Social movements, political violence, and the state

The rise of social movements in the late 1960s in the industrialized West posed compelling questions for social science: Why did political conflicts radicalize precisely in those societies that seemed to have been pacified by the promises of the welfare state and the institutionalization of the labor conflict? Why did a generation socialized to politics in the calm and affluence of the early sixties resort to violence? Why, in the "First World," were police forces ordered to fire on political demonstrators?

This book presents empirical research on the nature and structure of political violence. While most studies of social movements focus on single-nation studies, Donatella della Porta uses a comparative research design to analyze movements in two countries – Italy and Germany – from the 1960s to the 1990s. Through extensive use of official documents and in-depth interviews, della Porta explains the actors' construction of external political reality. The empirical data are used to build a middle-range theory on political violence that incorporates an analysis of the interactions between social movements and the state at the macro-level, an analysis of the development of radical organizations as entrepreneurs for political violence at the meso-level, and an analysis of the construction of "militant" identities and countercultures at the micro-level.

By studying the social movement families from within which violence emerges, linking social movements to institutions, and, finally, providing a systematic analysis – firmly grounded in history – of the nature of political violence, the author has created a masterful synthesis that will help secure a place for the study of political violence in the study of systemwide politics.

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Social movements, political violence, and the state

A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany

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Foreword

SIDNEY TARROW

Donatella della Porta's *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State* crosses four important thresholds in the comparative study of political conflict: the violence/social movement threshold, the movement/institutions threshold, the comparative politics/sociology threshold, and the history/social science threshold.

Beginning with the attacks on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, a virtual cottage industry of terrorist studies developed. Rooted in the international system, largely innocent of theoretical apparatus, and often conflating terrorism with other forms of violent conflict, these studies produced much new knowledge, but drew little on the social movement field that was undergoing a renaissance at the same time. The first major virtue of della Porta's book is that she has grounded her analysis of political violence in Italy and Germany in both European and American social movement theory. This allows her to show how the organized violence of the 1970s and 1980s in these two countries related to the social movements that appeared during the previous decade.

Della Porta's second contribution is to root the study of social movements within political institutions. Research on social movements languished in the backwaters of sociology and social psychology until the late 1960s and was largely ignored by political scientists. But the flowering of the civil rights and student movements in the United States and of the "new" social movements of Western Europe in the 1970s led to a resurgence and "normalization" of this field. Della Porta situates her study in this tradition, relating the movements she studies to the political process. In particular, she uses the key concept of the structure of political opportunity to show how some of the movements that emerged in the late 1960s were integrated within the political process, while others gravitated toward political violence.

Not only that: della Porta enlarges the focus of the political process approach to the state and to its most relevant contributor to the dynamics of political violence – the police. Following Tilly's injunction that a movement is a sustained interaction between challengers and opponents, she focuses on how the

repertoire of the movements and the tactics of the police affect one another, and how each is affected by the balance between civil rights–oriented groups and law and order–oriented groups. Much of the difference in the frequency and strategies of politically violent groups in the two countries is explained by this intersection between the police and protesters.

Della Porta also makes an original contribution to the intersection between political sociology and comparative politics. In the past, the social movement field was largely built on one-nation case studies (and that nation was almost always the United States), while studies of comparative politics were mainly occupied with the study of formal institutions. Della Porta's book will help to break down this boundary. By choosing two similar cases – Italy and Germany – both of which emerged from defeat in World War II and were building new democracies at the time when widespread social insurgency appeared, and by using a variety of methods drawn from political sociology and comparative politics, she builds an effective bridge between these two fields.

One of the methods she employs relates the organizational ecology of terrorist organizations to the movements' life histories. Rather than interpreting terrorism as the result of personal deviance, she sees it as a possible outcome of a tree of possibilities resulting from organizational choices and constraints. Thus, just as not every movement becomes violent, not every violent movement gives rise to a clandestine terrorist organization. Perhaps the signal contribution of the book is to add an organizational perspective to the analysis of the dynamics of violent political movements.

The fourth contribution of the book is to situate the study of collective action within history. In recent years, many political scientists have turned their attention to collective action, building upon public choice theory. Although this strand of theory has led to significant advances in knowledge, its distance from history has made it somewhat abstract and, at times, disembodied. Della Porta's book shows that research on social movements and political violence can be both theoretical and in history. She not only traces the rise and dynamics of organized violence in these two countries from the 1960s through the 1980s, but roots her findings in the larger political developments of each system since World War II.

In situating her study of political violence, first, among the social movement families from within which violence emerges, then in relating social movements to institutions, and, finally, in providing a systematic analysis of what we know about violence – much of which she herself has contributed – Donatella della Porta has produced a masterful synthesis that will help to secure the place of the study of political violence and social movements squarely within the field of the systematic study of politics.

Abbreviations

AO	Avanguardia Operaia (Workers' Vanguard)
APO	Außerparlamentarische Opposition (Extra-Parliamentary Opposition)
AStA	Allgemeiner Studenten Ausschuss (General Committee of Students)
B2J	Bewegung 2. Juni (Movement of the Second of June)
BC	Brigate Comuniste (Communist Brigades)
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt
BR	Brigate Rosse (Red Brigades)
CC	Comitati Comunisti (Communist Committees)
CCPO	Comitati Comunisti per il Potere Operaio (Communist Committees for the Workers' Power)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPM	Collettivo Politico Metropolitano (Political Metropolitan Collective)
CPO	Collettivo Politico Operaio (Workers' Political Collective)
CPOS	Collettivo Politico Operai e Studenti (Workers' and Students' Political Collective)
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union (Christian Social Union)
DC	Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy)
DKP	Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (German Communist Party)
FAC	Formazioni Armate Combattenti (Armed Fighting Formations)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC	Formazioni Comuniste Combattenti (Communist Fighting Formations)
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Liberal Democratic Party)
FGCI	Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana (Italian Communist Youth Federation)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany

GDR	German Democratic Republic
Jusos	Jungsozialisten (Young Socialists)
K-Gruppen	*Kommunistische Gruppen* (Communist Groups)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
LC	Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle)
MCR	Movimento Comunista Rivoluzionario (Communist Revolutionary Movement)
MS	Movimento Studentesco (Student Movement)
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement)
NAP	Nuclei Armati Proletari (Armed Proletarian Nuclei)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAC	Proletari Armati per il Comunismo (Armed Proletarians for Communism)
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)
PCIml	Partito Comunista Italiano marxista leninista (Italian Communist Marxist-Leninist Party)
PdUP	Partito di Unità Proletaria (Proletarian Unity Party)
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PL	Prima Linea (Front Line)
PO	Potere Operaio (Workers' Power)
POS	Political Opportunity Structure
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)
PSIUP	Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (Italian Socialist Party for the Proletarian Unity)
RAF	Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Fraction)
RC	Republikanischer Club (Republican Club)
RCA	Reparti Comunisti d'Attacco (Communist Unities for the Attack)
RH	Rote Hilfe (Red Help)
RZ	Revolutionären Zellen (Revolutionary Cells)
SDS	(American) Students for a Democratic Society
SDS	(German) Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (Socialist German Student League)
SH	Schwarze Hilfe (Black Help)
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SPK	Sozialistisches Patientenkollektiv (Socialist Collective of Patients)

UCC	Unità Comuniste Combattenti (Communist Fighting Units)
UCIml	Unione dei Comunisti Italiani marxisti leninisti (Union of the Italian Marxist-Leninist Communists)
UGI	Unione Goliardica Italiana (Italian Goliardic Union)
UNURI	Unione Nazionale Universitaria Rappresentativa Italiana (Italian National Universitarian Representative Union)

For Herbert

Preface

West Berlin, June 2, 1967. An official visit in Germany by the Shah of Iran and his wife coincided with the peak of a long-lasting student mobilization. Because of rumors of a possible attack against the Shah, the federal government declared the "highest security level." The state government mobilized 4,240 policemen to guarantee the security of the guests. Since the early morning, organizations of Iranian refugees and student groups had staged protests everywhere the imperial couple was expected to appear during its Berlin visit. Several times during the day, demonstrators and the Shah's supporters – later said to be organized by the Iranian secret services – clashed with each other, and the police charged the demonstrators. The first confrontations took place in front of the city hall. About four hundred protestors carrying placards calling for "Freedom for Iran" were attacked by a group of about a hundred pro-Shah demonstrators. Once over the police barriers, the attackers advanced on the crowd, armed with iron bars. The demonstrators called on the police to stop the attack. The police charged the anti-Shah demonstrators. Skirmishes continued throughout the day: "12.40 smoking bombs in front of the city hall . . . 15.50 egg-and-paint bombs thrown in front of the castle . . . 17.00 a demonstrator throws an egg . . . 19.47 firecrackers were thrown at the cortege of the Shah" – so the chronicle of the Berlin daily Morgenpost. *But the most violent confrontations took place in the evening in front of the opera house, where the Berlin authorities and their guests were to attend a concert, protected by about one thousand policemen. Before the beginning of the performance, members of the Shah's escort had thrown stones at the students, who had retaliated with rotten eggs, bags of flour, and tomatoes – the typical "arms" of the student movement. A few minutes after the performance began, the police charged the demonstrators with truncheons. Employing what the chief of the police described as the "sausage" tactic, some police units pushed the demonstrators at the front of the "sausage," while others charged them from behind. During the ensuing fights between the police and demonstrators, a plainclothes policeman shot and killed the student Benno Ohnesorg. Besides this death, the final toll of the fights amounted to twenty-*

eight injured among the policemen, at least twenty-two injured (some of them seriously) among the demonstrators, and a total of forty-seven arrests.

June 2, 1967, represented a climax. Professors, assistants, and researchers from many universities issued statements stigmatizing the "brutal repression of fundamental democratic rights," labeling police brutality a legacy of the Nazi past and proof of the weakness of democracy. But if the protestors and their allies advocated "Widerstandsrecht" – the right to resist unjust authorities – the political parties and part of the press accused the students of demonstrating "against democracy." The demonstrators were, in fact, stigmatized as "Radikalinskis financed by the East," as an anarchist minority, as professional revolutionaries (Berufsrevoluzzer), *or simply as bloodthirsty, hysterical rioters. The red flags of the students were considered symbols of the subordination of the protestors to the German Democratic Republic: "Red flags." wrote the conservative and sensationalistic* Bild, *"the symbols under which the popular rebellion of June 17 [1953] was repressed and the wall was built. Communist slogans in front of the city hall, after that, just yesterday, another human being was killed at the border." As puppets of the communist regimes, the demonstrators were then accused of producing chaos in West Berlin in order to provide the Soviet Union with an excuse for military intervention. The street violence evoked, in fact, the phantom of the Weimar Republic and the breakdown of democracy: "All of us, who lived in the period before 1933," proclaimed a social-democratic member of the Berlin Parliament, "we know how it starts and how it ends." At least part of public opinion seemed to share the prevailing comment of the authoritative daily* Frankfurter Allgemeine, *which stated that "political demonstrations are the most stupid and useless means of political participation."*

Rome, March 1, 1968. At 10 a.m. several thousand students converged on Piazza di Spagna to protest against the police intervention to clear the occupation of the Roman university buildings by students. The Roman occupation and its counterparts all over Italy were part of a massive mobilization campaign for a reform of the university system. The march, joined by high school students, passed the headquarters of the RAI (the Italian public television broadcasting network) and the Christian Democratic daily, Il Popolo, *and then reached Valle Giulia, where helmeted policemen armed with truncheons had garrisoned the faculty of architecture. The two sides confronted each other for a few minutes; then the fights, later known, in the movement's mythology, as "The Battle of Valle Giulia," started. The clashes lasted for over three hours, in a dramatic escalation of violence. The police attacked with tear gas and water cannons; the students retaliated with eggs and stones. The police received reinforcements, and so did the students, while an enormous traffic jam blocked the entire city center. According to the police, the students built barricades with cars and destroyed police Jeeps. According to the demonstrators, the police acted with great bru-*

tality, charging to the command: "Kill them." The struggle, in which about 3,000 demonstrators and 2,000 policemen were involved, resulted in 211 injured (158 of them among the police), 228 arrested, and 4 imprisoned.

The Battle of Valle Giulia triggered an embittered debate, which polarized the political system. The students found a strong ally in the Old Left, which called for the formation of a large reformist and progressive front. On the next day, the Roman leftist daily Paese Sera, *openly referring to the resistance movement against the Nazi occupation, ran the headline: "Unarmed they faced chains, clubs, Jeeps, and guns. The young courage of the students humiliates the brutality of the police." For the students and their allies, the enemy was the antidemocratic forces that responded to the demands for reform with "fascist repression." As a leader of the Socialist Party (then in government) put it, the "barbarian methods of the police" were paralleled only by the German rounding-up of members of the resistance in occupied Italy. Although the students found allies in the political system, for the conservative political spectrum and a large part of the press they were nothing else than left-wing extremists, agitprops, and political troublemakers. Instigated by the communists, they were said to produce chaos in order to destroy democracy: "The disorders at the university," stated the Roman daily* Il Tempo, *"are provoked for political reasons by those Moscovite or Chinese communists who found the way to unhinge, even for the future, the scientific institution, hitting the nation in one of its more essential parts." Praising the police, Minister of Home Affairs Taviani recalled that "the weakness and uncertainty of the forces of law and order were among the components of the decline of democracy and the advent of fascism."*

The two episodes summarized here had a high symbolic impact on social movements and the political systems in the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy. On the one hand, they triggered a violent escalation in the interactions between protestors and the police, destined to continue well into the seventies. On the other hand, they polarized the political arena between those who conceived protest as an essential part of the democratic process and those who saw it as a danger. If in the early nineties, most observers consider social movements to be peaceful actors in the democratic system, in the sixties and the seventies, protest appeared to many as synonymous with disorder and violence.

Has the reality of protest changed so much over the past three decades? Or do we observe – and judge – social movements from a totally different perspective? Certainly a shift in both positions has occurred. Now, activists who challenge the establishment have access to the polity through channels that were simply unavailable to their counterparts thirty years ago. Moreover, challengers are better organized and can draw on a repertoire of collective action that has broadened considerably over the past thirty years. Generally, then, the social movements that emerged during these years achieved some substantial success. After each wave of protest, new collective actors were accepted into the arena

of "normal" politics. Indeed, the cycle of protest that began in most Western democracies – and elsewhere – in the mid-sixties produced profound changes in the institutional system, contributing in particular to a more liberal conception of democracy and citizens' rights.

But social movements themselves have changed over the past decades, especially in their attitudes toward the use of violence as a means of exerting political pressure. In the sixties, although attitudes differed somewhat from one country to another, movement activists were generally ambivalent as to the use of violence. In the seventies, however, a variety of circumstances transformed this ambivalence, at least for a good portion of movement activists, into a positive attitude. In several countries, the forms of protest then radicalized, state repression increased, and the escalation on both sides often lasted for several years, before the vicious circle of violence–repression–violence–repression was interrupted. When political and social conflicts became radicalized, terrorist organizations emerged in several representative democracies, including the United States, Japan, and various European countries. For a while, in the seventies and early eighties, the political elites perceived political violence as a serious threat to the stability of several Western European countries.

This dramatic evolution raises several questions. Why did political conflicts radicalize precisely in those societies that seemed to have been pacified by the development of the welfare state and the institutionalization of the labor conflict? Why did movement organizations, which originally emphasized spontaneity and grass-roots democracy, transform themselves into small, often "armed," sects? Why did a generation socialized to politics in a democracy and in the calm and affluence of the early sixties resort to violence? The social sciences were slow to provide answers to these questions. On the one hand, reliable sources were scarce; on the other hand, the tense political climate of the years in which violence peaked was not conducive to objective scientific research. The sociological contribution therefore consisted of rather abstract, deductive theories on the nature of conflict and violence. More recently, various case studies on radical political organizations have improved our knowledge of the phenomenon. But we still lack an empirically based explanation of the escalation and de-escalation of political conflict. Only a historical and cross-national comparison of the characteristics and dynamics of political violence will, I believe, allow us to combine the detailed information provided by the case studies with a broad explanation that is the aim of sociological theory. Through my research on the roots and manifestations of political violence in Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany from the end of the sixties to the end of the eighties I attempt to analyze radicalization processes in a comparative perspective, with the hope of bridging this gulf between abstract theories and case studies.

Several people and institutions helped me in this enterprise. First of all, the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation generously supported my comparative re-

search with a three-year Career Development Award. For my work on the German case, the research unit on Social Movements and the Public Sphere at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung provided me with a most stimulating environment for three years. For the Italian case, I used in part the materials I had collected during a research project at the Istituto di Studi e Ricerche Carlo Cattaneo, in Bologna; the research for my doctoral dissertation at the European University Institute in Florence; and a Visiting Fellowship at the Western Societies Program at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Moreover, I continued my research as a Visiting Scholar at the Faculty of Political Science in Florence. The actual writing of this book began when I was a Visiting Scholar at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.

Finding original sources for empirical research on political violence is not an easy matter. I am most grateful to all those who trusted me enough to help me in my search for information in both countries. I am particularly obliged to the Italian judges Gian Carlo Caselli, Rosario Minna, Armando Spataro, and Pierluigi Vigna; the Istituto di Studi e Ricerche Carlo Cattaneo in Bologna; Peter Katzenstein at Cornell; and the President of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, Friedhelm Neidhardt. Moreover, I am grateful to all those activists who agreed to narrate their often painful experiences with political violence.

The list of sociologists, political scientists, and historians with whom I had the good fortune to discuss parts of my research is simply too long to cite. I presented partial results of my research at the International Meeting on Comparative Social Movements at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin in December 1989; the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research in Bochum in April 1990; the World Congress of the International Sociological Association in Madrid in July 1990; the International Conference on Social Movement Theory in Berlin in June 1990; the International Conference "European–American Perspective of Social Movements" in Washington in August 1991; the Tagung of the *Neue Soziale Bewegungen Forschungsjournal* in Bonn in 1991 and 1992; the "First European Conference on Social Movements" in October 1992 in Berlin; and the World Congress of the International Sociological Association in 1994 in Bielefeld. During these workshops I was able to discuss various pieces of my work with colleagues and friends: Robert Benford, Karl-Werner Brandt, Mario Diani, Bill Gamson, Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi, Juan Linz, Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, Alberto Melucci, Dieter Rucht, David Snow, Sidney Tarrow, Leonard Weinberg, and Mayer Zald are among them. From all of them, I have learned much more than I could acknowledge in my footnotes. Colleagues at my research unit at the Wissenschaftszentrum – Barbara Blattert, Dieter Rucht, Friedhelm Neidhardt, Birgit Peters, Dieter Fuchs, Thomas Ohlemacher, and Jürgen Gerhard – all assisted me, with kindness and patience, in the various steps of learning German and getting accustomed to the German political system. Friedhelm Neidhardt and Dieter Rucht – as well as Martha Crenshaw, Mario Diani, Bert Klandermans, and Nicola

Lacey – read drafts of the chapters and offered much welcome comment. An article I wrote with Dieter Rucht constitutes the basis for the second chapter of this volume. I am most grateful to Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow, who had the courage and courtesy to read the whole – unedited – manuscript. Although the responsibility for what I have written is, of course, mine, this book benefited greatly from their comments.

Martha Linke edited, with competence and care, the entire manuscript, struggling to make my English readable. Clare Tame skillfully reedited several chapters that I had drastically revised after the first copyediting.

Finally, my gratitude goes to Herbert Reiter. I cannot be sure that this book would have not been written without him, but I am sure that my understanding of Germany would have been much more superficial and my life in Germany less exciting without his presence. Even if we do not always agree on our judgments of our native countries – which is normal between historian and a political scientist – I hope he will learn as much about Italy from me as I have learned from him about Germany.

D.d.P.
Florence
April 1995

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Comparative research on political violence

In Western democracy, the social movements of the eighties and early nineties have generally been very pragmatic in their aims, moderate in their tactics, and well connected to political authorities and policy makers – so much so that several scholars have asked whether they can still be called social movements. There are indeed many impressive differences from their counterparts of the late sixties and the seventies. Social movements have often been defined by their use of unconventional strategies and loose organizational structures, but both characteristics have changed a great deal since the sixties – especially in the use of political violence. As mentioned in the Foreword, the movements of the sixties and the seventies often "encountered" violence: they used violent tactics, and they faced violent repression. If in the mid-sixties political activists advocated nonviolent protest, by the end of the decade, in most Western democracies, several emphasized the need for "self-defense." In the seventies, violence became more and more organized in some countries. Radical, sometimes underground, organizations emerged and engaged with the state in a military struggle that they eventually lost. Their negative example probably contributed to the tactical moderation of protest in the eighties.

From our historical point of observation, the nineties constitute the end of a cycle of protest that began in the sixties: new actors emerged, encountered severe reactions, fought back, and finally found their way into "normal" politics. Several questions, however, remain about the dynamics of the emergence and institutionalization of new collective actors, and the escalation and de-escalation of their action repertoires. What brought about a new explosion of political violence after the conservative tranquillity of the fifties and the reformist hopes of the early sixties? How can we explain why a generation socialized to democratic values resorted to political violence? Why, in the "First World," were the police ordered to open fire on political demonstrators? This volume is an attempt to answer these questions by drawing on research on social movements, political violence, and the state in Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany from the late sixties to the nineties.

This introductory chapter describes the theoretical approach, explains the choice for the cross-national comparison, identifies the methods and sources used, and summarizes the scheme of the volume.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Political violence does not belong to the established, mainstream areas of research in either sociology or political science. Whereas scholars who work on parties or interest groups, the government, or public administration can rely upon relatively well defined concepts and choose between already formulated theories, the social scientist wishing to focus on political violence needs to develop, first of all, a definition of political violence per se and, then, to construct a set of categories and research hypotheses borrowing from different fields of research.

In search of a definition

In order to be useful for scientific purposes, a concept has to meet certain requirements: it must be neutral and univocal, communicable and discriminating. As a concept "imported" in the scientific jargon from everyday life, political violence – as generally understood – lacks these requisites: it is ideologically loaded and its meaning varies according to social and political groups, geographical area, and historical period. In its everyday use "violence" refers to "acting with or characterized by great physical force, so as to injure, damage, or destroy; [or] . . . force unlawfully or callously used" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language,* 2nd college edition, 1979). *Violence* is therefore the use of great physical force to inflict damage. In the same way, the standard social science definition of violence refers to "behavior designed to inflict physical injury on people or damage to property" (Graham and Gurr 1969:xxvii), or "any observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are seized or physically damaged in spite of resistance" (Tilly 1978:176). *Political* violence then is the use of physical force in order to damage a political adversary. If we leave aside state or state-sponsored violence, political violence comprises "collective attacks within a political community against a political regime" (Gurr 1970:3–4).[1] In these situations, violence may emerge intentionally or accidentally: " [as the] deliberate infliction or threat of infliction of physical injury or damage for political ends," or as violence "which occurs unintentionally in the course of severe political conflict" (Wilkinson 1986:30). In general, political violence consists of those repertoires of collective action that involve great physical force and cause damage to an adversary in order to impose political aims (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:614).

This definition is, however, not easy to operationalize since the understanding of both "great" and "damage" is highly subjective. A certain degree of physical force is involved in forms of collective action that are usually not considered

violent per se; moreover, all collective actions seek to damage a more or less visible adversary. For example, a picket line displays physical (sometime great physical) force and seeks to damage the factory owner's interests; but it is debatable as to whether picketing per se constitutes violent action. In order to make the definition of violence fully operational, we need to find some thresholds beyond which the use of physical force and consequent damages suffered may be considered as violent. The second part of the Webster's definition only partially resolves the problem by introducing the terms as "unlawful" or "callous use" of force or power. Political violence is generally understood to mean behavior that violates the prevailing definition of legitimate political action. Operationally, however, the degree of legitimacy is not easy to measure. If "callous" is too vague a term to define illegitimacy, "unlawful" is questionable. Protest actions are, for instance, by definition uninstitutionalized, disruptive forms of collective action, and some of them – including picketing – have long been unlawful, even if tolerated and semi-institutionalized. In the prevailing political culture, however, not all unlawful protests are considered violent.

Moreover, any understanding of a concept such as political violence is historically bound. An operational definition of political violence needs therefore to start from the historical forms of violence addressed by the research.

My research focuses on the political violence that emerged from within the left-libertarian social movement family during various cycles of protest. Before continuing with the search for an operational definition of political violence, let me briefly specify this statement. A *social movement* can be defined as "an organized and sustained effort of a collectivity of interrelated individuals, groups and organizations to promote or to resist social change with the use of public protest activities" (Neidhardt and Rucht 1991:450). More precisely, I deal with *political movements*, that is, those movements that "make changes in power arrangements, especially those structured through the state, a central part of their program" (Jenkins 1981:83). In each society, there are movements that, regardless of their specific or individual goals, have similar basic demands and a common constituency: these sets of coexisting movements constitute *movement families* (della Porta and Rucht 1991:4). Movement families emerge during periods of turmoil, when protest activity intensifies, new repertoires of collective action are created, and unconventional action spreads to different social sectors: these periods represent the peaks of *protest cycles* (Tarrow 1989a:13–14). Among the various movement families, I concentrated on what I define as the *left-libertarian* movement family: a set of movements that emerged during the cycle of protest that started at the end of the sixties and participated, then, in several protest campaigns in the seventies and the eighties. I will consider the political violence of the state or of other movements and countermovements only insofar as it interacts with the main object of research.

In this context, I saw political violence as a particular repertoire of collective action that involved physical force, considered at that time as illegitimate in the

dominant culture. Operationally, I included forms of action such as attacks on property, when damage or theft of property is the main goal; rioting, when unorganized disorder leads to damage to property; violent confrontation, when members of opposing political groups fight with one another; clashes with the police, when protestors interact violently with the police; violent attacks directed against persons, when one political group attacks another group, or members of the elite or the public, causing injuries or deaths; random violent attacks, when organized violence is directed against persons, regardless of their political or social identities; armed seizure of places or people, including armed trespassing, holdups, and hijacking.[2] It is worth noting that, in all these forms of action, the main objective is a de facto display of physical force (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:614).

This operational definition provides a neutral and univocal, communicable and discriminating concept. For the empirical analysis, however, it proved, at least in some cases, too extensive. In the course of the research, it emerged that different types of violence followed different patterns of evolution. In particular, I identified low-level violence, usually not addressed against people, and high-level violence, including political assassination. Moreover, I distinguished between "spontaneous" and "organized" forms of violence. On the basis of the two variables – the degree of violence involved in a repertoire, and the degree of organization of the actor using it – I formulated a fourfold typology including:

- *unspecialized* violence – or low-level, unorganized violence;
- *semimilitary* violence – still low-level, but more organized;
- *autonomous* violence – used by loosely organized groups that emphasized a "spontaneous" recourse to high-level violence;
- *clandestine* violence – that is, the extreme violence of groups that organized underground for the explicit purpose of engaging in the more radical forms of collective action.

Finally, in order to formulate a concept that would describe the historically bound type of violence I wanted to study in a unique and discriminating way, I had to descend several branches in what methodologists call Porfirio's tree of concepts. I proposed a general concept that would only apply to a relatively limited historical and geographical context, that is, Italy and Germany in the period circa 1960–90. By increasing the connotation of the concept, I implicitly reduced its denotation.[3] As a consequence, my explanatory ambitions were limited: in rejecting a universal definition of violence, I also rejected a search for a global theory of violence and instead opted for a formulation of middle-range hypotheses, applicable to violent interactions between social movements and the state in Western democracies.

Approaches to political violence: a review

In contemporary social science, political violence has been studied inside two traditions that very rarely interacted with each other: terrorism studies (*Extrem-*

Table 1.1. *Some explanations of the origins of violence*

Variables	Structural explanations	Conjunctural explanations
Economic	Economic inequalities	Intermediate steps in the economic growth
Social	Social cleavages	Rapid modernization
Political	Authoritarian regimes	Crisis of repressive apparatuses
Cultural	Tradition of violent conflict	Rapid changes in the value system

ismusforschung in Germany) and social movement studies. Curiously, while the former has enlarged its field of interest, to include even nonclandestine forms of action and low-level violence, the sociology of social movements tends, on the contrary, to exclude violent political behavior from its attention.

Terrorism studies developed especially from the shock of international terrorism. In the early seventies, actions such as the massacre of the Israeli delegation to the Olympic Games in Munich or the first airplane hijackings caused the alarmed attention of the Western public as well as Western social scientists. From international terrorism, and the field of international relations, "terroristologists" spread their net wider to include domestic political violence and nonunderground groups – a trend testified for by the publication of several "dictionaries of terrorism" as well as multicountry comparisons of domestic violence based on standardized data sets.[4]

Concentrating on the most radical forms of political violence, terrorism studies tend to isolate their object of interest from the larger political system. In the tradition of collective behavior studies (Blumer 1960; Killian 1964; Gusfield 1968), they emphasize the discontinuities between "normal" political behavior and deviant political behavior. Within a functionalist perspective, the causes for high levels of domestic violence are singled out in various strains at the macrolevel. Following Neil Smelser (1962), various scholars of domestic conflict had already tried to explain violence by looking at *imbalances in different subsystems*: economic, social, political, and cultural.[5] Some hypotheses on the development of terrorism and domestic violence refer to such structural conditions as the level of societal development, the strength of ethnic or class cleavages, the repressiveness of a regime, and cultural traditions (see Table 1.1).[6] Others cite such conjunctural conditions as the intermediate stages of economic development, the crises of modernization, periods of ineffective state coercion, and rapid cultural change.[7]

For my empirical cases, most of these hypotheses are of little help. First of all, the empirical results were often contradictory. For instance, the explanations of political violence that emphasized the role of the political system have attributed violence both to too little repression and to too much, to the absence of reform and to abrupt change, to insufficient legitimation and to lack of opposition, to a delayed and a premature institutionalization of the new collective actors. Moreover, in emphasizing the systemic imbalance, they are not interested in (or able to account for) the collective actors that use political violence.

These problems are not solved by those meso-level explanations in terrorism studies which focus on the *ideological characteristics of some political organizations.* In his analysis of terrorism, Wilkinson (1986) referred to small and radical "ideological sects" whose aim is the suppression of individual freedom. Isolated in liberal societies that support the peaceful resolution of conflict, these sects understand that they cannot persuade citizens through legal propaganda. They therefore resort to violence in order to weaken democratic institutions, by preventing them from fulfilling their function: to produce social consent through political participation in collective choice. In an apparently opposite but in reality mirror explanation, other authors argued that violence is a product of the lack of opportunity for radical opposition in technocratic societies (Targ 1979; Wellmer 1981).

In both versions, the explanation of violent behavior as a last resort of antidemocratic or antisystemic groups is unsatisfactory. The simplified assumption is that there is a direct relationship between given aims and chosen means: if the aim is antidemocratic or antisystemic, then the means will be violent. By considering the aims as intrinsically antidemocratic or antisystemic, these hypotheses underestimate the influence of the context in shaping the aims and the integrative capacity of democracies. Leaving aside the questions as to what produces these radical interests, one then assumes that antidemocratic or antisystemic aims are produced by individual personalities.

Not surprisingly then, terrorism studies share various versions of the "puppet theory," according to which the radicals are blind instruments in domestic or international plots. Some scholars have analyzed individual political participation at a micro-analytic level by examining the *psychological characteristics* of militants. According to the relative deprivation approach (Davies 1969; Gurr 1970), the activists of radical organizations are drawn from social groups that feel frustrated because of the gap between their expectations and their capabilities. Drawing on the so-called mass theory, several studies assume that individuals who resort to the use of political violence are likely to be socially uprooted (Kornhauser 1959). Radical personalities are defined – according to LeBon's description of the "psychologies des foules" (1896) and Hoffer's notion of the "true believer" (1951) – as frustrated individuals, blindly obedient to a leader or following the mass, content to lose their "unwanted" selves.

The more radical – or "deviant" – the forms of collective action, the greater the likelihood that scholarly analysis would concentrate on assumed psychopathologies (on terrorists' personalities, see, e.g., Knutson 1981; Livingstone 1982; Ivianski 1983; Russell and Bowman 1983). Theories about the "terrorist personality" in particular became central in the seventies and the eighties in research on domestic and international terrorism carried out in the United States (Zwerman 1992). The militants of underground organizations were described as infantile, mentally distressed, and terrorized by the external world; as defeated people seeking to compensate for their failures by excluding themselves from society or seeking for revenge (see, e.g., Servier 1979; Laqueur 1977:120–32; for a critical review, see Wilkinson 1979).

A main critique to this trend of studies addresses their empirical validity. First of all, as a critic observed, "Much of the sociological work involved an ex-post facto examination of the outcropping of collective action, without systematically asking whether grievances at the individual or aggregate level had systematically changed" (Zald 1992:328–9). Moreover, research at the micro-level – focusing on the biographical and psychological characteristics of *radical activists* – has indicated that political violence is *not* the consequence of pathological personalities or international conspiracies. Indeed, as Crenshaw has observed, "[one of] the most relevant characteristics of terrorists is their normality" (1981:390). Leaving aside their very much debated empirical validity, the relative deprivation and mass society approaches share a total disinterest in the institutional aspect of political life: in their theory, uprooting and psychological strain "translate" into political violence, which appears therefore as a spontaneous, unorganized phenomenon.

Thus, and with few exceptions, the way in which terrorism studies approach the explanation of political violence offered little for my research on the Italian and the German cases, where violence emerged from the gradual radicalization of political actors. In order to understand this process, one has to take into account the continuities between the different forms of political behavior, and the relationship between systemic characteristics and collective actors. In doing so, I drew insights especially from the social movement approach.

Considered for a long time as a residual, marginal field of research, social movement studies grew enormously in the past few decades. In particular, new approaches to social movement research flourished in the seventies, criticizing precisely those assumptions which were then absorbed by terrorism studies: the definition of social movements as unconscious reactions to temporary strains; the discontinuity between "normal," legitimate, conventional actors and "abnormal," illegitimate, and unconventional actors; and personal or collective frustration as the basis for individual commitment to protest. European sociologists defined "new social movements" as the actors of the central conflict in postindustrial societies, after the pacification of industrial conflict and the integration of the working class into the capitalist system.[8] In the United States, the "re-

source mobilization'' approach looked at social movements as rational collective actors.[9]

In the social movement studies of the seventies and the eighties, protest is considered as the product not of temporary strains, but of conflicts structurally inherent in society. These conflicts, however, do not automatically produce collective action. In order for collective action to take place, collective actors must emerge, create collective identities, and found organizations. As one of the proponents of the resource mobilization approach observed, ''behavior entails costs; therefore grievances or deprivation does not automatically or easily translate into social movement activities, especially high-risk social movement activity'' (Zald 1992:332) Like any other collective actor, social movements have to motivate their followers, and since the latter are rational beings, they need to distribute selective incentive.

As rational, instrumental actors, social movements attempt to mobilize both material and symbolic resources in their environment. In order to affirm their interests, they rely mainly on *protest activities*, that is, unconventional forms of collective action. Since they lack easy access to decision makers, they mainly address public opinion. In their activities, the social movements encounter other actors in the political system, some of whom are allies, and others opponents. Not only their mobilization capacity and chance of success but also their strategic choices depend on several characteristics of the political system. Radicalism or moderation would depend, in particular, on the response the movements meet in their environment, the reactions of the authorities, and the strength and postures of their potential allies and opponents.

Within the social movement studies, political violence can therefore be explained as an outcome of the interaction between social movements and their opponents. It is worth noticing, however, that the new approaches to social movements paid little attention to political violence. As was observed in a recent review of the literature, ''the relationships among levels of violence and conflict, types of grievances, and the key variables of resource mobilization (resources, organization, opportunities) remain underdeveloped'' (McClurg Mueller 1992: 18). As already mentioned, whereas terrorist studies tended to extend their range of interest, lumping together international terrorism and domestic radicalism, social movement studies proceeded in the opposite direction, focusing on the moderate and organized forms of collective action, so much so that some scholars talk of a tendency to ''normalize collective protest.'' ''Blurring the distinction between normative and nonnormative forms of collective action,'' Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1992:301) observed recently, ''is the most fundamental expression of this tendency, as if rule-conforming and rule-violating collective action are of a piece.''

There are nevertheless a few exceptions to this general lack of interest in political violence. In his influential model of collective action, Charles Tilly (1978: 52–5, 172–88) related the use of violence to the emergence of new social

groups. In his terminology, political violence increases when new challengers fight their way into the polity and old polity members refuse to leave. In a pivotal research on protest strategies, William Gamson (1975) observes that the use of violence increases the probability of success of the challengers. In a similar vein, in their well-known study on poor-peoples movements, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1977) suggest that the existence of "radical flack" facilitates mobilization, insofar as the use of violence is a substitute for other resources.

These previous studies did not provide, however, a satisfactory explanation of political violence in Italy and Germany in the past three decades. Tilly's assumption that violent events are an indicator of protest events does not hold true for contemporary movements in Western societies: as Sidney Tarrow showed in his masterly reconstruction of the internal dynamics of protest cycles (1989a; see also della Porta and Tarrow 1986), violent repertoires have different dynamics than nonviolent ones. Moreover, in some contexts the use of violent repertoires favored the movement's success, whereas in both Italy and Germany political violence and terrorism endangered the development of the left-libertarian family.

The understanding of the dynamics and consequences of political violence therefore requires an analysis of the effects of different forms of political violence in different historical contexts. Although the problem of political violence is far from solved, recent studies on social movements provide the main categories for the explanatory model of political violence in Italy and Germany that I am going to develop here.

Social movements, political violence, and the state: some basic concepts and relevant questions

Most empirical studies on political violence refer to one of the three analytical levels: the system, the group, or the individual (corresponding respectively to the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of analysis). They address one of three questions:

- In what type of society is political violence most likely to develop – that is, what environmental conditions foster political violence?
- Which groups are most likely to use violent repertoires – that is, which characteristics of political organizations eventually lead them to adopt the most extreme forms of political violence?
- Which individuals are most likely to resort to political violence?

Although the existing macro-, meso-, and micro-analysis have generated interesting suggestions about the environmental preconditions for violence, the characteristics of violent groups, and individual commitment to violence, none provides a global explanation for the complex phenomenon of political violence.

The macro-analysis fails to consider the intermediate processes between general structures and individual behavior. The meso-analysis gives us a voluntaristic interpretation of violence as a strategic choice carried out by single groups or organizations. And the micro-analysis tends to attribute this political phenomenon to purely psychological factors.

In order to attain a more complex explanation of political violence, I have tried to develop a model in which the systemic, organizational, and individual perspectives – in other words, environmental conditions, group dynamics, and individual motivations – were all taken into account. For although political violence, as a political phenomenon, is certainly influenced by the conditions of the political system from which it emerges, it is, at least in most industrial democracies, a phenomenon involving fairly small organizations, whose dynamics inevitably influence its development. Moreover, like other forms of deviant behavior, political violence generates changes in individuals' value systems and perceptions of external reality, which in turn affect the organization as a whole. Thus, different analytical levels may be said to "dominate" different stages of the evolution of radical groups.

The argument becomes somewhat less abstract if I identify the basic concepts underlying the integrated model employed in the research. The framework used was a complex set of concepts adopted from many disciplines, including organizational studies, symbolic interactionism, and – above all – social movement studies.

Turning first to the *macro-variables* that influence the evolution of political violence, various studies suggested that – besides the internal resources of the movement and the dynamic of the protest cycle – the most relevant explanations of movements' repertoire are to be found in the political process. In particular, strategic choices are influenced by the *political opportunity structure* (POS), that is, the set of environmental opportunities and constraints available to social movements. Developed in the research on the temporal evolution of protest actions, the POS concept referred mainly to the opening or closing of the political system (depending, in particular, on available alliances and strength of the opponents) (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1983, 1994). When it was applied to cross-national comparison of social movements, the POS concept became progressively complex. In a comparison of Germany, Sweden, and the United States, Herbert Kitschelt (1986) suggested that action strategies and outcomes vary according to the *institutional* variables that define the openness–closure of the political system and its implementation capacity. Comparing movements' strategies in Germany, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, Hanspeter Kriesi and his collaborators (Kriesi 1991; Kriesi et al. 1995) added to the institutional aspects of the POS some *informal* elements, synthesized by the national strategy to deal with challengers. Studying the women's and ecological movements in France, Germany, and the United States, Dieter Rucht (1995) distinguishes between *historical* and *conjunctural* context structures. Most of these

studies refer to elements of the political sphere: the party system and interest representation; the legislative, executive, and judicial levels of power; institutional and cultural variables. In this way, they elaborated a number of hypotheses about social movement strategies and the environmental responses. In particular, the POS studies indicated a correlation between state strategies and movement strategies: the more confrontational the state strategy, the more radical the movement strategy; and vice versa, the more assimilative the state strategy, the more moderate the movement strategy.

Although I found several of these hypotheses very stimulating, I recognized that the specific aim of my research required a more specific model. First, POS studies referred to the potential "prevailing" strategy of the political system, distinguishing in some cases between the acceptance of the substantial goals of the movements versus the recognition of new collective actors (as suggested by Gamson 1975). They did not, however, systematically analyze a particular type of state response that, according to previous research,[10] has a marked impact on political violence, namely, repression. In particular, in order to understand the radicalization process, I focused on what I defined as the *policing of protest*, that is, the police control of protest events. I assumed that, since meanings are produced through direct experiences, in particular during episodes of collective action (Fantasia 1988), as the most short-term and visible response, the policing of protest is likely to be in the activists' perceptions an accurate indicator of the state attitudes. What then are the styles of protest policing in the two countries? How deeply rooted are they in historical traditions and how sensitive to the shifting configuration of power? And what influences the reactions of political and social actors to the strategies of the police and protestors?

A second problem encountered in available cross-national comparisons of POS with regard to an analysis of political violence is that they deal mainly with *prevailing* movement strategies. The analysis of political violence requires that we go beyond the prevailing strategy to examine the *differential* strategy: the contemporary assimilation of some parts of the movements and the repression of others; the moderation of some movements' components and the radicalization of others. In order to understand this differential strategy, it is necessary to take into account a meso-analytical level, namely, *organizational dynamics*. Different strategies are in fact chosen by different *social movement organizations* (SMOs), that is, "the complex or formal organization[s] that identif[y] [their] goals with the preferences of a social movement . . . and attempt to implement those goals" (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1219). Within social movement studies, the resource mobilization approach focused on SMOs. Gerlach and Hine (1970; see also Gerlach 1976) observed that the structure of social movements is simultaneously *segmented*, with different groups or cells that emerge and die, proliferate and decline; *polycephalic*, with many leaders, each of whom commands a small number of members; and *reticular*, composed of autonomous cells with multiple ties and constituting a network with vague

boundaries. The result is a *loosely organized collective conflict*, in which "hundreds of groups and organizations – many of them short-lived, spatially scattered, and lacking direct communication, a single organization and a common leadership – episodically take part in many different kinds of local collective action" (Oberschall 1980:45–6). The segmented, polycephalic, and reticular structure of social movements allows for rapid development and flexibility; avoids the suppression of the movement by the opposition; maximizes adaptation; reduces the effects of failure; and promotes innovation (Gerlach 1976). However, the presence of various SMOs also produces *internal conflicts and competition* inside a social movement or social movement family, which under some circumstances can induce serious consequences for the movements. In particular, "under conditions of declining availability of marginal resources, direct competition and conflict between SMOs with different goals can be expected to increase" (Zald and McCarthy 1980:5). The organizations within a movement family vary in their strategies, according to their internal resources as well as to their specific *multiorganizational field*, that is, the sets of organizations and structured networks with which an organization interacts.[11] In the internal competition among SMOs, various organizations address specific *mobilization potentials*, that is, reservoirs for recruitment (Klandermans 1984).

In my research, in particular in Chapters 4 and 5, I applied several of the theoretical suggestions used in the resource mobilization approach to the study of the radical organizations. I assumed that radical SMOs act as *violent entrepreneurs*, consuming and producing resources for violence in their environment, and analyzed what I considered as a group's three main organizational tasks: the *mobilization of resources*; the *integration of resources*; and the *allocation of resources for external aims* (della Porta 1990:36–7). At least for the case of radical SMOs, however, the rationalistic approach seemed to need some correction. The degree of *strategic choice* (Child 1972) available for radical organizations as opposed to the development of *internal dynamics* in the evolution of the radical groups appeared in fact as an empirical question. The choices of the radical SMOs correspond in part to their *search for a niche in order to face competition* in their environment – among marginal social strata or the radicalized militants of the fundamentalist movements of crisis (Kerbo 1982). There are, however, also *spirals of encapsulation* that reduce the organizational contact with the external world. An examination of organizational dynamics appears therefore as particularly relevant to a study of radical SMOs. How rational are the actions of radical organizations? How much latitude do these groups have in changing their strategies? How do they contribute to the strategic interaction between social movements and the state?

Beyond the interaction between the state and its challengers, an additional, micro-analytic level – to which neither POS nor SMOs studies have paid sufficient attention – refers to *activists' motivations*. In order to understand political violence, the structural approach has indeed to be combined with a construc-

tionist approach that explains the "mediating processes through which people attribute meaning to events and interpret situations" (Klandermans 1992:77). To understand why an individual would choose to join a radical organization, we need to draw on concepts such as *social network*, or the sets of social and affective ties an individual belongs to; *collective identity*, or the importance of a collective definition in the structure of the ego; *collective action frames*, which justify protest action; and *incentives*, which motivate individual commitment.[12] Research on social movements shows that movement organizations – which have a low level of material resources – have to rely mainly on nonmaterial incentives: the emotional fulfillment that comes from group solidarity, the psychological fulfillment derived from a strong collective identity, and the ethical fulfillment produced by acting for a cause. During face-to-face interactions, interpersonal life circles determine collective action frames (Snow et al. 1986). Solidarity and proximity – which derive both from preexisting social networks and organizational forms that maximize face-to-face interaction – characterize the relationships through which meaning is constructed and identities are created (e.g., Reynaud 1982). Cultural free spaces (Evans and Boyte 1986), rooted communities, facilitate the development of "emergent norms" (Turner and Killian 1987).

In Chapters 6 and 7 especially, I utilize the results of previous research to explain radical commitment. In order to understand the peculiar characteristics of individual participation in the most militant forms of collective action, I distinguish between *cognitive* and *affective* dynamics. Looking at the specific *countercultures* from which the radical activists emerged, I single out elements of what Berger and Luckman (1966) define as the construction of external reality. In particular, I focus on the *militants' perceptions of external reality*, that is, the way in which individuals perceive political events and collective actors, and the influence of small-group dynamics on the general political culture. Moreover, I analyze the radical commitment as a step in the *individual's political career*, during which political activities assume a totalizing role in the construction and maintenance of individual identity. Using these concepts, I hope to answer such questions as, What motivates individuals to join a radical organization? Which kind of incentives do radical organizations provide for their members in order to retain their commitment? What are the militants' perceptions of external reality?

My research not only examines the concrete details relevant to the functioning of the radical organizations, but also poses more abstract questions. What, for example, is the general nature of political violence? Is political violence, in Martha Crenshaw's words (1988a), an *intentional* phenomenon or is it an *unplanned* consequence of the interactions between different actors? Do violent acts follow strategic choices, or are they the outcome of internal dynamics? Are violent means logically related to their expressed aims, or does violent behavior follow erratic patterns? Do militants try to calculate the resources available and

the probable results of their actions, or do they act according to rituals and psychological impulses? Violence is only one of the phenomena to which these kinds of questions apply, but, in a broader perspective, the results of this research could provide an empirical basis for discussion of several fundamental questions about the limits and potential of the rational theory of collective action.

Regarded from a more focused perspective, however, my research aims especially at contributing to social movement studies. My concern, in particular, is to highlight the "bridging" of macro- and micro-conditions, what Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald (1988:709) call the *micro-mobilization context*: "any small group setting in which processes of collective attribution are combined with rudimentary forms of organization to produce mobilization for collective action." Indeed, with my research on political violence I also hope to help fill some principal gaps in our knowledge on social movements. First of all, at the macro-level, I wish to complement the existing research on the various elements of the political opportunity structure with an in-depth analysis on the interactions between a specific type of state response, the policing of protest, and a specific movement strategy – namely, violence. In-depth analyses of this kind could in fact avoid the risk that the political opportunity structure becomes, as Friedhelm Neidhardt and Dieter Rucht (1991: 456) warned, "a catch-all category." Second, at the meso-level, I hope to contribute to the understanding of another little analyzed aspect of social movements: the dynamics of collective action *after* the emergence of a social movement. According to a recent review of social movement studies, "while we have a number of specific theories of movement emergence, we lack any comparative theory of movement development" (McAdam et al. 1988:729). Third, at the micro-level, my research could help to understand not only the already quite developed topic of the role of social networks in recruitment (Snow et al. 1980; McAdam 1988; Morris 1981), but also the less analyzed theme of how networks maintain commitment by constructing meaning and securing loyalties. To quote again from McAdam et al. (1988, 729), "While there are several theoretical accounts of recruitment to collective action, we boast no real theory of the effects of movement participation on the individual."[13]

THE RATIONALE OF A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ITALY AND GERMANY

The concepts and questions elaborated in the preceding section guided me in my methodological choices for the empirical research. I will discuss these choices in more detail before describing the empirical findings.

Why to compare Italy and Germany

My research on political violence adopts a *historical comparative design*. As a scientific method, historical comparison seeks to control empirical relationships

between variables in different systems. It differs from the statistical method – based on mathematical elaboration of empirically relevant data (Lijphart 1971) – insofar as it seeks to understand a complex unity rather than to establish relationships between variables. As Ragin and Zaret (1983) observed, whereas the statistical method is based on concomitant variations and, in line with Emile Durkheim's methodology, endeavors to build law-form propositions, historical comparison is based on the analysis of concordances and differences and, following Max Weber's method, seeks genetic explanations. Although the quality of control of the relationship between variables is low using the comparative method – since it does not allow for a systematic test through partial correlation (Lijphart 1971) – it is often the *only* scientific method available for the study of the macro-dimensional, interdimensional, and institutional processes (Eisenstadt 1968). The choice of a historically comparative approach is thus justified by the need to explain macro-phenomena in a cross-national perspective.

Within the historically comparative approach, I chose a *binary comparison.* This choice reflects not only personal preferences and budgetary constraints, but also the "state of the art" of empirical studies on political violence, which, according to an influential scholar in the field, is characterized by "a disturbing lack of good empirically-grounded research" (Gurr 1988:115). Research on political violence has oscillated between multicase cross-national comparisons and organizational case studies. On the one hand, the cross-national analysis of many national cases has generally produced poor results because most of the available indicators of political violence are unreliable and not comparable. On the other hand, case studies have produced an ideographic, noncumulative body of knowledge that is difficult to integrate into more general analyses because of the lack of a common theoretical framework. What is missing, then, is an intermediate approach between the (often unreliable) large-scale comparisons and the idiosyncratic case studies. A binary comparison allows us to test some hypotheses that arose from the single case studies, without losing the "thick description" of the two national cases.[14]

The "state of the art" in the field suggested to me an additional choice: in-depth comparison of two *similar national cases over a long historical period.*[15] The choice of similar countries – what comparative scholars define as the "most similar" context, as opposed to the "most different" context – allowed me to reduce the range of variables, although at the cost of a reduced range of applicability of the research results.[16] The analysis of a long historical period permitted me to build a periodization that increased *pari passo* the number of cases, without increasing the number of variables, and, simultaneously, to analyze the dynamics of political violence – that is, to use *time* as a variable (Bartolini 1990). As a result, my cross-national and historical approach does not lend itself to a very high degree of generalization. It cannot, for example, reach conclusions as to the causes and dynamics of all the different forms of political violence, or even on some forms of political violence. The research design does, however, avoid the complications inherent in any attempt to compare very di-

verse forms of violence and very different external contexts, and thus allows us to reach some conclusions on at least one particular, historically defined form of political violence: the ideologically based violence connected with the development of new types of social movements in the late sixties and the seventies.

With this aim in mind, I selected Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred to simply as Germany) as ideal candidates for a cross-national comparison. Italy and Germany experienced similar forms of political violence under quite similar circumstances. Broadly speaking, both countries are approximately the same size, underwent similar patterns of modernization, and have similar political institutions and political culture. Both countries have, to mention just a few variables, a parliamentary political system, a proportional electoral law, a divided Left, and a relatively long tradition of repressive attitudes toward state challengers, which culminated in fascist regimes. In both countries, the sixties opened up with increasing hope for reform that contrasted with the repressive climate of the fifties; this hope materialized in a series of reforms in the seventies, but the international economic crisis of the early seventies halted the reform process and led to a pessimistic political and cultural climate. Finally, both countries witnessed the emergence of a left-libertarian social movement family.

As for the dependent variable, both countries faced waves of low-level mass violence, followed by low-level small-group violence culminating in episodes of terrorism. One can say that, for Italians and Germans, political violence has been one of the most important political phenomena of the seventies. Thousands of violent events occurred in both countries, hundreds of militant activists and dozens of small groups advocated the "armed struggle," and terrorist organizations wounded and killed, targeting both important politicians and the public. Furthermore, in both countries political violence was, at least in the seventies, perceived as a threat both by the public and policy makers alike.

Given these basic similarities, between Italy and Germany there were, however, some – from the analytical point of view enriching – differences, both in the level and the timing of political violence and in the political system. In Italy, between 1969 and 1982, left-wing extremists were held responsible for 1,173 episodes of mass violence, 1,792 unclaimed bombings against property, 2,188 claimed attacks (272 of which were against people) with 196 injured and 164 killed (della Porta and Rossi 1984:18–19; 60–5). In Germany, the number of terrorist attacks was instead much lower: a total of 57 people died in left-wing terrorist actions, including the attack on the OPEC meeting in Vienna in 1975 and the Entebbe hijacking in 1976.

Not only the number of violent *actions*, but also the number of radical actors differed between the two countries. In Italy several dozen underground organizations used 484 different names in claiming responsibility for their attacks (Galleni 1981:175). Between 1978 and 1988, about 6,000 people were charged

with subversive association and membership of an armed group; and 1,427 people were charged with being members of left-wing underground groups (643 in the Red Brigades; 239 in Prima Linea, or Front line; 545 in other organizations). In summer 1989, 464 people were in prison serving sentences for political crimes, 60 of them serving life sentences (*Il Manifesto*, July 5, 1989). In Germany, however, there were only about a dozen left-wing underground organizations with a few hundred members, and as of the summer of 1992 only 40 people were in prison for terrorism-related crimes.

These differences in the extent of political violence in Italy and Germany make comparison particularly interesting. Indeed, the two countries exhibit some significant differences, in particular in their political opportunity structures. In Germany, the federal institutions are more permeable than the centralized state in Italy. On the other hand, the electoral system and the referendum law in Italy facilitate access to legislators at the national level for challengers. The judiciary appears to be more powerful in Germany, but more independent in Italy. The administration is generally more homogeneous and coordinated in Germany than in Italy, and therefore formally less permeable; but the greater efficiency of the German administration allows for the implementation of reform, whereas in Italy this is blocked by the unprofessional and corrupt state bureaucracy.

Although the national strategy to deal with protest in both countries has generally been considered as confrontational, in Germany industrial conflict was institutionalized after World War II and the trade unions acquired power. This facilitated the creation of substantial consensus within the political system, and led to the outlawing of the most radical groups. In Italy, industrial relations were not so readily institutionalized, and the fifties witnessed the large-scale repression of labor movements. The "visible" political culture in Italy was therefore characterized by a high degree of polarization and a very low level of consensus, whereas at an "invisible" level compromises were built up (Pizzorno 1993). The result was the presence of large radical forces, which were repressed but not outlawed.

Structural differences influenced conjunctural differences in the configuration of power for challengers. The largest party of the Old Left – the main potential ally for the left-libertarian movements – was Social Democratic in Germany, Communist in Italy. The Italian Old Left – always in the opposition – was in general open to social movements: it provided the challengers with a channel to the polity, but it also reduced their autonomy through a cooptive strategy. The German Old Left, often in power in state and federal governments, was instead a tame and hesitant ally for the left-libertarian movements: it helped them less, but left more space for their development. As for the opponents, the story of the Italian left-libertarian movements in the sixties and the seventies was highly influenced by paramilitary policing and the physical clashes with strong and well-armed right-wing countermovements. In Germany on the other hand, paramilitary policing was altogether rare, and not only the Communist

Party but also the radical Right was outlawed and kept under police surveillance, making violent countermovements rare, at least until the early nineties.

Consideration of these differences, which supplements the analysis of concordances, helps provide a multidimensional explanation of political violence.

How to study political violence

The way in which one approaches the study of political violence depends on the research questions posed and the available sources. I have used two types of sources: those *external* to the radical organizations, mainly information collected by the police and the judiciary; and those *internal* to the radical organizations, mainly biographical material. Both kinds of sources present advantages as well as disadvantages.

External sources on political violence fall into two categories: media and official. For several reasons, that I shall briefly illustrate, I preferred the latter. A first and obvious concern was a *material* one. On protest events in general, several research projects have used newspaper data (Tarrow 1989a; Kriesi et al. 1994; Ohlemacher and Rucht 1992), but none of the existing data sets covered my research field: Italy and Germany, for the thirty-year period between 1960 and 1990.[17] The construction of a new data set based on the daily press would have been both costly and time-consuming, forcing me to invest a lot of energy searching for several thousand violent events among hundreds of thousands of protest actions. The use of police and legal sources, focusing on political violence, allowed me to save both time and money. Second, the official sources had the advantage of providing a *"thick" description* of violent events and actors, which would not have been possible to derive from newspaper data: media focus is, in fact, discontinuous, as it is linked to the curve of attention given to an event, whereas state investigators have to collect large sets of information on the evolution of an event, from its planning to its consequences. Moreover, because of the specific nature – semiclandestine or clandestine – of the groups that carry out the most radical forms of action, the press would tend to miss a lot of information, whereas the police and the judges have both the power and the means to investigate these groups. Third, data sets based on newspapers are a very important source on the dynamics of "visible" forms of protest – that is, those that reach the attention of the media. On some kinds of protest events, however, official sources are more *complete* than media sources.[18] Official sources are, at least for the most radical forms of action, not only less costly, but also richer than media-based sources. All these considerations pushed me toward the use of available police and court sources in both countries.

There are, however, some problems related to the use of official sources. First of all, as Howard Becker (1970:43) observed about the police records, they tell us more about the institutions that produce them than about the criminals. Since they reflect the strategic decision of the investigators about how much to invest

in a specific field, official statistics are misleading from the quantitative point of view. Official sources are also qualitatively biased: they provide more information on the "criminal side" of radical organizations and their members; and they tend to present images of radical organizations that fit some of the requisites established by law for certain types of crime – for instance, they will tend to demonstrate the existence of very structured groups or of "conspiratorial" aims when these are requisites for the application of some law.

In order to build a more balanced account of events and circumstances, official sources have to be combined with other sources, in particular with material from inside the radical organizations. This is not easy. Because of their lack of material resources and their loose structure, very few movement organizations keep archives. This is all the more true for radical organizations that are "secretive," if not clandestine. The few official documents or publications available tell us something about the groups' ideologies, but nothing about their internal life and the militants' perception of the external world. For these purposes, biographical materials provide instead a rich source. Thus, I combined the official sources with oral life histories and written biographical material.

Even this last type of source must be used with caution for, as historians rightly stress, reliability is low. In biographical recollections, the selection of the information follows – consciously or unconsciously – psychological needs (such as providing a coherent image of one's own life), as well as aesthetic considerations (to build up a beautiful narrative).[19] The participants in the events are often biased, wishing to emphasize the positive role they played and to demonstrate that they were "right." They therefore do not provide – or, at least, no more than official sources do – an "unbiased" description of reality; instead, they offer the participants' images and perceptions of historical events. For my research purposes, however, this limit was, in a way, an advantage. The biographical reconstructions, emphasizing the subjective side, allow us to observe the way in which history forms the individual consciousnesss, how public events intervene in private life, and how perceptions shape behavior.[20] They allow us to reconstruct the movement milieus, the perceptions of the external worlds diffused among militants, their definition of the costs and benefits of participation, their political socialization, and the dynamic of producing and sustaining a collective identity. By locating the political activities inside the global existence, they provide explanations for the choice of adhesion to a radical organization as well as commitment mechanisms. The emphasis on the subjective side helps, therefore, to reconstruct what I consider a highly relevant variable: the militants' image of external reality.

The availability of both sources influenced my decision to rely on them for my research. I had already collected a large set of data on left-wing terrorism in Italy (della Porta 1990). For Germany, a series of studies on political violence sponsored by the Federal Ministry of the Interior [21] offered a good point of departure. For both countries, I supplemented this material with additional in-

formation derived from empirical research, which, in accordance with the three analytical levels examined, focused respectively on the environment in which protest developed, the movements' organizations, and the individual activists. For the comparative analysis of environmental factors, I used a combination of written and oral sources. To document both social movements and the policing of protest, I used archives, press material, and parliamentary reports, as well as several unstructured interviews with experts. I also reviewed sociological studies and other reports on protest and the policing of protest in both countries. My main sources for information about radical political organizations were trial records, archives, and interviews with former activists. In studying individual motivations, I used primarly life histories and trial records.

At all three analytical levels, I juxtaposed the institutional information on political violence with perceptions "from inside," thus hoping to overcome the limitations of both the "external" (official) and "internal" (unofficial) sources. More specifically, I drew on court and police records (referring to about 100 trials for "political" crimes), documents produced by the radical organizations (about 50 documents), and biographical accounts by political militants (about 40 oral life histories, and about 100 written biographies). The information collected refers to 30 organizations, 1,600 terrorist events, and 1,400 members of radical groups. I filed some data using structured code books, in particular, on each terrorist event and each militant of radical organizations, and schemes for the life histories of the radicals and the data on the radical organizations.

On the terrorist events I collected information referring mainly to the organization involved, the form of the action, and its target.[22] For the most radical organizations, my data addressed the organizational structures, the actions, and the ideologies.[23] The quantitative information on the militants referred to the social background, the friendship network, the political experiences in legal organization, and the experiences in the terrorist organization.[24]

For the collection of the Italian life histories I utilized a scheme developed during a research project of the Istituto Carlo Cattaneo. The scheme included questions about:

- *the family and its environment*, in particular the family type, the profession of both parents, socioeconomic status, the internal environment of the family, the political and religious attitudes in the family, the social environment;
- *the subjective perception of the primary socialization*, including informal relationships with friends from school and elsewhere, experiences at school, and the use of leisure time;
- *the formation of an adult personality*, including friendships and other affective relationships, ideological and cultural formation, ideological and cultural references, the relationship with power, the labor experiences or career;
- *political and associational participation*, from the beginning of militance to its evolution;
- *involvement in the clandestine organization*, including the recruitment, the

characteristics of the group, everyday life outside as well as inside the terrorist group;
- *the end of the experience in the clandestine group,* including the process of leaving and the appraisal of terrorism.

I applied quantitative techniques of cross-tabulation to some of the data that I had collected in a standardized way, and qualitative methods in the analysis of the life histories and the narratives on radical organizations.

THE PLAN OF THIS BOOK

The book focuses on political violence in the left-libertarian movements in Italy and Germany from the sixties to the eighties. Chapters 2 and 3 describe the environment in which protest emerged and political violence escalated. Chapter 2 provides the necessary historical background on the evolution of social movements in Italy and Germany. For both countries, I propose a periodization, based mainly on changes in the behavior of the movement families. I then present a temporal and cross-national comparison of developments in the two countries to highlight the characteristics of each, as well as significant trends and cycles. Chapter 3 focuses on the environmental conditions that foster collective action, particularly the political opportunities available for social movements in the two countries and in the different periods, which I illustrate by examining in detail one sort of state response: the policing of protest. After a description of the styles of protest policing, providing also some information on the evolution of the political opportunity structure in different periods, I explain the historical evolution and cross-national similarities and differences on the bases of stable opportunities (as incorporated in political institutions and national cultures) and the (more volatile) configuration of power between a "law-and-order" coalition and a "civil rights" coalition.

Chapters 4 and 5 concentrate on the organizational dynamics of the radicalization of protest repertoires. Chapter 4 analyzes the organizational evolution of radical social movement organizations from the days of the student movement through the phases of violent escalation. Here I sketch the complex history of the social movement organizations in the two countries, focusing on the internal conflicts and schisms related to the use of violence and the formation of "militias." In following the evolutionary stages of the radical groups – some of which ended up in the underground – I stress that the radicalization of political behavior is a gradual, selective, and interactive process. In describing internal dynamics, a main element in the interactive process, I demonstrate how the scarcity of material incentives, the heterogeneity of the mobilization potential, and the alternation of mobilization and latency produced intense competition among movement organizations. Violence was, at least in part, an outcome of this competition. Chapter 5 deals with an extreme case of organizational descent

into violence: the underground organizations. Looking at the rationale these groups provided for their actions, I suggest that, far from limiting themselves to terrorizing the enemy, the underground groups adapted their structures, actions, and ideological messages to influence external political actors, especially the social movements and the state. I go on to argue that although the terrorist organizations attempted to find support among the social movements, the very choice of clandestinity isolated them, drawing them into a vicious circle of irreversible choices, some determined less by reason and will than by chance and "necessity." Trapped essentially by their own choices, they were transformed into criminal sects that devoted all their physical and psychological energy to confrontations with state apparatuses.

Chapters 6 and 7 look at the radicalization of the individual activist. In Chapter 6, I trace the way in which movement activists internalized the political (counter)culture and analyze the development of the micro-organizational contexts of the more radical groups. I place particular emphasis on the activists' perceptions – that is, their subjective reality. Two relevant themes are the development of injustice frames of meaning and the identification of the state as an "absolute enemy." Chapter 7 deals with an extreme case of militantness: commitment in the underground. Focusing again on psychological and small-group dynamics, I attempt to explain why militants remain loyal to underground organizations even when these forsake their original (political) goals for a primarily military agenda. The testimony of both Italian and German radicals revealed that the "totalitarian" and "ideological" characteristics of the underground groups exerted great pressure on their members: loyalty, both to one's friends and comrades and to the group's "mission," and its version of reality – however removed from "objective" reality that might be – made it extremely difficult for the individual to abandon the "armed struggle."

Chapter 8 is both a summary and an introduction to future research, for in recapitulating the results of my research – in the light of past and current theories on political violence, social movements, and terrorism – I arrive at several hypotheses. Using the American student movement in the late sixities and early seventies as a first, speculative test, I conclude by suggesting that these hypotheses can serve as the point of departure for future comparative research on political violence.

2

Political violence in Italy and Germany: a periodization

When the Red Brigades began setting fire to cars in Milan in 1970, most of the leftist groups in Italy denounced these actions as the work of agents provocateurs, the secret services, or fascists. Similarly, in Germany, few of the movements' activists could believe that some of their comrades were responsible for acts of arson in two Frankfurt department stores in 1968. Only later on did the Left admit that there was indeed a link between the radicals and other activists, that the former were – in the words of the prominent Italian journalist of the New Left, Rossana Rossanda – the "unwanted children" of the wave of protest that started in the sixties.

Although I am far from believing that – as conservative politicians hastened to explain at the time – such violence was a direct consequence of the activists' ideology, one of the principal premises underpinning my analysis is that *political violence cannot be understood as an isolated criminal phenomenon and must, instead, be interpreted in the context of other forms of protest.* As I argued in Chapter 1, social and political conflicts are a necessary, albeit not sufficient, precondition for political violence. Italy and Germany were no exception to this rule: in the late sixties and seventies violence escalated during various protest campaigns. These campaigns generated new political organizations and new collective identities; student movements, women's movements, environmental movements, urban movements, youth movements, antinuclear movements, and peace movements developed in both countries. To varying degrees, these movements discussed whether the use of violence was politically correct.

MOVEMENT FAMILIES, CYCLES OF PROTEST, AND VIOLENCE

The understanding of the development of political violence must go hand in hand with the analysis of the evolution of the social movements that inspired the more radical organizations. Second, any research on political violence in Italy and Germany during the past three decades requires that we examine not

only single movements, but also a *larger set of homogeneous movements.* If we look at a phenomenon such as violence, which cuts across different movements, we need a unit of analysis capable of including an entire set of movements. Following the literature on party systems (which has used such terms as "party family" and "famille politique"), we can refer to a *movement family* – that is, "A set of coexisting movements, which, regardless of their specific goals, have similar basic values and organizational overlaps, and sometimes may even join for common campaigns" (della Porta and Rucht 1991:4). Only after an analysis of the single-movement families present in a society, can we shift to the larger unit of what Garner and Zald have defined as a *social movement sector,* that is, "the configuration of social movements, the structure of antagonistic, competing and/or cooperating movements which in turn is part of a larger structure of action (political action in a very broad sense)" (Garner and Zald 1985:120; see also McCarthy and Zald 1977:1220).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the movement family that is at the center of this research is the one that emerged "at the Left of the Old Left." Following Kitschelt's terminology, I shall refer to this set of movements as *left-libertarian* movements. Herbert Kitschelt coined the term "left-libertarian" to refer to some new parties:

> They are "Left" because they share with traditional socialism a mistrust of the market place, of private investment, and of the achievement ethic, and a commitment to egalitarian redistribution. They are "libertarian" because they reject the authority of the private or public bureaucracy to regulate individual and collective conduct. They instead favor participatory democracy and the autonomy of groups and individuals to define their economic, political, and cultural institutions unencumbered by market or bureaucratic dictates. (Kitschelt 1990:180; see also Kitschelt 1988)

I adopted this definition to cover all those movements often referred to as the New Left and New Social Movements. These two world views are not identical. In Kitschelt's terms, we can say that the New Left is nearer to a "socialist" world view, whereas the New Social Movements formulated the "libertarian" critique of bureaucracies. If we look at single, ideologically more "extreme" organizations on both sides, it would even be misleading to define some groups of the New Left as "libertarian" or various groups of the New Social Movements as "socialist." On a more general level, however, one can state that the New Left expresses a concern for a participatory democracy and the New Social Movements stand for economic justice. Moreover, the historical intertwining of the two world views logically suggests that they be analyzed together.

As the left-libertarian movements evolved, they fostered violent behavior and radical attitudes. Usually *only a minority* of the groups and people active in the protest became radicalized and engaged in violence. Yet this minority can not be considered apart from the context of the larger protest movements and protest campaigns. Once we state that a certain form of political violence evolved *within* social movements, we have to formulate various questions on the characteristics

of the social movements in which violence developed. A first group of questions refers to the relationship between the dominant attitudes and behavior of a movement family and episodes of violence. Dominant movement behavior is related to the *internal, cultural resources* of social movements, including "worldviews, values, frames, symbols, skills, experiences and motivations" (della Porta and Rucht 1991:7). First, how does violence relate to a movement family's *dominant world view*? Is the New Left tendentially more violent than the New Social Movements or vice versa? Second, how does violence relate to the *dominant behavior* of the social movement family?[1] Is violence more widespread when the dominant behavior is either more confrontational or more oriented to bargaining? Third, which type of social movement strategy is more conducive to violence: instrumental strategies that aim to change their environment, or subcultural strategies, which focus on the cultural changes of their own members (Cohen 1985)?

Beyond the characteristics of the social movements, we should also take into account that violence develops not only within social movements but also during protest events. In particular, political violence has shown itself to be sensitive to the evolution of protest cycles, that is, periods of intense collective action (Tarrow 1989a:13–14). In a comparative perspective, we should therefore ask whether there is more violence at the beginning or at the end of a "protest cycle," and whether violence is more likely to appear during larger or smaller waves of mobilization.

In order to relate the general evolution of protest campaigns and the left-libertarian movements with the evolution of violence, and answer these questions, we need a detailed description of violent behavior. Clearly, we can not "measure" the level of violence, since no reliable statistics are available for a comparison of both countries for the whole three decades. I have, however, used the available sources to provide a detailed description of the different types of violence distinguished in the introductory chapter: spontaneous (low-level and nonorganized); semimilitary (low-level and organized); autonomous violence (high-level and loosely organized); and clandestine (high-level and organized).

In what follows, I sketch the evolution of political violence in the left-libertarian social movements over the past three decades in Italy and Germany, contrast the violent groups with the other SMOs, and examine other characteristics of the movements, such as their mobilization capacity and their political discourses. After comparing the evolution of protest in the two countries, I put forward some ideas on the relationship between cycles of mobilization, the movements' characteristics, and violence.

PROTEST AND VIOLENCE IN ITALY: 1960–90

In Italy, the first offensive wave of strikes in the large factories of the North that took place at the beginning of the sixties was a prelude to the widespread

mobilization that developed later in the decade. The economic boom of the early sixties and the (almost) full employment of the labor force had strengthened the structural position of the working class (Ginsborg 1990: Chap. 8). Nevertheless, although the trade unions and the Communist Party (PCI) had gained some access to institutional power, criticism still emerged on their left. From the mid-sixties on, new types of social movements emerged. Up to 1973, collective action expanded into different sectors of society in what Tarrow (1989a) has described as part of a "cycle of protest." In the mid-seventies protest declined, leaving small and radicalized left-libertarian movements in its wave. In the eighties, protest did not reach the peaks of disruption attained in the sixties and the seventies, but we witness instead the growth and "institutionalization" of the new social movements.

We can distinguish six phases in the evolution of left-wing protest: the years of the student movement, from 1967 to 1969; the revolutionary front, from 1970 to 1973; the *riflusso* (withdrawal), from 1974 to 1976; the years of despair, from 1977 to 1980; the anticruise campaign, from 1981 to 1983; and the pragmatic years, from 1984 to 1990.

Phase 1: the student movement, 1967–9

Until well into the second half of the seventies the Italian protest movements were characterized by the prevalence of a traditional Marxist stance (Tarrow 1989b). This bias is evident first of all in the student movement that sparked off the cycle of protest in the late sixties. The students' protest against a government proposal to reorganize the university system soon expanded to include aims other than the reform of the academic structures. The protest was framed in two kinds of discourse: an anti-authoritarian discourse; and a class-conflict discourse. The anti-authoritarian faction was particularly strong at the beginning and influenced, for instance, the protest activities of the student movement in Turin (Passerini 1988:89–115; Ortoleva 1988:69–70). The most widespread form of disruptive protest in these years – the university occupation – expressed the generational concerns of this wing. In the words of a historian and former activist:

> [It was] the attempt to "retire into oneself," to be separated from the dominant society, the search for a place (not only in the symbolic sense, but also in a very real one) where to live in full autonomy and freedom, surrounded by a peer community, and on the basis of a different and original value system. (Ortoleva 1988:47)[2]

The anti-authoritarians conflicted with a more traditional wing of the movement, which framed the student issue in the discourse of class conflict.

At the beginning of their protest, the students used forms of action that combined traditional means of exerting pressure (i.e., within the institution), with more innovatory forms of action (sit-ins and go-ins). The repertoire of action

and the ideology of the protest gradually changed as the movement interacted with other groups: from the hostile right-wing groups to the supportive factory activists. Violence occurred in the attacks by the neofascists and in some brutal assaults by the police.[3]

Consequently, a spontaneous type of violence developed. The "need for self-defense" became a relevant – albeit contested – issue. If the need for a revolution in the future was a common belief, opinions as to how to deal with repression in the present diverged widely. The movement's repertoires of action followed the principle of a "limited violation of the rules," and the movement's subculture justified violence as a "necessity" to counter state repression or the violence of social adversaries. No one group or branch specialized in the use of violent repertoires.

By the end of the period, the anti-authoritarian wing had lost momentum, and the main organizations of the so-called New Left emerged in the process of coordination of protest activities in the various universities and, later on, in the expansion of the protest beyond the universities. In building an alliance with the Old Left, the student movement also radicalized its initial demands for reform.

Phase 2: the revolutionary front, 1970–3

Two major elements characterized the period 1970–3: the decline of mobilization within the universities and the growth of protest beyond the academic world, in particular regarding urban problems and gender discrimination. The expansion of protest to the most diverse social groups heightened political tensions and favored the dominance of the New Left in the left-libertarian movements. The activists – particularly the student movement, which had expanded to include high school students – couched their hopes for radical social change in the traditional discourse of class conflict.

After the demobilization of protest in the universities, most of the student activists refused to return to normal, everyday life. One student leader, Luigi Bobbio, described the situation of his comrades when mobilization declined in the university in the following way:

> Their private life at this point was politics, they had to apply it to something, but they had lost their object. The period between 1968 and 1969 was very painful . . . because we could do nothing other than political militance, but we could not put it into practice, because everything we tried, failed. . . . At a certain moment, we started to apply the desire [for politics] to Fiat. (Interview with Luigi Bobbio, in Passerini 1988:132)

Like most European student movements and the American New Left, the Italian student movement held "the firm belief that the expansion of the struggle outside the university had to bring about the encounter with the working class" (Ortoleva 1988:185). Accordingly, the students attempted to link their anti-

authoritarian position with working-class revolution and sought allies in the large factories. But, in contrast to what took place in other countries, in Italy, for reasons that had little to do with student activism, the ties between students and workers became close and frequent. However unrealistic the hope of a stable alliance between students and workers, the prevailing outlook among the student activists as the events of 1969 unfolded was of great enthusiasm for the "United Front of Workers and Students." As a student activist in Turin put it:

> In the autumn of '68 the unbelievable happened. The student movement called for a general assembly of workers at the university. And they came in the hundreds. . . . The hall was full, packed – it was amazing! Most of them were migrants [workers from the South of Italy]. And they not only packed the hall, they took the microphone and spoke out about their living conditions. (Interview with Laura De Rossi, in Fraser 1988:251)

As we will see in Chapter 4, in northern Italy, the students' encounter with the working class helped the development of a Leninist organizational model. Luigi Bobbio recalled that, after the spread of working-class protest at Fiat Mirafiori:

> We couldn't believe it ourselves. We immediately found we had a role to play that was unquestioned. So in 1969 we ended up doing what we'd refused to do in '68. And it led slowly, of course, toward professional militancy, a political party, and all the things we had fought against in '68. (Interview with Luigi Bobbio, in Fraser 1988:251)

At precisely the same time, the forms of the industrial conflict became increasingly radicalized.

After 1969 the New Left consolidated. Even the women's movement, which was initially composed of very small "study groups" and other informal associations, took on the prevailing New Left orientation and acquired contacts with the Old Left. Where the early groups, modeled on the American and European women's movements, had developed forms of civil disobedience and concentrated on problems of contraception (still illegal at the time) and women's health, the women's collectives, which had formed within the New Left from 1972 onward, took up more strictly political issues.

In Italy, more than in any other country in Europe, the left-libertarian movements – under the hegemony of the New Leftist discourse – used symbols and frames of reference that were known and accepted by the Old Left. So although the Old Left and the New Left competed for the support of leftist activists, the goals and strategies of the two sides to a large extent coincided. At least until 1973, the larger part of the left-libertarian movements perceived the Old Left, and in particular the PCI, as their main ally and support. Trade unionists, PCI activists, and New Left activists launched campaigns on such themes as housing conditions and the price of public transport. Generally, the hope for radical political change fueled cooperation between the left-libertarian movements and the Old Left, while a fierce antagonism characterized the movements' attitudes toward the state.

As for their repertoires of action, the leftist movements imported forms of protest developed by the American student movement, and also borrowed tactics from the Old Left. Students occupied their schools and universities, and the workers their factories, as strikes were called and pickets organized. Students and workers joined in various protest campaigns (urban protests, among others) and together clashed with neofascists and the police. Although the trade union leaders often criticized the students for using excessively radical forms of action, the more disruptive protest events occurred when workers and students acted together (Tarrow 1989a:186). In the women's movement, the presence of elements from both the Old and New Left expanded the range of actions used in the various campaigns: conventional tactics (such as petitions) were combined with new forms of civil disobedience (such as "visible" illegal abortions).

Political violence developed throughout this period.[4] According to the data reported in della Porta and Tarrow (1986), from autumn 1968 to the end of 1971:

> The number of both total and violent events was in constant increase, with periodic peaks this time in the autumn and winter – the seasons of national contract negotiations for many categories of workers – followed by decrease in spring and, especially, in the summer. But the increase in the proportion of violent events was much less steep that the growth of non-violent ones.

After 1971, there was a decline in the number of both protest events and violent events, but "the decline [was] much less sharp for the violent component of the protest curve. Here, in fact, the percentage of violent cases was higher than the average of the entire period" (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:615–16).

Not only did dynamics of violent events appear to differ from those of peaceful events but also the type of violence itself changed. The quantitative data show that the more spontaneous violence of the beginning of the cycle tended to be substituted by semimilitary forms of violence:

> A high percentage of violent events took the forms of violent encounters. It is very difficult to say if they were planned or not. But what is certain is that they took place between competing groups or with police and not against targets in civil society. Their incidence was greatest at the peak of the cycle and decreased in the last years of the period. As far as the gravity of the effects is concerned, the more violent and directed forms of violence – attacks on persons – grew continuously up to the end of the cycle, while violence directed at persons or things increased as the total magnitude of conflict declined. (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:618)

Taking into account also the size of the groups involved, the conclusion was that

> In the sixties, violence was mainly unspecialized: it was unplanned and occurred during mass demonstrations, usually triggered by confrontations with neo-Fascists or the police, and it was justified as "defence" against the attacks from outside. By the beginning of the seventies, however, the concept of "defensive violence" was losing its appeal. Small

group forms of violence increased and in fact predominated at the end of the period. (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:619)

In their daily confrontations with the radical Right and the police, the branches that specialized in the use of violence – the *servizi d'ordine* – gained increasing influence within their organizations. The semimilitary structure of these groups was particularly appealing to younger militants, socialized into politics in the seventies. As one of them explained:

The *servizio d'ordine*, as I felt it, was a place of militance, more intense than the others. It was the place where all the people who were politically active had a relationship with militancy that I thought was more honest, because it was these people who completely dedicated themselves [to politics], the people you lived together with, from the leafletting at the march, to antifascist activities, to the garrison in the squares. (Life history no. 18: 24–5)

If the more Leninist groups managed to subordinate their semi-illegal bodies to the political leadership, in the more spontaneous *Gruppi operaisti* (workerist groups) – that stressed the centrality of the working class – they were more likely to win autonomy from the political leadership.

The process of radicalization, however, did not involve all components of the left-libertarian family, and during this period we witness an increasing strategic differentiation between movement organizations. Some wings of the movements criticized the use of violence, even for defensive ends, as this tended to increase the risk of isolation; whereas other wings thought that "the best form of defense is attack" and shifted to a model of organized violence. According to this model, specialized groups were to use violent repertoires in order to "win" battles, in a strategy of continuous confrontation. At the margin of the student movement, the emergence in 1970 of the first underground group, the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse, BR), expressed this last strategy in its most extreme form.

Phase 3: "riflusso," 1974–6

In 1974–6 the left-libertarian movements underwent partial institutionalization and experienced a *riflusso*, or withdrawal.[5] Particularly in the factories, the international economic crisis of the early seventies put pressure on activists to concentrate on the defense of what had been gained in the previous years. In the schools and universities, the situation normalized, although it never returned to the calm of the fifties and early sixties. At the same time, there was an increase in some forms of radical protest.

Triggered by the church-sponsored campaign for the repeal of the law granting divorce in 1973–4, mass mobilization in support of the legalization of abortion lasted until 1976. The campaign to liberalize abortion policy broadened the scope of the women's movement, which was thus able to establish important links with women's groups within the PCI and the trade unions. Because of the

presence of a strong Left, both Old and New, it became common for analyses of the role of women in society to borrow some traditional categories of class conflict: "exploitation" of women as sex objects and housewives, "imperialism" via macho values, and the "structural nature" of the "contradiction" between the sexes (Ergas 1986:64).

The women's issues, however, also created strains within the organizations of the New Left, which had serious problems in coping with the decline of mobilization in the schools and universities: some of these organizations gradually disappeared, while others contested local and national elections. One indicator of the crisis affecting the movements in this period was that in the 1976 national election the parties of the New Left slates won only a few hundred thousand votes. As mobilization declined, particularly in the factories, relations between the New Left organizers and the trade unionists (and, more generally, the Old Left) deteriorated. Some movement organizations began to take advantage of the new channels of political participation; others faced severe state repression by adopting a radically confrontational posture vis-à-vis the state.

Semimilitary violence escalated more in Italy than anywhere else in Western Europe. In this phase, as in the next one, violent confrontations with the police triggered a radicalization of the forms of violence. The various organizations within the movements split over the question of what "level of violence" was appropriate to the "historical phase." Small groupings of the New Left radicalized their ideology and strategy, preparing the ground for the development of the autonomous type of violence. In particular, a new form of radicalism – more anarchistic and spontaneous than its predecessors – developed in the groups that intervened among marginalized youth. It was in this environment that the radicalized leaders of the previous movement wave sought their new recruits. This phase ended with the first premeditated murder carried out by the Red Brigades, as other groups also began to organize underground.

Phase 4: the years of despair, 1977–80

From 1977 to 1980 the mass movements were generally dormant, except for a wave of youth protest in 1977 and an antinuclear campaign that gained momentum at the end of the decade.[6] Simultaneously, terrorism gradually undermined the possibility of using strategies of peaceful collective action and protest.

The women's movement, for example, reached a turning point in 1976–7. During the parliamentary debate on the abortion law in 1976, the movement abandoned its more political forms of action (Ergas 1982:268ff., 1986:78). Although a few of its constituent groups took advantage of the new institutional opportunities and began to operate as interest groups, the majority of participants in the movement succumbed to a pessimism generated by both the economic crisis and the loss of mobilization capacity. The movement split into a number

of small, informal collectives – including consciousness-raising groups – that turned inward (concentrating on the "search for the self"), and showed no interest in advertising their existence or recruiting new members.[7]

A wave of antinuclear protests marked, in the mid-seventies, the beginning of the environmental movement. Some political protest – activities mobilizing at the most 50,000 protestors in Rome in 1979 – followed the approval of the National Plan for Energy, which provided for the construction of twenty nuclear plants, beginning with Montalto di Castro. Ecological issues, however, inspired a mainly (counter)cultural strategy. Individuals concerned about animal rights and environmental protection mobilized, under the auspices of the Radical Party,[8] small groups of intellectuals and scientists. The activists of the New Left were very slow to become interested in ecological issues ("You have to be red before being green," went the slogan).

The students rarely mobilized during this period, and activists preferred instead to intervene outside the school and university, to organize protests against drug dealers, and to build youth centers in "squatted" public buildings (Sorlini 1978). The movement organizations that retained a more political orientation had to operate within a hyperradicalized atmosphere. Many small groups, still influenced by the New Left, radicalized their tactics and adopted an "autonomy" ideology, precariously combining old Leninist ideological frameworks with pessimistic images of a totalitarian society. For these groups, the working class became less and less important as a point of reference, and the Old Left was looked upon as an enemy. The revolutionary actors were to be found in the most marginalized social strata. The leverage to mobilize these groups was militant discourses and praxis, the appeal to a strategy of loosely organized acts of extreme violence. But the autonomous groups that had tried to promote youth protest failed to articulate political campaigns. Their daily fights with neofascists, drug dealers, and policemen led to a rapid radicalization of protest in the shape of dramatic forms of violence.

The youth groups provided new recruits first for the various tiny underground organizations and, later, for the larger terrorist organizations, such as the Red Brigades, Front Line (Prima Linea, PL), and the Communist Fighting Formations (Formazioni Comuniste Combattenti, FCC). They were often drawn from the paramilitary groups within the autonomous collectives. Clandestine organizations often emerged within these latter groups.

Protest activities collapsed, particularly following the kidnapping and assassination of the president of the Christian Democratic Party (Democrazia Cristiana, DC), Aldo Moro, by the Red Brigades, in 1978. In response, the so-called government of national unity (the national government elected in 1978 with the external support of the Communist Party) issued antiterrorist emergency laws. Until 1980, the only organizations that seemed to be on the increase were terrorist groups. This period witnessed the greatest number and highest concentration of left-wing terrorist attacks of any of the six periods.[9] Even the women's

movement had its terrorists: some of the small collectives tried to "keep the political fight alive" by resorting to violent, sometimes terrorist, actions.[10] Some violence also occurred during the antinuclear marches at Montalto di Castro when demonstrators clashed with police. It was, however, in this period that nonviolent forms of direct action started to be discussed and implemented within the left-libertarian movement family.

Phase 5: the anticruise campaign, 1981–3

The situation began to change between 1981 and 1983 as the protest campaign against the NATO plan to deploy cruise missiles in various European countries gained strength. Until then the peace issue had only attracted religious groups and a libertarian spectrum close to the Radical Party. These groups combined cultural actions (e.g., conferences) with conventional forms of exerting pressure, such as the sponsorship of parliamentary bills. Both the Old and New Left had virtually ignored the issue.

The peace movement remained highly visible throughout the period 1981–3; 500,000 people participated in two protest marches in Rome in 1981 and 1983 respectively. With its nearly 600 peace committees and a few coordinating meetings, the peace movement was able to (re)mobilize the collective actors active in previous years – student activists, feminist groups, some surviving youth centers, and the environmental groups. The peace issue was presented in a variety of frames of meaning, each targeted at a particular group of actors: "peace and economic welfare" for the PCI and trade unions; "peace and aid for the Third World" for the Radical Party; "peace and individual consciousness" for the religious groups; "peace and motherhood" for the women's groups; "peace and the critique of the adult world" for the student groups; "peace and natural equilibrium" for the ecologists; and "peace and anti-imperialism" for the radical fringe groups (Lodi 1984:138–50). Even if the campaign's action platform still reflected reactive and pessimistic tendencies,[11] the peace movement nevertheless was the first occasion – after the radicalization of political conflicts in the seventies – that the Old Left, the New Left, and the emerging New Social Movements had to cooperate in a political campaign. Unlike the mobilizations of the previous decade, this campaign relied on conventional forms of pressure (petitions, parliamentary initiatives, conferences, tax boycotts) together with the first nonviolent direct actions (e.g., the occupation of the military base at Magliocco in January 1982); violence was rare.

Although the number of attacks on persons remained high during this period, the new political atmosphere was not propitious for the terrorist organizations. Most of them disappeared, and even the two major groups – the Red Brigades and Front Line – experienced serious setbacks when some of their members began to collaborate with the police.

Phase 6: the pragmatic years, 1984–90

This last period is characterized by a profound change in the left-libertarian movements. When collective action reappeared in the eighties, after the "lull" in the late seventies, it had very different characteristics from those of the previous decade: the impact of socialist ideology waned with the decline of the New Left groups, and many of the organizational and cultural characteristics often described as peculiar to the New Social Movements emerged.

The most important event in this phase was the rise of the ecological movement with its pragmatic political orientation.[12] This movement developed a distinct identity, campaigning for the protection of nature without advocating measures that would inhibit technological progress. Its capacity for mass mobilization peaked when it attracted 150,000 people for a march in Rome after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. In general, however, the ecological movement did not seem to be interested in organizing national campaigns. It usually limited the scope of its actions, focusing on a neighborhood or other small area, although some attempts were made to coordinate campaigns at the city level. The campaigns were often defensive (protest against laws that would endanger the natural and/or artistic heritage), but occasionally took an offensive tack as well (for instance, the campaigns to establish and expand pedestrian areas in city centers). The environmental activists used mostly conventional forms (petitions and debates) but also innovative symbolic actions, such as "constructive" exemplary actions (e.g., working as volunteers to manage a park, organizing "work camps" in poor areas), or direct action (such as "harassing" hunters by making noise to alarm the birds). Members of the ecological movement never engaged in, or incited, violence.

The relationship between the left-libertarian movements and their allies was marked by pragmatism, and a frequent cooperation on single issues. The decentralized structure of the ecological movement – it had about 2,000 groups in 1987 – increased the opportunities for collaboration with the Old and the New Left. New political divisions emerged, evident in the appearance of various Green lists. A meticulous study of the organizational networks in the environmental movement has shown, however, that the ideological cleavages had very little effect on the coalition-building strategies of the movement organizations (Diani 1990).

In addition, the movements' attitude toward their opponents was moderate and open to bargaining on single issues. In order to obtain concrete results, members of local government elected on various Green party tickets were quick to join local governments of different political persuasions, occupying the newly created *assessorati all'ambiente* (local ministries for environmental issues). Virtually all environmental groups welcomed collaboration with institutional actors and accepted financial support from the state. Relations with the administration were defined as "constructive." Besides participating directly in local govern-

Table 2.1. *Protest and violence in Italy*

Phase	Main movements	Prevalent behavior	Forms of violence
Student movement 1967-9	Development of the student movement	Confrontational: disruptive protest for radical change; alliances with the Old Left	Frequent *spontaneous* violence
Revolutionary front 1970-3	Student movement (declining); emergence of the women's movement	Confrontational: violent repertoires with increasing competition with the Old Left	Increasingly organized *semimilitary* violence
"Riflusso" 1974-6	Mobilization of the women's movement; emergence of the youth movement	Confrontational: with tendencies toward countercultural retrieval; competition with Old Left	*Semimilitary* violence and occasional *underground* violence
Years of despair 1977-80	Short wave of mobilization of the youth movement; emergence of antinuclear movement	Confrontational: violent protest and countercultural retrieval; competition with Old Left	*Autonomous* violence and frequent *underground* violence
Anti-cruise campaign 1981-3	Mobilization of the peace movement; occasional remobilization of other movements	Bargaining: pragmatic attitudes, with some alliances with the Old Left	Some residual *underground* violence
Pragmatic years 1984-90	Ecological movement; remobilization of other movements in various protest campaigns	Bargaining: pragmatic negotiations with allies and opponents	Virtually no violence

ments and parliament, the environmentalists formed alliances with politicians from a wide spectrum of political parties to carry out single-issue campaigns (for instance, animal protection, phosphate-free detergents, and unleaded gasoline) (Diani 1988:167–75). During election campaigns the movement's press recommended candidates of various party lists who were sympathetic to the ecological issues.[13] The movement appeared satisfied with its policy success and the support gained on some issues, attested to by votes of up to 80 percent against nuclear energy in a national referendum in 1989. The countercultural dimension of the environmental movement was weak, limited to sensitizing the public to practical issues and developing alternative technical and scientific knowledge.

Other movements, especially the student movement and the women's movement (on the latter, see *Memoria* 1986), joined forces with the environmentalists in various campaigns, among them, the anti-Mafia campaign of the late eighties.

Both conventional and unconventional forms of action were used, but none were violent.

Thus, different forms of violence were present in all six phases of the evolution of the left-libertarian movement (Table 2.1). At the end of the sixties, in a phase characterized by the full development of the student movement, there were frequent episodes of defensive and loosely organized, spontaneous violence during the many campaigns of disruptive protest. In the phase of the revolutionary front, during the peak of the protest cycle in the early seventies as well as during the phase of *riflusso*, between 1974 and 1976, the confrontational attitudes widespread among the left-libertarian movements were accompanied by increasingly organized semimilitary violence and occasional episodes of underground violence. In the second half of the seventies, the years of despair were characterized by confrontational actions, widespread autonomous violence, and frequent underground violence. The dominant behavior changed in the eighties, with an increasing tendency to bargain. Although some underground violence was still present in the early eighties, since 1984 virtually no violence has developed in the left-libertarian family.

PROTEST AND VIOLENCE IN GERMANY: 1960–90

Even though the dominant image of Germany in the fifties and early sixties is one of a "consensual" society, political protest was already present prior to the emergence of the student movement. In particular, discontent with the authoritarian "Adenauer age" took two different forms. On the one hand, small groups of artists and intellectuals as well as some youth subcultures produced a critique of the dominant culture, expressing their discontent by adopting alternative symbols and life-styles. On the other hand, a coalition of various groups of different origins emerged, and thus constituted the so-called extraparliamentary opposition (Otto 1977, 1989; Fogt 1988). This coalition, composed of the left wing of the Social Democrats (SPD), some trade unionists, church groups, and the student organization Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS), was less interested in the cultural critique and more intrinsically political. Adopting a traditional Old Left discourse, mixed with themes of the Frankfurt School, these groups – coordinated in loose networks – organized campaigns such as the Easter Marches for peace and disarmament in the fifties and the Campaign for Disarmament and Democracy (which was primarily concerned with the approval of the legislation on the state of emergency) in the sixties (Otto 1977). If the cultural protests of the youth subcultures imitated the American model, their more political expressions took on a European character: in Germany, as in France and Italy, a small network of people formed around the anarchistic "International of the Situationists."

In the second half of the sixties, protest events in the universities introduced new forms of political participation and new collective identities. In Germany

as in Italy, the late sixties was a period of intense social and political protest (K. Brand, Büsser, and Rucht 1986; Roth 1985; Rolke 1986). The conflicts that began in the mid-sixties continued with various campaigns into the seventies and eighties. In the eighties, protest activities became less disruptive but more numerous.

Like the history of Italian social protest, which it parallels in significant ways, the story of the German social movements can be divided into six phases: the years of the student movement, from 1967 to 1969; the "long march inside the institutions," from 1970 to 1973; the years of disillusionment, from 1974 to 1976; the "German autumn," from 1977 to 1980; the anticruise campaign, from 1980 to 1983; and the pragmatic years, from 1984 to the nineties.

Phase 1: the student movement, 1967–9

The Free University in Berlin played a central role in the formation and emergence of the student movement.[14] In the mid-sixties campaigns protesting against an administrative decision to prevent students from inviting a left-wing speaker and disciplinary action against a professor triggered other expressions of discontent, particularly in reaction to the gradual restructuring of the Free University into a more conventional academic institution (Rabehl 1988:159–285). This stream of discontent merged with the campaign against the government proposal for a body of laws to be implemented in time of emergency, and with the growing criticism of American intervention in Vietnam. From Berlin, the student movement swiftly spread throughout the entire country.

The forms of actions used by the students in their first mobilization were quite innovative: from sit-ins to "wild-cat" marches in the city centers. Following the example of the American Free Speech Movement, the students – particularly active in Berlin – developed a strategy of "direct action" (K. Brand, Büsser, and Rucht 1986:65–6). The dominant position in the largest student organization, the SDS, was the limited violation of the rules (*begrenzte Regelverletzung*), that is, a conscious, nonviolent use of lawbreaking as a disruptive form of action. The more radical groups of the counterculture, such as the Kommune 1, became famous for their provocative use of mockery.[15] Their actions aimed at creating a "subversive environment" by revealing the manipulation of the media culture (Burns and van der Will 1988:106).

Spontaneous violence emerged when demonstrators occasionally clashed with the police (see Sack 1984:109–35). Among the student activists, calls for self-defense spread especially after the already mentioned killing of the student Benno Ohnesorg on June 2, 1967. In the spring of 1968, the attempted assassination of the student leader Rudi Dutschke[16] was the second event that made various forms of "violent defense" increasingly acceptable, at least to a part of the movement. Some activists formed paramilitary "marshal" bodies, such as the SDS's "leather jacket faction" (Fraser 1988:269), and, in 1968, began to

discuss the use of sabotage (Krebs 1988). After the attack on Dutschke, many members supported the acquisition of arms as a defense against the hostile environment they felt surrounded them. The majority of the SDS, however, favored mass action and condemned violent clashes between students and the police in Berlin in spring 1968 ("Eastern riots") as adventurism (Krebs 1988).

A few months later in Berlin students reacted to police attacks with organized violence in what was going to be known as the "Battle of Tegeler Weg." It was at this point that the SDS split, precisely on the issue of the "correct" use of force. Part of the movement saw violence as the only possible strategy in the confrontation with the state. Others defended the strategy of limited lawbreaking, where illegal actions had to take into account the "level of consciousness" of the masses. At the beginning of the seventies, former SDS members who supported the more radical strategy founded the underground group Red Army Fraction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF).

In summary, the student movement's attitude toward violence evolved from one of refusal, to the acceptance of spontaneous forms of self-defense, which sporadically became more organized. At the same time, the movement ideology radicalized. The criticism of the "bourgeois" value system intensified when the students encountered the (mainly proletarian) youth of the subcultural milieu. Communes and self-managed *Kindergarten* appeared, both clear signs of the search for alternative life-styles. The scope of the criticism rapidly broadened, addressing the bases of German postwar consensus: economic growth and anticommunism. For a short while, the students' hopes for a revolution – which was to be ignited by the rebellion of the exploited masses throughout the world – prevailed, together with a faith in the possibility of finding utopian alternative life-styles. In the meantime, confronted with what the students perceived as a "pogrom-like" attitude among some of the population as well as open criticism from the Old Left, the student movement acquired an autonomous and oppositional identity.

Phase 2: "the long march inside the institutions," 1970–3

A turning point for the movements came at the end of 1969 with the election of the social-liberal government coalition led by Willy Brandt.[17] The political shift coincided with a crisis in the mobilization capacity of the student movement that – after some victories in the university and various internal controversies on how to "continue the struggle" – lost momentum. During Brandt's tenure, however, the activists' hopes for social change did not prevent them from protesting: on the contrary, at this time there was a large number of both conventional and unconventional forms of collective action.

These were the years of the growth of urban protest and of the women's movement. Since 1970, there had been a rapid development of *Bürgerinitiativen*, that is, citizens' initiatives concerned with issues such as housing and public

transportation, high schools, and environmental pollution. At the beginning of the seventies, these initiatives tended to deal with single issues at the local level. Although former members of the student movement were active in them, these groups refused any utopian or revolutionary ideology; they instead articulated precise complaints and made proposals as to how to "improve the quality of life" in a neighborhood or a village (K. Brand et al. 1986:89–92). As for their repertoires, the *Bürgerinitiativen* combined relatively conventional forms of action with unconventional and disruptive protests, but the latter were very rarely violent. The usual evolution of protest campaigns on environmental or urban problems was the following:

> The first stage common to nearly all local *Bürgerinitiativen* is defined by the need to gain publicity for the purpose of expanding the circle of sympathizers and establishing the identity of the initiative in the mind of the addressee. Petitions, leaflets, posters, information stands, letters and articles in the local press are just some of the tried and tested means of preparing the ground. When the initiative has gathered sufficient momentum and support it is then possible to embark on a second stage where more demonstrative forms of actions such as rallies and mass meetings may be contemplated. When methods of persuasion and public pressure fail to have the desired effect, then often obstructionist tactics are deployed. In particular, *Bürgerinitiativen* have frequently and not without success recourse to the courts in order to contest local or state authorities' decisions, especially within the field of urban planning. Finally, if all else failed, some action groups have recourse to a strategy of disruption and civil disobedience, engaging in activities such as the occupation of building sites, squats, sit-down strikes in town centers, etc. (Burns and van der Will 1988:171)

As the same observers stated, however, "there is little doubt that for virtually all members of Bürgerinitiativen *acts of violence transcend the boundaries of what they considered as legitimate*" (Burns and van der Will 1988:177, emphasis added).

It was also in this period that the women's movement grew progressively stronger. After the first feminist actions in the late sixties inside the student movement, in 1970 the group "Frauenaktion 70" started a protest campaign asking for the reform of the abortion law. During this campaign – which eventually pushed the *Bundestag* to pass a new, more liberal law in 1974 – the forms of action ranged from declarations signed by well-known women proclaiming that they had undergone an abortion[18] to a wave of mass demonstrations. Although the women's issues immediately found support in the Old Left, the German women's movement in this period was characterized by the increasing influence of a radical wing (*der feministischer Feminismus*) and the development of lesbian groups (K. Brand et al. 1986:130).

Protest spread to different groups within the society but, in contrast to the Italian case, there were only very occasional alliances between the working class and the left-libertarian movements. The student organizations, in particular the SDS, had already made some overtures to the working class, but without success: "SDS's attempt to set up neighbourhood-based groups was a failure. The

adult population remained hostile, working-class youth tended to drift in and out, and the radicals found themselves isolated'' (Fraser 1988:267). After the decline of the student movement, the attempt was repeated by some New Left organizations, but once again the hope to mobilize the working class remained unfulfilled.

Disillusioned by the working class, a few radical activists in search of a new constituency adopted the *Randgruppenstrategie*, looking for potential revolutionaries among the marginalized members of society (K. Brand et al. 1986:70). These activists often expressed admiration for what they perceived as the existential ''rebellion'' of petty criminals, drug addicts, and dropouts. In this environment, some events did escalate into street battles between activists and the police – for instance, when the police intervened to clear squatters from houses in Frankfurt or arrested members of the Berlin counterculture.[19] On these occasions, the activists belonging to the more radical groups organized themselves and clashed with police using stones or Molotov cocktails. An extensive theorizing on the need to use violence against a ''fascist'' state also developed in those groups that started to mobilize on prisoners' conditions, and in particular on the conditions of ''political'' prisoners. As we will see later, it was from these subcultures that the underground organizations drew many of their recruits.

During this period, then, the violent groups in Germany consisted of very small networks of militants, with each network operating independently of the others, and made up of small cliques of friends[20] – often living together in small communes. In Berlin, which was supposed to be the very center of the movement, the radicals were, between 1969 and 1970, never more than a few dozen (Claessens and de Ahna 1982:106–29, 161–3). Thus, in this period organized violence was much less widespread in Germany than in Italy.

Phase 3: the years of disillusionment, 1974–6

The years 1974–5 were another turning point (K. Brand et al. 1986:79). The succession of Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt to the office of chancellor accelerated the progressive loss of confidence in the ''long march inside the institution.'' In the left-libertarian movements the more pragmatic and optimistic attitudes of the previous years lost momentum.

A major consequence of these changes was that during this period a large number of former activists abandoned the more visible forms of protest and returned to private life. After the Constitutional Court rejected the new law on abortion in 1975,[21] the women's movement, for example, abandoned its more political themes and proclaimed a ''retreat'' into private life (K. Brand et al. 1986:131). According to the ideology of radical feminism that developed at that time, it was ''patriarchal culture'' and not capitalism that was responsible for the women's oppression – and this patriarchal culture had ''even contaminated

the discourse of the women's movement in so far as certain sections of it continue to operate with 'patriarchal classifications' such as 'left' and 'right'" (Burns and van der Will 1988:142). For various of the tiny women's groups that flourished in this period, the first aim was self-liberation, which in turn required the creation of an autonomous counterculture. Women's centers of various types (houses for women, support groups, cultural groups) spread out in small towns and the large cities (Knafla and Kulke 1991:99–101). The organizational structure of the women's movement was highly decentralized, with women's magazines and bookshops providing places for encounters and cultural exchange. It was not, however, the only movement that adopted this "back to everyday life" strategy. Together with the women's groups, youth, ecological, and antinuclear initiatives formed a movement's "milieu": a patchwork of self-help groups, cooperatives, and communes (Roth 1987, 1991).

A second consequence of the disillusionment with political reform was a shift in the forms of action. While a large portion of the movements abandoned politics and built a "second culture," political protest became more radical. From the ideological viewpoint, various activists adopted a "fundamentalist" attitude, rejecting the *Modell Deutschland* proposed by the Social Democrats. The more confrontational stance taken by the government was denounced as a sign of fascism. There followed a series of *Bürgerinitiativen* to promote "democracy and basic rights," and in spring 1976, 14,000 people attended a national conference against repression. In this situation, groups formed to protest against the policy of isolating the "political prisoners" in the new, high-security prison wings. Hundreds of activists visited prisoners and campaigned against the harsh conditions under which they were kept. Out of solidarity with the few dozen imprisoned militants of the underground, some members of these groups joined clandestine organizations themselves. Some of their more sensational actions – such as the takeover of the German Embassy in Stockholm in 1975 – increased the fear of political violence both within the political elite and among the population at large.

As regards protest repertoires, there was some escalation especially during the ongoing campaigns against the construction of nuclear plants. In the various sites where nuclear plants were planned, protest activities were carried out by a large coalition of local groups, including the various splinter groups developed in the wake of the student movement. The majority of these groups still rejected the use of violence, but – after the failure of the more conventional forms of action – they resorted to forms of civil disobedience, such as the occupation of sites earmarked for the construction of nuclear plants. Although the organizers intended these actions to be *gewaltfrei* (nonviolent), police intervention sometimes led to confrontations. This occurred especially where the radical groups of the New Left – such as the Marxist-Leninist *K-Gruppen* or the anarchistic *Spontis* – were particularly strong.

Phase 4: the German autumn, 1977–80

The tendencies toward a more confrontational stance, begun in 1974, fully developed in 1977 (K. Brand et al. 1986:95). Faced with an economic recession, the coalition government formed by Social Democrats and Liberals (FDP), with the support of the trade unions, offered no more than a weak "politics of austerity." In 1977, following a wave of terrorist acts – culminating in the assassination of the federal general prosecutor Siegfried Buback and the banker Jürgen Ponto, the kidnapping and killing of the president of the Association of German Industrialists, Hanns Martin Schleyer,[22] and the hijacking of a Lufthansa airplane by Palestinian terrorists – the government passed new antiterrorist laws.[23] The increasing power given to the police deepened the already existing pessimism of the leftist movement activists, who held the *Modell Deutschland* responsible for creating the atmosphere of a "witch hunt."[24] Actions on environmental issues and the antinuclear campaigns were now framed in a discourse of a "last defense" against the "colonization of the internal world" and the destruction of the very conditions of survival. Although issues raised by the women's movement had by this time made an impression on the SPD and the trade unions (with the creation of women's groups in the SPD and in the trade unions), most feminist activists maintained their strategy of retreat into private life. The movement activists saw the political system as a de facto all-party coalition. The state appeared as increasingly authoritarian. According to many movement activists, the government wanted a *Verpolizeilichung*, or police repression of the social conflict.

Other events strengthened the activists' image of an increasingly repressive and authoritarian state. In autumn 1977, the suicides of three imprisoned RAF leaders, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe, had a dramatic symbolic impact on the activists, who believed that the three prisoners had been killed by secret services. In the same period the so-called Mescalero affair [25] also polarized public opinion. The economic crisis and increasing environmental pollution generated antimodernist sentiments and some antirationalist attitudes, expressed in the boom of "alternative" religions, holistic world views, and spiritualism (K. Brand 1990:33–5).

In this rather tense atmosphere, more movement groups – among them, most of the women's groups – abandoned political campaigns for countercultural forms of action. A broad spectrum of local political groups and enterprises, sharing an antistate discourse, formed what was a typically German phenomenon: an "alternative" sector, which grew progressively larger in the following years (K. Brand et al. 1986:177), and took the form of initiatives built on decentralized networks, loosely coordinated at the city, state, or federal level. Movement organizations expressed their mistrust of the state by refusing to accept offers of public financial support, which they saw as an attempt at cooptation and integration. Thus, the movements gradually developed an autono-

mous infrastructure. In this environment, the Green Party was founded at the end of the seventies.

As regards the forms of actions, a small, marginal wing of the left-libertarian movements became more and more committed to radical repertoires, which often included spontaneous and sporadically semimilitary types of violence. In comparison with the Italian case, violence remained more localized, but was more widespread than in the first half of the decade. Episodes of violence generally occurred during the defense of occupations – youth centers, squatted housing, and nuclear sites – against massive interventions by the police. The most radical groups were in fact active inside the various initiatives of the antinuclear movement (Oppeln 1989; Nelkin and Pollak 1981), such as the campaign against the building of nuclear plants in Brokdorf, Grohnde, Kalkar, and Gorleben. The nonviolent strategy of the *Bürgerinitiativen* prevailed, thus containing the violence. But where the radical splinter groups of the New Left were stronger – as, for instance, in Brokdorf – they reacted to massive police intervention with physical confrontations. The aggressive attitudes of both the militant wing of the movements and the police created serious problems for the *gewaltfreie Bürgerinitiativen.* On the one hand, and especially after the first experiences with violence, "It became for the mass of the citizen initiatives clear that the paramilitary conflict with a well-equipped and flexible police not only did not open any perspective, but also discredited citizen initiatives in front of the public opinion" (K. Brand et al. 1988:97). On the other hand, however, at various mass demonstrations those in the peaceful majority of the movements were caught up in the fights between militant groups and the police, and often found themselves victims of police brutality (for a few examples, see Burns and van der Will 1988:199). The symbolic effect of police intervention thus contributed to the climate of the German autumn. The recourse to police power produced even greater disillusionment among activists when it was directed at the nonviolent groups using civil disobedience and the mass movements that mobilized hundreds of thousands, for instance, in Hannover in 1979 and Brokdorf in 1981, as well as in the areas where nuclear plants were located.

Phase 5: the anticruise campaign, 1981–3

In the early eighties the peace movement flourished, in Germany as in Italy, with the campaign against the deployment of cruise missiles in Europe (Leif 1990; Rochon 1988; Schmitt 1991; Wasmuth 1991). Although the pessimism of earlier years survived, a new positive emphasis on political actions characterized this period. The peace movement was indeed a very heterogeneous coalition of different groups such as the various committees related to the German Communist Party (DKP), organizations of the Old Left (including the left wing of the SPD and the trade unions), groups near to the Greens, Christian initiatives, women's groups, autonomous groups, and the more radical "anti-imperialist"

fringes (K. Brandt et al. 1986:220–3). The issue of peace was framed in a different way in order to gain support among the ecologists – whose catchword was ecological peace – as well as among those concerned with poverty in the Third World, whose slogan "Nuclear weapons kill without being fired" called attention to the enormous costs of the arms race (Burns and van der Will 1988: 227). Relying on the extensive alternative structure established by previous movements and the participation of both religious groups and intellectuals, the movement against the deployment of nuclear missiles mobilized the largest number of demonstrators in the history of postwar Germany. The protest campaign peaked with mass marches of 300,000 people in the fall of 1981 in Bonn, and of about 500,000 people during various activities surrounding the Easter marches in 1982. In 1983–84, an umbrella organization for peace collected 5 million signatures against the deployment of cruise missiles in Europe.

The peace movement represented a new turning point, not only because of its capacity for mass mobilization, but also because it accelerated the criticism of violence and contributed to an increasing use of civil disobedience. Although some groups – such as the Antiimperialistische Gruppen – sympathized with the "armed struggle," the peace movement defended the *Prinzip der Gewaltlosigkeit* (nonviolence). In all the different political discourses of the heterogeneous movement's components, the very characteristics of the issue of "peace" were directly associated with nonviolent means. The forms of action used by the peace movement were in fact innovative – human chains, "radial marches," "die-ins," or religious sit-ins – but peaceful.

The campaign against the deployment of the cruise missiles together with the emergence of the Greens also helped spread nonviolent tactics. Both the peace movement and the Greens built bridges between the "alternative" milieu and the "normal" nonactivist citizens. Moreover, they demonstrated that it was possible for protestors to gain political influence by using the widespread networks and the large infrastructure built up during various years to organize on single-issue campaigns. If the partial defeat of the peace movement – the government decided to deploy the missiles after all – produced frustration, the positive, optimistic legacies of the campaign proved more enduring.

In the same period a radical minority survived but was more and more isolated in the left-libertarian movements. It consisted of a new generation of political activists, often very young people who had joined the marginal subcultures in some of Germany's large cities. Conflicts radicalized in particular around certain symbolic places, such as Kreuzberg, a Berlin district with the highest concentration of squatted houses in Germany, and a site where an extension of the Frankfurt airport was planned. It was at this time that the German *Autonomen* emerged. They espoused a rather vague anarchistic and anti-imperialist ideology, and were able to mobilize a few hundred militants on various occasions. More active in attracting the "youth" than the movement of the late sixties had been,

the *Autonomen* tended to recruit in the more run-down neighborhoods of the German cities, among marginal and unemployed youth. One of the forms of protest often used by the youth movement of the early eighties was squatting in protest against housing problems, gentrification, and lack of social infrastructures. This tactic, which was not violent per se, caused a radicalization, especially where "massive police interventions, using batons and water cannons, cleared squatted houses or tried to prevent others from being squatted" (K. Brand et al. 1986:200).

Phase 6: the pragmatic years, 1984–90

Despite the decline of the peace movement after 1983, the German left-libertarian movements reached and have maintained a very high capacity for mobilization (in a comparative perspective, see Koopmans 1992:75; see also Koopmans 1991). Social movements now emerge in conflicts on a very wide range of issues: from noise pollution caused by low-flying airplanes to the national census; from the conference of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Berlin to Ronald Reagan's visit to West Germany (Gerhards 1991; Gerhards and Rucht 1991). The repertoire of action emphasizes more and more the symbolic messages and aims to convince the public rather than to threaten observers. Together with symbolism, "strength of the numbers" is also emphasized. For instance, the mobilization capacity in antinuclear protest remains very high: in 1986, about 50,000 protestors participated in antinuclear marches in Wackersdorf and Brokdorf, and 880,000 people signed a petition against the nuclear reprocessing plant proposed for Wackersdorf. More recently, hundreds of thousands attended marches in protest against the Gulf War (in the beginning of 1991) and racist attacks against immigrants (at the end of 1992). The organizational structure of the left-libertarian movement has become more and more specialized. Professionally organized movement infrastructures – such as newspapers, publishing houses, and cinemas – have helped the development of tight networks of movement sympathizers, which, in turn, stimulate the growth of movement infrastructures. Protest campaigns are thus easy to organize, and the various social movements find numerous channels to voice their challenges to the established order.

The discourse within which these protests are framed has become less and less the "attack on the system" and more and more the "search for a better solution." Ideology has become deradicalized, as have the repertoires of action. The social movements became, in fact, a "normal phenomenon" (Roth and Rucht 1991:12; see also Fuchs 1990). Even the Greens[26] renounced most of their innovative, nonhierarchical organizational ideology and lost their image as an "antiparty party." Although in the early eighties many movement groups refused public subsidies in order to avoid cooptation, in the late eighties, most

of the movement organizations eagerly accepted financial help from the state. Attitudes have become in a way more "constructive": throughout the eighties, self-help groups flourished in the social service sector together with a number of alternative cooperative enterprises.

Regardless – or perhaps even because – of this institutionalization of the left-libertarian movements, some radical fringe groups survive. The increasingly isolated *Autonomen* have tended to become more and more violent. In the eighties, various autonomous groups gained strength especially from the radicalization of some long-lasting conflicts with high symbolic meaning, such as those against the nuclear power plant in Wackersdorf, the construction of a new runway for Frankfurt airport, and police interventions against squatters in the Hafenstrasse in Hamburg. The most radical wing of the *Autonomen* specializes in the armed defense of squatted houses against neo-Nazis and the police, and in fights with the police at public marches. In contrast to Italy, where the *servizi d'ordine* of the New Left was a well-established structure, members of the German *Autonomen* were never able to maintain an even minimal degree of coordination – as some of them self-critically admitted (Busch 1989; Geronimo 1990). And whereas in Italy the militance of the autonomous collective often opened the way to the underground, in Germany only very few among, first, the *Spontis* and, later, the *Autonomen* took this route. Although split internally and often in deep crisis, they still periodically organize gatherings, which often end up in riotlike violence, and carry out actions of sabotage, targeting not only the police or the neo-Nazis but even the Left, including the movement initiatives.[27]

Table 2.2 gives a schematic overview of the main characteristics of social movements' behaviors in the left-libertarian family in Germany. Given our periodization of the evolution of violence, we can observe that, at the end of the sixties, the student movement was characterized by confrontational behavior and the presence of defensive, spontaneous violence. In the early seventies, instead, the long march inside the institutions was accompanied by the prevalence of bargaining attitudes, with only occasional semimilitary and underground violence. Confrontational attitudes reemerged in the phase of disillusionment, in the mid-seventies, but violence (present especially in its clandestine form) was rare. In the next phase, instead, during the difficult years following the German autumn, while the dominant behavior of the left-libertarian movement became more confrontational, there was some autonomous violence as well as underground violence. In the early eighties, although the dominant behavior of the movement family became more and more oriented to bargaining, autonomous violence became more widespread – in particular, in the beginning of the decade, during the evolution of the peace movement – while some underground violence was still present. Even in the last phase, during the more pragmatic years, autonomous and underground violence, although declining, did not disappear.

Table 2.2. *Protest and violence in Germany*

Phase	Main movements	Prevalent behavior	Forms of violence
Student movement 1967-9	Development of the student movement	Confrontational: disruptive challenges to the political elites; sense of isolation	Some *spontaneous* violence
Long march in the institutions 1970-3	Latency of the student movement; development of women's and urban movements	Bargaining: moderate tactics and alliances with the Old Left	Little *semimilitary* violence; occasional *underground* violence
Disillusions 1974-6	Development of an "alternative sector" (women's, ecological, youth movements, etc.)	Confrontational: tendencies toward countercultural retrieval; competition with Old Left	Occasional acts of *underground* violence
The German Autumn 1977-80	Development of the antinuclear movement and youth movement	Confrontational: countercultural retrieval and isolation	Some *autonomous* violence; occasional *underground* violence
Anti-cruise campaign 1981-3	Mobilization of the peace movement; occasional remobilization of other movements	Bargaining: pragmatic attitudes, with some alliances with the Old Left	Increasing *autonomous* violence; some residual *underground* violence
Pragmatic years 1984-90	Ecological and youth movements; remobilization of other movements in various protest campaigns	Bargaining: pragmatic negotiations with allies and opponents	Little *autonomous* violence and little *underground* violence

A COMPARISON OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ITALY AND GERMANY

The foregoing descriptions provide a basis for a systematic comparison of political violence in Italy and Germany. Such a comparison reveals both marked similarities and significant differences.

Comparing the individual social movements that arose in each country, one is struck by the degree to which *their overall development* coincided. Not only did the same movements emerge and grow in both countries, but also their "timing" was very similar. As well as in other Western countries (Touraine 1968; Rootes 1980, 1983), in both Italy and Germany the first new movement to appear was the student movement, which peaked in 1968 in both countries, although it lasted longer in Italy while declining rapidly in Germany. Further-

more, the Italian and German student movements imported protest techniques developed by the American civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. In both countries the women's movements emerged next and attained their greatest political visibility around the mid-seventies with the campaign to liberalize abortion policy. The repertoire of the Italian and German women's movements also evolved along parallel lines, from the use of civil disobedience in the first half of the seventies to the formation of consciousness-raising groups as the movement turned in upon itself in the second half of the decade. Antinuclear protest spread throughout both countries in the mid-seventies (albeit with much greater intensity in Germany), providing the emerging environmental organizations with their first opportunity to mobilize. Finally, between 1981 and 1983, the peace movement in both Italy and Germany organized massive and largely nonviolent actions against the deployment of cruise missiles. Unfortunately, due to a lack of comparative research, this almost complete year-by-year coincidence in the evolution of all four social movements in Italy and Germany has been largely ignored.

Similarities can also be observed in the movements' attitudes to the use of violent repertoires. At the end of the sixties, Italian and German protestors viewed the role of violence in much the same way: a sometimes necessary response to attacks by political adversaries. Similarly, the ideological positions of the Italian and German movement organizations that survived the decline of the student movement were very close. Most of them viewed violence as intrinsic to political change. By and large, the position of the New Left was that the conservative forces would always resort to violence if there was any risk that the working class might come to power. Thus the need for a revolution went largely unchallenged.

In both countries in the mid-seventies semimilitary violence was criticized by two different tendencies, which often for a short time coexisted within the same organizations of the New Left: whereas one wing pleaded for tactical moderation, another wing rejected the bureaucratized organizational forms of the past, and developed a model of autonomous violence based on a decentralized structure of small and independent groups using violence as a means of expression rather than as an instrument in the political struggle. In Italy and Germany, this "symbolic violence" prevailed in the radical wing of the movements in the second half of the seventies, when loosely structured, poorly coordinated, and volatile base-groups spread in both countries. The ideology of these groups emphasized spontaneous rebellion against the institutional control of everyday life. In both countries, these radical groups considered militance as an integral part of the process of liberation rather than as a means with which to achieve it. Both in Italy and in Germany, terrorist campaigns poisoned the political debate, and caused a crisis among the movements' activists.

In the eighties, pragmatic attitudes and nonviolent repertoires started to dominate the left-libertarian movement families. Tiny terrorist organizations survived in both countries, but were completely isolated and their activities limited to a few actions a year.

Differences also existed between the Italian and German radicals. Although spontaneous forms of violence developed to a comparable extent in both countries in the late sixties, in the first half of the seventies the semiorganized violence of the New Left was much more prevalent in Italy than in Germany. This difference also affected the autonomous violence of the late seventies. As a byproduct of the decline of the more radical wing of the New Left, the Italian autonomous groups had a much broader base and were more highly structured than their German counterparts. Indeed, former New Left organizers succeeded – albeit for a short time – in giving a fairly centralized structure to at least one wing of the Italian *Autonomia*. Clandestine violence was also much more widespread in Italy than in Germany, at least in the seventies.

Thus, we can make various general observations on the basis of the preceding comparisons. First, political violence was perceived as a relevant problem in both Italy and Germany. Second, in both countries violence appeared in a variety of different forms and on various different levels, culminating in political assassinations. Spontaneous violence prevailed in the student movement; in the early seventies, semimilitary violence developed – particularly in Italy – followed by autonomous violence; and clandestine violence was a constant throughout the seventies and eighties. Third, the forms of violence evolved similarly in both countries: first used only occasionally and only for defense; then organized by small "vanguards"; and, finally, cultivated in the episodes of violence carried out by autonomous groups.

At the same time, violence was much less widespread in Germany than in Italy, particularly in the first half of the seventies. After the student movement and its revolutionary discourse waned in Germany, the activists' hopes for achieving reform seemed to become a more concrete possibility during the Brandt administration, between 1970 and 1974. The social movements were thus oriented primarily toward cooperation or bargaining with the leftist party in power. The forms of action used were relatively moderate, although (as in Italy in the same period) violence occurred sporadically in conflicts involving, for example, house squatting. In Italy, however, the seventies were characterized by confrontational behavior. One other noteworthy difference between Italy and Germany is that, in the latter, the emergence of the spontaneous violence of the "autonomous" groups took place much later than in Italy. In general, there was an important difference in the impact – marked in Italy, slight in Germany – that these groups had on the left-libertarian movements.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, PROTEST, AND VIOLENCE: SOME FIRST OBSERVATIONS

Given the historical background of the course of violence, protest, and movement families in Italy and Germany over the past thirty years, we can examine the internal relationships between the three phenomena. First, we can reflect on the relationships between violence and the prevailing behavior in the left-libertarian families in the two countries. Second, we can ask ourselves whether the levels of mobilization appear to be in any way related to the development of political violence.

Political violence and social movements' characteristics

Are some movements more violence-prone than others? If so, what movements' characteristics influence their attitudes toward violence? Do the different forms of violence follow different dynamics? Our periodizations of the left-libertarian movements in Italy and Germany provide some material to discuss these questions.

A first set of observations refers to the *dominant world views* in the movement family. How does ideology influence the actual use of violence? And which ideologies provide "better" justifications for violence? Our description has shown, first of all, that *violence was accompanied by ideologies containing its justification.* Referring to our distinction between the world views of the New Left and the New Social Movement, we can add that *the New Left world views were more favorable to the development of violence, and in particular the "semimilitary" and "clandestine" forms of violence.* One significant difference between Italy and Germany, particularly in the seventies, touches on the development of New Left as opposed to New Social Movements frames of meaning. In Italy the impact of the New Left, with its class struggle orientation, was more pervasive and longer lasting than in Germany, where class-struggle frames of meaning soon lost relevance and the workers could not be reached. This was reflected in both the degree and forms of action taken. Although the New Social Movement world views provide less justifications for the use of violence, it seems that the most "fundamentalist" expressions of the New Social Movements could slip in "autonomous" forms of violence.

We also saw, however, that *radical ideologies had often been "available" long before they were actually applied to justify violent actions.* If we want to explain violent behavior, we have therefore to look more at the actual behavior, rather than at the movement ideologies. We can start by observing that the *evolution of the prevailing behavior of the left-libertarian movements* followed a similar course in the two countries. In the sixties, both the Italian and German student movements were characterized by confrontational behavior and disruptive actions, which included episodes of mass violence. Conflicts were framed

in a revolutionary perspective and inspired by an optimism for the future and the likelihood of fundamental political change. In the second half of the seventies, a confrontational attitude predominated in both countries and violence spread, as did a generally defensive and pessimistic attitude. Later on, in both Italy and Germany, the peace movements contributed to the development of nonviolent tactics. Accordingly, although still formed in a defensive ideology, protest tactics slowly deradicalized. In the eighties, bargaining attitudes developed in the social movements, in Italy with the decline of the New Left organizations and in Germany after the creation of the Green Party in 1980.

One major difference between the two countries, however, was the phase of deradicalization in Germany during the first half of the seventies, when the change in national government encouraged movement activists to proclaim the "long march inside the institutions." In contrast, the left-libertarian movements in Italy were still inspired by the hopes for a "revolution" and still resorting to confrontational behavior.

A tentative conclusion is that, in general, *political violence tends to spread when the dominant behavior of the left-libertarian movements is more confrontational.* However, within this general framework the different forms of violence, defined in the introductory chapter, react in different ways. First of all, the most "spontaneous" forms of violence developed alongside confrontational attitudes, as demonstrated by both the Italian and German student movements. Second, the differences between Italy and Germany in the second phase – that is, at the beginning of the seventies – indicate that the "semimilitary" forms of violence were particularly sensitive to the development of confrontational behavior. In Italy, this form of violence developed inside movements characterized by highly confrontational behavior, whereas in Germany the moderate behavior of the movements hindered the diffusion of semimilitary forms of violence. The "autonomous" forms of violence seemed to be, instead, less dependent on the dominant behaviors. In fact, if in Italy they exploded in the very tense climate of the second half of the seventies, in Germany they spread during the moderate eighties. Fourth, "clandestine" forms of violence seem to be even less influenced by the dominant behavior of the movements than the spontaneous and semimilitary forms. The dominant behavior seems to have, moreover, less of an impact on the short-term evolution of violence – that is, violence tends to follow its own internal dynamic.

Some additional observations emerge if we compare the evolution of violence with the presence of *instrumental versus symbolic strategies.* In principle, we can argue that instrumental movements are more likely to become violent because they have to "fight" with the external world in order to impose their aims. Conversely, one can also argue that subcultural movements are more likely to become violent because they tend to isolate themselves from society and, therefore, to develop their own, alternative normative system. If we look at our cases, we can observe that *violence developed especially in the more instru-*

mental components of the movements. If we look, however, at both Italy and Germany in the second half of the seventies, we notice that *the radicalization in the cultural strategies coincided with the radicalization in the instrumental strategies.* In particular, it seems that the "autonomous" forms of violence were particularly sensitive to the development of a pessimistic ideology. Since, as we observed, the "autonomous" use of violence was more symbolic than instrumental, it is understandable that it was influenced by the cultural climate.

Political violence and cycles of protest

We looked until now at the relationship between the movements' characteristics and violence. We should not forget, however, that violence evolves not only inside the left-libertarian movement family, but also during cycles of protest, in which different movement families interact, while the mobilization spreads to different groups of the population, peaks, and then declines. How, then, does political violence correlate with the different phases of mobilization during protest cycles? Theoretically, there is reason to anticipate different types of correlation. As for the timing of violence in a protest cycle, we could expect there to be more violence at the beginning of the cycle, when the challengers have to fight for access to the polity; however, it may also be true that violence increases as mobilization declines, as those who are dissatisfied with protest outcomes try to compensate for the "reduction in numbers" with increased radicalism. As for the dimension of mobilization, there is reason to believe that violence increases when a wave of mobilization is more widespread, thus offering more opportunities for escalations; conversely, however, one could also argue that the smaller the mobilization, the more isolated the activists feel, and the greater the temptation to resort to more radical means of action.

As already mentioned, we could only give some qualitative information on the level of mobilization since no event series was available for the whole period in either of the two countries. At this point, however, we can combine our qualitative information with the results of two quantitative studies dealing respectively with Italy between 1966 and 1973 (della Porta and Tarrow 1986), and Germany between 1969 and 1989 (Koopmans 1992). Analyzing the evolution of violent forms of action in Italy, della Porta and Tarrow concluded that

> The incidence of political violence is strictly connected with collective action in at least two ways. First, it grew in total numbers during the whole cycle. Second, its percentage weight was average in the beginning, low during the upswing, and high in the declining period of the protest wave. Violent forms were, therefore, part of the protest repertoire from the very beginning and their presence tended to grow in total numbers during the whole cycle. But it was when the wave of collective action declined that their percentage distribution increased. (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:616; see also Tarrow 1990b)

Moreover, after distinguishing different forms of violence according to the degree of violence used, they observed that

Violence tends to appear from the very beginning of a protest cycle. In this phase, it is usually represented by less purposive forms of action and it is used by large groups of protesters. Clashes with adversaries or police during mass actions are the more widely diffused types of political violence during the height of the cycle and decline at its end. In the last phase, aggression carried out by small groups of militants and direct attacks on persons become more frequent. The more dramatic forms of violence rise when the mass phase of the protest cycle declines. To put it differently, as mass mobilization winds down, political violence rises in magnitude and intensity. (della Porta and Tarrow 1986: 620)

Koopmans singled out similar developments in two German waves of protest, at the end of the sixties and at the beginning of the eighties. Comparing the development of demonstrative forms with all radical actions (including both nonviolent confrontational forms and violence), Koopmans's study shows that, in each of the two waves,

The action repertoire was relatively radical in the initial periods of rapid expansions, around 1968 and 1981. Subsequently, these radical forms declined, while the number of demostrative actions continued to increase, reaching their peak in 1972 and 1983. After this period of moderation, the number of demonstrative actions decreased, and simultaneously radical actions made a come-back, although in both waves they did not reach the level of the first peak of disruption. (Koopmans 1992:141)

The evolution of the different forms of violence in Germany appears to be very similar to that observed in Italy. As Koopmans remarked:

Within the category of radical events, too, shifts in the action repertoire are discernible in the course of the two waves, most clearly so in the second one. Non-violent forms of disruption, such as occupations and blockades, and to a lesser extent also light forms of violence, such as violent demonstrations, dominated in the first period of radicalization around 1981. In the second radical phase after 1985, the number of such actions again increased to some extent, but the rise of heavy forms of small group violence (bombs, arson, sabotage, violence against people) was much stronger. Moreover, within the category of heavy violence, the increase was particularly pronounced for violence against people. Of the events with heavy violence in the period 1980–1984, only 4% involved violence against people, whereas in the period since 1985 this was the case in 25% of the events. (Koopmans 1992:142)

By and large, our qualitative descriptions fit the model provided by the quantitative studies. *In both Italy and Germany, protest cycles started with symbolically innovative tactics, and then shifted to mass action, which sometimes escalated into violence. When mass mobilization declined, the movements went back to more institutional forms of collective action, whereas small groups resorted to more organized forms of violence.*

Confirming this general tendency, our historical and cross-national perspective allows us to notice some *relevant differences* between the two countries and the different periods. After the first wave of protest in the late sixties, violence became much more widespread in Italy than in Germany. By contrast, in the eighties violence was more widespread in Germany than in Italy. In general,

there was a higher level of violence in Italy than in Germany. In a historical perspective, we should add that whereas in the early seventies violence took semimilitary and clandestine forms, in the late seventies and in the eighties it was autonomous violence that prevailed. And the level of violence that followed the decline of the student movement, in particular in Italy, was much higher than, for instance, that following the decline of the peace movement.

Thus, we have seen that there is a very close relationship between the development of protest cycles, social movement characteristics, and various forms of violence. Violence spread during the decline of the protest cycles, especially when the prevailing behavior of the movement families was more confrontational and the political culture polarized. Our task is however far from accomplished. Indeed, were we to limit ourselves to observing these relationships, we would have merely changed the question, from "Why violence?" to "Why violence inside social movements" and "during cycles of protest?" In order to explain political violence, we have to look at the various dynamics of social movements during protest cycles and, in particular, at the interaction between the different political actors, both inside and outside the movement family. The following chapter thus argues that the state reactions to protest, and in particular the policing of protest, have had an enormous impact on the evolution of protest and social movements and, therefore, on political violence as well.

3

Violence and the political system: the policing of protest

If political violence is – as I argued in the previous chapter – related to cycles of protest and the evolution of social movements, causal explanations for its development have to be found in the processes and structures that more directly affect social movements and protest. This chapter is devoted to the influence of the political system on protest escalation. Like other features of social movements, protest repertoires – and therefore violence – are related to contextual, macro-variables. As mentioned in Chapter 1, several hypotheses on the preconditions for violence referred to political variables. Blocked political systems and state delegitimation are explanations often quoted to account for both the Italian and German terrorism.

The relationship between social movements and the state is a most crucial theme for the understanding of collective action. Long neglected, it acquired a new relevance with the development of the "political process" approach to social movements (Tilly 1978, 1984; McAdam 1982). Within this approach, as I already observed, the political opportunity structure (POS) (Eisinger 1973; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1983) is the most inclusive concept we have for dealing with the external, political conditions for protest. In this chapter, I discuss political opportunities for social movements in Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II, focusing on protest policing and its effect on the action repertoires of social movements.

PROTEST POLICING AS A BAROMETER OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES: AN INTRODUCTION

One specific aspect of state response to protest is the *policing of protest*, which I define as *the police handling of protest events* – a more neutral description for what protestors usually refer to as "repression" and the state as "law and order." Although the variable "repression" is included in several explanatory models on insurgencies and revolutions, protest policing has received little attention in the research on contemporary social movements in Western democ-

racies as well as in studies on police. Although in his influential theoretical work Charles Tilly has stressed the relevance of governmental repression for social movements (Tilly 1978:101–6 in particular), empirical studies on the relationship between police and protest are still rare.[1] By analyzing protest policing I hope to fill this gap, but also to indicate possible solutions for some problems related to the research on political opportunities.

First of all, to focus on *one single variable* can be a promising complement to those analyses aimed at providing complex models on political opportunities and their effects on various aspects of the state response. Whereas the first studies on political opportunities had focused on a few variables,[2] in the eighties several scholars have referred to the POS concept in a number of case studies and cross-national comparisons, often adding new variables to the original set (in particular, K. Brand 1985; Kitschelt 1986; Rucht 1994:294–312; Kriesi 1991). These theoretical efforts have enlarged the explanatory capacity of the concept but reduced its specificity. Especially in cross-national comparative studies, it is very difficult to handle such a high number of variables and assess their explanatory power properly. Focusing on an in-depth analysis of a single contextual variable, however, would allow a better understanding of the interactions between social movements and their environment.

A second advantage of the focus on protest policing is that it addresses a variable that has *a direct impact on social movements*. This helps to face an additional problem related to the study of POS. The distance between the variables indicated as part of the political structure and the assumed effects on social movements is so great that it is often difficult even to show the logical connections between the values of the independent variable and the (presumed) effects on the movements. As Koopmans (1990) rightly observed, movements do not react to abstract categories (such as electoral volatility) but to a limited set of their derivates, which, so far, has not been properly singled out. Protest policing is a "derivate" of political opportunities that has a direct impact on social movements – indeed, it is *a* barometer, although not the only one, of the available POS. As part of the state response to social movements, it should be very sensitive to the relevant opportunities and constraints and represent, therefore, a general expression of the degree of openness or receptivity on the part of the state. By studying protest policing, we can better understand the effect of the numerous elements of the POS.

If we look at protest policing as a barometer of the POS, we should ask first of all which of the political opportunities seem to have influenced the cross-national differences and historical changes in protest policing we have observed. A first analytical level refers to the *stable opportunities* in which a certain style of policing develops, including institutional as well as cultural variables. The analysis of protest policing confirms the relevant influence of the institutions on the political life (March and Olsen 1984). *Institutional features* – such as police organization, the nature of the judiciary, law codes, and constitutional rights –

play an extremely important role in defining the opportunities for and the constraints on protest policing. The institutional or legal structure sets the conditions for the actual strategies of protest policing. Moreover, following K. Brand (1985), Kitschelt (1986), and Kriesi (1991), we can assume that some aspects of the *political culture*, in particular those referring to the conceptions of the state and citizens' rights, have similarly important effects.

In addition to the context, which is relatively stable, policing styles depend on a second (more "volatile") analytical level: the shifting results of the interactions of different actors. Various collective actors in fact put forward their interests or opinions, forming what Kriesi (1989) refers to as "configuration of power." Social movements intervene on the issues related to citizens' rights and police tasks, they organize protest actions to denounce police brutality, they ask for more democracy. Thus social movements influence their environment and the various characteristics of the POS. But we can add that social movements are not the only collective actors to take a position on protest policing. Political parties, interest groups, trade unions, and voluntary associations conflict or cooperate with them on the issue of how to police protest. Like-minded actors on each side of the issue form coalitions upholding, on the one hand, law and order and, on the other, civil rights.

The analysis of protest policing allows us to understand the interactive processes that fuel violent escalation. The actual protest policing, as well as protest strategies, is in fact directly influenced by the *interactions between protestors and the police*. Protestors and the police, social movements and the state influence each other in the strategic choices they make, in a process involving innovation and adaptation on both sides (see also Karstedt-Henke 1980; McAdam 1983).

In order to describe protest policing in the two countries, we need a classification that goes beyond an oversimplified categorization of policing styles as either "tough repressive" or "tolerant control." Two approaches to classifying the forms and nature of state control have already appeared in the social movement literature. In a phenomenological approach, Gary Marx (1979; see also Marx 1972) distinguishes repressive actions according to their specific aims.[3] In an analytical one, Charles Tilly (1978:106–15) deals not with repressive actions per se but, more generally, with political regimes, which he classifies according to the degree of repression and "facilitation" they manifest toward various collective actors and actions.[4] For my purposes, Gary Marx's list of repressive forms appeared too phenomenological for an attempt to trace evolutionary trends, and Tilly's typology of political regimes was too general for a comparison of Western democracies. Moreover, although acknowledging that several institutions and political actors do "respond" to protest, I wanted to concentrate on one single actor: the police. I therefore formulated some new classifications, including the following dimensions: (1) "repressive" versus "tolerant," according to the range of prohibited behaviors; (2) "selective" versus "diffuse,"

according to the range of groups subject to repression; (3) "preventive" versus "reactive," according to the timing of police intervention ; (4) "hard" versus "soft," according to the degree of force involved; (5) "dirty" versus "lawful," according to the degree to which respect for legal and democratic procedures is emphasized.

In the following discussion, I describe the evolution of protest policing, the political system, and the discourse on protest and policing in Italy and Germany. Even though the left-libertarian families did not emerge until the late sixties, in order to assess continuities and changes in police styles, my accounts start at the end of World War II. Although my contribution here is based mainly on a qualitative analysis of secondary sources, I also refer to the first results of an ongoing research project based on a series of case studies of police handling of violent demonstrations.[5] After comparing the historical evolution of policing styles in the two countries, I propose some hypotheses on the political opportunities and contraints on protest policing, looking at the stable political opportunities, the volatile configuration of power, and police preferences. I conclude with a comment on the potential effects of policing strategies.

THE POLICING OF PROTEST IN ITALY

In Italy, the style of protest policing has changed dramatically over the past four decades, as we can see by observing developments in five different periods roughly coinciding with (1) the repressive fifties, (2) the years of the Center–Left governments in the sixties, (3) the "strategy of tension" in the first half of the seventies, (4) the "emergency period" in the second half of the seventies, and (5) the moderate eighties.

The repressive fifties

Throughout the fifties, protest policing was characterized by hard repression of several political groups and forms of collective action, with a mainly reactive style.[6] "The primary means of keeping public order," states one of the few research reports on the police in Italy, "was the use of firearms by policemen against protestors, strikers, peasants who occupied land, etc." (Canosa 1976: 181). A cruel indicator testifies to the truthfulness of this statement: in the forties and fifties almost one hundred demonstrators died when the police using firearms charged go-ins and sit-ins.[7] The laws on public order as well as some organizational changes in the police forces favored in fact this hard and diffuse style of protest policing. As for the legislative asset, the body of law regulating public security – a legacy of the fascist regime[8] – gave much power to the police. Moreover, in 1948, a new law allowed for the immediate arrest of protestors who blocked traffic, and the "Regulations on the Territorial and Garrison Service" gave police greater latitude in using firearms against protest gatherings

whenever the officer leading a police intervention thought that there was a "threat to public order." The "Regulations" stated that: "Fire should be addressed directly against those who look most dangerous, who incite others to violence, against the leaders of the demonstrators" (in *Vie Nuove* 1969).[9] As for the organizational aspects, a hard and diffuse repression was also facilitated by the fact that, in this period, police forces were purged of left-wingers and former partisans, and their direct dependence on the national executive branch was reestablished. Policemen were members of a militarized body and, as such, were not allowed to form or join a trade union; they received no special preparation in crime control; their equipment was poor. Their training, indeed, was primarily physical and military, mainly oriented to the repression of mass disorder.

The style of policing reflected more general characteristics of the party system and the political culture. The first postwar governments in Italy based their plans for political and economic reconstruction on low wages and the exclusion of the working class from power, with a consequent repression of the trade unions and the Communist Party. The governments considered preserving public order as the primary task of the police. In parliament, the Left often called for reforms that would reduce such police power as the *fermo di polizia* (the right to keep "suspect" or "dangerous" people under arrest without permitting them access to a judge or a lawyer). Public opinion and the press were internally divided along the traditional Left–Right cleavage. In a polarized political system, the Right considered most protestors as communists and puppets of Moscow, and the Left denounced police misconduct (especially against former partisans) as systematic persecution of the political opposition.

The contradictions of the Center–Left

If a repressive policing of protest prevailed throughout the fifties, by the time the student movement developed the climate was quite different. In the sixties, in fact protest policing – still reactive and diffuse – became less repressive and softer. This statement can be summed up in one statistic: from 1963 to 1967 not a single demonstrator was killed. Police handling of the student protest was, however, quite contradictory, mixing tolerance and hard tactics. In general, during the early years of the student movement, the police took a much "softer" approach to the control of protest than had been the case when confronting other social groups. The police often tolerated spontaneous protest marches and the occupation of public buildings, and did not resort to firearms to disperse demonstrators. At times of particular tension, however, the more traditional forms of protest control resurfaced (see Canosa 1976: chap. 4). At the end of the sixties, when the protest exploded, the police again abandoned restraint: in 1968, three people were killed during marches organized by the trade unions, another three in 1969.

The contradictions in protest policing reflected those in the political system. In 1962, a Center–Left government had been formed, with the participation of the Socialist Party (PSI) together with the Christian Democracy and a few minor parties. The reformist Center–Left governments took a more liberal position toward civil and political rights than did their Centrist predecessors, which was reflected in a series of new laws.[10] When I analyzed daily newspaper reports on a protest campaign in March 1968, however, student protest appeared to have polarized the political spectrum and public opinion. The Left – including the PCI, the PSI, the trade unions, and the left-wing press – openly supported the students (see also Tarrow 1990a), often accusing the police of brutality. While the DC was internally divided, right-wing pressure groups – including elements in the press – called for the use of "hard-line" tactics against the lazy and/or "red" students. At the same time, the Socialists proposed a radical reform, including the disarmament of the police, and even a few Christian Democrats criticized the hard line chosen by their party. Beyond "visible politics," right-wing forces acted underground, planning coups d'etat and using the secret services to blackmail the Left.[11]

A "strategy of tension"

In the early seventies, the state responded to the radicalized left-wing movements with a use of police force that, on several occasions, reverted to the most brutal traditions of the fifties. Protest policing continued to mix tolerant tactics – which in fact produced a well-developed system of bargaining between police leadership and movement leadership – with an increasingly hard handling of large protest groups. Although police forces used other means than firearms, their reactive tactics for the control of mass demonstrations encouraged escalation, especially when large police squads charged the demonstrators with jeeps and tear gas (Canosa 1976:274–85). The list of protestors who lost their lives during police charges at public demonstrations grew in the early seventies. Between 1970 and 1975, policemen killed seven people, protestors and passersby, during police intervention at political gatherings (Canosa 1976:274–85). In these incidents, the victims did not fall under police fire, as happened in the fifties, but were beaten to death with clubs, crushed under police jeeps, or hit by tear gas. The relations between protestors and the police only worsened with time. While the fights between the movements' militants and neofascists triggered the escalation of political conflicts (della Porta 1991), widespread rumors of complicity between police officials and right-wing militants undermined the confidence of the left-wing public in the state. Claims that the secret service protected the radical Right were particularly frequent in the period of the *stragismo* – that is, the "strategy" of massacres perpetrated by the right-wing terrorism.[12] The strategy to control protest came to be known, not only in left-wing circles, as the "strategy of tension" – that is, the government's covert manipulation of the

radical political groups to incite outbursts so as to induce public opinion to favor authoritarian policies.

The shift in protest policing corresponded with a change in the party system. The crisis of the Center–Left governments strengthened the position of the hard-liners. At the beginning of the seventies, a more conservative coalition replaced the previous one. Although there was some reform (Tarrow and Stefanizzi 1989), it was widely believed in the Left that several of those in power were ready to use any means to block political changes. The repression was perceived as directed in general against the Left, so the Old Left and the trade unions sided with the social movements in denouncing state repression and fascist aggression. Public opinion was more and more polarized, and the political discourse more and more inflamed. Confronted with a strong and violent radical Right and a radicalized New Left, the more conservative political forces demanded a policy of law and order to contain the "opposite extremisms." The new Center–Right coalition used right-wing terrorism and a wave of organized and petty crime as a rationale to pass new, restrictive laws on public order (Pasquino 1990).[13]

The "years of emergency"

The strategy of protest policing changed again in the mid-seventies, when it was characterized by the harsh repression of increasingly violent movement groups. With the decline of mobilization, the "dirty" tactics were partially abandoned.[14] Right-wing radicals lost their institutional protection: for a few years they fell into an organizational crisis, from which they emerged after 1977 with a strategy of attacking the state and engaging in daily brutal – sometimes deadly – fights with the radical Left. In the radicalized climate of the terrorist emergency, police forces intervened to break up the often violent marches. As the information I collected from the press on some protest campaigns in the spring of 1977 indicates, in most of the demonstrations that flared up in violence, the police tactics seemed inappropriate to control violence. The police would charge an entire march, hitting the peaceful protestors as well as the militant ones. Armed cover agents were often deployed during the policing of public marches and, according to press reports, on a few occasions they fired against the protestors. Following a deep-seated tradition, the police intervened in large units and tried to overcome with numbers their deficiencies in armaments and technical expertise. To discourage attempts to defy the frequent prohibitions against public gatherings, the police and the army "occupied" some of the larger cities. To cope with the radical activists armed with P38 revolvers, military policing included even the use of firearms.

The hard line on protest policing, as well as its relative selectivity, reflected some political characteristics of the period. Protest policing was influenced by the institutional and symbolic effects of the most dramatic wave of terrorist

attacks. Terrorism and street crime shocked the public, and only small minorities criticized the institutional and police strategies for dealing with violent protest. During these "years of emergency," public order policies and internal security policies in fact overlapped (della Porta 1992b). If this climate was conducive to hard policing, the PCI's "historic compromise" – that is, its proposal for a cooperation between "Catholic and Communist masses" – and, in 1978 and 1979, its support of the national governments led by the Christian Democrats probably reduced the influence of the more conservative forces on the government. In their search for legitimation, however, the Communists gave up their position as defenders of citizens' rights, so that choices of hard repression found few challenges. While increasing conflicts among the ruling parties and parliamentary instability worsened the government's capacity for implementing a coherent policy, the fight against terrorism became a unifying aim. Identified as "terrorists" or "symphatizers for terrorism," the movement activists became scapegoats. The government as well as the parliamentarian opposition defined most protest as dangerous "disorder." Police practices were not the only factor contributing to the "leaden" climate of these years: the laws changed, and in an illiberal direction (Corso 1979; Grevi 1984). The emergency laws,[15] designed to fight terrorism, constrained protest as well, insofar as they could be used against the radical wings of the movements. And the climate of the "emergency" influenced even the judicial process itself.[16] Although the government of national unity signaled a depolarization in the political system, for social movement activists the emergency legislation and judiciary practices, as well as the death of demonstrators during police charges of mass demonstrations, recast Italy in the image of an authoritarian state. Consequently, the period 1977–9 came to be known as the "years of lead": grey, heavy, and difficult.

The "national reconciliation"

The style of protest policing changed again in the eighties, and in such a dramatic way that it seems inexplicable until one realizes how profoundly terrorism had shocked both movement activists and civil servants. The decline of terrorism brought calls for a "national reconciliation," including a revision of the emergency legislation. The "conciliatory" temper of this period is evident in the antiterrorist legislation of these years.[17] While the implementation of prison reform created the preconditions for a reintegration of former terrorists into society, the passing of the long overdue police reform contributed to a change in police practice and police culture.[18] These changes were manifested in a more tolerant attitude toward the peace movement in the beginning of the decade, and the other movements later on. In the eighties, the policing of protest thus became extremely "soft" and very selective. When the tiny, surviving groups of the *Autonomia* tried to disrupt the large marches of the peace movement, police intervention was usually targeted to keep the "troublemakers" under control.

The nonviolent movement organizations informally collaborated with the police in order to avoid escalations. The policing of acts of civil disobedience also became more tolerant. In only a few cases did "hard" police repression escalate the conflict (for instance, when police charged peace movement demonstrators staging sit-ins at the site of the nuclear missile base in Comiso in Sicily). Learning from their earlier lack of success in facing terrorism, the police increased preventive intelligence activities, devoting men and resources to the collection and filing of information on the few surviving radical groups. Institutional reactions against the nonviolent techniques of some movement organizations involved primarily the judiciary. But when the nonviolent activists on trial for breach of peace criticized the judicial system, it was not to decry repressiveness but to complain that the judges were too inclined to bargaining.[19]

Also in this period, protest policing reflected some characteristics of the political system. At the beginning of the eighties, the first governments with non–Christian Democratic prime ministers in the history of the republic signaled willingness for change and the governmental parties insisted on a new image of "efficacy." In the same period, the PCI, once again in the opposition, became more receptive to protest issues. To stop a steady electoral decline and reach a broader range of voters, the party tried to shed its image as the "working-class party" and presented itself as a "point of reference for the progressive forces in the society." The Twentieth Congress of the PCI in February 1991 thus became the First Congress of the Democratic Party of the Left, at which the party declared itself open to "all the leftist, progressive, alternative, environmentalist forces." The issues championed by the new movements – in particular, peace and ecology – did not polarize the press. Movement speakers were given space to present their opinions, and the movements' action repertoires, now emphasizing nonviolence, were praised. The political discourse on law and order and internal security became quite moderate and pragmatic, even during the campaigns on such symbolic topics as amnesty for former terrorists.

THE POLICING OF PROTEST IN GERMANY

In Germany as in Italy, the policing of protest underwent a variety of changes in the past four decades. As we follow the course of these changes, we will observe some parallels with concurrent conditions in Italy, but some differences as well. Also in Germany, five main periods can be distinguished: the first roughly coincides with the conservatism of the Adenauer era (the fifties and early sixties), the second with the contradictions of the Grand Coalition (the late sixties), the third with the reformism of Chancellor Willy Brandt (beginning of the seventies), the fourth with a partial conservative rollback under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (in the seventies), and the fifth with the larger tolerance but also the few escalations of the eighties.

The conservatism of the Adenauer era

Compared to the Italian case, protest policing in Germany in the fifties was in general more selective and (relatively) less hard. During this period, the police handling of protest was characterized by a frequent, although not brutal, use of force to implement the prohibitions against public marches.[20] According to recent research on the German police, before the student movement emerged the police had "an image of any gathering of people as potentially destructive, an irrational 'formation of a mob,' from which a danger to the state order could rapidly develop. The orientation to such an understanding of demonstration kept the executive and the judiciary loyal to a pre-democratic equipment of control by the state and the police" (Busch et al. 1988:319). Any potential threat to public order, including disruption of traffic, tended to be considered as a sufficient rationale to prohibit public demonstrations. Although in the early fifties the police charged marches against rearmament and on labor issues, killing two protestors (on May 11, 1952, and May 1, 1953), force was rarely used in the handling of subsequent industrial conflicts. Protest policing was, in fact, reactive but selective. In these years, state control of protest relied instead on a frequent intervention of the judiciary and the outlawing of neo-Nazi groups and the Communist Party.[21]

Internal and international political features influenced the state strategies to control protest. Inside the Federal Republic, the relative strength of the trade unions in the factories and of the SPD in some states dissuaded the conservatives from making a hard use of police force. The police attempt to regain legitimacy among the population in the new democracy was probably another check on hard-line intervention, as was the fear that claims of police brutality could stir up bitter memories of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi regime. But the very existence of the German Democratic Republic and the division of Berlin provided a rationale for a judiciary repression of the opposition.

The Grand Coalition

At the time the student movement evolved, protest policing included a mixture of "hard" and "soft" tactics. This was particularly visible in the long protest campaign in Berlin. In the beginning, student protests were in fact tolerated, although – in line with the tradition of the previous period – the claim of "disturbing the pedestrian traffic" became the rationale for police charges on student marches in the city center. Altogether, however, the police tended to avoid physical repression, a policy that was criticized in the right-wing press. Finally, the state government (and SPD mayor) put some pressure on the police to intervene more forcefully. As already mentioned, the conflict escalated, until, on June 2, 1967, a policeman killed a student, Benno Ohnesorg, during a protest against the visit of the Shah of Iran to Berlin. According to several reports

(*Kursbuch* 1968; Sack 1984), the Berlin police, in what was called "an exercise for an emergency," used hard tactics to repress the demonstrators. A reactive repression selectively targeted the student movements, while very few incidents involved the workers.

The protest policing of the student movement reflected and at the same time contributed to the changes in the German party system and public opinion in the second half of the sixties. When the student movement emerged, in fact, the SPD had joined the Christian Democrats (CDU and CSU) in a government called the Grand Coalition. Now in the federal government for the first time in the post–World War II period, the SPD, pushed both by its coalition partners and its search for legitimation, took a fairly negative attitude toward the student movement. Because of their general mistrust of disorders, most of the Old Left criticized the students' protest forms, in particular their strategy of "restricted rule-breaking." Generally, the political elites in power felt seriously challenged by the radical stance of the protest while, in part also as a result of the Grand Coalition, the radical Right won more votes. The conservative press – and especially the scandal-mongering daily, the *Bild* – launched campaigns against the students. Particularly in the peculiar position of West Berlin, the student activists experienced a pogrom-like climate, a violent rejection by part of the population. At the same time, however, the students gained sympathies and sparked the formation of a civil rights coalition, which eventually favorably influenced the members of the Old Left. When the police and the students confronted each other, both the press and public opinion split on opposite judgments. The liberal press criticized police intervention, singling out some episodes of police brutality as a sign that German society was not yet fully democratized. So, the shock of the death of Benno Ohnesorg led the Social Democratic mayor of Berlin to resign and intensified the internal conflicts of the SPD. And even among the police, there was growing criticism of the more repressive politics of the previous years and demands for greater democracy. One of the most long-lasting results of the late sixties was, in fact, that "the ways and forms of reciprocal behaviors of the state powers and the protestors became a theme of great relevance in the public discussion: The marches and their control by the police became a political issue" (Busch et al. 1988:318).

The reformist years

The policing of protest changed radically at the beginning of the seventies: still selective, it became instead less reactive and more tolerant and soft. As Busch and his collegues (Busch et al. 1988:320) observed,

> In the administration of justice the opinion tended to prevail that demonstrations should not only be tolerated, but that, as active citizen rights, they must take priority over concerns about executive order. The intervention of the police – until now oriented to

fight violent troublemakers with closed units – had to be rethought according to the "principle of the flexible reaction" and through an intervention suitable to the specific situation, designed to avoid the escalation of conflict and violence.

New police strategies developed with the precise aim of avoiding escalation: for instance, the Berlin police created a *Diskussionkommando*, composed of small groups of policemen, in uniform but without arms, who had the task of discussing tactics with the activists during demonstrations (Hübner 1979). Also in Munich, the police leadership, after the new model elaborated by the "study-group for politological research on communication," sent policemen in uniform among the protestors with the task of "convincing" the demonstrators to avoid illegal actions (Malpricht 1984:83–5). An effect of the choice of "softer" police tactics was that throughout the entire decade, no deaths occurred during political marches.

The tolerant turn in protest policing coincided with a change in government, but was also, at least in part, a result of the student movement. In 1969, in fact, the SPD coalition with the CDU–CSU broke up, replaced by a Social Democratic coalition with the liberal FDP. This shift produced a much more open attitude toward protest. Adopting the slogan "to dare more democracy," Brandt's government introduced a reformist policy meeting the demands for a more liberal understanding of the right to demonstrate.[22] One of the first – highly symbolic – actions of the Social Democratic–Liberal coalition was to grant an amnesty to those involved in the student unrests. Then, on May 22, 1970, the reform of the criminal law liberalized the right to demonstrate and abolished the *Landfriedensbruchparagraphen*, the law regulating the crime of "breach of peace." The terrorist actions of 1972 and CDU–CSU's aggressive electoral campaign in the same year marked, however, the beginning of another shift: a reversal, though only partial, of the liberalization of the laws on protest activities. In response to the accusation of being unfit to contain the "radical extremists," the SPD–FDP government issued the *Radikalenerlaß* (January 1972), which was designed to concretize and unify the various procedures developed by the different states to block access to the civil service to individuals with "anticonstitutional" attitudes. The *Radikalenerlaß* thus increased the controls on those who applied for civil service positions. Although actual exclusions were rare,[23] the symbolic effect of this law was quite strong: to many, Germany again acquired the image of an authoritarian state. The activists' mistrust toward the state was also increased by the police intervention to arrest terrorists, which sometimes resulted in casualties (see, for instance, Böll et al. 1976). In the movements, in particular, criticism of the state's authoritarianism intensified when the imprisoned terrorists staged hunger strikes to call attention to their harsh living conditions – particularly, in the high-security units and isolation – which several defined as inhuman.

Conservative rollback?

Although the more tolerant attitudes toward protest that had evolved in the early seventies (and had almost completely eliminated violence from the political conflicts) did not entirely disappear, the mid-seventies represented a new turning point. Especially in the handling of the antinuclear protest – often involving the occupation of sites where nuclear plants were to be built – the police deviated sometimes from the more tolerant behavior developed in the previous years. The police implemented strategy based on very large preventive intervention and (tendentially) selective use of force against the militant wing of the movements (Busch et al. 1988:328–41). Usually, the police forces' first move was to make the nuclear sites difficult to penetrate from outside – through water cannons and the building of high protective walls, for instance. Their next moves were guided by the principles of extensive control and preventive action.[24] The police prohibited demonstrations, or imposed restrictions on the route the marches could follow and the clothes demonstrators could wear. However, the lessons of the sixties were not completely forgotten. So, in order to avoid escalation, the prohibitions were often not enforced. Moreover, the police avoided frontal attacks on demonstrations, and tried to develop techniques for a focused repression of the violent groups. Even in those instances in which the police did use physical force, especially in the fights with the radical wing of the movement, nobody was killed (Busch et al. 1988:341–2). All things considered, the tactics the police used in the seventies were much more selective and less "escalating" than those they resorted to in the sixties. In comparison with the early seventies, however, they became clearly harder and more repressive.

The violent escalations were favored by the changes produced in the political system when the economic crisis of the early seventies undermined the reformist attitudes of the government. In fact, after Chancellor Brandt was forced to resign as a result of a scandal involving an East German spy, the reelected FDP–SPD federal coalition – now led by Helmut Schmidt – revised its slogans and programs, concentrating on the defense of the welfare state and abandoning its more ambitious reform projects. In the second half of the seventies, only a minority within the Social Democratic Party cooperated (although with some friction) with movement organizations on issues of nuclear energy, ecology, women's liberation, and disarmament. After two waves of terrorist attacks, in Germany as in Italy, protestors were often likened to dangerous criminals. On the other side, a radicalization of frames affected the movement activists. Even relatively "soft" police intervention had a negative symbolic effect, for the political discourse had changed since the sixties. The more aggressive handling of the protest, together with changes in legislation concerning civil rights,[25] fostered the image of an authoritarian state in the minds of movement activists. A massive number of house searches and road blocks to capture fugitive terrorists intensified the liberal citizens' sense that civil and political rights were threatened.

Among movement activists, the impression of increasing authoritarianism – even a "renazification" of the German state – was reinforced also by the isolation of terrorists in prison, the government's hard line toward those terrorists who undertook hunger strikes (two of whom eventually died), and the suicide in prison of four RAF members. Terrorism and antiterrorism had the effect of polarizing the political culture and "dramatizing" the frames of reference used by authorities and protestors to evaluate the presumed dangers of, respectively, protest and repression.

Bargaining and escalation in the eighties

At the beginning of the eighties, protest policing changed again and the peace movement enjoyed a larger tolerance than the antinuclear movement had in the seventies. Protest policing became in fact softer and more selective, with a large tolerance for nonviolent repertoires and a stricter preventive control on the radical wing of the movement family. Although terrorism continued to be an issue, the "years of lead" were over. My two case studies of police intervention in Berlin in the eighties indicate that peace keeping in fact clearly took priority over law enforcement. The police experimented with new tactics oriented mainly at isolating the violent wing of a demonstration and avoiding attacks on nonviolent protestors; attempts were made to contain the potentially dangerous demonstrators, rather than charging them, through the use of police barriers or the military isolation of the areas where the radicals held their meetings. These new tactics evolved, in part, from technical changes within the police forces: the state reorganized the units specializing in maintaining public order into smaller and more mobile subunits linked by a refined system of communications, and introduced new, more sophisticated equipment, such as protective helmets and fireproof clothes, armored trucks, and irritant CN and CS gas. At the same time, they also reflected cultural changes in the police itself. First of all, the violent demonstrators were perceived as psychologically weak individuals rather than as "puppets of the communist regimes" (della Porta 1994). Second, the police seemed more cognizant of the reactions of the public and the media. More than once, police leaders asked the political forces to provide a political response to social protest. Although there was a social learning on how to avoid escalation, conflicts did escalate on some occasions: during the occupation of houses in Berlin in the beginning of the eighties; during the long campaign against the expansion of the Frankfurt airport; in the protest against the proposed nuclear plant in Wackersdorf; and, again in Berlin, during the meeting of the World Bank Fund and the visit of President Reagan in the late eighties.[26] The most violent confrontations happened during symbolically important events, when police forces from various German states converged on Berlin, Frankfurt, or Wackersdorf to keep law and order while the *Autonomen* called for national "happenings." Even if the police perfected techniques for isolating trouble-

makers, the dynamics of the physical confrontation often triggered spirals of violence in which peaceful demonstrators or bystanders became involved. In these cases, police handling of protest was often perceived by the more moderate wing of the movements as repressive, hard, and diffuse. A massive deployment of police forces for preventive control of peaceful protest campaigns or a large number of charges for actions of civil disobedience sometimes spoiled the tolerant climate of the eighties.[27]

Once again, we can observe that styles of protest policing reflected political circumstances. The eighties began with the crisis in the SPD–FDP federal government and the return of the CDU to government. This, however, did not – as one might have expected – harden police handling of protest. In fact, the CDU reassured its more right-wing supporters with some symbolic campaigns on law and order. In 1985, for example, the national parliament passed a *Vermummungsverbot* prohibiting demonstrators from disguising themselves when taking part in public marches – a law directed specifically against militants of what was called "Black Block," who used to attend demonstrations dressed in black clothes with balaclava helmets covering their faces. But in essence, the CDU–FDP federal government and the CDU-dominated state governments maintained a tolerant attitude toward protest. With the decline of terrorism and the end of the economic recession of the seventies, political conflicts de-escalated. Although a new antiterrorist law was passed in 1986 (following two assassinations carried out by the RAF), in 1987 the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution unofficially offered to "help" those who abandoned the terrorist organizations; in 1989 a new law on internal security reduced the penalties for terrorists who confessed; and in the first half of 1992, the federal minister of justice, Klaus Kinkel, offered to free terrorists who were ill or had been in prison for a long time in exchange for an RAF declaration of a "suspension" of its armed attacks. A liberal understanding of demonstration rights prevailed also in public opinion, but with a strong stigmatization of any violent actions. In general, hard-line tactics met with strong criticism from at least part of the mass media, from political forces, and in public opinion, especially when the police used such tactics indiscriminately, without selectively targeting the violent groups. The public's tolerance for hard-line approaches increased, instead, when the demonstrators themselves resorted to violence even of the "lightest" form.

COMPARING STYLES OF PROTEST POLICING

We have until now described the evolution of protest policing in the two countries. In Table 3.1., I used the fivefold classifications I suggested in the second part of this chapter in order to summarize this information and, then, to compare the evolution of the two national cases.

Comparing the two countries, we find first of all that in Italy the policing of protest was much "harder" – that is, for a longer time several forms of protest

Table 3.1. *Protest policing in Italy and Germany*

Italy		Germany	
Phase	Characteristics	Characteristics	Phase
The "repressive" fifties	Repressive Diffuse Reactive Hard Legal	Repressive Selective Reactive (Relatively) hard Legal	Adenauer era
The Center-Left governments	(More) tolerant Diffuse Reactive Soft(er) (Mainly) legal	(Relatively) repressive Selective Reactive (Relatively) hard Legal	The Grand Coalition
The strategy of tension	Repressive Diffuse Reactive Hard "Dirty"	Tolerant Selective Preventive Soft Legal	The reformist years
The emergency years	Repressive (More) selective Reactive Hard (Mainly) legal	(More) repressive Selective Preventive Soft (occasionally hard) Legal	The Schmidt government
Reconciliation in the eighties	(Very) tolerant Selective (More) preventive Soft Legal	(More) tolerant Selective Preventive Soft Legal	Moderation in the eighties

were repressed with the use of force. In a comparison of the single periods, we can notice that this was true particularly in the fifties and early seventies; for the sixties, instead, we noticed in Italy a more visible break with the previous "hard" style of protest policing than the one observed in Germany. Consistently in all the periods, the police handling of protest seems to have been more selective in Germany than in Italy. Since the very beginning, in fact, the German police tended to intervene only sporadically in the industrial conflicts, and repression focused on small political groups. In Italy, instead, especially in the fifties and early seventies, there was a "hard" police handling of large oppositional groups, including the trade unions and the Communist Party. Moreover, the search for techniques of protest handling that could selectively address the

violent groups developed earlier in Germany than in Italy. Only in the eighties did the Italian police start to focus on the violent groups – an attempt the German police had already started in the previous decade. Whereas in Italy protest policing tended to involve a higher degree of force (at least until the eighties), in Germany, protest policing was characterized by a greater dependence on intelligence (such as the collection of information). We also observed that the Italian police forces were often accused by the Left of having resorted to what protestors considered as dirty tactics, such as a large and unconstrained use of agents provocateurs, the protection of the neofascists, and a direct involvement of the secret services in massacres and in the plotting of coups d'etat. Similar claims have been much less frequent in Germany, where the police seemed more constrained by a formal respect of the *Rechtsstaat.*

In Italy as well as in Germany, from 1950 to 1990, protest control evolved toward more flexible forms based on a more liberal understanding of demonstration rights. In both countries, public order policies became more tolerant, more selective, more oriented toward prevention, more respectful of democratic procedures, and "softer," even though this evolution was hardly linear (both countries experienced "relapses," as it were, when political conflicts escalated into violent forms). We can add that, over time, cross-national differences seemed to diminish, probably because of international cooperation and cross-national flows of information involving both movement organizations and law enforcers.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PROTEST POLICING

The comparison of protest policing styles in Italy and Germany raises various questions, first among them, Which of the characteristics of the POS seems to have influenced protest policing? In this part, I shall put forward some hypotheses on the different "levels" of political opportunities mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, starting with the stable opportunities.

Stable opportunities

In his distinction of an "input" structure and an "output" structure, Herbert Kitschelt (1986:61–4) emphasizes the relevance of the *constitutional features.* The historical and cross-national comparison indicates that protest policing is indeed "constrained" by some long-lasting institutional characteristics. The German case suggests that an institutionally open political system can favor the movements or their opponents, depending on circumstances. As for the effects of federalism and decentralization of power, for instance, the state governments – on which the police depend – often chose different policing styles than those elaborated by the federal goverment, implementing sometimes softer and sometimes harder repression. The policing of the antinuclear movement offers

a typical example of this last case, as the CDU state governments often adopted confrontational politics, jeopardizing the attempt to negotiate of the SPD–FDP coalition in the federal government. After a few minor incidents in 1975, in 1976 the conflict escalated in Brokdorf, in northern and traditionally Christian Democratic Schleswig Holstein, when the movement organizations threatened to occupy the site of a projected nuclear plant if the authorities began building without waiting for the decision of the administrative court. While the SPD–FDP federal government – although supporting the nuclear projects – hoped to negotiate with the *Bürgerinitiativen*, the state government called for a resolute intervention against the "small active minority," infiltrated by "extremists" (Busch et al. 1988:321–2).

Similarly, the presence of a strong judiciary power sometimes improved but sometimes worsened the opportunities to protest. Again in Germany, especially in the eighties, in several trials for breach of the peace the defendants were acquitted and police accusations rejected. And not rarely did administrative courts refuse police prohibitions against public demonstrations. In other cases, however, the courts adopted a hard line toward the protestors, going beyond the demands of the governments. Using a principle of indirect responsibilities, some judges, for instance, condemned the convenors or leaders of some protest events to pay for the damages produced by others during public marches that turned violent.

As well as constitutional codes, other laws can influence protest policing. In particular, *the legislation on public order and demonstrations, police rights, and citizens rights* obviously affects the choices of protest policing.[28] I shall limit myself to a few examples. Militarization of the police appears conducive to a "hard" strategy of repression (as exemplified by the Italian case, until the eighties), whereas professionalization and access to technical means encourage the use of more sophisticated forms of control, which in turn reduce the necessity of resorting to force (as exemplified by the German case). The degree to which the judiciary can control police behaviors also helps determine the forms protest policing will take. In Germany, for instance, the possibility that protestors might appeal to the Administrative Courts to reverse police decisions prohibiting demonstrations was a de-escalating factor.

Traditions are embedded not only in laws but also in the political culture. Looking at a less formalized, but still "stable" political opportunity, Kriesi applied to social movements the concept of national strategies of conflict resolution, elaborated in the analysis of the industrial conflicts:[29] "National strategies," he notes, "set the informal and formal rules of the game for the conflict" (1989:295). Protest policing seems in fact to be particularly sensitive to *the cultural understanding of civil rights and police power.*[30] A brief look at the national political culture of each country provides some illustrations of this statement. The "dirty repression" that often characterized the reactions of the Italian state – and thus contributed to the escalation of the political conflict and the

growth of terrorism – was consistent with a mentality geared to conspiracies, to the idea of a Machiavellian "state of the Prince." In Germany, the constant reference of both protestors and the state to the *Rechtsstaat* suggests why – unlike in Italy – even the "hard" strategies of police control of protest remained within the limits set by the law. These different conceptions of the role of the state had a particularly important effect, since they were internalized by the police as well as the general population. Accordingly, Italians and Germans generally had very different ideas about the proper roles and responsibilities of the police. As Peter Katzenstein observed in his study on security policy, in Germany "the normative order in which the police operates is shaped by a German tradition that grants the state the position of a prepolitically accepted, rather than a politically contested, order. . . . The West German police thus views itself as a part of a normative order that accepts the rule of the law" (1990:1). At the same time, the constitutional definition of the German democracy as a "militant democracy" – that is, "a democracy that seeks through unalterable structural arrangements and sempiternal constitutional norms to protect democracy against its internal enemy" (Finn 1991:179–80) – justified the legal prosecution of several forms of protest and frequent calls for outlawing one or the other movement organization. The Italian police, in contrast, had traditionally (i.e., from the creation of the Italian state) been accustomed to seeing itself as the *longa manus* of the executive power, and thus put the preservation of public order before the control of crimes. This tradition continued to play a role after World War II: "The refusal of DC ministers in 1949 to demilitarize the police reflected the view that the major function of the police was that of internal security of the state – the preservation of public order – rather than the prevention and investigation of crime and in these latter fields the police corps (Corpo delle guardie di pubblica sicurezza) has remained underdeveloped, lacking both expertise and equipment" (Furlong 1981:81).

Thus, institutions and political culture can produce a *stable set of opportunities and constraints* on protest policing. To use Kriesi's terms, our description suggests that historical traditions, or "national strategies," do indeed influence protest policing. First, both in Italy and Germany the institutional and emotional legacy from prewar fascist regimes was reflected in the *lack of fully developed democratic cultures.* Escalations resulted often because of the state's lack of confidence in democratic protest combined with the protestors' lack of confidence in the democratic state institutions. The members of the polity conceived protest as a threat to democracy, and the movement activists perceived state reactions as a sign of fascism. Second, the strategies adopted after World War II to deal with the labor movement produced norms and institutions that affected the way in which future social movements were handled. In Germany, the adoption of a neocorporatist model of industrial relations in the immediate postwar period induced, probably more than any other factor, a relatively tolerant state attitude toward the social movements. In Italy, meanwhile, the fact that class

conflict was not institutionalized in any way explains both the development of a large system of alliances between the Old Left and the new social movements and the harsh repression they encountered in the fifties and again in the first half of the seventies. Third, both in Italy and in Germany, the traditional techniques of the fifties often reemerged during times of crisis, in the sixties and again in the seventies and in the eighties.

Looking over several decades, we could observe, however, that the legacy of the past does not last forever – that is, even stable conditions do change. If socialization processes reproduce national strategies, traumatic events can stimulate learning processes. In Italy as well as in Germany, the dramatic experiences with terrorism, after the first escalation, pushed toward the institutionalization of protest and the development of tolerant and soft police tactics. History, as Sidney Tarrow (1994) indicated, offers several examples of these gradual processes of institutionalization of emerging protest repertoires. When the movements first mobilize, the institutional actors deny legitimacy to the new protest tactics, and attack them as antidemocratic or criminal. In the short term, a polarization in the political spectrum follows; in the long term, new forms of collective action become part of the accepted repertoires. This means that, from a historical perspective, social movements do influence even the more stable institutions and deep-rooted political cultures. These changes are, however, not produced by the social movements alone, but by their interactions with other actors, both allies and opponents.

The configuration of power

Stable institutional and cultural opportunities and constraints influenced, therefore, the evolution of protest policing during the four decades. Besides the stable context, however, protest policing resulted from the interactions of various actors and the evolving "configuration of power."

Shifts in the policing of protest – or techniques of repression – have often been traced to changes in the makeup of the government. In his model of the determinants of repression in the United States, Goldstein (1978) considered the ideological position of the president as the most important variable. Funk's study of internal security in Germany (1990), however, suggested that the main parties do *not* differ much from each other in their position on internal security policy.

The previous description of our two national cases seems to indicate that the policing of protest was an issue on which parties did in fact polarize along the traditional Left–Right cleavage. Left-wing parties, with vivid memories of state repression of the labor and socialist movements, tended to rally in favor of civil liberties; conservative parties, fearful of losing votes to parties further to their right, often advocated law and order. In general, *protest policing was "softer" and more tolerant when the Left was in government, whereas the conservative governments were inclined to use "harder" tactics.* In Italy, for example, the

Center–Left governments broke the tradition of allowing the police to shoot at demonstrators; in Germany, the first SPD–FDP governments developed a more tolerant style of protest policing, and also liberalized laws concerning public marches and citizens' rights.

It would be inaccurate, however, to state that left-wing governments are *always* more tolerant of protest than conservative governments are. *Protest policing is, in fact, a tricky issue for left-wing governments.* In Germany, for instance, left-wing governments often had to face aggressive campaigns on "law and order" launched by the conservative opposition (as happened under Chancellor Brandt). Especially when the Left felt a need to legitimate itself as "fit to govern," it made concessions to the hard-line proponents of law and order, disappointing its own supporters. The experiences of the antinuclear campaign under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in Germany and of the "government of national unity" in Italy clearly illustrate this dynamic. In Germany, the massive police intervention in the antinuclear conflict coincided with a conservative rollback of the SPD–FDP federal government. In Italy in the second half of the seventies, the PCI – while supporting the national government "from outside" – ceased calling for a softer strategy toward radical protest, thus losing several sympathetic supporters among movement activists. In both cases, the presence of violent, even terrorist, left-wing groups clearly helped embarrass the Left and push the governments toward a hard line on law and order. But, in both countries, these choices not only inevitably disappointed social movement activists (to the advantage of the most radical wings), they also elicited internal criticism.

Just as left-wing governments are not automatically lenient toward protest, so – my case studies show – *conservatives in power do not always implement repressive policies.* The German Christian Democrats, back in the national governments in the eighties, did not seem interested in an escalation of the political conflicts. The shift in the state government from the Left to the Right amid the turmoil of the Berlin squatters' movement, for instance, did not interrupt the negotiations for a political solution – even though some incidents did escalate into violence when the squatters anticipated a hard reaction by the conservative government that, at its turn, feared militant actions (*Cilip* 1981). Similarly in Italy, when the PCI returned to a position of "full opposition" and the politics of a "national front to fight an emergency situation" was superseded, a more repressive strategy of protest policing did *not* ensue.

This last statement takes us to some additional observations. If the government plays an important role in defining policing styles, various actors influence its choices. Political parties, interest groups, and movement organizations express their preferences, addressing either their constituency, the public, or the policy makers directly. Often they use the mass media to voice their preferences: the protestors and their allies launch campaigns to denounce "brutal" repression and defend civil rights; the conservative groups push for law and order. The effects of these campaigns on protest policing could be various. On the one

hand, the very fact that internal security policies are publicly discussed is a sign of a larger, democratic tolerance. On the other hand, hard-line policies are often implemented in response to pressure exerted by a law-and-order coalition.[31] We should turn then to two questions. What strategies did the two coalitions – the civil rights' defenders and the law-and-order proponents – adopt in the two countries? And what factors determined the temporary victory of one coalition or the other?

First, both in Italy and in Germany, *particularly relevant for the vicissitudes of the civil rights coalition was the position of the Old Left.* The power of the civil rights coalition increased greatly when the Old Left joined it; conversely, it shrank dramatically when the Old Left responded instead to law-and-order discourses. In the latter case, the hard line of protest policing tended to prevail, as happened in both countries in the second half of the seventies. The mere presence of the Old Left, however, did not guarantee that the civil rights coalition would gain influence over actual policing. If the Old Left was in a marginal position in the party system – as was the case in both countries in the fifties and in Italy until the eighties – the "hard line" tended to prevail. When the Left was gaining power but was not yet in government, "dirty" forms of protest policing could predominate, as occurred in Italy in the early seventies.

Second, in both countries, *the law-and-order coalitions gained favor at times when the national political culture polarized.* When the conflict between the social movements and the state was presented (often by both sides) as a zero-sum game, a large proportion of public opinion tended to side with the state. But, when the political system depolarized, and the fear about the loss of law and order diminished, the demonstrators were gradually granted more rights. Criticisms of policing strategies gained a larger audience, and greater influence, when framed in terms of improving an existing democracy rather than in terms of exposing signs of fascist conspiracies. In the early seventies in Germany and in both countries in the eighties, for instance, police tactics changed from one protest event to another, in response to previous criticisms voiced in a larger and more "moderate" public opinion.

Third, the *civil rights coalition gradually grew over time, while the law-and-order coalition shrank.* In both countries, not only was there a consistent increase in the number of collective actors who felt they had a right to intervene on the policing issue, but more and more "neutral" actors – such as members of professionals' associations – came to criticize the hard-line police tactics.

A fourth and last observation deserves more space than is here available: *the very forms of protest influenced the configuration of power between law-and-order and civil rights coalitions.* As Mayer Zald observed, "tactics may impose economic and political costs on authorities; they have effects upon the sympathies or antagonisms of local bystanding publics and referent elites; finally, they have impact upon the sympathies, readiness to act, and enthusiasm of adherents and constituents" (1987:331). We can add that the radicalization of protest

forms influenced the political system as a whole, bringing new supporters to the law-and-order coalitions. In both countries, in the second half of the seventies, during terrorist campaigns, the law-and-order coalitions gained sympathizers even among the Old Left. The German experience indicates that the civil rights coalition weakened even when only a tiny minority of the movements chose violence. Conversely, the larger tolerance toward protest in the eighties was very likely favored by the moderation of protest tactics, which enlarged the civil rights coalition.

The police

Protest policing is, however, not only a consequence of stable opportunities and the configuration of power. To understand the choices of one style or the other, we have to consider the role of the bureaucracy that has to implement policy choices: the police. Research on the police usually emphasizes that they have a certain degree of discretion in the implementation of political decisions. Thus, it seems important to examine how the police arrive at preferences either for carrying out or for resisting policies that might lead to escalation.

One hypothesis about police behavior holds that *internal dynamics can sway the police to support the hard line in the control of protest.* Preferences for strict control of protest could develop from a particular socialization and training of police agents, as well as from a kind of internal dynamics within the repressive apparatuses. Gary Marx observes, for instance, that agencies that deal with intelligence gathering and the prevention of crime or subversion have an inherent tendency to expand: "[Their] role can be defined in such a way as to create an appetite that can never be satiated" (1979:112). Referring to the control of protest in the United States in the sixties and the seventies, he adds:

> Factors that explain the origin of a phenomenon may not necessarily explain its continuance. Thus the origin of government programs for social movement intervention generally lies in events that most members of a society would define as crisis or a serious threat. However, the programs can take on a life of their own as vested interests developed around them, and new latent goals may emerge. Rather than social control as repression, deterrence, or punishment, it can become a vehicle for career advancement and organizational perpetuation and growth. The management and even creation of deviance, rather than its elimination, can become central. (1979:114)

Control agencies would consequently produce political deviants. And, indeed, internal dynamics such as those Marx describes could at least in part account for the "deviations" of the secret services that appeared so often in Italy, as well as for the "hard" intervention of "special squads" in both countries.

An additional hypothesis is that *some organizational characteristics of police forces can lead to escalation during their interactions with demonstrators.* As Monjardet observes, there are at least three main mechanisms in police intervention that favor escalation: the dialectic of centralization and autonomy in

police units, the difficulties of coordinating the different groups, and uncertainty about the aims of the intervention. Although a police force may have well-developed techniques for controlling large masses, it may be ill-prepared to isolate small groups operating within larger crowds (Monjardet 1990:233). Also in our two countries, some much criticized "hard" interventions of the police – which eventually led to escalations – happened during peaceful mass demonstrations "infiltrated" by small radical groups, when the handling of law and order required a difficult equilibrium between the control of violence and the rights of the nonviolent demonstrators. Moreover, especially in Germany in the eighties, claims of police brutality often followed the authorities' decisions to deploy units from different states to police some protest events. In these cases, lack of coordination and a poor knowledge of the territory may have helped the escalation of conflicts, even when a strategy of de-escalation had been planned by the police leadership.[32] This also means that some protest tactics, even some nonviolent ones, are more difficult than others to keep under control.

Although internal dynamics and organizational characteristics can bring the police to intensify repression, our narratives indicate that escalation usually followed political choices for a confrontational handling of protest. Often, it was the police who protested against repressive choices, inviting politicians to give "political responses" to protest. This was particularly visible in Germany. In Berlin, during the student movement of the sixties as well as during the squatters movement of the eighties, the police leadership sometimes intervened in the political arena and in the media and stressed the point that protest requires a political rather than a police response (Sack 1984; Busch et al. 1988). In these instances, the main concern of the police was losing legitimation and support among the population. The Italian police too showed signs of dissatisfaction with the deployment of massive military intervention at political gatherings, although their discontent was at first related mainly to their working conditions – for example, the long hours (see letters of policemen, collected by Fedeli 1981). Only in the seventies, with the emergence of the police movement for demilitarization, did a concern for public legitimation also emerge among the Italian police (see the autobiographies collected by Medici 1979). It seems, therefore, that – at least in the cases we described here – the police tended to resist being involved in "hard" repression especially when they feared that a liberal public opinion would accuse them of partisan attitudes.

ESCALATION AND DE-ESCALATION: THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROTEST POLICING

We can turn now to the effects of protest policing on social movements and, in particular, on protest tactics. The social science literature provides us with several hypotheses on this point. Some scholars have stated that a reduction in repression facilitates the development of social movements. According to Skoc-

pol (1979), social revolutions are triggered by political crises, which weaken the political control and the state's capacity for repression. McAdam (1982) too indicated that reduction in repression was a facilitating factor, specifically for the civil rights movement. Moreover, a higher degree of repression was often associated with radical behavior on the part of the challengers. Goldstein concluded his comparative analysis on political repression in nineteenth-century Europe by observing that "those countries that were consistently the most repressive, brutal, and obstinate in dealing with the consequences of modernization and developing working-class dissidence reaped the harvest by producing oppositions that were just as rigid, brutal, and obstinate" (Goldstein 1983: 340). Kitschelt (1985:302–3) hypothesized that an illiberal political culture will push movements to adopt antagonistic and confrontational positions.

Other scholars, however, have reported less clear-cut outcomes. In a review of studies on the American protest movements in the sixties and the seventies, John Wilson (1976) observed that the empirical results are somewhat contradictory, indicating at some times a radicalization of those groups exposed to police violence, at other times their retreat from unconventional actions. He suggested that to explain such differences, we should take into account variables such as the level of repression, the degree of commitment to the protest issue, and the degree of popular support for both elites and challengers. Similarly contradictory findings can be integrated into a more coherent explanation if one assumes a curvilinear relationship between the challengers' violence and the repressiveness of authorities (Neidhardt 1989). The complex relations between repression and social movement activities can probably be explained if we take into account the fact that protest policing influences both costs and (expected) benefits of collective action. First, state repression represents one of the most relevant (potential) costs of taking part in collective behavior (Tilly 1978:100). Even if other costs and benefits are taken into account – and even if collective behavior is not always "rational" – the weight of the cost defined by state repression would be difficult to overstate. But the form of repression influences the same grievances that spark protest in the first place, for example, by creating "injustice frames" (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982). The more "repressive" the state, therefore, the higher the potential rewards of collective action, since the "punishment" of the unfair state would become part of the expected rewards, and the need to "do something" would appear all the more urgent to some activists.

Also on this topic, a few statements can be drawn from the description of the German and Italian cases. These hypotheses come into focus if we relate the evolution of protest policing as reported here with the evolution of social movement repertoires, as described in the previous chapter. First of all, it seems that *a more tolerant, selective, and softer police behavior favored the diffusion of protest.* In both countries (but especially in Italy), the protest first emerged when more tolerant policing developed. In both countries, however, the state reacted to protest with an increase – albeit transitory – in repression. The harder re-

pression of the mid-seventies coincided with a political demobilization – the "return to the private sphere" – in social movements. In the eighties, when a tolerant police handling of protest developed, mobilization grew again in both countries.

A second observation is that *repressive, diffuse, and hard techniques of policing tend to, at the same time, discourage mass and peaceful protest while fueling the most radical fringes.* In Italy, for instance, radicalization processes in the movements coincided with a period of hard repression, when the police again killed demonstrators at public marches. Moreover, the belief that the institutions were involved in a "dirty war" worsened the relationships between movement activists and state representatives. Conversely, the relative absence of radical strategies in Germany during the first half of the seventies reflected the reformist attitude of the social-liberal government and a tolerant, selective, and "soft" protest policing. In both countries, the highest levels of repression coincided with a shrinking of the more politically oriented wing of the movements, a decline that indirectly helped the most radical behavior to prevail – as was the case, in particular, in Italy in the seventies. The lower degree of violence during protest events in the eighties corresponded instead to an increasing tolerance for different forms of protest.

A last concern refers to the *reciprocal adaptation of police and protestors' tactics.* We observed until now that hard police tactics "coincided" with hard protest tactics. We also suggested that, to a certain extent, police tactics influenced protest forms. It should be added, however, that the relationship between protestors and the police has not had a unique causal determination: we observed that protest tactics influenced the police tactics through interactive processes. For instance, the escalation of the antinuclear protest in Germany involved the ritualization of the conflict between an increasingly militant wing of activists and an increasingly aggressive police. On the one side of the conflict, in fact, a militant group began to organize, appearing at all the various protest events and pushing for direct confrontation; on the other side, the local police, bolstered by police units from different states, used massive intervention.[33] A similar ritualization of physical confrontations – although at a larger scale – involved the Italian police and protestors all through the seventies. These interactive processes have to be taken into account to explain the dynamics of escalation.

PROTEST POLICING: A SUMMARY

In this chapter, I analyzed some political preconditions for the development of violence. In particular, I focused on what I consider an important barometer of the political opportunities available for social movement, namely protest policing. Searching for a satisfactory description of different strategies of protest policing, I distinguished, first of all, the selectivity of state intervention, referring to both the forms of collective action and the type of collective actors. I also

considered the amount of force used, the timing of police intervention, and the emphasis on the "respect for lawful procedures" as opposed to tolerance for "dirty tricks." I then used these classifications of police styles for a description of protest policing in the two countries over the past forty years. I observed that police control has generally followed a trend toward more tolerant, selective, soft, preventive, and legal measures; but I also cautioned that we should not overlook important cross-national differences and reversals in the general trend.

In order to explain protest policing, I then tried to single out which of the variables mentioned in the studies on political opportunities have a direct impact on the police handling of protest. I started with the more stable institutional and cultural environment. In considering the role of institutions, I indicated the relevance of legislation on public order and demonstrations, police rights, and citizen rights. The federal German institutions – with the control of the police by the states' governments – strongly contrasted with the centralized Italian institutions. Apropos of the political culture, I emphasized the presence of different frames and political discourses referring to the state, civil rights, and police power. I observed that although the national strategies of Italy and Germany changed slowly, they did undergo quite dramatic changes through the period we are analyzing.

To understand the evolution of protest policing, I focused on a second set of political opportunities: the (more volatile) configuration of power. Looking at the attitudes of different parties in government, I suggested that, as expected, in general the Left tended to take a more tolerant attitude toward protest than did the Right. But protest policing proved a delicate matter for leftist governments for they were often pressured toward a hard-line policy by law-and-order campaigns. In time, however, Left and Right moved closer together on this issue: in the eighties, even conservative government had become more tolerant of protest, probably reflecting a more tolerant attitude in public opinion. Looking at the actors of interest intermediation – political parties, pressure groups, and movement organizations – I concluded that protest policing (as well as protest tactics) is particularly sensitive to the interactions of two opposing coalitions: a civil rights coalition and a law-and-order coalition. Analyzing the interaction of the two coalitions, I observed that (1) the position of the Old Left had a pronounced effect on the strength of the civil rights coalition; (2) the law-and-order coalition gained strength and influence when the political discourse was most polarized; (3) the civil rights coalition gradually expanded while the law-and-order coalition shrank; and (4) the configuration of power between the civil rights and law-and-order coalitions was influenced by protest tactics.

Protest policing is, eventually, influenced by the preference of the bureaucracy that implements policy choices: the police. I observed that, although internal dynamics sometimes pushed the police to adopt a hard line, the fear of losing public support often brought the police to oppose using hard repressive tactics during protest events.

After looking at the causes of protest policing, I also proposed some hypotheses on its consequences on social movement repertoires. I suggested that in general a tolerant and soft style of policing favors the diffusion of protest. A repressive and hard protest policing results, at the same time, in a shrinking of mass movements and a radicalization of smaller protest groups. Whereas preventive, selective, and legal protest policing isolates the more violent wings of social movements and helps the integration of the more moderate ones, reactive, diffuse, and "dirty" techniques alienate also the more moderate wings from the state. I concluded by observing that protest and police repertoires evolve through processes of reciprocal adaptation and innovation.

By focusing on the relationship between the political system and social movements, in this chapter we proceeded a step forward in the explanation of political violence. We stated, in fact, that political violence interacted with some characteristics of the POS, characteristics that were related to a "tough" style of policing. But to state this correlation does not yet help us to understand which processes and dynamics actually brought about political violence. The effects of the external environment on movement strategies are in fact mediated through organizational processes and individual motivations. Political activists inside movement organizations frame the reality and give a meaning to it, so defining their attitudes and behavior. In order to understand the effects of the context on movements' escalation, we have to analyze in the following chapters the organizational evolution and the individual motivations of the "unwanted children" of the Left – that is, the radical wing of the left-libertarian movement family.

4

Organizational processes and violence in social movements

Political institutions and culture, the strategies of allies and opponents, the governmental coalition in power – all these environmental variables help explain the cyclical emergence of repressive attitudes in Italy and Germany, precisely when these countries were generally moving toward greater tolerance of political protest and more liberal definitions of democratic rights. In the preceding chapter, we observed that political violence was at least partially correlated with variations in the policing of protest. But neither the political opportunity structure nor the policing of protest offers a completely satisfactory explanation for political violence. First, episodes of violent escalation – for example, the terrorist attacks in the early seventies or the waves of youth violence in the eighties in Germany – did not follow an increase in repression. Second, the correlation between protest violence and repressive violence by the state does not explain the dynamics and logic of radicalization. In order to understand the development of political violence, we have to look at the actors that used radical strategies, in particular, the radical movement organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES AND RADICALIZATION

In this chapter, I suggest that environmental conditions triggered organizational processes that in turn favored the diffusion of violence. Organizational analysis provides an ideal basis to study the escalation of political protest, as political violence is, indeed, a strategy used by radical – sometimes underground – organizations. The organizational approach (for an introduction, see Scott 1981; Hall 1982; Panebianco 1988) allows us to single out which kinds of organizations and which characteristics of the external environment favor the process of radicalization. In this perspective, the main questions about the causes and dynamics of political violence can be reformulated in terms of the causes and dynamics of organizational radicalization.

As yet, little social research has focused on organizational radicalization. The analysis of the evolution of political organizations usually applies the well-

known Weberian theory on bureaucratization and Robert Michels's "iron law of oligarchies" (1962). In line with this tradition, attention was focused on those processes of organizational "institutionalization" characterized by the centralization of decisional structures, the moderation of goals, and the predominance of organizational survival over the transformation of external reality. However, in an article dealing with the evolution in social movement organizations (or SMOs), two exponents of the resource mobilization approach, Mayer Zald and Roberta Ash Garner (Zald and Ash 1966), suggested that the Weber–Michels predictions were only applicable under certain environmental conditions and to some types of organizations. As for the environmental conditions, the tendency toward moderation can be hindered by the failure to reach explicit aims or the diffusion of radical opinions in society. Even when the environmental characteristics might facilitate the process of moderation, organizational characteristics might push in the opposite direction. First, the pressure to adapt to the external environment diminishes when *solidarity* incentives take precedence over material incentives – that is, when individual commitment is based on rewards related to participation per se rather than material rewards.[1] Second, the environmental influence decreases as *exclusive* organizational models increase the control of the organization over its members.[2] Third, the tendency toward goal moderation is hindered by *fundamentalistic ideologies* that deny legitimation to the institutional power.

Zald and Ash Garner concluded by asking for more research on organizational development:

> We have proposed some general hypotheses specifying conditions of membership, goal type, success and failure, environmental conditions, and leadership that determine the extent and nature of the change of organizational goals. We have illustrated our propositions, but illustration is not proof. What is now needed is a systematic testing of the propositions, using large numbers of historical and contemporary case studies – in short a comparative analysis of social movement organizations. (Zald and Ash 1966:360–61)

Thus, in this chapter and the next I test some of the propositions presented by Zald and his school on the phenomenon of organizational radicalization in Italy and Germany. In particular, I focus on environmental resources as well as the capability of movement organizations to mobilize these resources, distribute incentives to their members, and transform society.

Taking the resource mobilization approach as a starting point, I would add three observations. First, one of the characteristics of social movements is that they do not identify themselves with an organization. On the contrary, each movement is composed of a multitude of movement organizations that both collaborate and compete with one another. And, in the evolution of one social movement, we witness both the radicalization of some SMOs and the moderation of others. The only way to explain both is *to distinguish the resources*

available for the radical organizations from those available for the moderate ones.

Second, we cannot follow processes of radicalization over a fairly extended period if we limit ourselves to single social movements. As mentioned, between the sixties and the nineties, we have witnessed the evolution of a new social movement family, formed by single movements with a similar ideology and a common mobilization potential – the left-libertarian family. During this evolution, already existing SMOs provided the organizational resources for those that followed, and thus influenced their strategic choices. To grasp these interactions between protest cycles, social movements, and organizational radicalization, I shall therefore differentiate between *organizational resources,* within the movement family, and *environmental resources,* available in a larger environment.

Third, SMOs have to adapt to a *particularly volatile environment,* in which the mobilization of protest may move rapidly from a peak to a decline. To catch up with environmental transformations, SMOs need to adapt to different aims: to offer the organizational resources necessary to start a protest campaign,[3] to coordinate activities when mobilization increases, and to maintain the commitment of their members when it declines. The SMOs tend therefore to transform themselves but do not all change in the same direction. The analysis has to take into account the effect of the protest cycle on different SMOs, trying to explain their institutionalization, disappearance, or radicalization.

These points are developed in a comparison of the organizational radicalization in the left-libertarian family in Italy and Germany, beginning with the student movement and continuing with the more radical of the groups that followed. In the next two sections, I analyze the organizational radicalization in Italy and Germany. Afterward, I discuss some explanations for the development of political violence by looking at organizational resources and environmental resources. In the conclusion, I shall focus on some unforeseen internal dynamics – or "absurd processes" – that can explain the survival of political violence even when political and social conflicts evolve in a peaceful direction.

RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ITALY

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the Italian left-libertarian family has been characterized, at least until the end of the seventies, by the influence of the New Left. From the organizational point of view, the encounter between the students and the working class brought about the growth of SMOs, characterized by centralization, exclusivism, and radical ideologies. While most of the New Left became institutionalized, a few leaders joined the second generation of young and radicalized militants, producing decentralized but ideologically and strategically very radical groupings of the *Autonomia.* Clandestine organizations grew, and in several cases died, in this process.

Student unions and gruppi operaisti

When the student movement emerged in Italy in the mid-sixties, the movement's political expertise was supplied by members of the student unions and other self-governing student organizations within the universities. Groups with different ideological orientations (mostly branches of national political parties) took part in the Unione Nazionale Universitaria Rappresentativa Italiana (UNURI), the student "parliament," which served as a reservoir of young leaders for the political parties (Statera 1973:88–92). During the sixties, when the students became increasingly dissatisfied with the functioning of the academic system, the UNURI and its "student parties" radicalized, becoming the first arenas of student protest. In particular, a more radical wing emerged within the left-wing student union, Unione Goliardica Italiana (or UGI), that had strong ties with the Communist Party. These very ties, which had previously provided the UGI with its organizational resources, became too cumbersome when mass protest developed in the mid-sixties. Torn by dissension (Tarrow 1989a:254ff.) and unable to gain independence and credibility, the UGI disbanded.

The organizational resources for mobilization came, then, especially from the "workerist" groups. Throughout the sixties, intellectuals who criticized the PCI and the trade unions founded "circles" and journals with the aim of adapting Marxism to the profound changes of postwar society and, at the same time, opposing the "revisionism" of the institutional Left. *Quaderni rossi* and *Classe operaia* were the most important of these journals. Among the many local groups was Potere Operaio Toscano, founded at the end of 1966 by former PCI members whose aim was to mobilize the workers of Pisa, Livorno, Massa, and Piombino. The ideology of these groups was called *operaismo* (workerism) because it stressed the centrality of the working class and of class conflicts and the need for the working class to have an autonomous organization. The "workerist" activists played an important role in student mobilization.[4]

Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio

After the break-up of the UGI, no preexisting organization was in a position to coordinate protest activities. At this point, several groups started to cooperate, and compete, in order to do so. At the same time, the university nuclei strengthened their ties with one or another of the "workerist" groups in order to organize common activities outside the university. This process, which took place between 1968 and 1969, gave rise to all the main organizations of the Italian New Left: Unione dei Comunisti Italiani-ml (UCIml); Avanguardia Operaia (AO); Potere Operaio (PO); Il Manifesto; Movimento Studentesco (MS); and – the most long-lived and probably most important – Lotta Continua (LC).

The story of LC exemplifies the way in which these *gruppi* emerged. Like most New Left groups, it had a skeletal organizational structure, consisting of

a small network of friends that formed in the wake of strikes at the Fiat factory in Turin in the late sixties. Some of the student militants from Pisa moved in fact to Turin to participate in the protest at the Fiat, and there they met other student activists and members of "workerist" groups, such as La Classe, from Porto Marghera. In the meantime, labor protest had spread to other factories and industrial areas. For the groups of workers who opposed the trade unions' strategy (which they saw as too moderate), the "workerist" groups were a valuable source of organizational guidance and skill. In the larger factories, activists founded *assemblee operai studenti* (workers' and students' assemblies), which were ideologically heterogeneous and sought to coordinate the protest activities. Regional meetings were organized every Saturday to coordinate the local protest. In these meetings, groups with different ideological tendencies began to join together to form larger organizations. Activists from Potere Operaio Toscano and Potere Operaio di Pavia joined student activists from the universities of Turin and Trent and the Catholic University in Milan to found LC.[5]

LC expressed its organizational principles in the slogan "the organization is a process." Other *gruppi* chose to follow different models: PO took a Leninist position; AO concentrated its efforts in the big factories; MS restricted its activities to the student movement; Il Manifesto emphasized theoretical work. Even the more decentralized of the Italian groups, however, eventually evolved toward centralized structures. Once again, LC is a typical example.

Lotta Continua had once insisted on a loosely structured organization, with coordinated "action committees" (Tarrow 1989a:265). Indeed, in the beginning, LC "was not much more than an "umbrella term of a loose coalition of extreme left groups and radical workers who met every day in the same bar" (Tarrow 1989a:268). The spreading of protest to various social groups influenced the evolution of LC and of other groups of the New Left. While the common organizational form of the new mobilizations was the thousands of small collectives that operated at the local level, a good portion of the resources needed to coordinate protest came from the New Left, which continued organizing most of the activists coming from the student movement.[6] Having been the protagonists of the student mobilization, the groups of the New Left could count on a large membership.[7] Between the end of the sixties and the beginning of the new decade, these organizations underwent profound changes, adopting a more centralized and exclusive structure. In September 1968, the national congress of the student movement in Venice was, in the words of Luigi Bobbio, a former leader of LC, "the last moment in which the debate was open and the common participation in the student movement was a shared assumption" (Bobbio 1988: 16).

The turning point was 1969. Going back to LC, Bobbio recalled that, in that year, the leadership "thought that [it] had to surpass this primitive stage and to constitute a national coordination of delegates" (Bobbio 1988:74). At the first National Convention in 1970 – when LC had about 50 sections, distributed

throughout all the main towns in central and northern Italy – a "National Committee for Coordination" and an executive committee were created. In autumn 1972, when LC had as many as 150 chapters throughout the country, its leaders were searching for an organizational formula that would enable the organization to "overcome the primitivism of its previous experience" and to "return to the patrimony of militancy, discipline, and seriousness typical of the working class" (Bobbio 1988:129). The new organizational principles of the group – which now had to be transformed into a party – were defined as

> The theoretical and political formation of cadres, the election of leaders, the individual responsibilities of the militant in a framework of collective discipline, the division of tasks and specialization. . . . It is nothing else than the discovery of democratic centralism and the third-internationalist concept of the party. (Bobbio 1988:130)

Moreover, the organization became more and more exclusive. Later on, Bobbio observed, "there was a consolidation of an integrationist attitude." In July 1971, for example, during the second national conference of LC, the following dictum appeared in the group's newspaper:

> There are not only many groups, . . . there are many political lines. Among them, *only one is correct*, because it contributes to unifying and strengthening the working class; the others are wrong because they weaken the working class. (quoted in Bobbio 1988: 97)

Again in 1972, LC founded its own daily newspaper (*Lotta Continua*), which had to compete on the market with two other New Left dailies: *Il Manifesto* and *Il Quotidiano dei Lavoratori*. Similarly to most New Left groups, LC created specialized units to provide "self-defense" for movement activities and militant actions. Not rarely, the internal competition in the New Left was reflected in violent fights between the "marshal" bodies of the various radical groups.

After a rather complex sequence of alliances and splits, the three main groups of the New Left survived the decline in mobilization that began around 1973: LC, AO, and Manifesto–Partito di Unità Proletaria (PdUP).

The foundation of the Brigate Rosse

Not all of the small groups formed during the student mobilization, however, converged to form the larger organizations of the New Left. In particular, some of them stated that the concept of "mass violence," dominant in the left-libertarian movement, was too moderate, and started to practice "vanguard violence," considered as a vital step in the revolutionary process. Italy's first underground organization, the Red Brigades emerged from this area. Figure 4.1 gives a summary of the organizational evolution – splits and mergings – that led to the formation of this group and the main events that influenced its organizational evolution.

The BR was founded in 1970 in Milan by militants of one of the many radical

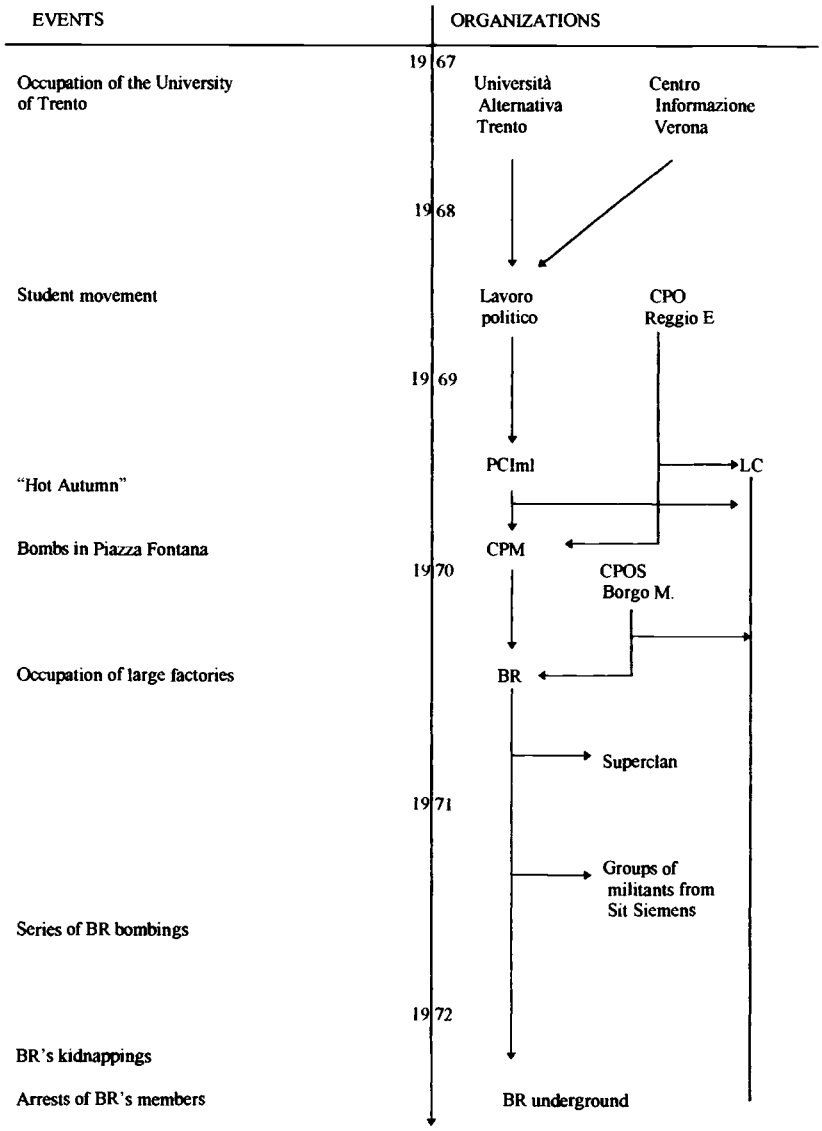

Figure 4.1. Origins of underground organizations: the BR

leftist groups, the Collettivo Politico Metropolitano (CPM). Some of these militants came from a small group of the traditionally "red" city of Reggio Emilia, the Collettivo Politico Operaio (CPO); others from a student group active at the University of Trent, the Università Alternativa, and the Centro Informazione di

Verona.[8] In 1968, members of the three groupings founded the group Lavoro Politico, while other members of the CPO of Reggio Emilia joined LC. After some experiences in a Marxist-Leninist group (the Partito Comunista Italiano marxista leninista, or PCIml), some activists from Lavoro Politico, joined with activists of the Collettivo Politico Operai e Studenti (CPOS) of Borgo Manero (a town on the outskirts of Milan), to found the CPM. Shortly after the bombings of the Banca dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana in Milan, several CPM activists founded the underground group BR.

The story of the BR is one of repeated splits and progressive encapsulation. From its very beginnings, the BR adopted tactics that were illegal but not very different from those tolerated – or even overtly advocated – by the social movements. At first, the group tried to maintain a "double militance": the organization itself was to be clandestine but its members would engage in political activity, in particular, in the industrial conflict. Two groups of militants – the "Superclan" and a group of workers from the Sit Siemens factory – did not agree with the increasing emphasis placed on underground work and left the BR. In May 1972, after a series of BR bombings and a few "demonstrative" kidnappings, some members of the organization were subject to house searches and arrested. In response to these events some decided to go underground; others, however, considered this decision "adventuristic" and dropped out.

The crisis and decline of Potere Operaio and Lotta Continua

As the histories of PO, LC, and their successors illustrate,[9] the use of violence also produced conflicts and splits within the nonclandestine organizations. Figure 4.2 gives a summary of this organizational evolution and of the external circumstances that influenced it.

By the early seventies, the disagreement about the role of the marshals already divided the most radical groups, until the "militarized" wings abandoned the main organizations. In PO, in which three semimilitary structures had been created since 1971, the debate on violence followed the legal investigations into a fire in the house of an activist belonging to the largest Italian right-wing party, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), in which his two young sons died. When three PO members were charged and arrested for arson, PO split between those who denied their organization was in any way involved in the incident and those who considered the charges accurate. In particular, this second fraction criticized the lack of a political control on the part of the leadership of the "military" actions of some members. One militant recalled this criticism, as expressed at the meeting held in Rome in 1972 to discuss that event:

> There were groups, also an organization of violence, that was not controlled by the assembly of the militants or by the political leadership. . . . The organization had degen-

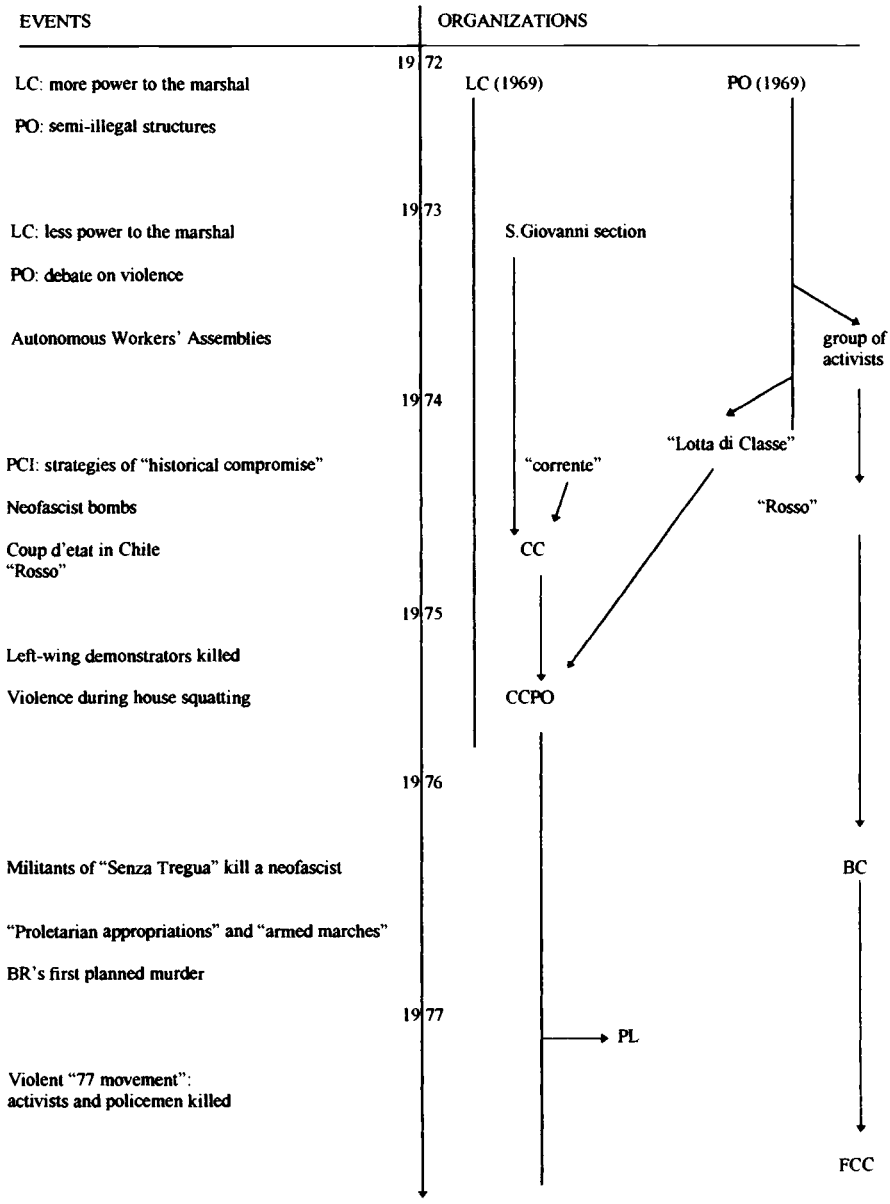

Figure 4.2. Origins of underground organizations: the PL and FCC

erated to such an extent that it was possible for an action like that to happen without anyone having made a decision about it. . . . It implied that, clearly, the debate on violence did not evolve in the collective channels, but in small, spontaneous groups and, therefore, had completely degenerated. (Life history no. 22:47–8)

At this meeting, PO underwent its first major split: all those who thought that PO members had been involved in the arson left the organization. The organization faced a similar defection only a year later, in 1973, at a national conference in Rosolina, when the split occurred between those who wanted a centralized structure and those who favored an "autonomous organization for promotion of the mass struggle" together with the "organization of violence, that is, the capacity of directing some guide to the attack on the state" (Life history no. 28:16). It was this latter wing that left the organization. The history of PO was thus characterized by a constant debate on the use and organization of violent forms of action. Internal disagreements proliferated, with one wing criticizing violence, while another voted for radicalization.

Lotta Continua similarly experienced frequent oscillations between an often violent "*spontaneismo,*" and the search for institutional legitimacy. In 1972, the organization's national conference in Rimini had assigned a relevant role to the marshal bodies, stressing the need for revolutionary violence by both the "masses" and the "vanguard." By autumn of that year, however, some leaders criticized that choice in very negative tones. On October 14 and 15, during a meeting of the national committee, "it was stated," recalled an activist, "that in '69 we had made a unilateral choice, [that] we did not realize there was a significant difference between the new working class and the entire working class . . . [that] we had embodied left-wing extremism in its more traditional understanding" (Bobbio 1988:115). Following the internal criticism, the main body of the organization renounced the more radical strategies, and, in 1973, LC shifted toward what was called an electoral strategy. At the same time, a strong wing of the Milanese section left the main body, supporting the strategy of using self-organized violence and calling on activists to pay more attention to the working class. Another group, "la Corrente," which was composed of members of the *servizio d'ordine*, also left LC, once again because of differences over organizational strategies and the use of violence.[10]

The year 1973 was a turning point not only for LC but for the entire New Left. The decline of mobilization in the big factories produced a double effect. On the one hand, the main organizations became more institutionalized, and moderated their ideology and tactics. On the other hand, small groups abandoned the main organizations, and radicalized their strategies. If violence contributed to the crisis of the New Left, in the second half of the seventies it was also a factor of a temporary reaggregation of some remnants of the New Left. A step in this process was the constitution of the *Autonomia* (see Chapter 2). The name itself referred to its criticism not only of the Old Left, but also of the "moderation" of the New Left. If the leaders of the *collettivi autonomi* came out of

the crisis of the New Left, their followers came from a new generation of militants.

Rosso *and* Senza Tregua

The debate on violence played a central role in the reorganization of former LC and PO activists into new groups. In most of the cases, this aggregative process included attempts, coordinated at an interregional level, to use violent repertoires but to keep a legal "mass" structure. These attempts took place, in particular, in meetings of what was called the *Autonomia organizzata* (organized autonomy), a network of radical committees and "assemblies" composed of former militants of the New Left who had left their organizations. These groups, which were based in factories or other enterprises, held their first national coordinating meetings in 1972 and 1973 (Castellano 1980; Palombarini 1982).

Eventually, two magazines – *Senza Tregua* and *Rosso* – became the focal points for a number of the former PO and LC militants. *Senza Tregua*, the journal of the Communist Committees for Workers' Power (CCPO), was established in Milan by militants of the LC section in the working-class neighborhood of Sesto San Giovanni and by former members of PO. PO militants who had left the group in 1973 joined members of various other autonomous groups to found *Rosso*. Fueled by the crises within LC and PO, both tried to "rephrase" the "workerist" ideology of the sixties so as to make it more appealing to the new "autonomous" mood of the mid-seventies. Despite ideological differences – *Senza Tregua* was more closely linked to traditional "workerism," whereas *Rosso* proposed a new theory of "the worker in the society as a revolutionary subject" – the two groups shared a particularly striking trait, which accounted for the almost parallel career cycles of many of their activists. Both groups pursued a strategy that proved impossible to implement: the maintenance of legal organizational structures alongside an emphasis on the need for violence. As a militant of *Senza Tregua* explained:

> There was so to speak a double militancy: a militancy in the factory with the *Autonomia*, and the beginning of a direct practice, a direct exercise of, I don't know, burning the cars of some big shots . . . nothing really special, attacks on the headquarters of the MSI, or some break-ins in the headquarters of the DC [the Christian Democratic Party]. (Life history no. 3:47)

Rosso shared with *Senza Tregua* the project of "on the one hand, organizing incidents of workers', proletarian, students' mobilizations [and] on the other hand, constructing an armed organizational lever" (Life history no. 28:116). The organization usually had some nuclei working within the autonomous collectives, "where they tried to build armed squads" (Life history no. 4:14–15).

Although the leaders of the *Autonomia* came from the New Left, their recruits

were very young people, socialized in the working-class neighborhoods of the alienating outskirts of Italian cities. As one militant explained, in Milan

> . . . all the work done in the previous years had produced about fifty cadres with this double ability: on the one hand to recognize an explosive situation and stay inside it and make it grow; on the other hand, to keep in mind all the problems of the clandestine struggle and thus also to have the ability to choose the best people for these tasks, to train them. (Life history no. 12:25)

At the very beginning, their violent actions were quite "spontaneous," "things for which nobody claimed responsibility," recalled one militant, who continued: "the things that happened in that period [could] be attributed to people who started to practice a double militancy" (Life history no. 3:47).

Nevertheless, the attempt to reach a precarious equilibrium between a legal structure for mass propaganda and a clandestine structure failed. As a militant of *Senza Tregua* recalled:

> In reality, it was impossible to solve this problem, we could not conduct politics and coordinate the other element, the clandestine and military one. These two sides are always in contradiction with each other. Even when they are organizationally unified, it is as if each lived its own life. (Life history no. 27:35)

One consequence of the failure to integrate legal and clandestine activities was the emergence of organizations that were completely underground.

The foundation of Prima Linea and of the Formazioni Comuniste Combattenti

Prima Linea, the second largest clandestine organization, was founded at the end of 1976 as a splinter group, the outcome of a series of choices made by some networks of individuals within its parent organization, the already mentioned (CCPO). The CCPO, like the early BR, tried to combine illegal tactics with nonclandestine structures, but was no more successful at sustaining this double life than was the BR: it was torn by internal divisions, and some members of the group were faced with legal prosecution after carrying out their first assassination, in 1976. To deal with this crisis, the CCPO split at the end of that year. One faction condemned illegal actions. Another, the "military structure" (which included a former member of BR) chose "compartmentalization" – that is, the organizational separation into units independent from each other – and the use of increasingly violent forms of action. This military wing was to become Prima Linea.

Similar was the process that led to the foundation, in 1977, of a third, relatively large, clandestine organization: the Formazioni Comuniste Combattenti, which originated in Milan from a split in the *collettivi* that published the magazine *Rosso*. In particular, the FCC was founded by militants of the Communist Brigades (BC), which was a kind of marshal body of the various groups close

to the magazine *Rosso*. In 1976, some networks of activists associated with *Rosso* had gradually increased their use of violent forms of action: planting bombs or throwing Molotov cocktails at cars or houses, and staging armed protest marches, "proletarian expropriations," and robberies. The military skills improved when a former member of the BR joined the group – as a militant recalled, describing this man's role in the organization of *Rosso*: "this guy arrived and, for contingent and personal reasons, because he was a clandestine, he was much more anxious to stress the logistical aspect. . . . He had a surprising, scientific ability for robbing banks" (Life history no. 12:24, 25). The event that ultimately divided this group was the assassination of a policeman during a public march organized by the more radical groups in Milan, in May 1977. Although the majority favored pursuing mass actions and retaining legal structures, the Communist Brigades feared state repression and went underground.

Previously existing groupings with developed military skills were also at the origins of other underground groups. The Armed Proletarian Nuclei (NAP) was constituted by a small group originally from LC. The Armed Proletarians for Communism (PAC) in Venice and Milan was founded by former members of *Rosso*. The founders of the Communist Fighting Units (UCC) in Rome and Milan and of the Armed Fighting Formations (FAC) in Rome and Turin were previously members of CCPO. Networks of people who had already participated in the underground formed other, smaller underground groups, and terrorists from the main armed organizations founded several small clandestine groups after 1979. As a militant observed, "The real legacy of the armed struggle was . . . the [large] number of cadres [that were] able to build up an armed structure from nothing" (Life history no. 12:24–5).

In a way, therefore, the very diffusion of military skills pushed the more radical wings of the SMOs underground, and the underground organizations drew more and more groupings into clandestinity. While state repression increased dramatically to counter the wave of terrorist attacks in the late seventies, no space was left for those radical groups that wanted to resist both institutionalization and terrorism. In the early eighties, the small groupings of the *Autonomia* had practically disappeared: most of their activists abandoned political activity, and a few joined the terrorist groups that, as we saw, were the product of the encounter between the most radical wing of the New Left and the new radicalism of the mid-seventies.

RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GERMANY

The history of radical organizations in Germany mirrors, to a certain extent, that of their Italian counterparts. Although Marxist journals influenced the origins of the student movement, a strong counterculture balanced the power of the New Left. The end of the student mobilization brought about a process of decentralization, with the dominance of inclusive and pragmatic organizations.

The most exclusive and centralized SMOs – among them the underground groups – remained small and isolated. Without a large presence of former New Left organizers, the German *Autonomen* were constituted of tiny and largely uncoordinated groups.

The Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund

In Germany, as in Italy, some organizational resources for the student protest came from the student "parliament," the Allgemeiner Studenten Ausschuss (AStA), although the activists criticized the role and the organization of the student "parliaments," sometimes "suspending" their elected representatives. In contrast to Italy, however, the German AStAs survived the decline of mobilization. Again unlike the Italian case, the main organizational resources for the student movement came from a student "party": the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund. Formed immediately after the war as a student organization, the SDS had very strong ties with the SPD, but consisted of other leftist groups as well: antifascist "Volkskomitees," independent socialists, communists of the Fourth International, and members of the orthodox Communist Party, the KPD (Fichter and Lönnendonker 1977:14). The SDS underwent a far-reaching transformation at the beginning of the sixties. Friction between the SDS and the SPD developed when the SDS insisted on requesting talks with the German Democratic Republic in its campaign for disarmament. In 1961, the SDS, which criticized the moderate turn of the party,[11] was eventually expelled from the SPD. By then, the group's "search for a new theoretical line" was already underway, and it occupied the following years, up to 1964. In this period, the SDS was in fact a study group that made an important contribution to the debate on the adjustments of Marxist theory to societal changes, a debate that had developed in various circles, among them the Republikanischer Club and the review *Das Argument.*

The SDS was particularly well suited to the task of guiding the student movement through the adjustment required by the spread of mobilization. It was not affiliated with any political party and was inclusive. As mentioned, the SDS had established its independence of the SPD many years before the protest began. Its inclusiveness was a well-established characteristic and allowed people of different ideological backgrounds to join, among them several people from the radical group Subversive Aktion, who sought entry in 1965. One of these Subversive Aktion members, Rudi Dutschke, described the suspicion of the SDS leadership when he and his colleagues asked to join: "What an entrance for us of the Subversive Aktion into the SDS! How mistrustfully comrade Tilman Fichter asked us what we wanted" (from his diary, quoted in Chaussy 1985: 65). Suspicion notwithstanding, the SDS embraced even this anarchist group, which energized the anti-authoritarian faction present within the organization.

The well-developed organizational structure of the SDS made it indispensable

for national mobilization, and at the same time it made it quite difficult for new organizations to compete with the SDS in coordinating protest. But the SDS retained its power only as long as mass mobilization increased. By 1969 the SDS was internally split over the *Organisationsfrage*, a dilemma that pitted the countercultural wing of the *Antiautoritären* against the *Traditionalisten*, who were more in line with the social-democratic tradition (Bock 1976:239).

The SDS could no longer fulfill its leadership role when mobilization declined. On the one hand, there was too strong a resistance against becoming a bureaucratized party; and, on the other hand, a return to its old *Studentenbund* organizational forms would have been impossible. As one former leader recalled:

> After the summer of 1968 we were suddenly confined to this goddam university and its reform. The latter was much too little for us after all that had happened before. The one-third student representation they were offering us on administrative bodies wasn't good enough for us. Even people who called for fifty-fifty representation were regarded as reformist. Any realistic politics was considered bad, if not worse. And that led to a complete incapacity to act politically at all, which in turn led to the continuous self-destruction of the SDS in factional fights. (Interview with Detlev Claussen, in Fraser 1988:268)

In 1969, the national leadership of the SDS declared its inability to function as a coordinating committee, because of the centrifugal tendencies. In 1970, the dissolution of the SDS was approved in a general meeting of the rank-and-file members.

K-Gruppen and "undogmatische Linke"

The decline of mobilization brought about not only a decentralization in the organization of the left-libertarian movements, but also the emergence of some bureaucratic groups. In 1968, the SDS had about 4,000 members, and the total number of student activists was estimated to be somewhere between 30,000 and 60,000. When the organization disbanded, its former members went in different directions. Many of the traditionalists joined the SPD, in particular its youth branch, the Jusos (*Jungsozialisten*). Between 1969 and 1973, the ranks of the SPD increased by about 100,000 members under thirty-five years old (Fichter and Lönnendonker 1977:143). Other traditionalists joined the orthodox communist Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP), which was founded in 1969. Many *K-Gruppen* – that is, small Maoist or Trotskyite nuclei – were also formed in this period. Notwithstanding their small size, these groups were indeed very exclusive in their attitudes and organizational structure.[12]

As for the "anti-authoritarians," these former members of the SDS founded Red Cells (*Rote Zellen*) in many faculties of various universities as well as "committees" devoted to specific topics. The Red Cells were decentralized and less exclusive than the *K-Gruppen* – main activities were theoretical discussions,

and their intervention was limited to the universities. One of the more important of these cells of the "*undogmatische Linke*," the Sozialistisches Büro (founded in April 1969), defined itself as a forum for discussion and *Sozializationskampagne*, and throughout its long life it never once adopted a political platform (Kukuck 1974:203). Even within the anti-authoritarian groups, however, sectarian tendencies developed.

The foundation of the Rote Armee Fraktion

At the beginning of the seventies in Germany, as in Italy, some movement groups went underground. Similarly to the Italian BR, the first German terrorist organization – the Rote Armee Fraktion – emerged from the radicalization of a small network of activists, after mobilization declined (see Figure 4.3).[13]

In 1970, a network of about twelve activists who, after the decline in the university protest, had "intervened" in a working-class neighborhood in Berlin, the Märkisches Viertel, formed the organization that was later known as the Red Army Fraction. Several of the future RAF members – Jan Carl Raspe and Katarina Hammerschmidt, for example – were also active in the "Kinderladen" ("alternative" kindergartens) and in the experimentation with different educational models popular at the time. Others – such as Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader, Astrid Proll and her brother Thorwald – had met while doing political and social work among juvenile criminals or drug addicts. Ulrike Meinhof and Horst Mahler were prominent supporters of the Berlin student movement.

Even before Baader and his comrades issued a call for the creation of a Red Army, which marked the origin of the RAF in late spring 1970, several future members of the RAF were involved in a chain of violent events that, incidental though they seemed at the time, ultimately led to a decision to go underground. In 1968, four militants had been charged and sentenced for acts of arson in department stores in Frankfurt. Two of the four, Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin, escaped to Berlin, where they were helped by the journalist Ulrike Meinhof. When Baader was arrested in a routine police patrol, a small group of comrades and friends decided to try to free him. In their attempt, during which a person was accidentally wounded, they left evidence that could have identified the members of the "commando" unit. These individuals thus decided to go underground in order to avoid arrest. According to Friedhelm Neidhardt (1982a: 342), "It is an open question if, at this point, the participants knew what they were doing."

After Baader's escape, he and his comrades flew to a Palestinian camp (Aust 1985:103–9) for "training" in the logistics of clandestinity. When they returned to Germany a few months later, they were all underground, so that all the group's energies were concentrated on its own "reproduction": robbing banks, faking documents, and finding secret places to live. About one year later, two other networks of militants joined the original twelve, who at the time were called the Baader-Meinhof group. The first was a group of anarchists from the

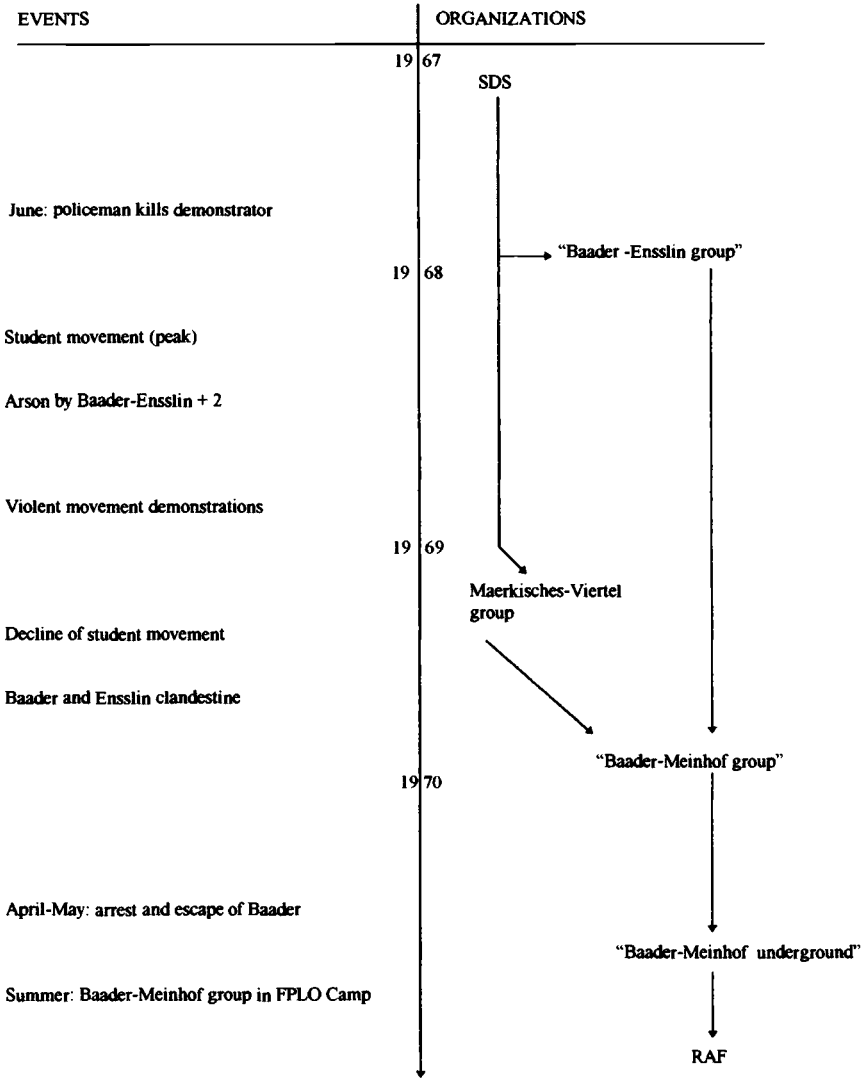

Figure 4.3. Origins of underground organizations: the RAF

Hash Rebels in Berlin (from which, as we will see, the "Bewegung 2. Juni," B2J – the Movement of the Second of June – emerged), and the second was a group of activists from the Sozialistische Patientenkollektiv (SPK) in Heidelberg. The SPK, which proposed radical medical therapies based on the concept of the disease as a product of social exploitation, was gradually marginalized

from mainstream institutions (such as hospitals and universities) until, in 1971, most of its members were arrested. In 1972, the first prison sentences were given: three members received four-and-a-half-year prison terms for organizing a criminal association, and other sentences followed. Several of those who fled before being imprisoned eventually joined the RAF.[14] By 1972, however, most of the RAF's founders were already in prison, and less than half a dozen new members were still active.

The foundation of the Bewegung 2. Juni and of the Revolutionären Zellen

Nevertheless, the issue of the prison conditions of the RAF members fueled the process of radicalization of a few other small networks of activists, which eventually brought about the rise of two other underground organizations: the Movement of the Second of June and the Revolutionary Cells (Revolutionären Zellen, RZ) (see Figure 4.4).

A first step toward radicalization was the encounter between some small groupings from the more anarchic wing of the student movement with some factions of Red Help (Rote Hilfe, RH) and Black Help (Schwarze Hilfe, SH), groups of the radical Left whose main aim was to defend movement activists against state repression.[15] To reconstruct the events that brought about the emergence of the B2J, we have to come back to the evolution, especially in Berlin, of the "communes movement," formed in the mid-sixties with the aim of experimenting with "alternative life-styles."[16] After the demise of the first Berlin commune, Kommune 1, a group favoring urban guerrilla warfare formed in another commune, the Wieland Kommune. Members of this commune, together with other small anarchic groups (one of which was known as Hash Rebels),[17] organized around the underground journal *AGIT 883*. In particular, activists of the more "political" wing of the Wieland Kommune made contact with young people of the less politicized Gammler Bewegung, and constituted the "Blues." The political aims of the Blues were quite vague, ranging from the legalization of hashish to the establishment of therapeutic centers for drug addicts, from the organization of youth centers to public "smoke-ins." Within this radical community, however, some networks of individuals organized the "defense" at public marches, mainly through the use of Molotov cocktails. Other networks formed to make bombs or to plan the escape of political prisoners. But the environment in which they operated was extremely volatile, and destabilized by a deep cleavage between the "counterculture" and the "political underground" (Baumann 1976:103).

Several elements favored the violent evolution of part of the group. In summer 1969, when the organization was beginning to take shape, some members from the anarchic scene went to Jordan to learn to make and explode bombs. By the time they returned, they had been converted to the "armed struggle" and set out to convert others. One act bearing their signature was the bombing of a

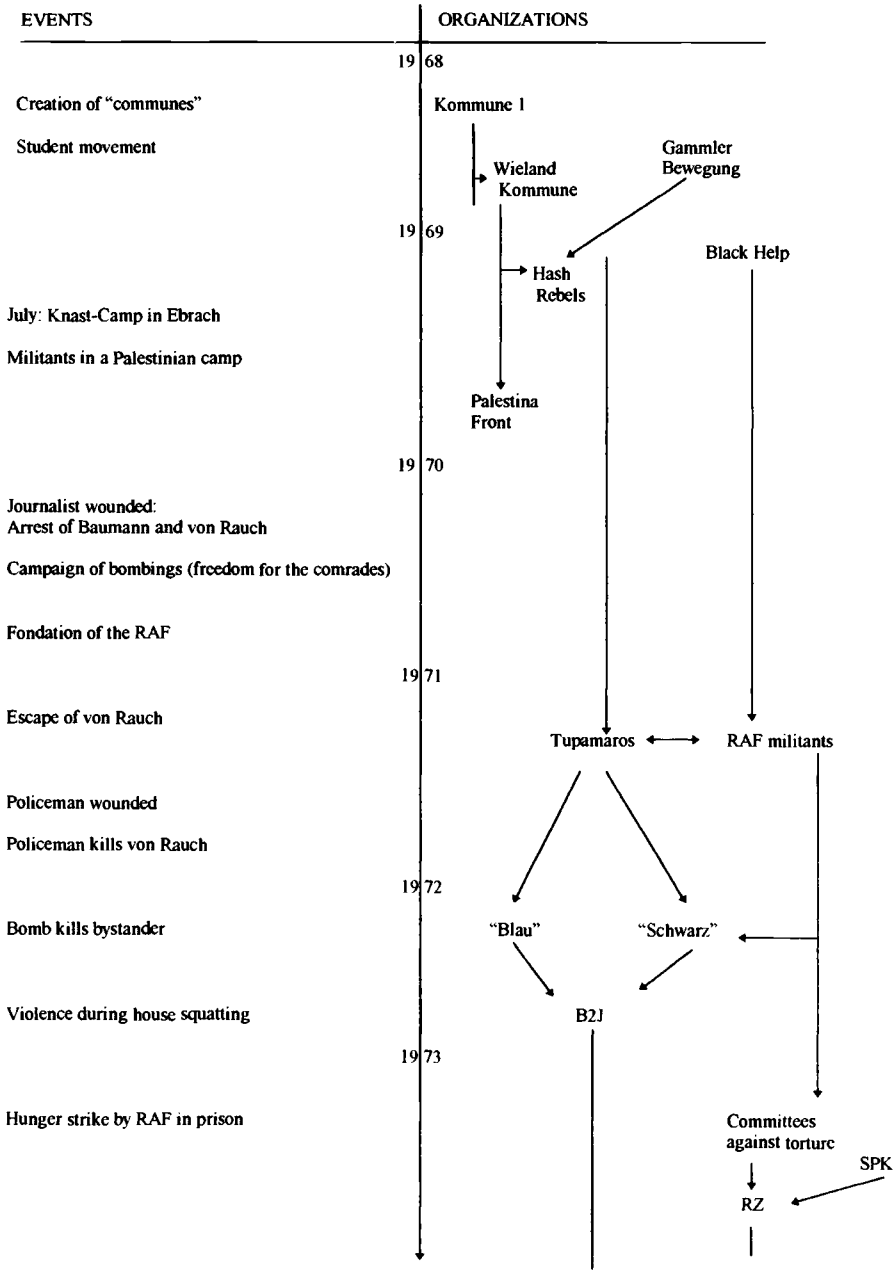

Figure 4.4. Origins of underground organizations: the B2J and RZ

synagogue in Berlin (Baumann 1976). The explosives used in about a dozen bombings in 1971 were also purported to come from Arab countries. Moreover, according to Baumann, a former member of B2J, the German groups received their first guns and explosives from an "agent provocateur," Peter Urbach, who had infiltrated Kommune 1. "It means," said Baumann, "that it was the *Bundersverfassungsschutz* [the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution] which provided us with the guns we later used to shoot at the police" (Baumann 1976:174).[18] Militants who were already underground also played a role in militarizing the group. In 1971, three former RAF members joined the network of anarchists who were to found the B2J (Document B:34). In a written indictment, the judges asserted that it was these three individuals who had provided the B2J with guns and with information about how to organize a bank robbery, neither of which any member of the group had previously possessed (Document A).

If these "external resources" favored the process of radicalization, the choice of going underground followed a long process of interactions between the militants and the state apparatuses. An important factor in the radicalization of the semi-anarchist groups from which B2J drew its members, the Hash Rebels and Black Help, was the arrest and imprisonment of two activists – Bommi Baumann and Georg von Rauch – in 1970 and the violent protest campaign that followed.[19] While some activists joined the RAF, at the end of 1971, militants wounded two policemen during a routine patrol and, in December 1971, a few months after his escape from prison, von Rauch was killed during a police patrol. His death shocked his fellow militants; one of his friends commented later that "At that point in time, nobody knew how we were to go on any more" (Document B:32). After the death of a former member in a fight with the police, the "Blues" suffered an internal split, as one former member explained: "While some continued to rob banks, we concentrated on political work and abandoned guerrilla warfare" (Baumann 1976:186). After the arrest of several militants, at the beginning of 1972, the more radical wing of the "Blues" attacked the English Yachting Club in Berlin, accidentally killing one person. This event accelerated the formation of B2J.

Another network of radical activists took part in the foundation of the B2J. At the beginning of the seventies, some "Blues" prisoners had joined a group of Black Help. Later on, the third German underground organization emerged in the same environment: the Revolutionary Cells.[20] This group crystallized in 1973, following a series of arrests and indictments of militants involved in the "Committees against Torture," formed from the radical wings of Black and Red Help. This group of activists had gradually increased its use of violent repertoires while developing contacts with members of other, already existing, terrorist groups. The story of the Stuttgart section of Red Help is another example of the way in which the issue of violence divided – and redivided – the movement organizations. Red Help's members disagreed with each other on several issues, from the definition of a political prisoner to the extent to which the group should engage in illegal actions. As a result of these disagreements,

various factions left Red Help over a period of time, formed new groups, joined already existing ones, or disbanded altogether. If the majority favored legal activity – providing external support to the RAF prisoners and their hunger strike – some members were indeed willing to offer more immediate assistance: maintaining contacts among the prisoners and collecting information for them, for example. But, as the future RAF member Volker Speitel recalled, even in this smaller group, which was established as a separate organization in 1974, "groupings were constituted of people who began to talk with arms instead of with leaflets" (Speitel 1980a:39). Eventually, when the legal faction demobilized and an RAF member who had been a prisoner joined the group, several of its militants decided to take up arms: some of them joined the RAF, others formed the RZ. External contacts with Palestinian guerrilla organizations and international terrorism played a particularly important role in the origins of the RZ; later on RZ formed an "international branch" and their militants were involved in some of the bloodiest acts of international terrorism of the time.[21]

Spontis *and* Autonomen

Although the process of radicalization that involved some SMOs after the demise of the student movement was similar, the influence of the radical SMOs on the left-libertarian movement was much more limited in Germany than in Italy. As already mentioned, under Chancellor Willy Brandt protest did not disappear, but simply became more moderate and decentralized. Even if the more radical groups tried to propagandize violence in the *Bürgerinitiativen*, they had little success. Although the intervention of the *K-Gruppen* in environmental and urban protest sometimes ushered in violence, the *Bürgerinitiativen* continued to firmly advocate nonviolent repertoires.

The discourse about the *Spontis* – that is, the network of collectives that, from 1973 on, united around the newspaper *Wir Wollen Alles* (we want everything) – is much more complex. The *Spontis*, whose few groups at the beginning of the seventies became more numerous by the mid-seventies, rejected the attempt to organize a "vanguard of the proletariat" for an "increasing awareness among the masses." Like LC in Italy, these groups expressed their confidence in the spontaneous and autonomous organization of the working class (Kukuck 1974: 228 ff.); and like the Italian *Autonomia* generally, they wanted to organize a total, anticapitalist – and militant – struggle, against the complete domination of capital over the sphere of production and reproduction. Their political mobilizations outside the factory, including rent strikes and house squattings, expressed their rejection of the domination of capitalism well beyond the sphere of production as well.

The *Spontis*, again like the *Autonomia*, were composed of small collectives, often rather volatile communities that were active in schools, neighborhoods, and the workplace. Even when they became more numerous, especially between

1975 and 1978, they remained quite loosely coordinated. Movement journals – such as *BUG Info* in Berlin – offered the *Sponti* collectives the opportunity to communicate with each other. These collectives sometimes organized national meetings, one of the most important being the "National Resistance Congress: Journey to TUNIX (do nothing)," in January 1978 in Berlin. This congress adopted what was once an LC slogan: "All and now." Persisting in their radical criticism of the *K-Gruppen*, the *Spontis* never abandoned their "base" structure in favor of greater centralization.

The repressive climate that followed terrorist actions in 1977 – with antiterrorist legislation and calls for law and order in public opinion – worsened the relationship between movements and institutions. However, only rarely did the conflict escalate into physical clashes between demonstrators and the police. The organizational structure of the left-libertarian movements remained decentralized and inclusive, with very loosely structured coordination committees. The very principles of "base" democracy, decentralization, and inclusiveness were even emphasized by the most structured organization with a national presence that emerged at the end of the decade: the Greens.

At the beginning of the next decade, the organizational characteristics of the *Spontis* were inherited by some of their successors in the radical wing of the left-libertarian movements: the *Autonomen*. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, during the escalation of some protest campaigns, radical activists, socialized in previous protest cycles, managed to mobilize the volatile environment of very young people who felt excluded from the mainstream society. Here too, however, the escalation of violence was limited: even if protest campaigns were accompanied by attacks against property, there was neither a relevant flux of *Autonomen* in the underground groups nor the creation of centralized radical organizations.

RADICALIZATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Following this description of the phases and characteristics of radicalization in some Italian and German SMOs, I will now attempt to explain this process, by looking at both similarities and differences between the two countries. We can start by observing that the *organizational resources present in the left-libertarian family influenced protest behavior.* In both countries, throughout the past three decades, various movements grew and were intertwined with each other. Using the terminology of the resource mobilization approach, we can say that SMOs, which had emerged during earlier phases of mobilization, produced resources for the following phases – and thus affected the characteristics of successive waves of mobilization.

As we observed earlier in this chapter, organizational resources present for the student movements in the two countries helped to determine the movements' choices, with persisting consequences. Both in Italy and in Germany, the first organizational resources for the student movements came from the student "par-

ties," active in the student "parliaments," and from small Marxist groups, devoted to theoretical elaboration. In comparing the two countries, some differences are worth noting. First, the critical theory of the Frankfurt school had a stronger influence in Germany than in Italy, where the main ideological framework remained a traditional critique of capitalist society. Second, the Italian *riviste operaiste* were small groups (with a few dozen people each) that were not coordinated with each other, whereas the German SDS had a large and formal membership (about 2,000 enrolled members), a national coordination (it held an annual conference of delegates), and a well-established organizational structure. Third, the membership of the SDS was by definition students, whereas the *riviste operaiste* tried – with some success – to recruit working-class cadres.

The main similarity is that, in both countries, the resources for the student mobilization came from intellectual circles that formulated a sort of criticism of the Old Left "from the Left." It was thus in the *competition with the Old Left* that the New Left radicalized its ideology. As was only logical in a cultural climate that was marked by the revolutions in China and Cuba, and the liberation movements in Algeria and Vietnam, one of the main accusations made against the Old Left was its rejection of a violent revolt of the working class. That is, the New Left tried to mark itself off from the Old Left by adopting a more radical and aggressive ideology that openly advocated the use of violent repertoires. In both countries, the student movements absorbed great utopias and theoretical justifications for violence. This legacy, however, did not automatically impel the movements to use violent tactics; indeed, at first the students mainly relied on nonviolent forms of action.

The organizational forms of the Italian and German student movements were quite similar in the very beginning: general assemblies of students from a particular faculty or university; study groups or "countercourses," established to "develop a different knowledge" (*uso parziale alternativo* in Italy; *Kritische Universitäten* in Germany); and faculty-based committees.[22] Participation in the university nuclei was not a formal matter. Decisions were taken in open general meetings, the leaders were those who devoted the most energy to collective action, and various ideological tendencies coexisted without dramatic friction. Until 1969, in both countries, students theorized about "direct democracy" and "councils' democracy." In Germany, the catchwords were "self-organization," "action committees," "centers of communication," "*Basisdemokratie*," "permanent control by the base," and "imperative mandate and delegation" (Bock 1976:242–3). Italian student activists debated the very same concepts.

But in both countries, the most innovative organizational principles proved difficult to apply to the reality of mobilization. In an interview, the SDS leader Bernd Rabehl described the role of the leaders in relation to the general assemblies:

> Yes, they [the general assemblies] were public, and then we went to a *Bierhaus* and, in a small group, we solved in half an hour what we couldn't solve in five hours. This was

necessary, we couldn't do anything else, we couldn't leave everything up to spontaneity. Basically, it was quite cynical behavior at the same time to propagandize about spontaneity and to do exactly the opposite. (in Bauss 1977:334)

In particular, the need to go beyond the initial "spontaneity" grew with the spread of mobilization and the related need to *coordinate movement units* with different ideologies, different geographic or structural settings, and different projects.[23]

In both countries, activists searched for organizational forms that would help coordinate the phase of high mobilization. In Germany, at the peak of mobilization, the student movement was led by a group that was well organized but decentralized; it laid great emphasis on ideological incentives but also had a tradition of involvement in political bargaining, and its members consisted exclusively of students. In Italy, mobilization generated many new movement organizations, formed when local university groups merged with "workerist" groups. Notwithstanding some internal differences, these movement organizations were characterized by centralized structures, ideological incentives, and heterogeneous membership. As a result of their activity in the phase of high mobilization, the New Left had also attracted a large number of members.

Despite the different forms taken by the German and Italian student movements, in both *the more "political" and radical wings dominated* as *mobilization declined.* Having accumulated organizational resources and acquired control of a large part of the movement during the phase of high mobilization, these radical, political groups were better equipped than the more moderate members to provide the symbolic incentives that create a sense of collective identity. As we shall observe in the following chapters – and in particular in Chapter 6 – some characteristics of these groups, such as their revolutionary ideology and their emphasis on total commitment, favored their use of violence.

Organizational changes also developed after the decline of student mobilization, when many groups disappeared while others tried to export protest to various social strata. In both countries, many activists joined the Old Left organizations or the trade unions, scattered in small local groups, or reaggregated in larger organizations. The more inclusive SMOs, such as the SDS, did not survive the decline of mass mobilization. Some more exclusive – or sectarian – organizations survived the crisis and underwent a process of institutionalization. Initially, student movement organizations had generally been inclusive – that is, their organizational boundaries were flexible and membership was defined more by a feeling of commitment than by the possession of a card; in most cases collective identities were based on the "movement" rather than on single organizations; and participation in more than one organization was allowed, and even encouraged. In both Italy and Germany, the organizations of the student movement had been inclusive: the German SDS allowed multiple membership; the Italian "workerist" groups let their militants keep their Old Left membership cards.[24] Inclusiveness, however, did not last. As mobilization declined, the

SMOs developed more "exclusive" attitudes, that is, organizational boundaries became more clearly defined, membership in one organization tended to exclude membership in others, identity focused on the organization, and members were required to have a strong and undivided commitment. To summarize, the decline in the mobilization in the universities initiated a similar process in both countries: some organizations disappeared, others *refused to demobilize, and gradually became more centralized and exclusive.*[25] Centralization and exclusiveness did not automatically produce violence. But, as we saw especially in the Italian case, both characteristics sustained the organization and diffusion of political violence when the external circumstances favored radicalization.

In the seventies, in both countries, some radical groups that had survived the decline of the student movement contributed to the development of political violence. When the protest spread to other social groups – taking again a decentralized and loosely organized structure – the sectarian SMOs that had survived the decline of the student movements "propagated" the most radical repertoires in the new movements.

The small, exclusive groupings that emerged from the student movements had, however, a different degree of influence in the two countries. In Italy, the New Left provided relevant organizational resources to the movements that followed: the student activists played an important role in the various *comitati di base* (rank-and-file committees) and propagandized radical thinking and behavior with some success. In Germany both the *K-Gruppen* and the small groups of the anarchical counterculture found very little room in the pragmatic and moderate *Bürgerinitiativen.* Radicalization could therefore be defined as a process of "double marginalization" – both from society and from the movement itself.

In both countries, political violence was a praxis inherited from the student movements that continued to divide the left-libertarian movements that followed. At times, however, the emphasis on radical tactics seemed to "pay." Although the issue of violence produced crises and divisions within the New Left, for some radicalized groups in both countries violence itself proved a powerful resource for survival. That is, militancy substituted other resources: when volatile material conditions and ideological factionalism weakened a movement organization, *militancy became its only unifying principle.* In the pessimistic climate produced by the economic crisis of the mid-seventies, activists with a long experience in radical organizations used violence as a strategic choice to try to motivate the alienated urban youth.

In this process, in both countries, some splinter groups abandoned the radical SMOs from which they had emerged in order to form *underground* organizations. In both countries, these groups were characterized by the use of radical repertoires and a highly ideologized stance even before they went underground. Technical skills – that is, logistic and military skills – were provided by the marshal groups within the movement organizations. In Italy, however, the ter-

rorist organizations grew larger and larger as political entrepreneurs from the sectarian New Left groups met the radicalized youth in the *Autonomia organizzata*. In Germany, instead, the terrorist groups remained smaller and more isolated as no preexisting radical organization was able to provide a centralized structure to the radical but scattered *Autonomen*.

Thus, in both Italy and Germany the SMOs that radicalized during the decline of the student movement contributed, either directly or indirecly, to the creation of resources for violence, albeit to different degrees. Radicalization was sustained by the creation of "entrepreneurs of violence": that is, political entrepreneurs who had developed technical skills and ideological justifications for the use of the more radical – and "militarized" – forms of violence. The theme and praxis of violence, inherited from the student movements, were reproduced in the movement environment as the radical groups conferred their organizational resources on emerging movements. Terrorist organizations originated within groups of activists who had shared similar experiences in one of the more radical SMOs. Subsequently, then, the terrorist organizations provided military skills that contributed to the radicalization of other SMOs.

RADICALIZATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

If the organizational resources available to social movements influence their strategies, some organizational models succeeded in one country but failed in another. In this section, I argue that these differences can be explained by the differences in the *environmental resources* available in the two countries – differences that we have analyzed in detail in the previous chapters. In both countries, in fact, the radical groups became "entrepreneurs of violence" – that is, they propagandized the most radical tactics in the left-libertarian movements. But the characteristics of these very groups as well as their influence on the left-libertarian movements depended on the presence of resources in the environment.

First of all, the organizational choices were in part determined by the *mobilization potential* for each particular SMO. The student movement organizations developed, in the beginning, in a very similar environment in the two countries. However, the situation changed after the decline of that movement, when protest spread beyond the university. A main difference in the environmental resources present in the two countries is that *only in Italy did the students "meet" the working class*. As we have seen, in both Italy and Germany student activists tried to mobilize other sectors. In Italy, where the industrial conflict had not been institutionalized, student activists were able to find workers willing to join their organizations, whereas in Germany students and workers did not form alliances. The Italian students' encounter with the working class produced noticeable changes in their tactics and strategies and, consequently, in their organizational forms. In 1968 most Italian groups, like their German counterparts, called for "direct and constant democracy." After the "Hot Autumn" of 1969,

however, when the most intense wave of factory strikes of the postwar period exploded in the big factories, the organizations formed during the student movement came under the influence of the working class, and became more hierarchical and centralized.[26] The attempt to expand protest beyond the university produced different organizational stuctures in the two countries, fairly centralized in Italy, and rather decentralized in Germany. In addition to the organizational model, the encounter of the Italian students with the working class also influenced the development of the movement repertoires. Indeed, the radicalization of the industrial conflict provided the student organization with an area of potential recruits available for violent actions.

We can add that, in both countries, the more radical groups found a base for recruitment especially among the marginalized social groups. In Germany, for instance, the radical Red Help and Black Help tried to mobilize prisoners, and the SPK worked with mentally disturbed people. In Italy, one of the LC's more radical phases was its campaign in defense of "the damned of the Earth" – the Marxist *Lumpenproletariat.* Later, the militant *Spontis* and autonomous collectives in both countries chose to intervene in the poor outskirts of the big cities.

It was not by chance that the groups characterized by the most militant organizational forms were usually involved in the more marginalized sectors of society: prisons, drug centers, youth in working-class neighborhoods. In the pessimistic climate produced by the economic crisis of the mid-seventies, militance was an attempt to consolidate this volatile constituency. As the history of the autonomous groups in both countries showed, however, the encounter of the political entrepreneurs with the alienated youth produced short explosions of violence: the preferences and attitudes of the two groups were too heterogeneous, and a stable alliance was therefore impossible. The small autonomous groups that survived in the eighties underwent, in fact, continuous crises and schisms between the political activists – who aimed at political changes – and a base that was more interested in ritual clashes with the police.

One last observation about environmental resources for violence: our description of the foundation of underground organizations shows that these resources sometimes come from *outside the national borders.* In the sixties, the revolutions and liberation movements in the developing countries provided symbolic resources for violence. In the seventies, in Germany, the technical skills for the armed struggle were "imported" from international terrorist groups, in particular from the radical Palestinian organizations.

INTERACTIONS AND RADICALIZATION: ON COMPETITION AND "PERVERSE EFFECTS"

Summarizing what has been said so far, the process of radicalization was related to both organizational and environmental resources. We can now, however,

add that these two kinds of resources were not totally independent from each other: a process of internal competition between SMOs active within the same social movement family reproduced both organizational and environmental resources for violence. Zald and McCarthy observed that "Competition between inclusive organizations in a [social movement] industry takes the form of slight product differentiation (offering marginally different goals) and, especially, tactical differentiation" (1980:6). This observation applies equally well to our cases. Addressing slightly different constituencies, the various SMOs tended to design their structures and frames to make them more attractive to their targeted groups. As we observed, it was especially when mobilization declined that the various SMOs tended to emphasize their differences. In both Italy and Germany, during the declining phases of mobilization – when a part of the movement became institutionalized and the movement organizations more exclusive – the surviving small groups had to compete with each other for the same (scarce) resources. By defining their areas of recruitment – or niches in the environment in which they were more fit to face competition – the various SMOs stressed one or the other of their characteristics. When areas of radical activists were present in the movement family, some SMOs then radicalized in order to have better chances to recruit in these areas. This process was therefore influenced by an *internal competition within the social movement family*, in which different organizations produced slightly different ideological statements and practices, often stressing diversity in order to improve their specific relevance within their environment.

These choices were also self-perpetuating. In *choosing radical strategies, some SMOs helped create the environmental resources they needed to survive.* If they developed radical skills in order to meet a demand present in their environment, they then used the skills they had developed and, in this way, contributed to produce the very environment in which their political skills made them more competitive. In their search for a specific political identity, different groups tested different strategies, thus polarizing the moderate and radical wings. Those activists who possessed the skills necessary for the use of violence – but lacked other resources – radicalized their repertoires and compartmentalized their structures, ending up in the underground. Indeeed, as we have seen, underground organizations arose from splinter groups within SMOs characterized by radical ideologies, violent repertoires, and specialized marshal bodies.

None of these three characteristics, however, actually *determined* a group's decision to go underground. In both Italy and Germany, there were several SMOs whose ideologies, structures, and forms of action were similar to those of the groups we have examined here, but whose activists did not found or join clandestine organizations. In other words, the foundation of an underground group does not appear to be the result of a causal determination. We must instead consider it as the last of several stages in a series of interactions involving both movement organizations and state institutions. The emergence of all six under-

ground organizations analyzed here ultimately was linked to specific events that increased state repression: going underground, then, was never a completely "free" choice. In order to deal with the consequences of these events – further repression and possible extinction – the larger political networks split: some wings increased their use of violence and went underground; others tried different strategies.

If until now we have considered the SMOs as rational actors, capable of influencing their environment, this last observation moves the focus of attention to *unforeseen consequences* of the interactions of different actors, both institutional actors and SMOs. Although a group's organizational choices followed its definition of a mobilization potential, the increase in violence was often in part an unforeseen consequence of "organizational experimentation." In particular, when groups were undergoing an organizational crisis, they would experiment with a variety of organizational forms. Cross-national exchanges enriched the range of possible options, so that a model developed in one country was exported and tested in another.[27] Then, as we have seen, some precipitating event, usually associated with an escalation of violence, drove some splinter groups further underground.

Radicalization offers a good example of the evolution of "absurd," chance processes resulting from the escalation of protest.[28] To use the language of organizational sociology, we can say that radicalization is a result of vicious circles – that is, spirals of negative feedback that produce different effects from those planned.[29] The parties involved in the conflict – protestors and police – repeatedly act on and respond to each other, escalating the conflict in a self-sustaining round of exchanges. In this situation, as Friedhelm Neidhardt observed (1981:245, 251–2), all the participants operate on the basis of a self-constructed image of reality and gamble on the results of the choices made. Accordingly, the outcome of their actions is the product of several "fictions" and concomitant miscalculations. This circle of actions and reactions forms a routine until a more or less chance event ruptures the pattern and produces a qualitative jump, the group debates its possible choices, and in this crisis some members decide to go underground.

The choice of clandestinity evolved gradually; it was partly unpremeditated and, up to a certain point, reversible. It reflected previously existing divisions within the leadership and was the means adopted by a radical faction in order to deal with a crisis.[30]

ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS: A SUMMARY

In this chapter, we observed how environmental resources interacted with organizational resources in the process of radicalization of some SMOs in Italy and Germany. The radical organizations that survived the previous phases of escalation not only instructed the new generations in the use of violence, but

also contributed to political polarization and, therefore, to a repressive climate that, in turn, favored the radicalization of protest. This process of radicalization was however more widespread when some environmental resources were available. In both countries, radicalization processes derived from a series of strategic choices on political violence, and produced continuous internal conflicts that sometimes culminated in the creation of terrorist groups. Although the various choices derived somehow from the existing organizational and environmental resources, the consequences of these choices were not fully predictable. Radicalization was, at least in part, an unforeseen consequence of organizational experiments and followed unplanned internal dynamics.

We can conclude that there are strong constraints on rational choice, especially among the more radical SMOs. On the one hand, the leaders sought solutions that would allow the survival of their organization. On the other hand, their decisions were often shortsighted: they produced short-term "advantages," but they paved the way for organizational collapse in the (not very) long term. Moreover, some SMOs appeared to be trapped in the path they adopted. Radicalization helped some organizations to become more competitive in the more violence-prone movement areas, but it also produced spirals of escalation, with a lethal outcome. In fact, when semimilitary units were created within legal organizations, these tended to follow internal dynamics that often triggered the adoption of increasingly violent repertoires. In the population of the SMOs, the environment selects those who are more fit to survive (Hannan and Freeman 1977).

Although a decision to go underground reduces the risk of being arrested, it also reduces the opportunity for action. Once taken, this decision makes the group a closed system, with very few outside contacts. Its members have little chance to withdraw, and thus their choice takes on a life of its own, independent of the activists' initial goals. These internal dynamics will be dealt with in the next chapter when I analyze the further evolution of underground groups.

5

The logic of underground organizations

On October 3, 1990, the states of the former GDR joined the FRG. Berlin – and thus the media throughout the whole world – celebrated German reunification. But not all the Germans celebrated: some movement activists in the West and in the East were skeptical about the unification and its timing. A few months later, on January 16, 1991, members of the German underground group the RZ expressed their disappointment by blowing up the Victory statue that stood in the middle of Berlin (Backes 1991:228). The surrounding streets, which are among Berlin's most important avenues – in the west side of the city but near the east side – had to be closed to traffic. No one was hurt.

By spring 1991, German reunification had created serious social and economic problems. One target of criticism had been the policy of the Treuhand, the trust company created for the privatization of the state-owned firms of the former GDR. On April 1, in Düsseldorf, the veteran German terrorist group the RAF assassinated the newly elected director of the Treuhand, Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, and wounded his wife.

These two recent episodes – similar in some ways, different in others – are part of what is normally understood as German terrorism. Both actions were aimed at *propaganda* among dissatisfied groups of the population, although the RAF in particular used a means that was highly stigmatized among the very groups it hoped to attract. Both actions sought a *symbolic* result, although the assassination by the RAF also had very dramatic concrete consequences. Both actions were *visible*, and in fact succeeded in capturing the attention of the media, although neither produced any relevant political result.

The story of German and Italian terrorism in the seventies and early eighties consists of similar, and similarly disparate, kinds of actions. Several of these actions are called "terrorism" probably only because they appeared together with those of a more lethal type. It was not only terrorist actions, however, but terrorist groups that differed from each other. Indeed, the dozens of groups that claimed responsibility for bombings and attacks had only one feature in com-

mon: they operated underground. For the rest – size, life span, geographic diffusion, lethality of actions – they varied greatly.

In the preceding chapter, I singled out some dynamics that contributed to organizational radicalization, and ended up by indicating the existence of some "absurd" processes that brought about the foundation of the Italian and German underground organizations. Here, I want to describe these processes more in detail, by examining the further evolution of six already mentioned terrorist organizations: the BR, PL, and FCC in Italy; the RAF, B2J, and RZ in Germany. Because several accounts of the history of individual underground groups or specific aspects of the underground are already available, my examination must be selective; I do not intend to summarize all the information available. I wish instead to address a limited number of questions, all referring to the "logic" of the underground organizations. How do terrorist organizations decide which strategy to adopt? How sensitive are they to the changes in their environment? And how do they choose their task environment? To what extent do internal dynamics play a role in the evolution of these groups? And, more generally, are "rational choices" possible in the underground? In order to answer these questions, I discuss the evolution of the terrorist groups, the strategic choices made by their leaders, the factors that influence their decisions given the range of their possible choices.

There are two commonsense explanations of decision making in underground organizations. Either these groups are considered incapable of strategically oriented actions, and their behavior is seen as erratic and bloodthirsty; or they are assumed to have hidden goals, in most cases connected with "dirty games" in the system of international relations. Avoiding these two extremes, Martha Crenshaw, in a recent essay (1992), suggested a model of decision making in the underground that takes into account psychological limitations on rational choices. My analysis here continues this line of thought.

In attempting to explain the different choices made by the various underground organizations, I began by considering their need to allocate scarce resources to sometimes conflicting goals. For the purpose of my analysis, I distinguish *externally oriented* activities, aiming at legitimizing goals and methods of the organization, from *internally oriented* activities, aiming at maintaining the organization itself. In both Italy and Germany, underground organizations oscillated between external and internal, promotion and integration strategies, though attempts at strategic action were severely limited by external circumstances. Strategies varied in different historical moments, according to the characteristics of the social movements the terrorists addressed and counterterrorist strategies. In every case, however, clandestinity considerably reduced an organization's strategic flexibility and rendered it less and less capable of perceiving the external situation, and thus of reaching even a tiny group of potential sympathizers.

In the four central parts of this chapter, I look at, respectively, the organi-

zational models, the action repertoires, the action targets, and the ideological messages chosen by the terrorist organizations in Italy and Germany. In each part, I focus on the distinctive characteristics of the different organizations, and single out common features as well as cross-national and cross-organizational differences. I also stress a particular type of evolution that – I shall argue – is intrinsic to the underground. In the fifth part, I propose an explanation for the "logic of action" in the underground, taking into account both strategic choices and intrinsic dynamics. Throughout, my sources are mainly trial records, police reports, documents written by members of the terrorist organizations, and some accounts of former militants.

ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL: DEEPER AND DEEPER UNDERGROUND

Although a defining feature of terrorist organization is their being "underground," it would be *misleading to say that the organizational structure of underground organizations was always centralized and compartmentalized.* In fact, in the case of all six of the groups I analyze here the organizational models varied, and members made frequent attempts to construct more decentralized semiclandestine branches.

The BR were able to build the most complex organizational structure of any of the six groups. Decision-making power was centralized in the Strategic Direction, the national leadership – formed via co-optation – which determined the "directions of columns" at the city level, in which only clandestine militants could take part (Caselli and della Porta 1984:160–1). Most of the time, there was no structure open to external sympathizers. Only individuals who were able to pass a long screening test that evaluated military courage and fidelity to the organization were accepted. The rules on centralization and vertical hierarchy were followed without deviation; there was no room allowed for disagreement. The body formally charged with the task of recruitment was the Worker (or Mass) Front, which organized the "activities" in factories and other places where potential supporters might be found. According to the BR's *statuto*, the structure of the Worker Front should have enabled, for instance, the BR militants of Fiat to meet those of Alfa Romeo and to decide together on propaganda actions. But, in practice, the functioning of the Front was subordinated to the organization's compartmentalized and hierarchical principles.

In the compartmentalized and hierarchical structure of the BR, "irregular" militants (who could keep their jobs and live with their families) were explicitly subordinated to the "regular" militants (engaged full-time and living underground, even when they were not sought by the police). Only the regular militants – defined as the "more conscious and generous cadres produced by the armed struggle" (BR, "Alcune questioni per la discussione sull'organizzazione," 1972) – could, in fact, be part of the "vertical structure of command."

To go underground was considered the logical evolution of a terrorist's career and the path to upward mobility in the terrorist hierarchy.

As the RAF was always much smaller than the BR, its structure remained more skeletal. According to the testimony given at the first trial against the founders of the organization, the RAF was divided into eight groups, operating in six German cities. Each group was relatively autonomous, and they all operated in a quite chaotic situation, moving from one city to the next according to the availability of logistic support (Steiner and Debray 1987:117–30). The organizational model proposed in a document written inside the prisons in 1972 envisioned "simply structured groups of eight to ten persons (in which to build the command level) if possible in all the cities of the federal states" (Document P:171).

As several observers pointed out, however, in the RAF, power was concentrated in the hands of the imprisoned leaders of the organization, especially Baader and Ensslin. The group developed an elitist mentality in order to justify this power. Baader's comrades described him as "the leader of the RAF because from the very beginning he had what the guerrilla needs the most: willingness, awareness of the goals, firmness, collectedness. . . . in these five years we learned from Andreas – because he is what we can define as an example – . . . to fight, fight, and fight again" (Document P:155). "Andreas," added Ulrike Meinhof in 1975 (Document I:158), "is for us what Fidel is for Cuba, Che for Latin America, Lumumba for the Belgian Congo, Ho for Vietnam, Marighella for Brasil, Malcom X for the blacks in the USA, George [Jackson] for the prisoners in the USA . . . the personification of a collective leadership."

At first, both the RAF and the BR had supported the idea of the guerrilla war as combining legal as well as military forms of action. Later on, however, when both groups had to adopt the strictest secrecy in order to escape state repression, this goal no longer seemed attainable. As the RAF wrote in 1971, for instance: "Our initial concept of the urban guerrilla implied a link between urban guerrilla and mass work. We all wanted to work in the factories, in the neighborhoods, in the existing socialist groups, we wanted to influence the discussion, to experiment, to learn. It became clear that this was impossible. The control of the political police over these groups, their meetings, their discussions is so widespread that it is impossible to take part in them without being singled out and put into their dossiers" (in Steiner and Debray 1987:125).

The choice of going underground separated the clandestine groups from their social setting; in a vicious circle, their very isolation pushed them to choose organizational models that could protect them from increasing repression but that, at the same time, furthered their isolation. However, even the most underground of the terrorist organizations *in some periods decentralized their organizational models and created structures open to "sympathizers"* – such as the various "Antifascist Committees" of RAF sympathizers and the "Nuclei of the Proletarian Movement of Offensive Resistance" founded by the BR.

Moreover, in both Italy and Germany, the late-comer clandestine organizations recognized the limitations of centralized and compartmentalized structures, and – in direct opposition to the BR and the RAF – tried to *keep their structures more open and decentralized.* The PL and FCC in Italy and the B2J and RZ in Germany did not impose clandestinity on their members but, on the contrary, asked them to participate in legal protest campaigns. In some periods, they tried to develop small nuclei that had quite a bit of autonomy in making decisions and were also partially independent of the central leadership.

In Italy, the organizations that emerged in the second half of the seventies were relatively decompartmentalized and open. Their guiding principle was "clandestinity in military action but not in proselytism" (FCC, Statuto); accordingly the "militants kept their legal identity and regular job, while only participation in the group was secret" (Examination, in Court of Turin: IM BI in JP 321/80). These choices derived from a critique of the BR. For instance, in its Statuto, PL declared its desire to avoid two mistakes of the first underground organization: "total clandestinity and characterization of the action as exclusively military" (cited in Court of Turin: SC July 1981:94). The BR was criticized for its attempt to "transfer to the metropolis the South American models of guerrilla war" and, therefore, for adopting the concept of the organization as a "military machine" and of the party as an army.

Another characteristic of these later groups was the presence of some organizational branches designed specifically for recruitment: for example, the PL's Fighting Worker Squads or Fighting Proletarian Patrols, and the FCC's Proletarian Armed Squads.[1] These bodies were open to people who did not share all the aims of the organizations but were nevertheless willing to participate in actions on a small scale and on a local level. They were very loosely structured organisms, defined in most of the formal statutes as rank-and-file structures, with a certain degree of autonomy in making decisions (which varied over time, according to conditions in the environment). Most of these groups operated within small areas to acquire information on targets for specific actions, the "military presence" in the territory, and the most important social problems. They were usually organized within already existing political groups, which they tried to influence and from which they drew recruits. One member of these squads or patrols, called "commander," was usually accountable for their activity to the Zone Command. Formally it was the Zone Command that decided the general aims of the "campaigns," while the squads could choose only the specific targets and were usually dependent on the main organization for arms and money. The squads' militants, however, often did not consider themselves as bound to the organization's hierarchy.

The German group B2J also wanted to combine legal and illegal work. Recruiting militants in the working class districts of Berlin, B2J openly criticized the "hyper" underground strategy of the RAF and rejected a hierarchical organization: "We did not have directive cadres like the RAF. We considered

ourselves part of the left-wing movement. Our aim was to support the mass campaigns with militant actions'' (Baumann 1978). Therefore they organized in small nuclei, of three to nine members, who had usually known each other before joining the group. As a militant declared during an interrogation, these nuclei were completely autonomous in their choice of actions and logistical structure, although they had (never materialized) plans to hold conferences with ''delegates'' of the various nuclei (Document E:9). In 1975, the B2J stated: ''We define our battle as part of the entire resistance. The urban guerrilla embodies imagination and energy, qualities that the people have'' (''Die Entführung aus unserer Sicht'' 1975:2).

The RZ similarly had an extremely decentralized structure, which German judges described as follows: ''The different groups of the organization exist and operate according to a principle of the most strict separation. . . . Nevertheless, there are various types of contacts between the various groups. Those members who have been in the organization for a longer time, and therefore have the deepest knowledge of the organization of the Revolutionary Cells and a dominant position in their group, maintain these contacts'' (Document L:22). Decentralization went hand in hand with a lack of internal hierarchy: ''In our group, we were all equals,'' stated a militant during an interrogation (Document C:2). As far as was compatible with a clandestine structure, decision making was a collegial process: for instance, the organization's journal *Revolutionärer Zorn* was, according to the same source ''the product of common work of the Revolutionary cells. . . . the product of common discussions and editorial meetings of members of different groups that were held before a final decision was made on the content of the publication'' (Document C:23). This form of organization corresponded to the self-appointed role of the RZ: ''To organize counterpower in small nuclei that work and fight autonomously in the different social fields. . . . And at a certain point, when we will have many, many nuclei, then the definition of the urban guerrilla as mass perspective is fulfilled'' (*Revolutionärer Zorn* 1975:8).

For the BR and the RAF, which were more isolated, closeness was a way to protect their militants, but *groups operating in environments more tolerant of violence were able to adopt a more open organizational model.* In the small ''movement countercultures'' in Milan and Turin, as well as in Berlin and Frankfurt, the militants of PL and FCC, or B2J and RZ, could – without too great a risk – be active and recruit within legal movement organizations. *The less clandestine model, however, could work only for short periods.* One or two years after their foundation, B2J and FCC had already been decimated by arrests. PL survived for a longer time, but it had to centralize and compartmentalize its structure in response to continuous waves of arrests. Only the RZ retained a decentralized structure and survived for a longer time in semiclandestinity, although with a reduced range of activities.[2]

Growing marginalization from inside the very movements they wanted to

influence and state repression were not the only factors that contributed to the demise of terrorist organizations. Failures and growing militarism increased *internal divisions.* Hypercentralization further reduced tolerance for dissent. In time, internal conflicts developed – especially in the long-lasting organizations and especially between different "generations," often defined as those militants in prison and those outside. In the BR, pervasive discontent with the militarization of the organization both reflected and stimulated harsh interpersonal conflicts. Between the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, the BR underwent various splits, and several groups of militants left the organization.[3] Throughout the eighties, two different groups claimed to represent the "real" BR. And many schisms characterized the brief histories of PL and the FCC as well.[4]

In the case of the RAF, the first dispute in the organization occurred in 1972, following a bombing at the headquarters of the Springer publishing house, in which several workers were wounded: the RAF's Gudrun Ensslin strongly criticized this action. Several years later, in 1977, one of the group's imprisoned leaders, Karl-Heinz Dellwo openly disagreed with the RAF's collaboration with the Palestinians in the hijacking of a Lufthansa plane full of German tourists coming back from their holidays in Mallorca.[5] Dellwo believed that "the actions of the RAF must not hit the people" (cited in Seufert 1978).

We can conclude that, in general, *the organizational model of the underground groups evolved toward more centralized and/or compartmentalized forms*, thereby reinforcing the already mentioned vicious circle of increasing isolation. The risks of being discovered induced members to concentrate decision making in the hands of a small group of clandestine leaders. Growing difficulties in recruiting, even in the most radical areas of the movements, reduced the potential importance of rank-and-file structures and their autonomy. When repression increased and support from social movements decreased, the organizations withdrew into themselves, giving up the structures formerly open to sympathizers. Even in front of several signs of defeats, the choice of clandestinity remained *imprinted* on these groups – that is, once they opted to go underground, they virtually insured that their development would be shaped by internal dynamics rather than by interaction with a broader environment. What organizational theorists would call "path dependency" brought them to emphasize survival and solidarity rather than political effectiveness.

THE SELECTION OF TARGETS: FROM PROPAGANDA TO SURVIVAL

Although terrorism is often defined as a type of action directed at "terrorizing" the enemy or the public, *the actions of our underground groups were not always aimed at maximizing the amount of terror produced.* Several actions were in fact intended to raise support for the terrorist groups in the social movement

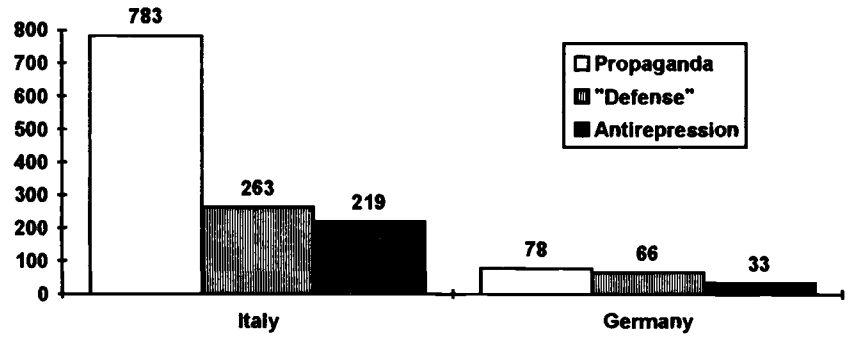

Figure 5.1. Distribution of terrorist actions by aim in Italy (1970–83) and Germany (1970–80)

families. As we will see, however, because *a large number of the actions had to be oriented toward integrative aims, they were often counterproductive in terms of raising external support.*

My data on the targets of terrorist attacks in the two countries provide some empirical basis for these two statements. Let us start by looking at the distribution of terrorist attacks, according to their targets. In Figure 5.1, I have distinguished the terrorist actions according to their orientation, whether to increase external support or to increase internal solidarity. The actions I classified as externally oriented – or "propaganda" – targeted the social and political "adversaries" of the social movements; those that I defined as internally oriented were "defensive" actions aimed at the survival of the underground organizations (such as bank robberies, accidental shootouts during arrests, and punishment of so-called traitors), and the actions against the police, the judiciary, or the prison system. In order to define the aim of the actions, I used not only their target, but also information on the process of selecting the target and the dynamics of the attacks, including documents written by the underground organizations to claim responsibility for some of their attacks. Although I acknowledge that both aims were normally present in most actions, it was often possible to single out a "prevailing" aim. I adopted a multiple classification for those actions where neither of the two aims appeared to be prevailing.[6]

In both Italy and Germany, *the terrorist organizations dedicated about half their actions to propaganda.* The aim of physical attacks against political or social enemies was to demonstrate that violent means were more effective than nonviolent ones, and thereby to win support among movement activists. A cross-national comparison reveals that, between 1970 and 1983, the Italian groups allocated more resources to propaganda than did the German groups (61.6 against 44.1 percent of the actions), whereas the Germans were more involved in "self-defense" actions (37.3 against 21.1 percent). A closer, more detailed

examination discloses other differences. Several terrorist actions in Italy (and almost none in Germany) targeted the factories. Anti-imperialistic propaganda was the rationale behind several German terrorist attacks, but it was an almost nonexistent factor in Italian terrorism.

These differences, however, do not imply that Italian and German terrorists were guided by two different kinds of logic. On the contrary, they reflect the national characteristics of the Italian and German left-libertarian movements: for instance, the concept of an "anti-imperialist fight" was more widespread in the German social movement family than in the Italian, while movement activists in Italy found more support in the big factories than did their German counterparts. Further, repressive state apparatuses were more often a preferred target of the radical movements in Germany than in Italy.

An analysis of the differences among terrorist organizations in the same country confirms the influence of the national social movements' preferences on terrorist choices. In Italy, the BR focused propaganda actions on the factories: 40 percent for the BR compared with 11 percent for other terrorist groups. The BR also attacked political targets more often than did the other groups (24 percent for the BR as against 10 percent for the others). By contrast, other groups concentrated on "social" propaganda (31 percent as against a very low 6 percent for the BR), targeting real-estate agencies, small businesses, drug dealers, neuropsychiatrists, nightwatchmen, computer services, and advertising agencies (della Porta 1990:216).

We can explain most of these choices in relation to the search for potential supporters. When the BR emerged, in the beginning of the 1970s, the workers in the big factories were the main reference for the militants of the New Left. In concentrating their action on the big factories, the BR hoped to attract new members from the more radical leftist groups with a Marxist-Leninist background. It was not by chance that their first actions were carried out in factories where organized groups had risen in opposition to trade unions and where violence was an accepted means of pursuing the industrial conflict. Moreover, the BR chose targets in those departments where sympathizers of radical groups worked. The wish to acquire new supporters may also account for some initial violence against right-wing trade unionists, as violence against "fascists" was the most "legitimized" in the leftist culture. The individuals the BR chose to attack were often at a low level in the factory hierarchy so that their "direct" responsibility in the "oppression" of workers would be more "visible." In the big factories, the BR handed out extensive documentation detailing the "personal guilt" of the people who were attacked.

The targets chosen by the second generation of terrorist organizations mirrored the themes of the radical movements active in the second half of the seventies. They reflected in particular the preferences of the militants of the radical "77 Movement," from which the terrorist groups of the late seventies planned to recruit. PL and FCC especially concentrated their efforts on the

problem areas in which the movement organizations "intervened": housing, cost of living, unemployment, and drugs. Since these groups considered power and repression as social rather than political phenomena, agencies and agents involved in the "penetration of social control" in the private sphere of individual lives were favored targets: among them, psychiatrists and computer shops.

In Germany, there were marked differences between the RAF and B2J, on the one hand, and the RZ, on the other. In their (few) propagandistic actions, RAF and B2J claimed to be continuing the campaigns of the German student movement. The RAF's anti-imperialist ideology and the deep "disgust" for the German "working mass" explain why propagandistic actions were concentrated against the United States. Of all the RAF's actions during the seventies – from the first, in 1972, to the last, in 1979[7] – bombings against NATO military sites and attacks against U.S. representatives account for virtually all the propagandistic activities. The first actions of the B2J were meant to express solidarity with the civil rights movement of the Catholic minority in Ulster. The bombing of the British Yacht Club in Berlin was carried out to protest the behavior of the British soldiers in Northern Ireland's "Bloody Sunday."

The actions of the RZ, in contrast, "supported" many social movement campaigns of the seventies: for example, those on the cost of transport, on nuclear power, on gene technology. These actions reflected the RZ's strategic choices, which were based on a definition of the marginal strata of the population as potential supporters of the movement: "The masses of our population," said one militant, "did not believe that the situation could change. Attempts at forcing the situation produced frustration. We saw also that the development in the Federal Republic did not offer any possibility for a democratic change in the situation. On the contrary, there was a move backward, which impeded change. Moreover, in the rich countries the population has quite high standards of living. We wanted to address marginal groups, where dissatisfaction and even misery were dominant. So we arrived at such actions as printing fake transport tickets or welfare tickets" (Document C:19). As the RZ explained in a document, "Since in many cities of the FRG the police brutally attacked the demonstrations against the increase in the transport price, members of the RZ have distributed 120,000 fake tickets in West Berlin" (cited in Fetscher, Münkler, and Ludwig 1981:176).

In general, the RZ acted in the political milieus where harsh political conflicts developed: the campaign against the increase in the price of transport and that for youth centers (including an attack on an official whom they held responsible for the closing of a youth center in Berlin), the abortion issue (for instance, taking action against churches), the workers' claims (with actions against the "capitalists"), and the ecological themes (see Fetscher et al. 1981:170–1). Especially in the late seventies and early eighties, members of the RZ sought to present themselves as part of the antinuclear movement, attacking firms involved in the construction of nuclear plants. Their actions, they believed, had to rep-

resent a stimulus for the masses, since, as they stated in one of their leaflets, "when it has no new ideas, the mass movement is in danger of being forced in a situation in which it loses its power" (Document G). Referring to the activists of the antinuclear movement, a writer in *Revolutionärer Zorn* (1978) stated, "We do not have to organize the militants . . . but we have to support them and to act in combination, like the yeast in the dough." In the eighties, most of the RZ's attacks targeted the institutions responsible for the restrictive policy toward immigrants and refugees seeking political asylum. It is worth noting that, showing some "flexibility" (and the need to recruit new militants), the RAF and the BR also tried to "infiltrate" the peace movement in the beginning of the eighties, with actions especially against NATO targets.

In summary, we can say that the prevailing preferences in the social movement family can, at least to some extent, explain the particular targets the terrorist groups selected. This explanation, however, does not account for the large number of defensive actions. Until 1972, for example, the RAF's illegal activities consisted mainly of robberies. Moreover, two policemen and four RAF militants were killed in eleven shoot-outs. Discounting their actions against U.S. targets, in fact, we find that all the RAF activities were oriented toward avenging or freeing imprisoned comrades. With few exceptions, the B2J concentrated on the very same aim. One of their first projects, which helped to consolidate the group, was a plan to free two RAF women. This plan incidentally increased contacts between the RAF and the more anarchist *Szene* in Berlin, and eventually attracted some West Berlin anarchists to join the RAF (Document O). Bombings against state apparatuses and bank robberies ended up constituting the entire life of the "Free-the-guerrilla guerrillas," as a former member called these terrorists. In the case of the RZ, it was to repay the support of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) that militants of the German terrorist group carried out several actions against Israeli and U.S. enterprises and the U.S. Army.

Although the Italian groups began their terrorist campaigns with propagandistic actions, this type of action sharply diminished, and actions against the state apparatuses and for self-defense increased. The proportion of terrorist actions against the "military" state apparatuses grew from 20 percent in 1970 to 50 percent in 1982. In the years after 1977, three-fourths of terrorist attacks were directed against the military state apparatuses (della Porta 1990:246). Actions that involved "revenge against traitors" show a parallel increase: only one occurred before 1979, four took place in 1979 and 1980, and there were as many as thirteen in 1981 and 1982 (della Porta 1990:247).

These actions were not only ineffectual as "promotion," they often alienated formerly sympathetic social movement activists. Bank robberies gave the militants the image of common criminals. Armed conflicts with policemen produced victims. Even the most radical movement activists strongly condemned attempts on the lives of former militants considered as traitors. Such actions, however,

were necessary for internal aims: obtaining material resources, avoiding arrests, maintaining the loyalty of members.

Significantly, the number of *integrative actions tended to increase in time.* Step by step, the terrorists abandoned propaganda activities in favor of defending militants against state repression – that is, they spent most of their time hiding, planning escapes, and looking for revenge. This activity *diminished whenever violence increased within the social movement families.* In Italy in the second half of the seventies and in Germany at the beginning of the eighties, for example, the hope of finding new recruits compelled the underground groups to allocate more resources to propaganda activities. But when "mass" violence declined, the underground groups once again found themselves more exposed to state repression, and thus once again had to *renounce propaganda and devote all their efforts to mere survival.*

TERRORIST REPERTOIRES: FROM DEMONSTRATIVE ACTIONS TO "WAR"

The need to remain attractive to potential recruits in the social movement family influenced the choices of repertoires, as well as the targets. Consequently, *terrorist organizations did not try to destroy as much as possible or to create as many victims as they could.* At least at the beginning of their stories, they used demonstrative forms of violence instead. Some empirical support for this observation comes, for instance, from an analysis of terrorist forms of action (distinguishing attacks against property and attacks against people – see Table 5.1) and of the number of victims in terrorist attacks (reported in Table 5.2).

In both Italy and Germany, *the form of action terrorists used most frequently was bombing*, a tactic often adopted by non-underground political organizations as well. The cross-national comparison reveals some differences: there were fewer attacks and kidnappings in Germany (3.8 against 18.1 percent in Italy), and no hijackings in Italy. The total number of victims was much higher in Italy than in Germany (179 deaths compared with 41, including those of militants in the underground organizations), although the relation between number of victims and number of actions does not differ much in the two countries.

There were also differences among the various groups within the two countries. In Italy, terrorist tactics reflected to some extent the choice – or need – of the different organizations to recruit in specific milieus. The BR, for instance, looking for recruits among those who had already joined the underground, carried out a greater number of bloody acts than any other group: 28.9 percent of the BR's actions were aimed at people, whereas such actions amounted to only 7.7 percent of the total acts carried out by the other leftist underground groups (della Porta and Rossi 1984:19). For the same reasons, the BR often displayed relatively sophisticated military skills – as in the kidnapping and murder of the

president of the DC, Aldo Moro, in 1978, or in the kidnappings of four people in 1981, conducted almost simultaneously by four BR columns.

As we have often observed, the other Italian terrorist groups attempted to recruit in an environment that was tolerant of less radical forms of mass violence. However, if the FCC dissolved before it had a chance to become involved in a violent escalation, PL underwent instead profound changes: it also started with demonstrative forms, and then its attacks became more and more bloody. To cite only one indicator of this evolution, the proportion of PL's actions against people (as opposed to actions against property) grew from 8 percent in 1977, the year the organization came into being, to 31 percent in 1979.

Similar differences existed among the German terrorist groups. The RAF pursued the most terroristic strategy. This organization alone was responsible for most of the terrorist attacks against people, including most of the assassinations that took place in Germany in the seventies and eighties (five of which occurred in 1977). The RAF's campaigns of terror continued into the eighties (escalating especially in 1985), and included eight planned murders.

The B2J, at least in theory, developed a different strategy. But, although the future members of B2J had started out with a critique of the "militarism" of the RAF,[8] their initial concentration on actions against property did not last. As we have seen, in 1972 their "demonstrative" bombing at the British Yacht Club in Berlin-Gatow accidentally killed one person. And in 1974, an attempted kidnapping took the life of the *Kammergerichtspräsident* of Berlin. In this second incident, the B2J claimed responsibility for the assassination in a leaflet that began "Who is 'moved' by the death of Günther von Drenkmann and why? The yelp about the death of v. Drenkmann is the yelp of the ruling class about the death of one of its own." It was probably only thanks to a bargaining position of the state authorities that the kidnapping of the secretary of the Berlin CDU's president, Peter Lorenz, in 1975 did not end up with other fatalities. Further, there remain strong suspicions that B2J members were responsible for the assassination of a member of their own organization who had collaborated with the police.[9] Finally, during street controls B2J members and the police often engaged in shoot-outs that resulted in injuries and fatalities on both sides.

Members of the RZ adopted somewhat less brutal tactics. With a few exceptions,[10] they avoided using guns and sophisticated explosives, and stated that they wanted to carry out their revolution using (with imagination) "everyday" materials – such as glue to destroy the much hated ticket machines or other easy-to-find ingredients for building small "home-made" bombs (all according to the instructions given in a thick "Handbook for the Resistance"). In addition, the group openly repudiated attacks on people, although its militants were allowed to carry guns when taking part in actions so that "the police could not freely fire at us" (Document C:20).

Apart from the tactical differences of the individual groups, however, terror-

Table 5.1. *Evolution of forms of action by terrorist organizations between 1970 and 1983*

A. Italy

Year	Bombs and walk-ins (against property)	Attacks and kidnappings (against people)	Robberies	Shootouts	Total
	%	%	%	%	N
1970	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4
1971	82.4	0.0	17.6	0.0	17
1972	84.6	2.6	12.8	0.0	39
1973	64.1	21.4	14.1	0.0	14
1974	80.4	10.8	4.3	4.3	46
1975	74.4	12.2	9.5	4.5	74
1976	77.8	10.7	5.8	5.8	103
1977	74.1	15.7	8.6	1.5	197
1978	65.5	23.7	10.0	0.8	240
1979	52.5	26.7	17.3	3.9	179
1980	47.4	22.9	26.0	3.8	131
1981	27.0	36.5	28.6	7.9	63
1982	10.2	24.5	42.9	22.4	49
1983	0.0	66.6	0.0	33.3	3
N total	713	231	171	44	1,159
% total	61.5	18.1	14.8	3.8	100

ism tended to evolve according to a general trend, beginning with low-level violent actions and degenerating into more and more violent forms. Terrorist activity followed much the same pattern in Italy and Germany; in both countries the forms of action occurred in short cycles, yearly ups and downs, which were also reflected in the number of victims. The timing of these cycles, however, was different in the two countries. In Germany, the RAF quickly evolved toward the most lethal forms of action, and, in 1975, the number of assassinations peaked. In Italy, the BR's campaign escalated more slowly, peaking for a first time around 1974–5. In its initial phase, the BR's actions consisted mainly of

Table 5.1 (*cont.*)

B. Germany

Year	Bombs and walk-ins (against property)	Attacks and kidnappings (against people)	Robberies	Shootouts	Total
	%	%	%	%	N
1970	20.0	0.0	40.0	40.0	4
1971	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	12
1972	47.4	0.0	31.6	21.1	19
1973	57.1	0.0	42.9	0.0	7
1974	66.6	16.6	16.6	0.0	12
1975	60.9	4.3	30.4	4.3	23
1976	70.6	0.0	23.5	5.9	17
1977	42.4	12.1	33.3	12.1	33
1978	78.3	4.3	0.0	17.4	23
1979	46.2	0.0	30.8	23.1	13
1980	90.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10
1981	95.7	4.3	0.0	0.0	23
1982	97.4	2.6	0.0	0.0	39
1983	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27
N total	182	10	46	25	263
% total	69.2	3.8	17.5	9.5	100

car bombings and symbolic kidnappings. Before long, bombings of property diminished in proportion while attacks against people rose from zero through 1973 to 12 percent in the years from 1974 to 1977.

In 1977 a second wave of violence began in both countries. In Italy, this second wave was characterized by the most dramatic terrorist campaign in the history of the Italian Republic. About 80 percent of the assassinations committed by left-wing underground organizations in the period we are studying were carried out after 1977 (della Porta 1990:241). This campaign peaked in 1979 and then sharply declined, although the most brutal forms continued to be used for several years. Attacks against people rose to between 20 and 25 percent in the

Table 5.2. *Number of deaths caused by terrorist actions and ratio of deaths to actions, 1970–83*

Year	Italy		Germany	
	Deaths	Deaths/ Actions	Deaths	Deaths/ Actions
1970	0	0.00	0	0.00
1971	0	0.00	2	0.17
1972	1	0.03	7	0.37
1973	0	0.00	0	0.00
1974	5	0.11	2	0.17
1975	7	0.09	10	0.43
1976	10	0.10	3	0.18
1977	6	0.03	10	0.30
1978	29	0.12	3	0.13
1979	23	0.13	2	0.15
1980	29	0.23	0	0.00
1981	14	0.34	2	0.09
1982	17	0.41	0	0.00
1983	1	0.33	0	0.00
N total	179	0.13	41	0.16

years 1977–82, and up to 66.6 percent in 1983. In Germany, the number of victims increased in 1975 and 1977, with ten deaths in each of the two years, then declined steadily, until the onset of a new wave of terrorist attacks at the beginning of the eighties that included assassinations, kneecappings, and several bombings.

Once again, we can turn to the differences in the characteristics of the national social movement families to explain terrorist behavior – in this case, terrorist repertoires. The actions against property with which the terrorist groups began their campaigns were not likely to elicit strong condemnations from inside the left-libertarian movements. But when the first fatalities – policemen and militants – occurred during police patrollings, bank robberies, or kidnappings, and the forms of action became more violent, the critique of vio-

lence from inside the movement family grew. The evolution of terrorist actions was then influenced by two factors: *the degree to which violence was accepted in the social movement family* and *the government's antiterrorist strategies.* The more isolated the terrorist organizations, the more the forms of action radicalized under the pressure of police repression. The forms of action then became more violent, actions against people soon outnumbered actions against property, and the number of people injured or killed during terrorist events dramatically increased.

This spiral of increasing – and increasingly destructive – violence was interrupted when violent social conflicts erupted within the social movement family. At such times, opportunities for recruitment increased, and new terrorist groups (e.g., PL and the FCC in Italy, the RZ in Germany) emerged with the express intention of using less violent forms of action than the already existing organizations (the BR and the RAF). Such competition compelled the established organizations to "reconvert" their strategies, to focus again on attacks against property (which were more acceptable than political assassinations to the radical wings of the social movement family), and to intensify their propaganda campaigns. These phases, however, did not last long. When radical fringes faded away, underground groups had to face stronger police pressure with reduced resources. Giving up the demonstrative actions of the beginning, they concentrated on their war with the state.

IDEOLOGICAL MESSAGES: INSTRUMENTS FOR "INTERNAL CONSUMPTION"

Terrorist organizations (including right-wing groups) do not act randomly or because they are "bloodthirsty." On the contrary, they devote a great deal of energy to the elaboration of what Crenshaw (1992) called "cognitive restructuring," through which reprehensible conduct is presented as honorable. Historical, linguistic, and religious "macronarratives" that justify violence are encompassed in eclectic ideological frames (Tololyan 1987). By using the processes of "frame amplification" (Snow et al. 1986) militants become able to accept the armed struggle on the basis of social movement discourses. In both Italy and Germany, the terrorists' choice of targets coincided in part with the ideological statements within which the armed struggle was justified. Consequently, *the terrorists' themes echoed the ideological preferences of the national social movement family.*

In Italy, the BR adhered to a Marxist-Leninist ideology in which the working class was the revolutionary subject and its party had to fight to conquer the state. The BR justified its initial choice for the underground by claiming that Italy was in danger of falling victim to a fascist coup d'etat, a threat that made violence a necessary defense. The BR produced an ideological "synthesis" of the theme of armed struggle against fascism and armed struggle in the factories

with the image of a fascist coup as a capitalist attempt to steal back what the working class had conquered. According to the BR, the bourgeoisie had "made its power apparatus more right-wing," thus attempting to regain control in the factories by means of "the growing despotism against the working class, the militarization of the state and of the class struggle, the intensification of repression as a strategic measure" (BR, "Brigate Rosse," 1971).

When state repression made direct intervention in the bigger factories increasingly dangerous, the BR focused on more strictly political targets, explaining that this shift was a consequence of the growing influence of political institutions in the economic sphere. The state was described as an expression of the imperialism of the big corporations: the "Imperialist State of Corporations," or SIM (Stato Imperialista delle Multinazionali, in the Italian acronym) (BR, "Risoluzione della direzione strategica," 1975). The BR answered increasing repression with a shift from "armed peace" to the "open civil war." As we can read in the "Risoluzione della direzione strategica" from 1978:

> To disarticulate the forces of the enemy means to launch an attack whose main objective is to propagandize the armed struggle and its needs; but in this attack the principal tactical characteristics of the next phase are already at work: namely, the destruction of the enemy's forces. . . . The disarticulation of the enemy's forces is therefore the last period of the phase of armed propaganda, and it progressively introduces that of revolutionary civil war.

The BR defined its enemy in different terms at different times, according to the ideology of a mutating potential constituency. In the second half of the seventies, the enemy was no longer fascism but Social Democracy (BR, "Risoluzione della direzione strategica," 1979). The BR also changed its definition of social allies when violent groups with non-Marxist-Leninist ideologies emerged in the left-libertarian movement family. At the end of the seventies, manual workers in the social services, marginal people, and the unemployed came to be defined as the closest allies of the working class (BR, "Risoluzione della direzione strategica," 1977), and the marginal urban youth came to be seen as cadres for the growing "Proletarian Movement of Offensive Resistance" (BR, "Risoluzione della direzione strategica," 1978).

Unlike the BR, the other Italian terrorist groups adopted a relatively new ideological framework, derived from the radical movements of the late seventies (Dini and Manconi 1981). According to this framework, social oppression was more a question of individual alienation than of economic exploitation; since state power controlled the private lives of individuals. The urban youth had taken over from the working class the task of leading the revolution. PL and the FCC both defined the role of an underground organization "in the movement" in a similar way. Members of PL maintained that the organization had to "root" itself in the "legal expression of the conflict": "Our fundamental task is to close the gap between a fighting organization and the proletarian fight"

(in Court of Turin, SC 17/81). The FCC stated that its aim was "to construct a clandestine and . . . quick-to-mobilize network as an expression of the capacity to build a real movement" (in Court of Milan, PPC in JP 907/79:23).

In Germany too the ideology espoused by the earliest organization (RAF) was more traditionally leftist than those adopted by the later groups. Compared with the BR's stance, however, the RAF's orientation was more anti-imperialistic than Leninist.[11] And while the BR took an optimistic view of the revolutionary attitude of the Italian working class, the outlook of the RAF was completely pessimistic. In their eyes, the German working class was subject to the interests of the "multinational" capital; the FRG was characterized by "open fascism, . . . with little awareness of fascism, and offering no resistance to it" (Prisoners of Stammheim 1977a:22); and the SPD was "the transmitter of the new fascism" (Prisoners of Stammheim 1977b:50). At first, the RAF looked for revolutionary subjects among such individuals as the young people in asylums, the inhabitants of the parts of the city centers about to be renovated, apprentices, and married working women. Armed struggle was justified as the only alternative to reformism.

When, having become increasingly isolated (especially after several of its members were arrested), the group had to move from Berlin to West Germany in 1971, its ideology became even more pessimistic about the possibility of launching a revolutionary movement in the Federal Republic. Thus, in "Konzept Stadtguerrilla," Ulrike Meinhof stated that, although there was still room for a legal opposition, the Emergency Legislation passed in 1968 had abolished democracy. It was therefore necessary to start organizing the urban guerrilla war immediately because it would be too late to organize it later, when the situation finally became ripe for armed struggle. The culminating argument, however, was that since the police shot the revolutionary, the revolutionary had to shoot back. In 1972, the RAF declared that the German working class had become an aristocracy, corrupted by capital to such a degree that it was no longer possible to address any political activity to the German workers. The RAF then rejected the strategy of a part of the radical Left, which still saw the working class of the metropolis as the potentially revolutionary subject. In the view of the RAF, the "real front of the fight" was between imperialism and the people in the Third World. A revolutionary subject was anyone who could free himself and find his political identity in the fight for the revolution in the Third World. Eventually, the RAF took an even more extreme – as well as solipsistic – position: "We are the revolutionary subject. Everyone who begins to fight and resist is part of us" (RAF, "Die Aktion des Schwarzen September in München. Zur Strategie des antiimperialistischen Kampfes"). Only revolutionary actions would compel the enemy to shift to a military situation, and only then could the masses unite against the dictatorship. In the isolation of the Stammheim prison, the RAF terrorists developed conspiratorial theories in which, in a *ver-*

knastete (imprisoned) and *psychiatrisierte* society, dominated by a new fascism, the BKA (the German FBI) and the CIA collaborated with the sole purpose of destroying the one hope for revolution – namely, the RAF.

Neither of the two other German terrorist groups regarded the working class as a potentially revolutionary actor. The ideologies of B2J and the RZ were in fact influenced by the anarchist wing of the left-libertarian movements. B2J defined its aims as "anti-authoritarian" and "revolutionary." One of the founders recalled during an interview, "We defined ourselves as the fifth column of the Third World, and the German working mass was not interesting to us. For us, the German working mass was part of the capitalist system that had since long gotten its part of the loot. It could go so well with our workers because it had gone so badly with the masses in the Third World" (Document F:24).

The ideological position of the RZ was, in the words of one militant, "not very clear" (Document C:19). Notwithstanding discussion of the topic in several issues of its journal, RZ's theoretical bases for the armed struggle were not well developed. The members of RZ shared with the RAF the belief that "the working class of the FRG was never a holy cow. [The working class wants] peace, TV, a car, a wife and a few children, to exercise their power on them" (Klein 1980:236). The RZ, however, was by far the most "optimistic" of the German groups. From the beginning, its members attacked the elitist mentality of the RAF: "We want the urban guerrilla to have a mass perspective and to see that it [the revolution] is not something for a couple of people," they wrote in the first issue of their *Revolutionärer Zorn* (1975:6). They also criticized the pessimism of the RAF. In an "Open letter to the RAF," the RZ polemicists asserted that "the history of the last years shows how little the masses here are corrupted and how fertile the ground can be" (Document M:12ff.). After listing the movement campaigns that involved some guerrilla action, the RZ authors rhetorically asked, "Comrades, are these movements still in your head today? Or do you think that they have no meaning? Are they not important enough for internationalism? Or do you find them insignificant because they do not pursue exactly the same politics as the RAF?" (ibid.).

RZ claimed to support the "struggle of workers, women, and youth," together with "anti-imperialism and the anti-Zionist fight." It wanted to encourage the German masses to fight against the unification of Europe under the leadership of Germany, as in Germany "the evolution toward a totalitarian state is the most developed" (RZ document, cited in Fetscher et al. 1981:166). Preparing the foundation for an alliance with the different ethnic and political armed groups in Europe, in 1978, the RZ stated, "We fight today in the *Modell Deutschland* against a Europe under the German-American hegemony, for a Europe of free peoples" (Document N:23).

The forces – the logic – at work in influencing terrorist targets and terrorist repertoires also played a role in determining the terrorists' ideologies. In both

Italy and Germany, terrorists used the processes of "frame amplification" (Snow et al. 1986) in the attempt to justify the "armed struggle" among small circles of social movement activists. In both countries, however, *the ideologies of the terrorist organizations had to be adjusted to internal aims and consequently became less and less comprehensible to outsiders.* As the ideologies of the various underground groups evolved, they became less functional as propaganda and increasingly oriented toward the integration of the militants. Accordingly, the terrorists' self-image changed: the "armed branch of the movement" or the "armed movement" became the "army"; the "brigade" or "squad" became the "party." As the militants' self-image changed, so did their image of the enemy. The adversary became less tangible, more immanent. Outside the organization there was only evil, and everything but the organization was evil. The terrorists eventually abandoned their interpretation of the armed struggle as a stimulus for a revolutionary process; the role of the organization became to witness a revolt that survived the end of class struggle. The terrorists' language also changed. The terminology and categories of Marxism-Leninism or other doctrines that pervaded the social movement family, and which the militants had originally found useful for explaining their activities in terms accessible to the external world, gradually disappeared from terrorist documents. Instead, terrorist groups developed special, cryptic languages, consisting of terms coined within the organization. Obscure or incomprehensible to anyone outside the group, these languages possessed a highly symbolic value for the members. The terrorists' ideologies thus became what Moyano calls "an instrument for internal consumption."[12] And, having abandoned the imagery and language they shared with the counterculture, the underground groups ended up constructing an alternative reality.

Using Sartori's typology (1969), we can summarize the major formal characteristics of the ideological systems of the underground: they rejected factual arguments, they were abstract, they were based on an appeal to the emotions, and they were accessible to only a very small group. To ensure total commitment, underground organizations exalted "powerful," strong ideas. Because proponents of these ideas never referred to the preconditions and the progression of a revolutionary process, their ideological beliefs seemed invulnerable to external defeats. The ambiguity of their language helped, as Edelmann (1971:65–83) foresaw, to avoid negative confrontation with reality. In the underground, symbolism and rituals – which are normally needed to legitimize alternative authority – rendered the ideologies particularly rigid,[13] and reinforced the isolation of the terrorist groups. And the more isolated the groups became, the more abstract, ritualistic, and inaccessible to factual argument their ideologies became. As Coser suggested in his classical book on social conflict (1956, esp. chap. 5), conflict with an out-group increased internal cohesion. But it also brought about the isolation from the external environment.

INTRINSIC DYNAMICS: AN EXPLANATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION IN THE UNDERGROUND

Here, I would like to summarize the results of the previous parts and provide some explanations for the development of terrorist groups. A first observation: what is usually understood as Italian and German left-wing terrorism includes groups that were totally underground and groups that were, so to say, semiunderground; groups more inner-oriented (free-the-guerrilla guerrillas) and groups more oriented to external propaganda. As we have seen, however, *internal differences among the underground groups diminished in time.* The information we have examined in this chapter indicates, in fact, that once underground organizations were formed, they tended to give up external aims and concentrate their efforts on mere survival. To put it in another way, they underwent a process of *implosion*, characterized by the compartmentalization of structures, strategic radicalization, and ideological abstractness. The first underground organizations to emerge were too isolated to take advantage of the diffusion of mass violence, but were more fit than the later-comers to survive in the long term. Even if we look at the longer-lasting underground organizations, however, what remained of them in the eighties were just tiny groups of a dozen people concentrating all their energies on the organization of a few assassinations, and becoming less and less comprehensible to the outside world. As the research on sectarianism in politics had indicated (for instance, O'Toole 1975), when internal aims prevail, the groups emphasize elitism (as closeness toward the external reality), purity and exclusivism instead of proselytism. Isolated from their potential basis, the groups will give up any hope to influence the public, and focus on mere organizational survival (Messinger 1955). Intrinsic dynamics then determined the evolution of the underground.

This conclusion brings us back to a central question, which we have already discussed in the previous chapter: What does our evidence on radical groups signify in terms of the sociology of organization? Do they fit better in the frame of the rational choice approach or in that of the garbage can theorists (Perrow 1961, 1986)? To what extent are the different approaches capable of explaining decision-making processes in the underground? Our analysis of various terrorist organizations provides sufficient data to start answering these questions. On the one hand, we find evidence supporting the rational choice theory. The clandestine groups made a number of strategic decisions, and their leaders made frequent attempts to exploit some resources available in the environment as well as those particular environmental changes they could use to their advantage. The decisions were influenced by two main factors external to the organization: characteristics of the social movement family and the counterstrategies of the repressive state apparatuses. When the radical organizations went into crisis, they reduced their contacts with the external environment. As organizational studies show, when an incongruence with the environment emerges, organiza-

tions can react in two ways: either adapting to the environment or becoming even more radical and dissident, in order to build a strong, although small, nucleus (Jackson and Morgan 1978). The terrorist organizations took the latter way. On the other hand, we can see that to understand fully the origins and evolution of terrorist organizations, we must take into account elements from the "garbage can" approach: the dynamics that were neither the direct effect of environmental changes nor the result of a rational organizational strategy. For, as I have emphasized, intrinsic processes that were not foreseen or planned by the terrorist organizations played a critical role in their evolution. Their decline, in particular, seems to be related to unforeseen consequences of the very choice of clandestinity made by small groups in democratic regimes. Subsequent choices, oriented toward solving different problems of survival, produced unanticipated results and reduced the range of actions available to the group. Each tactical transformation required new changes in the structure and functioning of the clandestine organizations. These changes in turn had unpredictable effects, to which the terrorist leaders reacted by introducing new strategic changes. Unable to avoid arrest and alienation from the external reality, they were drawn deeper and deeper into a sort of spiral in which each successive turn further reduced their strategic options.

In these two chapters, we have observed three main dynamics that influenced the strategies and evolution of underground organizations: the *organization's interactions with the social movement family, its interactions with antiterrorist apparatuses*, and the *endogenous dynamics of the organization itself.* As we have seen, the first of these elements influenced the *foundation* of the underground organization, whose *evolution* was then determined mainly by the second, though it was marked in several ways by the third (intrinsic dynamics) as well. The very condition of clandestinity drew the organization into a kind of vicious circle in which each attempt to face problems at one level produced new difficulties at another. As a result, the organizations had to abandon externally oriented aims for a "private war" with the state apparatuses. That is, operating illegally as they did, the militants of the armed struggle could not appear at the site of social conflicts, and this physical distance led to a kind of psychic distance as well. It reduced the militants' capacity to pursue effective "promotional" strategies. Abandoning their efforts to recruit, they concentrated their energies on their struggle with the state and became increasingly involved in their private war, an obsession that isolated them still further. And the more isolated they became, the weaker was their capacity to escape repression. Recognizing the ways in which the militants "rationalized" changes in organizational structure and goals is vital for any understanding of political violence, and this is the issue I focus on in the next two chapters.

6

Patterns of radicalization in political activism

The preceding descriptions of the macro- and meso-conditions for (and characteristics of) the development of political violence in Italy and Germany at the end of the sixties and during the seventies can take us part of the way toward understanding political violence. But now we must take a further step and examine the phenomenon from another perspective: the micro-level. On the one hand, how did the activists perceive the external political conditions for protest and the evolution of movement organizations? And on the other, how did environmental characteristics and organizational processes affect the lives of the activists? Why did some of these activists radicalize their politics, sometimes – more often in Italy than in Germany – to the point of going underground?

In asking these questions, I make two assumptions. First: the effects of the interactions between the state and the movements are mediated by the *militants' perception of the reality* in which their political involvement developed. The main tool for determining the link between individual motivations, at the micro-level, and environmental conditions, at the macro-level, is the analysis of the activists' perceptions and of the small-group dynamics that intensified and radicalized their involvement. I do not wish to imply that by taking the activists' perceptions into account, I also took everything they said or wrote at face value. But their "memoires" do give us a means of relating the macro- and meso-conditions described in the previous chapters to the individual activists' choices.

My second assumption is that the use of violence can be understood only within the context of an *individual's political career*, during which collective identities are built and, through collective processes, transformed. Conversion to violence requires a specific redefinition of reality, which the individual arrives at by adopting new beliefs and values. A new value system therefore evolves within dense social networks and creates positive attitudes toward more radical forms of action. Accordingly, commitment is the result of a process during which new collective identities are built. Affective, normative, and cognitive mechanisms contribute to the identity-building process.

The next chapter is devoted to individual experiences in the underground

organizations. In this chapter, I analyze the previous steps in the radicalization of individual political involvement. On the assumption that the radical careers reflect – though magnifying to some degree – the perceptions and motivations largely shared in the milieus of the counterculture as a whole, I have drawn on material that refers particularly to the perceptions and motivations of activists who ended up in the radical organizations. I present two life histories of political activists and indicate some common patterns in the evolution of radical careers. I then argue that the expansion of political protest was intertwined with the development of (counter)cultural milieus. We will see that, in these milieus, behaviors and beliefs became radicalized during violent interactions with countermovements and in an escalating conflict with the state apparatuses. I conclude with a systematic comparison of radicalization patterns in Italy and Germany.

TWO LIFE HISTORIES

Life histories are the best source of information for any researcher attempting to analyse the activists' perceptions and motivations. Fortunately, because interest in the more radical forms of politics is so widespread, several life histories of militants of the "armed struggle" are available for study. Although the patterns of radicalization vary from case to case, we nevertheless find some constants. The following brief biographies of two radicals – one German, the other Italian – can serve as typical examples.[1]

A German life history: Horst Mahler

Horst Mahler was born in 1936 in a small town in Schlesien. His father was a dentist. In 1945, to escape the Soviet Red Army, his mother fled with her three sons to mid-Germany, where Mahler's father joined them. In 1949, after his father's death, the family moved to West Berlin, where later on Horst enrolled in the university. In his curriculum vitae, he so described his first political experiences:

> From 1955–9, I pursued legal studies at the Free University in Berlin. I joined a *schlagende* fraternity [following the tradition of student duels] but later left it. In 1956 I became a member of SPD. In 1958–9, I joined the circle of people around Harry Ristock, leader of the Juso-chapter in the Berlin district Charlottenburg. From 1959 on, I was active participant in the SDS and became a member of the executive body of the organization at the state level. Because of the [SPD's] decision on the incompatibility of SDS and SPD membership, I was purged from the SPD. (Mahler 1977:77)

Already before the decision on the incompatibility of SDS and SPD membership, the SPD leadership had however decided to expel him from the party. "I was a Young Socialist," recalled Mahler,

and I had invited a Social Democrat who had spoken about NATO and called for the end of such alliances as the Warsaw Pact and for the neutralization of Germany. Although I had not directly endorsed these things, the party started the procedures to expel me. Eventually, I did not object to those procedures because in the meantime the SPD leaders had stated the incompatibility between the membership in the SPD and the membership in the SDS. Since I remained in the SDS, I was automatically outside the party. *In this way my attempt to keep a politically positive attitude toward the state was frustrated.* (in Baum and Mahler 1979:39; emphasis added)

After the expulsion from the SPD, Mahler's political activities continued in the extraparliamentary opposition. "In 1962," according to his curriculum, "I organized the 'May 1 countermeeting' of the New Left, at which I was also a speaker. At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962), I was for the first time arrested by the police (at an anti-imperialist meeting) and was charged with insulting the American occupation force and violating the law on public meetings" (Mahler 1977:77). In the New Left, Mahler was impressed by the search for a new value system. In a television interview, he expressed his fascination in observing "the way in which human beings can, in a very short time, change so profoundly" (Jäger 1981:148). In another interview, Mahler remarked that, in his political involvement, "a very important experience was the transformation of human relations, the great openness: to see how barriers between people fall down and how the greatest loyalty and reciprocal affection are created" (Jäger 1981:149).

Because of his political activities in the radical Left, Mahler risked being banned from the law examinations, which he avoided only thanks to the intervention of some SPD leaders. In 1963, he started a brilliant career as a lawyer, specializing in commercial law. He was the consultant of important firms and seemed to be well integrated in this environment. Still in January 1967, when a firm gave a party for its workers to celebrate the end of the construction of a building, Mahler gave a flattering speech for the "capitalist": "What is peculiar in this building is not the fact that it enriches the image of the city with its balanced architectural design; what is peculiar in this building is its history. Thanks to the help of the Federal Republic, whose parliament passed the special law to assist the state of Berlin, the interest of West German entrepreneurs to take part in the reconstruction and economic development of this city has been promoted. . . . The initiative, the courage, and the energy shown by this entrepreneur in December 1965, when he took the direction of the construction in his hands, proves that the economic citizens of this city are not the worst" (in Aust 1985:76).

Notwithstanding professional success, Mahler did not give up his political engagement. In 1966, he helped found the "November society," an association of trade unionists, students, and SDS members, which criticized the SPD for joining the CDU in the national government. In spring 1967, this group founded in West Berlin the Republican Club (RC), a center of contacts and communi-

cation of the "Extraparliamentarian Opposition" (APO). Between 1967 and 1969, he worked as a lawyer, defending APO's activists in numerous trials – among them, the proceedings against the activists of the Kommune 1 Fritz Teufel and Rainer Langhans; the student leader Rudi Dutschke; the son of the future chancellor, Peter Brandt; Beate Klarsfeld, a French German journalist who had slapped Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger because of his activities in the Ministry for Propaganda during the Nazi regime; and Andreas Baader, at his trial for arson in two department stores in Frankfurt. In 1967, he organized a counterinvestigation about the police charges during the protest against the Shah's visit in West Berlin. In 1968, he founded a "Collective of the Socialist Lawyers in West Berlin" and focused all his professional activity on the "political" trials. Besides his professional activity, he also participated, together with other future members of the RAF, in a political group active in a new, working-class neighborhood at the periphery of Berlin, the "Märkisches Viertel."

In this period, Mahler recollected, police repression of the student movement had dramatically undermined his confidence in the state:

> Then there was Vietnam, and this is a very central point. . . . in 1945 especially the Americans wanted to show us, young people, that capitalism had changed, that it had assumed a human face. . . . We felt that it was our turn [to act] now, because our government – more than any other in Europe – supported the criminal politics of the Americans in Vietnam. We marched in the streets against the genocide in Vietnam with the belief that we were doing the best thing in the world. Then, there was the massive aggression of the state apparatus, and there was one death. [This aggression] led us to the belief that Marx and Lenin were right: this state does not represent the entire society, does not represent us, this state is the policeman of particular groups in this society. (in Baum and Mahler 1979:39)

If the state was "unfair," the radical political activists he assisted as a lawyer became instead in Mahler's mind the most courageous and honest human beings. At the trial of Andreas Baader, he explained that the defendants expressed the rebellion of a generation against an unjust and repressive society: "The prison," proclaimed Mahler in his plea, "is not the right place for these persons. If they are sent to prison, we should conclude that in our society the prison is, for decent people, the only place to be" (in Aust 1985:71).

With his political involvement and his popularity, Mahler became, to use his own words, "a bane for the bourgeois justice" (Mahler 1977:77). In 1967 and 1968, he was, in fact, the target of various aggressive articles of the Springer press, which eventually cost him his career. This is how he recollected this chain of events:

> After the right-wing attempt on the life of [the student leader] Rudi Dutschke on Maundy Thursday 1968, 5,000 enraged demonstrators staged a go-in at the publishing house of Alex Caesar Springer [whose dailies, in an almost monopolistic position in Berlin, had violently attacked the student leader] in which I participated. As a result, in March 1969

I was for the first time called in front of a court, and was sentenced to ten months in prison. I was also convicted in a civil trial brought by Springer and had to pay a quarter of a million marks in damages. A request of the public prosecutors to ban me as a lawyer did not pass because of the pressure of a savage street fight in front of the *Landgericht* [state court] at Tegeler Weg. (Mahler 1977:78)

Personal experiences with repression further radicalized his approach to politics. In his framing of the external reality, the Federal Republic of Germany came to be associated – or, better, identified – with the Nazi state. In an interview, he explained, for instance, that the rise and radicalization of the student movement was the only possible reaction to an irremediably authoritarian state:

How could young people, enthusiastic about the universal good, feel OK in a *state that had already shown itself as a murderous Leviathan*, as the institutionalized crime against humanity? This is the reason why it was natural that this form of terrorism . . . appeared in West Germany, Italy, and Japan. . . . It was not a lack of reverence or a presumed evil of the young people that prevented their identification with the German state and the German people. It was instead the traumatic memories of fascist cruelty, the absence of an antifascist revolution in West Germany, and the continuity of state involvement in imperialism. (Mahler 1980:26–7; emphasis added)

On the same line, Mahler suggested that the "moral rigorism" of the German Left "derived from the horror and shame for what had happened in Germany between 1933 and 1945. Very early, that is, when I started to be politically awake, I had to be ashamed of being a German. This is a terrible thing, when you cannot identify yourself with your people. The personal problem was, How did our parents behave then? This question was at the same time a statement to oneself that, if there was a development that would, even vaguely, recall those twelve years, well, we had to react with resistance" (in Baum and Mahler 1979: 37).

Besides the symbolic effect of repression, the fine that Mahler was condemned to pay to the Springer press as reimbursement for the damages produced by the demonstrators (Backes 1991:138), ruined his professional career and thus represented an important push in his way into the underground. A next step in the radicalization of his political involvement was, in 1969, the formation of a small group, including Manfred Grashof (a conscientious objector against the military service whom he had defended), Grashof's girlfriend Petra Schelm, and Mahler's girlfriend Renate (Aust 1985:90). During a conspirative encounter with Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin, who lived underground in Berlin, the group decided to "prepare" itself for the clandestine struggle. The first action of the group, in which also Mahler participated, was an attack with four Molotov cocktails against a public building in the Märkische Viertel (Aust 1985:90). This escalation of political militance coincided with the decline of the student movement, which also had psychological consequences on activists: Mahler recalled a "series of suicides" among the former SDS members and his own personal crisis (in Willey 1990:372).

To Mahler and his friends, the "armed struggle" became the last possibility to avoid "surrender." Foreign militant groups inspired them. First, there was the influence of the radical wing of the American movement against the Vietnam War. As Mahler recalled: "Also in the USA, there were groups that had carried out attacks, and that had a similar conception of the urban guerrilla war. This was at that time, in our discussion, one of the factors that took us to the concept of the urban guerrilla" (in Backes 1991:139). The revolutionary movements in the Third World also influenced the group's ideology: "When," wrote Mahler (1977:89), "notwithstanding the worldwide revolt, the industrial workers did not move, we went out to search for a 'new' revolutionary subject. . . . [Our problem was that] we recognized and felt the necessity of the revolution, but we did not know . . . what and where the revolutionary class, the subject of this revolution, was. From here on, our way took us to an entirely abstract identification with the freedom fighters in the Thirld World and to entirely adventurous concepts."

A last step in Mahler's way to the underground was his involvement in the liberation of Baader in May 14, 1970. After the public prosecutors had issued a warrant of arrest, on June 8, he escaped to the Near East, where he was trained in a Palestinian camp. Six weeks later, he returned to Germany, to start fighting with the RAF for a "global revolution." He was then thirty-four years old. As Mahler recalled, at that point, he considered the choice of the underground as nothing but the logical continuation of his struggle (in Steiner and Debray 1987: 92). About his clandestine life, he recalled the dramatic changes in the perception of the external reality, in particular, the development of a "military" frame: "In clandestinity, one lives in a completely changed world. . . . *You see the world only inside a military model*, as a free zone, or as a dangerous area. You do not see human beings so often any more. . . . When the world becomes so illusory, then you have to change yourself" (in Horn 1982:149, emphasis added). As he declared in an interview: "We were from our point of view in something like a war. It was in order to be able to face the problem of death that *we defined ourselves as soldiers*" (in Jäger 1981:164, emphasis added).

Mahler's life in the underground lasted, however, not more than four months. On September 21, the RAF had carried out three bank holdups, which resulted in 200,000 marks for the group, but also the beginning of a massive police search. On October 8, 1970, a few weeks after returning to Germany, Mahler was arrested. After his arrest he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to fourteen years in prison: twelve years for the participation in several holdups and the formation of a criminal association, plus an additional two years for his help in Baader's escape in 1970. In his first years in prison, he devoted himself to the ideological justification of the "armed struggle" and staged, with other members of the RAF, two hunger strikes to protest against prison conditions.

In prison, however, his criticism of the strategy of the RAF and, then, the armed struggle itself developed. This process began with his rejection of RAF's

demand for a special "political status" in prison. Expelled from the RAF in 1974, he then joined the Maoist group Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands. His criticism of the armed struggle became more and more radical. In 1978, during a discussion with the federal interior minister, Gerhard Baum, Mahler declared: "Today, after a long way in learning and experiencing, the state is for me no more what it was," that is "the absolute enemy" (Baum and Mahler 1979:34). In 1980, after having served two-thirds of his sentence, he was released. In 1987, a decision of the Federal Criminal Court allowed Mahler to practice law again.

An Italian life history: Marco

Marco was born in 1956 in Milan. Both his parents came from small villages in the Tuscan Maremma, where his father was a teacher at the elementary school. After the war, his parents went with their daughter to Milan and the father became a bank employee. A sympathizer with the Republican Party, he did not agree with Marco's political choices, but appreciated his son's right to his own experiences and did not impede them.

Of his early years at school, Marco recalled his first discovery that "reality was very problematic" (Life history no. 12:7). While still in primary school, he became involved in a Catholic voluntary association, linked to the Catholic Action: "We went around asking for money for the missions abroad. We had a soccer team and were always meeting new people who played on other soccer teams. I liked this, and I liked the attention paid to the other people as opposed to the normal indifference of the people in the street" (Life history no. 12:7).

Marco's entry into secondary school in 1969 was a main turning point in his life. Marco enrolled in an experimental section of a classical *liceo*, and found it very attractive and stimulating: "Instead of the traditional educational structure . . . there was an anticipation of the themes of school reform. . . . The professors sided with the student movement, and political involvement at school was encouraged" (Life history no. 12:5). At this school, Marco began to feel more and more attracted to political activities: "Of course, interest rose after the fascist massacre of Piazza Fontana, on December 12, 1969. For the first time, there was a strike. We did not go to classes, but went to the funeral in Piazza Duomo. There was a huge public march and the Mass. I remember that, with a lot of effort because it was packed with people, I entered the Duomo. There were all these biers" (Life history no. 12:10). A few weeks later, on January 21, 1970, Marco participated in a protest march:

> Although [we were] not yet involved in the student movement, a classmate and I thought that we wanted to see this march. We went to the central building of the university. I remember it as a wonderful feeling. I had never seen so many people all of my age, all with the same interests as mine. We were looking for other classmates, quietly walking in the street, when pandemonium broke out: tear gas, cries, blows, people running every-

where. In the beginning, we did not realize what was happening. We had our share of tear gas and we tried to run away. . . . We wandered around in the city center, looking for the march, following the smoke and the cries. We saw a squad of policemen in combat gear. It was all very spectacular: tricolor bands, the trumpets to start the charges. I saw Milan in a way I would never have imagined, with the smoke of the tear gas, and a really ghostly scene: torn placards, broken road signs, and people wounded in the street. . . . I arrived home very late. My eyes were red from the smoke of the tear gas, my clothes were torn. But I was so happy and excited, because something very important had happened, and I had been there. (Life history no. 12:10–11)

After this very strongly emotional experience, Marco, together with a group of members of the Catholic Action, quit the oratory: "The matrons of the Catholic Action called us a group of rebellious ones . . . and preached us a sermon on the students who went into the street to destroy cars. I was outraged. I had been to a march, and I had seen these fights, and the police who charged the students, and I was shocked. . . . The break was radical. I never again took a step in the oratory" (Life history no. 12:8). At the same time, Marco joined the Movimento Studentesco, an organization of leftist activists that was very strong in Milan. Marco participated in the general assemblies with enthusiasm: "Even the Aula Magna was too small, so we used the gymnasium. But even one gymnasium was too small, so we used four or five of them, and you could pass from one to the other" (Life history no. 12:11). He was also fascinated by the atmosphere at the city "conventions" of all the Milanese student collectives held in the Statale University: "It was a magic atmosphere. In the Statale you met girls, had your first love affairs. But, especially, you met the students of the other schools, and so widened your horizons" (Life history no. 12:13). Marco's enthusiasm for political activities was also nourished by the creation of a peer group of friends and comrades: "There were Saturday night parties, when the parents were away; the first encounters with members of the other sex, the first joints; and the participants were all members of the movement" (Life history no. 12:14).

Marco's recollections of this period of his school life include very strong memories of violent fights with neofascist squads: "At school, there was a very small group of fascists, a daily source of fights. They were few, but evil. Moreover, they had the external support of a military group, the Alpha Group, based in a residence hall ten meters away from my school. They were fanatics, really threatening; many of them ended by putting bombs in the trains. They came to the entrance of the school and made revenge attacks, they even knifed people" (Life history no. 12:9). In 1970, as a defense against the neofascists, Marco's collective organized a marshal group, which he "joined with excitement, very glad to have been chosen" (Life history no. 12:9). As Marco recalled, the activities of the marshal

consisted of the fact that we met at six o'clock, or at very dreadful hours, and we patrolled all around the school with iron bars, to check if any fascist was there. Then, we garrisoned

at the entrance, to be sure that all the students could enter the school quietly. After that, we went to class – at the second hour, of course, because we were members of the marshal group, and this was appreciated even by our professors. (Life history no. 12:10)

In 1972, the first signs of demobilization appeared. The strategical differences between the various movement organizations increased: while the MS decided to concentrate its activities inside the school, Marco was more attracted by the "workerist" PO, which paid more attention to the big factories and the training schools for working-class youth. With two schoolmates, Marco organized in his school a cell of PO, whose main activity was to distribute the PO journal. He felt attracted to this group, he explained, because of its "moral coherence," its many international contacts, and, especially, the presence of many workers. According to Marco, "workerism" implied very radical forms of action:

[With PO] I had my first really brutal experiences. For instance, when the police intervened to clear a squatted house, the type of violence was very different from what I had been accustomed to during our protest in the school or the police charges against student marches. For when the workers squatted the houses, there was a lot of blood, people were arrested and remained in jail for months. This gave me a very strong motivation to fight. (Life history no. 12:17)

Nineteen-seventy-three brought another turning point in Marco's life. His father died in a car accident, and his mother consequently had serious psychological troubles. Marco thus quit his political activities for a while, a time of "absorbing the emotional stroke." When, after a few months, he returned to political activities, the situation had changed profoundly. PO no longer existed. Some of PO's former militants, among them one of Marco's friends, formed a group whose aim was to "build a structure to practice illegal actions" (Life history no. 12:16). Marco explained this evolution in terms of the political climate in 1974:

This is the period just after the military coup in Chile. We started to feel the need to defend ourselves. This argument was for me absolutely convincing. I was certain that any mass struggle that was to approach power could never reach it without a very violent fight. The massacre of Piazza Fontana testified to it. While Vietnam was for me very far away, I had felt the experience of the Popular Front in Chile as very near to the Italian one. Consider, too, that there was very widespread paranoia about an imminent fascist coup. (Life history no. 12:17)

With this group, Marco started to discuss the armed struggle; in his words: "We started to study the way in which a gun works, to take a gun in our hands, to assemble and disassemble it. We practiced firing, and I enrolled at a rifle range" (Life history no. 12:19). As Marco put it, the project of the group was to link armed struggle with mass violence:

We wanted to solder the armed struggle with the mass violence of the workers who fought against the police at Pirelli, who destroyed the sleepers at the Alfa Romeo factory, who occupied the tollhouses of the highway and the railway stations; to solder the armed

struggle and the violence of the squatters. For instance, in San Basilio there was a famous occupation during which the squatters fired their guns at the police. We wanted to be a link between the suggestive hypothesis of building the armed struggle and the mass movement. (Life history no. 12:20)

And, in fact, political violence escalated: "In these years, between 1974 and 1977, the radical autonomous collectives grew enormously, month after month, they multiplied their presence in the city, their bases, their guns" (Life history no. 12:25).

Political activities took again "90 percent of [Marco's] time": "I started head foremost. In a sequence of progressive steps, in a few months I became a militant, in an atmosphere that I found absolutely fantastic" (Life history no. 12: 20). The first "armed action" he participated in was burning the car of a professor. Marco also got involved in "self-financing" such as house breakins: "Those were things I had never liked to do, I had never stolen five lira in my life. But the organization was in need; and I knew I had to do that. It was for me the highest testimony to my political and revolutionary consciousness" (Life history no. 12:21).

Strong friendship ties developed in the environment of Marco's group. Marco's girlfriend belonged to the same organization and together they lived a social life shared only with comrades: "We started to associate with members of the factory collectives, to have common experiences, to go on holidays together" (Life history no. 12:27). In the same period, Marco met a small group of very young militants of the radical leftist LC. Marco established many long-lasting friendship ties with these militants. This group evolved from distributing antifascist propaganda to increasingly violent actions. With them, Marco took part in the "proletarian expropriations," or "political" robberies in big stores, and in the "armed marches," when "guns were given to fifteen-year-old kids." When, in 1977, the group joined the underground organization PL, Marco went along.

Marco entered the underground organization in a period of dramatic turmoil. In the second half of the seventies, "From a 'trot' phase, in Milan the armed struggle started to ride at full gallop. There were armed actions every day, at every march, at every deadline, at every strike" (Life history no. 12:23). Recruitment to the underground developed inside the "autonomous" collectives: "Squads of the underground organizations were built inside a legal collective. A militant of the organization got involved in the collective and convinced those who he thought were more [class] conscious to start an intermediary structure" (Life history no. 12:31). With this kind of structure, Marco, as a rank-and-file PL militant, could continue his normal everyday life and his legal political activities. The acceptance of illegal forms of action was so widespread that "there were periods in which we intervened in a general meeting of the movement and, in front of 200, 300, or 500 people, we almost openly supported the strategy of the armed struggle" (Life history no. 12:33). In the imagery enforced inside the

movement's subculture, the "revolutionary forces" were stronger and stronger, and a civil war was very near. For instance, Marco remembered:

> When Moro was kidnapped, we were at a protest march of the workers of the Unidal, an alimentary factory. . . . I remember that a copy of a special edition of the newspaper with the title "Moro kidnapped, his escort killed" was raised by the workers as a sign of victory. We were amused. Nobody realized how grave the situation was. . . . We went to the canteen and toasted, with the workers, to the approaching fall of the regime. (Life history no. 12:34)

In this period, affective ties and personal needs were positively considered by the underground organization:

> We shared the idea that the armed struggle, beside its historical necessity, was also an occasion to build human relations which had to be, I don't know how to say, absolute, based on the readiness to die, the opposite of everyday life, of the individualization of a capitalist society. There was friendship, solidarity also in the small personal problems. . . . there were also the parties, and the joints. . . . it was this aspect of a happy sodality that destroyed the lives of so many people. (Life history no. 12:35)

Also the military activities, exclusively oriented against properties, did not create too many psychological problems for the militants. Marco remembered that they had a "mocking taste": "To be frank, they did not produce any moral embarrassment. For instance, setting the deposit of the Magneti Marelli on fire caused 40 billion lira in damages, but they were 40 billion of damages for the capitalists. We told the night watchman not to worry; we gave him the time to save his car, because he was a worker" (Life history no. 12:28).

According to Marco, the situation dramatically changed in 1978: "The famous '77 Movement' had remained limited to the university. It was to provide a lot of militants to the armed struggle, but could not improve the situation in the big factories" (Life history no. 12:24). The crisis of the "autonomous" collective of Milanese big factories was attributed to state repression. Clandestinity and increasingly terrorist tactics were perceived as the only way "to continue the struggle":

> In the big factories, as they started to single out the members of the radical groups and to persecute them, the number of sympathizers shrunk. Protest action inside the factory became more and more dangerous and difficult to organize. So, the workers told us: 'that one is a bastard, but we can do nothing against him inside the factory, so you have to intervene from outside.' We started therefore this practice of *gambizzazioni* (of wounding people in their knees). (Life history no. 12:30)

Looking for targets who bore "personal responsibilities," the group with which Marco was affiliated wounded a personnel director who had fired "leftist workers," among them one of their comrades, and killed a heroin dealer "because he had destroyed the lives of so many young workers" (Life history no. 12:38). In part as a consequence of this violent escalation, Front Line was more and more isolated, with increasing organizational problems:

A key point for an organization like ours is to create a 'friendly' network, that is, of people who do not want to belong to the organization, to have specific tasks, or to participate in actions, but who can provide you with housing, fake documents, or keep your guns. When these persons leave you alone . . . you find yourself with a huge number of people underground, and you do not know what to do with them. You have to multiply the action for financing, and you multiply the number of accidents, and of people injured, killed, and arrested. (Life history no. 12:38)

Marco started to feel a "climate of desertion," in which the "stress of the militant" pushed many members to quit political activities. A sign Marco perceived as very threatening is the diffusion of heroin in the "movement" area. Disagreements grew inside Front Line between those who wanted a "de-escalation" of military activities – who started to "discuss Foucault and deny any legitimation to 'people's tribunals'" – and a majority who got involved in a kind of military competition with the Red Brigades.

In 1979, an episode convinced Marco of the degeneration of the "armed struggle": "Two comrades of a Front Line squad had started to drink too much. One night they went to a bar, drank a lot, and had a fight for futile reasons with a group of young *'fascistelli,'* who were also drunk. Well, the two comrades went home, took their guns, and killed three people in the bar" (Life history no. 12:39). At this point Marco and all the members of his squad decided to quit and gave back their guns to Front Line. Those who were not in danger of being arrested devoted their efforts to the organization of nonviolent political activities. Marco and the others who were afraid they might be arrested escaped abroad. When he was arrested in London one year later, he confessed his responsibilities and collaborated with the judges. In the interview, he recalled the impression of "freedom" he had during the interrogation when he was pushed to abandon his ideological image of the world:

All my political evolution had been mediated through political and ideological categories. Schizophrenia became part of our life, part of us. So that, facing the more simple human feelings like horror or fear, we had to invent ideological and abstract explanations. I think that the phenomenon of collaboration and repentance derived also from this sense of freedom, which comes from the possibility to recollect your life using the normal logic for which a murder is a murder, a wounding is a wounding, a ferocious comrade is a ferocious man, and not a vanguard with a higher level of class consciousness. (Life history no. 12:44).

In prison, Marco asked to join the group of his former comrades with whom he had shared the choice of quitting Front Line and escaping abroad. They formed a "homogeneous area" and printed a journal in which they started to reflect on their past and strongly criticized the underground groups.

Obviously, the two militants' life histories are very different, not only because one man was German and the other Italian, but because their political careers were separated by twenty years. The generational differences had important

consequences. For instance, Horst Mahler spent many years in the "institutional" Left, while Marco directly became involved in the radical New Left. The level of political violence was much lower at the time of Mahler's adolescence than at the time Marco was a teenager. Moreover, Mahler's political activity, which began in the university, continued throughout his professional career; Marco's narration refers especially to his school days.

Despite these differences, we can note several similarities in Mahler's and Marco's political development, similarities they shared with most of the other radicals of their generations. First, Mahler and Marco both became involved in collective action *initially because of moral concerns, and then because of political concerns.* Moral and political concerns also motivated activists working in social services, who influenced the politicization of marginal youths they met in juvenile prisons or detoxification centers. A future member of the B2J, for instance, carried out his first robbery in order to obtain money for a social project for foreign children that the national and local authorities had refused to sponsor. The former RAF member Peter Jürgen Boock became involved in political activities when he met the future founders of the RAF in a juvenile prison, where he had been sent for possession of hashish, after having lived in a commune in Holland. The political socialization of another RAF member, Rolf-Jürgen Mauer, began when he met some activists from Black Help in the juvenile prison where he was serving a sentence for nonpolitical crimes, and continued later on among social workers who helped drug addicts. He said of his relationships with these social workers: "The level of the personal relationships was connected with discussions about social and political problems. It was the beginning of the era of the anti-authoritarian movement and the emergence of the so-called subculture. I felt attracted because, for the first time in my life, I had the chance to express myself" (Document D: 27).

For many activists, moral concerns ended up in a radical, cultural critique of the dominant value system. Especially in Germany, affective ties developed within the communes, or *Wohngemeinschaften*, where countercultural attitudes often led to political involvement. Former RAF member Volker Speitel provides a good sense of this communal environment in describing the countercultural context of his politicization in the *Szene* of Stuttgart:

> At this time I lived . . . in a commune that was absolutely apolitical. . . . Correspondingly, life was chaotic in that commune, and to orient or help ourselves in solving the many conflicts that arose, we smoked a joint or took a trip. . . . We dreamed of a farmhouse in the country, nature, love, peace, and at the same time we liked any armed action. We wanted everything and at the same time nothing. . . . We were as far away from the radical Left as a Bavarian priest of a small village, and nevertheless we felt part of it. The affinities were based on a formal connection: the same habits, the same music, the same slang and slogans. (Speitel 1980a:36–7)

In addition to initial concerns and motivations, the two life histories reveal other similarities in the patterns of radicalization. For both Mahler and Marco,

political activities became totalizing, ultimately determining every aspect of their lives. In both histories we can detect a gradual justification for resorting to increasingly violent actions. For both activists, interactions with the state produced a shift in their definition of the political adversary.

We can recast these points in a more general form. First, by exposing the activists to vital formative experiences, the political and social activities in which they participated helped to create *distinctive political countercultures.* The members of these countercultures shared two characteristics: a strong political identity, that is, political commitment was an essential constituent of their personality, and a political socialization to violence, that is, their political ideology and activities did not exclude the use of physical violence. Second, justifications for violence depended on the activists' daily experiences. In Italy, the militants' frequent physical fights with countermovements produced *structures and frames* that contributed to the escalations. In Germany, however, the militants' rationale grew out of their feeling of isolation. Third, conflicts escalated when *the activists perceived the state as taking sides.* Their perceptions evolved from their daily conflicts with the police, and were reinforced by the frame of thought that defined the state as an enemy. Let us now look at each of these three topics in greater detail.

POLITICAL COUNTERCULTURES

In the late sixties and the seventies the movement activists constructed countercultures, which in time became more and more remote from the mainstream cultures in the society. In these countercultures, alternative value systems developed within dense networks of friends and comrades.

As we have seen, involvement that began as a cultural or a political protest quickly radicalized. Both German and Italian militants testify that the acceleration of the politicization process, the large amount of time devoted to political activities, and the transformation of everyday life facilitated their radicalization. All these factors strengthened the individual's affective ties with a small group of comrade-friends, while at the same time reducing contacts with the "outsiders." Commenting on this *accelerated process,* one Italian activist recalled: "There is . . . something that I find hard to explain: it is *the very high speed at which I precipitated* [into the movement]. From [my] first approach, from this curiosity about the new environment, to a more totalistic activism, to my immediately embracing political militance, in the groups linked to Lotta Continua, there were three or four months" (Life history no. 18:16; emphasis added). A German activist similarly described how his involvement in Stuttgart's Red Help rapidly changed his life: "Through this combination of discussion and working together, *our whole life changed in a period of only three or four months*" (Speitel 1980a:38; emphasis added). Caught up in this rapid evolution, the militants no longer perceived themselves as making a deliberate choice:

There was not a moment in which I chose, or I said "now." It was an *evolution toward a model of life, which became extremely exacting for the rest of my life.* From that moment on, I did only [activism], full time, concentrating [on it] not only all my physical energies . . . but also all my attention. (Life history no. 29:15; emphasis added)

As the political group began to demand more and more of the activists' time, they gradually gave up all other activities – social, athletic, or musical. Because of "this crazy activism," reported one individual, there was "no time to sleep anymore" (Life history no. 5:9); the full-time activists "participated in nothing . . . but political activities" and "went to every single mass demonstration that took place" (Life history no. 18:31). Recalling the years of their militance, both Italian and German activists noted the intensity of their activism:

Political activity was on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis. . . . It was a big game, a big game in which we felt involved, willing to give all ourselves. In that period politics transformed our dreams into reality: [it gave us] the feeling of being influential, of being many, of having power. (Life history no. 13:22–3; emphasis added)

We did nothing else, for fourteen or sixteen hours a day, but work on a leaflet, produce informational material for the media, organize meetings or discussions in support of the hunger strike. (Speitel 1980a:40; emphasis added)

Not only did political activity absorb all the activists' time, *political experience determined every aspect of their lives.* In the words of former RAF member Klaus Jünschke, "everything was political in that period" (1988:153).

The former activists recall this period of their lives as *extremely exciting.* Coinciding with their first independence from the family, their experiences within the group were, they remembered, very intense. They often used the words "party" and "play" to describe it; "in those years, one observed, . . . [we] had such a good time" (Life history no. 28:11). The atmosphere in the German Kommunen was, Bommi Baumann recollected, "always nice, and even fantastic when we planned some political actions, and when an action succeeded, then there was a real party at home" (Baumann 1976:51). Similarly, in the Italian groups "summer holidays were felt as . . . very boring because they interrupted the continuous cycle that had represented your entire existence for the whole year: the meetings of Lotta Continua, the meetings at . . . school, the student assemblies, the marches, the demonstrations" (Life history no. 13:33).

From the very beginning of the process of political socialization, *emotional motivations* played a decisive role. One Italian activist, talking about his recruitment to a radical group, said: "I never made an ideological choice, ideology always came later on. . . . If I had met a PCI member whom I had liked more than [the radical militants], today I would be a PCI member myself" (Life history no. 1:43). Ideology was no more a decisive factor for the German activists: "Most of the comrades of my group called themselves 'anarcho-trade unionists,'" wrote one activist, "and so did I, although I did not really understand what it meant" (Klein 1980:149).

Participation in small legal political groups strengthened these friendship ties. Even when an individual belonged to friendship networks outside the political milieu, their importance to him diminished as he became more politically socialized. In a spiral of mutual determinations, the more time an individual spent in political activities, the greater number of contacts he made with comrade-friends. At the same time, the strengthening of friendship ties within the political environment increased the value of political involvement, and accordingly the activists would dedicate more and more time to political activities. This commitment weakened other ties, which thus lost their power to exert a countervailing influence on the formation of the personality. Commitment to radical organizations involved a gradual isolation of the members from the outside world, which reinforced their loyalty to the new group.[2] The individual's comrade-friends became his or her most important and influential peer group – in the words of an Italian activist, "the most beloved friends" were those with whom he "handed out leaflets in front of the factories" (Life history no. 9:32).

Sharing the routine of everyday life further strengthened affective ties among members of the left-wing groups: "My friends were the comrades with whom I lived everything together" (Life history no. 28:11), said one activist; another observed that when "friendship coincided with politics," it was "difficult to distinguish between friends and comrades, because politics occupied every moment of the daily life" (Life history no. 9:30). Interviews with former Italian activists often include such statements as, "obviously relations at the personal level were built in the environment in which you spent your everyday life. I mean that *with the comrades . . . you built, day by day, affective ties*"(Life history no. 13:35–6; emphasis added). German activists too described their relationships within the movement as characterized by "solidarity," "love," and "self-transformation":

> Two years after having been organized in a group, in a political group, I had acquired completely new experiences and knowledge. I do not mean here study and political understanding but the *practice of solidarity, love, and reciprocal respect without competition and its anxieties.* Help even for the weakest members of the group, instead of repulse against them. That really was a fantastic experience for me. . . . On one side there was solidarity toward the others instead of the everybody-for-himself [ethic] practiced until then. On the other side there was love and goodwill for the others, even if they were weaker and had their defects. (Klein 1980:144; emphasis added)

In dense political milieus, the peer group composed of comrade-friends therefore came to exert more and more influence on the most important personal choices. Meantime, the group as a whole became more and more isolated from the external world. The German criminologist Lorenz Böllinger summarized this development in the biography of one of his interviewees: "The group became ever more closed in on itself . . . and an enormous pressure came from the union of private and public life. Any refusal, any private conflict, was criticized as political weakness" (Böllinger 1981:181). Or as an Italian activist put it: "The

sense of the group was always very strong. It determined personal choice and actual behavior toward society" (Life history no. 26:5). Another indicator of the emotional importance of the relations within the political groups is the frequent use of the word "family." Italian activists, for instance, affirmed that "the comrades became my family" (Life history no. 5:35); "Potere operaio was a small family" (Life history no. 16:71); "It is the sense of a family . . . we questioned the [biological] family, but looked for new certainty inside the group, which replaced what we criticized" (Life history no. 26:16).

As many of the small networks that had sprung up within the counterculture began to compete among themselves, *the radical movements became smaller, closer, and more insular sects.* One Italian interviewee suggested that this competition created ghettos: "You built a network of friends, of personal relations always inside this circle. I think that already at that moment a kind of unconscious ghettolike isolation took place" (Life history no. 13:6). Similarly, one German activist acknowledged, "In my radicalization, I became very intolerant. When I met comrades who had made different choices, I let them down. Eventually, *I became completely closed.* Everything was political to such an extent that I did not meet human beings on a human basis anymore. . . . We lost a lot of our sensitivity" (Jünschke 1988:153; emphasis added).

MOVEMENTS AND COUNTERMOVEMENTS: SPIRALS OF VIOLENCE

The atmosphere within the radicalized countercultures fostered the acceptance of violence. The ideological frames developed in the radical groups helped the militants to "read" their everyday experiences with politics and provided them with a rationale for action. Under these circumstances, they found justifications for the use of violence in the deadly face-to-face fights between left-wing and right-wing young militants. Sociologists of conflict have described the escalation of conflicts within established preexisting geographical, ethnic, or institutional communities, using the concept of community polarization (for a review, see Zald and Useem 1987). An analysis of the movement–countermovement interactions in Italy and Germany shows that, especially in Italy, similar mechanisms of escalation developed in mobilizations that cut across traditional community lines.[3] In such cases too, the spiral of violence between right-wing and left-wing radicals was fueled by a combination of factors, including increasing organization of the conflict, aroused emotions, and distorted perceptions of the external reality.

These dynamics are especially visible in the escalation of the confrontation between the radical Left and the radical Right in Italy. For a few years after the end of World War II, bands of former members of the Fascist Party and the Italian Social Republic had attacked strikers and trade unions activists, helping the police in a brutal repression of workers' protests (see, among others, Canosa

1976, chap. 2). Throughout the fifties and the first half of the sixties, however, there were few direct interactions between neofascists and left-wing activists, and these few were almost ritual occasions, mainly when the Left demonstrated against national congresses held by the neofascist party MSI or against its leaders' public speeches in the North Italian industrial districts and the "Red" regions in the Center. Although neofascists and right-wing trade unions occasionally provoked harsh reactions in the factories, physical conflicts were generally rare.

The situation changed rapidly in the second half of the sixties, when violent fights in schools and universities became increasingly frequent. The encounters followed a typical pattern: the leftist students would occupy a school or a university and were then attacked by neofascist groups, who tried to "disoccupy" it and reestablish the "right to study." One right-wing radical, for example, recalled a fight at his high school: "[The leftist students] were barricaded on the third floor . . . they threw down desks and we tried to assault them . . . we tried to penetrate the institute in order to 'free' it" (right-wing radical, in Pisetta 1990:200).

As the fights in the school and university became an everyday experience, *the militants of each group began to coordinate their actions, either of "attack" or of "defense."* In his biography, which I quoted at length at the beginning of this chapter, Marco defined the fascists as "evil" and "fanatic." A right-wing activist's description of his everyday life at school implies that the fascist students regarded their leftist adversaries in the same way:

> We had to enter the school in a group. Or we called each other in the evening, "Is there any news? Is something going to happen? What are we going to do tomorrow?" If everything was calm, we could each go on his own; if there were troubles, if there was tension in the air, we met before school in order to arrive at school together, because, you know, it is difficult to attack a group of ten people. (right-wing radical, in Pisetta 1990:200)[4]

Among the left-wing militants, the groups that specialized in the "self-protection" against the attacks of the neofascists became increasingly organized. Marco recalled, for instance, the activities of the marshal body of the left-wing *Collettivo* of his school. For their part, the neofascists organized body guards to protect the MSI leaders. As a member of the MSI juvenile organization recalled, his political activities at the beginning of the seventies consisted merely in "xeroxing, gluing posters, providing support for fellow activists in the university, engaging in physical fights, attending public speeches, working as an armed corps for the protection [of the MSI leaders], since these guys . . . when they went around, they had problems of physical safety, and therefore they needed an escort and a counterescort" (in Pisetta 1990:193). Several future right-wing terrorists had their first experiences with violence in similar paramilitary groups.

The organization of violence was also fueled through a *gradual reciprocal adaptation to increasingly dangerous weapons*: from the stones and sticks of the late sixties to rifles and guns in the seventies. When the activists of some groups on the Left began using big "monkey wrenches" – claiming that they needed to defend themselves against the aggression of the neofascists – the latter started to carry real weapons, also justifying their actions as self-defense. As one right-wing radical explained, "Eventually the fascists were forced to go around carrying guns, and they had to use pistols, because they were attacked and *sprangati* [hit with bars]" (right-wing radical, in Pisetta 1990:201). The use of guns on one side encouraged the other side to arm itself: "[Since] the physical struggle with the political counterpart, I mean with the fascists, was a matter of almost every single day," said one left-wing radical, ". . . it was therefore inevitable that we would start to equip ourselves in a military way" (Life history no. 13:29).

The physical confrontations had psychological effects: *solidarity increased among members of each of the conflicting groups*. On both sides, the shared involvement in risky activities strengthened the loyalty ties inside the peer groups of comrade-friends. In the words of one left-wing militant, describing the relationships among the comrades of the marshal body to which he belonged, "the danger we lived together, as soon as it was over, brought about moments of great closeness" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988:242–3). For both left- and right-wing militants, the political comrade was the "real friend," "who gives soul and body for you. You see yourself reflected in him, and he recognizes himself in you . . . [he is] the one you are happy to risk going to jail for" (right-wing radical, in Pisetta 1990:197). Finally, the ideological importance of the "community" increased the role of friendship ties. On both sides, the ties within the group represented an "island of human relationships in the desert of the metropolis" (right-wing radical in Osella 1988:8–9).

At the same time, the violent face-to-face interactions increased the hatred between the members of the opposing groups, *creating an "abstract" and "absolute" image of the other side as the "enemy."* The comments of a right-wing militant epitomize the militants' perception of their "enemy": "I think that the enemy has to be seen – and we all shared this concept – in an aseptic, impersonal way. If there is a fight, in that moment he is the enemy. Therefore: either him or me" (right-wing radical, in Pisetta 1990:208; emphasis added). Similar images developed on the Left, especially after the massacre of Piazza Fontana, when the neofascists started to be seen as plain murderers and were denied the right to speak in public meetings at schools and universities. As a left-wing activist put it, "The massacre of Piazza Fontana on December 1969 marked for me a very decisive step: it closed the circuit (which until then appeared to me open) between institutions, the state, and the Right. . . . With respect to the Right, I had my first real experience of polarization" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia

1988:114–15). On the other side, the young neofascists, who denied any responsibility for the massacre (Fiasco 1990), began to feel persecuted.

In this atmosphere of fear and revenge, the interactions between left-wing and right-wing groups escalated in "a logic of hatred, a logic of death" (in Pisetta 1990:196). A right-wing radical explained his involvement in political violence as the result of a series of revenges:

> There had been violence against my brother, and I felt a sense of injustice that pushed me to get involved, as he was, in politics. My first attitute was one of retaliation: my mother's car had been burned, and I burned other cars. I returned to others the blows my brother had received. It grew year after year. Violence called violence. . . . Our adversaries were those who had an opposite ideology. But our fights were basically fights between bands, according to a fashion that was widespread in our generation. (in Bianconi 1992:51)

In a similar way, a left-wing radical described a "merciless manhunt" that took place in particular in the second half of the seventies:

> In that period you lived in an atmosphere [that encouraged the] lynching of fascists. "If you see black, shoot at once," this was the slogan, and then, . . . if you met somebody who, during an antifascist leafletting said "fuck off, dirty red," well, you lit into him, no problem. . . . there was a manhunt, without any pity, it was a hunt against the fascists that then had repercussions for us, because there was a spiral of revenge. . . . for instance, during a "micro" public march in the center of the city, if you met somebody who had the collar of his jacket lifted [considered a symbol of the neofascists] it was the end. If we got him, it ended up in a bad way. (Life history no. 6:29)

If the militants of the Left recalled the mid-seventies as "the days when militants were killed during the marches, the years in which comrades were killed in fascist assaults" (Life history no. 13:29), for the neofascists those days were characterized by "a situation in which to kill a fascist is not a crime, a situation in which the fascists cannot enter the schools, a situation in which the fascists cannot walk in the streets, a situation in which the fascists cannot live" (right-wing radical, in Pisetta 1990:200).

In addition to creating structures for violence and arousing feelings of revenge, *the experience of daily fights with adversaries produced a kind of battle spirit toward politics.* Violence was gradually accepted as a *political* means, among both left- and right-wing groups. The life histories represent this widespread acceptance of violence: a left-wing militant referred to the "internalization of the idea that violence was legitimate for any communist militant" (Life history no. 13:28), and a right-wing militant stated that "political violence is part of the political fight, is a means like [any] other" (in Pisetta 1990: 205).

The use of violence gained even greater acceptance when a second generation of militants joined the political groups. On both the left and the right, the second generation became involved in radical politics at a very young age and very

rapidly.[5] This account of a left-wing radical is not untypical: "My first march was on October 1, 1977; in February 1978, I joined an autonomous collective; in April–May of that very year, I was already supporting [the terrorist group] Front Line" (left-wing radical, in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988:300). As for the right-wing radicals, "when they were sixteen or seventeen, almost all had the experience of having done something 'very important' outside the law" (Fiasco 1990:185). Having been socialized in a period of radical politics, the members of the second generation had very few taboos about violence, even fewer than the older generation. This difference accounted for some of the tension between the older and younger militants. A neofascist of the second generation recalls, for instance, that, "After Judge Occorsio was killed and another person died in a robbery [during actions of the radical right], the senior members of the group seemed to be preoccupied with the legal consequences. . . . They started to look at us in a strange way" (right-wing radical, in Fiasco 1990:172). From the opposite perspective, a first generation of left-wing radicals described the mistrust of the elders toward the youngsters: "All of us who had been politically active before, had a lot of difficulty with respect to the military action, to the very fact of carrying arms. . . . Those who had no prejudice at all were the younger ones, those who were eighteen or nineteen years old" (Life history no. 5:65).

As we will see in Chapter 7, because the second generation had so few reservations about political violence, it provided the terrorist organizations with many potential recruits. Several neofascists as well as leftist radicals regarded the armed struggle as the "logical consequence of their own political career." Previous experiences with violence eased the radicals' way into the underground groups. "I did not feel any psychological shock, I thought it was normal," said one right-wing radical about joining a terrorist group (in Pisetta 1990:207). A member of a left-wing underground group had had a similar reaction: "Thanks to the activities in the marshal [corps], I had no trouble in adapting myself to the more dramatic techniques of the armed struggle. . . . It was all familiar to me. One could say that I had substituted the gun for the monkey wrench [a widespread "arm" in the marshal bodies]" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988: 247).

In Germany, too, left- and right-wing militants engaged in physical fights. In the sixties, the radical Right often tried to disrupt the activities of the student movement. Almost routinely in the seventies, the radical Left clashed with the radical Right, when the neo-Nazis wanted to organize a national meeting and the antifascists disrupted it. Such events, however, were quite isolated. Although the radical Right had gained several electoral victories in the period of the Grand Coalition, it rapidly declined after the National Democratic Party (NPD) reached its peak in 1969 (Stöss 1989:135–7). If it is true that the marshal body of the NPD was responsible for attacks against antifascist demonstrations, these events were much more sporadic than in Italy and they raised criticism from within

the radical Right itself. A new, violent wing emerged in the second half of the seventies: membership in radical Right youth organizations increased dramatically in 1979 (Stöss 1989:153ff.). But because in Germany Nazism was much more stigmatized than fascism in Italy, the German radical Right remained much weaker than the Italian one. Moreover, as the left-libertarian movements were more pragmatic than in Italy, occasions for direct confrontations between movement activists and neo-Nazis were still quite rare.

We should note that, in Germany, the situation changed in the eighties. Small nuclei of neo-Nazis, often organized as sports associations, established paramilitary camps (see, for instance, Chaussy 1989:113). The number of illegal actions conducted by the radical Right increased in 1982, and continued at a fairly high rate in the following years. Trained in Lebanon, the neo-Nazis bombed synagogues and murdered representatives of the Jewish community.[6] Having infiltrated the milieus of football hooligans, rockers, and skinheads, they started to attack the squatted houses and centers of the radical Left (they targeted the *Autonomen* in particular), and to fight with various street gangs in the late eighties. It was especially at this time that Germany, like Italy in the seventies, experienced spirals of escalating violence, especially in the big cities and, more recently, in the new federal states (Farin and Seidel-Pielen 1993; Assheuer and Sarcowicz 1992).

Although in the sixties and early seventies left-wing German activists were rarely the object of organized attacks by countermovements, they resented the opposition of a strongly anticommunist public opinion. Especially in West Berlin in the late sixties, the movement activists felt that a "pogrom-like" attitude pervaded the population against "the students." Radicalization was therefore encouraged less by direct experiences with violence than by the sense of being violently rejected by mainstream society. As future B2J member Bommi Baumann recalled:

> For somebody like me, with my long hair, when I went out in Berlin, it was like being in the skin of a Negro. They threw us out of public places, they spit on us, they insulted us, they annoyed us . . . completely unknown people, people you had never done anything to. . . . Many people became aware of politics with the demonstrations against the Vietnam War on the Kudamm [in the Berlin City]. All of us from the Gedächtniskirche permanently met on the Kudamm. During the marches, we were therefore forced to meet each other. Since the very beginning, some took part in the marches. They were street affairs. (Baumann 1976:30–42)

The feeling of exclusion and persecution became more intense after a right-wing "loner" made an attempt on the life of student leader Rudi Dutschke (in 1968), following a violent campaign of the Springer press against the student movement. Baumann said that, during the demonstration that followed the attack against Dutschke, "the street lit by torches and the shout Rudi Dutschke meant to me: this bullet was directed against you too. For the first time, they fired at you" (Baumann 1976:72). According to another militant, the attempt on Dut-

schke's life precipitated the militants into "a discussion . . . , at first not so much about guns but about the most appropriate way to react" (Document F).

ENCOUNTERS WITH AN "UNFAIR" STATE

In both Italy and Germany, two factors further legitimized political violence: the diffusion throughout the counterculture of an image of a "violent" and "unfair" state, and the radicals' frequent conflicts with the state apparatuses. Activists found a justification for violence in the widespread belief that the state had broken the rules of the democratic game and that revolutionary violence was therefore the only way to oppose an increasing authoritarianism. In Chapter 3, I examined state policies toward protest; my concern here, however, is the images of the state that influenced the attitude and behavior of the activists.

The image of a violent state arose first of all from the *activists' vivid memories of police brutality*. Italian activists' recollections of public marches are full of such details as "a policeman who aimed his gun at my belly" (Life history no. 21:31); "my burned hand, when I tried to throw back a squat candle" (Life history no. 3:19); and their "eyes red from smoke of the tear gas." German activists who experienced police intervention during house squattings in Frankfurt have similar memories – for example: "I was passing near the Grüneburgweg just when the policemen started their orgy of clubs. I threw myself in the battle. Two minutes later I found myself in an ambulance" (Klein 1980:199). Several activists in both countries experienced their first encounters with police "brutality" as a shock. Marco recalled that he was "outraged" and "traumatized" by the police charges against the students. A German activist wrote: "I had never been at a march, and it was almost by chance that I passed near to that one. And there I saw three policemen who were beating a girl. I think if it had been a boy, I would not have felt so shocked" (Klein 1980:57).

For both Italian and German activists, the death of fellow comrades – at the hand of either the police or the fascists – acquired a highly symbolic value as an expression of the degeneration of the state. Among the events that helped to radicalize the attitudes of the Italian New Left were the "April days" of 1975, which one activist described in his autobiography as "three days of fighting . . . following the assassination of the young Varalli by a group of neofascists, and of Zibecchi, crushed by a police car in front of the MSI [neofascist party] headquarters" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988:163). Another activist recalled that "the days of the death of Zibecchi in Milan, Boschi in Florence, and Micciché in Turin were the moment when rage and the desire to rebel came to possess all of us. . . . Those deaths gave us a strange feeling, almost as if it were not possible to go back anymore" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988:206). In Germany, the mentioned death of Benno Ohnesorg in 1967 had a similar profound effect on his comrades.

In both countries, *the militants' fights with the police escalated around the*

"defense of a territory," often represented by squatted houses or sites for nuclear plants. In such instances, the battles became ritualized: "Every morning I left home, I went to fight the police in the street battles, I came back home for lunch, and went back to fight in the afternoon and until night. It was a Londonderry, I mean a series of battles carried out with Molotov cocktails and stones to conquer five meters of land" (Life history no. 27:26). Thus, among the activists the shared belief that it was necessary to resist the violence of the police provided another justification for the use of violence: "We reacted with stones against those who had guns and squat candles and clubs," one young militant remembered. "This difference was for me a justification: it *legitimized the defensive use of violence*" (Life history no. 9:26; emphasis added).

An even stronger justification, however, was *the belief that the state was involved in a sort of dirty war.* In Italy, the neofascist massacre at Piazza Fontana in 1969, and the proof that the Italian intelligence service had helped protect the assassins, had a radicalizing effect on the leftist political culture. In the activists' eyes, the state became the "state of the massacre," which used a "strategy of tension" to repress democratic protest. It therefore became *"right, there in Italy, to use mass violence* against those responsible for the 'massacre perpetrated by the state'" (Life history no. 12:10; emphasis added).

This situation fueled the *rhetoric of a historical moment.* In the years following the massacre, the militants lived in anticipation of a feared fascist coup d'etat. Whatever the likelihood that it would occur, the fears of the left-wing activists directly affected the daily reality of their lives: "Everyday life was interwoven with this atmosphere: I remember periods when I had my backpack already prepared under my bed, [when there were] false alarms for a radio news that had not been broadcast, chains of more or less reassuring telephone calls" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988:122); "How many people – I do not refer only to the comrades of the extraparliamentary Left – did not sleep at home; how many eyes were focused on the barracks" (in Novelli and Tranfaglia 1988:204). Among the radical leftists, the belief that it was necessary to equip oneself for resistance became pervasive. Biographies of left-wing radicals document the prevalence of conspirational behavior: "We assumed a conspiratorial identity, typical for that kind of situation in which we lived, for that particular climate that we experienced . . . the paranoia of a coup d'etat" (Life history no 18:47); " 'What to do when there is a coup d'etat' was the classic book that all the comrades had hidden on their bookshelves," added another (Life history no. 6:19).[7]

Although the German state was not involved in any massacre and there were no rumors of coups d'etat to unsettle the German population, as early as 1967, when Benno Ohnesorg was killed, movement activists began to sense a (new) "fascistization of the state." In Bommi Baumann's words: "The turning point of the state apparatuses, which was embodied in Ohnesorg's and Rudi's cases, proved that the state was ready to do anything and that *its fascist face appeared*

as soon as it felt in danger for whatever reason'' (Baumann 1976:81; emphasis added). As we have read in Mahler's biography, police repression of the student movement dissolved the activists' belief in the fairness of the state. The attack on Rudi Dutschke less than a year after the death of Ohnesorg was perceived in the left-libertarian movement not as the act of a loner, but as part of a strategy to destroy all political opposition. Although in this period no other fatalities occurred during mass demonstrations, members of the radical *Szene* were shocked when, in the space of a few months, several young militants of underground organizations died in shootouts with police (among them, Petra Schelm, twenty years old, in July 1971; George von Rauch, twenty-four years old, in December 1971; and Thomas Weißbecker, twenty-three years old, in March 1972). Once again, the activists saw these deaths not as casualties but as murders planned by the state apparatuses. When, in 1973, RAF prisoners were subjected to the ''isolation'' treatment, activists took this action as an evidence of the ''fascistization'' of the state. As former RAF member Klaus Jünschke put it:

> The acceptance of special prison units also legitimates all other means aiming at the same goal: constriction therapies, brain surgery, genetic manipulation. The [state's] inadequate reflection on German history from 1933 to 1945 corresponds to this lack of sensitivity toward the complete control of human beings, toward total dominion over human beings. (Jünschke 1988:131)

In 1977, the deaths of three RAF militants in the Stammheim prison was another shock, and for the radicals additional evidence of the state's authoritarian tendencies. ''The three deaths in Stammheim,'' one activist recalled in 1978, ''were for the group the confirmation that fascism had now exploded in an open way'' (Document F).

As we have seen in Mahler's biography, in Germany the frames that contributed to a delegitimization of the state in the counterculture were those that emphasized the state's continuity with the Nazi regime. Guided by the belief that ''those in command positions in the economic sector, politics, the army, police, secret service, church, science, media, and so on [were] ex-Nazis or those responsible for Nazism'' (Jünschke 1988:136), the activists repeatedly invoked images stressing continuities with Nazism or a return to Nazism when interpreting the state's reactions to protest and terrorism. Whereas in Italy the militants claimed to be carrying on their fathers' resistance to fascism, in Germany they used the lack of resistance to Nazism to justify violence.

Although the radicals in both Italy and Germany may have acted on an ultimately distorted perception of the state's authoritarianism, their beliefs were, at least partially, grounded in reality: in the outbreaks of neofascist violence in Italy, which were widespread at that time; in the fact that at least eight German terrorists died in prison, two during hunger strikes and five as a result of suicides. Further, these beliefs were not confined to the ''radicals.'' Not only the Italian Left but part of public opinion in general held that members of the state

apparatuses had tolerated, and even helped, the neofascists. German politicians and experts, as well as humanitarian organizations, criticized the prison conditions for the German terrorists; indeed, numerous intellectuals conducted opinion campaigns both inside and outside the Federal Republic. In the second half of the seventies, many Germans took the term *Modell Deutschland* to define an authoritarian society. For only the most radical militants, however, did the belief that the state was unfair lead to the conclusion that the Left had to resist it with violent means.

RADICALIZATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVISM: A SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

The observations and commentaries in the memoirs of the various radicals suggest that, in some historical periods, movement countercultures tend to foster a mentality of embattlement, to create a vision of the world as divided between "us" and "them." Thus, in time, the number and the extent of channels of communication between "inside" and "outside" are dramatically reduced. As we have seen, during the phase of *statu nascenti* of the late sixties and early seventies, *political countercultures* developed in both Italy and Germany, and it was in these countercultures that the future militants of the underground organizations first became involved – usually at a very young age – in political activities. In the extraordinary atmosphere of those phases of high collective mobilization, dense social networks of comrade-friends proliferated and alternative value systems emerged.

The process of political involvement documented by the Italian and German radicals fits well into Doug McAdam's "model of recruitment to high-risk/high-cost activism" (1986:esp. 68–71). According to this model, families or other socialization agencies play a role in making individuals receptive to certain political ideas; when individuals who have thus become politically sensitive encounter political activists, they are then motivated to become involved in an initial "low-cost/low-risk activism." In this sense, the presence of a protest milieu influences the individual's rough calculations of costs and benefits by increasing the social costs of *non*participation. Under conditions of "biographical availability" – that is, for instance, for young people – "these 'safe' forays into activism may have longer-range consequences . . . for they place the new recruit 'at risk' of being drawn into more costly forms of participation through the cyclical process of integration and resocialization" (McAdam 1986:69).

The passage from low-risk to high-risk activisms evolved in a similar way in our cases, although at a different speed: slower for the first generation of radicals, much faster for the second one. For both generations however, as for the Freedom Summer activists whom McAdam studied, this process involved *increasing integration into activist networks, a deepening ideological socialization, and the construction of an activist identity.* Our analysis indicated that, as

it has been observed in various recent contributions, social movements are in fact "socially embedded with loyalties, obligations, and identities that reframe issues of potential support for collective action" (McClurg Mueller 1992: 5).[8] The activist networks produce the "translation of objective social relationships into subjectively experienced group interests" (Ferree and Miller 1985:39). Although to a different degree,[9] social movements tend to produce alternative value systems. The activist groups sustain this process, creating solidarity and enforcing moral concern.[10] Movement activists form a "culture of solidarities," that is, "a cultural expression that arises within the wider culture, yet which is emergent in its embodiment of oppositional practices and meanings" (Fantasia 1988: 17).[11] In this process, the substitution of material incentives with symbolic ones tends to increase the closeness of the movement networks. As Gamson rightly remarked, from a source of support, the group can become sometimes a prison: "Participants in some social movements find an oppressive and stifling side to close-knit personal relationships. So-called cultural free spaces sometimes become prisons from which some participants would like to escape but cannot because they lack the courage to defy the group censure and ostracism that would follow" (Gamson 1992:64). Moreover, under some circumstances, movement solidarities can facilitate a strategical radicalization (Useem 1972). According to our analysis, the use of violent repertoires tends to produce a closed and intolerant counterculture.

Radicalization and group implosion followed the *everyday experiences of the militants in their environment.* Identities are created during phases of turmoil; they then bind the individual fate to the fate of a group. Cultures of solidarity emerge "in those moments when the customary practices of daily life are suspended and crisis requires a new repertoire of behavior, associational ties, and valuations" (Fantasia 1988:14). And, "As an inherently valued happening, humans attach symbols to such experience, the symbols so attached meriting distinction from merely routine symbol use" (Lofland 1985:228). Consciousness rises during episodes of collective action.[12] Everyday experience with radical forms of action changed the activists' attitudes toward politics. For the activists, the reality of everyday life – the "reality par excellence," in which "the tension of consciousness is highest" (Berger and Luckmann 1966:21) – created the conditions for a gradual acceptance of violence as a political means.

The appearance of *countermovements* strengthened the activists' motivations for engaging in political violence, especially when the interactions of movement and countermovement involved physical fights. Through the daily experience of physical confrontations, activists gradually acquired martial "skills" and created structures for the use of violence. In addition, the daily fights transformed the activists' attitudes toward politics, producing, as we have noted, a kind of battle spirit toward politics – much like that which emerged in the street violence between young communists and Nazi storm troopers in the early thirties in Berlin where, Peter Merkl observes, "According to accounts on both sides, the

street fighters were motivated far more by the escalating physical confrontations than by ideological beliefs . . . the reality of the clashes had a great deal more to do with aroused emotions, brawny fists, and weapons than with . . . ideological concepts'' (1986:43).

State repression further radicalized political conflicts, through what – in terms of the sociology of deviance – could be defined as the role of deviance-control institutions in the selection of those who will become deviant and in helping the creation of a ''deviant'' personality. In the late sixties and early seventies, state institutions often reacted to protest in what was perceived as an over-repressive way. In a sense, they not only prosecuted illegal political behavior, but ''criminalized'' protest. Although they were intended to isolate the radical Left, the repressive measures these governments took often produced the opposite effect: they delegitimized the state by creating ''injustice frames'' (Gamson et al. 1982) – that is, the belief that the state had committed the most serious violation of the rules of the game. Perceptions of an ''absolute injustice,'' however, varied with the degree to which violent behavior was tolerated in the different countries and periods. In post–World War II Germany, a country with a very low tolerance for political violence, the death of the protestor Benno Ohnesorg and the attempt on the life of the student movement leader Rudi Dutschke were sufficient to create the feeling that ''they were firing at us.'' For the Italian militants, it took a massacre – the neofascist bombing in Piazza Fontana – to sense a turning point, proof that the state, which was alleged to have taken part in the terrorist plot, had violated its own democratic rules.

These last two observations indicate a significant cross-national difference. In both countries, although the militants engaged in long debates on the different ''right'' forms of violence, the empirical boundaries between ''right'' and ''wrong'' violence, ''defensive'' and ''offensive'' violence, ''mass'' and ''elite'' violence remained quite vague. In Germany, both the policies of the Brandt government and strong cultural taboos against violence defused the social and political tensions, whereas in Italy, the activists' daily fights with police and right-wing radicals intensified the violence and produced more justifications for the use of violence – in the words of one militant, ''Everyday you talked about the use of physical force and everyday you practiced it'' (Life history no. 8: 35). Further, in Italy, where the confrontations between the social movements and their adversaries persisted for more than ten years, the escalation of violence assumed dramatic dimensions, especially in a second generation of activists socialized to politics in the violent first half of the seventies and committed to the underground in the second half.[13] As a result, the violent groups were much more deeply rooted and much larger in Italy than in Germany. Moreover, in Italy the escalation took place ''in the streets,'' whereas in Germany it was more ''behind the scenes'' – a consequence of the isolation of the radical groups, of what Friedhelm Neidhardt (1982a:340) called a ''double marginalization.''

In comparing the evolution of radical collective identities among Italian and

German activists, we find moreover that everyday experiences had a greater impact on the former, whereas the latter were more distant from the "shared reality" in the Old and New Left. Because the Italian activists faced a growing risk of direct participation in violent encounters, their radicalization was effected primarily by everyday experiences. For the German activists, however, radicalization was a kind of "intellectual" experience, influenced more by radical frames than by radical praxis.

In this chapter, I have continued to trace the evolution of political violence by adding to the preceding analyses of macro- and meso-processes an examination of relevant micro-processes and of the interactions among the three levels; for, clearly, activists influenced both the environment in which they operated and their organizations. In the next chapter, we shall analyze which dynamics brought a few of the radical activists – Mahler and Marco among them – to choose to escalate their attitudes and behavior up to the point of joining the "armed struggle," and what were the consequences of this choice on their lives.

7

Individual commitment in the underground

The micro-processes that shaped the patterns of radicalization among Italian and German activists determined as well the behavior and choices of those who – like Horst Mahler and Marco – eventually pursued the most radical course of action: going underground and adopting terrorist tactics. In analyzing the effect of organizational choices on the escalation of violence in the underground (in Chapter 5), I described the mechanisms by which social movement organizations gave way to criminal sects. In this chapter, I examine the process of goal displacement as it operates, not on the organizational level, but on the micro- or individual level, and address such questions as, How did people whose first experience of violence involved setting cars on fire "graduate" to accepting murder as a legitimate form of political action? How did the militants justify the escalation of violent means? When underground organizations abandon their original aims and transform themselves into military machines, why don't the members quit?

I have already emphasized that membership in the political counterculture was in no way typical only of those who later joined the underground. On the contrary, radical groups constituted only a small minority among the mass movements: a few thousand people in Italy, a few hundred in Germany. What particular characteristics, then, typified those militants who ultimately chose the underground? A sociological analysis cannot, of course, offer a complete explanation for individual choices, which depend to a great extent on the consciousness of each individual. It can, however, provide an important part of the explanation. In pursuing this explanation, I focus here on the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966) taking place in the underground. Here as in the previous chapter, my approach is based on the assumption that we cannot understand a phenomenon such as political violence unless we take into account the interactions between structural conditions and symbolic meaning, "objective" and "subjective" realities, public activities and private life.

We have already noted that the conditions – both material and symbolic – that foster underground organizations are produced by a variety of processes.

The primary determinants of the militants' perceptions and behavior, however, derived from the very nature of terrorist groups; as other researchers have observed, for underground groups as for religious sects, "the 'whys' or 'reasons' for joining arise out of the recruitment itself" (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980:799). The militants' experience inside the terrorist organizations, then, was what shaped their attitudes. "Terrorist" motivations were largely a product of what Crenshaw (1992) calls the "psychology of small, radical, illegal groups."

In the four sections of this chapter I first describe some of the factors that precipitate an individual's decision to join an underground organization; I then illustrate the components of what I call the "freedom-fighter identity"; third, I explain the persistence of commitment on the basis of affective and cognitive dynamics; and finally, I review and summarize the processes through which the militants of the underground organizations became progressively isolated and alienated from "normal" standards of good and evil.

RECRUITMENT IN THE UNDERGROUND

How and why do people join underground organizations? The biographies of the militants point at some facilitating as well as precipitating factors. In particular, previous experiences with violence and the participation in social networks "near" to underground organizations increased the individual's chances to join a terrorist group. Moreover, some events, either private or public, increased the militant's perception of an emergency, functioning thus as precipitating factors.

Facilitating factors

One essential fact about the activists of the left-wing underground organizations in Italy and Germany is that they all had political motivations. In both countries, activists who ultimately joined the armed struggle had already been involved, often for many years, in the legal organizations of the radical Left. My research on Italian activists has shown that 38 percent had been involved in the New Left – especially in two radical groups, PO and LC – and as many as 84 percent in the small groups of the *Autonomia* (della Porta 1988c:161–2; see also della Porta 1987b, 1988a). In Germany, too, most of the terrorists had been part of the New Left. The founders of the RAF and of the B2J had previous experience in the student movement; and many from the second generation had been active in groups close to the *Spontis*, such as those active in the squatters' movement or in the support of "political" prisoners (e.g., Red Help); in the semi-anarchist Hash Rebels and Black Help; or in the radical therapeutic group known as Sozialistisches Patientenkollektiv in Heidelberg.[1] As the German criminologist Wilfried Rasch (1979:81) observed, "At the outset of these careers stood a

serious social engagement that did not confine itself to verbal propagation of revolutionary goals but was realized in practical social work."

In keeping with the difference between the Italians' and Germans' tolerance for violence (noted in Chapter 6), the use of violent repertoires by *legal* organizations was much more frequent in Italy than in Germany. In Italy, in fact, all those who joined underground organizations had had previous experience with violence, often in paramilitary groups – such as the already mentioned *servizi d'ordine* of PO and LC, or the semiclandestine structures of the autonomous collectives. Many of the underground militants of the "second generation" had been investigated for participation in the "proletarian expropriations" and "armed marches" even before entering a terrorist organization (della Porta 1990:161).

In Germany, where political violence was not only less extensive but involved a much smaller number of people, the recruitment potential available for the terrorist organizations was indeed much smaller. Even in Germany, however, it was quite common for future militants of the underground groups to have participated in illegal, sometimes violent, events. According to Schmidtchen's data (1981:47), 32 percent of German future terrorists (as against 4 percent of the comparable age cohorts in the population) had taken part in nonauthorized marches; 17 percent in squattings (as against 1 percent); and 63 percent in confrontations with police (as against 8 percent). Referring to the RAF militants, Ulrike Meinhof observed, "All of us come from there: from the street battles of Berlin students in 1967–68 against the police, from the sit-ins, and from the attempt . . . to make socialist politics at the limit of legality" (in Neidhardt 1982a:339). In addition, such experiences as acting as marshals in demonstrations accustomed German militants to violence. Joachim Klein, for instance, recalled that he was always one of those who "protected the end of the cortege as far as we could, or [one of those who] freed the comrades. How many times had I freed comrades fighting with the policemen and how many times was I criticized because of my militant combativeness" (Klein 1980:163).

In both Italy and Germany, the militants' previous involvement in violent political activities provided them with the martial skills they needed to organize the armed struggle and so made their passage to the underground relatively untraumatic, even, in some cases, imperceptible. Another effect of this familiarity with violence was prosecution by the judges and the police, which, as we will see, itself became a precipitating cause for recruitment in terrorist organizations.

We can add that the decision to join an underground organization was very rarely an individual one. For most of the militants, it involved cliques of friends. Like recruitment in religious sects,[2] recruitment in political sects is facilitated by friendship ties. My research has shown that, for the Italian militants, in at least 843 cases out of 1,214, the people who decided to join an underground group had at least one friend who was already a member; moreover, in 74

percent of these cases the new recruit had more than one friend, and in 42 percent more than 7 (della Porta 1988c:158).

Devotion to friends was a powerful motivating force among the German militants as well. There is widespread agreement among researchers that "most terrorists . . . ultimately became members of [German] terrorist organizations through personal connections with people or relatives associated with appropriate political initiatives, communes, self-supporting organizations, or committees – the number of couples, and brothers and sisters was astonishingly high" (Wasmund 1986:204). Similarly, Neidhardt (1982a:341) described those who joined the RAF as "bound to each other to form a network, by means of personal acquaintances, of shared participation in communes, also of love stories, and in some cases even of a shared social work."

The main difference between the situation of radicals in Italy and that of German militants was that the Italian radicals had the benefit of a more supportive environment. "Block" recruitment – in which several members of the same small political group would all decide to join a terrorist organization, together, sometimes after a general meeting and a vote – was more common in Italy than in Germany. In both countries, however, the probability of becoming involved in the underground was higher for the activists in the small groups that were "in contact" with terrorist organizations. Strong ties within peer groups composed of comrade-friends encouraged the kind of fidelity expressed in the following statement: "There are many things I cannot explain by analyzing the political situation, or the social conditions in a city. . . . as far as I am concerned it was up to emotional feelings, of passions for the people I shared my life with" (Life history no. 21:28). The very fact that the choice was a collective one made it less perceivable and therefore less traumatic. As one militant observed: "A choice [made] in cold blood, such as 'now I will become a terrorist,' [did] not exist. It was *a step-by-step evolution, which passed through a kind of human relation* that I had with Guido, and with the people I worked with" (Life history no. 17:31; emphasis added).

Precipitating factors

In numerous cases, solidarity with one particular *"important" friend who had been arrested or had to go underground* pushed the individual to enter a terrorist group. Bommi Baumann's explanation is typical of this recruitment path: "I had joined the group because of Georg. I knew that he had decided to do certain things and I did not want to abandon him" (Baumann 1976:185). The decision to go underground often followed the arrest of a former member of one's own commune.[3] In addition, many of the German militants of the second generation became involved in the underground groups to express solidarity with friends – often comrades of the same commune – imprisoned during the first wave of arrests (Jäger 1981).

In a similar way, many of the Italian militants described the arrest of a friend as the impetus that gave them "the emotional energy . . . to carry out the first actions for the [underground] organization" (Life history no. 17:15). The decision to join an underground organization was the effect of a "growing responsibility for friends" and a search for a shared, "equal punishment," motives exemplified in the account of an Italian militant:

> [There was] a deep change and distortion in my life because, by *devoting all of myself to this kind of involvement [that was] spiritually related . . . to my friend who had to go underground*, to this idea of our feverish lives . . . I had these images of the necessity, the rightness, the beauty of that kind of sacrifice. (Life history no. 18:58–9; emphasis added)

Sometimes the precipitating factor was less personal loyalty than something more remote or abstract, such as the *death of militants in prisons.* These deaths in fact had a high symbolic value especially for many of the activists who had worked in the radical groups that focused on the problems of political prisoners. Thus, in addition to the impetus provided by personal acquaintances, the death of the RAF militant Holger Meins during a hunger strike led to a new wave of recruitment in the underground. For example, Volker Speitel, one of the militants who worked in political groups that supported the RAF militants in prison, described how the death of Meins pushed him to the final step of joining the underground:

> I was for the first time personally struck by the situation of the prisoners. I really saw tortured and tormented prisoners, in their totally isolated cells, where [the state] wanted to destroy them slowly by means of scientific methods. . . . Then the day came when Holger Meins died. . . . For us this death was a key experience. . . . *The death of Holger Meins and the decision to take arms were one and the same thing. Reflection was not possible anymore.* It was solely the emotional pressure of the last few months that pushed us to react. (Speitel 1980a:41; emphasis added)

Meins became a martyr even for those among the radical Left who had strongly criticized the RAF, such as the future RZ leader Klein. In his autobiography Klein wrote, "With [Meins'] death my sense of powerlessness in front of the state grew so much that I felt overwhelmed. . . . If all I needed for not only propagating the armed struggle, but also for taking it up myself was the right kick, then Holger Meins was this kick. . . . I had had enough of legal politics and I was ready to fight" (Klein 1980:256). The deaths in prison of the RAF leaders Ulrike Meinhof, in 1976, and Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe, in 1977, had a similar effect on the following "generations" of German militants.

The militants' decisions to go underground were also often determined by their perception of being involved in a *personal emergency.* Many militants, that is, felt that they were personally at risk, in danger of being arrested and prosecuted because of their participation in radical political activities. In Germany, those who went underground were often those who had already been charged

with crimes of political violence – such as Baader and Ensslin, who had received prison sentences for setting fire to a Frankfurt department store; Horst Mahler, whose professional career – as we saw – was ruined after he was sentenced to pay 250,000 marks for damages that had been caused during a violent demonstration he took part in, and who was also charged in the liberation of Baader (Krebs 1988); and Ulrike Meinhof, who went underground after the police linked her too to Baader's liberation (Krebs 1988). Some among the former SPK members who later joined the RAF shared the experience of Klaus Jünschke: he escaped out a window during a police control at the headquarters of the group, and a few weeks later joined the terrorist group.

The belief that they were in danger of being arrested similarly impelled many Italian militants to go underground. As one Italian woman said: "I could not stay at home and be quiet while waiting for them [the police] to come and take me" (Life history no. 15:29). One of the larger waves of recruitment in the terrorist groups followed the increasing repression of the autonomous collectives, after the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro (della Porta 1992a).

"FREEDOM FIGHTERS": IDENTITIES IN THE UNDERGROUND

Once militants became involved in underground organizations, what factors or forces secured their commitment? How could the criminal sects we described in Chapter 5 continue to enjoy not only the obedience but also the loyalty and dedication of their members? Journalistic literature has often overemphasized the degree to which the threat of physical punishment, as retaliation, deterred people from leaving terrorist organizations. In both Italy and Germany, for many years militants were not at risk when they quit their organizations, provided they did not collaborate with the police, "steal" arms or money, or try to persuade others to desert. But by the second half of the seventies in Germany and the beginning of the eighties in Italy, militants did feel they risked retaliation if they quit. When some among their members collaborated with the police, the terrorist organizations reacted by punishing the "traitors" or suspected traitors (Caselli and della Porta 1984:209). According to some interviewees, especially for those who were in prisons in the late seventies and early eighties, the threat of punishment delayed their decision to leave the terrorist organizations.

Persistence of participation in the underground groups, however, can be attributed less to the fear of negative sanctions than to the attraction of positive "incentives" (della Porta 1988b), that is, the construction of commitment. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1968, 1972) has defined commitment as a process through which individual interests become attached to a socially organized pattern of behavior. For terrorist organizations, this happened through the creation of a value system in which every member became a "freedom fighter."

The "freedom fighter" identity depends primarily on shared values and im-

ages of the external world. Jäger and Böllinger (1981) rightly state that to understand the dynamics of terrorism more clearly, we must consider terrorist groups as subcultures with a distinctive value system. The militants of the underground behave just as "normal" people do but within an alternative value system:

> In terrorist groups we see not only the breakdown of normality but also the development of a counterculture, of an alternative system of norms and aims that establishes the frontiers, reduces the constraints, imposes compliance, and – in a situation of complete isolation from the external world – replaces the normal standard of right and wrong, good and evil with a different or alternative value orientation. (Jäger 1981:157)

To develop a new value system the terrorist group relied primarily on ideology, which, according to Klaus Wasmund,

> has a twofold function, namely, to give outward expression to the group's legitimacy and to act as a means of . . . rationalization within the group itself. . . . Through group ideology, a purely criminal act is reinterpreted as a "political act," or rather it is only in the group that it gains a political dimension. An ideology conveys to the terrorist the conviction that a meaning lies behind his action. (1986:218–19)

In addition, values and ideology interact to produce images of external reality that justify the "necessity," the "correctness," and the "beauty" of the armed struggle.

In the preceding chapter, I noted how the activists relied on certain rhetorical means – particular images and conceptual frames – to diffuse and reinforce their ideologies. Within the terrorist counterculture, too, rhetoric was a powerful instrument for reinforcing the ideologies that enabled the terrorists to see the armed struggle as wholly justified and legitimate. In examining the interactions among the values, ideologies, and images of reality that prevailed in the underground (i.e., the way in which the militants internalized ideology), I found three dominant images: the militant as a heroic "example," the enemy as a "nonhuman being," and the situation as a "war."

A heroic elite

Although not all the former militants described relations within the terrorist organizations as positive – life underground was especially stressful, and its extremely hierarchical structure provoked strong personal conflicts – their accounts reveal that these organizations definitely developed a "sense of the group" and that the "group" gradually came to include the entire "community" of "freedom fighters." As one RAF member put it, "Anybody who fights is one of us" (in Böllinger 1981:202). The militants came to identify with all members of all underground groups. "The group," a German criminologist explains, "offers this type of identification-object in the form of comrades and leading personalities" (Böllinger 1981:223).

Ideology offered images of the "self" that, internalized by the militants, complemented the idea of "depersonalizing the enemy" with the image of the "freedom fighter" as a "cold executioner" who must fullfil his duty. Italian and German militants alike described how this "bureaucratic" perception of their role eliminated moral scruples in their everyday life. A German interviewee explained, "Most of the fear you feel disappears in the phase of the planning and repetition of the exercise until perfection. . . . *Then you become nothing more than a working gear*" (in Böllinger 1981:189–90; emphasis added).

The militants further justified their activities by invoking quasi-existentialist explanations that emphasized the "extraordinary" role of a small minority. Like other political sects, the underground groups idealized the value of living outside normal standards, the idea of courage as a duty of the true believer, and the idea of sacrifice as shared suffering (Kanter 1968, 1972).

The more isolated the militants felt from the external world, the more firmly they came to see themselves as a few embattled heroes. In Germany, the militants' self-defined image of their role as "freedom fighters" in the metropolis was soon superseded by another kind of symbol: "Eventually," Neidhardt observed of the RAF, "the group perceived itself less as a real instrument of liberation than as an example of self-liberation. It presented itself as a beacon of light" (1982a:357). Consequently, the group emphasized "activism." Ulrike Meinhof, for instance, talked of the "supremacy of the praxis": "The Rote Armee Fraktion states the supremacy of the praxis. The question if it is right to organize the armed resistance now depends on the fact if it is possible, and the question if it is possible is only a practical question" (in Neidhardt 1982a:355).

In Italy, too, as the terrorist groups became increasingly isolated at the end of the seventies, they found a rationale for underground militance in the need to "keep the revolutionary movement alive" by "opposing pacification." One interviewee clearly described the "underground" state of mind at that time:

> From 1980 on, the only aim [was] to resist. . . . There [was] no longer the idea of an advancing revolution: "Let's go on, we are many, we are beautiful." We [were] not beautiful, we [were] not many; we [were] only poor chaps who met and said "OK, let's try to do something while we wait, let's try to create again a revolutionary situation." . . . If we want to synthesize that in a slogan, it was to resist at any price, without allowing [the system] to reabsorb the movement and to impose social peace. (Life history no. 6:50)

Thus the Italian militants also glorified the idea of an adventurous and active life. The dangers involved in participating in a terrorist organization were considered "the expression of a dynamic and interesting life," a contrast to the dullness of normal life. According to one militant, this "diversity" was the foundation for group identity: "the group was made homogeneous by this peculiar attitude; it found in this diversity its identity and its sublimation. These attitudes were therefore exalted and became its raison d'être" (Life history no. 6:46).

The elitism common to the self-definition of German and Italian militants accomplished an important function: it made isolation appear to be a positive, self-imposed quality. An organization's lack of support became a sign of superiority rather than an indication of its mistakes and defeat. Members cultivated their differences from others as proof that they were among the few "elect."[4] As a German interviewee explained, one's comrades became the only ones who possess the "truth": "My involvement came not only from my head but also from my belly. It was wonderful to belong to [a group of people] who had a complete understanding of the world and who had really started to work hard, instead of sitting and complaining" (in Böllinger 1981:189); it was exhilarating to be one of "these extremely intelligent comrades with an iron will" (Böllinger 1981:202).

Depersonalization of the victims

The militants justified their use of political violence by depersonalizing their victims, defined in the documents of the underground groups as "tools of the system" and – later – as "pigs" or "watch dogs." Ulrike Meinhof, for example, wrote: "We say that policemen are pigs, that guy in uniform is a pig; he is not a human being. *And we behave toward him accordingly*" (in Jünschke 1988: 164; emphasis added). The most frequently quoted German terrorist slogans were those that emphasized the "fight of the human beings against the pigs in order to free humankind" and proclaimed that "humanity toward the enemy of humankind is inhuman" (in Jäger 1981:162). The militants internalized such ideological statements, reaching a point where they could say, for example:

> What I liked in that activity was the fact that it was possible, in some moments, to overcome the inhibitory restraints. . . . Even today, I do not feel any general scruple concerning a murder, because *I cannot see some creatures – such as, for instance, Richard Nixon – as human beings.* (German militant, in Böllinger 1981:203; emphasis added)

Because the Italian terrorists had a much larger reservoir for recruitment than did their German counterparts, and thus tried harder to find legitimation among the radical Left, their language remained for a long time much more "political" than that of the Germans. In other words, they tried to explain the necessity of the armed struggle by using symbols and by drawing on meanings that they shared with the mass radical movement. At the same time, however, Italian militants also relied to a great extent on "depersonalizing" the victim to justify their actions. Although they did not resort to terms such as "pig" until the eighties, when the underground groups were growing increasingly isolated, from the very beginning of Italian terrorism the militants defined the victims of their attacks as "wheels of the capitalist machine." The following passage from a biography clearly illustrates how the definition of the victims as "small wheels of a machine" enabled the militants to dismiss the idea that they had killed

other human beings. Recounting her own participation in a murder, a militant said:

> We lived the problem of death inside a grand ideology. . . . I am one of those who killed the policeman Lo Russo in Turin. . . . Well, I lived that murder inside this logic of the "role," because he was a warden, and he was well known as a "torturer," as we used to say, so I had all the justifications of the ideology. . . . For me it was a routine job. And this is the very aberration of the ideology: on one side, there are your friends, and on the other, there are your enemies, and *the enemies are a category, they are functions, they are symbols. They are not human beings.* And so they have to be dealt with as absolute enemies; therefore you have a relation of absolute abstraction with death. (Life history no. 26:62–3; emphasis added)

An Italian interviewee, explaining the process of selecting a target, provides a more detailed description of this process of depersonalization of the victim:

> You make a political analysis, but then you need a victim. If you want to hit the Christian Democracy in a neighborhood, you need a target . . . therefore, you start to look for this victim . . . you read the newspapers, you infiltrate their meetings, and you try to find out. Then you have singled out your victim: he is physically there; he is the one to be blamed for everything. In that moment there is already the logic of a trial in which you have already decided that he is guilty; you have only to decide on his punishment. So you have *a very "emphatic" sense of justice*; you punish him not only for what he has done but also for all the rest. Then you don't care anymore which responsibilities that person has; you ascribe everything to him . . . he is only a small part of the machine that is going to destroy all of us. (Life history no. 27:45; emphasis added)

Their victims thus dehumanized, the militants could deny having committed any injustice. As the criminologist Klaus Wasmund has observed, "By declaring your enemies 'nonpeople,' and by denying their human qualities, you block moral scruples right from the beginning" (1986:215). Dehumanizing the enemy is a way to deny any responsibility for the brutality inflicted on one's victims (Crenshaw 1988b).

The war analogy

The "war analogy" was another device that allowed the militants to overcome the anguish arising from their social and political isolation. In fact, as underground groups grew more and more isolated, they shifted their rationale for the armed struggle from the "instrumental" role of violence in a revolutionary process to the "symbolic" value of violence as an expression of conflict. Italian and German militants, however, viewed this rationale in different ways. In Italy, where, as I have often noted, the underground groups had a larger reservoir for support, the militants initially justified the armed struggle as part of the tradition of the working-class movement, supporting their argument with frequent references to the "fathers of socialist thought": in the words of one militant,

We were supported . . . also by famous quotes from Marxist literature, in which violence appeared as absolutely legitimate, as part of the history of the working class. Once it [has been] decided that the historical conditions allow for that kind of organization, the rest is only a technical consequence. (Life history no. 12:21)

Moreover, throughout the seventies, the Italian underground groups cultivated an overly optimistic view of the success of the armed struggle. The documents of the groups were full of such statements as "the worse, the better," "the near victory of the working class," "the coming revolution." This internalized optimism emerges even in the militants' present-day recollections, which include several statements affirming "mass" support for the armed struggle: "hundreds of people supported us"; "we were deeply rooted at Fiat and Pirelli"; "we were in contact with the working class"; "there was a very widespread legitimation for our actions"; "our hypothesis was going to be accepted at a mass level." For a long time the militants had few doubts about the victory of their organization, of the working class, of the revolution. Indeed, they denied defeats, describing them simply as indicators of the need to "shift to a new phase of the struggle."

The German militants paid less attention to developing a justification through traditional Marxist theory than did their Italian counterparts. For the German underground it was not the "corrupt working class of the metropolis" but the marginal *Lumpenproletariat* and the people's liberation movements of the Third World that represented the "revolutionary subject." They defined urban guerrilla warfare as "a method of revolutionary intervention for extremely weak revolutionary forces" (in Neidhardt 1982a:355). But whatever their ideological differences with the Italian terrorists, the German militants resembled the Italians in at least one way: they too refused to acknowledge defeats. As Neidhardt observed, the RAF's emphasis on the Third World in the anti-imperialist fight allowed for a "pretense of success." According to the RAF, in fact, revolution could take place only in the Third World, and the Left in the metropolis had the role of building the "international brigades for the victory of the people's war in Quan Tri and Hue, Palestine, Lebanon, Angola, Mozambique, Turkey" (in Neidhardt 1982a:357).

As time went on, and the militants saw increasing evidence of their isolation in pursuing their political project, they found it more and more difficult to use images of "political" victories as a rationale for the armed struggle. Thus they stressed the image of a "war" between the underground groups and the state. This change took place much earlier in Germany than in Italy, but both German and Italian militants have described how they came to perceive reality in military terms, adopting a military jargon to define the external world. Among the German militants, the use of military terms became internalized and widespread: "They talked about cadres, units, and commandos *in a military terminology that suggested . . . that something like that really existed*" (Speitel 1980a:41; emphasis added). As Mahler recalled, especially those who went underground de-

fined their world through a military frame: "In clandestinity, one lives in a completely changed world. . . . *You see the world only inside a military model*, as a free zone, or as a dangerous area. You do not see human beings so often any more" (in Horn 1982:149; emphasis added).

The war analogy allowed the militants to define success and defeat strictly in military terms. For the founders of the RAF and the militants of the RZ, training periods in the Middle East strengthened the sense of their exemption from normal standards. One German militant recalled,

> In Jordan, the feeling that you do not have to be afraid became stronger. When you are afraid of breaking the law, then you are in a weak position. The dominant feeling was instead that [what we did] was something for a military command, a *military action*. Therefore, there was the certitude that the law was on our side. (in Jäger 1981:164; emphasis added)[5]

The militants' daily involvement with guns substantiated the war analogy. Both Italian and German militants had "very special relationships with guns." Guns held a particular glamour: "the gun . . . gives you more strength," one militant explained (Life history no. 27:33); "arms have a charm . . . that makes you feel more macho," said another (Life history no. 16:79). As Baumann, for example, explained, "arms always play an important role. You are there to clean them or to charge them. You spend really a lot of time with this thing. You practice. Or you read books on guns. The *Waffenjournal* was the most beloved reading"; you can feel "very secure of yourself because you keep a gun in your hands . . . [they give you] a crazy self-confidence" (Baumann 1976:165).

The military framework allowed the militants to evaluate the effectiveness of the armed struggle on the basis of its military achievements. Satisfaction came solely from military success. An Italian militant, for instance, remembered that during a bombing, "the very fact of seeing that thing burning and falling down, that made me happy" (Life history no. 2:28). Another militant acknowledged, "We had this tendency to find our gratification only at the military level" (Life history no. 5:57).

By equating their situation with war, the militants hoped moreover to eliminate inhibitions and guilt about their physical attacks on individuals. Grounding their entire ideological system on an absolute opposition of "friend" and "enemy" (Manconi 1988), of total good and total evil, the militants were able to justify their most radical actions. The war analogy, in other words, subverted and suspended normal values and behavior.[6] Moreover, the militaristic frame enforced a value system in which, as in that of an army (Crenshaw 1992), desertion – as a form of betrayal – was considered as a most serious violation of group norms.

As a result of this perceived reality, the social and political dimensions of the activists' motivations gradually dissipated, and the military metaphor became a

self-sustaining reality in the militants' continuous clashes with the state apparatuses.

GROUP DYNAMICS IN THE UNDERGROUND

The images the militants relied on to justify and reinforce their commitment to violence – and their perception of themselves as freedom fighters – depended on their group's definition of its relation to the external world. This definition in turn depended on the relations among the members of the group itself. Looking at these relations, we see two types of group dynamics at work: affective and cognitive.

Affective dynamics

In the terrorist organizations, as in the legal left-wing groups described in Chapter 6, affective ties were vital in preserving loyalty to the group. As we have seen, recruitment to underground organizations usually involved groups of friends; the life inside the underground organizations maintained and even strengthened solidarity ties among small groups of militants, primarily in the first stages of individual involvement and when a clandestine group first took shape. Like the members of legal left-wing groups, the terrorists characterized their relations with comrades in the same organization as, in the words of several Italian militants, "absolute human relations," "relations free from any material interest"; the comrades maintained an "affective generosity" and "solidarity even in the small things." They too recalled the time spent with comrades as a very happy one; former militants spoke of "parties that followed some actions," a "large component of conviviality," a "merry brotherhood," and so on. A German militant defined the RAF as a "family" that had anticipated the "right forms of life for the future," pushed for "nonrepressive and open relations," and fought against "the imperialism that is inside ourselves" (in Böllinger 1981: 202). Another used words such as "warmth," "care," and "love" to describe her relationships with some RAF members (Proll 1978).

For various reasons, affective ties were even more important in the underground than in legal organizations. The exposure of friends to danger was a first factor that strengthened the affective ties in the underground groups. Among the Italian interviewees, maintaining solidarity with friends who had been arrested was an important reason for remaining in a terrorist organization. Many of their life histories contain statements such as "the fact that [X] was in prison was an important element for continuing, because he was a friend of ours" (Life history no. 26:68). As one militant explained:

This kind of involvement with my friends means that, at the end of the game, either we are all outside or we are all inside [prison], because if some of us are out and some of us are in, I don't give up my friends. . . . This means that if my friends had drowned because of a belief that I shared with them, I would decide to drown; . . . *if they are there and I can't help them, I prefer to be with them.* (Life history no. 18:58–9; emphasis added)

Former German militants also explained the persistence of commitment in terms of "human solidarity" (Boock 1981:113), and "loyalty toward people one knew from before and would not want to be defined by as a pig" (Speitel 1980c:34). Loyalty to the group, thus, preserved commitment:

The identity or identification with the group is like an alarm clock that always rings an "I keep going" in this choice you always make when, with a residual spark of self-preservation, you ask yourself "Why?" . . . You cannot cut the thick bonds the group has covered you with in the course of time. *One's whole existence was first of all in the group . . . the entire existence of all of us was first of all the group.* (Speitel 1980c:34; emphasis added)

The comrades who had died during terrorist actions became "heroes," and reference to these shared heroes strengthened the militants' loyalty. The death of a fellow member produced strong emotional reactions and the desire for "revenge," evident, for example, in this statement of an Italian rank-and-file militant: "The deaths of Matteo and Barbara [two very young militants shot dead by the police] had such a strong emotional impact. . . . [We then entered] *a spiral of revenge and retaliation,* because when you are in that game, you have to play it" (Life history no. 17:35; emphasis added).

Finally, underground groups were also held together by the members' strong sense of responsibility for one another, to which (as we have seen) their memoirs repeatedly attest. The militants who were not in prison felt responsible for the destiny of their imprisoned comrades, whether they knew each other or not. Any desire to quit the terrorist organization was considered a "betrayal of those who were in prison." At the same time, the militants in prison felt a "sense of becoming responsible" for those who, outside, risked their lives to free them. The following two passages describe this reciprocal emotional blackmail. The first, from the account of a PL leader, describes the feelings of those outside. Even in the early eighties, he said, when the defeat of the organization was more than evident,

we continued to fight above all for our comrades who were in prison. . . . *Choices [that could lead to] death, [to] individual death, were based on this very thing: solidarity with those who were in prison.* Because for all these people, it would have been much better if they had escaped abroad or surrendered. And instead they made this unbelievable choice. It is not by chance that the whole story came to an end in October 1982 in Florence [in the Florence prison] when we all met [for a trial], and so all together could decide that it was over, that we would quit. We did not have the problem of reciprocal blackmail anymore, of a solidarity that . . . had become reciprocal blackmail between

those who were inside and those who were outside. (Life history no. 26:69; emphasis added)

Meantime, those who were in prison had very similar feelings for their comrades outside:

It was a situation in which we were all for declaring the dissolution of the organization, the end of the experience of the armed struggle. But at that point the comrades outside wrote a very radical document in favor of "continuing" the struggle, and rejecting their demands seemed to us immoral. So, all that happened many years later. (Life history no. 29:48)

The relationships between "those outside" and "those inside" are epitomized by an imprisoned German militant who, in 1972, wrote to his wife: "Now I understand things very clearly. We are inside for you, you are outside for us. . . . The struggle goes on. You fight outside, we fight inside" (Document H).

Cognitive dynamics

Affective dynamics interacted with the cognitive dynamics deriving from the *very nature of clandestinity.* These cognitive dynamics were responsible for the dramatic changes in the militants' perception of the external world. The terrorist groups were essentially "ideological groups," whose distinctive feature is the *members' total commitment to a cause to which they must subordinate all personal ties.* The "handbooks for urban guerrillas" produced by most of the groups went well beyond the "logistic" needs of clandestinity. Their main effect was to ensure the organization's control of its members through domination of the most private aspects of their lives. Like the millennial movements studied by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1968; 1972),[7] the terrorist organizations demanded of their members the renunciation of all the external ties that could endanger the group; the sharing of all possessions, each member becoming nothing else than a small part of the whole; and the mortification of private needs and the abnegation of the self for the organizational needs.

Once having joined an underground group, the activists would be required to participate at *increasingly demanding levels of activity,* whether in terms of the risk or the time involved. They usually began their careers in the underground by distributing leaflets or renting an apartment for the group. The longer they remained underground, the more likely they were to end up participating in robberies and assassinations. In their biographies, several militants testify to the accelerating effect that a warrant of arrest had on their promotion in the internal hierarchy of the underground: from rank-and-file members they rapidly advanced to national leaders. Moreover, many recall the time they spent in the underground as a period of frenetic activism, which was even more involving than the activism in the movement organizations we have already mentioned in Chapter 6: they organized attacks, wrote documents, looked for refuge, and

worked out plans to free their comrades. The result of this "24-hours-a-day" commitment to the organization was, as one Italian militant put it, the lack of any time for "thinking," for critically reflecting on the sense of the crimes the terrorist organizations had carried out. The biographies of the Italian and German militants demonstrate that this process of material and emotional involvement culminated in the militants' almost complete identification with a "community of the armed struggle."

The *militants' isolation from external channels of information* was a main factor that strengthened their total commitment to the underground. It is well known that the kind of clique to which individuals belong determines to a large extent the political message they receive and the ideological appeals they translate into concrete action. Earlier research has established that the media alone are not an effective conduit for political information; such information acquires meaning and relevance only when it is channeled through social networks (Smith, Lasswell, and Casey 1946; McPhail 1971; McPhail and Miller 1973). The more total the activists' involvement in a political network, the more insulated they were from information that could threaten their political beliefs.

In both the Italian and the German underground, a militant's unreal image of the external world depended on the sources of information he decided to admit or restrict. Because clandestinity drastically reduced external contacts, "the majority of the group was closed toward some topics. They could not get information" (Boock 1981:114). The result was isolation. "Today," said former RAF member Astrid Proll (1978), "I would say that the politics of clandestinity and the prison have something in common: isolation. This kind of politics brings an almost total insulation from the people that you would like to reach from the political point of view." And one interviewee recalled, the large "sum of small lies" circulated inside the underground organization was the only information the militants "processed":

> It was a sum of small lies. In fact, each of us . . . tried to give credence to the image of an underground organization that was deeply rooted in society, which enjoyed more popularity, more support, more consensus [than it actually had]. This did not happen through big lies but through the small lies we told each other . . . [for example]: "but do you know that . . . the concierge understood that I am a member of the Red Brigades and not only does she not denounce me but, if she sees a policeman, she manages to warn me? Do you know that the people of that café understood who I am and, when I go there, the barman offers me a drink? Do you know that in that factory, when we wounded that foreman, they opened a bottle and drank a toast?" (Life history no. 11:38)

The maintenance of the freedom-fighter identity implied cognitive processes that selectively focused the attention on those events that were congruent with one's belief system, rejected the incongruent information, and reinterpreted ambivalent data as confirmation of the "success" of the armed struggle.[8]

The terrorists' isolation from external norms and information naturally intensified their loyalty to the group and thus – apart from the negative physical

incentives – increased the psychic obstacles they faced in quitting the underground. Even when the deep crisis of the organization increased the perceived costs of participation, "the idea of quitting the organization produced feelings of guilt because," an Italian militant observed, "after having already paid such a price, to quit meant to admit that all that we had done had been useless" (Life history no. 19:2, 63). Further, members who quit would inevitably have to exchange a "positive" identity for a "stigmatized" (Goffman 1963) identity – that is, they would have to confront their self-definition as a "terrorist" and therefore a murderer, a crazy, cruel criminal. Persistence of commitment came to mean a search for redemption; or, as one militant put it, "*to go right to the end* . . . [was] the only chance for redemption I had, from a moral point of view, both for the violence I produced and the violence I suffered" (Life history no. 18:73–4; emphasis added). Another interviewee explained, "*To pursue the way I had undertaken*" was the way "to find – or, better, to try to find – a reason for my previous participation in a murder" (Life history no. 14:19; emphasis added).

Continued loyalty to the "revolutionary community," then, allowed the militants to *ignore the price they had already paid.* In addition, it obscured their sense of the material costs by presenting imprisonment as a stage in the fight for freedom. We can see this reasoning in, for instance, Boock's detailed description of his situation in the high-security prisons:

> Those who are kept in the high-security units develop a logic of their own in order to make an unbearable prison situation understandable and bearable. *These hostile conditions become more bearable only if the prisoner can consider himself part of a larger community, of a somehow overdetermined truth, which allows one to see one's own existence as prisoner as only temporary.* I am a member of the Rote Armee Fraktion, an anti-imperialist urban guerrilla who fights against the Federal Republic of Germany, because the FRG, side by side with the imperialist USA, represses its own people and exploits Third World peoples. Because I was and I am part of this struggle, the state has taken me prisoner, almost as a hostage, and is keeping me in these inhuman conditions in prison. Any small compliance with their wishes in this situation will be taken as a sign of weakness and used against me and my comrades. There cannot be an individual solution for me: my only support is the group, solidarity with the other comrades, and the continuation of the common struggle, even in these constrictive conditions. . . . *Only insofar as I keep my loyalty to the aims of the group, can I retain my identity and the hope that the situation will change.* . . . The prisoner has only this choice between capitulation, which means destruction of the self and despair, and the spasmodic attachment . . . to the group and its aims. (Boock 1988:97–8; emphasis added)

It seems therefore that the militants' very high initial investment reduced the likelihood that they would leave their organization or choose what Hirschman (1970) called an "exit" option. Since they had already paid a very high price, they had a strong need for an adequate reward. When they did not obtain such a reward, a psychological mechanism impelled them to "raise the bid" rather than quit. Thus, they persisted in their involvement, because surrendering im-

plied "losing" everything they had already paid as the cost for entering the underground.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT IN THE UNDERGROUND: A COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

In their study on *Lebenslaufanalysen* Jäger and Böllinger (1981:232) observed that the

> political socialization of terrorist groups' members . . . is to be seen as part of a transformation in the reference system, that is, as a gradual process of individual exit from the majoritarian culture and integration in a political counterculture with divergent norms, values and loyalties, and a particularly rigid pressure to conform.

In Chapter 5 we looked at the effects of this process from the perspective of the organization as a whole. In Chapter 6, we saw how, within many small circles of individuals, support for political violence escalated, gradually and sometimes without the members' conscious intent. In this chapter, I have described the last steps of the individual radicalization, focusing on the ways in which the "transformation in the reference system" took place among both the Italian and German militants, who were motivated to *join the underground* for very similar reasons and arrived there by very similar means.

Recruitment patterns in the underground resemble those processes studied, especially in the analysis of religious behavior, as *conversion.* Research on cult sects has identified several conversion phases. In a classical study Lofland and Stark (1965:862) described the following value-added process:

> For conversion a person must experience, within a religious problem-solving perspective, enduring, acutely-felt tensions that lead to defining her/himself as a religious seeker; the person must encounter the cult at a turning point in life; within the cult an affective bond must be formed (or pre-exist) and any extra-cult attachments neutralized; and there he/she must be exposed to intensive interaction to become a "deployable agent."[9]

Our research on recruitment in terrorist groups confirmed the role of affective bonds, but singled out also political factors. Referring to Lofland and Skonovd's (1985) typology, conversion to underground organizations often resembled an affectional model, defined as coming to share friends' opinion.[10] At the same time, however, conversions implied also elements of an experimental model as the transformations in the behavior and world view occurred, quite tentatively, through an increasing situational adaptation, and as a result of a series of side bets.

As we observed, these side bets were often a way to face *precipitating factors*, such as the arrest or assassination of a friend, a friend's decision to go underground, and the risk – or perceived risk – of being arrested oneself. State repression sometimes enforced the radicalization through a process of secondary deviation: in fact, some militants who had been targets of police repression

became more committed to their deviant behavior instead of abandoning it.[11] For many activists, joining a terrorist formation was what Crenshaw (1992) calls an unforeseen consequence of nonterrorist actions. The material effect of the ban – in Matza's words (1969) – was to push activists into contact with more experienced militants who were already engaged in clandestine activities.

In both Italy and Germany, the militants' fear of arrest or apprehension was often itself the spur to joining an underground group. The conflict between movements and elites reached a climax when the first clandestine groups were formed and emergency legislation was passed. Although intended to isolate the radical Left, these repressive measures often produced the opposite effect: movement activists, feeling criminalized by laws that were indeed often used against them and outraged by restrictive prison conditions, rallied to support the "political prisoners," and sometimes eventually joined the underground. Meanwhile, in defiance of harsh prison conditions and long sentences, the militants of underground organizations clung to their deviant identity. Coercive counterterrorist reactions often made terrorism self-sustaining insofar as these measures confirmed the militants' expectations of hostility, reinforced injustice frames, and set off a spiral of revenge.[12]

Facing a hostile environment, the militants of the underground organizations developed a *freedom-fighter identity*, which defined them as members of a heroic community of generous people fighting a war against "evil." As the militants' attitudes and behaviors became radicalized, they found it easy to accept the armed struggle and even to consider it "natural." Justifying violence was thus an integral part of the alternative systems the militants constructed, replacing "normal" definitions of good and evil with their own.

As we have seen, *group dynamics* enforced this alternative value system, which was crucial to securing the militants' commitment to the underground: affective dynamics strengthened solidarity among comrades involved in the same mythical destiny; cognitive dynamics made the small circles of underground activists the militants' sole source of values and information. As Wilfried Rasch observed, the group reinforced the militants' dedication and sustained their careers:

> The group provides back-up when other support is eradicated. Within the group several psychological variables become essential: solidarity, complicity, and reality perception. Group membership means obligatory acceptance of a certain system of values and norms; deviations from these are punished. The group dynamics of complicity catalyze actions that any one member would hardly have been able to accomplish alone and that he has difficulty understanding later on. He acts within a set of mutual expectations and role assignments. Being forced into the underground, the group lives in isolation and, [its members] working in close cooperation, evolves new models for the interpretation of reality that acquire a binding character for the group members. (Rasch 1979:82)

Although affective networks always play a role in the dynamics of political organizations, they operate in a special way in underground organizations. If

participation in movement organizations always requires a certain level of identification in a collective identity, the degree of commitment required varies between different movements. As Lofland observed, movements differ from each other not only in terms of goals, leadership, corporateness, or inclusiveness, but also with reference to "the emotional tenor, presence, affective climate, or demeanor enacted and communicated by movement organizations" (1985:219).[13]

There are several reasons why affective ties among comrade-friends in the underground are notable for their intensity. First, *the total changes in an individual's life* that commitment to an underground organization entails require a high degree of affective identification. As Berger and Luckmann observe, processes of resocialization, or "alterations,"

> resemble primary socialization, because they have radically to reassign reality accents and, consequently, must replicate to a considerable degree the strongly affective identification with the socializing personnel that was characteristic of childhood. They are different from primary socialization because they do not start *ex nihilo*, and as a result they must cope with a problem of dismantling, disintegrating the preceding nomic structure of subjective reality. (Berger and Luckmann 1966:157)

Thus, the new values must be mediated to the individual through significant others with whom he or she has established strong affective identifications.[14] Activists entering the underground, like individuals in other novitiate phases, annihilate those who inhabited their world before their conversion; in Berger and Luckmann's words, "People and ideas that are discrepant with the new definitions of reality are systematically avoided" (1966:159).

Illegal activities of underground groups produce a *risk*. As also McAdam observed in his research on the activists of the Freedom Summer of 1964, group identification increases in more risky forms of participation. McAdam's interviewees described in fact their experiences in heightened language, as a sort of "ecstasy," a "sense of liberation," a feeling of being "finally at home," a "transcendent experience." The sense of living an "adventure" – of "stepping outside the routine" – compounded the excitement of pursuing a cause to which one was devoting one's whole life. Solidarity – "These people were me and I was them" (McAdam 1988:71) – and the lack of time for reflection intensified all emotions.[15] In the underground as in other high-risk secret societies (Erikson 1981), the excitement of shared risks strengthens friendships.[16]

In terrorist organizations, as in other secret societies, the *need for secrecy* becomes the single most important determinant of the organization's structure and strategy (Erikson 1981). Recruitment in the underground therefore depends on strong confidence ties between recruiters and recruitees (thus the possibilities for recruitment are always limited). Whereas for social movement organizations, weak ties are the primary channel of expansion,[17] underground organizations expand via strong ties. Such ties are equally vital in maintaining the members' loyalty to their terrorist organizations. Lacking a private life outside the group,

the Italian and German militants experienced what Passerini (1992) calls the loss of individual identity, which in turn compelled them to rely more and more on the group.

Last but not least, the *small dimension* of underground organizations is also a factor that tendentially increases commitment.[18]

An additional explanation for the intensity of friendships in the underground is related to the *militants' youth.* Peer groups, we know, exert a different kind of influence in the different stages of an individual's life. Because the militants' participation in underground organizations often coincided with their search for emotional independence from the family, their loyalty to the peer group – an important element in the evolution of an adult personality – was especially strong. We can understand why underground organizations attract the young – youth is perhaps the only characteristic all "terrorists" share – when we remember that young people are relatively unconstrained by obligations, responsibilities, and conventions. The attraction to the underground also depends on certain psychological traits characteristic of adolescence. Such typically youthful characteristics as energy, utopianism, the need for autonomy, openness to experimentation, a search for identity, and fidelity are conducive to total adherence to a "negative identity" and enhance the attraction of the "adventure" in the underground (Braungart and Braungart 1992).

But, in the underground, commitment did not derive only from processes of "alteration," shared risks and excitement, or the young age of the militants: the terrorist organizations enforced commitment via a strict control over their members. In this respect, they resemble "greedy institutions," that is, groups that "seek exclusive and undivided loyalty and . . . attempt to reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they wish to encompass within their boundaries" (Coser 1974:4). And, as "ideological groups" they required "their members to orient themselves to one another primarily in terms of some central symbols and ideas" (Nahirni 1962:397–8).[19] The more deeply in the underground were our radical organizations, the more they asked their members to provide extreme "testimonies" of commitment, such as the total renunciation of privacy regarding both material and affective ties.[20]

In concluding this analysis of individual commitment in the underground, I should emphasize that in both Italy and Germany, the militants of the underground organizations were impelled to activism by *political motivations* – that is, by the hope of changing the existing political realities. Although they retained their political motivations throughout the different stages of their militancy, their perceptions of external reality changed during the process of political socialization. Gradually, their image of politics as the expression of social conflicts gave way to an image of politics as the result of a military conflict. We observed this trend both in individual biographies and in the evolution of the various organizations. In both, we detected a *loss of the sense of reality:*[21] the creation of images further and further removed not only from those of the "dominant"

culture but also from those of the counterculture. In Snow and Benford's terms (1988:208), we can say that the frame of references adopted by the terrorist groups and their militants progressively lost in empirical credibility.

This loss of the sense of reality merits a few additional observations. First, the militants' sense of reality became more and more tenuous with the passage of time – more rapidly among the German militants than the Italian. The longer the individual's involvement, and the older the organization to which the terrorist belonged, the more removed from reality he or she became. Second, this loss varied with the degree of clandestinity an individual experienced; that is, it varied according to both the organizational model chosen by the terrorist group and the personal conditions of the individual militant. In both Germany and Italy, these dynamics were more visible in some organizations – namely, the RAF and the BR – than in others. The more compartmentalized an organization was, and the more involved in the clandestine life a militant was, the more extreme the militant's dissociation from reality. Third, this phenomenon was in general more pronounced among German militants than among Italian militants.

More generally, we can conclude that *the degree to which an underground group is isolated* is an important variable for explaining the group's deviation from the "normal" perception of reality. In other words, the more isolated the underground organization, the weaker its members' sense of reality. Although the decision to go underground is always in itself a strategic choice of isolation from the external environment, a terrorist organization's degree of isolation reflects the conditions of its environment. As we have noted, the political environment in Italy was more favorable to underground organizations than was the German environment, because Italy had a greater tolerance for political violence than did post–World War II Germany. These different environmental conditions were responsible for various differences between the Italian and German underground militants, in their motivations and perception of external reality. Nevertheless, Italian and German militants ended up with very similar – and similarly "absurd" or alienated – images of the external world. Isolation, then, appears to be an unavoidable consequence of the decision to function clandestinely in a democratic regime. And detachment from reality, and thus a shift in the motivational orientation of the members of terrorist organizations, seem an inevitable consequence of isolation.

8

Social movements, political violence, and the state: a conclusion

I began this book by suggesting that a comprehensive explanation for political violence lies in a research design that integrates three different levels of analysis: macro, meso, and micro. Now, having applied this method to the complex histories of political violence in Italy and Germany, I think it appropriate to return to some of the initial questions I raised and, drawing on the data I have presented, attempt to offer an explanation that combines insights from three different angles: from a theory of conflict, a theory of mobilization, and a theory of activism.

Some empirical questions are raised by our historical and cross-national comparison of political violence in Italy and Germany during the past three decades. Why did political violence, in all its various manifestations (spontaneous, semimilitary, autonomous, and clandestine), emerge in Italy and Germany? Why did violence peak in both countries in the seventies? And why was there in general more violence in Italy than in Germany, though ultimately more persistent violence in Germany?

In the preceding chapters I suggested several explanations for these phenomena, looking first at external conditions (the macro-level), then at organized group dynamics (the meso-level), and finally at individual perceptions and motivations (the micro-level). We observed that at each stage in the evolving cycle of violence, one of these three levels played the dominant role. Political and social conditions initially affected developments at the meso- and the micro-levels. Once violence had erupted and groups that acted as entrepreneurs of violence had emerged, the meso-level (organizational dynamics) assumed the determining role, influencing in its turn developments at the macro- and micro-levels. At the end of the cycle, when the number of militants committed to political violence had dwindled to only a few dozen radicalized individuals, the micro-level became increasingly important.

In this final chapter, I summarize past and current hypotheses about the origins and nature of political violence, as well as the results of my research. I also venture answers to the more ambitious questions related to the role of political

opportunities in the evolution of protest, the influence of entrepreneurs of violence, and the development of radical forms of political commitment. Next, I propose a last comparison of the Italian and German cases. In concluding, I develop a speculative comparison with the American cycle of protest of the late sixties and identify some possible directions for future research.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR VIOLENCE

Comparative research on political violence has often referred to some index of economic inequalities and related them to measures of political violence.[1] In particular, several studies on Italian and German terrorism have suggested that rapid social change – with its attendant economic, social, and cultural disequilibrium – was responsible for the sudden explosions of political unrest in those two countries.[2] Explanations that emphasize rapid social change, however, cannot distinguish between those Western democracies in which political violence developed and those in which it did not. Although the Italian economic structure, with its geographic dualism and its backward Mezzogiorno, could provide evidence to support the hypothesis that there is a direct relation between the degree of economic inequality and the diffusion of political violence, the German economy could not.

Assuming that (at least to a certain degree) political forces operate independent of social factors, I first sought an explanation for political violence (a *political* phenomenon after all) by looking at the political systems in Italy and Germany. Analyzing a political system to identify preconditions for the development of political violence is of course not a new approach in the sociological literature. The proponents of the political process approach to social movements have convincingly argued that, although social conflicts are always present, the timing and forms of mobilization of discontent in protest are defined by political conditions. One explanation for Italian terrorism popular in the late seventies was Italy's "blocked political system," which held that the Italian party system, governed for a long time by one party, did not allow for alternation in power. Consequently, the party system lost its legitimacy among the general public; the state became identified with the government; and the political elite's sense of responsibility and accountability declined or vanished.[3] German terrorism, too, has been explained as the consequence of a crisis of legitimation, specifically as a consequence of a limited political consensus based on economic growth and welfare (Scheerer 1988:197–205; Steinert 1984:497–502).

Although these explanations contain some grain of truth, it is difficult to determine the influence of a legitimation crisis on political violence if we do not look at the way in which structural conditions affect the main actors in political conflicts. Accordingly, in my research, I focused on the interactions between social movements and the state – in particular, the direct interactions between protestors and the police. In the course of the research, these interac-

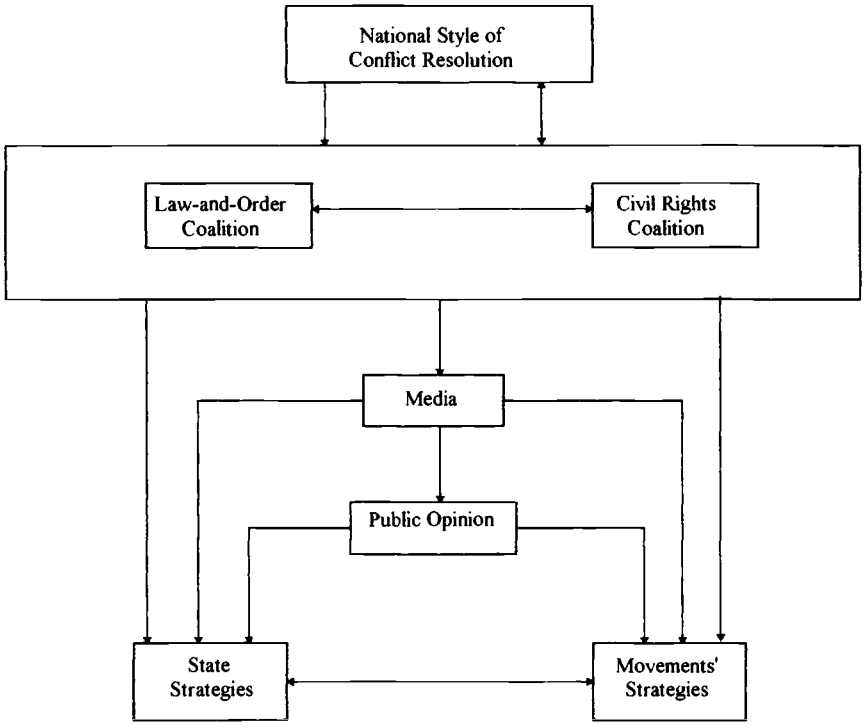

Figure 8.1. Political opportunities for violence

tions appeared as an important mediating process between structure and action. The main hypothesis developed at this level, then, is that *political violence in Italy and Germany was triggered not so much by the radicality of the social conflicts but – more directly – by the initial reluctance of the political elites in the two young democracies to integrate the demands for reform of the political regime.* Escalation was the product of polarization in the political culture, of reciprocal misunderstandings between elites and oppositions, each of whom feared the other would betray the principles of democracy.

We can extend this argument, while summarizing the research results on macro-conditions for political violence, by examining the different levels of interaction sketched in Figure 8.1. As the bottom level of the figure indicates, *political violence developed directly from interactions between social movements and the police.* Thus a first step toward understanding the dynamics that brought about an escalation of political violence was the analysis of movements' behaviors and of the policing of protest (the topics of Chapters 2 and 3 respectively).

As we saw, violence escalated in much the same forms, and according to much the same timing, in the Italian and German left-libertarian movement families. In both Italy and Germany, the first tremors of protest occurred in the universities in the second half of the sixties. Both the Italian and German student movements used disruptive forms of action, which sometimes escalated into violence, within a political strategy of advocating fundamental, revolutionary change. In the first half of the seventies, protest spread from the universities to a variety of groups in the general population: the women's movements and urban movements mobilized, moved by a still widespread hope for radical reforms. Attitudes changed rapidly in the second half of the decade, which – in both countries – was characterized by the activists' "return to private life" as pessimism deepened. At the same time, many small groups adopted increasingly radical tactics. At the beginning of the eighties, in both countries, the peace movement, with its extensive alliances and nonviolent ideology, contributed to a deradicalization of political conflicts. Protest de-escalated throughout the eighties as pragmatic attitudes prevailed in the left-libertarian family, now considered an institutional political actor, a participant in "normal" politics.

Although developments within the left-libertarian movement families of Italy and Germany were similar in many ways, they also differed, following the particular political opportunity structure of each country. In the Italian movement family, the New Left strategy, contiguous to that of the Old Left and maintaining the discourse of "class struggle," was stronger than in the German movements, and lasted longer. In Germany, meanwhile, the very term "new social movement" was coined to indicate a movement family that kept its distance from the Old Left, and class-based discourse had very little impact. As for the behavior of the movement families, in both the sixties and the seventies, violence escalated without interruption in Italy, whereas in Germany, there was quite a long phase of deradicalization in the first half of the seventies, during the first SPD–FDP government, led by Chancellor Willy Brandt.

As for the development of policing styles, we observed in both countries *a similar general evolution from a quite restrictive conception of protest rights in the fifties to a more liberal one in the eighties.* This evolution was not continuous, however, but marked by interruptions (of varying lengths) especially in the seventies, though the timing was somewhat different in the two countries. The cross-national comparison disclosed relevant (although gradually diminishing) differences. In the fifties Italian protest policing was much more brutal than the German. Almost one hundred deaths occurred at public marches in the fifties and sixties, almost a dozen in the seventies, and repression often took on the characteristics of a dirty war (with planned coups d'etat and the use of agents provocateurs in the sixties and seventies). In the eighties, however, protest policing in Italy appeared even "softer" than in Germany.

The development of the forms of protest actions in these two countries followed a process that McAdam (1983) has called *tactical interaction.* Social

movements, he says, rely upon tactical innovation – that is, they must change their tactics in order to be able to mobilize as their adversaries adapt their tactics to those of the movement. In our cases, protest first emerged at a time when police behavior was fairly tolerant; it escalated in response to harder-line tactics (and in the cross-national comparison it appeared that the harder line of Italian policing produced, in the mid-seventies, a more radicalized and smaller movement family than the one that developed in Germany); and it took more moderate forms when, especially in the eighties, the policing again became more tolerant, thus reducing tensions. I would add that not only the adversaries but also the movements adapt, so that in their experimentation with new tactics, they are influenced by the previous move of their opponents. The process of innovation and adaptation, in other words, is reciprocal, each side responding to the other. And in Italy and Germany, in the course of experimentations with different tactics, both adversaries tested "hard" techniques, thus creating resources for violence.

My research provided some insights into the dynamics of escalation in movement behavior that are triggered by state hard-line tactics. First, *state "repression" created martyrs and myths*: for example, Benno Ohnesorg, killed by police during a protest against the Shah of Iran's visit to Berlin, or the "battle" with the police in Valle Giulia in Rome, which took on a legendary quality for Italian activists. Police actions of this sort *delegitimized the state* in the eyes of the activists, not only by creating injustice frames (Gamson et al. 1982) but by arousing the sense of an absolute injustice (Manconi 1988), a reaction described by several militants in their interviews. Of course, as we have noted, Italian and German militants had different thresholds of absolute injustice. In Italy, the militants perceived the neofascist massacre of Piazza Fontana as a watershed; in West Germany, the death of Benno Ohnesorg and the attempt on the life of the student movement leader Rudi Dutschke were enough to galvanize the militants, and an event such as the acquittal of policemen accused of misbehavior could reduce confidence in the *Rechtsstaat* among young activists (Fetscher 1983:192–6). Moreover, state repression encouraged *secondary deviation*, the individual's even stronger commitment to his or her deviant behavior.

It was not only encounters between the movements and the state apparatuses that produced escalation. The very conditions that favored the escalation of violence in the left-libertarian movements often stimulated *radical countermovements* as well, and thus also what Garner and Zald (1983) would call national "radical sectors" composed of left-wing as well as right-wing radical groups, violent movements and violent countermovements. The interactions between movements and countermovements often resembled fights (Rapoport 1960). This development was characteristic especially of Italy, where from the very beginning of the protest cycle, the student activists clashed with neofascists. As we observed, throughout the seventies brutal conflicts escalated between young members of right-wing and left-wing non-underground groups who fired

at each other, sometimes lethally, right in front of the high schools. In Germany too, though to a lesser extent, small groups of neo-Nazis and "antifascists" clashed in the seventies and in the eighties. Among both Italian and German militants, alleged police sympathy for the radical Right further helped to delegitimize the state.

If we want to understand the reason for repressive choices, we have to start with the observation that protest policing, of course, is not a monolithic phenomenon; governments can pursue a number of possible strategies. But what factors determine the choice of policing strategy? Returning to our graphic representation of macro-conditions for political violence in Figure 8.1, we see that *both protest and policing strategies were influenced by a system of interactions that included a variety of actors:* parties, interest groups, social movements, and opinion makers. In the public debate on the way to police protest, different elements combined to form two opposing coalitions, a law-and-order coalition and a civil rights coalition. Both used the media to address – and sway – public opinion about legitimate forms of protest and acceptable forms of policing, thus ultimately affecting both movement and state strategies.

In this system of interactions among political actors, one indicator of the openness of the political opportunity structure in Tarrow's classic definition (1983:28, 1989c:35) appeared particularly relevant to policing policies: the *strategic posture of potential allies*, in particular the left-wing parties, the unions, and the more "liberal" public opinion. We observed in fact that, in general, the Left tends to take a more tolerant attitude toward protest than the Right, manifested in a softer approach to protest policing when the Left is in, or close to, power. We saw, however, that protest policing is a tricky issue for left-wing governments: law-and-order campaigns organized by conservatives, as well as the Left's desire to appear as a "responsible" force, push these governments toward a "harder line," which then alienates supporters not only in the movements but also among intellectuals and trade unionists.

Governmental policies and politics were, in fact, influenced by the symbolic struggle that evolved, in different public arenas, between a law-and-order and a civil rights coalition. Generally, the emergence of protest increased public concern for law and order, prompting the more conservative elites to choose hard-line tactics, but, at the same time, demands for a more liberal understanding of citizen rights spread out in the society. Protest policing tended to become softer when the civil rights coalition was represented in government, but even when the law-and-order coalition prevailed, the very presence of a civil rights coalition – which often found a forum in the media – helped to moderate protest policing. Especially in Germany, and especially in the eighties, the police, fearing a bad image in the media and a loss of legitimation among the public, mounted a fairly sustained opposition to becoming involved in political conflicts. We also noticed that repression tended to increase – although it became more selective – when the Old Left abandoned the civil rights coalition.

Opportunities for protest are influenced not only by the changing strategies and relationships of different political actors (see Rucht 1989b) but also by a more permanent and "stable" structure, *a national style of conflict resolution* that, with Kriesi (1989:295), we defined as consisting of a formal, institutional aspect and an informal, cultural aspect (see top of Figure 8.1). National structures – such as police organization, characteristics of the judiciary, codes of laws, constitutional rights – set constraints on protest policing. In Germany, for instance, emphasis on the *Rechtsstaat* and a police force that was more independent of the political power and more professional than the Italian police prevented protest policing from evolving in the direction of a "dirty war" against the opposition, as tended to happen in Italy. Yet Germany's constitutional principle of a "partisan democracy" that has to defend itself by any and all means allowed for the "marginalization" of the radical opposition – witness the so-called *Berufverbote* and the outlawing of the Communist Party – which had no parallel in the Italian system.

The national style of conflict resolution is indeed an important variable for explaining the peculiar extent of political violence in Italy and Germany, in particular in the seventies. Although the left-libertarian movements in several Western democracies underwent escalation, radicalization, and integration, not all Western democracies experienced such extensive violence as occurred in Italy and Germany. Why did conflicts escalate more frequently, and fiercely, in Italy and Germany than in, say, France or the United States? Why were the Italian and German left-libertarian movement families more violent than their West European and American counterparts? I suggest that a large part of the explanation lies in Italy's and Germany's similar experience with fascism and the legacy it left the postwar Italian and German democracies.[4] In both countries during the postwar period, the lack of a democratic tradition was reflected in a comparatively narrow actual definition of political rights, which, however, took different forms in the two countries: in Italy, the brutal repression of the labor movements; in Germany, the legal outlawing of the Communist Party. In Italy, the presence of a strong Communist Party on good terms with the Soviet Union had allowed for the development of an "imperfect" pluralism, one that excluded the PCI from the governmental coalition. In Germany, the belief that democracy had to restrict civil and political rights in order to survive had constrained the development of a liberal conception of democracy.

When the student movements emerged in the sixties, the governing elites of the young Italian and German democracies felt particularly endangered.[5] In Germany, recollections of the end of the Weimar Republic were often quoted in the press, and the students' "breaking of the rules" was compared to the political violence that preceded the rise of Nazism.[6] In Italy, the state justified its repression of the student movement by appealing to the antifascist sentiments. The absence of a consolidated democracy influenced not only the frames of meaning the elites used to define the "dangers" of protest, but also the activists'

frames of meaning, pushing them to resort to their particular national tradition (or lack of tradition) of resistance to fascism. Thus, in the face of state repression, the Italian movements adopted the frame of meaning of the "betrayed resistance," the German activists that of the "missed resistance." The Italian activists claimed they had to carry on their fathers' Partisan movement against a "fascist state" – a movement, according to them, the Old Left had sold out. The German activists asserted that they had to resist with all means the new "Nazi" state to avoid repeating their fathers' mistakes and redeem their shame.[7]

Feeling excluded from the political system, the movements escalated their demands, both symbolically, with the elaboration of radical frames of meaning and a revolutionary rhetoric, and practically, with the development of a meta-conflict about the very nature of democracy. The left-libertarian movements, in fact, began to demand not only social reform but also profound changes in the understanding of democratic rights. The formation of law-and-order and civil rights coalitions itself demonstrates that, besides various policy reforms, the movements aimed at basic changes in the political regime. The evolution of the conflict from the social to the political sphere offered the movements the possibility of building larger alliances. But it scared their adversaries, who read the demands for "another" democracy as attacks against "democracy" tout court. The hard-liners therefore gained momentum and pushed for a style of policing that increasingly alienated the activists from the state.

In both countries, notwithstanding reforms and a partial integration of former movement leaders into institutional politics, part of the movements radicalized. Throughout the seventies, for some movement milieus in the Western democracies, the state became the main enemy, while revolutionary groups in the Third World and Latin America were seen as allies. Political polarization increased, fueled by historical circumstances. In particular, the tensions between the two great powers and the development of movements of national liberation inflamed the rhetoric of the political conflicts and increased mistrust among challengers and polity members alike. Moreover, the economic crisis of the early seventies multiplied social tensions and fostered the pessimistic, fundamentalist mood that characterized the entire decade.

The characteristics of the democratization process can also explain why Italy experienced greater violence than Germany. In Germany, the total social and political collapse at the end of the war and the long Allied occupation helped the process of denazification – incomplete though it was – and the Weimar Republic provided a democratic model. In Italy, however, although the armistice and the relatively less brutal characteristics of fascism (compared to German Nazism) allowed for a smoother transition to democracy, they also permitted more continuities with the fascist regime. The institutionalization of the labor conflict and the moderate shift of the SPD depolarized the German political spectrum, whereas Italy's political culture became more polarized with the repression of the trade unions and the international alliances of the PCI.

But if the first reactions to the left-libertarian movements included a good deal of fear, the democratic regimes eventually demonstrated their adaptive capacity, instituting policy reforms while extending political rights. Further, the later history of the left-libertarian movements showed that the concerns and demands of these movements were not antisystemic. It was not so much the radicality of the movements' demands as the difficulty of the established institutions in recognizing new democratic actors that led to the escalations of the seventies. Yet even in the seventies the adaptive, integrative process had already begun (though its deradicalizing impact on the movement family was counterbalanced by repression of the movements' radical fringes). In the eighties, integrative attitudes finally prevailed (and came to be seen as prevailing), helping to deradicalize political conflicts. Former movement activists entered established politics, and the very conception of democracy evolved to such an extent that we can reasonably speak of a change in the political regime or, at least, of the final stage of democratic consolidation.

If national strategies of conflict resolution have a high degree of resilience, we should add, however, that, in the long term, they can change dramatically. The social movements themselves, with their demands for "more democracy," are main actors in this transformation.

ENTREPRENEURS OF VIOLENCE

In reconstructing our global explanation for the emergence of political violence, I now shift perspective from the macro-level to the meso-level, from the ways in which political structures responded to social movement activities to the developments and divisions within the movements themselves – in particular, to the process that, in certain instances, led to radicalization and its concomitant violence.

In Chapters 4 and 5 we saw how small radical organizations espousing violence evolved within and then broke away from the larger, nonviolent, social movement organizations. Exploiting environmental conditions conducive to militancy, these groups underwent further radicalization and eventually created new resources and occasions for violence. These radical groups, in other words, themselves became agents, or entrepreneurs, for the propagation of violence. In my research, I have tried to trace the main elements of this process and to identify the logic of action at work in these radical groups. What features characterized these organizations? What was their modus operandi?

Previous studies on radical political organizations offer two quite opposite approaches. The *instrumental* perspective considers radical organizations as rational actors that logically relate means to ends in order to bring about changes in their environment. The *organizational* perspective, in contrast, defines radical organizations as ideological sects based on emotional commitments and gov-

erned by internal dynamics.[8] The studies of political violence in Italy and Germany have often shifted between the two.

In both countries, sociological explanations have focused on the ideological characteristics of the radical organizations. German commentators, for instance, traced the ideological roots of the RAF to traditional left-wing ideology (e.g., Rohrmoser 1981); and Italian scholars have ascribed the ideology of the Red Brigades to the *operaismo* – that is, to a splinter branch of Marxism (Galante 1981; Ventura 1980). In these studies, the ideologies of the radical organizations were considered as the instigators of political violence.

My research suggests that political violence did not derive directly from the presence of ideologies that justified violence. In Italy and Germany, radical ideologies engendered radical violent repertoires only when political opportunities triggered escalation. Even if it cannot be considered as the primary cause of violence, however, the presence of organizations that advocated violence surely helped to sustain the use of violent repertoires. This presence, as we saw, increased when mobilization decreased. We can observe that a decisive peculiarity of movement organizations is their relation to mobilization, a process from which they derive most of their resources. Mobilization, however, is a terminal process: it can last a short or long time, but it cannot last forever.

In the late sixties, in both Italy and Germany, the decline of the student mobilization, and the consequent reduction in available resources, increased competition among the several (formal and informal) networks that constituted the left-libertarian families. A first result of the decline in mobilization was that the surviving movement organizations concentrated on retaining the loyalty of their members and focused on recruiting individuals already involved in the movement family instead of potential supporters outside the movement. But to face the internal competition, the political networks that had arisen in the movement family had to alter their structures. Competition thus set off a process of internal differentiation. Like rival companies vying for a share of the market, each political organization had to distinguish its "product" from that of the others in order to occupy the "niche" in the market where its products were most in demand. The decline of mobilization left a surplus of activists (Pizzorno 1978) who tried to spread protest to other sectors, and also a surplus of movement organizations. As I observed, some of these groups attempted to survive by radicalizing their structure and ideology.

In Italy and Germany during the process of differentiation, some organizations moderated their goals and strategies; others transformed themselves into radical extremist groups. Movement organizations, we have seen, are more likely to become radicalized when particular resources, or conditions, are present in the environment. These environmental preconditions, represented graphically in Figure 8.2, include *demands for radical changes, and the existence of political subcultures sympathetic to violence.*

Noninstitutionalized social conflicts were a factor in both countries in that the

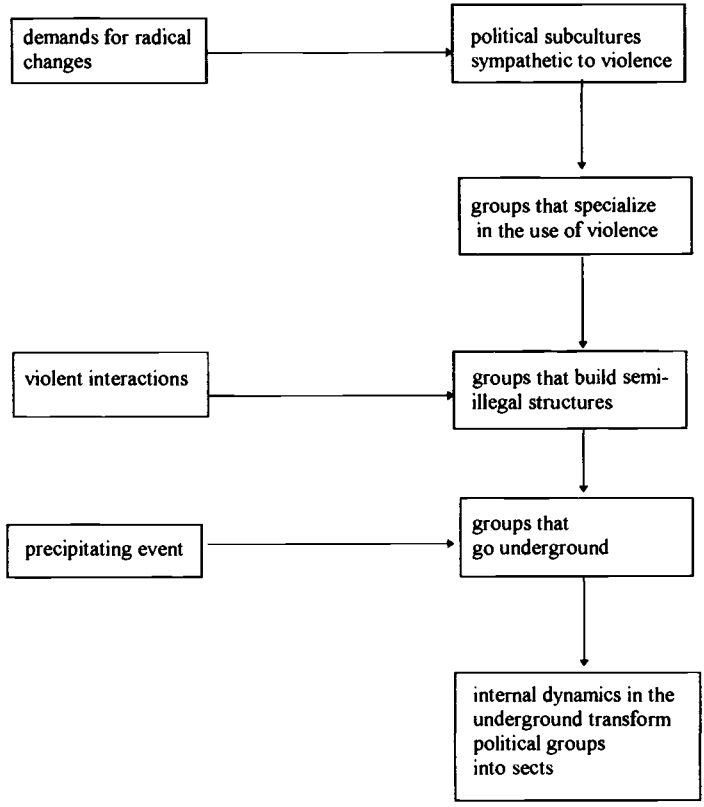

Figure 8.2. Organizational radicalization

presence of mobilizable interests that were not yet institutionally mediated encouraged some organizations to champion these interests and seek greater influence in the political marketplace by radicalizing their actions. At the same time, the emergence of new social actors escalated into a meta-conflict about the very understanding of democracy. Finally, the radicalization of repertoires depended on the presence of political cultures or subcultures receptive to violence. Indeed, some organizations emphasized militance precisely to help them compete in such movement milieus. These milieus were characterized by the prominence of a second generation of militants, who were socialized into politics when social and political conflicts had already escalated and who were typically very young, often no more than teenagers. Further, the social base in these milieus was particularly volatile, consisting of strata that, traditionally or contingently, were accustomed to radical forms of conflict – the young, immigrant workers from

the Mezzogiorno in the big factories in northern Italy, for example, or youth from the social fringes in the large cities in Germany. For these social groups, violence served as a cohesive force.

To the extent that radical groups took advantage of the available resources in their environment to strengthen or reinforce their militancy, their decision to emphasize violence can be considered a rational choice – at least if we understand rationality in a limited sense referring simply to reasoning or calculation. But the choice of radicalization was also a contingent development, for it depended on the supply of resources available to each particular movement organization: not surprisingly, the organizations that became most violent were those that lacked resources giving them access to the system. As a kind of compensation, they developed military skills instead.

This observation indicates that a strictly instrumental theory of mobilization is insufficient to explain the phenomenon of radicalization; we must complement it with an approach that emphasizes unforeseen consequences and internal dynamics. Indeed, the evolution of the movement organizations that specialized in the use of violence was to a great extent the result of unplanned actions and events.

Organized violence – and the *groups that specialized in violent repertoires* (again, see Figure 8.2) – developed gradually. It was during the fights with right-wing radicals and/or the police that a number of radical organizations (such as Lotta Continua in Italy and the "Blues" in Germany) constructed semiclandestine structures, established specifically to plan and carry out violent actions. Several kinds of factors – organizational, psychological, and accidental – prepared some of the semimilitary organizations for complete clandestinity. The most militant groups of the left libertarian families had attracted militants already experienced in the use of violent forms of political action; because of their particular socialization, their concept of politics was based more on direct forms of action than on bargaining processes. In most of the radical groups, attempts to sustain both a public (legal) and secret (military) organization failed. The military wings split off and experimented with different violent strategies. In the process, these groups underwent a special sort of bureaucratization – a spiral of radicalization, consequent isolation, and further radicalization – in which they became increasingly ingrown, abandoning the language and imagery they shared with the movement subculture. Caught up in their own self-constructed version of reality – particularly their identification with a military opposition to the state – members of these groups lost a sense of external reality and the ability to foresee the consequences of their actions. These conditions prepared the small radical groups for the shift to clandestinity, which was generally *precipitated by a violent chance event* that propelled the members underground in order to escape arrest.

As the final element in Figure 8.2 indicates, the *internal dynamics* took over completely once the extremist groups went underground. Although even the

underground groups felt the need to try to adapt their strategies to the changing external reality, the moves they made drastically reduced their range of possible choices and further weakened the group's sense of reality. The very choice of clandestinity forced them into a losing military conflict with the much more powerful state apparatuses. As this conflict became more and more bloody, most radical groups lost the cohesion they had when they were first organized. Thus they gradually gave up externally oriented goals in order to concentrate on mere organizational survival. The struggle to find resources for survival (money, hideouts, and so on) further isolated the clandestine groups, even from the movements in which they had arisen. Of course, clandestinity by definition entails material and psychological isolation, and the distinctive spiraling pattern of radicalization and isolation characteristic of the semi-illegal groups only accelerated when they went underground. Each successive turn of the spiral reduced the group's strategic options, making it a prisoner of its own version of reality. Under the pressures produced by this "implosion" – which involved the compartmentalization of structures, strategic radicalization, and ideological abstractness – most underground organizations, except for very tiny groups, did not survive for long. The entrepreneurs of violence unleashed a force they could not control; embracing violence, they cultivated the source of their own dissolution.

The timing of this trend toward dissolution depended on the environmental conditions that influenced the degree of isolation of the underground groups. As we saw, the process was quite rapid for the German RAF, which evolved in a context of very small radical milieus. The Italian militant organizations disintegrated more slowly, for in Italy the continuous escalation of social conflicts in the sixties and seventies produced a rather large radical element in the social movements. But it was not only the dynamic of social movements that influenced the development in the underground. To a certain extent, the German and Italian clandestine groups were pawns in a sort of surrogate war involving the secret services and international terrorist networks. International resources, for instance, helped the RAF to survive, even when violence almost disappeared from the movement environment.

Although radical groups are a very special kind of movement organizations, their stories tell us something about the logic of action of movement organizations in general. Movement organizations usually oscillate between instrumental and intrinsic concerns, that is, in their extreme forms they resemble voluntary associations, in the first case, and sects, in the second case. In most of the cases, however, they have some components of both: they have to resemble voluntary associations, insofar as they aim at changing their environment; and they have to resemble sects, insofar as their main resource is the commitment of their members.

A main stream of research has described movement organizations as strategically oriented toward collecting resources in the environment in order to reach

their explicit aims.[9] Several movement organizations do in fact match this description. Like voluntary associations, these organizations try to assert their social or political aims: they bargain with the authorities, try to find a forum in the media, and address a large public. During these activities they must build bridges with various potential constituencies, convince potential allies, and attract support from previously uncommitted, or even hostile, public audiences. If pragmatic attitudes are more likely to develop among the movement organizations that have more institutional contacts, we also observed that even the most radical organization makes some attempt at strategic action.

The research on radical organizations, however, highlights characteristics of movement organizations that the recent studies on more established movement organizations have underplayed. First, movement organizations need to motivate a degree of commitment that, normally, is higher than that required in other voluntary associations. Second, compared with other voluntary associations (e.g., interest organizations), they have far fewer resources in terms of power or money to invest in such efforts; thus they must rely upon other kinds of resources: namely, ideology and the psychological attraction of solidarity.

Researchers have stressed the positive role that rhetoric and rituals play in social movement organizations that must substitute symbolic for material incentives. But several scholars have also commented on the sometimes contradictory functions ideologies perform in these organizations. Here, to a greater extent than in other political organizations (e.g., political parties), the need for communication with the external environment conflicts with the need for internal coherence (Boucher 1977). Ideology plays a particularly important integrative function because "a movement is subject to strong centrifugal pressures, both due to its own internal fragmentation and to the initiatives of the adversary. Ideology is one of the main tools which can be used to guarantee integration" (Melucci 1990:6). Accordingly, movement ideologies exalt powerful, strong, and abstract ideas, as abstractness – the transcendence of factual arguments – makes ideological beliefs more resistant to external defeats. Moreover, as social movement scholars have observed, dogmatic ideologies, offering a high degree of certainty about the external world, help to motivate radical behavior (Gerlach and Hine 1970). It is also to a movement's advantage to maintain a certain level of ambiguity, for ambiguity enables leaders to escalate their requests in order to keep protest alive after initial victories or to conceal moments of weakness.[10]

The actual content of ideologies characteristic of small radical organizations, scholars seem to agree, favors the ideal of a close community of the elect, emphasizing purity rather than proselytization, exclusivity rather than expansion (O'Toole 1975). Elitism, after all, makes isolation appear a positive, self-imposed condition. The members' "inner versus outer" mentality, it has been noted, provides the basis for a dichotomous image of the world typically promoted by social movement ideologies (Gerlach and Hine 1970). These ideologies represent the movement's counterculture as enacting collective dramas or

rhetorical fantasy themes in which the actors in the conflict are heroes and villains and the setting consists of profane and sacred grounds (Rogers 1985a, 1985b). As Lofland (1985:224) observed, "Like other cultural groups, most MOs [movement organizations] tend to look out over the social landscape with suspicion, fear and hostility, and quantitatively to restrict their contact with people unlike themselves, most particularly with people who are only in small ways unlike themselves." Some movement organizations resemble ideological sects.[11]

But, of course, the evolution of a movement organization can, and often does, take a very different direction. "An SMO," Kriesi (1993:71–5) points out, "can become more like a party or an interest group; it can take on characteristics of a supportive service organization; it can develop in the direction of a self-help group, a voluntary association or a club." What factors determine the route a social movement organization will take? The research on the radical groups in Italy and Germany suggests some answers. The actual organizational design a social movement organization adopts is a function both of the resources and skills available to it and of environmental conditions. The more institutional channels, intellectual skills, and material resources a movement organization has access to, the more likely it will resemble a voluntary organization. *The more extensive its environment* – the larger the mobilization and the less isolated the individual members of the movement family – *the less likely it is that a movement organization will become sectlike, emphasizing internal concerns over extrinsic goals.* But as the experience of the Italian and German radical organizations illustrates, *the more isolated a group becomes, the more abstract, ritualistic, and impervious to factual arguments its ideology becomes.*

COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES AND VIOLENCE

Political opportunities allowed for the diffusion of violent actions and radical frames of meaning; movements' entrepreneurs sustained the escalation of violence – or, in the analytical terms I have used throughout my discussion, conditions for violence were determined first at the macro-level, and, later on, processes taking place at the meso-level favored their reproduction. We should not forget, however, that violent political actions were performed by normal activists, and that the members of the most radical organizations began their careers in normal political organizations. Moreover, there were periods in the history of the most radical organizations in which the main impetus for the continuation of the armed struggle came from only a few dozen militants who had developed a freedom-fighter identity. Therefore one cannot completely understand political violence without examining the way in which the political opportunities and the radical organizations affected the activists' life – that is, how they influenced the building of radical collective identities. What we need at this point, then, is a theory of political activism that can explain how and why people become radical activists, and what happens to them when they do.

Although several past studies of political radicalism took a psychological approach, explaining violence in terms of individual psychopathologies or psychological problems (this explanation, in fact, almost dominated the first studies of German terrorism),[12] the number of such studies diminished when the political atmosphere became less polarized. At that time it became clear that psychological characteristics could not explain the emergence of a political phenomenon. Taking a very different perspective, several authors of recent studies on less radical forms of activism have adopted rational choice models. Constructing their arguments on the work of Mancur Olson (1968), they have looked for the various kinds of incentives that justify activism. These scholars draw a parallel between political and economic behavior: activists, they claim, weight the personal costs and benefits of engaging in collective action before committing themselves. This approach too has been criticized, however, and other theorists have tried to balance the "too-irrational" and the "too-rational" approaches. In his classical study published in English ten years ago, Alberoni (1984) defined a social movement as a *status nascendi*, a situation in which the individual sense of freedom increases dramatically together with the range of perceived possibilities. As mentioned in Chapter 1, more recently researchers have stressed the role of symbolic processes in the development of commitment to common causes. Pursuing this latter line of research, my study of German and Italian radical militants (particularly the information presented in Chapters 6 and 7) stresses certain peculiarities of radical activism as compared with economically oriented behaviors.

Figure 8.3 synthesizes the principal findings on the process through which radical identities are constructed. One condition that increased the likelihood that a particular individual would participate in a left-libertarian movement was his or her involvement in those milieus that serve as relays – or connections – for the movements.[13] The activists' narratives indicate that accidental circumstances (going to a certain school or living in a certain neighborhood or attending a demonstration, all occasions for chance encounters with movement milieus or organizations) often influenced the beginning of dedicated political careers. Bandura reminds us, however, that the determinative effect of chance encounters – defined as "unintended meetings of persons unfamiliar to each other" (1982: 748) – will be stronger under some conditions than under others: in particular, when the individual person possesses the resources needed to gain acceptance and sustain involvement in a new group; and when he or she shares with the new group certain values and the same self-evaluative standard. Undisputably, individuals from specific geographically and culturally delimited milieus – for example, young people who grew up in left-wing families, or attended high school or university in the cities – were specially likely to join the left-libertarian movements. One's chance of being recruited into a movement increased with participation in specific personal networks connected with movement activists.

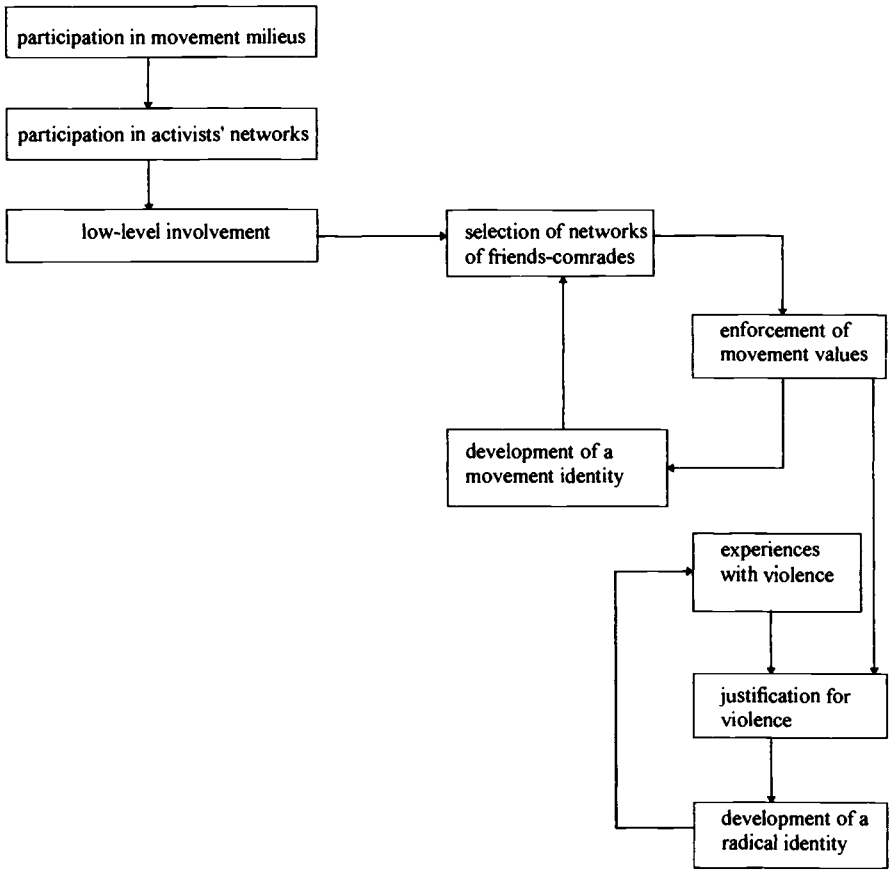

Figure 8.3. The development of a radical identity

Social networks indeed played a significant role in all stages of the political careers that, sometimes, ended up in the underground. The peer groups often determined successive political choices, particularly successive passages from low-risk to high-risk activism. Within the movement environment, personal cliques were connected with each other, and new networks emerged from old ones. Throughout the networks of comrade-friends, friendship reinforced the relevance of political commitment, while political commitment strengthened friendship ties. Consequently, an individual's participation in movement activities accelerated at an "incredible speed," as both Italian and German militants reported, and in a natural and almost unconscious way. In a gradual evolution, the groups of political friends became closed units.

The more radical the group, the more isolated from the movement culture it became, and the more the members' shared risks intensified the "us versus them" mentality. These affective ties ultimately were vital in recruitment to clandestine organizations. Both the Italian and German militants testified that "loyalty" to friends compelled them to make the transition to the underground and that underground organizations were founded by cliques of comrades-friends. Recruitment to underground organizations was often "block recruitment," involving networks of peer groups. Social networks also provided important constraints against what was perceived as "breaking the contract": the group relationship was in fact so intense, and individual identities so embedded in the group, that the members believed it was impossible to live outside it.

This communal solidarity also affected the militants' cognitive processes insofar as all the information individuals received was filtered through the group, which defined the external reality by providing shared master frames of meaning. Moreover, they helped ensure internal conformity. The emphasis on cognitive coherence was all the more important since the process of individual socialization in radical organizations involved a dramatic change in the militants' images of the external world.

A group's image of external reality, however, was not the product only of small group dynamics: in the social construction of reality, the frames of meaning provided by the cliques of comrade-friends interacted with the reality of everyday experience. The militants' immersion in violence distorted their perceptions of the external reality: direct experiences of violence produced, in fact, frames of meaning that justified violence. Internalizing the use of violence as "right" increased an individual's propensity to take part in violent confrontations.

The activists' acceptance of violence grew along with their emotional investment in politics, and their emotional investment intensified with their experience of violence. Stronger solidarity within radical groups fueled hatred for opponents – members of right-wing groups, and also the police – who, in the militants' eyes, became progressively dehumanized. Daily fights thus created a rationale for violence and militarized the activists' attitudes, diffusing a kind of battle spirit toward politics. At the same time, the militants' commitment to politics deepened.

And although radical ideologies were not themselves the cause of violence, the ideological frames through which the militants interpreted their daily encounters with political violence tended to dramatize the significance of these events. The more radical the forms of conflict became, the more radical the frames of meaning that the groups invoked to provide a rationale for individual militance. Memories of police brutalities or the allegedly inhuman treatment of "political prisoners" undermined confidence in democracy. The state became the fascist state of the bourgeoisie; the neofascist groups were the most evil

enemies. Police charges were viewed as evidence of an authoritarian evolution of the state. Street fights with young political opponents became episodes of a civil war. Violent encounters with the police were perceived as a stage in the social revolution. And radical activists developed a revolutionary identity – a solidarity with other militants prepared to fight against a state that was only a front for capitalist exploitation. Those militants who eventually chose, or were drawn into, the underground then developed a freedom-fighter identity, seeing themselves as members of an embattled community of idealistic and altruistic people fighting a heroic war against "evil."

The more widespread the justification for violence, the more radical behavior appeared not as deviance but as the norm, up to the point that joining the underground was perceived as a "natural" step. The "reality par excellence" of the militants' everyday life provided justifications for violence and the basis for an alternative system of values and norms. Because of their isolation from their environment, the underground organizations eventually became the sole point of reference for their members, who progressively lost the sense of external reality. The longer the life of the organization or the longer the individual's experience in it, the more demanding participation became – so that those militants living in clandestinity came to depend on the underground formations as their only means of survival, and indeed for keeping some kind of self-respect. Consequently commitment became ever more total. The cognitive circumscription typical of legal radical groups prevailed as well in the underground. Because the underground group became the militants' only source of information, or at least the only source they were supposed to believe, their grasp of external reality became more and more tenuous with the passage of time. This progressive loss of the sense of reality took place more rapidly among the German militants than the Italian, as its timing depended on the degree to which a particular group was isolated.

Our study of militancy in radical organizations indicates that emotions are the vital force in initiating and maintaining commitment. To a certain extent, this observation holds true for participation in all movement politics. Social movements as a whole, like their radical "subsets," require the development of collective identities. Individuals must realize not only that they can act together and that the collective action is likely to produce positive results but also that they *feel* part of a collectivity. Only this feeling can provide the solidarity needed for collective actions. And, Pizzorno observed years ago (1977), only the individual's adhesion to a "collective entity" – that is, the construction of a collective identity – enables him or her to balance costs and benefits of participation in the long run.

The development of a collective identity is a gradual process. After joining a movement, the individual becomes increasingly devoted to political activity, eventually to the exclusion of all other activities. Members adopt the values and goals of the movement as their own, develop a sense of belonging, and come

to define themselves first of all as movement activists. Thus the individual yields up part of his or her personal identity to the collective identity of the movement. Collective identity and the activists' motivations to participate are then reinforced by the integration of the individual into a movement counterculture, with its "alternative" values and social structures.

As Pizzorno (1977) states, the first phases of building a collective identity tend to produce a relatively "radical" type of identity, since their first task is to delimit borders and encourage internal solidarity. And, as William Gamson noted, "Construction of a collective identity is one step in challenging cultural domination. The content must necessarily be adversarial in some way to smoke out the invisible and arbitrary elements of the dominant cultural codes" (1992:60). But the initial phase of identity building passes. As new actors present themselves on the political market, the movements are compelled to increase contacts with the external environment, and, consequently, bargaining-oriented identities prevail. Contrary to underground organizations, social movement organizations do not usually isolate their activists from their environment. Social movements, in other words, cannot be hermetically sealed against the external world; they must provide for channels that allow a group to bargain with other social and political entities. Participants in movement politics must be able to interact with the outside world: they must be able to calculate the costs and benefits of their action and to communicate with others on the basis of a shared reality. Although most movements are deeply commited to their political goals, they, unlike radical militants, are not prisoners of their groups. The political milieus in which such activists spend most of their life usually do include dense networks strengthened by friendship ties; but they generally remain open to the environment. Most important, most of the movements do not emphasize extremely heroic definitions of the self, nor do they resort to warlike images of the movement's tasks. Like other political organizations, social movement organizations allow for differing degrees of commitment, and use various types of incentives – including individual ones – to motivate commitment.

The radical collective identity I have described in my research seems to emerge only in those historical situations in which the challengers have very few resources for bargaining (and in those subsectors of the movements which have few resources for bargaining). The more isolated a movement family is from the external environment, the more it demands a total involvement, and thus the more confining the movement identity becomes. Conversely, the more integrated into society a movement family is, the more individual "freedom" it allows its members. In the sixties and the seventies, there were times when social movement organizations grew more and more isolated. Social movements of the eighties and the nineties, in contrast, seem to be very well integrated in their environment – a large environment that interacts continuously with the institutions.

MACRO-, MESO-, AND MICRO-DYNAMICS: A FINAL COMPARISON

Our data on the differences between developments in Italy and Germany enable us to specify when particular dynamics are likely to become dominant. To provide a frame for our hypotheses and generalizations, let us briefly review the explanation for the emergence and evolution of political violence in Italy and in Germany, and the main differences between the two national cases.

For the Italian case, the main sources of political violence were found at the macro-level. The development of the Italian democracy and capitalist economy after World War II was based on intensive exploitation of labor, accompanied at the political level by a polarized system in which the strongest left-wing party was the PCI, a Leninist organization with close ties to the Soviet Union. This political system proved an obstacle when, in the sixties, labor attempted to improve its situation, and clashes between government and labor produced bitter social conflicts and an even more polarized political culture. The establishment feared an opposition they perceived as antisystemic, and the opposition feared that the elites would again resort to fascism to limit the workers' power. In response to the economic development and social changes of the late sixties, some members of the elite did adopt reformist attitudes, but others threatened a coup d'etat. The student movement that arose at the time triggered the development of a protest cycle, which involved diverse social strata. Hundreds of new political groups were created, but, although they criticized the Old Left, they remained very much within a traditional leftist master frame. For these groups, adopting violent tactics was a way of differentiating themselves from the Old Left, as well as a means of attracting recruits in the growing internal competition between movement organizations. The spreading mobilization and its radical framing scared and divided the elites in power; once again, some took a more liberal stance, urging the expansion of democracy and institutionalization of the labor conflict, whereas others tried to preserve conservative privileges by resorting to deviant secret services, planning coups d'etat, and protecting the radical Right. In the first half of the seventies, and with the emergence of the economic crisis, the conservative line seemed to prevail. Although the government instituted some timid reforms, unrest increased. And in the movement activists' daily street battles with neofascists and the police their forms of action escalated and their ideological frames became more extreme. The result was a large counterculture in which violence was accepted as a legitimate political means. When, roughly in the second half of the seventies, a more moderate line prevailed among the elites, the social and political situation had already become radicalized.

At that time, the dynamics at the meso-level became dominant in the diffusion of violence. Some groups split off from the movement counterculture and used militancy as a way to aggregate a volatile new potential, composed of a second

generation of very young people, socialized to politics during a period of brutal physical confrontations, a time marked by a general pessimism and the growth of the socially marginalized strata at the periphery of the large cities. But the increasing acceptance of the PCI (which had moderated its statements) into the political system served to isolate the movements' most radical wings. The development of terrorist organizations and mass violence, especially between 1977 and 1979, produced feelings of emergency in an "expanded" polity, now encompassing the Communist Party. The organizational entrepreneurs of violence sought recruits mainly in the radicalized and marginalized movement family, which, in fact, had shrunk as political violence escalated. The clandestine organizations, then, were very small groups, whose members, seeing themselves as freedom fighters, remained loyal to the group until they were killed or arrested. At the beginning of the eighties, however, political violence rapidly disappeared, as if the shock of a large wave of terrorism had taught the polity as well as the challengers a painful lesson. Many underground militants recognized their isolation and – sometimes after many vicissitudes – accepted the state's offers of a reconciliation. The eighties were years of depolarization in the political system and pragmatic collective attitudes.

The story of political violence in Germany goes somewhat differently. We can epitomize the difference by saying that our explanation for the dynamics of political violence in Germany relies more on the meso- than the macro-level. In Germany, in fact, social conflict was less radicalized than in Italy, although in some moments the perception that democracy was in danger was apparently as widespread as in Italy. Germany's economic development following the multiple traumas of Nazism, World War II, and the military defeat allowed for the institutionalization of the labor conflict and a depolarization in the political system, which was characterized by a strong Center and very small marginal radical wings on both the Left and the Right. Because of the traditional marginalization of the radical opposition, the student movement, and, more generally, the left-libertarian culture, were very sensitive to the issue of "exclusion" and very keen to accuse the state of autocratic tendencies. As a reaction to the Nazi experience, and to the civil war among armed militias at the end of the Weimar Republic, polity members and challengers alike feared the extreme use of force, on the one hand, by the opposition and, on the other hand, by the state. Thus, for the most part, Germany's political culture produced constraints against the use of force and violence and in fact limited it. At the same time, however, any incident involving force by the state or violence by the opposition was quickly framed (by the objects of the aggression) in highly dramatized terms and images. The somewhat contradictory outcome of this situation was that while actual violence was contained, radical statements proliferated, especially among a small radical fringe of the leftist movement.

The student movement raised fears among the elites, but its demands were rapidly assimilated by the political system as the government underwent a pro-

gressive change and experienced a wave of reform, which moderated movement tactics. The fights between the state and the first terrorist organization, the RAF, did escalate, however. The very existence of an underground group – even of one consisting of only a dozen isolated people – appeared to the German elites as a threat to democracy, and elicited police actions and new emergency legislation. These developments, considered in the leftist culture as an overreaction, together with the conservative turn that followed the economic crisis of the mid-seventies, alienated the movement activists from the elites in government. And, within the movement environment, the general pessimism typical of the decade increased mistrust in and discontent with the social democratic national government. The harsh treatment of several underground militants imprisoned for terrorist acts was seen as a sign of nazification. Their cause was taken up by a second, and then a third generation of terrorists whose main goal was to free the "political prisoners." The wave of terrorist actions in 1977 again alarmed the elites, who initiated a campaign against the "terrorist sympathizers," an epithet that, for conservative politicians and opinion makers, included a large number of left-wing intellectuals – who, in response, grew even more mistrustful of the state.

At the end of the seventies, actual violence was still rare, but the political climate had deteriorated. Even if most social conflicts were mediated through institutional channels, the movements felt marginalized. But soon, because of the far-reaching alliances created by the peace movement and the entrance of a Green party into national politics, the activists' sense of being marginalized weakened. Thus the radicals' pool of potential recruits dwindled. The most radical groups found some support in the escalation of clashes between police and protestors at demonstrations at nuclear sites. And these groups were able to address, with some success, a new constituency of young and alienated youth in the big cities. In these milieus, militance became an incentive and an end in itself. The tiny *Autonomen,* though isolated, survived in small enclaves, even into the eighties, when, in Germany as in Italy, the tolerance for protest increased. Small nuclei of isolated underground groups continued to carry out some political assassinations, probably with the support of international terrorism. But the underground organizations were unable to survive for long the disappearance of the social and especially the political conditions that had fostered their development. Indeed, at the beginning of the nineties, even the last of the terrorist groups that had emerged from inside the left-libertarian family – the RAF – promised to "suspend" the armed struggle.[14]

ON GENERALIZING THE RESULTS OF THE CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY

The deliberately circumscribed study of only two of the many Western countries that have experienced, or are experiencing, political violence naturally raises the

question, To what extent can we generalize the results of this research? As political violence is such a broad and imprecise concept, one must approach this question with a great deal of caution.[15] The term "radicalism" applies to a range of very disparate phenomena: right-wing and left-wing groups, political violence in democratic and authoritarian regimes, class- and ethnic-based conflicts. Not only do the radical organizations differ according to their ideologies and goals, they also adopt varied organizational models and favor different forms of action. Rule (1988:256) correctly notes that

> The idea that there must exist underlying causes for civil violence *in general* – or invariant characteristics of its participants, organizations or settings – deserves much scepticism. To be sure, we have no proof of the opposite position, for these are not matters that can be proved in advance. But it would be wiser to proceed from the more prudent assumptions that, for civil violence as for other things, what appears as "the same" effect may proceed from a variety of causes, and that "the same" causal influences may yield a variety of different effects in various settings.

Nevertheless, comparative analysis allows us gradually to enlarge our range of knowledge. Referring to social movement literature, Tarrow observes,

> Comparison can be a corrective to the theoretically sweeping but generally narrowly tested structural models that have dominated much of the field until now. . . . Comparison can serve as a check upon premature closure on what seems to the observer as "obvious" patterns that have emerged from narrowly drawn observations on individuals and groups in the same political system. (1991:399)

Cross-national comparative research should therefore provide perspective for results yielded by one national case study, and control the extent to which these results can be generalized to other regions or historical periods. Because I have focused on political violence in the left-libertarian movement families, I have to address the questions of the generalizability of the research results starting with historically and geographically similar types of political violence. What we can infer from the research on Italy and Germany, then, are first of all some hypotheses concerning the dynamics associated with the development of violence in *left-libertarian movement families*, hypotheses that could lead to further cross-national comparisons. The student movement that developed in the United States during the sixties, starting with the mobilization against the Vietnam War and lasting until the mid-seventies, can provide a good case for a first, tentative comparison with which I want to conclude this volume.

Radicalization processes in the United States evolved during a cycle of protest that had started off as mainly peaceful. The American student movement first emerged in 1964, with the Free Speech campaign at the University of California, Berkeley. The movement's platform – the Port Huron Statement – reflected its reformist and optimistic attitudes. The student movement inherited its reliance on nonviolent forms of protest from its predecessor, the civil rights movement.[16] Even the campaign against the Vietnam War had consisted, at least for the first

three years of mobilization, of extremely peaceful actions: vigils, petitions, lobbying, and mass marches (Morgan 1991:129–47). The first signs of radicalization emerged in 1967, with the escalation of the American military involvement in Vietnam, in a series of violent clashes between the students and the police. These started at the University of Wisconsin – where the Madison police, dressed in riot gear, charged a students' sit-in – and culminated on October 21, with the so-called March on the Pentagon. For the movement leaders, the March on the Pentagon was to mark the passage from peaceful protest to civil disobedience, or "from protest to resistance." It actually also marked the beginning of violent confrontations between the movement activists and federal troops. Other steps in the escalation of action repertoires were made in 1968: in February the police killed 3 black students and injured 33 in Orangeburg, South Carolina; and in April, 1,000 police cleared a building occupied by students at Columbia University, arresting 692 and injuring about 100, including bystanders. These tensions exploded during the Democratic Convention in Chicago, with three days of violent clashes between the police and the National Guard, on the one side, and antiwar demonstrators, on the other.

The Chicago battles led neither to the demise of the movement nor to its militarization. They did leave, however, a deepening division between the liberal component of the antiwar campaign, which favored institutionalized forms of protest and a limited set of aims (DeBenedetti 1990:312–47); and several more radicalized student organizations. Violent repertoires spread in 1969.[17] As the then activist and now sociologist Todd Gitlin recalls:

> In the spring of 1969 alone, three hundred colleges and universities, holding a third of the American students, saw sizeable demonstrations, a quarter of them marked by strikes or building takeovers, a quarter more by disruption of classes and administration, a fifth accompanied by bombs, arson or the thrashing of property. . . . Every week the underground press recorded arrests, trials, police hassles and brutalities, demonstrations against the war, demonstrations of blacks and then Hispanic and other people of color and their white allies, demonstrations by GIs against the war, crackdowns by the military. (Gitlin 1987:342–3)

Between September 1969 and May 1970, there were about 250 major episodes of violence (bombings and other forms of violence) attributable to the white Left, mainly against ROTC buildings, draft boards, and induction centers – one a day (Gitlin 1987:401). In the spring of 1970, Nixon's announcement of the American invasion of Cambodia was followed by serious disorders on several campuses.[18]

What is the explanation for this radicalization? First of all, as in Italy and Germany, the escalation of protest repertoires involved *tactical adaptations* between the two main actors: demonstrators and the police. Whereas the first violent interactions were usually spontaneous, the fights in Chicago were well planned. On the side of the authorities, the mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, known for his severity in dealing with the riots that took place following Martin

Luther King's assassination, placed 2,000 policemen on twelve-hour shifts, and put 6,000 army troops and 5,000 National Guardsmen on call for emergency for the week of the convention. According to CBS News in 1978, about one demonstrator in six was an undercover agent (Gitlin 1987:323). On the side of the demonstrators, a part of the organizers prepared to face repression with "defensive violence": "Chicago may host a Festival of Blood. . . . Don't come to Chicago if you expect a five-day Festival of Life, Music and Love" read a leaflet of the Yippies, a radical movement organization (J. Miller 1987:297). After the experience in Chicago, small movement groups started to arm themselves in order to counter police violence, and the violence of the demonstrators triggered paramilitary policing. Todd Gitlin observed, "In the year after August 1968, it was as if both official power and movement counterpower, equally and passionately, were committed to stocking up 'two, three, many Chicagos,' each believing that the final showdown of good and evil, order and chaos, was looming" (Gitlin 1987:342).

Similar *organizational dynamics* as those we saw at work in Italy and Germany fueled radicalization also in the United States. Organizational resources for the development of the student movement came from study groups critical of the traditionalism of the Old Left (Diggins 1992:222–31). The movement organizations that had mobilized the initial resources were not fit to coordinate the campaigns when protest peaked. In particular, the most important of the student organizations, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), collapsed when mobilization grew in 1968.[19] While decentralization and participatory democracy reduced its decision-making and coordination capacities, its inclusiveness increased the internal factionalism that brought about the rapid demise of the organization in June 1969. The American SDS split over two main issues: the use of violent repertoires, and the definition of the actors – new working class, internal "colonies" of blacks, or revolutionary youth – that had to carry out the revolution.

Also in the United States the process of radicalization produced an underground organization: the Weathermen (later Weather Underground). As for its European counterpart, the story of the Weathermen is one of progressive *encapsulation.* It originally emerged as a faction calling for more aggressive tactics within the SDS, and then gradually expanded its use of violent repertoires while adopting an increasingly inflammatory ideology. The choice of militant strategies was partly a consequence of the Weathermen's search for a *mobilization potential.* In its competition both with other factions within the SDS and with other movement organizations, the Weathermen focused on the more radicalized groups: the second generation of student activists, socialized in a radicalized political climate, in particular, the marginalized youth – greasers, motorcycle toughs, juvenile delinquents – who had been the backbone of the clashes with the police in the Chicago park in 1968.[20]

Although the use of militant action was partly a means to face competition inside the movement sector, for the Weathermen, as well as for the European militants, clandestinization was in fact a *step-by-step process* – from the repression that followed the violent rampages during the "Days of Rage" organized in Chicago in October 1969[21] to the National War Council in Flint, Michigan, on Christmas in the same year, when members decided to build small and loosely connected guerrilla focuses. The death of three leaders of the Weathermen during the accidental explosion of the bomb they were preparing, on March 6, 1970, produced an organizational crisis. While many members quit the group, those who remained went underground to escape repression.

Thus, for the Weathermen, as for the other terrorist organizations we have studied, clandestinity was *not a planned and fully conscious choice*: "I believe," the SDS's leader Carl Oglesby said, "they thought they looked cute, and that everybody would know it was basically a joke. The next minute they were lost in it and they couldn't get out" (Gitlin 1987:386–7). Once underground, the increasing dependence upon the "Weathermachine" for both material and symbolic resources (Braungart and Braungart 1992) pushed the militants to the construction of "a world apart": "To push on to the next phase, and abort doubt, they had to forge, at white heat, a world apart. So they withdrew from friends and former comrades, and sealed themselves off airtight. The world having failed their analysis, they rejected it" (Gitlin 1987:395). This isolation from external reality ended up with the implosion of the group as it lost any contact with the movement and concentrated its energies on surviving in clandestinity.[22] In line with a hypothesis that emerged in our comparative European research, in the American case *the "speed" with which the radical groups "imploded" was directly correlated with their isolation inside the left-libertarian movement family.* The process of radicalization in the United States where the social movements provided even less support for violence occurred even faster than in Germany.[23] As the Weathermen went underground, it lost all contacts with other political groups, and its members ended up devoting all their energies to survival.

This observation takes us to the *political countercultures* where the escalation took place. As in Europe, also in the United States, the violent escalation was favored by the stereotyped reciprocal image of the two main actors: the demonstrators and the policemen. As Norman Mailer wrote in an account of the March on the Pentagon:

> The demonstrators, all too conscious of what they considered the profound turpitude of the American military might in Asia, are prepared (or altogether unprepared) for any conceivable brutality here. On their side the troops have listened for years to small-town legends about the venality, criminality, filth, corruption, perversion, addiction, and unbridled appetites of that mysterious group of city Americans referred to first as hipsters, then beatniks, then hippies; now hearing they are linked with the insidious infiltrators of

America's psychic life, the Reds! the troops do not know whether to expect a hairy kiss on their lips or a bomb between their knees. Each side coming face-to-face with its conception of the devil. (in Miller 1987:282)

Similarly in Chicago in 1968, reciprocal fear and mistrust fueled the fights. A movement's leader recalled that if some policemen wanted to "Kill the Commies," the activists on their side feared the most ferocious repression: "I thought we were all going to be arrested, I thought they were going to try to nail us in Grant Park, gas us, beat us, put us away before the nomination of Humphrey. I didn't want them to round us up and beat the hell out of us" (Tom Hayden in Miller 1987:303). After Chicago, Gitlin (1987:324) noticed, "Paranoia and aggression were two sides of a common coin."

As we have observed for the European movements, in the United States the rhetorical radicalization was triggered by external events that produced the image of an absolute enemy: the assassination of Che Guevara, a few weeks before the March on the Pentagon; the assassination of King on April 4, 1968, in Memphis and the riots that followed, a few days before the turmoil at Columbia; the assassination of Robert Kennedy, two months before the Democratic convention in Chicago; and the millions of deaths in the Vietnam War. In this cultural climate, the activists lost at least part of their trust in American democracy; for many of them, the American system was nothing more than a "mockery of democracy."

Violence escalated when protests were met with force by the state, and violent confrontations between the state and the protestors led to the diffusion of the ideological frames of an unjust authority among the protestors. Looking at the time evolution, the American case also seems to indicate that *protest policing is sensitive to the shifts in the political opportunity structure.* The year of the escalation, 1968, saw a shift in the alliance system of the movement. During the early sixties, the liberal establishment had supported the demands of the civil rights movements, and the sixties had been in fact a decade of important reforms. During the years of John F. Kennedy, several movement leaders had had good channels of access to the presidential staff. Early in 1968, two candidates for the Democratic nomination, Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy, were perceived as sympathetic to the movement's claims. In the second half of the year – after the assassinations of King and Kennedy, the nomination of Hubert Humphrey as Democratic candidate for the presidential election, and his defeat by the Republican Richard Nixon – the configuration of power shifted dramatically, becoming less and less favorable for the movement. From the Chicago convention on, repression in fact escalated. To the paramilitary policing of several demonstrations, with the already mentioned outcome of seven demonstrators killed in a few days in May 1970, we can add a long list of harassment, disinformation, infiltration and provocation that addressed not only the antiwar activists but also the counterculture.[24] In March 1969, the leaders of different factions of the movement – among them, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis, Dave

Dellinger, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Bobbie Seale – were indicted on charges of conspiracy to incite a riot in Chicago; a year later, they were convicted. Several state institutions participated in the repression of the movement: the FBI extended its operation "Cointelpro" against the New Left; the CIA organized the "Operation Chaos" for movement surveillance; the Justice Department organized special antiradical grand juries and subpoenas; the House Un-American Activities Committee heard the testimonies of activists; and the Red Squads (political branches of the local police forces) took charge of the control of the activists in several cities.

As happened in our European cases, the repression and the isolation of the movement in the United States also spiraled. Repression increased among the activists the feeling that peaceful protest was useless and pushed them to look for more radical forms of action. But the radical image – greedily spread by the media – isolated the movement in public opinion and discouraged its more moderate supporters. After the first protest, the threshold for media coverage increased, either in terms of numbers mobilized or in terms of militancy of the action, pushing those who could not mobilize hundreds of thousands toward radicalization. According to an observer: "It was obvious from within the movement that the media were giving lurid prominence to the wildest and more cacophonous rhetoric, and broadcasting the most militant, violent, bizarre, and discordant actions, and, within the boundaries of any action, the most violent segments" (Gitlin 1980:182). Isolation and radicalization in turn justified harder repression.

Yet, political conflicts de-escalated rapidly, and the radical groups remained tiny and marginal. Comparing our two European cases with the situation in the United States, I would suggest that in the latter the *long democratic tradition limited the radicalization.* As for the authorities, notwithstanding the closing in the political opportunities in the beginning of the seventies, repression was, especially in comparison with other periods of American history, relatively mild; protest activities were by and large tolerated; and the liberal part of the establishment provided more channels of access to the system for the challengers.[25] Conversely, notwithstanding the inflammatory rhetoric, most activists maintained their confidence in nonviolent strategies, which had been successful in the civil rights movement. As Todd Gitlin remarked: "It remained true, to the decade's bitter end, that most of the New Left thought of violence as the harsh currency of the twentieth century, not the means of liberation. But violence also became the threat and the temptation around which the whole movement, whatever its actual disinclination to pick up stones or guns, revolted" (1987:316). It seems therefore that, contrary to the claims of those who contend that democratic "permissiveness" is responsible for political violence, *the more deep-rooted democracy is, the less widespread is political violence.*[26]

An additional hypothesis confirmed also in the American case is that even if some political violence did develop in the left-libertarian families, *these gen-*

erally demonstrated a strong propensity to solve conflict peacefully. Indeed, most of the 338 deaths that took place during protest activities between 1963 and 1970 (Gurr 1979:54–6) were connected with racial conflicts. In contrast with the "white" Weather Underground who could negotiate their "soft" surfacing, the Black Panthers were heavily infiltrated and often killed in police ambushes.[27] But to check this hypothesis, we should expand our comparative research by contrasting violence in the left-libertarian families with violence in other movement families.[28]

A final remark: throughout this book I have focused on interactions between social movements and the state, and proceeded on the assumption that social and political conflicts are a necessary precondition for political violence. In doing so I am not suggesting that violence was the main outcome of protest. On the contrary, I believe that the left-libertarian movements were primarily nonviolent phenomena, and that they helped to bring about important reforms. From a quantitative point of view, violent protest events in Western democracies were largely outnumbered by nonviolent protest events. Moreover, in the beginning of the nineties, we can say that political violence seems to have almost disappeared from the left-libertarian movement families.

Nevertheless, the need to pursue serious research on political violence has not diminished. Even today violence still dominates relations between social movements and the state in a wide variety of diverse geographical contexts. The problem of political violence, in other words, has by no means been "solved." Violence continues to spread in political conflicts in the Third World, as recent events in South Africa and the Maghreb attest. And with the breakup of communist regimes, violent conflicts – especially those based on ethnic rivalries – have exploded with increasing frequency (and savagery) in the "Second World." Even in the "First World," the West, recent violent outbursts reminded us that the potential for violent escalation of social conflicts still exist, especially when and where economic conditions are deteriorating. At a very first look, it seems that many of the hypotheses elaborated in my research hold true also for the nineties. The contemporaneous forms of violence appear to develop where political opportunities are closed or, at least, have been closed for a long time; where (autochthonous and international) entrepreneurs propagandize terrorist forms of action; and where movement activists are gradually socialized to a military image of politics. As was true in Italy and Germany in the seventies and the eighties, to find a way to invert the escalation of social and political conflicts, without endangering democracy, is not an easy task. Understanding the dynamics of this escalation may be a first step in this direction. I hope that the concepts developed in this volume can help to reach this end.

Notes

1. COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE

1. In a broader definition – too broad for our purposes – political violence includes all those violent actions that produce a political effect (Nieburg 1974:19).
2. This list is an extension of that presented by della Porta and Tarrow (1986:615).
3. As Sartori (1970) explained in his classical treatment of concept building in comparative politics, extension (or denotation) and intension (or connotation) are inversely related to each other.
4. For a review and a critique, see Snyder 1978; and Jenkins and Schock 1992:163–5.
5. For a review of these models, see Eckstein 1980; and della Porta 1983.
6. See, respectively, Russett 1964; Barrow 1976 and Sigelman and Simpson 1977; Muller 1985; Bandura 1973.
7. See, respectively, Feierabend and Feierabend 1966; Huntington 1968; Tilly 1969; Acquaviva 1979.
8. Among the European theorists on the "new" conflicts are the French sociologist Alain Touraine (1978), the Italian Alberto Melucci (1976, 1982, 1989), and the Germans Klaus Offe (1985) and Klaus Eder (1993).
9. For summaries of the American approach, see Oberschall (1973, 1978) and Jenkins (1983). For a combined discussion of "new social movements" and "resource mobilization," see Klandermans 1984; Ferree and Miller 1985; Raschke 1988; and Klandermans and Tarrow 1988.
10. For instance, McAdam 1982; Piven and Cloward 1977; Goldstein 1983.
11. "The concept of 'multiorganizational field' suggests that organizations in a community setting approximate an ordered, coordinate system. Interorganizational processes within the field can be identified on two levels which conceptually overlap: the organizational level, where networks are established by joint activities, staff, boards of directors, target clientele, resources etc.; and the individual level, where networks are established by multiple affiliations of members" (Curtis and Zurcher 1973:56).
12. On frames, see Goffman 1974; Snow et al. 1986. On incentives in political organizations, see J. Q. Wilson 1972; Zald and Jacobs 1978; Lange 1977.
13. The same point was raised again more recently: "We know much more about how active participants are recruited than about why they leave or stay" (Zald 1992:334).
14. As Collier (1991) observed, the choice of "thick descriptions" is in line with the recent development in comparative politics.
15. Skocpol and Somers (1980) distinguish three types of comparative analysis, which

tend to follow each other in a general "cycle of research" on a subject: the study of covariance in order to generate and test hypotheses; a parallel demonstration of a theory on a larger number of cases; and a comparison of cases in order to single out the reciprocal differences.

16. On the definition of parameters and operational variables, see Smelser 1976. On the choice of the countries in cross-national comparison, see Dogan and Pelassy 1984: 132–50.
17. Tarrow's data set covers Italy from 1965 to 1975; Kriesi's data set Holland, Switzerland, France, and Germany from 1975 to 1988; a German project, based at the Wissenschaftszentrum in Berlin, covering the FRG from 1949 to 1989, is still in progress and results are not yet available.
18. For instance, research carried out on the selectivity of American newspapers in covering protest events has shown that only 3.8 percent of protest demonstrations in Washington, D.C., are reported in the *New York Times*; 8.8 in the *Washington Post* (McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith 1992:12).
19. See, for instance, Renza 1977; Meyer-Spacks 1977; Grele 1975; Gagnon 1980.
20. This use of life histories is defended, among others, by Balan and Jelin 1980; Gagnon 1980a, 1981. On life histories in the study of social movements, see della Porta 1987a, 1992c, 1993b.
21. The results of this research project are reported in five volumes: Fetscher and Rohrmoser 1981; Jäger, Schmidtchen, and Süllwold 1981; Baeyer-Katte, Claessens, Feger, and Neidhardt 1982; Matz and Schmidtchen 1983; Sack and Steinert 1984.
22. The code book included the following variables: town in which the event took place, characteristic of the town, type of place, date, duration, presence of a written statement claiming responsibility, number of people injured, number of people killed, number of activists injured, number of activists killed, the organization responsible for the event, abbreviation used to claim responsibility (since some organizations used various abbreviations), target (defined on the basis of the characteristics of the person or object that the militants had in mind when they selected their victim), object (physical characteristic of the victim: a car, a building, a person), profession of the victim, aim of the action (i.e., the function of the action, such as propaganda, financing, military defense), tactics.
23. More precisely, my information referred to the following variables: *structures*: number of members, geographical diffusion, subunities, decision-making processes, and interaction with other groups; *actions*: groups, place, time, target, and forms of action; *ideologies*: derivations, definitions of identity, allies, enemies, objectives, and language.
24. The code book included the following variables: name, birth date, birthplace, characteristics of the birthplace, town of socialization, characteristics of the town of socialization, town of residence, characteristics of the town of residence, gender, family political tradition, presence of partisan in the family, family religious tradition, social origins, education, main type of working activity and employer, type of working activity and employer after joining a clandestine group, years of legal political activism, date of joining the clandestine organization, legal position, subjective position toward terrorism (*irriducibili* – or die-hards – repented, dissociated, etc.), name of legal political organization(s), hierarchical position in the legal group, function in the legal group, date of joining the legal group, date of leaving the legal group, town of legal political activity, name of clandestine organization(s), date of entering the clandestine group, relationship with the "recruiter" in the underground organization, number of friends within the underground organization, hierarchical position in the underground organization, functional position in the underground

organization, date of leaving underground organization, motivation for leaving (arrest, death, voluntary choice), towns of "operations" during the permanence in the underground organization, date of arrest, date of release from prison.

2. POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ITALY AND GERMANY: A PERIODIZATION

1. The dominant behavior includes both strategic actions as well as spontaneous action (della Porta and Rucht 1991:6–7). On movement strategies, see also Rucht 1990a, 1990b.
2. The occupation was therefore, "at the same time, a symbolic reversal of the authority and the creation of a separate and protected space in which to experiment with a different life" (Ortoleva 1988:48).
3. The neofascists killed a student, Paolo Rossi, in Rome in 1967. At the end of that very year, the police charged a demonstration against the "consumer society" in front of one of the most elegant nightclubs on the Tuscan coast, "La Bussola" in Viareggio, and severely injured a young activist.
4. About one-third (36 percent) of the 4,980 protest events singled out by Tarrow for the period between 1966 and 1973 involved violence (della Porta and Tarrow 1986: 615).
5. The quantitative data-set shows a declining trend, starting in winter 1972 (della Porta and Tarrow 1986:616).
6. For more information on this period, see the comprehensive research on social movements in Milan directed by Alberto Melucci (in Melucci 1984a), and Manconi 1983.
7. A few autonomous initiatives – such as magazines, cafés, and bookstores – offered sporadic occasions for contact. Nobody, however, tried to coordinate the various activities. On the women's movement in Italy, see Adler Hellman 1987; Beckwith 1985.
8. A new party that supported civil rights issues and nonviolent strategies.
9. There were 57 attacks against people in 1978, 57 again in 1979, and 35 in 1980 (della Porta 1990:57–9).
10. Such as the bombing of red-light cinemas or the kneecapping of gynecologists, often women.
11. It was based on a common belief in the possibility of a future catastrophe (Melucci 1984b:7) and disillusionment as to the chances for progressive change.
12. Since 1983, the membership of the ecological groups has increased dramatically. The membership of the "conservationist" World Wildlife Fund, for instance, grew from 30,000 in 1983 to 120,000 in 1987, and that of the "political ecological" group Lega per l'Ambiente (League for the Environment) rose from 15,000 in 1983 to 30,000 in 1986. Although ecological lists started to appear in local elections (from 1980), the first electoral campaign in which the ecologists were a significant presence took place in 1985: there were 150 Green lists in the local and regional elections, and they won 600,000 votes (2.1 percent of the total). This result was improved two years later when the Green groups received 1,000,000 votes in the 1987 national election (see Diani 1988:56–86).
13. We should note that votes for the Greens came from voters of different parties; of these votes 22.9 percent were from the centrist Partito Repubblicano Italiano and 16.7 percent from the Partito Socialista Italiano (Diani 1988:186; see also Biorcio 1988).
14. For information on the student movement, see, among others, K. Brand, Büsser, and Rucht 1986:60–67; and Burns and van der Will 1988:99–124. See also Glaser 1990.

15. For instance the *Puddingattentate*, an "attack" on Vice-president Humphrey during his visit to Berlin on April 5, 1967, with a "bomb" made of flower and sugar.
16. The attack followed in the wake of an inflammatory campaign against the student movement, launched by the tabloid press, especially by a daily of the publisher Springer, the *Bild*.
17. K. Brand et al. (1986:77) define this phase as one of reformism and enthusiasm for planning.
18. The first of these declarations, signed by 374 women, appeared in the weekly *Stern* in June 1971.
19. For an account of the interactions between the police and the anarchist counterculture in Berlin, see Claessens and de Ahna 1982:143–59. For an activist's perspective on the confrontations in Frankfurt, see Klein 1980.
20. For example, in 1968 Bommi Baumann, a future member of the yet-to-be-formed radical group Movement of the Second of June, protested against the lack of a playground for the children in his working-class neighborhood by slashing the tires of about one hundred cars, an act that earned him his first prison sentence. A year later, in an attack that was slightly more organized, Baumann and two friends injured a journalist who had criticized their group.
21. In 1976, the parliament passed a new reform of the abortion law, although less liberal than that rejected by the Constitutional Court.
22. Schleyer's driver and three policemen also died in the attack.
23. Such as the *Kontaktsperregesetz* in October 1977, referring to the isolation of alleged terrorists in prison, and the *Anti-Terror-Gesetz* of April 1978, which reduced defense rights.
24. The depressive feelings of the left-wing activists, trapped between terrorist crazy violence on the one hand and hysterical state reactions on the other, were described in the famous film *Deutschland im Herbst* (Germany in Autumn).
25. The "Mescalero affair" refers to the prosecution of some intellectuals who, as protest against the repression of freedom of speech, had republished a statement of an anonymous student who had written in a student journal that, while condemning terrorism, he could not but be "secretly" happy that general prosecutor Buback had died. The editors of the student journal had been convicted.
26. The Greens first won seats in the Bundestag in 1983, with 5.3 percent of the vote, which grew to 8.3 percent in 1987.
27. As documented even in the "alternative" Berlin daily *die tageszeitung* (see, for instance, "Bomben für ein proletarisches Kreuzberg," December 29, 1993, p. 5).

3. VIOLENCE AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM: THE POLICING OF PROTEST

1. There are, however, a few exceptions. For a review of the sociological literature on protest and the police, see della Porta 1993a.
2. In his pivotal study on political opportunities in American cities, Eisinger (1973) focused on access to the political system. Subsequent empirical studies considered additional variables, such as electoral instability (Piven and Cloward 1977), the availability of allies and the tolerance for protest among the elite (Jenkins and Perrow 1977), and the influence of the political process (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982). Tarrow (1983) integrated these empirical observations in his theoretical model for his study of protest cycles in Italy. In Tarrow's framework, the components of the POS are the degree of access to political institutions, the degree of stability or instability of political alignments, the availability and strategic posture of potential allies (Tarrow

1983:28), and – in a later work (Tarrow 1989c:35) – the political conflicts among and within elites.

3. In Marx's typology these aims include: (1) the *creation of an unfavorable public image* (i.e., police forces can cultivate or reinforce a negative public labeling of social movements and social movements' leaders, for instance, by distributing selected information to the press); (2) *information gathering* (which can take the form of collecting movement documents, infiltrating its organizations, attending public meetings, taking photographs, using various records of investigation, wiretapping, observing people and places, conducting grand jury investigations, and opening activists' mail); (3) *restricting a movement's resources* (e.g., communication services and supplies, tax-exempt status, employment for activists) and limiting its facilities; (4) *derecruitment of activists* (i.e., forcing members to defect through the use of argument, bribes, threats, etc.); (5) *destroying leaders* (through repression and/or cooptation); (6) *fueling internal conflicts* (e.g., through acts of domestic counterintelligence); (7) *encouraging conflicts between groups* (also through the use of covert agents and agents provocateurs); (8) *sabotaging particular actions* (by disseminating confusing information, restricting parade routes, denying permits, police provocation, police failure to restrain those who attack the demonstrators).
4. This approach yields four types of political regimes: *repressive* regimes, which repress many groups and actions while facilitating few of either; *totalitarian* regimes, which repress fewer groups and facilitate a wide range of actions, even to the point of making them compulsory; *tolerant* regimes, which accept a wide range of actions, but reduce the power of the stronger groups; and *weak* regimes, which have a wide range of toleration and little repression or facilitation.
5. On critical events and time-limited campaigns relevant to the issue of protest policing, I am in fact collecting information based on newspapers reports, debates on public order laws in parliament, and publications printed by both movement and police presses. I have collected so far information on six protest campaigns: three in Berlin and three in Rome. Those that took place in Berlin were the protest campaign of the student movement in the spring of 1967; the wave of protest surrounding the visit of President Ronald Reagan in spring 1982; and the protest sparked by a second visit by Reagan, in 1987. The protest events in Rome that I looked at were the first escalation during the student movement in 1968; the "77 movement" in the spring of 1977; and Reagan's visit of 1982. For more information on this research, see della Porta 1994. For the German case basic information can be found in *Cilip*, 1981; Blanke 1979; Sack and Steinert 1984; E. Brand 1988; Busch et al. 1988; Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen 1988; and Katzenstein 1990; for the Italian case, in Canosa 1976, and della Porta 1990. The lack of reliable statistical data on the possible indicators of protest policing styles frustrated any attempt at controlling with quantitative measures the qualitative information coming from the case studies.
6. My information on this period is taken from Canosa 1976:chaps. 1 and 2.
7. As many as 62 demonstrators died betweeen 1948 and 1950, 33 between 1951 and 1962 (Canosa 1976:chaps 2 and 3, esp. 127–8, 134–5, 210–13, 217–24).
8. The fascist *Testo Unico di Pubblica Sicurezza* had given the police the right to "admonish" and send individuals to "confinement" (i.e., restriction in a little village away from home), to enforce "compulsory repatriation" to an individual's own town of residence, to deny individuals a passport and the freedom to emigrate, to prohibit public meetings (for reasons of security), and to censor printed materials. According to Article 2, the prefect – the direct deputy of the interior minister at the local level – had the authority to take all measures necessary to preserve law and order, when-

ever there was the threat of a generically defined "danger." A partial reform was implemented only at the end of 1956, after several interventions of the Constitutional Court – that is, the Italian Supreme Court. The new law abolished the "admonishment" and the *fermo di polizia*, but the police retained the power to assign the individuals they considered "dangerous" to territorial internment and "special surveillance" (Law 1423/56).

9. In 1950 the defense minister issued similar regulations for the deployment of the armed forces to maintain public order (*Vie Nuove* 1969).
10. In this period, the parliament began passing laws that fixed a maximum period for incarceration before the judgment (Law 406/70) and increased the number of conditions under which a judge could parole a defendant even for those crimes for which arrest was compulsory (Law 773/72) (see Grevi 1984).
11. In 1964, the head of the military intelligence (Sifar), General De Lorenzo, was accused of planning a coup d'etat and had to resign. Under De Lorenzo, the security services collected files on the public and private lives of politicians from all the main parties (De Lutiis 1984). Subversive forces continued to have an influence on the intelligence services also later on.
12. Between 1969 and 1974, bombs set by right-wing terrorists killed seventeen people on December 12, 1969, in Milan; six in July 1970 on a train in Calabria; eight during a union meeting in Brescia, in 1974; and twelve on the train Italicus, near Bologna, in 1974. On these occasions, the repression of right-wing terrorism was so ineffective that the principals and the executors of those crimes are still unknown. On right-wing radicalism in these years, see Ferraresi 1984:57–72, and Minna 1984.
13. In particular, new regulations against criminality increased the maximum preventive detention (Law 99/74), and gave the police the right to interrogate a defendant (Law 220/74), to search without a formal warrant of suspicion, and to hold a suspect for up to forty-eight hours (Law 152/75).
14. The participation of several leaders of the secret services in the covert "Lodge Propaganda 2" (a Masonic lodge, with subversive aims), and a series of obscure episodes during the Red Brigades' kidnapping of the president of the Christian Democratic Party, Aldo Moro (listed in Flamigni 1988), indicate, however, that the "strategy of tension" had not lost all supporters.
15. They authorized the arrest of anyone who violated the prohibition against disguising oneself in public places (Law 533/77); abolished the maximum limit for preventive detention when a trial was suspended because it was impossible to form a jury or to exercise defense rights (Law 296/77); modified the rules for the formation of popular juries (Law 74/78); introduced a special prison system (Laws 1/77 and 450/77); increased sentences for terrorist crimes and limited individual guarantees for citizens and defendants (Laws 191/78 and 15/80). In particular, the antiterrorist Law 15/80 introduced the "preventive arrest," which allowed the police to detain a person in custody when there was a suspicion that this person would commit a crime.
16. Several trials carried out in those years were *processi indiziari* – that is, trials based on circumstantial evidence in which the judges considered even the testimony of only one person or one's affiliation with an organization with a radical ideology as sufficient evidence of guilt; moreover, the courts often accepted the principle of collective responsibility. After the emergency period, legal scholars expressed their concern for the often disproportionate increase in the length of sentences, a result of the vague definitions given to some crimes (for instance, subversive association; armed band; or armed insurrection against the power of the state) (see, e.g., Scarpari 1979; De Ruggiero 1982; Onorato 1982).
17. After the "emergency" declined, new laws were passed (particularly in 1982 and

in 1986) that were designated to take advantage of the internal crisis in the terrorist organizations. Most notably, they introduced "compensations" for the members of underground organizations who collaborated with the investigations or had simply declared they had given up the "armed struggle."

18. In 1981, the parliament agreed on a new law on the demilitarization and professionalization of the police forces that met some of the demands expressed by a movement for democratization that had became stronger and stronger within the police itself.
19. One peace activist, for example, complained that the judge had acquitted him for "not having committed the crime," notwithstanding his "full confession" (L'Abate 1990).
20. On protest policing in this period I referred to Busch et al. 1988:318–28; and Sack 1984.
21. Between 1951 and 1961 there were about 100,000 proceedings against communist "sympathizers" (Werkentin:116). On September 19, 1950, the Federal Government declared the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, its related organizations, and some right-wing groups as "enemies of the constitution" (Grässle-Münschen 1991: chap. 3). In the fifties, the Constitutional Court ruled the Neo-Nazi Party and the Communist Party anticonstitutional, and outlawed them (respectively, in 1952 and 1956).
22. For a short history of *Demonstrationsrecht* in Germany after World War II, see Blanke and Sterzel 1983.
23. By 1976, half a million people had been investigated, but only 430 excluded from the civil service because of anticonstitutional activities or participation in anticonstitutional organizations.
24. For a nationally called march in Kalkar, the police searched 122,000 people and 68,000 cars in Nordrhein-Westfalen; 147,000 people, 75,000 cars, and a train in the rest of the Federal Republic (Busch et al. 1988:38).
25. In Germany as in Italy, antiterrorist laws limited the opportunities for protest. In 1974 an amendment to the criminal proceedings law reduced the rights of the defendant; and in 1976 new legislation introduced the crimes of "founding a terrorist organization" (paragraph 129a of the criminal code), calling for "anticonstitutional" violence (par. 88a), and distributing of publications that encourage illegal actions (par. 130). In 1977, a law was passed that made it possible under "emergency" circumstances to prohibit any contacts with terrorists in prison; in 1978, new laws gave the police greater power in conducting searches.
26. On protest policing and escalation in Wackersdorf, see Kretschmer 1988; on the early escalation in the campaign against the expansion of the Frankfurt airport, see Schubart 1983; on the campaign against the conference of the World Bank Fund, see Gerhards 1993. In my case studies, I collected information on the two visits of Ronald Reagan to Berlin, one in 1982 and one in 1987.
27. See, for instance, state reactions to the boycott of the national census at the beginning of the eighties (Appel and Hummel 1988).
28. An incomplete list of the relevant variables would include: (1) *legislation on civil rights* – in particular on citizens' rights, defendants' rights, prisoners' rights; and (2) the *organization of the repressive apparatuses*, including primarily the police, the secret service, and the judiciary. Relevant questions about the police refer to the degree to which they are militarized and to their accountability and centralization. The specialization of the secret services in internal versus external security and their relative dependence on the military are also relevant factors in any attempt to define the context for protest and protest policing. Characteristics relevant to the judiciary concern who has the right to initiate a trial for political crimes; the existence of

special courts for political crimes; the existence of an inquisitorial legal process versus an adversarial legal process, and the body of laws on political crimes. For a general description of the Italian and German police organization, see Roach and Thomanek 1985).

29. Scharpf (1984:257) defined this concept as "an overall understanding, among those who exercise effective power, of a set of precise premises integrating world-views, goals and means."
30. Monjardet (1990:214–15) suggested, for instance, that – in light of the negative political consequences of the police killing demonstrators in February 1934 – the French police are still trained to consider the demonstrator not as an enemy but as a temporary adversary, and to avoid injuring or killing people.
31. For instance, according to Zwerman (1987), the "harder" counterterrorist policies of the Reagan administration resulted from the pressure of right-wing groups (such as the Moral Majority) on the national government.
32. On escalation and unforeseen consequences of police intervention, see Monet (1990).
33. About 1,300 police were present at the first demonstration in Brokdorf, 6,500 at the second demonstration in Brokdorf; there were 5,000 police at the demonstration in Grohnde; and 8,000 at the demonstration in Kalkar.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES AND VIOLENCE IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

1. As regards organizational incentives, I distinguish between material versus symbolic (solidarity incentives, ideological incentives, etc.), and selective versus collective (see Olson 1968; Wilson 1973). On the general characteristics of social movement organizations, see, among others, Curtis and Zurcher 1973; Downtown 1973; Zurcher and Curtis 1973; Freeman 1983b; Rucht 1981, 1989a; Klandermans 1989.
2. In contrast with *inclusive* organizations, the *exclusive* organizations require a long period of novitiate, the acceptance of strict discipline, and a high level of involvement (Zald and Ash 1966:330–31).
3. Several scholars have emphasized the importance of pre-existing organizational networks for the emergence of new movements (see, e.g., Freeman 1983b; McAdam 1982; and Morris 1981).
4. In his analysis of the occupation of the university in Pisa in February 1967, Tarrow wrote: "Supported by a national coalition of experienced activists and attended by the national media, they [the students] used the division in the traditional student organizations, their inability to match the occupation with equally dramatic forms of action, and the stupidity of the administration, to call attention to themselves and gain a following. The occupiers had one more thing going for them: the strategic sense, the existing organizational network and the tactical creativity of Potere Operaio Toscano" (Tarrow 1989a:248).
5. AO similarly emerged in a process of consolidation that brought together several small "workerist" groups: Avanguardia Operaia from Milan, Circolo Lenin from Mestre, Circolo Rosa Luxemburg from Venice, joined later by Sinistra Leninista from Rome and Unità Proletaria from Verona (Teodori 1976:445). The group Il Manifesto was instead founded by activists expelled from the PCI. The other important organization of the Italian New Left, the Partito di Unità Proletaria (PdUP), emerged from the dissolved Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (PSIUP), founded in 1964 by dissidents of the PSI. These groups also expanded as the result of the merging of various small local groups.
6. In contrast to the German students, very few Italian student activists joined the youth

organization of the Communist Party, the Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana (FGCI), at least during the peak of mobilization. In fact, in 1968 the FGCI entered a long-lasting crisis, which manifested itself in a dramatic decline in membership. The number of members – which had already declined from 438,759 in 1951 to 125,438 in 1968 – fell to 68,648 in 1969 (Barbagli and Corbetta 1978:11). In the mid-seventies, however, the number of PCI members with experience in the movements increased (Lange, Irvin, and Tarrow 1990).

7. About 20,000–30,000 members for LC; 5,000–6,000 for Il Manifesto (Monicelli 1978); 3,000 for AO. In the late sixties, the membership of the Partito Comunista d'Italia (ml) reached a peak of circa 10,000 (Teodori 1976:436). On the New Left, see also Hellman 1976.
8. In addition to the legal sources reported in the bibliography, on the foundation of the BR see Caselli and della Porta 1984; and Franceschini, Buffa, and Giustolisi 1988. On the later story of the BR, see Meade 1990.
9. On the evolution of the radical wings of the two groups, see also Palombarini, 1982.
10. A few years later, when the BR killed the father of an LC militant, further dissension over the use of violence shattered what was left of the organization.
11. The strategic turn of the SPD culminated in its "Godesberger Programm" of 1959.
12. In 1971, the "census" of the various K-groups was 35 Maoist groups (with a total of 2,000 members), 7 Trotskyite groups (with a total of 700 members), 10 anarchist groups (with a total of 250 members), and 210 other leftist groups (with a total of 2,600 members) (Langguth 1983:57). If these data are correct, the average number of members per group was 21.
13. On the foundation of the RAF, see Neidhardt (1982a, 1982b), von Baeyer-Katte (1982), and Aust (1985). On radicalization of movement organizations in Germany, see Waldmann 1986.
14. Later on, in the mid-seventies, about twenty activists of the pro–"political prisoners" *Komitee gegen Folter* (committee against torture) joined the RAF, among them, all six members of the "Kommando Holger Meins," which organized the armed occupation of the German Embassy in Sweden on April 24, 1975. Other organizational milieus for block recruitment were, in 1977, the terrorist group Movement of the Second of June, and, in 1979, the proprisoner group Black Help.
15. The program for the formation of "Red Help–People Organization" was published in May 1970. The group presents itself as a socialist group, active on such issues as "class justice," "help to the prisoner," and "alternative health services." Black Help was founded in early 1971 with a similar program (Claessens and de Ahna 1982:129–32).
16. On the B2J, see Claessens and de Ahna (1982), and the autobiography of Baumann (1976).
17. The Hash Rebels, formed by an ex-member of the Wieland Commune in the beginning of 1969, was an anarchist group that experimented with drugs as a way to reach a sort of "liberation of the self" (see Claessens and de Ahna 1982:106–19).
18. According to the same source, later on, the B2J put the RAF, which "badly wanted arms," in contact with the covert agent suspected of having offered them those arms (Baumann 1978).
19. The so called "Free-Bommi Campaign" started in June 1970 with a bombing against the Berlin Justice Palace. Other bombings followed (Claessens and de Ahna 1982: 123–6).
20. On the origins of the RZ, see the autobiography of Klein (1980); see also Becker 1988. In Germany as in Italy, the political environment generated other small terrorist groups.

21. Such as the terrorist attack against the OPEC Conference in Vienna in 1975, and the hijacking of an Air France airplane that ended up in Entebbe in 1976.
22. The "countercourses" represented an attempt to institute forms of "education from below": "the development of a new organizational form of a practical and experimental reform of the university and 'permanent critique of the university'" (Rolke 1986:278). The *Kritische Universität* in Berlin was based on the idea of "self-organization of one's own course of study" (Rabehl 1988:225).
23. White, Levine, and Vasak (1975) observed that exchanges between voluntary associations are initially hampered by a lack of knowledge, and that this testifies to the importance of coordinating units.
24. For example, PO initially had a number of militants who were still active in the PSIUP or the PCI (Luperini 1969:107).
25. There are two possible explanations for the increasing exclusiveness of movement organizations. First, the need for coordination emerged with the diffusion of mobilization and, given the organizational culture available, the more structured and exclusive organizations were better equipped to fulfill that task. Later on, when university mobilization declined, the more exclusive organizations were more able to command commitment by providing their members with a stronger organizational identity.
26. In Luigi Manconi's words, there was a shift from a "student organizational model" to a "workerist organizational model" (Manconi 1990:59–71).
27. Several of the German New Left's self-acknowledged "mistakes" were attributed to the "Italian illusion" – that is, its adoption of the Italian model of militance in the mid-seventies (Kukuck 1974:237).
28. See, for instance, Neidhardt's study (1981) of the emergence of the RAF.
29. It is not new that vicious circles influence the organizational evolution so that negative feedback loops can actually produce results that are the opposite of those expected (e.g., Masuch 1985:14–15). Merton's "vicious circle of bureaucracy" (Merton 1957) states, for instance, that the management of an organization tends to attain some goals (such as raising production) through increasing formalization. Formalization, however, produces apathy in the work force, to which management reacts with more formalization. In our cases, vicious circles brought about a special process of bureaucratization, which was eventually responsible for the breakdown of the radical organizations. On bureaucratization in the New Left, see Breines 1980.
30. Describing the origins of the RAF, Mario Krebs (1988) sums up the accidental nature of the "leap" into the underground. Whereas Meinhof herself commented "whether it was correct to begin armed guerrilla actions can now be proven only practically," her biographer observed that the RAF was the result neither of a concrete political practice nor of a strategic concept. Rather, it was the chance product of a badly executed liberation attempt and an overreaction by the state.

5. THE LOGIC OF UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATIONS

1. Other groups active at the same time were organized in a similar way: for instance, the small terrorist group Reparti Comunisti d'Attacco (RCA), active in Milan at the end of the decade, had organized so-called Communist Squads of the Proletarian Army.
2. The survival of the RZ can be explained in part by a peculiarity of this group, namely, the strong support it received from international terrorist organizations. The

RZ paid back these organizations by creating an "international cell" that assisted in some brutal actions of international terrorism.

3. A group of Roman militants, who later founded the Movimento Comunista Rivoluzionario (MCR), left in 1979; the Milanese "Colonna Walter Alasia" left in 1980; the group known as "Prison's Front" left in 1981.
4. Among the groups that broke away were "For Communism," in 1979, and the so-called Nuclei, in 1981. In 1981, a group of PL militants joined the BR, thus determining the final breakdown of PL. As for the FCC, various groups split off to join PL or the BR, while others created independent underground groups, such as the RCA or Guerriglia Rossa (Red Guerrilla War) (della Porta 1990:233–4).
5. This disagreement occurred during the kidnapping of the president of German industrialists, Hanns Martin Schleyer. The hijackers wanted to free the RAF members imprisoned in Stammheim, but the plan did not work, and the RAF killed their hostage.
6. See Chapter 1 for more information on the coding of the events.
7. In 1972, the RAF attacked U.S. military bases in Frankfurt and Heidelberg. Four people died in these attacks. After the campaign to free the Stammheim prisoners in 1977, the RAF's only other action in the seventies was, in 1979, a failed attack against NATO's General Alexander Haig. On the RAF in the eighties, see Peters 1991.
8. "We were not very good at using guns," wrote Baumann (1976:148), "and moreover we did not have guns. Our tactic was different; our only means of defense was to plant bombs and throw Molotov cocktails during street fights."
9. Even though it should be mentioned that the B2J's defendants were acquitted at the last of several trials, in 1991, for lack of definitive evidence.
10. In 1978, the RZ wounded a lawyer in Berlin. Moreover, as already mentioned, RZ's militants took part in sanguinary attacks of international terrorism.
11. As a matter of fact, the BR criticized the RAF's ideology as "abstract and deprived of any tradition" (see the interview with former BR Valerio Morucci in *Spiegel-Gespräch* 1986).
12. The Montoneros' "hedge theory" – according to which Peron supported the guerrillas but could not express his support because he had to placate his wife and the Right – exemplifies the extremes this "loss of the sense of reality" can reach (Moyano 1992).
13. Simmel (1950) made similar observations about ideology in secret societies in general.

6. PATTERNS OF RADICALIZATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVISM

1. It is to be noticed that while I reconstructed Mahler's biography on the basis of written sources, Marco's biography is a summary of a long interview I had with him. This is one of the interviews that, as already mentioned in Chapter 1, I have collected in the framework of a research project carried out at the Istituto Carlo Cattaneo of Bologna.
2. Keniston (1968) described a similar process in his classic study on the American student movement of the sixties.
3. Several scholars who have studied movement–countermovement relations acknowledge that the dynamics of these relations produced escalations, especially during face-to-face interactions: see Zald and Useem 1987:219ff.; Mottl 1980:628.
4. Another recalled: "I entered school at 7:30, so that they could not catch me . . . and

I left at 4:40; it was like going to a battlefield" (right-wing radical, in Osella 1988: 19–20).

5. Not surprisingly, the militants of the radical groups were quite young. Taking again the extreme case of the militants in the Italian terrorist groups, we find that of a total of 2,308 people arrested for terrorist crimes between 1970 and 1984, 9 percent were younger than 20 years old, 36 percent between 20 and 24 years old, and 29 percent between 25 and 29 years old at the time of their arrest. As low as the average age of these militants was, it was even lower for those who joined either right-wing or left-wing organizations after 1976 (Weinberg and Eubank 1987:99, 101).
6. On December 19, 1980, right-wing terrorists killed the ex-director of the Israeli center and his wife. A few months before, a member of the same group had set off a bomb at the Oktoberfest in Munich that killed 12 people and wounded 211. Other targets of right-wing violence were immigrants and *Asylbewerber* (asylum seekers).
7. Interestingly enough, this expectation of an imminent coup d'etat was shared by the radicals at the other extreme of the political spectrum, but with different feelings and effects. From the end of the sixties to the mid-seventies, the neofascists awaited a right-wing coup d'etat with the sense of being part of a historical event. In the words of one right-wing terrorist, in the early seventies, "the coup d'etat was our tactic, because it was going to help us to destroy communism" (in Fiasco 1990: 170). Among these right-wing radicals, the charged atmosphere not only seemed to promise the possibility of an authoritarian change of regime, it governed the daily behavior and the perspectives of the radical activists who "every single day [had] a coup d'etat to talk about . . . [and] lived in an unbelievable atmosphere of fake, true, presumed coups d'etat that were going to happen" (right-wing radical, in Fiasco 1990:170).
8. Social movements were defined as "forms of activity by which individuals create new kinds of social identities" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991:2).
9. As John Lofland observed, "Contemplating MOs [movement organizations] in comparative perspective, I have been struck with how a few seem to create vibrant, multihued, up-beat, complex, outward-extending cultural lives that imbue their members with liveliness and vibrancy. Others, by contrast, display stunted, simple, and emotionally narrowing cultures" (1985:219).
10. We can stress once again that social movements are in fact based on selective social incentives and moral concerns, which rational choice models of collective action include as main elements in the calculus of costs and benefits of participation (see, e.g., Chong 1991). On rational choice in violent behavior, see De Nardo 1985.
11. Fantasia defined cultures of solidarities as "more or less bounded groupings that may or may not develop a clear organizational identity and structure, but represent the active expression of worker solidarity within an industrial system and society hostile to it. They are neither ideas of solidarity in the abstract nor bureaucratic trade union activity, but cultural formations that arise in conflict, creating and sustaining solidarity in opposition to the dominant structure" (1988:19–20).
12. As Klandermans noted: "Processes of meanings construction take place at three levels: (1) the level of public discourse and the formation and transformation of collective identities; (2) the level of persuasive communication during mobilization campaigns by movement organizations, their opponents, and countermovement organizations; (3) the level of consciousness raising during episodes of collective action" (Klandermans 1992:82).
13. As we shall see in the concluding chapter, a similar point has been made about the characteristics of two generations of American activist groups, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Weathermen. The older SDS leaders grew up

under qualitatively different historical conditions from those prevailing when the Weathermen were adolescents: the nonviolent SDS in a period that valued peaceful protest, the militant Weathermen in a period accustomed to radical forms of action (Braungart and Braungart 1992:62–7). On generations in movements, see Ross 1983; Braungart 1984a, 1984b, 1984c.

7. INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT IN THE UNDERGROUND

1. According to Schmidtchen's data, German left-wing terrorists had participated in various types of legal groups: 27 percent had belonged to prisoners' help organizations, 10 percent to New Left organizations, 8 percent to student organizations, and 7 percent to *K-Gruppen* (Schmidtchen 1981:71). These percentages are doubled if we exclude the 48 percent of missing values from their computation.
2. For instance, Lofland (1977b) stressed the role of friendship ties in the conversion to the doomsday cult. On personal networks and recruitment, see also Aveni 1978; Klandermans 1988, 1990; Snow 1979; Snow and Machalek 1983. On the Italian case, see also Novaro 1988.
3. According to Schmitchen (1981:47), about 47 percent of the future left-wing terrorists had lived in *Wohngemeinschaften* (against 15 percent for the comparable age cohort of the larger population); 41 percent had lived in the more ideological *Kommune* (against 5 percent of the larger population).
4. Similarly elitist conceptions of self-identity are characteristic of other small totalistic groups, such as secret societies (Simmel 1950; Hazelrigg 1969) and sects (Niebuhr 1937; B. Wilson 1959).
5. According to Speitel, the request of the RAF members in prison to be treated as "prisoners of war" expressed this attitude: "It was not a request through which we pursued the improvement of prisoners' conditions. Quite to the contrary, this slogan [was meant to] convey the sense of the armed struggle" (1980b:32).
6. Lorenz Böllinger offers another explanation of the psychology behind the terrorists' warlike stance: "As a . . . defense mechanism the group cultivates collective projections: the enemy is therefore as powerful and as ideal as oneself . . . one's own importance and authenticity are related to the 'dimension' of the enemy" (1981: 204).
7. According to Kanter (1968), sacrifice and investment ensure the continuance of commitment; renunciation and communion enforce cohesion commitment; and mortification and surrending produce control commitment. For a definition of commitment, see H. Becker (1960).
8. In a study on a religious sect in the United States, Simmons (1964) singled out selective perceptions as one mechanism that allows members to maintain deviant beliefs. In a similar vein, Zygmunt (1972) – taking the example of millenarianism – observed that, even when prophecies fail, the groups that had produced them can survive. A mechanism that allows survival is to state, even against all evidence, that the prophecy did *not* fail.
9. More recently, Lofland (1977a) stressed the interactive dynamics involved in such conversion steps as "picking up," "hooking," "encapsulating," "loving," and "committing."
10. The typology proposed by Lofland and Skonovd also includes intellectual, mystical, revivalist, and coercive models.
11. A similar point is raised by Claessens and de Ahna (1982:83) apropos the effects of labeling processes on the radicalization of the student movement in Berlin.
12. Crenshaw (1992:37) makes a similar observation.

13. "Aware of the hazards of doing so," added Lofland (1985:219), "I want to label this elusive feature of social movement culture, the package of collective ways of approved and fostered member emotions, beliefs, and actions."
14. According to Berger and Luckmann, "No radical transformation of subjective reality (including of course identity) is possible without such identification, which inevitably replicates childhood experiences of emotional dependency on significant others" (1966:157).
15. McAdam's interviewees recalled the emotional intensity of their participation in the movement in terms that were themselves highly emotional: "[it was] a thing of beauty to see us working together" (McAdam 1988:85); "I felt like I belonged" (89); "infinite love" (91); "romantic trip" (93); "a lot of romance" (93); "maniac adrenaline high" (94); "aphrodisiac"; "erotic feelings"; "it was sexual in a certain way – you felt so close – you loved everybody in that place in that moment" (95); "I loved the danger" (96); "have something exciting happening to us" (111); "nowhere else I wanted to be" (112); "more love, sympathy, and warmth, more community than I have known in my life" (113).
16. These mechanisms were not confined to the Italian and German underground groups. See, for instance, Moyano 1995 on the Argentinians' "Guerrilla" and Steinhoff 1995 on the Japanese Red Army.
17. For a definition of the concept of "weak ties," see Granovetter 1973.
18. As Hougland and Wood (1980) observed in research on fifty-eight local churches in Indianapolis, the commitment increases according to the degree of control, which, in its turn, increases when the size of the group decreases.
19. Nahirni developed his concept of ideological group in a study based on autobiographical materials concerning members of Russian underground groups in the second half of the nineteenth century.
20. An extreme case is that of the Weathermen, which for a while required renunciation of privacy even in sexual relations (Braungart and Braungart 1992). On commitment mechanisms, see Kanter 1968, 1972.
21. Claessens and de Ahna (1982:142) spoke of *Realitätsverlust*, referring to the German radicals in Berlin.

8. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AND THE STATE: A CONCLUSION

1. See, for instance, Sigelman and Simpson 1977, and Park 1986. For a critique, see White 1989:1277–82.
2. Writing on Germany, Billing (1984) pointed to profound changes in the hierarchical structures. Writing on Italy, Acquaviva (1979) suggested that rapid technological progress destroyed the values that facilitated the individual's integration into a traditional society without substituting a new value system. For similar explanation, see Ferrarotti 1979.
3. See Bonanate 1979. For a critique, see Pasquino 1984. Assuming the perspective of the political actors, Melucci (1981) suggested that the disfunctions in the political system prevented the movements from expressing themselves in a more tolerant atmosphere. For a review of sociological explanations of Italian terrorism, see Pasquino and della Porta 1986.
4. Other scholars have cited the common experience with fascist regimes as an explanation for the development of terrorism. For instance, Norbert Elias (1989:497) stated that, in Germany as in Italy, the violence of left-wing terrorists is "a long-term consequence . . . of the barbaric violence of National socialism," which was, at its

turn, a consequence of a particular civilization process, characterized by the weakness of the bourgeoisie. The mediating dynamics that might explain the "burden of the past," however, have never been analyzed in detail. Moreover, the accounts provided for the Italian and the German cases appear to contradict each other. For the German case, most commentators emphasize the alienation of the younger generation from their fathers, whom they held responsible for the atrocities of Nazism (e.g., Botstein 1979; Billing 1984). Combining structural and psychological perspectives, Cook (1982:154) suggested that the German militants expressed a "need to 'over-identify' as a result of an 'under-identification' with the present German system because of Germany's fascist past." Research on Italy has instead emphasized the country's tradition of violence, to which the resistance to fascism belonged, and the "long-standing intellectual traditions in Italy of making violence photogenic by justifying and beautifying it" (Drake 1989:xv; see also Drake 1982, and Salvioni and Stephanson 1985). See, also, Steinert 1988.

5. Italy and Germany were not the only Western democracies in which the ideology and repertoires of the left-libertarian families underwent phases of radicalization. In both France and the United States, the student movements aroused fear and provoked "overreactions" from democratic governments. One explanation for these overreactions is that the student movements were, as it were, bringing to birth a new social actor, and therefore a new, not yet institutionalized, conflict (for this explanation, see the seminal work of Alain Touraine, in particular, Touraine 1978). The student movement, and the left-libertarian movements that followed, were indeed a different type of collective actor from the labor movement, and consequently the Old Left was reluctant to offer them channels of access to the political system.
6. Kolinski (1988:59) rightly observed that German terrorism "testifies to the failure of creating a legitimate space for conflict in the political culture."
7. According to Cook (1982:154), "The inability of the German terrorists to see the differences between the past Fascist Germany and the present democratic Germany represents a 'reality loss'."
8. For this distinction, see Crenshaw 1988a. The organizational perspective is presented in depth in Crenshaw 1985.
9. See, for instance, McCarthy and Zald 1973; Garner and Zald 1983.
10. On social movements' ideology, see Gerlach and Hine 1970; on a similar phenomenon in religious sects, see Lofland and Stark 1965.
11. Not all movement organizations that become sectlike choose violence; the choice depends on the presence of resources for violence first of all in the environment and then in the organizations themselves.
12. According to Baeyer-Katte (1982), for instance, terrorist sympathizers are psychopaths who react politically to strains in their personal lives. For a critique of this interpretation, see Horn 1982, and Hertel 1986:chap. 4.
13. For a definition and an empirical application of the concept of "relay," see Ohlemacher 1992, 1993.
14. Even earlier, however, the RAF had become so incapsulated, so isolated from the social movements that some commentators have suggested it no longer really existed after the mid-eighties. This thesis was presented during a television program on the national public channel ARD ("Brennpunkt" of July 1, 1992). As the police had been unable to find any trace of those responsible for attacks claimed by the RAF since the mid-eighties, the ARD's reporters suggested that there was no proof that those attacks had really been carried out by the RAF, or even that the RAF still existed. The same hypothesis is discussed in Wisnewski, Landgräber, and Sieker 1993.

15. Alasdair McIntyre, for one, criticized the tendency to look for "general theories" even for a phenomenon that appears as diffused as "making holes" (in Rule 1988: 255).
16. Nonviolence aimed at raising support for the black people in moderate public opinion. Martin Luther King so described the four steps involved in nonviolent protest: "First, the demonstrators would attempt, in a lawful manner, to exercize their constitutional rights. Second, in doing so they would be attacked, without legitimate provocation, by their racist opponents. Third, media coverage of this senseless violence would leave a deep impression about the conditions of the South that would shock and outrage the American public and bring forth their sympathy and support for the goal of the civil rights movement. And fourth, the federal government would be compelled by the weight of public pressure to intervene and correct the problems with appropriate legislation" (in Chong 1991:20). As Eyerman and Jamison (1991:6) noted, "The civil rights movement is, in many way, a transition between the old social movements of the working class and the new social movement of postmodernism. It shared with the working-class movement a desire for inclusion into the modern industrial welfare state, but it also came to transcend that role by articulating new needs and desires which entered into a new wave of social movements in the 1960s and 1970s."
17. According to statistics of the American Council of Education, in 1969 there were 9,408 incidents of protest, of which 731 involved police intervention and arrests, 410 instances of damage to property, and 230 cases of violence to persons (Gitlin 1987:409).
18. The most dramatic of these confrontations took place at Kent State University in Ohio, where, on May 4, National Guardsmen opened fire, killing 4 students and wounding 9; Jackson State College in Mississippi, where, on May 14, the police killed 2 students and wounded 9; and Berkeley, on the following day, when the police shot between 50 and 100 demonstrators and killed 1. Three thousand National Guardsmen remained for weeks to patrol Berkeley; about 1,000 people were arrested in just the week following the events (Gitlin 1987:353ff.).
19. For a history of the SDS, see Sale 1973. On the evolution of SDS, see Miller 1983.
20. During the Chicago Convention violence was triggered by a temporary alliance between the most militant leaders and marginal youth, the "Chicago Park People": "Some were movement toughs in affinity groups, but most were new to the movement. . . . They were proud to be freaks, playing out the logic of juvenile delinquency, the beats, James Dean, Hell's Angels; the very idea of 'the movement' or 'political authority' was laughable to them. . . . Old-timers tingled to see the movement open up. In their rush toward militancy, what they had feared more than anything else was isolation. Now they beheld allies and wanted to swing with them" (Gitlin 1987:328). Ehud Sprinzak describes the Weathermen as the "second generation of the SDS who where politically socialized by the violent confrontations of the previous three years" (1990:77).
21. Weathermen were indicted and condemned to pay a total of $2.3 million worth of bail bonds requiring $234,000 in cash bail (Gitlin 1987:394).
22. After they went underground, members of the Weathermen set off about twenty bombs (among them, one at the New York police headquarters and one at the Capitol), killing nobody. Many militants of Weather Underground surfaced in the second half of the seventies. On October 20, 1981, a remnant group killed a guard and two policemen during a robbery. As Sprinzak (1990:77) noted, "For most of the time, its inexperienced leaders and recruits worried not about the revolution but about their hideouts, survival logistics, and internal group relations."

23. We can recall that in Italy, where the culture offered more support for violence, the disintegrative process took place more slowly.
24. On the repression of the antiwar movement see, among others, Goldstein 1978; Peck 1985:135–44; and Donner 1990.
25. As Gitlin (1987:415–16) noticed, for instance, "During the Nixon years, juries remained relatively unimpressed with the government's cases against radicals." Edward Morgan (1991:128) observed that: "172,000 men were conscientious objectors, while over half a million committed draft violations, like burning draft cards or resisting induction, that could have sent them to prison for up to five years; 3,250 went to prison." The police harassment of student activists never reached the brutality of the repression of the union movement and the civil rights movement.
26. A comparison with the populist movements in Latin America would probably confirm this hypothesis: violence escalated, in fact, much more rapidly in Argentina and Peru, where weak democracies resorted to brutal repression against political opponents, than, for example, in Italy, Germany, or the United States. For in-depth analyses of political violence in Argentina, see Gillespie 1982 and Moyano 1992, 1995. On political violence in Peru, see Scott Palmer (1988, 1995).
27. According to some estimates, about twenty-eight Panthers were killed by the police between 1968 and 1969 (in Gitlin 1987:350).
28. Ethnic movements in Western Europe, in particular the Basque separatist movement in Spain and the civil war in Northern Ireland, could be a good case in point. On terrorism in Northern Ireland, see Bell 1979, and White 1989, 1992, 1993. For Basque terrorism, see Jáuregui Bereciartu 1981; Wieviorka 1988: 249–349; and Llera Ramo and Shabad 1995. For a comparison of ethnic terrorism and other forms of terrorism, see Waldmann 1992.

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PRIMARY SOURCES

Police and judicial sources

Abbreviations for judicial sources

IM BI Investigating Magistrate's Bill of Indictment
JP Judicial Proceeding
PP C Public Prosecutor's Charge
SC Sentence of Court

Bewegung 2. Juni:

- Prozeßbüro Berlin, Die Prozesse gegen die Bewegung 2. Juni. 1977.

Brigata Lo Muscio:

- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 226/81
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 226/81

Brigate Rosse:

- Court of Genoa: IM BI in JP 759/80
- Court of Milan: PP C, March 22, 1975
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 1094/78F et al.
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 1094/80F
- Court of Milan: IM BI and PP C in JP n. 490/81F
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 187/83 + 473/83 + 1204/83
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 624/83F + 509/83F
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 1482/78
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 607/79
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 54/80

- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 995/81
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 1679/82A + 3910/82A
- Court of Turin: IM BI and PP C in JP 1774/77 et al. and 483/77 et al.
- Court of Turin: SC, June 23, 1978
- Court of Turin: SC, December 1979
- Court of Turin: IM BI in JP 6587/79 et al.
- Court of Turin: IM BI and SC in JP 918/80
- Court of Venice: IM BI in JP 274/80
- Court of Venice: IM BI in JP 298/81
- Court of Venice: IM BI in JP May 1981
- Court of Venice: IM BI in JP July 1981
- Court of Venice: SC 12/81
- Court of Venice: IM BI in JP 759/81
- Court of Venice: IM BI in JP February 1982
- Court of Venice: SC 1/83
- Court of Venice: SC 14/84

Formazioni Armate Combattenti:
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 1680/82A + 1682/82A

Formazioni Comuniste Combattenti e *Reparti Comunisti d'Attacco*:
- Court of Milan: IM BI and PP C in JP 988/78
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 907/79
- Court of Milan: SC 59/79
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 225/81
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 716/80 + 225/81
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 43/82
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 43/82 + 396/82
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 354/83

Gruppi Armati Proletari:
- Court of Milan: PP C March 1975

Guerriglia Rossa:
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 225/81
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 716/80 + 225/81

Movimento Comunista Rivoluzionario:
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 1482/78
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 54/80
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 995/81

Nuclei Armati Proletari:
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 765/77A
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 1416/78A
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 3194/81A

Per il Comunismo and *Nuclei:*
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP
- Court of Turin: PP C in JP 231/82

Prima Linea:
- Court of Bergamo: IM BI in JP 177/80
- Court of Florence: IM BI in JP 309/79
- Court of Milan: SC June 1980
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 177/80

- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 921/80
- Court of Milan: IM BI in JP 228/81
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 921/80 + 228/81
- Court of Milan: IM BI and PP C in JP 231/82
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 3382/80
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 664/82
- Court of Rome: IM BI in JP 120/83
- Court of Turin: IM BI in JP 1774/77
- Court of Turin: IM BI and PP C in JP 321/80
- Court of Turin: SC April 19, 1980
- Court of Turin: SC July 7, 1981
- Court of Turin: SC December 12, 1982

Proletari Armati per il Comunismo:
- Court of Milan: IM BI and PP C in JP 171/79
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 2748/79

"*Rosso*":
- Court of Milan: PP C in JP 229/81
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Life histories

The quotations from "Life history no. [1, 2, 3 . . .]" refer to the transcription of interviews with former militants collected during the research project sponsored by the regional Government of Emilia-Romagna at the Istituto di studi e ricerche Carlo Cattaneo of Bologna. The interviews were collected by a research team composed of Donatella della Porta, Giuseppe de Lutiis, Patrizia Guerra, Luigi Manconi, Domenico Nigro, Claudio Novaro, and Luisa Passerini. The transcriptions are stored in the archives of the Istituto Cattaneo.

Other documents

The quotations from "Document n. [A, B, C . . .]" refer to documents coming from the archival fund of the Asöte-Project, sponsored by the German Federal Interior Minister. Copies in possession of the author.

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