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Anti-Party Discourses in Germany: Three Essays

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Abstracts

Susan Scarrow

The paper argues that there is a logical link between types of party criticisms and types of proposed remedies. It distinguishes three main variants of anti-party discourses – Pluralist, Rouseauian, and Statist – and identifies corresponding remedies. It uses examples from German history to clarify the proposed typology, and to demonstrate the plausibility of the argument.

Lothar Probst

Following up to the deliberations of Ernst Cassirer and Murray Edelman on the importance of political myths in the twentieth century, this local study examines specific forms of communication and their contents of symbolisms used by the right-wing populist German People's Union (DVU) to communicate with their voters. The author starts from the assumption that, in overly bureaucratic procedural democratic societies, the failure to create affective bonds and to instill a feeling of identification causes a trend toward the use of symbolic forms in politics. Such a trend is, to a certain degree, the result of the inability of political institutions to solve problems. The political propaganda and the holistic ideology of the DVU suggest that the problems of fragmented societies could be solved by a new identifying social system. Without providing a capability of solving problems, the DVU latches on to a policy filled to the hilt with symbolism's by contributing their own images, pictures and symbols, to successfully reach certain groups of voters. In doing so, the DVU uses simple and populist symbols following the basic pattern of a binary code such as the top/the bottom or we/the others to establish a communication in symbolic forms with their electorate, which is made up of socially intimidated voter groups that are cultural outsiders, politically disinterested and have a below-average education. This study demonstrates with concrete examples, that this type of communication of symbolic forms fulfills at least three prerequisites for creating political myths: (1) It reduces the complexity of political problems to "simple solutions." (2) It satisfies the need for a clear friend-foe definition. (3) It gives disgruntled voter groups the image of a concept they can identify with.

Ruth Bevan

Petra Kelly's antipolitical credentials normally find validation in her association with the German Greens "antiparty" which she co-founded in 1979. Kelly's rupture with the Greens in 1990 demonstrated, however, that Kelly was in fact antipolitical while the Greens were not. The irreconcilable difference between the two was her antipolitical renouncement of political power in favor of permanent opposition. She argued that no truly independent opposition exists to check state power. Her antipolitical efforts were directed at creating an independent opposition in the name of civil society and at establishing centers of what she called "counter-information". Creating this permanent opposition was Kelly's paramount dilemma of power.

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Susan E. Scarrow

> "The question about the fate of democracy in Germany is therefore implicitly and above all a question of the relationship of the German people to their parties. The discontent with politics and democracy which is so widespread in Germany, and about which people recurrently complain, is first and foremost discontent with the political parties."
> (Karl Friedrich Kindler, 1958)

Kindler's diagnosis about German discontent with political parties still sounds fresh three and a half decades after it was written. Anti-party arguments have indeed played a recurrent role in German political life ever since the mid-nineteenth century, when political parties began to organize in legislatures throughout Germany. Despite the success of the parliamentary democracy that emerged after 1945 in the western part of Germany, even this so-called "party state" has been haunted by ambivalence towards the very parties which are granted special status in the country's Basic Law. This ambivalence has again come to the fore in (re)united Germany, as the country once again faces serious questions about the effectiveness and desirability of particular democratic institutions. In the 1990s, opinion polls and electoral behavior seem to once again reveal growing alienation of Germans from their party system and from their party state. In the wake of these signs, German political analysts have been heatedly debating the causes of the growth of popular *Parteienverdrossenheit* (vexation or disenchantment with parties), and many have proposed solutions to the malady.

Fewer analysts have asked which changes to German politics are most likely to result from this apparently growing disenchantment with parties in the party state – is it likely that this growing anti-party sentiment will now decide "the fate of democracy in Germany", as Kindler suggested, or that these negative assessments will lead to only minor changes in the conduct of politics? Merely raising this question serves as a reminder of how little is known about the dynamics of anti-party politics and about the consequences of anti-party sentiment.

1. Differentiating Among Anti-Party Arguments

In recent years anti-party arguments have gained prominence in a wide-range of democracies. Italy's popular revolt against established parties reached new heights in the spring of 1993, when 90% of voters (69% of the electorate) voted to abolish state subsidies for political parties, and when the new "movements" (self-proclaimed anti-parties) registered strong support in local government elections (Graham). French voters showed their lack of enthusiasm for traditional party alternatives by casting 2.1 million spoiled ballots in the March 1993 parliamentary elections (three to seven times as many as in recent elections) (Davidson). Meanwhile, the surprising story of the US presidential race in 1992 was the mobilizational ability of the non-party candidate, Ross Perot.

This list, by no means exhaustive, shows that the contemporary success of anti-party appeals is not confined to a single country. Nor is there anything new about the use of anti-party appeals, which actually predate the emergence of modern party politics. The French tradition of distrusting political parties traces its roots back before the French Revolution (Kimmel). Anti-party populism also has a long pedigree in the United States: since the foundation of the first American republic, US politicians and scholars have tended "to deal uneasily with the necessities of partisan political organization because of their widespread belief that political parties are, at best, unavoidable evils whose propensities for divisiveness, oligarchy, and corruption must be closely watched and sternly controlled" (Ranney, 22; see also Skrownek). And American unease with partisan political organization was itself inherited from British political experiences

(Hofstadter). Indeed, it was over two centuries ago that Burke wrote to some of his constituents, warning them against accepting arguments about the corruption and partisan divisions of members of the British Parliament:

> "I hope there are none of you corrupted with the doctrine taught by wicked men for the worst purposes, and received by the malignant credulity of envy and ignorance, which is, that the men who act upon the public stage are all alike, all equally corrupt, all influenced by no other views than the sordid lure of salary and pension." (Burke: 149)

Burke's remark is cited not merely as an illustration of the longevity of anti-politics populism, but also because it contains the important reminder that those seeking to stoke discontent with parties and with politicians often do so with *specific ends* in mind. Burke's diagnosis was made during a particular political conflict, and we do not need to stretch his argument and assert that anti-party arguments are *always* made by "wicked men for the worst purposes". But we should not ignore the fact that anti-party arguments are often made by those pursuing distinct purposes.

Despite the recurrence and reach of anti-party appeals, few scholars have attempted to provide either cross-national or cross-temporal perspectives on the nature and consequences of charges levelled at political parties. Perhaps because most European and American political scientists in the past half century have themselves been firmly committed to multi-party democracy, there have been relatively few attempts to dissect either the sources, or the implications, of dissatisfaction with existing multiparty systems. Yet both types of analysis are necessary if we are to gain a better understanding of anti-party phenomena: when studying both cross-temporal and cross-national outbreaks of anti-party sentiment, we would like to have clues about the likely results of such discontent.

Analyses of sources, and analyses of implications, of anti-party sentiment may be distinct projects, requiring different tools and different data. This is so because it is useful to conceive of anti-party sentiment in two different ways. On the one hand, anti-party sentiment can be viewed as an aspect of mass public opinion. Studies that start from this perspective will describe the dimensions and possible causes of popular anti-party attitudes in one or more countries (for instance, Abromeit; Berger; Lawson and Merkl). On the other hand, anti-party sentiment can be studied as an aspect of elite debates about the desirable shape of the political system. Within this second context, anti-party sentiment can be viewed as a mobilizational appeal, as a weapon used by those endorsing political change. Studies that start from the second perspective, like the one presented here, examine the link between elite debates and system changes. While the anti-party weapon may be more powerful when it resonates with popular opinions, an important premise of this distinction is that elites may effectively use the weapon of anti-party arguments even in situations where scholars might question the validity of evidence purporting to show widespread popular discontent with existing parties or party-based institutions. In other words, anti-party arguments might lead to system changes even without any "real" underlying increase in popular anti-party sentiment.

The question explored in this paper is, "what kind of political change does anti-party sentiment promote?". This paper argues that part of the answer to this question lies in the ways in which political elites frame debates about the "problem(s) of parties". These elites channel, amplify and even increase discontent with political parties by bringing specific charges against parties and their roles in the political system. The ways in which their anti-party arguments are framed provide clues about the changes which are likely to result from particular waves of anti-party populism.

2. The Problem(s) With Parties: Diagnoses and Cures

There have been only a handful of systematic considerations of the nature and probable consequences of specific varieties of anti-party criticism. In one of these, Austin Ranney's study of two centuries of efforts to reform American political parties, Ranney divided party critics into two categories: Abolitionists, who wanted to rid the Republic of the divisive influence of political parties; and Reformers, who wanted actual parties to more closely approximate various ideals of parties as they should be.[1] These labels point to important strands of party criticism, but Ranney did not attempt to precisely define these categories, nor did he aspire to provide a framework for the comparative study of party criticism.

Hans Daalder's recent analysis is a better starting point in the search for a comparative vocabulary with which to analyze elite anti-party arguments. In this article Daalder examines scholarly attitudes towards political parties as part of his plea for political scientists to openly acknowledge normative assumptions underlying discussions of the "role of party in European systems". Daalder suggests that discussions of the "crisis of party" can be divided into four broad categories: "the denial of party" (all parties are a danger to society); "the selective rejection of party" (some parties are good, others are bad); "the selective rejection of party systems" (some party systems are bad); and "the redundancy of parties" (parties are being supplanted by other institutions and actors). Since the criticisms Daalder describes have not been confined to academic debates, it is worth examining them more closely for clues about how argument types are linked to calls for particular types of action.

These clues are found in the different locations in which each of Daalder's categories diagnoses "the problem with parties". Arguments which reject particular parties (selective rejection of party) accept party-based politics but analyze party programs in order to make claims about what constitutes the proper spectrum of party alternatives. Critics who argue in this vein may reject the existing set of alternatives as a threat to the polity (some parties are too extremist, or are anti-system), or they may argue that current alternatives are too narrow (existing parties are too centrist, or they are not concerned with the "correct" political issues). On the other hand, arguments which deny parties, or which claim that parties are redundant, are attacks on the existing parameters of the party-based political system. These critics argue that parties play the wrong roles in the political system, and they may propose a variety of actors to supplement or replace party decisionmaking (including voters, interest groups, bureaucrats, or courts). Daalder's fourth category is the "selective rejection of party systems". Those who argue from this perspective emphasize the virtue of parties and party-based politics, but fear that certain party constellations may cripple the operations of the political system. Daalder's category can be broadened to include all critics who locate the problem with parties in the specific norms and rules which shape the functioning of a particular party-based system. Thus, a third diagnostic location of party problems is in the norms and rules governing all parties within the political system. Critics in this vein endorse the idea of party politics, but they may complain that electoral procedures distort the representativeness or efficiency of party government, or they may complain about norms of cooperation between parliamentary parties.

This categorization of criticisms according to the location of the diagnosed problem suggests that there is a micro-macro progression in the targets of anti-party diagnoses. At the first level, critics attack only the way the system currently operates. At the second level, they attack available party alternatives. At the highest level, critics attack the fundamental roles of parties in the political system itself.

1 His third category is Defenders, who responded to such attacks by emphasizing parties' virtuous functions.

The reason to make these distinctions is that the diagnosed location of the problem is logically linked to the nature of the proposed cures. If the problem is with the norms and operations of parties within the political system, the proposed cure is likely to consist of revisions to rules or norms which affect all parties. If the problem is the presence or absence of certain programmatic alternatives, suggested cures are likely to affect only some parties. If the problem is with the structure of the political system, proposed cures are likely to reshape the entire arena in which all parties operate.

Figure 1: *Implications of Anti-Party Arguments*

Diagnosed Location of Problem	*Nature of Proposed Cure*
A. Operations	Changing the Rules & Norms (affects all parties)
B. Programmatic Alternatives	Changing the Players (affects specific parties)
C. System	Changing the Parameters (affects party arena)

But we would like to be able to go further than this in searching for the link between diagnoses and proposed solutions. Given the anti-democratic uses to which anti-party arguments have sometimes been put, we would ideally like to have a basis for predicting whether (for instance) a systemic criticism is likely to lead to calls for undemocratic cures. Of course, a major problem which stands in the way of drawing any such conclusions is that the meaning of "democratic" is itself contested. But here again Daalder provides useful guidance for partially overcoming this problem when he makes the crucial move of subdividing "denial of party" arguments into two further lines of argument. The first type contends that all parties are bad because they distort the emergence of the General Will (what might be called the Rousseauian approach). The second type contends that all parties are bad because they try to capture the state for the benefit of particular interests, while the state actually ought to be free to care for the general welfare (what might be called the Statist approach). This distinction is useful because Daalder makes clear that those who reach similar conclusions about the location of the problem may nevertheless have very different visions of the good polity.

We can extend Daalder's insight by arguing that the nature of the proposed solution depends not only on the critic's assessment of the location of the problem, but also on the critic's underlying political philosophy. This is not to say that the connections are immutable: the proposed link between philosophical perspective, diagnosed location, and proposed cures is one dictated by the logic of arguments – and political debate is not always logical. But the argument here is that political elites channel and foster popular discontent with parties by articulating particular grievances, and that the ways in which these grievances are phrased makes some responses more likely than others.

This argument follows in the footsteps of literature on agenda-setting and public policy, which views ultimate policy "solutions" as partly determined by the interests and political visions of those who successfully define the problem. "Public ideas", as one group of authors labelled such normative visions, "simultaneously establish the assumptions, justification, purposes, and means of

public action. In doing so, they simultaneously authorize and instruct different sectors of the society to take actions on behalf of public purposes." (Moore: 75). Or, in Kingdon's more parsimonious formulation, "The recognition and definition of problems affect outcomes significantly." (Kingdon: 207). This perspective urges us to distinguish arguments about "the problem with parties" according to the normative visions they invoke when they proclaim existing conditions to be problems in need of solution: these visions have power to shape policy outcomes.

One of three distinct visions of the good polity underlies most anti-party arguments: Pluralist, Rousseauian, or Statist. None of these is necessarily an anti-democratic vision. Indeed, those approaching politics from any of these perspectives might (but do not necessarily) agree that some degree of multiparty democracy is necessary, or at least inevitable. However, they will disagree on the types of limits which ought to be imposed in order to arrive at the best (or least bad) party democracy.

Daalder's Rousseauian and Statist perspectives have already been mentioned. Rousseauian perspectives are those which start from the premise that parties (and other mediating institutions) are undesirable because they aggregate sub-interests, and thereby prevent the emergence of the general will:

> "[W]hen factions, partial associations at the expense of the whole, are formed, the will of each of these associations becomes general with reference to its members and particular with reference to the State. . . . In order for the general will to be well expressed, it is therefore important that there be no partial society in the State, and that each citizen give only his own opinion." (Rousseau: 62)

Critics who view the polity from this perspective argue that politics will be improved by minimizing the extent of mediation between citizens and decision-making; if parties do exist, measures should be taken to hinder the dominance of one or a few disciplined parties.

Statist perspectives start from the premise that the welfare of society is more than the sum of either individual or group interests, and that national welfare is improved by minimizing the extent to which it is held hostage to partisan feuding. Arguments from statist perspectives were prominent in one strand of state theory in nineteenth century Germany. These arguments defended imperial institutions on the grounds that an executive above the parties governed on behalf of the whole state, while parties existed to articulate the views of society's competing interests – but not to govern (Gusy).

In contrast, pluralist perspectives start from the premise that it is legitimate and necessary to let group conflict shape public policy. Sartori describes the (pluralists') rationale for the party era as resting on three premises: (1) parties are not factions, (2) a party is a part-of-a-[pluralistic]-whole, (3) parties are channels of expression (Sartori: 25). Critics who argue from this perspective might suggest that the polity could be improved by levelling the playing-field of group competition, but would never suggest that it could be improved by doing away with parties altogether.

The political vision of anti-party critics help shape proposed solutions, as Figure 2 suggests. This figure's scheme for analyzing anti-party arguments presents logical links between philosophical perspectives, diagnosed locations of the problem, and the species of proposed cure. Figure 3 expands on Figure 2 by giving more specific examples of cures which are logically linked to particular diagnoses. The examples of cures are not intended to be exhaustive, but are instead intended to make the point that those making certain types of arguments are unlikely to arrive at certain cures. Both figures can also be read as saying something about which types of cures are unlikely to emerge once a "problem" has been given a certain type of definition. For example, those who start from a

pluralist perspective and diagnose an operational problem are unlikely to propose that the "problem with parties" can be solved by establishing a non-partisan president. What this does not tell us is which types of argument are more likely to lead to "non-democratic" or even to "extreme" changes. Without knowing more about the circumstances, we cannot say whether it is undemocratic to ban parties because they are perceived to be threats to the polity, or to transfer decisionmaking from legislatures to non-elected judiciaries.

Nevertheless, the scheme presented in Figure 2 can help in bringing to light differences in the roots and results of past and current anti-party debates. This figure's categories can also aid in assessing the likely outcomes of contemporary anti-party outbreaks. The rest of the paper will use two discussions of anti-party politics in Germany to show how these categories can be used for both purposes. The first discussion uses these categories to highlight long-term *changes* in German anti-party debates: in other words, it uses these distinctions as a way of showing why the Kindler quote which heads this paper could be misleading in its emphasis on the enduring qualities of German distrust of parties. The second discussion uses these categories as a basis for analyzing the probable consequences of contemporary German anti-party rhetoric.

Figure 2: *Anti-Party Criticisms and likely Cures*

Diagnosed Location of Problem & View of the Good Polity

	A. Operations	B. Alternatives	C. System
I. Pluralist	Change rules of party competition	Exclude parties which threaten operation of party polity	Accomodate non-party groups in policymaking
II. Rousseauian	Weaken parties internally	Increase party alternatives	Limit areas of party government
III. Statist	Encourage all-party cooperation	Limit numbers of competitors	Expand scope of non-party governing institutions

3. The Changing Nature of German Anti-Party Arguments

Given the current mood of German politics, there seem to be few grounds for questioning Kindler's assertion that "a deep-rooted and apparently unconquerable anti-party passion ("Affekt") belongs to the constituent elements of the basic political attitudes of the German people"(Kindler: 112) – though once again it is useful to remember that this anti-party passion may not be unique. (Ranney saw deep-seated ambivalence towards parties as a defining feature of two centuries of *American* political life.) German anti-party rhetoric did not disappear after 1945, though the circumstances of the demise of Weimar democracy did make the weapon of anti-party arguments more difficult to wield. Thus, seventy-five years after the adoption of the Weimar Constitution a German republic once again echoes with complaints about parties.

Figure 3: *Examples of Likely Proposed Cures*

Political Vision	*Problem Location*	*Example of Cure*
I. Pluralist	A. Operations	–Make electoral system more proportional –Change campaign finance laws
	B. Alternatives	–Exclude small parties –Exclude anti-system parties
	C. System	–Expand corporatist decisionmaking
II. Rousseauian	A. Operations	–Diminish power of legislative party groups –Decrease party role in candidate selection
	B. Alternatives	–Start anti-party parties –Increase grass-roots democracy in established parties
	C. System	–Employ non-partisan plebiscites –Expand non-partisan (local) governments
III. Statist	A. Operations	–Form grand coalitions –Form national unity governments
	B. Alternatives	–Abolish all but one party –Reduce no. of parties by starting cross-class, cross-denomination parties
	C. System	–Give decisions to non-party agencies (courts, etc.) –Strengthen supra-party executive

Yet – in terms of anti-party criticisms, a closer comparison of the arguments clearly shows that Bonn is not Weimar. The difference in the nature of the anti-party attacks does not lie in the the diagnosed location of the problem: operational, programmatic and systemic criticisms have surfaced in both Republics. Instead, the difference is in the underlying political views of those making the criticisms. To say this is not merely to say that more recent party critics have been more clearly committed to multiparty democracy than some of their Weimar predecessors. It is also to argue that the perspectives of democrats have shifted: whereas Weimar debates pitted Pluralists against (not very democratic) Statists, critics in Bonn have most often come from Pluralist or Rousseauian perspectives. This change emerges clearly from a review of debates which have focussed on different locations for "the problem with parties".

 Criticisms of Operations: Operational arguments view certain party characteristics as possible threats to the stability, effectiveness, or legitimacy of

the party-based system. Two such characteristics have surfaced repeatedly in German political debates: the first concerns the (small) size of parties' parliamentary delegations, while the second concerns parties' internal arrangements. This second type has featured arguments about party rules and, in particular, about the nature and extent of public subsidies for political parties. But it is operational arguments about party size which will be detailed in this section.

Though small parties were a feature of the imperial German parliament, operational attacks on small political parties only became common in Germany after proportional representation was introduced in 1918. Since then criticism of small parties has been a recurrent theme, one that has been closely linked to calls for changing election rules. Operational critics charge that small parliamentary parties foster unstable coalitions and thereby endanger the efficient functioning of party democracy. Furthermore, such critics claim that small parties endanger the legitimacy of the entire parliamentary system because small coalition partners are disproportionately powerful.

The introduction of proportional representation in 1918 Germany was widely supported by German politicians and political observers who were reacting against the vote/seat disparities of the imperial German system (single-member districts, double-ballot) (Schanbacher, 47 ff). In the 1919 National Assembly deliberations on a new German constitution, the overriding virtues of proportionality were almost taken for granted.[2] The Liberal delegate Friedrich Naumann raised a lone voice in committee debates when he invoked the specter of small parties crippling the future parliamentary system. Naumann, who with hindsight looks remarkably like a German Cassandra, opposed enshrining proportional representation in the new constitution because he expected that such a system would produce parliaments without stable governing majorities (Schanbacher, 76).

Although Naumann himself died shortly after this debate, other voices soon adopted his argument that small parties threatened the democratic system. Like Naumann, these critics viewed the electoral system as the prime weapon for combatting the proliferation of small parliamentary parties. Because the Weimar constitution stipulated that all German elections must use proportional representation, it strictly limited the range of feasible "cures". But those making operational anti-party arguments hoped to legally modify existing proportional representation rules to eliminate the smallest political parties. In several state parliaments, operational critics succeeded in modifying electoral laws to make it more difficult for small parties to compete. The state parliaments of Mecklenburg, Hamburg, Hessen, Baden, and Saxony introduced relatively large, forfeitable, deposits for all parties appearing on the ballot[3], and the legislatures in Prussia, Bavaria, and Württemberg modified the rules by which seats were allocated – to the detriment of small, geographically dispersed, parties.[4]

Operational criticism of small parties revived during debates surrounding the establishment of the Bonn Republic. Most postwar German politicians and scholars agreed that the proliferation of small parties in Weimar parliaments had undermined the first German republic. Already in the 1930s the emigre scholar F.A. Hermens was proposing an appropriate cure, vividly arguing that the only way to prevent the evil of small-party proliferation was by doing away with proportional representation (P.R) electoral systems. In an impassioned text that was widely cited in postwar Germany, Hermens argued that "P.R. facilitates – and thereby

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2   Delegates to this Assembly were elected by proportional representation.

3   The deposit was to be forfeited by parties which did not succeed in winning at least one mandate.

4   However, these operational improvements were short-lived: eleven attempts at state-level modification of the PR system were overturned as unconstitutional between 1927 and 1930 by the *Staatsgerichtshof* (Apelt, 182). For a detailed account of *Land* and *Reichstag* debates about electoral reform, see Schanbacher.

creates – a multiplication of parties," (Hermens, 16) and he lauded "[t]he Majority system [i.e., single member district system] as the protection of democracy and national unity".[5]

Arguments about the destabilizing effects of small parties helped ensure that most of the new *Land* constitutions opted for electoral systems designed to exclude very small parties. Delegates to the Parliamentary Council in 1948/49 also agreed that any system should deliberately exclude very tiny parties from the new parliament. However, they disagreed about the format of the desired federal electoral system,[6] and instead of anchoring the choice of electoral system in the provisional constitution, the framers of the Basic Law left this decision to future legislatures. As a result, debates about reforming the federal electoral system continued through the 1950s and 1960s.

In this period some critics renewed the charge that small party power was endangering the proper operation of German party government. These critics, who disapproved of the role played by the FDP and who worried about the rise of the right-wing NDP, endorsed a change to a British-style electoral system. Thus, for example, in the 1960s a commission appointed by the pro-reform CDU interior minister criticized PR voting because, "Proportional representation facilitates the division of parties. It eases the creation and growth of radical parties" (Lücke, 94). Furthermore, the commission wrote, the existence of small parties undermines democratic legitimacy because where there are small parties, there are usually coalition governments – and with coalition governments "there is no unmediated influence of voters on the formation of the government" and "the contrast between government and opposition is not clearly defined" (Lücke, 94). In the same years both CDU/CSU and SPD commissions used similar arguments to endorse the abandonment or radical modification of Germany's proportional representation electoral system (Lücke, 164-170). Such electoral reforms were seriously debated during the grand coalition of the 1960s, but were dropped once the SPD entered into a coalition with the FDP.

The examples in this section show how operational anti-party arguments in Germany have been linked to calls for rule modification. Though some of the proposed changes have obviously been designed to eliminate specific small parties, they have been presented under the guise of neutrality towards all parties: they are concerned with organizational forms, not with political content. All of the critics cited here have approached the subject with a pluralist political ideal. Thus, those making operational criticisms have argued for incremental modifications of the party-based political system, not for replacement or radical redesign. The final section of this paper shows that Rousseauian-type operational criticisms have recently surfaced in German political debates, but these are quite new to the Bonn Republic.

Criticisms of Alternatives: The second type of anti-party critique locates the problem in the nature of the available party alternatives. These will be referred to as "programmatic" critiques, because they assert that voters are not being offered choices between parties with the proper sorts of programme. Of those Germans who have argued that it is necessary to change the roster of party players in order to improve the political game, some have wanted to eliminate certain players, while others have wanted to expand the list of players. Those of the first sort include pluralists who have claimed that party democracy needs to be protected from parties which do not accept basic pluralist tenets. Those of the second sort have come from both Rousseauian and statist perspectives. Both are convinced that

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5 A section title from his book, *Democracy or Anarchy?*.
6 The SPD, FDP, and KPD endorsed a proportional representation system with a "hurdle" to automatically exclude small parties, while CDU/CSU delegates favored the single-member district plurality system.

the system can only be improved by the establishment of new parties with non-traditional goals and/or methods.

Attacks based on party alternatives have a long German pedigree. Within the first decade of German unity, and only two decades after the appearance of extra-parliamentary parties in the German states, Bismarck started from a statist perspective when he invoked the preservation of national welfare to justify his attacks on two ideologically dissimilar parties, the Catholic Center Party (Zentrum) and the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). Thus, in Bismarck's successful call for anti-socialist laws in 1878 he described the SPD and its supporters as a danger to the state "because of their political and economic goals and because of their 'general attitude of scorn towards every law and custom'" (quoted in Pack, 84). Bismarck's *Sozialistengesetz* aimed to strangle all interelection social and political activity which might serve to promote the electoral success of the SPD. The solutions adopted in the 1870s and 1880s were directed at extra-parliamentary activity: SPD candidates continued to participate in elections even when all other party organizational activity was banned.

This notable statist use of programmatic anti-party criticism made later pluralists reluctant to make their own programmatic attacks. Weimar democrats who condemned Bismarck's *Sozialistengesetz* were uncomfortable making the argument that the state should protect itself from parties whose proclaimed aims endangered the political order. However, as public order was increasingly threatened by opponents of the new Republic, the national government and some state governments used provisions of the 1922 Law for the Protection of the Reich (originally directed against non-party clubs and associations) to ban the activities of those parties declared to be enemies of the regime (Jasper, 142). Even in this context of persistent attacks on the democratic system, both government ministers and the Weimar high court agreed that there were constitutional limits on how far the state could go to protect itself from unfriendly parties: thus, parties whose intra-election activities were banned in the 1920s were not prevented from competing normally in elections (for instance, Reichskanzler Marr, Deutscher Reichstag 1924).

Events in the Weimar Republic ensured that criticisms of party alternatives were much more palatable to German pluralists after the Second World War. For politicians in occupied Germany the turmoil and ultimate collapse of the Weimar system were fresh memories, while the *Sozialistengesetz* was something from history books. Because of the experiences of Weimar, the framers of the *Grundgesetz* empowered the new constitutional court to ban parties which, "according to their aims or according to the behavior of their members, seek to impair or to abolish the liberal democratic fundamental order, or which seek to endanger the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany" (Basic Law, Article 21). The solution chosen by the framers of the Basic Law was more direct than Bismarck's solution: the *Grundgesetz* provides for completely outlawing parties, and for excluding banned parties from electoral competition. This was an uncontroversial measure which prompted little debate in the Parliamentary Council. Support for such a measure grew out of the conviction, still widely shared, that the Federal Republic should be a democracy capable of defending itself from hostile forces – even from enemies who use party organization as a Trojan Horse strategy for attacking the polity (as a *streitbare Demokratie*) (Backes and Jesse).

In several periods in the Federal Republic pluralist critiques of alternatives have been directed against specific parties. Thus, in the early 1950s, Konrad Adenauer's government successfully appealed to the Constitutional Court to ban the Communist Party (KPD) on the grounds that this party sought to overthrow the West German parliamentary system. While the KPD was the only party to be banned in the Federal Republic between 1956 and 1992, programmatic anti-party arguments against other parties were not absent in this period. Indeed, such

arguments have re-emerged in the Federal Republic of Germany whenever parties of the far right have demonstrated significant electoral support.

In the mid-1960s, when the German Nationalist Party (NPD) racked up a string of victories in state elections, some demanded that the political system should protect itself by banning this party. Similar calls were made in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, when electoral support for right-wing Republicans and German People's Party (DVP) was on the rise. Finally, in 1992 and 1993 the Office for Protection of the Constitution successfully applied to the constitutional court to ban several very tiny parties of the extreme right. Because the ideas associated with these tiny parties are widely condemned as unacceptable by Germany's political class, few Germans have challenged the solution that follows from the programmatic anti-party argument: that some parties' ideas are so harmful that it is best for the political system to remove them from competition.[7]

The other side of the programmatic argument is the claim that national welfare suffers because of the absence of certain programmatic alternatives. Those making this type of argument advocate the expansion of the political spectrum, whether through the radical modification of existing parties' programmes, or through the creation of new parties. Party reformers and party rebels are among those most likely to criticize the existing electoral alternatives. Criticisms of existing parties' programmes and procedures rose to prominence in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Such Rousseauian-inspired arguments about the need for new political alternatives supported the emergent Greens party. Supporters of the Greens argued that Germany needed parties of a different type, parties with more grass roots democracy and with different visions of the good life (Huber).

As the examples in this section have shown, programmatic critiques eschew any pretence at neutrality. They are made by avowed partisans who invoke basic ideals as guides for the entire political system, and who advocate alterations in the list of party alternatives in order to ensure that these ideals triumph.

Criticisms o ohe System: The third type of anti-party argument indicts the broader political systems in which parties operate. According to such arguments, existing multiparty systems endanger public welfare by undermining support for the polity and/or by incapacitating the system. Ever since the emergence of organized parties in German legislatures, several varieties of systemic anti-party arguments have regularly resurfaced in this country. Solutions linked to this type of argument vary greatly in degrees of extremity, but they all start from the premise that there is a need to fundamentally change the extent to which parties play a role in the political system.

A statist variant of the systemic anti-party argument claims that a system's political legitimacy, and even efficacy, can be threatened because its parties cannot discern what is good for the nation. According to such charges, partisan office holders are more concerned about pleasing party bosses than about citizen interests; as a result, bonds between citizens and their government erode. This type of fear of partisan politics was widespread even before the original German unification. Thus, many 19th century German jurists argued that the proper role of legislators was to put the good of the nation above the good of particular geographic or partisan segments. To ensure that legislators would not be unwillingly bound by special interests, German constitutions from the North German confederation onward explicitly freed legislators from parliamentary party discipline (*Fraktionszwang*) (Milatz, 11). Bismarck and other non-socialists used similar arguments to oppose the introduction of salaries for Reichstag deputies,

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7   However, Germans have been much more reluctant to use such measures against the politically distasteful, but electorally successful, Republicans (*Financial Times*, 2).

claiming that only a non-paid parliament would attract selfless and idealistic legislators (Hamerow, 295; Pflanze, 161; Sagarra, 145).[8]

Regime critics in the Weimar period revived nineteenth century German statist arguments, charging that competing parties are undesirable because they inevitably fragment national unity. Such critics viewed the state as the organic embodiment of national will, while they viewed parties as being (by definition) advocates of ideas that could benefit only a part of the nation. The following quote from a 1920 article is typical of Weimar statist-influenced system criticism in the way it connects the shortcomings of parties with the shortcomings of the entire political system:

> "In our time of greatest need we lack leaders. We have no policies because we have no government. The men sitting in the top positions were called to their offices not by their talent but by their membership in particular parties. They do not govern. . . . We do not believe in parliamentarism nor in democracy – these are yesterday's catch words. German democracy is the opposite of true freedom, because it fills the leading positions according to beliefs [i.e., party affiliations], not according to competence" (Pechel, 457-459).

Those who held similar views usually made extreme suggestions for altering political institutions in order to protect the nation from the parties. Statist systemic criticisms often supported calls to save the state by "overcoming" party competition: national welfare could only be assured through suspending, if not actually abolishing, multiparty government. Systemic anti-party arguments of this type supported calls for "supra party" rule by presidential decree in the last years of the Weimar Republic. Not surprisingly, National Socialists used systemic arguments about the evils of multi-party divisiveness to defend the one party state, as is illustrated in Hermann Göring's remarks to the National Socialist Reichstag in 1934, less than a year after the abolition and dissolution of rival parties:

> "We see now how it has been possible in one year of indescribable effort and work to once again bring together a unified Reich.…Out of a plethora of parties, out of the disgusting strife of parliamentary groups, out of the nervous gossip of parliamentarians, the unity of the people has finally re-emerged" (Deutscher Reichstag, 1934).

Such extreme systemic criticisms were discredited by what followed the collapse of the Weimar Republic: many Bonn Republic politicians and political analysts saw the crucial lesson of the Weimar period as the realization that good government was not possible without competing parties. As a result, there was little dissent, sixteen years after the end of Weimar democracy, when the Federal German Republic became an official "party state". Indeed, in this era when political parties were elevated to constitutional status, parties were more likely to be assigned to the rhetorical status of sacred cow than to be castigated as unmitigated evils. Yet, as will be seen, in the 1990s moderate Rousseauians in particular have used systemic arguments to criticise the party state. Such critics have proposed a variety of solutions designed to profoundly transform the political system.

The three preceeding subsections have shown how anti-party arguments in Bonn have been channeled in different directions than in Weimar. The differences that emerge are not just that critics have seen different areas of failure. The differences are that critics have started from different premises about the nature of

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8   Salaries for Reichstag members were not introduced until 1906.

the good polity. Most anti-party criticism in the Bonn Republic has started from pluralist premises, whereas in the Weimar Republic many party critics had statist ideals. As the following section shows, what may be changing in the Federal Republic today is that the most recent round of anti-party feeling has been accompanied by an upsurge in Rousseauian-inspired criticisms of the failure of the party state.

4. Contemporary Anti-Party Critiques in Germany

The German anti-party tradition apparently experienced a new popular revival in the 1980s and 1990s. The word "apparently" is deliberately chosen, since the evidence of an upsurge in popular disenchantment with parties is strong but by no means undisputed. But even if there are questions about the magnitude or novelty of contemporary popular dislike for parties, there can be little doubt that in the 1990s it has become fashionable for German journalists and politicians to talk as if increasing disenchantment with parties were a factor of growing importance in German politics.

In the 1970s, symptoms of popular disaffection with established political parties prompted German academics to begin the search for causes, and possible cures, of a newly diagnosed social disease: *Parteienverdrossenheit*. Though the consequences, and even the existence, of *Parteienverdrossenheit* were intermittently debated in academic journals and books in the 1970s and 1980s, this debate blossomed in the popular media in the 1990s, once the initial euphoria (or shock) of German unification faded. As noted earlier, the current resurgence of anti-party critiques was partly fueled by changing voting patterns: analysts have interpreted declining turnout and increasing "protest party" voting as signs of disaffection with political parties, and some survey evidence has buttressed this interpretation (c.f. Falter and Schumann; Rattinger). Yet the debate on "disenchantment with parties" is only partly fuelled by such evidence. Thus, for instance, the weekly newsmagazine *Spiegel* saw fit to print a five page article with the subtitle "Why the citizens have no respect for their politicians", an article which relied much less on new information than on recycled month- and year-old citations from politicians and political analysts (*Der Spiegel (c)*). This article is illustrative of how recent German debates have been stoked as much by the prominence of the critics as by the actual evidence of citizen discontent.

The most prominent critic of all was the then German President, whose attacks on the German party state were published in the summer of 1992. President von Weizsäcker's interview seems to have contributed at least as much as did voter behavior to unleashing a spate of editorials, articles, and books about "the" problem(s) with parties and the party state. This subsequent flood of contributions to the anti-party debate prompted the Society for the German Language to vote *Politikverdrossenheit* "word of the year" in 1992 (Dietze, 4).

In von Weizsäcker's interview with editors of *Die Zeit* magazine, the President levelled three over-arching charges against political parties and party politicians, charges which supported the President's view that Germany suffers from an overdeveloped party state. First, he argued that partisan competitors are so obsessed with winning elections that they fail to make good public policy decisions. Second, he charged that public policy also suffers because party procedures tend to promote the wrong type of politician – favoring those who have made long careers in politics to the exclusion of those who have experience outside of politics. And finally, von Weizsäcker charged that German society suffers because parties have pushed themselves into social arenas in which partisan politics should not play a role – for instance, party sympathies are taken into consideration in university appointments, in the running of non-political social clubs, or in school board decisions. In short, in von Weizsäcker's much-cited summary, the German party state suffers from having parties which are

"power-crazed for electoral victory and powerless (irresponsible) when it comes to understanding the content and ideas required of political leadership" (*machtversessen* and *machtvergessen*)(von Weizsäcker, 164).

Von Weizsäcker proposed several Rousseauian-inspired, mostly systemic, cures, all of which would represent a weakening of parties: the "supra-party" character of the Federal Presidency should be strengthened, perhaps through direct election; all Germans should directly elect their mayors and should be allowed to participate in local and state referenda; members of all political parties should be able to directly participate in the selection of party candidates for public and party office; and parties should stop trying to exercise their influence in realms like churches, the media, and education.

The President's well-publicized remarks generated a flurry of sharply divided articles and editorials. Many party critics used the these comments as preludes to their own complaints about current politics. While such critics used a variety of evidence to buttress their arguments, most agreed with the President that many of the problems with parties are embedded in the whole party-government *system.* Such analysts describe their subject in appropriately dramatic terms: "the crisis of the parties" (Rüttgers), a "crisis of the party system" (Kauder) "a crisis of party democracy" (Apel) a "crisis of the party state" (Glotz; Haungs), or even "a crisis of politics" (Kleinert).

Of course others, particularly party politicians, criticized the President for making populist attacks on institutions and individuals who were trying their best to serve the nation in a particularly difficult period (for instance, the SPD Minister-President of North-Rhine Westphalia, Johannes Rau) (*Der Spiegel (a)*). Some even accused von Weizsäcker of ill-advisedly serving the interest of right-wing extremist politicians (for instance, the CDU Federal Labor Minster) (Blum, 20). Once again, Germans making systemic attacks on political parties have risked confronting the "sacred cow" mentality – the charge that any change to the parameters of the current party state would be a retreat from democracy. To combat this, most systemic critics have affirmed their support for democratic systems. Even a book with the provocative title "To hell with the politicians" dutifully includes a chapter titled "Politicians – a necessary evil" (Gloede).

Today's critics challenge the political status quo not because they are not democrats, but because they share a political vision that is more Rousseauian than pluralist. Many of today's systemic critics consider the basic problems of the contemporary German party state to be weakened ties between citizens and political parties, and between citizens and the state. Their favored prescriptions are the creation or expansion of channels for citizen participation, and a corollary reduction of the influence of existing parties and/or party elites. Specific cures endorsed by today's systemic critics include changing state and/or federal constitutions to permit the use of referenda and initiatives, and selecting a non-party Federal President (for instance, Apel; Haungs; Kauder; Richter; Rüttgers; Scheuch & Scheuch). Others, including von Weizsäcker and Jens Reich (who was once mentioned as the von Weizsäcker's possible successor), have gone even further and demanded constitutional changes to limit the power of political parties (Reich; von Arnim; von Weizsäcker).

Some proposals of this sort have already been successful. Thus, faced with the threat of an CDU/FDP popular initiative (Volksbegehren), the SPD in the state of North-Rhine-Westfalia endorsed the introduction of directly elected mayors in that state, a change which was supposed to weaken party control at the local level. The CDU in Lower Saxony followed suit (Schäffer; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung d).

Rousseauian attacks have also been directed at the existing political alternatives: some have argued that existing parties are not democratic enough, while others have endorsed the establishment of new parties. This case was summed up by a vocal critic of German political finance, Hans Herbert von Arnim,

who has been explicit in his rejection of a pluralist perspective. In a recent newspaper article he argued that,

> "The pluralist lesson of harmony, which equates the results of interest pressures with the 'common good', has long been held up as dogma. But actually the give and take of parties and groups does not function equally, as this lesson suggests.... [Thus]...all things considered, democracy appears to be in crisis because there is actually too little democracy" (von Arnim).

Von Arnim's prescriptions also have a Rousseauian-inspiration: thus, he argues that, "inside the system there are probably only two ways to achieve something while going around the parties which control the key positions: by founding new parties, and by introducing plebiscites." (von Arnim).

Perhaps the most dramatic response to Rousseauian attacks on democracy in existing parties occurred in the spring of 1993, when the SPD became the first German party to institute a kind of party primary to select its party chair.[9] Though the party's unprecedented use of such a "primary" was initially viewed as a desperate response to a series of self-inflicted injuries, the effort proved surprisingly successful. Over 55% of members cast preference votes, and the election produced a clear winner in a three way race. Political party leaders and the German media were tremendously impressed by the participation rate, and by the ballot's clear verdict: this new procedure was proclaimed to be one of the solutions which could help the Republic overcome "disaffection with parties". As a result, SPD leaders promised to expand the use of party primaries and party policy referenda. At the same time, some CDU members started demanding similar opportunities. Within weeks of the SPD election, the CDU state party organization in North-Rhine-Westphalia changed its rules to introduce party-internal primaries and programmatic "referenda". Other state parties may follow suit (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung a, b, c; Frankfurter Rundschau; Der Spiegel (b)). This switch towards candidate selection through member-primaries weakens party elites in ways demanded by Rousseauian critics.

A third strand of Rousseauian criticism of alternatives has led to the 1993 creation of the ultimate anti-party party, the "Instead Party" (Staatpartei). Though this party had no program except changing the alternatives, it won almost 6% of the votes in the September, 1993, state elections in Hamburg – and wound up joining the governing coalition! Its success encouraged imitators in other states to found their own middle-class alternative parties (Dönhoff; Kaiser).

Finally, there has even been Rousseauian-inspired operationalist criticism calling for more openness and more citizen involvement in the way party government functions. One Rousseauian operational suggestion which has resurfaced is the the idea of changing to a British style electoral system, which critics argue is needed to strengthen links between voters and governments (Betz; Jäger 1993a). This perspective also led one critic to argue that the parliamentary parties should open parliamentary committee deliberations to the public, should televise these committees where all interested citizens could see their representatives at work, and should even televise the (previously closed-door) weekly meetings of individual parliamentary parties (Fraktionen) (Jäger 1993b). Yet these operational criticisms and solutions have clearly received relatively less attention than systemic and programmatic critiques.

Despite the current popularity of expanding direct democracy within the parties, it is too early to say whether other types of extra-party direct democracy will be adopted. However, it is possible that expansion of direct democracy could

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9 This was a non-binding vote to advise the party conference, which formally elects the party chair.

still be picked up as a theme in this year's wave of state or federal elections. Furthermore, in states where the possibility already exists, anti-party forces might begin to take advantage of voter initiatives. In short, because this wave of anti-party criticism is predominantly phrased in terms of Rousseauian-inspired attacks on alternatives and on the political system, the most likely changes to result from current debates are (probably small) steps away from the party state.

5. Concluding Thoughts

This paper has argued that there is a logical link between types of party criticisms and types of proposed remedies. It has used examples from German history to clarify the proposed typology, and to demonstrate the plausibility of the argument. The typology elaborated in Figures 2 and 3 could have been phrased as a set of formal hypotheses: if party critiques are framed in terms of x, then the probability of y sorts of change increases. These could also have been stated another way: those who want y sorts of change are most likely to criticize parties in terms of x.

The problem with probabilistic models is that they are not readily falsifiable – a problem that other agenda-setting analyses have acknowledged but not solved (cf. Kingdon). The best test of the above type of model is its plausibility when applied in a variety of settings. One way to carry out this sort of test is by applying the framework to other countries which have witnessed debates about the problems with parties: are the links which I describe as "logical" only logical in the German context? Another way to test the model is by asking whether it tells us anything new about contemporary and future politics either inside or outside Germany. Whichever approach is chosen, the point of such comparative studies should not be to provide fuel with which to attack today's anti-party critics, for instance by showing that they utilize arguments once wielded by those who favored totalitarian systems. To selectively invoke history in this way would be to make the absurd suggestion that parties truly ought to be regarded as sacred cows, off limits for contemporary criticism. What is needed instead are studies which view elite anti-party attitudes as a legacy of Western political thought, and which view anti-party populism as a mobilizational appeal that has been tested many times in a variety of political systems. Such studies could push us far towards understanding the consequences of anti-party sentiment.

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II.
Political Myths and Symbolic Communication
Electoral Mobilization by the DVU

Lothar Probst

1. Introduction

The idea for the following local case studies, analyzing the electoral mobilization methods of the right-wing German DVU[1] party in Bremen, goes back to an observation that seems paradoxical at first. Although the DVU never did conduct a conventional public election campaign and could not approach the voters with the help of the mass media they nevertheless obtained seats in the Länder-parliament of Bremen in 1987 and again in 1991 with 6.2 percent of the votes. Bremen, one of the Stadtstaaten of Germany, represents a typical northern German urban environment with about 550,000 inhabitants. Certain political trends emerged in this micro electorate before they later affected the entire Federal Republic. The Greens, for instance, had their first successful parliamentary coming-out in Bremen. The DVU probably chose Bremen as the target for a parliamentary break-through because Bremen's electorate is easily surveyed. Against this background this local case study can help to study very typical methods of the DVU's electoral campaign strategy.

2. Particular and General Phenomena Affecting the German Society

One popular explanation for the success of right-wing parties points out that this phenomena is directly connected to the German unification. But they had their first success in 1987, when the DVU gained seats in the Bremen parliament, and again in the spring of 1989, when the Republikaner got seats in the Berlin parliament. Both events occurred before the unification. In my view Germany caught up with a development that had already taken place in the course of the eighties in a number of European countries, especially in France and Italy. Votes up to 10 percent for right-wing populist and fascist parties were nothing unusual. In Germany it was the relative stability of the party system and the integration of socially disadvantaged people through high-leveled benefits of the welfare state that impeded the advancement of right-wing populist parties. As well domesticated national orientations – as a result of the division of Germany – were a kind of bulwark against right-wing trends. But in the course of the eighties we were already faced with some turbulence in Germany too: the increasing number of nonvoters or voters who were switching parties, criticism leveled at the policy of the major parties and the disintegration of traditional party customs (see Betz 1991/92). All these phenomena – which can be observed in all modern Western mass democracies – indicate an increasing reluctance to support the democratic institutions. Particularization, privatism and a loss of public spirit are perceptible signs of the crisis of modern societies. An increasing alienation seems to determine the relationship of many citizens to their polity. Liberal democratic societies with their bureaucratic institutions and complex decision making procedures don't give the people a feeling of identity. They are, as Ralf Dahrendorf put it, "cold projects". This seems to be a structural weakness of the liberal democratic system.

In the light of these considerations I start from the presumption that the fundamental preconditions for the emergence and the success of right-wing populist parties already existed before the unification in Germany. But actually it is true that the problems in the course of the unification had some negative effects on the above mentioned development. The stability of the German democracy seems to be at stake because the crisis of democratic institutions coincide with a

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1 With regard to the frequent muddling of the terms radical right-wing, extreme right-wing and right-wing populist, I would like to side with Norbert Lepzy and Hans-Joachim Veen, who plead for a clear distinction between these three terms (see Lepzy/Veen 1994: 3). I have classified the DVU as first and foremost right-wing populist, in order to underline the specifically populist form of addressing the electorate. This, however, does not preclude the DVU from being classified as extreme right-wing in a different context.

current economic crisis and an identity crisis. There are at least three elements, which are characteristic for the different types of crises:

1. The recession and the escalating costs of unification have restricted the ability to integrate underprivileged people by the means of the welfare-state. This hits the core of the economy-oriented political culture in the old Bundesländer, which was for decades a main pillar of an Ersatzidentität during the years the nation was divided. But it also affects the citizens in the new Länder who had expected a rapid adjustment to the West-German welfare level after unification.

2. The unification necessitates a redefinition of Germany's position and interest in the international political arena. But the society seems not to be prepared for this discussion and a consensus is far off.

3. In the second half of the eighties immigration into West-Germany started to change. The society was confronted with the fact that no longer desirable laborers from South European countries came to Germany but underprivileged people and refugees from all parts of the world. The changes in Eastern Europe after 1989 – especially the violent ethnic eruptions in Yugoslavia – further aggravated the immigration pressure on Germany because of its geographic position and its constitutional right for political asylum. This unregulated influx deeply disturbed parts of the German society, especially those who are in actual competition with the immigrants on the housing-market for example. The right-wing populist movements, addressing this issue, profited from the discontent with this development.

3. The Growing Importance of Symbolic Forms in the Politics of Democratic Societies

My second point concerns some theoretical reflections on the importance of symbolic forms in the political communication of democratic societies. The theoretical framework of my study is close related to considerations of the cultural anthropologist Ernst Cassirer and the political scientists Murray Edelman and Ulrich Sarcinelli. But first of all I will refer to Niklas Luhmann who characterizes power as "code controlled communication" (Luhmann 1975: 15). He pointed out that the reduction of complex problems and the use of symbolic forms are indispensable means for establishing credibility and stability in democratic societies. Politicians and parties use for example, as Claus Offe put it, the mean of a "Realitätsverdoppelung" – that is the linkage of strategic rationality with symbolic forms (Offe 1976: VIV). As long as symbolisms are conveyed to the outside, while on the inside decisions are made on the basis of strategic rationality, democratic societies do not seem to be at risk. However, danger arises when – as Sarcinelli emphasizes – "irrationality, sentimentality and aggressiveness [...] are used as instruments in a political struggle" (Sarcinelli 1987: 22). Because of the variability of the content of symbolic messages they can develop a life of their own and lose their original steering function.[2] This could, by the way, be observed for instance in the way the asylum law had been discussed in Germany in the last years. The use of symbolic forms in

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2 Roland Barthes, for instance, speaks of the constitutive ambiguity of the mythical statement. He differentiates between the signification, the significance and the symbol of the myth. Significance to him denotes "meaning and form, replete on one hand, empty on the other hand. [...] During the transition from meaning to form the symbol loses its knowledge in order to better accept the acumen of the concept. However, the knowledge contained in the mythical concept is composed of a confusing array of uncertain, unlimited associations. One must clearly emphasize the open status of the concept." (Barthes 1957: 96, 99) Sarcinelli, too, refers to the significance of "blank symbolic formulas": "In political communications symbolic formulas are not classified as 'blank', because they have no contents, but because their contents are relatively vague, that is they cover a wide semantic field." (Sarcinelli 1987: 155)

communication between political parties and their electorate always runs the risk of a populist voter mobilization.

In connection with this situation neopopulist movements and parties enter the political arena, which is already replete with political symbolisms, and place their own logos, images and symbols. Without having to demonstrate their ability to solve complex problems they suggest with their political propaganda and holistic ideology that the existing democratic system with its complex structures could be replaced by a new social system, a system voters can identify with.

An enlightened policy, based on the discourse of "communicative action" (Habermas) runs the risk of underestimating the strength of populist voter mobilization. In many cases insufficient consideration is given to the force of "the other than reason" (*das Andere der Vernunft*, Gernot Böhme) that develops in the undercurrents of society. Cassirer expresses this insight with his all but lyrical formulation:

> "In politics we are never living on a firm and stable ground. In quiet and peaceful times, in periods of relative stability and security, it is easy to maintain a rational order. But we are always standing on a volcanic soil and must be prepared for sudden convulsions and eruptions. In the critical moments of man's political and social life myth regains its old strength. It is always lurking in the background, waiting for its hour and opportunity." (Cassirer 1979 [1944]: 364)

Harold Lasswell, going in the same direction, writes in this context:

> "Politics is a process that brings to the surface the irrational foundations of our society. [...] In politics, the success and the handling of rational interests are always subject to the continuously changing definitions of an emotional consensus. [...] Many disturbing changes in the life of many members of society lead to adjustment problems that are mostly solved with the help of symbolic forms." (quoted in Edelman 1976, p. 28)

And Murray Edelman states in addition that many voters perceive social reality through a "symbolically sensuous" world. For the majority of people in our society, as he says,

> "it is characteristic to observe and to think in stereotypes, personalization and simplifications". They are "unable to perceive complex situations and react primarily to simplified symbols" (Edelman 1976: 4).

Against this background the prospects for the public support of an enlightened policy and a rational development of consensus is limited even in democratic societies. In times of insecurity and crisis, in which society seems to have lost "sense" altogether and people are longing for orientation, the neo-populist actors offer their simple messages and political myths.

> "Whoever casts and stages myths in a culturally effective production", Andreas Dörner points out, "also assigns appropriate roles to the head and bodies of his audience and can motivate them to heretofore unexpected actions" (Dörner 1992: 202).

The neo-populist movements and performers have at their disposal a remarkable arsenal for symbolic, mythical and inspiring forms of expressions in order to communicate with their voters.

4. Results of the Local Case Study

4.1 Information about the Social Structure of the DVU Electorate

Before I turn to the construction of political myths by the right-wing German DVU I want to summarize some brief information about the social structure of the DVU electorate in Bremen. With the help of a very precise and meticulous analysis prepared by the Statistisches Landesamt in Bremen[3], I was able to proceed with my study on the basis of the following established factors:

– The DVU mobilized an above-average number of voters particularly in areas with a high concentration of state-subsidized housing, with large blue-collar segments and definite structural problems (high fluctuations, little cultural life, relatively high unemployment, dependency on transfer payments in the form of unemployment and welfare benefits, and a relatively large segment of foreigners). (Dinse 1992: 67 f).

– The support of the DVU corresponds clearly to the voters' educational level. Good results were obtained above all in residential areas with an above-average share of voters whose education ended at the upper division of elementary schools.

– While an above-proportional share of voters of the age group 60 years and older opted for the DVU in 1987, the results in 1991 showed a

> "structurally increasing resonance to right-wing parties among younger voters. [...] In this group one of six male and one of ten female voters cast the ballot for a party on the extreme right wing." (Dinse 1992: 26)

In socially underprivileged areas even one of five young male residents voted DVU (19.4 percent).

– Male voters constitute the main area of recruitment of the DVU. However, a proportional increase of female voters was noticed between the elections of 1987 and 1991.

So a picture emerges of a socially insecure, culturally underprivileged and politically rather disinterested electorate with a below-average level of education.

In addition to this information my study relied on an evaluation of the DVU campaign material, on interviews with the DVU members of the Bremen parliament and a study by a Bremen journalist regarding the activities of the DVU. The study is centered around two questions: 1. How did the DVU successfully communicate with their voters? 2. What signs, images and symbols does the DVU use in its political propaganda?

4.2 Specific Ways of Communication

At the beginning of my study I felt that an explanation was needed to clarify how the DVU communicated with its voters although not a single public election campaign was conducted. To this very day the DVU does not have a party or faction office in Bremen, nor does it have a staff for their parliamentarians. According to a former member of the DVU faction, no regular activities take place on the community level. The political control of the entire apparatus is in the hands of the headquarters in Munich and party chairman Dr. Gerhard Frey. However, since the DVU has been generally boycotted by the local and also by the national media, at least until 1991, this line of communication, too, was de facto of little consequence for their campaign strategy. The only activities noticeable

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3   See Jürgen Dinse's explanations of methodic procedures in his pamphlet: Zum Rechtsextremismus in Bremen. Ursachen und Hintergründe der Erfolge rechtsextremer Parteien, pp 12-15, a work of particular relevance because of the methodology of the representative statistics.

from the outside before the elections were hundreds of thousands of third-class mailings reaching practically all households in Bremen. During my study I came across a second, less one-way street of communication. The spokesman of the DVU faction of the Bremen Länder Parliament describes their campaign strategy as follows:

> "We approach the voters primarily with written messages in the form of third-class mailings. Every household receives several mailings during the course of a campaign. [...] Then, of course, people have the opportunity to speak to us, to contact us directly, be it by telephone or in writing. And that is what they usually do. People write to us and ask for material. Primarily they write to the federal headquarters in Munich, from where they will be serviced according to their requests."[4]

A former DVU member whom I interviewed, told me that all people who ask for information are entered in a computer. Then they receive promotional material and are asked if they wish to become a member. Actually Party Chairman Frey confirmed in a letter to a delegate of the DVU from 1987 that they stored almost ten thousand addresses of households from Bremen and Bremerhaven in the computers of the DVU Headquarter and that these people received several times direct mailings during the election campaign. In one of the letters it is said:

> "Dear Champion of the German Cause, the new party in this upcoming election, the *Deutsche VolksUnion* – List D of the Unified German Rightists – is involved in a momentous election campaign in the City-State of Bremen on behalf of the German cause. [...] With all my heart, I am asking and beseeching you to help us as soon as possible with the highest affordable amount. Please accept my most sincere gratitude for all you have done and all you are going to do now for Germany."[5]

All these examples prove that the DVU understood perfectly how to involve voters and potential voters with the help of a differentiated offer of information in some sort of complex exchange of communications. They also emphasize the fundamental importance of the efficient party headquarters in Munich which, in fact, is planning and executing the entire election campaign. Acting merely as the extended arm of the DVU headquarters, local party functionaries, on the other hand, play hardly any role in the campaign concept. Thus a former member of the DVU faction reports that Frey explicitly prohibited the establishment of a party office in Bremen or Bremerhaven respectively. Nevertheless, efforts have been made on a local level after the successful elections of 1991, to adopt rudimentary forms of a more personalized exchange of communication. In answer to my question if there are any direct contacts between functionaries, party members and interested persons, some members of the DVU faction told me that they have a citizen's forum once a month in Bremen, house calls and even hospital visits. Telephone calls seemed to be one very important factor of personal contacts. Another aspect of the DVU concept involves new members in membership promotion, as outlined by Frey in a letter dated June 24, 1987:

> "Dear Member of the Landesverband Bremen: Enclosed you will find your membership badge. Could you please use the short time span to September 13th to recruit new members, advocates and voters for our young party.

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4   Unless differently noted, this and all other quotes from members of the DVU faction in parliament were obtained in an yet unpublished interview I conducted in December 1993. They are available for inspection at the author's files.
5   The author has a copy of this letter.

All you have to do is order your supply of stickers, sew-on patches and the party platforms for the Federal Republic and for Bremen. [...] I would be particularly appreciative of addresses of other free thinking men and women in Bremen."[6]

This example also illustrates the importance of small symbolic gestures like the membership badge meant to convey a feeling of belonging to an exclusive community of like-minded people.

Contrary to my earlier hypothesis, that there was no substantial network of communication between the DVU and their voters, my studies led me to the conclusion that a cleverly conceived network does in fact exist. It includes many lines for the party to contact and to communicate with their electorate. Certain aspects of this approach to their voters are even more direct and personal than the path taken by the established parties, who increasingly mobilize the voters for their themes through the public media. Nevertheless, the bottom line is, that the effect of these specific forms of communication between DVU and electorate should not be overestimated. According to a former member of the DVU faction, many members who joined during the early hours of the party have soon departed again. The aforementioned Citizen Forum is attended only by the inner circle of functionaries and a few outsiders. Thus my conclusion is that there must be more profound reasons for the surprising conquests of the DVU, reasons that are not found in personalized or media-oriented communications with the electorate. This leads me to the second question of my local case study: What images, metaphors and symbols are used by the DVU to create political myths?

4.3 The Creation of Political Myths via Electoral Mobilization

Studies dealing with the creation of political myths refer to the *"dualistic structure of symbolically condensed methods of argumentation,"* which selects themes in accordance to the principle of a *"binary coding"* and classifies these according to certain criteria of *"relevancy, preferably in binary codes such as friend/foe, law/power, progressive/conservative."* (Sarcinelli 1987: 211) Based on these deliberations, I have scanned DVU campaign material and parliamentary speeches in the search of such binary *"key symbols"* (Lowell Dittmer 1977: 570) and in order to analyze their symbolism.

Contrary to my expectations that the focal point of their political propaganda would be the abuse of the right to asylum, it was their uncompromising position against the established political parties that dominated early publications and speeches. With the help of a many-faceted chain of political metaphors a clear friend/foe orientation is created in terms of the binary codes described above. This is illustrated by the following examples:

– "We consider ourselves the attorney representing the so-called little people."
– "The chasm between the homeless and the political bosses sitting here [in parliament] is widening continuously."
– "Established apparatchiks."
– "Fleecing at the bottom and splurging at the top, that seems to be the motto of the political potentates."
– "Against the politician's mismanagement and their disrespect for the little man."
– "The profiteer's mentality of the established parties."
– "Previous non-voters should give the established parties what they deserve by voting DVU."[7]

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6   The author has a copy of this letter.
7   All citations were obtained from DVU campaign material and parliamentary speeches in Bremen. The material can be found in: "Die DVU in der Bremischen Bürgerschaft. Mißbrauch des Parlaments. Eine Dokumentation von Jochen Grabler." Available through Fraktion Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in der Bremischen Bürgerschaft.

In terms of Edelman's philosophy, these variations of the top/bottom metaphor can be interpreted as a central "Verdichtungssymbol" that insinuates the myth of the good people (at the bottom) and the bad bosses (at the top) who must be replaced by a new leadership (from the bottom). These impressive and simple metaphors appeal to popular tenets of voters (as for example: Those at the top will do what they want, no matter what), and they express the growing apprehension about the established parties. The classification of society in separate entities is a method typical for holistic ideologies. In the above examples, they work in two directions: At one side of the coin an insurmountable incompatibility between the "political bosses up there" and the "voting people down here" is constructed, while the other side suggests the natural unity between voters and DVU. Both statements fulfill at least three criteria for the creation of political myths:

a) They suggest that even in today's fragmented society an identity of interests between voters and political leadership is still possible.

b) They fill the need for a clear friend/foe definition.

c) They translate the discontent of the voters into a specific political language and they transform simplistic images of the people into a concept of identity. Moreover, feelings created by symbolic forms are usually resistant to reality, in other words, they become immune to different political concepts and views.

The basic model of binary coding occurs in DVU campaign material and statements in most diversified variations. Complex political issues are usually reduced to the "problem" (foreigners and asylum seekers), as the following examples underline:

– "Our coffers would be full, if our money wasn't squandered for questionable and even senseless causes. Throwing German money away to foreign countries, to foreigners, phony asylum seekers, the European Community and the like are examples that must be mentioned here."

– "Many kindergarten places are taken by phony refugees. And who remains out in the cold? Socially disadvantaged German families."

– "We must rid our streets of the gangs of foreign criminals."

– "The most important for us to do would be to send the whole gang packing, that is taking up so much room here. They are criminals from all continents, gangsters, swindlers and crooks of all skin colors."

– "We want to preserve Germany as a country for Germans by limiting foreigners and by doing away with the abuse of the asylum law" (ibid.).

In all the examples cited here, the binary coding follows the model "we and the others," respectively "we and the aliens" (foreigners/asylum seekers). "The" Germans are usually portrayed as victims (as socially underprivileged, honest taxpayers, as people willing to work), whereas "the" foreigners are depicted as "swindlers, gangsters, riffraff, crooks and criminals." This is another illustration of how political myths operate:

– The manifold and complex reasons for the government's financial problems and the limits of social and welfare services are reduced to one factor.

– The "we" (that means the Germans) constitutes an imaginary unity as opposed to the excluded "others" (that means the foreigners), and thereby creates a feeling of identity.

– The concerns of certain electorates are ministered to in terms of a definite friend/foe orientation with highly emotional concepts such as phony asylum seekers, pack, criminals etc.

Another interesting aspect is the respective connotation with two basic problems, which are considered to be of great importance, particularly in election districts with above-average DVU electorates: unemployment and criminality. In this connection, individual cases of actual abuse of the right of political asylum are blown out of proportion in an absolutely perfidious manner with statements like this:

> "At the same time [while social services for Germans are being reduced], fashionably dressed, and tanned from a vacation in their alleged persecution homeland, asylum villains, cash in at two, five or even ten social welfare offices."(ibid.).

As can be seen quite clearly from the above example, political myths frequently operate with the technique of reversing the facts. As a rule, millions of fashionably dressed German vacationers are getting tanned in the homelands of many foreigners, while asylum seekers and unemployed foreigners must live under often humiliating circumstances. The same pattern of reversal is used when the DVU portrays itself as a victim of unjustified attacks from the established parties. While their party indulges in diatribes against political opponents and foreigners, DVU delegates complain that *"the DVU faction is being confronted continuously by vituperations from the SPD, the FDP, the Greens, and even from the CDU"* (ibid.). A key symbol used time and again by the DVU is the concept "fate" or "fateful" respectively, for instance, when it is said that *"In the State of Bremen, the DVU is involved in a fateful election campaign for the German cause."*[8] Ernst Cassirer already pointed out that we meet *"in nearly all mythologies of the world [...] the idea of an unavoidable, inexorable and irrevocable fate"* (Cassirer 1949 [1944]: 380). The invocation of a Schicksalsgemeinschaft follows the logic of the ethnic community that is held together by ties of blood and must defend itself in the hour of trial against all enemies from without and within.

4.4 What Conclusions can be Drawn?

(a) The fact, that an increasing number of voters which can no longer be ignored see themselves reflected in pictures, symbols and images described here, is to be taken seriously. An enlightened policy has to take into consideration the peoples discontent with the political establishment, especially with the self-service mentality of the political parties, and has to overcome deficits on this matter by structural reforms.

(b) Political science should invest more effort to study "irrational" forms of the construction of identity. In this respect we should take up cultural studies in an interdisciplinary way and follow the advice of Ernst Cassirer who said:

> "In order to fight an enemy one must know him. And to know him means not only to know his defects but also his strength. To all of us it has become very clear that we have greatly underrated the strength of the political myths. We should not repeat this error. We should see the adversary face to face; we should try to understand his true character, and we should carefully study origin, structure, methods and technique of political myths." (Cassirer 1979 [1944]: 266)

(c) A policy even in secularized societies has to accept the people's need for orientation and identification. Democracy, democratic procedures are not a matter of course. It remains the task of politicians and democratic parties to convince the people and particularly new generations, again and again, of the advantages of a democratic system. Of course, this will not solve the problem of how to deal with the hard core of right-wing populist activists. But it is the only way to regain the support of many misled people who are attracted by the symbols of neopopulist actors.

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8   From a letter of DVU-Chairman Dr. Frey to the members of the DVU in Bremen. See footnote 6

III.
The Dilemma of Power in Petra Kelly's Antipolitics

Ruth A. Bevan

Petra Kelly belongs to any discussion of antipolitics. She was one of the most significant antipolitics actors of our time and one of the most consistent in her antipolitics.[1] Co-founding the German Greens in 1979, she coined the expression "anti-party" to differentiate the Greens from the political mainstream. In her iconoclastic linkage of peace, human rights and environmentalism, she achieved a unique international base of support that served to reprioritize political agendas in democratic states and to strengthen resistance movements in Communist, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Sunday *London Times* listed her in 1990 as one of the Top 1000 Makers of the Twentieth Century.

During the brief and stormy years of her antipolitical activism, Petra Kelly confronted various dilemmas of power. Essentially, these dilemmas involved translating antipolitical principles into political form and, in their sequence, chart Kelly's antipolitcal growth. The Greens did not represent the fruition of this growth, as generally assumed and, in fact, Kelly's break with the Greens, as we shall demonstrate, was for antipolitical reasons.

In examining this growth, we shall be working our way toward an operational definition of antipolitics. Presently, the term, "antipolitics" is used indescriminately to designate a variety of political mavericks. Recently, the *New York Times* called the governor of Connecticut "antipolitical" for his independence from any regular political party. The 1992 American presidential candidate, Ross Perot, has likewise been called "antipolitical" for his neo-populism and political independence.

Petra Kelly shared with both of these politicians an independence from party, a populist orientation and an opposition to established politics just as she shared with the "radical" monetarist, Margaret Thatcher, the belief that the contemporary state is too powerful and has acquired a dangerous autonomy. An unbridgeable gulf, however, separates the antipolitician Kelly from all the others. The boundaries of that gulf must be defined.

As the term conveys, antipolitics is about opposition. It is not simply ideological opposition. Nor is it anarchism, opposed altogether to politics as organization. Rather antipolitics is concerned with constructing moral opposition to political power. It seeks a politically autonomous civil authority capable of checking and censuring political power.

Antipoliticians like Petra Kelly argue that the modern state has subsumed, if not totally absorbed, civil society. Political power thus finds no rival and knows no limits. The antipolitical intent is to establish those limits by rejuvenating civil society as a politically autonomous rival to political power. Petra Kelly's special contribution in this regard was her effort to transform East European dissident antipolitics into a Western democratic force.

A

The popular image of Petra Kelly was full of New Left-style political hype. Wearing a combat helmut strewn with love daisies, the peace activist staged sit-ins and other "happenings" at NATO military installations, engaged in massive street demonstrations, staged a mock Nürnberg Tribunal against nuclear super-powers and spoke in the clipped jargon of the '60's. Contrary to her image, Petra Kelly was never a New Leftist. Nor was she a Marxist.

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1 Petra Kelly was born in Günzburg, Bavaria on November 29, 1947. In late October 1992 she was found dead in her home outside Bonn, Germany, killed by a single shot fired by her long-time companion and fellow activist, Gert Bastian, who, subsequently, committed suicide. The assumed motivation was despondency over their personal and political futures. The German police have officially established that this was not a suicide pact, that Kelly played no part in her own death. Badly decomposed, the bodies were found some three weeks after the act. The date of death has been placed on October l.

From the beginning, she disavowed all political conflict theories and hence violence as a political means. Peace was her primary value and the foundation of her environmentalism. "You cannot reach a peaceful end with violent means," she asserted, "and you cannot reach a just end with unjust means."[2] As a consequence of her contact with the American civil rights movement during the 1960's, she embraced civil disobedience, responding to its emphasis upon moral suasion as the means of political change.[3]

An activist during the Cold War, Kelly uniquely disclaimed ideological differences as the root cause of that war. Behind the facade of diametrically opposed ideologies, capitalist and communist states shared a common commitment to modernization in their drive for power.

Rooted in the scientific revolution of 17th Europe, modernization denotes that "process of change from an agrarian to an industrial way of life that has resulted from the dramatic increase in man's knowledge of and control over the environment in recent centuries."[4] It has resulted in mass industrial production and markets on the economic front, the creation of the centralized state on the political front, and the nationalization of an increasingly urbanized, "outer-directed," production oriented population on the social front. Justifying the conquest of natural resources as well as human beings connected with those resources, modernization rests upon what Kelly called a "conquest culture."

Now the world-wide standard of power, modernization is the state's final objective. Developing the indicators of power, like heavy industry, armaments and a centralized, technocratic state capable of mobilizing national resources, takes policy precedence over all other considerations, like civil rights. This power imperative, according to Kelly, results in a monopolistic state that squeezes out civil society and thus defies popular control (Habermas' "colonization of the life world" by the economic-administrative sector). Kelly saw the total state as the impulse of modernization. She would have wholeheartedly agreed with the seven Chinese intellectuals whose recent petition to China's president Jiang Zemin stated that "to talk about modernization without mentioning human rights is like climbing a tree to catch a fish."[5]

The scramble for ever scarcer resources continuing in the post-Cold War era can only culminate, for Kelly, in increased conflict (ultimately war) and human rights violations, even genocide. Bush's prediction of a New World Order following the collapse of Soviet Communism is impossible within the modernization framework. A genuinely new order will require a new culture of politics.

Having developed this critique, Kelly had to face the next obvious question: what kind of political action will change the state? Willy Brandt's leadership of the Social Democrats in the early 1970 s inspired her to join the party. She had great faith in Brandt's moral integrity, proven by his active resistance against the Nazis.

2 Petra Kelly, "Towards a Green Europe, Towards a Green World," reprinted in Glenn D. Paige and Sarah Gilliatt. Nonviolence Speaks to Power: Petra Kelly. Honolulu. Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, Univ. of Hawaii. p. 26.
3 Divorced from Petra's biological father, Petra's mother, Marianne, subsequently married Lt. Col. John E. Kelly, an American army officer stationed near Petra's hometown in Germany. Thereafter, in 1959, the family moved to the United States. While an undergraduate student at American University in Washington, D.C., Kelly became involved in the civil rights movement while working in the presidential campaign of Senator Robert Kennedy. After Kennedy's assassination, she worked for Senator Hubert Humphrey whom she regarded the "most honest politician in Washington". After graduating from American University in 1970, she returned to Europe, securing her Master s degree in political science from the University of Amsterdam in 1971 and then moving to Brussels to work for the European Community as a social-health administrator.
4 Stephen Welch. *The Concept of Political Culture*. New York. St. Martin's Press. 1993. p. 5. The definition is that of Syril Black.
5 *New York Times*. March 11, 1994

As SPD Chancellor, Brandt pursued a policy of détente vis-à-vis East Germany. Kelly translated this policy into her own "détente from below" campaign designed to arouse West German public opinion against nuclear weaponry and to nurture the East German resistance. Comfortable with Brandt, Kelly joined the SPD as a party of peace.

The rise of Helmut Schmidt as SPD Chancellor after Brandt's fall from power in 1976 deflated her confidence in the party's direction. That confidence was totally shattered by Schmidt's acquiescence in 1979 to the installation of American Pershing missiles in Germany. Formally quitting the SPD, Kelly turned to founding the Greens anti-party.

Though personally quite devastating, Kelly's break with the SPD psychologically paved the way to antipolitics. She was now totally dislodged from "official" politics and, having lost her faith in that politics, would never return. Henceforth she made political disengagement (non-collaboration) a first principle. Her political alienation was complete.

B

The Greens constituted an in-gathering of the politically disaffected and "homeless" on the left. Never ideologically coherent, they were united only by their mutual disaffection which found expression in the organization of an "anti-party." Originally, the term connoted the Greens' renouncement of the chain-of-command leadership structure characterizing all political parties in favor of rotating "spokespersons" subject to the rank-and-file membership. Structural differences notwithstanding, the Greens were a "party," being organized to enter political elections. In the early years, after the party's founding, Kelly continued to talk of the Greens as the "anti-party party."

During the years 1979-1990, the very name of Petra Kelly symbolized the Greens. Indeed the success of the Greens in those years was tied to the meteoric rise of Kelly, now a media event, as their spokeswoman. She led the Greens to their breakthrough electoral victory in 1983, when they secured 28 seats in the German parliament (*Bundestag*), and, of all the Green delegates over the next seven years, maintained the highest personal constituency vote.[6]

Yet Kelly's relations with the German Greens were rocky from the beginning. The escalating friction produced a rupture in 1990, symbolically the year the West German Greens lost every one of their parliamentary seats in the first All German election after unification. Kelly faulted the Greens' internal divisiveness for the traumatic defeat but remained obtuse about her own schismatic impact upon the Greens.

Two major factions plagued the Greens. The left-wing "Fundis" (Fundamentalists) advocated "selective violence" against property targets to accomplish their ideological objectives. This position was unacceptable to the civil disobedient Kelly though she shared the Fundis' rejection of a possible Green-SPD coalition. By contrast, the "Realos" (Realists) advocated such collaboration.

The vast majority of Greens endorsed nonviolence, so the Fundis were peripheralized. This left the issue of collaboration as the irreconcilable difference between Kelly and the Realos. The logic of Kelly's position, from the Realo standpoint, dead-ended in an oxymoron: the Greens should simultaneously be political actors and non-actors. They should run for parliament but decline ministerial posts. They should be a permanent opposition.

Historically, leftist parties have squabbled and divided over the strategic efficacy of collaboration (entering coalitions or otherwise supporting extraneous political groups as a means of acquiring political power). The fate of the Second

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6 While other Greens delegates were just skimming the 5% hurdle, Kelly reached 17% of the vote in her Nürnberg district

International especially comes to mind. Non-collaborationists, protective of ideological purity, fear co-option. Never did non-collaborationists, like the early revolutionary Marxists, give up their desire to capture political power. To collaborate or not was always a tactical consideration related to ultimate power goals.

Except for Petra Kelly. In this she stands unique. Noncollaboration, for her, was not a power tactic but, as the dissociation from power, her final objective. Had she lived, therefore, her rupture with the Greens would not have been repaired, for the drift of the Greens since 1990 has been decidedly toward the Realo position. She sensed this would be the case and wrote about moving "beyond the Greens."[7]

Somewhere along the way anti-partism crystallized in Kelly's consciousness as antipolitics. Her break with the SPD was decisive in this development and left her with the desire to "transcend" factional and other political boundaries. Her own words, written in 1989, are unequivocal regarding her antipolitical commitment:

> Exactly ten years ago, at the founding of the German Green Party, I coined the term "anti-party-party" for the Greens, trying to express the new type of power (counterpower) that we are all speaking about. This is the power of nonviolent change and nonviolent transformation. "Power-over is to be replaced by "shared power," by "the power to do things," by the discovery of our own strength as opposed to a passive receiving of power exercised by others, often in our name. It is not power to dominate – not power to terrorize or to oppress – but the power of nonviolent change. The Hungarian writer Gyorgy Konrád expressed it even better with his term "anti-politics", a moral force.[8]

Repeatedly, Kelly acknowledged how much she had learned about antipolitics from Soviet and Eastern European dissidents, many of whom she knew on an intimate basis.[9] Her involvement with the dissidents was transforming. "Sitting in those tiny kitchens and in those smoke-filled living rooms of our dissident friends in East Germany – in a world quite its own," she wrote, "was something I shall never forget" (ibid.).

Petra Kelly brought a radically different venue, and one probably not altogether disclosed by her, to Green antipartism. Highly educated, cosmopolitan, a woman who lived in the realm of ideas, she incorporated experiences beyond the provincial ken of other Greens.[10] She retaliated against that provincialism.[11] In

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7 For the November/December 1991 issue of Ms. magazine in the United States, Kelly wrote an article entitled, "Beyond the Greens," which she introduced by describing her conflict with the Greens. She stated: "So it turned out that being a Green cofounder and member of parliament for eight years made me a lonely person. I refused to play the tactics game of being either a dogmatic leftist "Fundi" or a pro-Social Democrat conservative Green "Realo," or even a mediating "Centralo" -because I felt that all of these boundaries must be transcended if we are to create a nonviolent., feminist, ecologically alternative society." (p.70)

8 Petra Kelly, "Global Green Politics," in Paige-Gilliatt. *op. cit.*, p. 58.

9 In this regard Kelly wrote: "Through my long friendship with Lew Kopelew, the Russian writer and dissident, and through his circle of friends in Moscow, I came to know and understand what the notion of a civil society was all about – civil society and antipolitics - the two most important concepts which I learned from the citizens' rights movement in Eastern Europe." Petra Kelly, "A Green View of German Reunification and Europe's Future," in Paige-Gilliatt *op.cit.*, p. 92.

10 At the time of her death, Petra Kelly was in the dissertation stage of her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Heidelberg. Her American upbringing had left her fluent in English, conversant in American culture and deeply impressed by the civil disobedience tradition of American democracy, foreign to other German Greens. She was a world traveler and involved in various international human rights and peace or organizations.

particular, Kelly grappled with the Nazi past (she credits her American experiences for pushing her into an awareness of this past) and drew what were unmistakably antipolitical conclusions from her analysis of that past.

The conceptual evolution of antipartism as antipolitics in Kelly's mind found no counterpoint in the Greens. The Realos probably saw in the dialectically-charged term a barb against the SPD while the Fundis, no doubt, responded to the revolutionary implications of antipartism.[12] All told, the Greens embraced a political objective. The symbiotic public image of Kelly and the Greens had been a mirage all along.

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Kelly once remarked that "if the Greens end up becoming simply ecological Social Democrats, then the experiment. is finished – it will have been a waste."[13] The Greens were not old wine in new bottles; they were an experiment. Kelly felt herself creating a whole new political form - even the language to describe this creation had to be invented. This sense of creativity brought her into close affinity with three other creative individuals who greatly influenced her antipolitics. They were Vacláv Havel, Heinrich Böll and Joseph Beuys.

Kelly had met Havel in Prague during the Communist days and esteemed him as a moral force, carefully studying his political ideas and actions. She was very close to Nobel Laureate Böll and the controversial anti-artist Beuys. In the "hot autumn" of 1983, Böll had linked hands with Petra to form a human chain over 100 kilometers long in protest against nuclear armaments like the Pershing missiles. He had written an introduction to one of her books and for a time was involved in the Greens. Beuys was one of the co-founders of the Greens. Earlier, in 1967, he had founded the German Student Party at the Düsseldorf Academy of art as a "meta-party" organized "not against other political parties but against parties themselves."[14] With Böll, he began in 1971 the Free International School for Creativity and International Research to free education from careerism.

All three of these individuals were intellectually avantgarde artists. *Persona non grata* to the Communists, Havel wrote politically controversial absurdist plays emphasizing the meaninglessness of "official life." Böll sought new language to capture the identity crisis of postwar Germany. In positing the political as an artistic problem, Beuys incorporated autobiography and *Aktionen* in his art form. His sardonic remark that, the Berlin wall should be heightened by

11 In this regard she wrote: "After serving eight years in the (West) German Parliament, I have learned firsthand how 'Eurocentric' our own European ecology/feminist/peace movement and alternative parties have becomes. There is also a European type of arrogance and smugness about us: the more power my own Green Party in Germany accumulated within the electoral process, the more 'German,' arrogant and 'know-it-all-better-than-the-rest' we became." Ms. *op. cit.*

12 Kelly had only contempt for the Fundis' behavior toward Communist East German officialdom when the Greens were endeavoring to assist the dissidents. "We continued to dialogue with Mr. Honecker, making clear that we would see our dissident friends despite the measures he took against us. That type of position was not always supported within my own Green party, since many of the left-wing dogmatic Green Party members wanted to make sure that they had good relationships with the old SED regime. They saw their dreams of socialism in some and nebulous way come alive in the old GDR." Petra Kelly, "A Grew View of German Reunification," in Paige-Gilliatt. *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92

13 Manuel Dittmers. *The Green Party in West Germany*. London. Buckingham. 1986. p. 20

14 Ann Temkin, "Joseph Beuys: An Introduction to His Life and Work," in Ann Temkin and Bernice Rose. *Thinking is Form: The Drawings of Joseph Beuys*. Philadelphia Museum of Art/Museum of Modern Art, New York. 1993. p.18

five centimeters for "better proportions" illustrates his conviction that the political blocks creativity.[15]

Each one had experienced totalitarianism. The dissident Havel led the "velvet revolution" against the Communists. Böll and Beuys had both lived under the Nazis (Beuys had been in the *Luftwaffe*). The anguish over those experiences finds voice in their art as conscience. Beuys believed that art is the process of self-alteration, not self-expression.

These common threads wind their way through Petra Kelly as well. She was certainly a politically engaged intellectual. A writer, she had a keen appreciation for the creative arts. Born in the same town as Joseph Mengele, known as the "angel of death" in Auschwitz, Kelly felt personally responsible to fight against the kind of public silence and societal forces that made Nazism possible. She called Mengele "the mainstream of his nation and its prevailing moods, attitudes and scientific philosophies" and used her parliamentary position, in particular, to act as Germany's "memory."[16] She was driven by a moral vision.

It does not appear that Kelly knew Gyorgy Konrád personally but she obviously felt great affinity to his antipolitics. (Konrád's book, *Antipolitics*, appeared in English in 1984, one year after the Greens first victory.) A sociologist by training, Konrád became politically controversial for his 1973 book, *Intellectuals on the Road to Power*, which cost him time in a Hungarian Communist jail. He is also a prominent novelist. Like those in the circle Kelly drew around herself, Konrád is artistic and politically enragé.

Konrád most specifically articulates the principles of antipolitics imbibed by Kelly. He asserts,, firstly, that "we ought to depoliticize our lives. […] I ask that the state do what it's supposed to do, and do it well. But it should not do things are society's business, not the state's."[17] The antipolitician is one who "wants to keep the scope of government policy (especially that, of its military apparatus) under the control of civil society" (ibid., p. 227). Thus antipolitics is "the political activity of those who don't want to be politicians and who refuse to share in power"(ibid., p. 230). He sees democratic opposition, therefore, as "not a political but an antipolitical opposition, since its essential activity is to work for destatification" (ibid., p. 229).

The intellectual is of key importance in the emancipation of civil society. As a free thinker, the intellectual exerts a moral force by challenging, implicitly or explicitly, political power. In their detachment from vested interests and in their novelty, free ideas invariably threaten vested powers. Independent intellectuals are thereby "border violators", the censors are "border guards" and their "intellectual weight. is in direct proportion to the number of border violations [they] commit" (ibid., p. 218). Consequently, "spiritual authority differs from political authority in that it only grows stronger from opposition and controversy" (ibid., p. 222). The moral power of the intellectual is thereby instrumental in wresting psychological and social "space" from the political domain and returning that space to civil society.

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15 *Ibid*. p. 16. Temkin writes: "Convinced of the overemphasis on the physicality of the wall itself, he [Beuys] wished to redirect attention to the 'mental wall' as symbol of all the unnecessary walls that exist between individuals and peoples. The alteration of five centimeters appeared to be an 'aesthetic' solution, but the 'aesthetic' that Beuys was getting at was in fact far different. He wrote to the Ministry of the Interior [of North Rhine Westphalia which had questioned Beuys about his remark] that he was ready 'to solve this wall problem in my life, if I am given the opportunity.'" *ibid.*
16 Petra Kelly. *Mit dem Herzen Denken.* Munich. C.H. Beck. 1990. p. 51. In parliament, Kelly introduced restitution measures for slave laborers under the Nazis, the Basque culture center of Guernica that was blitzkrieged and other forgotten victims. She introduced questions and resolutions about many issues, like Kohl's Bitberg ceremony and his reception of Paraguay's President Stoesser, that connected contemporary German politics to the Nazi past.
17 George Konrád. *Antipolitics*. San Diego. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. 1984. p.229

The genuine intellectual is by nature antipolitical; he is not fixed. Karl Mannheim spoke of "free floating intelligence," meaning that intellectuals are not class-bound. Through their ideas, intellectuals transcend sociological barriers as well as those of consciousness. Antipolitics is the struggle against mental, spatial and temporal barriers impeding moral creativity and fulfillment. Kelly wished to transcend the barriers of Green factionalism, of political parties and established politics in order to create an "alternative" political world. Antipolitics is transcendence, in particular, moral transcendence.

By contrast, co-opted intellectuals, servants of power pandering after fame and fortune, lose their intellectual freedom and sacrifice their intellectual credentials. Antipolitics, therefore, does not seek to bring down governments since "its members don't want to be government leaders" (ibid., p. 218). Konrád stipulates that the "most effective way to influence policy is by changing a society's customary thinking patterns and tacit compacts, by bringing the pace setters to think differently" (ibid., p. 222). (Parenthetically, Havel's official biographer carefully inserts that, as president of the Czech republic, Havel is not involved in partisan politics but is the "guarantor of the legitimacy of the political solution, the custodian of the political culture and the moral dimension of politics.")[18]

At its core, antipolitics is an intellectual revolt against the moral turpitude of aggrandizing politics. As such, it enjoys a rich historical lineage stretching back to Socrates. The antipolitical vituperation against renegade "intellectuals" recalls the outrage provoking Julien Benda's condemnation of the "treason of the intellectuals." Considering herself a feminist pioneer, Kelly included in this "co-opted category" male thinkers (she specifically designated Marx) who "sold out" to chauvinism.

Of special interest is the *antipolitician as artist*. First emerging in the 19th century, the politically engaged artist is the product of new commercial market options (selling his wares) that eclipsed royal patronage. This financial independence brought forth a spiritual independence and self-assuredness. In transcending social strictures, the artist achieves authenticity of voice and morally informs.

Paul Johnson credits Beethoven as "a key figure in the birth of the modern because he first established and popularized the notion of the artist as universal genius, as a moral figure in his own right – indeed, as a kind of intermediary between God and man."[19] Describing artists as a "new, self-contained, disengaged element of society – outsiders and judges, rather than participants," Johnson asserts that it is a "significant fact of history that artists preceded the political radicals in their attacks on the bourgeoisie." (ibid., p. 135).

Moral authenticity demands *disengagement*. Antipolitics is the constant process of disengagement from the boundaries invariably threatening our imprisonment, like Plato's metaphorical cave. Embracing no fixed ideology, antipolitics is, rather posture against the dogmatic. Its imagery is that of movement. Beuys captures the sense of this free movement of ideas in the continuous line running through his drawings.

Desiring to keep alive the sense of extraparliamentary movement (like the citizens' initiative movement [BBU] and *Aktionen*) in the Greens, Kelly argued that, "the variety of currents enriches our party, even in the absence of a common consensus in the analysis of society" and that she did not want to "exclude

18 Eda Kriseova. *Vaclav Havel*. New York. St. Martin's Press. 1993. p. 277 . She concludes that Havel "can no longer say he does nto want to be president and he did not choose his office: He has accepted it ashis lot. Yet in his statement of beliefs, there ts still the freedom of an intellectual, of someone who can always return to something he perhaps likes even better." *ibid*.
19 Paul Johnson. *The Birth of the Modern*. New York. Harper Collins. 1991. p. 117

communists or conservatives" since "one current learns from another."[20] "There is not mutual destruction," she concluded, "but a convergence of views. That's what's new about our movement"(ibid.).

Antipolitics presents us with a more complex countercultural phenomenon than might otherwise have been assumed. As a side observation, it is interesting that many of the antipoliticians around Kelly were, like herself, Catholic. Not formally religious, they, nevertheless, preserved that spirituality.[21] In their communitarian, spiritual values, they exhibit elements of a *Kulturkampf* against the rationalistic, individualistic, capitalist state whose creation Max Weber credited to the Protestant imagination.

In contemporary terms, antipolitics is part of the information revolution. Communications technologies generate information and connect those who deal in information throughout the world. Knowledge is power, and the power of the modern state rests upon its ability to monopolize information and to co-opt technical experts. Within a totalitarian state like the former Soviet Union, the Xerox machine symbolizes that power. Dented access to "the machine," the intellectual (and the mass public) is subverted as a political force. By marginizing intellectuals, oppressive regimes simultaneously imprison civil society but, as Konrád warns, spark retaliatory *samizdat* and thereby foreclose their own political future.

Communication - publicity, is the central antipolitics method to roll back the state (depoliticize and destatify) and rescue civil society. All states, in Kelly's analysis, seek exclusive rights to information and indulge in desinformation. She conceived her role (and that, of the Greens) as a disseminator of what she called "counter-information," meaning non-establishment information on non-establishment issues. She introduced such counter-information into parliamentary debates on topics like "Brazil and the construction of nuclear bombs, the participation of German engineers in a missile project in India, and Guernica and the lack of German reparations."[22]

Kelly did not speak directly of intellectual power à la Konrád but endeavored to make out of the Greens a public conveyer belt of counter-information constantly flooding the public forum. In this respect the anti-party played an "intellectual" antipolitics role. Like Beuys, Böll, Havel and Konrád, she believed political change could be accomplished only through education, through changing people's minds. Like Konrád she envisioned a proliferation of international public forums where people could receive and discuss counter-information.

Toward this end, she organized, in 1990, with East and West Europeans, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, one of several such forums that she instituted. Kelly became renowned for her world counter-informational lecturing and writing, her interminable faxes and constant presence at the Xerox machine. Parliament, with its resources and national audience, was crucial to Kelly as such a public forum, not as an avenue to power. This the Greens did not understand.

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Petra Kelly viewed East European dissidents as the moral avant-garde in transforming Europe, perhaps the world. In September 1989 she spoke about the common desire among the various human rights movements in Eastern Europe to reclaim civil society, which "implies a space where independent discussion and criticism can grow, where an alternative to the state's monopoly on information and education can thrive, where an effort can be made to restrain the state's

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20 Werner Hulsberg. *The German Greens.* London. Verso. 1988. p.124
21 Kelly was educated as a child in a Catholic convent school. In 1983 she formally quit the Church because of its gender bias and alleged passivity on world poverty. She continued to regard herself as religious.
22 Petra Kelly, "Morality and Human Dignity," in Paige-Gilliatt, *op. cit.*, p. 123

arbitrary or arrogant use of power against its own citizens or other countries and, finally, where the rigidity and isolation of the bloc mentality can be challenged."[23]

A year later Kelly stated that, Western ideas are "still sadly unimaginative" and "not commensurate with the radical changes in Eastern Europe."[24] Looking to the East to stimulate new politics in the West, she claimed that, "now, in Western Europe, we find ourselves learning to become dissidents so that we too can begin building a civil society at home."[25]

At a time when Soviet and East European Communism had collapsed, when the West felt, itself vindicated as the "Cold War victor" and the East's instructor in democratic behavior, Petra Kelly turned the tables by extolling the "new kind of sovereignty" displayed by Eastern dissidents that should be captured in the West.[26] This was an outrageous position, flying in the face of post-Cold War totems and taboos. Using the East as a model for moral transcendence, Kelly's thinking was not only provocative but antipolitically problematic.

Within Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and the Soviet union, intellectual dissidents produced a moral voice that became decisive in emancipation. Their very illegitimacy in the eyes of the government gave them their moral legitimacy in the eyes of the public, at home and abroad.

Implementing antipolitics in Western democracies, however, presented Kelly with the *dilemma of legitimacy*. Opposition is integral to constitutional democracy, and this legitimacy, consequently, robs opposition of any special moral claim or *persona*. In fact, the electorate routinely assumes that those in opposition, like those in power, are motivated by self interest, not pure principle. While there was no hope of Communist dissidents becoming "powerful," even if they so desired, there is every expectation that democratic opposition groups seek power.

Moreover, the legitimacy of opposition in democratic states means that opposition becomes diffuse (many groups in opposition), further eroding its moral profile. Independent opposition, like that of the antipolitician, faces, too, the dogma of what A. F. Ostrogorski called the *"regularized candidatures"* produced by established political parties. The electorate tends to look suspiciously at the independent as "inferior goods" or "loose canons" unacceptable to the conventional parties.

The dilemma of legitimacy engenders, therefore, the *dilemma of authenticity*. It is extremely difficult to conceive of, much less locate, the authentic moral voice within democratic society where pragmatic majorities rule and minorities, tolerated and perhaps "right," still lose. In the slide rule calculus of Bentham's "greater good," numbers define moral aptitude. As the recorded *Bundestag* debates indicate, Petra Kelly, in presenting her "moral agenda" to parliament, suffered an opponent's inflamed retort, "Whose morality? Yours?"

John Stuart Mill assumed that the free competition of ideas would produce the "truth" of the moment (if not the "Truth"). The research of Marshall McLuhan casts shadows on this assumption. Even if there were completely free competition, the individual tends to read, listen to and accept that information which coincides with his own opinion, knowledge and experience. Untruths are difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate once they have penetrated the public forum since individual's have no assurance that the "truth" being substituted is, in fact, "true".

Further complicating the picture is the problem of our "technical culture", which Konrád describes so well:

23 Petra Kelly, "Global Green Politics," in Paige-Gilliatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61
24 Petra Kelly, "Morality and Human Dignity," in Paige-Gilliatt, *op. cit.*, p. 128
25 Petra Kelly, "A Green View of German Reunification and Europe's Future," in Paige-Gilliatt, *op. cit.*, p.112
26 Petra Kelly, "Morality and Human Digity," in Paige-Gilliatt, *op.cit.*, p. 128

Technocracy, by presenting value-free alternatives and by striving to measure rather than evaluate possible outcomes, indirectly and involuntarily relativizes values. In the principle of efficiency technocracies have discovered a neutral yardstick stripped of all other values, and hence useless in making value-judgments between competing technical rationalities, since every technical rationale appeals to some kind of efficiency (to whatever serves its own interest, in fact). For that reason the technocratic mentality is unable to arrange competing interests into any kind of hierarchy and must willy-nilly fall into a system of transactive conflicts and pragmatic compromises".[27]

The net effect of this relativity, it seems, is often the considered *irrelevance* of profound ("transcending") ideas. At the same time, we ironically lament the seeming paucity of ideas. Consumerism, also, dulls the sense of need for ideas by feeding on the "choices" presented by abundant goods. This cultural density frustrated Western antipoliticians like Beuys, Böll and Kelly into seeking new, shocking modes of communication.

The dilemma of legitimacy and the dilemma of authenticity together constituted a major aspect of Petra Kelly's dilemma of power in implementing antipolitics. They reflect democratic societal problems but present the stratetic problematic of antipolitics. For the sake of clarity, we can chart these dilemmas as follows.

Opposition in Non-democratic States	*Opposition in Democratic States*
illegimitate	legitimate
moral salience	banality of purpose (relativity)
crystallized	diffuse, co-opted

Within the Western democracies, antipolitics had to take a political form, albeit as an "anti-party." No writer's manuscript or artist's exhibit could "threaten" government to change its ways, and Kelly earnestly believed that the world stood on the brink of impending ecological decimation and social catastrophe. She, therefore, endeavored to transform antipolitics, with its individualistic, intellectual orientation, into a determined, politically interventionary force.

This was a task fraught with unresolvable contradictions. Antipolitics rests upon the moral inspiration of creative individuals. This inspiration translates into moral leadership. Fueled by a moral vision and of strong personality, Petra Kelly took naturally to such leadership. She had the instincts of what James McGregor Burns calls "transformational" leadership. The Greens, however, eschewed the leadership principle, thereby despising Kelly's prominence and "self-righteousness." Kelly became the victim of democratic intolerance.

Historically, the secular state, in its ascent, gobbled up spiritual authority, then civil authority. There is no prophet to censure kings, no Canossa for penitence. The voter stands hapless and helpless. Political adversaries share the system's spoils. Political power stands unrivaled.

This was the overarching dilemma of power in the antipolitics of Petra Kelly. Creating space for a rival spiritual authority meant enlarging the non-political

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27 George Konrád and Ivan Szelenyi. *The Intellectuals on the Road to Power*. New York. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1979, p. 100

domain or civil society. This could be accomplished, in Kelly's estimation, if everyone transformed himself into a civil disobedient:

> "President Havel recently stated in a speech in the People's Forum in Prague that upright, honest, credible people are needed in politics – people who have the courage to stand up for their convictions, who are not afraid, and who can act and think independently. All of us in Germany would benefit if we were at last to learn the liberating and constructive art of civil disobedience – not just in the extraparliamentary movement, but also within parliament and within political parties".[28]

The civil disobedient is the antipolitician, one who rejects the "power monopoly of the political class."[29] The antipolitician, in Konrád's words, is "not a representative of spiritual authority, but rather its repository"(ibid., p. 227). From the democratic standpoint, using civil disobedience as a means of political change is revolutionary. This was precisely Petra Kelly's intent. Therewith she hoped to see in the West the "new kind of sovereignty" she had witnessed in the East.

Spiritual opposition must be permanent opposition if political authority is to be pushed back and held within its respective domain. Kelly experimented with the Greens as one element, though not the exclusive one, of such permanent opposition. Her concept raises interesting prospects of a civilian body in parliament responsible for political oversight. An analogy might be that of a jury or an ombudsman, though these are too legalistic-administrative in connotation. In their combination, however, they represent civilian judgment and oversight, implying censure and check.

James Madison thought he had found a permanent opposition to aggrandizing political power in the federal scheme and in checks and balances. He also envisioned the sovereign public, civil society, as a permanent check. Like Madison, Kelly (and other antipoliticians) didn't expect to eliminate the corruptibility of political power but did intend to restrain that power's influence.

Kelly's antipolitical contribution was to demonstrate that, under contemporary circumstances, it is illogical and dangerous to expect systemic politics either to hold itself accountable (checks and balances) or the national public to be the "countervailing power." New structures, non-political but politically interventionary, must be created for the "flow" of spiritual authority from civil society. Antipolitics might be thought of as a process of building dams (against political power) and constructing irrigation canals (spiritual authority checking but also informing political authority).

Kelly's understanding of the modern state is of a selfperpetuating system. This perspective applied also to the democratic state which, however, she did not see as truly democratic. Kelly's antipolitics was intimately linked to her feminism. She was not interested in maintaining either modern political culture or its power structure, both of which she saw as anti-feminist. A genuinely democratic state had to be based upon "shared power" between men and women in a popularly-controlled decentralized polity committed to what Kelly called "peaceful, life-enhancing" goals.

Empowering civil society, therefore, meant, for Kelly, an inroad against the power structure of the modern state *per se*. The dispossessed would now become participants. Her antipolitics was avowedly revolutionary; she hoped that the success of the East European dissidents would be repeated elsewhere. Kelly did not want to "purify" the democratic processes already in existence but to institute an "alternative" political process that she claimed would be the essential

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28 Petra Kelly, "Morality and Human Dignity," Paige-Gilliatt, *op.cit.*, p. 148
29 Konrád. Antipolitics. *op. cit.*, p. 231

democratic one. Like the artist, she felt herself creating a new political form that evoked moral authenticity.

If the modern state was anathema to Petra Kelly, certainly Petra Kelly was problematic to state power-holders. From the democratic standpoint, she confused and confounded constitutional processes. Was it democratically responsible, for example, for an elected representative to reject the obligations of power? Was a constituency not therewith neglected? Furthermore, does not civil disobedience, conducted on a mass scale, pose a grave threat to constitutional stability?

These kinds of questions reflect the ultimate dilemma of power in the antipolitics of Petra Kelly. Undeniably, she was a woman of power and one who desired augmented revolutionary power. Much of that power was the result of her own talents, daring and energy. Yet her acute sense of a power loss following the 1990 ouster from parliament attests to the role of democratic institutions, including the mass media, and constitutional provisions in bolstering her power. In wielding this power for antipolitical objectives, Petra Kelly took a gamble. She had to assume that the outcome of her efforts would in fact be morally superior, for, to create, she also had to destroy. This gamble was her ultimate dilemma of power.

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