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Radical Urban Movements in Poland – the case of squatting

Radical social movements are more and more often the subject of academic inquiry, where their agenda, identity-building processes and repertoires of action are examined vis a vis the dominant discursive opportunity structures. The case study presented in this article is the squatting movement in Poland. We interpret this movement, its actions and in particular alliance-building strategies, through the perspective of radical flanks of broader urban social movements environment.

Key words: squatting, post-socialism, urban movements, Poland

Introduction

Recent academic discussions claim urban movements to be the type of social movements rooted in “collectivities with a communal base and/or with the local state as their target of action” (S. Fainstein, F. Fainstein 1985: 189). However, some researchers point to the fact that local authorities are not necessarily the target of action; the target may include private agents or action may be directed towards self-help initiatives (cf. Passotti 2013). Our intention is to show how alliances built between different groups and social movements result in the choice of targets and also politicization of movement claims. The definition of urban movements is often vague and opaque: “urban movements continue to mobilize around a great variety of issues – for instance, they struggle against urban redevelopment and gentrification; for environmental justice, including public transportation, waste management, pollution, and urban agriculture; for improved social services, community empowerment, and employment opportunities” (Passotti 2013: 3).

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Within the case studies of urban movements we chose for our study we expect to observe claims expanding beyond the issues of housing or controlled rents. Passotti summarizes the development of the research on urban movements: “much analysis on urban movements sets them in the context of macroeconomic shifts. In the latter part of the 20th century, capital reacted to deindustrialization by investing its surplus in cities with a strategy of «accumulation by dispossession» (Harvey 2008), in which poor residents in high-value areas were displaced to make place for profitable urban redevelopment” (Passotti 2013). The disposition is explicitly stated in Harvey’s manifesto *The Right to the City*, in which he writes that one should demand “greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus. Since the urban process is a major channel of surplus use, establishing democratic management over its urban deployment constitutes the right to the city” (Harvey 2008: 37).

One of the controversial points is the form of urban movements. Scholars see urban movements as taking a variety of forms, “from counter-cultural squatters to middle class-neighborhood associations and shanty town defense groups” (Castells 1983: 328). Our ambition is to show that urban social movements enrich their repertoires of action by forming alliances and cooperating often through transactional activism that focuses on networking between organized non-state actors and other actors and groups in the politico-institutional sphere (cf. Petrova, Tarrow 2007).

Our analysis is built primarily on 40 semi-structured interviews, whereof 20 interviews were conducted in Warsaw in 2013 with squatters and tenants’ movement activists and 20 interviews were conducted with grassroots activists (mostly squatters) in the years 2008–2013 in Poznań. Warsaw and Poznań have been chosen as they are the two Polish cities where the urban movement scene, and the squatting movement in particular, is very vibrant. The analysis focuses on the alliance built between the more radical forms of urban movements – squatters – and the more moderate ones – the tenants. The information collected in the interviews is complemented by publications released by and about the activists, official documents, newspapers and mass-media, social media, and with other information on the Internet [for more information about data collection see (Polanska, Piotrowski 2015)].

Squatting as a movement

Squatted social centers have been an integral part of alternative social movements (mostly autonomous, but also anarchist or radical environmentalist) for the last few decades. They have provided a place for the activists to meet up, organize themselves, and find shelter. They have formed mostly in urban areas and focused on urban issues, which is why squatting has been incorporated into the definition of urban movements (Castells 1983). For many activists, squatting has become

an end in itself: free spaces where ideals are introduced into everyday practice of consensus-based decision-making processes, environmental stability, autonomy, and so forth.

The term squatting originated in the 19th-century U.S. and described the taking-over of unused property by the Settlers (it also meant taking the land from Native American people), regulated in 1862 by the Homestead Act. For many decades, squatting was more focused on providing cheap (if not free) housing, just as it was for instance in the first post-war years in the United Kingdom. The second wave of squatting took place in the 1970s, when it became a political statement as well as an imminent part of the counterculture; this period provided the term's current meaning. Over the years, scholars have analyzed squatting from a number of perspectives such as: an example of middle class counter-culture (Clarke *et al.* 1976: 58); a manifestation of DIY³ culture (McKay 1998); an "important facet of the decentralized yet worldwide struggle to redistribute economic resources according to a more egalitarian and efficient pattern" (Corr 1999: 3); a housing movement (Wates 1980); a post-modern, post-ideological, mass media-influenced movement (Adilkno 1994); an utopian struggle (Kallenberg 2001); a self-help movement (Katz, Mayer 1985); and progenitors to, and later a wing of, the "international Autonomien"⁴ (Katsiaficas 1997).

An important distinction has to be made between squatting as a result of a necessity (provision of housing) and squatting as political statement. In this period of global recession and increased housing foreclosures, squatting has become far more prevalent in Western contexts (Peñalver 2009) and in some cases need-based and politically motivated squatting go hand in hand. According to Reeve, who specializes in housing research, "in the context of adverse housing circumstances, limited housing opportunity and frustrated expectations, squatters effectively remove themselves from and defy the norms of traditional channels of housing consumption and tenure power relations, bypassing the 'rules' of welfare provision" (Reeve 2005: 198). In effect, beleaguered citizens living in a welfare state that cannot provide them with adequate resources take action into their own hands.

This distinction between squatting resulting from housing needs and squatting as a political (or cultural) activity is reflected in the types of occupied locations. The first ones are house projects (living projects, social shelters etc.), the latter, after the Italian anti-hierarchical left *Autonomia* movement activists from the late 1960s and early 1970s, are usually called social centers. As Klein describes: "Social centres are abandoned buildings – warehouses, factories, military forts, schools –

³ DIY – Do It Yourself – culture is linked to punk rock and hardcore scenes and the squatting movement. It is more than a fashion trend or aesthetic orientation, the 'true and pure' underground has to rely on DIY ethics in terms of organization, publishing, record labels and so forth. The DIY culture is most visible in squatted social centers and their activities, but its impact can be observed all over the scene.

⁴ I.e. the autonomist anti-authoritarian left wing libertarian groups emerging in Germany and Italy since the early 1970s.

that have been occupied by squatters and transformed into cultural and political hubs, explicitly free from both the market, and from state control... Though it may be hard to tell at first, the social centres aren't ghettos, they are windows – not only into another way to live, disengaged from the state, but also into a new politics of engagement” (Klein 2001). This partially romanticized description of social centers emphasizes a few important features of venues like this. Firstly, squatted social centers are not occupied because of affordable housing shortage, at least not primarily. They are political statements, usually responding to local policies and, more indirectly, to national politics. Therefore, their emergence and existence should be analyzed through the perspective of the cities, not the states, however we acknowledge that often, state policies affect city governance that, in turn, condition and affect the emergence of squatting. Their confrontational attitude is at the core and brings the activists from squatted social centers closer to social movement activists. According to della Porta and Diani (1999: 15), such an attitude is one of the defining features of social movements as they engage in collective action focused on conflict, take part in political and/or cultural conflicts, and strive to promote or prevent social change.

The housing/activism division is also reflected in a long-running dispute between the activists themselves about the fundamental ideas behind squatting. This discussion can be reduced to two opposing tendencies: to open the squatted location as wide as possible (the social center model) or to create a space for its inhabitants and their activities, limiting interactions with the surrounding world by creating a private space within the squat. Social centers also differ in the degree of openness, with some stressing the openness to other groups and audience and some intentionally limiting the access for bystanders by requiring specific cultural capital or by creating strong links with specific subcultures. This division has far-reaching consequences including the types of activities performed in the squatted locations. In the case of a more exclusive space, the need to compromise the ‘purity’ of the movement is not as urgent as in more open and accessible organizational forms. The need to satisfy less radical (politically and esthetically) tastes and attitudes is less frequent.

The label ‘radical movements’ we use has been implicitly defined in opposition to the mainstream or moderate groups. Pizzorno (1978) suggested that instrumental movements establish a separation between means and ends, while countercultural movements scrutinize collective action as an end in itself. Fitzgerald and Rodgers (2000) wrote that radical social movements differ from other (moderate ones) in terms of structure, ideology, tactics, methods of communication and understanding their success. Such movements emerge during or after particular cycles of protests or are the consequences of social dynamics that push groups into processes of radicalization (Stekelenburg, Klandermans 2010).

Guzman-Concha suggests that in order to define radical groups one should: “(1) establish historical and geographical parameters, against which similar instances of this type can be reasonably compared and (2) define the components

that constitute the concept” (Guzman-Concha 2015: 3). He later points that radical groups (a) pursue an agenda of drastic changes, in particular within the political and economic organization of society. In order to implement their agenda, they (b) use an unconventional repertoire of contention including civil disobedience. In addition, these groups (c) adopt countercultural identities that frame and justify unconventional objectives and methods, although this process of identity formation often comes together later with the development of the cases and campaigns.

Within social movements one can observe heterogeneity and ongoing internal negotiations (e.g. Melucci 1989, Peterson 1997), as well as an implicit, sometimes conflict-ridden, internal division of labor between different movement factions. While radical activists tend to be skeptical towards contacts with state representatives, moderate activists often see this as necessary for solving the problems at hand. Haines (1988, 2013) talks about ‘radical flank effects’ to describe how these different logics can both strengthen and counteract the overall goals of a movement. On the one hand, the more conflict-oriented strategies of the movement’s ‘radical flank’ (e.g. direct actions) can create publicity and awareness of the issues at stake, making it possible for the movement’s more ‘reasonable’ moderates to contact established political actors and influence the political agenda. On the other hand, there is a risk that the conflict-oriented actions of the radical flank may stigmatize and marginalize the movement as a whole, which will also affect its moderate flank.

Squatting in Poland

Squatting has not been studied to the same extent in Central and Eastern Europe as it has been in Western contexts, which is related to the phenomenon’s delayed emergence in post-socialist settings. Squatting attempts, as an expression of counter culture, have been observed in the area in the first part of the 1990s, much later than their counterparts in the West. In the end of the 1990s, Corr (1999) predicted a rise of squatting actions in the post-socialist countries as a result of the growing inequalities, the decrease of affordable housing and opportunities for the improvement of living standards. Indeed, squatting spread to post-socialist cities and one of the few researchers studying squatting in Central and Eastern Europe, Piotrowski (2011a; 2014) argues that the squatting movement in the area encountered difficulties in finding broader support, due to the small size of left-wing movements and the phenomenon’s novelty in the area. Poland stands out among other post-socialist countries with a deeply rooted squatting movement (Piotrowski 2011a, 2014; Polanska 2014; Polanska, Piotrowski 2015), with squatting initiatives represented in most Polish cities (Poznań, Warsaw, Wrocław, Opole, Gdynia, Lublin, Łódź, Gdańsk, Gliwice, Biała Podlaska, Częstochowa, Kraków, Grudziądz, Ruda Śląska, Białystok, and Sosnowiec) along with a rising number of tenants’ associations fighting for tenants’ rights all over the country (over 40 associations registered in the country) (Polanska 2015).

The very emergence of the squatting movement in Poland is described in Żuk's (2001) study of the new social movements in Poland in the 1990s. Żuk discusses the origins of squatting in the country and argues that it is a new phenomenon that holds some connections to the development of alternative culture in the country in the 1980s, but draws its inspiration mainly from Western examples. Squatting in Poland is also described as caused by the systemic changes in the 1990s and the rise of capitalism, along with socio-economic changes and the very existence of vacant buildings. Moreover, there are some studies indirectly describing the phenomenon of squatting in post-socialist context (for instance Piotrowski 2011b, 2014; Schwell 2005; Gagyí 2013).

Squatters' activism in Poland is ideologically rooted and squatting is seen as a goal in itself and, at times, could be described as a politicized lifestyle (Portwood-Stacer 2013). Because of squatters' preference for direct action and squatting's illegal dimension, such activism is often interpreted as 'uncivil' and has not found broad support in Poland, or in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe (cf. Císař 2013). The tenants represent a more moderate social movement as they function within the politico-institutional system and are organized formally in associations (*stowarzyszenia*). Because tenants' demands contradict mainstream discourse of the market and private property, they are often viewed by the broader public as posing 'illegitimate' demands (Polanska 2015).

In order to understand the conditions of squatting and squatters' cooperation with tenant activists in Poland, one needs to consider the situation in the housing sphere, as it constitutes the conditions for such activism. According to official statistics, as many as 6.5 million Poles lived in substandard conditions in 2012, and there was a shortage of 1.5 million dwellings in the country by that time (NIK 2012). Many buildings and land, nationalized during communism, were until recent times under municipal management, however re-privatization claims by former owners, their heirs and the buyers of these claims (and the so called 'cleaners', used in situations when property needs to be 'cleaned' of tenants) started to re-shape the situation. Due to the lack of coherent legal regulations and lengthy procedures, lawyers or banks that employ lawyers skilled in property law, often buy these re-privatization claims, subsequently resulting in rent increases and eviction of the old tenants and subsequent gentrification. Sometimes the unclear ownership status of a building leads to it standing vacant for a long time. Squatters and tenants in Polish cities oppose these processes, given the housing shortage in the country. They also oppose the gentrification processes, related to the business of re-privatization claims, and the shrinkage of affordable housing stock.

Our analysis builds on the comparison of squatter and tenant activists from Warsaw and Poznań. Both cities are among the largest cities in Poland and with vibrant (for Polish standards) social movement scenes. In both of them, there is a rather long-standing and active squatting scene. What is different is their central/peripheral positioning: Warsaw, being the capital, is far more central for social movements than Poznań, along with their size (Warsaw has over 1.7 million

people, Poznań 0.7 million). Many of the groups we have studied so far (squatters, tenants and anarchists) were involved in urban conflicts and targeted local authorities in their campaigns. In Warsaw, the squatters, their activities and their cooperation with tenants' groups resulted in a Round Table on housing issues in 2012. Municipal housing and city housing policy have become politicized issues in the capital city. In Poznań, the squatters and the anarchists (being often an overlapping environment) have managed to radicalize and politicize the issues of public housing and commodification of public services, but in a somewhat different way, as we will show further on.

Cooperation between squatters and tenants

In the literature, tenants' activism is usually defined as self-help activity, where squatting or occupying a dwelling might be inevitable, but is not the very goal in itself, as it often is for squatters (Pruijt 2013). The development of the movements however has been inter-connected and is often mentioned in the literature on squatting in the West. For instance, Corr has described the development of a squatter organization closely related to homeless people and tenants' organizations in the US in the 1990s and concluded "squatters and rent strikers have often supported each other because both resist eviction and because many of their arguments, tactics, and movement trajectories have similarities" (Corr 1999: 9). In their study of the development of the tenant self-management movement in New York City in the 60s and 70s, Katz and Mayer (1985) illustrate how this movement is intertwined with squatters' tactics and repertoires of action. Nevertheless, the links between squatters and tenants are not exclusive to the North American context. In the case of squatter settlements in Latin America, the squatters took over the land informally and over time their activity was organized as tenants' communities (Castells 1983; Ward 2002). Also in Amsterdam, the history of squatting was interwoven with the history of tenants' committees fighting for affordable housing already in the 1930s (Owens 2009). Owens emphasizes, however, that the identities of tenants and squatters were separated as "tenants used squatting as a tactic, however, they did not think of themselves as squatters, let alone as a squatters' movement" (2009: 47). The clear division between the squatters and the tenants, and at the same time their interconnectedness throughout the history, generates some interesting questions on the relationship of these movements and the character of their cooperation.

In social movement literature, there are several studies covering the factors facilitating cooperation and alliance building (Polletta 2002; Lichterman 1995; Obach 2004; Rose 2000). For example, Van Dyke (2003) found that heightened levels of threat or opportunity, access to abundant resources, and high levels of identity alignment among the actors are significant factors to the probability of alliance building. This argument seems to be in accordance with the Political

Opportunity Structures (POS) approach (Tarrow 1998). In other words, social movement actors tend to build alliances and cooperate with others when they feel threatened, when they recognize an opportunity for reaching some of their goals, when the resources are plentiful and accessible, and when their identities are similar to the potential allies. These opportunities and threats appear from political structures, from the side of the authorities, and occasionally from other social movement actors involved in coalitions. Moreover, regarding the social movement context, “the openness or vulnerability of the political system and the fragmentation of the elites are key factors in the emergence of urban movements and shape targets and strategies” (Passotti 2013).

The durability and diversity of movements and alliance formation

A brief overview of the two cases shows an increase in the vibrancy of tenants' movements and squatters in recent years and alliances formed rather recently. The campaigns to defend the squats of Elba (Warsaw in 2012) and Rozbrat (Poznań in 2009) and the campaigns against the practices of the ‘cleaners’ of evicted houses in both cities resonated strongly within the public opinion on the local and national level (for a chronological review of squatting see Table). In the case of Warsaw, in particular, the cooperation between squatters and tenants and their sustained independence in that cooperation opened up a bargaining position vis-à-vis the authorities and allowed the movements to use an opening in the emerging POS.

Table. Squats (existing longer than one month) in Warsaw and Poznań since 1989

Warsaw	Poznań
1995–1996 Student Autonomist action at Smyczkowa Street (Warsaw University building)	1994–today Rozbrat squat at Puławskiego street
1998–1998 Twierdza (fortress, more than a hundred-years-old fortification building)	
2002–2002 Czarna Żaba (Black Frog, located in an old bakery on St. Wincenty Street)	
2000–2011 Fabryka (Factory, opened in 2002 for social and cultural activities)	
2002–2003 Okopowa Street, Spokojna Street (named after the location)	
2003–2003 Furmania (cooperating with an animal welfare organization)	

Warsaw	Poznań
2004–2012 Elba (named after the location at Elbląska Street)	
2005–2005 Spółdzielnia (Cooperative, on Wiertnicza Street)	
2007–today Wagenburg (a trailer camp/eco-village on squatted land)	2007–2008 Magadan (punk squat)
2011–today Syrena (Mermaid, the symbol of Warsaw)	
2011–2013 Czarna Śmierć (Black Death, focus on black magic, skating and chess playing)	
2012–today Przychodnia (Clinic, located in a former medical clinic)	2013–2015 Od:zysk squat at the Old Town Square
	2013–today Zemsta (info-shop and activist run bookstore and café)
2014–today ADA (Aktywny Dom Alternatywny/ Active Alternative House, a legalized social center)	

Source: own sources basing on interviews and available movements' publications.

In Warsaw, the authorities tried to settle with the squatters by pushing them into more formalized initiatives resulting in the opening of a legalized social center, ADA, in 2014, which was preceded by the squatters establishing an association – Skłot-Pol – in order to have legal foundation for cooperation with the municipality. The alliance between squatters and tenants resulted in pressures imposed upon the authorities that heavily relied on mass media and Internet but also on demonstrations, campaigns, and other forms of direct action, such as eviction blockades or meeting interruptions. The diversity of the movement scene in both cities has varied and so has the openness towards alliance formation by the movements and ultimately their influence on formal politics. What is evident is that the influence of the movements in each city has varied in its degree on local formal politics. In Warsaw, one of the achievements was the arrangement of the Round Table (2012) and the creation of a platform for a dialogue between squatters, tenants, and the authorities (on the local, but also the national level) (2012–2013); in Poznań, the local authorities claimed the conflict between the tenants and the new house owners was of a private nature and downplayed the issue.



Picture 1. Przychodnia squat in Warsaw

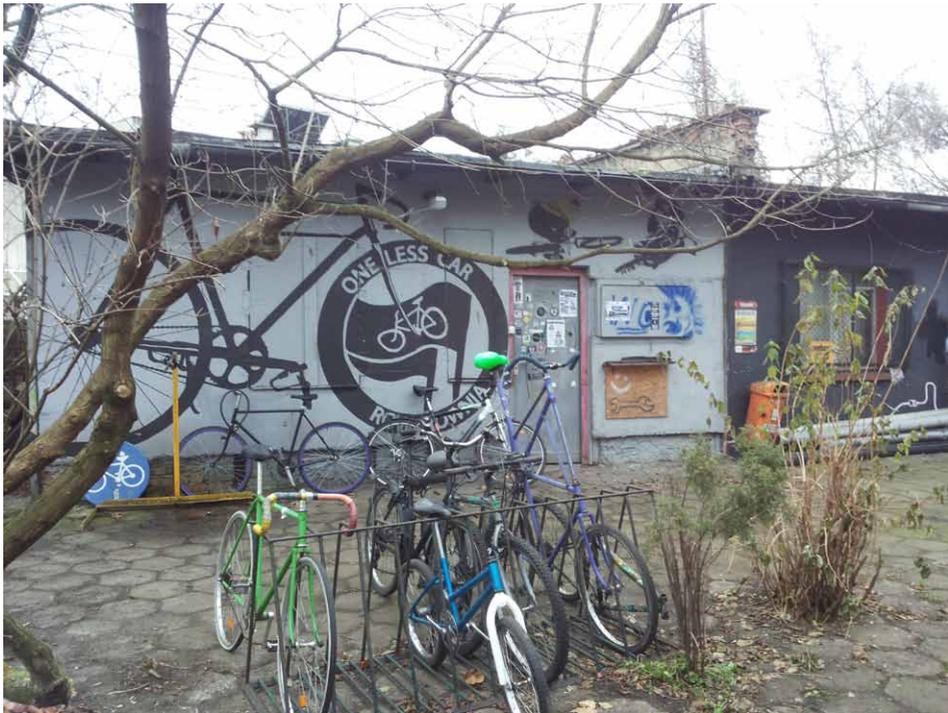
Source: Dominika V. Polanska.

The alliances formed between squatters and tenants in both cities were not entirely free of friction and this was particularly evident in the Warsaw case. Here, the tenants' organizations were more independent from squatters' support, compared to the case of Poznań. In the interviews, we were told that some of the Warsaw squatters considered squatting as a purely cultural and social activity when the question of alliance with tenants came up and made their voices heard when tenants' rights were discussed. However, the difference of opinion was solved in the city by the opening of a new squat in 2011 that focused mainly on housing activism and where squatters interested in housing/tenants' activism could join in. Warsaw squatters saw this solution as a process of "profiling" and solving the tensions between different interests among squatters' activists in the city.

In the case of Poznań, the cooperation between squatters and tenants was initiated relatively later, in 2011 with the foundation of Wielkopolskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów, and by securing an important position of squatters in the founded tenants' association, and thus avoiding internal conflict. When understanding the role of personal networks in the alliance formation between squatters and tenant activists in both cities, it is evident that these networks of acquaintances were important at the very beginning of the contact between these environments. They also were, over time, broadened to more general trust, shared by both groups. This way, inter-

personal trust generated inter-organizational trust among the squatters and tenants in both cities, however earlier and for a longer period of time in the case of Warsaw.

From the perspective of resource mobilization theory, the tenants – usually older and with lower economic capital – have successfully cooperated with the mostly younger and helpful squatters. The latter used the conflicts revolving around tenants' rights to push forward their agenda and politicize the claims, but also possessed necessary skills in terms of campaign organization, media contacts, organization of demonstrations, and simple logistics. For the squatters, the cooperation has given them new tools in their conflict with the local authorities; it has provided them with more arguments for criticizing local housing and development policies and created an opening to politicize the housing issues in anti-capitalist terms. It also opened up squatters to new tactics, in particular concerning legal tools: for instance, in Poznań new regulations about stalking were used against the 'cleaners'. Tenants have gained a new, radical, skilled and experienced ally, which could help win compensation for illegal evictions in courts (Rozbrat Raport 2014). Above all, tenants have gained a challenging partner that has broadened tenants' claims (from affordable housing, to a right to the city) and encouraged them towards a more demanding, confrontational and self-respecting attitude.



Picture 2. Rozbrat squat in Poznań

Source: Dominika V. Polanska.

The argument we would like to make is that the main differences in squatter-tenant cooperation in the two cities are affected by:

- the position and stability of squatters and squats in each city,
- the independence and influence of the tenants' organizations,
- tenants' organizations' diversity,
- the internal dynamics and divergence/convergence of interests and ideologies of the squatters.

In Poznań, since the squat Rozbrat was established in 1994, its stable political and cultural position has become indisputable within the city. Its position has heavily affected the interactions with other social actors and the authorities. We argue that ideological and identity alignment among the squatters and other social actors in the city shaped the need of interaction and openness towards new allies. In Warsaw, on the other hand, the diversity and dynamics in the activists' environment resulted in greater ideological and tactical flexibility in coalitions with other social movement actors. Therefore, we argue that the high degree of identity alignment and ideological consistency dampens formation of new alliances. Our cases show that the role of instability and differentiation of interests and identities among the activists facilitates the creation of alliances and willingness to cooperate. However, some degree of identity alignment must be kept as a common platform to build the alliances on.

Furthermore, in understanding what inspires and facilitates cooperation and alliances across and within social movements, researchers have highlighted the role of movement structure, ideology, and culture (Polletta 2002; Van Dyke 2003; Beamish, Luebbers 2009). In contrast to previous studies, we argue that our cases demonstrate that ideology and identity alignment generate stagnation in movements in regard to openness towards new allies and new potential modes of interactions with the authorities. Of course we are not opposing that alliances require some degree of identity alignment or ideological similarities between the allies. However, an overly high degree of identity alignment and ideological consistency discourages formation of new alliances.

We would, furthermore, like to argue that the formation of alliances and cooperation is not always grounded on rational decisions, as in many cases already existing social relations play a pivotal role in selecting partners and allies. Corrigall-Brown and Meyer (2010) argue that personal networks of friends and acquaintances enhance participation and collaboration. We believe that the trust produced through pre-existing inter-personal and inter-organizational relations and the need for investments on both parts in trust building can be (to a great extent) overridden by relying on already existing relations and networks. At the same time non-participation can be costly to the individual or the organization in terms of time spent on building trust and production of social capital required for the cooperation.



Picture 3. Former Od:zysk squat in Poznań

Source: Dominika V. Polanska.

Conclusion

The two cases described show an increase in the vibrancy of tenants' movements and squatting in recent years. The Polish media, often skeptical towards squatters and anarchists, has recently showed a large interest in the tenants' and the squatters' case and often showed affinity for the campaigns. We show that the success of the activists is mainly caused by alliances with each other and depends on the efficient use of the emerging political opportunity structures, in particular the openness of the political system to activities and claims made by squatters and tenants. The alliances formed result in pressure on the authorities (local and, in the case of Warsaw squatters, also national), and are heavily dependent on mass media and the Internet, but also on demonstrations, campaigns, and other forms of direct action, such as eviction blockades or meeting-interruptions.

Not to be ignored is the fact that the location (peripheral-central) and the size of the two cities compared might play a role in the complexity of the activist scene. Warsaw is a far bigger city than Poznań and has, as we argue here, a more dynamic, but also unstable squatting scene. In Poznań, the number of potential allies for the tenants' movement is limited. There is also one squatting and one anarchist environment (that despite internal tensions and discussions is rather homogeneous), while in Warsaw, the picture is far more complex and dynamic. Not only are some squats not explicitly anarchist but there are also other radical leftist groups present in the environment that form potential allies. In Poznań, activists from the anarchist environment are often the only groups with the know-how and experience in organizing protests and campaigns, but in Warsaw the already existing tenants' organizations have some experience in this regard.

Nevertheless, the pressure of the alliances formed resulted in uneven political outcomes in the two cities. We argue that the position and stability of the squatters in the cities, the independence and influence of tenants' organizations in each city, but also the internal dynamics and divergence/convergence of interests and ideologies of squatters and tenants play an important role for which direction their alliances take.

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