Social Movements and Institutional Selectivity

WISLER, Dominik, GIUGNI, Marco

Abstract

Contrary to what is usually implied by work on the relationship between political opportunity structures and social movements, political institutions are not a general setting offering or denying formal access and political opportunities to every challenge, but rather favor certain types of movements and constrain others. This process of institutional selectivity depends on the relationship between the structure of a given political institution and the movement type and defines social movements as pro-institutional, counter-institutional, or neutral. Accordingly, variation in the movements’ action repertoire and degree of success can be observed. Yet, political institutions leave the door open to different interpretations by social actors so that a framing struggle takes place; at stake is the fit between movement demands and the structure of political institutions. The argument is developed through the example of federalism and its impact on two types of movements-namely, regionalist and squatters’ movements-and illustrated by discussing their fate in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Empirical data suggest that […]

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SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND INSTITUTIONAL SELECTIVITY

DOMINIQUE WISLER*
University of Geneva

MARCO G. GIUGNI
New School for Social Research

ABSTRACT: Contrary to what is usually implied by work on the relationship between political opportunity structures and social movements, political institutions are not a general setting offering or denying formal access and political opportunities to every challenge, but rather favor certain types of movements and constrain others. This process of institutional selectivity depends on the relationship between the structure of a given political institution and the movement type and defines social movements as pro-institutional, counter-institutional, or neutral. Accordingly, variation in the movements' action repertoire and degree of success can be observed. Yet, political institutions leave the door open to different interpretations by social actors so that a framing struggle takes place; at stake is the fit between movement demands and the structure of political institutions. The argument is developed through the example of federalism and its impact on two types of movements—namely, regionalist and squatters' movements—and illustrated by discussing their fate in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Empirical data suggest that institutional selectivity is to be taken into account to reach a better understanding of the relationship between social movements and their political context.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of political opportunity structure (POS), first coined by Eisinger (1973), has recently become fashionable in social movement research. Analysts have combined two theoretical perspectives. First, they derive their identification of social movements as strategic actors from the earlier framework of the resource mobilization approach (e.g., Gamson 1975; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Oberschall 1973), and second, they adopt a perspective oriented to the polity (e.g., McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1983, 1989a, 1994; Tilly 1978). The driving line of the argument put forward by this approach is that social movements' levels of mobilization, their

* Direct all correspondence to: Dominique Wisler, Department of Political Science, University of Geneva, 102 Bvd Carl-Vogt, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland. e-mail: Wisler@ibm.unige.ch
strategies, and their degree of success depend mainly on their political context and the availability of political resources. In this perspective, the notion of POS has proven to be a powerful analytical tool for studying the relationship between social movements and their political context.

Although there is no firm consensus about the different elements of POS, the concept seems to include at least four dimensions: the salience of political cleavages or conflict lines in society (Brand 1985; Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995), the degree of openness of political institutions (Eisinger 1973; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995; Tarrow 1983, 1989a), the prevailing strategies of the authorities to deal with challengers (Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995), and the structure of alliances and political alignments (della Porta and Rucht 1995; Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995; Tarrow 1983, 1989a). Many authors also seem to agree on the two functions played by the different components of POS for social movements: while alliances and political cleavages select certain types or even individual movements, political institutions and prevailing strategies are thought of as offering or denying access to the whole social movement sector.

The aim of this paper is primarily theoretical. We challenge the view, generally held in the literature, that the openness of political institutions can be defined without considering the kind of demands voiced by social movements and propose, instead, that political institutions perform a very selective task regarding types of social movements. The first part of the article sketches the theoretical framework of the "institutional selectivity" by discussing, at the macro level, the interplay between two types of federalism and two types of social movements: squatters' and regionalist movements. We then argue that, at the micro level, there often is a definitional struggle, which we refer to as "framing struggle," between challengers and authorities over the actual "fit" between demands and the structure of a given political institution. We then provide an illustration of the theory, first by discussing the predicted impact of specific combinations of the two types of federalism—as embodied in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland—on the strategies and the degree of success of squatters' and regionalist movements, and test them with the help of data on protest events deriving from a comparative study of new social movements in Western Europe (Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995). Second, we describe the framing struggle that has involved the Jurassian separatist movement and the national authorities in Switzerland, in order to show the dynamic aspect of the fit between social movements and political institutions.

INSTITUTIONAL SELECTIVITY AND FRAMING STRUGGLE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pro-institutional and Counter-institutional Social Movements

Political institutions can be defined as formal or informal rules of the political process (Hall 1986, Kriesi 1994). The literature on social movements implicitly
assumes that the degree of openness of political institutions is a function of the multiplicity of actors they allow to participate in the political game. For example, a proportional electoral law is considered to be more open than a majoritarian system, since small parties get a chance to enter the parliamentary arena. The existence of judicial review or direct democratic procedures is viewed as a sign of openness, because social movements will have the opportunity to challenge the government either through judges or the people. Similarly, federal states are considered to be open because they acknowledge several state actors and provide, as a consequence, more leverage points for social movements.

In our view, such a definition of openness is only one side of the story of how political institutions offer or deny access to social movements. Indeed, it is our contention that political institutions are not just inclusive or exclusive as to the number of actors that can participate in the political process but also are selective regarding the kind of demands social movements voice. A definition of the openness of political institutions has to take into account their inclusiveness not only in terms of the number of actors integrated in the political process but also in terms of the way they are integrated. The mode of integration can be crucial for social movements. Let us illustrate this by considering regionalist and squatters' movements.

For movements demanding regional autonomy, the political institution defining the participation of regional units in the political process is obviously of primary importance. Territorial federalism offers favorable opportunities for these types of movements, while territorially centralized states are a major obstacle. Territorial federalism can be defined as a political institution according to whose rules the "activities of government are divided between regional governments and a central government in such a way that each kind of government has some activities on which it makes final decisions" (Ricker 1975:101). Of course, there are different degrees of territorial federalism. Some federal states grant legislative and administrative powers to their territorial units (e.g., Switzerland and the United States), while others restrict the autonomy of their territorial units to the administrative arena (e.g., Germany). France and the Netherlands are examples of territorially centralized states.

For autonomy-seeking subcultural movements, such as squatters’ movements, territorial federalism does not seem to be a crucial institution. In their case, the relevant institution is the way nonterritorially based groups are integrated in the political process. Borrowing the notion of sociological federalism from Lijphart (1980, 1984), we define it as a political institution that grants social groups a degree of autonomy on a nonterritorial basis. This principle is opposed to a sociological unitarian state, such as France, in which state actors claim to act on universal principles. The Netherlands is a typical example of sociological federalism. The historical process of formation of "pillars"—that is, of a mutually exclusive system of unions, media, school, and health systems articulated around religious and class-based groups—has been referred to as "pillarization." State taxes are collected by the central government and redistributed to the pillars—that is, religious, liberal,
and socialist groups—in order to implement policies in policy domains such as education, health care, or youth affairs. Thus, pillars can be considered as a functional equivalent of regional units in territorially federated states. Sociological federalism appears to be a favorable political institution for squatters’ movements, whose demands are articulated around the idea of group autonomy.

Territorial and sociological federalism represent two different ways to deal with the problem of the pacification of social conflict by granting groups a certain degree of autonomy, one based on territorial decentralization, the other on group-based autonomy. For example, Swiss federalism was introduced in the 1848 constitution as a means to resolve the religious conflict between the old Catholic cantons and the Liberal and Protestant ones immediately after the short civil war of 1846-1847. Political hegemony was granted to the cantons’ local dominant elites, and its results are still visible today in the strong homogeneity of the cantons in terms of religion and language.1 This territorial principle of conflict resolution, which had already strong roots in Switzerland,2 has clearly been made at the expense of a sociological principal as a way to integrate subcultures. Shortly after the introduction of federalism, for instance, the Protestant authorities in the canton of Bern tried to dismantle the Catholic clergy in the Jura region.

However, territorial and sociological federalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Through different historical paths, states may be fragmented on both dimensions and, thus, integrate territorial as well as subcultural demands. Belgium, which is decentralized territorially as well as sociologically, is a case in point.

We distinguish between three situations regarding the fit between a social movement’s demands and a given political institution. First, when the movement’s demands fit the structure of the institution, the former is “pro-institutional” with regard to that institution. This is the case, for example, of the squatters’ movement in the Dutch pillarized system. Second, when the movement’s demands do not fit the institution, the movement is “counter-institutional.” For instance, regionalist demands are counter-institutional in the territorially centralized Netherlands. A third situation emerges when the movement’s demands are neither in line nor opposed to the structure of a given political institution. This is, for example, the case of the antinuclear movement, which may take advantage of potential divisions among elites in a territorially federated system. Here, the movement is using the opportunities offered by the intervention of several actors in the political process, and whether the participation of these individuals is provided territorially or sociologically seems irrelevant.

The openness or closedness of political institutions can no longer be simply measured by their faculty of integrating as many actors in the political process as possible. In addition to this numerical aspect, we must consider that the structure of political institutions selects different types of movements. Demands made by “pro-institutional movements” are generally seen as legitimate and are responded to by tolerant or integrative authorities. Counter-institutional demands usually find a repressive environment. The type of state reaction—repression or facilitation—is strongly influenced by the process of institutional selectivity. In addition,
counter-institutional movements are less likely to be able to build up alliances with important political actors than pro-institutional movements. Here, we follow the lead of new institutionalist theorists (see, e.g., DiMaggio and Powell 1991), who argue that political parties’ preferences are also shaped by institutions. Of course, political parties in the opposition may challenge existing institutions for tactical purposes. Yet, once in government, they often follow the logic of the state. Thus, political alliances or, more generally, the configuration of power are not independent of state institutions. Moreover, the more counter-institutional a movement, the less political alliances it is able to build up.

It is important to remark that our argument does not pertain to the emergence of social movements but only to the movements’ strategies and degree of success. Indeed, adversarial political institutions do not seem to be enough to discourage protest. We expect pro-institutional movements to display a moderate action repertoire and to be significantly successful, while counter-institutional movements, facing repressive authorities, are expected to be more radical and to be denied substantive success.

Framing Struggle

Up to this point, in order to make the argument simple, we have considered political institutions as if they were having a direct impact on social movements without being themselves interpreted by state actors. In fact, the notion of institutional selectivity implies the underlying social process of actors standing in some authoritative relationship to each other around an institutional apparatus. These actors have developed explicit or implicit conceptions of appropriate functions and alternatives in the political game, and the “fit” between a movement’s demands and the structure of a political institution is better understood as a consonance of social movement demands with the routine frames of state authorities.

Authorities’ routine frames, however, are not insensible to challenge. As has often been remarked (e.g., Almond 1988), the very terms of “state” and “institution” are open to different definitions and interpretations. To return to our example of federalism, there is a basic ambiguity between its legal content and its political meaning. Federalism legally guarantees autonomy to “actual” groups or territorial units in society, but politically it is designed to resolve “new” conflicts and rising social segmentation. As Klöti (1988) has observed, while the legal meaning of federalism is inherently static, its political meaning is dynamic. The tension between the legal and the political meaning of federalism allows a “framing struggle” to take place between challengers and authorities over a specific case. The expansion of the political institution to new challengers is the fundamental stake of this framing struggle.

The framing struggle that occurs with the emergence of a challenging group generally involves several actors. The most important actors, of course, are the movement and the authorities, but the general public, the courts, the press, intellectuals, and counter-movements often play a role as well. The weight of these
actors in the process is a function of both the institutions and the political culture. French intellectuals, for example, have always enjoyed an influential position in the government. More importantly, the role of the courts in the framing struggle varies according to the presence or absence of the institution of judicial review. In Germany, for instance, there is a high degree of judicial review, while in Switzerland the upper hand in constitutional law is ultimately given to the people and the cantons. The role of the public is very important in systems where constitutional amendments require a referendum, while most states can bypass the citizens' will for the time of a legislature. The role of the assembly is itself dependent on the type of state; in the Westminster model, the assembly majority controls the government, while in Gaullist France, the former is relatively weak. The framing struggle can be quite differentiated and intricate, taking different shapes in each political system.

It is not our intention to provide a theory of the framing struggle but only to acknowledge its existence and recognize that it has to be taken into account in the argument of institutional selectivity. It adds a dynamic element to the static claim that institutions select movements. We argue that, when a favorable political institution exists, pro-institutional movements will have the edge over their opponents (including the authorities) in this struggle. On the contrary, for counter-institutional movements—that is, when their demands do not fit the existing institutions—the framing struggle develops rapidly to the advantage of the authorities, and the movements will likely be repressed by legalist authorities and develop broad, general, anti-systemic ideologies. In other words, when the authorities have the system "on their side," social movements are tempted by revolutionary theories and radical strategies. In contrast, pro-institutional movements can frame their struggle within the context of an existing institution and, hence, are less likely to take issue with the state. Institutions, in this case, are not working against them, but, instead, social movements claim their full implementation. History will be appealed to by movement leaders to demonstrate the legitimacy of their claims and the fit with state institutions.

THE SELECTIVITY OF FEDERALISM IN FOUR COUNTRIES: AN ILLUSTRATION

Some Hypotheses

We would like to advance some hypotheses about the institutional impact of a combination of sociological and territorial dimensions of the state, according to the unitarian/federalist structure, on regionalist and squatters' movements. The four resulting arrangements are shown in Figure 1 and correspond to the political systems of Switzerland, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium.

Switzerland is perhaps the most typical example of a state fragmented around territorial units, but its sociological structure is strongly unitarian. The cantons enjoy complete autonomy on a few policy domains and they implement most
federal policies. The federal constitution was introduced in 1848 at the expense, as already noted, of a nonterritorial pattern of integration.

The opposite is true of the Netherlands. Subcultural, not territorial, autonomy is the traditional pattern of organizing society in this country. Reminiscent of Napoleonic rules, the Dutch state is territorially centralized, as is demonstrated by the fact that the central state collects 98% of all taxes and appoints governors and mayors who administer its provinces and cities. However, by means of an intricate system of subsidies, policy domains such as education, health, and youth affairs are in the hands of or implemented by the national pillars. Pillarization, the process of organizing the society around the pillars' autonomy, has its origin in the 18th century and accompanied the country's modernization process (Huyse 1984). However, since the late 1960s, a process of depillarization has taken place, which we will come back to.

France's unitarian logic, inherent in both territorial and sociological dimensions of the state, is well known. The French revolution, by claiming universality, only reinforced a strong unitarian territorial logic pursued by the Kings of France (Tilly 1986), Brittany being the classical example. Brittany was annexed to France in 1532 and the Revolution replaced the only administrative regional parliament by a set of prefectures devoted to the interest of the central state. On the sociological dimension, again, the universality principle professed by the Revolution does not allow state-sponsored subcultural differences, and the administration, claiming to act on behalf of the general good in a holistic spirit, has a high degree of autonomy against particular interests.

Belgium represents the opposite case, because it is federated on both dimensions of the state. The 1970 constitutional reform was a reaction to an increasing polarization between the French and Flemish-speaking communities. Three political and administrative regions were constituted (Flemish, French, and the city of Brussels) and, at the same time, three cultural entities were recognized (Flemish, French, and German). The necessity of adding a sociological dimension to territorial fragmentation was due mainly to the presence of the bilingual city of Brussels.
Each territory and community has the right to constitute its own representative body, with specific legislative competences: the regional and the cultural councils, respectively (see, e.g., Zolberg 1977).

Before discussing the impact of these institutional arrangements on social movements, it is important to note that institutions are not free from shifting over time. Specific constitutional reforms may be the result of the framing struggle associated with a given movement or the product of broader transformations taking place in the polity. In France, for example, the seizure of power by the Socialist party in 1981 triggered a process of decentralization. This happened, however, without deeply modifying the traditional unitarian structure of the state. Switzerland experienced a minor institutional shifting related to the Jurassian separatist movement, in which the self-determination of the Jura region was made possible by a constitutional amendment, which was approved in 1970 by a majority of the citizens of the canton of Bern in a popular referendum.

Changes in the Netherlands and Belgium deserve more attention. In the Netherlands, a process of depillarization took place in the late 1960s, which involved the erosion of the pillars' ideological base of support and the increase in communication between members of the pillars. Most notably, these changes were reflected in the party system, where accommodation was substituted by competition. Specifically, minimum-winning coalitions and ideologically colored governments replaced the oversized coalitions of the 1950s. Given the size of confessional parties (which merged into a single party in 1977), this center coalition was, however, inescapable and participated in all postwar governments, adding to a moderating element in Dutch politics. Further changes occurred in the 1980s, when an increasing role was granted to the prime minister in establishing political programs, bypassing other political consortia where compromise was traditionally sought. These changes point to a diminishing role of the pillars and an increasingly relevant part played by the governing coalitions in Dutch politics. Yet, at the same time, the pillars' organizations are still in place today and continue to implement their traditional policies. In our view, for the institutional selectivity argument, these changes should translate into an increasingly relevant role for the political coalition in power in deciding whether or not autonomy-seeking subcultural movements will be granted access to the system. Given political affinities, center-left coalitions are more inclined to facilitate this type of movement than conservative coalitions.

Changes in Belgium have been quite dramatic. While the introduction of socio-logological fragmentation on the linguistic level is rooted in a tradition of pillerization (Huyse 1984), territorial fragmentation introduced by the 1970 constitution has completely reversed the former unitarian structure of the state. Squatters' and regionalist challengers should find a very favorable system in this country.

We discuss the impact of these different institutional arrangements on regionalist and squatters' movements. The choice of these two types of movements is based on the fact that their demands are articulated mainly within the territorial and the sociological dimensions of the state respectively. Regionalist movements are pro-institutional in a territorially federated state, while they are counter-institutional...
in the case of a unitarian logic. Squatters' movements articulate their demands around the idea of free spaces and subcultural autonomy. They are pro-institutional in a sociologically fragmented state and counter-institutional in a state dominated by a unitarian logic. Accordingly, we expect squatters' movements to be less radical and more successful in the Netherlands and Belgium than in France and Switzerland. However, depillarization in the Netherlands should give fewer opportunities over time for the squatters' movement, and the inclusion of nonlinguistic groups in Belgium (such as the squatters' movement) will probably take time, depending on the success of the reforms for linguistic groups. Regionalist movements are expected to be less radical and more successful in Switzerland and Belgium than in France and the Netherlands. In the latter two countries, repression rather than facilitation is to be expected when regionalist mobilizations are involved.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the hypotheses mentioned above. Next, we would like to provide an empirical illustration of these predictions. In order to do so, we make use of two kinds of evidence. First, data concerning action repertoires derive from a previous study on new social movements in Western Europe (Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995). Following the lead of other studies on collective action (e.g., McAdam 1982; Tilly et al. 1975; Tarrow 1989a), quantitative data on protest events that took place between 1975 and 1989 were collected by means of a systematic analysis of each Monday edition (or the following edition when needed) of one major newspaper in each of the countries studied. By doing so, a sample of protest events was set up. Among the information gathered for each event, there is the form of the event, which allows us to define their action repertoire. Second, qualitative data on movement success derive from both our studies (in the case of Switzerland) and secondary literature.
Federalism and the Action Repertoire of Squatters' and Regionalist Movements

According to our hypotheses, the counter-institutional character of social movements results, in the first place, in a radicalization of their action repertoires. This is mainly due to the exclusive strategy of the authorities toward specific movements within an adversarial institutional structure. This hypothesis can be tested by looking at the share of violent actions carried out by squatters' and regionalist movements. Table 1 gives the percentages of violent protest actions carried out by the two movements in comparison to all social movements in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland.8

In Switzerland, as we expected, the squatters' movement has been quite radical: 40% of its actions during the period under consideration were violent. Much of this violence, to be sure, has been relatively minor, such as broken objects or minor material damages. Yet, overall, the Zurich movement, the largest squatters' movement, was indeed the most violent Swiss movement since 1945. Switzerland has also been the theater of a strong regionalist movement in the Jura region. Rather surprisingly, given Switzerland's federal structure, the separatist Jurassian movement has been relatively radical as compared to the other movements. This variation requires some explanation. It will become clear that the Jurassian separatists had to first shift the conflict from the cantonal level, which is characterized by strong social control on the part of the Bernese elites, to the national level, where the much more favorable institution of territorial federalism exists, in order to be able to frame it in a second stage. This conflict has also been characterized by the overt confrontation between the separatists and the antiseparatists, two antagonistic social movements.9

Turning to the case of the Netherlands, we find that the squatters' movement has been less violent than in Switzerland and France. This fact seems to confirm the institutionality of the movement in a pillarized society. However, the relative level of violence displayed by the movement can not be overlooked. As Table 2 illustrates, a closer look at the development of violence over time shows that it
TABLE 2
Percentage of Violent Events Produced by the Dutch Autonomous Movement By Period (over all unconventional events)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975-1979</td>
<td>2.7 (n = 37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>21.9 (n = 96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>39.6 (n = 53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

was almost absent in the 1970s but increased during the 1980s, with a surge in 1985. Such radicalization may be linked to the broader structural depillarization process experienced in the Netherlands. According to Koopmans (1995), the 1980s saw a surge of repressive measures toward the squatters' movement that its predecessor, the 1968 movement, did not experience. Although Koopmans attributes the new strategy of the Dutch authorities to a conjunctural dynamic, Dutch politics was dominated for most of the 1970s (1972-1977) by a center-left coalition, more inclined to integrate subcultural movements belonging to the left-libertarian family (della Porta and Rucht 1995), while for most of the 1980s, it was dominated by a center-right coalition. The strategy of the authorities toward the squatters' movement during the 1980s, however, was not strictly exclusive. Again according to Koopmans (1989), a policy of "divide et impera" was pursued by the Amsterdam authorities toward the movement, whereby the moderate wing was integrated through a very active housing policy, while the more radical wing increasingly experienced repression. Although the strategy of the Dutch authorities seems to have followed a tradition of integrating subcultural movements according to a sociological fragmented pattern, the extent of this strategy increasingly depends on the political coloring of the governing coalition.

There has been virtually no regionalist movement in the Netherlands. According to our model, we would have expected the exclusion of this type of movement in the Dutch context anyway, because territorial centralization is an adverse institution for regionalist movements. Unfortunately, the very absence of such movements does not allow such a test of our hypotheses.

Our hypotheses, on the contrary, are strongly confirmed by conflicts in France. Both the squatters' and regionalists movements have been very radical per se as well as in comparison to other social movements. Although the general degree of radicalness displayed by the whole social movement sector in France is rather high, the squatters' and regionalist movements have displayed a higher amount of violence during their actions in the period under study. Both the squatters' and regionalist movements are counter-institutional in the French context and have experienced strong repression by the authorities. Other movements, such as right-wing movements or the labor movement, articulating themselves more within the left-right cleavage, did not experience the same closedness of the
institutions and were arguably much more dependent on shifting alliances within the government.

In sum, our examples suggest that the action repertoires of social movements are linked to the institutional structure of the state, but some anomalies appear which need further explanation. In Switzerland, given the federalist institution, the radicalness of the separatist movement was not expected, while the relative radicalness of the squatters' movement in the Netherlands was also too high to prove a strong test of our hypothesis. As we will try to show, the radicalness of the Jurassian movement can be explained by the fact that it moved from the closed and centralized cantonal subunit to the federal level by means of a process of framing struggle. The late radicalness of the squatters' movement in the Netherlands could be the result of structural changes linked to depillarization, although accounts invoking conjunctural dynamics or wave-like models ultimately cannot be ignored.

Federalism and the Success of Squatters' and Regionalist Movements

A second feature of social movements that may vary according to their pro-institutional or counter-institutional character is their degree of success. This is, however, a tricky notion. Not only are there "objectively" different types of success, but their perception by social movement participants may vary strongly. As far as the first aspect is concerned, the literature offers several typologies of social movement success. Many of them seem to agree about the need to distinguish between procedural and substantive success (e.g., Gamson 1975; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995). The former refers to the opening up of channels of access to the system, while the latter implies the gaining of new advantages or the preventing of new "disadvantages" with respect to a movement's goals. Our argument deals with substantive success. Regionalist movement success will be measured by the degree of territorial control they obtain. The granting of free and autonomous spaces will be the standard to evaluate squatters' movement success.

In Switzerland, the squatters' movement emerged in the city of Zurich at the beginning of the 1980s. Some concessions were granted to the movement's moderate wing in several cities, but the general mood was repressive. The Zurich movement mobilized after a financial bill for the renovation of the city Opera was passed through a communal referendum in 1980. The movement, recruiting in an important youth subculture, spontaneously constituted itself in the streets after the vote and delivered an ultimatum to the city government to establish their own cultural center based on the principle of self-management. The reluctant city government, an oversized coalition with a one-seat center-left majority, eventually chose to meet the movement's demands and opened an autonomous youth center. After a few months' experience, the government, under the pressure of public opinion as well as the conservative parties and press, was forced to close it. However, the center was reopened later, but with new contractual conditions which did not satisfy the movement anymore and were in opposition to its radical wing. During this fluctuating policy, a number of violent demonstrations were met
with strong police forces and more than 3,000 arrests were recorded over the 18 months of the overt conflict. The political struggle around the autonomous youth center found an end with the March 1982 elections: the Socialist party was weakened and a new coalition led by a conservative mayor decided to close the center and to abandon, so to speak, the declining movement to the police “solution” in the streets.

The failure of the squatters’ movement in Switzerland—particularly in Zurich—sharply contrasts with the success of the Jurassian separatist movement. Despite the apparent marginality of the squatters’ demands—a self-managed youth center—and the apparent centrality of the Jurassian demands—secession from Bern—it was the latter who were eventually co-opted by the state. In 1978, the Swiss people accepted by an overwhelming majority the creation of the new Jurassian canton in the northern part of the Bernese Jura and put an end to a long and bitter struggle in the region. Such contrast can be explained by the fact that regionalist demands are pro-institutional in a federal state, whereas squatters’ demands are counter-institutional in Switzerland. Indeed, it is the institutions, and not the alleged “objective reality,” that decide whether a movement’s demands are radical or moderate in a given state. The creation of the Jura canton has often been described as a partial success since, according to the separatist movement’s goals, the whole region of the Jura should have been allowed to constitute a single canton. However, the maximalist views of the separatist leaders did not fit the traditional understanding of Swiss federalism. In other words, once again, the separatists’ success was constrained by the nature of the federal system.

The squatters’ movement has been rather successful in the Netherlands, as compared to Switzerland and France. From 1980 to 1985, squatters kept occupying buildings in Amsterdam, and their strong mobilization led the city government to engage actively in building new houses in order to meet the demands of the movement’s moderate wing. According to Kriesi (1995), the relative success of the squatters’ movement in the Netherlands can be interpreted as the result of a tradition of consociationism combined with a strong state. Contrary to Switzerland, for example, where the government’s decisions can be vetoed by means of direct democracy procedures, the margin of maneuver of the Dutch government is very large and allows an accommodating government to grant substantial concessions to an unpopular movement. While we acknowledge the importance of these two factors, we think that the substantive success of the squatters’ movement and its initial facilitation by the authorities were in fact rooted in the deeper institutional structure of the Dutch state. Once the movement was able to demonstrate its capacity of mass mobilization, the institution of pillarization was readily expandable to this “new” subculture (but only in relation to the movement’s moderate demands). In the Netherlands, the squatters’ claims for subcultural autonomy were thus not opposed to the institutional structure of the state.

The absence of a Dutch regionalist movement excludes a test of the hypothesis regarding the impact of a centralized territorial structure on the success of regionalist demands. We have to turn to the French case to find evidence of this.
As we expected, success has been denied to the squatters' and regionalist movements in France, because both movements are counter-institutional within the unitarian structure of the French state. The squatters' movement, which developed in the early 1980s in Paris, as in most European cities, has never mobilized massively in France, never reaching the level of mobilization of its German, Dutch, or Swiss counterparts. Although the seizure of power by the Socialist party was accompanied by an initially rather tolerant governmental attitude, the movement did not gain accommodating measures like in the Netherlands. After 1982, following a neo-Gaullist campaign against the latitude of the Socialists in the capital, the movement experienced harsh repression and most of the squats in Paris were evacuated by police forces.

No regionalist movement has been granted formal autonomy in France. To be sure, some minor concessions, such as the recognition of minority languages, were made during the 1970s following a wave of regionalist mobilization in the Basque country, Brittany, and Corsica. But most of them effected only cosmetic changes and did not alter the fundamental unitarian structure of the French state. The logic of the French state, as Birnbaum (1988:146-155) has convincingly pointed out, has always been to "tolerate no peculiarities" and to "fully integrate its periphery," operating in a claimed "universalistic manner." The most far-reaching concessions were granted to Corsica, again during the first years of the Mitterrand period, in which the island was granted special status, and its population was recognized as having a specific culture and allowed to elect a "regional assembly." These concessions were made when decentralization was beginning, but were not seen as a step toward recognition of a Corsican "people" with its own legislative body that would have more than a consultative character. "The principle of sovereignty," as John Loughin (1986:94) has noted, "remaining entirely at the level of the central organs of power, is maintained" despite the reforms. The substantive gains of Corsica are very weak as compared to those obtained by the Swiss Jura movement, which is reflected in the opposite paths taken by the two movements: while the Jurassian movement has experienced institutionalization (Rennwald 1994), the Corsican separatists have not stopped their campaigns of radical and terrorist actions.

This brief discussion about the success or failure of squatters' and regionalist movements in the three countries suggests two concerns. First, it provides evidence confirming our hypothesis as to the relationship between the territorial and sociological structure of the state, and the degree of success of social movements whose demands articulate around these two logics. On the one hand, squatters' movements, which aim at obtaining free cultural spaces (subcultural autonomy), are more successful in sociologically federalist countries such as the Netherlands. On the other hand, regionalist movements, which aim at gaining political control over a region (territorial autonomy), are more likely to be able to obtain substantial concessions from the authorities in territorially federalist countries, as is illustrated by the Jurassian case in Switzerland. Finally, both movements find reluctant, often repressive, authorities and as a consequence
experience a low degree of success in unitarian and centralized countries such as France.

Second, the discussion suggests that political alliances matter even in a system characterized by adverse institutional arrangements. In France, decentralization initiated by the Socialists offered new political opportunities for the Corsican regionalist movement, which was able to acquire regional status in the early 1980s. Similarly, in Switzerland, the Socialist majority in the coalition of the Zurich city government was more inclined to grant concessions to the squatters' movement. However, it should be noted that success in adversarial institutional arrangements is either weak (Corsica) or temporary (Zurich). The absence of a sociological federalist tradition in Switzerland made the Socialists' move very controversial, provoking a conservative victory at the local elections held in 1982. We might also add that, eight years later, a newly elected Green-Socialist majority in the Zurich government tried to open an autonomous youth center in the downtown area of the city, but the project was defeated in two consecutive referenda held in 1990 and 1991 (see Wisler 1993:60). Thus, adverse institutions, it appears, constrain the attitude of the authorities, no matter how sympathetic, and make it very difficult for them to grant concessions to social movements whose demands do not fit the broader institutional logic.

**FRAMING STRUGGLE**

There is no automatic fit between a social movement's demands and a given institution. Freeman (1979), for instance, stated that social movement organizations have to possess the expertise to be able to take advantage of the often intricate legal system. Social movement success, in our view, depends to a large extent on the ability of their leaders to frame grievances in accordance to the routine frame of state actors regarding a specific favorable institution. In the case of federalism, the situation is complicated by the fact that, even after the movement has framed its demands at the right level—the federalist and national level—the struggle has not yet been won. The federalist constitution still has to be “extended” to the new group. At this level of the conflict, authorities can still hide themselves behind the legal framework and refuse to compromise, but strong incentives exist for them to try to find a solution. The framing activity of social movements is embodied not only in their discourse but also, as McAdam (1994) has recently pointed out, in their actions. Actions, as McAdam states, “represent a critically important contribution to the overall signifying work of (a) movement.”

Four situations can be distinguished with regard to the framing struggle. First, there is a lack of a favorable institution for a given social movement in the political system, that is, the movement is counter-institutional. This is the worst situation for a social movement. Accordingly, the movement will tend to frame its goals in an antisystemic way, while the authorities will have the state on their side and their reaction will be repressive. Second, a favorable institution does exist, but the authorities try to deny its relevance; their reaction tends to be legalist.
in the legal system and the legal meaning of federalism) as opposed to a legitimistic position (grounded in the historical meaning of federalism). Third, there is a consensus about the relevance of a given institution to resolve the conflict but conflicting interpretations about the mode of application of the institution. Fourth, there is agreement on both the relevance of a given institution and its interpretation. This is, of course, the best situation for a social movement, and it usually occurs after the movement has gone through one or more of the other stages.\(^{13}\)

This process is illustrated by the case of the Jurassian separatist movement in Switzerland. Due to the existence of both the cantonal and national level in the Swiss federal system, the Jurassian movement provides a neat example of framing struggle that went through all four stages. The first stage was characterized by the confinement of the conflict within the cantonal context. Whereas the Jurassians sought the federalization of the canton, the Bernese elites attempted to secure their hegemony over the canton and were constrained by a centralized cantonal institutional structure. At this level of the conflict, the separatists appeared to be counter-institutional, whereas the authorities had the state on their side. In the second stage, a new strategy was followed by the separatists, who broaded the conflict and, above all, articulated it in national-federalist terms. After an initial stiff and reactive position of both the Bernese and the federal authorities, the third stage was set into motion when the new dimension of the conflict became obvious and the federalist solution became nearly accepted by all parties. During this stage, there was a consensus about the fit of the separatist’s demands into the federalist institution at the national level. However, there remained conflicting positions about the mode of application of federalism, which had to be cleared before the fourth and final stage could begin and a new canton of Jura could enter the Confederation in January 1979.

Historically, the Jurassian conflict goes back to the attribution of the Jura region, formerly under the authority of the Prince-Bishops of Basel, to the canton of Bern by the 1815 Vienna Treaty. Several regionalist or separatist movements maintained a relatively conflicting relationship between the Jura and the old canton since that date, the most important of which was triggered in the 1870s by an authoritarian Bernese attempt to take control over the Catholic Church in the northern part of the Jura. None of them, however, succeeded in breaking down Bernese hegemony. At one time, the region was militarily occupied by Bernese troops. Although the last and most successful separatist movement tried to frame the conflict as a historic and ethnic conflict, several strong dividing lines cross the Jura region. The northern part of the Jura is predominantly Catholic, while the south is Protestant. Six out of seven Jurassian districts are French-speaking, but the Laufen district is German-speaking. Historically, the north was under the influence of Basel; in the south of the region, “combourgeoisie” treaties with Bern go back to the 14th century. Politically, while the Christian-Democrats are the dominant party in the north, the south is predominantly Socialist and Liberal. Generally, there is strong segmentation in the north, while the south is characterized by cross-cutting social affiliations with Bern.
The proximate cause of the emergence of a separatist movement was the so-called "affaire Moeckly" in 1949. The Jurassian politician Georges Moeckly was denied the directorship of the Department of Public Works in the Bernese government in a controversial move by the legislature which followed the concerns expressed by the Farmers party that the Department was too important to be headed by a French-speaking person. The first stage of the framing struggle was characterized by a framing of the conflict within the cantonal context. Immediately after the "affaire Moeckly," the so-called "Moutier Committee" was formed, regrouping several regional associations and representatives of the Jurassian parties. The new organization addressed to the Bernese authorities a 17-point petition whose main demand was the federalization of the cantonal constitution. Such a demand was unlikely to find a favorable reaction within the canton, given the centralized constitution of Bern. Not surprisingly, the authorities responded in a White Book asserting that federalization was out of question. Even weaker demands such as administrative decentralization were considered as unfounded. "The fair representation of minorities," stated the White Book (1949:42), "finds its limits where the obvious discrimination and marginalization of the majority begin" (our translation). According to Henecka (1972:125-129), the Bernese authorities took a strong legalist stance about the validity of the 1815 Treaty and their stiff position was also determined by the traditional self-perception of the Bernese elites as an integrating power between the French-speaking and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Interestingly enough, the delegations of the Socialists and the Farmers within the Moutier Committee soon stepped back from their initial support of the petition after pressure was put on them by the cantonal parties. According to Henecka (1972:129-30), the Jurassian delegations of the Christian-Democrats and Liberals did not experience such pressure from their cantonal parties. This difference seems to confirm the interpretation given by Altermatt in (1978:342-43) that the conflict had, above all, a political character and was strongly associated with the Christian-Democratic party. Obviously, the two dominant parties at the cantonal level wanted to keep their hegemonic role over the entire territory of Bern. Nevertheless, Bern made a few concessions to Jura by recognizing the principle of equality of language and the existence of the Jurassian people, as well as constitutional provisions securing two governmental seats (out of seven) for Jurassians.¹⁴

After the summary reform, the Moutier Committee dissolved and the regionalist aspirations were left to a separatist organization that took the name of "Rassemblement Jurassien" (RJ) in 1951. From the beginning, RJ stated that its goal was not territorial decentralization of the old canton but secession from Bern. The RJ already asserted that the matter had to be resolved at the national level and that the Swiss federalist constitution had to be applied to the Jura. However, despite its rhetoric, the RJ was still acting within the cantonal context. Indeed, based on the reflection that the failure of the Moutier Committee resulted from its leaving the solution of the conflict to the immobile political parties and believing that the Jurassian people were almost entirely behind the separatists' goals, the RJ chose...
to use the popular initiative procedure at the cantonal level as its main strategy. Well aware of the fact that a cantonal referendum would be easily defeated in the old canton, it thought that an overwhelming approval of the initiative within the Jura region itself would put the Bernese authorities under enough pressure to force them to join the negotiation table. However, this calculation proved to be wrong and, in addition to being strongly defeated in the old canton, the initiative was also rejected by a slim margin in the Jura region (52%).

The initiative’s defeat, of course, greatly satisfied Bern, which had not even proposed a counter-project to the initiative and had considered the matter as definitely resolved. This was not the opinion of the RJ. But the movement had to undergo deep transformations at both the organizational and the strategic level. We shall concentrate on the latter level, which defines the beginning of the second stage of the conflict. More coherently this time, the RJ had to find a new strategy to involve the federal authorities. Conscious of the resistance of the cantonal institutions and authorities toward their goals, the RJ had to demonstrate that the conflict belonged, as it was claiming, to the national level and that the federal government was the right body to settle the matter. This strategy was pursued by raising the level of unconventional activity, disrupting national events such as a military commemoration in 1964, and attracting international attention by various actions—for example, expressing solidarity with other European ethnic groups, inviting European diplomats to the annual “Jurassian people festivities,” or, later, even occupying the Vienna castle, where the 1815 Treaty was signed, and the Swiss embassy in Paris. In this effort to broaden the dimension of the conflict, the RJ received the unexpected support of a small terrorist organization whose spectacular actions helped to create a “state of necessity,” as the RJ leaders framed it.

Initially, the federal government coldly welcomed the new strategy of the RJ and, basing its arguments on the opinion of the majority of Swiss constitutional jurists, stated that, indeed, the Bernese canton was sovereign in the Jurassian question and that there was no constitutional provision for a federal intervention. Eventually, however, the new separatist strategy proved to be effective. In 1967, for the first time, the Bernese authorities reconsidered their position without excluding any option and decided to form a cantonal commission with the task to assess the situation and make propositions. Almost at the same time, they asked the federal government to use its traditional role as mediator (good offices) in the conflict, and another commission was set up. Based on the recommendations of both commissions, the Bernese government prepared a constitutional amendment allowing either self-determination for the Jura region or a negotiated autonomy solution. The amendment was passed in a referendum in 1970 and, after a deadlock in the negotiations on the autonomy solution (the RJ refused to participate), the authorities set in motion unilaterally the self-determination process with June 1974 as the date of the first plebiscite.

The process was based on a fragmentation of the decision-making process down to the communal level. After the whole region had voted, the districts that were against the majority decision could ask for a second referendum and, then, the
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cities and villages sharing a common border with the new or the old canton could ask for another referendum. The whole package had to be approved by a final national referendum. This process was in line with the notion of political control over a given territory implied by the Swiss federalist constitution. The consensus reached on the fit of the separatist movement in the federal constitution and, therefore, the applicability of this institution as a solution put an end to the second stage.

The third stage was structured around the question of how federalism would be applied in the Jura case. Here, again, interests and frames confronted each other. Self-determination was seen as the best solution by the antiseparatists of the southern Jura. After the 1959 referendum, they had good reason to think that a vote in these districts would allow them to remain in the canton of Bern. According to Ganguillet (1985), they had pushed the Bernese authorities to opt for self-determination.

Within the separatist movement, there were divergent interests. In this regard, it is necessary to distinguish between the interests of the RJ leadership and the interests of its followers. It has often been stated that the RJ leadership was composed of charismatic intellectuals committed to the ideal of French ethnicity. For them, the stake of self-determination was the entire region of Jura, or at least the six French-speaking districts, making the whole region a new canton. Most of the members of the RJ—namely, the Christian-Democrats—did not agree with this ideal. In the southern districts, although they were only a tiny minority, they could envision political control over the three northern districts of the Jura. Fearing and anticipating the division of the region that was implied by self-determination, the RJ leadership established a set of conditions for the referendum, the main one being that only Jurassians established in the Jura for at least three generations were eligible to vote. Of course, this condition went against the territorial voting procedures of Switzerland, but its aim was obvious: only "integrated" Jurassians, supposedly more favorable to the creation of a new canton, would prevent the division of the region. Eventually, the leadership had to step down, but under Bernese pressure as much as pressure from their own rank-and-file. Self-determination was seen as a good opportunity for the Christian-Democrats to gain control over the affairs of the new canton.

Once a consensus was reached on the fit of the movement's demands within the federal institution and the way to apply this institution to the conflict, the conditions were met for the implementation of self-determination, thus defining the fourth stage of the conflict. As had been feared by the separatist leaders, the process did indeed divide the region: the three northern districts voted in favor of the creation of a new canton; the others, against it. In September 1978, the Swiss people overwhelmingly approved the creation of the Jura canton.

This story suggests that social movements have to frame their goals within a favorable institution and that this process implies, first, the recognition of the favorable institution and, second, a framing activity, by means of both actions and ideas, with other political actors to convince them that they fit the favorable
institution. For the separatists, this meant disentangling the conflict from its closed cantonal context and framing it as relevant to the national level, where federalism prevails. However, since federalism does not provide a blueprint telling separatist movements how to create a new territorial unit, the Bernese authorities had to recognize that their legalist stance was no more defensible, given the tradition of federalism in this country. On the other side, the separatist leaders had to give up their ethnicity or French language frame, because of the absence of a Swiss institution defined in those terms. Ethnicity and language are not criteria around which Swiss federalism is traditionally constituted. In some cantons, more than one language is spoken. Though relatively homogenous, French-speaking or German-speaking regions or communities do not have their own political institutions within the Swiss federal system, as opposed to the situation in, for example, Belgium.

The strategic ability of the RJ leaders to frame the conflict as a national problem was decisive in finding a more open institution, but at the same time, they had to give up part of their identity-based frame in order to be able to take advantage of the federal constitution. What has been called a partial success by the RJ was in fact very much in line with the traditional Swiss system that gives political elites control over territorially defined segmented subcultures (here, the Christian-Democratic party over the overwhelmingly Catholic northern Jura region of the old canton). The separatists' success, arguably, was on the terms of Swiss political institutions.

CONCLUSION

Through the example of federalism, we have tried to show that political institutions do not have the same consequences for the mobilization of all social movements. Far from representing a general setting offering or denying formal access and political opportunities to every challenge, political institutions facilitate some movements while they constrain others. This is basically what we mean by institutional selectivity. Which movements are facilitated and which are constrained depends, above all, on the relationship between a specific institution and the type of movement concerned. As far as federalism is concerned, squatters' movements fit a sociological decentralized arrangement, whereas, in the case of regionalist movements, only territorial decentralization is favorable. Sometimes, due to specific historical paths, the two types of federalism do not coexist and are seen as strong alternatives (Kriesi 1990). The Swiss example shows that the historical choice of territorial federalism was made, in the final analysis, at the expense of autonomy-seeking subcultural movements.

Empirical data have been shown to confirm the hypothesis stating that counter-institutional movements tend to be more radical and less successful than pro-institutional movements. Yet, certain results, such as the relative radicalness of regionalist movements in Switzerland or of the squatters' movement in the Netherlands, have been less satisfactory than we would have expected. We have argued that a framing struggle has to be taken into account to explain the results
of the Swiss case, while the depillarization process in the Netherlands accounts for the radicalization of the radical wing of the Dutch squatters' movement. The framing struggle has been discussed in detail for the Jurassian separatist movement. We have tried to show that social movements try to frame the issue they raise within a favorable institution and, in doing so, they have to face other social actors, most notably the authorities, who have obviously different, if not opposing, interests. Thus, the dynamic aspect of framing struggle is an indispensable complement to the static aspect of institutional selectivity.

Although this paper has focused on federalism, we suggest that our general argument may be applied to other political institutions, viewed as relatively stable aspects of POS. Direct democratic procedures seem to represent a possible generalization of the argument. Like federalism, direct democracy has been usually conceived of as offering general, almost automatic access to all kinds of challengers. If it certainly is a sign of openness of the system at a general and abstract level, direct democracy is not for everybody. To make meaningful and, especially, successful use of direct democratic instruments, social movements must be rich in strategic, human, and financial resources. Moreover, since people decide the result of a vote, the issue must be shared by a large proportion of the population. Thus, despite some indirect positive effects, the use of direct democracy by has a much smaller chance of success when used by "poor outsiders" than when it is employed by powerful pressure groups. Although in a different sense than in the case of federalism, direct democracy is similarly selective, leading in particular to different degrees of success depending on which social actors make use of it.

In the final analysis, the openness or closedness of a political system can be conceived of as the result of the selectivity of its institutions. Thus, the degree of openness of the system—the access available to challengers—varies according to the number of political institutions that render a social movement counter-institutional. The more counter-institutional movements, the more closed the system. To use the example of federalism, the French system is more closed than the Belgian system, because the former makes at least two types of movements counter-institutional, whereas the latter allows them to be institutional, at least insofar as they reach this stage through the process of framing struggle. Switzerland and the Netherlands are two intermediate cases in this respect.

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NOTES

1. According to the figures of Lijphart (1984), this homogeneity amounts to about 80%.
2. In 1597, Appenzell had been divided in two parts after the northern part of the region adopted the Reform; Basel was also divided into two half-cantons following strong
divisions between the countryside and the city over the democratization process in 1833.


4. In relation to the emergence of this political system, Daalder (1971:376) emphasizes the role played by the Catholic minority in the north of the Netherlands, who developed a political consciousness and, after having been instrumental in reintroducing the Catholic hierarchy in the country, came to defend the interest of the southern Catholic provinces as well. The second wave of organization around subcultural life has been brought about by the growth of the socialist movement. Confessional pillar elites managed to retain control over their constituency by building their own unions. Instead of increasing polarization, accommodative measures between the pillars became the rule, at least since the 1917 Pacification Act, thus allowing each pillar’s elites to consolidate control over their traditional constituencies (Scholten 1987) or, according to the interpretation of Lijphart (1968), to manage the potential conflicts of a strongly segmented society.

5. On the French state, see Birnbaum (1988) and Badie and Birnbaum (1979).

6. Since we lack data on Belgium, we do not test the hypotheses on this case.

7. See Kriesi et al. (1995) for more details on the methodology used.

8. Totals refer to all protest events that we define as “unconventional.” These include demonstrative events such as petitions (signatures gatherings) or mass demonstrations, confrontational events (legal and illegal) such as blockades or occupations, and violent events such as breaking objects or bombing. The category “all movements” refers to all protest events so defined, regardless of the demands addressed.

9. According to our hypotheses, other federal countries, such as Germany or the United States, should display a similar pattern as to the use of violence by squatters’ and regionalist movements. Data on Germany suggest that this is actually the case: 37% of the unconventional events produced by the German squatters’ movement has been violent \( n = 327 \), whereas the average for all movements amounts to 15.2% \( n = 2344 \). Nothing can be said about regionalist movements, since they have been practically nonexistent in Germany.

10. Moerings (1984:489) explicitly links the absence of radicalization by the Dutch 68 movement and the moderate strategy of the Dutch authorities toward protest to pillarization.

11. Again, in other federal countries the degree of success of squatters’ and regionalist movement should be similar to that of Switzerland. Although we do not have data on this point, it seems that the squatters’ movement has been much less successful in Germany than in the Netherlands, but more successful than in France. Of course, nothing can be said of regionalist movements.

12. It has often been stated that social movements in France tend to frame their goals in a broad, antisystemic way, and we agree with Duyvendak (1996), who sees this feature as the result of the fact that institutions are closed to social movement demands (closed system) in this country and tend to reinforce the action capacity of the authorities (strong state).

13. We would like to underline that this process is anything but automatic. On the contrary, we want to avoid any mechanistic or teleological interpretation. Sometimes social movements can go through all stages, sometimes not. Sometimes they start from the first stage, sometimes from another one. It is also possible that this interactive process goes back to a previous stage.
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