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Capturing protest in urban environments

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Capturing Protest in Urban Environments: The 'Police Kettle' as a Territorial Strategy

Abstract

Kettling has emerged in recent decades as an established, if controversial, tactic of public order policing. Departing from a historical emphasis on dispersal, kettling instead acts to contain protesters within a police cordon for sustained periods of time. In this article, we seek to elaborate upon the spatial and temporal logics of kettling by investigating the conditions of is historical emergence. We argue that 'kettling' has to be understood as a territorial strategy that co-evolved in relation to new forms of disruptive protest. Whereas older techniques of crowd dispersal serve to diffuse a unified collective, 'kettling' aims at capturing the highly volatile and 'swarming' movements characteristic of contemporary choreographies of dissent. Drawing on police manuals, media coverage, accounts from activists and expert interviews, we show how the 'kettle' re-territorializes protest by acting on its spatio-temporal and affective constitution. By fabricating an inner outside of the urban milieu, freezing the time of collective mobilization and inducing debilitating affects such as fear and boredom kettling intervenes into the scene of political subjectification that each congregation of protesting bodies seeks to fashion.

Keywords: Affect, Kettling, Protest, Public order policing, Subjectivation, Territorialization

Introduction

In recent decades, a particular spatial strategy has manifested itself in the theatre of public order policing: the police encircle protesters and keep them in a cordon for a sustained period of time without the permission to leave. In official police discourses this strategy is referred to as 'containing' or 'corralling' but activists and the media rather refer to it in terms of 'kettling' (Joyce and Wain, 2014: 154-156; Fernandez, 2005: 248, 2008: 132; Reicher et al., 2007: 411). This terminological division reflects a deeper division on the ethical and political valence of this strategy. Amongst police officers, containment is regarded as a liberal technology of policing designed to prevent disorder and violence (HMCIC, 2009a, 2009b; NPIA, 2010). For protestors, the kettle represents a deeply oppressive tactic bent on discouraging citizens from exercising their democratic right to protest (Penny, 2010a, 2010b).

Strategies of enclosure and isolation have a long history in the military, where they have been deployed to cut supply chains of enemy forces and preclude opportunities to retreat.[1] In policing, however, the kettle is a relatively recent phenomenon, presumably not much older than three decades. Archival materials suggest that the first modern police kettle was formed in Hamburg on the 6th of June 1986 when 861 protesters were kept inside an encirclement for up to thirteen hours (Von Appen, 2016). Although German administrative courts have subsequently declared kettling unlawful on several occasions, the measure has

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[1] The German term for this military strategy indicates a 'family resemblance' with the police kettle: *Kesselschlacht*, literally 'kettle battle'. Famous examples reach from the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 B.C. to the Battle of Stalingrad in World War II. It remains to be explored whether the adoption of spatial elements from military encirclement by the police attests to a wider trend towards what Stephen Graham (2010) has called 'military urbanism'.

been recurrently applied during the 1990s when it spread internationally. London in particular became a hotspot both of the deployment and the contestation of the technique. At the May Day protests in 2001 about 3000 demonstrators were contained by the Metropolitan Police. Kettling sparked further controversy when it was used during the G20 summit in 2009 and the student fee protests in 2010. Other instances of police kettling appeared around the same period in different settings, such as at the Copenhagen climate change protests in 2009, in Toronto at the G20 Summit protests in 2010, on Brooklyn Bridge in New York against 'Occupy' protesters in 2011, and in Frankfurt during the annual 'Blockupy'-protests between 2012 and 2015 (Mullis et al., 2016: 57). Today, the strategy is firmly anchored in the repertoire of police measures for governing public protest both in Europe and North America.[2]

From a historical perspective, the emergence of kettling involves a spatial transformation in public order policing that cannot be overstated. The logic of containment diverges markedly from tactics of dispersal that have been used for centuries. Wedges, V-formations, mixed shield dispersals, running lines, baton and cavalry charges all operate to divide and scatter an unruly crowd and restore public order (Cocking, 2013). In Britain the infamous Riot Act, dating back to 1714, would be read out by the authorities demanding that a 'riotous' gathering of more than twelve people should disband and go back to their 'lawful business', or otherwise be dispersed by force. Kettling is equivalent to dispersal in that both strategies are applied when the right to assembly is suspended. But spatially

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[2] While this article focuses on public protest, it should be mentioned that techniques of corralling have also come to be applied in securing football matches. Although the term 'kettling' is rarely used in this context, the affinities in spatial design stand out. Most notably, the police have regularly enclosed travelling soccer fans on their way to and from the stadium. A very similar form of containment - the so-called 'mobile kettle' - is deployed to escort anarchist groups (the 'black bloc') during demonstrations.

kettling operates under an inverted logic. Rather than dispersing protesters, the kettle contains them: hindering disruptive elements from circulating by barring movement. Urban space is striated in a highly flexible manner through the establishment of fleeting enclosures comprised of the flesh of police bodies reinforced with body armor, shields, visors, batons and other equipment which is organized into densely layered 'lines' (Sørli, 2012). Kettling thus turns the spatio-temporal coordinates of crowd dispersal upside down: instead of rapidly diffusing the protest, it sets up a bounded space for containing and potentially exhausting its energy.

In this article, we seek to elaborate upon the spatial and temporal logics of kettling. We intend to contribute to the rich body of research that aims at examining the 'time-space *sequences* and *settings* of police activity' (Fyfe, 1992: 470). Yet, given both the public prominence of the phenomenon and the broad scholarly interest in the territorial strategies of policing in general (c.f. Herbert, 1997; Wahlström, 2010; Yarwood and Paasche, 2015; Zajko and Béland, 2008), the literature on kettling is surprisingly thin (for notable exceptions cf. Policante, 2011; Sørli, 2014). Most of the authors who address the technique refer to it only in passing (Brighenti, 2014b: 14; Cocking, 2013: 220; Martin, 2011: 10), concentrate only on its legal status (Mead, 2012; Wall, 2016) or use the term rather metaphorically (Paasche, 2013). Decades after its emergence, research on the spatio-temporal constitution of the kettle still remains an urgent desideratum.

This scholarly neglect, moreover, corresponds with a certain reluctance on the side of the police to promote the technique of containment explicitly as a rationality of crowd control. If police manuals and government reports refer to it, they primarily highlight legal hurdles (NPIA, 2010: 38) and specify precautions to be taken 'to moderate its impact' (HMIC,

2009a: 10-11). Both aspects, however, do not explain why exactly kettling is used in lieu of any other measure to govern public disorder. One of the very few cues to answering this question merely lies in the declared need 'to adapt to the changing face of protest' (HMIC, 2009b: 18). To be sure, there is scant mention as to how the nature of protest has precisely changed and how kettling actually corresponds with the changes. But rather than anything else, containment is presented as a response to more decentralized forms of protest such as 'spontaneous demonstrations' or 'sit-downs in the highway' (HMIC, 2009b: 46).

In the attempt to deepen our understanding of the time-space of kettling within the political rationalities underpinning public order policing, we take the insinuation that the kettle has co-evolved with forms of protest as an analytical lead. We contend that the emergence of the *strategy* of kettling has to be comprehended in relation to developments in the *tactics* of contemporary protest (De Certeau, 2011: 29-42). The first section of this article therefore unfolds what we conceive of in terms of a *de-territorializing* quality immanent to recent changes in protest. Drawing on tactical reflections put forward by activists as well as on historical accounts from the literature on crowd policing *inter alia*, we show that traditional mass protest has recently been supplemented, and in many instances displaced, by a repertoire of fleeting and widely dispersed maneuvers in the urban milieu which aim at disrupting infrastructural nodal points. Containment strategies have been developed in the context of a transformation from the symbolism of the unified collective appearance in public space to more volatile, swarming modes of resistance. Against this backdrop, the second section will detail the particular form of *re-territorialization* enacted by the kettle. Complementing the few official accounts available with materials from blogs, media reports and semi-structured interviews we conducted

with two public order policing experts, we demonstrate that the kettle is designed as a particular apparatus of capture (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 424-427). Forming a kettle is an attempt of seizing and exhausting the dynamics of protest by spatial means. It intervenes into the bodily constitution of protest, struggling to destitute the political subjectivity that is potentially emerging in acts of public dissent.

In delineating the relation between the *de-territorializing dynamics of contemporary protest* and the *re-territorializing strategy of containment*, we take inspiration from a conceptual debate that does not conceive of territory as the pre-existing object of power but as political technology through which power is exerted (cf. Brenner and Elden, 2009; Delaney, 2005; Elden, 2010; Raffestin, 2012). Notwithstanding the diversity of the different contributions, the focus of the debate is on the making of multiple territories and how they shape distinct spaces of action. Two analytical aspects are of particular importance for our treatment of the police kettle. First, the notion of territory is not tied to the historical formation of nation state space but applies to a much wider spectrum of phenomena. As 'a way of carving the environment through boundary drawing activities' (Brighenti, 2010a: 61), territory aims at circumscribing behaviour, configuring interactions and providing 'differential access to things and to others' (Sack, 1986: 30). We analyze accordingly how the kettle constitutes a territorializing act that shapes the urban milieu in situations of protest, barring possibilities of movement and confining modes of political articulation. Second, territory is inherently dynamic and contested. This is the reason why it is analytically so useful to translate it into the conceptual pairing of de- and re-territorialization: both processes appear only relative to each other (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 220-29, 324-37; Brighenti, 2014a). Acts of territorialization intervene into a given

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forcefield; they modulate rhythms of movement and affective intensities which, at the same time, have the potential to overflow, escape or counteract a territorial assemblage. Such a conceptual view is highly conducive to understanding how the kettle corresponds with protest tactics that occupy the urban environment in a hit and run mode. Through investigating the constitutive enfolding of de- and re-territorialization we intend to shed light on the spatio-temporal rationality of the kettle as a political technology for governing protest.

2. De-Territorializing Tactics: From Symbolic to Disruptive Protests

In his histories of popular contention, Charles Tilly (1986, 2005) undertook to study the evolution of the distinct organizational forms that public 'disorders' have taken. What Tilly shows is not only that forms of public 'disorder' are, in fact, highly ordered, but that practices of contention are historically highly malleable. They come into being, rise to prominence, fall away, become refigured and disappear over time. In this section, we will employ a genealogical perspective (Bonditti et al., 2015) to render the recent appearance of the kettle intelligible. We seek to understand kettling as a response to a problematisation of public order policing wrought by transformations of contemporary protest. Here, we chart a trajectory between two forms of contention: symbolic mass protest and disruptive protest. This trajectory corresponds with changes in the de- and re-territorialisation of protest. Symbolic mass protest, on the one hand, re-territorializes the fleeting dynamics of rioting and corresponds with the de-territorializing technique of crowd dispersal.

Disruptive protest, on the other hand, performs a tactical movement of de-territorialisation which is met through the re-territorializing strategy of the kettle.

Instead of beginning by asking what symbolic protest is (an impossible task given its ongoing evolution), we propose instead to understand how it originally emerged from riotous protest. The riot has been historically understood as a kind of prototypical war machine: a collection of bodies acting together as a force of opposition to striated, state order (Borch, 2012; Brighenti, 2014). Yet while the aim is most certainly to foment disorder, the riot exhibits a particular logic of ordering. It is the emergence of an electric affective atmosphere which charges its composite bodies. It is a form of self-ordering designed for maximum disruption to the broader social order. In this respect, tactical elements of early-modern rioting will re-emerge in our most recent present. As we detail below, contemporary forms of protest take up the de-territorializing vector immanent to tactics of contention elaborated centuries before. The kettle will serve as the apparatus designed to capture the affective intensity of the rioting bodies.

Up until the late 19th century, riotous protest was the most common medium through which politically unrepresented peoples demonstrated their grievances to the ruling elite (Reiner, 1998: 37; Linden 2016). Unsurprisingly, rioting is intimately tied to powerful derogatory narratives, the most prominent being the problematisation of the crowd (Borch, 2009, 2012; Brighenti, 2010b). As a direct inversion of the ideal liberal subject the crowd marked the threat of the resurgence of pre-social modes of behaviour characteristic of children (dependent, selfish, emotional) or animals (irrational, competitive, violent). The semantics of the crowd helps to portray rioters as an object, rather than a subject, of governance thus legitimating, if not necessitating, the exercise of 'illiberal' techniques of

governance (Valverde, 1996). These connotations were mostly preserved when the crowd emerged as an important epistemic in the burgeoning fields of sociology and crowd psychology at the beginning of the 20th century (Brighenti, 2010b).

Symbolic protest evolved from an effort to manifest a politically legitimate expression of political contention. To be distinguished from the riot, the protest must be composed: both ordered and orderly. The influence of the workers movements within early social movements was important in this regard. Like the strike, mass symbolic protest is a demonstration of unity and solidarity. The assembly of protesters stages the appearance of the people as a spectacle of opposition. Its size, measured in number, signifies power and force (Wall, 2016: 396). But the gathering of individuals is more than symbolic. It is a manifestation of collective political subjectivity. For achieving this effect, bodies, individual and collective, must be disciplined. The affective charge produced by the gathering of bodies must be carefully managed. Passions are incited but not permitted to run loose. Rather, they must be constantly folding back in on themselves to strengthen the social bonds of the collective and give concrete form to a common collective identity. The psycho-spatial territorialization of the protest is thus simultaneously a physical and symbolic demonstration of solidarity. The spatial form of the protest is massifying: centripetally pulling individuals into a collective mass-body demonstrative of unity, solidarity and, indeed, force. In this way, mass rallies and marches could be understood as rival centres of power to that of the state (see Jeffery and Hennessy, 1983: 6-7).

The continued conflation of protests and strikes with 'crowds' was simultaneously a way of delegitimizing their claim to political status while enabling policing practices that aim to restore order through crowd dispersal. The figure of the crowd functioned as to degrade

the symbolic act of the demonstration by pathologizing it: targeting specifically the affective bonds of solidarity which demonstrations seek to manifest. The crowd is a depoliticized collective rendered sinister and dangerous. Problematizing the crowd in terms of its potentially violent irrationality therefore helped to legitimize dispersal tactics that aimed to de-territorialize the mass-body of the protests. Water cannons, baton charges, cavalry charges, tear gas, the firing of rubber or live bullets, and the police formation of the 'flying wedge' were variously employed for the purpose of putting a crowd into flight. Violence, first through threat and later through its exercise, was deployed as a way in which proper authority could be reasserted and restored. The physical fragmentation of the crowd acted to fracture the psycho-social bonds which had been developed within it: interrupting the influence of 'group think' over the individual, breaking the influence of illegitimate leaders and allowing the return of individual rationality and morality.

Taken together the dynamic of protest and policing staged a contest over the extent to which any given protest could be reduced to a crowd. Different moves of de- and re-territorialization were imbricated in that contest. Over the course of the 20th century, developments in social movement organization sought to elevate and distinguish themselves from the crowd through self-governmentalization. While these developments were in no way linear (see Della Porta and Reiter, 1998), protest became more and more distinct from affiliated forms of political contention, striated through increased bureaucratization and hierarchicalization, and coded in the form of 'legitimate' peaceful protest. In the UK, for instance, institutional changes in the years following the Second World War, including the professionalization of the labour movement, the

institutionalization of 'collective bargaining' and the growing influence of the Labour party had the effect of imposing more structure and control over protest movements leading to a significant cooling of antagonisms between protests, pickets and police (Waddington, 1997 Geary, 1985). This development correlated with the adoption of more hierarchical, 'arborescent' modes of organization which concentrated decision-making around organs of power and effected moral discipline over its membership.

Of course, protest tactics outside the remit of these growing organizations persisted or developed in direct opposition to these trends during this period. New disruptive tactics of industrial action developed, especially within non-unionized industries, which marked a clear deviation from the symbolic figure of protest. The relative de-territorialization of industrial actions could be witnessed in developments such as the introduction of the 'flying picket', which was deployed to great success in 1972 to close power stations, steelworks, ports, coal and coke depots permitting strikers to effectively disrupt the power supply of the whole of the United Kingdom (Jeffery and Hennessy, 1983). At the same time, organizational deterritorialization can be witnessed with the rise of 'new social movements' starting with the antinuclear demonstrations of the 1950s, advancing through students protests and anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and culminating with the inner-city race riots in America and the UK (including the experience of the Troubles) in the 1980s (Offe, 1985).

The general deterritorialization in the expression of political dissent in turn placed new pressures on public order policing. The adoption of riot gear, including shields and reinforced helmets, tear gas and plastic baton rounds contributed to what researchers refer to as the 'paramilitarization' of public order policing in the 1980s (see Geary, 1985;

Jefferson, 1987, 1993; Waddington, 1987). Corresponding legislation was introduced, aiming for re-territorialization of both strikes and protests. In the UK the 1986 Public Order Act, to take one example, introduced an obligation on protest organizers to notify police and provide detailed route plans of a demonstrations 6 days in advance, creating new lines of responsibility (amongst organizers who are given legal liabilities) and communication (between protest organizers and police have enabled the development of negotiated management tactics on the part of police). While some celebrated these developments on the basis of their success in preventing large-scale disorder at demonstrations (Waddington, 1987), others argued that these controls not only restricted free speech, but were fueling resentments and divisions within social movements (Jefferson, 1987, 1990).

It is difficult if not impossible to precisely date the emergence of more disruptive modes of protest. Nevertheless, scholars routinely identify the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle as an important event in this regard (see De Armond, 2001; Fernandez, 2008; Tufekci, 2017). Here, the creative uptake of new technologies including cell phones, e-mails, and listservs opened new organizational and tactical opportunities, forming highly distributed assemblages of contention (Tufekci, 2017). In contrast to symbolic mass protest, disruptive protest is based on mobile or even fleeting manoeuvres directed against strategic or emblematic sites. From the 1990s to the present, forms of disruptive protest became more frequent including 'Reclaim the Streets', UK Uncut, and environmental protests, which have targeted key points of transport and energy infrastructure, such as airports and coal-fired power stations. These assemblages tend to be comprised of a mix of both hierarchical (e.g. labour unions) and non-hierarchical (e.g. anarchists, black bloc, direct action groups)

bodies displaying various degrees of affinity and tension. The decentralized command and control structures employed by contemporary social movements frustrate both the 'decapitation' (De Armond, 2001) (attacks on leaders) and negotiation tactics of police (Fernandez 2008). They have been characterized as robust, adaptable and highly maneuverable in the face of conflict, mirroring organizational transformations already occurring within Western militaries (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001; Zebrowski, 2016).

The shift from policing strategies of dispersal to those of containment correlates with these transformations in protest. This constitutive relation can be ascertained within *Adapting to Protest - Nurturing the British Model of Policing* (2009) which asks 'How best should the police as a service adapt to the modern day demands of public order policing while retaining the core values of the British model of policing?' (HMCI, 2009b: 5). Commissioned in response to a legal challenge to containment, which had been brought before the European Court of Human Rights and House of Lords[3] the report acknowledges: 'The world is changing. And public order policing needs to change with it and evolve to meet the challenges of the modern age' (HMCI, 2009b: 11). Containment is introduced in response to the evolution of new protest tactics as a purportedly 'proportionate' strategy to counter potential or actual disorder (HMCI, 2009b: 85-90). The relation between containment and new protest tactics was further borne out within the interviews we conducted with high-level policing experts. One senior police officer spoke to the issues raised by new protest

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[3] A legal challenge was brought to the court by two people who had been inadvertently corralled by police while on their lunch break in Oxford Circus during the May Day protests in 2001. The claimants alleged they were wrongfully detained in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights. The original court action (2005) and a subsequent appeal (2007) were both rejected. A 2012 decision on this case found containment to be lawful, portraying it as 'the least intrusive and most effective means to protect the public from violence' (Austin and Others v. the United Kingdom 2012, application nos. 39692/09, 40713/09 and 41008/09).

tactics stating: 'It's a massive challenge. The use of mobile phones assists those intent on disorder and damage in lots of ways. Particularly in their ability to quickly respond to different police tactics'.[4] He continued: 'A containment is a [response to a] pretty serious level of threat or disorder'.[5]

Kettling appears especially reserved for situations where assemblies may get out of control and become dispersed. As retired senior police officer Andy Hayman (2009) wrote,

> 'A protest on the move is harder to police than a stationary rally. Tactics to herd the crowd into a pen, known as 'the kettle', have been criticised before, yet the police will not want groups splintering away from the crowd.'

Despite the kettles express purpose of containing disruptive forms of protest, fractions within the so-called 'autonomist' left continue to refine disruptive tactics as a means of exacerbating containment techniques. A particularly interesting case in this regard are the 'Out of Control' tactics developed by German protesters (AK Out of Control, 2007a, 2007b). As a concept, 'Out of Control' is reminiscent of a homonymous book by Kevin Kelly (1994) that combines biology, complexity theory and cybernetics to inquire into decentralized modes of self-organization. 'Out of Control' is exemplary for its entanglement of de- and reterritorializing movements premised on the decomposition of a demonstration into unpredictable movements of flight, dispersal and reassembly. Instead of forming a homogenous group, protesters aim at sudden forms of disappearance and reappearance. As such, the tactic is explicitly designed to counter the strategy of kettling:

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[4] Interview with a retired UK Senior Police Officer 1 August 2017.
[5] Interview with a retired UK Senior Police Officer 1 August 2017.

'We want to disrupt […] the practice of cordoning and mobile kettles […] by being everywhere, gathering and spreading quickly. We are always behind the backs of the pigs. Always outside of kettles and containments, always at the edge of the on-going demonstration. Always in contact and within earshot. Always attempting to become multiple and develop momentum. The concept [of Out of Control] relies on using the free space that we appropriate.' (AK Out of Control, 2007a)

At the same time, the new protest tactics develop an aesthetics that differs fundamentally from symbolic mass protest. Instead of forming a homogeneous collective, protest should now take the form of experimental 'choreographies' (AK Urban Swarming, 2010). It is supposed to produce a visibility both distinct from the statist visibility of sovereign power and from the unitarian appearance of traditional protest by using theatrical means such as costumes, confetti or chanting. The spatial practice of dispersal, then, goes along with a performance of diversity and an aesthetic practice of playful performances.

'Out of Control' tactics developed mainly after the 2007 G8-summit in Heiligendamm, Germany. However, similar protest tactics - sometimes also referred to as 'jump and run' - have formed elsewhere in the last decades. They have been strengthened and refined by the creative uptake of developments in communications technologies: Demonstrators carrying portable computers use the internet to coordinate street blockades and inform themselves about the changing police tactics. Further on, protesters deployed mobile media to flash up unpredictably as 'smart mobs' (Rheingold, 2003). Enabled by peer-to-peer connectivity, the 'smart' in smart mobs inverts historically ingrained accounts of uneducated masses and irrational crowds. In this way, the immediacy of the bonds which

held together the crowd - emotion, suggestibility, mimicry - become technologically mediated through information media, permitting much more broadly dispersed activities.

The relatively neat spatial contours of the kettle thus stand in stark contrast to the new figures of protest. The polycephalous and reticular shapes of networked organization that Della Porta and Diani (2006) highlight in regard to the latest social movements are lacking any clear and fixed boundary. Others have characterized the unraveling dynamics of disruptive protest by drawing on concepts such as swarming (Routledge 1997; Wiedemann, 2014) or the multitude (Woods et. al. 2013). For rendering the re-territorializing feature of kettling intelligible, two aspects deserve explicit attention. First, the concept of the swarm captures the type of movement embodied by new forms of protests. It highlights that the spatial dynamic of dispersal – now performed by protest itself – does not rely on central control, but rather emerges from multiple localized interactions. The swarm is an auto-spatializing collective that perpetually transforms itself by contracting and expanding, concentrating and spreading again. It is not surprising, therefore, that protesters have modelled themselves after swarms: 'Do not walk straight lines but detours […] The swarm divides itself when it confronts security architectures such as barriers. It produces irritations only through the form of its movement.' (AK Urban Swarming, 2007). In its fleeting and unstable mode, the swarm enacts a de-territorializing flight vis-à-vis the setup of the urban milieu.

Second, both concepts highlight the temporal and affective dimension in self-organizing. As Eugene Thacker (2004) argues, a swarm always exists in time, since it is continuously self-transforming. It is a heterogeneous set of dynamic bodies acting on each other. In this sense, 'swarming is always affective swarming' (Thacker 2004: no pagination). The concept

of the multitude emphasizes this affective dimension in a way that resonates with the new forms of protest. As Hardt and Negri (2004: 99-102) stress, the multitude does not rely on the self-representation of its collectivity, but constitutes itself through its immanent life-forces as a set of singularities. This plural constitution resonates with the new forms of protest that do not any longer seek to find their unity in the representation of a shared identity and a set of corresponding claims. Rather, this new protest forms itself according to principles of affinity through temporary and highly volatile alliances.

From the perspective of public order policing, the emergence, spread and continued evolution of forms of disruptive protest constitutes a serious problem. To begin with, non-hierarchical, leaderless and plural structures make any attempt to establish a form of 'negotiated management' nearly impossible (Baker, 2011: 143-145). The responsibilization of protest organizers is undermined by the splintering away of autonomous groups. Moreover, the affectively laden, highly distributed and mobile spread of protesters poses a challenge to the traditional techniques of policing. Kettling, we contend, responds to the problematization of the rationalities and practices of public order policing engendered by the emergence of disruptive protest. It is a technology designed to *re*-territorialize the de-territorializing tendencies immanent to contemporary protest.

3. Re-Territorializing Strategy: Kettling and the Destitution of Politics

In what follows, we want to elaborate in more detail how the police kettle, in its brute simplicity, captures the fleeting and overspilling dynamics described in the last section. Kettling is demonstrated to be a particular mode of re-territorialization combining the

spatial calculus of containment with a temporal calculus of decelerating movements which are both corporeal and political. The kettle intervenes into the bodily-affective formation of collectivities and thereby engages in a struggle over the constitution or destitution of political subjectivity. For making this argument, it is first of all necessary to situate the kettle in the space of circulation par excellence - the urban milieu.

According to Foucault, the milieu is 'the space in which a series of uncertain elements unfold' (Foucault, 2007: 20). At the time of the consolidation of the liberal security dispositif, the events of foremost concern in regard to the government of the urban milieu were accidents, disease outbreaks and criminal acts. Securing the aleatory space of the city in a liberal way consisted in maintaining circulatory processes despite the regular chance of those events to occur. In recent years, scholars have traced this governmental logic in a large array of more contemporary political practices, including the processing of flight passengers (Adey, 2009), the management of infrastructural flows (Luque-Ayala and Marvin, 2016) or the activities of emergency services (O'Grady, 2014). Most important for our purpose, it has been demonstrated that territorial strategies, far from being opposed to liberal rationalities of governing, can become implicated in fashioning circulatory regimes (Brighenti, 2014a; Opitz and Tellmann, 2012; Opitz, 2016). Territories constitute 'places of passage' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 323). Instead of simply blocking movements they modulate them.

The police kettle also operates in relation to the problematique of circulation. Yet it does so in a peculiar way. To begin with, the kettle is clearly involved in a differential politics of mobility: it creates forms of relative immobility to protect those urban circulations deemed as productive. This rationale surfaces in the *Austin* case ruled by the House of Lords, a

decision that has determined the lawfulness of containment measures during the May Day protests of 2001 in London. In the reason given for the judgement, the House justifies the corralling of protesters on the premise that the police had to tackle a form of disorderly crowd behaviour 'inimical to the life of the city' (Wall, 2016: 338). The emergence of a crowd threatens to congest the pathways that allow for productive circulation. In containing this threat, the police addresses 'a problem less of enclosure […] than of traffic' (Virilio, 2006: 33). The territorializing act of forming a kettle stands in the service of securing the urban flows that will surround it.

At the same time, the kettle targets a form of movement which is qualitatively distinct from the traffic of goods and people: a *political* movement. This movement also unfolds its motion onto the street, but in order to occupy or interrupt the infrastructure of liberal exchange. The comparison with uncertain events such as accidents or infectious disease is instructive here. Whereas the latter emerge as a byproduct of circulatory processes and threaten them from within, protest does not inhere in liberal commerce in the same way. Political demonstrations tend to reclaim parts of the urban milieu and turn them into a space of public dissent. As detailed in the last section, contemporary protest goes even one step further. It deliberately seeks to frustrate or disrupt the circulatory systems themselves. The kettle is supposed to counter this potential threat. It serves as a preventive technology in situations where interference with liberal life appears likely (HMCIC 2009a: 88-89).

One has to bear in mind the intricate relationship between the strategy of containment and the space of circulation when focusing more closely on the topological figure the kettle instantiates. The kettle does not enact an exclusionary ban from the city comparable to the

expulsion of the medieval leper or, to choose a more timely example, the area bans issued on selected population groups (Beckett and Herbert 2009). It rather produces an inner outside that usually lasts for several hours at a location that is not predetermined or fixed - as if highly malleable city walls were erected *inside* the city on an ad hoc-basis. For establishing such an inclusive exclusion, different materials are deployed. In addition to the geared up bodies of the police, crowd control fencing or steel barricades are used, but also very flexible and lightweight shutoff devices made of plastic fabric.[6] Furthermore, elements of the built environment such as buildings and bridges tactically serve to solidify the police line.[7] Utilizing these heterogeneous materials, the kettle sets up a boundary within the urban milieu to create an environment out of reach. It carves out a temporary zone of abandonment, putting those contained into what Giorgio Agamben has once termed a 'relation with the nonrelational' (Agamben, 1998: 23). This particular form of unrelatedness is perfectly epitomized by the frequent scene of policemen standing at the fringe of the kettle and not responding to any requests from inside – be it for using a toilet, receiving nutrition or accessing medical service.[8] The re-territorialization of protest movements accomplished by the kettle thus excises small bits of terrain from the realm of free movement and cuts off those captured from their urban surroundings. It quite literally hollows out liberal space.

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[6] This was the case during the Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EQix5jI9MY; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdIv5teKJB4. (both accessed 18 January 2018)

[7] An infamous kettling incident where the police took advantage of a bridge occurred during the student protests in London 2010: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/dec/19/police-kettle-risk-crush-hillsborough (accessed 18 January 2018).

[8] This is a recurrent topic in reports by those who have been kettled. See for instance the interview statements in the CBC documentary on a kettling incident on June 27, 2010 during the G20 summit in Toronto, Canada: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgmGxKvGFWU (accessed 18 January 2018).

The topological geometry of the kettle is intimately bound up with a temporal calculus. At the most basic level, the kettle allows for 'buying time' in a situation perceived as critical.[9] It is supposed to extend a state of affairs where protest is kept from its disruptive potential. In this regard, the kettle is an instrument to hold the future with all its surprising possibilities in store. It serves as an element of contingency planning. As the senior police officer put it in one of our interviews: 'the tactic […] is keeping people, whether they like it or not, in an environment to protect [it from] the greater threat that is emerging'.[10] In recent scholarship, a set of different political rationalities of acting on potential futures has been identified, reaching from preparedness over precaution to preemption (cf. Anderson 2010). Against this backdrop, the peculiarity of the kettle lies in the situational tactic of *deferral*: It temporarily freezes the movements of bodies with the purpose of releasing the protesters hours later in a relatively slow manner, sometimes in small groups, more often person by person. One might therefore argue that the *telos* of the kettle is, in fact, the dispersal of the crowd. Although such a characterization is certainly not fully incorrect, it is important to take into account the governmental tactics of reckoning with the situational tendencies and intervals. The kettle addresses the potential behaviour of a crowd through a politics of deceleration that radically modulates the speed of bodily movements in the urban environment.

Due to this preventive concern with potentiality, the police are highly attentive to the atmosphere of a given situation in considering whether to build a kettle or not (Wall 2016;

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[9] As the senior officer responsible for public order policing put it in one of the expert interviews we conducted: 'So I kettled with a capital 'K' […] for the best part of an hour […] and that hour bought me time […] to get some of my critical areas of concerned covered so that we were in a position to better respond' (Interview 2017).
[10] Interview with a retired UK Senior Police Officer 1 August 2017

see also Adey 2014). As a senior police officer explained in our interview: 'you need to feel, scent, smell the mood in the crowd'.[11] Much seems to depend on sensory intuition about what kind of events a situation might harbour and how it unfolds. The kettle corresponds with the transient quality of such forms of situational awareness. Depending on the atmospheric apprehension of police officers it can be formed relatively quickly, it can also shrink and expand its volume, it is removable and even transportable, as the case of the so-called 'mobile' or 'wandering kettle' demonstrates.[12] Containment actions are thus related to the ability of sensing the crowd dynamics assumed to inhere in political protest.

The police, however, do not only attune themselves to the situative atmospheres in the streets: they also seek to manipulate them. There is strong evidence, stemming from the reports of both police experts and demonstrators, that the kettle is a technology for actively intervening into the bodily-affective constitution of the collective. This aspect is highlighted by the scholar and police advisor Peter A.J. Waddington who has been heralded as the main architect behind the strategy in the UK. A long-time critic of the use of baton charges, Waddington worked with the London Metropolitan Police in the 1990s on an alternative strategy of keeping protesters in a limited place. Subsequent to the highly controversial use of kettling during the G20 protests in London in 2009, he laid out its rationale to the media, presenting it as a means to regulate the affective state of a crowd. 'In a tension filled environment', Waddington (2009: no pagination) wrote, 'sparks will inevitably fly'. In such a situation, the kettle helps to maintain or restore 'order by using boredom as a principle weapon' (Waddington 2009: no pagination). From this perspective, the kettle is a device to

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[11] Interview with a retired UK Senior Police Officer 1 August 2017
[12] For further information and a picture of a 'mobile kettle' see: https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Freiheit-im-Polizeikessel-3413728.html (accessed 18 January 2018).

administer a certain anaesthesia on the crowd, acting on its turbulent passions. It territorializes its affective intensities.

In an interview we conducted with Waddington for substantiating our research on the kettle, he further elaborates this strategic aspect:

> 'The whole point was to slow everything down, to reduce the temperature, to calm down all parties, including the police. 'Cause when you get people running around their nervous system switches from flight to fight, and […] that's a recipe for them being aggressive and responsive. It struck me that using baton charges and things of that sort was just a recipe for putting officers under a sort of stress that would cause them to possibly use excessive force. So, the whole idea was slow things down, just encircle people, not allow them out of the kettle, except under controlled conditions and avoid situations of aggression or violence. And if it came from anyone, it would have to come from the protesters. The police would be in a defensive posture having established a cordon'.[13]

In this quote, the kettle appears as a political technology for re-territorializing protest in a complex sense. It implements a form of spatial enclosure in order to achieve temporal and affective control. The operations of cordoning demonstrators, slowing down bodies and calming down the nervous system are intimately interwoven. According to Brian Massumi (2002: 23-45, 2015), affect inscribes future possibilities into the present: 'Affect is simply a body movement looked at from the point of view of its potential', it is a 'reserve of ... newness or creativity […], a more to come' (Massumi, 2015: 7-8). As such it holds the

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[13] Interview with PAJ Waddington 8 August 2017

promise of becoming. The kettle, in turn, aims at closing down the opening enshrined in the affective capacity. It is designed to lower the collective potential embodied in protest. If affective intensities such as collective excitement and anger are activating, the kettle is supposed to be deactivating. Inducing boredom is a way of reducing what bodies can do.

This account of a territorialization of affect can also be drawn from the more critical reports by journalists and protesters who have been captured in police kettles. With one significant difference: According to many of them it is not so much boredom that is being induced but fear. For instance, in her coverage for the *New Statesman*, activist Laurie Penny (2010a7, 2010b) gives a vivid description of the seven hours she spent inside a kettle during the student fee protests in London 2010. Two distinct phases of affective modulation can be inferred from her account. The first phase started immediately when the kettle was formed. The realisation of being unable to move and having no way out of the situation, made protesters panic. The term 'kettle', Penny writes sardonically, is therefore 'rather apt, given that penning already-outraged people into a small space tends to make tempers boil and give the police an excuse to turn up the heat' (Penny, 2010a). The realisation of being entrapped set the bodies of protesters into a frightened alarm, which further increased when the cordon was stretched so tight that people started acting claustrophobic. Other witnesses and journalists concurred with this account and attested a suffocating atmosphere.[14]

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[14] In a report by the Guardian, an anaesthetist providing medical assistance to the protesters kettled on Westminster Bridge is quoted as follows: 'Police had us so closely packed, I couldn't move my feet or hands an inch. We were in that situation like that for hours. People in the middle were having real difficulty breathing […] Repeatedly I tried to speak to officers, telling them that I was a doctor and this was a serious health and safety risk." (Townsend and Malik 2010).

The second phase of affective modulation started gradually, when protesters realised their bodily abandonment and exposure to forces of nature. It was marked by the turn from an over-excited anxiety state into something akin to a state of fearful resignation. Again, in Penny's view,

> 'this is the most important part of the kettle, when it's gone on for too long and you're cold and frightened and just want to go home. Trap people in the open with no water or toilets or space to sit down and it takes shockingly short time to reduce ordinary kids to a state of primitive physical need. [...The agents of the state] decide when old people can get warm, when the diabetics get their insulin. [...] It's a way of making you feel small and scared and helpless.' (Penny, 2010a).

Kettling thus not only turns boredom into 'a principle weapon', as Waddington maintains, but it employs environmental elements to manipulate the affective composition of the crowd: cold or heat, darkness or bright sunlight, rain or humidity all play a role in slowly draining the energy of protesters. Even though each kettle is certainly unique, many accounts highlight this effect (cf. Sørli, 2012, 2014).[15]

Although it makes a huge difference whether the police induces boredom or fear, dejection or anxiety, the mode of intervening into the affective state of the crowd is, at closer examination, always a way of targeting political subjectivity. By exhausting and depriving the bodies of their capacities of self-determination, the kettle counters the event of political subjectification that public demonstrations usually strive for. This aspect is particularly evident in production of shame which, intentionally or not, takes place in many instances of

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[15] It is also a central theme in the CBC documentary on the kettle in Toronto on 27 June 2010 mentioned above, described by most of the interviewees.

kettling. Confined over hours in the open, people have to urinate and defecate in the closest proximity to others; women during menstruation may run out of sanitary articles; strangers become witnesses of one's own most personal feelings and bodily needs.[16] Shame arises where the Self becomes openly and irreducibly tied to one's intimate existence and is thence 'overcome by its own passivity' (Agamben, 1999: 105). Shaming amounts to 'an irrefutable order to be present at its own defacement, at the expropriation of what is is most own.' (Agamben, 1999: 106). In kettling, what was intended to be a demonstration of a political body is diverted into a demonstration of a vulnerable body thrown back upon itself. As an apparatus that incapacitates, intimidates or distresses those who carry their protest onto the street, it tends to produce bodies in shame who witness their own disorder as political subjects. In its extreme, the kettle is a machinery of political destitution.

At the same time, the kettle exhibits an almost paradoxical mode of functioning: it seeks to capture the excessive forces of a political assembly not by dissolving or isolating the assembling elements but by keeping them in place *en masse*. According to Judith Butler (2015: 9), there is an 'indexical force to the body' that is assembling with other bodies on the street. Prior to the verbal utterance of a particular demand, the bodies are collectively 'exercising a plural and performative right to appear, one that [...] instantiates the body in the midst of a political field.' (Butler, 2015: 11). On the one hand, then, the kettle alters the

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[16] An extreme case in this respect is the confinement of protesters at the Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen 2009. People were held about for hours on the ground in the freezing cold of December, handcuffed and without the ability to move. This means that they had to urinate and defecate *on themselves*. One might argue whether this practice goes beyond kettling, even if the media used the term to relate to it: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/15/copenhagen-194-arrests (accessed 18 January 2018).

conditions of appearance for bodies assembling collectively and publicly. It threatens to

neutralize the expressive force of the self-indexing body. If political protest aims to create a

scene for staging its disagreement, the kettle builds a frame that may transform political

speech into uncivil noise. On the other hand, crisscrossing the political appearance of

bodies by acting on their mere physical presence is itself a precarious operation. The

indexical force of the body can almost never be fully abducted. In reckoning with the

tendencies of physical bodies to grow tired, cold or frightened, the kettle also perpetuates

the assembly at least to some extent. Even in denying the fundamental autonomy of

determining when to move, to eat or sleep - something that 'total institutions' (Goffman,

1961) are specialized in - the kettle always already exhibits the potential of bodies to

gather collectively. The kettle, in other words, engages in a struggle over the emergence of

political subjectivity whose outcome is far from predetermined. By re-territorializing urban

protest both spatially and affectively, it intervenes into a spatial organization of power that

will remain contested.

Conclusion

This article analyzed the particular spatio-temporal mode of operation of police kettling

and the historical conditions under which it could emerge. In doing so, we have

concentrated on the relationship between the evolution of protest and police practices

which we considered to be co-constitutive. Kettling aims to contain the decentralized,

highly volatile, swarming modes of action characteristic of what we have called disruptive

protest. Whereas traditional technique of crowd dispersal look to de-territorialize the

unified symbolic mass corpus in a rapid show of force, the kettle re-territorializes protest by acting on its spatial, temporal and affective constitution. It fabricates an inner outside of the urban milieu, freezes the time of collective mobilization and induces debilitating affects such as fear and boredom. While it is certainly true that the strategic objectives have switched sides - the demonstrators now operate through dispersal and the kettle is deployed to concentrate groups - the impact of kettling reaches beyond the narrowly spatial maneuver of pooling and zoning. Ultimately, the act of re-territorialization intervenes into the scene of political subjectification that each congregation of protesting bodies seeks to fashion.

Understanding the relation between protest and police in terms of co-evolution also discourages us from making any deterministic evaluation. New technologies and choreographies of protest have been created to evade, criss-cross or invert the effects of kettling. For instance, smartphone applications such as Sukey have been developed to circumvent and evade police containment using GPS technology to alert users to escape points from police kettles that are forming in real time.[17] The name of the technology is reminiscent of an English nursery rhyme ('Polly put the kettle on, Sukey take it off again'), which highlights a certain playfulness of the politics of contention at stake. A different example could be drawn from the 'Blockupy Protests' in Frankfurt 2012 in which a group of protesters encircle a police kettle, chanting: 'Hey! Hey! Our kettle is much nicer!'[18] In 'kettling' the police kettle, protesters diffused the police kettle through parody: countering

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[17] The self-description on the website reads as follows: 'Sukey is a web app that is designed to keep people safe, mobile and informed during demonstrations." (http://sukey.org/what, accessed 18 January 2018).
[18] Footage of the tactic has been documented on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH7KYV7IENU (accessed 18 January 2018).

the fear inducing practice of lining up in riot gear through mocking mimicry. Rather than

seeking to evading or circumvent containment, protestors acted to re-appropriate the

public space as an open space of collective appearance.

Even though such scenes of contestation turn out to be not much more than fleeting

episodes, they are nonetheless an important reminder of the inherent instability of policing

technologies, even if they appear as solid as the kettle. Far from producing homogeneous

effects across heterogeneous situations, their governmental rationality has to be analysed

in its multiplicity, its inner tension and also its potentials for transformation. Given the

surprisingly scarce academic literature in kettling, this article may hopefully serve as a

prelude and a stimulus for more research to come.

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