

Die Friedensbewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Ursachen und Bedingungen der Mobilisierung einer neuen sozialen Bewegung, by **Rüdiger Schmitt**. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990. 338 pp. NPL paper. ISBN: 3-531-12153-7.

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The early eighties were a period of widespread peace movement activities in Western Europe directed at the NATO decision that nuclear missiles would be deployed in Western Europe as long as the Soviets did not withdraw their medium-range missiles. Millions of people united in protest. Especially noteworthy were the rapid growth of protest activities, basically 1981–83, and the rather broad support of protest by the public compared with that for other social movements.

Rüdiger Schmitt tries to explain how this came about in West Germany, one of the countries where protest was especially widespread. He starts by developing a theoretical model according to which the formation of social movements results from a complex interplay of macro and micro levels. On the macro level, the ground is laid by latent dissatisfaction with the present situation and by political actors, or "entrepreneurs," who give some meaning to the latent dissatisfaction. Out of this, cognitive mobilization arises, followed by political mobilization, including the construction of beliefs about possible and desirable protest activities. Acting on those potentials is the third step in forming movements. The participant is thereby basically seen as a rational actor who tries to change social reality in accordance with his own beliefs.

The author then covers the various aspects of mobilization: the definitions brought forward by various actors, including other social movements, the media, and the political establishment; and the activities of the peace movement and movement support in the general population, as assessed by nation- and regionwide surveys. The author does so rather competently, given the available data. However, since the data are not the best to answer all the questions raised by his theory, there are a number of deficiencies. The interrelationship of the various

elements of the model remains a relatively loose one. For the macrolevel explanations, the author has to rely on publications and data that were originally collected by others for other purposes. Consequently, the dynamic interplay that is considered crucial in his model cannot be documented in detail. Furthermore, the empirical analysis on the micro level sometimes becomes problematic owing to the indicators at hand.

This applies especially to one of the most important explanatory variables: attitude toward deployment of the missiles. The only indicator available for secondary analysis refers to the NATO double-track decision: the threat of deployment combined with the willingness to negotiate. As shown in other studies, such kinds of two-dimensional question wording can give the wrong idea about what people think of an issue. Many people support the NATO decision, according to this indicator, because they think it is a good idea to stress negotiation before deciding on deployment. Deployment itself is rejected. Under these circumstances the indicator is contaminated and will necessarily deflate the relationship with other relevant variables. What remains unsettled is the question of how well attitudes toward the peace movement and toward deployment are explained by different sets of variables. Many people think negatively about the movement because of its protest activities yet basically support its goals.

It would be unfair, however, to blame the author for all these deficiencies. Having to rely on secondary analysis, he has to make the best of what is available. Seen from this point of view, the book is a first step toward a more comprehensive approach in studying empirically the formation and development of social movements.