CHAPTER 7
POLITICAL INTERESTS

Outline

Quote of Note:

"*"The workers have discovered that the union is the only way for them to withstand the overpowering pressure of capital."*

Karl Marx

Can you imagine the mailbag (or more recently the email inbasket) of a Bundestag deputy? They are often flooded with letters, and petitions, and requests for meetings by their constituents and others affected by government policy. It might be a business owner who is struggling to deal with foreign trade issues, a group of students dissatisfied with educational policy, a union representative seeking a meeting about social programs, or a citizens group concerned about the environment. Clearly, people want to let the government know what they think.

The process of bringing the public's wants to the attention of policy makers is known as interest articulation. The government must become aware of what people want before any action can be taken. Interests are articulated through the individual forms of political participation discussed in Chapter 6, when citizens write to their Bundestag deputy or become active in a political campaign. However, the individual communication of interests is not always an effective method. The policy process is complicated for both the public and political elites. The individual citizen can easily become overwhelmed by the magnitude and complexity of government; where does one turn to find a sympathetic hearing from someone able to influence policy. Dealing with government agencies often requires a high level of technical or administrative expertise. A single individual, or even a group of individuals, cannot be certain that their petitions will receive a fair hearing even after identifying the appropriate government agency.

Conversely, policy makers have a difficult time judging what is in the public interest. No one can really speak for "the public" as a whole, but every petitioner of government claims to do so. Is a single letter from a constituent a sign of a broader social need, or merely the unique views of one individual? Should a petition by a business owner receive serious consideration, or be treated as a self-serving statement contrary to the public interest? When so many people are trying to express their views it is difficult to know which voices to listen to.

Because of these communication problems, the articulation of public interests frequently depends on the efforts of an intermediary–an interest group. An interest group speaks for a distinct clientele with a common viewpoint, thus the members' views are expressed with more clarity and force than if they approach the government individually. Thus, individual businesses concerned about foreign trade might

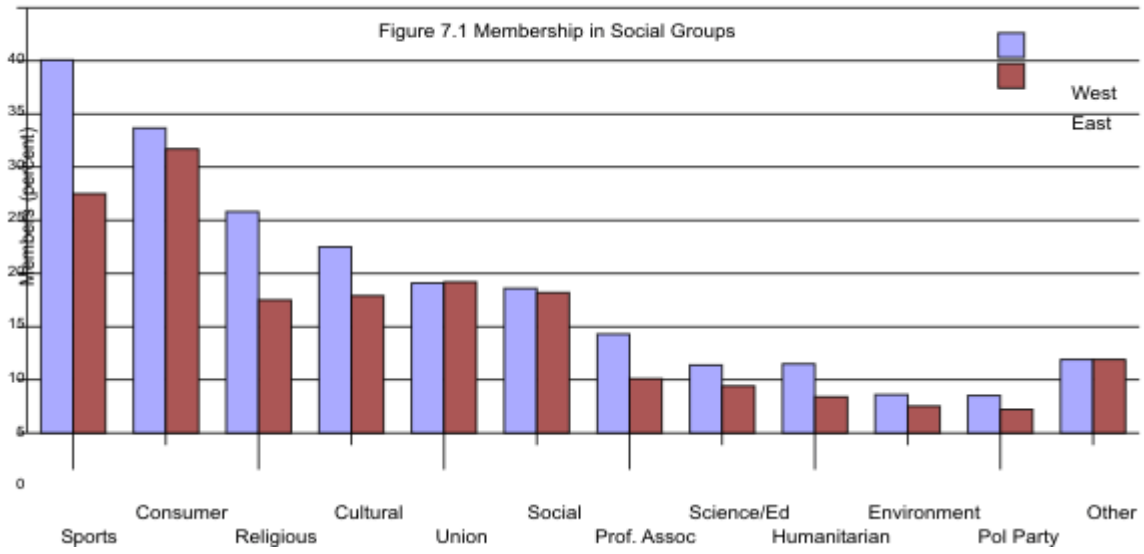
ask the business lobby to make their views known. Similarly, citizens interested in the environment may work through an environmental group.

A group's organizational structure provides the political and administrative expertise necessary to monitor government activities and lobby policy makers successfully. Because they keep a foot in both camps, interest group officials can present the views of their members in terms that political elites understand. While direct forms of citizen participation may involve the public in politics and communicate broad social preferences, interest group activities provide a more focused method of interest articulation.

This chapter describes how interest groups act as intermediaries within the political process. In many ways, interest groups are even more central to the policy process than they are in the United States. At the same time, there are significant similarities and differences in how interest groups are organized and how they interact with the government.

The Organization of Interests

Many different social groups exist in contemporary German society. People can choose between professional associations, cultural groups, labor unions, religious groups, social clubs, and numerous other voluntary groups. The majority of the population belongs to at least one voluntary organization, and many individuals belong to several. Figure 7.1 illustrates the diversity of organizational life in Germany. The figure charts the percentage of the public that belongs to a group across a variety of social sectors.



Source: European Social Survey, 2002

Germans are active in a wide array of organizations. Most of these group memberships involve social and leisure activities–such as membership in sports clubs or cultural organizations–but a substantial proportion also belong to labor unions and professional associations, and a significant number belong to humanitarian groups, environmental groups, or a political party. Group membership is generally higher among Westerners because of their greater social resources as well as the democratic traditions of the Federal Republic. Compared to other European nations, Germans are socially engaged.(1)

Interest groups that are politically active usually display several specific traits. First, the organization or its members are concerned with political matters. For instance, sports clubs and rifle clubs (*Schützenverein*) have very large national memberships that they might mobilize for political action. But unlike the National Rifle Association in the United States, these German groups are largely apolitical organizations that shun politics. The consumer groups in Figure 7.1 largely consist of automobile clubs and other relatively non-political groups. Groups with more direct political interests–such as economic associations or public interest groups–are obviously more relevant to our study.

A second common trait of politically active interest groups is an organizational structure that enables them to participation in the policy process. Without such an organizational base, a group would find it difficult to monitor the actions of government, assemble information for their lobbying activities, and articulate the interests of its members through the policy process.

The most political influential interest groups, therefore, generally combine a developed organizational base and a special interest in policy questions. Some of these groups are small, representing distinct subgroups of the public, such as farmers or refugees. Other associations encompass a broad membership, such as trade unions, professional associations, and religious groups. Almost two thousand such groups are formally registered as lobbyists with the federal government, and hundreds more are active in the state capitals.

Most of the major interest groups in the Federal Republic have an organizational structure that is markedly different from interest groups in the United States. American politics is based on a pluralist model of interest groups derived from Madison's *Federalist Papers*. Madison held that the division of interests into loosely-structured, competing factions constituted a prerequisite for democracy. Open political competition is the key to the pluralist system:

- multiple groups compete to represent the same social interests
- the groups compete against each other within the policy process
- membership in a group is voluntary
- The government's role is to provide a neutral arena for interest group activities.

Competition among a many groups assures that no one group wields a dominant influence within the policy process and that any group's influence depends on the support it can mobilize. Competition thus encourages group leaders to remain responsive to their members in order to maximize support for the organization.

Many German interest associations follow a contrasting neo-corporatist model of interest group politics.(2) Neo-corporatism is defined as a system of interest intermediation in which the constituent parts are:

- organized into a one or a few groups in each social sector
- these groups are often hierarchically organized
- membership is often compulsory
- the group is recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state, and
- the group is granted a deliberate representational monopoly within its social sector.(3)

Neo-corporatism evolved from earlier corporatist tendencies within German and European society. Prior authoritarian regimes tried to contain social groups with a corporatist framework controlled by the state. Analysts added the qualifier "neo" to the corporatist label to denote a more moderate form of this interest

group structure, in which highly stratified interests and a strong democratic state exercise a new patterns of interest intermediation.

In the neo-corporatist system, interests groups in a social sector are often united into a single organization. The groups exist under the umbrella of one large all-inclusive national "peak_associations" (*Spitzenverband*). For instance, distinct labor unions or business groups are united under a single peak association for labor or business. Moreover, most peak associations follow a hierarchical structure in which policy decisions flow from the top down, rather than up from the membership. The national office defines the goals and strategies of the entire association. In short, instead of a fluid, competitive system of interest representation, neo-corporatism signifies a highly structured and institutionalized system of interest group politics.

This style of neo-corporatist interest groups is not restricted to the Federal Republic, it is widely found throughout Scandinavia and other democracies. German politics follows a neo-corporatism in both the method of organizing interests and the pattern of policy formation.(4)

The Major Interests

Most discussions of interest groups focus on the large associational groups that represent the major socioeconomic forces in society, the so-called big four: labor unions, business, the churches, and the agricultural lobby. These are the long-established interest groups in the political process, and they wield substantial influence on policy matters related to their interests and on policies broadly affecting society. We briefly introduce these four major interest groups as a first step in understanding the system of interest articulation.

Labor Unions

The labor unions were among the first organizations to emerge from the rubble of postwar Germany. Trade unionists who had survived Hitler's purges began organizing in anticipation of the Allied military advance. In June of 1945 the Soviets formally recognized a union organization in Berlin comprised of prewar union activists. Later in 1945, British occupation authorities recognized union organizers in their zone, and union activity soon after spread to the American zone.

In the West, labor leaders decided to break with the pattern of highly ideological and partisan union activity that characterized the Weimar Republic.(5) Four principles guided union development in the FRG. First, labor organized itself into a unitary, autonomous unions that were independent of religious or partisan ties (*Einheitsgewerkschaft*). In contrast to the Weimar Republic (and the GDR), unions in the FRG are formally separate from the political parties, although unions obviously lobby the parties on issues affecting the interests of workers. Second, unions are organized along industrial lines; all employees at one plant belong to the same union regardless of their occupation. An electrician at an auto assembly plant belongs to the metalworkers union, while an electrician at a plastics company joins the chemical industry union. This structure gives unions more bargaining power in negotiations with employer organizations because one union represents all the workers in an industry. Decentralization is a third distinguishing feature of the FRG's unions. Individual unions generally follow a federal structure, with local, district, Land, and national offices. Each level exercises some influence in the direction of union policy.

Fourth, the FRG unions rely on the legal process for the protection of workers' rights. The unions adopted a strategy of ensuring their status primarily through government legislation, rather than through direct negotiations with businesses. For instance, the pattern of industrial relations, the conditions for allowing

strikes and industrial lockouts, the requirements of union membership, and basic social welfare benefits are all determined by labor law legislation. This strategy allows the unions to rely on state guarantees for these matters, so they can focus their contract negotiations on improving the economic conditions of the workers. At the same time, however, this strategy makes the unions dependent on the government and on the way that state agencies interpret labor legislation. Unions are thus often involved in legal cases on the interpretation of labor law, and the decisions of the Federal Labor Court (*Bundesarbeitsgericht*) strongly affect the pattern of industrial relations.(6)

The labor movement has a "peak association" in the image of the neo-corporatist model. The German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) embraces eight separate union groups, ranging from the police association to the metalworkers union (Table 7.1) (visit the DGB online). The DGB's broad-based membership covers all industrial fields, a number of white collar employees, and some government employees. The DGB's mixed identity is illustrated by its two largest unions represent industrial workers (IG Metal) and white collar service workers (Ver.di). (Ver.di now includes what used to be the DAG, the German White-Collar Employees' Union).

Table 7.1 Membership in German Federation of Trade Union (in 000s)

Union	**Members (000s)**
Metal Workers (IG Metal)	2,332
United Services Union (Ver.di)	2,274
Mining, Chemicals, Energy	728
Construction, Agriculture	368
TRANSNET Railway	248
Education and Science	249
Food and Beverage	211
Police	170
Total	6,585

Source: DGB, December 31, 2006 statistics.

The DGB affiliated trade unions account for about 6.5 million members, but membership has been slowly decreasing. Many new members joined as a result of unification with the East, but the total nationwide membership today is less than before unification. The unions represents around a third of the labor force, about average for European industrial democracies.(7) Moreover, the economic influence of the labor movement extends beyond the simple number of union members. While only a minority of workers belong to a union, a large majority of all jobs are covered by collective bargaining agreements negotiated by the unions. Union actions thus directly affect nearly all industrial workers and many workers in the service and government sectors.

Government civil servants and public sector employees are represented by the German Civil Servants' Federation, DBB (visit the DBB online). The DBB is a peak association for 14 different public service unions. Analysts sometimes describe the DBB as a union, but it comes closer to being a lobbying organization, because as public employees the Beamte cannot strike or engage in collective bargaining.

The DGB does not have formal ties to the Social Democratic Party, but its informal ties are quite strong. The unions routinely support the SPD at election time, and union members are disproportionately SPD

voters and party members. Union members or former members also constitute a relatively large proportion of SPD deputies in the Bundestag.

Even though the DGB serves as the peak association for the labor movement, it is not monolithic.(8) A division of effort gives separate roles to the Federation and its member unions. On one side, the DGB articulates the interests of labor in social discourse and within the policy-making process. The government regards the Federation as the official spokesperson for the labor movement and the official representative of labor in discussions of policies affecting the working class. DGB officials are very active in the policy making process at national and local levels, advising cabinet members, informing party leaders and testifying before parliamentary committees. On the other side, each union tries to improve its members welfare through the collective bargaining process. Most unions focus their attention on contractual issues that directly affect their members. While the DGB prowls the halls of government, the unions negotiate at the bargaining table.

The individual unions within the Federation also have considerable autonomy. The DGB may suggest broad guidelines for its member unions to follow in contract negotiations, but each union acts independently in setting its own contract terms. The independence of individual unions comes from the diversity of interests and political philosophies within the labor movement. The DGB membership divides into "radical" and "moderate" factions. The radicals, led by IG Metall, advocate a more assertive style in challenging business interests and advancing the cause of the working class. For example, IG Metall pressed for co-determination in the early 1950s, for the 35-hour work week in the 1980s, and for single labor agreements in East and West during the 1990s, as well as pressuring the Schroeder government to adopt a cooperative jobs program in the late 1990s. The radical unions are more willing to strike when collective bargaining fails and to involve the labor movement in broader issues of social reform. In contrast, the moderate unions prefer a strategy of working together with employers for steady, moderate economic growth that benefits both labor and capital.

The diversity within the union movement is also apparent in how the individual unions reacted to the process of German unification. From the outset, IG Metall was a vocal critic of Kohl's economic program and aggressively supported policies such as salary equalization, claiming it would stem the flight of skilled labor to the West and create the basis of a single national economy. These policies benefitted workers in the East who gained union jobs, but some economists argue that this forced equality actually increased unemployment and slowed economic investment in the East, because this policy made labor more expensive in less productive Eastern firms. IG Metal has also taken a more strident stand in opposition to the reform programs of the Schröder government. It ran newspaper advertisements in 2003 that attacked Agenda 2010 (see Chapter 10) as one-sided and unfair. Other unions have been more willing to explore reform options. This division within the labor movement is one reason why economic reform has progressed so slowly in Germany.

The DGB and its affiliate unions face many challenges. Membership in unions has been declining, and the percent of the workforce covered by union negotiated labor agreements has also been declining. Some analysts see a weakening of this pillar of the Germany social system.(9) In addition, an increasingly global economy creates pressures to reduce the benefits for workers in Germany; and these pressures have increased with the expansion of the European Union to eight East European nations. For the last several years, businesses and many economists have called for reforms that will lower the costs of employing workers in Germany, which means limiting social welfare benefits and restrictive employment practices. The CDU-SPD government thus faces calls for economic reforms that go against traditional union positions. The unions also face a difficult balancing act in representing the interests of their members in both halves of Germany. Some economic policies that might aid the worker in the West might further

undermine the competitiveness of the East and contribute to higher unemployment in the East. Unions are based on the principle of economic equality, so such tradeoffs are difficult issues for them to address.

Business and Industry

In the market economy of the Federal Republic, business is an important policy actor. However, business interests are diverse. Individual businesses ranging from a large multinational firm to a small *Tante Emma* store require representation of their interests. The owner of a machine shop, for example, is concerned about government policy that impacts on the business' interests, labor agreements affecting its employees, and the business opportunities for the firm. In short, a businessperson wears many hats. In the first case, the business needs its views articulated as policies are being made. In the second instance, the firm must be represented in negotiations with the labor unions. In the third area, the owner may need assistance in developing new customers or identifying new suppliers. Separate organizational networks address each of these three areas, each headed by a national peak association.

The single most important representative of business interests within the policy process is the Federation of Germany Industries (BDI). Following the neo-corporatist model, the BDI is a peak association for thirty-four separate national trade associations, such as the association of the automobile industry or the machinetool industry. The BDI is a centralized and inclusive business lobby, comparable to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and more important than the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) in the United States. The BDI's associations account for more than 90 percent of all industrial firms in the West; NAM's membership includes only a small minority of U.S. industry.

The BDI is the primary political spokesperson for the business community. It is a conduit between business and the government. It consults with its member associations to establish the position of the business sector on public policy matters. Once these views are determined, the BDI articulates them by lobbying the national, state, and EU governments on pending policies. Conversely, when the government is interested in hearing the views of business on a policy matter, it typically consults the BDI. The Federation also provides its members with information on pending government proposals and newly-enacted legislation. This helps the separate industrial groups understand the implications of government legislation and perhaps initiate their own lobbying efforts.

The Federation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) is the second major representative of the business sector. The BDA is a peak association of 67 separate employers associations: 14 regional organizations of employers' associations at the Land level, and 53 national trade associations organized by economic sectors. Industrial associations account for the bulk of the BDA member groups, but the confederation spans the full spectrum of business activity: banking, insurance, trade, transport, crafts, and other fields. Virtually every large or medium-size employer in the nation is affiliated with one of the employer associations comprising the BDA.

The BDA serves employers as a coordinating and advisory center for matters of social and labor policy. It negotiates with unions in setting general wage and salary guidelines for the specific contract agreements of their members. The Confederation is a pressure group at the state and national levels on legislation dealing with social security, wages and income policies, labor practices, and social services. The BDA also nominates business representatives to government committees dealing with these policy areas. The BDI and BDA thus share a division of effort; while the BDI focuses on the economic and broad political interests of business, the BDA represents management's interests on social policies.

The final part of the business triumvirate is the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHT). The DIHT is comparable to the Chambers of Commerce in the United States, except

that the German association includes more members. The law requires that all German firms that pay business taxes must join their local chamber and pay membership dues. Several million business enterprises belong to the eighty-one district and local associations of the DIHT.

The DIHT's national office articulates the interests of business on economic issues affecting its members. Because the Association represents such a broad range of companies, its lobbying efforts focus on broad consensual issues among the business community. One of the functions of the DIHT involves representing German business in foreign nations and on matters of international trade. The DIHT is therefore very active in efforts to encourage foreign investment in the five new Länder. The Association also provides informational, advisory, and liaison services to its members. For instance, the DIHT furnishes its members with information on economic and market conditions, financial and training advice, and assistance in dealing with government agencies.

The tripartite division of the business lobby in the FRG raises an inevitable question: are three heads better than one? The three business associations overlap in their membership and produce at least a partial duplication (triplication) of effort. Still, periodic efforts to consolidate these interests into a single organization, known as a "marriage of the elephants," have all ended in failure. Besides bureaucratic rigidity, the existence of three separate organizations reflects the belief by business people that different organizations are the best way to address their various needs. Specialization allows the BDI to focus its efforts on political matters, the BDA on social and labor policy, and the DIHT on commercial concerns. Seldom do the three organizations work at cross-purposes. In those instances where all three organizations do function as a united front, their lobbying impact is difficult for policy makers to resist--like three charging elephants.

Industrial Relations

Even in normal times, relations between business and labor inevitably contain some degree of conflict. Union efforts to improve the conditions of the work force are sometimes seen as interference in the prerogatives of management, just as unions view some corporate decisions as callously indifferent to the situation of workers. When both sides meet at the bargaining table, an adversarial relationship frequently exists; the higher wages sought by the unions mean lower profits to the employers. Union officials and business leaders also hold differing personal values and political loyalties. Most union officials lean toward the Social Democratic party, and most business leaders prefer either the CDU/CSU or the FDP. Labor favors extensive social programs, and business endorses a conservative social agenda. These economic and political differences are not unusual, they represent a normal part of industrial relations in most Western economies.

What makes the Federal Republic exceptional is the degree to which business and labor have generally restrained these tensions and worked together within the economic system. During the early postwar years intense differences in philosophy separated labor and business. The Munich program that guided the initial activities of the DGB had a decidedly Marxist tone, and the business sector reacted with inevitable opposition. Within a few short years, however, management and labor began to reconcile their differences. Both sides informally agreed that their first priority was to develop the national economy, from which both sides would prosper. By the late 1950s the mainstream of the labor movement had shifted from radical Marxist rhetoric to pragmatic social reform.(10) This social partnership (*Sozialpartnerschaft*) reshaped industrial relations from an adversarial relationship to one primarily based on mutual benefit.

The social partnership of industrial relations in the Federal Republic is illustrated by the pattern of strike activity. The FRG protects the rights of unions to strike against employers, but this right is exercised with

caution. The norms of industrial relations stress the reconciliation of contract differences through voluntary arbitration. The breakdown of arbitration is implicitly an admission that both the unions and employers failed to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. These norms are underscored by labor legislation that discourages the use of both strikes and lockouts as part of the contract negotiation process. To call a strike, a union must organize a strike vote and win approval from 75 percent of its membership. Furthermore, labor laws prohibit "wildcat" strikes when a contract is in force, or the use of strikes for non-contractual political goals. These strike limitations are matched by equally strict limitations on the use of lockouts by employers. As a result of these conditions, work time lost through strikes and work stoppages is consistently lower than in most other Western European system (see following box). Most German unions and employers clearly prefer arbitration to conflict over strike barricades.

On Strike!

Because of the cooperative style of industrial relations in Germany, strikes by the labor unions are relatively rare. For instance, there were only 3 days work lost to strikes per 1000 employees in Germany averaged across 2003-05, compared to 128 lost days in Britain and 742 in France. Still, strikes and the threat of strikes are one of the main tools of the unions.

YouTube video of IG Metall warning strike in March 2007 (auf Deutsch)

Worker participation in corporate decision-making represents another example of the social partnership of industrial relations. Employees participate in their company's managerial decisions at two levels. On the shop floor, works councils (*Betriebsrat*) give workers a direct say in the conditions of their job. In every firm with five or more employees, about two-thirds of the active labor force, the workers are entitled to establish a works council. The council is separate from the union hierarchy and its members are directly elected by the employees of the plant. The council grants workers more say in matters affecting their employment and the conditions of work. The company management must gain the approval of the works council for decisions involving working conditions, personnel policy, vocational training, and pay structures. The issues might be as mundane as the length of coffee breaks, or as major as disputes over compensation arising from a reduction in the work force. For fundamental plant changes–such as personnel planning, restructuring of the plant, or other significant changes in work or production techniques–management must seek the advice of the works council. To a real extent, the works council represents a partnership between workers and management on decisions made at the plant level.

The Federal Republic's system of co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*) provides even more extensive opportunities for worker self-management at the corporate level.(11) Co-determination originated in the coal and steel industries (*Montanmitbestimmung*). Under 1951 legislation, a supervisory board controls the management of these corporations. The board has an equal number of worker and shareholder representatives, with one neutral member acceptable to both sides. The board's authority is similar to the board of directors of an American corporation. It meets periodically throughout the year to set corporate policy and provide direction for the management board that handles day-to-day affairs. Co-determination initially had two other non-economic benefits: it gave the unions a share of the economic democracy they desired, and it provided another check on the actions of two industries that had been a vital part in Germany's past war-making activities.

Co-determination initially faced dire forecasts about its negative effect on industry. Such economic cooperation, after all, seemed more in harmony with the communist economy of the East than with Western capitalism. Business leaders feared that the employees would destroy their companies, either through ignorance or by pursuing policies of narrow self-interest. The system has function fairly

effectively, however, fostering better labor-management relations and still providing sound economic management. Worker participation became a cornerstone of the Federal Republic's economic system.

In 1976 the SPD-FDP government passed a new law to expand co-determination to all private firms with more than two thousand employees. The size of the supervisory board varies from 12 to 20 members, depending on the size of the firm. At large firms (20,000 and more employees), the board consists of ten employee representatives, including at least 3 union officials and at least one each from among the blue collar workers, salaried white collar employees, and managerial employees. The unions were disappointed with the 1976 law because it restricts the unions' formal participation to less than a third of employee seats. In addition, this newer form of co-determination does not grant full equality to the employees. If labor and management can not agree on a neutral committee chairperson, the shareholders' representatives can unilaterally select the chairperson whose vote decides split ballots. Despite the reservations expressed by both labor and management, the 1976 co-determination reform marks a significant advance in worker participation without fundamentally changing the nature of corporate decision-making.

Both labor and business have praised and panned the Federal Republic's unique system of social partnership. Some activists, for example, criticize the partnership as a turning away from fundamental socialist goals in favor of short-term, limited economic benefits. The labor movement has pursued incremental reform rather than fundamental social change. Evolutionary change should not lessen appreciation for the overall accomplishments, however. Most labor leaders stress the extensive social benefits the unions have won for their members: a growing share of the national income, subsidized savings plans for employees, an extensive social security system, and liberal fringe benefits, including an average 6 weeks of paid vacation and holiday leaves (see Chapter 10). Jutta Helm's evaluation of co-determination concluded that this program benefited workers financially, increased employee satisfaction, and provided better training programs and other company benefits.(12) The advances of co-determination are even more striking in cross-national perspective. For most other industrial democracies the concept of worker participation in management seems like a fanciful dream. Formal labor membership on U.S. corporate boards is extremely rare; few democratic nations rival the progress won by the Federal Republic's unions.

Sentiments within the business community are also mixed. Some business leaders look at the gains posted by the labor movement and conclude that business must be disadvantaged by the social partnership. They claim that the workers' extensive social welfare provisions make the Federal Republic less competitive in international markets. The success of the Economic Miracle was built upon the cooperative style of labor relations, however. The increases in business profits over the postwar period exceed the rise in wages. So business has also be benefitted from this partnership.

Despite this history of cooperation, the events since unification have strained the social partnership. Unification created new pressures on the German economy, and relations between business and labor. Global economic competition has further increased the economic strains within the German economy, and lead unions and business to advocate different responses to these pressures, Businesses claim that labor costs are too high and benefits should be reduced; unions claim that firms are making poor economic choices and asking workers to bear the costs. The inability to agree on a common solution lead to immobilism in government policies. A set of financial scandals involving corporate boards at Volkswagen in 2004-05 created additional criticisms of the co-determination system as contributing to Germany’s current economic problems. Finally, the Schröder government enacted economic reforms without and against the unions, but these were seen as insufficient by business interests.(13)

In sum, the social partnership has yielded mutual benefit to both business and labor. Neither side has maximized it own immediate benefits, and society as a whole has prospered because of the partnership. However, current economic problems are making it more difficult for this partnership to function as it has in the past.

The Churches

Religious associations constitute the third major set of organized interests in German politics. The churches in both halves of Germany were among the few institutions to survive the Third Reich relatively intact, but they were not untouched by the experience.(14) The Catholic church was an unwitting accomplice in the Nazi consolidation of power in 1933.(15) When the Vatican and Hitler's government signed a treaty (*Reichskonkordat*) guaranteeing the church's rights under the new state, the church withdrew from politics and allowed the Zentrum party to disband. The Protestant church (composed largely of Lutherans) suffered years of internal division during the Third Reich.

The experiences of the Third Reich led the churches to change their perspective on politics. The Protestant church broke with its traditional principle of passive subordination to the state's authority. Instead, Protestantism developed the view that "the church's moral responsibility to the nation entailed a political responsibility and...that this political responsibility lies not in passive obedience, but in independent judgment of the acts of the state."(16) The Catholic church similarly renewed its political commitment, but in a different manner than past Catholic action. Rather than resume direct partisan involvement, the Catholic church became an active lobbying organization.

An equally profound change is the creation of an ecumenical union between Protestants and Catholics in the Federal Republic. The formation of the Christian Democratic Union sought to bridge the historic gap between Catholics and Protestants by uniting them within a party broadly committed to religious values. The traditional political conflicts between Catholics and Protestants over church-state relations no longer divide the two religious communities. Each church still retains its own distinct spiritual and political identity, but interdenominational differences are now overshadowed by the differences between religious (Catholic and Protestant) and nonreligious interests.

In postwar West Germany, the churches helped to create the new social and political life of the Federal Republic. This occurred, in part, because the Christian Democratic party directed postwar reconstruction. In addition, the churches were one of the few functioning institutions can could assist in this development. Moreover, in contrast to the U.S. tradition of the separation of church and state, the two institutions were closely intertwined in the FRG. The state legitimized the political role of the churches, granting them a special legal status as public law corporations. The government even collects a "church tax" as a surcharge on personal income taxes, and these funds support Church activities. The churches are also formally represented on government commissions and supervisory bodies that deal with social policy, educational issues, family matters, and similar topics.

The GDR government treated the churches as a potential rival to the regime. During the 1950s the state attempted to exclude the churches from politics and educational activities. At the same time, the government eroded the popular base of the churches; it introduced the secular *Jugendweihe* ceremony, abolished the church tax, and prohibited Eastern church officials from participating in Western religious organizations. Still, the churches remained too strong for the government to suppress.

Because of their autonomy from the state, the churches served as a locus for political opposition to GDR regime. During a missile debate in the early 1980s, many churches organized "peace services", and the fledgling environmental movement in the East also was born within church walls. Only the churches

could openly question the government's policies on military issues, human rights and other issues because the churches represented the values of humanism and peace that the government claimed for itself.

As the German revolution began to gather force in 1989, the churches offered a home for the people. Churches in Leipzig, East Berlin and other cities granted sanctuary for citizen's groups; weekly peace services acted as a rallying point for opposition to the regime. Every Monday night the Nikolaikirche in Leipzig sponsored a prayer meeting and discussion group that eventually grew into the mass demonstrations that brought down the regime. Without the sanctuary provided by the churches, the German revolution of 1989 might not have happened.

Today, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) is the peak association for the provincial protestant churches. On religious and social issues, the EKD largely functions as a coordinating body, granting considerable autonomy to its member churches. The EKD maintains a sense of community among the various Protestant congregations and promotes inter-congregational exchange. Politically, the EKD is the formal representative of the German Protestant churches. It is the national spokesperson for the protestants, articulating the church's interests to the government, presenting the church's viewpoint in public debate, and representing its member congregations in formal governmental agreements regarding church-state issues. The EKD maintains a branch office in Berlin with all the trappings of a lobbying organization. Its staff keeps informed on pending legislation and lobbies the ministries on upcoming policy proposals.

The Catholic Church is Germany if formally under the authority of the Vatican. Within the Federal Republic, the major organizational body is the Bishops' Conference, which brings together the roughly 80 bishops for semiannual meetings. The conference deals with the pastoral and religious matters facing the church. In addition, the conference attendees discuss contemporary social issues and establish a common church policy on political matters of relevance to the church. The conference provides a focal point for a very active network of Catholic lay associations.

The Catholic church is more assertive than the EKD in its political involvement. The Bishops' Conference has a permanent secretariat in Berlin. Catholic leaders and church organizations are not hesitant to lobby the government on legislation dealing with social or moral issues. It is not uncommon to see a bishop meeting with national political leaders, or a pastor conferring with local officials. Catholic leaders even host a social/political club for Catholic legislative and ministerial figures, which meets every Tuesday during the Bundestag session. The Catholic church, with its considerable resources and extensive organizational network in the FRG, is often a visible participant in policy making.

The EKD is less engaged in the everyday politics of the Federal Republic, although the Protestant hierarchy has been more likely to involve the church in controversial political topics when they feel an issue deals with the spiritual values of the nation. In recent decades, the issues of peace, aid for less developed countries, and nuclear war have stimulated activity within both churches, especially among the young.(17) For instance, the bi-annual church day (*Evangelische Kirchentag*) intermixes bible reading groups with organizations discussing homosexual rights, the Palestinian question, and spousal abuse.

In sum, the German churches have a legitimate and broad-scale role to play within the political process. More than a right, it is seen as a duty and responsibility of the religious communities. At the same time, however, the general secularization of society that we discussed in Chapter 3 suggests that the churches' popular base, and thus the source of their political influence, will continue its slow erosion.

The Agricultural Lobby

Despite its relatively small size, the agricultural lobby has a surprisingly strong influence in the policy process of the Federal Republic.(18) Agriculture's political impact partially results from the social and political homogeneity of the agricultural community. The farm lobby presents a united front when dealing with policy makers–unity and the intensity of their views gives them a strength in excess of their numbers. Agriculture also has a key economic and political position within society. People can not live without food, and conservative parties can not win without rural voters.

The peak association of the agricultural lobby is the German Farmers Association (DBV).(19) The association focuses very narrowly on farm issues. It has been remarkably successful in convincing the government to protect the financial status of farmers through generous programs of price supports, subsidies, and agricultural grants. Even though these programs make German food costs among the highest in Western Europe, the programs are relatively immune to reform. Under both CDU- and SPD-led governments the Ministry of Agricultural aggressively works on the farmers' behalf. The guidelines for many agricultural policies are determined by the Common Agricultural Program (CAP) of the European Union. The 1990 Treaty on Monetary, Economic and Social Union committed Eastern agricultural to this same system of price supports. Both Western and Eastern farmers have benefitted from the generosity of CAP, but the European Union will have to curtail these generous benefits as a consequence of EU expansion to East Europe.

Public Interest Groups

As the Federal Republic developed the social and economic features of an advanced industrial society, new interests have entered the political arena. These new political interests have taken two forms. One set of groups are similar to public interest lobbies in the United States. These citizen groups deal with issues as diverse as consumer rights and self-help activities. Such groups have rapidly proliferated in recent years, and have substantial memberships (See Figure 7.1).

In addition, a subset of these public interest groups represent the New Politics perspective (see chapter 4). Three political movements–environmentalists, the women's movement, and the peace lobby–constitute the core of this New Politics movement. These New Politics groups differ from traditional interest groups in their orientation toward society and politics.(20) The leadership of these groups is largely drawn from a single pool of political activists -- young, highly educated, adherents of a New Left ideology.

New Politics groups seek a new social model for dealing with the conditions of advanced industrial societies like the Federal Republic.(21) Instead of stressing wealth and economic growth, they advocate an economy in harmony with nature and the personal needs of its citizens. New Politics supporters are skeptical of technology as a solution to modernization's side effects. Individuals must control society, rather than society controlling the individual; personal fulfillment and self-expression should be maximized. For instance, nuclear energy is opposed not just because of its environmental consequences, but also because it signifies the domination of industry and technology over the individual. The quest for a new *Weltanschauung* is admittedly unfinished; New Politics groups are often more articulate in criticizing the norms of society than in producing an alternative model. Still, these groups espouse a new set of goals and a new way of thinking about politics.

The environmental lobby is the most visible part of the New Politics movement in the Federal Republic.(22) In the 1970s, ecologists drew public attention to the contemporary problems of environmental protection (industrial pollution, nuclear power, chemical wastes, etc.) and linked these matters to failures of the economic and political systems. Environmentalists reminded the public that the

water in the Rhine once was pure, and blue skies once shone above the Ruhr–and insisted that this environmental degradation threatened the public's health and quality of life.

Table 7.2 The Major Environmental Groups and 2006 Membership

Group	Membership
Greenpeace Germany	553,000
Naturschutzbund Deutschland - NABU	400,000
BUND für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland	390,000
World Wildlife Fund	324,000
Deutscher Naturschutzring	96 member groups

With this flowering of the green movement, many organizations now compete to represent the public's new interest in environmental matters. The New Politics core of the movement is a set of national organizations formed in the 1970s and 1980s: Greenpeace, Robin Wood, the BBU and several environmental centers and research institutes. Anti-nuclear groups have popped up like mushrooms around nuclear power facilities, and local environmental action groups exist throughout the nation. These groups provide a network of political activists that determine the political identity and strategy of the movement. The leftist orientation of many of these activists developed environmentalism into a source of social and political criticism, and not just a political lobby. In addition, older and more well-established nature conservation groups (BUND, *Deutscher Naturschutzring*, and the Federation for Bird Protection, etc.) are allies of the more activist groups. Membership in environmental groups now exceeds formal membership in the political parties. And these groups added a wide variety of environmental issues to the political agenda.

Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, women organized to change the traditional male bias within West German society.(23) Despite guarantees of sexual equality in the Basic Law, women still face discrimination at home and at the workplace. Traditional social norms in both Germanies defined the women's family role in terms of the three K's -- *Kinder* (children), *Kirche* (church), and *Küche* (kitchen). Activists in the women's movement have a dualistic strategy to improve the status of women: programs for changing the consciousness of women and programs for legislative reform. Activities at the local level nurture the personal development of women; most large cities host a women's center, self-help groups, women's bookstores, and a network of women's organizations. Policy oriented interest associations exist at the national level.

The German peace movement has also ebbed and flowed with changes in the international environment. The movement staged mass demonstrations in the 1980s when tensions rose between the United States and the Soviet Union. More recently, a revived peace movement has actively criticized American actions in Iraq, and been vocal critics of other international conflicts.

Unification both strengthened and weakened the status of the New Politics movement within the Federal Republic. On the one hand, the movement does not wield the influence of any of the so-called "big-four" interest groups. Moreover, the economic problems of unification threaten to overshadow the quality of life issues of the New Politics movement. On the other hand, established interest groups and political parties are responding to the criticisms raised by these groups. Indeed, the movement seems to relish its role as social critic, raising issues that have been overlooked or opposed by the established interests. This orientation might be strengthened by the addition of young activists from the East, who are more sensitive about guarding their newly-won democratic freedoms and in addressing the severe life quality issues of

the East. For example, the pressure of women activists in the East was important in generating new legislation on gender issues enacted by the Schröder government, especially since the Green party was part of the governing coalition. The interests of these groups will likely wane under a Grand Coalition government, but this might increase the political activity of the movement.

The Patterns of Action

Interest groups can choose between a variety of methods to influence policy makers. The federal structure of government means that important political decisions are made in Berlin and the state capitals, so interest groups lobby at either or both levels. And with the expansion of the European Union's authority, they may have to lobby in Brussels as well. The separation of powers between the executive and parliament means that both branches of government are access points to policy making; Interest groups can contact government ministers and agency officials at the same time they lobby Bundestag deputies and appear before parliamentary committees. The political parties are generally receptive to appeals from their supporters. And of course, a group can always call its members into the streets and attempt to influence the political process through public persuasion. In comparative terms the German political system probably contains more points of access for interest groups than are normally found in European parliamentary democracies, though fewer than in the even more open American system.

A group considers many factors when it chooses between various points of political access. Institutional opportunities heavily determine the choice of tactics. If a policy decision will be made in the executive branch, then lobbying activities should focus on this target. More often than not, several political institutions are involved in the decision-making process, and interest groups must consider multiple points of access. The resources of the group are another prime consideration. Labor union officials have a mass membership; business owners command large financial resources; other groups possess unique technical expertise. Control of significant political resources might provide general access to the government decision-makers, but interest groups exploit the tactics that best utilize their capabilities -- mobilizing voters, providing parties with financial support, or lobbying policy specialists. The self-identity of a group also predisposes its political behavior. While business leaders might be hesitant to stage a public protest even if it would be effective, this tactic comes naturally to student groups. Finally, groups often hold differing goals in dealing with the same issue; one group might favor passage of new legislation while another tries to block passage. These contrasting objectives might lead to differing strategies of action, as groups calculate the best way to achieve their goals.

Political parties are one of the major channels of interest intermediation. The political system grants special importance to the parties in determining electoral choices and organizing the structure of policy making (see Chapter 8). Yet because of the partisan excesses of the Weimar Republic, many interest groups avoid the formal partisan ties that characterize interest group politics in other European democracies. The labor unions and business associations stress their independence from political parties (*überparteilich*), and do not officially endorse a party at election time. The churches similarly shunned the direct partisan ties that characterized their political behavior during Weimar. New Politics groups are probably the most vocal critics of partisan politics.

Despite public pronouncements of partisan innocence, many of these same interest groups carry on close affairs with the parties. While the labor unions do not formally endorse the SPD at election time, strong informal ties bind the unions and the party. The unions' motto holds that they are politically non-partisan but not political neutral. Union members provide a large proportion of SPD party activists and the core of party volunteers during elections, and the partisan preferences of union leaders are unmistakable for anyone who listens. Even while proclaiming electoral neutrality, the Catholic church's political affinities are well known. One common story recounts the actions of a Catholic pastor in the Christian Social

Union's home state of Bavaria. On election Sunday the pastor would stand in the pulpit and proclaim, "It is not for me to tell you how to vote. But I do say: Vote Christian! Vote Social!" Up until the 1969 election the Catholic bishops issued pastoral letters encouraging their followers to vote for a "christian" party. Church leaders made it appear to be a religious duty to vote for the CDU/CSU. Conversely, the Protestant church subtly displays its inclinations for the SPD. While business gives some support to all of the established parties, its affinity for the CDU/CSU is clearly apparent, and the farmer's association has close ties to the FDP or the Union parties. So important is partisan politics that even the anti-partisan New Politics groups have strong informal ties to the Green party.

Most citizens are aware of the partisan preferences of the major interest groups in Germany. The public sees big business and the Catholic church as leaning toward the CDU/CSU, and the Social Democratic tendencies of labor are also pronounced. The group bases of party support constitute a long-standing feature of the party system, and public perceptions have changed only slightly during the history of the Federal Republic. Groups representing New Politics interests, such as the environmental movement and women's groups, are generally seen as leaning toward the Green party.

The Bundestag is another major arena of interest group activity. Most lobby groups are concerned about monitoring legislation, and Bundestag decisions can have a major impact on an interest group's fortunes. Most groups target their parliamentary efforts on the specialized committees: testifying before committee hearings, lobbying committee members, and interacting with committee staff. It is within the committees that many of the political decisions of the Bundestag are actually made. Moreover, the system of specialized parliamentary committees enables interest groups to direct their efforts to those committees primarily concerned with policies affecting the group. Unions and business groups confront each other in the Labor and Social Relations committee; agriculture is concerned with the Nutrition, Farming and Forestry committee; social welfare groups focus their attention on the Youth, Family, and Health committee; and so forth. This aspect of interest group politics is not much different from what transpires in the halls of the U.S. Congress.

Interest group politics in the Bundestag is different from the US. Bundestag deputies often have a formal affiliation with an interest group, that might provide political support or even financial support for the deputy. Deputies are required to register these affiliations. in terms of the formal affiliation between deputies and interest groups. Since the Bundestag first began keeping records in 1972, about half of the deputies say that they are employed by an interest group or hold an executive position in a group. Despite the Basic Law's mandate that deputies to represent the public interest, these formal ties are accepted as a legitimate aspect of politics. In practical terms, many party candidates are selected as representatives of specific interests, and it is considered better to acknowledge that fact than to suppress reality. Economic groups maintain the largest representation in the Bundestag, almost one-third of the deputies are affiliated with a union, business lobby, or other class-based association. Many deputies have ties to religious or cultural associations, and a sizable number are linked to social groups.

As might be expected, the interest group affiliations of Bundestag deputies follow party lines. The deputies registered with trade union links are heavily concentrated within the ranks of the SPD, and the vast majority of SPD deputies are members of a DGB-affiliated union, at least in name. The CDU also contains a modest labor wing (*Sozialausschusse*), but its influence within the party Fraktion is limited. The CDU/CSU is the bastion of industrial and business interests. Most of the deputies affiliated with business groups, the employers' association, and middle class groups are within the Union parties. Cultural, religious, and social groups are similarly concentrated within the CDU/CSU Fraktion. The interest group networks of the CDU/CSU are most extensive, with over two-thirds of these deputies representing some interest group. Green deputies, in contrast, are the least likely to possess formal group ties, except for the party's involvement with the environmental and women's movements.

For an earlier Bundestag, Ferdinand Müller-Rommel showed that these general partisan tendencies are often accentuated within the key Bundestag committees that deal with matters relevant to competing interest groups.(24) For instance, in 1983 deputies with farming ties occupied 17 of the 27 places on the agricultural committee; deputies with business or labor interests accounted for a majority of the labor committee; and cultural interests dominated the education committee.

The German system of involving interest groups in the policy process reaches even further than the range of normal lobbying activities we have discussed. The neo-corporatist system encourages the state ministries and governmental agencies to develop formal linkages with interest groups.(25) This relationship begins with the government's recognition of an interest group as spokesperson for a social interest. Recognition might come through legislation regulating the activities or internal structure of a group. The non-partisan nature of the labor unions, for example, is defined by the Basic Law and many procedural aspects of industrial relations are governed by labor law legislation. In some occupations (doctors, lawyers, and other self-employed professions) professional associations are established by law. The government grants these associations legal sanction to certify professional competence and establish professional standards, making them quasi-public bodies. This legal status strengthens a group's position as representatives of its members.

In other instances, interest groups receive financial support or other resources from the government. The churches, for instance, get the majority of their income from a "church tax" collected by the government. A surcharge (about 10 percent) is added to an employee's income tax and this amount is transferred to his or her church. Citizens can opt out of the tax by renouncing their religious affiliation, but social norms discourage this. Similarly, the church-run primary schools in several states receive government funding and the churches are granted government subsidies to support their various social programs. This pattern of financial dependence applies to other groups as well. Many environmental groups and women's groups depend on government grants for a substantial part of their income, as do other citizen lobbies.

Official government recognition often results in the granting of formal consultative status by government ministries. Federal administrative regulations require that relevant national associations be consulted and asked to provide testimony on proposals under consideration by a ministry. To meet this requirement Federal ministries maintain a set of standing advisory committees, where membership is allocated to what the ministry feels are the relevant interest groups. Most ministries have a number of such committees; some deal with admittedly minor topics (such as the agricultural committee on potato research) but other committees have large staffs and wield substantial influence within the political process (such as research advisory groups in several ministries, and expert committees dealing with topics such as cartels, nuclear safety, and trade). The number of such committees has grown over the years.

Beyond these formal advisory committees, government administrative regulations encourage direct contact between representatives of the recognized interest groups and ministry officials when new legislation is being considered.(26) Ironically, the same opportunities for political discussion need not be granted to Bundestag deputies, non-recognized groups, or the public-at-large.

Interest groups are also formally represented on committees that supervise the activities of some government agencies and policy programs. The law establishing the Second Television Network (ZDF), for example, allocates two seats on the supervisory board to representatives delegated by the Evangelical church, two seats to the Catholic church, three seats to the trade unions, two seats to the BDA, two seats to agriculture, two seats to the newspaper federation, four seats to specific charities, one seat to the Federation of Expellees, one seat to the German Sports' Federation, and so forth. Other administrative boards oversee the post office, railroads, social security system, and other important governmental activities.

These channels of participation open policy formation and administration to the established interest groups. In the mid-1980s the German Federation of Labor, for instance, was a member of 46 ministry committees and 12 administrative boards. The representation of business and religious interests is just as extensive. In short, official recognition by the state almost ensures that a group is formally represented within the policy process.

In other cases the interaction between interest groups and government occurs informally or through unofficial channels. Most often the interchange between policy makers and interest group officials takes the predictable form of business meetings, social gatherings, and unofficial discussions. Such communication keeps the policy process working smoothly. In a few prominent instances, however, these informal networks have partially circumvented the public policy process.

The privatization of the public policy process is most clearly seen in the example of Concerted Action (*Konzertierte Aktion*).(26) In reaction to the economic crises of the early 1970s, the government instituted an on-going private conference with top representatives of business (BDI and BDA) and labor (DGB) to decide basic elements of national economic policy. These meetings sought a consensus between competing interests on wage and price increases, and other aspects of government economic policy. Once a consensus was reached, the government could implement the policy and group representatives sought compliance by their members. Concerted Action was an unusual example of the formalization of interest group representation, but the general philosophy appears in other policy areas. When government wants to take an initiative in a policy area, it often turns to study groups, commissions, and advisory bodies to work out an agreement--that the government then implements. For instance, the Hartz Commission of the Schroeder government is a recent example of this process, but the same process can be seen in health care policy, environmental policy, and other areas.

This pattern of formal and informal cooperation between government and interests constitutes another characteristic of the neo-corporatist style of interest group politics. Neo-corporatism institutionalizes the role of interest groups in the policy process. Governments feel that they are responding to public demands when they consult with designated interest groups. Conversely, formal consultation and participation in government committees ensures group officials of access to the policy process. Moreover, this style of interest group politics encourages group members to depend on the organization for the representation of their views, making interest groups the prime intermediaries between the public and government decision makers.

The advantages and disadvantages of neo-corporatist politics have been sharply debated. One advantage of neo-corporatism is that it increases the efficiency of the governing process. The relevant interest groups can negotiate on policy without the pressures of public debate and partisan posturing. In a period of crisis when government may become overloaded by pressing problems, this is an important consideration.

The critics note, however, that efficient government is not necessarily the best government, especially in a democracy. Under the neo-corporatist system decisions are reached in conference groups or advisory commissions, outside of the representative institutions of government decision making. The "relevant" interest groups are involved, but this assumes that all relevant interests are organized, and only organized interests are relevant. The views of latent groups such as consumers are seldom represented when business and labor combine within a neo-corporatist structure. Decisions affecting the entire public often are made beyond the public's eye. At the same time, democratically elected representative institutions -- state governments and the Bundestag -- are sidestepped as interest groups deal directly with government agencies. Neo-corporatism intrinsically contains illiberal and anti-parlianmentary tendencies that must constantly be monitored.

While neo-corporatist patterns of interest group activity are well- entrenched in the German policy process, some interest groups are exceeding the bounds of conventional politics and resorting to protests and similar forms of political action. While protest is not new to contemporary politics, the nature and goals of protest have changed from an act of desperation or coercion to a form of political persuasion. This new form of protest politics is most closely identified with citizen groups and the New Politics movement. Lacking the resources of labor or business, citizen groups struggle for recognition. These groups find that a spectacular public event or a largescale protest often provides immediate public exposure. In addition, the media attention that accompanies dramatic events enables a group to mobilize the popular support that is the basis of the group's political influence. Political movements are like sharks, they have to keep moving to stay alive.

Greenpeace Protests

Greenpeace is one of the more visible protest groups in Germany. In 2007 they were active on issues such as global warming, protecting whales, limiting the use of pesticides, restricting genetically modified foods, and opposition to nuclear power. Their inflatable boats challenge shipping in a campaign for a nature preserve in the North Sea, a climate conference ended with a protest march to the chancellor's office, they organized an email protest against genetically modified crops, and protested Japanese whaling by depositing a 20 ton dead whale in front of the Japanese embassy in Berlin. Greenpeace has a long record of using protest to generate media and public attention for its causes.

YouTube video of Greenpeace protest against use of light bulbs

The forms of unconventional political action are only as limited as the imagination of the organizers. Local groups orchestrate school boycotts or street blockades to protest the policies of government. National groups often resort to more dramatic events that will capture national media attention or demonstrate the extent of their popular support. For instance, environmental protests often encompass elements of street theatre: hanging banners from smokestacks, dying industrial discharges to demonstrate the reach of pollution, building a human chain across the Rhine river, or depositing dead fish at the doors of the Rathaus. But beyond being pure theater, these events aim at educating the public to the problem and possible solutions.

The choice between the various forms conventional lobbying and protest activities is open to all interest groups. Although few groups limit themselves exclusively to one form of political action, the pattern of interest group politics tends toward extremes. The major established interests benefit from a closed system that grants them formal representation within the policy process while excluding other interests. The participants of this neo-corporatist system see it as a defensible method of policy making, and one which benefits their supporters. Conversely, new political interests see a closed neo-corporatist system where their attempts to participate are not equally accepted. Thus their initial criticisms of policy outputs frequently broaden to critique the policy process more generally. While still relying on unconventional methods, many environmental and other New Politics groups find that they must pursue normal lobbying activities, meeting with policy makers and administrators, in order to affect policy outcomes. The German political system needs to reconcile these contractions -- opening the neo-corporatist system to wider participation and developing new mechanisms of accommodating the interests of citizen groups -- if it hopes to remain a dynamic system, representative of the changing social and political interests of its citizens.(27)

Key Terms

co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*)
Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)
Federation of Germany Industries (BDI)
German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB)
interest articulation
interest intermediation
neo-corporatism
peak association
pluralism
social partnership

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Notes

1. See the discussion of interest groups in Gabriel Almond, G. Bingham Powell and Robert Mundt, *Comparative Politics: Systems, Process, Policy*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), chap. 7.
2. Philippe Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds. *Trends toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979); Gerhard Lehmbruch and Philippe Schmitter, eds. *Patterns of Corporatist Policy Making* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982).
3. Philippe Schmitter, "Modes of Interest Intermediation and Models of Societal Change in Western Europe," in *Trends toward Corporatist Intermediation*, ed. P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch, p. 65.
4. At a superficial level, organizational life in the German Democratic Republic seemed to mirror the neo-corporatist structures of the West. There were single peak-associations in each sector, often with large mass memberships. However, the SED did not allow autonomous groups. Instead, social groups were agents of the state: "transmission belts" for government doctrines, vehicles for mobilizing the public, and instruments in implementing SED-designed policies.
5. In the East, the SED quickly merged unions together under the umbrella of a single trade-union federation in early 1946, the Federation of Free German Trade Unions (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* [FDGB]). The SED took control of the FDGB, and the federation became an agent of the state. See Ulrich Gill, *FDGB: Die DDR-Gewerkschaft von 1945 bis zu ihrer Auflösung 1990* (Cologne: Bund, 1991).

6. Peter Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 65-66.
7. However, the membership of the unions decreases by about 10 percent if one removes retirees who are no longer employed. By comparison, about 50 percent of the British labor force and about 15 percent of U.S. workers are unionized. German law makes union membership voluntary, which partially accounts for the low level of union membership.
8. Andrei Markovits. *The Politics of the West German Trade Unions*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chap. 3; Kathleen Thelen, *Union of Parts: Labor Politics in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
9. Wolfgang Streeck and Anke Hassel, "The crumbling pillars of social partnership." In Herbert Kitschelt and Wolfgang Streeck, eds. *Germany: Beyond the Stable State* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).
10. The growing strength of reform elements within the labor movement paralleled similar trends within the Social Democratic party. The transformation from Marxism to reformism was finally formalized in the 1963 Dusseldorf Program of the DGB. See Markovits, *The Politics of the West German Trade Unions*, pp. 91-104.
11. Peter Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany*, ch. 3; Wolfgang Streeck, Co-determination: The fourth decade. In Bernhard Wilpert and Arndt Sorge, eds. *International Yearbook of Organizational Democracy* (New York: Wiley, 1984); Volker Berghahn and Detlev Karsten. *Industrial Relations in West Germany* (Oxford: Berg Publishing, 1987).
12. Jutta Helm, "Codetermination in West Germany: What Difference Has it Made?," *West European Politics* (October 1986), pp. 32-53.
13. Streeck and Hassel, The crumbling pillars of social partnership; *The Politics of Economic Reform in Germany* a special issue of *German Politics* 14 (June 2005).
14. As one example of the historical continuity of the churches, the regional boundaries of both the Protestant and Catholic churches date back to the 1800s, rather than following administrative boundaries within the Federal Republic. In addition, both churches initially included dioceses in East Germany and Poland until these areas separated in the 1960s.
15. Several prominent postwar figures critiqued the church\'s activities under the Third Reich in their literary works, see Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* and Heinrich Böll's *Billiards at Half-Ten*.
16. Frederic Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1974).
17. Siegfried Scharrer, War and peace and the German Church, in *European Peace Movement*, eds. Walter Laqueur and Robert Hunter (New York: 1985); Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace: German Peace Movements since 1945*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).
18. Erich Andrlik, The farmers and the state: Agricultural interests in West German politics, *West European Politics* 4 (January 1983); Edmund Neville-Rolfe, *The Politics of Agriculture in the European Community* (London: Policy Studies Institution, 1984), ch. 3.
19. While membership in the DBV is voluntary, all farmers are required by law to join the League of Agricultural Chambers (*Verband der Landwirschaftskammern*), which acts as an equivalent to the DIHT in the business sector.
20. Ruud Koopmans, *Democracy from Below: New Social Movements and the Political System in West Germany* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995; Russell Dalton and Manfred Kuechler, *Challenging the Political Order* (New York: Oxford University Press/Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990).
21. Lester Milbrath, *Environmentalists: Vanguard for a New Society* (Buffalo: SUNY Press, 1984).
22. Dieter Rucht and J. Roose, "Neither Decline Nor Sclerosis: The Organisational Structure of the German Environmental Movement," *West European Politics* 24 (October 2001): 55-81; Russell Dalton, *The Green Rainbow* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

23. Eva Kolinsky, *Reinventing Gender: Women in Eastern Germany Since Unification* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Brigitte Young, *Triumph of the Fatherland: German Unification and the Marginalization of Women.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
24. Ferdinand Müller-Rommel, "Interest Group Representatives in the German Bundestag," in *The U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag*, ed. Uwe Thysen, Roger Davidson and Robert Livingston (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).
25. Claus Offe, "The Attribution of Political Status to Interest Groups," in *Organizing Interests in Western Europe*, ed. Suzanne Berger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 123-158.
26. A small survey of interest group representatives found that they ranked these ministry consultations as the most important form of contact with the government; hearing of the Bundestag ranked lower in importance, and government advisory committees even lower. See Martin Sebaldt, "Interest Groups: Continuity and Change of Germany Lobbyism since 1974," in *Institutions and Institutional Change in the Federal Republic of Germany*, ed. Ludger Helms (New York: St. Martin's Presss, 2000), p. 195.
27. Rolf Seitenzahl, *Einkommenspolitik durch Konzertierte Aktion und Orientierungsdaten* (Cologne: Bund, 1974); Andrei Markovits, *The Politics of the West German Trade Unions*, pp. 108-111, 213-214.
27. See, for example, the insightful discussion of the tension between these forces in Peter Katzenstein, "Stability and Change in the Emerging Third Republic," *Industry and Politics in West Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). Also see Wofgang Streeck, "Industrial Relations: From State Weakness as Strength to State Weakness as Weakness," in *Governance in Contemporary Germany*, ed, Simon Green and William Patterson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

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