CHAPTER THREE

TRUTH REGIMES AND ACADEMIC INQUIRIES INTO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In this chapter I test the argument developed in the previous pages by exploring the effect truth regimes have had on academic inquiries and the knowledge these have produced of social movements. I examine how social movement theory frames thought and functions to make some entities, agents and topics subject to academic query while others are excluded as peripheral and eccentric. I will do so by identifying the assumptions conventional approaches carry to show how these restrict their perception and conceptualisation of social movement activism. Conventional approaches, it will be revealed, are not only limited in their assessment of the strategy and outcome of social change-oriented actors but the knowledge they provide on social movements also serves to reinforce the societal model of modern industrial societies.

First, I will introduce the theories that have emerged over the past three decades on the subject of social movements in America and continental Europe to illustrate their conformity and adherence to assumptions and boundaries generally associated with the framework of modern industrial societies. I will also assess the consequences of adopting this particular perspective for our understanding of social change-oriented actors and the evaluation of their strategies and outcome. I conclude this chapter by suggesting a new way of looking at social movements that focuses on

what conventional approaches consider to be peripheral actors and their potential for instigating structural change via the grassroots level of society. This approach will allow for a re-assessment of social movement strategy and outcome.

The review presented in this chapter does not claim to incorporate every study that has ever been published on the subject of social movements. Instead, it seeks to present the key contributions within the field that have been made over the last three decades. This, however, will not undermine or weaken the argument since the very themes that are considered 'state of the art' within the social movement literature will be covered.[1]

3.1. The Conventional Literature on Social Movements

On both sides of the Atlantic a unique approach to the social movement phenomena has developed, each reflecting the specific political culture and institutional environment that has influenced and determined not only the types of social movements that were to emerge and the course their development was to take, but also the social scientific research on the topic.[2] New Social Movement Theory, the predominantly European approach, accounts for the *newness* of these movements and

[1] For a general review and assessment of the social movement literature see Bert Klandermans and Sidney Tarrow, 'Mobilization into Social Movements: Synthesizing European and American Approaches', in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Syndey Tarrow (eds.) *International Social Movement Research: From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movement Research Across Cultures Vol. 1* (London: JAI Press, 1988), pp.1-38. Bert Klandermans, 'New Social Movements and Resource Mobilization: The European and American Approaches Revisited', in Dieter Rucht (ed.) *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA* (Frankfurt am Main/Bolder, CO.: Campus Verlag/Westview Press, 1991), pp.17-44. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, 'Social Movements', in Neil J. Smelser (ed.) *Handbook of Sociology* (London: SAGE, 1988), p.695-737.

explains *why* they have emerged.[3] These approaches argue, for example, that the way advanced industrial societies function and operate causes new grievances, and therefore the motivation, for new movements to mobilise. Karl-Werner Brand et al. called it "the crisis of modernity".[4] Industrial growth, economic expansion, and technological development have given rise to a number of harmful social and environmental side-effects and social movements now reacted against these *negative consequences of modernisation*. The protest of these movements, as Suzanne Berger argued, is directed "not against the failure of the state and society to provide for economic growth and material prosperity, but against their all-too-considerable success in having done so, and against the price of this success."[5]

New Social Movement Theory concentrates on social or cultural characteristics and it defines social movements accordingly. Resource Mobilisation Theory and the Political Process Model, on the other hand, argue that New Social Movement theorists fail to explain why some movements are more successful than others, why some of them "have had such dissimilar careers" under the same structural conditions,[6] and why some "never show up at all."[7] These predominantly American approaches argue that grievances persevere in every society,[8] and that social

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[2] Margit Mayer, 'Social Movement Research and Social Movement Practice: The U.S. Pattern', in Rucht, *Research on Social Movements*, 1991, ibid., pp.50-58.
[3] Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, edited by John Keane and Paul Mier (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), pp.21/22.
[4] Karl-Werner Brand, Detlef Büsser, and Dieter Rucht, *Aufbruch in eine andere Gesellschaft: Neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1986), p.242.
[5] Suzanne Berger, 'Politics and Antipolitics in Western Europe in the Seventies', in *Daedalus,* Vol. 108, No. 1 (Winter 1979), p.32.
[6] Herbert P. Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies', in *British Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 16 (January 1986), p.58.
[7] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978), p.60.
[8] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', in *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 82, No. 6 (May 1977), p.1215. Edward N. Muller, 'A Test of a Partial Theory of Potential for Political Violence', in *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 1972), p.931/954. J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow, 'Insurgency of the

strain in itself "does not create social movements; it only creates the potential for movements."[9] Resource Mobilisation Theory and the Political Process Model identify the resources required by movements to translate grievances into protest and the factors in the institutional environment that could hinder or facilitate movement mobilisation in order to explain *how* social movements emerge. These studies tend to focus on the 'political' dimension of social movements and their interaction with the traditional political arena of policy-making, its elites and institutions.

Despite the difference in perspective, this section argues that competing social movement theories all subscribe to the same paradigmatic premise. In their perception and assessment of social movement strategy and outcome, both branches conform to underlying assumptions about 'truth' and valid 'political actors'. Yet because they are not granted *political* status, social forms of movement activism and their potential to instigate change via the grassroots level of society is not given serious consideration. As a result, social movement strategy and outcome is assessed merely in terms of changing the existing rather than in terms of developing and enhancing an alternative societal model. In the remainder of this section I will seek to illustrate this point. Fist, I consider those approaches that locate social movements within the formal political framework.

Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946-1972)', in *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 42, No. 2 (April 1977), p.251.

[9] Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation* (New York and London: Longman, 1975), p.44.

3.1.1. Social Movements and the Formal Political Framework

Polity-oriented approaches perceive social movements as forms of activism that are directed against the established political framework, "its actors ... or its policies."[10] Sidney Tarrow, for example, defines social movements as "*collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities*."[11] From this polity-oriented perspective, social movements are perceived as "excluded groups",[12] outside the formal political process,[13] and as such to be subject to what James Q. Wilson calls "the problem of the powerless". These groups lack the essential resources to engage in the conventional bargaining process.[14] It is because they are disadvantaged, polity-oriented approaches recognise, that social movements have to fall back upon unconventional, non-institutionalised tactics,[15] violence,[16] and disruptions[17] in order "to force their opponents to deal with them outside the established arenas within which the latter derive so much of their power."[18] Social movements, in other words, manifest the failure of established

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[10] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), p.3/4. Emphasis added.
[11] Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.4. Emphasis in the original.
[12] Peter K. Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities', in *The American Political Science Review,* Vol. 67, No. 1 (March 1973), p.28.
[13] William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, second edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990), p.140.
[14] James Q. Wilson, 'The Strategy of Protest: Problems of Negro Civic Action', in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 5, No. 3 (1961), p.291.
[15] Doug McAdam, 'Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency', in *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 48, No. 6 (December 1983), p.735.
[16] Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 1990, op. cit., note 13, p.87.
[17] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p.31.
[18] McAdam, 'Tactical Innovation', 1983, op. cit., note 15, p.735.

institutions of interest intermediation to respond to or include new demands into the political system.[19]

Polity-oriented approaches conform to underlying assumptions about who and what valid political actors and activities are, but they also carry a traditional view of power as located in a particular set of institutions, groups or elites. Charles Tilly defines social movements as the "deliberate, ostentatious mounting of a sustained challenge to powerholders in the name of a disadvantaged population living under the jurisdiction or influence of those powerholders,"[20] and as "a sustained interaction between a specific set of authorities and various spokespersons for a given challenge to those authorities."[21] Consequently, it is those unconventional actors who seek to gain access to power, to influence powerholders, or even want to conquest power, that the polity-oriented perspective perceives and conceptualises as social movements.

The strategy and outcome of social movements is assessed accordingly. Resource mobilisation theories recommend that the formation of a formal internal organisation is essential[22] in order to co-ordinate and sustain interaction with elites, authorities and opponents,[23] to activate a previously unmobilised constituency,[24] to

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[19] Alan Scott, *Ideology and New Social Movements* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp.9/10.

[20] Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention Britain 1758-1834* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP), quoted in Sidney Tarrow, 'The Europeanisation of Conflict: Reflections from a Social Movement Perspective', in *West European Politics,* Vol. 18, No. 2 (April 1995), p.228.

[21] Charles Tilly, 'Social Movements and National Politics', in C. Bright and S. Harding (eds.) *State-Making and Social Movements: Essays in History and Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), p.305.

[22] See for example Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 1990, op. cit., note 13, pp.91-108. Donatella della Porta, 'Recruitment Processes in Clandestine Political Organizations: Italian Left-Wing Terrorism'. in Klandermans et al. *International Social Movement Research,* 1988, op. cit., note 1, pp. 155-169. Doug McAdam, 'Micromobilizaton Contexts and Recruitment to Activism', in Klandermans et al. *International Social Movement Research*, 1988, op. cit., note 1, pp. 125-154. Aldon Morris, 'Black Southern Student Sit-In Movement: An Analysis of Internal Organization', in *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 46, No. 6 (December 1981), pp. 744-767. Jo Freeman, 'The Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement', in *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 78, No. 4 (January 1973), pp. 792-811.

[23] Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 1994, op. cit., note 11, p.1.

aggregate resources,[25] and to translate available resources into action.[26] Here, Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash introduced the term *social movement organisations* which are considered to be "the *carriers* of social movement aims".[27] Furthermore, social movement success also depends upon a favourable external political environment, the so-called political opportunity structure.[28] Movements benefit "from the opening up of access to power, from shifts in ruling alignments, from the availability of influential allies and from cleavages within and among elites."[29] Or as J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow put it, "the success of a 'powerless' challenge depends upon sustained and widespread outside support coupled with neutrality and/or tolerance from the national political elite."[30]

Social movement outcome is evaluated on the basis of the impact they have achieved on the existing political structures, its institutions and elites, that is whether they have gained participation in the policy process[31] or acceptance "as a valid spokesman for a legitimate set of interests,"[32] whether they were included in negotiations[33] or have gained recognition as "legitimate representatives of

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[24] Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 1990, op. cit., note 13, p.16.
[25] McCarthy and Zald, 'Resource Mobilization', 1977, op. cit., note 8, p.1216.
[26] Ibid., p.1220/1221.
[27] Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, 'Social Movement Organization: Growth, Decay and Change', in *Social Forces,* Vol. 44, No. 3 (March 1966), p.12. Emphasis added.
[28] Eisinger, 'Conditions of Protest Behavior', 1973, op. cit., note 12. Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures', 1986, op. cit., note 6. Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Marco G. Giugni 'New Social Movements and Political Opportunities in Western Europe', in *European Journal of Political Research,* Vol. 22 (1992), pp. 219-244. Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Marco G. Giugni, *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (London: UCL Press, 1995).
[29] Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 1994, op. cit., note 11, p.18. Also, pp.81/85-89, chapter 5.
[30] Jenkins and Perrow, 'Insurgency of the Powerless', 1977, op. cit., note 8, p.253.
[31] Thomos R. Rochon and Daniel A. Mazmanian, 'Social Movements and the Policy Process', in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 528 (July 1993), p.75.
[32] Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 1990, op. cit., note 13, pp.28/29.
[33] Ibid., pp.28/29.

demands".[34] The placement of an issue on the political agenda, sensitising other political actors towards social movement goals,[35] the achievement of a change in policy,[36] and the passing of a movement proposal into law,[37] are further criteria for evaluating success or failure. Also, social movements are considered a success if they have managed to make policy-making processes more open, visible and democratic.[38]

It is the formal political framework of modern industrial societies that sets the parameters for the activities that are to be recognised as social movements from a polity-oriented perspective. Social change, this perspective assumes, is achieved by influencing the elites and institutions responsible for policy-making processes. Even a transnational perspective merely shifts the public/private dichotomy to the global level. Here, global social movements are considered to be new actors in the international arena, aiming to influence world politics while operating from the terrain of a global civil society.[39] This perspective analyses global social movements in terms of their impact on international public institutions.[40] As a result, these polity-oriented studies, both national and transnational, concentrate upon signs of disruption or agitation towards the established way of doing politics and its elites; they focus upon grievances expressed and dissatisfaction articulated. They also examine how

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[34] Kitschelt, Political Opportunity Structures', 1986, op. cit., note 6, p.67.
[35] Kriesi et al., *New Social Movements in Western Europe*, 1995, op. cit., note 28, p.211.
[36] Rochon and Mazmanian, 'Social Movements', 1993, op. cit., note 31, p.75.
[37] Paul D. Schumaker, 'Policy Responsiveness to Protest-Group Demands', in *The Journal of Politics,* Vol. 37, No. 2 (May 1975), pp.494/495.
[38] Jeffrey M. Berry, 'Citizen Groups and the Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics in America', in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 528 (July 1993), p.40.
[39] Martin Shaw, 'Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach', in *Millenium,* Vol. 23, No. 3 (1994), pp. 647-67. M.J. Peterson, 'Transnational Activity, International Society and World Politics, in *Millennium*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1992), pp. 371-388. Paul Wapner, 'Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics', in *World Politics,* Vol. 47 (April 1995), pp. 311-340.
[40] Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte, Marc Williams, *Contesting Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

established political actors and processes influence and determine the behaviour and outcome of these unconventional actors. Essentially, social movements are considered to be part of the social structure of modern industrial societies, a structure which they seek to influence or modify. As Russel J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler argue, "[t]he challenge that new movements pose to the political order in Western democracies *springs from within*. It is not a revolutionary attack against the system, but a call for democracies to change and adapt."[41]

This polity-oriented perspective proved useful to explain why, unlike many of its continental neighbours in the 1970s and 1980s, the UK did not witness the emergence of a characteristic environmental movement which relied on unconventional protest activities while its green party lacked electoral success.[42] Historically, conservationist groups, such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (1889), the National Trust (1895) and the Council for the Protection of Rural England (1926), have been working through conventional channels inside the administrative system.[43] The new generation of environmental organisations such as Friends of the Earth (1971) and Greenpeace (1977), by and large, have continued in this tradition.

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[41] Russell J. Dalton, Manfred Kuechler, and Wilhelm Bürklin, 'The Challenge of New Movements', in Russel J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler (eds.), *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p.3. Emphasis added.

[42] Chris A. Rootes, 'The New Politics and the New Social Movements: Accounting for British Exceptionalism', in *European Journal of Political Research,* Vol. 22, No. 2 (August 1992), p.171. Brian Doherty and Peter Rawcliffe, 'British Exceptionalism? Comparing the Environmental Movement in Britain and Germany', in Ingolfür Blühdorn, Frank Krause and Thomas Scharf (eds.), *The Green Agenda: Environmental Politics and Policy in Germany* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1995), p.235.

[43] Wolfgang Rüdig and Philip D. Lowe, 'The Withered "Greening" of British Politics: a Study of the Ecology Party', in *Political Studies,* Vol. 34, No. 2 (June 1986), p.270.

The explanation for this 'British exceptionalism' can be found in its institutional environment, or *political opportunity structure*.[44] On the one hand, a closed electoral system, the first past the post system, keeps new parties at bay. On the other hand, the political system offers a number of other opportunities in the form of private members' bills and hearings to raise environmental issues. At the same time, administrative structures have been relatively open towards environmental organisations. Environmental groups were able to engage with government departments through consultation and negotiation. As a result of this inclusion in the decision-making processes, these groups had no need to fall back upon unconventional political practices.[45] The British system, in other words, has been successful in accommodating new environmental groups, "sufficient for them to remain well-ordered and non-disruptive".[46] Inevitably, these groups avoided confrontation and protest so as not to constrain the relationship and political influence they have been building up over the years.[47]

By the late 1980s, Britain was 'openly' turning green. In the 1989 European Parliament election the British Green Party secured 15 per cent of the votes and in 1990, the Thatcher Government published the White Paper *The Common Inheritance.* Furthermore, the appointment from 1990 to 1997 of Tom Burke, formerly Director of Friends of the Earth and the Green Alliance, as Special Advisor to the Secretary of

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[44] Rootes, 'New Politics', 1992, op. cit., note 42, p.186.
[45] Doherty and Rawcliffe, 'British Exceptionalism', 1995, op. cit., note 42, p.238. Rootes, 'New Politics', 1992, op. cit., note 42, pp.181-183. Chris A. Rootes, 'Political Systems, the Green Party and the Environmental Movement in Britain', in *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,* Vol. 12, No. 4/5/6/7, Special Issue (1992), pp.216/217. Chris Rootes, 'Britain: Greens in a Cold Climate', in Dick Richardson and Chris Rootes, *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.79/80.
[46] A. G. Jordan and J. J. Richardson, *British Politics and the Policy Process: An Arena Approach* (London: Urwin Hyman, 1987), p.172. Quoted in Doherty and Rawcliffe, British Exceptionalism', 1995, op. cit., note 42, p.239.

State at the Department of the Environment is generally interpreted as a sign of growing importance of these movements in the political arena.[48] Similarly, the British industry was also slowly turning greener, as *The Economist* observed:

> Because green groups are now so powerful, firms want to know where their finger will point next. The past few years have seen a change of attitude. Clever companies now see that the green movement can be an opportunity rather than a threat, and are turning to the environmental lobbyists for advice.[49]

The success of environmental groups in sensitising the public and political and economic actors, can be explained by Resource Mobilisation Theories. These groups strengthened their formal internal organisation throughout the 1980s which allowed them to co-ordinate and sustain their interaction with the authorities, to activate a new constituency and to aggregate resources. Since the mid-1980s, partly due to a successful "exploitation of agenda opportunities"[50] such as Chernobyl, environmental groups witnessed the rapid growth in their membership numbers. By 1990, environmental groups had more than twice as many supporters than political parties,[51] with the largest 15 environmental pressure groups employing over 1,000 full-time staff and disposing over a £163 million budget.[52]

Internally, these groups developed into larger and more corporate organisations, characterised by administration, marketing, fund-raising, professional

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[47] Rüdig and Lowe, 'The Withered 'Greening' of British Politics', 1986, op. cit., note 43, pp.278/279.
[48] Doherty and Rawcliffe, 'British Exceptionalism', 1995, op. cit., note 42, p.245. Peter Rawcliffe, *Environmental Pressure Groups in Transition* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), p.71.
[49] *The Economist*, 20 October 1990, p.126, quoted in Rawcliffe, 1998, ibid., p.72.
[50] Rawcliffe, 1998, ibid., p.70.
[51] There are four to five million supporters of environmental groups, compared to less than two million party members. Doherty and Rawcliffe, 'British Exceptionalism', 1995, op. cit., note 42, p.242.
[52] Ibid., p.242. Rawcliffe, *Environmental Pressure Groups in Transition*, 1998, op. cit., note 48, p.73.

staff and managers.[53] They also gained the financial resources to develop technical expertise[54] which allowed these groups to make research-based *appeals* rather than *complaints*.[55] Increasingly, these groups came to enjoy the status of expert witnesses. As Peter Melchett, Director of Greenpeace, observed in the early 1990s, “Environmentalists now operate in a much more sophisticated and knowledgeable environment. There are more NGOs, there are more expert environmental journalists and there are more expert environmental consultants”.[56] Environmental groups became increasingly professionalised, made use of expert knowledge, as well as the most advanced communication and marketing technologies.

These developments further reinforced the accommodating nature of environmental groups. An increasing amount of their time and energy was spent on organisation management and the maintenance of their large membership base.[57] As Chris Rose points out, for Greenpeace the years 1989-92 were marked by inward self-examination, training, management changes and restructuring to cope with the results of massive growth.[58] “It is not so much that, by entering dialogue with officialdom, environmentalists risk being co-opted, as that energies and resources channelled in that direction are unavailable for popular mobilisation.”[59] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, British environmental groups were reformist in orientation, institutionalised, and essentially political actors.

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[53] Doherty and Rawcliff, ‘British Exceptionalism’, 1995, op. cit., note 42, p.242.
[54] Ibid., p.238.
[55] John McCormick, *British Politics and the Environment* (London: Earthscan, 1991), p.158. John McCormick, ‘Environmental Politics’, in Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble, Ian Holliday, and Gillian Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics 4* (London: Macmillan, 1993), p.278.
[56] *The Independent,* 28 August 1992, quoted in Rawcliffe, *Environmental Pressure Groups in Transition,* 1998, op. cit., note 48, p.87.
[57] Doherty and Rawcliffe, ‘British Exceptionalism’, 1995, op. cit., note 42, p.247.
[58] Chris Rose, ‘Beyond the Struggle for Proof: Factors Changing the Environmental Movement’, in *Environmental Values,* Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter 1993), p.290.

It was during the 1990s that environmental activism turned more radical in the UK because many green activists became increasingly dissatisfied with the accommodating nature of environmental organisations. The first Earth First! (UK) action in the UK, the blockade of Dungeness nuclear power station, set in motion a new generation of environmental activities, with a new action repertoire, such as tree sits, anti-road protest in the form of tunnel building, and the destruction of GM crop trials. "EF! (UK) can thus be seen as both aiding *green movement reproduction* … and *green movement mutation* into new fields of action and discourse."[60] Brian Doherty et al. argued that not only did direct action help to radicalise and revitalise the more mainstream environmental organisations, such as Friends of the Earth, but it has also triggered a radicalisation of political culture. Direct action was met by the use of law, the police, security guards, and the policy to repress these forms of protest.[61]

Despite their ability to explain the 'British exceptionalism', for example, polity-oriented approaches have been criticised because they take formal political processes for granted at a time when "[t]he conflicts and contradictions of advanced industrial society can no longer be meaningfully resolved through etatism, political regulation, and the inclusion of ever more issues on the agenda of bureaucratic authorities."[62] New social movements, critics argue, not only dispute established political actors over particular issues and policies but they also challenge the very

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[59] Rootes, 'Britain: Greens in a Cold Climate', 1995, op. cit., note 46, p.82.
[60] Derek Wall, 'Mobilising Earth First! in Britain', in Christopher Rootes (ed.) *Environmental Movements: Local, National and Global* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Class, 1999), p.97.
[61] Brian Doherty, Matthew Paterson and Benjamin Seel, 'Direct Action in British Environment', in Benjamin Seel, Matthew Paterson and Brian Doherty (eds.), *Direct Action in British Environmentalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.20/21.
[62] Claus Offe, 'Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics: Social Movements Since the 1960s', in Charles S. Maier (ed.) *Changing Boundaries of the Political* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.64/65.

"boundaries of institutional politics";[63] they question "what politics is about and what its legitimate collective actors and forms of action should be."[64] Or as Touraine put it, these movements try "to extend, diversify, and even break up the field of politics."[65]

Critics also argue that social movements do not aim to influence or gain access to institutions or elites but instead represent "attempts of 'society' to *liberate* itself from 'power'".[66] New movements seek to emancipate civil society from the state, "and thereby to *reconstitute* a civil society that is no longer dependent upon ever more regulation, control, and intervention."[67] This means, Touraine argues, that social movement activism "cannot be identified with political action for the conquest of power."[68]

For this very reason, the polity-oriented paradigm has been criticised for its "political overload"[69] and "political reductionism".[70] "Social conflicts are reduced to political protest" by polity-oriented studies, Alberto Melucci argues, "and regarded as part of a political system." This view, however, "exaggerates the function of politics, just at a time when movements are shifting towards a non-political terrain".[71] According to the society-oriented perspective, therefore, social movements "target the

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[63] Claus Offe, 'New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics', in *Social Research,* Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1985), pp. 817-868.
[64] Ibid., p.868.
[65] Alain Touraine, 'Triumph or Downfall of Civil Society', in David Rieff (ed.) *Humanities in Review,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.232.
[66] Alain Touraine, 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements', in *Social Research,* Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1985), p.776. Emphasis added.
[67] Offe, 'New Social Movements', 1985, op. cit., note 63, p.820. Emphasis in the original.
[68] Alain Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.80.
[69] Alberto Melucci, 'The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements', in *Social Research,* Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1985), p.798.
[70] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, 1989, op. cit., note 3, p.44. See also Paul Bagguley, 'Beyond Political Sociology? Developments in the Sociology of Social Movements', in *Sociological Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1997), pp.147-161.

social domain of civil society, rather than the economy or the state,"[72] and as a result, their nature "can be defined only in terms of cultural stakes and conflicts between social, 'civil' actors."[73] Next, I discuss society-oriented contributions in more detail.

3.1.2. Social Movements as Social or Cultural Phenomena

European approaches consider new social movements to be "*symptoms* of change in the boundary conditions of the social system".[74] Their emergence is seen as the *result* of the structural change modern societies themselves had undergone - a shift from an industrial to a post-industrial, technocratic or programmed society[75] which is characterised by a new system of production:

> The mechanisms of accumulation are no longer fed by the simple exploitation of the labour force, but rather by the manipulation of complex organizational systems, by control over information and over the processes and institutions of symbol-formation, and by intervention in interpersonal relations ... More and more, production no longer consists solely in the transformation of the natural environment into a technical environment. It is also becoming the production of social relations and social systems; indeed, it is even becoming the production of the individual's biological and interpersonal identity.[76]

Within this new societal model, therefore, new forms of domination and power are in operation, forms that are no longer based on economic resources but on the "capacity

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[71] Alberto Melucci, 'An End to Social Movements? Introductory Paper to the Session on "New Movements and Change in Organizational Forms"', in *Social Science Information,* Vol. 23, No. 4/5 (1984), pp.822/823.

[72] Jean L. Cohen, 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', in *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1985), p.667.

[73] Touraine, 'Introduction to the Study of Social Movements', 1985, op. cit., note 66, p.776.

[74] Scott, *Ideology and New Social Movements*, 1990, op. cit., note 19, p.7. Emphasis added.

[75] Alain Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society: Tomorrow's Social History: Classes, Conflicts and Culture in the Programmed Society*, translated by Leonard F. X. Mayhew (London: Windwood House, 1974).

to organize the minds of people," on the "control over the construction of meaning," and on the control "of the production and diffusion of ideas".[77] Inequalities, therefore, are no longer based on the ownership of the means of production but on the disposition of knowledge and the control of information.[78]

> As mere consumers of information, people are excluded from the discussion on the logic that organizes this flow of information; they are there to only receive it and have no access to the power that shapes reality through the controlled ebb and flow of information.[79]

The dominant class in post-industrial societies, according to Touraine, "is defined by knowledge and a certain level of education,"[80] while a "lack of information (hence of participation in the systems of decision and organization) defines alienation."[81] Today's new social movements, he therefore argues, struggle over the control of science and information and in their struggle they are led by those who "speak in the name of knowledge against an apparatus that seeks to subject knowledge to its own interests".[82]

To society-oriented approaches, civil society is thus not merely "the indispensable terrain on which social actors assemble, organize, and mobilize,"[83] as polity-oriented approaches see it, but the "contested social terrain …. in which the creation of norms, identities, and social relations of domination and resistance are

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[76] Alberto Melucci, 'The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach', in *Social Science Information,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (1980), pp.217/218.
[77] Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.176-182.
[78] Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society*, 1971, op. cit., note 75, p.61. See also Alberto Melucci, 'The New Social Movements Revisited: Reflections on a Sociological Misunderstanding', in Louis Maheu (ed.), *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action* (London: SAGE, 1995), pp.107-119.
[79] Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p180.
[80] Touraine, *Post-Industrial Society*, 1971, op. cit., note 75, p.28.
[81] Ibid., p.63.
[82] Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye*, 1981, op. cit., note 68, p.22.

located."[84] As a result of this shift in perspective, theorists within the society-oriented paradigm engage in the *cultural* analysis of social movements.[85] Social movements are considered to be sources of meaning,[86] and they are identified on the basis of their collective identity.[87] Unlike the labour movement, these new actors embrace a new set of values, a development recorded in Inglehart's theory of post-material value change which claims that values amongst the Western publics have changed from *material* to *post-material*, from a concern with "material well-being and physical security toward greater emphasis on the quality of life."[88] Also, new issues and demands such as the environment or civil rights are raised because new social movements express a concern with the "*grammar of forms of life*" rather than "*problems of distribution*".[89]

In the UK, this emphasis on the social dimension of movement activism informed studies into counter-cultural movement characteristics, studies into the ideology and culture of the Donga Tribe[90] and the Anti-Road Movement,[91] into the

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[83] Cohen, 'Strategy or Identity', 1985, op. cit., note 72, p.682.
[84] Ibid., pp.699/700.
[85] See for example, Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (eds.), *Social Movements and Culture* (London: UCL Press, 1995).
[86] Mario Diani and Ron Eyerman, 'The Study of Collective Action: Introductory Remarks', in Mario Diani and Ron Eyerman (eds.), *Studying Collective Action* (London: SAGE, 1992), p.9.
[87] Mario Diani, 'Analysing Social Movement Networks', in Diani and Eyerman, *Studying Collective Action*, 1992, ibid., pp.107-135. Alberto Melucci, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in Johnston and Klandermans, *Social Movements and Culture*, 1995, op. cit., note 85, pp.41-63.
[88] Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p.3.
[89] Jürgen Habermas, 'New Social Movements', in *Telos,* (Autumn 1981), p.37. Emphasis in the original.
[90] Alexandra Plows, 'Eco-Philosophy & Popular Protest: The Significance & Implications of the Ideology & Actions of the Donga Tribe' in Colin Barker, Paul Kennedy, Mike Tyldesly (eds.), *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest: A Selection of Papers from The Conference 4th-6th April 1995*, Vol. I (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 1995).
[91] Cristina Eguiarte, 'Ideology and Culture among Core Activists in the British Anti-Roads Movement', in Colin Barker and Mike Tyldesley (eds.), *Sixth International Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest: A Selection of Papers from The Conference 25-27 April 2000*, Vol. II (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2000).

internal dynamic of the 'Exodus' collective,[92] into LETS schemes,[93] Eco-Paganism,[94] and the local rationalities of social movements,[95] for example.

However, despite the difference in perspective, society-oriented approaches maintain conventional assumptions about valid 'political actors' and 'truth'. I will discuss the implications of this in the subsequent section but first I seek to illustrate this point by examining the works of Melucci, and Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison in more detail .

ALBERTO MELUCCI

Melucci places great emphasis on the *latent* dimension of social movements, that is the networks "dispersed, fragmented and submerged in everyday life … [which] require individual investments in the experimentation and practice of new cultural models, forms of relationships and alternative perceptions and meanings of the world."[96] These networks, according to Melucci, are "cultural laboratories," where new identities, "new cultural models, forms of relationships and alternative perceptions and meanings of the world" are developed, experimented and practised.[97] Movement participants, therefore, "live in another dimension", "in the capacity and

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[92] Wayne Clark, 'The 'Exodus' Collective: D-I-Y Activism in Action?', in Colin Barker and Mike Tyldesley (eds.), *Fourth International Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest: A Selection of Papers from The Conference 15-17 April 1998*, Vol. I (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998).
[93] Peter North, '"Taking the Wind out of Capitalism?" Theorising Local Exchange Trading Systems' in Colin Barker and Mike Tyldesley (eds.), *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest II: A Selection of Papers from The Conference 26-28 March 1996*, Vol. II (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 1996).
[94] Stephen McKay, 'A Pagan Intifada? Eco-Paganism and the Land Rights Movement', in Colin Barker and Mike Tyldesley (eds.), *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest II: A Selection of Papers from The Conference 26-28 March 1996*, Vol. I (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 1996).
[95] Laurence Cox, 'Power, Politics and Everyday Life: the Local Rationalities of Social Movement Milieux', in Paul Bagguley and Jeff Hearn (eds.), *Transforming Politics: Power and Resistance* (London: Maxmillan Press, 1999), pp.46-66.
[96] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, 1989, op. cit., note 3, p.60.

will to reappropriate space and time, and in the attempt to practice alternative life-styles."[98] Essentially, social movements present "a different way of perceiving and naming the world,"[99] they announce and publicise "that alternative frameworks of sense are possible".[100] These networks challenge our conventional understanding of collective action because

> They don't ask, they offer. They offer by their own existence other ways of defining the meaning of individual and collective action. They don't separate individual change from collective action, they translate a general appeal in the here and now of individual experience. They act as new media: they enlighten what every system doesn't say of itself, the amount of silence, violence, irrationality which is always hidden in dominant codes.[101]

As such, these movements pose a *symbolic challenge* to modern industrial societies because they oppose their very *logic* "on a symbolic ground. They question definition of codes, *nomination* of reality".[102]

And yet, despite the fact that these networks both resist and "render power visible,"[103] that they reveal and expose "that which is hidden or excluded by the decision-making process,"[104] these latent networks "disappears from political

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[97] Ibid., p.60.
[98] Ibid., p.71.
[99] Alberto Melucci, 'Social Movements and the Democratization of Everyday Life', in John Keane (ed.) *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspective* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), p.248.
[100] Ibid., p.249.
[101] Alberto Melucci, 'Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements', in Klandermans et al., *International Social Movement Research*, 1988, op. cit., note 1, p.812. Emphasis in the original.
[102] Melucci, 'An End to Social Movements?', 1984, op. cit., note 71, p.812. Emphasis in the original. See also Laurence Cox, 'Structure, Routine, and Transformation: Movements from Below at the End of the Century', in Colin Barker and Mike Tyldesley (eds.), *Fifth International Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest: A Selection of Papers from the Conference, 29-31 March 1999*, Vol. I (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 1999).
[103] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, 1989, op. cit., note 3, p.76.
[104] Ibid., p.175.

relevance"[105] in Melucci's work. In contrast to (eco)feminists who consider the personal to be political and life-style practices to be the most important form of political activism,[106] Melucci maintains conventional assumptions about politics and political actors. New movements, he insists, are conflictual and antagonistic, but not political.[107]

Melucci attaches importance to the social dimension of collective action only to the degree that it facilitates 'political mobilisation' but he does not grant this social dimension itself a political status. To Melucci, *latency* allows movements to be formed and to participate directly or indirectly in the formal political system in order to modernise the cultural outlook and the procedures of dominant institutions, and to select new elites.[108] Political mobilisation, the *visible* aspect of movements, according to Melucci, would be impossible without this prior *latent* dimension, the "underground laboratory for antagonism and innovation",[109] the small networks submerged in everyday life. This cultural dimension is instrumental in value because it "nourishes" the visible face of mobilisation,[110] it provides the "solidarity resources mobilisation needs" and "builds the cultural framework within which mobilization takes place."[111]

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[105] Laurence Cox, 'From Social Movements to Counter Cultures: Steps Beyond Political Reductionism', in Barker and Tyldesley (eds.), *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest II*, 1996, op. cit., note 93.
[106] Maria Mies, 'The Need for a New Vision: the Subsistence Perspective', in Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1993), p.320.
[107] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, 1989, op. cit., note 3, p.23.
[108] Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p.287/249.
[109] Alberto Melucci, 'A Strange Kind of Newness: What's "New" in New Social Movements?', in Enrique Larana, Hank Johnston, and Joseph R. Gusfield (eds.), *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p.127.
[110] Melucci, 'Getting Involved', 1988, op. cit., note 101, p.248. For a similar instrumental approach, see Ann Swidler, 'Cultural Power and Social Movements', in Johnston and Klandermans, *Social Movements and Culture*, 1995, op. cit., note 85, pp.25-40.
[111] Melucci, 'A Strange Kind of Newness', 1994, op. cit., note 109, pp.127/128.

Melucci recognises that this *latency* in social movements problematises the conceptual distinction between 'the state' and 'civil society'.[112] New social movements have created a new *public space* where "cultural experimentation" and deviant forms of behaviour assemble.[113] This space "has become *a distinct area of the system* … The area of movements is now a 'sector' or a '*subsystem'* of the social."[114] This subsystem develops outside, 'underneath', and independent of the dominant institutions of civil society.[115] Nevertheless, Melucci recognises this social subsystem only as a new terrain from which to influence the political system. Formal political institutions, however, are taken as given. This social subsystem, Melucci writes, is

> designed beyond the traditional distinction between State and "civil society": an intermediate *public space*, whose function is not to institutionalize the movements, nor to transform them into parties, but to make society hear their message and translate their claims into political decision-making, while the movements maintain their autonomy.[116]
> [P]ublic spaces [are] independent of the institutions of government, the party system and state structures. These spaces assume the form of an articulated system of decision-making, negotiation and representation in which the signifying practices developed in everyday life can be expressed and heard independently of formal political institutions ... [P]ublic spaces are intermediate between the levels of political power and decision-making and networks of everyday life[117]

In principle, therefore, 'the state' as the public sphere associated with formal political decision-making, and 'civil society' as the private sphere, are maintained as categories and boundaries by Melucci. Melucci himself, therefore, can be criticises for practising

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[112] Melucci, 'Democratization of Everyday Life', 1988, op. cit., note 99, p.257.
[113] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, 1989, op. cit., note 3, p.56.
[114] Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p.3. Emphasis added.
[115] John Keane (ed.) *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (London: Verso, 1988), p.12.
[116] Melucci, 'And End to Social Movements?', 1984, op. cit., note 71, p.831. Melucci, 'The Symbolic Challenge', 1985, op. cit., note 69, p.815.
[117] Melucci, 'Democratization of Everyday Life', 1988, op. cit., note 99, pp.258/259.

a form of political reductionism. He merely rectifies the polity-oriented paradigm by showing that social movements are *not part of* a political system as such but pursue what Jean L. Cohen calls *politics of influence*[118] from the outside of the formal political framework. Yet Melucci does not challenge the very concept of politics that conventional polity-oriented approaches carry. Melucci himself considers forms of action that focus exclusively on the cultural level to be unable to exert influence on mainstream society, to be "ineffectual unless they work through the mediation of political actors."[119]

> A 'pure' antagonist movement, unprepared to equip itself with an instrumental base and without any relationship with the mechanisms of representation and decision-making, tends to break up and disintegrate … terminating in a mere symbolic search for alternative – a search easily assuming the features of an escapist and marginal counterculture unable to exert any influence on the crucial mechanisms of the society.[120]

Pure cultural forms of activism that do not assume a political form, Melucci insists, "may easily splinter or veer off into violent outbursts, marginal sects or market fashions. Only political representation can prevent collective demands from being dissipated into mere folklore, individual escapism, or aimless violence."[121] Melucci, in other words, fails to grant cultural forms of activism and the social spaces they create an independent existence; he fails to acknowledge the possibility of a purely

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[118] Jean L. Cohen, 'Mobilization, Politics and Civil Society: Alain Touraine', in Jon Clark and Marco Diani (eds.), *Alain Touraine* (London: Falmer Press, 1996), pp.179/181.
[119] Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p.216.
[120] Ibid., p.36.
[121] Ibid., p.112.

cultural challenge,[122] because he continues to subscribe to a conventional view of politics.[123]

Subsequently, Melucci believes that the effectiveness of collective action "depends on society's capacity to transform the questions raised by collective action into negotiated decisions and institutional changes of a political type."[124] Negative outcomes, he argues, are the result of political institutions not being prepared to process and adapt to the demands of collective action.[125] Melucci does not explore whether the effectiveness of collective action could not equally depend on the ability of cultural laboratories to develop and strengthen a viable alternative societal model. As a result, the potential of cultural laboratories to instigate change via the grassroots level of society remains under-studied.

RON EYERMAN AND ANDREW JAMISON

Eyerman and Jamison criticise conventional approaches for locating social movements into pre-existing frameworks of interpretation rather than studying social movements "in their own terms."[126] Eyerman and Jamison reject the interpretation of social movement's symbolic dimension as a symptom or a challenge to power and instead read them as a socially constructive force, as a source of social innovation, "as

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[122] Cox, 'From Social Movements to Counter Cultures', 1996, op. cit., note 105.
[123] For a similar view on politics, see Alain Touraine, 'A Sociology of the Subject', in Clark and Diani, *Alain Touraine*, 1996, op. cit., note 118, p.330. Daniel Pécaut, 'Politics, the Political and the Theory of Social Movements', in Clark and Diani, *Alain Touraine*, 1996, op. cit., note 118, pp.159-171.
[124] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, 1989, op. cit., note 3, p.56. See also Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p.183.
[125] Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p.185.
[126] Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp.2/33-46.

a fundamental determinant of human knowledge".[127] Social movements, Eyerman and Jamison argue, create, articulate and formulate new ideas, identities and ideals, they are "producers of knowledge", they generate "new intellectual 'projects'".[128] As a result of their cognitive praxis, social movements trigger an identity transformation in society. They make new problems and issues visible, they provide new world-views and values, and they generate new intellectuals.[129] As such, social movements

> provide a challenge to the dominant assumptions of the social order, making problematic the self-image of societies … They also provide spaces for new conceptualizations and organizational forms to develop, serving as social laboratories for experimenting with new forms of cognition.[130]

Nevertheless, despite their innovative approach to the study of social movements, Eyerman and Jamison themselves locate social movements into pre-existing frameworks of interpretation. In their final assessment of social movement impact they conform to underlying assumptions about 'truth' or 'knowledge'. Overall, Eyerman and Jamison take scientific knowledge for granted, and they assess the impact of social movements on the renewal of scientific knowledge, its practices and related institutions, such as universities. In doing so, Eyerman and Jamison focus on intellectual activities, on knowledge production at the theoretical level, while they exclude the skills, knowledges and meanings of everyday organisations and interactions, as Laurence Cox argued.[131] The type of impact achieved by social movements is assessed in terms of gaining access to, and equal rights within, the

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[127] Ibid., p.48. For a similar criticism, see Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Collective Action, Culture and Civil Society: Secularizing, Updating, Inverting, Revising and Displacing the Classical Model of Social Movements', Clark and Diani, *Alain Touraine*, 1996, op. cit., note 118, pp.224/227.
[128] Eyerman and Jamison, ibid., pp.3/4/43/56/161.
[129] Ibid., p.166.
[130] Ibid., pp.165/166.

dominant scientific tradition, in terms of the incorporation of a new 'green' knowledge into science. Eyerman and Jamison identify a positive social movement impact with their ideas being institutionalised, absorbed, or "incorporated to re-form established patterns".[132] The development of green technology, the growth in number of environmental engineers, the establishment of environmental studies departments, and the training of environmental lawyers, in other words this absorption of environmental ideas into the established scientific and political community, are associate with a successful movement impact.[133] What is ignored, however, is the subjugation and disqualification of an ecological, local and democratic knowledge system.

Eyerman and Jamison maintain an elitist approach to knowledge production. The institutionalisation of new environmental experts and disciplines is associated with a successful movement impact. What is ignored, however, is the lack of a genuine participation of non-scientists, the democratic deficit, that accompanies modern scientific knowledge production, as discussed in chapter two. Effectively, Eyerman and Jamison fail to take into account that the production of, and what becomes finally accepted as, new knowledge is not neutral as such but permeated by power relations, as Foucault argued. "[P]ower produces knowledge" he maintained, since "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[134] And yet, the issue of who produces knowledge, by what

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[131] Cox, 'From Social Movements to Countercultures', 1996, op. cit., note 105.
[132] Eyerman and Jamison, *Social Movements*, 1991, op. cit., note 126, p.63.
[133] Ibid., pp.63/108.
[134] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1977), p.27.

means and to what effects, remains unexplored by conventional assessments of social movement outcome.

3.1.3. Conventional Approaches and the Study of Societal Insiders

The review illustrates that the new academic literature that was to emerge from the late 1960s onwards to account for the new social movement phenomenon in Europe and the United States carries the very assumptions, boundaries and concepts that inform conventional social and political theory.[135] Despite the difference in perspective, both polity and society-oriented approaches conform to underlying assumptions about 'truth' and valid 'political actors'. From this perspective, therefore, only those agents of social change are recognised who conform to these assumptions. As a result, environmental movements such as Greenpeace are recognised as agents of social change and their impact on the existing societal model is studied while smaller, grassroots projects are denied the status of a valid political actor, the status of an agent of social change.

It could be argued that it is not surprising that Greenpeace gains so much attention since it engages in spectacular types of direct action. However, is it not just as drastic to live a low impact, sustainable life close to Nature? As one of the members of Brithdir Mawr said, "I personally consider that building and living in a low impact eco house is the best direct action can do." Yet Greenpeace, by contrast,

[135] See for example John Schwarzmantel, *The State in Contemporary Society: An Introduction* (New York: Harvester & Wheatsheaf, 1994), Part I. Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideas and Concepts: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1994), chapter 2. James Schmidt, 'Civil Society and Social Things: Setting the Boundaries of the Social Sciences', in *Social Research*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Winter 1995), pp.899-932. See also Harry H. Bash, *Social Problems & Social Movements: An Exploration in to the Sociological Construction of Alternative Realities* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995).

has embraced and accepted the key features of modern industrial societies, their perception of power, elites, institutions, scientific knowledge and modern technology. Peter Bahouth, director of Greenpeace USA, stated proudly that "For the first time in history, activists are beginning to confront powerful institutions – the bomb makers, the petrochemical industry, the planet's bureaucratic managers – as equals."[136] Environmental organisations have become increasingly professionalised, made use of expert knowledge, as well as the most advanced technologies. They recognise existing political and economic institutions but seek to 'green' them. They maintain conventional patterns of knowledge production and distribution. Rather than being participatory, Greenpeace distributes information and thus maintains an elitist approach to knowledge production.[137] Greenpeace and similar environmental groups meet the criteria set by the dominant paradigm and this explains why their form of activism is recognised as being political by conventional approaches to the study of social movements. Their activities take place within the same societal paradigm as that of the social sciences.

By contrast, ecological initiatives are recognised by conventional approaches as cultural laboratories, spaces from where mobilisation and innovation emerges, spaces from where established institutions are modernised and reformed. Yet conventional approaches deny these ecological projects political status, which explains why their potential to instigate social change via the grassroots level of society, outside and independent of established institutions, remains under-studied.

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[136] Quoted in Joni Seager, *Earth Follies: Feminism, Politics and the Environment* (London: Earthscan, 1993), p.190.

[137] See for example, Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, 'Environmental Knowledge as an Organizational Weapon: the Case of Greenpeace', in *Social Science Information,* Vol. 28, No. 1 (March 1989), pp.99-119.

The Global Eco-village Network (GEN), for example, was set up to provide a network between dispersed experiments of sustainable living across the world "so that information can be shared and the concept spread".[138] GEN's approach to knowledge and information is participatory and democratic. Furthermore, GEN is tackling issues such as the development of a global currency which would allow eco-villages from all over the world to trade among each other. GEN *bypasses* the global institutional framework; GEN does not seek to influence, modify, or even participate in it. Instead, GEN promotes the concept and the network of eco-villages around the globe outside and independent of the international institutional framework at the grassroots level of society.

Similarly, the Findhorn Community, which is a member of GEN, considers the energies given off by "thoughts, feelings and states of being" to be of vital importance to instigate change, and not just the grievances and demands that are explicitly expressed by protest movements or interest groups through established political means and processes:

> A group of people who are living in the attempt to discover and express inner truth will give off a different energy than that of a group of people who are striving to fulfil themselves by acquiring possessions…
> All this is rather important in understanding the working of the major transformation of which our community is a part … The real significance of the Findhorn Community is in the energies it generates … Fulfilled people have an influence on unfulfilled people, even if the latter do not visit us or meet someone who has. Such people will not know anything about the community, but gradually a feeling that there is something better, that there is another way, that there is hope, surfaces.
> The Findhorn Community generates energy at a particular vibrational frequency. We work in conjunction with other centres

[138] Hamish Stewart, 'Global Eco-villages Network (GEN)', in *Living Lightly*, Issue 2 (Autumn 1997), p.15.

> and individuals … In this way we are part of a network of energy transformation on the planet which is spreading wider and wider and steadily increasing in power.[139]

Such notions, however, cannot be comprehended by a conventional understanding of politics and social change. As a result, these alternative practices and ideas are discarded as unpractical, peripheral or eccentric. It is not the case that there are not many such alternative projects out there. Simon Fairlie assumes that the number of people actively attempting to live a low impact life style in the UK, for example, is "in the order of tens of thousands."[140] Yet because their values and world-views are incompatible with those of modern industrial societies they are not considered to be viable options for organising life in the 21st century and as such they are not given serious consideration.

Conventional studies, in other words, focus on changes to the existing societal model but they fail to assess social movement outcome from the standpoint of the alternative reality presented by these movements. Marta Fuente and Andre Gunder Frank concluded that

> Many social movements are indeed *anti-systemic* in the sense that the movements and their participants combat or otherwise challenge the system or some aspect thereof. However, very few social movements are *antisystemic* in their attempt, and still less in their success, to destroy the system and to replace it by another one or none at all. There is overwhelming historical evidence that social movements are not *antisystemic* in this case.[141]

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[139] Carol Riddell, *The Findhorn Community: Creating a Human Identity for the 21st Century* (Forres: Findhorn Press, 1990), pp.48-50.
[140] Simon Fairlie, *Low Impact Development: Planning and People in a Sustainable Countryside* (Charlbury: Jon Carpenter, 1996), p.48.
[141] Marta Fuentes and Andre Gunder Frank, 'Ten Theses on Social Movements', in *World Development,* Vol. 17, No. 2 (February 1989), p.187. Emphasis in the original.

Yet why social movements have failed to materialise an alternative social reality has never been answered, in fact, the social movement literature has not posed this question. This omission has had significant implications for our understanding of what social change-oriented activities are about, for the assessment of their strategies and outcome, as well as for the potential of alternative movements themselves to instigate social change. Conventional approaches focus on reform movements. They advise on how to operate successfully, and the difficulties to expect, *within* the social structure of modern industrial societies, with social movement outcome being assessed in terms of what is considered to be a success according to this societal model. The hard core assumptions reform movements carry, however, resemble those of the dominant societal model, and the conflicts they engage in are over the nature of the protective belt. The aim of reform movements is to transform the existing society from within its institutions and organisations. They do not bring about a new type of society.

Since they study reform movements, conventional approaches focus on evolutionary change to the protective belt of mainstream society; they examine the processes and dynamics of the *duality* of a particular social structure rather then the complex interrelationship and power relations between members of different models. Conventional approaches examine the impact and change social movements have achieved in terms of the transformation modern industrial societies are undergoing rather than studying their outcome outside and independent of the existing social framework. Societal outsiders or alternative movements are explored, but only in terms of the effect they have on the existing societal model. No knowledge is provided to further our understanding of their strategies and outcome from the standpoint of the

alternative social reality they seek to bring about. The conventional literature only examines a fraction of what social change is all about. These conventional approaches focus on one dimension of movement activism, namely that aspect which is directed towards changing the existing social structure.

In their focus on the environmental movement, conventional studies fail to see that environmentalism is already the outcome of a previous struggle between two versions of social reality, ecologism and modern industrial societies. In other words, conventional approaches take the *synthesis* as the starting point for their investigation and as such as given. Effectively, conventional approaches fail to question why this particular form of synthesis has emerged in the first place. Conventional approaches fail to take into account that environmentalism is not neutral, it is not the result of *interpenetrability*, of a re-arrangement of disciplinary boundaries. Rather, environmentalism is a new discipline that not only holds on to the very hard core assumptions of modern industrial societies but that has also successfully re-negotiated the science-society boundary to its own advantage. As a result, Nature politics has become the exclusive domain of environmental experts while the society at large is excluded from participation. Conventional approaches to the study of social movements, however, fail to account for the power relations involved in the institutionalisation of environmentalism as well as the buffering mechanism that operates to keep ecologism at bay. This raises serious doubts about the neutrality or objectivity of conventional social movement approaches as well as questions about their role in maintaining the societal status quo.

Conventional studies on social movements present the official discourse on social movements. Social scientists are authorised to make knowledge claims about

social change-oriented actors. The knowledge provided by these approaches, as a result, "found, justify and provide reasons and principles" for certain ways of doing things, as Foucault would argue.[142] The social movement literature justifies certain political actors and political activities while it denies legitimacy to others. Since no study has been undertaken into the potential of cultural forms of activism to instigate structural change, since no knowledge is provided on the factors that enhance or hinder their success, these forms of activism are neutralised. Because they are not considered to be 'true' political actors, a not-to-be-taken-seriously status is attached. They are considered peripheral or eccentric.

By providing reason and justification for certain types of activities, by only assessing change in relation to the existing societal model, these conventional studies shape peoples' perceptions of how to act as a social movement and what outcome to expect. Conventional theories effectively assist in channelling social change-oriented activities and grievances into an orderly mode of expression, one that does not challenge the *status quo*, one that can be accommodated within modern industrial societies. By refusing to ascribe power to everyday forms of movement activism, and by failing to assess the changes they have achieved at the grassroots level of society, these theories restrict the options open to individuals who seek to bring about change. As a result, social movement theories help to maintain the social reality of modern industrial societies.

The very attempt to account for social movements in terms of the concepts belonging to the dominant societal paradigm presents one of the mechanisms of reality-maintenance identified in chapter two. To recall, the ultimate goal of such a

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[142] Michel Foucault, 'Questions of Method', in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller (eds.),

procedure "is to *incorporate* the deviant conceptions within one's own universe, and thereby to liquidate them ultimately. The deviant conceptions must, therefore, be *translated* into concepts derived from one's own universe. In this manner, the negation of one's universe is subtly changed into an affirmation of it."[143] Conventional studies on social movements assimilate social change-oriented activities into the existing societal model because in their account of social movements these theories conform to underlying assumptions and boundaries about truth and valid political actors. Real-existing alternatives, as a result, are changed by the literature into affirmations of the existing societal model.

Conventional social movement theories, in other words, are part of the truth regime that correlates with the societal structure of modern industrial societies and as such function as part of their buffering mechanism. The power associated with these societies produced the new academic discourses of Resource Mobilisation Theory, the Political Process Model and New Social Movement Theory. These new theories, or rather the knowledge they provide, function as a tool in the exercise of power of modern industrial societies, a power that accommodates the irregularities and the challenges posed to their mode of operation by social movements.

Conventional approaches to the study of social movements, as I tried to illustrate in this section, are biased which explains the continuous gap in the academic literature. In the subsequent section I seek to re-address the balance and present a new approach to the study of social movements, an approach that focuses exclusively on actors and activities that are denied political status by conventional approaches.

The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p.79.

[143] Peter L. Berger, and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (London: Allen Lane, 1967), p.133. Emphasis in the original.

3.2. A New Approach to the Study of Social Movements

The principles, ideas and practices expressed by the members of the ecology movement in the UK are not an isolated phenomenon but are part of a global grassroots movement which is engaged in the struggle for "a new vision" for organising society. The social structure of this societal type promotes economic activities that are based on the principles of self-provision, self-sufficiency, regionality and decentralisation. The relationship between the micro social frameworks that make up this society is one of respect, promoting the principles of reciprocity, mutuality, solidarity, reliability, sharing and caring. Human society's relationship with Nature is built upon ecological principles, namely diversity, interdependence and an ecocentric identification. Furthermore, the social structure of this new societal type overcomes conventional boundaries between politics and economics, the public and the private. Its value system seeks to reintegrate spirit and matter, culture and work, and it prioritises happiness and a fulfilled life-style over material prosperity.[144]

In order to recognise and assess those activities that seek to bring about an alternative societal model at the grassroots level of society, a more radical approach to the study of social movements is required, an approach that discards with traditional concepts of truth and valid political actors. A new approach to the study of these movements, therefore, will first and foremost focus on Melucci's cultural laboratories, or what Nick Crossley called *working utopias*, the spaces where utopian projects achieve some degree of concrete realisation and as such become "empirical test cases

[144] Mies, 'The Need for a New Vision', 1993, op. cit., note 106, pp.319-320.

for the possibilities of change".[145] Here, new meanings, new identities, new visions of social reality, are constructed, experimented with and practised.

Working utopias, Crossley points out, are of crucial significance to the long-term reproduction of a social movement, its culture and its vision. Projects provide *proof* to activists that their ideas, their values, and their criticism of mainstream society are not absurd or foolish. Such projects lend meaning and validation to political beliefs and aspirations, they refuell the motivational momentum of activists and boost their imaginative force. By allowing activists to envisage the possibility of alternatives, by showing that their activism is meaningful and worthwhile, working utopias provide an impetus to activists to continue with their struggle and to maintain their commitment and spirit.[146]

Furthermore, working utopias have an important educative role. In order for movements to "change society from within", they need to spread their skills and knowledges, their dispositions. Working utopias assist in this progress since people who visit these projects are given the opportunity to practical and embodied learning, they are given the opportunity "to learn how to practise differently, how to perceive, think and act in different ways."[147] In this sense, project members become *agents of change*, as Crossley points out, because "they have broken with the *habitus* of the obedient citizen and with the *doxa* of the society to which they belong."[148]

Working utopias, therefore, engage in what Cohen calls the *politics of identity*. Here, movements target civil society with the aim to institutionalise new

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[145] Nick Crossley, 'Working Utopias and Social Movements: An Investigation Using Case Study Material from Radical Mental Health Movements in Britain', in *Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (November 1999), pp.809/827.
[146] Ibid., p.809/813/815/816.
[147] Ibid., pp.809/817.

identities, autonomous egalitarian associational forms, and democratised institutions within the life-world.[149] For Cohen, the refusal of social movements

> to instrumentalize cultural politics and identity-building for the sake of narrowly conceived political success ought not to be construed simply as a fundamental unwillingness to learn. Rather, one could interpret the resistance to 'self-rationalization' on the part of many contemporary collective actors as a result of insight into a range of problems specific to contemporary civil society that cannot be rectified by 'normal' political means. If conventional tools of government intervention are not adequate to problems arising in such areas as gender and family relations, socialization and education practices and biotechnology, then autonomous collective action focusing on consciousness raising, self-help and local empowerment, do involve learning after all. In areas where identities, conventional meanings, institutionalized norms, socialization practices must be altered to produce solutions to social problems, learning along the moral-practical dimension is required. A self-reflection politics of identity has its proper place here.[150]

From this perspective, therefore, I perceive the *public space* that social movements create not so much as a space from where movements influence existing institutions and political decision-making processes, as Melucci suggested, but as a space on which alternative social realities, alternative societal models, are actively constructed. These public spaces, therefore, are not merely *sub*systems to the social, nor to the formal political and economic systems for that matter, but they are the building stones for an alternative societal model, and thus truly political.

A new approach to the study of social movements will therefore assess social movement strategy and outcome from the standpoint of the alternative social reality these movements seek to bring about. Conventional approaches locate social movements within the existing institutional environment and assess their strategy and

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[148] Ibid., p.821. Emphasis in the original.
[149] Cohen, 'Mobilization, Politics and Civil Society', 1996, op. cit., note 118, p.199.
[150] Ibid., p.202.

outcome in terms of what it means to operate and to achieve success within the formal institutional framework. Conventional approaches associate the modernisation of modern industrial societies with social movement impact. Here, by contrast, I will assess movement strategies and outcome not in terms of the degree to which the *existing* societal model is changed or transformed, but by exploring whether the *alternative* societal model is materialised, developed and strengthened.

A new approach will focus on those strategies pursued by social movements that enhance the autonomy and self-reliance of an alternative societal model, on strategies that assist in making the alternative real and visible, as opposed to strategies that involve co-operation and participation in the existing societal model. This type of strategy, as argued in chapter two, takes the form of playing a different game of truth. Since the dominant truth regime prioritises scientific knowledge, scientific methods of knowledge production and scientific expertise, a new approach to the study of social movements will focus on local, particular and democratic knowledge systems and lay expertise. In order to perceive these "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges"[151] and the forms of political activism that correlate, *the subsistence perspective*[152] needs to be adopted. Everyday activities will become the focus of attention rather than conventional organised expressions of grievances or discontent.

A positive social movement outcome, from this perspective, would be achieved if movements gained the power to name, to construct meanings, to produce appropriate knowledge and technology, to spread information, and to organise the

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[151] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, translated by Gordon, Colin, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), p.83.

minds of people.[153] The ability to live in small-scale communities, to participate in local economies, to use and develop low impact technologies, to practise participatory politics and to produce knowledge locally and democratically, are all examples of a positive outcome for the ecology movement. Social movement success, therefore, depends on whether working utopias, these models of the types of change social movements seek to bring about, achieve full-scale realisation of this change, to paraphrase Crossley.[154]

Whether working utopias achieve full-scale realisation of change, I believe, depends on how modern industrial societies respond to this challenge. Do they look favourably upon the alternative movement? Do they grant social movements sufficient space to exist and develop? Or do they seek to repress this challenge in order to buffer their own version of social reality? In order to answer these questions, the mechanisms available to a society for reality-maintenance and its politics of introducing evolutionary change as a means of reabsorbing control need to be scrutinised. When combined with a world-view which has attained the status of 'truth', it was argued in chapter two, truth regimes and knowledge production function as buffering devices against those who seek to bring about change. Only cosmetic or superficial reforms may be introduced. Truth regimes assist social structures to govern by the production of truth, by the "interplay between a 'code' which rules ways of doing things … and a production of true discourses which serve to found, justify and provide reasons and principles for these ways of doing things."[155] Truth regimes assist

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[152] Mies, 'Need for a New Vision', 1993, op. cit., note 106, pp.297-322.
[153] See Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, 176-182.
[154] Crossley, 'Working Utopias', 1999, op. cit., note 145, p.810.
[155] Foucault, 'Questions of Method', 1991, op. cit., note 142, p.79.

a society in status quo maintenance by de-legitimising and denying reality to alternative truth regimes and their correlating social structures.

A new approach to the study of social movements, therefore, needs to explore "the systemic field, with its logic, with the processes that enable it to reproduce and change."[156] In other words, social movement analysis must identify the dominant logic, the dominant truth regime, in order to establish what the effects are that result from "the production of true and false".[157] Who is authorised to speak the truth, and who is de-legitimised, neutralised and denied reality? How are individuals disciplined into accepting and maintaining membership to a particular truth regime?

A study into the outcome of social movement activism, therefore, is essentially a study into power relations between two versions of social reality. Here, discontinuities and breaks in meanings, knowledges and discourse need to be traced because it is in these that the ongoing struggle between the dominant and the subjugated knowledges can be recognised. A new approach to the study of social movements will thus have to trace the "systems of subjection", "the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations" that accompany the emergence of new meanings, knowledges and discourse.[158] It is in examining these power relations that the new approach to the study of social movements seeks to provide insights into, and an assessment of, social movement impact. A new approach must ask whether disciplinary boundaries have been shifted as a result of movement activism, whether

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[156] Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 1996, op. cit., note 77, p.107.
[157] Ibid., p.79.
[158] Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (London: Penguin, 1984), pp.80/81/83. See also Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1988, op. cit., note 134.

the science-society boundary has been re-arranged, whether the new meanings are the result of interpenetrability or the result of one knowledge tradition setting the standard on which alternatives are to be judged. How successful have movements been in overcoming the buffering mechanism of modern industrial societies?

Finally, a new approach to the study of social movements should also seek to clarify the role reform movements play in hindering or facilitating the materialisation of an alternative societal model. Chapter two argued that power relations infiltrate the introduction of reforms, the expansion of the protective belt. Essentially, reform assists in maintaining the continuity of a particular societal model but also serves to neutralise alternative versions of reality. How relevant, therefore, is the mediation of formal political actors to a movement's attempt to overcome a society's buffering mechanism? In other words, what effects do modernisation, reform and innovation of modern industrial societies have for the enhancement of an alternative movement culture? These are questions conventional approaches fail to ask and that I seek to address in the subsequent chapters.

In chapters four to six I will now use the case of food production in the UK to explore what additional insights this new perspective on social movements can provide that conventional approaches would have failed to detect. Conventional society-oriented approaches would identify the various social movement networks that are submerged in everyday life, such as organic box schemes or farmers' markets and point to the newness of their issues and values. They would point out that in contrast to the immediate post-war period where there was an acute food shortage, today's affluence and surplus production allow for environmental concerns to be raised and incorporated into food production. They would also examine the role of social

movements in sensitising the public, the agriculture industry and political representatives towards organic production methods. Conventional polity-oriented approaches, on the other hand, would point to unconventional forms of political activism, such as the destruction of GM crop trials and consumer boycotts, and identify the new organic interest groups and their impact on policy-making processes. Conventional approaches would develop a framework for the empirical analysis of organic farming *within* the context of modern industrial agriculture.[159]

In this study, by contrast, I seek to explore the development of an alternative agriculture model underneath, outside and independent of the mainstream agricultural system. I am interested in those everyday practices that bypass formal political processes and promote alternative agricultural production and distribution patterns at the grassroots level of society. Specifically, I focus on those everyday practices, meanings, knowledges and discourses that are developed and experimented with within the working utopias, the cultural laboratories, of Brithdir Mawr, the HHP, the Findhorn Community and the WFA. I will then examine to what extent their alternative agri*culture* triggered reform and what the implications of the greening of mainstream agriculture are for such projects.

If the new perspective on social change-oriented actors developed in this chapter was to be confirmed, the material presented should illustrate, first of all, that the dominant agricultural discourse checks the rise of conflicts by organising new ideas and practices that do not conform to its hard core assumptions out of the public arena and by confining the scope of decision-making to those new ideas and practices that it can accommodate by adjusting its protective belt. The paradigm will be aided in

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[159] See for example Johannes Michelsen, 'Recent Development and Political Acceptance of Organic

this attempt by its knowledge system, or regime of truth, which determines what new knowledge can be produced, by what methods, and by whom, and which in turn justifies and provides reasons for certain practices. It is the power of this regime of truth that will urge its critics and challengers to say certain things and use particular methods if they want to be listened to.

Secondly, it should emerge that to avoid a paradigm change taking place, the dominant agricultural system will try to reabsorb control by accounting for the deviant ecological definitions of reality in terms of concepts belonging to its own paradigm. It will translate ecological concepts into its own language, thereby changing the challenge into an affirmation. If successful, alternative conceptions will be liquidated. The dominant society thus hinders the further development of alternative realities by initiating evolutionary change. Deviant realities are assimilated and incorporated by accommodating these into the dominant paradigm's protective belt. It is in these situations that power forms new knowledge, produces new discourse, and constructs new meanings in an attempt to reabsorb control. The new meanings the official agricultural discourse embraces should bear the imprints of its hard core assumptions, rather than those of the alternative agricultural paradigm.

Finally, it should also emerge that attempts by movement activists to influence society by working via the formal political framework, either directly or indirectly, are counter-productive. The modernisation or reform they bring about not only serves to sustain the existing agricultural system but effectively neutralises the alternative agricultural paradigm and its practitioners. The case of agriculture should

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Farming in Europe', in *Sociologia Ruralis*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2001), pp.3-20.

reveal that those movement activists who work through the mediation of formal political actors assist in maintaining the status quo.

I begin in chapter four by identifying the dominant agricultural truth regime and its correlating practices. I will document the dynamics and processes that rendered this particular agricultural paradigm 'true' and normal, and examine the effects the regime had on the farmer as well as the wider socio-economic and natural environment.