The political practice of environmental organizations

a constructivist view

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THE POLITICAL PRACTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

-A CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEW

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Preface

When I began this work, in September 1990, I had on the one hand a theoretical interest in the nature of power and the importance of political ideas in the course of history, and, on the other, I was puzzled by the dynamics of the environmental movement. During the three and a half years I have worked on this thesis I have tried bring these interests together to form a coherent whole.

The focus in this thesis is on environmental organizations. They are, in my view, the organizational channel through which many of the values of the environmental movement are expressed. Environmental organizations, however, are not neutral institutions. They are, I will argue, active in shaping both the fundamental values of the movement and designing new policies. It is this active role of environmental organizations in forming values and policies I aim at understanding in this thesis.

My approach is inter-disciplinary. This is mainly a result of the fact that I have been working during the last three years at an inter-disciplinary department which welcomes any initiative to break the academic disciplinary boundaries. Today, I consider myself as a social scientist in the broadest sense of the word. My academic roots are in sociology. I was trained in sociology at the University of Copenhagen in the 1980s. In recent years, however, I have found myself moving towards political sociology and political science. This dissertation is a product of these academic preferences.

Several institutions contributed financially to the trips to the United States which were essential in gathering the empirical material necessary for this thesis: Department of Economics and Planning at Roskilde University, The Danish Research Academy, and Center of Local Institutional Research at Roskilde University. I am very grateful for this support.

In working my way through the thesis I am indebted to my two supervisors, Lars Dencik at Roskilde University and Andrew Jamison at University of Lund. A number of colleagues shared their thoughts and criticism about the manuscript. These include Peter Abrahamson, Peter Bogason, Christian Friis, Lars Hulgård, Søren Germer, Mikael Kluth, Dorthe Pedersen, Ove Kaj Pedersen, Lars Kjerulf Petersen, Paul Rabinow, Herman Schmid, Lars Skov, Andrew Thejls-Crabtree, and Jacob Torfing.

I dedicate this work to my wife, Mona, who contributed with fresh insights and supported me when I needed it most.

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Introduction

I have chosen to focus on environmental organizations in this thesis because they represent a type of political institution which, contrary to theoretical expectations, have grown rapidly in the last few decades and now arguably occupy a central position in modern politics. The total membership of these organizations has risen tremendously since the 1960s[1] and, along with this development, the political power of environmental organizations seems to have increased considerably. Simply by virtue of this recent development, environmental organizations qualify as a major political phenomenon in the late twentieth century.[2]

This development has not been reflected in the literature on social movements. Within this body of literature there has been a tendency to emphasize the political practice of grass-root groups and neglect the role of formal organizations. The dominant view is that the major political and cultural innovations happened in the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, and this was, primarily, the work of grass-root groups. Later, it is concluded, the informal political activity chrystallized into more rigid organizational forms which ressembled the dominating organizational form of the political establishment.[3] This interpretation has then lead some scholars to declare that social movements today are dead.[4]

This way of understanding social movements and the dynamic of social change has made it difficult to understand the recent growth and political effect of environmental organizations. My ambition is to go beyond this understanding and provide an alternative reading - a constructivist approach, which will be explained in the forthcoming pages. This approach offers a way of studying environmental organizations that does not have any predetermined conclusions about their political activity, but aims at explaining the specific conditions which determine the kind of action these groups undertake.

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[1] See chapter 5 for an illustration of this development in the United States. For data about the European environmental movement, see Van der Heijden 1992.

[2] Environmental organizations refer in this context only to non-governmental organizations. For a listing over such organizations, see Trzyna 1992; Deziron 1993.

[3] This view is inspired by the Chicago School (Park and Burgess 1921; Blumer 1969). This school was one of the pioneers in the thinking on social movements, as I will show in chapter one. The tradition of the Chicago School advanced the view, influenced by the political turmoil of the 1930s, that social movements are forms of collective behavior which basically are totally erratic and irrational. Gradually, however, it was argued that social movements crystallized into organized behavior. In that sense, social movements were seen as an early state of the development of organizations.

[4] See, for an example of this view, Brand 1990; Dowie 1992.

Environmental organizations, in my view, manifest a form of political action which oscillates from social movement to pressure group. Hence, the problem to be explained presents itself as follows: what are the particular conditions which make such organizations define themselves as either social movements or pressure groups, and what is the political effect of this ideological move.

My contention is thus that two ideal typical forms of political identity can exist in environmental organizations. On the one hand environmental organizations can take on a *movement identity*, and on the other hand they can take on a *pressure group identity*. The former is conceived here as a form of ideology which aims at challenging the political order by making fundamental social issues the subject of discussion. The latter is defined as an ideology which accepts the political order and sees the role of the organization as one of seeking influence through conventional channels. These forms of identity can vary, of course, from one historical epoque to another. Thus, in one historical period an environmental organization can be dominated by a movement identity and in another it can be dominated by a pressure group identity.

Furthermore, it will be argued that these two forms of organizational identity reflect different political practices. The first - which I will call a *practice of problematization* - builds upon a movement identity: it questions the basis of conventional politics by a continual attempt to define and redefine what is legitimate political issues and what is not. The second - which will be referred to as a *practice of political effectiveness* - is based upon the belief that political results are achieved most effectively by adjusting to existing power structures and seeking to benefit the most from such a pragmatic stand.

These two forms of political practices are of a strategic nature. Both seek to attain a powerful position from which environmental organizations can make claims on society. But the means to achieve this goal are different. A practice of problematization centres around bottom-up activities typical of social movements, while a practice of political effectiveness emphasizes the need for pressure group strategies in top-level politics. Empirically, this is reflected in the kind of political actions environmental organizations are involved in. On one hand, they can take part in activities directed towards raising public consciousness, such as demonstrations, public meetings, publication programmes, educational programmes, happenings etc. On the other hand, they can use conventional channels of influence, such as lobbying, litigation, financial support to political candidates etc.

Practioners of effectiveness are lead to believe that this form of political activity is the most effective. By gaining credibility in negotiations the organization is often capable of producing political results within a limited time-span. But these political gains are often negligible next to the policy gains which practioners of problematization can achieve. By opposing a political suggestion and mobilizing support among the public, environmental organizations have often proven to hold a stronger position in the long run than otherwise would be the case.[5]

My contention is that environmental organizations, like other political groups[6], are governed by both a practice of political effectiveness and a practice of problematization. Thus, they are not exclusive alternatives. An environmental organization which gives priority to formal political work also needs support from the public for its points of view. Its strength in negotiations is dependent upon the degree to which it can mobilize general support for its policies. By contrast, an environmental organization governed by a practice of problematization gains insight and political contacts by participating in governmental work. Thus, radical environmental groups also benefit, to a certain degree, from a practice of effectiveness.[7]

My basic argument is thus opposed to the conventional view which suggests that groups such as environmental organizations typically start as social movements and then gradually becomes more organized and institutionalized, thus loosing its movement identity. I will argue that environmental organizations do not necessarily go through such a development. Rather, they follow an unsteady course shifting identity from one historical period to another dependent upon internal and external factors. In my view environmental organizations are social constructions, they are continually being produced by specific social actors within a larger societal context.

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[5] Greenpeace, for instance, has been a major factor in establishing strict quota for whale catching, not by participating in negotiations but by virtue of their spectacular media-events. See, for further details, chapter 3.

[6] These two forms of political practice are, of course, not unique for environmental organizations. One could argue that all kinds of political work rest on that duality. I have chosen in this thesis, however, to focus exclusively on environmental organizations. My contention is that it allows me to present a more substantial analysis of organizational identities and strategies than would otherwise be the case. For an analysis along these lines of the early feminist movement, see Björkenlid 1982. For a broader discussion of collective action and its methods as social movement and as pressure group, see Eder 1993.

[7] To illustrate the point: Earth First!, one of the most radical environmental groups in the United States, did not rely solely on nongovernmental forms of action. It became known for spectacular actions (such as knocking spikes into boles of old trees to prevent the cutting down of old-growth forests), but it also participated in more formal work in order to reach its objectives. See chapter 6 for a further discussion.

This approach is sociological in nature: it has been developed first by the American sociologist Herbert Blumer (1957) and later by European and American sociologists such as Touraine, Melucci, Klandermans, Kitschelt, and Eyerman & Jamison as a response to what they see as conceptual problems within psychological and functionalist theories on social movements. Blumer argued that social movements "could not be explained merely in terms of a psychological disposition or motivation of people" (Blumer 1957: 147). Social movements, in his view, were more stable forms of collective organization and needed to be studied in their own right as particular social constructions. Eyerman & Jamison, Kitschelt, Klandermans, Melucci, and Touraine later, from various theoretical backgrounds, have argued that this *constructivist view* of social movements is basically a fruitful one. It shows us how social movements have carved out a political position, and how this position has fitted - or not fitted - into the political and cultural landscape of their time.

I intend to develop this approach in such a manner that it can be used in studies of environmental organizations. I will view environmental organizations as institutionalized forms of social action conditioned by the larger societal context and the actor's own perception of social reality. Thus, my analysis operates on three levels: the individual level, the institutional level, and the societal level. All these levels must be included in the analysis in order to give a valid account of environmental organizations.

A constructivist view is of particular relevance in studies of environmentalism because objectivistic accounts are rather dominant within this field. Objectivistic conceptions flourish in the daily debate about the environment. It is common to hear the kind of argument where nature is perceived as an objective world outside the realm of man, and man at the same time is seen as the caretaker of this outside world. Nature collapses and man has to react to it. One forgets to ask: which nature and how should we react? A constructivist view poses these questions and shows us how environmental organizations construct ruling ideologies and political strategies.

More specifically, I will focus on two aspects of the societal level. When studying the workings of a practice of political effectiveness I will focus on the readiness of the political system to change according to the beliefs of the organization. The openness of the political system towards such groups as environmental organizations have been well termed a *political opportunity structure* (Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1988). For me, political opportunity structures are the degree of openness in the decision-making centres towards policies suggested by groups such as environmental organizations.

The question of the distribution of power between different levels of government is of particular importance here. A decentralized political structure, for instance, seems to offer environmental groups the best possible conditions for influencing the decision-making in society. In such a political opportunity structure local and regional authorities are granted extended freedom to make priorities and groups like environmental organizations can be given authority by the state to implement the law. The case study, presented in chapter five and six, show, however, that environmental groups in certain periods prefer a centralized administrative structure because it offers the environment the best protection and, furthermore, it gives big environmental organizations a more exclusive possibility to exert influence through lobbying etc.

When studying how a practice of problematization works I focus on the *cultural conduciveness* of society towards certain symbolisms that environmental organizations can make use of in campaigns (Gamson 1988). An example of such symbolism could be the slaughtering by the Inuits of seals and baby seals in Greenland and Canada which Greenpeace used in campaigns as a powerful imagery of human's destruction of nature. The cultural conduciveness in society towards this campaign was high, probably because seals in general and baby seals in particular share some features with humans and, apparently, have the potential to rouse passion. The particular campaign, however, was distorted by other factors, primarily the consideration for the traditional lifestyle of Inuits (Dahl 1993).

Certain opportunities thus emerge from the political environment. Depending on the *capacity* of environmental organizations, some of these will be taken advantage of, and corresponding strategies will be adopted. Specifically, I will focus on the administrative and intellectual capacities of environmental organizations. It will be argued that the *organizational form* is of crucial importance for the ability of environmental organizations to respond to external opportunities. In hierarchical organizations, for instance, the right to exercise power is centralized and this makes these organizations capable of reacting more promptly in top-level politics. If, on top of that, these organizations have an administrative apparatus which supports the decisions of the leadership, they are likely to use the conventional channels of influence and exploit given possibilities in the political opportunity structure.

Furthermore, I will argue that *political intellectuals* are a valuable force in environmental organizations. They are instrumental in creating a stable and strong organizational identity, and they also play a very important part in shaping the strategies of the organization (Eyerman and Jamison 1991; Fox 1981; Strong 1990). Perhaps most important are these intellectuals in the formative phase where a sharp organizational profile and undisputed leadership seems crucial for the growth of the organization.

To sum up: environmental organizations are seen as social constructs which can take on different identities (a movement identity and/or a pressure group identity) and be guided by different forms of political practice (a practice of problematization and/or a practice of political effectiveness). Moreover, it has been suggested that the construction of identity and strategy in environmental organizations has two aspects: the organization's relationship with the environment (opportunities and constraints), and the capacity of the organization to exploit the opportunities.

My approach aims at showing how environmental organizations are shaped within this framework. This is a rather new way of studying movement organizations. As I will show in chapter one there has been a tendancy in the literature on social movements to ignore this intermediate level in the political process by assuming a direct relationship between discontent and political mobilization or, alternatively, to focus on disfunctions at the systemic level. In recent years, however, a new type of approach has developed as a response to this problem - the resource mobilization approach (Zald and McCarthy 1987). It takes its starting point for analysis in organizations and focuses on the effectiveness with which these organizations use the resources in attempting to achieve their goals. Thus, this approach stresses the organizational dimension of social movement activity and in that respect complement my conceptualizations.

The resource mobilization theorists have, in my view, been very instrumental in drawing the attention to the organizational level in collective behavior processes. Thus, the term *movement organization* was first suggested by the resource mobilization theorists (Zald and McCarthy 1977). It refers to "a complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement ... and attempts to implement these goals" (20). This definition of movement organizations has two important elements which I will discuss in chapter one. First, it states that this type of organization builds its identity on social movements; second, it distinguishes this - formal - type of organization from informal and more spontanious groupings.

One should not overestimate, though, the theoretical and empirical power of resource mobilization theory, as indicated by a growing critique of the theory in the last five years (Klandermans 1988; Gamson 1988; Snow and Benford 1988; Kitschelt 1991; Tarrow 1991; Melucci 1989; Eyerman and Jamison 1991). This critique has focused on the fact that resource mobilization studies tend to take the objectives of movements organizations as given. The theory cannot explain the processes through which movement organizations define their objectives and form their strategies. Hereby, resource mobilization theory cut off an extremely important dimension of the activity of movement organizations, a dimension which I will discuss in particular in chapter two. A movement organization, it will be shown, is not a given. It is the instrument which social actors construct in order to pursue collective objectives as effectively as possible.

This leads me, in chapter three, to define, more accurately, a practice of problematization. It is argued that this form of strategy includes the apparently non-political in the sense that it does not focus on instrumental action and short-term changes, but rather on expressive action and long-term cultural changes. Moreover, it does not focus on the state, but on what has been referred to as "governmentality" (Foucault 1991). Governmentality is what the state relies on; it refers to the political process that defines the role of the state. This emphasizes the social field and the construction of ideas which influence and define the limits of governmental tasks.

This leads us to another central point: we must acknowledge that the state's power is not a given thing, it stands in constant need of legitimation. Different political actors take part in this ongoing struggle over the limits of the state's legitimacy. The result of this struggle is what counts as the state.

Political groups, such as environmental organizations, participate in this political struggle because the state represents the highest form of political authority in Western democracies. It has the law-making authority and means of physical coercion to ensure this authority. Thus, it becomes an extremely important task for political groups to question where this authority begins and ends. By challenging the authority of the state in this way, political groups seek to construct themselves a powerful position, a position from where they can set the political agenda.

The state, in this perspective, is not a given and stable feature of political life. It is continually being produced in society. Various actors participate in this political process - any party or government needs success in constructing and selling a legitimating set of ideas. But movement organizations are particular active in this kind of political practice. They often problematize the legitimacy of political institutions in society which counteract the goals of the organization.

Thus, this view of politics does not focus on the state and the decision-making on issues over which there is overt conflict of interests. Rather, this line of thinking emphasizes the overall bias of the political system towards consideration of certain issues and exclusion of others. Hence, this form of power is not only associated with observable conflict, but also with the shaping of discourses which in turn affect decision-making (or non-decision-making).

This suggestion, not to focus exclusively on the state but on "what makes up the state" is not new in political science and political sociology. As Wolfe has remarked "the avoidance of the state has become the central proposition of the theory of the state" (Wolfe 1977: xiii). Both liberalism and Marxism have rejected the state as the central referent of the political and instead focused on the processes underlying the state and its powers. Thus, this view of politics rests upon a solid tradition.

In chapter four I will focus on how a practice of political effectiveness is constructed in environmental organizations. Obviously, an understanding of this form of political activity requires a different theoretical perspective, one which highlights the way environmental organizations influence decision-makers in the short term. Within this perspective the agenda is given; the aim is to influence issues which are already on the agenda.

Political scientists and political sociologists (Lowe and Goyder 1983; Mitchell 1979) have in particular analyzed environmental organizations with a pressure group identity, focusing on those aspects relevant to the practice of political effectiveness: size, resources, formal channels of influence, effectiveness etc. These works, despite their narrow perspective, form a major contribution to my study. They inform us about the ways environmental organizations can effectively get their viewpoints through to the decision-making centres.

This theoretical perspective is based upon interest group theory in politics (Ball and Millard 1986; Noll and Owen 1983; Wilson 1990; Wooton 1970). In it the underlying assumption about organizational behavior is that decision-making in organizations is intentional, consequential, and optimizing. Moreover, it is assumed that this type of political group uses different tactics than social movements. It is the relationship with its target group, typically the state, which is in focus, not broader sections of society. Furthermore, effectiveness is the issue here, not ideology and socialization. This approach thus makes us aware of how organizations might follow a practice of political effectiveness.

Hence, this theoretical position stresses the instrumental aspects of the activity of political groups. Of central importance within this perspective is the size of membership, size of staff, economic resources, effectiveness of organization, standing in capitals etc. All these different kinds of resources are seen as essential in pursuing the standard pressure group techniques such as lobbying, campaign contributions, litigation etc.

It is acknowledged within the literature on interest groups that movement organizations cannot be portrayed as traditional pressure groups. They have been viewed in this literature as a particular kind of pressure group, namely public interest groups. Characteristic of these groups is that they are not based on occupational categories such as economic groups (business and labour union organizations) or professional groups. Moreover, they do not build their identity on the material advantage of their members (though they often offer incentives for individuals to become members). Hence, public interest groups do not typically have a stable membership base and relatively well-defined goals based on material needs. They have more loosely defined goals based upon their conception of the public good and, furthermore, they depend upon support from large sections of society in order to legitimize their claims and survive economically.

In chapter five and six I present an analysis, by means of my main concepts, of the Sierra Club, an American environmental oganization formed in California in 1892. The basic question to be addressed is: how could the Sierra Club develop from a semi-romantic, semi-scientific organization for the protection of the Sierra Nevada Mountains into one of America's most influential environmental organizations?

We can try answer this question by focusing directly on the political practice of the organization. In chapter five I present a detailed analysis of the historical background of the Sierra Club. Only in this way could I see how its organizational identity and practice have been constructed in earlier periods. This is necessary for understanding present choices and priorities.

Four phases can be distinguished in the political history of the Sierra Club, each with specific forms for political practice. My analysis tries to show how the political practice of the organization was formed, in each phase, by given external opportunities and internal capacities.

The Sierra Club represents a particular type of case with a unique history. Case studies are very suitable as a research strategy when "how" questions are posed and complex social phenomena, as organizational processes, are the object of the analysis (Yin 1984. 13-14). Case studies allow you to examine complex issues in depth and retain the meaningful characteristics of real-life events. The main problem, however, with this form of research endeavour is that of generalization. How can one ensure that a single-case study is applicable to other cases?

This is a much debated issue in the social sciences (Flyvbjerg 1991: 137-58; Skocpol 1984: 371-373). The answer to the question above is probably that one cannot be sure. One can only strive to show that one's approach is capable of yielding new insights within a specific field, and, presumably, could be applied to other cases. I return to this question in both chapter two and chapter seven.

My main ambition is not, as in history, to give an historical analysis of the Sierra Club based on the historical material available. Rather, it has been to use my main concepts to develop a meaningful historical interpretation of the political activity of the organization.[8] That is to say that my research strategy has been to make use of analyses made by historians in order to reach my aim: to use my concepts to interpret particular political processes.

What I have tried to do in my analysis of the Sierra Club is to use my concepts - especially those posed as ideal types basic to organized political life - to orient the events and patterns running through the history of the organization. I have not in the course of my analysis tried to produce a fixed general theory about the political practice of environmental organizations. Rather than testing my pregiven concepts I have sought to use my theoretical ideas in dialogue with the historical material. In my view, theoretical concepts must be "elastic" - open to historical redefinition. It is not only abstract thinking, but also the historical material in itself that should decide the content of the concepts.

In chapter six I analyze the political practice of today's Sierra Club. My main argument is that the political action of the organization is a result of two processes. First, that of present cultural and political opportunities in society and the capacity of the organization to exploit these opportunities. Second, it is the result of the history of the organization. The organizational identity and political practice was to a large extent constructed in earlier periods and continues to influence ideological discussions and strategic priorities in the organization.

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[8] E. P. Thompson is one of the sociologists who has been most instrumental in developing this form of "interpretive historical sociology". See, for a further discussion, Trimberger, E. K.: "E. P. Thompson: Understanding the process of History", in Skocpol 1984.

In chapter seven I discuss, more generally, the context in which the political practice of environmental organizations is constructed. Through a comparison of the political and cultural context in the 1960s and onward in respectively the United States and Denmark I aim at showing how particular conditions, characteristic of national political cultures, produce different opportunity structures and different environmental groups.

1

Movement organizations and sociology

Movement organizations have in general not been studied by sociologists as isolated political phenomena. They have been analyzed in relation to social movements, or as a by-product of social movements. In order to review the literature on movement organizations one has thus to look into the debates within the sociological literature on social movements.

I will begin by briefly summarizing the main positions within this literature. I intend to show that social movements basically have been conceptualized in two different ways. Structuralist accounts, (Gramsci 1971; Habermas 1981; Offe 1985; Friberg 1988; Gorz 1982) have focused on contradictions and dysfunctions on the systemic level in society and explained the rise and fall of movements in these terms, failing to address the question of how to perceive of organizational action. Individualistic accounts (Park and Burgess 1921; Blumer 1969; Inglehart 1977) have tended to view collective action as the product of psychological differences of individuals, thereby ignoring organizational questions.

In recent years a middle-range approach to the study of social movements has been developed in the United States, the so-called resource mobilization approach (Zald and McCarthy 1987). This has emphasized the role of movement organizations in laying the groundwork for social movement formation. Thus, it has departed from the traditional social movement approaches, according to which social movements are explained by either structural or psychological factors

In this chapter I will discuss, in detail, the recent critique of resource mobilization theory. Klandermans, Melucci, Eyerman & Jamison and others have criticised this theory for ignoring the fact that social problems are not objectively given, but socially constructed. This critique has lead to the articulation of a theoretical position which maintains the focus on movement organizations but with a different view, a constructivist view. Movement organizations in this perspective are the work both of social actors and the framework of limits imposed upon them by the institutions of our society. This approach offers us, it will be argued, a way to study how movement organizations play an important role in creating new issues and generating new policies.

A structuralist perspective

The structuralist position within the literature on social movements has to a large degree been coloured by European social theorists. Scholars in Europe have tended to locate the roots of collective action in broad macroprocesses, such as industrialization, urbanization, mass migration etc. The basic argument has been that the extent to which these processes have influenced society in turn has implied very different potentiales for the growth of social movements.

Perhaps the most influential and prototypical version of this form of analysis has been the Marxist one. In the following I will present this analytical perspective and illustrate how it does not thematize the problem of how political problems and public policies are constructed by social movements and movement organizations.

Let us first note that Marxist discussions have had a profound impact on the theoretical debate in Europe for most of this century. In the 1920s and 1930s Marxists, such as Gramsci and Luxembourg, reformed some of the most controversial points in Marx' and Lenin's writings (Gramsci 1971; Luxemburg 1973). The Marxist problematic of working-class revolution continued, however, to dominate the debate until the 1970s when a new generation of scholars (Touraine, Offe, Melucci, Habermas, and others) suggested, in line with Gramsci and Luxembourg, that new classes and new lines of conflict had developed in the welfare society of late twentieth century.

Marxists have focused on social movements because they represented, in their view, the chief mechanism through which deprived groups can demonstrate their power and the capitalist society can be replaced by socialism. The most deprived group in Marxist theory - and the most likely group to form revolutionary groups - no doubt was the working class. The working class represented, in Marxist theory, the most progressive force in the capitalistic phase of development. Workers, in traditional versions of Marxism, had a common interest in acting as a unified force, a class, in order to change the economic system of capitalist society.

Gramsci was one of the first Marxists to challenge this version of Marxism. He retained the idea that the working class would be at the center of a revolutionary movement, but he did not think that it would act as a unified force. Rather, some parts of the working class were likely to form alliances with other groups. The basic argument underlying this statement was that industrialization had come so far that it required a highly trained and motivated working class. These new workers (later to be referred to as the middle-class) did not identify themselves with the working class, but rather with the system they worked in close cooperation with. Hence, for Gramsci and a new generation of neo-Marxists new class-alliances and lines of conflict were at the center of the analysis (Gramsci 1971).

In the 1970s, the ideas of Gramsci, as mentioned earlier, went through a renaissance. The reason was pretty obvious: the world-wide student revolt in 1968 and the emergence of the environmental, women's, and peace movements, signified the appearance of new social actors on the historical stage. These movements were conceived of as **new** social movements, indicating that these recent movements were different in type from the "old movements", the labour movement and the agrarian movement.

Offe (1985), among others, argued that the new social movements were "new" in at least two fundamental ways. **First**, the new social movements were all middle-class movements, whose supporters benefited from the existing political order. Hence, these movements did not arise out of social deprivation, as the old social movements did. Rather, they got their prime support from the ranks of the well-established. The student movement, for instance, was shown to be most powerful at the most prestigeous universities: Berkeley, Columbia, the Sorbonne, Oxford, Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Berlin. Moreover, the environmental, feminist, and peace movements were shown to hold most sympathy among the affluent parts of society.

The fact that the supporting base of the new social movements was not narrowly tied up with class-interests made them, according to the new social movement theorists, distinctively different from old social movements. Thus, collective action in both the labour and agrarian movements was traced to a sense of self-interest. Moreover, this self-interest was pictured as reflecting distinct social networks. The old social movements relied, to a large extent, on already existing organizational networks (the labour movement, for instance, depended on labour union membership created by the socialist party). In contrast, the goals of new social movements could not always be restricted to a clearly defined social aggregate and specific instrumental motivations. The adherents of new social movements were not part of a well-defined organizational network and they had no clear economic interests in the movements. Hence, rather than narrow self-interest, it was argued that new social movements were based on broader values.

Second, Offe has argued that new social movements advocated a different type of political practice, one that was less elite-directed than was the case in the old social movements. It was, according to Offe, based on direct action, stressed particapatory decision-making, a decentralized structure, and opposition to bureacratic procedures. This lead Offe and others to conclude that new social movements represented a qualitatively new aspect of contemporary politics.[1]

I agree that new social movements differ from old social movements in terms of class-background and the kind of political practice they advocate. But there is not empirical evidence for the claim that new social movements are forms of political action which only date back to the 1960s, as claimed by Offe and others. The environmental movement in terms of ideology and support from the middle-class goes back to the last century. Hence, instead of one type of movement succeding another in the 1960s it would be more accurate to say that the two types of movements have co-existed since the nineteenth century.

The history of organized environmentalism illustrates my point. Conservation societies were founded in the middle of the last century in England (1830s) and the United States (1860s). They were formed by men of the well-established part of society who inspired by romanticism wanted to protect wild animals and spectacular natural landscapes (Nicholson 1987; Worster 1988). By the end of the nineteenth century this rather exclusive interest developed into a powerful movement which affected the national legislations, especially in the United States. Thus, the environmental movement of the 1960s and onward is not the first example in history of a movement concerned with the protection of nature and built upon ideological principles and non-class-based support.

Hence, I would claim that not all new social movements are as new - in terms of ideology and supportive basis - as suggested by Offe and others. What is truly new about new social movements is the direct-democratic forms of political participation which became the dominant form of political expression in the 1960s and 1970s.

I agree, however, with another central claim within the new social movement literature: that the working class has ceased to be the central agency of social change. As the "welfare society" has developed after World War II and various Social Democratic parties have been given a central role, the conflict between labour and capital, so fundamental for Marxist theory, has slowly dissolved. Instead, it is argued, protest has come to be organized less around the workplace and more around other arenas of life.

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[1] See, for example, Offe 1985; Touraine 1981; Brand 1982.

Habermas is perhaps the best example of a theorist who has recently put all his efforts into constructing a theoretical framework which could explain what traditional Marxist accounts could not: the emergence of these new lines of conflict in society (Habermas 1981). Basically, Habermas views the relationship between a social movement and the established political system as a form of conflict which is a reflection of a much more basic conflict, the conflict between two different logics in modern society: a communicative rationality which is essential in the coordination of everyday life (the lifeworld) and an instrumental rationality which is characteristic of the function of the system.

The core of Habermas' theory is the relation between a particular area of societal life (the lifeworld) and a social logic (the communicative rationality). Habermas pictures the lifeworld as a type of social praxis which is characterized solely by the communicative rationality. This is to say that everyday life is governed, if the system does not interfere, by a mutual attempt to understand each other and give appropriate grounds for one's arguments and actions.

This way of perceiving modern society gives Habermas a critical standard which can help him in his ambition: to prolong the project of the Enlightenment. As Giddens has remarked: "Enlightenment, obviously, is no joke. The modern world for Habermas *is* more enlightened than the primitive" (Giddens 1985: 100).

As the main problem in modern capitalist societies Habermas points to the logic of the system which leads to a colonization of the lifeworld processes with a destruction of the basic communicative structures as a consequence. The emancipatory potential, then, is to seek to reopen the colonized areas for communicative action and thereby force the influence of the system back.

The rise of new social movements is seen exactly in this perspective. These movements are, according to Habermas, a response to the colonization of the lifeworld. They are an attempt to rebuild the competencies that have been eroded during the attack from the system. Hence, the new social movements are seen by Habermas as agents of reason[2].

My contention is that these conceptualizations are not very useful in understanding the role of environmental organizations today.

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[2] For a more detailed analysis of Habermas' account of social movements, see Nielsen 1991.

When Habermas situates the communicative processes in the lifeworld and the non-communicative processes in the system, there emerges a rather static, non-dialectical theoretical world in which communicative rationality has clearly positive connotations (as the medium for emancipation). Environmental organizations do not fit into this picture. They are to a large degree integrated into the political system, and they seek both to exercise power and attract money to their activities. From the position of Habermas this is not part of the Enlightenment project. As a consequence, the historical role of environmental organizations is not stressed at all in Habermas' writings (Nielsen 1991: 22). This, I believe, is an underestimation of the political and cultural powers of these organizations. Environmental organizations play a vital role in the creation of new policies and are a dynamic force in the constant reinterpretation of the relationship between Man and Nature.

A main problem with most Marxist-inspired literature, illustrated by Habermas, is that the discussion has had less to do with the movements and movement organizations themselves than with Marxism. Marxist theorists have produced little in the way of concrete studies of the social movements to which they refer in the course of theoretical debate. Emphasis has been on theoretical disagreements, such as the potential role of new social movements in ushering a new socialist era, linkages between the new social movements and the working-class etc. (Friberg 1988; Gorz 1982; Habermas 1981; Offe 1985).

An individualistic perspective

Along with the structuralist trend in the literature on social movements there has been an opposite trend, an individualistic, social psychological trend (Park and Burgess 1921; Blumer 1969; Turner and Killian 1957; Inglehart 1977). This trend is characterized by a focus on the individual as the appropriate unit of analysis. The basic assumption underlying this literature is that it is some attribute of the individual which ultimately lead to participation in social movements. Thus, any account along these lines tend to neglect the broad political, economic, and social factors which the structuralist literature tends to emphasize.

Despite this fundamental difference between the structuralist and individualist perspective, the underlying focus of attention is similar. Both perspectives focus on those features of the pre-movement period that gives rise to social movements. Less emphasis is put on the movements and movement organizations once they are formed. As I will argue later, this neglect of organizational dynamics has lead to a third position which explicitly deal with the resources essential in maintaining movements and movement organizations.

The individualistic, social psychological position has dominated especially the American literature on social movements until the 1970s. Thus, there is an extensive empirical literature available in the United States on the individual characteristics thought to be causally significant for participation in movements and movement organizations (Klandermans 1988; McLaughlin 1969; McAdam 1988; Rucht 1991).

This trend has its roots in the "Chicago School". Park and Burgess were among the first scholars in the United States that began to analyze psychological mechanisms in crowds (Park and Burgess 1921). However, it was one of Park's students, Herbert Blumer, that systematized this perspective. In *Outline of collective behavior* (1934)[3] Blumer presented a critical approach to the study of collective behavior. He was not satisfied with the common explanation of the time: that the actions of individuals were secondary to the mechanisms of mass behavior. In Blumer's view the emotionalism to be found in crowds could, to a large extent, explain the emergence of social movements, such as the fascist and communist movements in Germany and Italy in the 1930s, but it could not explain the crystallization of movements into specific groups and organizations.

What Blumer succeeded in showing was that the formation of groups identifying themselves with social movements was not primarily a result of collective excitement, rather it was a result of rational individual action. Hence, Blumer did not, as others, view such groups as irrational and potentially dangerous forms of collective behavior which represented a threat to the political order. He pointed to some positive aspects of social movement groups, mainly the social creativity that might accompany this form of political behavior.

This perspective on social movements and movement organizations is one that has been widely recognized by scholars in the field since. After World War II social movements no longer seemed so threatening to democracy, and sociologists became increasingly aware of the interpretive powers in Blumer's work. Thus, Blumer became the focal point for an emergent social psychological tradition in the study of social movements.[4]

Perhaps the most important point made by Blumer was that participants in social movements and movement organizations are calculating actors who attempt to judge the potential costs and benefits of participation. This perspective moved the study of social movements from psychology to social and political science. The political practice of movement organizations became with Blumer "politics by other means", not a threat to the political order.

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[3] Republished in Evans 1969.

[4] For an overview of scholars within this tradition, see McLaughlin 1969.

Mancur Olson has later pointed to the "free-rider" problem, arguing that rational calculation would lead few people to participate in movement organizations, since they could expect to get the advantages of participation whether they were active or not (Olson 1965). In my view Olson has stressed a serious problem in the mobilization strategies of movement organizations. People, however, seem to join movement organizations out of - what they conceive of as - "rational reasons" despite this problem. Hence, I would argue, with McAdam and others (McAdam 1988: 710; Fireman. and Gamson 1979), that Olson's conception of rational action is to narrow. I will illustrate this point in chapter five and six where I will be arguing that the appropriate standard for rational action in the Sierra Club not was narrow economic calculus but rather a broader sense of mission.

Another important point that Blumer made was to distinguish between social movements and movement organizations. Blumer thought of social movements as a set of values from which movement organizations and other more informal groups develop. Hence, social movements, in Blumer's perspective, were rather formless in organization. Individuals developed, on this background, specific organizations and structures, transforming the general values into well-defined objectives and goals (Blumer 1969: 11).

Characteristic of a movement organization, in Blumer's view, is a strong organizational identity based upon the values of social movements and a recognized and accepted leadership capable of holding the organization together. By "organizational identity" Blumer referes to the sense which people have of belonging together and of being identified with one another in a common undertaking (Blumer 1969: 14-15). This psychological mechanism gives movement organizations solidity and persistency, features they do not share with the more diffuse grass-root groups.

The leaders and the intellectuals in movement organizations are also in focus in Blumer's work. Two types of figures are distinguished in such organizations: the prophet and the administrator. The "prophet" is likely to be an intellectual leader in the formative phase of a movement organization. At this stage the organization is not clearly organized with rules and policies and people are susceptible to charismatic figures with strong and definite views. The "administrator", as the name implies, is more concerned with the organizational facet, with its stability, growth, and tactics. Thus, this type of leader is more likely to play an important role in a later stage in the development of a movement organization.[5]

Blumer focused on the micro-sociological level in particular, but he did not ignore factors on the intermediate level of society. That makes him, in my view, one of the main sources of inspiration for a middle-range approach to movement organizations.

Blumer, unfortunately, has not generated as much research attention, at least in the United States, as the **theory of relative deprivation** (Gurr 1970; Morrison 1973; Gurney and Tierny 1982). This theory assumed that the relatively most deprived individuals would be the most likely to participate in social movements and movement organizations. The theory, in other words, assumed that participation in movements was an act of frustration. In this sense the theory was not different in kind from the dominant theories in the 1930s, based upon studies of crowd behavior. In both cases the emphasis is on stressful states of mind that dispose the individual toward participation.

In the United States this perspective on social movements was dominant until the 1970s. Social movements basically represented an irrational form of collective behavior, an unacceptable form of political action. This discourse, of course, influenced - and was influenced by - the political culture in the wake of World War II. As I will illustrate in chapter five, the American government used various means to ensure that environmental organizations stayed within the normal political routines of society. One example is that the government threatened, in conflict situations, to take away the tax exempt status enjoyed by many environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club.

In the 1970s and 1980s, partly as a response to the emergence of many popular movements, the theory of relative deprivation was severely criticised (McCarty and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978; Gurney and Tierny 1982). Instead emphasis was placed on more macropolitical and structural factors, such as urbanization, educational reforms, industrialization etc. This, in turn, has lead some scholars to call for new and up-to-date perspectives based on social psychology (Klandermans 1984).

Perhaps the most influential work in recent years within the individualistic trend in the study of social movements has been done by the British social scientist Ronald Inglehart. In *The Silent Revolution* (1977) he pointed to the importance of individual values in explaining the rise and fall of social movements. The surveys carried out by

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[5] See, for a thorough analysis along these lines, Roche and Sachs 1969.

Inglehart showed that sympathy for new social movements are strongly related to whether one has materialist or postmaterialist values. Postmaterialist values, as defined by Inglehart, do not turn around economic growth as the central problem, rather they deal with the non-economic quality of life. Postmaterialist values give top priority to self-expression as opposed to materialist values which focus on economic and physical security. The support for environmentalism, for instance, reflect these postmaterialist values: his surveys indicate that environmentalists are concerned with both the quality of the physical and social environment. They seek both a cleaner environment and less hierarchical, more intimate and informal relations between people.

At the same time, by stressing the importance of values, Inglehart seeks to demonstrate how little class conflict has to do with the development of todays movements. Postmaterialists are, according to Inglehart, more likely to support social movements than materialists are. Contrary to empirical observation, the level of income proves to be a feeble predictor of activism in todays movement organizations.[6]

What Inglehart has succeded in showing is the importance of values in the rise of new social movements. I agree with Inglehart that the emergence of new value priorities has been an important factor in this development. The rise of the conservation movement and later the environmental movement in the United States, for instance, is not, as I will show in chapter five and six, solely a response to the emergence of new "objective" environmental problems. It is also a result of different value priorities. The American public became much more sensitive to development projects in areas of spectacular natural beauty around the turn of the century and the scientific-based explanations of the environment in the late 1960s than it was earlier.

In my view, the emphasis on individual men is important in any study of movement organizations. Individuals are an essential part of the resources that movement organizations have at their disposal and thus an analysis must include this dimension of organizational life. But the danger prevails that such an individualistic perspective lead to an oversimplification: that the activity in movement organizations is interpreted merely as the product of individual qualities, not broader social processes.

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[6] Ingleharts data show that the upper income groups are more likely to participate in groups affiliated with new social movements than are the lower income groups. But values remain the strongest predictor of activism.

A middle-range approach

In recent years there has been a tendancy in the literature on movement organizations to view these organizations as a kind of institution split between structure and actor. The basic viewpoint in this literature is that social movements and movement organizations are neither the result of structural contradictions and disfunctions, nor the product of psychological differences of individuals; they are constructed in the tension between structure and actor.

The basic argument in this literature is that the structuralist and individualistic accounts of social movements and movement organizations have not been capable of explaining the concrete processes that enable individuals to act together. The structuralist theories emphasize the **common** structural conditions of collective actors, and they ignore the **particular** processes that enable actors to define the circumstances of common action. Individual-oriented theories focus on individual differences and motivations but fail to address the question of how organizations fit into this picture.

In Europe the middle-range approach developed as a response to the inadequacies of structuralist theory which became evident in the late 1970s. Touraine was one of the leading figures in this development. In 1978 he concluded in *The Voice and the Eye* that the workers movement could not be expected to play the central role in the transformation of capitalist society which Marxists had predicted. In his view such an interpretation of Marx was too mechanistic. One should rather focus on the sociological Marx, stressing the "human construct" dimension of his work. Later, this perspective was followed up by scholars such as Melucci, Klandermans, and Eyerman & Jamison.

In the United States a middle-range approach arose out of a critique of individualistic perspectives on collective action. Resource mobilization theorists such as Zald & McCarthy, Tilly, and Tarrow, criticised in the 1970s and 1980s micro theory for ignoring the organizational dimension of individual action. In their view, the individualistic theory had not included the institutional framework within which the actor is enclosed.

Despite the different starting points, these scholars have come to occupy a common position in the literature on social movements and movement organizations. Their basic claim is, as earlier indicated, that collective action is neither to be viewed as a product of the logic of the system, nor as a result of personal beliefs. Rather, collective action is seen as the product of individual orientations, coloured by its institutional context and developed within a larger field of opportunities and constraints. Of course, fundamental theoretical differences do exist within this broadly formulated position. But common for these scholars is that they all advocate some form of middle-range approach.

Resource mobilization theory is perhaps the most typical example of this. Inspired more by organizational analysis than sociology resource mobilizationists tend to explain mainly how movement organizations operate within a larger societal context and not why social movements emerge and develop. The aim of this theory is thus much more modest and down-to-earth than most of the European theories on social movements. Resource mobilization theory focus, very concretely, on the need for movement organizations to collect resources in order to find support for their goals, not on broader processes of social change.

Mayer Zald's work (much of it co-authored with either Ash-Garner or McCarthy) is probably the most prominent example of the resource mobilization approach. Zald basically follows Blumer in his main argument that social movement activities are to be viewed as rational and organized. But Zald goes much further than Blumer: he stresses the rational choice of movement organizations, leaving no room for irrational actions of individuals and structural logics. Movement organizations, in his view, are the core of social movements. As effective organizers of collective action they contribute significantly to the public debate and political reforms.

Zald and McCarthy (1987) make a sharp distinction between social movements and what they call social movement organizations (similar to what I understand as movement organizations). A social movement in their view is characterized by a continual reinterpretation of reality, it is "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population representing preferences for changing some elements of the social structure or reward distribution, or both, of a society" (Zald and McCarthy 1987: 20). Hence a social movement is by Zald and McCarthy defined as a kind of public belief. In contrary to this symbolic order, a movement organization is conceived as "a complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement ... and attempts to implement those goals" (Zald and McCarthy 1987: 20). In other words Zald and McCarthy set up a dual structure in order to understand social movements and movement organizations: a social movement is understood as a symbolic framework and a movement organization is conceived as a political actor that feeds from - and produces - this symbolic structure.

I will argue that this view basically is a fruitful one because it succeeds in describing a movement organization as a kind of institution split between the realm of a social movement and the rational calculation of an organization. But Zald and McCarthy do not balance between these two kinds of concerns.

What Zald and McCarthy actually have done, as pointed out by Touraine (1977) and Foss & Larkin (1986), is to take a highly simplistic model based on organizational theory and apply it to the field of social movements. Thereby, they tend to ignore the social movement character of movement organizations. In Zald and McCarthy's view movement organizations act in approximately the same way as interest groups: the aim in both cases is to strive for funding and increasing memberships in order to be more efficient in influencing decision-making through the formal channels of influence.

A general critique of the resource mobilization theory has been that it tends to ignore historical factors in the generation of social movements and movement organizations (Foss and Larkin 1986: 26; Neidhardt and Rucht 1991: 439). It is argued that the models tend to be too static.

Charles Tilly has, however, in *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978) opted for a model of resource mobilization which aims at solving this problem. In my view, this revision of the theoretical basis of resource mobilization is very useful. It clarifies the theoretical connections between the rationalistic version of resource mobilization theory by Zald & McCarthy and the constructivist position of Touraine, Melucci, Klandermans, Gamson, and Eyerman & Jamison.[7]

Tilly stresses, as do Zald and McCarthy, the central role of movement organizations in processes of social and political change. His historical studies of collective action has given him some documented reasons to think that movement organizations are powerful contenders in political struggles, first of all by virtue of their control of politically significant resources (Tilly 1975: 286). Hence, Tilly basically argues that this form of organized response in general seem to have a much greater importance than impulsive, unreflective forms of collective action.

Tilly has strengthened - and altered - the perspective of Zald and McCarthy by offering historically grounded accounts of social movements and movement organizations. Contrary to Zald and McCarthy, Tilly enters the place and time into his explanations. Tilly uses this historical grounding of the analysis to avoid universal categories. Instead of laws concerning social movements, he studies the regularities of collective action during particular historical periods.

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[7] Zald has, inspired by Tilly, tried in a working paper to apply the resource mobilization theory in a historical study of capitalism. But it has been Tilly who has dealt with this problematique most explicitly. See Garner and Zald (1982).

Thus, Tilly does not aim at creating timeless general models of social change, rather, he seeks to identify the specific historical conditions under which collective action works (Tilly 1981).

Specifically, Tilly operates with three fundamental components in his analyses: the **interests** around which people organize; their **capacity** to act on those interests; and the **opportunity** to defend or advance those interests collectively (Tilly 1981: 46). These components make Tilly capable of focusing, like Zald and McCarthy, on the effect of collective action from the point of view of organizations and, at the same time, calculating in structural factors in the analysis. Contrary to Zald and McCarthy, however, Tilly's concepts do not lead to a static model of collective behavior, rather they are instruments one can use in particular historical settings to analyze the action of movement organizations and other forms of collective behavior.

This perspective on collective action is closer to a constructivist position than that of Zald and McCarthy. It acknowledges that the objectives of movement organizations are historically constructed, not objectively given. Hence, it offers us a way of bridging the gap between the theoretical position of the constructivists and resource mobilization theory. The central importance given by Tilly to the dimension of historical context in his study of social movements and movement organizations gives us a platform on which we can combine the insights of these two positions.

Klandermans (1991: 30), Kitschelt (1991: 331), Eyerman and Jamison (1991: 31), Melucci (1989: 22) and others have criticised the resource mobilization theory for ignoring the fact that social movements and movement organizations are social constructions. They argue that resource mobilization studies tend to neglect the mediating processes through which people and movement organizations attribute meaning to events and interpret situations. This makes resource mobilization theory incapable of grasping the linkages between a social problem, a social movement, and a movement organization. A social problem does not inevitably generate a social movement, and a movement organization does not necessarily tactically manipulate resources in order to attract supporters etc. The political practice of movement organizations, in a constructivist view, is the result of internal and external processes of learning in which the actors bring facts and values to bear on strategic choices. In the following I will go into this literature in order to describe this constructivist position which seems to have developed in the past five years as a response to the "onesided" image of movement organizations given by resource mobilization theory. First, however, I will briefly summarize the position of Alain Touraine who, in my view, laid many of the theoretical foundation stones which constructivists later made use of.

Touraine in *The Voice and the Eye* (1981) made an ambitious attempt to break down the dividing line between analyses of respectively actors and systems. In his **sociology of action** the system becomes dissolved in the relations between the actors. Thus, for Touraine, structure is a property of activity. People do not act **in** a social structure, they constantly produce it.

This clearly is a different way of looking at structures in society than that of, for instance, Marx. According to Touraine, the history of our society is not controlled by mechanisms and laws but by ever-changing social relations (Touraine 1981: 32). In that sense Touraine's sociology of action represents a fundamental challenge to more traditional structuralist theories.

The basic assumption underlying Touraine's theory is that society has no solid structures and no ends of which the members of the society are unaware. Society is continually being produced by human actors and as such is undergoing constant transformation. However, human actors are not acting in the dark. Members of society have a reflexive capacity and use this capacity to construct symbolic representations of experience. These representations then becomes a part of the "cultural landscape" (*historicity* in Touraine's terms) which actors can use to make sense of the world.

Social movements play, in Touraine's view, a significant part in the construction of representations of society. They have very explicit views on future society, use powerful political strategies and in that sense directly compete for control of a cultural field (Touraine 1981: 26-30).

I share with Touraine his constructivist view of society and agree fundamentally in his diagnosis of the role of social movements in constructing new representations of society. I disagree, however, in his view on movement organizations. He pictures society as going in two opposing directions: one which changes the political order into **organization**, and another which breaks down this order through cultural innovation and **social movements** (Touraine 1981: 31). In other words, Touraine tends to see movement organizations as diametrically opposed to social movements. This interpretation, it will be argued in this thesis, is too simple. It neglects the ability of movement organizations effectively to influence the public opinion and decision-making in cases essential of social movements.

Melucci has developed a theoretical position similar to Touraine (Melucci 1989). His basic claim is, in line with Touraine, that collective action is **produced**. Melucci strongly opposes the dominant view in both Marxist and the reletive deprivation theory that collective action is simply unified empirical data. The underlying epistemological assumption of both positions is, according to Melucci, that the collective reality exists as a thing which, supposedly, can be perceived and interpreted by observers (Melucci 1989: 18). This theoretical move transforms collective action into an incontrovertible fact; a fact that can be studied more or less objectively by social scientists.

Instead of taking such a position, Melucci proposes to look upon collective phenomena as the outcome of various processes through which actors produce meanings, negotiate, and make decisions (Melucci 1989: 20). This constructivist view of collective action gives emphasis to the creative powers of individuals acting collectively. Collective action, in Melucci's view, is the result of individuals ability to **define** the content of the political struggle and **organize** their common behavior.

Thus, Melucci both rejects the objective causes of collective action - the structural conditions - and the subjective causes, that is, the psychological preferences of individuals which lead them to organize in groups. Instead he stresses the dynamic interplay between structure and actor: social movements and movement organizations are social constructions, they are continually produced and reproduced by specific actors within a larger social field of opportunities and constraints.

Of crucial importance to Melucci is his diagnosis of contemporary society. He views modern society as a place in which struggles over the production and distribution of material goods are becoming less important. Modern society, he argues, is becoming more organized around the production of meanings and symbols. Thus, politics today is not exclusively about the distribution of wealth. Political institutions also seek to regulate and control every aspect of the lives of citizens. These trends, Melucci argues, stimulate the growth of social movements and movement organizations. New social movements are the response to this development: they challenge the capacity of the state to organize life in still new areas of society, such as health, nature, sexuality, birth and death.

This approach is similar to Habermas' theory of the colonization of the lifeworld. But whereas Habermas has developed a coherent and systematic theory, Melucci only claims to have presented a "different viewpoint, through which the less obvious can be rendered visible" (Melucci 1989: 13). This fundamental difference in their methodological starting points has a profound impact on the range of their conceptualizations. Habermas' comments on the role of social movements in society are a part of a "grand theory" and serves to confirm his general thesis about the dynamic between the system and the life-world. Melucci's conceptualizations are experimental and have no general validity; their value lies in their ability to inspire other sholars to develop similar approaches and produce interesting accounts of social movements.

My thesis is an example of a work which is inspired by Melucci, and in that sense it serves to prove the value of his conceptualizations. I share with Melucci his methodological and theoretical starting points and aim at demonstrating the interpretive range of such an approach.

Melucci, however, does not explicitly analyze the political practice of movement organizations. His basic viewpoint is that the power of social movements lies in their ability to question the limitations of the political order and suggest major societal changes, not their ability to promote their own interests on the short term. This interpretation leads him to focus on the political practice of grass-root groups. They are not, as some movement organizations, interested in capturing state power but prefer to act in a distance from the political decision-making process. This position, in Melucci's view, is the potentially most powerful and thus the most interesting for the social scientist.

Melucci, I would argue, underestimates the amount of resources available to movement organizations and thus the political effect of these organizations. The resource mobilization theory in this respect could complement the approach of Melucci, as demonstrated most convincingly by Tilly.

Another example of a work with a constructivist approach to social movements is that of Eyerman and Jamison (1991). They build on the insights of Marx in the sense that they see society as the work of collectivities, of social movements. Social movements, in this perspective, are bearers of new ideas, creaters of new social and political identities. Thus, Eyerman and Jamison basically view social movements as innovative forces of social change.

Eyerman and Jamison share epistemological starting points with Touraine and Melucci. First, they reject both the pursuit of objectivity that has been so dominating in social science and the subjectivism which has dominated American social science especially. Second, they see society as an ongoing construction of human beings. Society, in this view, is a combination of action and construction, created by human actors and informed by the actor's "frames of reference" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 2-3).

Eyerman and Jamison have two central concepts: "the cognitive praxis" of social movements and "movement intellectuals". These two concepts allow them to raise much broader questions than those usually raised by Marxian theorists. For them, class identity is not necessarily the fundamental kind of identity in contemporary society. They argue that collective identities are shaped by the cognitive praxis of social movements and the actors taking part in this process (movement intellectuals).

The cognitive praxis of social movements is defined by Eyerman and Jamison as the process through which new ideas are formulated and specific issues are created. Movement intellectuals, then, are formed by this praxis and, in turn, re-form the cognitive praxis. This approach thus places itself between structure and action. The focus is both on how social movements create spaces for new types of movement intellectuals to emerge and how these intellectuals shape the cognitive praxis of social movements (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 44).

My contention is that this form of approach potentially is a very fruitful one. Eyerman and Jamison use this approach to show the significance of social movements, movement intellectuals, and political culture in processes of social change. However, they downplay, in my view, the organizational dimension of cognitive praxis. Movement intellectuals act within an organizational context and are to a large extent, I would argue, influenced by this institutional environment.

Klandermans (1988; 1991), Kitschelt (1986; 1991), Tarrow (1991), Snow & Benford (1988), and Gamson (1988) follow Touraine, Melucci, and Eyerman & Jamison in their basic argument: that social movements and movement organizations are created by a social process and thus should be perceived in that perspective. They emphasize, however, the role of movement organizations and concrete interests, resources and strategies much more strongly. In that sense they place themselves, like Tilly, somewhere in between the position of Zald and the constructivists: Touraine, Melucci, and Eyerman & Jamison.

In what follows I will briefly present some of their main concepts. In chapter two I will then suggest how one could further qualify such concepts.

Klandermans has suggested that we use the term *consensus mobilization* to refer to the process through which movement organizations try to get ideological support among a subset of the population and, in turn, increasing memberships (Klandermans 1991: 31). Consensus mobilization is, according to Klandermans, essential for movement organizations: they must in every campaign try to create a form of consensus between the organization and potential members about the problems the society faces. Likewise, they must try to arouse the motivation of potential members to participate in order to get new members.

The concept of consensus mobilization points to the importance of participating in the cultural struggle in society, the struggle over interpretations and the actual processes in which people constitute their interests. Movement organizations can, according to Klandermans, follow two different roads in this respect: First, they can employ long-term strategies based on strong forms of persuasion aiming to attract people who have only a limited sympathy for the movement's cause. Second, they can make use of short-term strategies, confined to limited forms of persuasion, in order to mobilize people already sympathetic to the movement organization. The two different strategies involve different requirements for persuasion but fundamentally the aim is the same: to win attitudinal support in society and attract new members.

Kitschelt (1986; 1991) and Tarrow (1988; 1991) have proposed to use the concept *political opportunity structure* to refer to the political conditions that may be favorable or unfavorable for social movements and movement organizations. Kitschelt and Tarrow are inspired by resource mobilization theory, but have criticised it for not studying the intersection of political structure, political opportunity, and social movements (Kitschelt 1991: 328; Tarrow 1991: 396). In their view resource mobilization theory has not articulated sufficiently clear how movement organizations respond to changing political opportunities. Thus, the concept of political opportunity structure is meant to complement resource mobilization theory in this respect.

Kitschelt, in particular, has emphasized that the political opportunity structure is dependent upon the policy-making capacity of the government (Kitschelt 1986). Thus, the political opportunity structure, in his view, is most relevant for movement organizations which deals explicitly with the government. As Kitschelt notes elsewhere: "For movements oriented towards cultural innovation, for instance, political opportunity structures may be of marginal importance" (Kitschelt 1991: 338).

Snow and Benford (1988) and Gamson (1988) have used the concept *frame alignment* to describe how the cognitive frame of individual participants and the ideological frame of a movement organization are connected. Frame alignment is in many ways similar to consensus mobilization: it points to the efforts by movement organizations in mobilization campaigns to create a consensus in values between the organization and individuals. But where consensus mobilization emphasizes the resources available for movement organizations and thus their capacity to create a consensus, frame alignment focus more on the degree of similarity between the frames of reference of individual participants and movement organizations.

Hence, frame alignment highlights not the strategies of movement organizations, but the congruence of various ideologies.

As these new areas of social movement research indicate, recent research has stressed the significance of ideological processes directed at producing and maintaining support for movement organizations. Moreover, this research, inspired by resource mobilization theory, puts focus on movement organizations, not the structural or individual level. My theoretical position is a continuation of this recent research. In the next chapter I will try to address some of the basic questions this line of research raises.

2

A constructivist view

In the 1980s and onward social scientists from various perspectives have increasingly questioned objectivist accounts of social action. The basic argument within this literature has been that an objectivist view transforms social action into an incontrovertible fact, a "given" that does not merit further investigation. This process of reification, it is argued, obscures the human processes underlying social action. Thereby, the objectivist view, according to these critics, tends to give a simplified picture of social reality.

An example of this growing critique of objectivism was presented in chapter one. I showed that a constructivist position has developed in the recent years within the literature on social movements and movement organizations. This position, as argued, is characterized by sharing certain epistemological assumptions. First, it rejects both an objectivist and a subjectivist view on social movements and movement organizations, arguing that a fuller understanding of these phenomena require a more complex approach. Second, it views society as a human construction, as the product of human beings. Emphasis is both on the actor's level and the societal level. Of main importance within such a view is the degree to which actor's succeed in using the "opportunity structure" of our society to create and promote new collective identities and new policies.

This constructivist view is useful in showing how social movements are capable of creating new visions of society which come to play a significant political role. By analyzing the intellectual background of leading actors in the American civil rights movement and the dominant political culture of the time, we are shown why this social movement became so relatively influential in the 1960s (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). But what is lacking within this perspective is a greater emphasis on the organizational dimension. What role do movement organizations play in this political process?

In this chapter I will discuss the nature of a constructivist view. The aim of this discussion is to strengthen the constructivist perspective offered by Touraine, Melucci, Eyerman & Jamison, Klandermans, Snow and Benford, and Gamson. These scholars have developed different forms of constructivist approaches in order to understand social movements and movement organizations. These approaches have, however, not crystallized into a common approach. What is needed is a further discussion of some of the key issues within this perspective in order to understand more precisely how social movements and movement organizations are constructed.

The social construction of reality

The recent development towards a constructivist position within the literature on social movements is not unique in the social sciences. Constructivist analysis[1] has at the same time blossomed in fields such as sociology of science, sociology of knowledge, sociology of organizations, management and communication theory, cybernetics, ethnomethodology and feminist studies.[2]

Rabinow and Sullivan (1987) have argued that this trend in social science, from an objective social science to what they call "an interpretive social science", has gone so far that one can talk about a paradigmatic shift. I will not go so far in this thesis. I will only argue that there is a need for strengthening the perspective known as social constructivism within the social movement literature by discussing similar approaches in other fields of sociology.

A particularly important work in social constructivism has been *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Latour and Woolgar 1979). The reason why the book has become a modern "classic" within this genre is that it demonstrates rather succesfully how easily we accept pronouncements that have the weight of authority and do not question the human processes underlying such statements.

Latour and Woolgar's starting point is that "the result of the construction of a fact is that it appears unconstructed by anyone" (Latour and Woolgar 1988: 240). The production of facts in a laboratory is in their view an example of exactly this process. The popular assumption, according to Latour and Woolgar, is that "a laboratory is a factory where facts are produced on an assembly line"

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[1] The terminology is not quite clear within this field. Some scholars (Drescher 1991; Melucci 1989) prefer to label this kind of analysis "constructivist" while others (Sarbin and Kitsuse 1994; Feffer 1988) regard "constructionist" as the appropriate descriptor. This difference in terminology does not, however, reflect any substantial differences in analytical perspective.

[2] See, for examples of such analyses, Sarbin and Kitsuse 1994, Drescher 1991, Feffer 1988.

(Latour and Woolgar: 236) without human interpretation playing an essential role in this process.

Latour and Woolgar conducted their work along the lines of an anthropological field study. "Laboratory life" was seen as a tribal situation in which the daily activities of the scientists were interpreted as rituals through which the scientists tried to gain recognition and credibility. Science, in this perspective, becomes something completely different from an "objective" production of facts; it becomes a question of mobilizing resources in the purpose of persuading others about what is "true" and what is not.

This perspective on the production of scientific facts has stirred the social constructivist debate within sociology of science in recent years. Bijker et al. (1987), for instance, have analyzed a number of different technologies as something that has been continually reshaped and redesigned by the various social groups involved. Fluorescent lighting, the bicycle, and bakelite plastics are examples of technologies which Bijker claims are the result of a social struggle between different competing and heterogeneous ideas about these technologies. There is, in his view, no optimal technology, there are different interpretations of technologies and continual struggles about the meaning of them. Hence, Bijker and his associates do not, like Latour and Woolgar, focus specifically on scientists and the production of scientific facts but the analytical aim is the same: to show how social objects continually are constructed and organized by human actors.

Sociology of knowledge and constructivism

In sociology of knowledge scholars such as Mannheim (1948) and Berger and Luckmann (1966) established social constructivism as a central analytical perspective. Within this form of sociology, the relationship between knowledge and politics became a major focus of attention, and the relativism question has since been thoroughly debated. Thus, there is reason to go more into detail with this particular form of sociology in order to understand some of the epistemological questions involved in a constructivist approach.

The beginnings of a sociology of knowledge was already evident in the writings of Nietzsche in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Meja and Stehr 1990; Schrift 1990; Forbes 1989; Danto 1980). By emphasizing the interpretive nature of all understanding, Nietzsche underlined that there is no foundations of knowledge or, to put it another way, no single "correct" interpretation. The basic insight of

Nietzsche was that we have no access to "reality" other than through the interpretations we impose from our perspectivally-determined situation and therefore the hope for an "accurate" or "true" description of the world must be given up.

Hence, Nietzsche tried to shift the focus from the act of constructing context-free categories that promise to reveal the truth about our society to the intentions behind offering interpretations and the criteria on which to judge between interpretations. This critique of "truth" leads to a totally different way to approach political institutions. Instead of taking them for granted in some way or another, the question becomes: why they are perceived like that. "Truth" is the epistemic designation of ultimate privilege, the highest sanction to be bestowed upon a belief. When something is labelled as "true", a belief is no longer subject to question or reinterpretation. Within this perspective thus it is crucial to question this notion of truth and re-enter it to the field of interpretive play.

Now where does that leave us? One main problem needs to be addressed in all its aspects: How does one avoid that this deconstruction of epistemology leads to an unending, pluralistic play of interpretation? In other words what is supposed to replace "truth" as the standard according to which interpretations are judged? Clearly there must be some kind of criteria by which to decide what makes one interpretation better than the other if one is to avoid the pitfall of relativism and nihilism.

Nietzsche fought all his life against the danger of nihilism, which was a predominant current in cultural life in fin-de-siécle Germany, but he did not come up with any convincing solutions.[3] This is where Mannheim's contribution should be seen.[4] Mannheim agreed with Nietzsche in his assesment about the interpretive or perspectival character of all knowledge (Mannheim 1948: 1-15). According to Mannheim one cannot retain any confidence in the objectivity of actors perceptions and claims. This theoretical stand raised for Mannheim, as for Nietzsche, the issue of relativism. Mannheim could not, as

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[3] His solution was to ground the notion of truth in a form of existentialism: "affirmation of life". Affirmation of life referred to the ability of particular gifted individuals to come up with new interpretations, new perspectives on life. That led to his ideas about "übermenschen" which, as it is commonly known, has been subject of severe criticism since the Germans usage of the concept in nazi-Germany (Danto 1980).

[4] Others have argued that Mannheim also is indebted to first of all the Marxian critique of ideology, but also to the Durkheim school, Weber, and Pareto (Meja and Stehr 1990: 3). I have, however, chosen to emphasize the tradition of Nietzsche because this tradition most clearly put focus upon the constructivist dimension of his work.

Nietzsche, accept the complete lack of standards and criticism in his theoretical universe. Mannheim's solution became to assert an existential bondedness of human consciousness to social structure. In his view all knowledge is **social** knowledge determined by its historical context: "the vain hope of discovering truth in a form which is independent of an historically and socially determined set of meanings have to be given up" (Mannheim 1948: 80).

Mannheim argued continually against the possibility of context-free knowledge. From his perspective, knowledge is socially conditioned in a very radical sense. "Objective" knowledge is, according to Mannheim, only possible so far as certain societal developments are seen as providing the preconditions for intellectual consensus. Hence, intellectual opportunities are provided by given historical conditions and should be viewed in that perspective. That is, knowledge is to be seen as social and historical constructs.

A constructivist view builds upon this insight. Instead of studying the inner dynamics of the individual psyche (subjectivism), or the already determined characteristics of the external world (objectivism), it is suggested we study the social and historical conditions which shape the object we are interested in. This follows Nietzsche in the sense that it pictures "the world in a state of becoming" (Nietzsche 1968: 715). The world, in this view, is marked by an absence of fixity; it is continually being produced by human actors. The world of human existence does not exist independently of human activity, but is a product of that activity.

The problem then, from a positivist standpoint, becomes how to validate judgments of this confused sphere. When one cannot reduce the human world to building blocks which can be anchored in a certainty beyond subjective intuition, then one cannot claim to have obtained real "scientific" knowledge. Taylor (1987), Rorty (1980) and others have argued that such an uncertainty is an irradicable part of our epistemological predicament. That even to characterize it as "uncertainty" is to adopt an absurdly severe criterion of "certainty", which deprives the concept of any sensible use.[5]

The assertion that social reality is continually produced has nothing to do with the question whether there is a world external to thought.[6] An earthquake or the change of seasons are events that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs independently of the human will. But such events can only constitute themselves as objects of the human mind through communicative and social processes (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

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[5] Postmodernism has developed this point very far. It is a prominent example of a tradition which turns around exactly this problematique. See Bauman 1988; Featherstone 1991; Jameson 1984; Lyotard 1984; Hudson 1989.

[6] Sarbin and Kitsuse (1994: 14) differ between contextual and strict constructionism. In their view contextual constructionism is what I describe here: one must as a researcher assume a pre-existing ontological reality in order to observe and describe

Of cardinal importance within a constructivist view is the conditions which make the construction of certain representations of reality possible. What is important is to try to show how "Nature", for instance, has been produced by cultural means in modern times and is embodied in various practices and institutions in our society. This is, of course, a difficult task. The ensemble of practices and institutions which produce nature as a category mutually reinforce and act upon one another. I have tried in this thesis to isolate the workings and effects of one kind of institution, environmental organizations, in order to see how this specific institution contribute to this process.

Berger and Luckmann have also emphasized the importance of analyzing institutions, like environmental organizations, from a social constructivist perspective. In their view, "the objectivity of the institutional world (as) massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 60). Critical social scientists, in their view, need to "deconstruct"[7] the institutional world and show how specific institutions are constructed by human actors.

Thus, a constructivist view, along the lines suggested by Mannheim and Berger & Luckmann, rejects an essentialist perspective and the notion of a preconstituted categories like "nature" or "organizations" and attempt to study the processes through which such categories are produced.

Another constructivist who has sought to overcome "the trap of relativism"[8] which Nietzsche was caught in by grounding his

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the social constructions of peoples activities. Strict constructionism does not assume the existence of such a reality and thus have no interpretive frame in which to record observations. This position creates major methodological problems and, as a result, only a few studies have been made along these lines.

[7] "Deconstruction" refers to an analytical process through which one is working backward from taken-for-granted social realities toward the social processes that produce them.

[8] The trap of relativism is, in my view, a troubling point in Nietzsche's thinking. It is troubling because it seperates the aesthetic from the moral. The consequences of this seperation are particular serious when morality has no regulative authority over the aesthetic, a situation you often find in Nietzsche's thinking. Nothing then prevents that the worst side of Nietzsche wins, and the fighting becomes an end in itself and, equally regrettable, one becomes blind to the consequences of human inequality.

conceptualizations in a form of objectivity is Foucault (1987; 1978).[9] He has suggested, in line with Mannheim and Berger & Luckmann, to accept at face value the historical constructions of discourses and institutions as positivities. His basic proposal was to carry out a critical historical analysis in which he tried to see how different solutions to a problem had been constructed, and how these different solutions resulted from a specific form of problematization.

This does not mean, however, that he believed that a pure description of objective facts is possible. The analyst was, according to Foucault, situated within the social field and thus was a part of the social reality he set out to analyze. An analyst's account of the significance of certain social practices hence can never be value-free, it always involves interpretation (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982).

Interpretation is involved at least in the choice of descriptive categories. But once that move is made one can analyze how organizations and other institutions are produced permanently around by rather objective means. This, according to Foucault, is possible because institutions have identifiable effects: in studies of environmental organizations one can, for instance, study the ideological statements and strategical actions as positivities. The organizations are visible through their manifestations.

The critical potential in such an analysis is to break down illusions by investigating the making of institutions and thereby display their working in society in a different light. Foucault has put it the following way: "It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to critizise the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independant; to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them" (Foucault 1974: 171).

This approach is Nietzschean in nature. It seeks to break down illusions of truths that hold a grip in our thinking. This is to say, that we, as Nietzsche first pointed to, have to be extremely aware of what claims to be true and thus holds some form of illusionary power over us.

Obviously, this approach is very different from a traditional form of positivism. The main ambition of the positivist tradition has been to look for "brute data" which can serve as basis for correlations and lead to "objective" conclusions (Taylor 1987). This, of course, leaves little room for an interpretive stand: "any description of reality in terms of meanings which is open to interpretive question is only allowed into this scientific discourse if it is placed in quotes and attributed to individuals as their opinion, belief, attitude" (Taylor 1987: 89).

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[9] In 1971 Foucault, inspired by Nietsche, left his former objectivist-oriented position and took a more constructivist stand. See Foucault (1987).

The construction of reality in this kind of positivism is deceptive in the sense that it claims to be interpretation-free in its focus on identifiable acts and structures, certain institutions, procedures, and actions. I will argue that this is an impossible stand; everybody interprets whether they know it or not, admit or not. By focusing on certain features of social life one is already interpreting.

By interpretation I basically mean a situated diagnosis of society and the designing of an analysis on that basis. This stage of the research process can not be phrased in objective terms; some parts of the answer can be more or less objective, but the posing of the problem, what one picks out as issues, is, in my view, interpretive.

To sum up: a constructivist view on movement organizations has to face the same problem as Nietzsche, Mannheim and Berger & Luckmann did. It does not base its conceptualizations on a given object-world and thus it stands in danger of ending up in a relativistic position. My suggestion has been, inspired by social constructivism, to overcome this problem of relativism by showing that movement organizations and other institutions can be studied as historical constructions. Movement organizations, in this view, are the objective result of historical struggles over collective identity and strategic considerations. By studying these processes underlying movement organizations one can show that this type of institution exists as a social reality for the actors involved: it has certain effects which we can study objectively and use to characterize the institution.

Organizations as social constructions

Crozier and Friedberg were among the first and most influential contributors to a constructivist view within sociology of organizations (Melucci 1989: 36). In the following I will, on the basis of their work, discuss how organizations are constructed by social means.

In my view, the position of Crozier and Friedberg should be seen in continuation of Mannheim's original contribution to the sociology of knowledge. Crozier and Friedberg follow Mannheim in their basic view on society. Thus, Crozier and Friedberg reject both objectivistic and subjectivistic accounts of society and emphasize the "human construct" dimension of society.

Moreover I would argue that their position is a valuable supplement to that of Touraine, Melucci, Klandermans, and Eyerman & Jamison because it, contrary to the social movement theorists, focus on the role of **organizations** in the construction of new collective identities and policies.

They do not subscribe to the view that organizations can be analyzed as transparent entities, as social movement theorists tend to do (Crozier and Friedberg 1980: 19). In Crozier and Friedberg's view the dynamics of organizations are essential to grasp in order to understand how relatively autonomous social actors come to co-operate around common goals.

The advantage of organizations, in their view, lies "in their ability to offer a more reliable and more useful way to structure the human field of participants, actors, and clients than that offered in a nonorganized field" (Crozier and Friedberg 1980: 4). Organizations, in Crozier and Friedberg's perspective, thus are characterized by their usefulness for the actors involved. Organizations are human constructs which are designed in order to be of help to people who cannot solve problems on their own or in more loose-structured networks. The crucial question for Crozier and Friedberg then becomes to understand how, more exactly, these organizations are constructed, rather than - the natural next step - to measure the effectiveness of these organizations.

To understand and explain the constructedness of these organizations Crozier and Friedberg propose a method which aims at highlighting the social processes through which specific organizations are defined. This method focuses on the actor's resources and capacities to act, develop, and change according to the conditions of the ruling power games (Crozier and Friedberg 1980: 259).

Thus, of central importance in the social construction of organizations is communicative processes. In order to understand each other we must all draw upon communicative resources held in common. At the same time, however, we all embody a different evaluative stance, a different position in the world, with a differential access to communicative resources. The crucial point for movement organizations is to use the common communicative resources to construct a position in the cultural landscape which have a potential to mobilize support and to unite different positions. This form of cognitive praxis have been referred to as *consensus mobilization* by Klandermans (1991: 31).

Consensus mobilization is, as described in chapter one, a deliberate attempt by movement organizations to connect the cognitive frame of individuals with the ideology of the organization. In order for this to succeed these organizations must create a feeling of common interests. This is done, I would argue, by creating a "we" and a "them" in such a manner that a particular subset of the population can identify itself with the "we".

Politics in movement organizations, some have argued (Benford and Hunt 1992: 40), has to do exactly with this constructive move. By creating an image of a political enemy and a feeling of injustice, a sense of mission is at the same time constructed in the organization. The movement organization becomes the embodiment of the good, capable of overcoming injustice and neutralizing the political enemy.

This process of constructing an organizational identity supply participants with reasons and rationales for taking action through which participants are given a vocabulary of motive which help them justify their actions. Without this cognitive framework participants would not be able to defend their position in discussion with others.

Apart from this form of persuasion, movement organizations can also mobilize support by offering "selective incentives" (Fireman and Gamson 1979). Potential members of movement organizations are in this case offered material advantages by becoming members: exclusive membership articles, reduced prices on various items etc. On top of that, it is often argued in campaigns that membership fees are tax-deductible. Fireman and Gamson argue, however, that it is only worthwhile to use this type of incentives in special circumstances (Fireman and Gamson 1979: 9). Most often, movement organizations mobilize people by creating an organizational identity and raising consciousness of common interests.

I find it reasonable, on those grounds, to concentrate here on the process of constructing organizational identities and strategies as a means of mobilizing support. Of central importance in this process, I will argue, is the **capacity** of organizations to interprete reality and to create, on that basis, powerful symbols and a organizational structure which can transform these symbols into real-life politics.

The **organizational form** is a major factor in the ongoing construction of political groups, such as environmental organizations. The organizational form is constructed in order to obtain a position from where the members on one hand can be true to the ideals of the environmental movement, and on the other hand are able effectively to put pressure on governments. In principle, this organizational construction should ensure the members the most powerful position: authority and legitimacy is gained from the fact that the organization represent a specific share of the supporters of the environmental movement, and political results are created on this background by an effective organizational apparatus. In reality, though, this organizational form create as many problems as it solves.

This is reflected in the authority structure[10] of environmental organizations. Environmental organizations are either characterized by a flat authority structure (a non-hierarchical structure) or a pyramidal one (a hierarchical structure). This has a profound impact on the shaping of the organizational identity and activity.

In environmental organizations with a flat authority structure authority is delegated to members that are active and interested in the organization. The philosophy behind this allocative system is not one of effectiveness, as in hierarchical organizations, rather it stems from an ambition to engage as many as possible in the political struggle. By giving members a sense of responsibility the organizations aim at commiting the members to the cause the organization is fighting for. This tends to increase the common feelings of nearness and power among members of these organizations (Jamison 1990).

The price for a flat authority structure is lack of control. When the atmosphere is set against democratic values of individual autonomy and self-realization operational disfunctions may occur at the organizational level. Such an organization simply cannot be as effective in the short term as other political groups because of a built-in sluggishness in the decision-making process.

In a non-hierarchical organization there is a lot of ambiguity in interpersonal relations. Each position is not differentiated by precise assignments of authority, rather the positions are determined by the members will to engage themselves in specific fields. Hence, authority is typically not legitimated by a formal, hierarchical position, it is legitimated by a general acceptance among the members. Furthermore, few sanctions exist to encourage "acceptance". The members working in such organizations are volunteers and they tend only to work along as long as they feel their personal integrity is not violated. Thus, in contrary to bureaucratic authority which is reinforced by rewards and punishments, authority in this kind of environmental organizations operate without such sanctions (Gundelach 1988).

This kind of authority structure also creates external problems concerning decision-making. Most interest groups, political parties, and administrative bodies are elite-controlled, hierarchical organizations and this often becomes a problem in negotiations with this type of environmental organizations. The difference in organizational style often result in a clash of contrasting value paradigms and lead to poor results in negotiations (Eder 1993: 150).

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[10] An authority structure will be defined here as an institutionalized allocative system with the principal purpose to delegate power to different parts of the organization.

By approaching the socio-political establishment in terms of organizational form environmental organizations can overcome these problems and be more effective in top-level politics. The main argument behind such a move is that the right to exercise power must be centralized in the organization if it is to act expeditiously.[11]

Perhaps the main function of hierarchy is to validate authority along a descending scale throughout the organization. Within such a structure the leadership gets the absolute authority to delegate, or not to delegate, its powers to the lower levels of the hierarchy. Crucial in such an authority structure is to make the organization as efficient as possible in order to reach its objectives (Lowe and Goyder 1983).

How much an environmental organization should approach the socio-political establishment and, as a consequence of that, give up its movement identity is, of course, an area of conflict. Should an environmental organization relocate its national headquarters to the capital where it would be close to policy-makers, or should it remain at its original location, far from the center of political power? Should the leader of an environmental organization participate in an exclusive co-operation with leaders of other organizations in order to co-ordinate their efforts, if it meant that internal democratic procedures in the organization were violated? These questions are examples of how this conflict can manifest itself in the daily life of the organization. In chapter five and six I will show how the Sierra Club has dealt with these questions.

The choice of a hierarchical vs. a non-hierarchical structure is not just an internal organizational matter. Organizational forms also have a **self-referential** nature in the sense that the form itself is a message, a symbolic challenge to other forms of leadership. The organizational form is in this sense not just "instrumental" for given goals, it is also a goal in itself. The non-hierarchical organizational structure, for instance, signals the possibility of alternative ways of governing, of a different and more democratic way to delegate authority.

The organizational form is thus also **productive** of organizational identities. Hence, the hierarchical structure in environmental organizations with a pressure group identity gives members of the organization a sense of contributing to a society in which effectiveness is the main objective, while the non-hierarchical structure in environmental organizations with a movement identity signal to the members the importance of democratic procedures in the society at large.

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[11] See chapter five for an illustration of this point.

Another major factor in the social construction of environmental organizations is, of course, the specific actors involved in the process. I will in the following focus on the role of **political intellectuals**. These intellectuals are, it will be argued, often of major importance in the shaping of organizational identities and strategies, mainly because of their intellectual and personal capabilities.

Mannheim emphasized in his writings the role of the intelligentsia in the social production of knowledge because it seemed to him that this specific group was characterized by its ability to not only produce new knowledge but also analyze and explain existing systems of belief (Mannheim 1992). Especially in modern times where social change is extremely rapid and all-pervasive it seemed to Mannheim that the role of intellectuals was of particular importance. As traditions are superseded, society stands in need of new values and norms, and the intellectuals in particular can contribute to this process by interpreting the societal development and suggest new ways of conceiving of this development.

Recently, Eyerman and Jamison (1991) have taken up this perspective in their study on social movements. They make a distinction between *classical partisan intellectuals* in the old social movements and *movement intellectuals* in the new social movements. Classical partisan intellectuals were part of a well-educated elite and often became acknowledged leaders which functioned as both ideologists and practical administrators. Well known examples from the labour movement are Marx, Engels, Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg or Gramsci. Contrary to this type of leaders, movement intellectuals in comtemporary movement organizations are much more modest in their ambitions. They are to a large degree specialists in their fields and do not at all assume the role of "prophetic heroes" as their precursors. The reason for this is mainly to be found in the change in the general education which has made it more difficult for leaders to claim that they possess privileged insight (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 114).

The assertion that the leaders of contemporary movement organizations do not have the same authority as the leaders before the second world war has lead observers to conclude that we are in the middle of a authority crisis (Rucht 1990; Schmitt 1989). Empirical evidence support this thesis: Todays environmental movement is not unified by strong and undisputed leaders, rather it is scattered in various groups and organizations, each with leaders which seek to promote their own group's interests. The material on the environmental movement in the United States, presented in chapter five and six, only confirms this picture.

Todays mass media tend, however, to construct figures in the movement who are recognized as undisputed leaders by the public. The mass media, especially television, relies upon the creation of easy recognizable figures in political life. Such figures makes it easier for the mass media to effectively communicate complex issues concerning, for instance, the environment to the public (Crook et. al. 1992: 148).

These "environmental leaders" do not in reality, however, have the same authority as classical partisan intellectuals had before. Todays environmental organizations are much more complex than the conservation organizations in the early twentieth century. It is a much more difficult task today to define the values and the goals of the organization, and thus it is much more difficult for a leader to establish effective leadership. In order to achieve this one has to uncover the ruling values of the organization and that is not always easy. There is, of course, a formal basis of statements, purposes, policy-recommendations etc., but they do not fully cover the valuesystem in the organization. The consensus of values within the organization exists mainly in the form of unwritten rules. This points to the importance of each individual's ability to find out what these unwritten rules are and how to deal with them.

For the leadership this is especially important. Success in an organizational power struggle depends on the ability to perceive and manipulate these rules, to judge accurately where the line is drawn between acceptable and unacceptable action, and to justify a deviance from these rules by reference to some superordinate rule. The leadership needs this ability if it wants to rule effectively (Bryman 1992).

An effective way to establish an organizational identity - and create a consensus on values in the organization - is the symbolic usage of heroic figures in the history of the organization. By referring to a founding father as a man of vision an environmental organization can construct a historical mission for itself and thereby create a firm ideological basis in the organization. In the case of the Sierra Club, presented in chapter five and six, this ideological move seems very dominant. The identity of this environmental organization is to a very large degree build around the life of John Muir who founded the organization in 1892.

The example of John Muir is illustrative in this respect. He was a classical partisan intellectual: a respected scientist, a famous poet and writer of fiction, administrator of the Sierra Club for more than two decades, a respected political intellectual of his time etc. He obviously played an essential part in the formative phase of the organization, both as an ideologist and as a administrator. After his death in 1914, it is remarkable to see, that his life still has a major impact on the identity of the organization. He functions, as it will be clear in chapter five and six, as a central reference point in ideological discussions in the organization. He has become a "prophetic hero", a symbol in the organization of the "rightful" political struggle.

To sum up: it has been argued so far that the administrative apparatus (the organizational form) and key actor's in the organizations (political intellectuals) are necessarily included in an analysis of the social construction of environmental organizations. Of crucial importance in this process is, however, also the given opportunity structure in society. I will in the following distinguish between the political opportunity structure and the cultural opportunity structure which I refer to as cultural conduciveness.

The **political opportunity structure** defines the space in which environmental organizations can manouver politically. Of prime importance in this opportunity structure is the readiness of the political system to respond to claims from groups such as environmental organizations (Rucht 1991: 443). This readiness, of course, facilitate or dampen the efforts of these organizations to influence decision-makers and produce political results. If the political opportunity structure is favourable to particular environmental organizations, they are inclined to seek to exploit these opportunities by adapting to the political system (Eder 1993: 151). On the other hand, if the political opportunity structure is of limited value for environmental organizations it is likely that they will give priority to strategies working through non-governmental channels of influence. This is supported by a study by Eisinger (1973) of different forms of protest in forty-three American cities during six months of 1968. He showed that "the incidence of protest is mildly related to the nature of a city's political opportunity structure, which I have conceived as a function of the degree to which groups are likely to be able to gain access to power and to manipulate the political system" (Eisinger 1973: 25). In other words, if the political system is not open towards the claims of citizen groups, these groups are likely to engage in marches, sit-ins, demonstrations, protest meetings etc.

Cultural conduciveness referres to the symbolic component of mobilization potential. Cultural conduciveness is the degree to which people can identify themselves ideologically with particular themes in campaigns. The cultural conduciveness towards a nuclear opposition in West Germany in the early 1980s, for instance, was high, and that is within this perspective seen as a major factor in explaining why the energy movement had so high a mobilization potential at the time (Joppke 1991).

Gamson (1988) has underlined that cultural themes transcend specific issues and suggest larger world views. The cultural themes include symbolic elements "that provide an underlying framework and are largely taken for granted" (Gamson 1988: 220). This is to say that cultural themes are a part of politics, but are less visible than particular struggles over interests.

What I will be arguing is that environmental organizations use cultural themes as a part of both a symbolic struggle in society and as a part of political struggles with a specific aim. Environmental organizations seek, of course, to exploit particular cultural themes in any struggle in order to communicate their worldview to the outside world. By doing this they take part in the ongoing symbolic struggle in society. At the same time, however, they exploit cultural themes in specific campaigns in order to mobilize support for their views.

Theory or approach?

The value of my conceptualizations lies not so much in its function as evidence of exact claims with a general value but as an illustration of how a fruitful reading can be carried out. This reading does not pretend to give an exhaustive picture of movement organizations. It simply offers a way of understanding how the political practice of environmental organizations are constructed. Thus, what is offered is a particular approach to the study of environmental organization, not a Grand Theory. We do not need a theory of environmental organizations if by theory one means a context free, objective set of statements. What we do need, however, is a perspective on these organizations which can yield new insights and lead to new studies. This does not mean discarding theory, but I believe that experimental conceptualizations within the field are more useful than formal theories.

A constructivist approach is not directed toward metaphysically determining the essence of political reality. Its aim is not metaphysical, but strategical. It is to be applied in a concrete context, and the aim is to find historical constructions of truth.

This approach make no claims for its truth value beyond what it said about the contemporary context. Any attempt to go further in generalizations than the very local and concrete level is not included in such a perspective (Foucault 1987).

This methodological claim raises the problem of the general interest. How can one ensure that the study is not lost in concrete details without a general interest? The answer can only be that one must pick out case studies that are as concrete and general as possible. My method, hence, is to look for concrete cases that are as *illustrative* as possible, or, in other words, are so good examples that they open our eyes to similar phenomena in society.[12]

What I suggest is to carry out a case study of an environmental organization in order to see how different solutions to ideological and strategical problems have been constructed. The critical potential in this analysis is to question ruling views about environmental organization and suggest different ways to look upon these organizations. A predominant conception about environmental organizations - which I will seek to question - is that they are not compromised by self-interests and therefore are able to speak with a clear voice. In my view environmental organizations do not speak in the name of the cause itself (nature).[13] Environmental organizations are, like other organizations, organized around certain interests. These interests are just not of a material kind.

Presented in this way my intellectual enterprise is a continuation of the Enlightenment project of seeking liberation through reason. But, inspired by Nietzsche, I also see the ways in which reason itself can tyrannize rather than liberate. My task, thus, becomes that of employing reason to overcome its own destructive tendencies.

The basic thesis, that theories can be totalizing and lead to reductionism, has been stated in particular by the so-called postmodernists (Featherstone 1991; Lyotard 1984; Hudson 1989). In aiming at a detotalized position postmodernists seek to give us a diagnosis of our present which contains no moral guidelines. Postmodernists do not speak in the name of truth. To claim to give an account of the truth expresses, in their view, just an attempt to reduce the field of interpretations by referring to the so-called "truth". Instead, postmodernists seem to suggest, like Nietzsche, that social researchers should restrict themselves only to presenting interpretations of reality which open up for further interpretive activity. The scientific criteria is not truth but the ability to yield new insights.

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[12] For a further discussion about case studies, see Flyvbjerg 1991.

[13] This point is supported, as I will show in chapter five, by the fact that environmental organizations in the 1960s in the United States tried juridically to establish the necessary "standing to sue" on the grounds that they represented "nature". The court, however, made it clear that environmental organizations, as other organizations, represented certain interests and only could appear in court if these interests were affected in some way.

I agree with the postmodern way of thinking in the sense that I think we as social scientists have to be aware of perceptions that have a firm grip in our thinking. It is always a sound scientific ambition to question the established truths within our fields. I want to avoid, however, a rigid choice between being "for" or "against" the Enlightenment. One has to put faith, in my view, in the interpretive sense which enables you to go beyond value judgements and register the conditions that produces political institutions such as environmental organizations.

I have tried to form a third position, inspired by the constructivist literature, which claims to look "neutrally" into the events which form political institutions. Hereby I pay tribute to Nietzsche in his attempt to avoid interpretation in the form of succesive configurations of an identical meaning. At the same time, I am deeply indebted to the thinkers of the Enlightenment which introduced the notion of man being able to free himself through reason. In short, my project is to develop an analysis of the institutional limits that are imposed on us and show how an organization manouvers within these boundaries.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have discussed some of the theoretical underpinnings of a constructivist view. It is not an exhaustive presentation of my approach, rather it is an attempt to give a more explicit formulation of some of the methodological problems often discussed within this literature.

My contention is that in order to understand the political practice of environmental organizations we need to explicate the processes by which meaning is produced and reproduced in and through these organizations. In other words, we need to look upon the way environmental organizations are defined by themselves and by the larger societal context.

I have proposed to structure the analysis around two basic elements: the **capacity** of environmental organizations to construct a powerful identity and effective strategies, and the given **opportunities** in society to defend or advance the ideology of the organization. These two elements should make it possible to focus on those internal and external factors which produce what we know as environmental organizations.

It will be suggested in the following that in order to mobilize support for their claims environmental organizations fight on two levels: a symbolic and a formal political level. On the symbolic level environmental organizations use powerful symbols to raise public consciousness and influence decision-making on a long-term basis. On the formal political level environmental organizations seek to influence government and decision-making on the short term through legislative, electoral, and legal means.

These two forms of strategic intervention in the world of politics reflect different political practices. The first will be referred to as a practice of problematization. In chapter three I will, in some detail, go into this form of strategy. The second form of political practice I have called a practice of political effectiveness. The nature of this practice will be discussed in chapter four.

3

A practice of problematization

A practice of problematization is, it will be argued in this chapter, one of the fundamental forms of political action that environmental organizations use to influence decision-making. It is pictured as a subtle mechanism of persuasion and control whereby domination is exercised through influencing the circumstances under which people make decisions. Thus, a practice of problematization is not viewed as explicitly directed towards decision-makers, but it is seen as affecting the basis on which decision-making rests and in that sense it is regarded as an essential form of political action.

In this chapter I will discuss how this political practice works in the case of environmental organizations. In order to avoid later misunderstandings I will underline here that a practice of problematization is an analytical category. This means that I have isolated, for analytical purposes, certain aspects of the political behavior of environmental organizations. In concrete events, of course, a practice of problematization can only with difficulty be seperated from other forms of political action, such as a practice of political effectiveness.

I consider it as an important analytical task to try to understand how environmental organizations problematize certain aspects of social reality. Why do institutions like environmental organizations decide to emphasize this line of political action?

This question has not been sufficiently dealt with in the existing literature. The cultural generation of issues and the mechanisms of agenda-setting are among the least understood subjects of political sociology. Only few studies have been made along these lines. This is in particular true in the case of movement organizations and environmental organizations.[1]

In recent years, however, a number of scholars, drawing both on liberalism and Marxism, has rejected the state as the prime object of political analysis and instead focused on the social processes underlying the state. This theoretical perspective could help us describe how environmental organizations act in order to shape political issues which in turn affect decision-making.

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[1] Interesting accounts can be found in Joppke 1991; Gamson 1988; Fraser 1991; Jamison 1990.

Politics as the construction of meaning

Politics can be understood as the construction of meaning, as the creation of certain issues and destruction of others. This view on politics has important implications for an empirical study. Emphasis is not given to observable decisions and action but to the cultural proces through which political norms and values are formed. There is thus more to politics than the overt actual behavior in decision-making processes. Politics is also at work in non-decision-making processes, namely in the political practices that are instrumental in influencing the political system towards consideration of certain issues and exclusion of others (Bachrach and Baratz 1962).

This view of politics has recently been unfolded in theoretical debates about the notion of the state in respectively liberalism and Marxism. These debates focus on the political process that define the role of the state and thus inform us about the mechanisms through which a practice of problematization works.

My concern, first, will be to understand liberalism not simply as a doctrine of political and economic theory, but as a way of thinking concerned with governmentality. Governmentality, in this context, refers to the processes that make government possible. These processes are not just about an authority needing to be legitimized. They also deal with the construction of ideas that seek to define the limits of governmental tasks.

Liberalism, thus, is not exclusively seen as an utopian doctrine suggesting to minimize the role of the state in society. Rather, it is seen as a fertile problematic, dealing with the rationale of political intervention. The focus, hence, is on the theoretical discussion of government and its method, not on the real effects of liberalism.

This way of interpreting liberal theory is inspired first of all by the lectures that Michel Foucault held at the Collège de France on governmental rationalities and liberal theory in 1978 and 1979 (Burchell 1991). The interesting, and distinctive features of Foucault's reading of liberalism is that he sees liberalism's main task as devising a new definition of the governmental domain, not as specific policy recommendations addressed to the state. What liberalism does, in Foucault's view, is first of all to construct a new domain of governmentality, a new way of perceiving the state (Burchell 1991: 22).

What Foucault seems to suggest is that governmentality is conditional on the availability of certain ideas about politics (Burchell 1991: 46). In other words, ideas are seen as fundamental in studies of politics. Ideas make political practices possible by assigning meaning to this form of human action. Of fundamental importance in this cognitive process is, of course, that the ideas, in order to be operable, need to be credible to the governed as well as the governing.

Liberalism offers, in Foucault's view, a way of thinking about government which hold considerable power over modern society. This is first of all due to the fact that liberalism has succeeded in presenting itself as a political alternative to expansionist and despotic tendencies within the state. Liberalism is above all a form of knowledge calculated to limit the power of the government by persuading it of its own incapacity. Hence, what liberalism does is to problematize the right of the state to intervene politically in the lives of individuals (Burchell 1991: 122).

What is distinctive about the governmentality of liberalism is the way of reflecting the individual who is to be governed. The individual is, in liberalism, an economic agent who should be given freedom of action so he can pursue his own ends. In Adam Smith's words, the individual economic agent "intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention" (Smith 1976: 477). The state has no right to intervene in these economic processes. First of all because the state is in no position to know and control what is happening in the economy. Moreover, a *laissez-faire* policy is not only expected to benefit the individual economic agents, but also the society as such.

This way of thinking on the role of government in society has had a profound impact on modern politics. In Foucault's view, *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith has lead to a fundamental transformation in political and economic thinking which affects us even today. The ideas of liberalism hold such a firm grip in our thinking that we often are not aware that we are governed by such ideas. An example of this is the idea of one's life as an enterprise which should make provision for the reproduction of one's own human capital. This form of liberal or neo-liberal thinking is widely accepted in the United States and a number of other Western nations. It is accepted to such an extent that it is often not questioned, but taken as a gospel, an unquestionable truth.

For my analytical purposes, this interpretation of the role of liberalism in modern political thought is fruitful. It points to the importance of ideas, norms, and values in modern politics. Politics, according to this view, is not just about decision-making, but also about problematizing certain issues and not problematizing others. Political groups, such as environmental organizations, play an important part in such a political process. Environmental organizations are, I would argue, a prominent example of a type of institution which profoundly have altered our conviction in the rationality of modern society. By problematizing our relationship with nature these organizations have questioned the idea of progress and the ruling policies in nearly every field. The "environment" has, with the active involvement of environmental organizations, become a part to be considered in almost all policies: agricultural policy, energy policy, traffic policy, industrial policy, educational policy etc.

This development cannot be understood merely in terms of organizational effectiveness and formal political mechanisms, as some social scientists seem to suggest (Noll and Owen 1983; Lees 1983; Zald and McCarthy 1987). Rather, it must be viewed primarily as the result of a fundamental revision of the rationale of modern society (Eder 1990). Nature has traditionally been seen as external and opposed to society. This fundamental relationship between nature and society has been redefined and ruling policies, as a result, has been reorganized.

The crucial question for me is what role environmental organizations have played in this process. My suggestion will be that they through a practice of problematization have been a major factor in the fundamental change of our relationship with nature which most observers agree have taken place during the twentieth century (Hays 1959; Koppes 1988; Eder 1990; Jamison 1990).

This proposal basically follows the main argument of constructivists such as Touraine and Eyerman & Jamison. They have argued, as described in chapter one, that social movements play a significant part in the construction of new norms and values in society. It is only possible for these movements to play this powerful role because society in Touraine's words has a high "capacity for self-transformation" (Touraine 1981: 105) and social movements directly try to exploit this opportunity through non-conventional forms of political protest which have the specific aim of problematizing basic values of our society.

Social movements and movement organizations are in this sense very powerful political agents. This view is supported by the recent research by Laclau and Mouffe (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Laclau 1990; Mouffe 1979). They do not, as Touraine and Eyerman & Jamison, consider the new social movements as the social force which - as the working class in the nineteenth and early twentieth century - can bring about a radical change in a determinate society. In their view, there is no "privileged revolutionary subject which might come to replace the working class, with the latter seen as having failed its historic mission of emancipation" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 169). Social movements, from their perspective, are cultural constructs and must be interpreted in terms of their specific articulations, not in terms of the structural site from which they come.

This view on social movements and modern politics is inspired by Gramsci who, in the 1920s and 1930s, put forward a revised account of the structure and nature of capitalism, suggesting that political groups and strategies different from those suggested by Marx were appropriate in this phase of capitalist development, a phase he called Fordist (drawing the term from Henry Ford's role in the development of assembly-line production) (Gramsci 1971). His reformulation opened up possibilities of including other groups than the workers at the center of a revolutionary movement. According to Gramsci, it was first of all the new middleclass movements which played the essential political role in the Fordist phase of capitalism. This had become possible because capitalist society in its late stages did not center around economic-oriented struggles but rather around ideological-oriented ones. Crucial in modern politics was, according to Gramsci, not antagonistic economic interests but *hegemony*, a cultural consensus on how to govern and whom are to decide (Gramsci 1971).

Laclau and Mouffe has developed one version of this approach, but a very important one. Basically, they follow Gramsci in their argument that ideology and culture have become major arenas of struggle in the late phases of capitalism (Mouffe 1979: 170). This insight they use as a basis for criticising traditional Marxism which they portray as consisting of economic determinism and historical teleology. In their view capitalism will not break down as a result of its internal economic contradictions, and the working class will not be the revolutionary agent in a predetermined transition to socialism. In this sense their work are more a critique of - or alternative to - Marxism than a helpful revision of it.

Laclau and Mouffe maintain that ideological struggles cannot be conceived as the struggles of economic classes. In their view, "political practice does not recognize class interests and then represent them: it constitutes the interests which it represents" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 120).

Laclau and Mouffe embody the tendancy within recent Marxist debate on the state to reject the economy as the determining factor in society and start the analysis from a plurality of political and social spaces which do not refer to any ultimate basis (Jessop 1982; Jessop

1990). Poulantzas was a major factor in this development by introducing "the relative autonomy of the State", but he maintained that the state was "determined in the last instance by the economy" (Poulantzas 1975). Laclau and Mouffe's main effort has been to deconstruct this theoretical framework dominated by the notion of economic classes and underline the constructedness of the political world: "The autonomy of the State as a whole - assuming for a moment that we can speak of it as a unity - depends on the construction of a political space which can only be the result of hegemonic articulations" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 140).

Social movements and movement organizations are in this perspective very central political agents. They have only few economic resources and a very limited amount of force available, but this has, as indicated above, only marginal significance, according to Laclau and Mouffe. Social movements and movement organizations have their outset and political strength at the ideological level. They depend upon an ideological context much vaster than that of simple relations of production. Moreover, these movements and organizations to a large degree use **ideological** means to challenge the ruling consensus in various political fields. Examples of such political fields are environmental policy, security policy, gender policy etc. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 167).

The work of Laclau and Mouffe has first of all contributed to the understanding of the preconditions for modern politics. Their prime effort within neo-Marxist theory has been to identify an increasing fusion of political and cultural spheres in modern society, and the decoupling of political conflict from class divisions. The notion of hegemony thus inform us about the nature of political change today. Political change do not in Western democracies take the form of bloody revolution and class-struggle, rather we can with Gramsci and Laclau & Mouffe talk about a "passive revolution." and hegemonic struggles (Mouffe 1979: 11). Modern societies change not primarily because of war, but rather because of a "war of position" (Gramsci 1971: 1615).

The war of position is, according to Gramsci and Laclau & Mouffe, crucial to understand if one wants to study how hegemony is established. Characteristic of this "war" is that it "supposes the division of the social space into two camps and presents the hegemonic articulation as a logic of mobility of the frontier seperating them" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 137).

I agree with Laclau and Mouffe that an essential constructive move for political groups is to divide the social space space into two camps or, in other words, to construct a "we" and a "them". Politics turn on the capacity of groups to occupy an ideological position and defend it as effectively as possible in the struggle with other groups. Of crucial importance in this form of politics is to be on the offensive, to try to set the agenda and suggest the internal dividing lines within the social (Laclau 1990: 71-73).

A prominent example of this is the role of environmental organizations in policy-making. Environmental organizations represent a political force with new and often controversial ideas about Man's relationship with nature.[2] In the recent decades these organizations have grown considerably in terms of total membership[3] and this development seem to have had a decisive impact on the shaping of the political agenda. This is indicated by the fact that environmentalism today is comprised of thousands of local groups, both branches of national organizations and ad hoc community associations, that spring up to confront particular environmental cases (Dowie 1992: 83). It is often at this local and decentralized level that new issues are formed and the political agenda is set. Examples of this include the placing of waste dumps or nuclear power plants, the transportation of nuclear weapons, the pollution of industries, green consumerism etc.

Environmental activists are not ultra-rationalistic actors devoid of feeling, as indicated by resource mobilization theory (Zald and McCarthy 1987). Emotions, in fact, seem to play a crucial role in local movement mobilization (Benford and Hunt 1992: 50). Environmental activists are not only driven to action by rational grounds, they are also driven by passion and intense emotions. This suggests that local activities have a different rationale than the one governing at the national level in environmental organizations. Big environmental organizations have, compared to grass-root groups, a rather formal and bureaucratic desicion-making process. This means that these organizations have difficulties in including non-rational elements in their decision-making. In local groups, however, there is a more informal organizational structure and emotions are often allowed to play a much more significant part in the political activities (Benford and Hunt 1992).

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[2] The history of environmental organizations date in countries as the United States and Great Britain back to the mid-nineteenth century. At that time conservation issues and romantic views were dominating in the organizations. In the 1960s - as I will show in chapter five - a new ecological concept began to dominate the ideology of the organizations.

[3] In the United States, for instance, the total membership of environmental organizations have risen from around 1.5 million in 1970 to around 20 million in 1991. (Sale 1993: 79)

The result of this non-rational element in grass-root action is typically less conventional forms of political action and more untraditional ideological stands than is usually the case. In my vocabulary, this form of action is to be viewed as an effective practice of problematization. This view is supported by Dowie (1992) that asserts that in the United States "during the past five or 10 years, grass-roots actions have arguably stopped more direct pollution than all the nationals' litigation combined" (Dowie 1992: 86). Grass-roots have done this by effectively problematizing in local campaigns various decisions that have, in their view, a negative impact on the environment. An example of this is the campaign of Citizen's Clearinghouse on Hazardous Waste against the use of styrofoam carryout containers in McDonalds in 1990. The group persuaded children from every state to send their used containers to the corporate headquarters. The result of this campaign was that McDonalds because of the attention the campaign received in the media agreed to switch to coated paper containers, a more environmentally sound alternative (Dowie 1992: 85).

The mass media

The prior example points to the importance of the mass media in a practice of problematization. In order effectively to problematize aspects of social reality environmental organizations and groups are forced to try to form public opinion, and in this regard the mass media is of prime importance. What is at stake is nothing less than the popular perception of reality. The media allow environmental organizations and groups to extend their reach to the entire public. Thus, it makes them capable of communicating their message to very broad sections of society.

Recent research has underlined that certain environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace, use the media in a very deliberate and strategic way (Eyerman and Jamison 1989). Spectacular actions aimed at attracting media attention are thus the political strategy which Greenpeace has specialized in. The most famous of these actions are the sailing into the atomic fallout zone of Muroura, the boarding of Japanese and Russian whalers, and the prevention of dumping in the North Sea (Eyerman and Jamison 1989: 107).

These actions are characterized by being illegal. Greenpeace, on that account, looses credibility in the governmental arena of society. On the other hand, however, the organization gains legitimacy in the public by the fact that its actions always are non-violent and in "good cause" (Eyerman and Jamison 1989: 104). This support in the public for the legitimacy of their tactics helps Greenpeace on the long term in its lobbying work. Hence, even if the tactics of Greenpeace on the short term often have damaged its position in negotiations with government, the actions have proven in the long run to enlarge its political power.

The case of Greenpeace informs us about the crucial relationship between environmental organizations and the media. Greenpeace has only been capable of attaining its position as one of the worlds largest and most powerful environmental organizations because the media has played such a central role in getting its message out. The popular appeal of Greenpeace stems to a large extent from the spectacular actions it has been involved in, actions which the media has covered intensively (Eyerman and Jamison 1989: 107). Without the nearby presence and attention of the media in the action-campaigns of Greenpeace, the organization would not have been so succesful in mobilizing broad public support. Greenpeace has, through its media-capturing actions, succeded in establishing an image of itself as the rightful warrior for nature itself, and this, of course, has helped the organization in membership campaigns.

There are, however, two sides to this relationship between environmental organizations and the media. First, as already described, environmental organizations try to use the media as effectively as possible in order to problematize certain aspects of Man's relationship with nature. Second, however, it has been shown that movement organizations not only **use** the media but to a large degree are **dependent upon** it and its central role in agenda-setting (Joppke 1991; Gitlin 1980). Because movement organizations lack a well-defined group basis, they are more dependent than other organizations upon the public attention to the issues they adress. As a result, environmental organizations typically make progress in terms of members in phases of public attention to environmental issues. A recent example of this phenomenon is the development in the membership of the leading environmental organizations in the United States in the late 1980s. The Sierra Club, Audobon Society, Wilderness Society and Friends of the Earth nearly doubled their total membership in that period,[4] and that has been seen not so much as the result of campaigning as external factors spurring public concern (Joppke 1991: 48). Of prime importance in the generation of public attention to environmental issues in that period was the explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in April 1986. It was the most serious accident in the history of civilian nuclear power and it got a massive media attention all over the world. The environmental dangers of nuclear power was suddenly exposed in the mass media with tremendous force. This told a generation of Americans and others that we should be much more aware of environmental hazards in nuclear power than we had been before. One way to signal this change of attitude was to join an environmental organization, and the development in the late 1980s show us that this was exactly what many Americans did.

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[4] The Sierra Club went from its 1985 level of 350,000 to 650,000 in 1990; Audobon Society grew from 450,000 to 600,000; Wilderness Society went up from 100,000 to 350,000; and Friends of the Earth increased its membership from 25,000 to 40,000 (Sale 1993: 53-80).

What Chernobyl, and the attention it got in the media, lead to was a re-emergence in the public of the image of the atomic mushroom cloud and the fear of global annihilation, which had been so dominant in the 1970s. This cultural theme has proven in the course of environmental history to have a major potential for mobilizing public support for environmental organizations (Nicholson 1987; Worster 1988). It suggests a threat of global disaster and creates, on that basis, a sense of utmost urgency. Environmental organizations are, at first sight, the logical answer to this imminent "danger". By supporting these organizations, the public is told that everything will be done by the relevant political groups to prevent the "nuclear winter".

The scenario of the nuclear winter fed upon existing cultural themes in society such as technology-out-of-control and human-survival-in-a-world-of-increasing-pollution (Joppke 1991: 50). The symbolism of a nuclear winter, however, added a dimension to these cultural themes. The question no longer was how to diminish, in a stepwise fashion, the environmental dangers within this specific field. The image of the nuclear winter was used by many environmental organizations as a powerful imagery of an industrial world that had gone to far in its neglect of Nature (Jamison et al. 1990).

Environmental organizations, however, cannot exploit the same symbolisms forever. When the accident at Chernobyl faded from memory the mobilization potential related to this incident also declines. This means that environmental organizations continually need new reference points to construct powerful symbolisms which can attract new members and mobilize broad support. This has been illustrated in a recent comparative analysis of the energy movements in West Germany and the United States (Joppke 1991). While the energy movement in the USA declined concurrently with the fading from memory of the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island in 1977, the energy movement in West Germany blossomed first of all as a result of the planned stationing in the early 1980s of new nuclear weapons on German territory (Joppke 1991: 51).

Cultural conduciveness

The main reason why the energy movement had so high a mobilization potential in West Germany in the early 1980s was that the cultural conduciveness towards such issues was high at the time. My suggestion thus is that the success of the campaigns of environmental organizations is much dependent upon a cultural atmosphere conducive to the statements made by the organizations.

Another example of this is the role that the Danish Conservation Society (Danmarks Naturfredningsforening) played in the political process surrounding the passing in the Danish parliament of the Water Pollution Act (Vandmiljøhandlingsplanen) in 1987 (Svold 1989). Of crucial importance in this process was the fact that David Rehling, executive director of the Danish Conservation Society, appeared in the national media in the autumn of 1986 conveying the message that the oceans around Denmark as a result of pollution were deficient in oxygen and oceanic life was suffering severely from it. He was confronted in the eight o'clock news with the Minister of Fishing who, caught by surprise, in principle accepted the very concrete plan of Danmarks Naturfredningsforening to solve the problem. This started a heated debate about the use of fertilizers in the agricultural sector and the quality of the cleaning of sewage, a debate which ultimately lead to the passing of the Water Pollution Act in January 1987.

The Danish Conservation Society played a decisive role in this process because it succeded in problematizing the environmental effect of particularly the agricultural sector and the public water treatment plants. This success derived first of all, I would argue, from the fact that the Danish society was culturally conducive to the kind of argument put forward by the organization. It was just in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster in April 1986, an incident which just after the explosion seemed to threaten the Danish environment. On top of that, it was not the first summer in which the Danish oceans were deficient in oxygen. Hence, there was a general feeling that something should be done about the environment, and the oxygen problems in the Danish oceans seemed like a severe case that should be dealt with immediately. The Danish Conservation Society exploited this situation by launching a major campaign which both touched the "Chernobyl-chord" and had a specific aim, the passing in parliament of a Water Control Act.

This interpenetration of political and cultural spheres is, of course, also known from other areas of society. A well-known empirical reference for this suggestion is the fact that the "new social movements" of the 1960s emerged in a period that was dominated by economic growth but also by a diffuse cultural climate: the post-war generation of the new middle-class could not to a large extent identify itself with the norms and values of the earlier generation and looked elsewhere for inspiration. Hence, the emergence of the new social movements has been explained in terms of a cultural conduciveness in society (Dalton 1990).

Movement organizations in general seem to benefit from the existence of strong social movements and waves of cultural critique in society.[5] The campaigns of the organizations are most likely to succeed when there exists some reference points in society which the organizations can build the campaigns around. The example of the energy movements in the early 1980s in West Germany and the USA has already been mentioned. One could also point to the big number of organizations that during the 1970s grew out of the peace movement, the women's liberation movement, and the regional movement (Friberg 1988).

Friberg (1988) has stretched this point very far. He suggests that there has been four major waves of cultural critique in Europe from the sixteenth century to the present day. These waves represent, in Fribergs view, the background for the major innovative social force in modern Europe, the revolutionary political groups. The first wave was the protestant reformation which created a new worldly ethic and marked the end of a period of religious wars within and between the states. The second wave was liberalism. It had a vision of a society of free men equal in rights. On that basis, Friberg argues that revolutionary groups transformed the political order of a number of countries in Europe in the nineteenth century. The third wave was socialism. It wanted to transfer the means of production from private control to the control of the people. This vision generated powerful political groups from the end of the nineteenth century and onward, most clearly expressed in the Russian revolution in 1917. Finally, Friberg argues that we currently are in the middle of a fourth wave, a green wave. This wave centeres around a critique of industrial society aiming at replacing it with "an ecolologically sustainable society focused on human development and community building" (Friberg 1988: 6). The green wave, according to Friberg, reached a high visibility in 1968 but still has an effect on us in the 1990s.

These four waves follow, in Friberg's view, a logical sequence. The first step was the building of a nation state with an active citizenry, the second step was a democratization of the state, the third step was a redistribution of wealth and the construction of a welfare state, and finally the fourth step can be seen as a deepening of the earlier achievements transforming the welfare society into a more decentralized and democratic society (Friberg 1988: 43).

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[5] This is supported by the development in memberships in the major environmental organizations in the United States in the recent decades. This development indicates that the organizations are very dependent upon external factors, such as the cultural conduciveness in society. See chapter five for further details.

What Friberg has done is to outline a general theory of cultural critique and political mobilization, based on the recent history of Western Europe. I agree with Friberg in his assessment of the importance of powerful cultural themes in society in relation to the political power of political groups, such as environmental organizations. Environmental organizations rely on the existence in society of alternative visions of the relationship between Man and Nature. I do not agree, however, with the evolutionary aspect of his theory. Friberg argues that there is a cumulative pattern in the succesive four waves, each preparing the ground for the next. This interpretation is not based strictly on historical evidence. It is first of all a result of an attempt to give history a logical meaning. History does not, in my view, have this logical and evolutionary character. Society does not necessarily, as Friberg - and Marxism - seem to presuppose, follow a logic of succesive revolutionary phases and develop into a still more reasonable place to be. Rather, society has, to speak with Giddens (1984: 5), an "episodic character".

This episodic character of society is illustrated by the role of environmental organizations in the construction of new values and policies. In chapter five and six I will show how the political practice of an environmental organization, such as the Sierra Club, is conditioned by the capacity of the organization to exploit the given political and cultural opportunities in society. It will follow from my analysis that the capacity in the organization and the opportunities in society varies from one historical period to another. Thus, from my perspective it makes little sense to speak about a unifying political logic in society. In order to make sense of the political history one is forced to study the particular circumstances which make different groups able to exploit the opportunities of their time.

The authority of the state

The political system does not, however, consist of groups which all enjoy the same status. The state has in Western democracies an essential role in the political system. It has the law-making authority and physical powers to ensure its authority. Environmental organizations need, I would argue, to question the limits of this authority in order to get through with pioneer legislative initiatives.

By questioning the authority of the state environmental organizations also question the ruling hegemony, the values on which the power of the state rests. This hegemony is not simply to be identified with the values of the ruling political class, nor is it solely determined by the economy, as pictured by most Marxists. Rather, the hegemony is the product of a continual struggle over ideas and values, as suggested by Gramsci, Foucault, Laclau & Mouffe and others. This points to the fact that a hegemony is not a stable one. The hegemony is continually being defined and redefined by the different parties in the struggle. In this political struggle the government, political parties, interest groups, and citizen groups alike, seek success in constructing and marketing a set of ideas which can gain political legitimacy. During the struggle the parties need regularly to reconstruct their legitimacy base and delegitimate those of their opponents. The result of this struggle is some form of consensus on the legitimacy of the state and the basic rules which it should follow.

This conception of hegemony has been subjected to criticism, primarily from two fronts. First, it has been suggested that the conception of Gramsci relies to heavily on voluntary consent and neglects the process of unconscious reproduction of political culture (Winch 1958; Almond and Verba 1963). It is argued that a political culture is not the result of conscious actions of specific political actors. Rather, it is the product of unself-conscious attitudes which continually is reproduced "behind our backs". In this sense politics is a question of unwritten rules that govern our actions without our rational assistance. This critique raises an important question for theory based on consensus formation: to which degree is the rules of politics in fact to debate? Is it not possible that a part of the political hegemony so to speak is non-negotiable because it appears to be so self-evident? My contention is that this might be the case but it does not alter the fact that different actors within the political system still use a practice of problematization to question the authority of the state. There is, of course, norms and values which play an active role in the political system and is not subject to public debate, but the interesting part is exactly those norms and values which *do* get questioned and become a part of the struggle over the limits of the state.

Second, it has been suggested that rather than the authority of the state being a result of a consensus on values, it is the product of dissensus, of a plurality of struggles over the meaning of politics

(Lipset 1960; Held 1987). Where Gramsci and Laclau & Mouffe would argue that the authority of the state rests on a basic consensus of ideas, the latter position would claim that the state is made up of incompatible positions, only made to function by pure pragmatism. In my view, the disagreement is not fundamental here. Both positions seem to emphasize the importance of symbolic struggles about the nature of the state. Whether the outcome of the struggle is consensus or dissensus probably varies from case to case. The crucial point for me is that political groups engage themselves in struggles at this level in order to influence decision-making.

Inglehart (1977) and others,[6] have in recent years argued that the challenge of social movements to the state is primarily of a symbolic nature. They argue that these movements on the ideological level advocate a new social paradigm which contrasts with the dominant trends in current society. This paradigm is according to their view based upon postmaterialist values. Postmaterialist values are, as discussed in chapter one, centered around the non-economic quality of life and thus give priority to issues such as a cleaner environment, peace, womens rights, civil rights etc.

Thus, economic interests, which the unions and political parties traditionally represent, is considered less important by postmaterialists than non-economic and green values which the social movements represent. This change of values which according to Inglehart has occured in Western democracies since the 1960s has had a profound impact on the state and its authority (Gundelach and Riis 1992: 184).

The state has to consider the interests of the growing number of postmaterialists in order to keep its legitimacy as the guarantor for democracy. This is reflected in two ways. First, the government must include postmaterialist values in its policies. The growth of environmental policies all over the Western world in the recent decades is perhaps the most obvious example of this trend. Second, the government has to make use of political forms that better than the traditional ones can lead to self-realization etc. This point in the direction of decentralization and non-hierarchical forms of governance at the local level. This trend is not so pronounced as the first one, but recent research in Denmark suggest that grass-root oriented organizational forms and strategies are in the melting pot (Hjelmar 1994). During the 1980s and early 1990s grass-root activities have on an experimental basis been integrated into the Danish state in the form of state programs which fund and administratively support grass-root groups.

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[6] Gundelach (1988; 1992) has made analyses of Danish social movements and values along the lines suggested by Inglehart. In Sweden Thorleif Petterson (1991) has made similar analyses; and in the Netherlands Felix Heunks (1991) have done the same. Loek Halman (1991) have on the same basis reported on the change of values in Europe.

Such trends is the result of what has been called "postmodern politics" (Gibbins 1989: 2) or "new politics", as opposed to "old politics" characterized by class voting, a high level of interest and participation in party politics, focus on economic interests etc. (Crook et al. 1992: 138). Postmodern politics or new politics is what social movements represent today: a focus on non-economic values, a fusion of cultural and political spheres, decentralized solutions, and human development as a turning point. This form of politics has blossomed in the recent decades in the Western world parellel to the rise in public support for new social movements, and the effect has been remarkable. It has challenged the political order and established new ways of conceiving of society by problematizing issues as environmentalism, feminism, sexual behavior etc.

Concluding remarks

The emergence of radical forms of political practice has been difficult to explain with existing theories of social protest and collective action. As described in chapter one, two types of explanations have been dominating in this century: the functionalist explanation which centers around the claim that social movements are a kind of vent hole for the system, and the individualistic explanation, that is, feelings of relative depravation with one's economic or social situation lead to protest behavior. Neither of these explanations can sufficiently explain (or did foresee) the rise of the so-called new social movements. The functionalist perspective could not, for instance, account for the elite-orientation of the student movement, and the individualists had similar difficulties in explaining why well-adjusted students and others participated in radical political groups.

In this chapter I have argued that radical forms of political action in the case of environmental organizations can be perceived as a practice of problematization. Such a political practice is characterized by its aim to question the authority of the state and influence agenda-setting. Of main importance in this form of action is the role of the mass media. The media allow environmental organizations to communicate their message to a substantial share of society and thus is an essential tool in raising public consciousness about a specific issue.

The effectiveness of a practice of problematization is dependent upon internal and external factors. Internally, the capacity of environmental groups to exploit given opportunities is essential. Greenpeace, for instance, is organized very professionally. The organization builds upon the skills of trained professionals and decision-making follows a hierarchical structure. The aim is, as efficient as possible, to launch media-capturing campaigns with the potential to form public opinion and influence decision-makers. Grass-root groups, on the other hand, do not have the economic resources that Greenpeace has. They rely upon the ability and resources of volunteers to arrange activities and campaigns which on one hand can mobilize support and attract members and on the other can create a strong group identity. Members are not passive as in Greenpeace, they are the prime resource of these groups.

Externally, environmental groups are dependent upon what is referred to as the cultural conduciveness in society towards particular issues. Because a practice of problematization takes up new - and maybe controversial - issues it is of prime importance in the political process that public support is mobilized. The existence of cultural themes in society which make it easier for people to identify themselves with the campaigns is crucial in this process.

Finally, it has been concluded that there has been a fusion of the political and cultural spheres in the recent decades, and cultural themes seem to play a still more important role in politics. Thus, a practice of problematization has in that respect a wider range of possibilities than earlier in the twentieth century.

4

A practice of political effectiveness

Environmental organizations can, as it was argued in chapter three, try to change the rules of the political game by pursuing a practice of problematization. On the other hand, I will argue that environmental organizations are to a certain extent governed by the structure of the political game in which they take part and that determines the possible strategies they can follow. Even within this context many opportunities for freedom and diverse organizational behavior exist. Environmental organizations use these opportunities, manipulating them with skill to expand their freedom from control.

By a practice of political effectiveness I basically mean a form of action which makes use of conventional channels of influence, and which have the specific aim of being as effective as possible in terms of achieving political results within a limited time-span.

This form of political practice, obviously, has a different rationale than that of a practice of problematization. Where a practice of problematization was directed towards agenda-setting, a practice of political effectiveness deals more directly with the decision-making process. In the following I will examine how environmental organizations specifically use this form of political strategy.

Instead of taking the role of pressure groups as a foregone conclusion it is my aim to construct a conceptual framework which can inform us about the processes through which organizations see it as meaningful to pursue such a form of strategy. First, I will discuss the view of politics underlying much of the action of political interest groups concerned with decision-making and resource control. I will be arguing that this view of politics is different in kind from that governing a practice of problematization. Second, I will show how this perception of politics shapes what I call a practice of political effectiveness.

Politics as influencing decision-making

Politics can be seen as the ability of various groups in society to influence decision-making in the state apparatus and thereby shape public policies to their advantage. The focus, from such a perspective, is on the observable activities of political groups, the formal channels of influence, and the amount of resources available for the particular groups.

This view of politics has been unfolded in the recent literature on interest groups (Noll and Owen 1983; Ball and Millard 1986; Wilson 1990) and in resource mobilization theory (Zald and McCarthy 1977; 1987). This line of study has stressed the relationship between the state and non-governmental groups in particular. It requires us to appreciate both the significance of interest group activity and the role of the state in structuring interest group activity. As Wilson notes, the state "is both a battleground for contending interests and the structure which shapes those interests" (Wilson 1990: 32). On the one hand the role of the state was seen as merely aggregating "inputs" into public policy "outputs". On the other hand the state was seen as an autonomous actor capable of encouraging or discouraging the creation of interest groups.[1]

Common to these two ways to approach interest group activity is the central role in policy-making which is dedicated to the state. The state is seen within this literature as a kind of Archimedian point around which various political groups organize in order to get their policies through. Whether the state is an autonomous actor or merely a reflection of societal interests, the focus remains on the state or, at least, the position occupied by the state.

Interest groups are generally viewed as democratic institutions. They represent a kind of political institution which is seen as supplementing political parties as a means of representation and expression. Where political parties tend to concentrate on broader issues, interest groups can focus on more narrow and specialized concerns which might otherwise be neglected. Thus, rather than representing obscure self-interests interest groups are considered by many as a valuable part of the democratic process (Wilson 1981: 1-16).

This view of the role of interest groups is of great importance for groups like environmental organizations. If interest groups generally are viewed as essential democratic institutions, it is likely that the state will encourage the activity of these groups and thus offer environmental organizations a possibility of expressing their interests along these lines. The most obvious example of this is probably to be found in Scandinavia. Here, environmental organizations in certain cases are granted official status as a part of the state administration and a legitimate participant in the governing process. For instance, since the 1930s the Danish Conservation Society (Danmarks Naturfredningforening), as I will show more in detail in chapter seven, as the only non-governmental environmental organization in Europe has had rights to institute legal proceedings to preserve certain areas and, furthermore, had the right to appeal the verdict. In addition to this, the Danish Conservation Society has had direct consultation with ministries as legislation is being drafted, formal representation on government administrative bodies, and participation in government advisory commisions (Svold 1989).

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[1] Within political science these two positions are referred to as respectively pluralism and statism. See, for further details about the debate on the state, Nordlinger 1981.

The opposite scenario could also be the case. If interest groups are seen as expressing merely special interests without no reflection of general considerations and they thereby are viewed as instrumental in obscuring the political process, it is not likely that interest groups will be offered easy access to the different branches of the state.[2] In this scenario, environmental organizations are not likely to take on a pressure group identity and pursue what I call a practice of political effectiveness.

The political opportunity structure

Environmental organizations have, therefore, certain ideological and institutional limitations and possibilities imposed upon them from the outside. In the following I will use the term **political opportunity structure** to refer to these external conditions. The political opportunity structure have been defined in this thesis as the readiness of the political system to respond to claims from groups such as environmental organizations. An example of this is the increased willingness in the American courts in the late 1960s and 1970s to accept the standing to sue of interest groups like environmental organizations. This lead to an increased usage of litigation as an organizational weapon in these groups and organizations, as I will show in the next two chapters on the Sierra Club.

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[2] This was the case, for instance, in the the 1950s in the United States. At that time interest groups generally were poorly organized and lacked prestige. The result was that legislators and the government tended to neglect the input of interest groups (Wilson 1981: viii).

The political opportunity structure offers, I would argue, a range of possibilities for groups such as environmental organizations. Political opportunity is created when the environmental organizations became convinced that a certain route is viable and can produce some results (Fireman and Gamson 1979: 30).

Centralized and decentralized political systems represent two forms of political opportunity structures and two different sets of possibilities for environmental organizations. A centralized political system in which power is held at the central level of government, not intermediary and lower levels of government, signals to environmental groups that powerful strategies are needed in order to influence decision-making. These strategies can either problematize the political order or follow existing power structures, the crucial point is that they need to be organized systematically in order to be effective. Small grass-root groups with few organizational ressources have only few possibilities within such a system.[3]

Within a decentralized political system, however, such groups have a better chance of exerting influence. When intermediary and local level authorities are granted freedom to design policies without having to adjust to central government rules, grass-root groups are much more likely to play an active part in the policy-making process. This assertion is, of course, also a part of the philosophy behind decentralization efforts. As argued by Engaas (1992: 22) decentralization efforts traditionally has been favoured "because it is supposed to be good for democracy and also contribute to more efficiency with respect to goal-attainment". Decentralization is good for democracy because its explicit goal is to take power away from the central government and transfer it to institutions closer to the daily life of citizens. Decentralization, however, is also seen as having the potential to lead to more efficient ways of governing. The state's ability to plan and control regional and local development is, within this view, seen as limited. Deducted from this is the argument that locals know local conditions better and therefore are capable of making better decisions.

In environmental politics it has been argued in recent years that central steering opportunities have their limits (Pedersen 1990; Hjelmar 1992). Decentralization has been the answer to that problem. A decentralized form of steering is believed to be more effective because central authorities do not have detailed information about local projects, local power means local commitment which leads to local responsibility etc. Examples in Denmark of this trend are *the Programme for the Best Available Technology* (Udviklingsprogram for Renere Teknogi), *Our Common Future* (Vor Fælles Fremtid), and *Green Municipalities* (Grønne Kommuner) - all initiated in the late 1980s (Hjelmar 1991; 1994).

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[3] In political systems ruled by a small political elite organizations do not, however, need many resources if they are a part of this elite. See chapter five for an illustration of this point.

Underlying the notion of political opportunity structure is the assumption that actors, like movement organizations and grass-root groups, respond rationally to given opportunities. Hence, whether these groups work within a centralized or a decentralized political opportunity structure it is assumed that they follow rational lines of thought. This is so because the leadership in the groups, especially the big organizations, has to be able to defend its position in rational terms (Benford and Hunt 1992).

Olson stated in his influential study *Logic of Collective Action* (1965) that public interest groups, unions, and lobbies were governed by a utilitarian logic. He argued that people act collectively only when there are "selective incentives" for them to do so: "Only a *seperate and "selective"* incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a (large) group to act in a group-oriented way" (Olson 1965: 151). As shown later by Fireman and Gamson (1979) and others, this utilitarian logic is questionable in the case of social movements and movement organizations. If individuals are thoroughly rational, the building of an organizational identity and the creation of common interests would be irrelevant. Studies have shown that this is not the case: much effort is put into creating cognitive frameworks that appear as rational as possible for the participants.

Tilly et. al. (1975) have in a historical study of European collective action from 1830-1930 found a fairly good fit between the interests of people and the actions people took: "The fit is far to good to justify thinking of participation in collective violence as impulsive, unreflective, spur-of-the-moment" (Tilly et. al. 1975: 281). Collective action cannot be explained in terms of individual anger and disappointed expectations, as relative deprivation theory did. Rather, one must view collective action as organized behavior, that is, as a more reliable and useful way of structuring human action than that offered in a nonorganized field. In other words, Tilly et. al. regard collective action as a kind of rational behavior. Unlike Olson, they do not portray the actors who participate in collective action as aiming for individual benefits, rather they try to characterize the way in which they are provided with a "common interest" or a "rationality". The process through which this common interest is constructed is of central importance for Tilly et. al. as it is in this study.

Strictly speaking environmental organizations have difficulties in acting absolutely rationally. Not because they do not have the intention to do so, but because they do not have the information necessary to calculate accurately the costs and benefits of various solutions to a problem. Thus, environmental organizations decide as rationally as the conditions allow them to (Kitschelt 1991: 332-3).

What environmental organizations do is to construct solutions that appear as rational as possible for the people involved. In a process of trial and error experimentation, these solutions are then tried out. If they succeed people are supported in the view that the solution indeed was a rational one; if the strategies do not succeed the participants are lead to believe that the rationality assumption was wrong.

Organizational capacities

Environmental organizations have, as described in the former section, certain institutional limitations and possibilities imposed upon them from the outside. I would argue here, however, that **internal** factors also play a central role in the construction of the institution. The focus here will be on the structure of environmental organizations with a pressure group identity.

I will argue that in order to put effective pressure on governments and legislatures by using the conventional channels of influence in politics environmental organizations tend to organize themselves rather hierarchical.[4] The political institutions they negotiate with, such as administrative bodies and political parties, are often hierarchical, and in order to be able to make binding decisions in these negotiations environmental organizations need to have recognized leaders and a supportive administration.

Hence, environmental organizations with a pressure group identity typically are characterized by a hierarchical authority structure. The philosophy behind this allocative system is, as earlier argued, one of effectiveness. By constructing a range of formal positions ordered in a hierarchical system these organizations aim at being as effective as possible in the policy-making process.

What is needed in environmental organizations governed by a practice of political effectiveness are leaders with administrative skills (an "administrator" in Blumer's terms) rather than intellectual capabilities (a "prophet").[5] Of prime importance in this form of political practice is not the intellectual capabilities of political intellectuals, as is the case in a practice of problematization. More important than the ability to define the cultural themes underlying the public debate seem, within this scenario, to be the ability to administrate and market the organization as effectively as possible.

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[4] There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. Friends of the Earth is perhaps the most well-known example of a big environmental organization which is organized along non-hierarchical lines (Lowe and Goyder 1983).

An illustrative example of this is the change of leadership in the Sierra Club in 1969. I will go more into detail with this case in chapter five and restrict myself here to mentioning only this particular incident. The history is, in short, as follows: David Brower, executive director and one of the leading intellectual forces in the organization from 1953, was forced to leave the Sierra Club in 1969 and was replaced by Michael McCloskey who lacked the intellectual and charismatic qualities of Brower but was considered an excellent administrator. This change of leadership occured simultaneously with a change of political practice. Where the Sierra Club in the Brower era emphasized bottom-up activities such as publishing and specialized in media-directed activities, the organization in the McCloskey era put emphasis on a consolidation of the organization and a professionalization.

What this example tells us is not that Brower and McCloskey were the decisive factors in this change of political practice. Rather, it shows us what the strategic priorities of the organization were at that particular time. Thus, I will be arguing in chapter five and six that the Sierra Club in the 1950s and 1960s gave priority to organizational innovations and expansions, while the organization in the 1970s and 1980s stressed more pragmatic pressure group strategies.

This organizational development is in no way unique. The role of "administrators" and professionals became widespread in the environmental movement in the 1980s (Eder 1993: 150). This, not surprisingly, often created tensions between the constituency and the leadership in the organizations. Where the constituency tended to emphasize democratic procedures in the organizations which would ensure members participation in decision-making, the leadership tended in this period to focus more upon professionalization. An example of the latter is the hiring in many environmental organizations of both experts to provide the necessary knowledge about specific issues, and public relation professionals to bring the campaigns of the organization to the attention of the public (Eder 1993: 150).

This development does not necessarily lead to a practice of political effectiveness. Perhaps the best example of this is Greenpeace.

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[5] See p. 19.

As described in chapter three, decision-making in Greenpeace follows a top-down pattern and the organization is very dependent upon professionals in their campaigns. But despite these organizational features of a pressure group, Greenpeace is also geared towards problematizing our relationship with Nature. On the one hand, Greenpeace seeks to question ruling perceptions of right and wrong in our relationship to Nature, such as whaling and the use of nuclear bombs. On the other hand, the organization seek to benefit as much as possible from their action-campaigns in terms of increasing membership roles and lobbying. Thus, Greenpeace aims both at consciousness raising and political results on the short run (Eyerman and Jamison 1989).

There is no direct causal relationship between the organizational form and the organizational identity and strategies. As the example of Greenpeace illustrates, an environmental organization can be hierarchical and still have a movement identity and pursue in part a practice of problematization. I would argue, however, that the relationship between the organizational form and political practice represents a potential ideological conflict in Greenpeace. Greenpeace's organizational form is consciously designed to be an efficient tool in their military-like operations, membership campaigns and in lobbying. The philosophy behind this structure is one of effectiveness, and this basic philosophy affects, I would argue, also the ideology in the organization. An organizational form is not just an allocative mechanism. It is part of a meaning system through which an organization like Greenpeace makes sense of itself and the world in which it functions. As part of a meaning system, a hierarchical structure tells the members and employees that pressure group tactics such as political effectiveness and professionalism are important facets of social reality, while the more grass-root oriented forms of politization in the environmental movement are less important. Hence, there seems to be a latent conflict in Greenpeace between organizational form and identity.

A group like the Environmental Defense Fund is a more clear-cut example of an environmental organization defined by a pressure group identity and a practice of political effectiveness. Environmental Defense Fund, an American environmental organization founded in 1971, looks in many ways like a traditional pressure group, indistinguishable from any of the other 2,000 groups encircling Capitol Hill and the courts. It is heavily staffed with no volunteers working actively in the organization, preoccupied with lobbying and litigation. It is dependent largely, not upon members, but upon donations from corporations, such as Dupont, Chevron, Monsanto, and Waste

Management Corporation (Dowie 1992: 80). In return for their generosity top officers of the donor corporations have been invited to join the board. Most officers have happily accepted this offer. A seat on the board of an environmental organization makes corporate executives look concerned about the environment and strengthens the green profile of the corporations.

The Environmental Defense Fund has been seen as one of the leading actors in "third-wave environmentalism" - a systematic attempt to co-operate with the traditional enemies of the environmental movement, corporate polluters and extractors, in order to achieve, what could not be done by confrontation (Sale 1993: 83). The main reason why the Environmental Defense Fund has taken this route is that the organization has been characterized by a pressure group identity and a total lack of grass-root activism. This identity has made it easier than in most other environmental groups to approach industry and the industrial lobby. Both the Environmental Defense Fund and the industrial lobby are hierarchically organized and consist of the same kind of staff: lawyers, economists, professional fund-raisers, mail-order specialists etc. In this sense, it is fair to say that a group like the Environmental Defense Fund is closer to the political culture of the industrial lobby than that of environmentalists working on the grass-root level.

From the gras-roots point of view the example of the Environmental Defense Fund just adds to the resistance they have towards intervening in top-level politics. Members of grass-root groups always seem to be reluctant to form a traditional pressure group or a political party even if it seems clear that the group can gain politically from it. They prefer, as described in chapter three, to influence policy through the weight of public opinion, rather than becoming directly involved in conventional politics. The reason is that they fear they may be forced to compromise on their goals and the radical element in the movement thus will be lost (Eder 1993).

Resource mobilization theory (Zald and McCarthy 1987; Tilly 1978) does not distinguish between social movements and pressure groups. In their view, the only difference is that they have different resources at their disposal, which they can make use of in the battle for political influence. As argued earlier, this view on social movements and movement organizations is simplifying. It tends to reduce the rationality of protest to the rationality of pressure groups. It takes as a foregone conclusion that the aim of protest groups is to maximize their interests by the most appropriate means in any given opportunity structure.

What I am suggesting is that specific mobilizing conditions determine which form of protest is the most appropriate at a particular time. In the case of the Environmental Defense Fund, for instance, it seems like both external and internal conditions were decisive in the construction of the organization. Externally, the increased willingness in the American courts in the 1970s to accept the standing to sue of environmental organizations seem to have been of main importance for the formation and succesful first years of the group. Internally, the hierarchical organizational form and the number of professional staff members employed in the organization seemed to have been a decisive factor in the development of the group into a movement organization difficult to distinguish from a traditional interest group.

Environmental organizations and the state

In the following I will go into greater detail with the different strategies which are included in a practice of political effectiveness. My suggestion is that three political strategies are of prime importance: lobbying, electoral strategies, and litigation. Environmental organizations try, I will argue, to influence decision-making in the state through these forms of political action. Whatever seems to be the most appropriate and effective route to follow in a given case is likely to be taken. They use lobbying and electoral strategies to influence the government and parliament, and they use litigation to influence the courts.

Characteristic of these three strategies is that they are all directed towards the state. The state has an historic monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and represent the law-making authority in democratic society. This, as stressed earlier, makes it a key object for the campaigns of environmental organizations.

Lobbying is one of the traditional pressure group tactics. Environmental organizations, for instance, have used lobbying since their formative years in the end of the nineteenth century. At that time, lobbying was so much seen as exerting pressure on public policy. Rather, lobbyists were considered as suppliers of technical information which enabled better policy to be made. Thus, lobbyist were often acting as unpaid staff members for legislators and the government.

An example of this form of lobbying is presented in chapter five. John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club, was on friendly terms with a number of people in government, government officials, and legislators, and he used deliberately those contacts to lobby the viewpoints of the Sierra Club.

Pressure groups were in general at that time poorly organized and were to a large degree dependent upon individual efforts, as those of John Muir, in their lobbying activity. The study of pressure groups has shown, however, that this picture has changed (Wilson 1981; Wilson 1990; Wooton 1970). Today, pressure groups generally have become much more active and better organized. This is clearly reflected in the lobbying activity of environmental organizations.

Today, lobbying is an integral and institutionalized part of the political practice of the major environmental organizations. Lobbying is not, as earlier, primarily a matter of personal qualities and networks, it has become a kind of political action which requires much organizational support. The lobbyist must, as always, be capable and well informed in order to develop a relationship with politicians and administrators. The main difference now, however, is that the flow of information and the complexity of issues have increased considerably during the latter part of the twentieth century. This means that lobbyists have great difficulty operating on their own, they need an organization to keep them up to date with information and analyses.

The result of this general tendancy in lobbying work is that environmental organizations during the recent centuries have employed a number of lobbyists and formed legislative offices in the national capitals. In the United States, for instance, the number of lobbyists working for environmental organizations in Washington have increased from 2 in 1969 to 88 in 1985 (Dowie 1992: 71). At the same time legislative offices have been established and enlarged in Washington. Some environmental organizations, such as Friends of the Earth, have even moved their national headquarters to Washington in order to be closer to Capitol Hill.

Lobbying is perhaps the best example of what grass-roots mean when they criticise national organizations for being to enclosed in conventional politics. What offends grass-roots in particular is the degree to which lobbyists look and act like politicians and administrators and not like the grass-roots they are representing. Lobbyists need, however, to make the decision-makers trust them and for that purpose they have to adjust to the dress code and ruling political culture.

Lobbyists in environmental organizations have thus conflicting roles. These different roles are the visible sign of a more profound conflict in these organizations. On the one hand, environmental organizations represent grass-roots concerned with fundamental issues in the relationship between Man and Nature. On the other hand, these organizations use professionals like lobbyists and, thereby, signal to the members the importance of a practice of political effectiveness.

Electoral strategies have become an even more important part of the political practice of the major environmental organizations. This has been most evident in the United States.[6] Here, environmental organizations have followed, as in the case of lobbying, a general trend in pressure group politics. Studies have shown that earlier in this century the American public was little influenced by the candidates' position on certain issues in deciding how to vote (Wilson 1981: 108). Instead, the voters were guided mainly by a loyalty to a certain political party and voted to a large extent according to this feeling of loyalty. In the recent decades, however, this has changed dramatically. Today, the American electorate identify itself less with political parties and more with single issues. Thus, the public is much more susceptible than earlier towards electoral strategies: strategies which seek to influence the voting behavior of a certain share of the public by informing that particular group about the position of candidates in particular issues, such as the environment, abortion, crime etc.

Environmental organizations in the United States have developed such strategies during especially the 1980s and early 1990s. As it became clear for these organizations that they possesed power to impose effective electoral sanctions on politicians and the politicians became aware of this power, the major environmental organizations have put still more effort and resources into this form of strategy. A concrete illustration of this point is the recent formation of various environmental Political Action Committee's, an institution directly concerned with soliciting funds for electoral work and selecting appropriate candidates. But the most illustrative example of this development is probably the recent growth of the League of Conservation Voters (LCV). This organization (originally formed by David Brower from the Sierra Club in 1970) has specialized in making environmental records for all Congress men. Other environmental organizations can then, through a contribution, use these lists in their electoral campaigns (Sale 1993: 90).

Despite these efforts, the results of the electoral approach have been rather poor. In the congressional elections in 1988 and 1990 and the presidential elections in 1988 and 1992 only few of the candidates that the LCV endorsed were elected. Furthermore, the elected candidates endorsed by the LCV have not been so active in drafting environmental legislation as hoped. This points to the limits of electoral strategies in the case of environmental organizations. First, corporations can at any time outspend environmental organizations and thus run much more effective electoral campaigns. Second, there is no guarantee that the election of "green" candidates ultimately will lead to the passage of environmental legislation.

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[6] This is probably due to the fact that the American political system is not based upon strong political parties, as in most European countries. Interest groups have a comparatively bigger chance of influencing the priorities in individual political campaigns than in party-governed campaigns. See chapter seven for a further discussion.

Thus, electoral strategies have proven in the recent years to be an important part of the political practice of the major environmental organizations in the United States, even if this kind of strategy has its limitations. It is a kind of strategy which emphasizes effectiveness and pressure group tactics, and in that sense it contributes to the image of environmental organizations as governed by a practice of political effectiveness.

Litigation has increased in recent years in the case of environmental organizations. It has become a major tool for influencing specific environmental policies, especially in the United States. The advantages of using administrative and constitutional courts has during this period become still more evident for many environmental organizations. Where lobbying and electoral means have proven often to be rather ineffective, litigation appears as a very effective way to change specific policies.

The reason why litigation appear as such an effective organizational strategy is that a verdict can put an immediate halt to a given project, while the results of lobbying and electoralism seldom appear to be visible. This was illustrated clearly already in the pioneer case in the United States, the protection of Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River in 1965. The Sierra Club wanted to protect the area from a power project and joined in a suit to prevent the project. The court broke precedent by recognizing that conservationists, under certain circumstances, could bring cases to court to protect natural resources. The court found that an "aesthetic, conservational, or recreational" interest could suffice standing and later ruled in favour of the Sierra Club (Turner 1990: 14). As a result all work on the power plant on Storm King Mountain stopped.

This suggested that litigation was an effective way for environmental organizations to influence decision-making. In the following years a number of environmental organizations, such as the Natural Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Sierra Club, established legal departments in order to be as effective as possible in court. Full-time professional lawyers were hired to make sure that the organizations sounded legally worthy and did not pursue passionate causes which would not work in court (Turner 1990).

The forming of the Environmental Defense Fund is another illustration of this development. It was founded in 1970 by former members of the Audobon Society who was told that an activist-oriented litigation had no place within this traditional protectionist organization (Gottlieb 1993: 138). As a consequence, they left the Audobon Society and formed the Environmental Defense Fund, an organization with the specific purpose to defend the environment by litigative means. The organization proved to be succesful from the beginning. Through the early and mid-1970s, the EDF became a major litigator in such areas as lead toxity, the protection of sperm whales, and pesticide hazards.

The Environmental Defense Fund illustrates very well what it requires to be succesful within this field. It is staffed with full-time professionals, dependent upon support from foundations, and proudly independent from grass-root activities. It has thus clearly a pressure group identity, emphasizing its professional character and its leading role in environmental litigation (Gottlieb 1993: 139).

Litigation, it has been argued, is a kind of strategy which inevitably leads to a professionalization of environmental organizations and an emphasis on a practice of political effectiveness. Environmental organizations simply cannot effectively use litigation as an organizational weapon without using professionals and having a stable financial base.

Concluding remarks

The general rise in membership since the late 1960s has brought a lot of resources into environmental organizations, both in terms of money and voluntary assistance. That has given environmental organizations a range of new possibilities and, I have argued, has lead to a professionalization of these groups. They have today those means of power which political parties and interest groups have at their disposal and thus are not forced to "march in the streets". They can thus, in principle, choose to compete with established political groups on their terms.

I have suggested using the term, a practice of political effectiveness, to refer to this side of the activity of environmental organizations. More specifically, I conceive of this form of political practice as a form of action which has the specific aim of influencing decision-making in the state through the use of conventional channels of influence, such as lobbying, electoral strategies, and litigation. It has been argued, furthermore, that this form of action aims at producing political results within a limited period. It does not, as in the case of a practice of problematization, seek to question basic social conditions in society; it aims directly at influencing the output of the policy-making process in the state.

Environmental organizations which are characterized by such a political practice have, I suggest, a pressure group identity. This organizational identity is not one which is given. An environmental organization can in one period have a movement identity and in another period have a pressure group identity. Of crucial importance in this cognitive process is the political opportunity structure. It determines the range of opportunities to influence decision-making directly which groups such as environmental organizations have at their disposal at a given time. Thus, it is likely to influence heavily the strategic considerations of environmental organizations, and in that sense it is also likely to be a substantial factor in the production of the image, or the identity, of the organization.

5

The historical background of the Sierra Club

In the next two chapters I will try to apply my concepts in a concrete study of an environmental organization. I have chosen to focus on the Sierra Club, an American environmental organization which was founded as early as 1892 and since has been very succesful. Today the Sierra Club is one of the biggest and most influential environmental organizations in the United States. In that sense the Sierra Club represents a very rich case; its history informs us of the various ways in which an environmental organization can respond to external conditions and construct a political identity and strategy. Because of this long and eventful history the case of the Sierra Club provides a rather complex test for the usefulness of my conceptualizations.

My ambition is to understand how the Sierra Club has been constructed by social factors of both an external and internal nature. Thus, the success of the Sierra Club will neither be seen as a result of solely structural conditions, nor exclusively as a product of organizational effectiveness. In chapter two, I argued that particular political and cultural opportunity structures had a strong influence on how environmental organizations were constructed. Moreover, I contended that the capacity of specific organizations to respond to external opportunities were crucial in the social construction of organizational identities and strategies.

I have split the history of the Sierra Club up into four phases. Each phase, I argue, is characterised by distinct internal features in the organization and, to a varying degree, certain political and cultural opportunity structures. My basic argument in what follows will be that the political practice of the Sierra Club was formed in relation to these phases.

By dividing the history of the Sierra Club into four phases I intend to show that certain historical configurations produce conditions which make it possible for environmental organizations to play a powerful role in the construction of new ideas and new policies while other historical configurations make it much more difficult.

In this chapter, I analyze the first three phases in the history of the Sierra Club. These phases form the historical background of todays Sierra Club and are, I would argue, essential to study if one wants to understand the present political practice of the organization. The identity and structure of the Sierra Club were established in these years through numerous political battles, internal conflicts and changing societal conditions.

In the following I will argue that the formative phase in the history of the Sierra Club, from 1892 to 1916, was a crucial one both for the construction of the organization itself and conservationism in general. It was a period characterized by a growing cultural conduciveness towards the kind of claims that the newly formed conservation movement made on society. The Sierra Club exploited this historical opportunity very effectively and became one of the leading conservation organizations in the United States around the turn of the century. This phase culminated in 1916 with the chief political victory of the conservation movement in general and the Sierra Club in particular: the establishment of the National Park Service, a federal agency which should assure both that preserved areas remained in their natural state and that the public could get access to the areas.

The second phase, from 1917 to 1949, marked a period of consolidation and introspective activity for the Sierra Club. Although there was, especially in the middle of this period, a number of cultural and political opportunities to establish a powerful political platform the Sierra Club did not make use of these opportunities.

The third phase, can be conveniently set from 1950 where an Atlantic Chapter was established in New York - the first outside California. Moreover, David Brower was hired as an executive director just two years later. This sparked of a period of expansion, both in terms of members and geographic extension. The Sierra Club was in this period capable of using both the dominating cultural themes to mobilize public support, and act as an innovator of pressure group strategies within this field, such as the use of litigation.

The fourth and present phase, which will be analyzed in chapter six, can be set from 1969 when David Brower was forced to leave the Sierra Club. Brower had been the main force in the innovative 1950s and 1960s. When he left the Sierra Club it marked in many ways a new phase in the political history of the Sierra Club, a phase in which environmentalism was institutionalized in the form of national administrations and fewer experiments and more professional solutions became characteristic of the organization.

Quite a lot of historical material about the Sierra Club is available because the organization had such a central role in early conservation history in the United States. To a large extent the Sierra Club embodied the conservation movement in the beginning of this century, only later the Sierra Club became one of numerous organizations which together formed the conservation movement. This central role in conservation history is reflected in the historic accounts by Fox (1981), Strong (1990), Koppes (1988), Worster (1973: 1977; 1988), Gottlieb (1993) and Penick (1968).

These accounts will form the basis of my analysis in this chapter together with two books about the history of the Sierra Club published by the organization itself around its centennial celebration in 1992 (Turner 1990; 1992). What I have done is to structure the historical material in these accounts around my theoretical framework presented in the earlier chapters. The historic accounts are all based on different theoretical foundations - even if some of them do not explicitly explain their theoretical starting points[1] - and it has thus been necessary to be rather critical in my usage of these sources of information. Where Fox (1981), for instance, tends to neglect the role of organizations in the course of history, Worster (1988) emphasizes it.[2] Another example is Turner (1990; 1992) who was assigned by the Sierra Club to write its history and, as one could expect, tends to over-emphasize the role of the Sierra Club in conservation and environmental history.

The formative phase, 1892-1916

On May 28, 1892 a group of 27 citizens gathered in a San Francisco law office to found the Sierra Club. They agreed that the purpose of the society was

> *"to explore, enjoy, and render accesible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast; to publish authentic information concerning them; and to enlist the support and co-operation of the people and government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains."*

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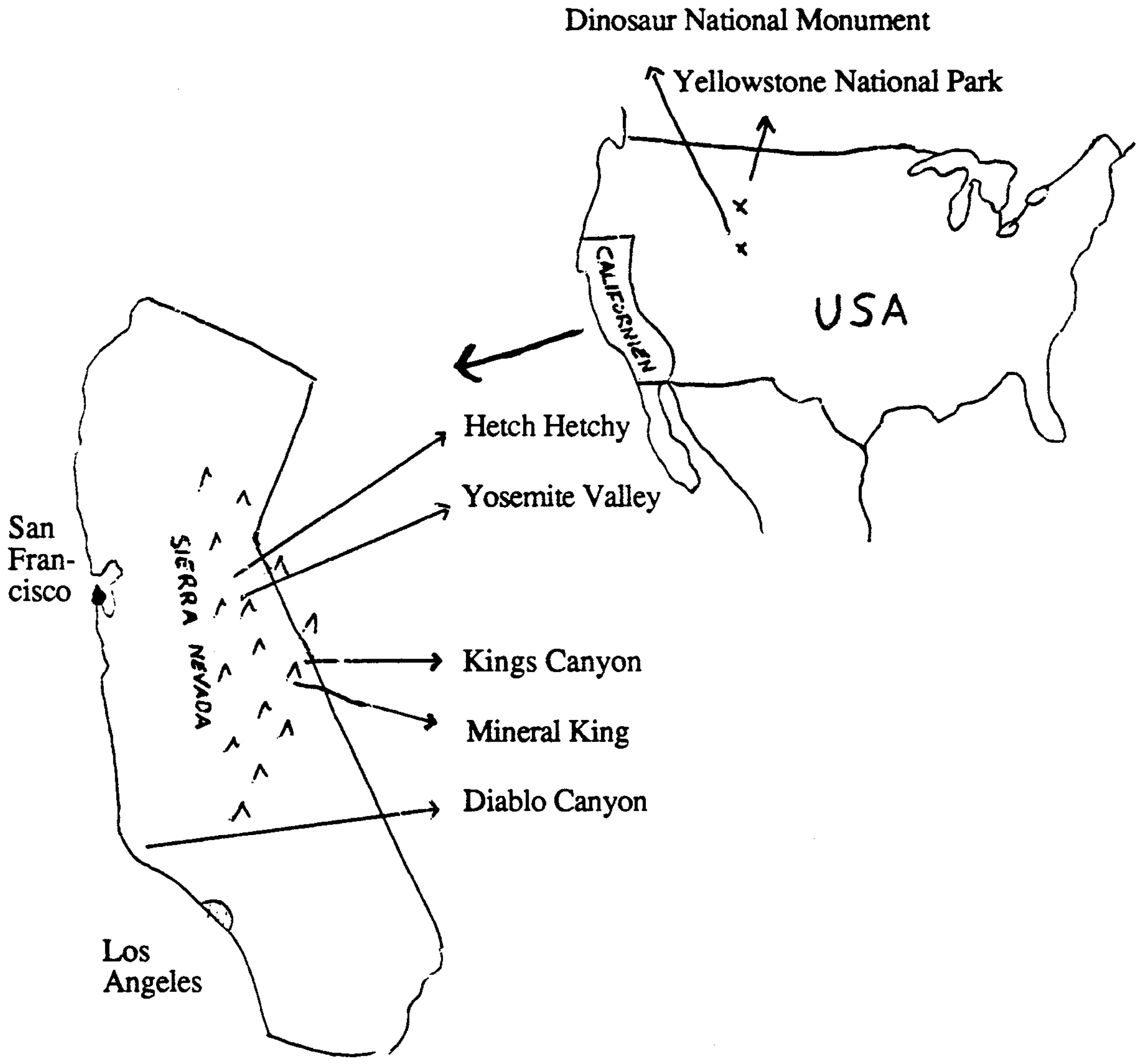
[1] See, for instance, Fox 1981 and Penick 1968.

[2] Fox (1981: ix) states that ideas matter: "When I looked at Muir more closely, I found that his religious idelogy and the part he took in the movement set patterns for his successors in conservation." Worster (1988: 303), on the other hand, maintains that "ideas are socially constructed and, therefore, reflect the organization of those societies, their techno-environments and hierarchies of power."

The founders had, in particular, one urgent reason to found the Sierra Club: The Yosemite National Park, created in 1890, in Sierra Nevada was threatened by a bill in Congress which aimed at reducing the park's boundaries. There were no other groups in the area to defend the newly established Yosemite National Park and existing conservation organizations at the time - such as the Boone and Crockett Club which took it as their duty to protect Yellowstone National Park - refused to take Yosemite under their wing.

Figure 5-1: Sites of conservation struggles in the United States


Dinosaur National Monument
Yellowstone National Park
USA
CALIFORNIEN
Hetch Hetchy
Yosemite Valley
San Francisco
SIERRA NEVADA
Kings Canyon
Mineral King
Diablo Canyon
Los Angeles

Thus, an urgent need was felt among conservationists at the time for an organization which could defend the park. This specific background was the releasing factor in the formation of the Sierra Club. But to complete the understanding of what caused the formation of the organization we need also to look upon broader processes of a cultural and political kind.

The concrete background on which the Sierra Club was founded was, as argued, that there were concrete political threats to conservation reforms at the time and there were no organizations at the regional level to defend these reforms. What was needed was a local group which could lobby both the central government and the sub-national government. The central government was in charge of Yosemite National Park, and the sub-national government administered Yosemite Valley within the park. The Sierra Club wanted to preserve the national park and include Yosemite Valley in it because it would secure the valley a higher degree of protection.

The Sierra Club succeded in defending the park and transferring Yosemite Valley from the state to the federal government in 1894. After this political victory the Sierra Club continued its political efforts. This suggests that the Sierra Club was not merely an ad hoc pressure group formed in response to particular regional problems. For me the forming of the Sierra Club should be understood in a broader perspective. First, as a response to the emergence of cultural and political opportunities in society for that kind of political institution. Second, as an organization which in this phase succeded in using its organizational resources to make the most of these opportunities. In my view, it demonstrated to its members that it had a valuable and durable function in political life. In what follows I intend to show how the Sierra Club, more specifically, constructed its identity and political practice by making use of the emerging cultural and political opportunities around the turn of the century.

Of main importance in the formative phase in the Sierra Club was that a growing numbers of Americans by the late 1800s began to fear that something valuable was being lost in what they conceived as the unrestrained capitalist development. The feeling of over-civilization and spiritual homelessness was spreading and a cultural opposition to the present society was growing. Thus, this period was tinged by an atmosphere of crisis, self-doubt, nostalgia, and melancholy.

This time-spirit laid the basis of the initial success of the Sierra Club. Instead of being met with scepticism, the Sierra Club quickly found support for its points of view. Hence the early conservation discourse in the United States was first of all a result of a spreading industrialization and a growing neclect of the values in nature. The image of the land as holding inexhaustible economic opportunity gave way to a much more modest vision: the idea of conservation which implied that resources were sparce and man had to adapt.

The vision of America as a beckoning field of laissez-faire enterprise was a very dominant one in the nineteenth-century American mind. The American policy had simply been to try to free individual enterprise from the bonds of traditional hierarchy and community, whether the bondage derived from other humans or the earth. As a result, Americans tended to regard everything around them - the land, its natural resources, their own labour - as potential commodities that might fetch a profit in the market. This line of thinking had a profound impact on the American environment. The crowning statement of this discourse was the Homestead Act of 1862 by which one could acquire title to 160 acres simply by making it productive. Of course, this meant that Man was spurred into believing in a frank, energetic self-assertiveness, unembarassed by too many moral and aesthetic sentiments - this state of mind even got a name: "the frontier spirit" (Koppes 1988).

Americans were taught to believe that natural resources were inexhaustible. Even if eastern cities experienced shortages of firewood allready in the middle of the seventeenth century[3], the Americans were told that there were always more wood in the next mountain range.

This situation changed in the late nineteenth century. At this time a serious shortage of natural resources occured, particularly of timber, and an economic imperative was created for conservation. On top of that a report, which attracted considerable attention, published by the Census Bureau in 1890, concluded that the frontier was closed. That bland factual statement carried great symbolic meaning, for it suggested to a generation of Americans that the process of exploiting inexhuastible resources was coming to an end (Koppes 1988).

Most historians agree that the last half of the nineteenth century marks a vital transition from a preindustrialized society to the modern world of cities, massconsumption, cars etc. In this turbulent period the cultural conduciveness towards conservationism grew and the cognitive basis for conservation organizations was formed.

The first organization which was based on conservation ideas was the Williamstown Alpine Club, founded in 1863 in Massachusetts. A few similar organizations were founded in the following years in the east, all with the principal mission of protecting specific areas for their aesthetic and recreational qualities. But it was in the 1880s and 1890s that the conservation movement really became powerful, and a number of influential organizations were formed: The American Ornithological Union in 1883, The Audobon Society in 1886, and the Sierra Club in 1892.

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[3] Boston lacked firewood in 1638; in the next century many other eastern cities experienced the same. See Koppes (1988).

These organizations benefited from the growing anxiety about the future course of American capitalism. Organizations, such as the Sierra Club, used the growing cultural critique of society to construct an organizational identity which, it seemed, would appeal to a considerable share of the population.

The founder and first president of the Sierra Club, John Muir, was the leading ideological force in the organization around the turn of the century. According to him, the dogma "that the world was made especially for the uses of men" was the fundamental error of his time (Fox 1981: 59). Man did not, as the the industrial revolution taught people, have a supremecy in the natural world. This belief soon became the cornerstone of the identity of the organization and, as I will show, continued to be a vital part of the ideology of the Sierra Club.

Thus, the cultural critique that emerged in the end of the nineteenth century set the tone of the early conservation debate and determined which issues were likely to catch on in the public.

On top of that, conservation organizations such as the Sierra Club benefited from the existence of two powerful discourses: the romantic discourse and the emerging scientific discourse on nature. These two discourses provided the cognitive framework within which conservation organizations made one of their prime contributions of the time: to transform prevailing cultural themes into political issues. Thus, I would argue that the contribution of the early conservation organizations in the United States was not so much the formation of a totally new discourse as the reinterpretation of existing discourses in a different and more political direction.

American conservationism was very inspired by nineteenth century romanticism. The main sources of inspiration were American poets like R. W. Emerson and D. Thoreau, and British poets like J. Ruskin and W. Wordsworth (Fox 1981: 82-5). What combined these men was a devotion to nature, a love for the beauty and tranquility beyond civilization.

Emerson and Thoreau especially influenced the thinking of conservationists. They gave influential leadership during the nineteenth century in America to a mystical view of nature intimately linked with trees and forests. They believed that Man in order to understand the essential facts of life should lead a life of simplicity. Nature, in this respect, offered Man peace and calmness, and hence a chance of coming to terms with oneself.

Thoreau, as an experiment, cast himself away from society for two years. Taking virtually nothing with him from the civilized world, he lived alone in a cabin. This inspired Thoreau to some of his most famous books, such as *Walden,* a book written in the mid-nineteenth century.

John Muir was a part of the romantic movement both in terms of lifestyle and writing. Hence, Muir chose from 1869 to 1872 to live primitively in and around Yosemite Valley in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California, trekking in the mountains, putting down notes about geology and botany, writing poems and prose[4]:

> *"We are now in the mountains and they are in us, kindling enthusiasm, making every nerve quiver, filling every pore and cell of us. (...) Just now I can hardly conceive of any bodily condition dependent on food or breath any more than the ground or sky. How glorious a conversion, so complete and wholesome it is, scarce memory of old bondage days left" (Muir 1987: xii).*

Muir had, as illustrated, a lyrical style and a mystical tone in his writings. That appealed to a young generation of urban Americans who felt that something had gone wrong in the industrial revolution and new values had to be found.

While living in Yosemite Muir met Emerson, the most famous romanticist of his time. A meeting Muir later recalled as the most memorable in his life even though they only met shortly. Emerson was staying a few days in Yosemite Valley with his party from Boston. But Muir kept a correspondence with him throughout Emersons life (Strong 1990: 92):

> Muir: *"Would you were here to sing our Yosemite snowbound. What prayers push my pen for your coming, but I must hush them all back for our roads are deep blocked with snowbloom" (Fox 1981: 6).*
>
> Emerson: *"I have everywhere testified to my friends, who should also be yours, my happiness in finding you - the right man in the right place - in your mountain tabernacle" (Fox 1981: 6).*

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[4] See, for details about this part of Muir's life, Muir (1987).

But even if Muir admired Emerson as a person and a writer, he disagreed with him in his view on nature. From Muirs perspective, Emerson appreciated nature from a base in abstract metaphysics, ignorant of nature itself. Muir found that any philosophical baggage brought to nature only distorted the picture.

This points to another dimension of Muir's thinking. Muir was not "an intellectual" or a "romanticist" in the traditional sense: ""No amount of word-making will ever make a single soul to know these mountains ... One days exposure to mountains is better than cartloads of books" (Fox 1981: 19).

This dimension of his thinking can best be described as indian holism. Living in a Christian society and not wishing to offend the established society, he generally kept these ideas for himself. But it appears from his personal papers and manuscripts that he felt close to native American religious traditions (Fox 1981: 80).

These thoughts later became an essential factor in the social construction of the political tactics of the Sierra Club, as I will show. Outings, not books, became the main form of educating the public in the early years. Through the outings the Sierra Club aimed at making urbanized people acquainted with the wilderness. Only in that way, it was believed, people would really appreciate it.

The scientific discourse also played a significant part in the formation of conservationism as a body of thought. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that a large number of the people who founded the Sierra Club were natural scientists. They came from University of California at Berkeley which was situated just outside San Fransisco, where the founding meeting took place and the headquarters have remained until today. The natural scientists were mainly interested in exploring the nature in the Sierra Nevada Mountains for scientific purposes. They saw the Sierra Club as an opportunity to enhance the possibilities of drawing maps (some of it was explored for the first time, at least by white people), collect samples and organize the scientific community in order to establish a library for geology etc.

The scientific discourse had its roots in the debate over evolution in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection and evolution, first published in 1859, was a major part of this debate. Before nature was more or less conceived as a moral order governed by a beneficient providence. Darwin's work shook this ideological foundation and opened for science to take God's place as the ultimate source of truth.

Also the science of ecology came to influence this debate. It was coined in 1866 by the German scientist Ernst Hackel, but soon spread to American science. The new science developed a better understanding of the fragility of the natural system and an increased capacity for precise measurement of environmental dynamics. This meant that science could exercise a still greater authority in Man's dealings with nature.

When the Sierra Club was formed in 1892 both Darwins work and ecology was generally known but it did not embody the authority as it came to later. Conservation issues were mainly at the time a matter of esthetic and moral dispute. This weakened the conservation ends because the Sierra Club had ultimately nothing to fall back upon. Science, later, lent the movement considerable authority by making conservation and environmentalism a matter of fact.

The creation by Act of Congress in 1872 of the first national park, Yellowstone National Park, shows, however, that the scientific discourse already played some part in conservation at that time. The recommendations included that Yellowstone should become a natural outdoor laboratory for the study of earth and life sciences. In reality, though, the esthetic rationale was dominating: The boundaries of the park was drawn with attention to spectacular scenery, not scientific principles. No efforts were made to limit the impact of visitor accomodation, and few laborious explorations were in fact made in Yellowstone before the 1930s (Koppes 1988).

To sum up: It has been argued here that early conservationism in the United States benefited from a growing cultural critique of industrial society and its alleged neglect of nature. More specifically, conservationism drew upon two discourses which formed a substantial part of late-nineteenth century culture: romanticism, and natural science. From each of these discourses conservation organizations took those elements which could support them in their effort to portray nature as valuable and worth to preserve.

It should be stressed, though, that not any part of nature was seen as worth preserving. The romantic interpretation of nature favoured sweeping vistas, picturesque scenes, and dramatic landscape features. This esthetic ideal also came to embrace the policy priorities in the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club in its formative years, as I will show, first and foremost fought to protect landscapes of an esthetic value, such as Yosemite and later Hetch Hetchy, a valley close to Yosemite.

Another main factor that contributed to the success of the Sierra Club in its early years was that around the turn of the century the government became more amenable to regulatory policies. Conservationism was in direct confrontation with laissez-faire policy and could not have become generally accepted in a less progressive period. Thus, I would argue that the political opportunity structure was rather favourable at the time towards conservation policies.

The change of political climate was, in many respects, a response to the growing cultural critique of unrestrained capitalism in the end of the nineteenth century. Americans at the time, as earlier described, were taught to believe that the material growth had been achieved at a great cost in human values and in waste of natural resources. As a result the demand of reform increased in this period, and it soon became evident that society could not reduce the social and environmental ills of industrial society without using the power of the central state. Consequently, the conception of the state changed in this period which later has been labelled as "the progressive era" (Hofstadter 1963).

Americans have always been critical towards a centrally governed process, that is, a case where one central actor, typically the government, has the power to steer the political process. This is reflected in the political-administrative functional decentralization of power at the central political level in the United States. The political power is accurately balanced between the government, the administration, the legislature and the court, and each institution has the right to question the authority of the other institutions (Rose-Ackermann 1992). Furthermore, the United States is a federal political system in which all authority to make decisions is delegated to the local state level unless it is specifically stated that it is a matter of the central government. Around the turn of the century, however, this critical view of the central state changed. The central state was no longer merely viewed as a negative policing agency, rather it was increasingly seen as having a wide and pervasive responsibility for the welfare of its citizens and the management of natural resources.

The development of the Division of Forestry illustrates very well how the role of the central state in conservation policies changed in these crucial years. In 1898, when Gifford Pinchot was given charge of the Division by President McKinley, the Division was an insignificant agency in the Department of Agriculture lacking both political power and economic resources. Ten years later, however, the Division (later the Bureau of Forestry) had become one of the foremost agencies concerned with public lands and one of the most essential parts of President Roosevelt's (1901-9) domestic policy (Penick 1968: 5). This development has been viewed as the personal achievement of Pinchot, a very committed and talented administrator and conservationist (Penick 1968: 10). But in my view Pinchot was as much an instrument for larger political tendencies as the innovator of this administrative development. What Pinchot did, with the political support of President Roosevelt, was to design a system of planning which had the specific aim to maintain a constant supply of timber by insuring that annual cutting did not exceed annual growth, the so-called sustained yield management (Penick 1968: 5). By designing the planning system in that way Pinchot (and Roosevelt) hoped to bridge on the one hand the interests of those groups concerned with the commercial possibilities of the forests (lumbermen, cattlemen etc.) and on the other hand the interests of those groups, like the Sierra Club, which wanted the forests entirely removed from commercial use.

Of importance here is also the fact that conservation was never more an elitist conspiracy than around this time. Around the turn of the century the political system of the United States was a relatively closed one. A small power elite ruled and those who had access to the people in office had a proportionally large influence on policy-making and the implementation of policies.

It was thus of uttermost importance for the implementation of an organization's policies to have figures within the organization who were accepted by the elite and capable of lobbying the interests of the organization. In the Sierra Club this role was fulfilled by the president of the organization, John Muir. Muir lobbyed effectively his and the Sierra Club's interests in the formative years of the organization. He did not take his cases to the public first, he went directly to Washington and talked with the political leaders, typically the President, the Secretary of the Interior, or other powerful members of the cabinet, like Pinchot. He succeded often in this enterprise, primarily because of his good name and rhetorical skills (Fox 1981: 110).

Muir's ability to get in contact with central policy-makers is illustrated by the fact that he trekked in Yosemite with two presidents while they were in office: T. Roosevelt in 1903 and W. H. Taft in 1909. During these events he persistenly lobbyed his points of views. Roosevelt, especially, never forgot Muir and their trip together. This effective form of lobbying contributed to the fact that the resource programs of the Roosevelt years took non-commercial interests into consideration (Fox 1981: 129). Aside from these programs, Roosevelt approved the completion of Yosemite National Park (getting Yosemite Valley under federal protection) in 1906, created five national parks, fifty-three wildlife reserves, and sixteen national monuments (Fox 1981: 128). This, of course, was not entirely Muir's accomplishment, but Muir's close acquaintance with him seems to have been an important factor in this policy process, at least in the Yosemite case.

It has been argued so far that cultural and political opportunity structures were favourable to conservation organizations around the turn of the century. Moreover, it has been suggested that the Sierra Club was capable of making use of these emerging opportunities. In the following I will, more specifically, show how the Sierra Club in its formative phase succeded in exploiting the given opportunity structures.

Of crucial importance for the Sierra Club in its formative years was, as already suggested, its leader, John Muir. Muir was the president of the organization until his death in 1914, and his role in these formative years should not be underestimated. His ideas on conservation were a main factor in constructing the ideology of the organization, and his intellectual resources and personal contacts were the central parts in the organization's early lobbying efforts.

The Articles of Incorporation from 1892 clearly illustrates the ideological influence of John Muir in the early years of the organization's history. The main political purpose of the Sierra Club was to "render accesible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast" and "to publish authentic information concerning them". The underlying assumption was that if only people themselves got the chance to be introduced to the mountain scenery, then the political support for defending natural sceneries would grow by itself. This view on conservation politics was first of all inspired by Muir. For Muir there was, as described earlier, a close connection between personal experience and political involvement. Muir stressed all through his writings the freedom of the wilderness and the social constraint of civilization, and he was convinced that once people experienced the beauty and tranquility of nature they would support the Sierra Club in its claims.

Muir was, as already indicated, also an irreplacable part of the lobbying efforts of the Sierra Club in the early part of its history. Muir was, at the time of the foundation of the Sierra Club, a respected and well-known writer and conservationist. He became known as a writer during the 1870s and 1880s where he published a number of books on Man's encounter with wilderness. Beside this, he also became engaged in politics in the latter part of the 1880s. Among other things, he was one of the main forces behind the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890 (Strong 1990: 96).

Thus, even before Muir co-founded the Sierra Club he was widely known for his conservationist ideas and, furthermore, he was actively involved in conservation politics and had built up a network of political contacts. This was of great value for the Sierra Club in its first years. Through the political contacts of Muir and his personal lobbying efforts, the organization succeded in achieving many of their policy goals, first of all the preservation of Muir's beloved Yosemite Valley.[5]

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[5] Yosemite Valley was transferred from the state to the federal government in 1894, and that secured the valley a higher degree of protection.

Muir was in this period considered by the members as the undisputed leader of the organization, both politically and ideologically. Thus, the authority structure of the organization reflected the unique position of John Muir in the organization. This, I would argue, only served to strengthen the image of the organization as governed by a practice of political effectiveness.

Muir can be seen as a good example of what has been referred to as a classical partisan intellectual, an acknowledged leader which functions as both ideologist and administrator. He had in that sense a kind of authority which no leader of environmental organizations has today. Muir was, to put it short, both executive director (administrator), president (leader), and staff member (intellectual force).

A practice of political effectiveness was thus, largely because of Muir's absolute position, dominant in the first years in the Sierra Club. Around 1900, however, the organization slowly turned to a practice of problematization. At that time the Sierra Club had to realize that it did not have sufficient political support among people to continue its lobbying efforts. The Sierra Club slowly lost members. Despite its political accomplishments, the members did not feel they got value for their money and chose in great numbers to leave the organization.

The response to that crisis was the outings. William Colby, a young lawyer and member of the organization, began to organize trips for the members to Yosemite. These trips were mainly social events: the same people came year after year and enjoyed the primitive and calm life in the mountains. This soon became a main factor in establishing the exitement and solidarity necessary for the functioning of the organization.

But the outings had a significant political meaning as well. They embodied the very essence of conservation: rambling through fields and woods, climbing mountain peaks, one was taught to feel the kinship with nature that lay beyond civilization.

Thus, the outings became a major political tool for the organization after 1900. Moreover, the expertise that the Sierra Club developed in arranging hikings and mountain climbing came to mean much for its ability to attract members. By publishing a lot of material about the natural wonders in the Sierra Nevada and emphasizing the possibilities that the Sierra Club offered in terms of exploring them, the organization succeded in attracting a growing number of people. In 1892 the organization had 27 members, in 1897 there was 350, and in 1908 the membership reached 1000. Remarkable was that a high percentage of the members were active in this period. In 1909, for instance, 220 participated in the annual "High Trip" to Yosemite.

As a consequence of this policy, the Sierra Club in its formative years was a very local club. Only people living close to the San Francisco area and in range of the Sierra Nevada were members. Moreover, it was white people from the middle-class who became members of the organization. This was probably due to the fact that conservationism, like romanticism and natural science, was a part of white America's culture. In addition to that, the outings were difficult for poor people to participate in. They required both money - to buy equipment - and much time.

Let us round off this first part of the political history of the Sierra Club by illustrating in a concrete case some of the main points discussed here. In what follows I will go into detail with the Hetch Hetchy case. It seems to embody nearly all aspects of the early conservation struggle and, furthermore, can inform us about the way in which the political practice of the Sierra Club was constructed in this period.

Hetch Hetchy (the name probably derives from a local indian phrase meaning "grassy floor") was a valley in the Sierra Nevada, just north of Yosemite Valley. In 1890 it was included in Yosemite National Park, partly because of Muir's recommendations. The struggle around it which lasted from the mid 1890s until 1913 was surely the most public and prominent in American conservation history at that time and it as such prepared the way for future political contests.[6]

The opponents in the battle were on one side conservation organizations, mainly the Sierra Club, which wanted to protect the integrity of Yosemite National Park and on the other side the city council in San Francisco which wanted to build a reservoir in Hetch Hetchy Valley and a pipeline to transport the water to the city.

Hetch Hetchy was not as well known as Yosemite but was quite similar with its domes, cliffs, waterfalls and meadows. For the Sierra Club it was a magnificent natural landscape that ought to be left wholly wild, to manage itself in accordance with nature's laws, as described here by John Muir:

> *"Hetch Hetchy Valley, far from being a plain, common, rock-bound meadow, as many who have not seen it seem to suppose, is a grand landscape garden, one of nature's rarest and most precious mountain temples. (...) Sad to say, this most precious and sublime feature of the Yosemite national*

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[6] Samuel P. Hays consideres this struggle as one of the most important in conservation history. He sees it as a showdown between two dominant ideas in conservation thinking - efficiency and esthetics. See Hays (1959).

> *Park, one of the greatest of all our natural ressources for the uplifting joy and health of the people, is in danger of being dammed and made into a reservoir to help supply San Francisco with gardens and groves one or two hundred feet deep."* [7]

Thus, to construct a dam and flood the valley Muir considered a highly inappropriate interference with nature's beauty. Hetch Hetchy ought to be left alone.

The battle started in the mid-1890s when the local authority in San Francisco made its first proposal to turn Hetch Hetchy into a water reservoir. Sierra Club immediately responded and the city council withdrew their plans. But it started over again in 1901 when the major of San Francisco, James Phelan, filed for reservoir rights at Hetch Hetchy. In the first round Interior Secretary E. A. Hichock denied the application as inappropriate for a national park. But after April 18, 1906 where San Francisco was hit by a violent earthquake, followed by a even more destructive fire, the cultural conduciveness towards conservation claims weakened at the local level. The city desperately needed water and after a couple of years of lobbying, the federal government ruled that the city could reopen the matter (Turner 1992).

Many members of the Sierra Club were in the initial phase of this process responsive to the arguments of the pro-dam forces. They supported the city politicians in their view that San Francisco needed a reliable and economical supply of fresh water and their view that a lake in Hetch Hetchy could be as beautiful as the natural valley. But the non-compromizing wing around John Muir won the internal battle. 50 members or 7% resigned in protest after a formal poll had determined that Muir's points of view represented the majority of the members. Even if this internal battle created some temporary disturbance, it was necessary for the organization in this crucial matter to create a consensus about the objectives in order to be able to act as effectively as possible in the political struggle (Turner 1992).

After this incident the position of the Sierra Club was clear. The Sierra Club opposed any development in Hetch Hetchy arguing that the national parks had to be kept inviolate. Of what use, the Sierra club argued, was the idea of national parks "inalienable at all time" if Yosemite could be invaded and violated by the City of San Francisco for its water supply, no matter how urgently needed? This was the idea that the organization fought for, and through its campaign, became known for all over the nation (Fox 1981).

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[7] Muir, J: *The Yosemite*, New York 1912. Printed in Worster (1973: 194-5).

The campaign followed a typical pattern in this early phase of the history of the Sierra Club. First, the organization tried to make use of a practice of political effectiveness, but when that failed it had to pursue a practice of problematization.

Muir tried first to lobby president Roosevelt but this time he did not succeed. Roosevelt could not support Muir he told him, even if he wanted to, because the public opinion seemed to be in favour of the dam. Thus, the only way for the Sierra Club to succeed in its campaign was to seek to raise public consciousness about the conservation issues involved. This form of long-term political strategy was new for the Sierra Club. Earlier, the lobbying of Muir and the local support from its members in San Fransisco had been sufficient to reach their policy goals (Turner 1992).

The Sierra Club began to distribute pamphlets, send out letters, write articles in newspapers and magazines. As a result opposition slowly grew, but despite this the bill allowing the construction of the dam and reservoir in Hetch Hetchy was approved by the Ministry of the Interior and passed Congress as an administrative measure in 1913. Thus, the Sierra Club lost the battle with the city of San Fransisco. But the Sierra Club won the war because in the wake of Hetch Hetchy, to balance its verdict, the Ministry of the Interior established the National Park Service in 1916. This was a major victory for the Sierra Club. For several years it had been proposing a national administrative body to unify the park responsibilities previously scattered among three cabinet departments. The Sierra Club wanted a centralization of power in one strong administrative agency at the national level because that seemed to offer the established parks the best protection possible. The parks administered by the local states had proven to be vulnerable towards local economic interests. On top of this policy victory, a long-time member of the Sierra Club and an active enemy of the Hetch Hetchy, Stephen Mather, was nominated as the first leader of the National Park Service..

This tells us that even if the Sierra Club lost one political battle, however important, it established a whole new institutional framework in which future struggles were fought. Thus, the greatest significance of the Hetch Hetchy battle lay, I would argue, in the process and long-term effects, not the concrete outcome. This is the way a practice of problematization works: it might not influence short-term decisions, but on the long term it is likely to affect the basis on which decision-making rests and cause greater institutional changes.

To sum up: In its formative years the Sierra Club played a significant political role in conservation politics. Despite the fact that it was established by a very limited number of people from a specific social background and geographical area, the organization was capable of constructing and marketing an identity which centered around the claim that it represented, not a special interest, but a cause which concerned all Americans. The Club succeded in this difficult task mainly because the cultural conduciveness in society towards such claims was high at the time. Concurrently with the rapid urbanization many Americans became susceptible to the kind of arguments put forward by the Sierra Club: that the cost in human values and waste of natural resources were to high a price to pay for industrialization.

The Sierra Club made the most of this historic opportunity to construct a powerful political identity. By forming its ideology close to the romantic view of nature, which was a substantial part of the cultural heritage of white America, and stressing new scientifically based ways in urban society of using nature, the Sierra Club succeded in constructing an organizational identity which appealed to influential parts of modern America. Muir, in particular, used this benevolence to lobby the interests of the Sierra Club. This form of political practice, a practice of political effectiveness, dominated the organization in the 1890s.

After the turn of the century the political practice of the organization slowly changed into a practice of problematization. The Sierra Club had during the 1890s taken on a pressure group identity and neglected the social side of its activity. In the following years, however, the Sierra Club began to arrange outings in the Sierra Nevada, and that soon attracted members and created a strong and vital organizational basis. In the Hetch Hetchy controversy this organizational development proved to be helpful. The socializing effect of the outings, books, photos etc. became the creation of a "we", and the controversy over Hetch Hetchy constructed a "them". Hereby a strong organizational identity was created in the Sierra Club. That increased the motivation of members to participate in organizational work, and it was instrumental in creating an image nation-wide of the Sierra Club as one of the leading conservation organizations in the country.

The establishment of the National Park Service in 1916 was the chief victory of the organization in this period. It resulted in a new phase of conservationism and the functioning of the Sierra Club: From then conservation policy was acknowledged by the national government as a legitimate political area, administration grew, and the number of conservation groups seeking influence increased. The pioneer time of conservationism was over.

The consolidation phase, 1917-49

This phase in the history of the Sierra Club can best be characterized as a time of consolidation. After the burst of energy to defend Hetch Hetchy and the ultimate victory with the establishment of the National Park Service, the Sierra Club entered a less streneous period. A period where the Sierra Club addressed itself to national park matters and mountaineering, and did not engage itself in major political battles. In what follows, it will be argued that the opportunities for a more active and powerful political role for the Sierra Club was present, especially in the end of the period, but the organization failed to use these opportunities.

Let us first note that the cultural conduciveness towards conservation claims was reduced in the 1920s. The decade was, contrary to the progressive era, dominated by a suspicion of anything that interfered with capitalist expansion. The policy of the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations reflected this trend. Priority was given to business interests, not welfare and conservation issues.

Hence, the political opportunity structure was also limited in this period, seen from the point of view of conservation organizations. The conservation initiatives that fared best politically were resource management programs, for they often did not conflict with business interests. These resource management programs entailed some interference in the market, but their philosophy was not to supplant capitalism, only making it work better. Conservationists and businessmen, according to this philosophy, had a common interest in finding the best way to manage federal resources. Conservationists contended that unrestrained human exploitation of natural resources was prevented, and natural scenery and wildlife were preserved. Businessmen, on the other hand, also had an interest in the perpetuation of resources and was satisfied as long as the federal government allowed them to carry out the actual exploitation of resources (Koppes 1988).

Perhaps most evident was this utilitarian way to approach conservation in the various pieces of legislation drafted by commercial sporting interests. An illustrative example of this was the game-refuge bill drafted in the early 1920s by Biological Survey, a national government bureau, and the American Game Protective Association, a group launched by the gun companies under Winchester leadership but declaring itself as a conservation group. The bill proposed a system of refuges strung along the migratory paths of ducks, geese, and other waterfowl. The necessary funding, it was proposed, should come from hunting licences. Two main arguments were to be found in the bill.

The conservationist argument was that such a reform would enlarge the nesting, stopping, and feeding areas of waterfowl, and the hunters argument was that the refuges could enlarge the number of public shooting grounds (Fox 1981: 164).

On the four refuges, established under Roosevelt and Taft, no hunting was allowed. Thus, the bill was regarded as rather controversial. It soon created an opposition among more traditional conservation groups, first of all the Izaak Walton League, by far the biggest and most powerful conservation group at the time. The Izaak Walton League was a very professional organization by the standards of the 1920s which is clearly illustrated in this case. The organization launched a major campaign from a hotel in Washington which included the employment of a number of staff and messengers and frequent meetings with both president Coolidge and the Secretary of Commerce and the next president of the United States, Herbert Hoover. The result of the campaign was one of the few victories of the conservation movement in the 1920s: the creation of one big wildlife refuge financed, not by hunters, but by the Congress.

This case illustrates two important aspects of conservationism in the 1920s. First, it points to the relative defensive position of the conservation movement. It shows clearly how commercial interests took the lead in the conservation debate. Second, it points to the fact that the most appropriate strategy of the time for conservation organizations seemed to be a practice of political effectiveness. The best way to work for conservation reforms, it seemed, was not to try to set the agenda, but rather to defend established conservationist principles through conventional means.

The Sierra Club did not play a substantial role in these political processes. It did not have the organizational resources and political determination to participate in such struggles. Since the death of Muir in 1914 it had become a quiet, largely social organization. Membership was rather stable throughout the period; in 1916 it had 1500 members and in 1949 it had 3600 members. Compared to the size of the Izaak Walton League, the biggest conservation organization of the time with more than hundred thousands members, these numbers were not impressive.

The political minded group around John Muir slowly dissolved after his death. There was no leader with his political skills and contacts to take over at that time and construct a powerful political identity. The entire leadership in the following period were not so much politicians as mountaineers. President in a number of years was William Colby, the lawyer who originally arranged the outings in

1900. Not surprisingly, - given the leadership - the Sierra Club in this period focused more on mountaineering and less on politics.

The mountaineering program expanded in the 1920s and 1930s. The several-week-long "High Trip" was a fixture in the Club life of the period, introducing members to the natural wonders of the range. The High Trips provided ambitious mountaineers with an opportunity to scale numerous peaks in the vicinity of a series of base camps. Less-serious participants used the layover days to relax, sketch etc.

The purpose of these trips, following Muir's ideas, was to awake an interest in nature conservation and construct a strong organizational identity. In the words of William Colby, the leader of the High Trips until 1929:

> *"If properly conducted it will do an infinite amount of good toward awakening the proper kind of interest in the forest and other natural features of our mountains, and will also tend to create a spirite of good fellowship among our members."* [8]

However, this kind of activity was not linked to the mobilization of members to specific political campaigns, as in the formative period. As a result, the Sierra Club can in this period be characterized more as a social club than a political group.

This organizational profile attracted few young members. As a result most of the members in the 1930s were middle-aged. To solve this problem the Sierra Club tried to reduce the annuals with fifty percent for those under the age of twenty-one, but with a poor result. The Sierra Club had lost touch with the youth (Fox 1981: 214).

The Sierra Club was thus uncapable of using the limited political and cultural opportunities in the 1920s to promote conservation ends. This trend became even more true in the following years. In the 1930s conservation began to move towards a more central position in both cultural and political life, but the Sierra Club still did not exploit the emerging opportunities.

The increasing cultural conduciveness towards conservation in the 1930s was largely a consequence of the collapse of the Wall Street and the entire economic system in 1929. The mood of the nation, it has been argued, became more communal and less individualistic (Worster 1977: 232). As in the case of the progressive era, the willingness to subordinate economic criteria to broader standards of value, including conservation issues, was characteristic of the period.

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[8] *Sierra*, May/June 1992, p. 56.

Conservation issues were, furthermore, brought to public attention through what was seen as the worst environmental disaster of the century: the five year drought from 1934-39 which seriously damaged by erosion half of the Great Plains, approximately 500,000 square miles, and made more than a million tenant farmers virtually homeless (Worster 1977: 224). What was remarkable, from my perspective, about this disaster was that it was not constructed, as earlier, in terms of a natural phenomenon of the Great Plains. Rather, it was seen, as illustrated in a report given by the Great Plains Committee under President Roosevelt, as a wholly manmade disaster, produced by a history of misguided efforts to "impose upon the region a system of agriculture to which the plains are not adapted" (Worster 1977: 231).

This points also to the increasing importance in the 1930s of ecological principles in the construction of the relationship between Man and Nature. Ecology, not the esthetic view of romanticism, became in these years the dominant frame of reference for conservationists. This was probably due to the fact that ecology offered both planners and conservationists a technique for the management of the environment which seemed to benefit both parts. Planners tended to stress that ecology provided a scientific underpinning which had overtones of objectivity and as such was useful in planning. Conservationists, on the other hand, were given a new type of powerful arguments, scientifically based, which ultimately, it was believed, would lead to the preservation of larger areas than before. It seemed like a much easier task to argue convincingly along scientific lines instead of trying to define and construct the "scenic" and "monumental".

At the same time the political opportunity structure developed in favour of conservationists. The administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt reinvigorated conservation politics, especially in the second term from 1935-39. A concrete result of this policy was the creation of 159 new refuges, covering an area more than the double of the federal holdings of 1934 (Fox 1981: 198).

The New Deal politics of Roosevelt followed the mood of the nation in the sense that it favoured measures that would reduce the influence of the market and enhance government's role as a counterweight to the power of private interests. This general policy created a number of new political opportunities for conservation organizations, including larger influence on resource planning, preservation schemes etc. On top of that, the depression of the 1930s created conditions conducive to the enlargement of the national park system. The forest industry was in deep economic crisis and the price of timber was on a record low. As a result, national forests could be transferred relatively easily into national parks, and private forests could be bought relatively cheap (Koppes 1988).

The Sierra Club failed to take advantage of these emerging opportunities during the Roosevelt administration. The organization had not adapted culturally as well as politically to the new societal conditions. Ideologically, the organization had not changed substantially since the days of Muir. It still favoured the esthetic principles of romanticism and not the scientific principles of ecology. This was clearly illustrated by the alliance in the period between the Sierra Club and the National Park Service, which had advocated esthetic conservation since the days of Stephen Mather. Moreover, the Sierra Club did not as early as other conservation groups oppose an increased accesibility to the national parks and monuments. The number of tourists, for instance, as a consequence of the building of many roads inside the protected areas had risen from 6.3 million in 1934 to 16.2 million in 1938 and created a number of waste problems etc. in the parks (Fox 1981: 199-209). Politically, the Sierra Club suffered from both a lack of resources and poor organization. The Sierra Club no longer had the capability of being an essential political factor on the national level.

An organization such as the Wilderness Society, founded in 1935, was more able to use especially the cultural opportunity structure of the time to promote its case. While the Sierra Club clinged to its old principle of "rendering accesible the mountain regions", the Wilderness Society defined wilderness as "an environment of solitude" and proposed wild areas should be protected entirely from commercialization (Fox 1981: 211). This more radical stand proved to be more in line with the new ecologically inspired values of the time than the ambiguous ideology of the Sierra Club.

Furthermore, the Wilderness Society also participated more actively in the New Deal policies under Roosevelt. While the Sierra Club was dominated by republicans and thus generally was hostile to Roosevelt's policy of an active "Social Democratic" government, the Wilderness Society was much more open to the political liberalism of the Roosevelt administration. Robert Marshall, the first leader of the Wilderness Society,[9] embodied this stance. He was the first prominent socialist in the conservation movement and in that sense symbolized a new trend in the movement, a trend that would penetrate the environmental movement in the 1960s.

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[9] Marshall was not formally the leader of the organization in its first years, but in reality he controlled the organization. See, Fox (1981: 212).

Let me, finally, illustrate how the political practice of the Sierra Club was constructed in this period by going, in some detail, into the case of Kings Canyon. Kings Canyon is a valley in the Sierra Nevada mountains a hundred miles southeast of Yosemite. It is perhaps not as spectacular as Yosemite but even though it was generally considered a beautiful natural scenery. Muir explored, for the first time, the valley and its surroundings in the 1870s and later often returned. In 1891, after his successful campaign for the Yosemite National Park, he tried to lobby Congress to establish the area as a national park. The campaign failed because of commercial interests in the area, but the region became a national forest and thus had a minimum of protection (Turner 1992).

The Sierra Club tried in the following years a number of times to lobby Congress, but without Muir's charismatic figure the organization lacked power. It was not before Robert Marshall from the Wilderness Society in 1935 lobbyed the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, that things started to happen. Marshall proposed to turn Kings Canyon into not only a national park in the traditional sense but a wilderness area, limiting roads and hotels to an absolute minimum (Fox 1981: 213).

The concrete reason for Marshall's approach was a proposal from the Forest Service, a federal agency, to construct a major highway into the area. The Forest Service wanted to enhance the possibilities of hunting, grazing, mining, and logging in the area by making the region more accesible.

Ickes, regarded as a prominent conservationist,[10] was sympathetic to Marshall's proposal to make the Kings Canyon a new kind of national park and thus move the jurisdiction from the Forest Service to the National Park Service, an administrative body under his ministry. Thus, he approached the Sierra Club, the conservation organization closest to Kings Canyon, in order to get its support. The Sierra Club was at first hesitant to support the bill but eventually followed suit and supported the bill which then passed Congress in 1940. Finally, the sequel to the passing of this bill is also illustrative. In 1941 a highway to Copper Creek in the new Kings Canyon National Park was build without severe protests from the Sierra Club, a stand which later was severely criticised by the new leadership.[11]

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[10] See, for a biography, Strong (1990: 152-76).

[11] David Brower, executive director for the Sierra Club from 1953-69, has later concluded that "the Club's leaders too often has compromised on important issues. If the Club had stood firm in 1941, there would not now be a highway to Copper Creek in Kings Canyon National Park" (*Sierra*, May/June 1992, p. 91).

Thus, to the extent that one can talk about a cohensive political practice in the Sierra Club in this period, the organization relied most on a practice of political effectiveness. It restricted itself, however, only to deal with local issues, like Kings Canyon, because of a lack of resources. There was no basis in the organization for a long-term political practice, a practice of problematization.

In the second world war the activities in the Sierra Club were further turned down. A considerable share of the members, around 600, participated in the war, and that, of course, contributed to the reduction of activity in the organization.

After World War II, however, things started to change in the Sierra Club. Two books portended this change. L. M. Wolfe wrote a Pulitzer Prize winning biography of John Muir in 1945 and thereby provoked a revival of Muir's thinking. In 1948 Ansel Adams, a long time member of the Sierra Club,[12] published his photographs of the Sierra Nevada mountains, interspersed with quotations of Muir. This lead to a deepening regard for Muir's ideas on conservation and prepared the ground for a new phase in the history of the Sierra Club.

To sum up: The Sierra Club, after the death of John Muir and the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916, scaled down its political activities and focused on social activities, such as mountaineering. As a result it made only little use of the opportunities of the time to contribute to the establishment of conservation reforms. Especially in the 1930s with the reinvigoration of the conservation movement there was a number of cultural and political opportunities which the organization did not exploit. This recovery of the movement was, as earlier argued, partly a result of a growing cultural critique of America as a "business civilization" - materialistic and hostile to spiritual values - and partly a result of extended federal conservation programs. The Sierra Club did not, in any significant way, contribute to either this cultural critique or the federal programs.

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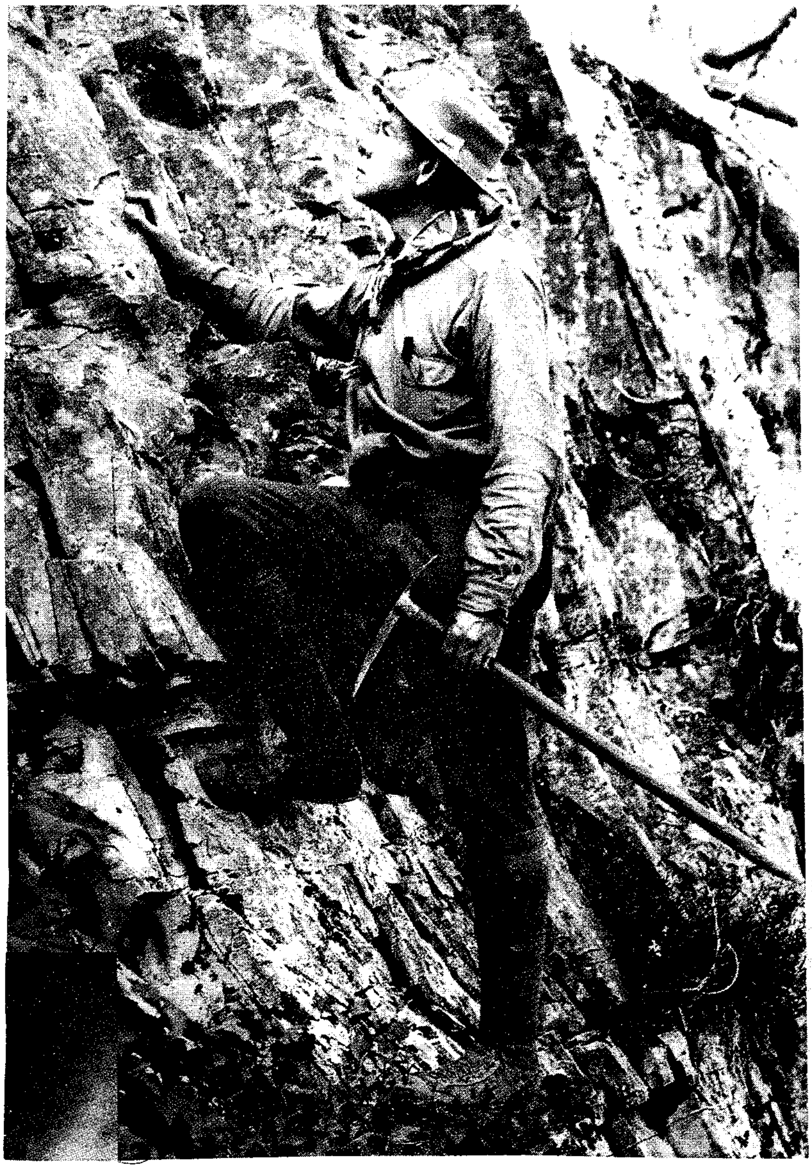
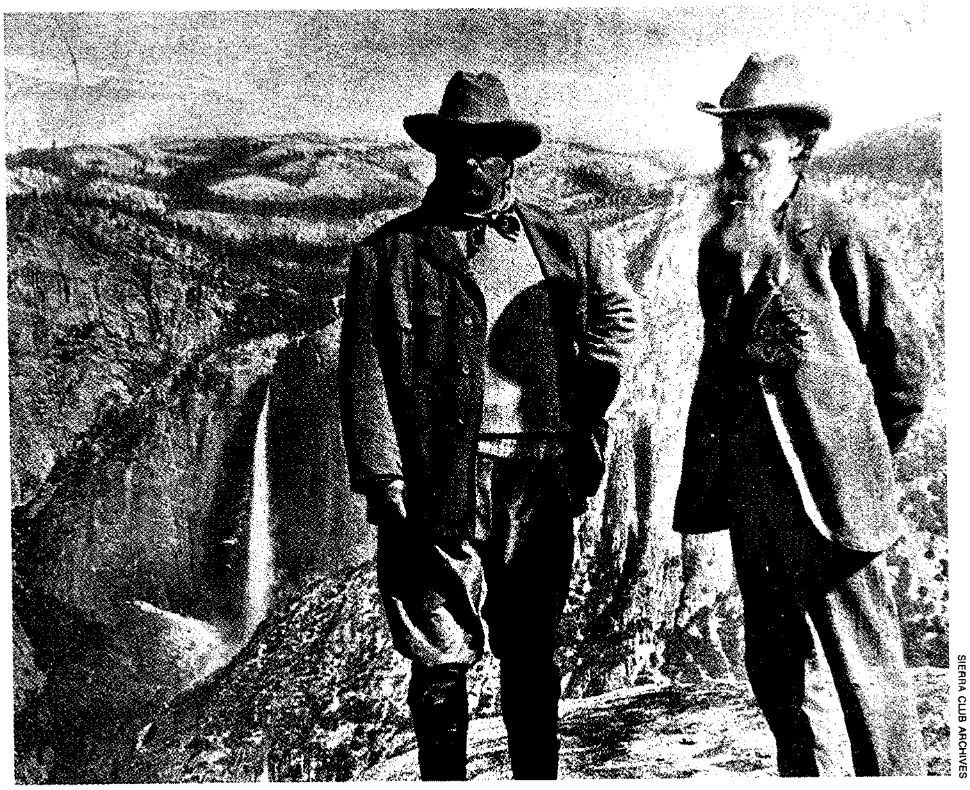
[12] For a description of Adams career and his influence on the American environmental movement, see Cahn (1979).



SIERRA CLUB ARCHIVES, BANCROFT LIBRARY

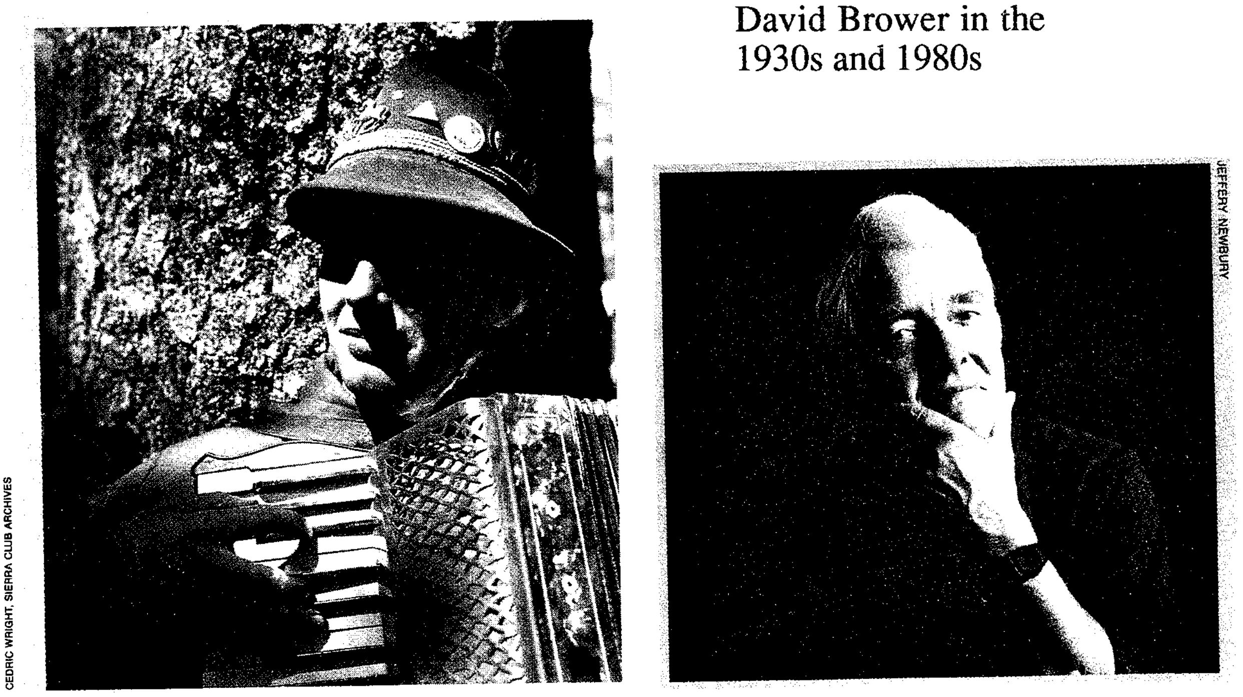
William Colby on one of his "High Trips" in the 1920s



SIERRA CLUB ARCHIVES

President Roosevelt and John Muir in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1903

David Brower in the 1930s and 1980s



CEDRIC WRIGHT, SIERRA CLUB ARCHIVES

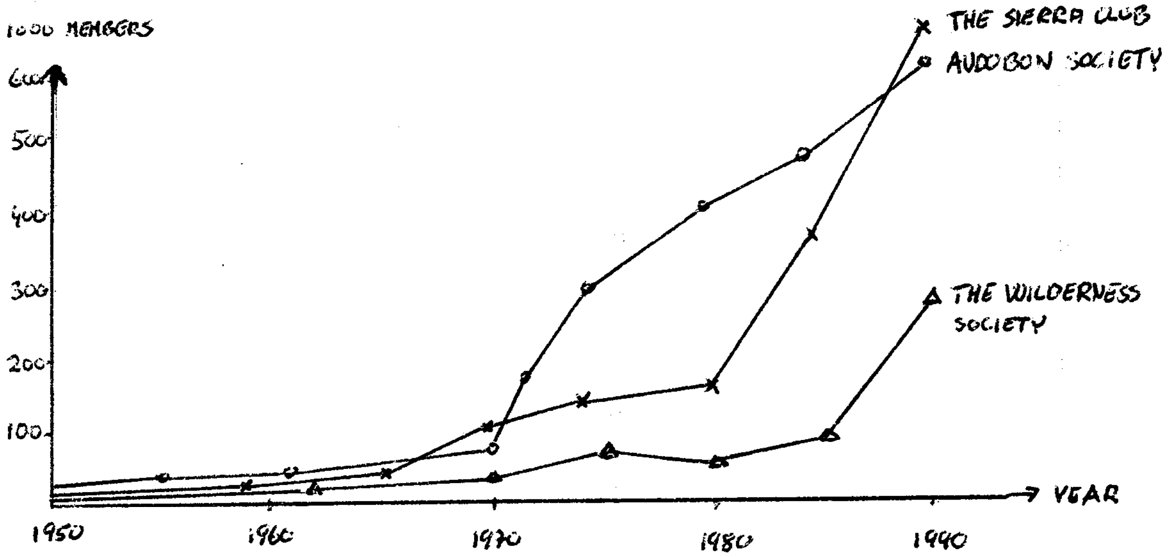
JEFFERY NEWBURY

The expansion phase, 1950-69

The period from 1950 to 1969 marks a vital transition for the Sierra Club. In 1950 the Sierra Club did not have chapters outside California, while in 1970 the Club chapters represented members in every U.S. state. Furthermore, in 1950 the Sierra Club only had 7000 members. That number had increased to 113.000 in 1970, as illustrated in table 5-2. Included in table 5-2 are - for comparative purposes - also the reported membership of two other major conservation organizations in the United States which have a history dating back before World War II.[13]

The Sierra Club membership, stable at around 3,000 in the consolidation phase, climbed to 20,000 in 1960, then 113,000 in 1970, 165,000 in 1980, and finally 600,000 in 1990. The most spectacular gains were in the 1980s, particular as a result of an aggressive membership drive, as I will show in chapter six. The general tendancy, though, has been a steady growth after World War II until the mid-1960s, and then a remarkable growth which not yet has stopped.

Table 5-2: Reported membership of three conservation organizations in the USA



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[13] These three conservation organizations are among the biggest in the United States. It is only National Wildlife Federation which has a higher membership. This organization has not been included in the table because it is not directly comparable. Contrary to Sierra Club, Audobon Society, and Wilderness Society, the membership of National Wildlife Federation is primarily based upon collective membership - local sportsmen's groups which pay an annual fee. Moreover, as Fox notes, "size is no index of effectiveness" in the case of National Wildlife Federation (Fox 1981: 262). The organization has seldom taken the lead in conservation struggles.

The table indicates that something extraordinary seems to have happened for the conservation movement in the USA in the mid-1960s. Until around 1965 the rise in membership was slow and steady in all organizations, and then suddenly the membership increases exponentially. That points to factors outside the specific organizations as being most important in the study of mobilization of members.

But still we cannot ignore the internal factors in the organizations. The table shows us that even if the three organizations have moved within a common trend significant differences still exist between the organizations. The Sierra Club has recruited most members; the Audobon Society was the biggest organization of the three until the 1980s where a (relative) stagnation occured; and the Wilderness Society has been the smallest of the three since its establishment in 1935 - today's membership is about half of that of the Sierra Club. This tells us that the organizations have used the opportunities of the time after the second world war in more or less effective ways, judged in terms of members. Of course there is alternative ways of measuring organizational efficiency, but the ability to attract members remains extremely important for the power of the organizations - both in terms of economic ressources and political credibility.

In the 1950s, the cultural conduciveness towards the claims of conservation organizations was rather low, and that, of course, influenced the political activity of these organizations. Generally, the conservation organizations were acting rather defensively, trying to prevent the established parks from being violated by developers. There was no basis at the time for major ideological changes and massive campaigns. The public, it seemed, was still mainly concerned with wilderness and the preservation of spectacular sceneries. The rise in car sales after the war and the increased possibilities of getting access to wilderness was a substantial factor in this ideological stand (Fox 1981: 281).

At the same time, the political opportunity structure changed slowly. The gentlemen agreements between political leaders and representatives of the conservation organizations, characteristic of the early twentieth century, came to play a minor role. The relationship between the national government and the organizations generally became more hostile, especially after the movement gained momentum in the early 1960s. This was first of all because the economic costs at stake were generally much higher than before and the government could not as a result as easily ignore the commercial interests and public costs.

The Sierra Club used these cultural and political opportunities rather effectively in this period and reemerged on the national scene as one of the leading conservation voices. A main reason for this effective usage of cultural and political opportunities was that a new and younger generation took over in the organization in the years after the war. The people they replaced tended to regard the Sierra Club as a closed gentleman's club. For them the organization was essentially a hobby, not an instrument for political change.

The new generation of political intellectuals had higher ambitions. They wanted to re-establish the Sierra Club as one of the leading conservation organizations in the country. The most prominent of these new political intellectuals was David Brower, a member since 1933. In 1952 he was hired as the Sierra Club's first executive director. Other conservation organizations had already hired professional staffs. But the Sierra Club resisted this development for a long period, clinging to the tradition of the amateur in conservation work (Strong 1990: 201).

Brower was an innovative and dynamic man and quickly established himself as the undisputed leader of the Sierra Club. A collegue of his has later described him as "a strongminded, very forceful and decisive man. He does what he thinks is right. If the Board of Directors does not agree, he does it anyway."[14]

Brower got a baptism of fire. At the time the Sierra Club was becoming increasingly involved in protecting the Dinosaur National Monument. It was threatened by a plan of the Department of the Interior, proposed in the late 1940s, to construct a dam and a hydroelectric facility within the boundaries of the park. The plan was a part of a package of projects by which the national government hoped to stimulate agricultural activities as well as urban and industrial growth in the Mountain States and the Southwest (Fox 1981: 281).

The conservation organizations had a difficult case. The plan was backed by local development interests and the Secretary of the Interior, Oscar Chapman, pushed for an approval of the project. Furthermore, the Dinosaur National Monument was a little-known preserved area in Utah, beyond the reach of good roads. Thus, the public had no direct knowledge of the area in question and only limited access.

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[14] Interview with Tom Turner, June 8, 1992, San Fransisco. Turner grew up with the Brower family in Berkeley Hills near San Francisco, and was later recruited to the Sierra Club's staff by Brower. Currently, Turner is working for the Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund. He is the author of several books about the Sierra Club: *Sierra Club: 100 Years of Protecting Nature*, San Fransisco 1992; and *Wild by Law: The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and the Places it has Saved*, San Fransisco 1990.

The Wilderness Society was the first conservation organization to engage itself fully in the struggle. The Sierra Club was more hesitant. It had in the period after Muir mostly been dealing with mountain climbing, skiing, and backpacking. Thus, the Sierra Club had to break with the tradition of the former period and construct a new organizational identity.

The new leadership under Brower needed a case exactly like Dinosaur National Monument to shake up the organization. After being hired as executive director Brower committed himself fully to the struggle, campaigning against the plan all over the country. A powerful symbol in his campaign became the Hetch Hetchy case and Muir's ideas on conservation. Brower effectively used the pictures of Hetch Hetchy - before and after the dam - and the image of Muir as a prophetic hero to convince people that history should not be allowed to repeat itself and the ideas of Muir neglected once more. Furthermore, Brower organized raft trips for journalists down the Green and Yampa rivers within the park, made two movies (*Wilderness River Trail* and *Two Yosemites*), and dedicated a special issue of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* to the scenic glories of Dinosaur.

Thus, a practice of problematization began in the mid-1950s to dominate the political activity of the Sierra Club, for the first time since the days of John Muir. The Sierra Club, through the campaign for Dinosaur National Monument, again became a substantial factor in shaping the public conception of wilderness and creating a sense of necessity for it. Another contributive factor in this development was the photographs of Ansel Adams. Adams was, as Brower, a part of the young generation that took over in the Sierra Club after the war.[15] He published in the 1950s and 1960s more than half a dozen books on the Sierra Nevada, filled with beautiful photographs of the nature in these mountains and, to contrast this beauty, a few photographs of the ugly side of our civilization. Nearly every child who was brought up in the United States after the war came to know these photographs and was influenced by the message they conveyed: wilderness is more than interesting vacation land. It represents spiritual and esthetic values, and it is our responsibility to preserve it for future generations.[16]

At the same time, however, a practice of political effectiveness also developed in the Sierra Club. This was mainly a result of the controversy over Dinosaur National Monument. The controversy was settled in 1955 in favour of the Sierra Club. The final compromise implied that the project would not violate any national park or monument. This result was, of course, a major victory for the Sierra Club. It suggested, however, that a professional staff was needed in future campaigns. The campaign simply had overburdened Brower and the few volunteers who had devoted time and money to the campaign.

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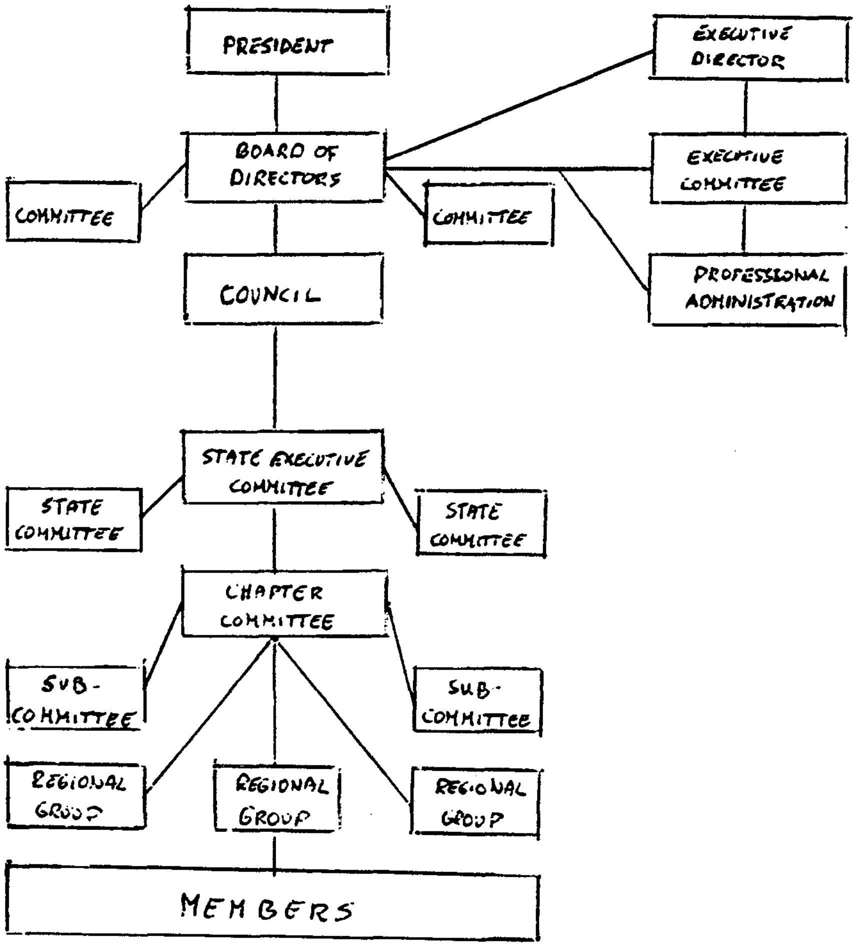
[15] Adams became a member in 1919 and a director (member of the board) in 1936. His influence, however, first became evident after the war when he suddenly was one of the most experienced members of the board.

[16] See, for an illustration of this conception of the impact of Adams' photographs, Justice W. O. Douglas forword to Adams, A. (1960): *This is the American Earth*, San Fransisco.

From the late 1950s the Sierra Club build up a professional department as a result of this campaign and a general tendancy in the movement to professionalize. The organizational form, as a consequence, changed rather fundamentally as it is shown in table 5-3.

Table 5-3: The new organizational form of the Sierra Club[17]

Voluntary department Professional department


PRESIDENT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE
PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION
COUNCIL
STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
STATE COMMITTEE
STATE COMMITTEE
CHAPTER COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE
REGIONAL GROUP
REGIONAL GROUP
REGIONAL GROUP
MEMBERS

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[17] This is a simplified illustration of the organizational form. There are literally hundreds of committees and regional groups in the Sierra Club today. Moreover, there are also certain State Committees and Chapter Committees which have small professional departments.

Since the late 1950s the organization has been divided into a voluntary and a professional department. This institutional development broke definetive with the old amateur tradition and, I would argue, made the organization more hierarchical and reduced the influence of grass-roots. According to the philosophy of the organization this is not the case. Michelle Perrault, president of the organization in the mid-1980s, has put it this way: "It is very clear that the staff does not create policy which does not exist. They bring it back to the Club for discussion. The volunteers speak to the Board of Directors that make the ultimate decision, the staff feeding the input on that."[18]

I would argue, however, that the staff not only serves to strengthen existing structures in the organization. The staff mainly serves the top-level of the organization and, as such, is instrumental in making the organization more top-governed. Moreover, the staff members in many cases use the job as a step in a career and as a result tend to emphasize effectiveness and results, not internal democracy (Dowie 1992).

In the 1960s the Sierra Club continued to use both a practice of problematization and a practice of political effectiveness. The main difference, however, was that the cultural conduciveness towards basic questions concerning Man's relationship with Nature was rising. These new questions were nurtured by changes that had occured in post-war America. First of all, there was a shift in production from products directly derived from nature to a new science-based and synthetic production system. As a result, a range of new materials were produced - plastics, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, household chemicals etc. - and the impact on nature of these synthetic products seemed increasingly problematic. Second, the society was becoming still more urbanized and people were confronted on a daily basis with what seemed like Man-made problems in nature. The problems with air pollution in big cities were only one type of example. Already in 1943 problems with the air quality were first noticed in Los Angeles and by 1957 it had been authoritatively traced to car exhausts. As the number of cars on highways and interstate networks grew and the air quality problem became still more evident, the social construction of "environmental problems" in modern societies was a likely result (Fox 1981: 301-2).

At the same time ecology developed into a particular branch of biological science and began to heavily influence the conception of Man's relationship with Nature. Contrary to biology, ecology stressed the "mysterious" symbotic interdependence of various species and

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[18] Interview, conducted in Berkeley, June 11, 1992.

Man's increasing interference in these fragile living systems. The focus was not, as earlier, on particular species and their ability to survive in an everchanging environment. Rather, the focus was on the capacity of the environment and the living systems to absorb the impact of human civilization. In short, ecology provided a perspective which highlighted the ways in which we as humans interact with nature and disturb the balance of nature, and in that sense it was a central factor in the social construction of environmentalism (Bramwell 1989).

The new ecological inspired notion of the relationship between Man and Nature was most powerfully brought to public attention in the writings of Rachel Carson. In 1962 she published *Silent Spring*, a book condemning the American pesiticide industry, particular its use of DDT. The main argument in the book was that the damaging possibilities of the spreading of pesticides, especially DDT, called for government intervention and restraints. The book became an immediate success; it was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 31 weeks, rare for a serious non-fiction book.

In the book she challenged the existing conservation discourse. She did not consider nature as a seperate realm outside society, rather she studied nature and society as two sides of the same coin. By doing this she reconceptualized the relations between "nature" and "society", stressing the interactions and interdependence of the two. In that sense she was one of the leading political intellectuals in the environmental movement in the 1960s.

The book sparked off the environmental movement in the United States earlier than elsewhere[19]. The public was, as decribed, conducive to the type of arguments presented by environmentalists, and Carson as a well-known and respected biologist lent the movement authority just when it needed it.

The old conservation organizations, such as the Sierra Club, reacted at first negatively to this new movement. The current chairman of the Sierra Club, Michael McCloskey, said in 1970 that "either a better synthesis of philosophy must develop or hard choices will have to be made".[20] The Sierra Club did not want to give up its hard-won position in the conservation area.

Despite the fact that the Sierra Club did not identify itself in the 1960s with the new environmental movement it still benefited from it in terms of membership. The growing awareness in the public about environmental issues could not avoid to result in more Sierra Club members. By the mid-1960s the Sierra Club was regarded as the most well-known and influential of the conservation organizations. Thus, a certain spill-over effect was to be expected.

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[19] See, for further details, chapter 7.

[20] From an editorial in the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, June 1970. Quoted from Gottlieb (1993: 108).

The Sierra Club became generally known to the public through its publication programme which started in the 1950s and mushroomed in the 1960s. Among the first publications were the Exhibit Format Book and the Sierra Club Calendar. This introduction of the large formats to make better use of the colour photographes of especially Adams became a moderate success. But as the publication program developed further - with the two first Sierra Club books, *This is the American Earth* (1960) and *In Wildness is the Preservation of the World* (1962) - and the lacquered pages caught the public's attention the success was evident (Turner 1992).

Hence, the Sierra Club continued in the 1960s to make use of a practice of problematization. At the same time, however, a practice of political effectiveness was further developed in the organization. First of all, the Sierra Club played an essential role in the adoption in the 1960s of **litigation** as a political instrument.[21] Historically, litigation had not been playing a decisive role before the 1960s in the conservation struggle in the United States. Today, however, litigation play a significant role in the political practice of the major environmental organizations. More direct than publishing and education, often quicker than legislation, litigation offers the environmental organizations an effective new tool (Gottlieb 1993: 138).

The power of this political strategy was clearly demonstrated in one of the pioneer cases, the case of Mineral King. Mineral King is a u-shaped valley typical of the Sierra Nevada, carved by glaciers and forested on its lower slopes. It was not included in Sequoia National Park, created in 1890, because it did not include giant sequoias growing west and north of Mineral King at somewhat lower altitudes. In 1926 when the park after a major campaign from the Sierra Club was enlarged Mineral King was again left out.

Consequently, when in the 1960s the Forest Service looked for suitable areas for development as alpine skiing resorts it was drawn to Mineral King. The demand for skiing opportunities was big because the nearest ski resort was eight hours by car away from Los Angeles and people became increasingly interested in skiing. Mineral King was much closer, and its scenery was spectacular. After having published a prospectus and request for proposals in 1965, the Walt Disney Cooperation was accepted as the best bid for development of Mineral King. The Disney plan was very ambitious: the corporation promised to build the world's greatest ski resort. It would be six times as big as Squaw Valley, the local rival of leading resorts as Sun Valley, Aspen, and Chamonix. The Sierra Club announced its opposition to the project and the battle started.

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[21] For a detailed discussion of the major environmental litigation initiated by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, a seperate institution under the Sierra Club, see Hoffman, J, D, (1977): "The Club, the Cause and the Courts", in *Sierra Club Bulletin*, vol. 62.

It did not seem like fair odds. The state's governor favored the project, as did the state legislature, the state highway commision, the state's major newspapers, the president of the United States, the Secretary of Agriculture, local congressmen, and both California senators. But by 1978 all that had changed, and Mineral King was added to Sequoia National Park. The decisive factor in this political proces was litigation.

First the Sierra Club tried to pursue the traditional means, but it became clear when Interior Secretary Stewart Udall gave the last approval of the project in 1967 that the only place to turn was the courts. In 1968, then, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit to prevent the development of Mineral King. The crucial issue, though, was whether the Sierra Club had the right to press charges at all. In order to establish the necessary "standing to sue", the courts held that injury to financial interests had to be demonstrated. The Sierra Club argued: "If the Sierra Club may not be heard then who speaks for the future generations for whose benefit Congress intended the fragile bowls and valleys to be preserved?" (Turner 1990: 16).

The court ruled against the Sierra Club but left it open for the Club to go to the Court of Appeals. The Club had been trying for a too broad affirmation of standing - that it had a right to defend public lands simply because one of its principal purposes as an organization was to defend public lands. The litigation proces went on, and the Sierra Club narrowed its claims by demonstrating a direct interest by its members in the particular case. The new complaint clearly stated examples of members that frequently hiked in the valley and members who owned property in and near the valley.

Pending trial, preliminary injunctions halting all further work on the project were issued by the court. From 1969 the project stopped and it never got beyond that. This indicated the potential power of litigation in the conservation and environmental cause. First, it allows, in principle, groups and citizens affected by the development to confront far more powerful adversaries in industry and government, and it forces them to play by common rules. In reality, though, only affluent citizens and established organizations as the Sierra Club can effort to use the legal system. Second, it can prolong battles beyond fixed dates, such as we saw in the case of Mineral King. This enables environmental groups to keep on drawing the attention of the public to the dispute and thus put more pressure on politicians and developers.

In the case of Mineral King litigation clearly bought time for the political proces to work in favour for the Sierra Club. By 1975 Mineral King was one of the most prominent national conservation issues. All major organizations had endorsed the idea of adding the valley to Sequoia National Park, and legislation to accomplish the transfer was rapidly gaining supporters. Finally, Mineral King was added to Sequoia National Park in 1978. Thus, litigation proved in this period to be a potent tool for environmental organizations in general and, as I will show in chapter seven, was a main factor in constructing the organizational identity and strategy of the Sierra Club in the 1970s and onward.

Hence, the Sierra Club was the innovator of various forms of political tactics in especially the 1960s and transformed itself in this period into one of the leading conservation organizations in the country. It did not, however, make full use of the cultural opportunities of the time. Instead of sizing up the cultural situation in the 1960s and adjust its policies, it clinged to an out-dated perception of conservation.

This is clearly demonstrated in the fuss around the "firing" of Brower in 1969. The particular reason to the dismissal of Brower was a controversy over Diablo Canyon north of Santa Barbara in California. The controversy centered around a plan by Northern California's Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) to build a nuclear power plant on the central Californian coast in the late 1960s. PG&E at first suggested a spot near Santa Maria that had been considered as a state park. Sierra Club protested and urged the company to look elsewhere for a reactor site. The company then suggested Diablo Canyon north of Santa Barbara, on the last sizable, deserted stretch of the central Californian coast, and the Board of Directors endorsed it in 1966 (Turner 1992).

At this stage the Board of Director's major concern was the placing of the construction site. The problems of nuclear waste management, reactor safety, and nuclear proliferation had not yet been properly debated in the Sierra Club. As a consequence the Board of Directors chose to follow existing policy recommendations in the Sierra Club and endorse the Diablo site because it was outside any preserved area. Moreover, the Sierra Club did not want to appear to unreasonable by opposing any project that enhanced progress and hoped by their decision to gain momentum in negotiations.

However, Brower became increasingly worried, not about the site, but the larger questions about nuclear contamination and waste disposal. As a result he urged like-minded members to campaign for the 1968 board elections in order to reverse the organization's approval of the site. Four new members, all opposed to the Diablo approval, were elected and the new board reversed its decision.

This decision lead to a larger quarrel about Brower's leadership. Many members felt he reigned to supreme and did not pay respect to the democratic traditions in the organization. Eventually, the tension between the critics of Brower and Brower's wing broke out in open conflict and the matter was submitted to the general membership. Apart from Brower's style as a leader the decisive issue in the election was the Diablo question. Brower lost the election by a narrow margin and forced to leave he resigned in 1969 along with a few staff members.[22] Moreover, in the same election the Diablo site was again approved and the construction of the plant could go on.

As this case illustrates, the Sierra Club might have gained credibility in top-level negotiations in the short term by their decision to endorse the Diablo site, but in the long run it certainly lost momentum. The Sierra Club would have hold a stronger position if it, as suggested by Brower, had followed a practice of problematization and lead the American environmental movement in this crucial issue from the very beginning. But such policy considerations did not persuade the members in 1969. Brower was fired and the organization approved the construction of a nuclear power plant at the Diablo site.

The critique of nuclear power became one of the dominant themes in the environmental debate in the 1970s. The frightening image of the atomic mushroom cloud and the fear of global annihilation became in the United States, as elsewhere, powerful symbols of the environmental struggle. Two events contributed to this development. In March 1975 an accident occured in one of the world's largest nuclear reactors at Brown's Ferry, Alabama. Then, in March 1979, in a plant at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, a stuck valve overheated the reactor core and raised fears of meltdown and radiation poisoning; hundred thousand nearby residents were evacuated. A new phase in the history of conservationism and environmentalism had begun, a phase in which the Sierra Club had to play an active political part in order to keep its credibility.

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[22] Thus, officially he was not fired. Brower resigned himself in May 1969 and remained a member of the Club. Later, he was even appointed Honorary President of the Club. In reality, though, he was forced to leave.

Summary

The Sierra Club has changed tremendously since its formative period around the turn of the century. Today it has more than 650.000 members spread all over the USA. In 1914, when John Muir died, it had less than 2000 members, all situated around the San Fransisco area. This remarkable growth is not merely a result of structural changes in society. Nor is it purely a result of organizational efficiency. Rather, as it has been argued here, it is the result of the interplay between organization and given opportunity structures in society. The Sierra Club has, especially in the first and third phase of its history, effectively used cultural and political opportunities to mobilize public support and produce political results.

I have aimed at showing that there is no linear pattern of change within the organization. The political practice of the organization has been constructed in relation to different periods defined by distinct external and internal factors. Externally, I have focused on the existence of cultural themes in society and the openness of the political system towards environmental claims. Internally, emphasis has been on the capacity of the Sierra Club to respond to these opportunity structures.

In the first phase the Sierra Club favoured, first, a practice of political effectiveness and, later, a practice of problematization. The decisive factor in this strategic choice seemed to have been the political opportunity structure. In the first part of the period the Sierra Club was succesful in lobbying Congress and the government and there was therefore no obvious cause to use more unconventional means of influence. In the second part of the period, however, the lobbying efforts of the Sierra Club failed and the organization felt a need to problematize the basis on which decision-making rested. In the following years the organization changed both identity and strategy. It emphasized in its campaigns its movement identity and used, not lobbying, but publishing and the media to raise public consciousness.

In the second phase the Sierra Club followed neither a practice of political effectiveness nor a practice of problematization. It was in this period more a social club than a political organization. For me, this points to the importance of organizational resources in the shaping of political activity. Especially the role of political intellectuals seem to be essential here. What is remarkable about this period is that the Sierra Club had the organizational apparatus together with cultural and political opportunities to promote their views, but nevertheless did very little to influence decision-making. What was lacking seemed to be people who could give the organization a sense of mission and ideas about how to work politically.

In the third phase the Sierra Club pursued both a practice of political effectiveness and a practice of problematization. This period is perhaps the best example of how these two forms of political action can support each other and work in the same direction. The Sierra Club, it seemed, decided from case to case whether it would use conventional or unconventional channels of influence to promote its ends. This was only possible because the organization at that time still was rather small and unbureaucratic, and the organization still was not integrated into the political system.

In the 1970s and onward the Sierra Club followed mainly a practice of political effectiveness, as I will show in the next chapter. This was first of all a result of the fact that the political opportunity structure became much more open than before, and the organization suddenly got a number of new opportunities to influence legislation and litigation. At the same time, however, the identity and strategies of the organization were heavily influenced by its eventful history.

6

The Sierra Club in a contemporary landscape

The present phase in the political history of the Sierra Club has primarily lead to a practice of political effectiveness. Through the 1970s and 1980s the Sierra Club has become increasingly professionalized and institutionalized, settling into large buildings, large staffs, and large budgets. This has left little room for grass-root initiatives and unconventional means of influencing decision-making.

The professionalization of the Sierra Club and the development towards a practice of political effectiveness was, I will argue, first of all a response to the emergence of a much more open political opportunity structure in the United States. This new opennes is clearly illustrated by the fact that the United States in 1970, followed by many other countries, created a seperate national agency for environmental problems. As I will show this institutional development, along with the emergence of new and complex environmental problems, lead to the construction of new forms of political effectiveness in the Sierra Club.

The recent political development in the Sierra Club has, however, also been shaped by the history of the organization. No organizations with a history as long as the Sierra Club's can avoid being influenced by its past, and this is in particular true for the Sierra Club. The organization is still heavily influenced by its background in early conservation struggles despite the fact that it now appears to work as a modern environmental organization.

The chapter is based on political analyses of the American environmental movement (Gottlieb 1993; Sale 1993, Dowie 1992), documentary material (volumes of *Sierra*; *Sierra Club National News Report*; *Grassrotts Sierra*, Merrow 1992), seven interviews with Sierra Club leaders, staff members and ordinary members in both the headquarters in San Fransisco and the legislative office in Washington DC[1], and two interviews with environmental activists from other groups.

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[1] In 1992 I was a visiting scholar at the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at University of California, Berkeley. During the stay I conducted five interviews with

Opportunities for environmental action

The enlargement of the political opportunity structure in the 1970s was largely a result of a general rise in the cultural conduciveness towards environmental claims, unmatched by any earlier period. Environmental concerns rose from an obscure fad of a small minority in the early 1960s to a widely respected and accepted principle of national policy in the 1970s. This development was, as earlier argued, the result of a rapid industrialization and modernization in post-war America which caused a number of changes in nature, changes which ecologists like Rachel Carson conceptualized in terms of "environmental problems".[2]

The growing public support for environmentalism led President Nixon to establish the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970. Starting with a staff of 6000 and a budget of 455 million dollars, the EPA grew during the 1970s to nearly 13,000 staff members and a budget of 5,6 billion dollars. This made it one of the largest federal agencies in the United States.[3]

The cornerstone for the legislation of the 1970s was the National Environmental Policy Act, which was signed into law on January 1, 1970. Though important legislation had been made in the 1960s on issues such as air quality, water quality, and solid waste disposal, it was not until NEPA that a more fully developed environmental legislative agenda was introduced.

During the 1970s eighteen far ranging and complex environmental Acts passed Congress. These included the Clean Air Act (1970), the Water Pollution Control Act (1972), the Endangered Species Act (1973), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976) (to control hazardous wastes), and the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (1978). The major environmental organizations, like the Sierra Club, were generally pleased with these initiatives from the federal state. They offered in their view the environment the highest degree of protection and, as I will show, also served to strengthen the position of these organizations in relation to grass-root groups.

Characteristic of the environmental Acts were that they relied upon "objective" scientific data, not moral values. Where science and

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staff members and volunteers in the Sierra Club. Then, in October 1993, I visited Washington DC for two weeks where I conducted two interviews with staff members in the Washington office.

[2] Carson's book was, of course, not the only one that effectively conveyed the environmental message in the 1960s. Other books include *Science and Survival* (1967) by Barry Commoner, *The Population Bomb* (1968) by Paul Ehrlich, and *The Costs of Economic Growth* (1967) by E. J. Mishan.

[3] Only the Veterans Administration and the Office of Personel Management were bigger. See Sale (1993: 36).

esthetics in the conservation discourse had been the major reference points, science in the 1970s became the authoritative source of knowledge.

Thus, the green case has become increasingly tied to science. Today environmentalism is first of all a matter of fact, not moral dispute. This is clearly illustrated in the political process surrounding the passing of environmental bills. A particular illustrative example of this has been the political fuss stemming from the Endangered Species Act. In 1990, for instance, a proposal to build a 200 million dollar Mount Graham Internation Observatory was opposed by citizens who feared it would mean the end of the Mount Graham red squirrel, an endangered Arizona rodent (Merrow 1992: 25). Crucial in this political struggle was science. Only scientific experts could decide whether this proposal would, or would not, threaten the survival of this particular species. Another, and more well-known example, is the northern spotted owl which has become a symbol of the struggle between environmental and economic interests. The owl received official status and the right to protection as an endangered species in June 1990, after twenty years of political and scientific wrangling. This decision by the Endangered Species Committee prevented the Bureau of Land Management, a public agency, from selling off large sections of Oregon old-growth forests for clear-cutting and, as a result, few jobs were created in the timber industry in the North-West. Science, undoubtedly, played an essential role in this political process.[4]

Scientific facts, from my perspective, are not the ultimate truth but social constructions. In my view, things which count as factual observations tend to shift as scientific ideas change so that what, at one time, would have been regarded as hypothetical come later to be regarded as the pure truth.[5]

For the Sierra Club, though, this discussion is academic. In order to play an active role in todays regulatory process the Sierra Club simply has to make much more use of scientific experts than before. The environmental issues of the 1970s and the 1980s, as described, to a much larger extent required scientific expertise. Endangered species were only one issue of many which were based on scientific findings. Others include groundwater contamination, deforestation, acid rain, global warming, loss of topsoil, toxic smog, filling of wetlands, nuclear waste disposal polluted fisheries, elimination of landfills, ozone depletion etc. In order to deal effectively with these kinds of problems major organizations such as the Sierra Club had to enlarge their professional staffs, they could not as earlier rely mainly upon committed volunteers. Grass-root groups, however, seldom have the resources to analyze and respond effectively to these problems. Instead they choose a practice of problematization, as I will show later.

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[4] The Endangered Species Committee is the only group officially allowed to take socio-economic factors, such as jobs, into consideration in such rulings. Theoretically, the decision-making process thus could include social as well as scientific factors. In reality, however, this committee does not play a significant role. It has only convened twice since its creation in 1978.

[5] See, for a further discussion, Yearley 1991.

Another contributive factor to the professionalization of the Sierra Club was that the powerful industrial lobby in Washington was very active in shaping the new laws and, as a result, these new laws often had unclear provisions which in turn created government agencies with unclear mandates. This made industries capable of effectively exploiting all the loopholes in the legislation and undermine the intentions of the law. The Sierra Club, along with other of the major environmental organizations, felt a pressing need to professionalize so that they could better respond to and shape the new legislations and be more instrumental in the implementation of the policies (Gottlieb 1993: 124-36).

The new practice of political effectiveness

In the early 1970s the organizations co-operated by using the same lobbyists, but eventually all the big environmental organizations got their own offices with their own staff in Washington. In the case of the Sierra Club this development lead to a shift in focus. The Washington office continually made the Board of Directors aware of the significance of the political controversies in and around Capitol Hill and the board responded by giving priority to campaigns related to these controversies.[6]

The development towards a practice of political effectiveness made the major environmental organizations capable of playing a more active role in the legislative process but it also lead to less confrontational tactics. During the 1970s these organizations became increasingly absorbed by the operation and maintenance of the federal policy system itself, and avoided to take radical stands that would harm their chances in negotiations. The philosophy of the time seemed to be

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[6] This is based on an interview with a staff member at the Washington Office, October 18, 1993. At that time the Sierra Club concentrated on a campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement. The campaign failed and NAFTA passed Congress in November 1993.

"that's the way the game is played in the big time, and the crumbs are, after all, big-time crumbs" (Sale 1993: 57).

Observers have called this development "the Washingtonization" of the major environmental organization (Sale 1993: 55). On the one hand, this centralization enhanced the possibilities of the organizations to influence legislation and produce political results. On the other hand, though, it created a severe legitimacy problem. The major organizations were in this period increasingly attacked by grass-roots, as I will show more in detail later, for having a "top-down" approach to environmental problems and of "cooptation". This last accusation was nurtured by the fact that several leaders of the organizations received central positions in the administration, especially under Carter in the late 1970s (Gottlieb 1993: 130).

The criticism of grass-roots did not, however, affect the political practice of the organizations at the time. Those organizations which focused the most on the lobbying efforts in Washington also at the time had most success in terms of memberships. Especially new organizations such as the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund, which were dominant forces in the professionalization in the 1970s, had huge membership gains. Wilderness Society, on the other hand, did not follow the professionalization trend and suffered from it in terms of members (Gottlieb 1993: 155).

The Sierra Club was reluctant to follow this trend in the 1970s. The lobbying efforts in Washington and the centralization tendancy did not fit well with the Club's identity as a grass-root governed organization based at the West-coast - as the only one of the major organizations.[7] The image of John Muir and the "devoted volunteer" still prevailed in the organization. Moreover, there was a general reluctance in the board in the early 1970s to vest too much authority in staff leadership, owing to the Brower controversy. Thus, the Sierra Club tried to resist the powerful professionalization tendencies until the late 1970s (Gottlieb 1993: 148-51).

In the 1980s, however, the Sierra Club turned into a much more expertise-oriented and staff-based organization. It was mainly important policy gains of the small Sierra Club lobby in Washington which were instrumental in the construction of this form of political organization. The most important of these was The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservations Act which was passed in 1980, largely as a result of the Sierra Club lobby's efforts. The act resulted in another 103 million acres was added to the federal wilderness system (Turner 1992).

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[7] Friends of the Earth, founded in 1969 by Brower, also had its headquarters in San Francisco until 1985 when they moved to Washington. Brower, opposing the decision, resigned from the board complaining that the organization was becoming "just another lobbying group". See, Sale (1993: 54).

The culmination of the enlarged Sierra Club lobby's efforts occured in the mid-1980s. The environmental organizations were at that time forced in the defensive by the Reagan administration, and tried as a countermove to unite forces. Robert Allen, an executive director of the Kendall Foundation and a major funder of environmental programs, in 1981 brought together the executive directors of ten of the biggest environmental organizations to discuss possibilities to co-ordinate their efforts. These ten organizations later became known as The Big Ten and include the Sierra Club, National Resources Defense Council, The Audobon Society, The Wilderness Society, Defenders of Wildlife, National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Policy Institute, National Parks Association, Environmental Defense Fund, and Izaak Walton League. More radical environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Action and Earth First! were not invited to participate (Dowie 1992; Gottlieb 1993; Sale 1993).

The discussion at the meeting resulted in a co-operative strategy that lasted until the end of the Reagan administration. The organizations formed a "B-team" of their top-lobbyists, they conducted joint research projects, they published policy recommendations such as the 1986 report *An Environmental Agenda for the Future* etc. In short, these organizations aimed at forming a visible power center in the capital which could help soften the position of the Reagan administration in its second term. From the point of view of grass-roots, however, this co-operative strategy was an extreme example of centralization and professionalization within the movement.

A concrete result of the B-team's work was an aggressive campaign against Reagan's first Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, which both lead to huge membership gains for most of the big organizations (particularly the Sierra Club) and Watt's resignation in 1983. Watt was an easy identifiable target with his extreme right-wing position and functioned in this respect as a common focus for the Big Ten.[8] This only serves to illustrate that membership campaigns are most effective when a dangerous enemy can be constructed and a particular organization in the same discursive move can be constructed as the rescuer.

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[8] For a more detailed description of the position of the Sierra Club, see Reed, N. P. (1981): "In the Matter of Mr. Watt", in *Sierra*, vol 66, July-August.

Electoral strategies is a form of political action parallel to that of lobbying. It was adopted in the late 1970s by the Sierra Club, partly by the same reasons as in the case of lobby work. But it was not before the late 1980s that this electoral approach became a substantial part of the Sierra Club tactics. According to Michelle Perrault, a former president of the Sierra Club, it has contributed to the power of the organization:

> *"Not every environmental group goes that route. So that gives us additional power. That is why many congressional leaders will say that the Sierrra Club is one of the strongest groups because we exert that leadership. Politicians need the endorsement because we have such a good name".*[9]

The 650,000 members of the Sierra Club obviously constitute a major factor in any election, if they vote together. In recent years, the Sierra Club has intensified its campaigns around elections with the result that members begin to vote according to the recommendations of the organization. One member has explained it this way:

> *"they help me vote on different measures. I know if the Sierra Club says this is a good candidate or this is an important conservation measure then I vote the way they recommend."* [10]

The Sierra Club has also enforced its electoral work by establishing political action committees to solicit funds for direct electoral work. Furthermore, the Sierra Club has set up computerized indexes of its membership lists by congressional district to better target campaigns in key congressional elections (Sale 1993: 53).

Common to these electoral strategies are the reliance on "the good name" of the Sierra Club. Only because the Sierra Club represents a political authority for many people, a speaking tube for nature itself, is this political strategy plausible. This is also why the Sierra Club has distanced itself from the radical parts of the environmental movement. Radical groups using radical means could compromise "the good name" of the organization and harm its possibilities in electoral work. This ideological move was clearly illustrated in 1990 when the Sierra Club tried, by all means, to make it clear to the public that Earth First!, a radical environmental group, had nothing to do with the Sierra Club (Merrow 1992: 27). Earth First! at the time was associated with radical tactics like knocking spikes into boles of old trees to prevent the cutting down of old-growth forests in the North-West (which could lead to the mutilation of forest-workers).

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[9] Interview with Michele Perrault, June 11, 1992, San Francisco.

[10] Interview, June 16, 1992. Berkeley, California.

The Sierra Club has, however, one major barrier in electoral work. It does not have the financial means that other interest groups have (trade associations, labour unions, professional groups etc.).[11] It relies upon its status as a representative for a common interest in society.

To counterbalance the financial strength of other groups the big environmental organizations are forced to co-operate. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is a prominent example of an institution that try to serve all environmental organizations. It first of all make listings of legislators with anti-environmental records which the environmental organizations can use in their campaigns.

An illustration of the effectiveness of this form of political strategy is the assessments by LCV of the environmmental records of the Democratic presidential candidates in 1992. Bill Clinton, the forthcoming president, came in last in this listing. This assessment made it clear that to get the environmental vote Bill Clinton had to adopt more substantial environmental policies. He soon did. In May 1992, three months after the LCV ranks, Clinton launched a major debate on the environment attacking what he saw as "the broken promises of President Bush".[12] Moreover, his choice as running mate, senator Al Gore from Tennessee, a well-known environmentalist,[13] signalled at the time a move in an environmental direction (Sale 1993: 91-2).

In general, though, the electoral strategy has proven its limits, as described in chapter four. The 1990 and 1992 elections demonstrated that the financial strength of corporations is a major barrier. Moreover, the election of green candidates did not always mean the passage of green legislation.

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[11] The Campaign Finance Law of 1974 put a lid of 5000 dollars on Political Action Committee contributions to each candidate. But corporations have found ways to bypass this regulation. See, Sale (1993: 90-92).

[12] *Sierra Club National New Report,* Vol. 24, no. 10, p. 3.

[13] Gore is in this respect perhaps most known as the author of *Earth in the Balance* (1993), a well-received book on environmental problems. In addition to that, however, he has written numerous articles and held a number of speeches about environmental problems. He has also written the foreword to the book of Susan D. Merrow, a former Sierra Club President, in which he states, before becoming vice-president(!), that "I have come to believe we must take bold and unequivocal action: We must make the rescue of the environment the central organizing principle for civilization" (Merrow 1992: xiv).

Litigation offeres a more direct appoach. The Sierra Club was, as earlier described, one of the pioneers in the 1960s in developing this strategy. In the 1970s and 1980s it intensified this form of approach. In 1971 it established its own seperate law department, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF). The board wanted full-time professional lawyers to make sure that the organization sounded legal worthy and did not pursue passionate causes which would not work in court (Turner 1990).

The majority of the other environmental organizations did not follow suit. Only the Natural Resources Defence Council, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the National Wildlife Federation have legal departments today. The other environmental organizations use in many cases the SCLDF to represent them in court. It was set up as a seperate organization in order to be able to take tax-reductible contributions, a privilege that was taken away from the the Sierra Club by president Lyndon Johnson in the heated debates in the 1960s.[14]

The lawsuits of legal-defense organizations, such as SCLDF, were mainly directed towards offenders of environmental laws. In the 1980s this resulted in a total of 300 convictions involving nearly 100 corporations (Sale 1993: 89). In addition to this a number of lawsuits were directed, with shifting success, towards federal agencies, particularly the Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency for not implementing the laws.

Litigation thus has been a major factor in the construction of todays political practice in an organization like the Sierra Club. But, despite the victories, this strategy has its limitations. Corporations have become increasingly combative during the 1980s and early 1990s and use vast amounts of money to fight environmental cases.

Conflicts within the Sierra Club

At the grass-roots level this development towards a practice of political effectiveness and a centralization in the major environmental organizations provoked a strong response. Many environmentalists felt that the big organizations had compromized to much on their ideas and as a consequence organized themselves in alternative groups critical of mainstream environmentalism.

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[14] This blow, though, was anticipated and its effects were partly ward off by the creation of the Sierra Club Foundation in 1960.

The most wellknown of these alternative groups is probably Earth First! It was established in 1980 by Dave Foreman and has since its formation advocated a more radical tactic than that of the major organizations, including less reliance on regulatory legislation and more direct confrontation with polluters at the local level. The group, according to Dave Foreman, was decided to make no compromise in the environmental struggle: "We - this generation of humans - are at our most important juncture since we came out of the trees six million years ago. It is our decision, ours today, whether Earth continues to be a marvelously living, diverse oasis in the blackness of space, or whether the "charismatic megafauna" of the future will consist of Norway Rats and cockroaches" (Foreman 1991: 2).

Earth is constructed in this discourse as the repository of three and a half billion years of evolution, of flow of life, and is in this sense of intrinsic value, nearly divine. Humans have no right to govern this divinity: "We, as human beings, as members of industrial civilization, have no divine mandate to pave, conquer, control, or use every square inch of this planet. ... we have a right to be here, yes, but not everywhere, all at once" (Foreman 1991:4).

Through the 1980s Earth First! represented the most visible environmental alternative to big organizations like the Sierra Club which concentrated on policy efforts on the federal level of government. Earth First! apparently did not compromise, as the more professionalized organizations, in its efforts to create a more clean environment. These efforts, however, found other organizational forms in the early 1990s when Earth First! splintered into several rival groups as a result of an increasing pressure from the outside, first of all in form of FBI infiltration and a car-bombing of Earth First! activists[15] (Sale 1993: 67).

The criticism from radical groups like Earth First! has not directly influenced the construction of a political identity and practice in the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has experienced its most spectacular membership gains during the 1980s and today stands out as one of the most succesful environmental organizations in the United States. Indirectly, however, the critique from radical grass-root groups like Earth First! has created a legitimacy problem within the organization. The Sierra Club, in its own image, is a grass-root organization which has its basis on the local level of society. When groups like Earth First! accuse the Sierra Club for being to enclosed in a formal and centralized way of making environmental politics, it is thus a severe critique.

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[15] It has never been proven who was responsible for the car-bombing which severely injured two activists, Darryl Cherney and Judi Bari. Likewise, the circumstances around the "FBI-infiltration" is not clear. The case has never been thoroughly investigated (Merrow 1992: 23-27).

The political dilemma within the Sierra Club, caused by groups like Earth First!, was clearly illustrated in the "Redwood Summer" in 1990, one of the last protest initiatives of Earth First! Redwood Summer was an attempt to prevent clear-cutting in the ancient forests of the American North-West by using college students and others across the nation to participate in mass nonviolent disobedience in the mode of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The Sierra Club did not participate in this demonstration. In fact, it did not want to be associated with it at all and moved, after advice of its lawyers, its local chapter away from the office space it shared with Earth First! in northern California. This created severe tensions within the Sierra Club: "Some members of our Redwood Chapter, caught up in the excitement all around them, were demanding that Sierra took a more visible posture. Others were calling for us to distance ourselves from Earth First! - and the farther the better" (Merrow 1992: 28).

This points to the fact that the American environmental movement today seems scattered in a wide range of organizations with few common interests. Some organizations, like the Sierra Club, focus on the central level of government and design their strategies on that basis, while other organizations like Earth First! emphasize work on the decentral level of society and radical forms of action.

The Sierra Club has never really challenged the established rules of the political game. Fundamental to the Sierra Club's ideology has been the pragmatic idea that conservation is compatible with the principles of capitalist society. Hence, in the beginning of the century Muir argued that wilderness could enhance the American standard of living by offering the citizens the possibility for themselves to experience the spectacular natural sceneries. Later David Brower put it the following way: "A succesful nation ought to be able to set aside a reserve, not of money for a rainy day, but of wilderness for a rainy century - and enjoy it as wilderness" (Brower 1960: v). The notion was that if America was to ignore, for utilitarian purposes, the part of its land which is still wilderness, then the nation truly is a poor nation.

Thus, I would argue that the political practice of the Sierra Club has only affected the logic of industrial society to a small extent. Nature conservation has been constructed as something which had to do with remote areas, exotic animals and plants etc. It had only little to do with the everyday life of the majority of American citizens. An illustrative example of this is that some of the wildest mountain areas in the world, the Sierra Nevada, co-exist with one of the most populated and polluted areas in the world, such as Los Angeles. Nature is reserved for particular designated areas while civilization grows, rather undisturbed, outside. This state of affairs is acceptable within a conservationist discourse which is based upon a romantic interpretation of sublime nature. But within a modern environmentalist discourse such a co-existence of polluted megalopolise's and wildlands becomes untolerable.

This has clearly been stated in the so-called "intentional communities" which have emerged in the 1970s and especially the 1980s.[16] Inspired by a somewhat ill-defined but magnetic mix of new agy, anarchist, pacifistic, feminist, and environmental beliefs, these communities are proudly utopian, with a strong sense of fusing morals and politics. A resident of an intentional community has descibed the ideology of his community this way:

> *"It isn't really an ideology, it is a simple way of life which is reference for all things, animate and inanimate: The concept of the wheel, the lifecircle ... Life and the planet begins and ends, it is a continuous circle. All the things are connected."* [17]

Clearly, the radical ideas of John Muir are closer to such utopian visions than to the policy of the Sierra Club today.[18] The radical part of John Muir's writings has ceased to have influence in the politics of the Sierra Club, it only exists in ideological statements. But it has survived as a moral guide in minor informal groups across the United States.[19]

The thinking and life of John Muir has been an essential element in the construction of an organizational identity in the Sierra Club. David Brower, for instance, has been instrumental in this process a number of times, latest in the issue of *Sierra* dedicated to the organization's centennial celebration: "in 1989, in a show of ambivalence that would have saddened John Muir, the Board of Directors hesitated to support a proposal to tear down O'Shaughnessy Dam and restore Muir's belovered Hetch Hetchy Valley to its rightful state in Yosemite National Park."[20]

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[16] An indication of the scale of the phenomenon is the voluminous listings in *Intentional Communities*, Rutledge, 1991.

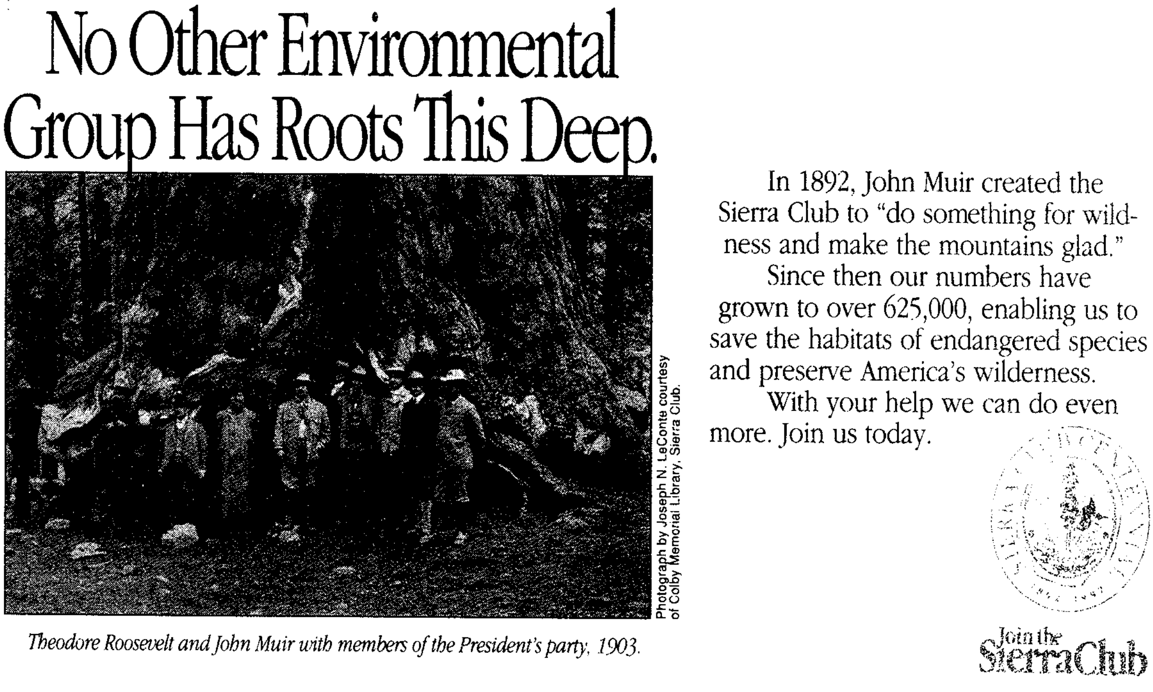
[17] Interview , February 19, 1992, Esalen Community, California.

[18] Radical ideas are not a part of the official purpose of the Sierra Club (revised in 1981). It now reads: the purpose is "to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth, to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives."

[19] This approach to environmental problems has become known as Deep Ecology. Deep Ecology is influenced by many different sources (ranging from nature and eastern religions to eco-philosophy) but centeres around the belief that the non-human world has intrinsic value. For a comprehensive account, see Næss, A. (1989): *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Cambridge.

An eye-catching illustration of the symbolic power of Muir's life and writings in the organization today is the fact that a five-foot, gold-framed oil portrait of Muir hangs over the desk of the Sierra Club President (so one imagines that he looks over the shoulder of the president watching him or her carefully) (Merrow 1992: 8). But most important is perhaps the way Muir is used in membership campaigns to symbolize the political legitimacy of the organization:

Figure 6-1: Membership ad from the Sierra Club



No Other Environmental Group Has Roots This Deep.

Photograph by Joseph N. LeConte courtesy of Colby Memorial Library, Sierra Club.

Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir with members of the President's party, 1903.

In 1892, John Muir created the Sierra Club to "do something for wildness and make the mountains glad."

Since then our numbers have grown to over 625,000, enabling us to save the habitats of endangered species and preserve America's wilderness.

With your help we can do even more. Join us today.

Join the Sierra Club

This membership ad tries to convey an image of the Sierra Club as an organization which you can trust upon in political work and an organization which need public support in order to carry out its objectives. The headline "No other environmental group has roots this deep", the roots of the giant sequoia in the background, the group of acknowledged environmentalists in the foreground, and the text next to the picture all serve to bring this message across.

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[20] *Sierra,* May/june 1992, p. 91.

Thus, the life and thinking of John Muir are a vital part of the continuous construction of an organizational identity in the Sierra Club. It is not the radical John Muir, however, who is used today to symbolize the organization. The radical Muir, who wrote that "thousands of over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity", is not used so frequently (Merrow 1992: 39). Rather, it is the John Muir who co-operated with top-level politicians driven by the ambition "to make the mountains glad" that seems to characterize the Sierra Club today.

The Sierra Club has not demonstrated an ability to succesfully integrate the critique from intentional communities. The organization has accepted the general argument: that environmental degradation is everybody's problem and therefore ought to be everybody's concern. But this argument, according to the philosophy of the monthly magazine *Sierra*, only seems to count to the extent that the moral guidelines do not interfere severely with the everyday life of the members. A member voiced this philosophy:

> *"The main things the Sierra Club believes in I also believe in. It helps you to be active in what you believe in. They encourage recycling so I do that, and they encourage water conservation so I try to do that as well. They encourage you not to pick the wildflowers and plants so I try not to do that. And they encourage you not to litter because you can ruin the streams and the natural open spaces if you litter."* [21]

The perhaps most radical book about "environmental life-style" which the Sierra Club has published was a paperback, published in 1970, titled *Ecotactics* that sold nearly half a million copies. It inspired a whole generation of environmental activists without, however, affecting the political practice of the organization itself in any significant manner: "We can begin, as much as possible, to create communities which are an active expression of our hopes for the future - small groups of people who are constantly seeking more meaningful individual values and daily activity which is more consistent with these values and aspirations, and who continually engage in dialogue with the larger community, in the hopes of expressing a possible alternative way of life".[22]

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[21] Interview, June 6, 1992. Berkeley, California.

The Sierra Club has not changed completely into a modern environmental organization. It is still heavily influenced by its roots in early conservation history. It has not constructed an organizational identity which succesfully integrate the critique from radical environmental groups and intentional communities. Moreover, it has not like its counterparts Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, expanded overseas in order to deal more effectively with the new global environmental problems. It is still, in reality, a Californian based organization. The headquarters are still in San Fransisco, despite the obvious advantages of placing it in Washington D.C.; a third of the members are from California; 13 Chapters out of 50 are based in California, including the two biggest in San Fransisco and Los Angeles;. the first non-Californian to be elected Club president was Lawrence I. Moss in 1973 - 81 years after the forming of the Sierra Club etc.

This well-rooted Californian tradition makes the Sierra Club different from other American environmental organizations. It has a rather well-defined group basis and is hence not so dependent on the shifting public attention as other groups. First, the Sierra Club can construct its identity around West-coast issues because of its stronghold in this part of the country. Second, it has a long tradition of arranging hikes and organizing regional groups and this is, now as before, a crucial element in the construction of an organizational identity in the Sierra Club. A long time member of the organization explained her reasons for becoming a member this way:

> *"I got a member of Sierra Club probably 25 years ago. I remember the first time I got involved with them was in the winter. Some of my friends were going downhill skiing and we stayed in a lodge and it was just next to the Sierra Club lodge, and they were going on a snowshoe hike and that appealed more to me than downhill skiing. It was a very nice group and they were interested in conserving the mountains and plants etc. We took it slowly so we could see things. So I liked that better than the other. I realized that I had a lot in common with other Sierra Club members."* [23]

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[22] *Ecotactics. The Sierra Club Handbook for Environmental Activists*, New York 1970, p. 48.

[23] Interview, Berkeley, California, June 6, 1992.

Obviously, the feeling of mutual connexion is of utter importance for the well-being of the participants in the hikes. This leads to a form for social expulsion. Only those who are socially accepted within the group are urged to stay in the group. These social mechanisms support what has been seen as a main tendancy in the environmental movement in the United States: the white middle class makes up the biggest fraction of the activists and therefore tends to dominate the environmental agenda.

This form of critique in particular stems from groups of urban blacks claiming that the political practice of the major environmental organizations is elitist and selfish in its social aims, catering to the economic prejudices of the affluent at the expense of the poor and ethnic minorities. The background for such statements is that very few people of colour are to be found in leadership and staff positions in the Sierra Club and other major environmental organizations, and the fact that the organizations have largely ignored social justice considerations in their adopted policies (Gottlieb 1993: 3-7).

This criticism has hit the mark in the case of the Sierra Club. An affluent and white clientele has, rather exclusively, constructed the identity and political practice of the organization throughout its existence. The Sierra Club was founded by affluent white citizens, and its activities and statement of purpose reflected that particular social background. It was a resource-demanding and time-consuming hobby to do trekking and mountain climbing. That meant that only the prosperous could afford to participate on the trips.

Responding to this critique the Sierra Club has repetedly stated that it is aware of the problem and seeks to face it. This is illustrated in a speech given by the former executive director, Michael Fischer, in 1990 about the Club's goals for the millenium. Here he emphasized that the effort to enhance the ethnic and social diversity of the Club was one of the biggest challenges for the organization[24]. Only the effort to maintain the internal democracy in the organization was viewed as a bigger challenge.

As the environmental agenda began to influence the ideology of the Sierra Club in the 1970s and 1980s the identity of the organization took its present form which centers around the notion that class does not have any importance in the environmental struggle. The discussion about capitalism and communism is, according to the present philosophy of the organization, like rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. Obviously, when there are only white and well-nourished faces onboard something appears to be wrong with this line of thinking.

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[24] August 23, 1990 at the Sierra Club headquarters in Polk Street, San Francisco. See Turner (1992: 248-258).

Moreover, from a more pragmatic point of view, a broad membership base also gives you access to lobby your viewpoints in Washington. The broader the crosssection of people in the organization, the more difficult it is for the elected politicians to neglect the viewpoints of the organization.

In order to broaden the social basis of the Club different strategies are tried out. On all levels of the organization members are urged to pay attention to the links between social and ecological problems and emphazise them in their political work. At the local level a leading member explained that the chapter

> *"tries to reach out to various ethnic diverse communities and work with them on environmental issues that affect them, like toxics and wastedumps. Our hope is that poor people will begin to realize that a nasty factory or a wastedump will be placed in their neighboorhood if they don't organize themselves around such issues and do something about it."* [25]

Until now, however, these policy statements have not been implemented in effective organizational strategies. The Sierra Club remains an organization which is constructed around, not a common interest as it would prefer to be, but a special interest just like other interest groups.

Finally, I will mention a type of conflict within the Sierra Club which the organization has been better capable of handling. This conflict is centered around the question whether the organization should adopt a more co-operative strategy towards the industry than previously or not. This question has drawn a lot of attention during the 1980s and early 1990s in which the so-called "third-wave" environmentalism has dominated the agenda.[26] The buzzwords of this wave of environmentalism are "market-based incentives", "constructive engagement", and "regulatory flexibility".

Third-wave environmentalism is constructed around the belief that only if the private sector remains in control of production decisions and is encouraged to make its own environmental policies will environmental goals be achieved efficiently. Some environmental organizations, such as the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Wildlife Federation, have adopted such a point of view but the main part of the American environmental movement, including the Sierra Club, has been critical towards such a line of thinking.

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[25] Interview with Allan Carlton, June 9, 1992. Carlton has been a member of the Sierra Club since 1972. He has, among other things, served four years as the chair of the Conservation Committee in the local chapter. At the present he is Treasurer of the local chapter.

[26] The first wave of modern environmentalism was around the turn of the century; the second wave arrived with the landmark legislation of the 1970s; and the third wave, then, is supposed to have taken place in the 1980s and early 1990s (Dowie 1992).

The Sierra Club has seen it as essential for the integrity of the organization not to co-operate to closely with the industry. John Muir, the ideological source of inspiration in the organization, stressed in his writings and political work the difference in interests between conservationism and business. Particularly in the Hetch Hetchy struggle, which threatened to destroy one of his beloved valleys in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, he articulated this difference in interests.[27] Such an ideological stand, however, is not unique for the Sierra Club. Industry, in general, is considered the traditional "enemy" for environmentalists. Hence, to be associated with industrial interests would potentially create a legitimacy problem for the organization internally as well as externally.

The Sierra Club has, to avoid this problem, refused donations from companies which are considered major polluters. One of the most well-known examples of this is the case of McDonalds who offered the Sierra Club money in order to look "green". The Sierra Club refused to accept the money on the grounds that McDonalds, among other things, did not produce containers in an environmentally sound way.

Thus, the Sierra Club has managed to keep its political credibility by refusing to receive large donations from companies without a good environmental record. This has only been possible because the organization has been capable of attracting still more members and being so effective in fundraising campaigns as it has been. The Sierra Club has during the 1980s and early 1990s organized membership and fundraising campaigns still more professionally with the result that the organization today has a membership of more than 650,000 and a budget on more than 50 million dollars a year. The fundraising campaigns are not only organized at the national level, also at the local level members continually try to raise money:

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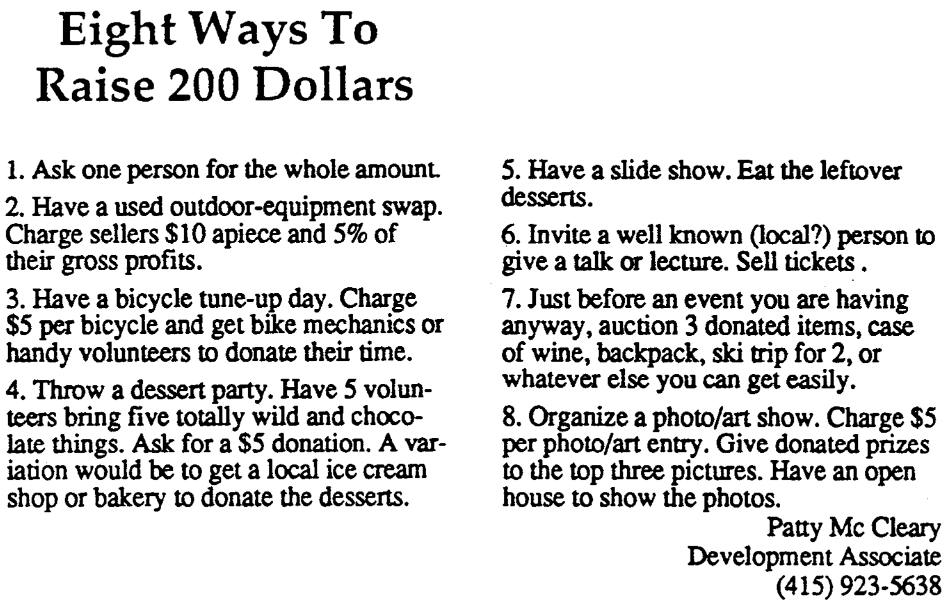
[27] See, for an illustration of this point, Worster 1973.

Figure 6-2: Advertisement about fundraising[28]



Eight Ways To Raise 200 Dollars

1. Ask one person for the whole amount.
2. Have a used outdoor-equipment swap. Charge sellers $10 apiece and 5% of their gross profits.
3. Have a bicycle tune-up day. Charge $5 per bicycle and get bike mechanics or handy volunteers to donate their time.
4. Throw a dessert party. Have 5 volunteers bring five totally wild and chocolate things. Ask for a $5 donation. A variation would be to get a local ice cream shop or bakery to donate the desserts.
5. Have a slide show. Eat the leftover desserts.
6. Invite a well known (local?) person to give a talk or lecture. Sell tickets.
7. Just before an event you are having anyway, auction 3 donated items, case of wine, backpack, ski trip for 2, or whatever else you can get easily.
8. Organize a photo/art show. Charge $5 per photo/art entry. Give donated prizes to the top three pictures. Have an open house to show the photos.

Patty Mc Cleary
Development Associate
(415) 923-5638

A main reason as to why the fundraising campaigns have been so effective is that the organization has succeded in constructing a common feeling in the organization that everybody needs to contribute to the common cause both in terms of voluntary work and money. This has clearly been expressed by Susan Merrow, a former president of the organization: "I knew it was necessary, if we were going to raise money, for the Board of Directors to donate generously,. "Don't expect others to give if you haven't done so yourself," the rule goes" (Merrow 1992: 33).

This suggests that the Sierra Club cannot be viewed simply as a pressure group. Even if the organization from the 1970s and onward has pursued a practice of political effectiveness there is still within the organization elements of a movement identity. Members of the Sierra Club are lead to believe that they are part of, not only a special interest group, but a broader movement in society which need each members personal support in order to come up with results. This identity is furthermore clearly reflected in the organizational form of the Sierra Club. The organization is not, like other pressure groups, organized in a purely hierarchical way. It has maintained a rather flat authority structure and an extensive democratic decision-making process.

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[28] Grassroots Sierra, Vol. VI, No. 2, May 1990, p. 6.

This organizational form and identity is both the strength and the weakness of the Sierra Club. Contrary to other pressure groups, the Sierra Club can rely upon a general support among its members in terms of voluntary work and personal donations and that, of course, is of immense value for the organization. The weakness, however, is that by defining itself as a part of the environmental movement, the organization exposes itself for the kind of critique described in this section: it is not radical enough in its claims, it has a double standard of morality when it comes to personal life-style, it is elitist and selfish in its social aims, it is too tied up with industrial interests etc. The great challenge of the Sierra Club in the future is exactly how to manage this conflict within the organization.

7

Environmental groups in a political and cultural context

My main argument in this thesis has been that environmental organizations are split between two forms of political action. They can seek to influence decision-making in the short term by conventional political means, and they can try to influence the discursive basis on which decision-making rests by more unconventional means, such as publishing, demonstrations, happenings, creating alternative communities etc.

This dual function can be a complementary as well as a contradictory one, as it has been illustrated in the case of the Sierra Club. In the late 1950s and the 1960s, for instance, this strategic position seemed to have benefited the Sierra Club. Through publications and media-directed events the Sierra Club often succeded in raising public consciousness about specific issues and, furthermore, it was able to use the rising public goodwill to produce concrete political results. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, the Sierra Club could not easily challenge the policies of the government through unconventional forms of action. In this period the federal state expanded its administration, offering environmental organizations not only new channels of influence but also a share in the responsibility.

Furthermore, the argument of this thesis has been that different historical settings produce different set of conditions for the political activity of environmental organizations. My main concern has been to show how such external conditions together with given organizational resources influence the strategical decisions of environmental organizations.

The constructivist approach, presented in this thesis, helps us to consider this aspect of environmental organizations. This approach has been inspired, as described earlier, by Touraine, Melucci, Klandermans, Kitschelt, Crozier & Friedberg, and Eyerman & Jamison. The work of these scholars together form a body of thought which inform us about the different ways in which environmental organizations are both produced and produce political reality.

An environmental organization, in this perspective, is not a product of strains at the structural level and it is not a product of individual priorities. It is the product of a particular historical context which must be studied in detail in order to see how cultural and political conditions have formed the organization and how the organization, in turn, has sought to exploit given opportunities within this social setting.

In recent years scholars have to a large extent looked upon movement organizations in this way, as "neutral" products of social settings - and not as bearers of larger structural trends or the result of individual genious or charisma. This is first of all a result of the fact that structuralism and individualistic accounts, which dominated the field in respectively Europe and the United States until the 1970s, concentrated on the pre-movement period and as a result could not explain the dynamic of social movements and movement organizations. Emphasis today is, as a consequence, more on strategic and tactical decisions in social movements and movement organizations than on general questions concerning the rise and fall of social movements in society.

On top of that a number of recent studies (Jamison et al 1990; Katzenstein and Mueller 1987; Klandermans et. al. 1988) have shown the importance of national settings and political cultures in the forming of social movements and movement organizations. According to this literature the specific character of national political cultures has a direct effect on the structure of social movements and movement organizations, their identity, and the issues they take up. These studies have thus underlined the fruitfulness of both a comparative and a constructivist approach to social movements and movement organizations.

In what follows I will discuss, on this theoretical basis, the political and cultural context in which environmental organizations are constructed. First, I will focus on the political opportunity structure in the United States and in Denmark. This comparison puts my case study into perspective, and it informs us about the different political conditions influencing environmental groups today. Second, I will look upon the cultural conduciveness in these two countries and discuss how it has affected the forming and strategic priorities of environmental groups.

Political opportunities and national settings

The major environmental organizations have during the 1970s and 1980s generally been integrated into the political system and do not today - if ever - represent a revolutionary threat to society. Major environmental organizations, rather, function as a pragmatic force in todays politics. As the Western democracies in the 1970s and onward build up national administrations to effectively handle environmental problems, environmental organizations were offered a range of new opportunities to influence decision-making, including the role of partner in government.

In addition to this general trend in environmental policy there exists, however, substantial differences between countries which are due to different political cultures and political opportunity structures. In the United States, for instance, environmental organizations generally have had a great deal of access to the decision-making centres in recent years but lacked the necessary resources to pursue their goals as effectively as they wanted, as described in chapter five and six.

This is a typical feature of American politics. Politics in the United States is more open and pluralistic than politics of its European counterparts. In the United States lobbying, constitutional challenges and litigation are used much more frequently than in Europe. This form of politics, as described, is generally less bureaucratic and less closed to the public than the corporatist politics that is dominating Northern Europe. The main constraint, however, on this form of political action is the resources necessary for effective lobbying and litigation.[1]

This has lead to a political situation in which business holds a privileged position. Business organizations have the resources to outspend any other group, and that is of major importance in both lobbying, electoralism, and litigation. This makes it very difficult for organizations with different views to get through with their policies. This is clearly illustrated in the case of the Sierra Club. The main obstacle for its policies is the belief, powerfully advocated by business, that economic growth - and not environmental protection - is the basis on which wealth is created.

Despite the fact that the power of pressure groups is to a large extent determined by their resources, environmental organizations like the Sierra Club tend to use pressure group tactics even more. This is probably due to the fact that the power of environmental pressure groups is also determined by their ability to politically exploit the diffences between the various institutions of the state. It has been traditional to suggest that American pressure groups face weaker countervailing institutions than do pressure groups in other countries (Wilson 1990: 40). The Constitution, for instance, divides the state into competing institutions while providing numerous opportunities for pressure groups to exert influence. The Sierra Club, for example, has made use of these opportunities in a number of campaigns by putting pressure on Representatives directly elected in the areas in question. Most important, however, seems to be the weak and ill-disciplined political parties making it much more likely that legislators vote against the party line if they are subject to pressure from outside groups. Environmental pressure groups, for instance, have frequently used this weakness in the party system to make legislators block legislation in a narrow policy area. This ability to block legislation is, it has been suggested, perhaps the most powerful means that environmental pressure groups have in the United States (Gottlieb 1993).

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[1] This is reflected in the American literature on interest groups. Contrary to the literature in northern-Europe "neo-corporatist" ties between government, labour, and business are not frequently discussed within this literature. See Lees 1983, Wilson 1981.

In Denmark, environmental pressure groups have had different political conditions. The governmental structures and the political parties are generally much stronger in Denmark making it difficult for these groups to use the same tactics as in the United States.

Pressure group politics in Denmark, as in other corporatist countries in Northern Europe, contrast with pluralist systems in which a multiplicity of groups compete with each other for influence. Pressure groups in Denmark are often licensed or recognized by the state as a legitimate partner in government. Business and labour are perhaps the most typical examples of interests which are organized in that way, but environmental interests are, as I will show, also in a partnership with government (Svold 1989; Wilson 1990).

The Danish political structure leads potentially to a decentralized form of government steering. Power is transferred from the central government to functionally specialized authorities in which business and labour groups often play a decisive role. Where these pressure groups in the United States are forced to seek to coerce legislators from case to case, their counterparts in Denmark have a much more stable political position within the political system and can concentrate on feeding the system with input.

The most obvious example of this type of steering within the field of conservation politics is perhaps the right, established in 1937, of the Danish Conservation Society (Danmarks Naturfredningsforening) to bring conservation cases to court. This is rather unique in conservation politics. If the Danish Conservation

Society estimates that a particular area should be protected it has the right, as the only private organization, to stop all development in the area while the Conservation Board (Fredningsnævnet) read the case. This has given the Danish Conservation Society much power in conservation politics. The organization has been the promoter of approximately 65% of the cases brought to the Conservation Board (Svold 1989: 65). Other environmental groups, however, have not benefited from this type of steering. In that sense the decentralization effort by the Danish state might have lead to increased power in one specific group (the Danish Conservation Society), but it has not lead to the forming of a multitude of environmental groups in Denmark.[2]

In this case there is no competition between environmental groups. The Danish Conservation Society is supported financially by the state and has, as the only non-public environmental organization, the right to bring preservation cases to court and appeal. This system of interest intermediation thus favours this specific group. The Danish Conservation Society can at any time make use of the established channels of influence, it is a right fixed by law. Other environmental groups cannot.

In recent years, however, the Danish authorities have financially supported grass-root groups which work with environmental affairs on the local level. Examples of this are first of all to be found in two political programmes, Our Common Future (Vor Fælles Fremtid) and Green Municipalities (Grønne Kommuner) (Hjelmar 1994). The locally based strategies in these programmes evolved in the late 1980s as a response to the centralizing welfare state model showing signs of inadequate regulation and, furthermore, as an offshoot to "Our Common Future", a report published by the United Nations in 1987.

The question is whether this form of decentralization will encourage movement activity on the local level or not. According to resource mobilization theory, this development will supply local groups with economic resources which will make them capable of being more effective in their work and thus it will support the democratic process. From the perspective of constructivists, however, such a development will reduce the ability of grass-root groups to confront the established political culture and, in that sense, undermine the democratic potential of such groups. My contention is that this development first of all should be interpreted in terms of a legitimacy crisis in the welfare state and, in continuation of that, I see the so-called decentralization as an attempt to solve this crisis, not enlarge democracy in the long run (Hjelmar 1994).

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[2] This suggests that efficiency arguments, not democratic arguments, have played the dominant role as rationale for the decentralization effort in Denmark in the 1930s. For an elaboration of this discussion about the rationale for decentralization policy, see Engaas 1992.

This thesis is supported by the fact that the "decentralization programmes" in Denmark have been defined as "trial projects", that is, they are not expected to continue. This suggests that the decentralization of power to environmental grass-roots is mainly of a temporary nature.[3]

Environmental politics in Denmark is, as shown, organized mainly along corporatist lines. At the same time, however, there are certain environmental issues which are handled in a pluralist manner in Denmark. Denmark is, according to several political scientists, the country in Scandinavia which is the most influenced by pluralism (Wilson 1990: 112; Katzenstein 1985). By contrast, in the United States environmental organizations seek to influence the policymaking of political parties first of all, not individual legislators. The party system is much stronger in Denmark and that leads, of course, to a different strategical approach. A recent example of this pluralistic approach was the decision-making process concerning the Oresund Bridge (Øresundsbroen). Of crucial importance in this decision-making process were the Social Democratic parties in Denmark and Sweden. The conservative and liberal parties in both countries were in favour of the bridge but did not have a majority of the votes. Thus, they needed the Social Democratic votes. The environmental organizations opposed the building of the bridge because of the environmental risks and the increased pollution from the cars which were supposed to finance the bridge. In this case the environmental organizations did not make so much use of institutionalized channels of influence. Rather, they sought, in competition with the industrial lobby, to give the Danish Social Democratic Party input so it would vote in favour of their proposal. The result, however, was that in 1989 the Social Democrats voted in favour of the industrial lobby and supported a bridge based on car traffic.

The United States and Denmark have, as shown, different political cultures and that, in turn, leads to different political opportunity structures and different political practices in the case of environmental organizations. In the United States a wide range of interest groups compete with each other not only for influence but also to represent the same interest. Decisive in this political game is the amount of resources available to employ good lobbyists, construct an effective electoral campaign machinery, take legal action etc. Since the

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[3] Our Common Future was carried through in the period from 1989 to 1992; Green Municipalities started in 1989 and ended in 1991. The latter program, though, has found different ways of continuing its efforts (Hjelmar 1994).

1970s the major environmental organizations have tried to exploit these political opportunities through aggressive membership drives and funding from business. As concluded in chapter six, however, this form of political strategy has proven its limits. Business can at any time outspend public interest groups like the major environmental organizations. This is supported by the fact that most observers believe that American public interest groups have lost influence to business in the late 1970s and 1980s (Wilson 1990: 183).

In Denmark the interest group system is much more institutionalized in its linkages to government. The case of the Danish Conservation Society served to illustrate that some interest groups even have a right, fixed by law, to act as a form of public agency. This institutional design makes it less crucial for environmental organizations to have economic power. Of main importance is the ability to feed decision-makers with relevant input, and that points first of all to the necessity of a well-structured organization.

A common trend in both countries has been, as earlier mentioned, that environmental organizations have used pressure group tactics much more persistently. It is not likely, however, that unconventional forms of protest about environmental issues will be completely integrated into existing forms of interest intermediation. As I will show in the next section, protest behavior is an effective and increasingly legitimate political form. At the time of the old social movements this kind of political behavior was often uncontrolled political outbursts, now it has simply become another form of influencing public opinion and policy-makers. Thus it seems plausible that spontaneous demonstrations, sit-in's etc. are political forms that will continue to exist, despite the fact that environmental organizations and other formal institutions more professionally can take care of the interests in question.

Cultural conduciveness and national settings

The case study of the Sierra Club showed that this specific organization was formed in the 1890s, a period of cultural criticism, and later, in the 1970s and 1980s, seemed to benefit, in terms of public support, from a new wave of cultural criticism. This suggests that there is a positive correlation between on the one hand periods of cultural criticism and on the other the growth and political functioning of environmental organizations.

Whether this thesis is valid at all times remains an open question which cannot be answered on the basis of this historical case alone. In fact, it has not been the ambition of this study to suggest such a general thesis.[4] My suggestion is simply that one should be aware of such a correlation in empirical studies. It seems to me that this perspective on the development of environmental organizations generally is a fruitful one.

In the United States and Denmark cultural criticism has spread especially in the wake of periods of rapid industrial growth and social transformation (Brand 1990). The common explanation for this is that after a period of growth a gap appears between expectations and the satisfactions of needs, thereby causing social unrest and cultural criticism. This explanation assumes, as individualistic theories on collective action often do[5], a direct relationship between individual discontent and collective mobilization. This is in my view a too simple view.[6] Personal discontent can lead to many other types of responses, as shown by Jenkins (1983). But the point remains, however, that cultural criticism often seem to emerge after periods of rapid social change.

Generally, the cultural conduciveness towards environmental claims is rather high in both the United States and Denmark today.[7] Even though the conservative governments in both countries (the Reagan administration (1980-88) and Bush administration (1988-92) in the USA and the Schlüter administration (1982-92) in Denmark) tended to emphasize business interests and not environmental issues, the public interest in environmental affairs does not seem to have weakened. This is indicated by the ongoing rise in membership of environmental organizations in the United States and Denmark.[8]

I would argue that this environmental consciousness is to a large extent a result of two cross-national cultural trends evolving in the 1960s. First, it is dependent upon a wave of cultural criticism in the western world, emerging in the late 1960s. Second, it is the result of an institutionalization of a scientific discourse about the environment which has lend the environmental movement much authority.

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[4] See, for an outline of such a thesis, Brand 1990.

[5] Individualistic theories of collective action are, as described in chapter one, often based upon the frustration paradigm: individuals compare their position with those of a comparable group and if the comparison leads to the conclusion that they have lost status they react aggresively.

[6] As argued in chapter two, collective identity formation is a question of both individual preferences and opportunity structures; it is in the tension between these two poles that collective action is constructed.

[7] There is, of course, huge differences in such a big - and decentralized - country like the USA. In California, for instance, the public is generally much more sympathetic to environmental claims than people in the southern states.

[8] See chapter five for further details about the American environmental movement. Danish figures can be found in Jamison et al. 1990.

I see the late 1960s as a creative period that carried new ideas about fundamental social issues into western society. One of these new ideas, coming from ecology, was that the Earth was an ecosystem, encompassing both the organic and inorganic elements of nature bound together in a reciprocating relationship, and we as humans had an overall responsibility for the functioning of this system. The new symbol of the environmental struggle became the Earth itself. The Earth was perceived as a spaceship with limited resources and limited capacity to absorb pollution, and we humans as managers of the craft.

A contributing factor to this change of perspective was the landing of a manned spacecraft on the moon in the summer of 1969 and the eye-catching photographs of the Earth the astronauts brought back with them. The sight of the blue ball floating in black space - the only living thing we know for certain exists in the universe - became known to everybody and was ideal to illustrate the environmentalist claim: that the Earth is fragile and vulnerable and we must join efforts and take care of it.

At the same time new ideas about gender, peace, civil rights, local autonomy etc. were influencing the public perception of "society". New social movements translated these new ideas into a political force, thereby challenging conventional views of society. Society, literally, was reconstructed in this period.

This wave of cultural criticism in the late 1960s was a substantial factor in the transformation of ecology from a natural science to a social philosophy. Without the criticism of social movements and political intellectuals from other areas of society the reconceptualization of the American and the Danish society would probably not be so profound as the case was. Conventional wisdom was in the late 1960s severely questioned, and the environmental movement both contributed to this cultural process and gained from it in terms of additional support.

An example of this was the idea, carved out by the new social movements, that the "personal is political". Politics, in this view, is not only a matter of established political institutions in society, and relevant political issues did not only include macro-oriented and economic issues. Politics also had to do with the everyday life of ordinary citizens. The feminist movement, for instance, questioned the daily routines of a typical household in order to problematize the role of women in society as such. The environmental movement, along the same lines, questioned the way people dealed with nature in everyday life situations. The power of this idea is illustrated by the fact that green consumerism and urban ecology have become important issues in environmental politics in both America and Denmark in the 1990s (Gottlieb 1993; Pedersen 1990).

Along with the cultural criticism of the late 1960s ecology developed as a science and, furthermore, it was institutionalized in the national administrations which were established in both the United States and Denmark in the 1970s. The ecological paradigm became the dominant cognitive framework in the environmental legislative work in these two countries in the 1970s. This way of defining environmental problems was, as earlier described, mainly a result of cultural processes taking place outside national administrations, but these administrations have also been extremely influential in shaping the public perception of "environmental problems". The Environmental Protection Agency, for instance, is among the most active informants of the American public of environmental issues, through its preparatory legislative work, reports, and policy work.

Ecology not only offers a credible explanation for the way nature works, it also offers public administration standards with which they can account for the magnitude of environmental problems and suggest appropriate steps to be taken. Public administration need unambiguous directives and objective standards to operate from. Ecology, in this sense, is an administratively sound frame of reference.

It should be underlined here that it is a particular form of ecology which has been institutionalized in the national and state administrations and lend the environmental movement much authority. Worster (1979) has suggested that there are two dominant approaches to ecology, a holistic and a "new ecology" approach. The holistic approach, coined by Gilbert White in the late eighteenth century, emphasized that nature was a single integrated unity, held together by a rather mysterious organizing force (Worster 1979: 18). This approach has in the late nineteenth century been developed especially by radical wings of the environmental movement, such as deep ecology (Næss 1974). The "new ecology" approach has a more "scientific" coloration and is in this sense more useful for administrative purposes. It gave a supposedly more objective and neutral description of nature, thereby offering administrators a tool in more effective environmental management. The "mysterious organizing force" in the holistic approach was in "new ecology" substituted with material exchange of energy and chemical substances as water, phosphorus, nitrogen etc. Thus, the bonds that hold the natural world together were in this approach not metaphysical but very concrete and managable (Worster 1979: 302).

The United States and Denmark have, as shown, to a large extent been influenced by the same waves of cultural criticism and processes of institutionalization. At the same time, however, there have been some cultural and institutional differences between the two countries which have influenced the environmental agenda and the political activity of environmental organizations in respectively the United States and Denmark in the recent years.

In the United States the cultural conduciveness towards environmental claims rose earlier and stronger than in most other countries, as indicated in chapter five. Books such as *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson and *The Population Bomb* (1968) by Paul Ehrlich suggested not only to a generation of Americans that society was in the midst of an "environmental crisis", but they also influenced the public perception of the relationship between Man and Nature in the rest of the western world. The United States was, in this period, the pioneer in the process of transforming conservationism into environmentalism (Dahl 1993).

The sudden rise of environmentalism in the 1960s in the United States had to do with both institutional and socio-cultural factors. Of importance was, first, the fact that the conservation organizations provided the basis for broader environmental movements from the 1960s onward (Koppes 1988: 251). Conservation organizations, like the Sierra Club, was instrumental in establishing the unique national park and monument system, a vast system planned along esthetic and ecological lines. The environmental movement in the 1960s benefited both from the existence of a strong conservation movement and the impressive results it had achieved. The environmental movement in the United States could, so to speak, use the political results and momentum of the conservation movement to carve out its own, and potentially powerful, position.

Contributing to the early rise of environmentalism in the United States was, furthermore, reigning assumptions after World War II about the negative effects of urban and industrial forces. Americans were continually in the rapid urbanization following the war confronted with problems related to the industrial city which suggested that something profound was wrong in urban society. First and foremost, urban and industrial conditions raised what was considered in the 1950s as "health problems" - limited and contaminated water supplies, inadequate waste and sewage collection and disposal, smoke-filled air etc. (Gottlieb 1993: 55). The environmental movement in the 1960s pointed to the connection between these problems and the way industrial society in general treated nature. This social background thus was a substantial factor in the social construction of environmental beliefs in the 1960s in the United States (Gottlieb 1993: 8).

The environmental movement in Denmark, emerging around 1970, did not have the same institutional and cultural background as the environmental movement in the United States (Jamison et al. 1990; Klandermans 1988). There were, as earlier described, cross-national trends which influenced the environmental movement in both the United States and Denmark. At the same time, however, there were specific institutional and cultural factors in Denmark which formed the environmental movement in Denmark in a way different from the United States.

Where the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s were characterized by a strong conservation movement and a relatively uncontrolled urbanization and industrialization, Denmark had a rather weak conservation movement and a highly regulated urban and industrial development. Thus, the environmental movement in Denmark did not have the same favourable mobilization conditions as the movement in the United States and, as a result, it was formed much later.

The Danish Conservation Society was founded in 1917 and functioned in half a century as the only non-governmental Danish organization dealing with the administration of nature. Throughout this period the organization followed a practice of political effectiveness and limited its field of activity to specific conservation cases.[9] As a result, confrontational tactics and the new environmental problems did not become known in Denmark before new environmental groups were formed around 1970.

Thus, the conservation movement in Denmark did not take up problems of environmental pollution in the 1960s like its counterpart in the United States.[10] As a result, the ground was not prepared in Denmark for the new environmental ideas, and the Danish environmental movement had to prepare the way for environmentalism largely by itself (Jamison et al. 1990: 188).

At the same time, the new environmental problems were often not as visible in Denmark as in the United States. Where the health hazards and environmental problems were clearly visible in many urban areas in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s[11], these problems were less conspicuous in Denmark. As a consequence, environmental issues crept only slowly into public awareness in Denmark.

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[9] The only period when the Danish Conservation Society tried to pursue a practice of problematization was from 1961-63. The organization elected a new president (Vagn Jensen) in 1961 who tried to change the organization in a more radical direction. Vagn Jensen, however, was forced to leave in 1963 and the organizationed returned to more conventional tactics (Jamison et al. 1990: 75).

[10] The Sierra Club, as described in chapter five, was not very active in promoting environmentalism. Other conservation organizations, like Wilderness Society, were much more interested in ecological and environmental issues.

This was first of all due to the overall policy of the emerging Danish welfare state. The Danish welfare state, taking form in the 1950s and 1960s, was first of all characterized by the belief that a centralized state through rational intervention could solve all social problems. The welfare state, to put it shortly, was seen as the guarantor of social justice and a decent society.

This belief was expressed through the Social Democratic Party which was in power in most of the 1950s and 1960s in Denmark as well as in the rest of Scandinavia. But unlike the Social Democrats in other Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway, the Social Democrats in Denmark were not able to build majority governments. They often had to share power with smaller parties. As a result, the political hegemony of the Social Democratic Party was not as strong in Denmark as in the rest of Scandinavia (Jamison et al. 1990: 68).

Despite this fact, the welfare ideology was powerful enough in Denmark to create a wide range of policies after World War II which substantially reduced the human costs of rapid urbanization and industrialization. Examples of this include regulation of water usage, construction of sufficient sewerage, and placement of industries injurious to health (Pedersen 1990). As a result of these efforts, Danes did not witness the same health problems in and around the big cities as Americans did.

The institutional and socio-cultural context in the United States and Denmark in the 1950s and 1960s, described in this section, heavily influenced the forming of environmental organizations in these two countries. In the United States the cultural conduciveness towards environmental claims was relatively high in the early 1960s. This was, as described, partly because conservation organizations had opened a passage for environmental groups through their rather successful political campaigns, and partly because health problems connected to industrial and urban growth were highly visible and becoming politically disturbing at the time. The new environmental groups, exploiting these cultural opportunities, were typically local groups, like citizen initiatives and grass-root groups. These groups showed a high degree of susceptibility to new political problems. The relatively fluid, minimally institutionalized character of these groups made them capable of quickly adapting to the changing social and political conditions and quickly take action. These groups succeded in a number of spectacular events in the late 1960s, before the building up of national administrations, to problematize the way American society treated nature. Thus, it has been argued by several scholars that these groups had a big influence on the construction of environmentalism as a political ideology in the United States in the 1960s (Gottlieb 1993; Dowie 1992).

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[11] As earlier mentioned, cities like Los Angeles suffered from smog problems as early as the mid-1950s. In addition to that, a number of incidents - like the temperature inversion that combined with factory smoke killed fourteen people in Donora, Pennsylvania, in 1950 - were instrumental in making people aware of air pollution. These problems triggered in the late 1950s and early 1960s a number of reports which contributed to the construction of "pollution" as a social problem (Fox 1981: 301).

In Denmark the cultural conduciveness towards environmental issues was, as described, relatively low in the 1960s. The Danish welfare state had to a certain degree limited the environmental and health problems in society, and existing conservation organizations like the Danish Conservation Society did very little to make people aware of these problems in the 1960s. As a result, new environmental groups could not as easily mobilize public support as in the United States. It was only after a young "new left" generation at the universities revolted against the established society in 1968 that the ground was prepared for environmental criticism of industrial society. NOAH, an environmental group formed by students from the natural science faculty at University of Copenhagen in 1969, became the most influential of these new groups. It was, as most of the new environmental groups in the United States, characterized by a horizontal and non-bureaucratic organizational form which made it capable of being a part of the alternative political culture spreading at the universities and, at the same time, a powerful political tool in the environmental struggle. The strength of NOAH in the formative phase of environmentalism was the mixture of scientific knowledge, political determination, and organizational flexibility. An illustrative example of this was the effective way in which it used a practice of problematization. Apart from numerous articles, meetings, debates, and exhibitions informing the public about the existence and threat of pollution, it also made use of more unconventional political means like putting gas masks on statues in public parks to symbolize the health hazards in big cities (Jamison et al. 1990: 83; Læssøe 1987).

As shown, there are both striking differences and resemblances between the forming and strategic priorities of environmental groups in the United States and Denmark in the 1960s. The main difference is that environmental groups were established some years earlier in the United States. Where NOAH was formed in 1969, a wide range of local environmental groups were established from the mid-1960s and onward in the United States.

The similarities between the development of environmental groups in the United States and Denmark in the 1960s are, however, more significant. In both cases, it was first of all environmental groups characterized by a flat authority structure and unconventional forms of political activity which succeded in problematizing reigning assumptions about the relationship between Man and Nature and in that way preparing the way for the environmental legislation in the 1970s. This suggests two things. First, a practice of problematization seemed to have been the most effectful form of political strategy in the 1960s when environmentalism was constructed as a political ideology. Second, grass-root groups appear to have been most capable of problematizing Man's relationship with nature in this phase of environmentalism. Conservation organizations like the Sierra Club and the Danish Conservation Society were at the time characterized by formal (and slower) decision-making processes and a tradition for using conventional political tactics.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have put my theoretical approach to environmental organizations into historical context by discussing the structural conditions for the emergence and forming of environmental groups. I have in partucular focused on the political and cultural context in which environmental groups have emerged and developed in the United States and Denmark. These two countries represent, I have argued, different political cultures and a comparison of them, although brief, can in that sense inform us about the significance of political culture in the social shaping of environmental groups.

It has been shown that political culture matter. The political culture in the United States lead in the 1960s to the emergence of a wide range of grass-root groups concerned with environmental issues. These groups were a main factor in drawing the American public's attention to the new "environmental problems", a political process which resulted in the forming of environmental legislation and national administrations in the 1970s. In the 1970s and onward grass-root groups did not have the same impact on the environmental agenda. In this period it was first of all the major environmental organizations which was able to exploit the political opportunities emerging after the institutionalization of environmental concerns.

The political culture in Denmark was not as favourable in the 1960s towards the forming of new environmental groups as the political culture in the United States. As a result, environmental groups were formed later in Denmark and environmental legislation was introduced a few years later than in the United States. In the 1970s, however, new environmental groups like NOAH was a major factor in influencing the public perception of environmental problems. Thus, the "new environmental movement" came to Denmark a few years later than in the United States. In the 1980s and onward the dominating environmental groups became, as elsewhere, professional organizations which effectively could work with the new governmental environmental administrations. Contrary to the United States, however, environmental organizations like the Danish Conservation Society were integrated into the governmental system and hence did not to the same extent rely upon public support and succesful campaigns from case to case.

Conclusions

This dissertation has attempted to articulate the strategic opportunities of environmental organizations in changing political and cultural contexts. Broadly speaking, two forms of political strategy have been counterposed. The first form of strategy, a practice of political effectiveness, has been described as operating in terms of lobbying, litigation, and endorsements. The second form of strategy, a practice of problematization, has been conceptualized in terms of letter writing, demonstrations, ad campaigns, publishing programs etc.

In the division of labour within the social sciences, political scientists have dealt more with the first form of political activity, characteristic of pressure groups, and sociologists have dealt more with the latter form, characteristic of social movements. In my view, this onesidedness has made it difficult to understand movement organizations, an institution split between an identity as pressure group and social movement.

My constructivist view on movement organizations seek to move beyond strict disciplinary boundaries to a new kind of conceptualization. By focusing on the cultural and political context in which movement organizations define themselves and analyzing the concrete means by which they try to influence government policy, I have not predetermined whether movement organizations are to be understood as pressure groups or social movements. In my view, their identity and political practice are continually produced by the concrete social context they are situated in. In certain periods, they tend to view themselves as pressure groups and employ a political system's conventional form of collective action. In other periods, they define themselves as social movements and tend to use noninstitutionalized tactics and channels of influence.

Movement organizations form in this sense an entirety, in which different pressure group and movement strategies complete each other. In reality, however, these organizations are often forced to choose whether they want to give priority to pressure group tactics or social movement tactics. It is very difficult to be both within the legislative and administrative arenas using pressure group tactics, and be outside these arenas and question the policies the organization itself has been instrumental in forming. This strategical position creates a legitimacy problem for the organization, both in relation to the public and in relation to the legislators and administrators.

As a result, movement organizations tend to identify themselves as pressure groups when they gain routine representation in, and access to, the government. They may still use the rhetoric of a social movement, but in actual tactical behavior they are difficult to distinguish from other groups encircling the parliaments.

Most scholars studying movement organizations have emphasized this transformation from social movements to pressure groups (Zald and McCarthy 1987; Brand 1990; Dowie 1992). The focus in these studies has been on processes of routinization and institutionalization, and the main argument underlying the analyses seemed to have been that social movements almost inevitably developed into organizational forms ressembling the political establishment.

By reading environmental organizations constructively, I have tried to show that this development does not need to be the case. An environmental organization, as indicated in chapter five, can also transform itself from a pressure group to a social movement. If pressure group tactics don't succeed, it is likely that the organization will change its priorities and begin to make more use of unconventional forms of collective action.

Environmental organizations are not unique in this sense. Other movement organizations, like feminist or peace organizations, are also situated within such a strategical landscape. Bjõrkenlid (1982), for instance, has shown that the early feminist movement in Sweden was rather succesful in using pressure group methods until 1911 at which time the alliance with the conservatives broke down and the political opportunity structure, as a consequence, was reduced. The feminist movement chose then to emphasize social movement strategies such as increased publication activities, public meetings, and theatre work.

My thesis has attempted to strengthen such a theoretical perspective. A main effort has been to describe the double function of movement organizations, that is, their ability to reproduce their conditions of existence and to serve as medium of emerging opportunities. Movement organizations, in my vocabulary, are both constructed by a larger social context and instrumental in constructing the very same social context. The essential question here is, of course, what determines this process of construction.

Three factors have in particular been emphasized in this work: the cultural conduciveness, the political opportunity structure, and the capacity of movement organizations to exploit given opportunities in society.

The cultural conduciveness has proven to be the most important factor in the mobilization of support for environmental organizations. As shown in chapter five, all of the the biggest environmental organizations in the United States benefited from the rise in cultural conduciveness towards environmental claims in the mid-1960s. This development was repeated on a global scale in the late 1980s. At that time new environmental problems like global warming and ozone depletion were constructed, and the public continually was told about the potential disastrous effects of the Chernobyl accident.

The political opportunity structure has, however, also been a major factor in shaping the political activity of environmental organizations. This has been underlined by the development of environmental legislation together with agencies and departments to administer the new laws in most western countries in the 1970s and 1980s. The favourable political opportunity structure emerging in this period has lead most of the major environmental organizations to professionalize their activities in order to be more capable of exploiting the new political opportunities.

Of main importance in this process is furthermore, as I have attempted to show in this thesis, the capacity of organizations to make use of emerging cultural and political opportunities in society. The case of the Sierra Club, presented in chapter five and six, served to illustrate that the political practice of environmental organizations seem to be heavily dependent upon given organizational resources. These include human resources like the individual capabilities of political intellectuals, and a suitable organizational form. The importance of political intellectuals in environmental organizations has been illustrated several times in the history of the Sierra Club, most clearly in the case of John Muir in the end of the nineteenth century. His writings and lobbying efforts shaped the political identity and practice in the formative years of the organization. That resulted, as described in chapter five, in a number of bills leading to a considerable enlargement of the protected areas in the United States.

Today, environmental organizations are much bigger than conservation organizations were at the time of the forming of the Sierra Club, and the political agenda and the political process seem to be much more complex today. As a result, political intellectuals cannot play the same crucial role in environmental politics as John Muir did in conservation politics. Todays national mass media tend, however, to construct an image of an undisputable leader within the specific national environmental movement. Examples of this include Frederic Hauge in Norway, Jonathan Porritt in Great Britain, and David Rehling in Denmark. These leaders do not, however, have the same significance as nineteenth century leaders like John Muir.

Today, the main organizational resource seems to be an organizational form and a professional staff capable of feeding the political system and public debate with relevant input. What is needed in environmental organizations are local members and professionals who can provide legislators and the public with documented proof about environmental dangers in crucial policy areas like, for instance, major construction works or the approval of new chemical materials.

Finally, I will mention one flaw in my conceptual framework. The major drawback in my constructivist approach, presented here, is that it does not lead to any normative assertions. I have tried, along the lines suggested by Mannheim, Berger & Luckmann, and Foucault, to look as neutrally as possible upon the processes through which environmental organizations are produced. My aim has been to carry out a historical analysis in which I have tried to see how different political practices have been constructed. Thus, I do not make any value judgments about the positive or negative aspects of different forms of political action.

This kind of analysis has, of course, its advantages as well as its disadvantages. A big advantage, I have learned, is that constructivist analysis offers a conceptual space which is capable of grasping how different solutions to a problem are made up. Constructivist analysis ask whose claims brought a particular problem to public attention, how those claims typified the problem, and how the public and the policymakers responded to the claims etc. Hence, this form of analysis has a bottom-up approach, it tries to reconstruct the historical processes through which a particular problem became politically significant.

A major disadvantage in constructivist analysis is, however, that it does not ask why a political problem has occured and whether it could be solved under different social and political conditions. In environmental politics, as in other fields, these are essential questions which need to be addressed by social and political scientists. A constructivist approach does not answer these questions and that is in my view a major drawback.

Constructivist analysis needs to integrate its main area of interest - the social construction of issues and collective action - into more complex analytical frameworks, and to carry out more empirical research than we have seen so far. With this thesis I hope to convince scholars about the relevance and fruitfulness of a constructivist approach to the study of environmental organizations, and to urge them to generate the research necessary to arrive at a fuller understanding of the political action of these organizations.

Summary in Danish

Afhandlingen fokuserer på miljøorganisationers politiske rolle i moderne samfund. Denne type institution har i de seneste årtier fået en stadig mere central placering i det politiske liv. Medlemstallet i miljøorganisationer i den vestlige verden er steget eksplosivt siden 1960'erne, og parallelt med denne udvikling er disse organisationers politiske magt tilsvarende forøget. Der er derfor grund til nærmere at analysere baggrunden for denne udvikling. Hvordan har disse organisationer kunnet udvikle sig til en så central politisk faktor som tilfældet synes at være?

Den eksisterende litteratur om social bevægelser giver os ikke et fyldestgørende svar. Fokus i denne litteratur har været på græsrodsbevægelser, ikke formelle organisationer såsom miljøorganisationer. Den herskende opfattelse har været, at de afgørende samfundsændringer i 1960'erne og 1970'erne først og fremmest var et resultat af græsrodsbevægelsers politiske aktivitet. Da græsrodsbevægelserne i løbet af 1980'erne i stort tal enten opløstes eller blev omdannet til mere formelle organisationer, ledte det mange samfundsforskere til at konkludere, at sociale bevægelser var i krise og samfundet havde mistet en afgørende forandrende kraft.

Denne måde at forstå sociale bevægelser og social forandring på har gjort det svært at forklare miljøorganisationers politiske rolle. Målet i denne afhandling har været at foreslå en anden måde at betragte disse organisationer på - en konstruktivistisk analysemåde. Denne tilgang er først og fremmest kendetegnet af ikke at have nogle forudfattede konklusioner om karakteren af den politiske aktivitet. Den søger først og fremmest at forklare de grundlæggende forhold, som har skabt - eller konstrueret - specifikke former for politisk handlen.

En miljøorganisation, i dette perspektiv, kan forstås både som social bevægelse og interesse gruppe. Spørsmålet er hvilke betingelser, som er afgørende for, om en miljøorganisation definerer sig selv som henholdsvis social bevægelse eller interesse gruppe? Dernæst er den politiske effekt af en sådan kognitiv proces også af afgørende betydning.

Mit analytiske udgangspunkt er, at der eksisterer to idealtypiske former for politisk identitet i institutioner som miljøorganisationer. Den ene form for politisk identitet er en *bevægelses identitet.* Den er defineret som en selvforståelse i en gruppe, der bygger på ønsket om at udfordre den politiske orden ved at debattere og søge at ændre fundamentale forhold i samfundet. Den anden form for politisk identitet er en *interesse gruppe identitet.* Den bygger på en ideologi, som grundlæggende accepterer den politiske orden og, i forlængelse af dette, ser det som en organisations opgave at udnytte de formelle muligheder i det politiske system. Disse to former for politisk identitet kan skifte fra en historisk epoke til en anden. I en periode kan en organisation således være præget af en bevægelses identitet, mens den i en anden kan være præget en interesse gruppe identitet.

I afhandlingen argumenteres der endvidere for, at disse to former for politisk identitet afspejler to grundlæggende former for politisk praksis. Den ene form for politisk praksis, en *problematiserende praksis,* bygger på en bevægelses identitet. Den søger at sætte spørgsmålstegn ved konventionel politik ved kontinuerligt at prøve at definere og redefinere hvad der er legitime politiske handlinger. Den anden form for politisk praksis, en *politisk effektivitets praksis,* baserer sig på en interesse gruppe identitet. Fundamentalt i denne praksis er forestillingen om, at politiske resultater opnås mest hensigtsmæssigt ved at tilpasse sig til eksisterende magtforhold og søge at udnytte de muligheder der gives indenfor sådan en ramme.

Begge former for politisk praksis er af strategisk natur. Deres mål er at opnå en magtposition gennem rationel handlen. Men midlerne til at opnå dette mål er vidt forskellige. En problematiserende praksis lægger vægt på "nede-fra-og-op aktiviteter" i lighed med sociale bevægelser, mens en politisk effektivitets praksis fokuserer på "oppe-fra-og-ned aktiviteter" kendetegnende for interesse grupper. Empirisk afspejler dette sig i de former for politisk handlen, som eksempelvis miljøorganisationer involverer sig i. På den ene side kan miljøorganisationer deltage i aktiviteter, hvis formål er at øge bevidstheden om kontroversielle emner: demonstrationer, offentlige møder, publikationsvirksomhed, uddannelsesprogrammer, happenings etc. På den anden side kan de gøre brug af formelle indflydelsesveje, såsom lobbyarbejde, retslige tiltag, økonomisk støtte til politiske partier el.lign.

Grupper, som benytter sig af en politisk effektivitets praksis, bliver ledt til at tro, at denne form for politisk handlen er den mest rationelle. Ved at vinde troværdighed i forhandlinger er disse grupper ofte i stand til at fremvise politiske resultater indenfor en overskuelig periode. Men disse politiske resultater er ofte små i sammeligning med de resultater som grupper, der har benyttet sig af en problematiserende praksis, kan få. Ved at modsætte sig et politisk forslag eller en politisk beslutning og mobilisere støtte i offentligheden har grupper såsom miljøorganisationer ofte vist, at en sådan strategi leder til større politiske resultater på langt sigt end en politisk effektivitets praksis.

Min tese er, at miljøorganisationer skal forstås som værende styret af både en problematiserende praksis og en politisk effektivitets praksis. Disse to former for politisk praksis udelukker altså ikke hinanden. En miljøorganisation, som lægger vægt på formelt politisk arbejde, har også behov for at profilere sig i forhold til offentligheden og skabe opmærksomhed omkring dets arbejde. Dets styrke i en forhandlingssituation afhænger af dets evne til at skabe opbakning i offentligheden bag dets synspunkter. Omvendt, så har en miljøorganisation, som benytter sig af en problematiserende praksis, også behov for at udmønte sine synspunkter i formelt politisk arbejde.

Det grundlæggende argument i denne afhandling er altså, at grupper som miljøorganisationer ikke nødvendigvis udvikler sig fra social bevægelse til organisation, og i denne proces mister sin politiske dynamik. Snarere må man betragte miljøorganisationers politiske udvikling som en fortløbende proces, hvori de skifter identitet og politisk praksis fra en periode til en anden afhængig af de givne forhold. Men hvad er det for forhold, som er af afgørende betydning for den stadige genskabelse eller konstruktion af sådanne organisationer?

Jeg har i min afhandling peget på tre forhold som værende af essentiel betydning i den social konstruktion af miljøorganisationer. Det første forhold har jeg sammenfattet i begrebet *politisk mulighedsstruktur.* Det refererer til den grad af åbenhed, der er i beslutningscentrene i forhold til de krav, som eksempelvis miljøorganisationer kommer med. En åben politisk mulighedsstruktur vil eksempelvis tendentielt lede til en politisk effektivitets praksis i miljøorganisationer, som man bl.a. har kunnet se i en lang række vestlige lande i 1970'erne og fremefter. Etableringen af en omfattende miljølovgivning og en række nationale og internationale miljøadministrationer har ledt til stigende muligheder for miljøorganisationer til at deltage aktivt i den formelle politiske proces. Resultatet har været en professionalisering af et stort antal miljøorganisationer.

Det andet forhold, som spiller en afgørende rolle i konstruktionen af den politiske praksis i miljøorganisationer, er den *kulturelle modtagelighed* i samfundet overfor den type krav som miljøorganisationer kommer med. Vigtigheden af dette forhold illustreres måske bedst af perioden fra midten af 1960'erne til starten af 1970'erne. I denne periode blev offentligheden i vestlige samfund generelt meget mere opmærksom end tidligere på de virkninger i forhold til naturgrundlaget, som industrialiseringen og urbaniseringen syntes at have. Dette forhold betød, at miljøgrupper og -organisationer gennem en problematiserende praksis kunne regne med en betydelig folkelig opbakning og dermed en stor politisk gennemslagskraft. Resultatet af den kulturelle modtagelighed overfor miljøkrav i denne periode var da også, at miljøgrupper og -organisationer generelt benyttede sig meget af en problematiserende praksis.

Det tredje forhold i min analyse af miljøorganisationernes politiske praksis er disse organisationers *kapacitet* til at udnytte de muligheder, der er i samfundet til at etablere en magtposition. Af særlig betydning er her organisationsformen og de humane ressourcer i organisationen. I hierarkisk strukturerede organisationer, eksempelvis, er retten til at træffe beslutninger centraliseret, og det gør disse organisationer i stand til at agere hurtigt og entydigt i forhandlingssituationer. Denne organisationsform synes altså at lede i retning af en politisk effektivitets praksis. Endelig er menneskene i organisationerne selvfølgelig også af afgørende betydning for de prioriteringer, som man kontinuerligt må foretage i organisationerne. Jeg har i afhandlingen navnlig fokuseret på de intellektuelles rolle i organisationerne. Det har jeg gjort, fordi historien har vist, at netop de intellektuelle har været en afgørende faktor i konstruktionen af organisationers identitet og politiske formål. John Muir, for eksempel, som var leder af den amerikanske miljøorganisation, the Sierra Club, fra 1892 til 1913, er et klart eksempel på dette. Hans livsførelse og hans bøger var hovedinspirationen i dannelsen af denne organisations identitet, og synes stadig - hundrede år efter - at spille en stor rolle i organisationens selvopfattelse.

Netop the Sierra Club udgør case studiet i denne afhandling. Denne organisation repræsenterer i kraft af sin lange og begivenhedsrige historie en kompleks test for frugtbarheden af mine begreber. Min ambition i dette studie har været at forstå organisationens historie i lyset af de begreber, jeg har præsenteret, og dermed forhåbentlig bidrage til en øget forståelse af denne organisations politiske rolle i USA.

The Sierra Club blev dannet i 1892 på et tidspunkt, hvor et af de første naturområder der var blevet fredet, Yosemite National Park i Californien, blev truet af økonomiske interesser i området. Denne baggrund betød, at organisationen hurtig søgte at etablere en politisk effektivitets praksis. Yosemite National Park skulle beskyttes, og for at sikre det, søgte organisationen at påvirke regeringen gennem lobbyarbejde. Denne form for politisk praksis dominerede indtil kort efter århundredeskiftet, hvor den politiske mulighedsstruktur blev mindre åben. Resultatet af denne ændring i de politiske forhold var, at organisationen i en kort periode efter århundredeskiftet gjorde brug af en problematiserende praksis. I en af de første storstilede "miljøkampagner", Hetch Hetchy kampagnen, søgte the Sierra Club gennem en række publikationer, offentlige møder m.m. at gøre offentligheden opmærksom på det politisk betænkelige i at opdæmme og oversvømme den naturskønne Hetch Hetchy dal i Sierra Nevada bjergene blot for at skaffe strøm og vand til de voksende byer. The Sierra Club tabte dette politiske slag, men nok så vigtigt var det, at organisationen gennem sin problematiserende praksis havde skabt opmærksomhed omkring fredningsproblematikken. Et markant resultat af dette arbejde var oprettelsen af National Park Service, en af verdens første nationale fredningsadministrationer.

I den følgende periode, fra tiden omkring første verdenskrig til umiddelbart efter anden verdenskrig, var the Sierra Club mere en social forening end en politisk gruppe. Det sociale element i the Sierra Club - at vandre i bjergene, campere, synge m.m. - havde altid været fremtrædende i organisationen. Forskellen i forhold til tidligere var imidlertid, at organisationen i denne periode ikke brugte denne samhørighedsfølelse, denne identitet, aktivt i politiske kampagner. Mulighederne for at opnå en magtposition i samfundet var absolut til stede i denne periode, især under præsident Roosevelt's New Deal politik i 1930'erne, men organisationen formåede ikke at udnytte disse muligheder.

I perioden fra omkring 1950 til 1970 etablerede the Sierra Club sig igen som en af de mest magtfulde organisationer indenfor frednings- og miljøområdet. Af særlig betydning i denne genetableringsfase var, at en ny og yngre generation overtog lederskabet i organisationen efter anden verdenskrig. Denne generation af ledere havde større politiske ambitioner end den tidligere generation. Det kom tydeligt til udtryk i kampagnen til bevarelse af Dinosaur National Monument i midten af 1950'erne. Kampagnen søgte, i lighed med Hetch Hetchy kampagnen, at forhindre bygningen af en dæmning og en efterfølgende oversvømmelse af naturområder af stor æstetisk værdi. Resultatet af denne kampagne var, at dæmningen ikke blev opført, samt at the Sierra Club genopstod i den offentlige bevidsthed som en "frontkæmper" i fredningssager.

I 1960'erne profiterede the Sierra Club i form af øget medlemstilgang m.m. af den større kulturelle modtagelighed i befolkningen overfor miljøkrav. Organisationen var dog ikke en drivkraft i denne fase af miljøkampen. Den identificerede sig først og fremmest i forhold til sin fortid som fredningsorganisation, ikke i forhold til nye temaer som forurening, genbrug m.m.

I 1970'erne og fremefter ændrede organisationens identitet sig dog delvist. The Sierra Club ønskede at få opbakning fra så stor en del af den amerikanske befolkning som muligt, og definerede sig derfor tættere på den nye og gennemslagskraftige miljøbevægelse. Organisationen fastholdt dog samtidig sin identitet som en fredningsorganisation med rødder i Californien. Denne konstruktion af identitet har vist sig meget vellykket i forhold til medlemstilgang. The Sierra Club steg fra ca. 100.000 medlemmer i 1970 til over 600.000 medlemmer i 1992. Dermed er organisationen i dag en af de absolut største indenfor sit område i USA. Styrken ved the Sierra Clubs identitet har navnlig været, at den har kunnet tilbyde sine medlemmer meningsfulde aktiviteter (vandreture, andre typer naturoplevelser) samt en følelse af som medlem via sit kontingent at medvirke til løsningen af en af tidens størst problemer, miljøproblemet.

The Sierra Club har siden starten af 1970'erne, i lighed med andre store miljøorganisationer i USA, først og fremmest benyttet sig af en politisk effektivitets praksis. Det er et resultat af, at den politiske mulighedsstruktur er blevet mere åben end tidligere i forbindelse med opbygningen af den nationale miljøadministration og vedtagelsen af en række lovkomplekser om luftforurening, vandforurening, dyrebeskyttelse, affald, energibesparelse m.m. The Sierra Club har søgt at udnytte disse muligheder ved at opbygge en stor professionel stab af jurister, lobbyister, PR-folk m.m.

Denne strategi har givet resultater i form af flere fredede områder (bl.a. fredningen af mere 100 millioner acres land i Alaska i 1980) og større miljøhensyn indbygget i lovgivningen. Men den har også ført til en stadig større kritik fra miljøaktivister, der har lagt vægt på græsrodsarbejde og en problematiserende praksis. Disse aktivister føler, at store miljøorganisationer, såsom the Sierra Club, er svære at skelne fra andre interesse grupper. Ifølge disse aktivisters opfattelse har the Sierra Club svigtet sine idealer for at få del i magten.

Spørgsmålet er hvordan the Sierra Club skal løse dette legitimitetsproblem. Det er et spørgsmål om legitimiteten af organisationens handlinger, fordi organisationen ifølge sin egen selvopfattelse er en græsrodsorganisation, som først og fremmest er et instrument for græsrødderne.

Historien har vist, at the Sierra Club har skiftet identitet og praksis flere gange, alt afhængig af de givne kulturelle og politiske forhold. Det tyder på, at organisationen igen kan forandre sig og dermed komme kritikken fra græsrødderne i møde. På den anden side er organisationen blevet så stor og organisationsformen så fasttømret, at det bliver svært at opgive den politiske effektivitets praksis. Historien synes dog at sandsynliggøre, at det er muligt, hvis den politiske mulighedsstruktur bliver mere lukket, og organisationen dermed fratages en række formelle indflydelsesmuligheder.

I den sidste del af afhandlingen har jeg sammenlignet de politiske mulighedsstrukturer og den kulturelle modtagelighed i USA og Danmark siden 1960'erne. Denne komparative analyse viser, at den politiske kultur har afgørende indflydelse på de samfundsmæssige betingelser som miljøorganisationer er underlagt. I USA betød den begrænsede rolle, som staten har i reguleringen af industri m.m., at de miljømæssige problemer blev skabt i den offentlige bevidsthed noget tidligere end i Danmark. Dette ledte til opbygningen af den nationale miljøadministration i USA i 1970 - tre år tidligere end i Danmark.

Opbygningen af nationale miljøadministrationer og professionaliseringen af miljøorganisationerne i 1970'erne og fremefter er et internationalt fænomen, som både har slået igennem i USA og Danmark. Der er imidlertid en afgørende forskel i den politiske praksis i miljøorganisationerne i de to lande. I USA har det pluralistiske politiske system betydet, at miljøorganisationerne konstant må profilere sig fra sag til sag og afprøve alle mulige indflydelsesveje indenfor det politiske system. Det mere korporatistisk prægede system i Danmark har omvendt betydet, at miljøorganisationer her i langt højere grad har været sikret en ret til at præge og implementere lovgivningen, og dermed har kunnet koncentrere sig mere om administrativt arbejde.

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