

Regulation Theory, Post-Marxism, and the New Social Movements

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The new social movements pose a direct challenge to Marxist theories on what should be their most secure terrain—their ability to identify the main lines of social division and conflict and to explain the broad contours of historical change in the advanced capitalist world. Many writers have seen French regulation theory as promising a reinvigorated Marxism that avoids the pitfalls of functionalism, teleology, false totalization, and class reductionism while simultaneously offering a convincing analysis of phenomena such as the new social movements. Yet German analyses of the new social movements as responses to the contradictions and crises of the Fordist mode of regulation reveal not only the strengths but also the limits of the regulation perspective. In contrast to the abstract presentations of their own perspective, regulation theorists tend to interpret social formations and historical change in terms of all-encompassing totalities. The regulation approach can remain relevant for understanding conflict and change in contemporary capitalist societies only by relinquishing such totalizing ambitions. More generally, Marxism can only remain viable if it allows its central conceptual mechanisms to coexist with a range of heterogeneous theoretical mechanisms, that is, if it acknowledges the difference between the levels of theory (abstract) and of explanation (concrete).

My argument is presented in four parts. The first sketches the specific problems posed by the new social movements for traditional Marxist theory. The second section discusses the major attempts to analyze the new social movements in terms of revised versions of traditional Marxism. The most convincing of these approaches, regulation theory, is discussed in the third part. Here I focus on the work of Joachim Hirsch and Roland Roth, especially their book, *Das neue Gesicht des Kapitalismus* (1986), which presents an interpretation of the development of the new social movements in West Germany between the 1960s and the 1980s. In section four, I sketch an alternative interpretation of the German new social movements, suggesting that they

I am grateful to Julia Adams, Julia Hell, Doug McAdam, Moishe Postone, members of the CSST seminar at the University of Michigan, and an anonymous reviewer for comments on an earlier version of this paper.

0010-4175/94/1769-0500 \$5.00 © 1994 Society for Comparative Study of Society and History

were conditioned by cultural and historical factors that cannot be subsumed under the Fordist mode of regulation or the processes of its breakdown.

I.

The collapse of the state-socialist regimes in eastern Europe has occasioned only the latest in a century-old series of “crises of Marxism.” Against this mood, however, many Marxists have countered that the “commodification of everything” (Wallerstein 1983:11) has only been accelerated by this collapse, making Marxist theory more relevant than ever (Ruccio 1992:11–12; Jameson 1992). The crisis of Marxist theory is depicted as a fabrication of the mass media or as the triumphant battle cry of victorious capitalism. Others have acknowledged the psychological and political costs for Marxists of the failure of the “socialist experiment,” without, however, rejecting Marxism out of hand (Therborn 1992). These writers embrace what they understand as genuine Marxism, of course, rather than the official doctrine of the East European regimes, which had long been dismissed by Western Marxists.

The danger in this current discussion is that an even more serious set of challenges to (Western) Marxism will be forgotten, namely those linked to the new social movements (NSMs) of the past two decades. Even if Marxism were to survive as an adequate theory of capitalism as an economic system, the broader attacks on its claims as a social theory and guide for emancipatory political practice would remain. The new social movements have been crucial both as a phenomenon that apparently cannot be explained within a Marxist framework and as the source of post-Marxist and poststructuralist theoretical discourses that present themselves as incommensurable with Marxism. Chantal Mouffe is not alone in her view—expressed before the collapse of state socialism—that “it is unlikely that Marxism will recover from the blows it has suffered” (1988:31).

THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: CLASS STRUGGLE WITHOUT CLASS REVISITED

The new social movements have been paradoxical for traditional Marxism. Most importantly, Marxist categories of social class have not been able to map the frontiers of social conflict nor the social composition of the movements’ support groups or membership. Nor have the movements’ goals been framed in terms of benefits for specific social classes. Although these movements have vigorously opposed many of the same forces of power, property, and privilege as the old labor and socialist movements, the form of their opposition has differed in almost every respect.¹ Where the socialist and communist

¹ Without using the phrase new social movements, Reinhard Mohr (1992) develops a similar contrast in political goals, styles, theories, and cultures by comparing the German “generation of 1968,” which he depicts as emulating the “old social movements” in many ways, and the “generation of 1978.”

movements were concerned with mobilizing the proletariat and allied social groups and classes to gain state power and effect a major redistribution of resources, the new movements eschew these same goals. In western Europe, the new social movements have tended to spurn the “social movement entrepreneurs” central to traditional Marxist understandings of politics and to evade such formal “social movement organizations” as parties. They have not sought to gain control of parliamentary power and have had a problematic relationship even to Green parties wherever the latter have been electorally successful.² The new social movements often claim to abjure power altogether, as in the popular slogan of the alternative movement in West Germany during the 1970s: “*keine Macht für Niemand*” (no power for nobody). Instead, the new movements aim to prevent things from happening, such as constructing nuclear power plants or completing censuses (Nelkin and Pollak 1981; Kitschelt 1986; Taeger 1983); to secure social spaces that are autonomous from both markets and the state; and to directly implement and exhibit an alternative form of social life.

Which conflicts fall into the category of new social movements? Strictly speaking, a coherent definition of any phenomenon, including the NSMs, can only be made from within a theoretical framework. In later sections I will argue that regulation theory permits the theoretical definition and delimitation of the new movements by singling out their specific determinants (in terms of their relationship to modes of regulation). For the moment, however, I will present a more consensual definition based on a cross section of the literature on the NSMs.³ This definition takes the form of a cluster of characteristics, many of them specified through implicit or explicit contrast with the historically preceding model of social movements. According to these accounts, the new social movements

- focus on goals of autonomy, identity, self-realization, and qualitative life chances, rather than divisible material benefits and resources;⁴
- are as much defensive as offensive in orientation and are often directed toward limited demands which allow little or no negotiation;
- are less oriented toward social-utopian projects, formal political theories, or meta-narratives of progress;

² Most researchers distinguish between the Green parties and the NSMs, although the boundaries are certainly fluid. During the early years the German Green Party—with its insistence on “rotation” of parliamentary representatives to prevent centralization, its refusal of coalition politics, and its uncompromising opposition to nuclear power, toxic chemical products, and membership in NATO (and violence and militarism in general)—was much closer to the NSMs. See Schroeren (1990), interview with Petra Kelly.

³ This list builds on the following articles: Offe (1987), Brand *et al.* (1986), Raschke (1985:254–66, 322–36, 411–36), Cohen (1985), Roth (1989), Hirsch and Roth (1986), and Melucci (1980, 1981b, 1989).

⁴ It follows from this that the NSMs often look more like subcultures than movements. They can be considered movements, insofar as they challenge existing social structures, have some degree of organization (even if it is informal, in the sense of Melucci’s “networks”), and demonstrate some congruence of grievances, aims, and identities.

- do not appeal or mobilize along class lines but cut across them. In the NSMs, socio-economic categories begin to lose their subjective salience and give way to identities that are either more permanent and ascriptive (i.e., “natural”) than class or else more flexible, fleeting, partial, and voluntary;
- prefer organizational forms that are non-hierarchical and undifferentiated with respect to roles, with unmediated direct democracy as a regulative norm if not a reality;
- rely on temporary or part-time membership and informal or submerged networks, resulting in individual patterns of shifting but continuous involvement in various movements that are only partially differentiated from one another (Melucci 1989: 61, 78);
- work mainly outside of the parliamentary political system, employing unconventional means, such as direct action;
- politicize aspects of everyday life formerly seen as lying outside of politics;
- can be seen as at least partially unified through their shared opposition to a system that is itself perceived as monolithic, even if they are fragmented and diversified in terms of issues, ideology, and organizational base (Raschke 1985:412).

The final characteristic concerns historical periodization: The NSMs have appeared since the 1960s in the advanced capitalist countries (and in the core sectors of the periphery and semi-periphery; see Escobar and Alvarez 1992). Thus, these movements have been quite literally new, in the sense of being contemporary. The label new also suggests to some readers that these movements are historically unprecedented, however; and this notion has stimulated a barrage of criticism. Tarrow (1988) points out that earlier social movements, especially in their beginning phases, shared some of the features of the NSMs. Focusing on the repertoires of collective action used by French social movements over the course of a century, Tilly (1986:349) finds little novelty in the most recent wave of protest. A small academic cottage industry has grown up around the project of proving that the new social movements were really not so new after all (see, for example, Kivisto 1986 and Tucker 1991). But as Dieter Rucht (1982:278) acknowledges, the new movements “cannot be specified in their totality by their form, their varying contents . . . nor their constituency. Due to the historical parallels, every attempted definition in this direction will run into boundary problems.” This line of critique misses the contextual significance of the term new, which is intended to emphasize the specific difference between the dominant patterns of social conflictuality before the 1960s and thereafter, not to signal that the specific forms of contention were unique in any world-historical sense.⁵ It is a term of periodization analogous to such expressions as “early modern” or “ancient.”⁶

⁵ Whether the NSMs are now giving way in Europe to a new pattern of social movements based on racism and nationalism is a different question that I will turn to in the conclusion.

⁶ Although the adjective new before social movements is not necessary to make the historical point, I will continue to use it because it is widely understood as referring to a common set of phenomena and is less clumsy than the alternatives. It is necessary to define the period more precisely, of course, and to address problems of cross-national differences in periodization, as the NSMs do not appear simultaneously everywhere in the capitalist core and since they appear to have had longer staying power in some areas than others. But such periodization problems can

This definition discourages efforts to create an inventory of discrete movements that fall into the NSM category (for example, Vester 1983). The new movements, given that they abstain from parliamentary politics and assume forms that look from the outside like subcultural deviance, may not even recognize themselves as social movements. Ostensibly unified social movements often contain heterogeneous conflicts and logics (Melucci 1989:28; also Melucci 1980, 1981). A case in point is the contemporary women's movement, which is sometimes counted among the NSMs. Identity-based politics which assert difference as well as equality (Scott 1988) seem to be part of the new politics, as do consciousness-raising groups and "take back the night" marches. Strands of the women's movement that focus on attaining political and market equality through electoral politics and centralized organization, however, are closer to the political paradigm that Habermas calls "bourgeois-socialist liberation movements."⁷

These examples also raise questions about the new social movements' stakes and goals. Clearly the NSMs cannot be specified simply by pointing to their novel aims, as these could also have been addressed by old-style movements. Indeed, established political parties, such as the German SPD, have tried to appropriate themes, such as environmental protection, from the NSMs. So the real difficulty facing any theory of the new social movements is to explain the appearance of a cluster of novel forms of political action, recruitment patterns, and political stakes at a specific moment in history (1960s through the 1980s), as well as the articulation of these different elements.

II.

Alongside the challenge from the new social movements to the Marxist belief in the importance of class and to the traditional Left's political strategies, there has been a rise in popular theoretical discourses critical of Marxism.⁸ While Marxism has typically focused on relations of exploitation, that is, relations

only be resolved on the basis of a model of the determinants of the new social movements. Part of the confusion stems from the different explanatory models used by adherents of the term new social movements. Inglehart's theory (1990), for instance, virtually requires that the NSMs are historically unprecedented.

⁷ Another example of inadequacy of common-sense definitions of social movements is the peace movement of the 1980s. It in many respects assumed centralized and bureaucratic forms (Rochon 1988:21, 210) but also encompassed groups that emphasized localized actions, anti-statist politics, and the practical demonstration of new forms of social life (Hartford and Hopkins 1984; Liddington 1991:197–286). Bagguley (1992:31) concludes that the traditionalist tendencies in the peace and women's movements undermine arguments for the distinctiveness of the NSMs. If one retains a distinction between abstract-theoretical and concrete-empirical levels of analysis, however, it is easy to see how a single social movement may exemplify more than one theoretical logic.

⁸ The relationship between theoretical discourses critical of Marxism and participation in new social movements is illustrated by individuals such as Foucault, Touraine, and E. P. Thompson.

involving transfers of (surplus) value, many of the post-Marxist social theories have moved relations of domination into the center. Foucault is most strongly associated with a view of power and domination as ubiquitous and not centered in capitalism or social class (*cf.* Foucault 1978:94–95; 1980:60, 89, 122). Other damaging critiques of traditional Marxism have retained a materialist sociology but have insisted on the prominence of non-class actors, identities, and interests in social conflict, involving race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and religion. Class is not at the core of such antagonisms, either phenomenologically or in any immediate structural way (see Beck 1986:121–30; 1989). Other theories permit social class to coexist peacefully alongside other forms of oppression or stratification but with no claims to preeminence. These approaches range from dualistic feminist theories of class and gender (Hartmann 1981), through tripartite schemes of “class, status, and power” (Weber 1947 [1921–22]; Wiley 1970), to schemes in which the bases of social differentiation are potentially infinite. Taken to its logical conclusion, for instance, Bourdieu’s sociological theory allows for the construction of an infinite number of new fields with their specific forms of distinction, capital, dynamics of conflict, and irreducible stakes.⁹

Finally, there is a disparate body of culturalist or poststructuralist theories associated with the new social movements and often referred to as post-Marxist. Most influential are the elaborations of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony associated with Mouffe and Laclau. Hegemony, in the broadest sense, represents a specific type of discursive and political practice in which one social group or class orients the perceptions and actions of another. According to Showstack-Sassoon (1982:13–14), Gramsci uses hegemony

in the sense of influence, moral leadership, and consent, rather than the alternative and opposite meaning of domination. It has to do with the way one social group influences other groups, making certain compromises with them in order to gain their consent for its leadership in society as a whole. Thus particular, sectional interests are transformed and some concept of the general interest is promoted.

Hegemonic discourse provides a weapon with which domination can be challenged, but it also limits the ways in which actors understand themselves and imagine their opponents. Hegemony in this view differs from other discursive logics in that it implies a relatively unified, encompassing discursive formation, and one which is actively constructed by a set of leading actors or intellectuals. In discussing the relations of these hegemonizing intellectuals to the groups they attempt to shape, Gramsci makes it clear how his position differs from Leninist understandings of the role of ideological leadership in social conflict (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:55, 65–71). The ideal-typical Leninist strategy is in this respect indistinguishable from classical Social Democra-

⁹ See Bourdieu (1977, 1984). In his more abstract theoretical statements, however, Bourdieu limits the number of forms of capital to three or four (*cf.* Bourdieu 1986).

cy: The party's goal was to align workers and non-proletarian groups with the *Weltanschauung* of the proletariat, rather than to construct some new identity and world view for both the leaders and the led. In the radically anti-essentialist reading of Gramsci, social agents transcend their earlier identities when entering a hegemonic formation, and the hegemonizing class is also seen as transcending its original class identity when constructing this formation. Hegemony thus entails the discursive construction of hegemonized and hegemonizing agents alike. As one interpreter of Gramsci puts it, "the subjects of hegemonic practice at the level of their discursive constitution will not necessarily have a class character . . . to hegemonize as a class would imply a limited or unsuccessful attempt" (Rosenthal 1988). Successful hegemonizing agents must abandon their sectional interests, whether they try to align the interests of dominated groups with those of the economically dominant or to orchestrate a counter-hegemonic project which coordinates the resistance of subordinate groups.

In some post-Marxist theory, social structure does not figure even as constraint; conflict becomes entirely intra-discursive. Laclau and Mouffe begin with Althusser's notion of overdetermination, which underscores the role of contingency, unique constellations of events, and non-simultaneous periodicities in the determination of historical outcomes. Yet their radical version of overdetermination breaks with any vestige of material structuration. When actors adopt new goals or identities, they are constrained mainly by previous discursive formations. Not only is there no "logical and necessary relation between socialist objectives and the positions of social agents in the relations of production" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:86), but social-structural positions are not related to specific forms of consciousness or interest.¹⁰

Hegemony in Gramscian post-Marxism thus represents a form of discourse that straddles structural divisions in the process of forging social collectivities; some post-Marxists deny the very existence of structural stratification outside of discourse. Hegemony is an inherently conflictual process in which there is a continual struggle among contending efforts to define reality. Radical theories of hegemony question the ability of any sociological theory, including Marxism, to explain phenomena such as the new social movements.

ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN TERMS OF REVISED CLASS CONCEPTS

Rather than rejecting class analysis altogether, some researchers have tried to explain patterns of support for the new movements by using revised class concepts (often quasi-Weberian ones). The new social movements have been explained as an outgrowth of the interests of the new middle class (Brand

¹⁰ In a somewhat less radical critique of objectivism, Bowles and Gintis (1986:149) argue that collective actors are created by political discourse and that "no natural boundaries to group membership" exist.

1982:14; Kitschelt 1985:278) or new class (Martin 1988)¹¹; the state-sector middle class (Cotgrove and Duff 1980; Mattausch 1989:50–52, 84–85); the service class (Lash and Urry 1987:195); the old and new petite bourgeoisie (Eder 1985); and classes located in contradictory locations between proletariat and bourgeoisie (Wright 1985; Kriesi 1989).¹² At least one author (Wilde 1990:67) has described the new social movements as “protest movements within the working class” but without offering any evidence to support this claim. For Vester (1983), the new movements represent the reemergence of traditionally lower-class resistance among the “new plebeians,” characterized as those who are highly educated but blocked in their chances for upward mobility. According to Offe (1987), at least three different groups constitute the new movements’ social base: the old and new middle classes, and economically peripheralized (decommodified) strata, such as the unemployed and underemployed, housewives, and students. Other putative characteristics of participants in the new conflicts which can be linked more or less closely to social class include youth, high levels of education, and employment within the cultural sector (Kriesi 1988).

All such attempts to account for the new movements in terms of social class run into difficulties. First, recent studies indicate that the NSMs’ social composition is much more diverse than any of the class-based approaches suggest; there is evidence that even non-active supporters of the new movements are drawn from the various social classes in approximately representative proportions (Roth 1989:29). Public opinion polls on environmental issues and patterns of electoral support for Green parties indicated during the second half of the 1980s that the distribution of sympathizers was flattening out (Hülsberg 1988:68; Brand *et al.* 1986:248, 281). According to a study of the Netherlands, the “strong sympathizers for the peace movement,” if not the participants, “form an almost representative cross section of the Dutch population” (Kriesi 1989:1101). The same appears to have been true of the West German peace movement of the 1980s (Brand *et al.* 1986:263).

This raises a second question about the class approaches. Even if the thesis that the “new middle class” is over-represented could be supported empirically, this might reflect its greater proclivity for protest participation, rather than its inherently stronger interest in the new grievances. Rather than being disproportionately affected by the new social problems, the new middle class may simply be better able to perceive and to mobilize against them. The

¹¹ See also Bell (1973) and Inglehart (1990), both of whom correlate support for the NSMs with populations resembling the new class, a term used by Bell in this context (1973:479). Inglehart also discusses the “new class” as a bearer of “postmaterial” values—his central concept—but also as one cause of the NSMs (1990:331–2, 371–92).

¹² Although he actually claims to reject “objectivist” class analysis, using Bourdieu’s category of habitus to mediate between objective and subjective class position, Eder (1985) ultimately derives the putative petty-bourgeois attraction to the new social movements from their intermediate position between upper and lower classes.

middle classes were also overrepresented in many “old” social movements (Bagguley 1992). Such dynamics are ignored by class-theoretical approaches, which typically posit a direct relationship between engagement in a movement and relevant structural interests.

The lack of class distinctiveness of the NSMs’ base might be seen as reflecting the relative classlessness of many contemporary forms of deprivation and domination. Most of the paradigmatically new grievances (nuclear power and energy, state penetration of civil society and the life-world) do not affect the new middle classes—or any other classes for that matter—disproportionately. According to an influential German study originally published in 1983, “the population of those who are immediately affected [negatively by the modernization process] cannot be pinned down according to clear categories of class and stratum, in contrast to other cases of social disadvantaging” (Brand *et al.* 1986:33). As a result, “one should not expect to find sharply differentiated new social-structural social camps alongside the new lines of conflict, comparable to the class contradictions of class society” (Brand *et al.* 1986:43). Ulrich Beck’s notion of a shift from a class society to risk society (*Risikogesellschaft*) elaborates upon this idea: “The generalization of modernization risks unleashes a social dynamic that can no longer be grasped and understood in class categories” (Beck 1986:52; see also Beck 1989, 1991; Lau 1991). Beck concludes that “need is hierarchical, smog is democratic” (Beck 1986:48).

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS EXPLAINED IN TERMS OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN CAPITALISM

Even if social class were able to map patterns of membership in the new movements, there would still be the problem of explaining the emergence of novel social problems, stakes, and forms of conflict. To address these issues, certain versions of Marxism have examined large-scale changes in the structure of capitalism, attributing to them the ability to generate new social contradictions and, ultimately, social movements.

The early work of Manuel Castells (such as 1977, 1978) represents one such approach. Concerned specifically with urban social movements, Castells emphasized capital accumulation rather than social class, analyzing the urban space under capitalism primarily as the site of the reproduction of labor power. According to Katznelson’s summary of Castells, as “capital concentrates the working population,” it “requires collective goods that the private market is unable to provide” (1981:211). The result is an increase in the collective (that is, socialized) consumption of goods and services, such as housing, transportation, cultural and educational facilities, and welfare. The contradictions of collective consumption are especially severe (and visible) in the city and increasingly define the nodal points of urban social conflict (Castells 1983:94, 1978:15–36). In contrast to relations of production, the

relations of collective consumption define structural positions that cut across boundaries of social class. The users of public transportation come from diverse social class positions, for example, yet their interests converge with respect to crises of the transportation system. The basic dynamics of social provision can nonetheless be explained in terms of the logic of capital accumulation. Urban public transportation systems, for Castells, are designed primarily to meet the needs of capital.

Castell's early work thus retained a Marxist analysis of political economy and macro-social development and analyzed certain new social movements without reducing them to expressions of social class. He did not focus on contradictions and grievances unrelated to collective consumption, including those—militarism, patriarchy, and environmental pollution—often seen as central to the NSMs. Nonetheless, it is possible to extend Castells' logic and argue that capital accumulation remains the mainspring of advanced societies, even if the sociologically defined working class is declining in size (Offe 1984), and that this process will continue to define the main positions in social conflict. Castells recognized that his early work ignored the autonomous cultural determinants of urban social movements, especially the role of the defense of cultural identity (Castells 1983: xviii).¹³ The problem is to account not just for the emphasis on identity in the new social movements (Cohen 1985) but for the entire set of rejections of the older form of politics.

III.

Regulation theory presents itself as having remedied many of the shortcomings of older versions of Marxism without abandoning Marxist theory altogether.¹⁴ Regulation theory focuses on political economy rather than class and avoids teleology and functionalism. The figure of historical necessity is exchanged for an emphasis on contingency and accidents. The only historical constant in the regulationist view is the recurrence of capitalist crisis, but the outcomes of such crises are always the product of multiple forces and wills intersecting in unpredictable ways. The type of crisis outcome that attracts the most attention is the temporarily stabilized "mode of regulation," which creates orderly social arrangements that permit further economic growth and capital accumulation. But regulation theory offers no guarantee that an ordered resolution to crisis will be found. Social formations are not the correlates of specific stages of development of the productive forces, nor do they automatically result from economic crisis. Social movements, finally, are

¹³ Another problem singled out by Katznelson (1981:211–212) is that Castells did not discuss the conditions that turn the structural possibility for social protest into its actualization. Castells' approach began to change considerably with *The City and the Grassroots* (1983).

¹⁴ Several different branches of regulation theory are discussed in Jessop (1990b). Each regulationist differs in emphasis, with some closer to traditional Marxism than others. The version discussed in this section is closest to Jessop's. I am also grateful to Bob Jessop for discussing some of the ideas in this section with me.

interpreted in the light of interests and grievances defined by waning or nascent modes of regulation.

Despite its willingness to acknowledge contingency, the regulation approach is not totally amorphous. It operates with concepts at two different levels of abstraction. At the more empirical level are specific modes of regulation, such as Fordism. These models are realized in different ways in various national (and subnational) cases, with distinct emphases, subtractions, and additions. Regulation theory also proposes more abstract concepts, such as regulation itself. The notion of a Fordist mode of regulation is ideally suited for a presentation of regulation theory because it has been discussed most extensively and illustrates the relationship between the abstract and concrete levels of analysis. It is also seen as generating the new social movements.

FORDISM AS A MODE OF REGULATION

Theorists associated with the theory of Fordism as a mode of economic and social regulation include Michel Aglietta (1987), Robert Boyer (1982, 1990), and Alain Lipietz (1987) in France; Joachim Hirsch (1980, 1983, 1988) in West Germany; and Bob Jessop (1983, 1989, 1990b; Jessop *et al.* 1991) and David Harvey (1989) in Britain. Much of this work draws on the original insights of Antonio Gramsci in his essay, "Fordism and Americanism" (1971 [1929–35]). Gramsci had analyzed with a mixture of admiration and abhorrence the social and economic changes in the United States during the 1920s, at a time when American industry was searching for ways to combat the falling rate of profit and to radically increase productivity through the reorganization and mechanization of the production process (Gramsci 1978b:112–3). In Aglietta's (1987) study of twentieth-century American capitalism, this involved a shift from a strategy of extensive accumulation and absolute surplus value to reliance on intensive accumulation and relative surplus value. Aglietta interprets the Fordist production process as a radicalization of the Taylorist system, the latter referring to the "sum total of those relations of production internal to the labor process that tend to accelerate the completion of the mechanical cycle of movements on the job and to fill the gaps in the working day" (1987:114). Fordism applied the Taylorist principle of fragmenting the labor performed by the deskilled individual worker to the collective labor process.¹⁵ The key was production on a semi-automatic assembly line, which was at first used especially for producing mass-consumer goods in long production runs and was later extended upstream to the manufacture of standardized intermediate components for the production process.

The second signal feature of Fordism, the formation of a social consumption norm, resulted from the lowered costs of the means of reconstituting labor power. A historically unprecedented working-class wage level was the

¹⁵ Gramsci distinguishes Fordism and Taylorism as "two methods of production and work" (1978:112); see also Maier (1987).

quid pro quo for the intensification of work; indeed, the higher living standard was necessary to “maintain and restore the strength that has been worn down by the new form of toil” (Gramsci 1971 [1929–35]: 310). In addition, employers had to pay high wages in order to capture the workers who were “best adapted to the new forms of production and work from the psychotechnical standpoint” (1978:113). Workers in the core mass-production industries could now purchase the commodities they produced. The generalized result, Gramsci predicted, would be “a larger internal market” and “a more rapid rhythm of capital accumulation” (1971 [1929–35]:291). Fordism was thus founded upon a particular combination of high wages and high productivity.

Gramsci stressed Fordism’s need for a “new” man who would be psychologically and physically adapted (with heightened physical and muscular-nervous efficiency) to the new production processes. Although Fordist laborers were relatively deskilled, they needed systematic work habits: A single unreliable worker could wreak enormous damage in the interconnected and inflexible Fordist labor process. The new Fordist methods of work were thus linked to efforts to rationalize sexual, emotional, personal, and family life. Gramsci pointed to American crusades against the “exaltation of passion,” alcoholism, and the “squandering of nervous energies in the disorderly and stimulating pursuit of occasional sexual satisfaction,” and in favor of working-class monogamy (Gramsci 1971 [1929–35]:304–5). He interpreted these campaigns as tools for the creation of workers suited for the “timed movements of productive motions connected with the most perfected automatism” (Gramsci 1971 [1929–35]:305). Creating the Fordist subject was a hegemonic project, most successful if “proposed by the worker himself, and not imposed from the outside” (Gramsci [1929–35]:303).

A related process only touched upon by Gramsci, but which played a central role in later theorizations of Fordism, was the state’s growing involvement in maintaining consumer demand for mass-produced goods. A panoply of social insurance programs supported aggregate levels of popular demand. This legislation originated in the nineteenth century in Europe and during the 1930s in the United States, but social insurance benefits did not begin to approach wage-replacement levels until after 1945. Gramsci also discussed the political effects of Fordism on the labor movement: Struggles between labor and capital over the wage rate became institutionalized in the form of collective bargaining (Aglietta 1987:116). A neo-corporatist productivist bloc between industrial workers and management was “destined to resolve the problem of the further development of the Italian economic apparatus” (Gramsci 1971 [1929–35]:291). The prescience of Gramsci’s observations is underscored by the rise of neo-corporatism during the post-1945 period (Schmitter and Lehbruch 1979; Panitch 1986).

The more recent writings by regulation theorists characterize Fordism as a specific mode of regulation articulated with a particular regime of accumula-

tion, which is defined as a set of rules determining the distribution and allocation of the social product between investment, accumulation, and consumption. Regulation refers to the manner in which social relations are reproduced despite (what is assumed to be) their conflictual and contradictory nature. A mode of regulation is a set of “rules and procedures, of norms, institutions, procedures, and modes of calculation through which the accumulation regime is secured. It comprises all of the institutional forms and norms which secure the compatibility of typical modes of economic conduct” (Jessop 1989).¹⁶ In addition to clearly economic institutions and norms, such as money, the mode of regulation typically encompasses aspects of the state, culture, and mechanisms of initial socialization, sex and gender relations, family forms, and so forth.

As a regime of accumulation, Fordism is characterized by a systematic relation between mass production and mass consumption. As a mode of regulation, Fordism signals a broad range of changes. According to Jessop (1989, 1990b), Fordist regulation is characterized by the following economic features (listed in approximately declining level of prominence):

- the centrality of the wage as the main mechanism for securing the reproduction of labor power;
- collective bargaining over wage rates and working time; monopolistic price regulation;
- the predominance of mass consumption of standardized mass-produced commodities and of collective consumption of goods and services supplied by the state;
- the encouragement of mass consumption by a number of techniques such as advertising;
- the importance of credit for validating full employment levels of demand.

Productivism and consumerism constitute the prevailing cultural forms, the societal goals and way of life, under Fordism (Hirsch and Roth 1986). An ideology of individualization is combined in a potentially contradictory way with the homogenization of personal life-style orientations. Culture is institutionally centered around the mass media. Neo-corporatism and the Keynesian welfare state, finally, represent the related political forms. According to Hirsch and Roth (1986:37), Fordist politics are based on social-democratic, bureaucratic societalization, strong unions, reformist parties of mass integration, corporatist institutionalization of class contradictions, and Keynesian state interventionism.

Regulation theory does not understand the modes of regulation as automatic, functionally determined responses to crisis. The only assumption about historical change is that social arrangements for capitalist accumulation repeatedly fall apart and profit rates eventually decline, leading to a frantic and

¹⁶ An example of such a regulative institution, money, represents the recognition of the labor contained within an exchanged commodity and of the commodity-owner's right to an equivalent share of social labor (Scherrer 1989). Jessop proposes a third concept, “hegemonic project,” which he distinguishes from modes of regulation, while Hirsch (1988:46) equates the two.

uncoordinated search for solutions by diverse social actors.¹⁷ The outcome is always uncertain and differs from prior blueprints. Each regulatory mode reflects the historical peculiarities of the nation (or region) and their location in the world capitalist system and world time. Muddling through and suboptimal solutions are as likely as successful resolutions of crisis. Fordism itself resulted from a combination of uncoordinated planning efforts and pure chance.¹⁸ Once the Fordist model had been invented, it was reproduced and copied, because it seemed to work. But the general model of Fordism was instantiated in different ways and varied enormously in each national setting (see Jessop 1989).

The more recent formulations by regulation theorists describe the rudiments of Fordism as taking shape in the United States during the interwar period, with full-blown Fordism taking root during the post-World War II years in western Europe and the United States. It is frequently argued that Fordism began to unravel during the 1970s and that the advanced capitalist world is currently in the midst of a transition to some still vaguely defined post-Fordist mode of regulation (see Jessop *et al.* 1991; Harvey 1989; Bonefeld and Holloway 1991). Different writers disagree on the precise periodization of Fordism, and their judgments depend to some extent on their implicit reference to (or familiarity with) specific national cases.

Fordism is an abstract model describing the general, dominant features of the advanced capitalist world in a certain period. It is not a concrete description of specific countries, an essence that is instantiated in each case. The nationally specific form of Fordist regulation, which Jessop calls the “national form of growth” (1989), depends on preexistent national conditions; thus Britain exhibits a weaker form of Fordism than West Germany, whose Fordism was in turn less pronounced than Sweden’s (Jessop 1991:137–42). Even though several of the central elements of Fordism were pioneered in the United States (mass production in consumer goods based on semi-skilled labor, scientific organization of work, high wages, and mass media and advertising), Fordism was less complete in the United States than in many other countries. The welfare state and neo-corporatism were underdeveloped, and vast sectors of society were not encompassed by even the partial version of Fordism that did exist.

Fordism does not create the institutions and social practices that it brings under its sway, nor does it fully control them. Figure 1 attempts to illustrate Fordism as a historic *bricolage* of components from the diverse social arenas which preexist and survive it (see Figure 1). The horizontal lines in the figure

¹⁷ Wright (1978:111–80) allows capitalist crises and their resolutions to vary historically but suggests that some sort of resolution will always be forthcoming: “In such situations [of structural accumulation crisis], typically, the forms of accumulation are themselves restructured in basic ways” (1978:165).

¹⁸ Weir and Skocpol (1985) detail the international variations and contingencies involved in the diffusion of Keynesianism, one of the key elements of the Fordist ensemble.

represent the historical development of various social fields. The general descriptions of the fields are given in the right-hand column in bold-face type; the specific forms they assume in different periods are represented by labels within the horizontal lines. The placement of a phenomenon, such as mass consumerism, within a time line represents the hypothetical moment at which it became prominent. (The historical placement of these phenomena is merely suggestive, of course, since the chart does not refer to a specific case.) Each of the strands develops non-synchronously and in partial autonomy from the other fields.

Our central concern here is with the formation represented by the box labelled Fordism. Fordism interrupts the strands containing the elements that it articulates within its specific mode of regulation. The arrows that are only partially interrupted by Fordism were more peripheral to it; their post-Fordist development should also be less strongly shaped by the Fordist era. Strands that continue uninterrupted, such as religion and the fine arts, were less central to Fordism (even if they were influenced by the Fordist mode, which is a separate issue). The sharp vertical lines around the Fordist formation misleadingly indicate a sudden birth and an equally abrupt disappearance; it would be preferable to represent an uneven congealing on the left margin and an equally incremental dissolve on the right. Finally, the figure only attempts to show the approximate placement of one regulatory mode, Fordism; other regulatory modes might be indicated both before and after.

Figure 1 suggests that Fordism is a provisional historical construction that relies on and is shaped by its own raw materials, even as it partially recasts them. This is a hypothetical example that does not represent a specific national case. Not just the form of Fordism, but the timing of Fordist development in each national case will depend on the preexisting development of each of the components.

THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND FORDISM IN THE WRITINGS OF HIRSCH AND ROTH

Hirsch and Roth argue that Fordism has determined the main bases of interest, grievance, and oppression in the societies where it existed, and that as a result it has structured the main social surfaces, forms, and themes of social conflict.²² The new social movements are seen as a response to the contradictions

¹⁹ Bob Jessop deserves credit for the term Toyotism.

²⁰ See Chopra and Scheller (1992) for an overview of changes in marriage and the family in what they call "late-modern society."

²¹ "Official nationalism," according to Anderson (1983), arose in the late nineteenth century.

²² See Hirsch (1980, 1981, 1983), Hirsch and Roth (1986, 1987), and Mayer (1988, 1991). Critiques of Hirsch and Roth are presented by Hübner (1987), Wagner and Stahn (1987),

and the crisis of Fordism but are also understood as contributing indirectly to the elaboration of a new “post-Fordist” mode of regulation (Roth 1989; Hirsch 1988:54; Hirsch 1991). This contemporary phase is of less concern in the present context than the etiology of the NSMs during the era of Fordism and its dissolution.

A few key aspects of Fordism should be retained in order to understand its supposed contribution to social movements. Fordism was based on the centrality of industrial labor as producer and consumer. Male workers were relatively well-paid, and the welfare state propped up consumer demand during slack periods. The social movement sphere was monopolized by the official labor movement, centralized and bureaucratized labor unions; closely connected were social-democratic or labor parties engaged in neo-corporatist relations with employers’ organizations and the state. In order to stabilize the Fordist formation, the old class actors, especially militant extraparliamentary labor, had to be either marginalized or integrated. Yet the Fordist system soon began to generate new areas of conflict. Just as the neo-corporatist labor movement corresponds to Fordism, so the new social movements signal (and help induce) Fordism’s breakdown. Indeed, the most obvious feature shared by the new social movements is their rejection of the Fordist model of socialization. Examination of the cultural, economic, and political sides of Fordism reveals its negative relationship to the new conflicts.

Fordism as a regime of accumulation involved the production of a hitherto unknown level of wealth. Due to the labor-capital accord and the welfare state, the working classes received a slightly larger amount (in per capita, not proportional terms) of this wealth than had previously been the case. The movements challenging the Fordist system were also closely tied to the social wealth produced by that very system. Fordism increased levels of education, income, social security, and free time, allowing the proliferation of “post-materialist values” (Hirsch and Roth 1986:195; see also Inglehart 1977, 1990). These values led in turn to a heightened consciousness of the Fordist model’s shortcomings, especially the homogenization of culture and consumer goods. Sandwiched between the era of Fordist mass culture and the current postmodernist (post-Fordist) breakdown of distinctions between high and low culture was a period in which new social movements rejected both the culture

and Jessop (1988). As will become evident, I am more interested in Hirsch and Roth’s treatment of the connections of Fordism to the NSMs than in their discussion of Fordism per se, which is the main focus of these criticisms. The critics are probably correct in arguing that Hirsch and Roth’s version of regulation theory is overly functionalist and “state-centered” and that it understates the difficulties involved in constructing Fordism, especially the non-state aspects of regulation. The critics also examine various ways in which the West German case deviates from the general model of Fordism. Harvey (1989) concentrates on the relations between models of regulation and cultural change, and includes only a few pages on the NSMs; Epstein (1990) includes a short section on Hirsch and Roth but does not discuss *Das neue Gesicht* and their other work in German.

industry and official elite culture.²³ Such challenges varied between sub-cultural retreatism and openly oppositional milieux.

The evidence of cross-class recruitment into NSMs cited above makes it impossible to rely uniquely on postmaterial values as an explanatory factor, however. The new movements also responded in part to the leveling class connotations of mass culture. Rejection of the culture industry was to some extent an attempted distinction strategy (Bourdieu) by *arrivé* carriers of cultural capital, themselves the product of the Fordist expansion of the educational system. Hirsch and Roth suggest that attacks on mass culture were aimed not just at its producers but also at its core proletarian and lower-middle-class audience (1986:198). One factor driving student protest was the traditional lettered classes' refusal of the "degradation" of the cultural arena and the downgrading of university credentials. Of course, the expansion of higher education also led to struggles against a curriculum that valorized exclusionary, classical forms of cultural capital—struggles that are visible in the current American culture wars.²⁴ The important point is that the Fordist expansion of mass culture and education set both forms of student unrest in motion.

The new movements also rejected the Fordist model of individualization and socialization. The emphasis on the politics of identity within the NSMs responded to Fordism's enforced conformism. Family and gender relations were subjected to massive criticism. The importance of the nuclear family as an agency of consumption and socialization in Fordism had several contradictory consequences. The women's movement(s) and social movements organized around alternative sexualities and life styles rejected this model.²⁵ The nuclear family was undermined by the commodification of the family's role in the reproduction of labor power and by the sweeping entry of women into the labor force. Fordism's cultivation of a hedonistic, consumerist, narcissistic personality form (Bell 1973; Lasch 1978) created a further cultural precondition of the NSMs. Spiritual movements oriented towards the recovery and solidification of identity can be interpreted as responses to the lowered super-ego control and minimization of the self entailed by the narcissistic Fordist form of subjectivity.

The NSMs opposed not only the cultural and subjective aspects of Fordism

²³ The 1978 announcement of the 1978 TUNIX ("Do-Nothing") meeting of the "spontaneous left" in West Berlin appealed to everyone who was sick of the "Coca-Cola-Karajan-culture" (Hoffmann-Axthelm *et al.* 1978:93).

²⁴ This is not an argument (à la Allan Bloom) for the superiority of the traditional curriculum, but a comment on the sociological basis of struggles against it. See Delale and Ragache (1978) for the argument that the French student protests of May 1968 involved anger by "proletarianized" students about false promises of social mobility.

²⁵ Bagguley argues correctly that feminism as a new social movement can only be understood in terms of "changes in the structure and form of patriarchy," specifically the shift from private to public patriarchy, and not in terms of class structure (1992:27, 42–45). But while gender relations certainly cannot be subsumed under regulatory modes, a more subtle analysis of changes in capitalism might also permit one to draw certain finer distinctions in forms of patriarchy.

but also its negative material externalities. The clearest example has been environmentalist protest against the Fordist tenet of the unlimited exploitation of nature (Hirsch 1988:47). The automobile was the very centerpiece of Fordist mass production and consumption (Roth 1989). The collective irrationalities of reliance on individual automobiles provided the impetus for demands for cities free of automobiles, reduced speed limits, better mass transportation, and so forth. Labor and management have often been on the same side of the Fordist “productivist cartel” in opposition to movements against environmental destruction.²⁶

In other respects, the new social movements respond to the specifically political aspects of Fordism. Hirsch (1980) argues that the Fordist state assumes the form of a security state—a term that resonates with both the social and the police connotations of security. By deepening its penetration into citizens’ everyday life, the state provokes defensive reactions. Citizen opposition prevented the Netherlands from carrying out a nation-wide census after 1971 (Vietsen 1983); in West Germany, the census originally planned for 1983 was delayed until 1987 and widely boycotted (Hubert 1983). A more extreme case involves groups like the German *Autonomen* (autonomous groups), whose attacks have been directed especially against representatives of state power (but also against private organizations and actors in civil society, from computer and genetic engineering firms to middle-class gentrifiers in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin).²⁷

The Keynesian welfare state also has contradictory effects. On the one hand, it awakens new needs or confirms a sense of entitlement to a certain standard of life. Writers on both the Right and Left in the 1970s claimed that they detected a system overload caused by widespread feelings of welfare entitlement. But the decline in productivity and profits since the early 1970s meant that the fiscally strapped welfare state could no longer meet such needs fully (Hirsch and Roth 1986:71, 89). Moreover, the Keynesian welfare state ascertains and serves peoples’ needs in an authoritarian, disabling way (Lasch 1978:154–7, 223–31; Illich *et al.* 1977; Fraser 1987). Many new conflicts focused therefore on demands for social services administered democratically and locally (Handler n.d.).

The dominant neo-corporatist system of interest representation and the corresponding mass-integrative or official political parties (Poulantzas 1980:232)

²⁶ A recent example concerns battles over proposed anti-smog controls in Los Angeles, which were opposed by an “unlikely” coalition between labor and industry (*cf.* “Political Fallout from Smog Blurs Future for Los Angeles,” *New York Times*, national edition, April 30 1989, p. 15).

²⁷ Lashing out against the extensions of the security state, the violence of the *Autonomen* has sometimes been depicted as symptomatically replicating the practices of their presumed adversary (Kramer 1988), although the *Autonomen* themselves dismiss the notion of such a mirror effect (Lecorte 1992). Most recently some of the German *Autonomen* have started to attack neo-Nazis and to defend foreigners against right-wing assaults. This can also be interpreted as an anti-state activity, to the extent that the Christian Democratic government has promoted anti-foreigner activities by focusing debate on restricting the right to political asylum, paying for the return of Vietnamese guest workers and Romanian gypsies, and failing to quickly repress right-wing attacks.

provided a final impetus to the new social movements (Kitschelt 1986). As Hirsch and Roth argue, neo-corporatism systematically marginalized grievances and themes that did not fall under the purview of the peak interest organizations. This resulted in a surplus of peripheral grievances that the political system could not address (Offe 1980). Rejecting the rigid bureaucratic form of the “mass-integrative political party,” the NSMs assumed informal, non-hierarchical structures (Hirsch and Roth 1986:68; Benton 1989). As Melucci (1984:829–30) suggested, “the normal situation of today’s ‘movement’ is to be a network of small groups submerged in everyday life. . . . The new organizational form . . . is a goal in itself . . . the *form* of the movement is a message, a symbolic challenge to the dominant patterns.”

IV.

Hirsch and Roth’s analysis is more solidly anchored in historical and cultural context than most contending approaches.²⁸ They can better account for the issues, forms, and actions distinguishing the new social movements from their predecessors. Yet the regulation approach has some of the same limitations as earlier versions of neo-Marxism. It is of little help in explaining the individual motivation to join a social movement, the mobilization of resources for collective action, and the course of social conflicts.²⁹ Regulation theory seems best

²⁸ In addition to the perspectives discussed here, it would be necessary to consider the theories of late capitalism (Mandel 1978), programmed society (Touraine 1977), and Postone’s (1993) thesis of a contradiction in contemporary capitalism between the ongoing structuring of society according to the labor-based form of value analyzed by Marx and the diminishing importance of labor inputs in the economy.

²⁹ In all the theories discussed here the emphasis is on explaining very broad changes in patterns of social conflict, such as shifting ideologies, goals, forms of activity, and bases of recruitment. None of these approaches address the problem which is central to “resource mobilization theory” (RM), namely, accounting for differences between contending social movement organizations in recruitment success and between individuals in their proclivity to join a movement. The RM approaches, by contrast, are ill-equipped to illuminate the form and content of the new social conflicts, especially the specific nature of their grievances, as well as upsurges and declines in protest. The often expressed notion that a surplus of ever-present grievances must only be taken advantage of by effective organizers with sufficient resources completely ignores the relationship between evolving social problems and changing identities. How can the massive increase in peace movement activity in Europe and the United States between 1979 and 1983 (Wittner 1988:277–86) be understood without attending to the developments in the Cold War and the nuclear arms race at that time? The more micro-economic versions of the RM approach must also bracket the central symbolic, expressive, and moral aspects of the new movements and the non-instrumental motives which lie behind much participation. Selective incentives, a central explanatory device in the armory of RM theory, certainly could not have been operative in motivating millions of Europeans to demonstrate against nuclear missiles and other weapons and nuclear power plants during the 1980s. Most participants in the NSMs do not even belong to an organization that could provide them with side benefits, and individual participants are nearly invisible at large demonstrations (see Mohr 1992:27–31 for a vivid description of the sense of anonymity of a participant in protests against the West German Brokdorf nuclear power plant). The sheer size of these demonstrations and the absence of any single centralized organizer precluded the distribution of side benefits for most people, except for their immediate group of friends. Describing such small-group reinforcements as a sort of psychological side benefit not only vitiates the concept but also begs the more important question of why so many primary social groups valorized participation in precisely this sort of movement.

Of course there is another variant of RM represented by Tilly, Klandermans, and others. This

suited for understanding the patterning of grievances and the emergence and disappearance of potential collective actors. But even here the regulation approach is problematic.

Despite their rejection of teleology and functionalism and their insistence on contingency and variation, Hirsch and Roth's ideal still seems to be the all-encompassing, totalizing form of analysis familiar from earlier versions of Marxism (and criticized by Althusser in his discussions of the notion of "expressive totality").³⁰ Hirsch and Roth do not simply present a theoretical argument, in which it would be acceptable to mobilize only a single theoretical system; instead, they propose a history of concrete social conflicts in West Germany. Here they elide the distinction between theory and explanation. Nowhere in their text do they indicate that diverse theoretical systems with their particular causal mechanisms might be jointly involved in determining the concrete. Contingency is admitted to this regulationist universe, but this does not mean that diverse causal mechanisms combine in producing an empirical outcome. Rather, contingency here only means that Marxism is unable to explain certain aspects of reality and that those aspects simply remain untheorized. The implicit message is that aspects of the real-concrete, such as social movements, are either fully determined by the causal mechanisms central to Marxist theory or underdetermined.

My aim is not to condemn the regulationists but rather to take the anti-reductionist tone of their programmatic statements to its logical conclusion. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to propose a complete alternative analysis of the new social movements, this final section will make some suggestions about the sorts of additional historical and cultural factors that would need to be considered in a more adequate account. I will first discuss the general importance of granting more autonomy to historical subjectivity and culture in explaining the NSMs; then I will review some of the ways in which the Nazi past shaped the German NSMs.

SUBJECTIVITY AND THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

For Hirsch, Roth, and other regulation theorists, the Fordist regulatory mode is dialectically coupled to its own demise, producing new needs and values that lead to a rejection of its basic premises. The problematic implication,

variant does not focus exclusively on the choices of maximizing rational individuals but also considers political opportunity structures and the effects of a wide variety of resources, including preexisting infrastructures, on mobilization (see Perrow 1979:199–200; Tilly 1978; Klandermans and Tarrow 1988). To the extent that Tilly (1986) also is able to account for the historical emergence of new interests through the combined processes of proletarianization and state formation, he goes beyond other RM approaches. I would argue, however, that a modified version of the regulation perspective might provide a more fine-grained analysis of changes in interests and forms of social protest (Tilly's "repertoires of collective action").

³⁰ See Althusser (1977) for a discussion of the concept of expressive totality. As Althusser (1970:91–119) makes clear, teleology is one form of expressive totality, specifically one in which historical change is explained in terms of a single underlying principle. Regulation theory does not engage in this particular kind of totalizing thought.

however, is that all forms of subjectivity relevant to the NSMs are part of the Fordist system, that is, Fordism provides the sufficient cultural preconditions for the NSMs. Consider Hirsch and Roth's claim that the NSM focused on identity politics in reaction to the homogenization of Fordist mass culture and the penetration of the life world by the neo-corporatist security state. Fordism may have been a necessary condition for the new political paradigm, but it was not a sufficient one. The turn to identity politics in response to perceived psychological leveling depended upon prior definitions of the subject that could then be violated. In a socio-cultural setting with different preexisting constructions of individuality, autonomy, or the category of the person, Fordism might not have incited the specific reassertion of subjectivity and individuality seen in the NSMs. The specific ideological framing work of social movement leaders and intellectuals also contributed to the negative interpretation of mass culture (Snow *et al.* 1986; Snow and Benford 1988).

Differences in the NSM activities of the advanced capitalist countries cannot be attributed to variations in the construction of Fordism. In the United States and Great Britain, new social movements have been less prominent than in Europe; and there has been less resistance to working within the state and cooperating with authorities. The regulationist approach would tend to explain such differences by referring to the variation in the modes of regulation, pointing for instance to the differing importance of the central state as a coordinating instance in each national variant of Fordism. The fragmentation of social movements in the United States would then reflect the relatively decentered nature of American Fordism. Yet a more deeply rooted factor that cannot be assimilated to Fordism is the historical weakness of a folk concept of the state in the United States and Britain, as compared to continental Europe (d'Entrèves 1967:33–34; Badie and Birnbaum 1983:125–30). The example of the census boycott in West Germany during the 1980s throws an interesting light on this contrast. The regulation approach would attribute the surprising success of this boycott to the key role of the intrusive state in German Fordism. This begs the question of why the state was experienced as overly intrusive. The specific framing of the census as an issue of state intrusion was not an automatic result of Fordism but probably had to do with the salience of the folk concept of the state in Germany as all-powerful and pervasive and with the negative coding of this concept. This image of the state can be understood in terms of a specific construction of the collective memory of Nazism as an omnipotent dictatorship rather than a popular movement—a construction which has little to do with Fordism.³¹

³¹ This self-exculpating view of the Nazi state is being reinforced in today's reunified Germany by an image of the GDR as a dictatorship with many victims and few perpetrators. The view of the strong intrusive state may also be related to older images of an omnipotent Prussian absolutist state. Central European absolutism, guided by Cameralist doctrine, obsessively collected every possible shred of information about the territory and its inhabitants, with the avowed goal of social discipline (Maier 1980; Foucault 1989, 1991; Pasquino 1991). Regardless of the actual extent of information gathering in the absolutist states where cameralist doctrine was taught, these states

More generally, Hirsch and Roth assume, rather than carefully trace, the linkages between structural conditions and subjective responses, material grievances and consciousness. Consider their claim that the Fordist program of universal prosperity awakens new needs, such as the expectation of a long and healthy life, but that the economic growth model itself seems to undermine the very possibility of realizing such needs (through environmental threats to health, and so forth), thus inciting opposition. Fordism cannot bear the weight of accounting for the definition of subjective expectations, perceptions of empirical reality, attributions of responsibility for grievances, notions of justice, and assessments of the value and effectiveness of opposition. Why did citizens believe the Fordist promises of the good life in the first place? Why did they understand these promises as having been broken? How did people become cognizant of environmental destruction and see it as an unacceptable risk? Why did they attribute this destruction to the social system rather than, say, human nature? These are elementary questions for any investigation which takes seriously problems of ideology and the creation of hegemony, rather than deriving culture from external material conditions.

THE PRESENCE OF THE NAZI PAST

It is important to consider the diverse ways in which the “peculiarities of German history” (Blackbourn and Eley 1985) continue to influence many aspects of German society, including the NSMs. When contemporary historians discuss the German *Sonderweg*, they are typically referring to a period stretching backwards from 1933 to the nineteenth century or even to the Reformation (see, for example, Dahrendorf 1967; Wehler 1985). In this view, 1945 marks the end of (West) Germany’s deviant history.³² This model distracts attention from the continuing effects of Nazism on the political culture of the Federal Republic after 1945.³³ Indeed, one could argue that the German *Sonderweg* began with the unparalleled events between 1933 and 1945 and that since that time it has become impossible for Germany to be just another European country.³⁴ The exceptionalism thesis might make more sense if its

openly announced their intention to scrutinize and regulate the most minute aspects of society.

³² For an explicit statement of the end of the *Sonderweg* thesis, see Kocka 1990:495–9.

³³ When the historians of German exceptionalism warned in 1989 and 1990 against the revival of the German *Sonderweg*, they were referring not to a possible revival of Nazism, but rather to the supposed dangers of retaining a second German state in the East. This shows how deep-seated the notion was that “good” democratic West Germany had overcome Germany’s peculiar legacy (see Winkler 1990: 9; Kocka 1990). (Of course the same view of West Germany is equally widespread among conservative opponents of the exceptionalism thesis: Thomas Nipperdey, “Die Deutschen wollen und dürfen eine nation sein,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 160 [13 July 1990], p. 10).

³⁴ As Blackbourn and Eley (1985) and others have shown, pre-1914 Germany was not insufficiently bourgeois; in fact, many of its anti-democratic features reflected the power of the industrial bourgeoisie in state and society. Labor relations, economic policies, even the military were in many ways more modernized and more in conformance with capitalist interests in Imperial Germany than in neighboring countries (cf. Grebing 1986; Fischer 1987; Steinmetz 1990).

chronology were completely reversed, projecting Germany's Sonderweg forward from 1933 rather than sequestering it in the distant past. If one ignores the peculiarities of twentieth-century German history, it is impossible to understand not just the NSMs but also the way in which Nazi ideas and slogans could have been revived and diffused so rapidly in Germany since the late 1980s, fueling the resurgence of the latest mass social movement (see below).

The pronounced anti-authoritarianism of the German NSMs is rooted as much in the nationally specific history of Nazism as in the role of the state and centralized political parties and trade unions under Fordism.³⁵ The Nazi generation was fully discredited in the eyes of many of its children. The theme of rejecting the parents is especially strong in the literature of the 1968 generation (Schneider 1981).³⁶ Many younger Germans generalized this sentiment, turning their backs on West German society as a whole. This repudiation was facilitated by the continuing presence of many former Nazis within the West German power elite.

Most important, the Holocaust made it impossible for many Germans to develop a positive national identity. This peculiarity of German identity politics had manifold effects on the NSMs. Many Germans have hesitated to embrace a positive German national identity. This has been a steady complaint of conservatives and establishment figures, culminating in the *Historikerstreit* of the late 1980s and the attacks on opponents of German unification in 1989 and 1990.³⁷ One result has been an overwhelmingly right-wing coding of popular German nationalism, making it even more taboo for non-conservatives. For the new social movement milieu, the focus on identity seems to respond to a vaguely felt subjective deficit that national feelings cannot fulfill. The NSMs often projected desires for positive identity onto non-German groups, such as in the movement of "urban Indians" (*Stadtindianer*) during the late 1970s, the ongoing fascination with Italian social movements, the Bhagwan cult of the 1980s, and alternative tourism. With the revival of regional German folk music and dialects in the 1970s and 1980s, even the internal German other became an important site of counter-identification.

Another set of influences on the West German NSMs that cannot be assim-

³⁵ Radical anti-authoritarianism has been most clearly expressed in the movement-milieux of the so-called *Spontis* (spontaneous left) of the 1970s and early 1980s and the Autonomi (Brand *et al.* 1986:174–6; Hoffmann-Axthelm *et al.* 1978). It is also striking that the earliest and biggest autonomous movement arose in Italy, another country with a fascist past.

³⁶ The Green party leader, Antje Vollmer (1992), even hints at a connection between the partial acceptance of Willi Brandt by the 1968 generation and his role as a fatherless grandfather (rather than father) of the Germans. The question of women in Nazi Germany seems to have been discussed and psychologically worked through in very different terms by the post-war generation.

³⁷ Other appeals to this identity deficit include the Norddeutscher Rundfunk's television series "Wir Deutschen" (1991–92) and Edgar Reitz's successful series "Heimat" (1980–1984), which proposed a nostalgic relationship to the German past and "a gratifying identification with the victims, and with oneself as victim" (Elsaesser 1989:278).

lated to Fordism is related to the unusual situation of the old Left. Especially important here is the state's repressive orientation towards extraparliamentary opposition and the unusual situation of the Communist Party. In contrast to most other European countries, West Germany had no viable or legal Communist Party to absorb some of the new conflict issues. The Nazis eliminated most of the Communists: West Germany then banned the KPD in 1956. Even after the Communist Party was legalized and refounded as the DKP in 1968, its close association with the GDR made it extremely unattractive to critical West Germans.³⁸ The FRG government's initial success in banning the KPD also created a state precedent of overreacting to supposed "threats to the constitution" from the Left, best illustrated by the Radical Law and professional interdictions of the past two decades. West Germany's geopolitical position on the front line of the Cold War systematically reinforced its hard-line approach to left-wing domestic opposition. Such official alarmism in turn heightened NSM alienation from the state.

The conflictory and ambivalent German relationship to the United States is yet another influence on the German NSMs indirectly related to the Nazi past. To some extent this highly charged relationship to the United States is a characteristic of Fordism in general as an international phenomenon. When the United States assumed the role of hegemon in international relations after 1945 (Krasner 1983), it assured a period of relative free trade and held the line against insurgencies world-wide. This benefited the other Fordist national economies. America's role as world gendarme and its political and military leadership in Europe decisively influenced both United States and European social movements in the post-war period. The Vietnam War triggered startlingly simultaneous social movements around the globe (Arrighi *et al.* 1989:97–115; Katsiaficas 1987:29–35). United States (and Soviet) nuclear policy again became the focus of a series of social movements across Europe during the early 1980s. Alongside the perceived nuclear threat, affronts to national sovereignty helped catalyze peace movements in the NATO countries in which U.S. missiles and troops were stationed.

German alternative movements were shaped by Germany's particularly intensive relationship to the United States, a relationship that cannot be fully subsumed under the aegis of Fordism. American movies, music, fashion, and popular culture swept over West Germany during the 1950s, resocializing a whole generation of youth (Maase 1992). While such cultural Americanization was not unique to Germany, it was coupled in the FRG with the humiliations of denazification (despite the limitations of the actual denazification program) and the formal Allied occupation, followed by continuing limitations on German political sovereignty until 1990. Denazification was not

³⁸ While the presence of the GDR weakened conventional Left party politics in West Germany, collective war guilt towards the Soviet Union seemed to contribute to the strength of the peace movement during the 1980s.

invented in Washington, of course (Bark and Gress 1989:74 *ff.*); but the leading American role in West German policy and the NATO alliance tended to focus attention on the U.S.³⁹ Most Germans ostensibly accepted their country's junior partnership with the United States. The NSMs themselves, with their informality and their use of civil disobedience tactics from the American civil rights movement, represented a certain Americanization of German political culture.⁴⁰ Yet undercurrents of resentment were always evident, and sweeping rejections of the United States were common in the German NSMs.⁴¹ Commentators probably overstated the extent of anti-Americanism and nationalism in the West German peace movement during the 1980s (for example, Berman 1981; Pohrt 1982:116–7; Hollander 1992:377–83; Herf 1991:227). On the other hand, German peace movement supporters did pay less attention to the German and Soviet role in the arms race than to the U.S. side.

The most direct influence of Nazism on social movements in Germany, finally, has become especially evident since the late 1980s, with the rapid growth of an extreme right-wing movement and less open expressions of far-right sentiment. On the one hand, this movement could be construed as part of a European-wide phenomenon of neo-racism (Balibar 1991; Link 1992) and traced to the rise of a new mode of regulation (post-Fordism or flexible accumulation, see Steinmetz 1994). Several general aspects of post-Fordism could be seen as giving rise to new forms of racist mobilization: the decline of well-paid unionized jobs in the metropolises, the export of basic production jobs to the non-European countries, the opening of national borders to foreign products and workers, and the general loss of the guaranteed living conditions characteristic of the Fordist-Keynesian welfare state. Yet even if post-Fordism plays a role in these newest European social movements, German neo-racism is *sui generis*. German Nazi ideology provides a specific ideological grid connecting a variety of disparate enemies into an overarching category of the

³⁹ For a discussion of the limits on German sovereignty in West Berlin, see Tergeist (1984).

⁴⁰ The late Petra Kelly, co-founder of the Green Party and the most familiar symbol of the NSMs in Germany and abroad, embodied this ambivalent relationship to the United States with her American and German parentage, her university education in the United States, and her continuing emphasis on the positive sides of American society.

⁴¹ These statements are based mainly on my own observations within the German peace movement between 1981 and 1985 (see also Schmitt 1990:249–59). I would not argue, however, that these left-wing German attitudes are equivalent to right-wing German nationalist rejections of the United States, as the latter contain unmistakable racist and anti-Semitic elements. Consider a typical statement by the extreme-right-wing German Republican party leader, Franz Schönhuber: I am struggling against a “foreignization” (*Überfremdung*) leading to a situation in which we lose our national identity; that is the decisive point for me. I am struggling against the permanent Americanization [of Germany] . . . we are on the way to becoming a Coca-Cola Republic. We are taking over slogans from the Americans. . . . If you turn on the radio nowadays you have the feeling you're driving somewhere between Manhattan and Riverside (sic).”

(Interview with Schönhuber in the television documentary, “Mord von Rechts: Wer stoppt die Gewalt?,” on the German ZDF network, November 25, 1992).

other. Thus the recent targets of German neo-Nazi attacks have included not just immigrants seen as taking jobs away from Germans but also Polish tourists, homeless men, left-wing squatters, handicapped people, and Jews.⁴² Although further research is needed to clarify the exact ways in which such ideologies are reproduced and propagated (compare Butterwegge and Isola 1991; Schröder 1992), one condition for their particular resonance in Germany is their enhanced realism. As Stuart Hall has argued, ideology must contain at least partial truth if the masses are to accept it (Hall 1983:82, 1988:45). The partial truth for German neo-Nazis is that their ideas have actually been put into practice and that they worked. The peculiar history of Germany since 1933 continues to influence even the newest of its social movements.

CONCLUSION

This article has reflected on the challenges to Marxist theory posed by the new social movements and on some of the theoretical discourses associated with these movements that are sometimes grouped together as post-Marxist. Many analysts have been led to proclaim the obsolescence of Marxist theory on the basis of the new social movements' aims, form, and heterogeneous class base, together with the waning of working-class identification, the labor movement, and class differences in political behavior (Niethammer 1979; Mooser 1983; Offe 1984; but compare Weakliem 1991). I examined regulation theory, a specific form of neo-Marxism that rejects functionalism and teleology, and tried to answer some of the other critiques without abandoning what it sees as Marxism's core: the analysis of capital accumulation, its crises, and the social arrangements that allow it to continue.⁴³ Given the role of the new social movements in generating the critiques of Marxism, explaining these movements within the revised Marxist approach takes on an obvious importance. Because Hirsch and Roth have presented the most extended analysis of the NSMs from a regulationist perspective, their work deserves a serious appraisal. They argue that historically stabilized social formations for regulating accumulation structure the actors, stakes, resources, and likely outcomes of social conflicts. Many of these grievances, needs, and actors cut across social class boundaries. The problem with this analysis lies in its ambition of at-

⁴² In 1991 skinheads in Berlin reportedly dragged a young Polish visitor into the bushes of the Tiergarten, anesthetized his tongue, and cut off the end of it with shears. Whether or not this incident is apocryphal, it illustrates in a particularly insidious form the argument about the new racism being less about biological heredity than "the insurmountability of cultural differences . . . the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions" (Balibar 1991:21). There are specific German elements at work here too, including the long German tradition of repressing the speaking of Polish. The numerous attacks on handicapped people during 1992 have been accompanied by slogans explicitly echoing the eugenic ideology (and policy) of the Nazis. See Steinmetz (1994).

⁴³ For an important intra-Marxist critique of the regulation approach, see Brenner and Glick (1991; cf. also Graham (1991).

tempting to explain the new movements entirely in terms of regulatory modes. Arrangements for capital accumulation may not be the sole determinants of patterns of social antagonism or even necessarily the crucial ones. Marxists must accept that actors' identities, perceptions, and interests may also be shaped by discursive formations and loci of conflict and oppression that have little relationship to capital accumulation. There should be no pressure on Marxists to explain everything in terms of the mechanisms central to its own theory.

My own understanding of Marxism is that it is an abstract theoretical system existing at a very different level than explanations of historical events and concrete processes. To clarify this we need to distinguish theories and explanations and to attend to the relations between what Roy Bhaskar calls mechanisms and events.⁴⁴ Realism in the philosophy of science assumes an ontological distinction between events as they are observed and the underlying mechanisms that produce those regularities. Scientific theories, including social theories, are ultimately about causal mechanisms and are not concerned with explaining specific empirical and historical occurrences. Examples of such mechanisms include the unconscious in psychoanalysis, natural selection in evolutionary theory, and modes of production or capital accumulation in Marxist theory. Science also tries to produce explanations, which have as their object concrete outcomes or events in the world. Bob Jessop's (1990a) term, "contingent necessity", nicely expresses the relationship between theory and explanation. As he notes,

"contingent" is a logical concept and concerned with *theoretical indeterminability*, "necessity" is an ontological concept and refers to *determinacy in the real world*. Thus "contingent" means "indeterminable within the terms of a single theoretical system"; it can properly be juxtaposed to the notion of "necessity," which signifies the assumption underpinning any realist scientific enquiry that "everything that happens is caused" (Jessop 1990a:12).

Jessop's so-called method of articulation, inspired by Poulantzas' distinction between modes of production and social formation, entails a movement from the abstract to the concrete and from the simple to the complex (compare Mahon 1991). An empirical phenomenon is explained as the result of multiple chains of causation. Explaining the effects of the 1989 California earthquake, for example, might require knowledge of a variety of different mechanisms: plate tectonics, highway and building construction techniques, traffic patterns, and American conceptions of nature, culture, and civilization.⁴⁵

The arguments advanced here clash with the standard ideal in most of

⁴⁴ See especially Bhaskar (1978, 1979, 1986); also Erik Olin Wright's discussion of these issues in Wright *et al.* (1989:57–63).

⁴⁵ It would be possible to combine various theoretical systems into a new "compound" theory for every empirical analysis, thus avoiding the distinction between theory and explanation. This would provide only a temporary solution, however, as each empirical case would require the elaboration of a new compound theory. The result would be an endless proliferation of highly specialized theories with ridiculously limited ranges of applicability, thus hollowing out the very meaning of theory.

Marxism (and in much of the social sciences) of attaining parsimonious explanations through theoretical statements that are maximally capacious. Marxists have felt compelled to encompass the entirety of reality in their theory. “Vulgar” Marxism simply collapses across levels of abstraction, discovering flesh-and-blood social classes or neatly delineated modes of production existing in reality. The more “sophisticated” forms of Marxism respect the distinction between the simple and abstract and the complex and concrete but assume that both could be understood within an entirely Marxist conceptual universe. The Althusserians in particular differentiated between the abstract mode of production and the more concrete social formation, itself a complex articulation of modes of production. The Althusserians also assimilated non-Marxist concepts, such as in Poulantzas’ use of mainstream political science and Macherey’s employment of Russian formalism, not to mention the importance of Freud, Lacan, Bachelard, and other non-Marxists in Althusser’s own thought. But the whole process took place within the homogenizing framework of Marxism. “Bourgeois” concepts were changed into Marxist ones, as in Poulantzas’ discussion of state bureaucracies (1978:331–59).⁴⁶ The social formation may have been an articulation of diverse structures, but all of these structures had to be categorized as modes of production. And the economic was “determinant in the last instance,” even if that “lonely hour” never came.⁴⁷

Where does this leave us? Marxism is an abstract theory that operates with simple objects (such as mode of production, social class, and perhaps now mode of regulation and accumulation regime), but it cannot claim a monopoly on explanations of the empirical and historical.⁴⁸ Marxism must respect the integrity and boundaries of theoretical systems, including its own. This self-understanding is perhaps the best definition of post-Marxism. Only where the theoretical core of Marxism is retained does it make sense to speak of post-Marxist, rather than non-Marxist, theory. I recognize the existence of varying interpretations of the term post-Marxism. Some authors see post-Marxism as synonymous with a “thorough critique of modern civil society” (Cohen 1983:2), but this ambition is hardly unique to Marxism. For others, post-Marxist seems to be primarily an (auto)biographical description (Wright 1987; compare Laclau and Mouffe 1985). But in practice, a post-Marxist orientation

⁴⁶ An exception to this was Althusser’s acceptance of the unconscious as a specific object requiring its own theory (see Althusser [1971]).

⁴⁷ It may seem unfair to single out Marxists for criticism, as they were undoubtedly more sophisticated with respect to these issues than many others. After all, sociologists and political scientists are more frequently accused of throwing together a hodgepodge of “independent variables” in their regression equations with little attention to the theoretical systems from which the variables are derived—an approach that eliminates theory altogether, rather than just collapsing the levels of theory/mechanism and explanation/event.

⁴⁸ This does not mean that Marxism is a regional theory in the Althusserian sense, for example, a theory of the economy. The question of which regions exist and how they are defined is historically variable, and an empirical object, such as the economy, may also be co-determined by non-economic regions, such as the state.

seems to be one that continues to provisionally accept the usefulness of Marxist theory—however Marxism may be understood—while embracing a more diversified explanatory strategy that accepts a multiplicity of theoretical systems on an equal basis. It is no paradox to argue then that post-Marxism is Marxist in theory but post-Marxist in its explanatory strategies.

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