POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND CULTURAL CHANGES
IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

REFLECTIONS ON THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-TRANSFORMATION OF MOVEMENT POLITICS: A TENTATIVE STAGE MODEL

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"New" Movements: Four Negative Features

It has become quite commonplace in the eighties to refer to movements such as the peace, civil rights, environmental and women's movements as "new" social movements. This terminology is used by activists, political commentators and social scientists alike. But its justification is far from obvious. It can hardly be taken to just signal the recent or unexpected nature of the sociopolitical phenomena which are summarily categorized as "new" social movements, since, at least in retrospect, there seems to be a virtually uninterrupted history of significant movement politics in most Western democracies on both sides of the Atlantic for at least twenty years. In the United States, these not so new social movements date back to the civil rights, anti-war and student movements of the sixties, and non-institutional movement politics, most importantly those focusing on military integration and re-armament, are to be found in various European polities of the mid-fifties.

To use concepts in a reasonably rigorous way is to rely on implicit hypotheses. There are a number of hypotheses implied by the term "new" social movements. First, they are new compared to movements in the earlier post-war history of Western liberal democracies in that they are neither organized and created by nor dependent, in terms of material and other resources, upon established political parties (which was the case with most peace movements of the fifties), nor eventually absorbed by those parties (which was, at least in West Germany, the case with the student movement of the sixties, whose political activists, energies and motivations came ultimately to be absorbed and coopted to a large extent by socio-democratic and liberal political parties). Hence, in contrast to these older waves of intense political activity and mass enthusiasm, the designation of the new movements as "new" is justified to the extent that they persist outside the universe of "old" political parties and their electoral politics.

Second, they are new to the extent that they persist as political movements, i.e., do not retreat into literary, artistic, religious or otherwise cultural forms of collective expression and the folklore of lifestyles, but continue to claim a role in the generation and utilization of political power. Movements are "new" in that their very existence and persistence testifies to the limited and perhaps painstaking "absorption" and political "processing" capacity, i.e., the ability to accommodate and channel political issues and demands, of "established"

political actors and the precedures of "normal politics," as well as of institutions within civil society (e.g. art, religion).

Third, these movements are "new" in that they are clearly different from "reactionary" forms of social protest which have regularly emerged and disappeared in the history of socio-political modernization of Western societies and which also remain outside the universe of party-dominated "normal politics" (e.g. nationalist, protectionist, xenophobic, racist and tax-revolt movements). They represent a non-reactionary, i.e., universalist critique of modernity and modernization by challenging institutionalized patterns of technical, economic, political and cultural rationality without falling back upon idealized traditional institutions and arrangements (such as the family, religious values, property, state authority, or the nation).

If a specific "progressive" (as opposed to reactionary) orientation can be claimed for new social movements (as I think it in fact can and as I have argued elsewhere),[1] and if this orientation still cannot be captured and absorbed by the established political forces of either the conservative, liberal or socialist/social-democratic varieties, the question must be addressed in what relation these movements stand to the older movements from which these established political forces themselves have emerged, namely the bourgeois-liberal and the democratic-socialist and labor movements. I think that the distinctiveness of the "new" movements can accurately (if schematically and overly briefly) be further conceptualized in the following terms. The axis of sociopolitical conflict that was proclaimed by the bourgeois-liberal movements of the late 18th and 19th centuries was freedom vs. privilege, and the associated vision or utopian project of a just order was that of a civil society relying on the economic dynamics of the market within a framework of egalitarian legal guarantees and liberties. In contrast, the dominant axis of the democratic-socialist labor movement was social justice and economic security vs. private property and economic power, and the associated sociopolitical project of an interventionist and redistributive state which would provide citizens not with liberties, but with rights to resources. Thus socialist and labor movements take up in their demands what the liberal-bourgeois project leaves to be desired, once it is implemented and its morally and politically less appealing features become apparent; in this sense, they may be interpreted as the collective and historically consequential articulation of disappointment with the concrete results to which the liberal-bourgeois project has led.

Now an analogous continuity exists between the demands of new social movements and the joint accomplishments of the bourgeois-liberal and the social-democratic movements. The disappointment which they express concerns the perhaps unanticipated, but now apparent and evident failures and negative impacts of the modernization process that was carried out, be it cooperatively or be it antagonistically, by these two great antecedent movements. The axis of conflict on which the new movements concentrate can in my view best and most comprehensively be described as fear, pain, and (physical or symbolic) destruction vs. integrity, recognition and respect. This set of claims and demands clearly

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[1] C. Offe, "Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics: Social Movements since the Sixties," in Charles S. Maier (ed.), *Changing Boundaries of the Political*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987, pp. 63–105 and *idem*, "The Utopia of the Zero-Option: Modernity and Modernization as Normative Political Criteria," *Praxis International* 7 (1987), No. 1, pp. 1–24.

radicalizes the emancipatory thrust of the earlier movements and historical projects (which distinguishes them radically from anti-modernist and reactionary movements), but it is also, apart from this continuity, radically different from them in that the politics of new movements do not crystallize into anything like a historical project, a positive utopia or a new "mode of production" that would be introduced by revolutionary or reformist tactics.[2] This is a fourth hypothesis the confirmation of which would justify the description of these movements as "new": due to their lack of a comprehensive vision or institutional design for a "new society," they are incapable of using the grammar of political change which was common to the liberal and the socialist traditions. This grammar consists basically in two dichotomies, the dark past vs. the bright future and the progressive "we" against the selfish and reactionary "them." Instead of such grandiose ideological constructs, we find a scattered set of issues and the incoherent expression of complaints, frustrations and de- mands which do not add up—either ideologically or, for that reason, organizationally—to a unified force or vision. The "enemy" which is to be overcome is no social class or cat- egory of people, but some more abstract kind of dominant rationality in which, at least to some extent, "all of us" do actually partake or at least depend. As a suggestive description of this situation, Wiesenthal has used drug-dependency as a metaphor: he compares the condition of modern man in a capitalist economy to the situation of an addict who would fatally suffer both from the sudden withdrawal of the drug as well as from its continued use.[3] Under such conditions, the absence of a basic and global "alternative" is not just a matter of the failure of intellectual imagination and political vision, but due to substantive difficulties inherent in the situation itself which does not lend itself to easily feasible and attractive transformative strategies. And equally obsolete is the positive notion of a "uni- versal class" which, by striving for power and by establishing its own institutions, would simultaneously perform a civilizing and liberating mission for all mankind.

This post-ideological and perhaps even "post-historical" nature of their protest and critique is, it appears to me, the most significant reason why these movements deserve to be described as "new." It is significant that most of them, in spite of occupational alliances with socialist and radical political forces, seem to find the very idea of "revolutionary" trans- formation, as well as even the use of the left/right code of the political universe, rather use- less. They can best be described as the rediscovery and eclectic application of certain de- mands and values from the liberal and socialist traditions which are now used as a critical standard against the outcomes of the sociopolitical, economic, technological and military processes of modernization in an organizationally and ideologically unintegrated way, i.e., without a genuine "project," "vision," or "design" for a new society.

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[2] A. Giddens emphasizes the point that "peace movements lack a deep structure of objectives" and that they, as well as ecological movements, "find it easier to state what they are against than what they are for." They also lack the rudimentary outlines of a distinctive political theory, as they "tend to set themselves against the institutions of parliamentary democracy, (while) their future probably lies substantially in the transfor- mation of those very institutions." Cf. A. Giddens, "Modernity, Ecology and Social Transformation," unpublished paper, Turin 1986, pp. 13–16; cf. also H. Kitschelt, *Der ökologische Diskurs*, Frankfurt: Campus 1984.

[3] H. Wiesenthal, "Rehe em Weltmarkt," unpubl. ms., Bielefeld, January 1988.

The Transitory Nature of Movement Politics

These characteristics make it extremely difficult for new social movements to develop institutional forms in which their particular mix of—radical, but not in any serious sense revolutionary—motives and demands can be accommodated. With the following remarks and observations, in which I take the institutional dilemmas of the Green Party in West Germany as my implicit (and only occasionally explicit) reference point, I wish to propose a stage model of the institutional dilemmas, ambiguities, and crises that are typically encountered by the politics of the new movements.

This model should not be mistaken for a descriptive, predictive or even prescriptive account of the organizational problems of new movements, i.e., for their predicament of having no readily available institutional "shelter" which could be used for the accommodation of their particular mix of issues, demands, and motivations. This essay is rather limited to a heuristic exercise and the construction of a stage model which may—or may not—be implemented in the actual development of new movements. For at present (Spring 1988) it appears far from certain that an institutional solution to these problems is at all likely to be accomplished, or even feasible. All I can do, instead, is to propose some intelligible and hopefully generalizable pattern of the search processes and its stages which can be observed when new movements do not only strive to achieve their goals, but also to design and implement institutional forms for themselves through which they might enable themselves to do so in a continuous and cumulative way in the future. That is to say, the four negative characteristics specified above are not only objectively "there," but they are also self-reflectively integrated into the strategy and political practises of new movements as a set of problems that they must consciously and actively cope with.

1. The take-off phase of movement politics

Socio-political movements as forms of collective action usually start in an institutional vacuum, with no other institutional resources available to them other than the (usually partly contested) legal and constitutional rights of citizens to assemble, communicate, protest, petition, and demonstrate. The other initial ingredient of the situation from which a movement emerges is a widely publicized and highly visible event (or anticipation of an event) that triggers expressions of opinion and protest and helps to define the collectivity of those who are actually or potentially affected by it. In the initial phase of social movements, the absence of organizational form and institutionalized resources is typically not perceived as a liability. To the contrary, according to what may well be suspected to be a pattern that follows the logic of "sour grapes," movement activists tend to consider the established forms of political conflict as either unnecessary, given the evident urgency of the movement's causes or demands, or even manifestly harmful due to their suspected tendency to divert and co-opt the political energies mobilized by an emergent sociopolitical movement. The emphasis is overwhelmingly on "content," not "form." The style of discourse and action is characterized by militant rhetoric, spontaneity, decentralized experimentation, and often vehement confrontation. Action is not triggered according to plans, strategies or leader-

ship decisions, but by perceived "provocations" which are responded to by radical demands.[4]

The radicalism of these demands is indicated by the fact that they are "immediate" in two senses.   First, in their substance, they are phrased in an absolute language, i.e., a language using phrases such as "no," "never," "stop," "ban," "end," etc., which does not leave room for processes, gradual accomplishments, or compromises, but insists upon immediate fulfillment of demands.

Second, in their form, these demands are not processed by "intermediaries" or through a machinery of deliberation, representation and tactical calculation, but are the often plebiscitary expression of the moral values and protest sentiments of the movements' constituents.   To the extent there is some discernible group of core activists, its members do not consider themselves, nor are they considered by others, as formally appointed, elected or otherwise procedurally legitimated leaders, but just as "spokespersons" or "organizers" who voluntarily perform certain services (such as producing information materials, etc.) which are essential for internal communication and/or the communication with the outside world.   Characteristically, there is, in this initial phase of the life cycle of sociopolitical movements, no formal separation between (a) some "leadership" and "rank and file followers," nor is there a recognized and recognizable separation between (b) the latter and "the people in general" or "all those threatened and affected by" whatever event or development arouses the protest; finally, there is no explicit and recognized separation between (c) contending groups, factions, or divisions within the movement itself, as the prevailing rhetoric stresses the value of unity and consensus and as, for lack of any elaborate mechanism for collective decision-making, the only method by which emerging controversies can be decided is through the unanimity rule, i.e., by pushing to the side those issues upon which unanimity cannot easily be reached.

All three of these rather crucial distinctions—between leaders and followers, between members and non-members, and between adherents of different policy preferences—are ignored (and at times actively repressed and denied recognition and legitimacy) in the name of "grass roots democracy" or "Basisdemokratie."   Apart from its well known theoretical as well as normative problems, this concept and the practises of collective action that it is employed to legitimize suffer from a serious operational problem: it is simply not clear who the "base" is unless this question is first settled in a (constitutive or "constitutional") decision made by a "non-base," e.g., a legislature defining and incorporating (by the use of categories such as territory, place of birth, language, age, etc.) who the "people" (i.e., the universe of citizens enjoying the rights of citizenship) is.   Thus the base that is claimed to be the ultimate source of any collective decision is clearly also the outcome of some prior decision, and hence by no means an "ultimate" source.   And conversely, unless such prior constitutive definitional act has taken place, the concept of the "base" or the "people" remains operationally fuzzy and the constant object of disputes, which is exactly what happens when quasi-empirical collectivities (such as "all those affected," all mankind, all members

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[4] For a lucid description of the anti-institutional features of the new social movements and a review of the literature that deals with the syndrome of anti-elitist enthusiasm of direct forms of mass action and mass-expression, see E. Wiesendahl, "Neue soziale Bewegungen und moderne Demokratietheorie," in R. Roth, D. Rucht (eds.), *Neue Soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Bonn, 1987, pp. 364–384, esp. 379 sequ.

of a specific ethnic, racial, age or gender category, etc.) are used as the referents in the names
of which political action in staged. For such non-constituted collectivities invite (rather
than settle) the question of whom exactly we mean when referring to them: all those who
share the intentions, interests and other subjective attributes and value characteristics as-
signed to the members of the category as typical? Or all those who happen to be present as
participants in some collective protest? Or all those who share the objective characteristics
associated with the category? Given the impossibility to decide this question, the authority
of the "base" remains derivative, i.e., contingent upon the definitional power of those who
manage to "constitute" groups by using the force of semantics.

2. Stagnation

Socio-political movements are extremely ill-equipped to deal with some of the problems
of time. In their action and protest, they respond to present dangers and injustices or to
those that are anticipated to be part of the immediate future and thus the source of intense
present fear. In their demands they do not anticipate a lengthy process of transition, gradual
reform, or slow improvement, but an immediate and sudden change. A common and
widely used rhetorical tactic of both peace movements and ecological movements consists
in depicting long or at least uncertain periods of time as being in fact very short; in this way,
possible dangerous developments in the unknown and possibly distant future are dramatized
as being imminent catastrophes. Analogously, the time-span that is needed for basic changes
is represented as being in fact minimal—a representation of the political time structure which,
on the one hand, helps to increase the perceived marginal productivity of present protests[5]
while, on the other, any delay in achieving a solution to the problem in question will be
attributed, within the framework of such distorted imaginations, to the bad intentions of the
opponents; in both of these respects, it appears as if an attempt is being made to turn the
structural short-sightedness of movement politics, which is conditioned upon their low
organizational complexity, from a liability into an asset. The mode of decision-making
of movement politics is insufficiently complex to permit anything but rapid responses on
the spot, as any type of prognostic theorizing, long term planning, or a political "invest-
ment" calculus would presuppose some clear-cut internal division of labor between leaders,
followers, permanent staff including administration and analysts, etc.

Apart from the aforementioned thorny problem of defining the "base" in ways that
are not essentially contested and divisive, the other most pressing problem of movements
experienced by them stems from their extremely constrained time horizon. For the only
time-span that is likely to be in fact quite short is that of the movement's survival. As we
have seen before, movements thrive upon three resources: rights to protest, dramatic and
highly visible events that offer themselves as reasons for protest, and the spontaneous motiva-
tion of relevant segments of the population to engage in protest in response to these events.

All three of these resources may well turn out to be of a highly perishable nature or
may be easily withdrawn from the movement, thus making its continuity precarious. In

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[5] On the "production functions" of protest politics, cf. P. Oliver and G. Marwell, "A Theory of the Critical
Mass, I," *AJS* 91 (1985), pp. 522–556.

specific, strategic responses of political, juridical and economic elites will come forth which limit and redefine the citizens' rights to engage in protest in ways which make the use of these rights less easily available or more costly; a case in point is the recent decision of a West German Federal court that declares all cases of sit-down demonstrations (e.g. in front of military installations) a criminal offense.   Secondly, a highly effective elite response may consist in making the triggering events less visible or less frequent, or in fact in absorbing some of the concerns and demands raised by the movements; substantial—and not just "symbolic"—reorientations have taken place on the part of political elites in response to feminist, anti-nuclear energy and peace movements, a development which, at least temporarily, has put each of these movements into the position of becoming a "victim of its own (partial) success," thus weakening the forces striving for more ambitious and far-reaching goals. Thirdly, and concerning the spontaneous protest motivation, it has a strong tendency to decline both in the case of success and in the case of failure.   Regarding substantive success, i.e., a visible and effective redress of the situation that occasioned the protest in the first place, movement activists may soon come to feel that protest activities are no longer necessary. Regarding the less substantive, more formal variety of success that consists in high levels of mobilization, turnout, and participation, individuals will soon hit upon the collective action problem that emerges in the wake of the reasoning that, as "everyone else" seems to be actively concerned about the movement's cause, "my own" participation becomes dispensable because of its negligible marginal productivity.   Various "frustrations of participation"[6] may add to the growing inclination to leave the burden of active involvement to others.   This inclination may be even stronger in the case of perceived failure, i.e., if the distance that needs to be travelled in order to achieve success turns out to be longer than anticipated, or the support for the movement weaker and its opponents stronger.

The problems[7] that are posed by the receding tide of movement enthusiasm are particularly hard to cope with under conditions where all three of the essential characteristics of formal organization are lacking: leadership roles, membership roles, and established procedures to deal with conflict and divisions.   It is in response to the experience of precarious continuity resulting from abruptly shifting levels of support and activity that a reflective move will be taken by movement activists to overcome these deficiencies.   In contrast to the initial phase of communication with the outside world in substantive terms of protest and (mostly "negative") demands, the second phase in the life-cycle of movement politics will therefore focus upon internal communication in formal terms and on organizational formalization.   As the movement's continuity is perceived to depend upon its effective self-transformation into an organization, there will be a strong tendency to adopt at least rudimentary features of formal organization.[8]   Among these are the following:

—The acquisition of funds and legal expertise that is needed for the purpose of the legal
representation of activists who either are being prosecuted for alleged violations of

[6] Cf. A. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1982, chs. 6–7.

[7] For an analysis of the nature and impact of these problems (such as declining issue-attention-cycles, issue-displacement, and issue cooptation) see B. Zeuner, "Parlamentarisierung der Grunen," *Prokla* 15 (1985), No. 4, pp. 5–22.

[8] Cf. R. Roth, "In und gegen Institutionen.   Anmerkungen zur paradoxen Situation neuer sozialer Bewegungen," in W. Luthardt, A. Waschkuhn (eds.), *Politik und Repräsentation*, Marburg: SP-Verlag 1988, pp. 184–203.

the rights of others or are trying to challenge existing practises and arrangements through the court system.   Hereby, legal resources are appropriated in the service of the causes of the movement, be it by defending and augmenting the space of protest action or by supplementing the means of protest by way of court procedures; also, in both cases the time horizon of action is extended and an "investive" type of rationality is employed. —The incipient formalization of membership roles and the concurrent differentiation between, on the one hand, members and non-members and, on the other hand, members and leaders.   A significant transition in this process of formalization is that from occasional donations in the context of face-to-face interaction to dues paid by (what thereby become) "members" on the basis of a more or less permanent commitment, and similarly the transformation of the form of communication from leaflets and posters to newsletters and periodical publications to which supporters can "subscribe"; again, the continuity-securing aspect of these moves is evident.
—At the same time, conferences, regular meetings, and similar types of horizontal internal communication are introduced for the purpose of debating and reconciling internal divisions on ideological and tactical issues among (those who become by virtue of such events and due to their participation in them) "leaders" of the movement.   The contribution of this aspect of the formalization process to the solution of the problem of continuity is twofold: on the one hand, it gives rise to some rational interest of leaders to perform as leaders and assert themselves in that role; on the other hand, such formalized opportunities for debating conflicts of opinion and ideology will typically converge upon some commonly shared interpretation of the movement's present situation in which two rival points of view are combined: namely that "much has been achieved already" and "much remains to be done (and can be done)"—thus avoiding the two complementary demobilizing interpretations of premature despair about the chances of success and of premature triumph over what actually has been accomplished.

After these three transformations have been achieved, the movement has come a long way from its initial phase of spontaneity and informality and has reached a certain degree of organizational maturity.[9]   The focus of activity has then shifted from substantive demands and protest activity to the formal and reflective concern with the conditions under which some measure of permanence and extended time-horizon can be secured for the movement.   To the extent that the corresponding efforts are successful, the movement is likely to be perceived as a somewhat durable collective actor, whose continued existence and activity can and must be counted upon both by its members and leaders as well as by its opponents and the general public.   This general perception, however, does not mean that a state of equilibrium has actually been reached, as the accomplishment of organizational formalization will presumably cause as many problems as it helps to solve.

3.   The attractions and temptations of institutionalization

With these features of organizational formalization in place, movements find themselves

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[9] For an analysis of the transformation of environmental protest groups into formal organizations and networks of organizations, see D. Rucht, "Von der Okologiebewegung zur Institution?," in R. Roth, D. Rucht (eds.), Neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn 1987, pp. 238–260.

caught in the following dilemma.   On the one hand, there is the opposition of those who fear—in the spirit of a vulgarized version of Michels' "iron law of oligarchy"—that any step towards formalization might involve the danger of bureaucratization, centralization, alienation, and de-radicalization.   From the point of view of this opposition, the spontaneous, local, quasi-syndicalist, and ad hoc form of protest activity is the most effective and promising one for the movement's causes, whereas any organizational formalization that goes beyond a lose network of independent initiatives is suspected as counter-productive.   On the other side, there is the diametrically opposed opposition which advocates the gradual transformation of movement politics into the institutional modes of "normal politics," involving party competition, participation in elections, parliamentary representation, the formation of alliances and coalitions with rival political forces, and eventually even the occupation of government positions.

The transformation of the new social movements that emerged in the seventies into the Green Party that was established in 1980 testifies to the overwhelming attractiveness of the latter of these two potential directions of further organizational change and growth. Entering the "official" institutionalized channels of political participation and representation seemed to offer opportunities that no other conceivable form of political activity could possibly match.   The use of the political institutions of liberal representative democracy appeared to suggest itself as the rational strategy as it appeared to permit the fullest and most effective utilization of the (ecological, pacifist, feminist and "alternative") movements' resources.   Relative to the adoption of this institutionalizing strategy, the adherence to any alternative organizational form would have appeared, from the rational point of view of the optimal extraction and utilization of political resources, as irresponsibly wasteful.   More specifically, the relative advantages of proceeding from organizational formalization all the way to political institutionalization were seen to consist in the following:

—Gains resulting from alliance-formation: according to the logic of "rainbow-coalition," it was tempting to expect that many individual issue-movements would reinforce each other by "pooling" their respective electoral support, thereby neutralizing the ups and downs of individual protest cycles.

—Gains resulting from the fuller extraction of support: movements (in their initial stage) are primitive and precarious forms of collective action precisely because the only resource they are capable of absorbing is their participants "willingness to act," i.e., join the movement's activities; in contrast, a movement that has become a formal organization makes available for itself an important additional category of resources, namely the members' commitment to pay dues; a significant further step in the direction of increased "resource absorption capacity" is the transformation of a movement organization into a political party, which permits, in addition, the tapping of resources of those who are neither willing to "act" nor to "pay," but just to "vote."   (In that sense, the evolutionary advantage of a political party can be compared to that of a car engine that would run, if need be, on vegetable oil instead of ordinary gasoline.)

—Gains resulting from the special status of political parties: the West German political system is commonly referred to as "party-democracy," as Section 21 of the Constitution (Grundgesetz) as well as other laws, traditions and practises grant special privileges to political parties that are unknown in most other liberal democracies.   Most important

among these are considerable financial subsidies granted to all political parties which win more than a tiny fraction of the vote, so as to make them relatively independent both from revenues out of membership dues as well as private donations and campaign contributions.   Another privilege consists in the fact that political parties get free time on public radio and television programs to advertise their programs and candidates. For these and related peculiarities of the German political institutions, the decision not to adopt the party form would amount to the decision to forego significant resources. —Gains resulting from the logic of party competition: one important difference between "political" markets and common commodity markets is that in the former I win even if some competitor imitates and succeeds in marketing "my" product, while a business firm would hardly ever find comfort in having launched a new product on which some imitator, rather than the original innovator itself, is now making a profit.   In fact, profiting from the profits of others by forcing them (i.e., "persuading" them), through the mechanisms of electoral and parliamentary competition, to redesign their own "product" (i.e., platform or program) is one of the major, if often less spectacular or even visible avenues of successful political change.   A necessary (though obviously not sufficient) condition for accomplishing this indirect change of the terms of political discourse and conflict is the preparedness to join and confront the opponent on the same institutional terrain of party competition, as failure to do so would imply the impossibility to accomplish this indirect kind of "antagonistic accommodation."

Given these four apparent advantages that result from the transition from organizational formalization to political institutionalization, the pressure to actually make this transition is likely to mount with the perceived opportunity costs of not making it.   The advantages to be gained from the transition must be, however, or so the argument voiced by important segments within the movement organization runs, counterbalanced against the reverse opportunity costs, namely those of giving up movement politics in favor of institutional politics. The anti-institutional (or "fundamentalist") argument maintains that:

—The apparent advantage of political "cartelization" of the causes of various movements will be paid for by significant losses of identity, autonomy, and distinctiveness of each individual movement;
—The pooling of various sorts of support ("acting," "paying dues," "voting") will lead to a relative deprivation and loss of influence of the activist core of the movement;
—The resources and privileges associated with the form of the political party will corrupt representatives and compromise the movement's demands; and
—The logic of assimilation inherent in the institutional modes of electoral and parliamentary competition is likely to work both ways, thus penetrating the movement's parliamentary representation to (at least) the same extent as the movement is able to "persuade" its competitors.

Underlying this debate is an important controversy in democratic theory that partly relates back to—and is sometimes framed as a revival of—the theoretical argument that evolved in the first two decades of the century between Bernstein, Luxemburg, Kautsky and Lenin.[10]   I cannot enter this debate within the present context, but must limit myself to a

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[10] For recent elaborations of these debates in democratic theory, see A. Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social*

brief consideration not of which side is "right" in this debate, but of which side has prevailed in the specific case of the transformation of West German new social movements into the Green political party.   Concerning this empirical question, there cannot be any doubt that the institutional strategy has become the dominant one, and that its attractions or (as its opponents would see it) its temptations have been sufficiently strong so as to exert a continuous "learning-pressure" in the direction of institutional accommodation.   The theoretical argument that this relatively rapid process of self-transformation seems to support is the following: the political power that a movement has gained through its successful mobilizing efforts can be maintained, exploited, and expanded only if the movement undergoes a process of a—often demanding and sometimes painful—strategic self-transformation that eventually enables it to "cash in" that power within the channels of dominant political institutions; and that a growing understanding and appreciation of this condition—and of the growing opportunity costs that are associated with any protracted failure to comply to it—will promote a process of collective learning aiming at and converging upon, first, organizational formalization and, subsequently, political institutionalization.

To be sure, the transition process from "movement" to "political party" tends to be —and has actually been in the case of the Green party—full of inconsistencies and uneasy (as well as unstable) compromises.   In the early stages of electoral and parliamentary participation, the Greens liked to think of themselves as a "new type of party," an "anti-party-party," or a form of collective action that comprises both extra-institutional and institutional practises.   This attempted synthesis has turned out to be characteristically fragile.   In the early years of their existence as a political party, the Greens introduced a number of regulations and special organizational features which are unknown within the "established" political parties and which were meant to preserve—in accordance with some of the doctrines and historical examples of "direct," "participatory" or "council" democracy —some of the spirit of movement politics.   Among these regulations and features were the following:

—Members of the Bundestag and other legislative bodies within the Länder should not be free in their parliamentary work, but committed to following decisions of party conventions and other bodies of the party;

—Green members of parliaments should serve less than the full term for which they have been elected (two instead of four years), and they should be barred from seeking re-election;

—No cumulation of party office and parliamentary function should be permitted;

—The selection of candidates for seats in parliament should not primarily be made according to criteria of professional qualification or political experience, but according to gender and other quota as well as to the symbolic significance of their minority status (e.g. handicapped persons, persons convicted of political crimes, etc.); sometimes candidates were nominated from outside the membership of the party;

—Members of parliaments should be remunerated according to some moderate fixed income, which would commit them to making major deductions in favor of party funds from the income they are entitled to as parliamentarians.

Democracy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985, and N. Bobbio, *The Future of Democracy*, Oxford: Polity Press 1986.

Interestingly and significantly, virtually all of these stipulations, with the important exception of gender quota, have been compromised, questioned, and partly silently dropped from the practise of Green parliamentary politics, and the populist, direct-democratic and anti-professional emphasis of these regulations has given way to a much more conventional pattern of candidate selection and political professionalization. As of 1988, it could even be argued that the political control that the party exerts over its own group of members of parliament in the Bundestag is less strict and direct in the case of the Greens than it is with any other party—for the simple if paradoxical reason that, as the ban on re-election is still adhered to (though in a watered-down version), members of parliament have nothing to lose from non-compliance, as they do not have anything to win (e.g. nomination for re-election) from compliance in the first place. The rather absurd spectacle of the party leadership publicly denouncing its own parliamentary group in an advertisement in a daily newspaper[11] for no longer being "representative" of the party's "base" epitomizes this drama-tic loss of control of anti-institutional over institutional actors.

In the course of its short parliamentary history, the Green party has not only, as these examples show, abandoned most of its partly naive experiments of mingling the forms of movement politics and parliamentary politics, but it has also, and correlatively, adopted much of the conventional tactical repertoire of (oppositional) parliamentary politics and party competition. This becomes most clearly evident if we look at the type of demands and proposals that are ideal-typically made within the context of movement politics, and compare it, in contrast, to the routines and the logic of parliamentary politics. The typical political discourse of movement politics consists of negative demands on isolated and dis-jointed issues; these demands are voiced in response to events and are framed in a short-term and confrontational ("yes or no," "them or us") logic. The discourse of parliamentary politics, in contrast, tends to be agenda-generated rather than event-generated; it consists in competing proposals rather than the expression of protest and rejection, and these pro-posals are formulated with the more or less implicit intention of winning over, if not the mem-bers of parliament belonging to other parties, at least parts of their (potential) electoral base, which therefore may not be antagonized. Moreover, parliamentary political debate will often focus on long-term consequences, budgetary burdens, and side-effects of proposed legislations and programs; parliamentary parties, even if their core concerns are limited to some particular policy areas, will always try to demonstrate some competence and dis-tinctive political preferences in even the least appealing policy areas as well—all of which presupposes a certain degree of expertise, professionalism, preparedness, and hard work. Finally, the possibility of forming issue-specific alliances or even more general coalitions, even if it is only meant as a tactic to threaten opponents with divisive initiatives, is always part of the game of parliamentary politics. On all of these dimensions, casual observations as well as numerous journalistic commentators have demonstrated that, apart from some stylistic ingredients of "alternative" culture, the Green members of parliament have quickly and effectively adopted all the essential elements of the parliamentary discourse, and simul-taneously abandoned much of the discourse of anti-institutional movement politics. This remarkably smooth and rapid transition can be accounted for in terms of at least three dif-ferent and cumulative factors, of which I have stressed the first. These are:

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[11] *Frankfurter Rundschau*, May 27, 1988.

—The pragmatic advantage and attraction of facilitating the survival of the political causes and activities of the movement by making use of the protection and recognition that are provided for by established political institutions (as well as non-political ones, such as churches, universities, and the institutions of art and the media);

—The striking absence of models and designs for alternative political institutions, such as those which eventually emerged out of the revolutionary struggles of all the "old" social movements;[12] this lack of alternative designs and projects for institutional reform is probably best explained in terms of the pervasive preoccupation of the new movements with specific issues, aspects, and sectoral irrationalities and injustices, which, however, does not give rise to a global revolutionary critique, and hence to the vision of entirely new relations of production or relations of political authority. From this point of view, accommodation within existing institutions is not only pragmatically attractive, but there also seems to be hardly anything else available and feasible;

—There are even—seen from the point of view of a radical, New Left, libertarian or whatever brand of progressive perspective—compelling reasons to embark on this (only available) road in good political conscience. There is a long-standing and intellectually powerful tradition on the political Left on the European continent (dating back, at least, to the work of Rosa Luxemburg) according to which the Left must consider itself neither as the heir nor as the opponent, but as the protector of those modern and liberating political institutions, such as parliamentary government, that the ruling classes are always on the verge to abandon, betray, or corrupt in authoritarian ways.

A Resurgence of Movement Politics?

So effective seems to be the logic of institutional politics, and so pervasive its impact upon individual actors who simply have to learn and practise the rules of the institutional game, that it is not so much this rapid evolutionary self-transformation that needs to be explained, but rather the hard-nosed refusal of anti-institutional and anti-reformist minorities within the party (who are commonly referred to—and refer to themselves—as "fundamentalists") to follow the same pattern of organizational and institutional learning. In other words, what we need to make sense of is not the evolving configuration of perceived threats to the movement's survival, emerging opportunities, incentives, perceived irreversibilities, institutional logics, etc. that propel the transformation of movement politics into institutional politics, but, to the contrary, the halting, ambiguous, roundabout and highly conflictual process in which this process is apparently taking place. In still other words, is there a rationality of resisting the learning pressure towards self-rationalization?

Two popular explanations for the phenomenon of persistent "fundamentalist" minorities can be dismissed as uncompelling. One is the biographical explanation that points to the fact that some of the most outspoken leaders of anti-institutional politics within the Green party seem actually to have a background, some 15 years ago, in Marxist-Leninist and other "revolutionary" splinter groups of at best regional importance. While conser-

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[12] Cf. F. Alberoni, *Movement and Institution*, New York 1984.

vative opponents of the Green party like to make much out of such discoveries[13] in intel-
lectual and political biographies, it is the striking absence of any trace of revolutionary
rhetoric or theorizing and the clear discontinuity between "fundamentalist" and traditional
leftist radicalism that leaves little if any plausibility to this explanation. It is rather the
rapid disappearance of any claim to "revolutionary" politics that may arguably be one
of the important political and cultural changes that took place in Western Europe some-
where between the late sixties and the early eighties. One other explanation, which is some-
times invoked or implied by the intra-party "realist" opponents of the "fundamentalists,"
focuses on psychological variables such as the alleged "weak ego" of the latter, their over-
whelming need for asserting collective identities by purely expressive modes of action, their
incapacity to tolerate cognitive dissonance, and their urge to display an ultra-radical "ethic
of conviction" ("Gesinnungsethik") for the sake of the specific psychic rewards that presum-
ably are associated with this syndrome. Relevant though this explanation may appear in
individual cases, the question remains why these personality types seem to be attracted,
rather than gradually repelled, by a party that predominantly embarks upon an institu-
tional strategy.

    Let me conclude by briefly discussing two alternative, less reductionist, and, I believe,
more plausible explanations for the stubbornness of the "fundamentalist" syndrome. The
first of these two explanations is based on what may be termed a "poverty of public policy"
argument. It refers to the often observed exhaustion—or perhaps even categorical in-
adequacy—of the means of public policy for a satisfactory solution of some of modern
society's most pressing problems. Governments (including what is sometimes referred to
as corporatist "private governments" such as encompassing associations and "quangos"),
whatever their power may be, are restricted to the use of three categories of resources, namely
(a) legal regulation, bureaucratic surveillance, and the use of state-organized violence, (b)
the manipulation of fiscal resources through spending on collective consumption and invest-
ment, taxation, and subsidies, and (c) the use of information and persuasion. There are
clear absolute limits to the use of all three of these media of governmental intervention.
Bureaucratic commands, surveillance, and sanctioning fail as reliable steering mechanisms
wherever the context of action becomes turbulent and unpredictable so as to make the "ra-
tionality" of this (relatively rigid and inflexible) mode of intervention questionable; they
also fail where the targets of such intervention, i.e., societal actors, become sufficiently powerful
so as to be able to resist, subvert, or obstruct the effectiveness of this mode of intervention.
Next, economic modes of intervention (i.e., incentives for desired behavior and punishment
for undesired action) fails where the targets of control either refuse to operate according
to some utility-maximizing economic calculus, and also where they in fact operate according
to this calculus, but find it feasible and profitable to either "pass on" the costs imposed upon
them or to "push up" the incentives to fiscally unaffordable levels. Finally, the effectiveness
of information and "symbolic politics" is contingent upon a number of conditions, among
them a viable sense of moral obligation on the part of the public (which may or may not
be "depleted" in the course of cultural processes of "modernization") and the absence of
the suspicion that the appeal to "facts" or "moral values" is employed just for the purpose

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    [13] For a collection of pamphlets written along these lines, see M. Langner (ed.), *Die Grünen auf dem Prüf-
stand*, Bergisch Gladbach 1987.

of altering the behavioral disposition of actors, rather than "for their own sake."   But there are also relative limits to the effectiveness of these media—relative, that is, to the "nature" of the social and economic problems that call for some political solution.   That is to say, in policy areas where the "passions," identities, collectively shared meanings, and moral predispositions within the "life-world" of social actors (rather than their economic "interests") are the essential parameters that need to be changed in order to achieve some solution, the three conventional modes of intervention are virtually ineffective or even counterproductive.   And there seem to be good reasons to believe that this type of collective problems is proliferating in modern Western society, while those problems (e.g. incomes policy, economic growth, etc.) for which the conventional tools of government intervention are most adequate tend (while certainly not being "solved" in any definitive sense) to decline in their relative significance.   No amount of legal regulation, taxation, subsidies, or even state organized promulgation of information and education will evidently succeed to control and alter problematic and pathological behavioral patterns in areas such as health (including sexual) practises, nutrition, gender and family relations, socialization and education practises, environmentally relevant styles of consumption, drug use, various forms of crime and violence, or the treatment of ethnic and other minorities; the same seems to apply to the norms and codes of technical, scientific and professional groups.   The "poverty of public policy" consists precisely in the fact that these spheres of social action do appear to generate most significant and highly costly and conflictual aggregate effects, thus raising considerable public concern, while at the same time being located outside the reach of public policy and almost entirely immune from its conventional forms of intervention.   To the extent the objective limits of public policy become apparent as a result of a series of frustrating experience and programs that failed or turned out to be counter-productive, the conclusion becomes plausible that these types of social problems can no longer be approached through the means of public policy, but only through remedial initiatives that originate within civil society itself, such as "consciousness raising" campaigns, "moral crusades," demands for a change of the dominant "way of life" (rather than public policy), and communitarian forms of action.   To the extent that, in the light of the perception of politics and the experience of social problems, this line of reasoning on the nature and conditions of social change "makes sense," it will return as a strong argument against the otherwise powerful drift towards more formally organized and eventually institutionalized modes of action.   It will thus serve to raise some basic doubts concerning the potential usefulness of institutional participation and of any eventual influence upon government action, and hence strengthen (if only e contrario) the case of those who advocate a return to "fundamentalist" political practises, the persistence of which could consequently be explained (and, up to a point, perhaps even justified) on the basis of this analysis.

     While this explanation of the phenomenon of anti-institutional "fundamentalism" is based on some assumptions about the reach of public policy which are as general as they are pessimistic, the second explanation refers to a set of conditions that would appear to be rather specific to the German condition and experience; such an additional explanation, however, may be called for in view of the fact that the schism between the ("fundamentalist") advocates of anti-institutional strategies and the "realists" who are actively promoting institutional modes of action is nowhere as pervasive and hostile as in the West German Green party, where it has reached, since the mid-eighties and according to numerous com-

mentators, virtually suicidal proportions. The stubborn resistance of "fundamentalist" forces within the new social movements in general and the Green party in particular may to a considerable part be due, or so I wish to submit, to a negative reflection of the "fetish- ization of the state" and state institutions that impregnates much of German constitutional theory and practise.[14] Built into this theory—and into the constitution of the Federal Re- public itself—are two cumulative traditions, the common denominator of which is a strong distrust in the forces and capacities of civil society. The more classical thread of this tradi- tion refers back to the political theories of Hobbes, Hegel, and, in the twentieth century, Max Weber and Carl Schmitt. On top of this tradition, the post-fascists and explicitly anti-totalitarian context out of which the West German constitution (Grundgesetz) originated in the late fourties after World War II gave rise to an extremely state-centered version of democratic constitutionalism, as the major task to be accomplished by the constitution was seen—by conservatives, and to some extent by social democrats with their own version of "etatist" traditions as well—to tame, control, and contain disruptive and potentially "totalitarian" forces that might arise out of the conflicts of interest within civil society. This conception of the new constitutional order implied a strong emphasis upon the "combative" (*wehrhafte*) quality of a democratic form of government that would be able to deal with its "enemies" in reliable ways, most importantly through the strength of the state's "mono- poly of force." The consistent distrust that the constitution displays against disorderly and potentially dangerous movements, demands, and conflicts that might emerge from the sphere of civil society is illustrated, among other things, by the strong constitutional position of political parties (which are upgraded to the status of virtual "organs of the state," rather than of civil society), by the absence of any significant plebiscitarian or direct-dem- ocratic modes of democratic participation, and by the strong position of the Federal Republic's Constitutional Court with its power to review and challenge the conformity of parliamentary legislations and even of political parties to what are believed to be substantive value com- mitments of the constitutional order which must be shielded from putative violations that might arise out of the democratic process. As a consequence of this decidedly state-centered conception of "democracy" and the political order, a number of doctrines and proposals have been developed by constitutional theorists and segments of the political elite that border on the equation of the democratic citizen with one who is unqualifiedly loyal and faithful to existing arrangements (as the ominous criterion of "Verfassungstreue," or "faithfulness to the constitution," to which even any state-employed postal worker is required to conform, indicates). Democracy in this sense is often held to be a "way of life," if not a state-defined and state-enforced Weltanschauung or "constitutional culture" that must be promulgated through heavy doses of elite-supervised civic education. The implication of all these phil- osophical, cultural and legal interpretations is the almost methodical distrust in a citizenry that is held to be in need of a constant paternalistic supervision, control, and education, and the democratic process itself a strong element of institutional "distance" from the cit- izenry, in order for the citizens to become "safe for democracy."[15]

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[14] For a recent account of the implicit political theories of German constitutional and legal thought, see P. Hammans, *Das politische Denken der neueren deutschen Staatslehre in der Bundesrepublik*, Opladen: West- deutscher Verlag 1987, pp. 50–98.

[15] For a critical view on these assumptions and implications, see H. Dreier, "Staatliche legitimität, Grund- gesetz und neue soziale Bewegungen," in J. Marko, A. Stolz (eds.), *Demokratie und Wirtschaft*, Wien: Böhlau 1987, pp. 141–185.

It seems obvious that the prevailing, though certainly not uncontested, interpretation of the meaning of democratic government in these terms and along these lines will provide strong counter-arguments to those who refuse to consider an institutional strategy for the new social movements as viable and potentially productive. If acting within the existing institutions, or so their argument could be summarized, would automatically imply wholesale compliance to the standards of democratic worthiness and respectability as they are defined by existing political elites, the use of institutional forms of action would amount to virtual corruption of the causes of any movement. Such an implication is in fact claimed by "fundamentalist" strategists who are often able to derive some plausibility from this argument for their own refusal to join in what I have described as an institutional learning process along the stages of our model. It thus appears that such an institutional learning process is itself contingent upon a favorable institutional environment, and that, conversely, the excessive practise and persistence of fundamentalist "Gesinnungsethik" (and the failure to overcome its deficiencies in a gradual process of institutional learning) is in part just the by-product of an excessive "Verantwortungsethik," as it is built into the prevailing practises of political institutions.

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