

Direct social action beyond party politics. How new subjectivities change the idea of social transformation

Felix Butzlaff & Michael Deflorian

To cite this article: Felix Butzlaff & Michael Deflorian (2021) Direct social action beyond party politics. How new subjectivities change the idea of social transformation, Political Research Exchange, 3:1, 1-21, DOI: [10.1080/2474736X.2021.1896343](https://doi.org/10.1080/2474736X.2021.1896343)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2474736X.2021.1896343>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 28 Mar 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 101



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Direct social action beyond party politics. How new subjectivities change the idea of social transformation

Felix Butzlaff  and Michael Deflorian 

Institute for Social Change and Sustainability (IGN), Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria

ABSTRACT

Currently proliferating alternative action organizations, such as food cooperatives, solidary agriculture, repair cafés, or DIY initiatives, pursue social transformation at a deliberate distance from party politics. Instead, they concentrate on changing society directly by altering everyday routines and thereby prefiguring an alternative society. Local and experimental movements promise to pioneer social alternatives, which traditional organizations appear to be unable to accomplish. This indicates a remarkable shift, since in the past, social mobilizations often pursued direct social action and party politics simultaneously. The current literature conceptualizes movements and parties primarily as cross-fertilizing allies or even potential hybrids (movement parties) yet struggles to explain why alternative action organizations in countries that have not experienced post-crisis austerity measures have largely abandoned the parliamentary arena. Addressing this gap, we compare contemporary understandings of direct social action in Germany with past understandings: that of the 1920s labour movement and the 1970s new social movements. Applying sociological theories of modernization, we demonstrate that processes of individualization and flexibilization have increased the demand for immediate experiences of social change and decreased the attractiveness of formal organization. Since this makes strategic alliances between movements and political parties increasingly unlikely, societies' capacity to organize long-term social struggles might be impaired.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 26 May 2020
Accepted 23 February 2021

KEYWORDS

new social movements;
alternative action
organizations; direct social
action; political parties;
prefigurative politics

Introduction

Does the recent increase in social movements that resort to everyday practices signal that imaginations of social transformation have changed? Lately, several scholars have highlighted a proliferation of movements, especially on the progressive side of the political spectrum, that address social change and transformation outside of the parliamentary political realm (Bosi and Zamponi 2020; Certomà 2016; Monticelli 2018; Schlosberg and

CONTACT Felix Butzlaff  felix.butzlaff@wu.ac.at  Institute for Social Change and Sustainability (IGN), Vienna University of Economics and Business, Welthandelsplatz 2, Building D5, A-1020 Vienna, Austria

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Craven 2019; Wright 2010). Instead, they focus on changing the everyday routines of their members in order to prefigure an alternative version of society. Through *direct social actions* they seek to 'focus upon directly transforming some specific aspects of society by means of the very action itself' (Bosi and Zamponi 2015, 369). These repertoires of action involve, inter alia, food cooperatives, community-supported agriculture, repair cafés, open workshops, platforms for swapping or borrowing goods, or alternative housing projects. In the established literature on social movements, organizations that resort to direct social action have been addressed as *lifestyle movement organizations* (Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones 2012), *sustainable community movement organizations* (Forno and Graziano 2014), or *alternative action organizations* (Giugni and Grasso 2018). For the purpose of this article, we will make use of the latter term, and we are going to argue that the current proliferation of repertoires of direct social action suggests a historical shift in the way social transformation is imagined.

Calling for a broader understanding of the concept of social movement, the above-mentioned conceptualizations have explained new forms of direct social action as a consequence of growing distrust towards institutional actors on the one hand, and the experience of economic hardship and crisis, on the other (Bosi and Zamponi 2015, 2020; Naegler 2018; Schlosberg and Craven 2019). By *prefiguring* an ideal future society (Yates 2015) and *politicizing* the individual *lifestyles* of their members (de Moor 2017), forms of direct social action are expected to maintain a radical focus and remain distanced to the possibly corrupting influence of the parliamentary and party-political arena as well as the clumsiness of big social movement organizations (Raekstad and Gradin 2020; Schlosberg and Craven 2019). Beyond traditional definitions of contentious politics and social movement organizations, it has been established that direct social actions might politicize everyday habits that had previously not been understood as manifestly political and that social change and transformation might be approached by the activists in ways that were previously considered individual and private (Blühdorn and Deflorian 2021; Bosi and Zamponi 2015; Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones 2012).

However, up to now, the research on contemporary practise-based collective action has to a great extent concentrated on countries in Southern Europe that had suffered a severe economic crisis and austerity measures post 2008 (Bosi and Zamponi 2015, 2020; Forno and Graziano 2014; Giugni and Grasso 2018; Varvarousis, Asara, and Akbulut 2020; Zamponi and Bosi 2018). The rise of progressive, green or left-wing direct social action has been interpreted as a pragmatic 'bread and butter' reaction to measures of austerity (Bosi and Zamponi 2015, 383) and to a declining trust in established political institutions after the economic crisis. Furthermore, the upsurge of direct social action has been identified as a driving force in the establishment of hybrid organizations such as *Barcelona en Comú* or *Syriza* which have explicitly connected parliamentary efforts with direct social action (Della Porta et al. 2017; Varvarousis, Asara, and Akbulut 2020). However, the accounts of Southern European direct social actions and their ties to political parties also strongly emphasize that this choice of repertoire has been heavily impacted by the experience of austerity and is therefore strongly country-specific (Bosi and Zamponi 2015, 2020; Forno and Graziano 2014; Giugni and Grasso 2018; Zamponi and Bosi 2018). Thus, while a cross-fertilization of movements and parties (see section 2) is framed as a reaction to austerity measures in Southern Europe, the picture might be different in countries that have not been as affected by recent economic downturns.

Indeed, at least in European countries that have evaded harsh austerity measures post 2008, the cross-fertilization of practice-based movements and political parties has been the exception rather than the rule.¹ This might indicate a remarkable shift from traditional understandings of how social change can be organized by the hands of social movements (Adloff 2018; Schneidewind et al. 2018; Wright 2010).

Historically, the idea of attaining social change through changing the everyday life was often part of a *dual perspective on how to transform society*, which prevailed in social movement organizations in Western democracies, such as the labour movement or the new social movements. Within the latter two, prefiguring an alternative social order through shaping the daily routines of movement members was one strategic pillar of their political struggle (Bosi and Zamponi 2020; Calhoun 1993), whereas institutionalizing an alternative social order through political parties within the parliamentary system was another one (Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2019; Lösche and Walter 1989; Poguntke 1987; Sassoon 2010; Walter and Marg 2013). In the contemporary, this potential alliance between movements resorting to direct social action *and* political parties has been well established in austerity-ridden Southern Europe. However this is rarely the case in countries that have dodged the experiences of economic crisis and austerity post 2008. Here, it has been observed that movement organizations turning to prefiguration and practise-based forms of action tend to avoid any ideational and organizational relationship with a sympathetic political party. Activists as well as scholars advocating a socio-ecological transformation of society often perceive the parliamentary arena as unnecessary or even detrimental to their struggle (Adloff 2018; Boddenberg 2018; Muraca 2013; Schlosberg and Craven 2019; Schneidewind et al. 2018; Wright 2010).

In this article, our goal is to explain and conceptualize this historical shift in the imagination of how social change should be achieved in countries without a strong collective experience of crisis and austerity. Doing so will allow us (a) to address existing blind spots in the literature on the relationship between movements and parties, which conceptualizes movement and party organizations primarily as (potentially) cross-fertilizing allies and stresses the potential for organizational *hybridization (movement parties)*; and (b) to spell out how this change in imagining social transformation might affect the way in which political parties and social movement organizations are able to mobilize legitimation and resources for their goals.

For this purpose, we use Germany as a case study. In Germany, as in the Southern European countries, progressive, leftist and ecological alternative action organizations have gained momentum against the backdrop of the 'multiple crises' (Brand and Wissen 2018) that the Western world is currently facing, *inter alia* climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing social inequality, and political apathy (Adloff 2018; Boddenberg 2018; Butzlaff 2016; Eversberg and Schmelzer 2016; WBGU 2011; Welzer 2011). Yet, Germany differs from several Southern European countries in that it did *not* experience a comparable economic and social breakdown or austerity measures post 2008. In addition, Germany did *not* see the advent of hybrid organizations, but an increasing number of movement organizations that envision social transformation in terms of changing the everyday routines of their members *without* developing ties to political parties or big social movement organizations. What is more, the historical development of the German social movement sector presents manifold examples of how direct social action and the parliamentary arena were imagined as two sides of the same coin. As

we will show in the next section, in a European comparison, political parties in Germany up to today have remained strongly committed to the legitimizing model of membership and mass organization, a fact that would have expected closer movement-party relationships. We therefore consider Germany a suitable case to illustrate and understand why in countries with less experience of economic hardship movement organizations resorting to direct social actions have increasingly dispensed with party politics.

We address this puzzle by critically engaging the literature on social movements and prefigurative politics with sociological theories on how modernization has altered the way individuals envisage their role in social change. Since the 1970s, Inglehart and colleagues have emphasized that shifting understandings of and demands for political participation might favour and support democratic institutions (Inglehart and Welzel 2003). Furthermore, they have argued that rising participatory expectations may lead to increasing engagement *outside* of established institutions like political parties, but may help to create new and cross-fertilizing grounds between movements, parties, and other democratic institutions (Scarrow 1999). Yet, whereas Inglehart and Welzel have highlighted the positive relationship between participatory and self-expressive values and 'effective democracy' (Inglehart and Welzel 2003), other scholars of social modernization have suggested that the same values that foster self-expression and individual participation might also complicate the capacity of social movements to mobilize for social change, due to the loss of stable orientations towards collective norms (Bauman 2012; Beck 1992; Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994; Sennett 1999). Going beyond Inglehart's and Welzel's findings of growing democratic values, this perspective suggests that social modernization might pose a challenge for the organization of social change. By utilizing these social theories on how political subjectivities have evolved, we will provide an interpretation of the fact that in many Western countries the repertoires of direct social action have become disconnected from the parliamentary realm – in terms of both organizational and ideational ties.

Our argument will be that modernization processes have fundamentally remoulded the subjectivity of movement participants over time. Comparing historical analyses and qualitative empirical studies, we will show that the German labour movement was constituted by a reliable collective subjectivity (Lösche and Walter 1989), and that the new social movements were carried by a more mobile, yet still solid individual subjectivity. The small-scale, local, and experimental movements of today, in contrast, reflect a flexible, ever-more fractured subjectivity (Blühdorn et al. 2018). This 'liquefaction' of the subject (Bauman 2012) signals two developments: (a) direct social actions might no longer predominantly serve to prepare an alternative social order but to perform and experience it within the existing one; (b) with the subjective impetus of direct social action altered in that way, teaming up with a political party that could help implementing a social utopia is now longer deemed necessary.

In the next section, we will review the existing literature on the relationship between social movements and parties. On the one hand, dominant conceptualizations of movements and parties as potential allies and the more recent focus on hybrid organizations (*movement parties*) maintain a blind spot regarding alternative action organizations that have turned away from political parties and the parliamentary realm. On the other hand, and in contrast, the research on political parties suggests a growing estrangement between parties and movements. However, these expectations have been empirically

scrutinized and criticized, making the established research approaches on political parties unsatisfactory to explain why alternative action organizations are increasingly dispensing with the parliamentary arena. In section three, we will illustrate this change through a historical comparison of how Germany's labour movement of the 1920s and the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s have combined prefigurative and party politics, an idea that has been largely abandoned by contemporary alternative action organizations. In order to explain and conceptualize this shift, we make use of existing theories of individualization and political subjectivities (Bauman 2012; Reckwitz 2010; Sennett 1999) that make plausible how personal demands for movement activism and participation have evolved over time (section 4). In section 5, we will address how these changing notions of subjectivity might remodel the way in which traditional movement organizations and political parties are able to recruit supporters, resources, and legitimation for their goals.

The relationship between social movements and political parties in social movement studies and party research

Direct social action has been defined as collective attempts 'to change society rather than the state and to effect change directly rather than effecting change through the expression of claims directed at the state or other institutions' (Bosi and Zamponi 2020, 2).² This is nothing new – anarchist movements have since long emphasized the need to remain distant from the party political or parliamentary realm (Boggs 1977/1978) and the critique against political parties frustrating any transformative attempts goes back to Robert Michels' work on pre-World-War-I Social Democracy (2016).

Yet, what *does* seem new is that, within countries that evaded post-2008 austerity, progressive alternative action organizations are imagining social transformation beyond the pathways of the parliamentary arena. In the past, many movements in Germany that made use of direct social action used to understand themselves as part of a larger organizational cosmos that facilitated the deliberation over different visions of change, the orchestration of mutual support and the consolidation into a broader social movement. This notion resembles the understandings of a social movement field (Calhoun 1993) or a social movement industry (McCarthy and Zald 1977), consisting of a number of different movement organizations each pursuing social transformation in an individual, yet similar way, *and* including sympathetic political parties. Correspondingly, this notion of cross-organizational cooperation has not only been developed within social movements but has been prominent in the academic study of the relationship between movement organizations and political parties as well. In different research communities, social movement organizations and political parties have been conceptualized as functionally differentiated actors of interest representation that can nonetheless support each other in their respective struggles as cross-fertilizing allies (Kitschelt 2003; Rucht 1993).

In the research on social movements in established democracies with comparatively stable party systems, which up to now has also involved alternative action organizations, three strands have been distinguished, which are not mutually exclusive but may overlap (Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2019). Firstly, with emphasis on the political process, the relationship has been described as *functional differentiation*, in which parties and

movement organizations act as confederates in a joint struggle for the same goals. From this perspective, social movements consider parties as part of the context of movement mobilizations and, as such, part of the movement's social alliance and conflict structure (McAdam and Tarrow 2010). Secondly, the relationship between movements and parties has been used to identify *changing cleavage structures* in (Western) societies (Hutter 2014). Parties and movement organizations both have been attributed different roles in the context of politicizing and mobilizing cleavages. This strand of literature studies how different political ideologies make different use of the shared work between parties and movements by comparing how on the left and on the right the logics of protest and elections are combined differently (McAdam and Tarrow 2010). Thirdly, the relationship between social movements and political parties has been defined by describing movements and protests as *agenda setters* for the electoral arena (Hutter and Vliegthart 2018). From this perspective, movement organizations provide political parties and elites with information on social developments and help to direct public attention and discourse to critical problems.

In addition, social movement scholars have recently emphasized the potentials for cross-fertilization between parties and movements, highlighting cases that indicate a hybridization of organizations. In the aftermath of austerity measures and the global economic crisis after 2008, Almeida (2010), Della Porta et al. (2017), Deseriis (2020), as well as – previously – Kitschelt (2006) have identified a growing interest of social movements and political parties alike to benefit from the strategic and organizational resources of hybrid movement-party organizations. Similarly, in the context of an increasing crisis of democratic representation, Hutter, Kriesi and Lorenzini expect that social movements' interaction with political parties will become more frequent, close, yet also conflict-ridden and contentious (2019). As a vivid example, many participants of the Southern European square movements after 2008 found their ways into new prefigurative practices as well as political parties (Almeida 2010; Della Porta et al. 2017). Their engagement spurred the imaginary of an alternative society, which again helped mobilizing for ideologically proximate parties, such as *Barcelona en Comú*, *Partito Democratico* and *Syriza* (Bazurli 2019; Varvarousis, Asara, and Akbulut 2020). Transforming existing party organizations or founding whole new political parties remains an important strategic repertoire of many social movement organizations, from the Italian *Movimento 5 Stelle* to many European right-wing populist movements, including those who primarily focus on direct social action (Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2019).

Along the same lines, in the research on political parties, their relationship with social movements (and civil society in general) has been conceptualized as providing two-way *linkages between the institutions of parliamentary democracy and the people*. Similar to the concept of functional differentiation, political parties and movement organizations make use of different channels and repertoires of communication but are firmly linked through the democratic process (Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister 2013; Lawson 1980). Movements contribute to the bottom-up functioning of representative democracy by channelling citizens' preferences and demands and might be a part of the top-down character of Western democracy by helping to transmit the justifications of political decisions towards citizens.

However, while the research on social movements and party systems has emphasized possible cross-fertilization and growing relations between different social movement organizations and political parties, several political party scholars have argued that this

different-but-close relationship between political parties and social movements no longer exists. In a growing strand of party research, it has been diagnosed that political parties, especially those that originated in close ties with a social milieu, have lost big parts of their societal roots, and have suffered from increased voter volatility and loosening collective identities (Dassonneville, Hooghe, and Vanhoutte 2014; van Biezen and Poguntke 2014). The research on political participation has supported these observations and has diagnosed a shift of political activism from the sphere of political parties towards civil society (Dalton 2019). As a result, Katz and Mair suggest in their influential cartel party thesis that parties have withdrawn into cartels that increasingly turn to the state in a collusive manner in order to retain resources, narrow competition and improve vote seeking (Katz and Mair 1995, 2009). Consequently, as many scholars have built upon the cartel party thesis, political parties are expected to abandon close ties with civil society, members, and sympathizers and to seclude into a depoliticized vision of social transformation (Faucher 2015; Katz and Mair 2009). Therefore, from this perspective, alternative action organizations dispensing with the parliamentary arena might just be a consequence of political parties turning away from representing society. However, especially this representation claim of the cartel party thesis has been repeatedly criticized from the beginning (Koole 1996). In theoretical and empirical accounts of party cartelization, it has been convincingly demonstrated that notwithstanding declining party membership, increasing reliance on state funding and governance orientation, 'we have been offered no compelling reason to accept the conclusion that such developments suggest the end of political representation by way of parties' (Enroth 2017, 127) and that even cartelized parties are not necessarily 'losing their ability to provide selective and collective incentives for aligned social groups' (Detterbeck 2005, 185). The German party system, in particular, has been identified as committed to high levels of membership and to the legitimizing model of mass organization linking state and society, so that it could be expected that party relations with different forms of social movements remain relatively well-established (Detterbeck 2005, 2008; Nonnenmacher and Spier 2019).

Hence, for the purpose of this article, the research on party change might not provide sufficient explanation for why contemporary alternative action organizations have dispensed with the parliamentary arena, at least in countries that evaded austerity measures post 2008. Thus, we suggest going beyond the party political sphere in order to scrutinize why contemporary alternative action organizations and repertoires of direct social action are often avoiding all-too-close ties with political parties, and why political parties are increasingly perceived as putting the movements' own reputation as transformative social actors in danger (Blings 2020; Butzlaff 2016). Therefore, we turn to the activists' expectations and political subjectivities to understand why and how these movements' repertoires shape their imaginations of social change. To fill the gaps left by social movement studies and party research, we pursue a historical comparison and a modernization-theoretical interpretation of alternative action organizations in Germany.

In the following, demonstrating how social movements and political parties had developed a joint imagination and strategy of social change, we will reconstruct the ideational and organizational removal of alternative action organizations from political parties in Germany from the beginning of the twentieth century until today. We then use sociological theories of political subjectivities to explain how these joint imaginations were

abandoned in contemporary alternative action organizations and which consequences might arise for social movements' and political parties' struggles for societal change.

Direct social action and party politics growing apart in Germany

The labour movement in the 1920s

Organizing opposition against a bourgeois society had shaped the self-understanding of the labour movement. This incorporated a lifeworld and milieu on the one hand *and* a strategy for a collective seizure of power on the other (Boggs 1977/1978; Sassoon 2010). Both strategies started out from the commonly shared awareness that only organizational unity could provide the movement with the capacity to withstand social oppression and to overthrow the social, political and economic exclusion of the working classes (Lösche and Walter 1989). The organizational cosmos of the labour movement guaranteed its inner coherence and collective subjectivity, provided consolation and protection in the face of economic and social hardship, and facilitated efforts to anticipate and establish the *new man* and the socialist society to come.

Importantly, the plurality of movements within the traditional socialist labour movement (Calhoun 1993) implied that the unity of the two strategic arms was crucial, yet not monolithic. Especially the vivid organizational cosmos of Social Democracy in the German speaking countries between the 1890s until the early 1930s showed only limited strategic coherence and authoritative steering. Although under the conditions of economic and political crises of the 1920s envious fights over resources, members and influence broke out regularly, the single organizations were still convinced to belong to *one* movement struggling for the same goals (Lösche and Walter 1989). The political party was perceived as a crucial strategic pillar and coordinating the philosophical debate about the movement strategy. Simultaneously, the direct social action parts of the overarching movement were not only autonomous with regard to strategy and finance (Lösche and Walter 1989), but also complementary in terms of whom they were able to mobilize. Activities organized by sports, music and recreational clubs, educational associations or professional unions were able to reach out to far more people than political parties ever could through their formal members (Lösche and Walter 1989). Identity and a sense of multiple belongings were built through the affiliation with a wide array of organizations that structured daily life and practice. Direct social action therefore was not a top-down decision and the *new man* to arise was not designed by the political party and then to be realised through the various organizations. The discussions on strategy and programme on the one hand and on direct social action and political utopia on the other were not separated but took place in party and movement organizations alike – with both arms still playing their distinctive roles. An awareness of the necessity to cover *both*, an idea of power and hegemony *and* the creation of new logics, practices, loyalties and a revolutionary subject united the various movements and the political parties of European Social Democracy prior to World War II.

Furthermore, the pre-WWII labour movement was uncertain in terms of the role democracy could or should play in the transition towards a socialist society (Sassoon 2010). An electoral majority was still far from realistic and thus a purely parliamentary strategy was unlikely to provide the necessary powers. Hence, a complementary

organizational network for growing a class of *new men* was mandatory, who could then pursue the transformative tasks and express the movements' values in the face of a frustrating status quo. In addition, *the* social-democratic role model prior to WWII was the functionary, who held the organizational network together. He (it was more often a he) was expected to know the way towards a better future, lead various movement organizations at a time, take care of members and affiliates in need, and – of course – translate the political-strategic meaning of the daily practices of the labour milieu and the *Solidar-gemeinschaft* into the parliamentary political programme (Lösche and Walter 1989). In a nutshell, he was the embodiment of a solid collective class identity as well as the multiple belongings that the labour movement claimed to build upon. The labour movement's perception of democracy as well as the repertoires and networks reflected that direct social actions *and* party political practices were imagined to go hand in hand (Calhoun 1993).

New social movements in the 1970s and 1980s

A few decades later, the new social movements not only resumed and advanced the strategy of directly building an alternative society but also radicalized it. During the 1970s and 1980s, the establishment of anti-authoritarian kindergartens, food cooperatives, organic farms and knitting circles signalled a whole new era of alternative action organizations. This resurgence of prefiguration has been attributed to the importance of immediateness, authenticity and self-determination within the new social movements, which signalled new individual subjectivities and made movement integration and cooperation with the political arm increasingly complex (Reichardt 2014). In a way, this was an inevitable consequence: The student, feminist, peace and environmental movements were mobilizing against a political system that they perceived as authoritarian and technocratic and against an economic system that they experienced as alienating and unsustainable (Habermas 1981; Touraine 1981). Yet, instead of addressing a collective class identity, they appealed to the individual subjectivity of citizens. In order to destabilize the dominant norms of society and sway the public opinion on a range of newly politicized issues through direct actions, the new social movements relied on radically different meanings and practices that they developed, tested and circulated in the 'cultural laboratories' of activist everyday life (Melucci 1989, 60; Breines 1989; Epstein 1993).

Despite the plurality of movement organizations and their emphasis on extra-parliamentary transformative action, the strategy of seclusion against the political system began to soften in the late 1970s, and Green parties and citizen lists were founded to carry the feminist, ecologist and peace agendas into the parliaments. In Germany, sooner than anywhere else in the Western world, the new social movements developed *Die Grünen* as a highly capable political party, not least because they could rely on a strong alternative milieu hosting a broad array of alternative action organizations that helped creating a collective experience (Walter 2014). Yet, the role of the party was imagined differently than in the case of the labour movement. Instead of being an integral and leading coordinative part of the movement, the party was meant to be an instrument for realizing the goals of the movements on the ground (Poguntke 2001). Throughout the 1980s, ongoing conflicts about its role as the political arm of the new social movements and the steering power of its parliamentary representatives kept the movements busy.

The so-called *Fundamentalists* saw the party primarily as a stage to voice demands and to access the financial and organizational resources that come with parliamentary representation. The *Realists*, in turn, expected the party in parliament to exert concrete political power, in opposition or even in government, for the purpose of realizing movement goals.

What both currents had in common was the perception that the party had to be closely monitored and controlled by the movements. This was implemented through the party statute that should prevent the party from adopting the established mechanisms of the political system, which were perceived as corrupting and distorting the democratic process (Kitschelt 1988; Poguntke 1987). These controls included, inter alia, collective leadership, transparency, public meetings, restriction of terms and office accumulation, and rotation in office. Similar to the labour movement, there was no clear boundary between direct social action and parliamentary politics of the new social movements. Yet, in contrast to the former, the latter established a distinctive hierarchy between the two strategies, with the party being a political spokesperson and a subordinated instrument of the extra-institutional social movement organizations (Poguntke 2001). The Green party and the landscape of alternative action organizations were imagined to belong to one colourful movement – but direct social action had gained importance throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with the party political arm only being legitimate when it contributed to the unmediated transformation of society outside the political system.

To sum it up: Within the labour movement, direct social action and party politics advanced side by side, closely connected yet autonomous, and carried by a collective and solid subjectivity as a member of the working-class movement. Direct social action and party politics were understood as two wheels that were firmly linked by a transmission belt, which allowed them to circulate ideas of strategy, visions of the future and notions of solidarity among movement participants. With the new social movements and the Green party, this relationship had changed: The party was now an instrumental tool for alternative action organizations to express and demonstrate their goals and identity. The party was still imagined as part of a broader movement that shared the same convictions – yet, the individualized identity construction of its members was to be realized through direct social action and lifeworld practices.

Alternative action organizations in the contemporary

In contrast, progressive alternative action organizations in contemporary Germany are characterized by virtually no stable and long-term ideational or organizational ties to a sympathetic party for pursuing their goals of social transformation. This is demonstrated by a number of empirical studies that have been conducted on different alternative action organizations, ranging from comparative analyses of numerous organizations to in-depth case studies on single initiatives. Interviewing 29 activists and polling 212 activists from various urban food movements throughout Germany, Cordula Kropp has identified the common goal of fostering ‘transformative forms of food production and dissemination and the testing of alternative forms of dealing with urban areas that are sensitizing to global problems’ (Kropp 2018, 419). Sigrid Kannengießer, who held interviews with 38 practitioners among three German repair cafés and conducted participant observation in a national network of repair cafés, diagnosed eight main aims for participation:

conserving resources, preventing waste, appreciating devices, the fun of repairing, mingling with people, sharing knowledge, learning repair skills and economic considerations (Kannengießer 2018, 110). Both Kropp and Kannengießer highlight that their interviewees 'do not want to wait for politics or the economy' to implement the necessary structural adjustments (Kropp 2018, 427) and that they seek to 'put pressure' on them through their alternative everyday practice (Kannengießer 2018, 113). Bastian Lange, who conducted a survey on 103 open workshops in Germany, did not report any attitudes towards the political system, yet he, too, described the main motivation of respondents as the collaborative *experimentation* with and the *immediate* mobilization of sustainable consumption and production practices (Lange 2017). The idea to collectively change society via direct social action without establishing links with party organizations has also been identified in ethnographic case studies on co-housing groups (Seemann, Jahed, and Lindenmeier 2019), clothing swap initiatives (Derwanz 2015; Henninger, Bürklin, and Niinimäki 2019), and borrowing and free shops (Heiny 2016). The same can be found in social movement organizations that draw on various repertoires of action, with direct social action as a key one, such as degrowth (Eversberg and Schmelzer 2016), *DIY* initiatives (Baier et al. 2016) or recent civil protests, so-called *Bürgerproteste* (Butzlaff 2016). Notably, this general omission of political parties as a strategic partner among German progressive alternative action organizations does not mean that they do not accept financial support by local authorities (and thus, indirectly, by party officials) (Kannengießer 2018; Lange 2017; Scheller and Thörn 2018), nor does it preclude the engagement of direct social activists in contentious protests (Eversberg and Schmelzer 2016; Heiny 2016; Rombach and Bitsch 2015). Yet, what it *does* suggest is that the dual perspective on social transformation, which had defined the German labour movement and new social movements, is no longer present within contemporary alternative action organizations. In contrast, experimenting with alternative everyday practices, so they might have a fertilizing effect on different economic regimes or a mitigating effect on the Earth system, is perceived as an appropriate political strategy *in itself*. Public subsidies might be used and protest activities might be added – yet direct social action is no longer perceived as being tied to pursuing social change through political parties, neither organizationally nor ideationally. Alternative action organizations and direct social action represent only one among various forms of social movement organizations and action repertoires, yet their recent decoupling from the parliamentary arena in Germany might indicate that imaginations of how to organize and influence social change are shifting – and that political parties and direct social action as functionally differentiated allies are ever harder to integrate.

In the next section, we are going to approach this development through the lens of sociological theories of modernization. The cultural changes that are induced by modernization processes, we argue, have had lasting effects on the relationship that individuals establish with social movements and on the idea of the political subject these movements embody. Indeed, we presume the historically embedded subjectivity of practitioners as the pivotal point for understanding the shifting relationship between direct social action and party politics in Germany.

The dissolution of the subject: the fading link between lifeworld and party

Since Karl Marx, sociologists have highlighted the importance of social movements for constructing collective and individual identities (Buechler 2000), for catering for identity needs, and for alleviating alienation and identity crises (Klandermans 2006). The individual decision to join struggles against an unjust or menacing society always includes patterns of identity construction and self-expression. Yet, as theorists of modernization have argued, these patterns are constantly changing, and with them, the ideals of a better future, effective political institutions and the organization of social transformation. To begin with, the solid collective subjectivity attributed to members of the labour movement, with its comprehensive integration into a complete movement lifeworld, has dissolved. Giddens (1991) and others have worked out the ways in which personal identity has become ever less socially predetermined and increasingly turned into a matter of individual choice and self-construction (Beck 1992; Cortois and Laermans 2018) – including the perceived *obligation* to achieve a distinguished individuality (Reckwitz 2020). In line with these conceptualizations, Inglehart observed that in contemporary societies, issues of self-realization, self-expression and quality of life are becoming ever more prominent (1977), with contemporary citizens turning increasingly elite-challenging, participation-oriented and politically self-confident.

However, whereas Inglehart attributed these value shifts to a human development fuelling the fundamentals of ‘effective democracy’ (Inglehart and Welzel 2003), others have been more sceptical. For instance, Sennett has highlighted the growing complexity and flexibility of individual norms and objectives, which he conceptualized as the ‘corrosion of character’ (1999). Furthermore, Bauman has described how the goals of individual self-construction are becoming ever more fuzzy (‘liquid’) and how this renders all forms of collective action increasingly difficult (2012).

Kellner (1992), Gergen (1995) and others have pointed to the rise of a ‘fragmented subject’ (Reckwitz 2010, 125; see also Žižek 2000) in advanced modern societies. They have illustrated how contemporary individuals no longer pursue traditional notions of identity – centred, consistent, stable and rationally integrated – but host a dynamic patchwork of multiple identities that do not add up to a coherent and unified self. And rather than being evidence of a unidirectional human development towards democracy, on the one hand, or a pathological deviation, a ‘corrosion of character’ (Sennett 1999), or the failure to realise an aspired ideal, on the other, this shift towards new notions of the self might at least partly be interpreted as a *liberation* from the boundaries and constraints imposed by the idealist-bourgeois notion of identity. It creates new space for irrationality, for inconsistency and incompatibility. It entails an emancipatory promise for the individual: the diverse opportunities of an increasingly differentiated and fast-changing society can be seized, if one gives up on the project of integrating values, behaviours and life perspectives into a unitary self (Blühdorn 2013).

Going beyond Inglehart’s assumption of a positive relationship between values of self-expression and ‘effective democracy’, these conceptualizations of political subjectivity in modern Western societies are highly instructive, we argue, to make sense of the drift between alternative action organizations and party politics. If one conceives the two approaches to politics as *two arms* of a social movement *body*, then subjectivity can be imagined as the *torso* to which these two arms are attached and respond to. The more

solid and predictable the subjectivity of movement members is, the more it is able to combine the efforts of direct social action and party politics. Goals, visions and trust can be productively transferred between the two, because movement members share a normative horizon that binds them together. With an increasingly liquid and unpredictable subjectivity in modern societies, this ideal loses attractiveness – and the two arms of transformative social movements lose the very entity that used to hold them together.

The evolution of new social movements signals this very turning point of modern subjectivity: in the early years, movement organizations embodied a symbiotic relationship between direct social action and the imagination of social change at large, which mirrored the activists' desire to develop a reliable *individual* subjectivity within a reliable alternative society (Deflorian 2020). This extended to the Green party that was considered as an institutional proxy of the movements in pursuing the transformation of society *and* the realization of the individual activist identities. The alternative future that was being prefigured in the lifeworld of activists informed the political narratives of the party. Furthermore, the strong sense of hierarchy between the movements and the Green party made it clear that the movement identity and the individual subjectivity of its members was deemed more important and superior. Yet, with the end of the heydays of new social movement mobilization in the late 1980s, many members left the alternative milieus and their cultural laboratories for pursuing careers in the public and educational sector. Swiftly, they adopted more consumption-based forms of self-realization, while holding on to their post-material values (Walter 2014). This indicates a departure from the project of a solid self and the arrival at a *fragmented* or *liquid* subjectivity (Blühdorn and Butzlaff 2019). Direct social action, while still describing a pathway to social transformation, assumed another function for those that left the alternative milieus with their emancipatory norms and duties imposed on the individual: it became an occasional activity that could be articulated whenever one's liquid subjectivity became difficult to bear and whenever demonstrating commitment to a centred and consistent self became high in demand (Blühdorn 2013).

It is the *liquid* (form-losing) character of late-modern subjectivity and the *performative* (form-giving) value of direct social action, we argue, that explains why alternative action organizations in Germany have dispensed the parliamentary arena for their goals of social transformation. It has become almost a commonplace in social movement research that direct social action seeks social relations that are radically different from those that are dominant in contemporary societies (Wright 2010). Yet, from a late-modern perspective, it is not only an alternative future that is being embodied in community gardens, food cooperatives or repair cafés, but – as mentioned above – also a solid individual subject (Reichardt 2014). Rooted within the critical-creative milieus, which succeeded the alternative milieus of the 1970s and 1980s, contemporary alternative action organizations not only make others *see* the ideals of autonomy, integrity and solidarity, but allow practitioners to *live* the achievement of these ideals, if only for a moment. Importantly, this occasional *enactment* of a solid subjectivity responds to the late-modern condition that individuals grapple with: the intricacy of holding a fragmented and liquid self, while the norm of an autonomous and consistent self cannot be discarded. Social movement scholars have also indicated that these deductions from social theory might not only hold true for societies as a whole, but for movement activists in particular (Deflorian 2020; Kempson 2015; McDonald 2002).

All this has significant implications for alternative action organizations and their connection to the realm of political parties and parliament. First, ever rising expectations for self-realization, self-determination and self-experience, paired with declining confidence in existing political institutions, lead to ever more vociferously articulated demands for more immediate action, personal experience, and individual sovereignty (Butzlaff 2016). At the same time, however, it is this very expectation that makes the establishment of an overarching movement struggle less likely – since such a struggle would necessarily include social movement organizations and political parties that can only promise individuals *indirect* influence on social transformation. Second, societal differentiation and the fragmentation of selves render social organization, consensual decision-making and collective action ever more difficult. Considering that even at the level of the single individual, values and interests are becoming ever more diverse, inconsistent and volatile, their organization and consistent articulation – through a political party or movement organization – turns into a considerable challenge. Under these circumstances, the activists of contemporary alternative action organizations may, if at all, only seek a *selective* and *temporary* cooperation with political parties and the parliamentary arena. Once they are no longer perceived as instrumental for the goals and ideals of immediate direct social action, personal experience and individual sovereignty, alliances may falter quickly.

Conclusion

In the two major waves of progressive social movement mobilization in twentieth century Germany, a combination of direct social action *and* party politics dominated the strategic imaginations of social transformation. In the 1920s, the workers movement integrated direct social action and party politics through a strong proletarian culture and functionary structure. Several decades later, the new social movements struggled, but still managed to balance the perspectives of direct social action and party politics. In contrast, Germany's contemporary alternative action organizations, such as community gardens, borrowing shops or alternative housing groups, hardly show any signs of affiliation to existing or new parties. This drift has so far been overlooked by social movement research, which has underlined potentials for organizational cross-fertilization, especially in the cases of austerity-ridden countries in Southern Europe. The observation that alternative action organizations dispense with the parliamentary arena might in part be explained by contemporary theories of political parties suggesting a cartelization of political parties abandoning ties with civil society. However, even though political parties have been consistently losing membership and rooting in society, it has been convincingly argued that this does not necessarily imply either a disengagement with social movements or abandoning the ideal of a membership organization. Hence, this explanation remains insufficient and requires to be supplemented by a perspective on how alternative action organizations and their activists themselves have changed.

Therefore, in this article we have assessed the historical drift between German alternative action organizations and party politics by drawing on theories of the late-modern society and subjectivity in order to understand how demands for participation have shifted. The historical comparison allowed us to approach how different understandings

of organizing social change relied on different political subjectivities and varying identity-formation.

Contemporary forms of identity-construction have turned traditional ways of imagining and organizing social transformation complicated and somewhat dysfunctional. The idea of a comprehensive social movement integrating and representing solid political identities and connecting them in a stable way to a political party might be perceived as restricting and detrimental to the fuzzy identitarian needs of contemporary political subjectivities. Flexible, unbinding and low-threshold forms of participation – such as local, experimental everyday activism – might cater much more efficiently to these identitarian demands. In response, alternative action organizations pursuing direct social transformations create new and complementary conjunctions between (a) their goals of and experimental work with social alternatives, (b) a perspective of collective efficacy and power to realise their goals and (c) the identity demands and subjectivities of their members and sympathisers. This does neither imply that all progressive alternative action organizations in Germany act the same way nor that traditional repertoires of contentious actions and resistance are discarded altogether (Balsiger 2019; de Moor et al. 2019). However, it *does* imply that forming a stable strategic coalition with a political party is not part of this equation anymore. Whereas Inglehart's perspectives on value change and social modernization seem to suggest an ever-growing democratization, through the lens of theories of late-modern society and individualization this is not necessarily the case.

The intricacy of late-modern identities – hosting a multi-faceted and flexible self, while the norm of a holistic and reliable self cannot be abandoned – is not limited to alternative action organizations, but might influence more general understandings of democratic participation, activism, and association (Blühdorn and Butzlaff 2020). And it might indicate strong consequences for the organization of societal counter-powers that seek to confront and change the status quo, as the sustainable construction of a broad coalition of diverse social actors seems increasingly unlikely or even impossible. More generally, especially if organizations drawing on direct social action remain confined to changing lifeworlds, it might affect the possibility and likelihood of an organized and participatory large-scale transformation of society altogether. At least, it might indicate that established political organizations that have historically co-organized transformative agendas – such as progressive left-wing and green parties – might suffer a continuous loss in terms of credibility and legitimation.

These findings appear to diverge from the existing work on direct social action under conditions of austerity in Southern Europe (Bosi and Zamponi 2020), which emphasizes a cross-fertilization with party politics as a result of crisis and economic pressures. In contrast, the German case suggests that in *absence* of austerity and shortage in everyday life motivations for direct social action might be shifting. Without urgent (or with less pressing) economic and social grievances demands for immediate self-expression and flexible identity-construction might kick in as the determining factor.

Beyond the scope of this article, the argument that we have put forward may therefore inspire research in *both* direct social action and party politics. Firstly, future research might compare alternative action organizations in austerity-ridden societies with societies that lack these crisis experiences. Secondly, examining which issues and practices of alternative action organizations lead to which imaginations of social transformation seems

promising. Thirdly, as research on changing citizen's perspectives on institutions has indicated that parties and movements on the political left are confronted with different participatory demands than parties and movements on the right (Bennett, Segerberg, and Knüpfer 2018), the same might hold true for alternative action organizations. While the progressive alternative action organizations included in our analysis have dispensed with the parliamentary arena, the same might not necessarily hold true for direct social action that identifies as right-wing. Finally, especially comparisons between cases in which direct social action does and does not give rise to new political parties might benefit from the conceptual toolkit of late-modern subject theory.

Notes

1. One of these exceptions is the French Party 'Demain en commun' that was launched during the national elections in 2017 with the goal to raise the awareness and strengthen the support for social and ecological commons [see <http://demainencommun.fr/le-mouvement/>].
2. The term direct social action also strongly resonates with the conceptual work of Yates (2015), who has defined prefiguration as a multidimensional concept including (a) the wish to achieve an equivalent of means and ends, (b) to create and voice alternatives on the ground, and (c) to anticipate and practice the future utopia as if it already existed.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Felix Butzlaff  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6247-3194>

Michael Deflorian  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2263-9863>

References

- Adloff, F. 2018. "Zivilgesellschaft in der sozialökologischen Krise: Zur Transformation von Kapitalismus und Demokratie." *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 31 (1-2): 298–309.
- Almeida, P. 2010. "Social Movement Partyism: Collective Action and Political Parties." In *Strategic Alliances: Coalition Building and Social Movements*, edited by N. van Dyke and H. J. McCammon, 170–196. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baier, A., C. Müller, K. Werner, and T. Hansing, eds. 2016. *Die Welt reparieren: Open Source und Selbermachen als postkapitalistische Praxis*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Balsiger, P. 2019. "The Dynamics of 'Moralized Markets': A Field Perspective." *Socio-Economic Review* 55: 1–24. doi:10.1093/ser/mwz051 .
- Bauman, Z. 2012. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bazurli, R. 2019. "Local Governments and Social Movements in the 'Refugee Crisis': Milan and Barcelona as 'Cities of Welcome'." *South European Society and Politics* 24 (3): 343–370. doi:10.1080/13608746.2019.1637598 .
- Beck, U. 1992. *Risk Society. Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.
- Beck, U., A. Giddens, and S. Lash. 1994. *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press.

- Bennett, W. L., A. Segerberg, and C. B. Knüpfer. 2018. "The Democratic Interface: Technology, Political Organization, and Diverging Patterns of Electoral Representation." *Information, Communication & Society* 21 (11): 1655–1680. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2017.1348533 .
- Blings, S. 2020. "Niche Parties and Social Movements: Mechanisms of Programmatic Alignment and Party Success." *Government and Opposition* 55 (2): 220–240. doi:10.1017/gov.2018.18 .
- Blühdorn, I. 2013. *Simulative Demokratie: Neue Politik nach der postdemokratischen Wende*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Blühdorn, I., and F. Butzlaff. 2019. "Rethinking Populism: Peak Democracy, Liquid Identity and the Performance of Sovereignty." *European Journal of Social Theory* 22 (2): 191–211. doi:10.1177/1368431017754057 .
- Blühdorn, I., and F. Butzlaff. 2020. "Democratization Beyond the Post-Democratic Turn: Towards a Research Agenda on new Conceptions of Citizen Participation." *Democratization* 27 (3): 369–388. doi:10.1080/13510347.2019.1707808 .
- Blühdorn, I., F. Butzlaff, M. Deflorian, and D. Hausknost. 2018. *Transformation Research and Academic Responsibility: The Social Theory Gap in Narratives of Radical Change* (IGN Interventions). Vienna. Institute for Social Change and Sustainability (IGN). https://www.wu.ac.at/fileadmin/wu/d/i/ign/IGN_Interventions_03_2018_Eng.pdf.
- Blühdorn, I., and M. Deflorian. 2021. "Politicisation beyond post-politics: new social activism and the reconfiguration of political discourse." *Social Movement Studies*. doi:10.1080/14742837.2021.1872375.
- Boddenberg, M. 2018. "Nachhaltigkeit als Transformationsprojekt: Praktiken einer transkapitalistischen Gesellschaft." In *Die Gesellschaft der Nachhaltigkeit: Umriss eines Forschungsprogramms*, edited by S. Neckel, M. Hasenfratz, S. M. Pritz, T. Wiegand, N. Besedovsky, and M. Boddenberg, 123–144. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag. doi:10.14361/9783839441947-008.
- Boggs, C. 1977/1978. "Marxism, Prefigurative Communism, and the Problem of Workers' Control." *Radical America* 11-12 (6-1): 99–122.
- Bosi, L., and L. Zamponi. 2015. "Direct Social Actions and Economic Crises: The Relationship between Forms of Action and Socio-Economic Context in Italy." *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 8 (2): 367–391. doi:10.1285/i20356609v8i2p367.
- Bosi, L., and L. Zamponi. 2020. "Paths toward the Same Form of Collective Action: Direct Social Action in Times of Crisis in Italy." *Social Forces*, 1–23. doi:10.1093/sf/soz160 .
- Brand, U., and M. Wissen. 2018. *The Limits to Capitalist Nature: Theorizing and Overcoming the Imperial Mode of Living. Transforming Capitalism*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Breines, W. 1989. *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Buechler, S. M. 2000. *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism: The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Butzlaff, F. 2016. *Die neuen Bürgerproteste in Deutschland: Organisatoren - Erwartungen - Demokratiebilder*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Calhoun, C. 1993. "'New Social Movements' of the Early Nineteenth Century." *Social Science History* 17 (3): 385–427.
- Certomà, C. 2016. *Postenvironmentalism: A Material Semiotic Perspective on Living Spaces. Palgrave Pivot*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cortois, L., and R. Laermans. 2018. "Rethinking Individualization: The Basic Script and the Three Variants of Institutionalized Individualism." *European Journal of Social Theory* 21 (1): 60–78. doi:10.1177/1368431017698474.
- Dalton, R. J. 2019. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Dalton, R. J., D. M. Farrell, and I. McAllister. 2013. *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dassonneville, R., M. Hooghe, and B. Vanhoutte. 2014. "Partisan Dealignment in Germany: A Rejoinder to Russell Dalton." *German Politics* 23 (1-2): 145–155. doi:10.1080/09644008.2014.916694 .

- Deflorian, M. 2020. "Refigurative Politics: Understanding the Volatile Participation of Critical Creatives in Community Gardens, Repair Cafés and Clothing Swaps." *Social Movement Studies* 9 (1): 1–18. doi:10.1080/14742837.2020.1773250 .
- Della Porta, D., J. Fernández, H. Kouki, and L. Mosca. 2017. *Movement Parties Against Austerity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- de Moor, J. 2017. "Lifestyle Politics and the Concept of Political Participation." *Acta Politica* 52 (2): 179–197. doi:10.1057/ap.2015.27 .
- de Moor, J., P. Catney, B. Doherty, and J. de Moor. 2019. "What Hampers 'Political' Action in Environmental Alternative Action Organizations? Exploring the Scope for Strategic Agency Under Post-Political Conditions." *Social Movement Studies* 62 (6): 1–17. doi:10.1080/14742837.2019.1708311 .
- Derwanz, H. 2015. "Sharing und Caring in der Kleiderei: Kleidertausch als Peer-Produktion." *Kuckuck* 1: 36–40. https://uol.de/f/3/inst/materiellekultur/Derwanz_Sharing_und_Caring_in_der_Kleiderei.pdf.
- Deseriis, M. 2020. "Digital movement parties: a comparative analysis of the technopolitical cultures and the participation platforms of the Movimento 5 Stelle and the Piratenpartei." *Information, Communication & Society* 23 (12): 1770–1786. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2019.1631375.
- Detterbeck, K. 2005. "Cartel Parties in Western Europe?" *Party Politics* 11 (2): 173–191. doi:10.1177/1354068805049738 .
- Detterbeck, K. 2008. "Party Cartel and Cartel Parties in Germany." *German Politics* 17 (1): 27–40. doi:10.1080/09644000701855119 .
- Enroth, H. 2017. "Cartelization versus Representation? On a Misconception in Contemporary Party Theory." *Party Politics* 23 (2): 124–134. doi:10.1177/1354068815576293 .
- Epstein, B. 1993. *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eversberg, D., and M. Schmelzer. 2016. "Über die Selbstproblematik zur Kapitalismuskritik: Vier Thesen zur entstehenden Degrowth-Bewegung". *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 29 (1): 9–16.
- Faucher, F. 2015. "New Forms of Political Participation. Changing Demands or Changing Opportunities to Participate in Political Parties?" *Comparative European Politics* 13 (4): 405–429. doi:10.1057/cep.2013.31 .
- Forno, F., and P. R. Graziano. 2014. "Sustainable Community Movement Organisations." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14 (2): 139–157. doi:10.1177/1469540514526225 .
- Gergen, K. J. 1995. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Giddens, A. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Giugni, M., and M. Grasso. 2018. "Alternative Action Organizations: Social Solidarity or Political Advocacy?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 62 (6): 778–795. doi:10.1177/0002764218768855 .
- Habermas, J. 1981. "New Social Movements." *Telos* 49: 33–37.
- Haenfler, R., B. Johnson, and E. Jones. 2012. "Lifestyle Movements: Exploring the Intersection of Lifestyle and Social Movements." *Social Movement Studies* 11 (1): 1–20. doi:10.1080/14742837.2012.640535 .
- Heiny, F. 2016. "Solidarischer Konsum in Berlin: Leihen und Schenken in Leila und Ula." In *Solidarische Ökonomie als Lebensform: Berliner Akteure des alternativen Wirtschaftens im Porträt*, edited by B. Ronge, 116–137. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Henninger, C. E., N. Bürklin, and K. Niinimäki. 2019. "The Clothes Swapping Phenomenon: When Consumers Become Suppliers." *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* 23 (3): 327–344. doi:10.1108/JFMM-04-2018-0057 .
- Hutter, S. 2014. *Protesting Culture and Economics in Western Europe: New Cleavages in Left and Right Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hutter, S., H. Kriesi, and J. Lorenzini. 2019. "Social Movements in Interaction with Political Parties." In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, edited by D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, H. Kriesi, and H. J. McCammon, 322–337. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell.

- Hutter, S., and R. Vliegenthart. 2018. "Who Responds to Protest? Protest Politics and Party Responsiveness in Western Europe." *Party Politics* 24 (4): 358–369. doi:[10.1177/1354068816657375](https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816657375) .
- Inglehart, R. F. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R., and C. Welzel. 2003. "Political Culture and Democracy: Analyzing Cross-Level Linkages." *Comparative Politics* 36 (1): 61–79. doi:[10.2307/4150160](https://doi.org/10.2307/4150160) .
- Kannengießer, S. 2018. "Repair Cafés as Communicative Figurations: Consumer-Critical Media Practices for Cultural Transformation." In *Communicative Figurations: Transforming Communications in Times of Deep Mediatization*, edited by A. Hepp, A. Breiter, and U. Hasebrink, 101–122. Basel: Springer International Publishing.
- Katz, R. S., and P. Mair. 1995. "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Party Cartel." *Party Politics* 1 (1): 5–28. doi:[10.1177/1354068895001001001](https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068895001001001) .
- Katz, R. S., and P. Mair. 2009. "The Cartel Party Thesis: A Restatement." *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (4): 753–766.
- Kellner, D. 1992. "Popular Culture and the Construction of Postmodern Identities." In *Modernity and Identity*, edited by S. Lash, 1st ed., 141–177. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kempson, M. 2015. "'My Version of Feminism': Subjectivity, DIY and the Feminist Zine." *Social Movement Studies* 14 (4): 459–472. doi:[10.1080/14742837.2014.945157](https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2014.945157) .
- Kitschelt, H. 1988. "Organization and Strategy of Belgian and West German Ecology Parties: A new Dynamic of Party Politics in Western Parties." *Comparative Politics* 20 (2): 127–154.
- Kitschelt, H. 2003. "Landscapes of Political Interest Intermediation: Social Movements, Interest Groups, and Parties in the Early Twenty-First Century." In *Social Movements and Democracy*, edited by P. Ibarra Güell, 83–103. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kitschelt, H. 2006. "Movement Parties." In *Handbook of Party Politics*, edited by R. S. Katz and W. J. Crotty, 278–290. London: Sage.
- Klandermans, B. 2006. "The Demand and Supply of Participation: Social-Psychological Correlates of Participation in Social Movements." In *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, edited by D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, and H. Kriesi, 360–379. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Koole, R. 1996. "Cadre, Catch-all or Cartel? A Comment on the Notion of the Cartel Party." *Party Politics* 2 (4): 507–523. doi:[10.1177/1354068896002004004](https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068896002004004) .
- Kropp, C. 2018. "Urban Food Movements and Their Transformative Capacities." *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 24 (3): 413–430.
- Lange, B. 2017. "Offene Werkstätten und Postwachstumsökonomien: kollaborative Orte als Wegbereiter transformativer Wirtschaftsentwicklungen?" *Zeitschrift Für Wirtschaftsgeographie* 61 (1): 38–55. doi:[10.1515/zfw-2016-0029](https://doi.org/10.1515/zfw-2016-0029) .
- Lawson, K. 1980. "Political Parties and Linkage." In *Political Parties and Linkage. A Comparative Perspective*, edited by K. Lawson, 3–24. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lösche, P., and F. Walter. 1989. "Zur Organisationskultur der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik: Niedergang der Klassenkultur oder solidargemeinschaftlicher Höhepunkt?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 15 (4): 511–536.
- McAdam, D., and S. Tarrow. 2010. "Ballots and Barricades: On the Reciprocal Relationship Between Elections and Social Movements." *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (2): 529–542. doi:[10.1017/S1537592710001234](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001234) .
- McCarthy, J. D., and M. N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements. A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (6): 1212–1241.
- Mcdonald, K. 2002. "From Solidarity to Fluidarity: Social Movements Beyond 'Collective Identity'. The Case of Globalization Conflicts." *Social Movement Studies* 1 (2): 109–128. doi:[10.1080/1474283022000010637](https://doi.org/10.1080/1474283022000010637).
- Melucci, A. 1989. *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Michels, R. 2016. *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (first published 1915). Eastford: Martino Fine Books.

- Monticelli, L. 2018. "Embodying Alternatives to Capitalism in the 21st Century." *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique* 16 (2): 501–517.
- Muraca, B. 2013. "Décroissance: A Project for a Radical Transformation of Society." *Environmental Values* 22 (2): 147–169.
- Naegler, L. 2018. "'Goldman-Sachs Doesn't Care if You Raise Chicken': The Challenges of Resistant Prefiguration." *Social Movement Studies* 17 (5): 507–523. doi:10.1080/14742837.2018.1495074 .
- Nonnenmacher, A., and T. Spier. 2019. "Introduction: German Party Membership in the 21st Century." *German Politics* 28 (2): 150–161. doi:10.1080/09644008.2018.1540691 .
- Poguntke, T. 1987. "The Organization of a Participatory Party: The German Greens." *European Journal of Political Research* 15 (6): 609–633.
- Poguntke, T. 2001. *From Nuclear Building Sites to Cabinet: The Career of the German Green Party* (KEPRU Working Paper No. 6). Keele University. <https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/group/kepru/KEPRU%20WP%206.pdf>.
- Raekstad, P., and S. S. Gradin. 2020. *Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Reckwitz, A. 2010. *Subjekt*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Reckwitz, A. 2020. *Society of Singularities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Reichardt, S. 2014. *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Rombach, M., and V. Bitsch. 2015. "Food Movements in Germany: Slow Food, Food Sharing, and Dumpster Diving." *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 18 (3): 1–24.
- Rucht, D. 1993. "Parteien, Verbände und Bewegungen als Systeme politischer Interessenvermittlung." In *Stand und Perspektiven der Parteienforschung in Deutschland*, edited by O. Niedermayer and R. Stöss, 251–275. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Sassoon, D. 2010. *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- Scarrow, S. E. 1999. "Parties and the Expansion of Direct Democracy: Who Benefits?" *Party Politics* 5 (3): 341–362.
- Scheller, D., and H. Thörn. 2018. "Governing 'Sustainable Urban Development' Through Self-Build Groups and Co-Housing: The Cases of Hamburg and Gothenburg." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42 (5): 914–933. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12652 .
- Schlosberg, D., and L. Craven. 2019. *Sustainable Materialism: Environmental Movements and the Politics of Everyday Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schneidewind, U., K. Augenstein, F. Stelzer, and M. Wanner. 2018. "Structure Matters: Real-World Laboratories as a New Type of Large-Scale Research Infrastructure." *GAIA - Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society* 27 (1): 12–17. doi:10.14512/gaia.27.S1.5 .
- Seemann, A.-K., C. Jahed, and J. Lindenmeier. 2019. "Joint Building Ventures as a New Instrument for Urban Development: A Qualitative Analysis of Baugruppen in Freiburg, Germany." *Housing Studies* 34 (9): 1445–1464. doi:10.1080/02673037.2019.1581144 .
- Sennett, R. 1999. *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the new Capitalism*. New York: Norton.
- Touraine, A. 1981. *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- van Biezen, I., and T. Poguntke. 2014. "The Decline of Membership-Based Politics." *Party Politics* 20 (2): 205–216. doi:10.1177/1354068813519969 .
- Varvarousis, A., V. Asara, and B. Akbulut. 2020. "Commons: A Social Outcome of the Movement of the Squares." *Social Movement Studies* 10 (1): 1–20. doi:10.1080/14742837.2020.1793753 .
- Walter, F.. 2014. *Gelb oder Grün? Kleine Parteiengeschichte der besserverdienenden Mitte in Deutschland*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Walter, F., and S. Marg. 2013. *Von der Emanzipation zur Meritokratie: Betrachtungen zur 150-jährigen Geschichte von Arbeiterbewegung, Linksintellektuellen und sozialer Demokratie*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- WBGU. 2011. *World in Transition. A Social Contract for Sustainability*. Flagship Report. German Advisory Council on Global Change. Berlin.

- Welzer, H. 2011. *Mentale Infrastrukturen: Wie das Wachstum in die Welt und in die Seelen kam*. Heinrich Böll Foundation, Schriftenreihe Ökologie No. 14. Berlin.
- Wright, E. O. 2010. *Envisioning Real Utopias*. London: Verso.
- Yates, L. 2015. "Rethinking Prefiguration: Alternatives, Micropolitics and Goals in Social Movements." *Social Movement Studies* 14 (1): 1–21. doi:[10.1080/14742837.2013.870883](https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.870883) .
- Zamponi, L., and L. Bosi. 2018. "Politicizing Solidarity in Times of Crisis: The Politics of Alternative Action Organizations in Greece, Italy, and Spain." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62 (6): 796–815. doi:[10.1177/0002764218768861](https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218768861) .
- Žižek, S. 2000. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. London: Verso.