

Introduction

Establishing a linkage between citizens and governments is considered the most important function of political parties. It is the fulfilment of representative functions, Sartori argued, that is the premise, the 'justification' of the centrality of political parties in modern political systems. We do not need parties just 'for the sake of providing a government'. We need parties because 'we are interested in a mechanism of recruitment that fulfils the expressive function'.¹ Why would we need political parties otherwise? There may be, as Schmitter provocatively suggested, a multiplicity of alternative agents that could function far better as channels of political representation.²

This book looks back in time, to the turn of the 1970s, when new social movements were just emerging in West European societies. In many countries, the year 1968 signalled the beginning of a new era in the relationship between civil society and political parties, marking a fundamental watershed in the history of political representation. Since the 'participatory revolution', unconventional forms of political participation – defined as such because they go beyond the realm of conventional, institutional politics³ – have spread in different cycles and levels of intensity through various Western countries. These types of participation can be understood as 'making a political contribution in other forms', including strikes, sit-ins and demonstrations, squatting, boycotting, petitioning, and similar actions addressed towards some status quo.⁴

If nowadays the presence of bottom-up political mobilizations independent of partisan organizations is taken for granted, when they emerged in the late 1960s they were a new phenomenon in terms of their size, visibility, permanence and action repertoires. New channels of political participation and political involvement thus began forming, as 'the political' extended to other spheres of civil society outside the party channels. The 'church-party' – as Duverger defined the mass parties that developed in Europe after the Second World War⁵ – started to lose its potential to attract new followers. A process of 'political de-confessionalization' and 'ongoing secularization' started taking place,⁶ as political parties were suddenly confronted with the emergence and multiplication of new 'places' and new 'subjects' of politics, and no longer constituted the only channels for the political socialization and mobilization of the citizens. This book traces what happened in the perception of political parties at the moment when these new political collective

actors emerged, taking away their monopoly over political representation. What happens when, as the Italian Communist party journal *Rinascita* put it in 1976, 'the party is no longer everything'.⁷

The emergence and proliferation of autonomous and critical mobilizations from the late 1960s constituted a point of no return in the history of political parties as representative agents, as it challenged established parties in their traditional role as mediators between citizens and political systems, and marked the loss of their previously monopolistic position.⁸ Social movements introduced specific innovations that were reflected in particular challenges to established parties. How did political parties handle these challenges? Do we find evidence of party change as a response to the emergence of social movements? Did political parties try to link to social movement groups, and what factors explain the possible variation in the parties' responses?

The Objectives of the Book

Most party scholars would agree on the importance of political parties for democracy, just as most social movement scholars would agree on the importance of social movements for democracy. In both cases, their importance for democracy is justified in terms of the functions that both of these political actors perform as channels of political mobilization, symbolic representation, and political expression of the citizens' interests. However, despite the fact that both political parties and social movements act as vehicles of 'voice' and as networks of political linkage, the two fields of research, on parties and on social movements, have remained separate overall.

Party scholars have largely neglected social movements. Even though their emergence at the turn of the 1970s has been observed as a symptom of the inability of party organizations to maintain linkages with society, research on the actual implications of the emergence of social movements and the ways in which political parties responded to their demands is scarce. Kitschelt's observation that 'too little attention has been given to the adapting strategies of the political parties in responding to the challenges and proliferations of those [social movements] organizations'⁹ still appears valid over twenty-five years later. The literature on social movements, in turn, is very movement-centric,¹⁰ even though social movement scholars have long stressed the importance of mediation by political institutions. It is through the responses they received from political institutions that William Gamson defined social movements as successful, in his seminal 1975 book.¹¹ Moreover, the presence of institutional allies that supported social movements was considered as one of the key independent variables that constituted the so-

cial movements' political opportunity structure for the 'political process' approach.¹² Nonetheless, little attention has thus far been devoted to the actual mechanisms that connect movements to political parties and party change.

Overall, a division of labour exists between scholars of political parties and scholars of social movements, which seems to reflect the typical division between political scientists and political sociologists: the former focusing on political institutions, the latter on societal and extra-institutional phenomena.¹³ Such a compartmentalization of research fields does little justice, however, to the complexity of social reality. Here, not only are the boundaries between institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics 'fuzzy and permeable',¹⁴ but political parties and social movements unavoidably – and perhaps most often inadvertently – interact with one another, establishing dynamics of reactions and counter-reactions.¹⁵ As Tarrow has noted, 'the study of social movements will remain fatally incomplete unless scholars become more sensitive to the relations between protest and politics'.¹⁶ The same applies, I believe, for the study of political parties. As Goldstone argued,

just as analysts of social movements have come to realize that they cannot study movements independently of their political context, including the operations of normal political institutions, we maintain that the reverse is also true. . . . [W]e believe that one cannot understand the normal, institutionalized workings of courts, legislatures, executives, or parties without understanding their intimate and ongoing shaping by social movements.¹⁷

As a consequence of this regrettable lack of mutual engagement between party and social movement research, and despite the growing calls to bridge the boundaries between institutional and non-institutional politics,¹⁸ the adaptation processes that parties have undertaken in responding to the challenges made by social movements remain empirically and theoretically unexplored.

This book takes an interdisciplinary approach that connects the literature on political parties with the literature on social movements, thus aiming to avoid the social movement centrism of the latter and the social movement denial of the former. The objectives are to fill this gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence of the way in which political parties have adapted to the emergence of social movements and to open new theoretical perspectives on the underlying connections between politics within and outside institutions.

In doing so, this book also addresses normative and more contemporary concerns. In a recent study, Rosanvallon referred to social movements as

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‘counter-powers’ that help to reinforce electoral democracy.¹⁹ By addressing protest and mistrust through ‘the power of surveillance’, they play an important role in political systems. However, the mere presence of critical counter-powers is not likely to improve the quality of political systems without a corresponding process of adaptation by the political institutions.²⁰ Observing the dynamics by which political parties have responded to the emergence of social movements, therefore, the book also allows for a better understanding of the representative potential of political parties, discussing the actual capacity of political parties to listen, interpret, absorb and possibly anchor political conflict.

The Research Context

This book focuses on party responses to movements in Italy and the Netherlands, two countries with political systems whose prevailing strategies in dealing with challengers have been considered as being in opposition to each other. Social movement scholars have underlined that these strategies rest upon an ‘auto-dynamic reproduction across centuries’,²¹ and may be either exclusive or inclusive according to the different countries’ political traditions. In general terms, ‘the more egalitarian, liberal, inclusive, and individualistic the political culture, the less the opposition should be antagonistic and confrontational’.²² Exclusive strategies are considered to apply in the Italian political culture, whereas inclusive strategies are considered to apply in the Netherlands. Dutch political culture, in particular because of its tradition of ‘accommodation politics’, based on the search for consensus and the integration of challenging minorities,²³ means that the Netherlands are considered among those countries with the most open opportunity structures for social movements in Western Europe.

Consequently, the very character of the challengers also differed considerably in the two national contexts, especially with regard to their relationship with state authorities. The exclusive strategies adopted by the Italian state facing a society in protest, and its repression, favoured not only the increasing detachment of political activism from the institutional structures most closely connected to the state (political parties, first of all), but also their increasing radicalization over the course of the 1970s. Political protest and political violence became for many activists an ‘existential condition’ legitimized by an unfair, and in turn violent, state.²⁴ Revelli discusses the emergence of a number of ‘anti-systemic movements’ from the late 1960s, which were ‘constituted around a logic of absolute distance from the state’.²⁵ Such a pronounced distance from institutional politics did not take place

in the Netherlands, where movements were rather more inclined to search for alliances with institutional actors.²⁶ Overall, in contrast with the Italian social movements, the Dutch movements maintained a far less ideological character overall, their repertoires of action were mostly of a more moderate type, and they were considerably more policy-oriented, with important implications in terms of the potential political negotiability of their goals.

Despite the significant differences, until the end of the 1960s the two countries had experienced decades of exceptional stability, both at the level of individual parties and at the level of party systems. Indeed, both were referred to as model cases of Lipset and Rokkan's 'freezing hypothesis',²⁷ due to the low levels of electoral volatility and the loyal constituencies that political parties managed to maintain over the decades after the Second World War. In Italy, the two main political forces that had emerged after the war, the Christian Democratic party (DC) and the Italian Communist party (PCI), won more than 60 per cent of the popular vote combined for over forty years.²⁸ Besides channelling the great majority of the Italian electorate, both the Communist and the Christian Democratic parties managed to create strong partisan affiliation and identity in Italian society in the tradition of the mass parties, maintaining a web of collateral organizations within society, which functioned as further channels for political communication, membership recruitment, political influence and socialization.²⁹ In the Netherlands, the party system was 'frozen' around five main political parties: the Catholic party (KVP), the Dutch Reformed party (CHU), the Calvinists party (ARP), the Socialist party (PvdA) and the Liberal party (VVD) – the so-called 'Big Five' of Dutch politics³⁰ – which together held about 90 per cent of the seats in the parliament.³¹ Whereas in the Italian case what characterized voting was determined mainly by ideological and political attachment to either one of the two main political streams in the country (the Catholic or the Communist), what determined electoral choices in the Netherlands mainly derived from the very social structure of society. Indeed, the 'Big Five', formed at the end of the nineteenth century, reflected the internal division of the country into five extremely cohesive subcultures (or 'pillars'),³² constituting their political manifestations and promoting their specific group interests. The voting behaviour of the Dutch electorate was therefore defined as 'structured voting', and political elections as 'hardly competitions at all'.³³

Under these conditions, in both countries, political parties maintained agendas that society mostly followed. Parties were accustomed to the fact that politics took place in parliaments, by and through party channels. The late 1960s marked a fundamental watershed. Indeed, along with the changes in the electoral sentiments of the Dutch and Italian voters, political involve-

ment through the independent channels confronted political parties with new and unexpected challenges. In order to achieve a thorough understanding of how the established parties perceived and adapted to the 'participatory revolution' of the new social movements, the book focuses on the responses of the two largest traditional parties of the Italian and the Dutch party systems: the Communist party (PCI) and the Christian Democratic party (DC) in Italy, and the Socialist party (PvdA) and the Christian Democratic party (CDA) in the Netherlands.³⁴

As party responses do not take place in a vacuum, in the following sections I will discuss in more detail some of the characteristics of the Italian and the Dutch party systems, including patterns of government coalitions and the presence of smaller political parties on the far left of the two-party systems. Both are expected to play a role in the parties' thinking vis-à-vis social movements.

Centre-Dominant Coalition Governments

In Italy and the Netherlands, centre parties played a pivotal role in government coalitions throughout the whole period under investigation, and beyond. In both countries, all governing majorities that formed from the end of the Second World War until the early 1990s always contained the centre. For the case of Italy, the perception of the PCI as an anti-system party prevented the Communists from taking part in any of the governments of the Republic. The reason why the PCI was excluded from the governmental arena despite the high level of consensus it held resides in the party's economic and international positions, and in particular in its ideological and financial links with the Soviet Union. Overall, as neither of the parties located at the two extremes of the party system spectrums (i.e. the PCI and the post-fascist MSI) were considered as possible coalition partners for the government, the political market available to the DC was restricted to the moderate and minor parties to its left and right, despite the high number of parties present in the Italian parliament.³⁵

Interestingly, however, it was during the 1970s, precisely when the Italian party system had reached its maximum level of polarization (the PCI obtained only 4.4 per cent less than the DC in the national political elections of 1976), that a small opening seemed to appear in the dynamics of the Italian 'blocked democracy'.³⁶ This occurred as the consequence of a reciprocal politics of attention by two key leaders of the PCI and the DC: Enrico Berlinguer, secretary of the PCI from 1972 to 1984; and Aldo Moro, DC secretary from 1959 to 1964 and highly influential in the party during the

1970s. This strategy of mutual consideration did not lead to any political outcomes. The only significant attempt by the PCI to come closer to the sphere of government came in its external support (by abstaining in a vote on the government's formation) for the government from 1976 to 1979. The 'national solidarity governments', thus labelled in response to the economic crisis and the severe social conflicts the country was undergoing, had few of the characteristics of the politics of attention that Moro and Berlinguer had formulated.³⁷ The kidnapping and subsequent murder of Moro by the *Brigate Rosse* (Red Brigades) ended the possibility of this formula forever. The DC now sought to open up towards the Socialist party instead. In the 1980s the Italian 'blocked democracy' seemed to be even more blocked, and for two main reasons. On the one hand, the premises for the PCI's exclusion from the government sphere seemed to garner less support than previously, following the experience of the 'national solidarity government', the Communists' split from the Soviet Union in 1976, Eurocommunism, and not least, the thaw in relations between the two power blocs that began in the 1980s. On the other hand, the government coalitions that followed one another during the 1980s respected an almost fixed formula where the same five parties (DC, PSI, PLI, PRI, PSDI) held governmental responsibilities. It seemed, as Craveri argued, that the Italian party system was unable to provide further formulas or perspectives.³⁸

What kept the confessional parties playing a pivotal role in the Netherlands was instead a reciprocal veto on government participation by the Socialist PvdA and the Liberal VVD parties – a veto that remained in place up until the 1994 political elections. Yet, a fundamental difference from the government composition in Italy was the participation in the governments of the main left-wing party. The PvdA took part in the governing coalitions regularly: between 1945 and 1958, the PvdA participated in six governments successively, along with the KVP, four of them under the Socialist prime minister Willem Drees. After fifteen years in opposition, with the exception of a short-lived government in 1965, the PvdA once again entered government in 1973 with two new left-wing parties, PPR and D'66, and the support of the religious KVP and ARP, forming what remained known as 'the most progressive government the Netherlands ever had'. During the 1980s, the PvdA re-entered the government in 1981, this time with the CDA and D'66, but only for a short time due to coalition disagreements on economic policies and the labour sector.

Overall, if the confessional parties held government responsibilities throughout the whole period under consideration, the two parties on the left had to maintain a difficult equilibrium between promoting themselves

as open to a changing and more demanding society whilst at the same time appearing as a reliable (potential, for the PCI) government ally.

Smaller Parties of the Left

An additional challenge to the left-wing parties at the turn of the 1970s was the emergence of a number of new political parties, which were situated at the very left of their party systems. In Italy, these may not have been 'relevant' when counting the number of effective parties; however, they were important as they challenged the supremacy of the PCI on the left, and, most importantly for the purpose of this book, they were the parties that most closely connected to the wave of protest in the 1970s. Indeed, the New Left wave was manifested not only in extra-parliamentary groups but also within factional shifts in the old institutional parties. An early precursor of this trend was the PSIUP, a split-off from the Socialist party (PSI), which formed in 1964 in opposition to Socialist participation in a government with the Christian Democrats. As Tarrow has argued, 'well before a new extra parliamentary left was dreamt of the PSIUP extended the boundaries of the parliamentary left to new themes and forms of action'.³⁹ In the 1970s, the PSIUP became a bridge-party, linking the new movements that had emerged with the institutional political arena. Apart from the PSIUP, the two other parties that emerged in the early 1970s that were most closely associated with the political families of the social movements were the Partito Radicale (PR) and Democrazia Proletaria (DP), which both participated for the first time in the national parliamentary elections of 1976. The PR had existed since 1963 and functioned, especially in the first half of the 1970s, as a conglomerate of single-issue movements focusing on civil liberties: divorce, state secularism, abortion, liberalization of drugs, and feminism.⁴⁰ The DP instead emerged from the institutionalization processes of the main extra-parliamentary groups in the country (primarily the Lotta Continua and Avanguardia Operaia), the group around the newspaper *Il Manifesto*, and the Partito di Unità Proletaria (PdUP). In the 1980s, with the process of the internal structuration and institutionalization of the ecology movement, the Green party also emerged, taking part in local elections first and, from 1987, in national ones. As mentioned above, the electoral success of these parties remained limited, as they never managed to overcome the 2.5 per cent threshold. That said, their presence in the electoral arena, if not individually, did cumulatively challenge the PCI at its very left wing, and also constituted a challenge at the very level of political representation, as they actually managed to give voice to those sectors of mobilized society that the PCI did not seem willing or able to provide with adequate responses.

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Compared to Italy, small parties had a greater tradition of political representation within the Dutch party system. The *Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij* (PSP), for example, the party that most strongly supported the social movements and their actions throughout the 1970s and 1980s, emerged after a split from the Socialist party in 1957. A second small party supporting the social movements in the Netherlands was the *Politieke Partij Radikalen* (PPR), which emerged as a split-off from the Catholic party in 1968, and which shared with the PSP the recognition of the importance of extra-parliamentary actions and the willingness to maintain a close relationship with the social movements. The main themes that this party focused on in the 1970s were democratization, peace, and environmental awareness. Like the PSP, the PPR participated actively in movement initiatives and established independent ‘action centres’ in various cities to promote and encourage participation from below. A third small party that supported social movements in the 1970s was the Dutch Communist party. This opening to social movements took place after 1977, according to Voerman, Brinkman and Freriks,⁴¹ as a consequence of its electoral defeat in the parliamentary elections of the same year. From a traditional ‘old left’ party that centred its political actions predominantly on old ‘materialist’ themes, the CPN gradually opened up to the movements and their social actions. These parties obtained higher levels of electoral support compared to the Italian ones, in particular until the mid-1970s. Hence, the challenge from the left for the Dutch Socialists was higher than that faced by the Italian Communists. Yet, from the political elections of 1977 onwards, their electoral strength diminished, as a possible consequence of the fact that the PvdA, as I will show in Chapter 3, had then taken on board many of the movements’ demands.

The Added Value of Comparative Research

As previously mentioned, the emergence of social movements removed the monopoly over political representation from political parties, challenging them in their traditional role as mediators between citizens and political systems. However, the extent and the nature of any challenge varies considerably, depending on the individual party in question. The differences across the four selected parties are expected to shape their responses to movements to a significant degree. Strategic considerations as well as considerations based on the cultural identity of the individual party are likely to influence the way in which social movement claims are dealt with (see Chapter 1).

The case selection reflects the choice for opposite cases following a paired comparison research strategy, which allows for in-depth analysis and main-

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taining the added value of comparison while at the same time providing analytical leverage for identifying factors that both facilitate and constrain party adaptation trajectories.⁴² Indeed, the selected parties, the two main political parties of the left (PCI and PvdA) and the centre (DC and CDA) of the two party systems under examination, are at opposite poles with regard to their affinity to the social movement family. The former have been recognized as the 'natural allies' of the new social movements,⁴³ while the latter, because of their greater ideological distance from social movements, are (implicitly) considered as their natural adversaries. Demonstrating a bias towards 'positive' social movements' outcomes, social movement scholars have tended to concentrate on left-wing political parties,⁴⁴ while very little research has been undertaken on the way in which more distant party families have adapted and interpreted social movements. Extending the analysis to the centre parties not only broadens the empirical scope of the analysis, but it also provides analytical leverage for a more thoughtful understanding of the causal dynamics that link social movements to party change.

Political Parties, Social Movements and Political Change: A Parsimonious Approach

According to Sartori's classic definition of political parties, a party is 'any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office'.⁴⁵ Contesting elections is the key feature that distinguishes parties from other organizations. This is a first major difference from social movements, which engage in oppositional interactions with power holders, expressing political or cultural conflict outside of political institutions. Social movements emerge and fundamentally operate within the extra-institutional sphere ('outside of the polity as such, and beyond the boundaries of action defined by European mass parties', in the words of Goodwin and Jasper).⁴⁶ Indeed, movements rarely access the institutional domain if not as spokespersons for a given set of interests in consultation bodies,⁴⁷ or as movement representatives that are co-opted in turn by parties. Parties, instead, operate in both the extra-institutional and institutional spheres. According to Bartolini and Mair, parties perform a dual set of functions: the 'representative functions', including the functions of articulation, interest aggregation and formulation of public policies; and the 'institutional functions', including election campaigning, the recruitment of leaders and candidates, and the organization of parliament and government.⁴⁸ The two actors' different positions vis-à-vis the institutional environment is likely to have a significant impact on the way in which they behave and interact with

one another. As March and Olsen remind us,⁴⁹ there are several ways in which institutions shape and constrain political action: through rules, norms, the repertoire of practices, routines, and expectations. Operating within the institutional environment, political parties need to manage a whole plethora of complex problems that social movements do not need to address from their external position.

At the same time, parties and social movements may well share relevant similarities. First, they are both actors in the process of democratic representation.⁵⁰ Parties are, again in Sartori's words, 'the institutional channel through which and by which the citizens are represented in modern democracies'.⁵¹ Social movements can be seen as their non-institutional counterpart. They voice interests and identities, formulate new demands that remain unanswered by institutional actors and promote them in the public sphere, contributing to a redefinition of the cultural and political setting in which their mobilization takes place.⁵² The fact that movements and parties are actors in the broader processes of citizen representation implies that despite being distinct realities they coexist, albeit under different constraints, in the same social environment. Indeed, not only has research underlined the frequent occurrence of patterns of 'cumulative involvement', that is activists taking part in both partisan and social movement activities,⁵³ but also the very demands raised by one of the two actors may match, more or less closely, with those raised by the other. Some have advanced the idea that the expansion of the activities of social movements and the alleged crisis of parties are inversely related, and that social movements are rivals to political parties and to the system of political representation based on elections.⁵⁴ However, as I will argue in the final chapter of this book, they may also operate in a complementary fashion, the former giving voice to latent citizens' demands, and the latter incorporating these demands into their political and institutional agendas.

In turn, the fact that the two actors do not necessarily act in opposition to each other has important methodological implications, in particular with regard to the (in)appropriateness of establishing a clear-cut causal relationship between movement demands and partisan change. Several authors have underlined the methodological challenges and the complexity of observing patterns of exchange and interaction between different actors in a conflict system.⁵⁵ Bosi and Giugni, for example, referred to a 'dilemma of causal attribution', which refers 'to the difficulty of determining whether or not a particular change . . . is actually the result of protest activities or a social movement. The central question is how we can be sure that the relevant change we are attributing to a movement would not, in fact, have occurred without the movement'.⁵⁶ Similarly, Tarrow argued that 'although it is possi-

ble to correlate the timing of outcomes with the timing of movement efforts, it is not easy to identify particular movement actions as the cause of specific outcomes'.⁵⁷ Indeed, movements often coincide with other societal changes, including political changes of a more conventional type. They cannot be considered as the only motors influencing parties' behaviour, as the social environment itself is able to influence the positions of political parties (also) independently of the movements.

When discussing party responses to social movements we should therefore bear in mind that political parties themselves operate and are nurtured by the same societal stimuli and changes in the political environment to which social movements respond through their mobilizations and protest actions. More broadly, as noted by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, environmental stimuli may be interpreted by a plurality of actors: we see challengers, members and subjects simultaneously responding to change processes and to each other's actions as they seek to make sense of their situations and to fashion lines of action based on their interpretations of reality.⁵⁸ For these reasons, the drawing of a clear-cut linear model where the actions of movement lead to partisan change is beyond the purpose of this book. Rather, in a more parsimonious way, it seeks to identify the diffusion of discourse from one area to another, observing the way in which parties make sense of emergent societal claims by introducing changes that match the direction of social movements.

Defining Party Responses to Social Movements

In this book, I purposely adopt a wide operational definition of party responses to social movements, in order to allow the identification of a broad range of options that are available to parties as they face the emergence of movements. Party responses to social movements are identified as 'changes introduced by political parties around the major themes raised by social movements'. Such a broad operationalization allows the observation not only of the positive and more explicit responses to social movements, but also of the minor adaptive changes that parties introduce following the emergence of movements. Moreover, it allows for an analysis of the changes taking place within parties independently from their intention to establish any specific organizational tie with the movements. As Gamson and later Kriesi and his colleagues underlined,⁵⁹ political institutions may respond to social movements without actually supporting them, as the result of the movements' 'sensitizing impact' upon the political and the public arenas. Overall, thinking of party responses to movements in terms of degrees of change

allows for a more thorough understanding of the way in which parties have adapted to their emergence and of the manifest and latent interconnections (and tensions) that exist between the two political actors.

Of course, parties may change along a variety of dimensions.⁶⁰ Gamson identified two dimensions of the success of social movements according to the responses of political institutions. The first dimension, 'new advantages', refers to concessions made by political authorities on social movement themes by introducing specific legislation that benefits their interests. The second dimension, 'acceptance', refers to institutional actors considering a social movement as a valid spokesperson for a particular set of interests. The latter dimension involves the recognition of the social movement by the political authorities and its access to the political system through the processes of consultation, negotiation, formal recognition, or inclusion.⁶¹ Drawing on Gamson's twofold typology but adapting its logic from the perspective of social movements to the perspective of political parties, two main dimensions to party responses to social movements are identified: a discursive dimension and an organizational one.

Party responses along the discursive dimension refer to changes in the parties' political discourse that are beneficial to the social movements' overall goals. Were movement ideas, themes and language debated within the parties, and incorporated by them? The analysis of the parties' position with respect to the themes that the single movements were raising before and after their emergence allowed me to observe if parties adapted their political discourses to the movements' demands, introducing new elements to or changing the way they frame specific themes. Organizational responses, on the other hand, indicate situations where political parties enact changes in their organizational environments that reflect movement influence. These can take several forms. Parties may decide to give positions of status, authority or influence within their organizational structure to the leaders or members of social movements, as with the co-optation of movement activists onto party electoral lists. Or they may establish contacts with social movement actors, and join forces for the purposes of broader umbrella organizations, protest actions, seminars, meetings, and so on. Other forms of organizational responses by parties may refer to the establishment of (previously absent) internal workgroups, offices or sections formed within the party organization with the aim of discussing the themes raised by the social movements. Noticeably, the establishment of such groups does not imply the establishment of contacts with social movement actors, nor the intention of the political party to endorse the activities of a social movement. Yet, it is an organizational response that is in the direction of the movement's goals, as it implies an organizational effort aimed at deepening the issues raised by

social movements within the parties themselves, although it may take place independently of (or even despite) partisan support.

Sources and Methods of Analysis

Previous research investigating the presence of organizational contacts between political parties and social movements found no evidence of formal connections between the two actors. Social movements, in Poguntke's reading, have preferred formal independence from parties.⁶² Poguntke's work has the fundamental merit of comparing the ways in which political parties interact with different organizational environments. Parties, he found, are more likely to connect to societal organizations with a defined organizational profile and routinized and hierarchical structures, such as collateral or membership organizations, than to unstable and informal networks like social movements.⁶³ However, limiting the observation of linkages between parties and social movements solely to the establishment of formal ties excludes a whole range of potential ways in which the two actors may interact, cooperate, and influence each other. In order to shed light on these possible connections, a deeper empirical analysis as well as a broader array of sources is required.

The study relies on a variety of different primary data sources retrieved from social movement and party archives, documentation centres, and public libraries, including documents and texts produced by social movement groups and parties, national and party newspapers, leaflets, reports, internal organizational documents, and interviews with select party and movement activists.

For the analysis of the discursive adaptation of parties, I examined their election manifestos, congress acts, written statements by party leaders and executive organs, booklets and reports published on the themes at the core of the movements, as well as party journals.⁶⁴ Noticeably, these sources show the different 'faces' of parties: election manifestos and statements form their official image and reflect the final outcome of their elaboration; party journals and (to a more limited extent) congress acts present a greater variety of standpoints and offer the opportunity to access the internal discussions taking place around the social movement themes. The type of analysis conducted on these documents is mainly qualitative. Indeed, the specific inquiry of this book, which concerns not only the question of whether parties have responded to the emerging movements, but also the processes and underlying motives behind their patterns of responses, required an in-depth content analysis that quantitative measures alone are not able to provide. Moreover,

a qualitative analysis allowed for a greater appreciation of the parties' discourses, such as the transformation of their language and terminology. Only for the electoral manifestos of the four parties was a quantitative content analysis carried out, counting the number of positive frequencies whereby the single issues raised by the social movements were referred to across the different documents over time.⁶⁵ Based on saliency theory, which maintains that political parties emphasize in their manifestos those issues that they most support when competing in elections,⁶⁶ I expected to find variations in the number of references to social movement themes over time.

As for the identification of the core themes of social movements, hard choices had to be made. Indeed, as the analysis of the four selected movements presented in Chapter 1 clearly shows, movements are highly heterogeneous. According to the 'consensual definition',⁶⁷ they should be understood primarily as 'networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations'.⁶⁸ Hence, they are not unitary actors nor organizations, but each broadly defined movement should be understood as a plurality of groups and actors, where no group can be considered as the spokesperson or representative of the whole movement. This plurality of groups, moreover, interacts informally, in the sense that there are no established rules on whether to interact or not, or on what form these interactions should eventually take. This implies that when dealing with movements we are actually dealing with loose, segmented and multi-headed structures, with no stable leadership and rare identifiable decision-making entities.⁶⁹ Identifying the organizational boundaries of social movements is therefore not an easy task, such as deciding which groups and positions qualify as belonging to this or that movement. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter 1, different groups have had different positions even within the same social movement. Despite recognizing the complexity and the plural and heterogeneous nature of social movements, this work considers the four social movements under investigation in their most salient and politically visible expressions. In other words, for each of the four movements I consider those groups of actors that gained the greatest political visibility in the two national contexts as the main representatives of their demands. This methodological choice has been contested,⁷⁰ but was necessary in order to be able to distinguish between the plethora of demands addressed by the various movement groups, and those that political parties were more likely to be challenged by.

A large quantity of archival material was consulted. Party archives turned out to be a highly relevant source for collecting evidence on the parties' organizational adaptation, and, especially, on the extent to which parties and movement groups interacted with each other for the organization of joint initiatives. The analysis will also reveal cases in which regular written cor-

respondence between movement groups and parties took place. Yet, not all archives offered the same amount of information. The archive of the Italian Christian Democratic party (DC), in particular, possibly due to the splintering of the DC into several parties in the early 1990s, provided only a very limited amount of material in comparison to the remarkable amount found on social movements in the archives of other parties, which offers substantive evidence of these parties' concerns for discussing and finding means to interpret the new waves of political engagement. Finally, semi-structured interviews with a select number of party and social movement activists were conducted to provide supplementary information, give life to textual sources, and address the problem of the limits on access to some archival records.

Outline of the Book

The first chapter of the book describes the extra-institutional contexts at the turn of the 1970s in the two countries under consideration, and critically discusses the extant literature on the intersections between social movements and political parties. After discussing how uncertainty at the party system level has increasingly come to prevail after decades of institutional stability in both countries' national contexts, the chapter advances a set of theoretical propositions that attempts to explain what factors determine different trajectories in the parties' adaptation to social movements. The core argument I will make is that parties do not change as the consequence of electoral-type incentives only, as vote-maximization approaches to party change seem to suggest. I suggest that a broader range of factors should be considered when trying to make sense of party adaptation processes, including the path-dependent role of partisan identity, the mobilization of party members in social movement activities, and the political goals and repertoire of actions of the individual social movements. The second part of the chapter introduces the main social movements under consideration in this work, four of which proved to be particularly relevant, attracting the highest number of participants: the ecology and the feminist movements in Italy, and the ecology and the peace movements in the Netherlands. All four opposed political parties for their hierarchical decision-making structures and remoteness from the citizenry, and proposed new issues to be introduced onto the political agenda. Having explained the historical evolution of these mobilizations, the chapter clarifies their specific goals and discusses the individual movements' attitudes towards representative institutions.

Chapters 2 and 3 analyse the way in which parties on the left and parties in the centre have responded to the largest mobilizations in Italy and

the Netherlands. Chapter 2 examines responses by the parties of the left. The emergence of independent mobilizations constituted a major challenge to both parties, which had previously controlled political mobilization and socialization on the left. New voices and demands were on the rise, and the traditional left parties, in a context of growing instability, had to find a way to channel them. While both parties introduced changes at the discursive and organizational levels, and established interorganizational connections with social movement groups, they differed from each other with respect to the intensity of their responses to the movements. The comparison of the two parties with each other sheds light on the importance of intra-party organizational structures: more open and democratic party structures allow for greater internal turnover, which also positively influences the way in which political parties respond to the movements. The final part of the chapter discusses the crucial dilemma faced by the PCI and the PvdA of how to maintain a balance between their institutional functions and their openness to the demands of social movements. Both parties ended up playing down the latter and favouring the former.

Chapter 3 turns to the movements' adversaries. By shedding light on the various forms of responses that the Italian and the Dutch conservative parties have made after the emergence of social movements, this chapter shows that this neglected area of research is worth investigating further. Both parties experienced electoral blows from the 1970s onwards, pointing to the growing detachment of the parties' traditional constituencies. However, the confessional parties were more distant from the social movements than their left-wing counterparts, which suggests a lower degree of responsiveness from these parties. Interestingly though, the analysis shows that the confessional parties did not remain impermeable to mobilizations. They increased their attention on the main issues raised by social movements, and in some cases they also established organizational linkages with social movement groups. The chapter supports the idea that political parties can provide beneficial responses to social movements without actually endorsing their core goals. Hence, the chapter revolves around the notion of the 'sensitizing impact' of social movements, first introduced by Kriesi and colleagues, namely 'the possibility that a movement will provoke a sensitizing of some social actor in the political arena or in the public arena, which goes in the direction of the goals of the movement'.⁷¹ Even when support is marginal or lacking, mobilizations are able to solicit internal discussion within parties and bring about greater attention to the issues they raise.

In the Conclusion chapter, I summarize the empirical findings of the book and evaluate the major factors explaining party responses to movements across the cases observed. The chapter also opens up a broader reflection on

the relational dynamics between social movements and political parties, and sheds light on the opportunities and the inherent challenges of their interaction. In agreement with Goldstone and a number of other social movement scholars, it is argued that the rigid and established boundaries between non-institutional and institutional politics should be challenged, and that social movements and political parties should be put on an equal footing as forms of citizen political engagement and citizen representation. Yet, the chapter also draws attention to the fundamentally problematic nature of the relationship between the two political actors. It is noted that the original demands of social movements will unavoidably be transformed as they are taken up by political parties. Even when supportive of movements, parties will translate their claims into the language of political institutions, leaving the movements' activists dissatisfied. A perfect fit between the two worlds is therefore unlikely to take place, and some degree of separation between them seems inevitable.

Notes

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"Party Responses to Social Movement: Challenges and Opportunities" by Daniela R. Piccio. <https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/PiccioParty>

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"Party Responses to Social Movement: Challenges and Opportunities" by Daniela R. Piccio. <https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/PiccioParty>