

New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics*

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AMONG political sociologists and political scientists who analyze the changing structures and dynamics of West European politics, it became commonplace in the seventies to observe the fusion of political and nonpolitical spheres of social life. The continued analytical usefulness of the conventional dichotomy of "state" and "civil society" was questioned. Processes of fusion could be observed not only on the level of global sociopolitical arrangements, but also on the level of citizens as the elementary political actors. The dividing line that delineates "political" concerns and modes of action from "private" (e.g., moral or economic ones) was becoming blurred.

We see the contours of a rather dramatic model of political development of advanced Western societies: as public policies win a more direct and more visible impact upon citizens, citizens in turn try to win a more immediate and more comprehensive control over political elites by means that are seen frequently to be incompatible with the maintenance of the institutional order of the polity. Since the midseventies, a number of mostly conservative analysts have described this cycle as highly vicious and dangerous, one which, in their view, must lead to a cumulative erosion of political authority

SOCIAL RESEARCH, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1985)

and even the capacity to govern,¹ unless effective measures are taken that free the economy from overly detailed and ambitious political intervention and that immunize political elites from the pressures, concerns, and actions of citizens. The proposed solution, in other words, is a restrictive redefinition of what can and should be considered “political,” and the corresponding elimination from the agenda of governments of all issues, practices, demands, and responsibilities that are defined as being “outside” the proper sphere of politics. This is the neoconservative project of insulating the political from the nonpolitical.

Central to this project is the image of a breakdown or “implosion” of the autonomy and authority of nonpolitical institutional spheres and hence their increasing *dependence* upon political support and regulation. In this sense, it can in fact be argued that the “autonomous” cultural and structural foundations of aesthetic production, of science and technology, of the family, religion, and the labor market have been eroded and are contested to such an extent that only the political provision of rules and resources can keep these various subsystems of “civil society” alive. But, according to the neoconservative analysis, the extended reach of public policy, of state control, support, and regulation, into formerly more independent areas of social life is, rather paradoxically, both a gain and a loss of state authority: a gain in that more variables and parameters of civil society can and must be manipulated, but also a loss, because there are fewer nonpolitical—and hence uncontested and noncontroversial—foundations of action to which claims can be referred or from which metapolitical (in the sense of “natural” or “given”) premises for politics can be derived. As the *functions* and responsibilities of the state expand, its *authority* (i.e., its capacity to make binding decisions) is debased; for political authority can be stable only as long as it is limited, and thus complemented by self-sustaining

¹ S. P. Huntington, “The United States,” in M. Crozier et al., *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 1975).

nonpolitical spheres of action which serve both to exonerate political authority and to provide it with sources of legitimacy. This dilemma can be illustrated by referring to such nonpolitical institutional spheres as the family, the market, and science. As soon as these institutions lose their independence vis-à-vis the political, and function according to some politically determined design, the repercussions of such politicization will most of all affect political authority itself. Rather than growing stronger by greater "comprehensiveness," political authority subverts its nonpolitical underpinnings, which appear increasingly as mere artifacts of the political process itself. It is this *evaporation of uncontested and noncontingent premises (both structural and evaluative) of politics* that the neoconservative project is trying to revert in a sometimes desperate search for nonpolitical foundations of order and stability. What therefore is needed, according to the neoconservative project, is the restoration of uncontested standards of an economic, moral, or cognitive nature. As a consequence, the concept of politics turns reflexive; politics centers on the question of what politics is about—and what it is not about. The project aims at a restrictive redefinition of politics, the counterpart of which is looked for in the market, the family, or science. This search for the unpolitical is hoped to lead to a narrower and more viable concept of politics, one that "reprivatizes" those conflicts and issues that are not to be dealt with properly by means of public authority.

In spite of their obvious political opposition to the content of the neoconservative project, the politics of the new social movements shares an important analytical insight with the proponents of this project. This insight is the following: The conflicts and contradictions of advanced industrial society can no longer be resolved in meaningful and promising ways through etatism, political regulation, and the proliferating inclusion of ever more claims and issues on the agenda of bureaucratic authorities. It is only after this shared analytical premise that neoconservative politics and movement politics

diverge in opposite political directions. Whereas the neoconservative project seeks to *restore* the nonpolitical, noncontingent, and uncontestable foundations of civil society (such as property, the market, the work ethic, the family, and scientific truth) in order to safeguard a more restricted—and *therefore* more solid—sphere of state authority and no longer “overloaded” political institutions, the politics of new social movements, by contrast, seeks to politicize the institutions of civil society in ways that are not constrained by the channels of representative-bureaucratic political institutions, and thereby to *reconstitute* a civil society that is no longer dependent upon ever more regulation, control, and intervention. In order to emancipate itself from the state, civil society itself—its institutions of work, production, distribution, family relations, relations with nature, its very standards of rationality and progress—must be politicized through practices that belong to an intermediate sphere between “private” pursuits and concerns, on the one side, and institutional, state-sanctioned modes of politics, on the other.

The “new politics” of the new social movements can be analyzed, as can any other politics, in terms of its social base, its issues, concerns, and values, and its modes of action. In order to do so, I will employ the term “political paradigm.”²

The following agenda suggests itself: First, the “old” paradigm that has been dominant throughout the post-World War II era will be described, focusing on its four principal components (values, issues, actors, institutional practices). Second, the new paradigm will be discussed in the same categories. Third, the question will be addressed how the rise

² The term “political paradigm”—as I borrow and redefine it from J. Raschke, “Politik und Wertwandel in den westlichen Demokratien,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 36 (1980): 23–45, and K. W. Brand et al., *Protestbewegungen in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1983)—refers to a comprehensive model of what politics is about. A political paradigm provides answers to interrelated questions such as: (1) What are the principal values and issues of collective action? (2) Who are the actors, and what is their mode of becoming *collective* actors? (3) What are the appropriate procedures, tactics, and institutional forms through which the conflict is to be carried out?

of the new paradigm can be explained, and what kind of evidence is provided by analysts who have undertaken such partially conflicting explanations. Here we also want to consider why it is justified to speak of “new” (rather than a revived form of old) political cleavages that we are dealing with. Finally, some speculations are offered concerning which modes of resolution of this conflict about the proper space, focus, or arena of the political are conceivable, and what the likely outcomes of such resolution could be.

The Old Paradigm

The core items on the agenda of West European politics in the period from the immediate postwar years until the early seventies were issues of economic growth, distribution, and security. These central concerns of “old politics”³ were reflected on the level of survey data on “what people believe are the most important issues facing society.” While issues of state- and nation-building continued to play a subordinate role in German politics in connection with “reunification” claims and various East-West conflicts concerning the status of West Berlin, these remnants from an earlier political agenda must be considered as something particular to German politics of the postwar era, as were the issues of decolonization in the French and British polities. While such issues of the unity, limits, and redefinition of national sovereignty and national territory played a minor role in these countries, conflicts over the constitutional and legal order of national societies were even more conspicuously absent. The social, economic, and political order that was adopted in the late forties and early fifties was built upon a highly encompassing liberal-democratic welfare-state consensus that remained unchallenged by any significant forces on either the political Right or Left. Not only was this

³ K. L. Baker et al., *Germany Transformed: Political Culture and the New Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 136 ff.

constitutional accord firmly based in a broad “posttotalitarian” consensus, but it was also actively enforced and sanctioned by the international configuration of forces that emerged after World War II.

This is true at least of three central elements of the constitutional postwar accords, all of which were adopted, justified, and defended in terms of their conduciveness to growth and security. First, and regardless of some marginal elements of consultations, indicative planning, codetermination, and nationalization, investment decisions were instituted as the space of action of owners and managers acting in free markets and according to criteria of profitability; this freedom of property and investment had been overwhelmingly advocated and justified not in terms of moral philosophy and natural right but in the “functional” terms of a growth and efficiency that no alternative arrangement was thought to be capable of accomplishing to a comparable extent. Second, capitalism as a growth machine was complemented by organized labor as a distribution and social-security machine. It is only the basis of a prevalent concern with growth and real income that both the preparedness of organized *labor* to give up more far-reaching projects of societal change in exchange for a firmly established status in the process of income distribution and the preparedness of *investors* to grant such status to organized labor can be explained. On both sides, the underlying view of society was that of a “positive sum” society in which growth is both continuously possible (so as to make the strong position of unions in distributive conflicts tolerable to capital) and considered generally as satisfying and desirable (so as to make “system-loyal” unions and socialist parties—specializing in the task of channeling growth dividends back to the workers rather than pursuing goals of changing the “mode of production”—acceptable to workers). The third most important element of the constitutional design of the postwar period (adopted, as were some of the other two, in the German case from the Weimar Republic) was a form of political democracy that was

representative and mediated through party competition. Such an arrangement was well suited to limit the amount of conflicts that were transferred from the sphere of civil society into the arena of public policy, especially where there was, as in the German case, a far-reaching organizational disjunction between collective actors and bearers of *societal* interests (such as unions, employers, churches, etc.) and *political* parties concentrating on their objective of winning votes and obtaining positions in parliament and government according to the model of the "catch-all party."⁴

The implicit sociological assumption underlying the constitutional arrangements of the liberal welfare state was that "privatistic," family-, work-, and consumption-centered patterns of life would absorb the energies and aspirations of most people, and that participation in and conflict over public policy would for that reason be of no more than marginal significance in the lives of most citizens. This constitutional definition of the respective spaces of action of capital and labor, of the state and civil society, was a correlate of the centrality of the values of growth, prosperity, and distribution. The dynamic force of the political-economic system was industrial production and productivity-increasing innovation, and the task that remained for public policy was to create security and thus the conditions under which this dynamic process could continue to operate.

Since the fifties, "security" has been the term most often used in electoral campaigns and slogans by both major parties in West Germany. It has three important aspects. First, security refers to the *welfare state*, that is, to the issues of providing an adequate income and standard of living for all citizens and protecting them in cases of illness or unemployment, old age, and need. Second, it refers to military strategy and *defense*, the issues of maintaining peace in the international system and preventing military crisis through international organization,

⁴ O. Kirchheimer.

Third World-related policies, and continuous modernization of the defense apparatus. Third, and overlapping partly with the first and second aspects of its meaning, security involves a *social control* aspect, as it concerns the issues of dealing with and preventing all sorts of “deviant” behavior (including illness as deviance of one’s own body), especially as its consequences might affect the viability of the family and the legal, economic, and political order and one’s ability to participate in these institutions.

The two postwar decades in which the paradigm of “old politics,” or the paradigm of a comprehensive growth-security alliance, was dominant were, of course, not a period devoid of social and political conflict. But it was a period in which a remarkably undisputed, society-wide agreement was established about the “interests,” and thus the issues, actors, and institutional modes of the resolution of conflict. Overall economic growth, advances in individual and collective distributional positions, and legal protection of social status were the central concerns. Specialized, comprehensive, and highly institutionalized interest organizations and political parties were the dominant collective actors. Collective bargaining, party competition, and representative party government were the virtually exclusive mechanisms of the resolution of social and political conflict. All of this was endorsed by a “civic culture” which emphasized the values of social mobility, private life, consumption, instrumental rationality, authority, and order and which deemphasized political participation. The dominance of these issues, actors, and institutional modes of conflict resolution is highlighted by the absence (or, rather, the rapid elimination in the fifties) of cross-cutting issues, alternative modes of conflict resolution, or collective actors not easily accommodated within the growth-security framework. By the end of the fifties, the issues and proponents of socialism, neutralism, national unity, citizenship, and economic democracy were reduced to virtual insignificance. Not only the “end of ideology” thesis imported from American social

science, but even diagnoses amounting to an “end of political conflict”⁵ were acclaimed widely as plausible sociological interpretations of sociopolitical reality. And the partly reactionary, partly intellectual-progressive critique of the values of consumer society, failed to make any impact upon the solid cultural foundations of postwar and posttotalitarian welfare capitalism.

The New Paradigm

This brief account of the configuration of values, actors, issues, and institutions of the “old politics” may provide us with a background against which the “new paradigm” can now be compared. One of the few attempts to invent a substantive concept for this “new” paradigm has been made by Raschke,⁶ who speaks of an emerging *Paradigma der Lebensweise* (paradigm of “way of life” or “mode of life”). The major part of the social-scientific literature dealing with new concerns and movements simply emphasizes rupture and discontinuity, by using terms like “new protest movements,”⁷ “new politics,”⁸ “new populism,”⁹ “neoromanticism,”¹⁰ “antipolitics,”¹¹ “unorthodox political behavior” and “disorderly politics,”¹² or it describes the means by which conflict is typically carried out

⁵ H. Schelsky, *Der Mensch in der wissenschaftlichen Zivilisation* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1961).

⁶ Raschke, “Politik und Wertwandel.”

⁷ K. W. Brand, *Neue soziale Bewegungen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982).

⁸ K. Hildebrandt and R. J. Dalton “Die neue Politik,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 18 (1977).

⁹ J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen über eine Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1962); B. Marin, “Neuer Populismus und ‘Wirtschaftspartnerschaft’,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 9 (1980): 157–170.

¹⁰ U. Schimank, *Neoromantischer Protest im Spätkapitalismus: Der Widerstand gegen Stadt- und Landschaftsverödung* (Bielefeld: AJZ, 1983).

¹¹ S. Berger, “Politics and Anti-Politics in Western Europe in the Seventies,” *Daedalus* 108 (1979): 27–50.

¹² A. Marsh, *Protest and Political Consciousness* (London: Sage, 1977).

within the politics of the new paradigm as “unconventional.”¹³ The most encompassing, though still less than all-inclusive label by which activists of these movements themselves refer to the “new politics” is the term “alternative movements,” which is equally void of positive content, as is the case with the related terms “counter-economy,” “counter-institutions,” and “counter-public” (*Gegenöffentlichkeit*).

The new movements politicize themes which cannot easily be “coded” within the binary code of the universe of social action that underlies liberal political theory. That is to say, where liberal theory assumes that all action can be categorized as either “private” or “public” (and, in the latter case, rightfully “political”), the new movements locate themselves in a third, intermediate category. They claim a type of issue for themselves, one that is neither “private” (in the sense of being of no legitimate concern to others) nor “public” (in the sense of being recognized as the legitimate object of official political institutions and actors), but which consists in collectively “relevant” results and side effects of either private or institutional-political actors for which these actors, however, cannot be held responsible or made responsive by available legal or institutional means. The space of action of the new movements is a space of *noninstitutional politics* which is not provided for in the doctrines and practices of liberal democracy and the welfare state.

This raises a conceptual problem: What do we mean by noninstitutional *politics*, in contrast to “private” modes of action? Precision in this respect appears particularly relevant as the term “new social movements” is often used in a way which would also include private concerns of, for instance, religious or economic kinds. A minimum requirement for using the word “political” for some mode of action is that the actor makes some explicit claim that the *means* of action can be recognized as legitimate *and* the *ends* of action can become

¹³ Kaase.

binding for the wider community. Only those social movements that share these two characteristics have a political quality and will therefore interest us here. This is not the case with two interesting limiting cases, represented by new religious sects and by terrorism, respectively. These distinctions are illustrated in Figure 1. On the level of means, purely *social* movements (e.g., sects, movements propagating some specific cultural life-styles, traditions, or practices) make use of perfectly legitimate and recognized forms of action, such as the legally guaranteed freedom of religious practice and cultural freedom. On the level of ends, they do not intend to win the recognition of their specific values and concerns as binding for the wider community but simply claim to be allowed to enjoy their rights and freedoms. Even in the case of a diametric opposition between their cultural values and forms of life and those of the wider community, they do not attempt to overthrow the latter but to retreat to private spaces where their styles can be practiced, as is the case in many rural communes. There is no attempt to use these rights for collectively binding purposes.

The reciprocal configuration is the one we find in terrorist groups. The violent means they use are in no sense expected to be recognized as legitimate and rightful by the wider community. That is at least the case with groups such as the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF) in West Germany and the Brigade

FIGURE 1. SCHEMA OF FORMS OF NONINSTITUTIONAL ACTION

ends means/actors	not binding for wider community if accomplished	binding
not recognized by political community as legitimate	"private crime" 1	"terrorism" 2
recognized as legitimate	sociocultural movements advocating religious etc. practices; "retreat" 3	"sociopolitical movements" 4

Rosse (BR) in Italy which, interestingly, with the possible exception of their initial phases, have given up any attempt to establish themselves as “political” actors and to win recognition of their means of action as legitimate by a wider community. On the other side, their objectives are quite conventionally (if absurdly and unrealistically) “political” in that they consist, in the cases mentioned, in victory in an anti-imperialist revolutionary war, the outcomes of which would clearly be binding upon the entire community in quite an elementary way. In contradistinction to these two phenomena of the nonpolitical retreat into private concerns and private war, politically relevant new social movements can be defined as those movements that do make a claim to *be* recognized as political actors by the wider community—although their forms of action do not enjoy the legitimacy conferred by established political institutions—and who aim at objectives, the achievement of which *would* have binding effects for society as a whole rather than just for the group itself.

Throughout the following discussion, I will focus on four of these movements which appear to be the most important ones as measured by their qualitative mobilization success as well as their manifest political impact. These are the ecology or environmental movements, including concerns having to do not only with the natural but also with the built (urban) environment; human rights movements, most importantly the feminist movement, fighting for the protection of the identity and dignity and for equitable treatment of those defined by gender, age, race, language, and region; pacifism and peace movements; and movements advocating or engaging in “alternative” or “communal” modes of the production and distribution of goods and services. Let us first explore some ideal-typical common characteristics of these movements; these characteristics are evident in the movements’ *issues, values, modes of action, and actors.*

Dominant *issues* of new social movements consist in the concern with a (physical) territory, space of action, or “life-world,”

such as the body, health, and sexual identity; the neighborhood, city, and the physical environment; the cultural, ethnic, national, and linguistic heritage and identity; the physical conditions of life, and survival for humankind in general.

Diverse and incoherent as these issues and concerns appear to be, they have a common root in certain values which, as I will argue later, are not in themselves "new" but are given a different emphasis and urgency within the new social movements. Most prominent among these *values* are autonomy and identity (with their organizational correlates such as decentralization, self-government, and self-help) and opposition to manipulation, control, dependence, bureaucratization, regulation, etc.

A third element of the new paradigm is the *mode of action* of new social movements. This typically involves two aspects: the mode by which individuals act together in order to constitute a collectivity ("internal mode of action") and the methods by which they confront the external world and their political opponents ("external mode of action"). The first is already referred to by the term social movements; the mode by which multitudes of individuals become collective actors is highly informal, ad hoc, discontinuous, context-sensitive, and egalitarian. In other words, while there are at best rudimentary membership roles, programs, platforms, representatives, officials, staffs, and membership dues, the new social movements consist of participants, campaigns, spokespeople, networks, voluntary helpers, and donations. Typically, in their internal mode of action, new social movements do not rely, in contrast to traditional forms of political organization, on the organizational principle of differentiation, whether in the horizontal (insider vs. outsider) or in the vertical dimension (leaders vs. rank and file members). To the contrary, there seems to be a strong reliance upon de-differentiation, that is, the fusion of public and private roles, instrumental and expressive behavior, community and organization, and in particular a poor and at best transient demarcation between the roles of "members"

and formal "leaders." Concerning the external mode of action, we find demonstration tactics and other forms of action making use of the physical presence of (large numbers of) people. These protest tactics are intended to mobilize public attention by (mostly) legal though "unconventional" means. They are paralleled by protest demands whose positive aspects are articulated mostly in negative logical and grammatical forms, as indicated by key words such as "never," "nowhere," "end," "stop," "freeze," "ban," etc. Protest tactics and protest demands indicate that the (actually or potentially) mobilized group of actors conceives of itself as an ad-hoc and often single-issue veto alliance (rather than an organizationally or even ideologically integrated group) which leaves ample room for a wide variety of legitimations and beliefs among the protesters. This mode of action also emphasizes the principled and nonnegotiable nature of concerns, which can be seen as a virtue as well as something necessitated by the relatively primitive organizational structures involved.

Social movements relate to other political actors and opponents not in terms of negotiations, compromise, reform, improvement, or gradual progress to be brought about by organized pressures and tactics but, rather, in terms of sharp antinomies such as yes/no, them/us, the desirable and the intolerable, victory and defeat, now or never, etc. Such a logic of thresholds, obviously, hardly allows for practices of political exchange or gradualist tactics.

Movements are *incapable* of negotiating because they do not have anything to offer in return for any concessions made to their demands. They cannot promise, for instance, lower levels of energy consumption in return for the discontinuation of nuclear energy projects in the way trade unions can promise (or at least practice) wage restraint in return for employment guarantees. This is due to the movements' lack of some of the properties of formal organizations, most importantly the internal bindingness of representative decisions by virtue of which formal organizations can make sure to some extent

that the terms of a political deal will be honored. They also typically lack a coherent set of ideological principles and interpretations of the world from which an image of a desirable arrangement of society could be derived and the steps toward transformation could be deduced. Only if such a theory about the world—and its own role in changing the world—were available to the movements, a practice of exchanging long-term gains for short-term losses, a practice of tactical rationality and alliance formation could be expected from these political actors. Movements are also *unwilling* to negotiate because they often consider their central concern of such high and universal priority that no part of it can be meaningfully sacrificed (e.g., in issues linked to the values of “survival” or “identity”) without negating the concern itself.

Finally, concerning the *actors* of the new social movements, the most striking aspect is that they do *not* rely for their self-identification on either the established political codes (left/right, liberal/conservative, etc.) nor on the partly corresponding socioeconomic codes (such as working class/middle class, poor/wealthy, rural/urban population, etc.). The universe of political conflict is rather coded in categories taken from the movements’ issues, such as gender, age, locality, etc., or, in the case of environmental and pacifist movements, the human race as a whole. To be sure, the insistence upon the irrelevance of socioeconomic codes (such as class) and political codes (ideologies) that we find on the level of self-identification of new social movements (and often of their opponents), and which is part of their very “newness” (and distinguishes them from “old” social movements), by no means implies that the social base and political practice of these movements *is in fact* as amorphous and heterogeneous in class and ideological terms. As far as their social base is concerned, it consists, as I will argue in more detail later, of three rather sharply circumscribed segments of the social structure, namely (1) the new middle class, especially those elements of it which work in the human service professions and/or the public sec-

tor, (2) elements of the old middle class, and (3) a category of the population consisting of people outside the labor market or in a peripheral position to it (such as unemployed workers, students, housewives, retired persons, etc.).

The new paradigm divides the universe of action into three spheres (private vs. noninstitutional political vs. institutional political) and claims the sphere of "political action within civil society" as its space, from which it challenges both private *and* institutional-political practices and institutions. As we have defined the concept of paradigm as a configuration of actors, issues, values, and modes of action in sociopolitical conflict, the old and the new paradigms can be contrasted schematically as in Figure 2.

Changing Social Structures and Agendas

Much of what is known about the social-structural composition of the new social movements as the bearers of the paradigm of "new politics" suggests that it is rooted in major segments of the new middle class. One major characteristic of

FIGURE 2. THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "OLD" AND "NEW" PARADIGMS OF POLITICS

	"old paradigm"	"new paradigm"
actors	socioeconomic groups acting <i>as</i> groups (in the groups' interest) and involved in distributive conflict	socioeconomic groups acting not <i>as</i> such, but on behalf of ascriptive collectivities
issues	economic growth and distribution; military and social security, social control	preservation of peace, environment, human rights, and unalienated forms of work
values	freedom and security of private consumption and material progress	personal autonomy and identity, as opposed to centralized control, etc.
modes of action	(a) internal: formal organization, large-scale representative associations (b) external: pluralist or corporatist interest intermediation; political party competition, majority rule	(a) internal: informality, spontaneity, low degree of horizontal and vertical differentiation (b) external: protest politics based on demands formulated in predominantly negative terms

this "class" is that it is, according to Anthony Giddens,¹⁴ "class-aware" but not "class-conscious." That is to say: there appear to be relatively clear structural determinants of *who* is likely to support the causes and engage in the practices of "new politics" (thus a strong determinancy of *agents*), but the *demands* (and thus the beneficiaries of such demands) are highly class-*unspecific*, dispersed, and either "universalistic" in nature (e.g., environmental, peace, and civil rights concerns) or highly concentrated on particular groups (defined, for instance, by locality, age, or their being affected situationally by certain practices, laws, or institutions of the state). New middle class politics, in contrast to most working class politics, as well as old middle class politics, is typically a politics *of* a class but not *on behalf of* a class.

Structural characteristics of the new middle class core of activists and supporters of new social movements include high educational status, relative economic security (and, in particular, experience of such security in their "formative years"¹⁵), and employment in personal-service occupations. The preponderance of people sharing these characteristics has been well documented both for the various "issue movements" such as the peace movement,¹⁶ the environmental movements,¹⁷ various civil rights and feminist movements,¹⁸ urban citizens' initiatives, as well as "green" coalitions of these movements in general. But it is also true that in most cases new social movements do not consist exclusively of "middle class radicals" but are composed, in addition, of elements from other groups and strata with which they tend to form a more or less stable

¹⁴ A. Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (London: Hutchinson, 1973).

¹⁵ R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁶ F. Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968).

¹⁷ S. Cotgrove and A. Duff, "Environmentalism, Class, and Politics" (mimeo), Science Studies Centre, University of Bath, n.d.

¹⁸ H. Schenk, *Die feministische Herausforderung: 150 Jahre Frauenbewegung in Deutschland* (Munich: Beck, 1980), pp. 108–118.

alliance. Most important among these other groups are (a) "peripheral" or "decommodified" groups and (b) elements from the old middle class.

By "decommodified" groups I mean social categories whose members are not (presently) defined directly in their social situation by the labor market and whose time budget, consequently, is more flexible; examples include middle class housewives, high school and university students, retired people, and unemployed or marginally employed youths. One common characteristic of these social categories is that their conditions of life and life chances are shaped by direct, highly visible and often highly authoritarian and restrictive mechanisms of supervision, exclusion, and social control, as well as by the unavailability of even nominal "exit" options. They are in this sense "trapped," and this has often led them to engage in revolts against the bureaucratic or patriarchal regime of these institutions. One further characteristic of "peripheral" groups (e.g., students, middle class housewives, the unemployed, retired people) is that they can afford to spend considerable amounts of time on political activities, something that they share with the often flexible time schedules of middle class professionals. With these, they also sometimes share the same institutional environment, as in the case of teachers and their students, social workers and their clients, etc.¹⁹ The third element that is often included in the social base of new social movements is the "old" (i.e., independent and self-employed) middle class (such as farmers, shop owners and artisan-producers), whose immediate economic interests often coincide with (or least diverge from) the concerns voiced by the protest politics of new social movements.²⁰ On the other

¹⁹ It is worth noting that many of the movements and revolts that have occurred since the midsixties originated from institutional locations *outside* the labor market or the firm. Examples include the patriarchal family and the statuses and roles it assigns to women, children, and youth; the university and school systems; "total" institutions such as prisons and armies; and the more custodial and oppressive parts of the welfare state apparatus.

²⁰ For instance, in the antinuclear movement, the local old middle class has often

side, the classes, strata, and groups that are penetrated least easily by the concerns, demands, and forms of action of the "new" paradigm are exactly the "principal" classes of capitalist societies, namely, the industrial working class and the holders and agents of economic and administrative power.

In several senses, it can be said therefore that the pattern of social and political conflict that we find expressed in new social movements is the polar opposite of the model of class conflict. First, the conflict is not staged by one class but by a social alliance that consists, in varying proportions, of elements coming from different classes and "nonclasses." Second, it is not a conflict between the principal economic agents of the model of production but an alliance that includes virtually every element *but* these principal classes. Third, the demands are not class-specific but rather strongly universalistic or, to the contrary, highly particularistic, and thus in any case either more *or* less inclusive or "categorical" than class issues.

This configuration of class forces and class politics can be interpreted as the outcome of a long process of differentiation or divergence between what Parkin has called "working class conservatism" and "middle class radicalism."²¹ This differentiation is the reverse side of the development of the welfare state, in which the working class as a whole is granted institutionalized political and economic representation and some legal claim to security and protection. But the price that had to be paid for the accomplishment of this success (limited, fragile, and reversible as it remains) has generally been the *limitation* of political goals of working class movements and the *specialization* of their organizational forms.

joined the protest against the building of new power plants (H. Kitschelt, *Kernenergiepolitik* [Frankfurt: Campus, 1980]). Strong old middle class elements usually support regionalist movements such as the occitane movement in the hope of winning more economic subsidies from the central state (A. Touraine, *Le pays contre l'état* [Paris: Seuil, 1981]). And movements resisting large-scale urban renewal find natural allies in the local merchants, who fear that large-scale commercial capital will move in as soon as city centers have been modernized.

²¹ Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism*.

More concretely, struggles and successes that were won on behalf of people *as* workers, employees, and recipients of social security transfers were accompanied by a cumulative de-emphasis of the interests of people as citizens, as consumers, as clients of state-provided services, and as human beings in general. According to some logic of political compromise and interclass accord, the broadening of welfare state *inclusion* is not to be had without the *exclusion* of important dimensions of class conflict and the corresponding narrowing of its agenda. On the other side, the issue areas from which working class organizations (unions, socialist, social democratic, and communist parties) have largely withdrawn, and which they often *had* to abandon in the interest of their struggles for institutional recognition and the material improvement of the social and economic conditions of their core constituency, tend now to be occupied by middle class radicals who, again partially due to the accomplishments of the fully developed welfare state, are sufficiently numerous and economically secure to be able to afford to reemphasize some issues on the “forgotten agenda” of the working class movement and to revitalize some of the noninstitutional forms of politics that were characteristic of earlier periods of the working class movement itself.

Virtually all projections and speculations about the likely future of the social structure of West European democratic welfare states seem to suggest that at least two (and possibly all three) of the components of the social base of the new paradigm—namely the new middle class and the “peripheral” or “decommodified” segments of the population—are much more likely to increase in numbers than to disappear. Although some interesting doubts have been raised concerning the further growth of personal and social services and the number of new middle class people providing them,²² there is

²² J. Gershuny, *After Industrial Society? The Emerging Self-Service Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

still little prospect that the major social functions of new middle class occupations (such as teaching and the distribution of information; the provision of health services; social control and administration) can and will be replaced, in the same way as laundry services have been replaced by user-operated washing machines. This is likely to be so not just for reasons having to do with the complexities of supplying those services that the new middle class supplies, but also with the quantity of demand for such services. This quantity, in turn, is determined largely by the shrinking capacity of the labor market to organize and absorb the entire volume of labor power. Especially under conditions of economic crisis, more and more people are transformed from "workers" into "clients" for longer and longer periods of time. Thus the relative growth of the "decommodified" segment of the population guarantees the social existence of large parts of the new middle class and possibly even paves the ground for new forms of political alliances between these two elements. It is perhaps less obvious that the third element can be expected to be stable, as well, in the further development of social structures. This element, which is most reminiscent of the social base of "old" (e.g., populist) social movements, does, however, enjoy the interest and support of such diverse forces as conservative economic policymakers (who are aware of the fact that the old middle class and small business is the only place where additional employment is likely to be created in the future) and "alternative" or "dualist" models of economic reorganization bidding farewell to the proletariat²³ and observing favorably the rise of new forms of "self-employment."

In sum, there can be little doubt that at least two of the three elements of the social base typically supporting the new paradigm of politics are rising rather than declining in terms of numbers and strategic resources. This would constitute an

²³ A. Gorz, *Adieux au prolétariat: Au del à du Socialisme* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1980).

important difference between “new” and “old” social movements which regularly consisted of forces *unlikely* to survive the impact of the economic and cultural modernization they desperately tried to resist. It would rather constitute a parallel to the early period of the working class movement, which was inspired by its well-founded prophecy that its numbers and strengths were increased and promoted by the very system against which the struggle was waged.

But, of course, numbers alone do not count. We therefore look at the issues and conflicts around which numbers are activated and mobilized. Should there be reasons to expect that these issues will be resolved easily and are therefore of a transient nature (or else that they can be prevented from appearing on the political agenda in the first place), there would be little reason to expect lasting political conflicts and alliances to emerge from them. The opposite would be the case if the “nonclass issues” politicized by new social movements could be conceived as being the intrinsic and continuously reproduced outcome of the established modes of rationality of production and domination within the institutional, economic, and international environment of West European capitalist democracies. It is therefore a discussion of the type of issues and concerns of new social movements—and the likely future relevance of these issues on the agenda of the advanced societies—to which we must now turn.

The Issue Basis of New Social Movements

The theories of “unconventional,” “mass,” or “deviant” political behavior that were widely accepted in the fifties and early sixties²⁴ maintained that mobilization for noninstitutional political action was the consequence of the losses inflicted

²⁴ W. Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (New York: Free Press, 1976); N. J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

upon certain parts of the population by economic, political, and cultural modernization, against whose impact these groups reacted by seeking recourse to "deviant" political modes of action. According to these theories, such losses consisted in economic status, access to political power, integration into intermediary forms of social organization, and the recognition of traditional cultural values. If modernization of societies means, above all, the differentiation and disarticulation of spheres of action (such as the "private" and the "public" spheres), such antimodernist movements would insist on preserving a traditional "wholeness" of life.²⁵ Social "uprootedness" of the alienated and the marginal was the key explanatory idea in these theories. Mass behavior was said to be the typical form of response of those who suffered the costs of societal rationalization without (yet) having benefited from its accomplishments. Moreover, this revolt against modernization was itself seen to be irrational, ridden by anxieties and expressive needs, and thus likely to fail. Collective behavior, according to Smelser, is an irrational and exceptional, hysterical, wishfully thinking, or otherwise cognitively inadequate response to structural strains emerging from the process of modernization. This response was said to be based on negative and/or positive myths or highly simplistic interpretations of tension. The implicit message of this sort of theorizing—which appears often to be politically preoccupied with, and concerned to prevent, a possible rise of fascist and authoritarian mass movements—is evident and often of a highly self-assured nature: First, it is the backward, marginal, and alienated elements of society who form the basis of noninstitutional politics, not the core and the elites. Second, such expressive resistance against modernization is itself irrational and thus, if only the modernizing elites are not overwhelmed by such resistance and institutions are defended suc-

²⁵ Cf. B. Berger et al., *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

cessfully by (among other mechanisms) repressive means of social control, the resistance is bound to fail. Third, it is a transitory phenomenon, since the ongoing process of modernization will eventually provide the benefits of progress to all and thus weaken resistance to modernization.

Little if anything of this sort of theorizing about social movements finds support in the evidence offered by analyses of today's new social movements. The new middle class constituting the most important part of these movements can hardly be said to be "uprooted" but is connected rather closely with, and experienced in the use of, established political and economic institutions. Participants in protest movements such as the peace movement in Great Britain in the late sixties "appear well integrated into a broad range of social activities and institutions."²⁶ It has been demonstrated, as I have mentioned before, that those most likely to engage in unconventional forms of political action do so *in addition* to the fact that they also are likely to have engaged in "orthodox" political behavior. "Higher levels of protest potential are not associated with an estrangement from orthodox politics, but are part of a parallel, dualist attitude toward the use of political action."²⁷ The strata which give highest support to protest politics are by no means deprived and disadvantaged, but generally economically secure, and some of them, such as "middle class undergraduates," writes Marsh, "are often among the most advantaged members of the community."²⁸ And neither do they advocate, as the "romanticist" interpretation would have it, premodern, prescientific, undifferentiated patterns of social organization; rather, they advocate arrangements that would allow specifically "modern" values (such as individual freedom, humanistic and universalistic

²⁶ Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism*, p. 16.

²⁷ Marsh, *Protest and Political Consciousness*, p. 87; cf. J. P. Olsen, *Organized Democracy: Political Institutions in a Welfare State—The Case of Norway* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1983), ch. 1.

²⁸ Marsh, *Protest and Political Consciousness*, p. 165.

principles) to be realized more fully than the centralized, bureaucratized, and technology-intensive forms of organization appear to them capable of doing. The models for such societal arrangements are as a rule not adopted from a romanticized past; they are far more often pragmatically designed and proposed, and they often make some selective use of the accomplishments of technical, economic, and political modernization. For instance, the call for decentralization is not derived from an irrational longing for premodern small communities but from both an understanding of the destructive side effects of centralization and the potential for decentralization that is made available by, among other things, advanced electronic technologies of information and communication. Nor could these movements be described plausibly as "irrational," because their social base participates to an above-average extent in the cognitive culture of society (i.e., in the knowledge and information available in society) as indicated by high levels of educational attainment. As a consequence of the movements' participation in the "modern" cognitive culture, we find often complex, pragmatically limited, and nonideological accounts of social reality and its dilemmas as well as a relatively high level of tolerance for ambiguity and divergence of ideological principles. The new movements can perhaps best be described, in the words of Galtung, as "a federation of issue-movements that work out the level of integration they find justifiable, supporting each other in many things, perhaps not in all."²⁹ Within this nonideological framework, cognitive skills and intellectual tools (such as technology assessment, social and economic forecasting, ecological and strategic application of systems analysis, and the elaborate use of legal tactics) are often employed to defend the case and the demands made by new social movements, and consequently the core activists and informal lead-

²⁹ J. Galtung, "The Blue and the Red, the Green and the Brown: A Guide to Movements and Countermovements" (mimeo), Institut Universitaire d'Etude du Developpement, Geneva, 1981, p. 18.

ers of, for instance, German “citizens’ initiatives” are often recruited from teachers, lawyers, journalists, and other members of the professions.

It seems already clear, on the basis of these observations, that the new movements are of a different type than those analyzed by the older theories just referred to. But can this also be said of the issues that underlie mobilization?

In an earlier section of this essay, when the distinction between the “old” and the “new” political paradigm was introduced, the two corresponding types of dominant issues were contrasted as centering on the distribution of income and security vs. issues having to do with identity and autonomy—for example, human rights, peace, and the preservation of physical and aesthetic qualities of the environment. The following discussion will not be organized in terms of this dichotomy of types of issues, but rather in terms of the cross-cutting analytical dimension of two contrasting explanatory *perspectives* upon (new) issues. One of the well-known difficulties inherent in any analysis of political “issues” derives from the dual reference that is made whenever this concept is employed: some question is said to be an issue if there are significant numbers of actors who *feel*, according to their particular values, needs, wants, or interests, that the question must be resolved in ways that conflict with the interests of other actors, *and* if events or developments occur in the light of which needs are considered salient enough to make an “issue” out of a hitherto unrecognized “problem.” Thus the “issueness” of an issue emerges as the joint effect of values and facts, interests and events, subjective and objective factors. Accordingly, the rise of new issues can be explained primarily by placing emphasis upon either subjective or objective factors. In the case of predominantly subjective or, more precisely, psychologizing and reductionist explanations, the major weight is given to a change of the values and motivations of actors, their subjective dispositions and resources of action, etc., although changes in these variables may then

themselves be related to prior objective events, such as the objective parameters of political and general socialization, or developments on the plane of the welfare state. On the other side, predominantly "objective" explanations rely primarily on such independent variables as events, developments, changing conditions, contradictions, structural problems, etc., which are supposed to be responsible for the rise of issues, although here, too, intervening or mediating mechanisms of a more subjective nature (e.g., the actors' cognitive capacity to perceive events) may be inserted in the explanatory model. Ultimately, each of the two approaches is tied to one side in the debate between two schools of thought in social theory, namely "actor-centered" methodological individualists and "structuralist" or "functionalist" modes of social theorizing.

As far as the study of new social movements and unconventional modes of political participation is concerned, the existing research literature and interpretation is clearly overwhelmingly inspired by the first of these two major variants of social theorizing. That is to say, the interest and explanatory approach has in most cases been in the "push" of new values, demands, and actors that provide "issueness" to certain questions, rather than in the "pull" of objective events, developments, or systemic imperatives the cognitive perception of which might condition or give rise to issues. For the most part, it has been assumed that new issues or new forms of action reflect "rising demands" on the part of actors, as opposed to a rising urgency to defend *existing* needs, the conditions of fulfillment of which have deteriorated. Similarly, the explanatory variables have more often been motivational ones than cognitive ones. The methods employed have much more often been those particularly suited for the study of individual actors (such as survey research) rather than those suitable for the study of systemic variables (such as historical methods or structural analysis). Further correlates of the dichotomy between "psychologizing" and "structural" approaches seem to be that the former are more often favored by outside ob-

servers of movements, while self-theorizations of such movements tend to refer to objective conditions, circumstances, and events as the major causes that generate “issueness”—and thus to action as the rational response that the perceived nature of the problems would call for. Similarly, the “psychologizing” approach would rather conceive of the long-term perspective of movements in terms of “oscillating waves” or transient “moods,” while a more structural approach is inclined more easily to think in terms of basic discontinuities and changes of “axial principles.” Perhaps one could even say that the first approach is committed intellectually to the formation of theories *about* social movements, while the second is interested in building theories *of* or *for* social movements.

The more structural type of explanatory argument (which is clearly favored by authors³⁰ who look upon the new movements more in terms of their potential for structural change than in terms of their political deviance and potential for disturbing institutional process) refers to three interrelated aspects of advanced capitalist industrial (or, in Touraine’s usage, “postindustrial”) societies. First, the negative side effects of the established modes of economic and political rationality are no longer concentrated and class-specific but dispersed in time, space, and kind so as to affect virtually every member of society in a broad variety of ways (“broadening”). Second, there is a qualitative change in the methods and effects of domination and social control, making its effect more comprehensive and inescapable, which affects and disrupts even those spheres of life that so far have remained outside the realm of rational and explicit social control (“deepening”). Third, both the political and the economic institutions which jointly administer the rationality of produc-

³⁰ Brand, *Neue soziale Bewegungen*; Brand et al., *Protestbewegungen in der Bundesrepublik*; J. Hirsch, *Der Sicherheitsstaat: Das “Modell Deutschland,” seine Krise und die neuen sozialen Bewegungen* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1980); Raschke, “Politik und Wertwandel”; A. Melucci, *L’invenzione del presente: Movimenti, identità, bisogni individuali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982).

tion and control have lost any self-corrective or self-limiting capacity; they are helplessly caught within a vicious circle that can be broken only from outside the official political institutions ("irreversibility").

These are broad and sweeping propositions concerning the nature of contemporary West European societies, and they therefore require some elaboration and illustration. Taken together, they amount to the diagnosis of the simultaneous *broadening, deepening, and increasing irreversibility* of forms of domination and deprivation. As to the first point, Habermas has argued most consistently and cogently that in late capitalist societies the work role is neither the exclusive nor the basic focus of the experience of deprivation, an experience which equally affects the roles of the citizen, the client of administrative decisions, and the consumer.³¹ An even more radical version of the "dispersed" nature of power and powerlessness that can no longer be attributed to any central or fundamental causal mechanism, least of all industrial production, is presented by Foucault. This type of argument obtains a great deal of plausibility if we take into consideration two characteristics of modern political economies and the technological systems, both military and civilian, on which they depend: their enormous capacity for conflict displacement and the increasing scope of the impacts of failures (i.e., their increasing proneness to "catastrophe"). The first characteristic concerns the flexibility by which concrete conflicts can be solved by imposing the costs of the solution upon external actors or shifting it to new dimensions of privilege and deprivation. In this sense, the solution of a wage conflict may result in regional imbalances, or new health hazards at work, or inflation, or cuts in social programs for certain groups, etc. This systemic interchangeability of the scenes of conflict and the dimensions of conflict resolution makes any idea of a "primordial" conflict

³¹ J. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), 2: 513.

(such as derived, for instance, from the Marxian “law of value”) obsolete. Interconnectedness and interchangeability is also the condition that extends the scope of the effects of failures or errors. Any number of illustrations come to mind, whether taken from large-scale technological systems (industrialized agriculture, atomic energy, urban transportation, military defense, etc.) or from large-scale economic and administrative organizations (world markets, national social-security systems, etc.). Both kinds of society-wide spillover effects lead to a “classlessness,” or an increasingly “social” character of deprivation—a fact that would render plainly inadequate any traditional Marxist view of “core conflicts” and core contradictions inherent in specific institutional settings.

The second of the above three points amounts to the diagnosis of the *deepening* of deprivation which affects very fundamental levels of physical, personal, and social existence. This aspect of modern forms of rationalization and control is often referred to by metaphors such as the “invasion” or “colonization of the life-world.”³² That is to say, economic and political regulation is no longer limited to the manipulation of external constraints of individual behavior but intervenes, in the service of technocratic standards of rationality and coordination, into the symbolic infrastructure of informal social interaction and the production of meaning through the use of legal, educational, medical, psychiatric, and media technologies. This new and pervasive type of social control is often described as a functional requirement of a new stage of production:

The mechanisms of accumulation are no longer fed by the simple exploitation of the labor force, but rather by the manipulation of complex organizational systems, by control over information and over processes and institutions of symbol-formation, and by intervention in interpersonal relations. . . . Production . . . is becoming the production of social relations and social systems . . . it is even becoming the production of the

³² *Ibid.*

individual's biological and interpersonal identity. . . . The control and manipulation of the centers of technocratic domination are increasingly penetrating everyday life.³³

Such rather vague and global propositions could be clarified perhaps by exploring the idea that large-scale social and technological systems tend to become, in the process of their further growth, exponentially more sensitive and vulnerable to, and hence intolerant of, unpredictable, irregular, or "deviant" modes of behavior among their component actors and thus come to rely on ever greater and more detailed preventive and coordinated measures of surveillance and control.³⁴

The third point refers to the *structural incapacity* of existing economic and political institutions to perceive and to deal effectively with the global threats, risks, and deprivations they cause. The rather paradoxical image one receives from current theories both of economic failure and "state failure"³⁵ is that these institutions are both all-powerful in controlling, exploiting, and dominating their social and physical environments and at the same time largely helpless to deal with the self-paralyzing consequences of the use of such power. This experience of blocked learning capacity (the blocked capacity for self-transformation or even self-limitation of the institutions of technological, economic, political, and military rationality has led, in the words of Suzanne Berger, in Europe in the late 1970s to protest that was directed "not against the failure of the state and society to provide for economic growth and material prosperity, but against their all-too-considerable success in having done so, and against the price of this success."³⁶

³³ A. Melucci, "The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach," *Social Science Information* 19 (1980): 217-218.

³⁴ Cf. Hirsch, *Der Sicherheitsstaat*.

³⁵ M. Jänicke, *Wie das Industriesystem von seinen Misständen profitiert: Kosten und Nutzen technokratischer Symptombekämpfung: Umweltschutz, Gesundheitswesen, innere Sicherheit* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1979).

³⁶ Berger, "Politics and Anti-Politics," p. 32.

To be sure, these propositions might be looked upon as tendentious views made up to serve the legitimation needs of new social movements. On the other hand, should these propositions be demonstrably valid, this would provide us with a sociological interpretation of the rise of the new movements, whose mode of political action would then appear as a rational response to a specific problem-environment. This rational response interpretation would be the more compelling, the more the following conditions could be shown to be given:

(a) The above analytical propositions are shared not only by movement activists but beyond them by a wider community of informed and competent contemporaries who do not themselves become involved in movement politics.

(b) The causes and issues which are central to new social movements are those, and only those, the predominance and urgency of which is caused by the objective processes referred to by the above three propositions.

(c) The broad constituency of movements as well as their pool of activists are drawn from those social groups which are most likely to be affected by the negative consequences of these processes and/or those who have the easiest cognitive access to the working of these processes and their consequences.

(d) The values advocated and defended by the new social movements are not "new" but part and parcel of the repertory of dominant modern culture, which obviously would make it difficult to think of movements as flowing from either "pre-modern" or, for that matter, "postmodern" subcultures.

(e) The extrainstitutional forms of action adopted by the proponents of the new paradigm are explicitly used and justified by reference to "learning incapacities" and a structural lack of "responsiveness" of established institutions, rather than in the name of some revolutionary political doctrine.

To the extent that movements conform to these criteria, the view that their interpretations of the world tend to be mere ideological justifications of the action of deviant political subcultures can be refuted.

To start with the problem of “new” values, it could very well be claimed that what is *least* new in today’s social movements is their values. For there is certainly nothing new in moral principles and demands such as the dignity and autonomy of the individual, the integrity of the physical conditions of life, equality and participation, and peaceful and solidaristic forms of social organization. All these values and moral norms advocated by the proponents of the new political paradigm are firmly rooted in *modern* political philosophies (as well as aesthetic theories) of the last two centuries, and they are inherited from the progressive movements of both the bourgeoisie and the working class. This continuity would suggest that the new social movements are, in their basic normative orientations, neither “postmodern” in the sense that they emphasize new values which are not (yet) shared by the wider society nor, on the other side, “premodern,” in the sense that they adhere to the remnants of a romanticized prerational past. Regarding their implicit moral philosophies, they are rather the *contemporaries* of the societies in which they live and whose institutional embodiments of economic and political rationality they oppose. At any rate, this opposition does not primarily occur between “old” and “new” values but between conflicting views concerning the extent to which the different elements *within* the repertory of modern values are satisfied in an equal and balanced way. For instance, personal autonomy is by no means a “new” value; what is new is the doubt that this value will be furthered as a more or less automatic by-product or covariant of dominant institutions such as property and market mechanisms, democratic mass politics, the nuclear family, or the institutions of mass culture and mass communications. What is at issue is not the values but the mode of implementation of values, and the presupposed links between the satisfaction of different values (e.g., between income and intrinsic satisfaction in work, or the link between control over elites and personal development of judgment and understanding in democratic mass politics). Values such as autonomy, identity, authenticity, but also human rights, peace, and the desirability of balanced

physical environments are largely noncontroversial. It is this “contemporaneous” character of the underlying values of new social movements that leaves their intellectual and political opponents rather defenseless or leads them to misrepresent and often caricature these values as either romanticist (i.e., as politically and/or psychically regressive) or as the luxurious predilections of privileged groups who have lost contact with social “realities.” More accurately, one could therefore speak of a “modern” critique of modernization, rather than an “antimodernizing” or “postmaterialist” one, since both the foundations of the critique as well as its object are to be found in the modern traditions of humanism, historical materialism, and the emancipatory ideas of the Enlightenment. What we observe, then, is not a “value change” but an awareness of the disaggregation and partial incompatibility within the universe of modern values. The ties of logical implication *between* values—such as the links between technical progress and the satisfaction of human needs, property and autonomy, income and identity, and, most generally, between the rationality of processes and the desirability of outcomes—are perceived to disintegrate. This cognitive awareness of clashes and contradictions within the modern set of values may lead to a selective emphasis upon *some* of these values—which is still different from a value *change*.

If we turn to the *actors* of the “new” paradigm, the structural explanation would lead us to expect, as we have argued before, that the most likely actors are those who have the easiest cognitive access to the particular nature of systemic irrationalities or those who are the most likely victims of cumulative deprivations. The first part of this two-sided expectation is supported by the fact that levels of education (and possibly the recency of educational experience as indicated by age) plays the most important role as a condition of new movements’ activism. Two factors may contribute to the direct correlation between levels of education and unconventional forms of political participation. One is that a high level of formal schooling leads to some (perceived) competence to

make judgments about complicated and abstract “systemic” matters in the fields of economic, military, legal, technical, and environmental affairs. The other is that higher education increases the capacity to think (and conceivably even to act) independently, and the preparedness to critically question received interpretations and theories about the world. In other words, educated people would not only be more competent to form their own judgment but also less bound by rigid reliance on the judgment of others.

Moreover, cognitive access to such irrationalities, especially as the “deepening” aspect is concerned, might be supposed to be the greatest where people are occupationally located within the field of the personal social services, but also in administration. For those parts of the new middle class working in social services and administrative functions are confronted most closely and immediately with those irrationalities through their occupational practice and experience. Also, people can be expected to be least inhibited to develop and practice favorable attitudes toward the concerns of the new movements if they are relatively secure in their *present* economic positions (as opposed to the prosperity enjoyed, as in Inglehart’s theory, in their *formative* years). In most European countries, such relative prosperity and, most of all, security is enjoyed by public-sector employees. If we combine these four variables (educational attainment, age, personal services, public-sector employment) we get very close to *the* social category that, according to all quantitative evidence, has the highest proportion of people with favorable attitudes toward the concerns and practices of new social movements. This social category also happens to consist of the groups which have been described by various neoconservative writers as a “new class”³⁷ and which are said to be typical proponents of an “adversary culture.”³⁸

While the structural explanation thus fits the “new middle

³⁷ Cf. B. Bruce-Briggs, ed., *The New Class?* (New York: Transaction Books, 1979); H. Schelsky, *Die Arbeit tun die anderen: Klassenkampf und Priestertum der Intellektuellen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1975).

³⁸ D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

class" component of new social movements rather nicely, the same is at least less obvious concerning that segment that we have termed "peripheral" or "decommodified" groups.³⁹ In what sense can this highly heterogeneous category be thought to be particularly affected by and therefore specifically mobilized by the particular patterns of deprivation and control we have discussed before? One possible answer would be the experience, shared by the various elements within this category, of being excluded from those modes of participation in society and polity which are mediated through active and stable labor market participation and large-scale formal organization. Another answer would be to point to the substantially lower degree of personal autonomy that most members of "peripheral" groups (and especially middle class housewives and adolescents) enjoy regarding their individual disposition over their conditions of life. Finally, one might speculate that these groups are relatively less constrained by norms and institutions in a society in which more and more of life is spent outside formal work roles (before, during, and after the work life), but in which widely accepted patterns or models of how to spend the *nonwork* life have not yet been established; this might lead to an "anomic" condition in which a shrinking proportion of the universe of the societal map is charted by institutions and where, accordingly, the *terrae incognitae* spread. Least of all could a sizable mobilization of members of the old middle class, such as occurs in environmentalist and regionalist movements, be accounted for in terms of a structural explanation. For it is rather the violation of traditional values in response to which the mobilization of

³⁹ The new middle class and "peripheral" groups seem to share two structural characteristics. First, most of the "peripheral" groups stand in a relation of (past, present, or potential) clientelism with providers of social and personal services, and this clientelism can often be supposed to affect their central life interests. Second, and probably more importantly, both groups share the condition of "decommodification." The economic logic of efficiency, of thinking in terms of costs and returns, is, for different reasons, far less applicable concerning the use of one's own labor power and efforts than is the case, for instance, in the area of industrial production of commodities.

these old middle class elements occurs, and their action could therefore be analyzed more adequately along the lines of the patterns and dynamics of "old" social movements.

Also the *issues* of the "new" paradigm are clearly connected to a view of social reality which is characterized by the broadening of deprivations and (conceivably catastrophic) malfunctions, the deepening of control, and the diagnosis of blocked institutional learning capacities. All major concerns of new social movements converge on the idea that life itself—and the minimal standards of "good life" as defined and sanctioned by modern values—is threatened by the blind dynamics of military, economic, technological, and political rationalization; and that there are no sufficient and sufficiently reliable barriers within dominant political and economic institutions that could prevent them from passing the threshold to disaster. This view also provides the basis for the adoption and legitimation of unconventional *modes* of action. This is so for two reasons. First, if in fact life and survival are what is at stake, the formal faithfulness toward any established "rules of the game" is discredited easily as being of inferior significance compared to such substantive questions. Second, if institutional mechanisms are seen to be too rigid to recognize and absorb the problems of advanced industrial societies, it would be inconsistent to rely upon these institutions for a solution.⁴⁰ The rise of the new sociopolitical movements would thus appear to be the result of a "provocation" that consists in the more widely and more clearly visible internal contradictions and inconsistencies *within* the value system of modern culture, rather than the result of a clash between the "dominant" and some "new" (or, for that matter, romanticist and "premodern") values.

That the values on which new social movements are based must be understood as a *selective radicalization of "modern" values*, rather than as a comprehensive rejection of these

⁴⁰ Cf. D. Rucht, *Planung und Partizipation* (Munich: Tuduv, 1982), p. 277.

values, is also evident from numerous details of the dynamics of the new paradigm of extrainstitutional politics. This paradigm depends as much on the *accomplishments* of political and economic modernization as on criticisms of its unfulfilled promises and *perverse effects*. For instance, the period preceding the rise of the new feminist movement in the second half of the sixties—that is, the two postwar decades—was probably the period in which the most rapid and far-reaching advances in the social position of women in general have been initiated or accomplished within the last century (e.g., easier and more egalitarian access to higher education and the labor market, smaller families and a reduced work load in increasingly mechanized households, less rigid public attitudes as well as liberalizing legislation concerning birth control, abortion, and divorce, etc.). All relevant findings suggest that those women who are the most likely beneficiaries of these advances are also those most easily mobilized for the causes of the new feminist movement. This is by no means a paradox; rather it appears as a logical sequence if we assume that it is only *after* the experience of this liberalization of the norms and rules defining the status of women in society that it becomes possible to bring into focus and to politicize the functionalist and productivist logic of male-dominated institutions. Similarly, it becomes possible to conceive of the subordination of “feminist” visions of work and identity only *after* considerable progress toward “liberation” has already been made as an unintended by-product of modernizing developments, and after “womanhood” has thus become a possible focus of identity formation. Similarly, ecological movements can invoke the testimonies (such as the first report of the Club of Rome) which come from the centers of the institutions of scientific, economic, and political rationality and which point out vividly the possibly catastrophic consequences of an unmodified continuation of these modes of rationality. The same applies to the new peace movements, which often popularize and radicalize those doubts that already exist among worried

minorities within military elites and strategic experts concerning the dilemmas, risks, and contradictions built into current defense strategies. In all these as well as other cases, the proponents of the new political paradigm rely upon structural changes, pieces of knowledge, and standards of legitimation which are provided to them by (dissenting minorities within) ruling elites themselves (or reformist projects of such elites which have remained incompleting), rather than on norms and models derived from a distant premodern past or an equally distant utopian future.

The “contemporary,” integrated, and in that sense “modern” nature of (at least) the middle class component of new social movements is further highlighted by the well-documented fact⁴¹ that those who use nonconventional practices of political action do not do so because they lack experience with (or are unaware of) available conventional forms of political participation; on the contrary, these nonconventional actors are relatively experienced in, and often frustrated with, conventional practices and their limitations. Accordingly, the critique of political parties, parliamentary government, public bureaucracies, majority rule, and centralization voiced by theorists within the new social movements always appears to concentrate on the limitations, partial rigidities, instances of malfunctioning, and empirical evidence of deterioration, rather than on a global and principled rejection of these institutions such as we find in “revolutionary” theories of the extreme Left and Right. Finally, the “modern” character of the new social movements is underlined by their evident belief in the assumption that the course of history and society is “contingent” and hence can be created and changed by people and social forces determined to do so, rather than being determined by given “metasocial” (Touraine) principles of divine or natural order or, for that matter, by an inescapable road to catastrophe. This methodical assumption that things can be

⁴¹ Cf. Marsh, *Protest and Political Consciousness*, and Olsen, *Organized Democracy*.

changed even allows, as a rule, for contingency concerning the areas and methods in which such change might be accomplished, and it thus differs fundamentally in its logical structure from the doctrines of classical Marxism (as well as from the doctrines of some other earlier modern social movements) which relied upon ontological assumptions about the predetermined, privileged (or even "correct") social groups, points in time, organizational forms, and tactics by which change could be brought about.

A Challenge to the Old Paradigm

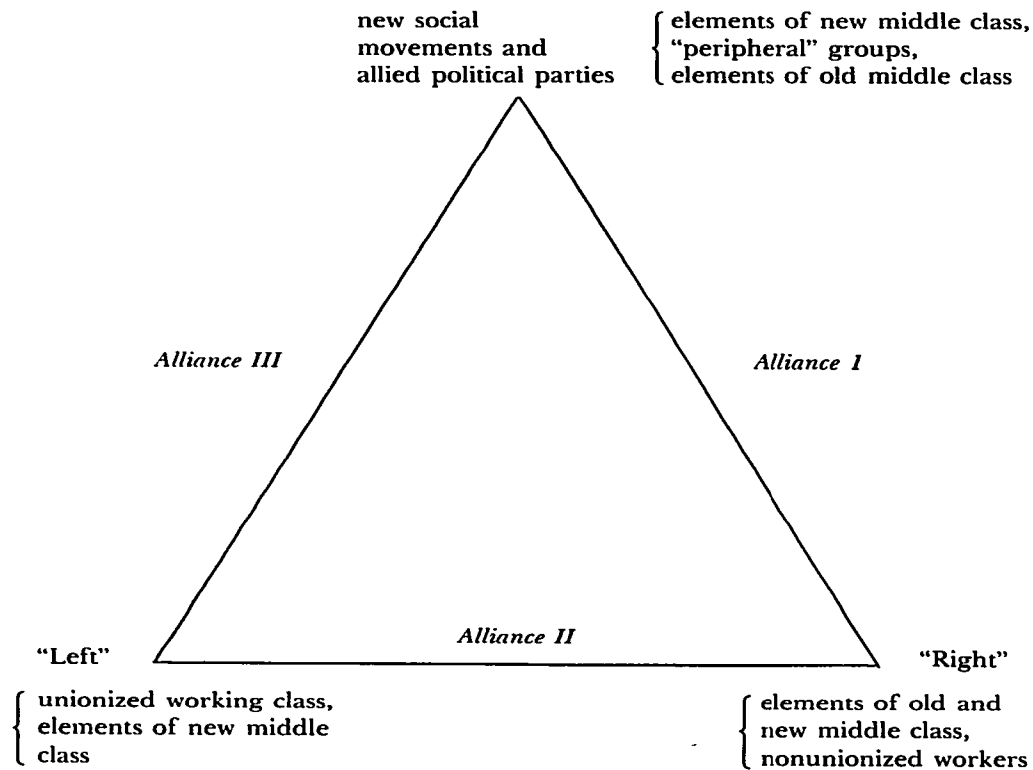
As I have argued already, the new political paradigm can best be understood as the "modern" critique of further modernization. This critique is based on major segments of the educated new middle class and carried out by the characteristic model of unconventional, informal, and class-unspecific mode of action of this class. In most new social movements, however, this new middle class base is shot through with elements coming from two other regions of the social structure, namely decommodified "peripheral" groups on the one side and elements of the old, often rural middle class on the other. While the new middle class is, for reasons discussed above, most likely to be sensitive to the risks and perverse effects of further technical, economic, military, and political modernization, the other two groups are most likely to be the immediate and most strongly affected victims of such modernization. In spite of the convergences and affinities that often are discovered among these groups in an ad hoc fashion, the divergences are clear enough: while the "modern" critique of modernization for which the new middle class element stands is based on universalistic and emancipatory values and ideals, as well as on the advanced cognitive capacities of the new middle class, the critique of the old middle class and the peripheral groups often draws upon premodern, particularis-

tic, deviant, hedonistic, retreatist, or otherwise irrational normative sources and cognitive styles. I wish to conclude this essay with a discussion of the proposition that *whether or not the forces that represent the new paradigm will transcend their presently marginal, though highly visible power position and thus whether they will be able to challenge the dominant "old" paradigm of the political will effectively depend, most of all, on whether and in which way the internal cleavages and inconsistencies that exist between the new middle class, old middle class, and peripheral elements within the new social movements can be resolved.*

Up until the midseventies, the traditional left-right continuum was an approximately adequate model in which all relevant political and societal collective actors could be located. The underlying dimension, manifestly reflected in the German party system, was a continuum from conservative economic liberalism to reformist and redistributive etatism, with a liberal-reformist position in between. This linear model of the political universe, representing as it does the major players in the growth-and-security game, is clearly no longer adequate. Both in terms of individual value dispositions⁴² and in terms of collective action and collective actors, a new cross-cutting dimension must be added which depicts the contrast between the old paradigm centered on issues of economic growth and security, on the one side, and the new paradigm defined by its defensive struggles against the irrationalities of modernization, on the other. We thus get a *triangular* model of the political universe: the forces of the traditional Left, liberal and conservative forces, and the new social movements including their (incipient and in some places dramatically successful) experiments with "green" or "alternative" parliamentary politics. The resulting configuration of political cleavages and their most typical social bases and potential alliances is represented in Figure 3.

⁴² S. H. Barnes and M. Kaase, eds., *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (London: Sage, 1979); Baker et al., *Germany Transformed*.

FIGURE 3. A TRIANGULAR MODEL OF POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AND POTENTIAL ALLIANCES



Such triangular arrangements are, however, basically unstable, at least if equal distance is assumed between the three polar points. For final choices and decisions can be made only after the number of alternatives has first been reduced to two, which implies the need for coalitions or at least ad hoc alliances. I will now try to assess the relative probability of the formation of each of the three logically possible alliances, of which only one, as I will argue subsequently, would involve a serious and effective challenge to the old political paradigm.

There are three possible alliances: the proponents of the new paradigm and the traditional liberal-conservative forces; the "great coalition" type of corporatist alliance, which would

largely exclude the forces representing the new paradigm; and the alliance of these forces with the traditional Left as represented by socialist, social democratic, or Euro-Communist political parties and their corresponding trade union organizations. My proposition is that which of these three logically possible *alliances* will emerge depends upon which of the three component *groups* making up the forces of the new paradigm will become (be seen as) dominant within this heterogeneous set of forces. This, in turn, by no means depends primarily upon the numerical strength of each of the three groups within a given new social movement or within the new social movements as a whole. To a large extent it also depends on the policies by which political elites make (positive or negative) symbolic reference to, and establish selective relations with, one of these groups within the new social movements, and on the extent to which they engage in policies designed to refer specifically and selectively to any one of the constituent segments of the movements and thus to isolate them from the other components. For all of the three possible alliances, there are clearly visible policy proposals and initiatives in the issue areas of each of the major new social movements, and for none of them can it be excluded that these proposals will be utilized effectively toward the objective of a consolidation of the respective alliance. A matrix representing these connections between issue movements, selective references to constituent components of the new social movements, the corresponding specific policy proposals and initiatives, and each of the three alliances is presented in Figure 4.

To begin with, let us consider the policies that might lead to the formation of the Alliance I between *traditional liberal-conservative forces and the new social movements*, the "target" group of which are the *old middle class* elements within the movements. In relation to the concerns of the ecology movement, proponents of this alliance are well equipped to respond by traditional conservationist strategies, emphasizing the ethical, religious, and aesthetic values of unspoiled nature, creat-

FIGURE 4. ISSUE MOVEMENTS, ALLIANCES AND COMPONENT GOUPS (Items in cells are illustrative examples of policy proposals and initiatives)

Alliances	selective emphasis on role of within new movements	issue movements			
		feminism and human rights	peace	environmental protection	alternative or "dual" economy
I (conservative-liberal Right plus new movements)	old middle class (positive reference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • antipornography initiatives • family-centered social policies for women • symbolic recognition of the special role of women and minorities in society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shift to conventional defense strategies • appeals to national self-reliance in defense policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservationism • concentration of industrial locations plus natural parks • environmental regulation through market mechanisms (fines and incentives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for community and self-help forms of social services • tax subsidies for small business
<i>general characteristics:</i> (symbolic) innovation of premodern communal values; critique of bureaucracy and regulation, centralization, and welfare-state egalitarianism					
II (conservative-liberal Right plus social-democratic etc. Left)	peripheral groups (negative reference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing labor market flexibility and mobility • improving access of women and minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reliance on supranational arenas and nuclear deterrence strategies of defense policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of environmental protection and new energy resources as a high-technology growth industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of part-time employment for peripheral groups
<i>general characteristics:</i> active depoliticization of concerns of new social movements; emphasis upon the illegality of their means and irrationality/irresponsibility of their aims					
III (social-democratic Left and new movements)	new middle class (positive reference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preferential living and quota systems • redistribution of work within production and household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (conditional) proposals for unilateral disarmament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion of environmental and Third World-related criteria in industrial policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for cooperatives, protected and "parallel" labor markets • economic democracy
<i>general characteristics:</i> increase compatibility between demands of new movements and traditional working class concerns and interests					

ing national parks, exploiting premodern resentments and fears of the old (rural) middle class about urbanization and industrialization, and relying largely on market mechanisms for the implementation of this conservationist approach. This does not preclude, as can be shown in the case of the Bavarian state policies of environmental protection (Bavaria being the first of the German *Länder* with a special ministry for environmental protection), large-scale industrial developments which, however, seem to be comparatively more concentrated in their spatial distribution. There is even some selective support the “neopopulist” approach is able to offer to the feminist movement. Certainly, there is little agreement on the issues of abortion or the egalitarian treatment of women in the labor market; there is much more affinity concerning the need for campaigns against pornography, about some family-related social policy, and also some affinity to the more particularistic notions of “feminine” identities, which appear to be popular in some quarters of the feminist movement. A substantial degree of convergence also exists between some of the new movements’ experiments in creating an “alternative economy” and liberal-conservative economic doctrines. This convergence includes a vehement rejection of the legitimacy of the demands and tactics of working class organizations. Not only have neoliberals from Friedman to Dahrendorf hailed the rise of “shadow work” and the informal economy as healthy signs of individual initiative and the adaptiveness of the economic system, but Catholic conservatives have also proposed the idea of “self-help” (based on voluntary unpaid work within the family and local community) as the solution to fiscal and functional deficiencies of established forms of social policy. There is obviously much in common between these doctrines and the “communitarian” approaches of alternative movements.

Finally, limited agreements also exist between some segments of the peace movement and conservative forces which could be used as a further pillar of this alliance. As is the case with the civilian use of nuclear technology, much of the pro-

test caused by it has to do with the choice of sites rather than basic choices about overall industrial or military strategy. As long as the conflict remains on this level, conservatives can easily join forces with local protests against the siting of nuclear warheads in the vicinity of a certain city. Moreover, the substantial resonance of recent theological condemnations of nuclear weapons as immoral in themselves (rather than in any particular instance of use) can be converted easily into a plea for large-scale increases in conventional defense efforts. Again, the old middle class would be the most likely element within the new social movements to be persuaded and coopted along these lines of policy proposals and initiatives.

Here it must suffice to draw two conclusions from this impressionistic list of policy links between these two poles of our model. First, and contrary to assumptions frequently made in the media and some of the social science literature, there is by no means a natural or unchangeable tendency for new social movements to form an alignment with the Left. Second, and concerning the question we started with in this section, the actual consolidation of the frequently proposed alignment between "new politics" and liberal-conservative forces would not conceivably constitute any serious challenge to the operational reality of the paradigm of "old" politics with its centrality of the criteria of growth and security. For by being absorbed into this alliance, "new" politics would evidently cease to be new *politics* aspiring to win power positions in state and society. It might renounce such aspirations in exchange for concessions which preserve some premodern protected territories of the natural environment, families, sex roles, forms of work, communities, and defense strategies.

Important segments of political elites are currently attempting to design policies which would lead to Alliance II, the one between the *traditional Left and traditional Right*. Implicit in this project is also a selective reference to the new social movements, this time a *negative* reference to the *peripheral groups*. New social movements are, within this political

strategy, perceived primarily as expressions of the needs and values of those who neither contribute to the industrial production process of society nor conform to its values and standards of rationality. Because of certain failures in the processes of material and cultural reproduction and the subversive role played by some of their intellectual mentors, these groups (such as the squatters' movements in various German and Dutch cities) have escaped the basic discipline that is to be presupposed for an orderly functioning of a complex society. These groups have adopted a fundamentally hostile attitude toward the institutions of private property and the state, and without being able to develop a realistic and workable political alternative of their own, their attitude toward the welfare state is taken to be a basically cynical and exploitative one. The logical public-policy consequences to be drawn from this kind of analysis are repression and surveillance, exclusion and nondecisions, and, at best, a measure of symbolic politics aimed at preventing the peripheral elements from winning support within the old or new middle classes. A broad Left-Right coalition supporting and executing this type of response can be brought about by capitalizing on the parallel fears that the activities of new social movements provoke in both camps: in the Left, fears of unemployment and declining standards of social security, and in the Right, fears of violence and the prospect of Communist infiltration of the discontent of peripheral groups. Both sorts of fears are accentuated by the conditions of general economic and international crises. This type of policy response toward the new social movements again illustrates the interaction between new social movements and public policy: these movements are not just shaped by what they "are" in terms of their social composition, their issues, and demands; they are shaped equally by the ways in which they are perceived, interpreted, and symbolically treated by political elites, and by the extent to which these elite responses become self-fulfilling by their determining the relative weights of the different components within movements. In

this sense, the attempt to define and exclude new social movements as criminal or deviant political behavior can well become self-fulfilling by excluding the more reformist elements of the new social movements and thereby defining the space of action of protest politics as being primarily a space for those willing to engage in militant antistatist action. This type of strategy based upon—and working toward the consolidation of—a Left-Right alliance does not of course exclude the possibility that concerns of the movements are taken up in a technocratic manner (e.g., environmental issues in terms of the preservation of strategic economic resources such as water; feminist issues in terms of labor-market and demographic planning; alternative forms of economic organization in terms of more effective and efficient provision of services; peace issues in terms of arms-control strategies, etc.). But in spite of such technocratic responses, this alliance is as unlikely to lead to a change of the dominant paradigm of politics as the first possible alliance discussed above; in contrast to that “cooptation” approach, however, this “confrontation” approach is more likely to lead to a relatively high and permanent (if fluctuating) level of violent extrainstitutional conflict.

The third of the logically possible alliances is based upon a strategy that links the *traditional Left and the new social movements* by focusing on the *new middle class core* of these movements. To a significant extent, it also relies upon an opening of traditional organizations of the Left—Communist and social democratic parties and unions—to youths, women and the unemployed—that is, upon a *positive* relation to the *peripheral* and partly “decommodified” segments of the population. Such an attempt at transcending the limits of the industrial proletariat in both directions and thereby at absorbing some of the concerns of the new movements has been proclaimed most clearly by the PCI⁴³ and, in a somewhat different way, by the French socialist union, CFDT. But it would be premature to

⁴³ P. Ingrao, *Tradizione e progetto* (Bari: de Donato, 1982).

conclude, on the basis of these two examples, that such an alliance is most likely to emerge within working class organizations that have, comparatively speaking, *least* abandoned their traditional socialist aspirations for a global change of the logic of development of capitalist society. On the contrary, one could be led to speculate about a U-shaped relationship between the degree of “revisionism” or “modernism” of working class political organizations and their responsiveness to new social movements by the fact that the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) has, since 1959, increasingly abandoned its identity as a classical working class party and has consequently relied upon—and electorally benefited from—the new middle class. It also has made considerable efforts to demonstrate its openness to the concerns of the new social movements (a tendency which, since the late 1960s, has been effectively symbolized by the party chairman, Willy Brandt). Thus, a highly “modern” social democratic party may hope to compensate for the losses resulting from its weakening roots in the working class by establishing links with the new middle class constituency of the new social movements.⁴⁴ As the debates and controversies within German Social Democracy in the early 1980s—and particularly after the fall of the Schmidt government in September 1982—demonstrate, such an electoral realignment is not easy to accomplish unless very basic changes in the strategic priorities of social democratic parties are adopted, changes which would reconcile the interests of the industrial working class and unions, on the one side, and, on the other, the concerns of the new middle class movements (including parts of the “peripheral” clientele of new middle class human service professions) on a *strategic* (rather than tactical, electoral, and ad hoc) level. As I have mentioned before, such a strategic reorientation is, for structural reasons, least probable to evolve under conditions of economic crisis,

⁴⁴ For a similar argument concerning the Swedish SAP, see U. Himmelstrand et al., *Beyond Welfare Capitalism: Issues, Actors and Forces in Societal Change* (London: Heinemann, 1981).

which automatically seem to place the highest premium on the restoration of economic growth and full employment at almost any price. On the other hand, the binding force of these economic imperatives may not be sufficiently compelling to preclude such reorientation (particularly for a left party out of government office); they may even contribute to its accelerated adoption, depending upon whether a general “*Gestalt* switch” concerning the future of growth-and-security-based industrial systems occurs.

There are three conceivable factors which would allow for this latter possibility of a consolidation of an alliance between the traditional Left and the new social movements. Taken together, those factors appear strong enough to justify the inclusion, along with the two others, of this path of development into our list of alternative scenarios. First, the new middle class element within social democratic parties—an element which was included in these parties as a consequence both of their electoral strategies and of their extension of the public sector and the welfare state—may already be sufficiently strongly entrenched within their leadership so as to offer effective resistance to any unconditional retreat of social democratic policies to the “productivist” philosophy of economic growth and too traditional conceptions of military security. Second, the very nature of the economic crisis and the dilemmas of defense may render the prospects for renormalization (i.e., full employment, based upon free international trade, the welfare state, and an effective and balanced nuclear deterrence) sufficiently unrealistic to weaken the more “traditional” resistance to such a reorientation. Thus some political “*Gestalt* switch” may be required. These two factors alone would already explain the rise of priorities such as “selective” or “qualitative” growth instead of quantitative growth, a skeptical attitude toward technical change, basic doubts about the accounting scheme by which labor productivity and productivity increases are conventionally measured, and proposals for unilateralist strategies of disarmament. All

of these priorities have become increasingly popular within the North and West European countries, where there are "strong" social democratic parties (this is especially true where these parties have experienced electoral defeats since the mid-seventies, as in Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Austria, and West Germany). A third factor that may turn out to be of some relevance in a possible process of political reorientation of the traditional Left, and thus in the formation of Alliance III, is the fact that all of the major social movements are able to make positive reference to and even draw upon more or less defunct, forgotten, or repressed ideological traditions of today's socialist, social democratic, and Communist parties and other working class organizations. Such parallels are most obvious in the case of the new peace movement and the traditions of socialist pacifism in Europe before World War I and in the egalitarian demands for an end to the political and economic discrimination against women.

Similar parallels could and are being drawn between today's experiments with alternative economic organizations and the tradition of working class production and consumer cooperatives. Furthermore, apart from the old concerns of the workers' movement with workers' protection and health and safety at work (the angle from which, for instance, the CFDT has critically approached the problem of nuclear energy), the concern not only with production, wages, and the worker but also with the product, its use value, and the consumer is a traditional (if often marginal) element in the demands of classical working class organizations which overlaps to a large extent with the demands of modern environmentalist movements. Such affinities seem to suggest that it is not just the "postrevisionist" social structure and the present policy dilemmas of modern social democratic parties, but also the "pre-revisionist" heritage of such parties which could become instrumental in building such an alliance.

Irrespective of the likelihood of this third scenario, it is

obviously the only one of the three which could possibly lead to an effective and successful challenge of the old paradigm of politics—as distinct from the preservation of the old paradigm through the cooptation and privatization or repression of the new movements. Common to the three scenarios—and, for that matter, the patterns of political conflict that we observe in West European states during the late seventies and early eighties—is the collision between forces “within” and forces “outside” the conventional definition of what politics is about and what its legitimate collective actors and forms of action should be.

* Thanks for extensive comments and criticism are due to John Keane, Herbert Kitschelt, Peter Lange, Dieter Rucht, Bart von Steenberge, and Helmut Wiesenthal. Most of this study was written while the author was a Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, Wassenaar, in 1982–83.