This is an accepted manuscript version of: Mayer, Margit. "The 'Career' of Urban Social Movements in German Cities." *Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in the Era of the Global City*, edited by Robert Fisher and Joseph Kling, SAGE Publishing, 1993, pp. 149–70.

Mayer, M., "The 'Career' of Urban Social Movements in German Cities,"
in: Robert Fisher und Joseph Kling, eds., *Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in a Global Era.* Newbury Park: Sage, 1993, pp. 149-170.

Over the last decade, urban protest has drastically changed its appearance. In the seventies and early eighties, massive protests of rehab squatters, citizens' initiatives, tenant groups and housing activists brought prevailing forms of urban development in many German cities to a halt. Today, such movements are reported only occasionally. Headlines are filled instead with reports of increasing numbers of youth street gangs, and more recently, racist and violent attacks on immigrants and refugees. No longer a site for struggle over alternative and popular ways of appropriating the city, the urban terrain instead appears fractured: community organizations are now on the "inside" and unemployed youth, foreigners and other marginalized social groups are on the "outside". These and other new cleavages find expression in unfamiliar forms of protest activity, in right-wing and neo-Nazi militancy, in attacks by "autonomous" radicals on Greens in city councils, or in puzzling rituals of street fighting over New Year's Eve or May 1. While similar changes have been observed in most western nations, this article traces one particular country's experience of urban social movements in terms of the specific West German (and later unified) political opportunity structure as well as in the context of a broader crisis and transformation of a mode of accumulation and regulation, the latter having created new patterns for urban politics and a different space for social movements.

We can identify distinct phases of urban opposition movements in Germany, beginning with a first wave of mobilization by citizens' initiatives during the early 1970s against large-scale renewal projects and in defense of residents' living conditions. These struggles soon expanded into struggles over the cost and the use-value of the public infrastructure, into which cities invested heavily during the short era of social reform (1969-73), and created a fertile milieu for various types of grassroots and community groups, into which leftist projects of the now dissolving extra-parliamentarian opposition of the student left inserted themselves. Squattings, rent strikes and massive demonstrations against renewal and displacement policies marked the high point of this first phase of urban movements, and left behind a new political actor in most West German cities: a self-confident and politically active urban counter-culture.

The transition from the reformist modernization politics of the Brandt government to the crisis-induced "Model Germany" of the Schmidt government in 1974 also marked a new phase for urban-based protest movements. While governments increasingly sought to delegitimate protest, their modernization policies exacerbated the negative effects of urban restructuring, and lead the various urban movements into tighter cooperation and highly politicized anti-state orientations. Moderate citizens' initiatives, radical leftists, and local projects of the newer women's and ecology movements became united not only in their opposition to urban renewal, but also, in contesting the established parties' monopoly to articulate political interests. During this phase, electoral alliances (green, colored, and alternative lists) were formed and gained seats on local city councils.

The early 1980s squatters' movements in various German (and other West European) cities is a result of the politicization and homogenization of urban protest during the late 1970s and also shows the effects of a changed economic and political opportunity structure. The period's economic crisis fell especially on local governments as they are responsible for dealing with growing unemployment and higher welfare dependency rates, while the federal government's austerity policies severely restricted their scope for action. Looking for ways to deal with these dilemmas, many municipalities "discovered" the problem-solving potential and innovative capacities of local movement milieus: their labor gradually was acknowledged and upgraded in a manner that would have been inconceivable in the highly polarized 1970s German political culture. Many movement projects receive funding and some are even incorporated as "model projects" into municipal social or employment programs of the "entrepreneurial city". Community and movement groups' participation in different policy sectors is routinized, and last but not least, movement issues and demands are now firmly represented in many local governments by the Green Party.

These various incorporation processes have had effects which became visible since the late 1980s in an increasing heterogenization of the social composition and political orientation of the urban movement milieus. While a social movement sector has now clearly become a stable, permanent element within German urban politics, with its own public sphere, alternative lifestyles, and infrastructure, it also manifests more and more polarizations, cleavages and forms of implosion. "Incorporated" segments frequently find themselves attacked by groups, whose economic and social problems have been ignored by the incorporation discourse of the 1980s and thus marginalized. The problems caused by mass unemployment, by the lack of opportunities for unskilled young people, and those engendered by the rapid multiculturalization of many city neighborhoods, are intensifying under unification pressures and creating a new agenda for urban movements, which has yet to be seized.

This career of urban social movements does not correspond to typical patterns described by social movement theory. Neither concepts of a gradual diffusion of movement sectors, patterns of cyclical rise and decline of mobilization, or the "natural death" of a social movement through institutionalization processes are helpful in accounting for these transformations. Clearly, a movement sector has consolidated which is still able to mobilize for different occasions. But its relations to intermediary sectors and the state are less clear and its constituent elements are fragmented and even polarized in new ways.

Therefore, to understand the developmental patterns of urban social movements in Germany, we will examine the actors, goals, internal organization and the transformations in their roles for social change as they relate to various phases of urban development and their respective conflict patterns.

Phases of urban conflict and urban social movements

1. Opposition to Fordist urban renewal

While the immediate post-war development was dominated by the Cold War and the German economic miracle, with the expansion of the (social-democratic) Keynesian-welfare state model of development from the mid-sixties on, new lines of conflict emerged. The instruments and agencies of central state planning and global steering were expanded in order to distribute the blessings of the Fordist modernization process all over the country. Local governments implemented this scheme by expanding the urban social and technical infrastructure (streets, schools, kindergartens, hospitals, social housing etc.), by servicing land provision and by managing large-scale urban renewal. All over Germany, and not merely in localities that were governed by Social-Democrats, large-scale urban renewal and modern housing construction were at the core of local politics. The demolition of whole turn-of-the-century neighborhoods and their replacement by modern housing construction marked a high-point, and simultaneously a crisis, of social-democratic local politics.

From 1969 to 1973 the majority of governments on the city, state, and federal level were led by Social Democrats which, during this phase, were strongly reform-oriented. From 1966 to 1969 a so-called Grand Coalition ruled on the national level, i.e. a coalition of the two large parties SPD and CDU/CSU. With its "Act for the Promotion of Stability and Economic Growth" it tied local budgets, which represent the lion's share of public investment, to the central government's Keynesian strategy of counter- cyclical measures. From 1969 to 1972 a social-liberal coalition made up the government on the federal level.

This type of urban infrastructure and of collective consumption expansion accelerated the segmentation of urban space into monofunctional zones of residence, shopping, working and entertainment and thereby destroyed vital fabrics and milieus of neighborhoods. While serving to raise consumption levels, it also standardized ways of living and monotonized urban life. It was against these effects of the growth strategies that the first phase of urban oppositional movements during the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s mobilized.

Already in 1965 Alexander Mitscherlich's book “The Unhospitability of Our Cities” offered a harsh critique of the dominant patterns of urban development, their fixation on the automobile, the consequent decay of the inner city and suburbanization's destructive effects on the countryside. Other precursors of the first wave of mobilizations include the early 1960s' youth revolts and the situationists' revolt against urban emptiness and hegemonic norms. Both revolts challenged the still hegemonic norms of self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and the belief in progress, and they contributed to a gradual cultural pluralization of post-war Germany. In 1968, this cultural opposition merged with the extra-parliamentary opposition to nuclear armament and the emergency laws passed by the grand coalition. From then on, the fundamental critique of society of the New Left became most influential for the movements of the period.

Citizens immediately threatened by urban renewal plans or large-scale projects formed the initial opposition to the growth strategies. These citizens’ initiatives often developed out of traditional citizen associations made up of middle class notables. They used conventional, pragmatic methods to defend their neighborhoods and chose cooperative tactics and professional strategies such as “planning alternatives from below”. However, confronting unresponsive technocratic city administrations they frequently resorted to unconventional forms of politics, including direct action and street protest. Contested issues included not only infrastructure expansion, but also cost, quality, and participation in its design. In many cities, broad mobilizations occurred which were directed toward lowering costs and influencing cultural norms expressed in the institutions of collective consumption (especially schools, kindergartens, and public transport). These protests were joined by initiatives from the youth protest movements, whose roots were in the 1960s anti-authoritarian movement. In the course of the 1970s, this local scene was gradually “infiltrated” by a wave of leftist community organizing groups that had grown out of the political projects of the extra-parliamentarian opposition. The New Left saw the ‘reproductive sector’ as an area of politicization where disadvantaged groups could be mobilized (cf. Roth 1990a).

The first squatting in Germany took place in 1970 in Cologne, but the Hamburg and Frankfurt housing struggles were even more militant. During the first half of the 70s, squattings took place in many West German cities (cf. Brandes/Schön 1982: 174ff). The most favorable conditions for a concentrated and relatively long period of squatting activities were present in Frankfurt, where from 1972 to 1974 squatting actually dominated the local movement sector. The issue here was restructuring of neighborhood near the central business district for expanding tertiary functions. In other cities the triggering events were large-scale renewal projects. In each case, renewal plans and large-scale demolition of turn-of-the century housing did not include open and democratic planning processes, but instead non-public and generous deals between city agencies and investors. This political process stimulated speculative behavior whereby whole blocks were bought up, temporarily rented out to "transitory residents" like students and immigrant workers, or left vacant. The real estate owners could expect huge profits from the demolition and eventual construction of high-rise office buildings. Both the undemocratic nature and the detrimental social effects of such urban development politics sparked (in Frankfurt as early as 1968) protest organized by conventional citizens' associations, which usually saw themselves as non-ideological and quite distinct from the radical, student-led groups which were also forming at the time.

Within this climate the first squat in Frankfurt was carried out by students and social workers who had already been active in SDS and community groups. The squatters had formed a "collective living experiment" and occupied a large, turn-of-the-century building together with Italian immigrant families. Two similar squats followed a month later and their success bred imitators in other circles (Dackweiler et al. 1990: 210). In Hamburg, the first squat took place in 1973 in a similar atmosphere of widespread protest against demolition plans (Schubert 1990:35). Explicitly political projects, the goal of these first squats was to radicalize political work in the "reproductive sphere". The squatted houses both symbolized the criticism of urban renewal that consisted in demolition for luxury housing or offices, and served as organizational bases for further squats; their residents also played important roles in initiating other movement activities (in Frankfurt for example the rent strike movement). The most discriminated population group, immigrant families, went on rent strike (by the end of 1972, about 1000 people participated) to reject the role which the renewal process had forced them into, i.e. to profitably fill out the last time span before the deteriorated housing stock would be demolished (Stracke 1976: 134). Despite the large number of rent-striking buildings and despite the support they received from the citizens' initiative, leftist activists, squatters and community groups, and the positive resonance they received from the media, the rent strike movement lost in court.

Because the issue of urban destruction was easily presented as a political scandal, public reactions were initially quite positive. In Frankfurt the SPD mayor even welcomed the first squats as "symbolic actions", they served to legitimate and strengthen the local SPD's reformist efforts. After the third squat in November 1970, however, the mayor decided there were enough symbols and declared that further occupations would not be tolerated. The occupation and subsequent violent eviction of a building in September 1971 encouraged more squats, because widespread indignation over the brutal police actions and bloody street battles forced the Frankfurt mayor to rescind his earlier eviction order. Similar sympathies arose in Hamburg over the city government's repressive and criminalizing response to their first squattings. Citizens' initiatives, tenant groups and professionals came to the support of the squatters and formed a broad housing movement. In Frankfurt, from October 1971 to July 1972 ten more mostly successful squattings took place, broadening the infrastructure for political work and the movement's alternative living arrangements. During this expansive phase of the squatting movement, a curious coexistence and even productive relationship prevailed between the radical, anti-reformist protest and social-democratic reform policies, which attempted innovative and socially-responsible solutions to the problem. The lines of conflict were drawn between the squatters, their supporters, and the ruling SPD against what appeared to all as the common enemy, the speculators and irresponsible real estate owners.

Reasons for the decline of this first wave in the squatting movement differed according to the local situation. While in Hamburg or Berlin community and tenant initiatives worked pragmatically to prevent demolitions and to create and maintain alternative housing forms (cf. Bodenschatz et al. 1983), thus building an organizational basis for another massive mobilization during the early 1980s, in Frankfurt the movement's strong infusion with political and existential radicalism eventually turned into a limitation. Left radicalism and militancy became quite synonymous, both because of the strong presence of new left groups within the movement, who understood their activities in the reproductive sector as part of broader revolutionary activities, such as party building or internationalism, and also because of the SPD city government's changing political strategy. In 1973/4, the city began urging evictions while simultaneously presenting itself as the savior of the existing housing stock and the fabric of the threatened neighborhood (Dackweiler et al. 1990: 214). The stiff repression and criminalization of the squatters during two protracted eviction conflicts in particular intensified the movement's critique of SPD reformism and its own self-radicalization (Stracke 1976:123) while the distance to the more moderate citizens' initiatives increased and the supportive environment began to crumble.

In spite of such setbacks this phase produced, by the mid-seventies, in most German cities a new political actor: a self-confident urban counter-culture with its own infrastructure of newspapers, self-managed collectives and housing cooperatives, feminist groups, etc., and prepared to intervene in local and broader politics. In Frankfurt, the movement scene reacted to the setback with a drastic shift in orientation. Trying to learn from the failure of the “mass militancy” of the housing struggle, its leaders turned towards the new women’s movement and its motto “the personal is political.” This shift brought to the foreground the social experiments which had actually been implemented in the squatted houses, covered up by the revolutionary power politics dominant during the period.

Institutional effects of this phase of mobilization included modest participatory concessions by city administrations: more groups and interests were to be heard and allowed participation in the urban planning process. But the slogan of the short social-liberal reform era, “Let's risk more democracy!” was not applied to the local opposition. Legitimate political action was still restricted to party-based action and limited to those parties which were seen as safeguarding the “free, democratic basic order”. The radical opposition was threatened with the Berufsverbote 1972 (i.e. the decrees against radicals, cf. Narr 1976). Thus, the social-democratic governments during this reform phase (1971-74) provided a peculiar opportunity structure for urban protest: they were quite supportive of reformist citizens' initiatives as these supplied necessary social pressure “from below” for envisioned reform initiatives “from above”. The left-radical opposition also benefitted from some participatory concessions. The only significant participatory measures passed during the period were the information and hearing rights established with the Urban Renewal Act of 1971 and from the general climate of reform, but whenever it took the promise of “more democracy” too seriously, it confronted severe repression.

2. Project Phase and Greening of the Opposition (1974-1982)

From 1974 to 1977 social-democratic governments remained in place on all levels, but now engaged in crisis management instead of reform politics.

On the local level, many Social-Democrats lost to Christian Democrats years before the shift occurred nationally (1982). In Frankfurt, for example, the conservative era started in 1977. The social-liberal government under Chancellor Schmidt (since 1974) returned institutional politics to its (pre-reform) era state of being closed off and protected from pressures and interests from below. Urban opposition and protest were publicly delegitimized and attacked, while, as a consequence of crisis management and modernization, pressures on the conditions of urban life intensified. Through a series of centralizing measures even the space for political action by local authorities was severely restricted.

Centralizing measures carried out during the second half of the 1970s (Gebietsreform) reduced the number of local governments by about one third, reduced their power and authority, and created yet greater distance between citizens and the administration at the lowest level of government.

The world-wide economic recession 1973/74 indicates the break of the post-war growth model and when the crisis of Fordism became felt in many different sectors. Markets for consumer durables and mass products were saturated, the labor process could not be further taylorized, economists noted a structural crisis of capital reproduction, and the consensus around Keynesian policies dissolved (Leaman 1988: 205ff, 212). In other words, the social and technical limits of the Fordist growth model had become apparent: the rigidities of the production structure, the rising costs of mass production and mass consumption, and the politicization of those costs and effects slowed down growth rates and triggered social conflicts and social movements which put these costs on the agenda.

Citizens' initiatives protesting the threats and infringements to their quality of life contributed to making the social limits of the Fordist regime visible, particularly how its resource-and waste-intensity creates barriers to expansion. The ecology and other movements also challenge technological fixes as solutions to the Fordist relationship to nature, fearing their negative effects on democracy and social responsibility.

The economic restructuring efforts undertaken to overcome this crisis of Fordism – including the world-market centered modernization strategies of the “Model Germany” (cf. Markovits 1982) – augmented the proportion of social groups that remain excluded from the “blessings of Fordism” as unemployment rates (affecting especially the younger age groups) skyrocketed. Unemployment remained abnormally high right up until the next recession in 1981 (cf. Leaman 216, 233). Economic restructuring oriented towards the world market also intensified such spatial restructuring as urban renewal and tertiarization (cf. Häussermann/Siebel 1987). These negative effects on urban living conditions and the growth cartel's exclusivity, attacking even moderate citizens' initiatives as “internal enemies of the state” (for blocking investments), encouraged not only more protest activity but also a coming together of heterogeneous movements and their creation of independent organizational structures quite opposed to the state and its parties. These movements were, in fact, not altogether independent of the state since their resources to a large extent stemmed, if indirectly, from the benefits of the German welfare state: to university students as stipends, to other political activists as welfare or unemployment compensation, rent subsidies, etc.

As repressive and marginalizing measures by the authorities provided repeated cause for cooperation among the movement groups and for confrontation with the authorities, alternative projects, frustrated citizens initiatives and local new social movement campaigns (peace, women, ecology) developed tighter solidarities and a shared radical-oppositional self-image.

The most significant innovation within the local movement scene was that alternative projects and communal experiments came to the fore more strongly. During the late 70s projects in all types of production and service activities and collective living arrangements were initiated (cf. Bertels/ Nottenbohm 1983; for economic projects 1985; for social projects Huber 1980). At the same time, the continued experience of political exclusion and marginalization during this phase (highlighted by the "German Fall" of 1977, cf. Mayer 1978) led the movement groups, in some localities more than in others, to shift their political interventionism in the direction of electoral alternatives. During the second half of the 1970s the first local electoral coalitions emerged: green, rainbow and alternative lists which ran candidates for city halls and municipal elections (cf. Roth 1991). In 1978, they joined on a state-wide basis in Hessia (and out of these developments in 1980 the national Green Party was to be formed). This electoral alternative helped to create a common denominator for the various and particular local movements, ecology. "Ecology" came to signify the search for fundamental and generalizable alternatives and a radical opposition to the dominant policy of crisis management (Roth 1990b).

3. Shifts in the relationship between the movements and the state

1982 marked another year of recession in Germany, stagnation reached the formerly expansive service sector (Leaman, 234), introducing a period of intensifying distributive struggles and reductions of social benefits by the state. The simultaneous change in national government brought the conservative Christian-Democrats into power and led to a revival of local and urban issues in the public sphere. While an intense second wave of squatting and housing struggles swept the country in the early 1980s, this time the solution was sought in the selective adoption of movement initiatives at the local level. Local governments, forced to find new and alternative ways of dealing with the fiscal restrictions imposed by the consequences of economic restructuring, unemployment and rising welfare costs, began to look to community groups and alternative organizations for their innovative potential. Thus, in the course of the decade, a transition from urban social movements challenging the state to a less oppositional relationship between "interest groups" and a local welfare bureaucracy increasingly confronted with its own limitations occurred.

The squatting movement of the early 1980s was soon known as "rehab squatting movement". This time, the movement was strongest in Berlin, where it started in 1979 as the last desperate step of a ten-year long defensive community and tenant-organizing endeavor to stop the deterioration, forced vacancies and speculation carried out by private landlords. When a powerful youth and alternative movement emerged and coalesced with local community groups, squatting became a form of self-help in which the squatters not only occupied vacant buildings, but also attempted to restore the properties into livable condition after years of physical deterioration (cf. Katz/Mayer 1985). Again, these forms of occupation managed to attract the support of broad sectors of the population alienated by the rotten building policies of the Berlin government and by the disruptive effects of – and huge profits made by – massive housing development, real estate and tax shelter syndicating firms. During the movement's peak in 1981, about 160 buildings were “rehab-squatted” in West Berlin, involving directly about 5000 people.

1. There were also widespread squatting movements in Zurich, Amsterdam, Freiburg and other German cities related to the “new housing needs”, a term coined for what appeared to be a new problem at the beginning of the 80s. A more limited squatting movement in Frankfurt at the time was mostly carried out by younger radicals at the margin of the “established” movement scene, many of whom were primarily interested in cheap housing. The local opportunity structures were no longer conducive to their efforts as the CDU city government would not tolerate illegal occupations. Intense gentrification processes in the cbd-near districts had displaced those groups who might have been willing to support and use radical forms of self-help. The dominant movement issues of the period, the struggle against the airport expansion and the new peace movement, did not leave much space for other mobilizations, and the activists of the earlier housing struggles had meanwhile gone into Green electoral politics (cf. Dackweiler et al., 206ff, 219ff). The unresolved housing problems contributed eventually to the fact that in 1989 a red-green city government became possible.

The joint actions of the squatter movements brought together citizens' and tenants' initiatives, marginalized youth, and alternative political groups. While the former were interested in careful urban renewal and self-help in housing rehabilitation, the latter sought niches for themselves in a relatively protected milieu, used the actions as a stage for their struggle against the state, or were simply interested in suitable space for political projects. What they had common, at least initially, was a radical critique of the state housing policy and a desire for unfettered self-realization, for private spheres without state control.

As the fruits of their self-help labor were repeatedly destroyed by evictions and demolitions, more squatters sought agents to mediate their interests with the local state. While evictions, arrests, trials, police investigations and street fighting were still going on (one demonstrator was killed in the protest against the eviction of eight squatted buildings in September 1981), some squatters and support groups worked up a variety of proposals for the transfer of squatted houses into public ownership, “legalized” self-management and long-term leaseholds, as well as an institutionalized third-party mediator and manager between the houses and the state. After years of struggle and many setbacks which gradually fragmented the movement, the first alternative renewal agent “Stattbau” began to administer the buildings on behalf of the Berlin Senat, which would in turn purchase the buildings from their current owners and give squatters long-term leases with extensive self-management rights (cf. Clarke/Mayer 1986: 412). Following this example, similar alternative renewal agents were established in Hamburg in 1984 (Schubert 1991: 37f.) and over the next few years in other West German cities.

A similar process of “approximation” took place with the alternative collectives and citizens initiatives and the state. In Berlin these groups had formed an umbrella organization “Arbeitskreis Staatsknete” to secure public funding for their projects. And while the founding activists among them framed this demand as a political offensive on the “new voluntarism” propagated by the Christian-Democratic government, more and more projects joined the Arbeitskreis, which were new, had little political experience, but high hopes for individual funding. This changing composition among the activists reflects the fact that deteriorating economic conditions and increasing marginalization (especially youth unemployment) were beginning to undermine the position of alternative projects all over Germany (cf. Beywl 1983: 97; 1988). A consequence was that the projects sought to professionalize and were increasingly willing to participate in the political bargaining process wherever it would open up to them.

And open up it did. Because the effects of the Fordist crisis and of restructuring efforts made themselves felt most of all on the local level, many cities began to develop unconventional, cost-effective policies to deal with the challenges they faced. Local budgets were under intense pressure through increasing unemployment and poverty rates; welfare programs (for which local authorities are responsible) had to be expanded, but fiscal austerity at the federal level severely restricted the ability of local governments to act. Additionally, municipal budgets began to feel the strain from years of environmental neglect, as polluted soils, traffic congestion, waste disposal and water provision are largely municipal responsibilities. To devise solutions to these crises, cities began to look to the alternative scene as an innovative reserve The West Berlin administration spearheaded these “opening-up” processes

2. Berlin has often been used as a testing ground for innovative social policies. This is due to its unique political and economic situation during the Cold War period and to the fact that it attracted such large numbers of marginalized groups and were soon followed by other (at first especially Christian-Democratic run) local governments. In 1983, a social services program was established in response to demands for state funding of alternative social, cultural and political projects, but also, as a solution to the problems of the local welfare state (cf. Fink's writings, who was then the Berlin Senator for Social Affairs). While the umbrella organization “Arbeitskreis Staatsknete” had demanded funding for a self-administered fund from various departments, the CDU offer was limited to social services and health-related activities, but geared towards projects based on client self-help and voluntary co-production of health services. Over the first few years of the program a number of groups found the state's control over their work and the redefinition of their goals too intrusive and dropped out, but the program endures and has funded hundreds of self-help groups in social projects working with women, immigrants, youth, drug addicts etc. (cf. SEKIS Newsletter, April 1987). Similarly, in response to the housing problems which the rehab-squatters publicized, the Berlin Housing Senat institutionalized a self-help rehabilitation program featuring the inclusion of various intermediary organizations and both technical assistance and socially-oriented renewal agents in the planning, formulation and implementation of housing and social policies (cf. Mayer 1987: 354f).

These examples of involving community-based and alternative groups in municipal policies are part of a larger change in local service provision in which the responsibility for the implementation of a variety of formerly municipal tasks is delegated to other (non-municipal) private and voluntary sector agents (cf. Mayer 1991, 1992). While traditional welfare state benefits are reduced, new mediating structures are installed and new forms of (often state-initiated) self-steering are explored, into which former social movement organizations are tied. This occurs in the classical areas of urban renewal, housing and social policies where self-help groups, women's centers, youth centers, and special programs for foreigners are affected, but also in the area of employment and job training policies where community and alternative groups have already experimented with innovative schemes addressing social marginalization and long-term unemployment. Administrative activity now seeks to connect the neighborhood and alternative groups and their social service work to state employment policies, thereby saving local welfare expenditure and activating marginal social groups for whom traditional means of welfare state integration have failed.

Whether they create projects in urban repair, in environmental protection, or in social and cultural infrastructure, the intermediary organizations or renewal agents turn into employment agencies of a new type. While tackling social and ecological problems, they mediate cheap labor through municipal rehabilitation and training programs and, in the course of managing the new organization, professionalize themselves. The municipality's increasing readiness to accommodate solutions developed by the alternative scene has had ambiguous consequences for the movement groups. The public acknowledgement, funding, and upgrading of their labor led to an erosion of their original orientation to social change, but led as well to a stabilization of local movement sectors, the strengthening of their infrastructure, and to making them, finally, a normal and permanent feature of German politics. While facilitating local improvements that are in many respects superior to anything the state or corporations have been able to achieve, the new organizations also find themselves "used to establish urban-cultural ambiance" or to assist the micro-management of intensifying social problems. In their less radical segments, metropolitan movement milieus are displayed by the city as (cultural) locational factors in the competition to attract investors.

These particular incorporation processes on the local level were paralleled by institutionalization processes in other social movements such as the peace or ecology movements. During the early 1980s, the peace movement expanded, reached new levels of mobilization in 1983/4, and throughout the 1980s, protests against a planned nuclear reprocessing plant continued, which, together with the protests caused by the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986, led to the consolidation of movement networks and infrastructures. From informal grassroots collectives to very professional movement organizations, all types of organizational patterns now co-exist side-by-side, and together constitute a new political sector adjacent to the other institutions of political interest intermediation, such as parties, unions and associations. The influence of the New Left within these movement sectors has diminished, however, and in many ways it seems 'that to the extent that the protest issues and motives have become more widespread the movement lost its former radical edge.

One of the most important social movement institutionalization processes was of course their incorporation via the Green Party's parliamentary representation. Since its foundation in 1980, approximately 6000 people have been elected to local councils on Green or green-alternative lists. Today, the Greens participate in governmental coalitions in four states (Hessen, Lower-Saxony, Brandenburg, Bremen), and there are numerous red-green local governments. As an electoral alternative to the established parties, the Greens have forced them to acknowledge and deal with the movements and their issues, and they have managed to negotiate many concessions and benefits for the movements (cf. Roth 1991). The ambivalent consequences of "parliamentarization" on the social movements are topic of many studies (cf. Zeuner 1985; Mayer/Ely 1992) and also have particular local manifestations. The constraints of parliamentary compromise, the concentration on elections and budgets, and the pressure to jettison symbolic counter-politics have led local Greens to adopt a rather limited strategy, focusing on few issues such as funding for women's centers and shelters, establishing affirmative action agencies, reducing traffic, etc., and giving up more comprehensive political challenges. Thus, the presence of the Green Party in local governments, while aiding the public recognition of movement issues and movement practice, has also served to shift the political weight from protest politics toward co-optation and lobbying (cf. Dackweiler et al. 1990:147; Roth 1981:85).

In sum, this phase features repeated waves of opportunities for urban movement groups to enter their demands and plans into city development. First, in the context of the housing struggles so-called "gentle urban renewal" programs were passed.

3. This obviously did not apply to central city areas, where housing policies encouraged high-income groups to move back into the city. Once they appropriated the social space, it was no longer available for alternative lifestyles and disadvantaged social groups, for which new agents were established and residents' input were routinized. Then, in the context of social policies, around issues which the traditional bureaucratic welfare state was not able to handle well, youth, drugs, battered women, and foreigners were addressed with new self-help and funding programs. Next, labor market problems were addressed with training programs, often coupled with environmental and social policies and also relying on community organizations' know-how and connections. As cities experience the need for urban regeneration they tap into their own "endogenous potential" of an organizational landscape of local movement milieus, offering local movements an opportunity to influence urban politics while simultaneously instrumentalizing them.

4. New Polarizations: Urban Social Movements in the 1990s

The restructuring processes triggered by the crisis of Fordism resulted in a more pronounced, uneven regional development than post-war Germany had ever known; for the first time urban development was no longer shaped by growth. Instead, two different patterns emerged: expanding cities (primarily in the new-growth South) and declining cities (primarily in the de-industrializing North) (cf. Friedrichs et al. 1986). Even within metropolitan areas disparities intensified (Häussermann/Siebel 1987). Simultaneous with this intensification of social-spatial polarization processes, inter-urban and inter-regional competition (for growth industries, state funding, skilled workers, or consumer spending) has intensified, conferring new challenges on the local level. Many urban governments try to stimulate growth through active management, through public-private partnerships and by developing their particular local assets as a tool in the competition over positional advantages (cf. Mayer 1992). So far, such policies have not counter-acted the tendencies of "flexible specialization" characteristic of the emerging regime, which intensify the hierarchical differentiation between cities and regions.

4. Instead, they often go hand-in-hand with the new ways of urban development: revitalization and gentrification of the inner city, expansion of polycentric agglomerations, and new forms of small-scale segregation which dissolve the homogenous Fordist zones. Current government programs subsidizing new housing construction and renovating existing housing privilege private developers over publicly-controlled production companies. While small-scale procedures have been introduced to renew deteriorated housing stock, rent laws have been liberalized, and the ensuing market-led restructuring has led to unplanned but massive displacements of low-income residents (for Frankfurt cf. Bartelheimer 1991, for Berlin Krätke/Schmoll 1991: 546).

Furthermore, the deregulated, flexibilized forms of growth tend to create new forms of exclusion such as homelessness, precarious and casualized forms of employment, and long-term structural unemployment for certain population groups.

Winners of the new growth, however, are not only the expanding numbers of well-paid, highly skilled professionals in the advanced services and hi-tech sectors. They are also to be found among the staff and founders of many of the newly subsidized projects and intermediary organizations whose work now enjoys social recognition and whose position is now relatively secure. The process of inclusion of formerly excluded social groups has produced both winners and losers and thereby created new contradictions and cleavages between insiders and outsiders.

The "new insiders" are to be found among Green city council people as well as in the new institutions local authorities created in response to movement politics. To Green members of a city government, movement politics is no longer as relevant as party politics. As a consequence, they appear to young activists as established, co-opted and even corrupted.

5. In Frankfurt, conflicts between movement veterans and a younger movement generation erupted already during the 1980s. At a teach-in in October 1985, after the death of an activist who was killed at an anti-Nazi demonstration by a police water tank, Fischer and Cohn-Bendit (radical activists during the housing struggle who became Green-Realo politicians) were attacked with eggs because they refused to withdraw from negotiations with the SPD to form a red-green coalition in the Hessen state government.

6. To an extent, the institutionalization of alternative local politics, as it turns movement participation into lobbying and interest group politics, contributes to the marginalization of the new movement actors and new protests. A similar mechanism is at work in the organizations and intermediaries that are now partially incorporated in the provision of services and into the emerging, decentral negotiation structures. While community development organizations are busy developing low-income housing, those who do not qualify for the waiting lists or who still prefer to squat see themselves confronting "established" development organizations. These tensions were expressed in violent actions by autonomous groups against Stattbau, the alternative renewal agent in Berlin noted above. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of old buildings usually prepares the way for gentrifiers to move into the area. As this occurred, protests were directed towards the symbols of advancing gentrification such as chic yuppie restaurants as in the so-called "Kübel-Aktion" when buckets of shit were emptied in the up-scale Maxwell restaurant in Kreuzberg (cf. Kramer 1988).

These actions are often led by the so-called “autonomous scene”, the most radical segment of the social movements.

7. In response to the harsher state repression, which constructed squatters as a criminal conspiracy (to repress them with anti-terrorist measures), a so-called “autonomous scene” formed in most large cities, with a radical, anti-state orientation and with militant praxis forms. They indicate that the movement scene has split into antagonistic fragments, where one group attacks as “yuppification” what to another is an achievement of gentle, participatory urban renewal. But there are more – and growing – social groups who cannot be reached even by the instruments of the last innovative phase of urban politics. In fact, some of the new political alienation is precisely an outcome of the recent incorporation processes.

Marginal groups are far worse off today than even during the early 1980s: the competition on the labor market has become most intense; the unemployment rate has now reached 11.8% (2.7 million) (see tageszeitung January 10, 1992: “Mehr Arbeitslose.”, and the number of people depending on welfare has reached 4.2 million; See tageszeitung January 3, 1992: “In Deutschland wächst die Armut.”) The number of homeless people is now estimated at 150.000 and increasingly includes young people and women. The economic, social and ecological problems have all been exacerbated through the addition of former East Germany, which even served to encourage a political backlash.

Because of the authoritarian structures the GDR society brought with it, social movements have lost some of the status and clout gained during the last couple decades. This is perceived by many in Germany as a political backlash to the 50s. Social groups with limited skills and training, who feel powerless and politically alienated, now tend to exert pressure on those groups who had barely been integrated, as for example some immigrant groups. German working class kids, who never participated in the alternative scene and never had a chance to be clients of the progressive community work (which preferred immigrants as clients), now join gangs and act out their anger against “foreigners” (cf. Farin/Seidel-Pielen 1991: 49). The Christian-Democratic party's campaign against foreigners and refugees has given public recognition to a racist discourse, which is supposed to deflect attention from and offer an illusionary solution to some very real problems. At present, racist mobilization in Germany threatens to seriously damage the still fragile democratic political culture developed during the last 40 years.

The field of urban social movements is structured rather differently in the 90s than during the 80s. It is more fragmented, displays far more heterogeneous orientations and some of these are quite antagonistic with each other. Also, the movements have generated new forms of institutionalization and even provide impulses for innovative municipal policies. Yet, one cannot say that urban movements have disappeared: massive mobilizations around urban issues continue (recently especially against highway construction plans, for traffic reduction, and against the housing shortage) carried out by citizens' initiatives; autonomous groups carry on the struggle against gentrification and urban renewal which is about to destroy the urban milieu they thrive in; all currents of the so-called new social movements, such as the women's, ecology, and peace movement as well as self-managed enterprises, are active locally and use the local political channels; there are violent riots, often in a ritualized form (e.g. every May 1 and New Year's Eve), but also as political protest (e.g. the campaign against the IMF-Meetings in Berlin in 1988 [cf. Gerhards 1991]). In early 1991 the Gulf War triggered massive mobilizations involving existing infrastructures, networks, and especially, local organizations. Houses are still squatted and defended (though the stage for these struggles has moved mostly to the East).

In the fall of 1990 more than 100 large tenement buildings were occupied by (about 1500) squatters in East Berlin. The use of massive police force to evict some of them November 1990, for which the SPD was responsible, led to the Greens' leaving the governing coalition. After the following elections a "Grand Coalition" of Christian-Democrats and Social-Democrats was formed ("to deal with the massive problems of unification") which replaced the red-green government of the last one-and-a-half years and eventually "processed" by the alternative renewal agents, who follow the state funding programs. Recently, such different components of the urban movement scene as autonomous and punks prone to militancy, as well as peace and religious groups defended asylum seekers from racist attacks and organized shelter for refugees who were fleeing a second time, this time from East Germany.

While in this case, groups with differing political conceptions and repertoires came together, there are also developments in very opposing directions. For example, movements have emerged pursuing goals contrary to those of the ecologically and socially oriented movements discussed so far, but who make use of the same action repertoire and unconventional forms which, due to the particular statist history of post-war Germany, have always been associated with the Left. For months, an active movement mobilized organizing demonstrations and an intense public debate against "Tempo 100", i.e. against speed reduction on urban highways and for unlimited freedom for the automobile. Increasingly, the Right seems to be using more and more elements of a social movement repertoire than the traditional forms of (hierarchical and formal) organization. Gangs of skinheads and neo-Nazis have developed a particular counter-culture, squatting houses (in the East), and militantly attacking their enemies (leftists, foreigners, gays) (cf. Holthusen/ Jänecke 1991; Farin/Seidel-Pielen 1991: 52).

Over the last 20 years urban movements have transformed from fundamental opposition via societal marginalization to modernizing and innovating forms of urban renewal, social policy, and forms of governance, and left behind a different terrain.

While the boundaries of the social movement sector have become less clear, and while the movement field has lost energy to other intermediary sectors, cities remain sites of social movements. But the issues are more and more defined by the harsher social realities and the new marginalization processes and by cleavages reflecting the increasing polarization into "dual cities". The actors more heterogeneous, and some of them turn against the former movement actors who are now "insiders". Unifying visions and shared forms of praxis have given way to the coexistence of diverse forms of movement politics, organized in all types of forms from spontaneous initiatives to professional movement entrepreneurs. Our analysis of urban movements found that these changes have to do with the changing political opportunity structures, particularly the established parties' selective appropriations of movement issues and the Green Party's 1980s electoral successes. These openings were especially manifest on the local level because the crisis and transformation of Fordist modes were first and most sharply expressed here and led to an upgrading of local politics. Though radical utopias confront harsher social conditions in the 90s than before, the impacts of the last decades' urban movements (returning politics to civic self-activity in a traditionally state-fixated society) and the openings that have been created into local politics provide opportune conditions for movement politics. One task will be to link the resources of the privileged movement sectors with the concerns and demands of the new marginalized sectors.

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