights to the building, squatters often face the inevitable choice: either legalize in some way (either through institutionalization or being co-opted) or be evicted. The movement faced a similar choice: either play ball with the city and stabilize the situation or risk losing everything. Obviously, given that scenario, working with the city appeared the logical choice.

But was the choice as logical as it at first seemed? Would it have been better to end up with "nothing" than to be fully integrated into the system? A vocal minority asked these very questions, wondering if the policy was nothing more than an elaborate new version of "anti-squat," a method of creating short-term leases in order to keep squatters out ("Broedplaatsblablabla" 2001). Their criticism was simple: the Breeding Grounds policy is set up to fail as it reverses the necessary relationship between stability and chaos in a successful building. Stability replaces chaos; chaos replaces stability. The stability of the building comes at a price. Although the spaces are subsidized, squatters were still upset about the expected out-of-pocket expenses – arguing that it would force them to create spaces in which "everything revolves around making money" ("Commentary" 2000). They argued that, "you cannot make money on subculture. Amsterdam should support and stimulate culture instead of trying to market it." Furthermore, to find a stable location, they worried that Breeding Grounds were being sent to the "fringe edges of the city," which isolated the space and reduced the chaotic interaction between the Breeding Ground and the city. Another stabilizing force was to turn live-work spaces into simple workspaces. Breeding Grounds were meant to be worked in, not lived in. Squatters rejected this narrowing of the definition of culture: "Culture and subculture should not be defined only in artistic terms, but include all of the aspects of life that contribute to the specific qualities in these types of buildings" ("Commentary" 2000). Culture, then, is not something you hang on a wall; it is something to be lived. Squat-

ters felt that separating the two would undermine the effectiveness of their projects.

These critiques boil down to a resistance to turning projects on the front lines in challenging the mainstream division between public and private space into little more than reflections of that same division. The city had, moreover, imagined the ends – a vibrant subcultural effervescence – while discounting the best means to getting there. The formal, planned, and structured process demanded by the city, which included economic and business plans for each building, was the opposite of how these projects had formerly developed. Duivenvoorden (2002) contends that the Breeding Grounds policy would be a "praiseworthy endeavor if it weren't for the fact that the idea goes completely contrary to the manner in which these places have always existed and developed themselves." In their address to the City Council, a group of squatters argued that, "They must grow by themselves and not be totally thought out from the start." Although the policy primarily aimed to stabilize these projects, it also disrupts some of the important sources of stability. Squatters argued that the office implementing the policy favored the creation of temporary over permanent projects, despite the fact that a successful effort "must have time and space to develop itself and not be confined by time constraints." Even more importantly, the policy privileged new projects over already existing squats, which was seen as a sign that this was less about preserving these projects and more about creating the appearance of doing so ("Commentary" 2000).

The Kalenderpanden offered a perfect test case of these concerns. Squatted in 1996, the same warehouses on the Entrepôtdok previously rejected as an alternative to the Wijers became home to an active cultural and political space. Filled with the standard large squat functions of performance spaces, info shop, restaurant, artist studios, radio station, etc., as well as being home to 45 people, the Kalenderpanden played a central role in spreading the cultural influence of the squatters' movement in the late 1990s. Moreover, unlike some of its cultural peers, the residents and users of the Kalenderpanden had a more explicit political agenda, using the space for organizing political protests as well as trying to strengthen the political side of the squatters' movement – along the same lines as the PVK, but rather more closely akin to the politics of the early movement. Hence, in some ways, the Kalenderpanden was a

throwback to an earlier time of squatting, smoothly combining politics and culture.

The first eviction notice came in 1998. The warehouses were to be converted into luxury apartments. The Kalenderpanden residents, however, refused to leave. In January 2000, 1500 people marched through the streets of Amsterdam protesting the eviction. One month later, an open letter in the newspaper, *het Parool*, signed by former squatters and other sympathizers, argued for the value of its contribution to the city. The directors of such mainstream cultural institutions as the BIMhuis, the Rijksacadamie, and the Concertgebouw voiced their support publicly. This belief in the important contributions of the Kalenderpanden was apparently shared by many Amsterdammers. A survey conducted in the summer of 2000 revealed that only 28% supported the Council's plans to evict the building to build luxury apartments; while 49% disagreed with the decision ("Enquete" 2000). The city offered an alternative location, but as with other offers like it in the past, this was deemed insufficient – too far away, temporary, and could not be used as a residence ("Aanbod" 2000).

To save the Kalenderpanden, the residents applied for Breeding Grounds status from the city. On the surface, it seemed a natural choice – here was a true cultural breeding ground, one with ties to both the center and the margins of the Amsterdam scene, which enjoyed a great deal of public support. But the city decided not to grant them this status, choosing instead to evict. This decision left some squatters questioning the goals of the program. "Is Amsterdam City Council really serious about preserving and promoting subculture in the city? If so, then why were the Kalenderpanden, probably the most active '*vrijplaats*' [free space] in recent years, evicted?" ("Broedplaatsblabla" 2001). Since the city's only proposed alternative was deemed untenable, the Kalenderpanden squatters submitted a list of buildings they saw as real alternatives to the City Council, but again their requests were denied. They found the entire affair "shocking," given the Council's stated goals of supporting such projects. They concluded that, "For the activities which take place in the Kalenderpanden, there is not only no room in the Kalenderpanden, but it seems that Amsterdam is neither able nor willing to offer it either" ("Geen Plaats" 2000). The building was evicted on October 31, 2000. Just as the life of the Kalenderpanden evoked memories from squatting's "glory days," so did its death, with a fierce show of resistance bathed in

the glow of the burning barricades surrounding the building. Nevertheless, the Kalenderpanden is no more, its walls now filled with posh apartments, its former residents spread out across the city.

Not all projects met with such open hostility from the authorities. OT301, a former film school located at Overtoom 301, was squatted in November 1999, and has since become one of the leading "free spaces" in the city. The users were successful in garnering Breeding Grounds status; they still have had a series of conflicts about how to run the space with the city. The most serious conflict occurred during the initial contract signing. The original contract was deemed unacceptable by the residents since, among other things, it not only did not allow for living spaces or public spaces, it was also a short-term contract ("Emergency" 2000). After the residents refused to sign it, they were threatened with eviction. Ultimately, the residents were able to win some concessions, most notably a public function for the building. But this public function required more concessions to the city bureaucracy, such as when the building was closed for several months due to fire code violations. Recently, the users have raised the necessary funds to buy the building themselves.

Given the harsh conditions imposed by the city on the workings of these breeding grounds, why would any of them agree to participate in the project? The answer is simple: they have few alternatives. Duivenvoorden puts it thusly:

> It must be stated that in spite of the fact that here and there in the city new initiatives continually arise, there are scarcely any that can shake off the specter of eviction for more than one or two years. Free zones that want to survive for a somewhat longer term will sooner or later need to find more structural solutions which in one way or another direct their sights on the authorities. The buildings that have survived in the past prove that cooperation with the government can sometimes be fruitful (2002).

Duivenvoorden, along with Jaap Draaisma (formerly of Wijers) and others, have been active in the formation of a new organization, *Vrije Ruimte* (Free Spaces), with a goal to negotiate and work more effectively with the city to develop better plans for the creation of cultural free spaces. Given the slow progress being made, they believe the city has not yet lived up to its promises. The orga-

nization has done studies on the development and maintenance of free spaces throughout the city (Breek and de Graad 2001), in order to use this data in future development negotiations.

Although tensions occasionally flare up between the organizations that have sprouted up around the Breeding Grounds policy and the City Council, these organizations represent a striking shift in the strategies that used to be empoyed by squatters. Before, if institutionalization occurred, it did so at the level of the individual building. The new development here is the simultaneous institutionalization of the structures of power inside squatting. *Vrije Ruimte* is simply another non-profit organization, more or less independent of any traditional movement elements. Squatting, formerly an end in itself, has been transformed into a means to a larger end – institutionalized Breeding Grounds. This may indicate the end of the "flexible institutionalization" that Pruijt (2003) claims marks the development of the Amsterdam squatters' movement. Of course, squatting still occurs as something for its own ends, but this type of squatting has undergone its own transformation. Today, it more closely resembles the squatting that occurred in the 1960s and early 70s. There is squatting and there are squatters, but little remains of the well-organized and coherent squatters' movement of the past.

The Decline of Decline

Decline can mean many different things in the context of social movements. Dominant definitions shift over time. At times it can mean the failure to win all of one's demands. At other times, it means the loss of power to even have demands taken seriously. But decline not only means different things at different times to different people, its significance varies as well. Decline was a big deal in the 1980s. Squatters were a powerful force in Amsterdam politics and society, and their influence was rapidly growing. First, decline was measured as the slowing of progress, then the lack of progress, and then, finally, the restriction and loss of previous gains. These discussions of decline shared the characteristic that there was an expectation of success and power for the movement. Anything less was considered a failure and decline.

But these expectations shifted during the 1990s. The present-day squatters' movement differs greatly from its predecessors.

Now victory means survival. Those dreams of "changing the world" have faded. The decline of the movement had itself declined in significance for those still involved. The decline of the movement was no longer the pressing concern it once was. There are certainly squatters who disagree with and fight against these changes, but this is more likely based on idealism than on strong expectations of efficacy. A long period of decline provides activists a perspective regarding the question of decline. When decline is new, its significance looms large. After it has set in, however, decline becomes just another fact of life, just like the successes of the period of emergence. Few feel the need to address the issue, because it is not a central part of their experience of the movement. The movement had finally reached the last stage of the process: acceptance (Kübler-Ross 1997).

In their interviews collected for the documentary *De Stad was van Ons*, some former squatters lamented the loss of the squatters' movement. They did not recognize the continuation of squatting activism that was going on in the city at the exact same time they made these statements. They did not see the old movement in the new movement, so they saw no movement at all. What, then, is a social movement? Too often it is defined by the identity forged in its period of emergence. As seen in the squatters' movement, this identity is merely a convenient label used to unify a disparate group of activists and causes. This identity, forged through a dominant narrative, becomes the marker of the movement. But over time, movements inevitably change, creating friction with the dominant narrative and those who support it. But decline is generally measured by the standards set by this original narrative, or the narrative of its origins.

Conclusion

Whether or not the movement had actually reached its end, it had no doubt changed by the early 21st century. It was formerly a movement driven by political goals and violent conflict that had been transformed into cultural activism based on strategies of compromise. To some extent, these changes are the outcomes of a shifting external socio-political context in Amsterdam, which made it more difficult both to squat and to sustain a stable squatters' movement. Over time, the intense localism of squatting be-

came better suited to cultural work than political revolt. Political activism shifted its attention up and outward, redirecting much of the remaining explicitly political energy from the squatters' movement. Cultural activism better weathered these developments, because of its weaker reliance on mass mobilizations and its inherent localism – a focus on the culture of Amsterdam remained in Amsterdam. More importantly, cultural activism had a different relationship with the rest of the world. Political squatters hated the government and the government hated them right back. Although equally antagonistic against mainstream culture, a culture-based squatters' movement had no illusions about overthrowing the state and were more willing to work with the government under certain circumstances. The authorities had originally been hesitant to work with culture squatters, beginning with the Wijers eviction – it was just too early to fully separate the different strains from the single squatters' movement. This tentativeness continued into the 1990s, even as the political side of squatting faded, first to the background, then into oblivion. But the City Council eventually came back around. They learned that cultural squatters could be used to further their own interests in the city. Alas, by the time they figured this out, they had practically killed off this side of the movement as well. Now, the group that was the most concerned about the decline of the movement was not the squatters themselves, but their former opponents. They were the ones who were scheming to turn this latest decline around. Because of the confluence of squatter and city interests, the end of the movement has now emerged as a responsibility of the city to avoid, not to facilitate.

But this brings us back to the question of how to define this movement, and in the process, to address the question of how to define movements in general. In many ways, the squatting of today has returned to its pre-movement form – a loose collection of individual squatters and buildings, who sometimes work together to defend themselves against evictions. But they have few grand political aspirations, at least as they express them through squatting. One important difference, however, is that organizational and historical legacies of the movement exist alongside the squatting of today. This sometimes helps in providing squatters with the institutional memory of strategies for finding and keeping a house, offering the stabilizing influence of established organizations, and supplying an already-existing collective and activist

identity. Yet, this history also constrains and obscures. Like the successful older sibling, it leaves an imposing reputation to live up to, casting a long shadow over all who follow in its path. Rather than being simply "different," those who come after will always be compared to what came before – better than, worse than, more successful, or, as it often happens, less successful than. The first wave of movement activism has the freedom to define itself, to write its narrative from scratch. Later waves don't have this option. Just as the dominant narrative of the movement shapes the way decline will be framed and addressed within the movement, it also creates a measure and definition, which confronts all future movements that wish to share its name.

Police evict the squat at Ceintuurbaan 85 in March, 1992, the 7th time the building had been evicted since first squatted in 1980.

Conclusion

Movement is always a complex balancing act. Walking, no matter how easy it looks, is perhaps best described as "controlled falling." To remain upright and moving forward requires an enormous amount of concentration and coordination. Yet movement seems to come so effortlessly. It takes an unexpected shock to force us back to attention. A stumble or a fall shakes us up, causing us to think more closely about how we are moving. The challenges and complexities of movement help explain why changes in mobility are used to denote critical life transitions. Learning to walk marks one of the great achievements of a young child's life. It is a moment to celebrate, to capture on film, to share with family and friends. On the other hand, losing the ability to walk on one's own generally signals either old age or failing health. Rarely celebrated, it is much more likely to be denied, hidden, and resisted. Between these two, the healthy, mobile adult walks smoothly and confidently; walking has become second nature. It requires neither thought nor attention, easily erasing the struggles of the past as well as ignoring those of the future. The link between walking and life stages is captured most clearly in the famous Riddle of the Sphinx, "What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?" Oedipus gave the correct answer: Humans. But, with some explanation, I believe that the Sphinx could be convinced to accept an alternative answer: Social movements. Movements are also complex balancing acts. Of course, they rarely operate at the same unconscious level that walking does. Certainly the early days of emergence require a great deal of thinking and action to see what works. But with the initial inertia overcome, the movement starts rolling. Shifting to auto-pilot is easy. What works works; don't mess with success. But when the first wobble comes, it is time to snap back to attention. This attention focuses both inward and outward. Catching oneself and regaining one's balance is very important, but it is not the only pressing task. It is equally important to ensure that no one else noticed you faltering. But, if they did notice, then it is best that they saw it handled with graceful confidence, not clumsy

weakness. Is this slip a thoughtless mistake, or the first sign of the onset of old age or declining health?

While in some ways comparable, humans hold a certain advantage over social movements when correcting one's step after tripping – unless it is a particularly serious fall, they remain in one piece and the injuries are minimal. However, movements do not necessarily have to hit the ground before they shatter, a small wobble is often enough. Even if it does not break, the bonds of solidarity have loosened, allowing different parts to take the next step in their own chosen direction. Decline forces a conversation about what it means to win, as well as what it means to lose. This may have been a conversation that was easily ignored in the early days when winning meant just getting the movement off the ground. Decline exposes the end point – not just the final resting place of a failed movement, but also the ultimate achievements of a successful one. Not just the end as ending, but end as completion. The onset or recognition of decline hastens reflections on social movements and their dénouement, demanding both explanation and reaction, a process that sows division and disagreement.

Decline divides. Even if the pieces have not yet fallen away, these proliferating pieces obscure the unified whole of the past. Decline obliterates innocence. The effortlessness of movement is now forever lost, never to fully return. This first mistake disrupts the equilibrium, calling for compensatory action. This compensation is, as likely as not, an overcompensation. This effort to restore balance then pushes things too far in another direction, requiring yet another attempt to steady its course. This attempt also often fails to perfectly restore the original balance, while further clouding the shared understanding of what, in fact, that balance actually consisted of. The second effort thus often begets a third, then a fourth, and so on. Thinking becomes over thinking, consciousness becomes self-consciousness. This is not to say that balance can never be restored. Yet, even if it is, it remains marked by the multiple attempts to reestablish it, a process that exposes the many fault lines underneath the movement, not to mention creating a few more along the way. Thus, both decline and the responses to decline expose just how constructed, and thus how fragile, the balancing act of movement truly is.

Decline begins a progression of asking, answering, and acting, one that evolves through a series of reflexive questions. The decline debate inside the squatters' movement centered on four fun-

damental questions: 1) Are we declining? 2) What are we doing wrong? 3) Who are we becoming? 4) Is decline the problem or the solution? How they responded to these questions and then acted upon them reveal how central issues privileged within the movement developed over time. In addition to their disagreements over narratives, the Amsterdam squatters confronted the questions of strategy, identity, emotions, and the political-cultural nexus. Their experiences show not only the importance of these issues in understanding decline, but also the importance of decline in helping to better understand these issues.

The Decline of Narratives and Narratives of Decline

Decline, as the ultimate plot twist and dénouement, makes a good story. But decline also needs a good story. Narratives, as Polletta (2006) argues, never fully resolve the ambiguity of the situation – they demand the continued telling of new stories. Nowhere is this more apparent than when facing the prospect of decline. That ambiguity, which formerly provided a rich, complex coherence, now becomes a frustrating vagueness. But it continues to make demands: either one must act to restore the integrity of the original story or one must tell a new, more compelling story. Deciding which one is the best has proven to be a serious point of contention within social movements.

The first question, "Are we declining?," is in some ways the most critical, as all the others follow from how it was answered. I argue that identifying decline first requires and calls forth a narrative shift within the movement. This moment identifies that something needs explaining, while later questions work toward producing the most compelling explanation. Decline first appears alongside the decline of the movements' own narrative of itself and its actions, a narrative generally called into being through the movement's original creation myth. In other words, how a movement conceptualizes its decline is generally established at the very start, by the way that it conceptualizes its beginnings. On its face, this explanation sounds like it shares a lot in common with standard social movement treatments of the subject, in that decline is analyzed as an inversion of emergence. Yet, decline is not that simple. Neither, I should add, is emergence. Still, there is something to learn from these treatments. The terms and concepts

used at the onset establish conditions and constraints that never fully go away. Once uttered, they cannot be unspoken, even if, as is often the case, some parties put an enormous amount of effort into erasing, ignoring, or distorting them. Decline is relative, not absolute. Thus, when considering the various possibilities and directions of the narratives of decline, it seems fitting to remember the words of the father of the theory of relativity, Albert Einstein, who once joked, "If the facts don't fit the theory, change the facts." These words remind us that every crisis presents itself as a fork in the road: is the essential problem the facts or the theory? To answer the question is itself an act of empowerment for activists in the movement. The coronation riots of 1980 had all the objective markings of the beginning of the end – a movement overextending its strategic advantage, leaving behind its core issues, and losing a great deal of public sympathy, along with rising levels of discontent within the movement. But these concerns never materialized into a concrete assessment of movement decline, despite the fact that many outside the movement viewed it as just that. There is not necessarily any connection between the objective events and the subjective interpretation of decline. In the early stages at least, it is in activists' best interest to postpone the admission of decline as long as possible, as decline is at first almost universally considered as a negative turn. There appears to be no obvious advantage to admitting to weaknesses.

When decline is first expressed, it is often articulated through the declining power and accuracy of the movement's emergence narrative. This decline of narrative unleashes the narratives of decline, which spring up to make sense of these changes. The specific narrative of the emergent squatters' movement, radicalization, brought its own challenges. Although quite successful at bringing a disparate group of squatters together under the roof of a radicalizing movement, over time, it created tensions among these same groups. Most importantly, radicalization carried its own irresolvable tension between the differentiating and deepening of experiences in the public and private spheres of the movement, while at the same time pushing them together in the ongoing process of totalization.

Decline feeds on itself. Losing breeds losing, since nobody likes a loser. A narrative approach to decline highlights how this process works itself out. Losers do more than simply lose; they carry the stench of failure and defeat wherever they go, unable either to

wash it off or to wish it away. Similarly, once the idea of decline moves to the center of movement discourse and narratives, it becomes nearly impossible to dislodge it. Even successful actions must now be treated as exciting reversals or comebacks. In the short term, at least, a return to the pre-decline state of unity is usually highly unlikely. More importantly in this research, once people start talking about decline, they rarely stop. Decline demands explanations, and as it is both generally unexpected and always complicated, a variety of reasonable explanations are possible. Decline demands action, so these multiple explanations compete in order to stimulate a specific action. This disagreement and the ensuing struggle for dominance might initially be an effect of decline, but it soon transforms into a major perceived cause, driving ever more explanations, which bring ever more conflicts.

While I see narratives as central, I do not want to overstate their importance, insisting that they are the next big thing to explain all of social movement activity from the dawn of recorded history. The story is key, but it is not *the* story. Decline is more than a story – it comes into being through real changes in objective conditions, the clashes of competing interests, and the evolution of perspectives. While all of these elements are critical to the process of decline, narrative still offers a compelling way to knit all of these elements together into an understandable, and thus actionable, viewpoint. Thus, it provides an organizing principle that offers a form for understanding decline, from both an activist and academic perspective. But this form, these narratives of decline, are overflowing with many possible components.

Strategic Crossroads and Identity Crises

For social movements, decline presents a wake up call – a call for rethinking, for reacting. A failed test, it presents a chance to measure progress. While activists are certainly always busily engaged in thinking via their actions and choices, decline raises the stakes, lending a greater sense of urgency and narrower focus to such thinking. Activists first ask whether the movement is declining. Answering "yes" moves the topic to the center of the movement's discourse. To reverse decline they must concentrate on decline; talking about decline provides a means for addressing the key issues of the movement. But what do activists talk about when they

talk about decline? When they have these discussions and debates, they focus on two primary questions: What are we doing wrong? and Who have we become? When they talk about decline, they talk, first and foremost, about strategy and identity. Their explanations first focus on one, then the other, then on their intractable interconnections. Over the course of the history of the squatters' movement, a palpable tension grew between these two closely related issues. Progress and victory each carried distinctive meanings from the different perspectives of strategy and identity. At the Wijers, the choices of options were painted in the starkest possible terms, as a choice between strategic success or upholding identity. By that point, squatters had decided that fully realizing both was no longer possible, despite the fact that both the primary strategy and the identity of the movement had arisen simultaneously as part of the same thing. How did they reach this impasse?

The relationship between the two has always been in flux. During periods of success and expansion these evolving influences were seen as signs of health, not illness; of life, not death. Yet decline brought a new point of view and a new dialogue. The discussion about decline supplied the main avenue through which squatters worked to come to terms with these changes. These discussions reveal the stakes involved in discussions of decline, the two most important being the definition of the movement and the social control of movement participants. At every step of the process, to define decline is to define the movement. Defining the movement is a rhetorical power play. It creates an ideological framework, which legitimizes the social control of one group of activists over another group of activists, based on who has been labeled as either inside or outside, and therefore, dangerous to the movement as determined by the definition of decline. Decline is a process continually negotiated within the movement, and this negotiation does not necessarily end even after the movement itself has. As the conflict over the documentary *De Stad was van Ons* highlights, the memory of the movement, its history, is defined by the way its decline is shaped and reshaped. Just as debating decline during the movement is a means of working though differences and evaluating strategies and identities, debating decline after the fact allowed activists to define the movement to support the activist identity they want to remember and hold on to.

Calls for innovation in the face of decline are easy to make, but can prove difficult to implement. Movements are highly complex systems. To remove one piece and replace it with another can produce an entirely new movement. This is what squatters confronted when they were forced to choose between new strategies and new identities. A choice of this kind can never be black and white. Given that these opposing strategies and identities always contain traces of each other, it is never possible to take a final position free of contradictions. Every new decision contains a remainder, leaving some problems unadressed. This remainder, in turn, will call forth a new decision to overcome it, which will then leave a new remainder.

Decline exposes the major fault lines of the movement. In this case, I wish to draw on both senses of the word fault. First, fault as a dividing line, the point at which two or more tendencies come together, but do not quite fit together completely. While they normally coexist happily, tension can drive them to push against each other, causing disruptions by shifting the formerly stable ground. Second, fault is the responsibility for failure. Someone has to be blamed when things go wrong. And when blame has to be placed, activists generally go looking for the main fault lines. To find faults is ultimately to find fault. But these lines have their own unique characteristics. The more one looks at them, the more one sees. Like fractals, each part carries the same level of complexity as the whole. Likewise, as the debate between strategy and identity reached a standoff, it fractured into other, smaller but equally complicated debates. Like a fractal, each sub-debate recreated the intricacy of the larger conflicts. The twists and turns of the debates uncovered additional weak points, such as the strains between politics and culture and the conflicting emotions of the movement's private and public spheres.

When Culture and Politics Collide and Collude

The issue regarding the effects of culture and politics on social movement outcomes has a long pedigree in social movement studies. I cannot give a definitive answer to the question as it is usually asked, which is whether political or cultural activism is more likely to lead to better outcomes. This question is difficult to answer as phrased, because different strategic choices often bring

with them different standards of success. Despite the difficulty of answering the question, it is one worth addressing, but from a perhaps more productive angle. I argue that the relative effectiveness of the two styles of activism is important because it is important to activists. That is, it is also worth studying as a subjective problem. While the movement enjoyed its period of success, these two tendencies coexisted happily side by side. This coexistence was so seamless, it was not experienced as two independent tendencies. Instead, the two tendencies were not easily distinguishable, with each seen as mutually constitutive and dependent upon the other. When the movement began its decline, however, the assorted advocates of culture and politics quickly disassociated themselves from one another, first ideologically, then physically. In the process, each blamed the other for the movement's fall. The internal battle that developed between the two tendencies generated contradictory outcomes, as every move towards unity pushed the movement one step further along the path of factionalism.

Objectively, however, this conflict left noticeable effects on the squatters' movement. The shift away from more overtly political activism had important outcomes. First, it provided the main standard by which most observers came to judge the movement as in decline or as already dead. This reveals the amount of bias towards explicit political activity as the standard measure for social movements. Movements are too often measured by their political confrontations with the authorities – by the size of protests, the numbers of arrests, the newspaper coverage, the political concessions, etc. This critique has been leveled against the agenda-setting work of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001), who have been criticized for privileging the state and political action as the defining feature of social movements (see Myers and Cress, 2004). Contentiousness and social change, though, cannot be fully contained by such a narrow definition, as evidenced by the continuation and success of squatting in other forms even after the demise of its political focus.

Second, in this case, the goals of cultural activism neatly converged with the goals of the City Council in a way that created a mutually supportive (although still at times antagonistic) relationship. The political squatters also shared certain goals with the authorities, such as providing better low-income housing. In their case, however, achieving those goals made them superfluous in

the eyes of the government, rather than central to the maintenance of the situation, as is the case with the cultural squatters. A movement that so fully shares the goals of its opponents is ripe for "institutionalization." The history of squatting in Amsterdam underscores the complex relationship between success and decline. For the political squatters, at least partially, their success led to their decline. With more active government programs to solve the youth housing problem and to punish speculators, both the reasons and the resources for squatting were taken from the movement, weakening its political basis. On the other hand, for the cultural squatters, it was their threatened demise that forced the city authorities to invite them to the negotiating table, where they were able to secure some means of stability for their continued existence. Naturally, the situation is not as clear cut as laid out here. Without later failures, the political squatters may have been able to continue with their activism. Likewise, without their successes in creating vibrant creative hubs, the loss of cultural squatting would likely have passed unnoticed by the city government. Nevertheless, success, failure, and decline have a complicated relationship, one that belies the frequent simple pronouncements of co-optation and selling out.

Emotions, Public and Private

Radicalization and totalization destabilized the public and private worlds of the squatters' movement. Activists developed their own strategies and identities appropriate to each sphere, which they initially linked together, but, over time, moved apart and set at odds. Strategies of the public, "political" realm conflicted with identities of the private lives of squatters. Identities supporting public actions clashed with the strategies to deepen the relationships of private life. These two worlds were distinct at the emergence of the movement, although they were initially treated not as contradictory, but rather as mutually supportive. Squatters were forced to face the challenge of trying to reconcile efforts to address the question of decline with their goal of saving and prolonging the totalizing radicalization narrative as long as possible. At first, they acted as if they were guided by the assumption that it was possible to reconcile the two. Over time, however, they recognized

that trying to hold them together might not be possible. Again, every effort to stitch back the torn seams only created new holes.

Decline further destabilized them, disrupting the established emotional practices and health of the movement. Emotions were closely tied to specific spheres in the movement, either public or private. The public world of squatters, where they confronted outsiders and opponents, was marked by urgency, anger, moral outrage, and with more than a hint of hatred and contempt for the enemy. These tended to be reciprocal emotions. The private life inside the squat and the squatters' movement provided a home for the shared emotions of love, friendship, trust, and hope. Fear was a constant throughout – the squatter's life was never totally secure. This range of emotions includes different strategies for dealing with and overcoming fear. Confronted by opponents, afraid of arrest or physical harm, an angry expression of violence is treated as the best protection against undesired force. Violence must be met with violence, and violence must be a product of spontaneous, unaffected emotions. Planned violence is another animal altogether, viewed with suspicion by most squatters. In their private lives, squatters feared having their homes threatened by attacks, physical and ideological, from outside; they feared losing their way of life. Their plan was to combat this by building a strong community of trust and caring, to keep outside threats out and to keep solidarity strong. Of course, the world is more complicated than this. Squatters described feeling a sense of love for their fellow stone-throwers standing at the barricades. Anger and violence broke out in trivial and serious ways behind locked doors. Despite this complexity and impurity of emotions, there was a strong tendency towards emotional purity in the movement, a reflection of its radicalized nature. Thus, the appearance of emotions defined as "off-limits" for a specific sphere was treated as a problem, a disruption, rather than normal behavior.

Decline is a powerfully emotional time for activists and movements. This is particularly true in the case of a movement like the squatters' movement. Activism and participation in the movement took over the lives of many squatters. They literally lived in their movement. The intensity of experience created a practical and identity-based dependence on squatting. Unsurprisingly, the threatened loss of a key part of one's life provokes a strongly emotional response. In working their way through this process, squatters responded in a way similar to the way one responds to the loss

of a loved one: first denial, then anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. Movements are built on the foundation of both safety and conflict. Within them, activists seek to productively balance hope and fear. Institutions help manage this, but create other constraints, hindering flexibility and innovation. Even under optimal circumstances, emotion work inside movements can prove incredibly taxing. Disruptions in other parts of the movement disrupt emotions. Reciprocal emotions turn inward; shared emotions are no longer shared. Movement participation demands a lot – not just investments of time, but emotional investments as well. Emotional intensity generally increases with radicalization, as the movement and its worldview capture more and more of the attention of the individual activist. When things are going well, this helps to forge strong ties and commitments. But this strength masks a precarious fragility. When this set of social relations is knocked off its axis, it requires much more work to set it back on track than to send it spinning further out of control. Again, while it is possible to treat decline as primarily the result of emotional turmoil, it can just as often be the cause.

Decline as Double Edged

This could be read as a story of two failures. The first failure led to the initial downturn in the movement's fortunes that produced the decline. The second failure was the movement's ongoing inability to effectively address these issues and respond to the first failure in a positive way. A comedy of errors in which every new solution merely creates more problems. Squatters certainly struggled with their movement's decline and often made decisions that both at the time and in retrospect seem poorly thought out and ineffectual. But this is an overly harsh reading of the circumstances, one that fails to recognize the many layers of movement decline, as well as the traps it throws at even the most astute and clever collective actor. Eventually, the movement's position on decline evolved. However, even as this evolution pointed to the same general conclusion, at the same time it also drove conflicting groups further apart, solidifying the distinct factions inside the movement. Rather than squatters assuming a position to reverse decline, they instead reversed their position on decline. No longer a categorical negative, decline takes on a more ambiguous mean-

ing, ultimately re-framed as the necessary solution to the problems the movement was going through. The competing sides in the squatters' movement both came to a similar conclusion: the best thing that could happen to squatting was the end of the movement. The movement no longer provided the basis for successful activism but rather acted as a limiting factor. Although their conclusions were similar, their response differed dramatically. The culturellas diagnosed the movement as having died of natural causes, and celebrated its death with a new found commitment to life, using the opportunity to move beyond the engrained practices and organizations of a movement they felt was past its expiration date. The politicos, on the other hand, feared the movement was being killed off by others, and in trying to reclaim control over this group chose to perform the deed themselves.

This simply highlights the double-edged nature of decline. Thus, while it may expose fault lines, in making these lines visible, decline simultaneously blurs them as well. Just when the time arrives to point fingers, it is often unclear exactly where to point them. Decline plays with the defined boundaries of the movement. These boundaries were first established at the moment of creation for the movement and solidified as the movement grew. But decline blurs these boundaries, throwing formerly obvious understandings into question. Responding to decline entails efforts to redefine and remake these lines. However, the new lines are rarely the same as the old ones. With the squatters' movement, the newly drawn boundaries split the movement, defining ideological and strategic spaces both tighter and more rigidly than those they sought to repair and replace. It brings with it its own contradictions, frequently stymieing even the hardest fought efforts of activists to effectively respond and reclaim movement momentum. These contradictions, rather than being incidental to decline, lie at its very foundation.

Decline is both real and imagined. That is, there are many ways to measure and define decline. One can take objective measures, such as movement size, numbers of successful actions, amount of political influence, and so on. But one can just as easily confront decline in the realm of imagination and representation. Subjectivity is built into even the most objective measures. And the points that are so often taken as measures of decline – membership, activity, influence – are often the very points of definitional contention that flare up during the process of decline. Thus, when things

start to go poorly, activists are as likely to attempt to redefine who belongs to the movement as they are to take a straight count of their membership. This is not surprising, given the traditionally fluid and permeable boundaries of social movements. Narratives play a primary role in this sorting out process, but they also find themselves caught in the paradoxes of decline. Decline as a narrative is simultaneously empty, in that it is open ended and leaves many options for action, and full, in that it is virtually inescapable, a bad social movement cliché threatening to strike all collective political actors. Even though decline comes as a shock, once it comes everyone feels that they should have seen it coming. Telling and retelling movement stories in that context, stories that can do justice for their audience to both the real and imagined elements of decline, is a tricky endeavor, fraught with challenges. I do not wish to imply that subjective definitions of decline are always going to be the most important. But, in a situation in which movement actors are losing control of the situation, the subjective or imagined conditions of the movement often appear as the easiest targets for change.

Decline is both a crisis and an opportunity. While it is merely an urban legend that the Chinese word for crisis is the same as the word for opportunity, the fact that this story resonates so well to Western ears shows just how intimately the two concepts have become interwoven in our collective consciousness. Yes, decline is primarily experienced first as a crisis by many within the movement. It denotes failure and the loss of power and effectiveness. It may even signal the loss of that most vital, but also most nebulous, of features of a successful movement: luck. But any crisis can produce new opportunities. In this case, it allows for a rethinking and a redirecting of the movement. Furthermore, it justifies making changes, not only changes that directly respond to the current situation, but also changes people wanted earlier, but discovered they could not fight the momentum of a movement experiencing success. But if every crisis is a new opportunity, then every opportunity is also its own new crisis waiting to happen. While decline requires changes, these changes come at the exact moment that the movement is most vulnerable to the disruptions and dislocations of these changes, not to mention lacking the luxury of time to wait and see which changes work and which do not.

Decline both unites and divides. When prospects for success sour, nearly everyone in the movement initially agrees that some-

thing needs to be done to fix the situation. The need to act is unanimously shared. Yet this consensus generally extends only to the basic response that something needs to be done. When it comes time to decide what that something should be, unity quickly devolves into divisions. Solutions come from all parts of the movement, focusing on different causal mechanisms and different plans of redress. Even if they were not logically inconsistent with one another, a scarcity of time and resources means that not all solutions can be implemented equally. Differing solutions become competing solutions, which in turn become the basis for competing factions. Yet, the initial unity never disappears completely. As long as the movement as a whole is in decline, every activist associated with the movement will be painted with the same broad brush. This raises another important point: the double-edged nature of decline does not imply that the two sides can be neatly divided into positive and negative values. Unity, when you are on your way up, is a good thing, but unity on a sinking ship is something else entirely. Thus, decline captures as well as releases. That is, the flip-side of to unite is not just to divide, it is also to capture and constrain. At the same time, division is also a release. When the ship starts sinking, no one is going to ask when you actually start on your way to the lifeboats. Decline is more than an opportunity to try new things, it grants permission to become something new – whether it is the movement itself, or more commonly, activists or groups within the movement redefining, and therefore liberating, themselves from the strict limits of the movement, limits that both tighten and loosen in the face of decline.

Decline both reveals and conceals. As noted, decline presents a moment for looking at the movement anew, this time without the rose-colored glasses that can result from a rapid, successful emergence. But, while decline is an eye-opening experience, it is also a head-turning one. To look deeply at the causes and problems of decline means to turn away from addressing possible other issues of importance. This condition is further compounded by the tendency for decline to become an all-consuming issue inside movements and thus a distraction. Attention is a limited resource, directing it towards requires also directing it away. This is true of all resources within the movement, meaning that decline both attracts and distracts resources, at a time when the pressures of these resources are already growing. That decline is riddled with internal tensions and contradictions renders it incredibly difficult

to answer perhaps the most basic question about decline: Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Again, it is both. It is the product of success and the result of failure. It is the end as well as the beginning. Moreover, no side of these equations lines up cleanly with any other side in any other equation. A product of success can be both good and bad, as can either the end or the beginning. Interpretation and action all depend on the broader context. And it is, in the end, this conceptual complexity that presents one of the most daunting challenges of movements facing decline, as well as one of the most conceptually rich aspects for researchers studying decline.

Defining Moments, Defining Movements

The squatters' movement declined, but did it die? While I lived in Amsterdam researching this book, each morning I would ride my bike across town to the International Institute for Social History, where the archives of the squatters' movement are archived. I spent my days rummaging through the boxes of papers and journals, often having to wait eagerly while the helpful librarians would pull up my requests from the archives. During the day, I immersed myself in the rich, colorful history of the squatters' movement. At the end of each day, I returned my boxes, made requests for the next day, and left, exhausted, to ride my bike back home.

But I did not leave the squatters' movement behind when I left the archives. In my "free" time, I lived within the squatters' movement, both traces from its past as well as its continuation today. I rented a small apartment above my friend, Eric Duivenvoorden, in the Staatslieden district, former home to the most militant wing of squatters, but now a quiet working-class neighborhood with a growing immigrant population. If one didn't know any better, one would have a hard time recognizing the neighborhood as the same one that less than 20 years ago was "no longer part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands" and angrily chased the mayor away when he came to visit to reassert his presence and power. But scratching the surface quickly revealed the lingering influence of the movement. A few blocks from my apartment stood Zaal 100, a former school, now used for cultural events, music performances, and a restaurant. If I headed a few blocks in the other direction, I

came to the squatted cinema, the Filmhuis Cavia, where I saw French Situationist and German art films, along with smatterings of classic Hollywood fare.

Much of my leisure time was dependent on squatted spaces. I dined cheaply at The Fridge, formerly in the Vrieshuis Amerika, de Peper, formerly located in the Silo [now in OT301], het Einde van de Wereld, a restaurant on a boat, or, my favorite, Schoppen 7, where for two euros apiece my wife and I would get a bowl of soup and a plate of day-old bread and hang out with squatters on Sunday evenings. I saw punk rock bands at the Binnenpret [called the OCCII], experimental jazz at OT301, and African music at ADM. I attended art openings at the Weetwee Gallery, bought books at the Fort van Sjakoo, checked email at the ASCII free Internet café, and, when there was nothing else to do, hung out at the Vrankrijk bar. And it was not all vegetarian meals and obscure films. There were animal rights conferences, benefits for Basque political prisoners, and protests against the monarchy to coincide with Prince Willem-Alexander's wedding. And, of course, when eviction days came, squatters still defended their buildings.

Living so closely to so many signs of the historical and contemporary squatters' movement it was hard to think of it as anything but vital and creative. Comparing it not to the Amsterdam of 1980 but to other cities, one would be more likely to point out how much was going on, not how much has been lost. But there is no question that the movement has been marked by some form of decline. Many, although not all, of the places I frequented, while originally squatted had long since been legalized, which might exclude them from any official inclusion in a *squatters'* movement. Certainly, as important as squatting has been to these buildings, as well as to the politics and culture they participate in, its influence today is limited. And decline does not mean death and disappearance, nor is it fully tempered by successes and positive legacies.

This brings us to the final question, a question that should have been a starting point for this research, but which still remains difficult to answer even at its conclusion. That question is, when does a movement cease to be a movement? In other words, what constitutes a social movement? Most textbooks and overviews on social movements give a basic definition which looks similar to the ones given by Tarrow (1998, 3-4): "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction

with elites, opponents, and authorities," and Goodwin and Jasper (2003, 3): "collective, organized, sustained, and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power-holders, or cultural beliefs and practices." Such definitions are certainly useful starting places for identifying social movements, and distinguishing them from protests, political parties, and cocktail parties. Yet they prove less helpful when trying to determine when an identified movement finally comes to an end. What counts as collective? As common? As sustained?

This explains the problems confronted by previous researchers of this movement; one book puts the end at 1984, another at 1988, another sees no end in sight. While each author gives very good empirical evidence to support the choices they make, they cannot all be right, can they? Either there is one objective measure for the end of the movement, in which case only one can be correct, or there are many objective measures, in which all can be correct, but would that still mean anything significant? This situation is hardly unique to the squatters' movement. It is common throughout the literature. Researchers – myself included – are self-interested actors and will frequently choose a stopping point that works best with either their larger theories or their practical limitations.

If no objective measure exists, or is at least agreed upon, perhaps it makes more sense to go directly to the source. Activists should be able to recognize at which point their movement ends. However, this study shows that few things produce as much disagreement within a movement as the question of its own decline and death. Activists are also self-interested. At times, it is in their interest to deny the end of the movement; at others, they benefit from claiming the movement is over. Both require a specific interpretation of the facts, which privileges some, distorts others, and ignores still more. Much like with researchers, activists' decisions of when a movement ends are always strategic. What then does decline actually mean? The difficulty of answering this question points to either its fundamental importance or its triviality. In self-interest, I choose its importance. Movements are not binary entities – they cannot be easily measured in ones and zeros. Both emergence and decline highlight this development, but decline perhaps more so, because this tracks the loss of what once was. Participants engage in an ongoing process of negotiating the nature of the movement, the past of movement, the future of the movement, as well as the very existence of the movement. Social

movement researchers would do well to take these negotiations and interpretations seriously, and to recognize that determining the life and death of movements is always a strategic decision, and it is unlikely that there will be much agreement over these choices. This lack of agreement should not be taken as an impediment to research, but rather as the starting point for future investigation.

Decline: The Offer

Decline may be inevitable. To understand decline, however, is not to concentrate on the inevitable, but rather the endless crossroads, choices, and contingencies that it is comprised of. When he was attacked about the veracity of *de Stad was van ons* documentary, Eric Duivenvoorden responded, "We don't pretend to be describing the history of the squatters' movement. That does not exist. This is one story, a story about people and power" ("Kritiek van Krakers" 1996). Similarly, I do not pretend to be describing a general model of movement decline. That does not exist. Nor, I would argue, will it ever exist. This is one story, a story about a declining movement. While I have analyzed the historical development of decline within the Amsterdam squatters' movement, I am certainly not offering up some general model of social movement decline that will map directly and without revision onto the experiences of other movements. The questions asked may differ, both in their content and their order. Furthermore, decline should not be confused with some kind of activist Bataan Death March, which every single movement is forced to follow, unable to resist. While challenging, it is entirely possible to regain the lost balance of the movement, to turn diminishing fortunes around. No, this is one story of decline that highlights both specific and general obstacles faced by a movement during its decline.

Specifically, the squatters' movement was quite distinctive. Relatively small and tight knit, localized in a major city in Western Europe with its own particular cultural quirks, with a strong radical ideology and practice, and generally focused on narrow range of tactics and goals, the squatters traveled down a path of decline deeply influenced by all of its unique traits, and more. Their story is a story of radicalization gone "too far" and the difficult balance between its creative and destructive urges. Decline generated and

exacerbated the most significant differences within the movement in their efforts to strike a working balance between identity and strategy as egalitarianism and effectiveness came into conflict. In their case, these divisions splintered along the tensions between political and cultural activism and between the movement's public and private spheres.

However, for all its unique qualities, there is a lot that is familiar in this tale, such as the costs of overreaching, the efforts to redefine the movement and its goals, the struggle for power, the factionalism and fracturing solidarity. Nevertheless, the path taken was never certain, and it is the moments of possible reorientation that I want to call attention to in order to highlight the most important general lessons of social movement decline, which include its mutual constitutive relationship with emergence, its centrality, its revelatory nature, and its complexity.

Decline never occurs in a vacuum. It is both an outgrowth of and reaction to the emergence of the movement. This is true beyond the idea that decline is impossible without emergence, as there would be nothing to decline. Instead, I argue that the way the movement came into being, and more importantly, the way that participants understand the movement's emergence, sets up the basic foundation for understanding the movement during its early stages. That is, it establishes the proper understanding of the bases of solidarity, the links between strategy and identity, as well as the appropriate boundaries for determining insiders, outsiders, and enemies. In some ways, activists' understanding of their movements can best be understood as the ongoing discussion over whether and how the movement is emerging or declining. Of course, decline is not totally determined by emergence. It is not a simple carbon copy. Instead, it is its own entity. Nevertheless, it will always be initially defined with respect to and in opposition to emergence. Therefore, decline can be understood most fully only with a strong grasp of the movement's beginnings.

While decline always follows emergence, it is far from an afterthought. Rather, decline plays a central role in virtually every aspect of the lives of movements. Although crafting a story of emergence may be the way movements initially come to realize self-consciousness, it is in their telling of the story of their own decline that they fully achieve this goal. Decline is not just one of many possible narratives; it often acts as a master narrative, through which all stories and analyses of the movement must travel. In

other words, given that social movements always privilege the achievement of specific goals, whether they are instrumental, expressive, or a combination of both, they will tend to conceptualize themselves in terms of a trajectory of progress towards these goals. Decline is a detour from these goals and will thus likely increasingly dominate and influence the thinking and acting of those inside the movement. If understanding decline means understanding emergence, then understanding a movement also means understanding its views on decline.

This is not only because of the centrality of decline in movement discourse and consciousness, but also because decline reveals and exposes the various fault lines within a movement. Movements work hard to create unity and solidarity, and often work harder to project this unified image both within and beyond its borders. Therefore, it can sometimes be difficult to crack this façade and see into the various differences that underlie the movement. Yet, decline can also act like an x-ray, allowing the insider and outsider alike a glimpse underneath the skin of solidarity to see all the various functional, as well as non-functional, parts of the whole. It is when the machine breaks, when the patient falls ill, that we are most likely to truly see not just the root cause of the specific problem, but also the intricacy, and thus vulnerability, of the system as a whole.

Just as decline can expose the complexities of the larger movement, it also highlights its own complexities. It is neither unitary nor singular, less a fatal deathblow than death by a thousand cuts. Therefore it does not lend itself to straightforward theorizing and analysis. Efforts to address a movement's decline can quickly begin to feel like trying to escape from a patch of quicksand: struggling just seems to make it worse. Every stable object one reaches for quickly dissolves into a double-edged subjectivity. These tensions, whether they are positive or negative, the end or beginning, or a crisis or opportunity, are both a product and a constraint on how decline is conceptualized in the movement. That is, it is open to interpretation, not just action. This process plays a formative role in the emergence of factions, but it is equally important in understanding the ways values, strategies, and identities shift within movements over time, since an interpretation is neither obvious nor can it be taken for granted.

For social movements, decline acts as a wake up call. I would not go so far as to claim that decline is also a wake up call for

social movement researchers. Nevertheless, I maintain that there is much to recommend a more serious engagement with the question of social movement decline. It not only provides a necessary missing link in the larger chain of events that form the basis of movements, it also offers critical insight into some of the most fundamental categories of social movement theory. While activists may have good reasons to decline decline, they nevertheless choose to confront it head on. Social movement scholars should rethink their own ideas and perspectives on the subject, and accept decline as an important location of study.

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