

From social movements to counter cultures

Abstract

This paper argues that the literature on contemporary social movements is essentially circular, representing a political reductionism within which the analysis of these movements in terms of (individual, collective, societal) instrumental rationality appears both as a premise and as a conclusion. This in effect treats the theorist's own local form of rationality as universal, rather than taking the question of the modes of rationality operating in these contexts as an open question for research. By restricting the analytic and explanatory value of the social movement concept to the narrow field identified as relevant by this methodology, its common use for more wide-ranging analyses of the nature of contemporary social change is fatally undermined.

This tension is strongest in authors representing an "identity paradigm" such as Alberto Melucci, whose work points towards the need to replace social movement activity within the sociocultural contexts from which it proceeds, but who are unable to theorise these contexts in their own terms, analysing them only from the point of view of their immediate contribution to political activity. Even this "culturalist" approach to contemporary movements, then, remains blocked by an ultimate prioritisation of instrumental political action, and thus considerably less flexible than early cultural studies approaches to class movements.

This paper argues that social movement activity as currently conceived is only one element of broader life-world contexts which need to be theorised on their own terms before contemporary movements can be fully understood, and that the modes of rationality operative in these contexts have to be seen as an open question for research, rather than assumed or imputed. Working with a concept of "counter cultures" as historically developed complexes of alternative practices and meanings, this paper suggests that both the role of skills and intellectual activity and the characteristic modes of organisation of contemporary social movements need to be seen in this context. Material from a series of Dublin interviews is used to illustrate the possibility that autonomy may be a key element of this life-world rationality. The conclusion discusses the political implications of this suggestion.

From social movements to counter cultures: steps beyond political reductionism

Contemporary challenges to the dominant order such as the women's, green and peace movements are conventionally treated as the subjects of a "social movements" literature [1] which, despite internal divisions, is now widely seen as convergent by both supporters and critics (Cohen 1985, Diani 1992, Jones 1993, Maheu 1995). This convergence derives from a common problematic which ultimately reduces "social movements" to essentially political phenomena, based on the ascription of a restricted conception of rationality to the social contexts of movement activity.

This ascription is legitimated by an implicit reliance on a rationalist methodology, as opposed to empiricist and critical realist approaches (McLellan 1981) [2]. Such a methodology involves a purely theoretical construction of the nominal subject of research. The effect of this is to treat the theorist's own local form of rationality as universal, rather than taking the modes of rationality in operation in movement contexts as an open question for research. The assumptions of an affirmative modernism then confirm the mirror-image arguments of postmodernists in treating instrumental rationality as identical with rationality tout court, despite the arguments made against this position by Habermas (1987).

Hence different variants (individual, collective, societal) of instrumental rationality are ascribed, unexamined, to these contexts; the result is a political reductionism within which only those meanings and practices which correspond to the theorist's perception of what is goal-rational are admitted. The "social movements" problematic thus focusses on political action in pursuit of seemingly given (individual, collective, societal) interests, and treats other forms of activity as a priori irrelevant.

In one perspective, an economic focus on individual rationality, whether in the abstract, as in "resource mobilisation" approaches, or in the context of a "political opportunity structure", is the starting-point for analysis of what is described as the "how" of social movements. Here instrumental rationality is an explicit methodological presupposition (Cohen 1985: 674 - 676). An alternative perspective offers a discourse of instrumental rationality at a societal or collective level, either in abstract accounts of contemporary society, or in differing forms of class analysis (Bagguley 1992: 26 - 38). Here the "why" of social movements appears as what is goal-rational for a class or for a society.

The convergence of these perspectives is then most evident in the shared assumption of a goal-rational link between the socially given "interests" of the individuals or groups which make up the movements and the action of the movements on the polity. This translates into a series of variants of political reductionism, generated and held together by a limited concept of rationality. In other words, an author's assumptions as to what is rational act to transform a methodological premise into a substantive conclusion. The net result of this is that, as one author (Scott 1990: 131) declares, "all the essential questions of sociology are nothing other than the questions of political science" - or rather, one is reduced to the other.

The circularities of instrumental rationality

Alan Scott's recent work *Ideology and the new social movements* (1990) is a useful example of the problems of this approach. He writes, for example, that "Locating social movements in terms of social closure ... *assumes* [my emphasis] that the central theme / aim of these movements is integration". This appears both as premise and as conclusion (Scott 1990: 136, 152), but no attempt is made to argue that this is the meaning of movement action for its actors - a curious position for a neo-Weberian.

Similarly, the claim that "social movements effect change largely through influencing existing institutions of political intermediation, particularly political parties" depends on a prior reduction of the field of enquiry to "concrete political analysis" (Scott 1990: 152, 140), yet this reduction is not itself examined [3]. In other words, a rationalist methodology ultimately takes its own presuppositions for conclusions. This leads to an unexamined political reductionism, which can be exemplified by Scott's empirical research. Here an "examination of [the] main ideological strands of 'the new social movements' " is reduced, on the next page and without explanation, to an examination of "ecological ideology" alone (1990: 80 - 81). This is then taken as effectively represented by *die Grünen*: although the

relationship between the party and contemporary movements is a well-known problem (Raschke 1993: 499 - 528, 682 - 696), Scott simply reduces "the Green movement" to the party (1990: 84 - 86) [4]. "Ideology" is then reduced to the writings of professional ideologists, again without any examination of this highly problematic assumption (Eagleton 1991). Finally, the issue of the representativity of these ideologists is left completely unexamined.

In fact, of the six figures discussed, only Joschka Fischer has any claim to representativity, as a regional boss and faction leader. Of the others, Petra Kelly was the only party member in 1990, but her influence within the German party was minimal (witness her failure to be reelected, her lack of factional affiliation, and her isolation at the time of her death). By the time Scott was writing, Otto Schily had joined the SPD; Rudolf Bahro had left the party five (!) years earlier, virtually alone (Raschke 1991: 26); to the best of my knowledge Carl Amery has no political affiliations (Schäfer 1983: 127); and Herbert Gruhl had spent a decade in the political wilderness [5]. Apart from Fischer, the actual ideologists and faction-leaders - Antje Vollmer, Jutta Ditfurth, Thomas Ebermann, Frieder-Otto Wolf, etc. - are ignored, as are the communication organs of the movement.

Thus the argument is circular: the conclusion that "Despite its grass-roots democratic principles the European ecology movement has indeed thrown up, and often centred around, political celebrities such as Petra Kelly, Otto Schily and Joschka Fischer" (Scott 1990: 117) represents simply the assumption that things centre around leaders, and that anyone the theorist has heard of must be one. The problem of the effectiveness of "grass-roots democracy" rules in weakening hierarchy has been the subject of intense discussion among academics and activists (Raschke 1991: 80 - 113); but none of this is reflected in Scott. Instead, a rationalist methodology ditches sociological problems of method in favour of the "obvious" assumptions of the author's own local mode of rationality - at its worst, reducing empirical research to what can be found in the university library.

Problems with political reductionism

In more formal terms, a rationalist approach involves a confusion between methodology and ontology. Weber argued that social scientists construct "ideal-typical" descriptions of processes in rational terms, but that these are heuristic devices, against which actual events must be measured (Weber 1984: 20 - 22, Sadri 1992: 11 - 22). Much of the literature simply identifies ideal types with reality. This rationalist methodology also involves a double short-circuiting of the concept of rationality. No justification is given for a presupposition of instrumental rationality as the only form of rationality, as opposed to, for example, value rationality (Weber 1984: 44 - 46) or communicative rationality (Habermas 1984, 1987) [6]. Secondly, the assumption that the local contexts of rationality of social movement actors and social scientists coincide is simply unexamined. Even instrumental rationality, in other words, cannot simply be abstracted from the lived contexts within which it may be used.

The effect of the imputation of instrumental rationality is to reproduce well-known problems deriving from a similar approach to "old" social movements, in particular the workers' movement. One of the central problems in western Marxism (Jay 1984, Gottlieb 1989) over the past seventy years or so has been precisely to explain why actors have not behaved in the way that abstractly goal-rational accounts predicted. The situation of "social movement" theory is comparable to that of class theory in the 1950s. It is as if a model of trade unions and corporatism was presented as a sufficient theory of social class. The difference is, of course, that class theory moved on from that point. In particular, Thompson (1963, 1977, 1993), Hoggart (1958) and Williams (1958, 1980) opened up the discussion to include an examination of

class as lived experience, shared culture and everyday response which goes far beyond political economy or institutional analysis to show class as a broad field of relationships of conflict, a "whole way of struggle", and not an abstracted logic or a specialised set of institutions.

To pursue the analogy further, while early cultural studies set out to theorise class experience, class culture and class action as a whole, social movement theory retains a sharp break between a reductionist concept of political action and an undertheorised area of "interests" and "identity", thus saddling itself with the difficult task of relating "movements", understood as political organisation, to "class", understood as given interests (Pakulski 1995). At the same time, this reductionist concept of "movement" is to play a major part in understanding contemporary society (Giddens 1990, Maheu 1995). The tendency then is to reduce society to politics, movements to movement organisations, and sociology to political science.

Trying to break out: Alberto Melucci

Alberto Melucci's approach begins from a critique of this political reductionism, a "myopia of the visible" which "ignores the way in which the visible action of contemporary movements depends upon their production of new cultural codes within submerged networks" (1989: 44). These networks, he writes, come to acquire a life of their own which cannot be reduced to movement mobilisation or its impact on the polity:

"In the 1980s, collective action came to be based on "movement areas". These take the form of networks composed of a multiplicity of groups that are dispersed, fragmented and submerged in everyday life, and which act as cultural laboratories. They require individual investments in the experimentation and practice of new cultural models, forms of relationships and alternative perceptions and meanings of the world. The various groups comprising these networks mobilize only periodically in response to specific issues. [My emphasis.] The submerged networks function as a system of exchanges, in which individuals and information circulate. Memberships are multiple and involvement is limited and temporary; personal involvement is a condition for participation. The latent movement areas create new cultural codes and enable individuals to put them into practice." (Melucci 1989: 60)

This development leads towards "soft" and multiple organisations and a distinction between "intense but temporary mobilisations and movement networks that produce information, self-reflection and symbolic resources". These networks are fundamental for mobilisation: "the potential for resistance ... is located in the molecular experience of the individuals or groups who practice *the alternative meanings of everyday life*." (1989: 70 - 71; my emphasis).

A chance to escape

This opens up the possibility of shifting the focus from "movements" to "networks", which are seen as the ultimate source of movement mobilisations and as more stable and continuous than these mobilisations. This would enable a more grounded analysis of movements, in which they do not appear as *ex nihilo* events structured

by external logics, but as part of a broader life-world with its own specific modes of rationality.

However, this distancing from goal-rational assumptions is not sustained. The possibility of shifting to an analysis of networks is apparently recognised, but rejected in a curious footnote which appears to be based on the assumption that representation prevents fragmentation: Melucci writes that "collective actors are prone to disperse, fragmented and atomized, into networks which quickly disappear into sects, emotional support circles and therapy groups" (1989: 71-2) [7]. This "disappearance" does not seem to be a phenomenological one, but rather a disappearance from political relevance because of the lack of an institutional output. This can, I think, only be explained by a problematic for which ultimately only (institutional) political events are real [8].

In other words, Melucci identifies the social basis of contemporary movements, notes its logically prior status to the movements themselves, but cannot accept that it has an independent existence. Similarly, the possibility of a purely cultural challenge is not considered: this despite the statement that (political) movements include "symbolic challenges" which lead to "a molecular change which is cultural in the anthropological sense: an alteration of daily life, of ways of living and forms of social and personal relationships" (1989: 75) [9]. Political movements may carry cultural meanings, but the possibility of a purely cultural movement is rejected along with the possibility of a direct analysis of "networks" or "movement areas". Despite his argument that "[c]onflicts do not chiefly express themselves through action designed to achieve outcome in the political system" (1995: 116), Melucci is ultimately unable to escape precisely this definition of social movements.

Within the "social movements" problematic as currently constructed, in other words, even the most "culturalist" authors and the most challenging conceptions of the social origins of new movements are ultimately contained within what might be called the "last instance" priority of instrumental political rationality [10]. The "identity-oriented paradigm" (Cohen 1985; Diani 1992) is interested in culture only to the extent that it contributes to goal-rational mobilisation; this of course subordinates it to the assumptions of the researcher's local mode of rationality. The need to transcend this problematic, then, is both a felt need and an unrealised one.

Beyond the "social movements" problematic

Melucci's attempt to escape the "social movements" problematic needs to be radicalised in two directions. Firstly, an approach which does not assume the primacy of state-oriented conflict can start from the analysis of these "movement areas" on their own terms. Secondly, the modes of rationality operative in these contexts can become an open question for research, in the examination of the nature and direction of potential sources of social change.

Networks, milieux, counter cultures

A concept close to Melucci's "movement areas" can be found in the work of a group of Hannover researchers who have examined the organisation of "new sociocultural milieux" as a source of movement activity, bringing together the local history of such milieux with accounts of the transformation of habitus within them and relating this to changing social structure [11]. Both approaches, however, reproduce a misleading distinction between private lifestyles (appearing as resources or interests) and public action.

What is needed instead is to replace those forms of visible public activity within these lived contexts: to examine the totality of this "whole way of struggle", without

presupposing a discontinuity between "collective action" and "the daily production of alternative frameworks of meaning" which are said to nourish it (Melucci 1989: 70). This would then give us a working concept of a counter culture, consisting at an ontological level not of formal institutions but rather of interactions between individuals affiliated to multiple institutions or to none; these interactions take place - networks are mobilised - around "events" of different kinds occurring in what are traditionally thought of as different fields - not only political action, but also cultural challenges, as well as the logically necessary forms of economic and social reproduction.

Such counter cultures, then, cannot be identified with any of their constituent elements; they are constituted by relationships which are activated in a variety of different contexts, only some of which fall within the conventional picture of social movements. In place of the abstraction of any one of these contexts as defining, what has to be done is to examine the actual articulation of meanings and practices within these networks or this intersubjectivity [12].

Research implications

The question of local modes of rationality, then, does not start from political organisations or the production of cultural artefacts, but from the way in which these networks structure daily life: culture in the anthropological sense, including alternative forms of economic production and reproduction, means of communication, modes of organisation and the forms of consciousness involved in all of this, as well as more visible forms of political or cultural contestation [13]. This concept of counter cultures as constituted by networks is "weak" by comparison with a focus on "groups", whether isolated, face-to-face subcultures or the more organised and intentional activity normally examined as "social movements"; it is "strong", however, by comparison with perspectives focussed on textual artefacts rather than on the creative meanings and practices (including the creative reception of such artefacts) in everyday life.

In terms of sensitising concepts and research techniques, relevant work in this area, such as Berger (1981), Sulkunen (1992), the Hannover "new social milieux" group (Vester et al. 1993) or Melucci (1989), points towards autonomy and reflexivity as possible characteristics of the meanings and practices operative in these contexts. The relationship of such cultural codes to "reflexive" and "autonomous" individuals is of course a serious problem in itself. Initially, then, research into such locally specific modes of rationality involves an examination of (a) alternative meanings and practices in general; (b) reflexivity and autonomy within these; and (c) tensions between meanings and practices, including individual resistance to generalised codes and identities.

Skills and intellectual activity

One possible approach to researching modes of rationality is to see them as embedded in intellectual activity, which can perhaps be specialised to skills. Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) challenging discussion of intellectuals and social movements is an important contribution here. However, it represents an unjustified narrowing of the concept in relation to Gramsci's theorisation of the problem. Firstly, it reduces intellectual activity to the activity of intellectuals. While Gramsci argued that "All men [sic] are intellectuals ... but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals." (Gramsci 1971: 9), this relates only to professional categories: "When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional

category of the intellectuals." The proportion of contemporary movement activity which is carried out by full-time paid staff, however, is minimal; and once we pass from movements to counter cultures this relation is reinforced. What is needed is then a theorisation of intellectual activity, not simply of intellectuals.

Secondly, "intellectual" is reduced to "theoretical", as opposed to "directive" (organising) activity, which is central to Gramsci's conception (Vacca 1982). This leads to a focus on "cognitive praxis", to the exclusion of the skills of everyday organisation and interaction. It is these latter, I would argue, that represent the effective "mode of rationality" of a movement or a counter culture: skilled work in the construction of practices and meanings: the organisational skills involved in participatory decision-making or direct action, the ideological skills needed to delegitimise one set of meanings and legitimate another, the creation of an infrastructure for communication, economic support, education, the cultural skills of tolerating difference and negotiating co-existence, and so on. The apparently pragmatic assumptions of counter cultural members then appear as guided by very different kinds of experience, and geared to very different kinds of need, than what appears as practical in other areas.

Autonomy in everyday life

I want to illustrate this with material from research in progress among a network of Dublin "hippies", leading lives structured by unemployment, emigration and casual labour. While the network extends to many different areas of the counter culture, these initial interviews focus on the shared elements of the life-world from which visible activities (e.g third world solidarity, green and anarchist politics, alternative and amateur publications, street theatre, Rainbow Gatherings, etc.) grow [14]. In this context, a goal-rational pursuit of material interests is explicitly contrasted to the pursuit of autonomy and self-realisation:

"It comes back to this idea that the way in which people perceive ambition as not a material ambition, which again links back to the ideas about people's attitude to property and that. Whilst they have fuck all of it, I don't think that is entirely responsible for their attitude. The development is sort of personal development, it's not material development. So the idea of going away to make money isn't really, you're not going to impress anybody, really. 'Oh wow, he's earning fuckloads of money, good for him, so what?' "

Or, more succinctly:

"Even before I went to college I went 'I want to do a sort of liberal arts thing that isn't going to qualify me for one thing'."

Similarly, the goal-rational pursuit of politics in the narrow sense is rejected in favour of autonomy:

["Groups are bad things?"] "Yeah, kind of limiting. If you try and set up anything a lot of these people will just go 'I'm not interested'. You know, if they happened to be somewhere and something happened they'd go for it, but anything organised they're not interested in, anything that sounds remotely political they don't want to know."
["Why is that?"] "Don't believe in politics, a lot of people just find it boring, or completely pointless, or they live their life the way they

want to and they live and let live, if other people want to get into politics. You know, it would kind of be 'if you're into politics that's your trip, whereas me, I just want to wander round and play guitar.' "

Politics, then, takes its place simply as one element of the life-world:

"Politics is the mechanism by which decisions that affect my life are made, therefore if I wish to have any control over my life I must have an interest in politics, but it is not the driving force of my life."

Rather than the imposition of a goal-rational logic from political action on the life-world, political activity appears as one interest among others, to be handled with tolerance:

"Seán and Muireann didn't ram [anarchist politics] down anybody's throat, and nobody tried to make them conform to what was going on."

Tolerance, in fact, appears as a condition of autonomy:

"There is a sort of laid-back attitude which allows people to do their own thing and is very very tolerant of people's individuality and people doing their own thing and coming and going as they please."

Autonomy then finds expression in characteristic forms of interaction:

"They travel an awful lot, they're obviously, they just don't want a job of any kind, they meet an awful lot of people, they hang out on the streets an awful lot, play a lot of music, and just do what they do. Mostly they're very independent, they don't sort of form a group exactly, they just sort of meet up with each other."

The characteristic modes of rationality of more organised groups can then be related to this life-world stress on autonomy. To take some examples more or less at random:

- *Earth First!*: "Every year the compilation of AU is passed on to another group. This is done to maintain new influences, stop burn out of those producing it and to prevent any one group becoming 'Earth First! National HQ'." (Anon. 1996)
- *The (England / Wales) Green Party*: "[S]ince we currently have more than our fair share of society's rebels, individualists and awkward types, consensus has to be a keystone of how we do things." (Wingrove 1996)
- *Friends of the Western Buddhist Order*: "The autonomy of each Centre - and of any other working unit within the Movement - is a fundamental principle of organisation within the FWBO. The major purpose of everything which makes up the FWBO is to help people to become individuals." (Subhuti 1988: 153 - 154)

In other words, autonomy appears to be a characteristic element of a mode of (communicative?) rationality which finds expression in the seemingly pragmatic assumptions of a counter cultural life-world, organised as well as disorganised, cultural as well as political. From the defence of personal and psychological free

space and independence, it may develop into a variety of organisational forms (e.g. participatory democracy, libertarian anarchy, consensus-based and confederal approaches) which contrast sharply with dominant modes of organisation [15]. This is then also a reflexive process, in the sense of conscious intervention into group self-production; these same organisational forms tend to become ends in themselves (as the immediate realisation of autonomy) rather than a means to an end (as in goal-rational perspectives).

Conclusion

The "social movements" problematic, through the unexamined ascription of instrumental rationality, artificially isolates state-oriented political activity from its lived context. It thus closes off questions that research into "counter cultures" wishes to hold open: the local modes of rationality of these life-world contexts, and the place of political or cultural contestation within them.

The concept of autonomy suggests a new perspective on contemporary difficulties in forming alliances between social movements. Conventional accounts which stress the homogeneity of the workers' movement as against present diversity (Lash and Urry 1987, Buttel 1990) mistake the successful creation of hegemony (Thompson 1963, Gramsci 1971) and the "closing of modernity" (Wagner 1994) for a "natural" uniformity.

It may be precisely the principled refusal of hegemony and the assertion of autonomy as a value in itself - a "post-hierarchical politics" (Boyne 1990) which poses the problem - or, more exactly, resistance to the imposition of goal-rational forms by actors who value their autonomy. If a resolution is to be found, it must lie in the development of non-authoritarian forms of (counter-) hegemony, in other words the organisation of consent around a shared project of emancipation and tolerance of diversity. Such a project could be grounded in the practices and meanings of a shared counter culture (cf. Wainwright 1994, Vester et al. 1993 and Seel 1995 for related arguments). The question of whether such an "emancipatory hegemony" is possible is, however, not just a theoretical question, but above all a practical one.

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Footnotes

1. The increasingly artificial distinction between those authors who make use of the phrase "new social movements" and those who prefer a different language is not employed here.
2. See Wainwright (1994:100 - 106) for a relevant discussion of critical realism in this context.
3. The earlier concession that "culturalist theories do have a partial explanation of social movements[]" effects in terms of cultural innovation" (Scott 1990: 134) vanishes without trace.
4. An equally unsatisfactory approach is taken by Giddens (1987: 31), who discusses the "ecology movement" on the basis of an examination of the

- manifestoes of the European Green Parties, without considering the extent to which they represent the actual "ideology" of the parties concerned, let alone the movement.
5. See e.g. Jurtschitsch et al. (1988) for a snapshot of party debate in this period. (I spent 1990-91 as a participant observer within *die Grünen* and related contexts.)
 6. Cf. Claus Offe's (1985: 852) argument on the lesser applicability of "the economic logic of efficiency" in social contexts marked by "decommodification" or Berger, Berger and Kellner's (1974) argument for a "demodernising consciousness" in areas outside the central processes of economic and political reproduction.
 7. This may derive from one of his criteria for a "social movement", as something which *"breaks the limits of compatibility of a system"* (1989: 29; emphasis original). Offe has a similar argument, but explicitly states its dependence on political criteria (1985: 826-7).
 8. Political reductionism often depends on a key slippage around the term "political" and the concept of power. The valid position that social movements pose central questions of power is extended to the unjustified assumption that they are primarily about institutionalised politics, in other words oriented towards the state. This reduces the concept of power unacceptably. Social power relations extend far beyond the confines of the state or even formal institutions (Lukes 1971, Rouse 1994); challenges to these relations necessarily do likewise.
 9. Raschke (1985: 105 - 116) explicitly argues that movement orientations to power or to culture are equally possible: he sees the student movement of the 1960s and the new social movements as ambivalent in this respect.
 10. A similar logic appears in Touraine (1981). While his analysis of movements as the self-creation of class in a struggle for cultural stakes would lend itself well to an examination of the non-instrumental elements of movement contexts (whatever the other difficulties of this Lukácsian position (Jay 1984)), in practice he insists on "organised collective behaviour" or "organised conflictual action": "an organisation must exist in order for conflict to take shape and for the movement to attain a certain integration" (1981: 77, 85).
 11. The interim reports (Clemens 1990, Hermann 1990, Geiling 1990, Müller 1990) are more useful here than the final publication (Vester et al. 1993), which is more oriented towards a generalised account of the distribution of lifestyles and political behaviour across German society.
 12. I take this to be defensible in terms of Habermas's (1987: 294 - 326) response to the structuralist and post-structuralist "death of the subject" in terms of a paradigm of intersubjectivity, as well as McRobbie's (1994) effectively realist version of postmodernism.
 13. This perspective is developed more fully in Cox (forthcoming).
 14. This is not intended as a formal analysis of local modes of rationality, but rather to illustrate the need for such an analysis, as against the simple ascription of instrumental rationality.
 15. It can also of course appear as a refusal of definition or as a negative and isolating form of "identity politics" (Sawicki 1991).