Social Movements and the Changing Structure of Political Opportunity in the European Union[1]

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To the extent that European integration results in the decline in the importance of the nation-state as the exclusive seat of formal political power, we can expect attendant changes in those forms of interest aggregation and articulation historically linked to the state. This article suggests that a polity characterised by multi-level governance is emerging in Europe and that this poses a set of new constraints and opportunities for groups that wish to influence political decisions. We argue that group strategy in response to this is a function of: (1) the structure of political opportunities facing a group in the EU; and (2) inherited institutions and ideologies that constrain the capacity of a group to exploit those opportunities. We use this framework to analyse the effect of European integration on four groups: the labour movement, regional movements, the environmental movement and the anti-nuclear movement.

To an observer of the contemporary world it might seem obvious that social movements and revolutions are, first and foremost, political phenomena. In light of the momentous changes wrought by the Velvet Revolutions of 1988–89 and the myriad nationalist movements currently operating throughout the former Warsaw Pact countries, it would seem the height of folly to deny political status and significance to social movements and revolutions. And yet, barely 20 years ago, the prevailing academic view did just that. Reflecting the conceptual dominance of the collective behaviour perspective, social movements were seen as, at best, a form of 'pre-political' behaviour; as warnings to those in power of emergent strains in society.[2] Accordingly, movements were depicted as more ephemeral and expressive than enduring and instrumental. Indeed, on the issue of rationality, the classic movement theorists were quite explicit. Movements were motivated more by a need to cope with the psychological stresses

occasioned by 'strain' than by the straightforward pursuit of political/material ends. Given this view, social movements were left, in William Gamson's paraphrase of the traditional view, to 'the social psychologist whose intellectual tools prepare him to better understand the irrational'.[3] So it was that sociologists (and the occasional psychologist) came to dominate the study of social movements, while their brethren in political science eschewed the subject matter.

The 1970s, however, were witness to a significant paradigm shift in the study of social movements and revolutions. Fuelled by the turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s, scholars such as Peter Eisinger, Charles Tilly, William Gamson, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald rejected the classical collective behaviour perspective in favour of a more explicitly political view of social movements.[4] At the heart of the emerging 'resource mobilisation' and 'political process' perspectives was the assumption of a close connection between institutionalised politics and the ebb and flow of social protest. This close connection was reflected in both the dynamics of collective action and the historical origins of the 'modern social movement form'.

Regarding the dynamics of collective action, the argument was straightforward. Social movements and revolutions were thought to emerge and develop in response to changes that rendered institutionalised political systems increasingly vulnerable or receptive to challenge.[5] As Peter Eisinger argued, 'protest signifies changes not only among previously quiescent or conventionally oriented groups but also in the political system itself'.[6] Thus, a close causal relationship was posited between institutionalised and movement politics.

Just as important to the emerging 'resource mobilisation' and 'political process' perspectives on social movements was the fundamental assertion that what we know as the modern social movement form arose historically in response to the emergence of the modern nation-state.[7] The centralisation of power in the emerging national state and its legitimation of a public civic culture gave rise to new forms of interest aggregation and articulation to replace the private corporatist forms characteristic of the *ancien régime*.[8] So social movements were not simply linked dynamically, but historically, to the rise of the modern nation-state.

While we are critical of, and will later take issue with, the prevailing top-do, n view of this historical process, we concur with the underlying theoretical premise: shifts in the structure and geographic locus of institutionalised power can be expected to be accompanied by simultaneous changes in the structure and locus of mass politics. When we shift our focus from the historic rise of the nation-state to contemporary events, this general proposition has important implications for thinking about the consequences that are likely to follow from the new transnational forms of governance that

appear to be emerging today. Though by no means the only example of this trend, we will none the less focus our attention on the emerging European Union and the EU process more generally. This restricted focus owes both to space constraints and to the limits of our expertise. We simply know the EU case better than any other contemporary example of the broader trend we seek to understand.

Our general argument is straightforward: to the extent that European integration results in the replacement, or, more likely, the decline in the importance of the nation-state as the exclusive seat of formal political power, we can expect attendant changes in those forms of interest aggregation/articulation historically linked to the state. In addition to the modern social movement, these forms would include trade unions and interest groups. Here we are not merely making the standard definitional point that the boundaries between these forms – social movements, parties, public interest lobbies, and unions – are inherently fuzzy. Rather we are arguing that the conceptual coherence of these categories is itself historically contingent and, in light of current trends, increasingly problematic. That is, the distinctions that we associate with these forms are inextricably linked to the historic rise and refinement of a *national* system of politics within which these distinctions were negotiated and subsequently institutionalised. So the generic labour union exists as a distinct form and coherent political entity only within the context of the nation-state. And if, indeed, institutionalised power is shifting away from the nation-state, then we would do well to relax the conceptual boundaries between these historically circumscribed political forms. Just as guilds, religious orders and other politico-organisational artifacts of the *ancien régime* had no standing in the emerging nation-state, neither do the rigid distinctions between interest groups and social movements mean much in the context of EU. All stand in much the same relationship to the integration *process*. They share the status of 'challenging groups' which hope to contest and shape the emerging institutions and philosophy of the European Union.' This emphasis on the emergent, contested nature of the EU process stands in stark contrast to the typically top-down accounts of the rise of the modern state. So before we turn our attention to an assessment of the likely impact of EU on the political prospects of several contemporary 'challenging groups,' it is necessary to revisit the prevailing argument linking the origins of the nation-state to the development of the social movement form.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN STATE AND THE NATIONAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

In recent years scholars such as Charles Tilly, William Sewell and Sidney Tarrow have argued that what we know as the social movement emerged in

response to the rise of the modern state.[10] This is not to say that there was little or no collective action prior to the emergence of the nation-state, only that the *form* and *characteristics* of that action were very different than those we associate with contemporary social movements and revolutions.

Under the *ancien régime*, popular protest activity had four defining characteristics. First, it tended to be local in origin and scope. So rather than marching on the capital, peasants seized local grain stores. Rather than orchestrating national boycotts, the aggrieved citizenry drove the local magistrate out of town. Given the decentralised nature of power preceding the rise of the national state, it made sense to attack local, rather than national targets. More to the point, the 'national' did not yet exist in anything like the form we know it now. Second, collective action tended to be reactive rather than proactive. Third, it was typically spontaneous instead of planned. And, finally, popular protests were ephemeral, rather than enduring.

According to the prevailing account, the rise of the modern state changed all of this. The key to the transformation was the dramatic increase in centralised authority vested in the national state. As the state came to exercise increasing control over more and more aspects of daily life, it also came to be seen as the appropriate target of collective efforts to promote or resist change in society. So, over time, popular protest took on a more national, rather than localised, character.

All well and good. Certainly the basic punch-line of the story seems correct. The rise of the modern state clearly is associated with a significant shift in the locus and nature of collective action. What is much less convincing is the top-down, state-centric view of the process linking these two outcomes. The idea that state formation shaped the subsequent development of institutions we now associate with the nation-state strikes us as an overly simplified gloss on a contested, reciprocal process. While social movements and the political institutions of civil society grew in response to the rise of the modern state, it makes sense to conceive both civil society and the modern polity as the outcome of a prolonged, contested, and above all, mutually interactive process of political restructuring. In our view, then, the modern, democratic state was as much an outcome as the architect of this emergent process.

While it is not our intent to sketch the definitive 'revisionist' account of this process, we can offer two sorts of 'evidence' in support of our alternative perspective. The first is simply an historical observation. It is not the case that state structures occur chronologically prior to the political forms noted above. Rather they typically develop apace of one another. This is perhaps clearest in the French case, where proto-typical movement groups and/or political parties – as represented by the various revolutionary

factions – coexist with embryonic state structures.

To give one example among the many that could be offered here, trade unions in most Western societies developed national federations to campaign for basic legal freedoms so that they could bargain in the labour market more effectively. But once such federations were established they took up a range of functions, including lobbying for substantive state legislation of working conditions, maximum hours and minimum wages, etc. To the extent that they were successful, they created the basis for further demands and legitimated a political strategy for achieving basic union goals. While there are wide variations across European countries in the institutional configuration of trade unionism and the political channels that were available to workers, it is clear that the causal arrows from union building to state building go in both directions. As trade unions were creating peak organisations to better influence authoritative decision-making, so they sought to extend the reach of the state. The second piece of evidence we would offer in support of this alternative perspective concerns the fundamental shift in the ideological foundations of government that accompanied the rise of the modern state. We think this shift bears the imprint of the kind of emergent, contested process we are describing. Indeed, the legitimating account of the modern, democratic state is nothing if not a product of popular contestation.

Above we characterised collective action in the *ancien régime* as local, reactive, spontaneous and ephemeral. By contrast, in the modern, democratic context, popular protest tends to be national in focus, proactive, planned and enduring. We can account for the geographic shift in the locus of protest on the basis of the more centralised nature of governmental authority in the modern state. But that is only part – and arguably the less important part – of the story. For had the modern state simply adopted the legitimating ideology of the *ancien régime*, we might have seen a shift in the locus of collective action, but almost certainly no change in its form and typical characteristics. But the collapse of the old order not only occasioned a shift in the scale and locus of governmental authority, but a thorough discrediting of the ideological account on which it and the 'family' of corporatist groups empowered by that account rested.

In their place there arose the modern state and the variety of organisational forms – including social movements – so familiar to us today. In turn, this distinctive organisational topography reflects the very different legitimating frame that developed apace of the process of state formation. Whereas the earlier monarchical states rested on the notion of divine right, the modern democratic state governed at the behest 'of the people'. This latter account legitimated the rise of a *public* civic culture to replace the privatised system of corporatist charters characteristic of the *ancien régime*.

Under the terms of this new system, it was not so much groups which survived at the behest of the state as the reverse. The state's claim to legitimate authority depended upon it being seen as a responsible steward *vis-à-vis* various 'client' publics. The key point is that this sea change was not the product of unilateral state action, but rather was imposed on the emerging states by the embryonic predecessors of these various 'client' publics. So Girondists and Jacobins in France, Sons of Liberty in the American colonies and their counterparts elsewhere were as much the architects of the modern nation-state as its offspring.

This view of the contested, reciprocal nature of the relationship of regimes to popular politics reflects more than our reading of history. It also reflects our interpretation of contemporary events in Europe. There, under the aegis of European integration, a new 'multi-level polity' would appear to be emerging in response to precisely the mix of top-down institution building, and bottom-up contestation described above. The ultimate impact of this process is far from clear. What is certain is that just as the shift from the *ancien régime* to the modern nation-state had implications for the locus and forms of collective action, so too does integration create new constraints and opportunities for European social movements.

THE EU PROCESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR STATES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The current process of European integration offers social scientists any number of fascinating topics for study. But among the most interesting to us concerns the potential of the process to set in motion the same broad transformation in governance structures and attendant organisational forms that we now associate with the rise of the modern nation-state. How likely is this to happen? Clearly, the final outcome of integration is uncertain. However, fundamental changes have already taken place, and while their causes are subject to debate, the locus of decision-making and the direction of change are reasonably clear. In this section we will review the character of the emerging European polity and what it implies about possible future changes in the spatial character and form of social movements. We begin, however, with a brief history of the EU process.[11]

The European Union was established by six countries, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, in 1958, in an effort to 'lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe.' The impetus for the European Union lay chiefly in the experience of the Second World War and the overriding desire to quench, or at least moderate, the intense nationalisms that fuelled successive and ever more destructive wars among the European powers. The founders of the EU wished to enmesh European countries in a web of interdependencies that would

encourage the growth of supranational loyalties as governments and peoples experienced the benefits of co-operation. The post-war decades provided a unique window of political feasibility for this ambition. Western Europe was desperately trying to rebuild its economic base, and European integration was trumpeted as a pragmatic step in this direction. In the context of the Cold War, traditional antagonisms among the old imperial powers of Western Europe diminished as their sense of collective vulnerability to the Warsaw Pact grew. In response to these and other unique pressures and opportunities, the European Union, as founded in the Treaty of Rome, was a mixture of supranational idealism and practical measures for economic co-operation.

The past 35 years have been characterised by extended periods of stasis, most recently the years of 'Eurosclerosis' from De Gaulle's reassertion of member state veto power in 1965 to the early 1980s, punctuated by periods of institutional recasting, as in the Single European Act (1986) creating an EU-wide market for goods, labour, and capital, and the decision at Maastricht in December 1991 to proceed with monetary union by the year 1999. Up to the present, the EU has not had a formal constitution; its development has been guided by irregular and *ad hoc* institution building to reap collective benefits in particular policy areas. In recent decades the original idealistic component of the EU has been very much overshadowed by hard-nosed bargaining among the executives of member states to achieve specific, mostly economic, benefits.

The question of how one should describe the governance structure of the European Union has been the subject of intense debate between those who focus on the development of a European capacity for supranational decision-making and those who focus on member-state control of institutional development.[12] The debate is compounded by disagreement about how to explain institutional outcomes, and by the implicit assumption on the part of many academic observers of the EU that it is more important to explain where the European Union may eventually end up than its current political dynamics.

However, these debates hide substantial agreement about how decision-making in the European Union has actually developed. Virtually all observers agree that national states no longer monopolise policy-making in a growing number of areas.[13] Decision-making is increasingly shared among institutions operating at different levels of government, at the subnational and supranational levels as well as the national level.

Early proponents of the European Union foresaw a polity in which states would wither away, but the past three decades have not seen anything of the sort. Member-state executives have played the decisive role in the treaties and major pieces of legislation that specify the outlines of the present

structure.[14] Treaties, including above all the original Treaty of Rome and the recent Maastricht Accord, actually formalise the monopoly of existing states as the recognised legal bodies in the process of institutional creation in the EU.

However, when one shifts from the high politics of treaty making to policy-making in individual policy areas, the role of national states and their political executives is far less sharply defined. Here, one sees diverse policy networks made up of member state executives, their civil services, national courts and other state agencies, including subnational governments at various levels, interacting with diverse private or semi-public groups and European Union institutions.[15] Member-state institutions are almost never excluded from such networks, and they continue to provide most of the key actors in the process of policy implementation. But this should not cloud the novelty of the present situation, which is that national political institutions no longer monopolise decision-making in a number of important fields of policy. European Union institutions now influence decision-making across most spheres of public policy, and they play a role that is as large, or larger, than national institutions in regulating regional development, agriculture and agricultural subsidies, capital flows, international movement of labour, competition and the regulation of trade in goods and services. In addition, subnational institutions at the regional and local level play an important role in diverse areas of policy provision; and in some countries, particularly in Belgium, Spain and Germany, they play a wide-ranging and decisive role in policy formulation.

The most powerful institution at the EU level remains the Council of Ministers, which is dominated by the executives of the member states. But since the Single European Act of 1986, which ushered in the integrated market, decision-making in the Council on a range of issues, including the single market itself, has been by qualified majority. The number of votes for each state ranges from 10 for the four largest countries (France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom) to two for the smallest, Luxembourg, making a total of 87 votes in all with a minimum of 62 votes necessary for qualified majority. Under this system, decisions in the Council are determined by member-state executives collectively but not individually, a situation that is exquisitely ambiguous – and frustrating – for those who wish to pin down sovereignty by identifying a final and ultimate source of authority in the EU.

Alongside the Council are three institutions, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament, which are more or less independent of member states. The Commission, the most powerful supranational institution in the EU, serves both as political executive (alongside the Council) and as civil service. The European Court of Justice

is, by virtue of the principle of primacy, the court of last appeal on Union law, and the European Parliament is a legislature whose powers have grown significantly over the past decade, though they are constrained in relation to those of national legislatures.

The creation of what we have called a multi-level polity has resulted from a centripetal process in which decision-making has spun away from the national level, both up to the European Union and down to subnational governments. The development of the EU is, in terms of the locus of authority, a mirror image of that of the development of the modern nation-state. The overall direction of power redistribution in the process of state-building from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries was towards the centre. The monopolisation of legitimate authority, the creation of a secular hierarchical system of justice, the deepening and widening of taxation, all pressed decision-making towards the national level. This process was greatly intensified with the rise of nationalism across Europe and the identification of centralised extraction, provision of welfare, and control of various sectors of the economy and society with the interest of the nation as expressed by the state.

Given the duration of this development and the movement in some programme areas towards further centralisation – this time at the EU level – it is tempting to see European integration as a further step in this process. But the spin-off of decision-making away from the state over the last three decades has been just as visible in the shift down to the subnational level as it is in the shift up to the European level. Governments across Western Europe have experimented with ways to deconcentrate administration and even decentralise decision-making to mollify ethno-linguistic minorities, to bring policy provision nearer policy receivers, to cushion demands on the state and to reduce the central tax burden.[16] Over the last three decades Belgium has been transformed from a unitary into a federal polity; Italy, France and Spain, previously highly centralised political systems, have created a comprehensive layer of regional government; and Greece, and to a more limited extent Portugal, have moved tentatively in the same direction, partly in response to the financial advantages of participation in the EU's structural policy. Only Germany, which is a federal polity in a culturally homogeneous society, has moved steadily in the opposite direction. Ireland remains highly centralised, though there are pressures for the creation of regional government, and in the United Kingdom Prime Minister Thatcher restricted the autonomy of subnational governments and resisted demands for devolution, though these are unlikely to dissipate in the future.

Given the process of institution-building in the EU and variations across policy areas, one should not expect uniformity of response on the part of

social and political groups. No uniform structure of political opportunity has
developed, or even shows signs of developing. Institution building in the
European Union is taking place in the absence of a strong legitimating myth
or ideology – indeed, this is one of its most important characteristics. The
process is an *ad hoc* one, leading to greater heterogeneity of policy regimes
rather than one overarching model.[17] As a result, the impact of the EU on
various 'challenging groups' – including social movements – has, to date,
been highly variable. Indeed, it is hard to make general statements about the
'system' as a whole. One can, however, discern beyond the specifics of
particular cases two general factors that shape the unique mix of constraints
and opportunities available to any given group. These two factors are: (1)
the relative structural access a group has to EU institutions; and (2) the
general policy receptivity of the Union – particularly the Commission – to
issues salient to the group. Together these two factors serve to specify, for
any given group, its structure of 'EU level political opportunities'.

But the political impact of the EU on any given group is not solely a
function of Union level structures and attitudes. These structures and
attitudes serve merely to define a new external environment with which the
group must interact. How successful it is in adapting to and interacting with
this environment is more a function of internal properties of the group. Of
particular relevance here is the way inherited institutions and ideologies
may constrain a group's ability to exploit whatever EU level opportunities
are available. That is, the link between political opportunity and movement
response is not at all reflexive. To the extent that a movement is wedded to
the existing political order, that is, is oriented to a national system of law, a
national system of membership incentives or belief structures, etc., so we
would expect to find powerful sources of resistance to institutional
adaptation.[18]

Together these two sets of factors – EU opportunities and internal
organisational constraints – have shaped the overall impact of integration on
any given group or movement. When combined they yield the two-by-two
Table 1 shown below.

TABLE I

INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

	HIGH	LOW
EU OPPORTUNITIES HIGH		
LOW		

In the remainder of this article we will use this basic conceptual
framework to assess the impact that integration has had to date on four

major European movements. The focus on internal constraints will also allow us to speculate about which of the four are in the best position to mobilise effectively in the future.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Trade unions have been profoundly influenced by the European Union and the widening of market competition in Europe. However, they have found it very difficult to adapt to these new circumstances by building transnational organisations to extend their national bargaining leverage to the European arena.[19] European integration has restructured the political and economic contexts in which unions operate, but the ability of unions to adapt to and exploit those opportunities is constrained by their history.

All trade unions attempt to increase their members' wages, improve their working conditions and, in recent decades, create a favourable social and political context for workers. However, the character of union organisations differs greatly across Western countries. In countries where unions developed gradually since the nineteenth century in a relatively non-repressive legal climate, union organisation reflects the accretion of early craft unions, organised exclusively by occupation, a later and competing layer of industrial unions, organised by industry irrespective of occupation, and a subsequent layer of general unions, composed of unskilled workers irrespective of occupation or industry. The British Trades Union Congress is made up of some 100 overlapping craft, industrial and general unions, reflecting the accretion and survival of diverse organisations over the past two centuries. At the other extreme are union movements that have been purposefully created or recreated after some fundamental political disjuncture. German unions were re-established after the Second World War along straightforward industrial lines. The DGB, the principle German union federation, contains just 17 unions with mutually exclusive memberships.

Diverse political and religious cleavages across Western Europe have compounded these organisational contrasts with competing socialist and communist union movements; Catholic, Protestant and nondenominational movements; and unions organised along ethnic lines. Finally, there are wide variations in the extent to which white collar and professional employees are organised in dominant blue-collar unions or form separate unions.

The result is a extremely diverse mosaic of organisational forms at every level of industrial relations: in the workplace, among individual unions, and among union federations. The organisational structure of union movements reflects particular national historical trajectories, and given the diversity of historical experience across Western Europe, the study of union movements

is a study of historically rooted variation.[20]

In addition, union movements have come to depend on national political and legal systems to mobilise members, structure collective bargaining and create opportunities for legislation. Unions were deeply affected by the creation of the modern nation-state and national markets, and as a result they are embedded in distinctly national structures of political opportunity. In the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, trade unions across Western Europe were transformed from organisations representing workers in particular localities and regions to national organisations bargaining routinely with employers at the national level. As national product markets developed, unions followed by placing their own organisations on a national basis so that they could encompass the supply of workers in the relevant product market in order to minimise employers' fears that by acquiescing to union demands they would be undercut by non-unionised employers.

In this period unions developed intensive political strategies for national political influence. Across Western Europe unions came to devote considerable financial and organisational resources to pressure governments to legislate improvements in their members' working lives. Unions formed national federations to co-ordinate their political efforts and most unions have maintained close links to labour or socialist parties. Unions came to pursue a dual strategy, pressing their demands for improvements in wages, working conditions, and welfare in politics as well as directly in the labour market.

The relationship between unions and the national state has operated in both directions. Not only did unions respond to the development of the modern nation-state by nationalising their own organisation, but they were also key actors in creating the state by campaigning for political inclusion, welfare reforms, and state intervention in the economy. In the process, unions became identified with the political system in which they operated. As organisations that are extremely sensitive to legal constraints on their ability to organise workers and use their labour market power to mount boycotts, strikes, etc., unions in all industrial societies have invested immense time and effort in gaining legal rights. Every union movement in Western Europe is embedded in a legal system that determines its ability to exercise economic muscle, its rules concerning leadership selection and, even more critically, the conditions under which it can organise and compel free-riders to join its organisation.

These factors make it very difficult for unions in different countries to coalesce along international lines. Yet the costs for unions of not doing so are very great. In the first place, unions face a drastic loss of bargaining power *vis à vis* employers. As labour market organisations, changes in the

economic environment are as, or more, consequential for unions than changes in the political system, and since the mid-1980s the economic structure of competition in Western Europe has been profoundly transformed by market integration. One result has been that many medium and most large companies in Western Europe have placed their organisations on a multinational basis and so are able to outflank unions in one country by relocating, or threatening to relocate, to another country where the workforce is less organised.[21] Even in industries where transnational companies are weak, unions are pressured if the product market is subject to international competition. To the extent that a union wins wage concessions from unionised employers, so those employers find themselves at a disadvantage in competing with non-unionised employers. So, for example, Air France workers gained only a Pyrrhic victory in thwarting a recent management plan 'restructuring' employment because their efforts were directed at a single airline competing in an increasingly competitive international market. To the extent that unions do not encompass all competing companies in the relevant product market, they undermine the international competitiveness of those in which they organise.

One way to summarise the problem is to say that unions are less flexible than the companies they bargain with. The logic of capital ownership and organisation is essentially anational. Companies provide their shareholders and employees with selective material incentives that travel without too much difficulty across national borders. They establish subsidiaries or merge with or takeover firms in other countries with comparative ease. If they wish to constrain the transnational dynamic of capital ownership, governments have to enforce specific regulations to that effect. Unions, in contrast, have to strive actively to create transnational organisation. The economic benefits that unions provide, such as job security and higher wages, cannot be targeted selectively to their members, but improve the position of all those in the relevant labour market, whether members or not. Hence, unions usually rely on some combination of the legal system, social norms and ideological incentives to induce potential free-riders to join the union, and these tend to be nation-specific. Unions are expressions of particular communities rather than vehicles for private gain and, as a consequence, do not have the option of expanding transnationally by buying the property of a foreign union. Unions are nationally rooted in a way that is quite alien to the corporation.

The chief response by unions to European integration has been to establish an umbrella organisation, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which encompasses union federations in EU and potential EU countries. The ETUC, which was formed in 1973, represents 40 federations in 21 countries (the EC-12 plus Austria, Cypress, Finland,

Iceland, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey), with a combined membership of 44 million workers, accounting for 86 per cent of the total unionised workforce in those countries.[22]

Given the existence of competing union federations in most of the targeted countries, the coverage of the ETUC is impressive and a clear advance on previous international union organisations – the socialist European Free Trade Union Confederation, the Christian World Confederation of Labour and the communist *Comité Permanent* – which were exclusive, sectional organisations. However, the ETUC is a feeble peak organisation. It has just 35 full-time staff, less than a fair-sized individual union, let alone a national union federation. It is a loose confederation of 61 union federations and confederations, many of which have very little power over their own member unions. Because it is so diverse, the ETUC tends to take a lowest common denominator position in representing union interests in the European Community.

On some important issues the ETUC is split between unions located in richer countries, which push for high uniform wages, benefits, and health and safely regulations, and unions in poorer countries, which resist uniform standards because they are aware that their comparative economic advantage within the EU lies partly in the lower taxes that employers pay in their countries.[23]

The ETUC is far too decentralised to play a constructive role in collective bargaining. The chief stumbling-block for transnational union organisation in particular economic sectors is that the coverage and type of unions differ substantially across countries.[24] In some countries there are several competing unions within one sector or which encompass that sector or parts of it among other economic sectors; in some countries the sector is monopolised by one union. There are also wide variations in the extent to which white collar workers and managerial staff are unionised and in their type of organisation. In some sectors they belong to monopolistic industrial unions, in others they have their own unions or entirely separate federations. Finally, as noted above, unions in different countries are enmeshed in very different legal frameworks covering collective bargaining.

These differences have severely limited the ability of unions to form effective transnational organisations. At present there are 15 sector-specific European Industry Committees in the EU with varying types of membership and co-ordination, the most effective of which are the European Chemical and General Workers' Union and the Metalworkers' and Miners' Inter Trade Committee. But no European Industry Committee has been able to press employers into formal bargaining at the European level. In most cases employers are able to block the possibility of transnational collective bargaining by simply failing to give their own transnational organisations

sufficient authority over their national constituents, and unions lack the co-ordinated economic muscle to force employers to negotiate at the European level.

Unions in the EU are trapped between the demise of autonomous national political economies which their organisations were built to cope with, and their inability to shape the new regimes that are replacing them.[25] The social contracts that they shaped in their respective countries have been undermined by several forces over which they have little control, including the 1992 Project of market integration. They are outflanked by multinational companies that can threaten to relocate to areas beyond their organisational reach. And their efforts to recapture their political and economic power at the European level have been resisted both by employers and by some member states, above all the UK. The main thrust of European integration so far has been in creating a European-wide economic space rather than regulating that space through coherent social policies or building strong supranational institutions of European governance. Hence, unions are faced not simply with the task of gaining favourable decisions, but with the far more exacting challenge of creating institutions to reassert political authority over market outcomes.

The incoherence of unions in the EU severely constrains the possibility of social democracy based on institutionalised class compromise as it was practiced in central and northern Europe in the decades since the Second World War. In these countries union movements were legitimated and strengthened by the ability of national union federations to exchange wage restraint for social, industrial, and welfare reforms. The institutional conditions for such exchange are absent in the EU. Not only is a coherent transnational union movement absent, but the European polity is extremely fragmented, reflecting diverse member state interests and an institutional structure based on a complex distribution of power across the European Council, Commission, Court and Parliament. Even if unions were strong and united, there is no coherent European government that could engage them in supranational bargaining.

REGIONAL MOVEMENTS

The European Community has been viewed as a creation of coherent states wishing to achieve particular goals that benefit them individually. This is the approach taken by intergovernmentalists, and it is an influential, perhaps the most influential, view of the European Union among international relations scholars in this field. It is supported by the fact, as noted above, that the member states, or to be more precise, the national executives of member states, are the principal participants in the treaties and major pieces

of legislation that undergird the EU. The Treaty of Rome recognises states, and states alone, as the constitutional representatives of their respective countries. This line of thinking underlies the recent application of two-level games in analysing institutional creation in the EU.[26] At the international level there is a game in which individual states interact with each other. At a second level, there are domestic games nested within each state which influence the state's bargaining position and which therefore must be taken into account in predicting systemic outcomes of the Union as a whole.

In this article we argue that this conception of the European polity is inappropriate for understanding social mobilisation. Trade unions are seeking to build transnational links so that they can bargain with employers and influence legislation at the European level, and as we discuss in the next section of this paper, new social movements, particularly environmental movements, have established a real European presence. But it is the experience of regional movements that provides the strongest case against the view that member states remain the nexus between domestic politics on the one side and international relations on the other. The mobilisation of regions directly in the European Union challenges the capacity of states to aggregate and represent domestic interests as if it was the buckle that joined two games played in two separate political arenas.

Despite the legal fiction of unitary states embodied in the Treaty of Rome and in successive treaties, most states in Western Europe are arenas in which diverse ethno-territorial groups and subnational governments contend for authoritative competences. In several countries territorially organised groups within states demand an enhanced role not only in deciding affairs in their own communities, but in the European Union as a whole.

Regions have mobilised in the EU along three avenues.[27] Many have set up their own offices, staffed and funded autonomously or with the help of businesses in their territory, to give themselves independent voice and access to information.[28] Second, alongside these regional offices there are a growing number of interregional organisations, many of which encompass regions in different states. Finally, regional governments have sought to extend their formal role in the Union, and have succeeded in instituting a consultative Committee of the Regions composed of local and regional representatives across the EU.

Over the past five years around 54 subnational governments have set up offices in Brussels.[29] The largest and best-funded of these offices combine the functions of an interest group and an embassy, though they have no legal or formal place in the Union. They provide the Commission and Parliament with a regional viewpoint on all issues that concern them; they participate in dense networks with other regional offices and EU organisations of every

type; they survey the European scene for upcoming issues to be brought to the attention of policy-makers in their home governments; and they lobby for greater voice in EU decision-making. These offices exist in the shadows of the EU, sometimes in ignorance of the existence of similar efforts on the part of other regions from their own country. But their numbers and their staff and resources have grown rapidly. The first regional office, from Saarland, was set up in 1985 and by 1988 there were 15 such offices. By 1993 the number had more than tripled. On average the regional offices that are currently established in Brussels are barely four years old.

Why have regional governments been drawn to Brussels?[30] As the policy activity of the European Union has expanded, so it touches on the affairs of subnational decision-makers across Europe. They need to know what potential policies are coming through the European pipeline and how those policies may affect them. They demand information, and they want to provide information to the relevant policy-makers at the European level so that their specific concerns may shape regulation. For its part, the European Commission is hungry for information, particularly from non-central state sources. Regions are steered towards Brussels to gain predictability and control in their institutionally complex world, and in the Commission and Parliament they have a set of interlocutors who are happy to engage in informational exchange. In general, the greater the policy competences of subnational actors, the more intense their need for information and influence. So we find that every German *Länd* has an office, alongside the majority of Spanish, Belgium, and French regions. Where subnational governments are weakly articulated, as in Greece, Ireland and Portugal, they are absent from Brussels.

Regional distinctiveness is also an inducement to organise autonomously at the European level. Regions having a distinctive culture, for example, the Basque Country, Scotland, or Wales, or which have longstanding political differences with their respective national governments, for example, the north of England, are likely to try to foster autonomous channels of informational exchange because they do not want to rely exclusively on national channels.

The efforts of such regions are intensified by their fears as well as their ambitions. Regional governments are acutely aware that the institutional structure of the EU has been shaped by treaties drawn up by the central executives of member states. Subnational governments that are entrenched in their respective federal states are drawn to Brussels to prevent their domestic political position being outflanked by national executives operating beyond their reach in Europe.[31] German *Länder* have managed to gain observer status on the Council of Ministers and individual Länder are now mandated by the German Government to represent its position on

certain issues in meetings of the European Council.[32] But such concessions
only provide the *Länder* with a shadow of the powers they exert in the
German constitution, both individually, and collectively through the
Bundesrat. Spanish regions, including the Basque country and Catalonia,
play an even smaller role in formulating or constraining the Madrid
government in the EU. German and Spanish regions are mobilised
defensively, to attain a constructive role in Europe commensurate with that
which they already have in domestic politics. One of the priorities for
regional governments in both countries is to compel their respective
national governments to accede them more formal power in the EU.

Under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty, regional and local government
representatives across the EU participate in a new Committee of the
Regions which has formal consultative status in the EU's political process.
Beyond and beneath this, regional governments have created a labyrinth of
transnational networks linking regions based on industrial specialisation,
geographical location, transnational cultural ties and a common political
role. These include the Association of European Regions, the Conference of
Peripheral Maritime Regions, the Associations of Regions of Traditional
Industry, the European Association of Border Regions, the Union of Capital
Regions, Associations covering the western, central, and eastern Alps, the
Jura, and the Pyrenees, the Association of Frontier Regions and the
Coalfields Communities Campaign.

In pursuing their goals in the European Union, and in trying to transform
it in a regionalist direction, regional movements are themselves
transformed. The possibility of regional empowerment in Europe has
influenced culturally distinctive regional movements away from the
demand for full national independence towards the demand for greater
autonomy in the context of the European Union. As policy-making has
shifted away from national executives up the supranational level and down
to subnational governments, so the issue of nationality appears separable
from the demand for an independent state. In reducing the stateness of the
European polity, the development of the EU has diverted ethnic groups
away from a focus on forging a separate state as their ultimate goal. The
1992 Project creating a common market for goods, services and labour has
provided regionalists with the security that demands for decisional
autonomy need not have a negative effect on wider trade and economic ties.

These transnational efforts are *ad hoc*, as are the individual efforts of
regions to gain representation in Brussels, yet they are considerably more
effective than the efforts of trade unions to create a transnational
organisation because the challenges regions face are not nearly as severe.
Market integration does not threaten the organisational basis of regional
governments, as it does unions. Regional governments are able to respond

to the threat and promise of the European Community both individually, by setting up European offices, and co-operatively, through transnational alliances. Trade unions, as detailed above, are compelled to build authoritative decision-making bodies to bargain effectively with employers and these compromise the autonomy of the constituent national unions. The creation of an effective European union movement is traumatic for national movements, while the creation of effective regionalist movements in the EU involves innovation and elaboration of existing regional organisation in a new direction.

The Commission, for its part, has consistently encouraged the activities of regional governments at the EU level. The mobilisation of regional governments serves as a counterweight to the entrenched power of state executives, and the Commission is eager for political allies to moderate state executive domination in the EU. Moreover, regional governments and their representatives in Brussels provide a source of information to the Commission outside regular state executive channels. As a small organisation with vast responsibilities, the Commission has to rely on externally generated information, and it seeks as diverse an informational base as possible.

Regional governments have extended their reach into the EU in impressive fashion. But like the other cases dealt with in this article, their ability to exploit new political opportunities is conditioned by their organisational roots. Subnational governments that are weak in their national political systems lack the resources to establish autonomous offices in Brussels. While all 17 German *Länder* and most French *Régions* are represented, there are no subnational governments from Portugal or Greece. Finally, regional mobilisation in the EU reflects the individualised character of constituent subnational governments. Almost all of the offices in Brussels represent individual regional governments and the dense web of transnational organisations at the European level does not compromise the autonomy of the individual constituents.

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Finally, we want to assess the impact of the emerging EU structure on a third type of movement, the so-called 'new social movements' (NSMs). Before we do so, however, a few thoughts on the controversy surrounding the use of the term are in order.

The literature on NSMs defies easy summary. Not only is it voluminous, but, as tends to happen with any broad theoretical perspective, there is little consensus among the writers associated with the approach. In identifying the qualities that define a movement as 'new', different writers stress very

different features. Some emphasise the 'postmaterialist' or otherwise distinctive values of the movements;[33] others point to the non-traditional organisational and decision-making forms associated with the movements;[34] still others to the central importance of new collective identities in the NSMs.[35]

Nor do NSM scholars agree on which movements merit the designation and which do not. Virtually all include the women's movement, the environmental movement, the anti-nuclear movement and the Third-World Solidarity movement, but others argue that the peace movement, the student movement, the gay and lesbian movement, the squatters movement and even the kind of regional movements discussed in the previous section should be included as well. In short, there is little consensus, even among proponents of the approach, on the qualities that define the new movements as new, or on the specific struggles that make up the category.

Critics have charged that this lack of definitional consensus betrays the underlying poverty of the concept.[36] The sharp distinction drawn between the 'old' class-based movements, and the 'new' postmaterialist movements, is simply untenable and ignores the many 'new' features of the 'old' labour movement,[37] the many conventional features of the NSMs,[38] and the strong links between the NSMs and previous activist traditions.[39] We agree with the general thrust of these criticisms. We see little in the values, goals, tactics, or organisational forms of the NSMs to suggest that they represent a qualitatively new type of social movement.

The only sense in which the movements are new is that their contemporary manifestations have their roots in the late 1960s or early 1970s (though some did not really develop until the early 1980s). What marks the movements as distinctive, then, is not so much their qualitative uniqueness, as their shared roots and continuing affinity with the political and countercultural New Left of that period. This alone marks them as an important category of movement for our purposes. As the dominant 'movement family' throughout Western Europe over the past 20 years,[40] the new social movements have proven to be a potent force for social change in many countries. Accordingly, we need to assess the impact of the emerging EU structure on this class of movements. In doing so, we will restrict our attention to two specific struggles: the environmental and anti-nuclear movements.

The Environmental Movement

Of the four movements under discussion here, none has been as advantaged by developments at the EU level as the environmental movement. The earliest expression of this receptivity came with the Union's proclamation of 'a common environmental policy' at its 1972 summit meeting in Paris.

More concretely, in recent years the Union has initiated four major environmental action plans aimed at various aspects of the environment including: 'the prevention and reduction of atmospheric, water or soil pollution; action against noise nuisances; management of waste and dangerous chemical substances and processes; promotion of clean technologies; [and] preservation and ... restoration of the natural environment and habitats'.[41] The Union has also participated as a signatory in a number of important international conventions aimed at curbing pollution in international waters.

Virtually all of the major EU institutions betray the imprint of this generalised pro-environmental emphasis. Most importantly, the Commission itself has been consistently progressive on environmental issues, often opposing the stated positions of powerful member nations. This disjuncture speaks to the increasing independence of the Commission from the narrow interests of the members states who appoint its members. In effect, there has emerged a distinctive Commission perspective that tends to transcend the mere aggregation of national positions on issues. And one of the clearest and most consistent components of this Commission perspective is progressive environmental policy. It has even been argued that the Commission has provided the 'environmental lobby' in Brussels with various forms of support as a way of increasing the pressure on the Union to be responsive to environmental issues. Whether, in fact, this is the case, we do not know. What is certainly true is that the sympathies of the Commission make such a claim plausible.

Nor is the Commission the only EU institution to prove receptive to environmental concerns. The 1972 declaration of a common environmental policy paved the way for legal challenge on environmental issues. In fact, only trade and commerce rank ahead of the environment as the focus of more EU-level court cases. The Union's Court of Justice in Luxembourg has heard the majority of these cases, and like the Commission, has come to be regarded as pro-environment in its interpretation of the law.

Finally, though still largely consigned to an advisory role, the European Parliament has evidenced a strong environmental consciousness. Much of the credit for this stance must go to the sizeable number of Greens represented in Parliament and to their strategic role in the majority left coalition.

To date, then, environmentalists have confronted a Union that, with the exception of the European Council, has shown itself to be both attitudinally sympathetic and structurally open to the interests of the movement. How has the movement responded to this apparently favourable structure of political opportunities? Suffice to say, European environmentalists have been aggressive in their efforts to take advantage of the Union's structural

openness and attitudinal receptivity. They have, in fact, sought to utilise all of the institutional channels touched on above.

Encouraged by the Commission's environmental sympathies and various forms of EU sponsorship the movement has established a strong lobbying presence in Brussels. The lobby is comprised of four major organisations, several lesser groups, and at least a half dozen specialised environmental 'networks'. The four major organisations are: the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the European office of Friends of the Earth (SEAT), the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace. The EEB was established and continues to be funded directly by EU while the other three organisations derive a portion of their budgets from programme and grant funds available on a competitive basis under the terms of various Union programmes. In 1990 some ECU50 million was available to these and other groups for projects or research aimed at protecting the environment.[42]

Besides these fund-raising activities, these and the smaller groups and networks which comprise the lobby engage in the kinds of educational, information-gathering and direct lobbying efforts that we associate with their national level counterparts. Radical environmentalists have been critical of the 'professional' form the movement has taken at the EU level, and especially of the willingness of these groups to accept EU funds, but the criticism speaks to the very real presence of the movement in Brussels and the close ties that exist between these groups and actors at the Union level.

As previously noted, the movement has also pursued its goals through both the European Court and the European Parliament. In doing so environmentalists have simply applied the legal and electoral strategies developed at the national level to the EU. Legal challenge has been arguably the dominant weapon in the arsenal of national environmental movements. And with the success of the Greens in Germany, 'electoral environment-alism' has gained adherents, as well.

This last observation goes a long way toward explaining the success the movement has enjoyed in the face of the emerging EU structure. Not discounting the favourable sympathies of many EU officials, the fact remains that there exists a real affinity between the tactics practiced historically by the movement and the institutional openings afforded environmentalists by the emerging EU structure. Most national environmental movements in Europe – and especially the German exemplar – have been dominated by a combination of legal, electoral and lobbying strategies; the precise mix encouraged by the relative openness of the European Court, Parliament, and the emerging policy community in Brussels.

Here again, then, we see that the political implications of European Union for a given movement are conditioned as much by the internal

constraints on the movements' response to integration as by the structure of the EU itself. So while labour's efforts to respond to the EU challenge continue to be hampered by the sedimented layers of *national* level organisation and the historic importance of the strike as labour's ultimate weapon – a weapon not yet available at the EU level – the relative youth of the environmental movement and the elective affinity between the movement's tactics and the structure of EU institutions have clearly had a salutary effect on its efforts to influence Union policy. The same cannot be said for our other New Social Movement.

The Anti-Nuclear Movement

Given the obvious similarities between anti-nuclear and environmental issues it might seem logical to expect the anti-nuclear movement to benefit from a comparably favourable structure of political opportunities at the EU level. After all, both issues are environmental at root and, as such, concerned with threats that fail to respect national borders. If ever there were any doubts on this score, the accident at Chernobyl should have erased them. No corner of Europe was entirely spared fallout from the accident. Given this clear demonstration of interdependence, one might have expected the same kind of generalised receptivity to the issue that the EU has shown in regard to environmental matters. This has not been the case. In contrast to the Union's handling of the environmental issue, the EU has yet to declare a common nuclear or broader energy policy. In his thorough survey of EU involvement in various policy areas, Schmitter includes energy as one of the areas least subject to EU control.[43] Nor does he expect this to change. Projecting to the year 2001, Schmitter continues to list energy policy as one of only five issue areas (out of a total of 28) over which he expects the national states to retain the lion's share of control.

To understand why nuclear (and, more generally, energy) policy has remained largely immune from EU control, one needs to understand a bit more about the extreme divergence among member states in their past and current policies regarding nuclear energy. The Union includes countries with diametrically opposed positions on the issue and it is this wide range of opinion that has discouraged EU involvement in the area. France and the Netherlands define the extreme poles of the implied policy debate on the issue. France has been and remains heavily dependent on nuclear power as a source of energy, and, as such, is decidedly pro-nuclear in its official policy. The Netherlands on the other hand has yet to build a nuclear plant and remains an outspoken opponent of such facilities.

Given the well-established, strong and opposing nature of these views, member nations recognised early on that nuclear policy was one issue on which they were very unlikely to reach agreement. Accordingly, as

Schmitter's survey shows, it has remained a non-issue in EU policy circles. As the functional executive and legislative arms of the Union, neither the Council nor the Commission has proposed any serious initiatives regarding the issue. Further, the lack of legitimate EU authority in the area has rendered the European Court effectively off-limits to anti-nuclear activists intent on pursuing a legal strategy. Finally, in its glorified advisory role, the European Parliament is also neutralised as a possible target for movement pressure. Lacking Council or Commission initiatives in the area, sympathetic members of Parliament are denied even an advisory forum on the issue. In short, where environmentalists have found attitudinal sympathy and structural openings at the EU level, the anti-nuclear movement has encountered the opposite. The strong and divergent national views on the issue have permeated the Council (and to a lesser extent the Commission), and effectively organised the issue out of the EU's broad policy agenda.

Lacking any real opportunities for EU-level mobilisation, the anti-nuclear movement has been as conspicuous by its absence in Brussels as environmentalists have been by their presence. A check of the official directory of all organisations maintaining offices in Brussels shows not a single anti-nuclear organisation represented. Nor, as noted earlier, has the movement been able to press its case via any other EU institutions. Nor has the European Court or the European Parliament afforded anti-nuclear activists alternative venues for pursuing movement goals. Indeed, as long as individual nation-states retain a virtual monopoly over nuclear policy, the movement has little reason to mobilise at the EU level.

Unlike labour, however, the anti-nuclear movement would not appear to be constrained by any internal impediments to transnational union. Indeed, the movement would seem to share the same characteristics that have allowed environmentalists to mobilise so quickly. First, anti-nuclear activists have always known that their's was inherently an international, rather than a national, issue. Eliminating the nuclear threat in one's home country would hardly solve the problem. Second, the movement is a relatively young one. In addition, like the adherents of most New Social Movements, anti-nuclear activists have long eschewed traditional bureaucratic forms of organisation. In combination, then, the relative youth of the movement and its philosophic commitment to non-traditional organisational forms has prevented any real institutionalisation of the movement at the national level. Instead, the national movements have tended to remain loose networks of adherents rather than enduring coalitions of formal movement organisations. Moreover, these adherents have always been attuned to events elsewhere and in contact with their counterparts in other countries. In this case, then, it seems clear that the relative powerlessness of the movement at the EU level owes almost

exclusively to the lack of institutional access afforded by the current EU structure, rather than to any ideational or organisational features of the movement itself.

SUMMARY OF THE CASES

The cases discussed here nicely illustrate the highly variable nature of the effects of EU on different social movements. The movements most likely to benefit from the emerging EU structure are those which enjoy a certain receptivity/openness at the Union level and are not handicapped in their efforts to mobilise transnationally. Two of our examples – regional movements and the environmental movement – fall into this category. Two other cells – the upper left and lower right – represent somewhat indeterminant outcomes as regards the movements in question. The lower right-hand cell is restricted to movements that are ideologically and organisationally well-suited to transnational mobilisation, but which, to date, have been afforded few structural opportunities at the EU level. It is here that we would place the anti-nuclear movement. Finally, most disadvantaged by the shift of power to the EU level are those movements which seem both ill-suited to transnational mobilisation and whose interests find little resonance in the Union. The labour movement would seem to be saddled with these twin deficits. On the opportunities side, European unions have been handicapped by the economic integration process and the multiplication of new institutional sites for collective bargaining and lobbying. As Fligstein and Mara-Drita have noted, integration has, so far, reflected the desire of business interests and national leaders to remove all cumbersome barriers to the free movement of capital, labour and materials.[44] Given this central agenda, is it any wonder that labour's interests have not been built into the basic structure and underlying philosophy of the European Union? Unions still have the weapon of the strike and they retain considerable political influence in many European polities, but these traditional sources of power have declined in value as product markets have widened in scope beyond the organisational reach of entrenched unions.

As daunting as is the challenge confronting the movement at the EU level, the movement also faces considerable internal constraints on its ability to mobilise cross-nationally. Critical here are historically rooted national orientations. The fate of workers has been intimately linked to that set of national institutions – above all, national unions, national labour laws, national collective bargaining procedures, etc. – forged over decades of struggle. The result has been the persistence of insularity and defensiveness among unions – qualities that have made effective transnational organisation immensely difficult to achieve.

CONCLUSION

We began this article by applying a perspective developed in recent years by Charles Tilly and others concerning the close historical connection between the rise of the modern state and the subsequent development of the national social movement to the contemporary process of European integration. If, as many observers believe, integration is slowly shifting power away from the nation-state, should we not also be able to discern corresponding changes in the locus and form of social movement activity? What, then, are the implications of European integration for European social movements and for a more general understanding of the relationship between institutionalised politics and social movements?

We are unable to answer this question authoritatively because the final shape of the Union is still uncertain. The past development of the Union is characterised by fundamental discontinuities as well as continuity, and it would be hazardous to assume that one could extrapolate current developments into the future. But European integration has already transformed political agendas, relations across levels of government and patterns of decision-making – and, as a result, has changed the political environment for most political movements and interest groups.

Our understanding of the causality of social movement change must encompass the variable pattern of multi-level governance in the European Union and the ongoing efforts of groups to change, as well as respond, to the emerging structure of political opportunities. The groups we have described in this article are not just corks on the tides of history, but actively seek to shape the institutional structure of the European polity. They do this strategically, as in the concerted efforts of regional governments in Germany and Spain to gain a formal place in EU decision-making. When a movement decides to press its demands within the European Union rather than at the state level, this has institutional as well as substantive policy implications, for it enhances the legitimacy of the European policy as an arena for authoritative decision-making.

While state executives continue to control the broad outlines of institutionalism in the EU, they are no longer the final arenas for policy determination. State executives play a major role in policy-making, but they do so in the context of a multi-level polity that encompasses actors above and beneath the state.

What does multi-level governance portend for European social movements? The answer, in our view, is as complex as it is fascinating. Consistent with the perspective sketched here, we expect – in fact, can already discern – significant changes in the locus and form of social movements as a result of European integration. However, the contemporary

restructuring of formal political power has a distinctly different character than the earlier process of state formation. The rise of the nation-state meant everywhere a centralisation of power. In contrast, European integration combines elements of continued state authority, with the creation of decentralised subnational power and the development of supranational decision-making bodies. The practical significance of this difference should be obvious. Whereas the classic nation-state tended to define the 'structure of political opportunities' for *all* challenging groups, the emergence of a multi-level polity means that movements are increasingly likely to confront highly idiosyncratic opportunity structures defined by that unique combination of governmental bodies (at all levels) which share decision-making authority over the issues of interest to the movement. So instead of the rise of a single new social movement form, we are more apt to see the development and proliferation of multiple movement forms keyed to inherited structures and the demands of mobilisation in particular policy areas.

In short, as our examples illustrate, the effects of the EU have been highly variable. In some cases, such as the anti-nuclear movement, the unwillingness of member nations to transfer any real policy authority to the EU has left the movement dependent on whatever openings or leverage it can muster at the national level. In other cases, significant policy authority has been transferred to the Union, but in such diffuse fashion as to pose real tactical problems for the movement in question. This would appear to be the case in regard to the labour movement. In still other instances, movements have clearly benefitted from a general receptivity or structural openness to their issues on the part of EU. Both the environmental movement and the various regional movements would seem to fall into this category. Both issues – environmental protection and regional autonomy – were accorded legitimacy by the Union early on and, more importantly, have consistently received institutional sanction and support by various EU institutions.

In contrast to the process of state-building, then, the impact of European integration on popular movements has been anything but uniform. We would also be remiss if we suggested that, as important as these effects are, the fate of European social movements were solely a product of their impact. On the contrary, consistent with our critique of the state-centric accounts of the rise of the movement form, the relationship between EU and social movements is clearly a reciprocal one. This is true in at least two ways.

First, to date the effect of the EU on social movements has been as much a function of the movements *response* to the unique structure of constraints and opportunities granted it by the Union, as any simple function of those constraints and opportunities. The institutional legacy of two centuries of

state monopoly in policy-making is seen as much in the organisational forms, practices and ideologies of various national movements as in the sedimented layers of national governments. The variable histories of these national movements introduce another source of heterogeneity into the EU/movement relationship. In general, as our examples show, those movements with the longest and most nation-centric histories face real constraints in their efforts to seek transnational union with other like-minded movements. By contrast, those movements of more recent origin – and especially those whose histories have granted them a certain expertise with the tactical forms favoured at the EU level – tend to transcend their national roots a bit more easily than their older counterparts.

Second, as we have emphasised throughout, integration is very much a process, the destination of which remains in doubt. The ultimate shape of the Union will depend on years of contestation, negotiation and compromise by a wide range of actors. We can expect that social movements will be among those engaged in this ongoing process, gradually transforming structures of institutionalised power, even as those emerging structures act back to reshape the form and practices of social movements.

NOTES

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2. See Neil Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (NY: Free Press 1963).
3. William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth 1990) p.33.
4. Peter K. Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behaviour in American Cities', *American Political Science Review* 67 (1973) pp.11–28; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilisation to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley 1978); William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*; John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilisation* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press 1973); John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 'Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Jnl of Sociology* 82 (1977) pp.1212–41.
5. Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (U. of Chicago Press 1982); Charles Tilly, *From Mobilisation to Revolution* (note 4).
6. Eisinger (note 4) p.28.
7. Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly, and Richard Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1830–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP 1975); Tilly (note 4).
8. See William Sewell, 'Collective Violence and Collective Loyalties in France: Why the French Revolution Made a Difference', *Politics and Society* 14 (1990) pp.527–52; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Mass Politics in the Modern State* (Cambridge: CUP 1994).

9. For a suggestive approach to the same question see Sidney Tarrow, 'The Europeanisation of Conflict: Reflections from a Social Movement Perspective', *West European Politics* 18/2 (1995), pp.223–51 and Doug Imig and Sidney Tarrow, 'The Europeanization of Movements? First Results from a Time-Series Analysis of European Collective Action, 1985–1993', unpub. paper. Tarrow and Imig do not find much evidence of protest activity at the European level, but their results are not necessarily at odds with the case studies presented here if one takes account of the possibility that social movements which engage in protest activity in their national arenas tend to act as lobbyists at the European level.

10. Charles Tilly, 'Britain Creates the Social Movement', in James E. Cronin and Jonathan Schneer (eds), *Social Conflict and the Political Order in Britain* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP 1982) pp.21–51; Sewell (note 8); Tarrow (note 8).

11. For simplicity we use the term European Union to apply to the various institutions – the European Economic Community, the European Community – that are the precursors of the current Union.

12. Gary Marks, 'Structural Policy and Multilevel Governance in the European Community', in Alan Cafruny and Glenda Rosenthal (eds), *The State of the European Community* (NY: Lynne Rienner 1993) pp.391–410; James A. Caporaso and John T.S. Keeler, 'The European Community and Regional Integration Theory', paper presented at the Conference of the EC Studies Assoc., 27–29 May, Washington DC (1993).

13. Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Interests, Powers and Functions: Emergent Properties and Unintended Consequences in the European Polity', in Gary Marks, Fritz Scharpf, Philippe Schmitter, Wolfgang Streeck, *Multi-level Governance in the Emerging Euro-Polity* (London: Sage, forthcoming).

14. Andrew Moravcsik, 'Negotiating the Single European Act', in Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann (eds) *The New European Community: Decisionmaking and Institutional Change* (Boulder, CO: Westview 1991).

15. See Gary Marks, 'Exploring and Explaining Variation in Cohesion Policy', in Liesbet Hooghe (ed.) *Cohesion Policy, the European Community and Subnational Government* (Oxford: OUP, forthcoming); Sonia Mazey and Jeremy Richardson, 'Policy-Making Styles in the European Community: Consultation of Groups and the Process of European Integration', paper presented at the Conference of the EC Studies Assoc., 27–29 May, Washington DC, 1993; Guy Peters, 'Bureaucratic Politics and the Institutions of the European Community', in Alberta Sbragia (ed.) *The Political Consequences of 1992 for the European Community* (Washington DC: Brookings Instn 1992) pp.75–122.

16. See Michael Keating *State and Regional Nationalism. Territorial Politics and the European State* (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1988).

17. See Sonia Mazey and Jeremy Richardson, *Lobbying in the European Community* (Oxford: OUP 1993).

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29. We are indebted to Jane Salk of the Fuqua School of Business, Duke University, for this data.
30. This discussion draws on a quantitative analysis of the phenomenon in Marks *et al.* (note 28).
31. This point was forcefully made to the first author in interviews with directors of regional offices in Brussels. On the limits placed by existing member states on the development of a Europe of the Regions, see Anderson (1991).
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