

University of Missouri, St. Louis

IRL @ UMSL

---

UMSL Global

---

1-1-1982

## Review Article The Civic Culture Re-visited The State of Democracy in Advanced Industrial Germany

Joyce Marie Mushaben  
mushaben@umsl.edu

Center for International Studies UMSL

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/cis>



Part of the [International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Mushaben, Joyce Marie and Center for International Studies UMSL, "Review Article The Civic Culture Re-visited The State of Democracy in Advanced Industrial Germany" (1982). *UMSL Global*. 14.  
<https://irl.umsl.edu/cis/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in UMSL Global by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact [marvinh@umsl.edu](mailto:marvinh@umsl.edu).

Occasional Papers

The Center for International Studies of the University of Missouri-St. Louis issues Occasional Papers at irregular intervals from ongoing research projects, thereby providing a viable means for communicating tentative results. Such "informal" publications reduce somewhat the delay between research and publication, offering an opportunity for the investigator to obtain reactions while still engaged in the research. Comments on these papers, therefore, are particularly welcome. Occasional Papers should not be reproduced or quoted at length without the consent of the author or of the Center for International Studies.

Review Article:  
"The Civic Culture (Re)visited:  
The State of Democracy in  
Advanced Industrial Germany"

Joyce Marie Mushaben

Review Article

The Civic Culture (Re)visited: The State of Democracy in  
Advanced Industrial Germany

Joyce Marie Mushaben

Assistant Professor of Political Science and  
Fellow, Center for International Studies  
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Edwin Hartrich, The Fourth and Richest Reich, New York, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1980. \$12.95 cloth.

Kendall L. Baker, Russell J. Dalton and Kai Hildebrandt, Germany Transformed - Political Culture and the New Politics, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1981. \$25.00 cloth.

David P. Conradt, The German Polity, Second Edition, New York, Longman, 1982. \$15.95 cloth, \$10.95 paperback.

Martin and Sylvia Greiffenhagen, Ein schwieriges Vaterland - Zur politischen Kultur Deutschlands, Frankfurt am Main, Fischer, 1981. DM 39,80 cloth (Paul List Verlag), DM 12,80, paperback.

Joachim Raschke (Hrsg.), Bürger und Parteien - Ansichten und Analysen einer schwierigen Beziehung, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982. DM 29,80 paperback.

For Helmut Schmidt, the party is over - the result of a vote by members of the German Bundestag to oust the SPD Chancellor of eight years in favor of CDU candidate Helmut Kohl. The Bundestag vote of October 1, 1982 marks the first time in the history of the Federal Republic that the constructive vote of non-confidence has been successfully invoked to replace a Chancellor prior to regularly scheduled national elections. The only other attempt to remove West Germany's chief executive by means of a parliamentary ballot occurred in April, 1972, when Christian Democrat Rainer Barzel failed to unseat Willy Brandt by one vote (with two abstentions).

Peculiar to the Federal Republic, the constructive non-confidence mechanism was designed to ensure stability of leadership among not-yet-entrenched democratic institutions. It is intended to guarantee the peaceful transfer of power during a period of governmental crisis in a country whose inability to sustain stable party majorities has been held singularly responsible for two world wars in this century. Helmut Kohl now appears to have a firm grip on the levers of government, parliamentary elections have been scheduled for March of 1983, the Rechtsstaat has not collapsed. Liberal democracy in postwar Germany has undergone the ultimate empirical test, and the results are positive. There follows a global sigh of relief.

Was there really any doubt that the Federal Republic would not succeed at democracy? Was there ever a point between the announcement of the FDP's decision to break ranks with the social-liberal coalition and

the appointment of the new Kohl Cabinet when the spectre of 1933 was briefly seen lurking in the wings?

The transition will certainly not be an easy one for Helmut Kohl--allegedly a "nice guy" with virtually no foreign policy experience, whose highest state executive office to date has been the ministerial presidency in Rhineland-Palatinate. Unlike another national leader with a similar profile, Kohl is a professional politician. Perhaps more importantly, he is part of a new generation of potential leaders too young to have directly participated in the events of 1933-1945, one of a generation whose ascension up the political ladder is grounded in his capabilities as a professional party manager. The same problems which brought about the downfall of the SPD-FDP coalition after thirteen years --the questions of where to cut the budget, how to stimulate the economy, how to overcome growing citizen unrest with respect to ecological and defense issues, how to win back alienated, apolitical, "no future" youth--continue to dominate the agenda, with little prospect for immediate resolution in sight. While the Christian Union has witnessed less party-internal division over these issues, there is still sufficient diversity among its members to prevent Kohl from presenting his platform as the proverbial "one best way," on the one hand, and insufficient diversity, on the other, to reflect accurately the degree and dimensions of the polarization that has grabbed hold of large segments of the German citizenry in recent months.

What holds a democratic system together? The answer provided by

Almond and Verba in 1965 was both logical and simple: the right political culture. The ideal "civic culture" was defined as one in which there is a substantial consensus on the legitimacy of political institutions and the direction and content of public policy, a widespread tolerance of a plurality of interests and belief in their reconcilability and a widely distributed sense of political competence and mutual trust in the citizenry.<sup>1</sup>

The civic culture rests on a measure of citizen commitment to democratic values, processes and institutions (the authors were never explicit about how-much-is-enough). Support for the system is presumably diffuse, that is, not attached to specific instances of system performance. Related to the need for diffuse support, yet certainly underestimated in Almond and Verba's assessment of Germany's democratic prospects in the early 1960's, is the role played by a positive sense of national identity. The relation would appear to be a reciprocal one. Commitment to a particular system and its established institutions requires that citizens first be able to identify the boundaries of that system (nationhood commonly understood to involve shared language, history and common customs in a given territorial space). The outputs, i.e. decisions or policies of that system, must be clearly distinguishable from those of other systems. Both the German occupational experience and the unresolved issue of reunification, up until the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971 and the Basic Relations Treaty of 1972, hindered the

Federal Republic in its efforts to define itself as a sovereign nation-state. Conversely, as David Conradt has argued, "the absence of a shared attachment to a particular state and political system has thus been the missing component in the German sense of national identity."<sup>2</sup>

Inquiries into the character of West German political culture are once again in vogue. The appearance of Almond and Verba's The Civic Culture Revisited in 1980 enabled a select number of country-specialists, armed with the wisdom of hindsight and the products of much more sophisticated survey research technology, to revise earlier interpretations and to review the impact of later developments on their respective political cultures as a whole. Of the five nations originally studied, the Federal Republic has clearly emerged as the one having undergone the most dramatic transformation, even if it was not voted the system "most likely to succeed" at the time of the surveys. Formerly a travesty of political development, the FRG has become a participatory dynamo, a leading actor in Western Europe, an anchor in the stormy seas of international political economy; in short, it has been labeled a "laboratory for the study of political change."<sup>3</sup>

This essay attempts to synthesize the findings of five relatively recent works on the evolution of the West German political system, in pursuit of three general themes. The first addresses the special conditions confronting the Federal Republic in its early efforts to cultivate a democratic political culture. Edwin Hartrich in particular explores the relationship between a thriving economy and the attainment of a

stable democracy. He is not alone in underlining the advantages inherent to many trade-offs the Bonn government was forced to make as a defeated power in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The second theme addresses questions contrasting the diffuse support lately found to exist among German citizens for the system as a whole, and qualms arising from "offenses" launched against particular decisions or elements of that system (e.g. the reaction to Ostpolitik, the allegations of unresponsiveness on the part of "catchall" political parties). Baker, Dalton and Hildebrandt conclude that the Federal Republic has "come a long way," while Conradt and the Greiffenhagens are conscious of the many potentially explosive issues mining the path that still lies ahead. The third theme looks to the meaning of change, focusing on a metamorphosis in the German "understanding of democracy" which manifests itself in the clashes between Old Politics and New Politics, between conventional and unconventional concepts of participation. Subject competence and a willingness to participate rest at the heart of the Civic Culture, as originally defined. The larger question is what concept of democracy has determined the development of political culture and access to political institutions over the last thirty five years, and what model of democracy Germany is likely to pursue in the future.

#### ECONOMIC GIANT, POLITICAL DWARF

Edwin Hartrich argues that material insecurity served as the driving force in German efforts to create a stable political system. The



memory of economic hardships suffered during the thirties, reinforced by the inflation and unemployment nightmares of the late 1940's, turned the search for material security into a national quest. The argument suggests that German citizens have come to embrace democratic institutions for their ability to promote growth and preserve economic stability.

Hartrich's characterization of Germany in the seventies as the "Fourth and Richest Reich" rests on the assumption that the leaders of the new Republic found in economics a most satisfying Ersatz for politics. Indeed, after its unconditional surrender in May, 1945, Germany had no choice but to seek a new raison d'être, having been stripped of all political functions by the Allied Command. For Hartrich, the story has a happy ending: the Wirtschaftswunder, based on a free, albeit "social" market economy, proved to be one of capitalism's finest hours. Prevailing wisdom maintained that an affluent state could be expected to produce a stable political state, even if the initial occupational directives for the dismantling of German industrial capabilities clearly contradicted this premise.

Effusive in his praise for Erhard's bold and unflinching commitment to a "supply and demand" strategy, beginning with the currency reform of 1948, Hartrich unwittingly prepares a case in favor of prewar economic management strategies and against the untrammled forces of competitive capitalism. The Allies, in fact, could have seriously bungled the occupation, had not the Korean war intervened and left the

new Republic to dig its own way out of the rubble. As the regular American troops clamored to be sent home less than a year after the German surrender, they were replaced by new draftees with only weeks of military experience. An estimated fifty percent of these draftees showed an intelligence rating of 50-90; a Class Five soldier with a rating of 75 or below "was considered little better than a moron in uniform, fit only for simple labor such as trench-digging" -- hardly a suitable role model for introducing the democratic personality.<sup>4</sup> For an overwhelming portion of the civilian population, the years 1945 to 1947 marked Germany's "darkest hour," as unemployment rose sharply owing to industrial disruption, some 7.8 million refugees poured in from the East, and caloric intake during the coldest winter of the century dropped from a prewar level of 3,000 to 1,550 to 700 calories a day.<sup>5</sup> The Zigarettenwirtschaft, the black market which recognized Lucky Strikes as a de facto reserve currency, was permitted to remove scarce food and energy supplies from normal circulation for two years, before Allied commanders realized that guaranteed military exchange rates for East and West occupation marks had resulted in a \$800 million subsidy to the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup>

Initial occupational directives, including a watered-down version of the Morgenthau Plan contained in JCS 1067, ignored the historical lesson that democracy is unlikely to develop out of defeat. Clearly, a Germany rendered industrially impotent had little chance of establishing a stable political system. It was naive to assume that a civic culture

could begin to flourish in a society of economically insecure, quasi-indentured servants.

Diverse denazification mechanisms adopted in the three Western zones showed the United States to be most persistent in its efforts to track down Nazi accomplices at the lower levels--while many major offenders went unpunished and unpursued. Convictions of minor offenders deprived the system of critical, qualified personnel during the reconstruction; 50 percent of the prewar doctors, for example, served as ditch-diggers during a time when poor nutrition was resulting in ever higher disease rates. Bureaucrats were summarily denazified and returned to their posts.<sup>7</sup>

Demilitarization policies proved equally inconsistent with abstract Allied intentions of transforming the remnants of a dictatorship into a democratic polity. The Western zones, on their own, were defenseless at a time when Soviet encroachment in Europe was rapidly becoming the focal Allied concern. Less than ten years after surrender, the new Republic was forced to undertake a rapid rearmament program in support of American cold war efforts, despite a nation-wide opposition campaign, the Kampf dem Atom-Tod movement. From the beginning, Germany-West served as the European linchpin in the US campaign against communism--a heavy responsibility for a land with no material surplus and no prior success with democracy.

As American attention shifted to the Asian theater, the "Chancellor of the Allies," Konrad Adenauer, was left to monitor an economy that

quickly reverted to old management practices, such as cartelization, and former production activities, i.e. quick revitalization of the steel and ship-building industries.<sup>8</sup> Financial assets were concentrated on the basis of shareholders' proxie votes, turned over to the boards of major banks (Depotstimmung). Reconstruction entrepreneurs were blessed with an abundance of state incentives, and labor costs were held low by post war unemployment.

Politics for Adenauer consisted of efforts to secure equal standing for the Bonn government in the community of European nations. His "non-policy" toward the Eastern sector was in essence a variation on the Ersatz theme; his motto "negotiation through strength" rested on the belief that a booming West German economy would exercise a magnetic influence on citizens in the East, whose unfulfilled material and political needs would move them to throw off the forces of communism and to seek reunification under Western terms. Social-Democratic hopes for reunification were dashed by the events of 1959 to 1961. The Godesberg Program of 1959 accepted the free market formula "as much competition as possible, as much planning as necessary." By the time of the construction of the Berlin Wall, the metamorphosis of the SPD into a majoritarian-hopeful party was almost complete. Final confirmation of its new standing as a non-Marxist "people's-party" came with the installation of the SPD-FDP coalition in 1969.

As late as 1975, the New York Times had yet to abandon Willy Brandt's characterization of the Federal Republic as "an economic giant,

but a political dwarf."<sup>9</sup> The time has now come to question the appropriateness and the accuracy of such a designation. In a global system beset with multidimensional economic crises, economic strength has replaced sheer military might as the new basis of political power to a significant degree (Ronald Reagan's attempts to turn back the clock to the days of unchallenged American military superiority notwithstanding). In the 1980's, a true measure of a nation's power and its international influence can be derived from its industrial-technological capabilities, its stable monetary reserves, its freedom to search out its own export-import partners and its success in negotiating favorable terms of trade.<sup>10</sup>

The "ecopolitical state" to which Hartrich gives such high marks cannot be equated with the civic culture. The unique consensus on national priorities through the early fifties made it possible for a quickly constructed ship of state to remain firmly anchored in a turbulent sea of international relations. As was to be expected, that consensus began to dissipate once economic security had been achieved. The new sociopolitical conflicts that occupied the center stage from the late sixties to the mid seventies escape Hartrich's purview. But what will hold the institutions together once economism is no longer an effective adhesive? Is there a danger that the institutions will be jettisoned, if it appears that economic security is beginning to erode?

Unlike the ecopolitical state, the civic culture by definition presumes, in fact encourages, a plurality of interests. A truly civic

culture would decry the conduct of politics by economic managers in lieu of alternating, responsive, elected officials. The weighty consensus that holds the ship to its moorings can not be used to propel it out to sea, once the storm has subsided.

The rest of the world is no doubt still rather puzzled as to why the German citizenry saw fit to dispose of Helmut Schmidt, recognized globally as a formidable statesman, over questions of economic performance. At this writing, both the German unemployment rate of 7.5 percent and an inflation figure of 5-6 percent register as the lowest among the advanced industrial nations. These figures sooner provide grounds for emulation (and possibly envy), than for removing a chancellor from office.

Economic discomfiture is not solely responsible for the fortnight of chaos preceding the non-confidence vote. Disagreement over specific budgetary cutbacks may offer a reason for the FDP's decision to resign from the coalition on September 17. It does not explain why the SPD was able to draw a startling 42.8 percent of the vote in the critical Hessian election on September 26, only to prove incapable of rallying the forces of the left scattered across the parties to back Schmidt on October 1, 1982.

Nor is successful economic performance to be judged the only source of legitimacy enjoyed by the political system. With all due respect to Fassbinder, the political metaphor for postwar Germany is neither Maria Braun, nor Veronika Voss. It is Oskar at the grave of Matzerath, putting

aside the drum that was both his salvation and livelihood, as he makes his conscious decision to grow.<sup>11</sup> Under Schmidt, the Federal Republic has come of political age, though the growing pains are likely to remain acute for some time. The reasons for Schmidt's downfall are decidedly political, rooted in growing popular disaffection with a concept of democracy too narrowly defined as a Parteienstaat. Growth per se does not put a halt to the search for identity. Democracy is not equivalent to a steady state.

#### DIFFUSE SUPPORT AND ISSUE CONFLICTS

Conradt, the Greiffenhagens, Baker, et al have undertaken two common tasks: to verify, for better or worse, the stability of West German political institutions, and to show that stability is a function of diffuse, if not "active" support, no longer dependent on economic performance. The dominant theme is change, the prognosis is generally positive.

Germany Transformed - Political Culture and the New Politics is an attitudinal history of the Republic in miniature, none of whose findings are counterintuitive. Like the quasi-paradigm of "Post-Materialism" from which the more interesting hypotheses are ostensibly derived, the study postulates a Maslowian-type scale of national needs and political interests. The internal logic of this scale dictates that "the approaching resolution of material and security issues will result in the addition of new issues to the political agenda. Increasingly, politics will

be concerned with questions of life styles and the quality of life, rather than the quantity of economic rewards."<sup>12</sup>

The transformation of the political agenda owes to three interacting and occasionally overlapping sources of change. Not surprisingly, Baker, Dalton and Hildebrandt underline the significance of economic development which has weakened, if not eliminated, traditional social class cleavages, thereby modifying the language as well as the substance of political debate in the Federal Republic. The survey data are used to explore the extent to which economic and occupational trends accompanying the advanced industrialization of Germany have strengthened the support for democratic norms and increased political involvement. Justifiable pride in the miraculous achievements of the economy has given way to a sense of confidence in the overarching institutions. Affluence and technological advancement have worked in concert to provide both the free time and the access to information necessary for more meaningful political involvement. The subsequent expansion of the higher educational system has outfitted members of the new middle class with conceptual skills, knowledge of the system's weaknesses as well as strengths, and the inclination to participate.

Baker, Dalton and Hildebrandt are more sensitive than Hartrich to the impact of generational change on the degree of system acceptance. They delineate five historical periods (Wilhelmine, Weimar, Third Reich, Early Republic of 1946-1955, late Republic, post-1956) in efforts to assess at what age respondents will be subject to maximal influences from the



domestic and international, political and economic environments. The negative political experiences affecting cohorts during the first three periods have produced citizens who are understandably more reluctant to give vent to opinions regarding domestic political developments. The international order poses qualitatively different types of threats to the security needs of individuals whose socialization is confined to the two postwar periods. Accustomed to economic miracles and ideologically hostile spheres of global influence, younger cohorts are free to develop criticisms directed against the internal operations of the system in a way that the Gründergeneration could not.

Dramatic sociopolitical changes in the Federal Republic are also attributable to the metamorphosis in the character and qualifications of political elites. Hartrich deals only with those he judges to be the "great men" of modern German history, such as Adenauer, Erhard, Krupp, Schiller. Baker et al attend to the influence of a new leadership class which comes to power after the watershed election of 1969. The SPD is judged to have made an independent contribution to the acceptance of democratic institutions and the accelerated decline of class cleavages.

Unprecedented economic recovery, radically different socialization patterns and the ideological shifts represented by a new political leadership have precipitated changes in the political culture, changes in the political agenda and changes in the nature of German partisan politics. The Federal Republic emerges as a system in which interest in politics is on the rise within and across all income groups; willingness to par-

ticipate continues to grow, particularly among members of an expanding, professional "new middle class." A veritable explosion in the numbers of voter and citizen initiatives beginning in the late 1960's lays to rest the image of Germany as a passive "subject" political culture, devoid of a sense of partisanship and efficacy. The focus on economic concerns has thus far been inversely related to the perceived health of the economy, with the exception of a temporary downturn in 1966-67. But as Baker and associates also discover, "perceptions of the economy changed in response to altered political constellations, not political allegiances in response to economic events."<sup>13</sup>

Adenauer's willingness to relinquish claims to national sovereignty in favor of European integration efforts amounted to a paradox of sorts, in that it actually hastened the recognition of Germany as a sovereign state within the Defense Community in 1954. The SPD ended its opposition to integration, once it realized the costs of reunification were prohibitive. By the late 1960's, it was the SPD pushing ahead in efforts to cultivate good relations with both the East and the West. Survey results indicate that a public which was becoming increasingly interested in foreign affairs, also increasingly came to support and demand a more "cooperative" foreign policy stance - in profound contrast to orientations during the Early Republic.<sup>14</sup>

As foreign policy emphases shifted from reunification to security to détente, domestic concerns moved from Fressen to Moral, from an interest in material outputs only to a focus on political processes and

quality of life issues. Urging citizens to "dare more democracy," Brandt proposed to initiate an era of sweeping internal reforms, most of which lost out to Ostpolitik. The SPD was at once the harbinger and chief beneficiary of the New Politics, though recent events suggest it has been unsuccessful at incorporating the panoply of new issues that would have secured the votes of younger, new middle class activists. Promising more, the SPD incurred the risk of disappointing many, in contrast to the CDU/CSU intent on maintaining the status quo.

"Germany Transformed" is pronounced a truly civic culture, one in which participatory norms are widespread, system support is well developed and generalized.<sup>15</sup> But that transformation calls for a sense of qualified optimism. The more diffuse the attachment to the political system, the less rigid and unquestioning the commitment one is likely to find among the successor generation to preserving specific institutions and procedures in their present form. In this respect, the FRG has "caught up," indeed may be surpassing more established democracies by engaging in a fundamental debate as to the meaning of participation in a democratic system. The proliferation of "initiatives" points to the obligation of established political institutions--including parties --to change and adapt in response to citizen needs, rather than to satisfy their own organizational imperatives.

Having also "caught up" with the economic malaise afflicting other advanced industrial societies, will the Federal Republic witness a shift back to an agenda based on Old Politics? Baker et al project a conver-

gence of Old and New Political agenda items. One must caution, however, that a return to old issues of economic stability and national security pose qualitatively different challenges to the policy-makers, in that they are now expected to resolve all these problems simultaneously, not in ascending order as the Maslowian scale presumes.

David Conratt's depiction of the German Polity, is both more cautious than the Baker text, on the one hand, and more optimistic than the Greiffenhagen assessment, on the other. The publisher boldly claims that Conratt's is "the only study of the postwar Federal Republic which treats the West German polity as a stable rather than a provisional creation whose future holds the ever present threat of some Nazi-coup."<sup>16</sup> Then why does Conratt feel compelled to hedge his bets, by raising two familiar questions? (1) Has the Federal Republic succeeded in consolidating a political system that guarantees a balance between conflict and consensus, liberty and order, individualism and community? (2) Is the highly acclaimed economic miracle of the 1950's and 1960's being matched by a German political miracle in the 1970's and 1980's?

Conratt's answers tend in the affirmative direction. The German polity, he holds, enjoys a degree of legitimacy and consensus unknown to any other teutonic regime in the twentieth century. More importantly, having achieved a degree of consensus, the polity is now confronted with an array of social problems that could not have been addressed earlier, in part because they are themselves the by-products of economic surplus and democratic ideals. Conratt is not squeamish in his treatment of

several of those issues, ranging from terrorism, to guestworkers, to restrictions on civil liberties in cases banning suspected radicals from civil service employment. He is sensitive to the historical antecedents of these problems; however, to accept the conclusion he draws, that "Bonn, in contrast to Weimar, is not a Republic without republicans," but one in fact "rooted in a solid attitudinal consensus on the values, processes and institutions of liberal democracy" still requires a great leap of faith.<sup>17</sup> A government that insisted on subjecting to rigorous interrogation 454,585 of its most highly educated and politically sensitive young citizens between 1973-1975 in order to weed out the 314 (.0006%) who might really intend its overthrow, is one replete with doubt about its own ability to confront conflict and forge consensus.<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, Conradt turns out to be most thought-provoking in exactly those areas where he seeks to advance a very cautious interpretation. The Federal Republic has adjusted to and accepted its "permanent provisional" status, especially in relation to "the other Germany." Survey data show West Germans to be among the best politically informed and the most electorally active citizens in all modern democracies. Yet the Basic Law which determines the character of citizen-state interactions is itself an essentially "negative" document, created only for provisional use. The detailed, restrictive nature of the document was meant to safeguard the Republic against the chaos of Weimar and the tyranny of the Third Reich during its formative years. Such restrictions are likely to have a very different impact on a citizenry actively

committed to democratic-participatory norms. Changing socio-economic conditions have mandated frequent amendments, 31 in all from 1949 to 1982 -- in contrast to 26 such modifications of the American Constitution from 1776 to 1976.<sup>19</sup> Has the Basic Law outlived its usefulness?

There is a growing propensity in the FRG to interpret explicitly political conflicts in constitutional-legal terms. Political leaders obsessed with the question of who is/who isn't an "enemy of the constitution" postpone (or evade) the search for solutions to pressing socio-economic problems. Those who would maintain a "state of siege" mentality are those who hope to gain politically. The most recent instance involved the CDU Secretary General, Heiner Geissler, who charged the widely respected FDP deputy, former state secretary and close friend of Genscher, Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, with "an attack on the constitution" for suggesting that the process of selecting a new Chancellor without the say of the voters, while legal, "offends morality and general Christian principles."<sup>20</sup>

This is not the rational response of a politician committed to the participatory norms of a civic culture. There persists in the FRG an unwillingness to look political conflict in the eye as the first step to resolving it. Domestic dissensus has twice resulted in world-political disasters. Germany has not yet digested the fact that conflict and dissent, not the unique national consensus that benefitted the Republic in the early years, is the normal state of affairs in a mature democracy. During the nonconfidence vote on October 1, 1982, Brandt even felt compelled to admonish his rival of 1972, Rainer Barzel, to "stop acting as

if this were a question of saving the fatherland. It is purely question of party and power interests, and this is the way the majority of citizens in this country understand it."<sup>21</sup>

Just as problem children are more often than not the product of broken homes, Martin and Sylvia Greiffenhagen draw attention to the fact that the radicals, the chaotics, the Greens, the citizen action groups are the offspring of a schwieriges Vaterland. The children are not untouched by the afflictions of the father, even if 40 percent of German 16 to 24 year olds report they know little or nothing about Hitler and the Third Reich.<sup>22</sup> There are significant overlaps between the Baker volume and the Greiffenhagen study, both in terms of conceptualization and with respect to the actual data sets used to evaluate the democratic health and well-being of this intransigent Fatherland. There are few shared conclusions, however, concerning the real nature of the "civic culture."

The Greiffenhagens note that, as a long-standing German tradition the Rechtsstaat is inconsistent with democracy in many of its key elements. Efforts to use the Basic Law to reconcile "closed system" constraints with conflicts inherent to an open, system appear to rest on a faulty understanding of democracy, upon a model which has not been readjusted to serve the particular needs of German political culture as it has evolved.<sup>23</sup> The agenda has changed over time to accommodate first the economics of reconstruction, the politics of external security, then the promises of social reform and the politics of internal security, respectively. But instead of welcoming the growing "democratic

potential," the political establishment has ignored, ridiculed and denounced the Kritikfreudigkeit and Partizipationsbereitschaft of the youngest successor generation. Politics is construed as crisis management; threats to political stability are attributed to the masses, rather than to overbearing organs of the state; dangers posed by the left are judged more serious than mobilization on the right. Defense of the constitution (Verfassungsschutz) has become a smoke screen for protection of the State (Staatsschutz) and its vested status quo interests. The "mutual trust" required by the civic culture is missing.

What causes this state to eschew compromise? What is it about this political culture that leads it to turn against itself? Without ever consciously posing the question, the Greiffenhagen analysis provides at least an indirect answer.

The Federal Republic is "a Country of the Middle."<sup>24</sup> Geography dictates that it develop the virtues and skills of a mediator, to foster a balance between two mutually exclusive Weltanschauungen. To side with only one or the other would be suicidal. Germany cannot avail itself of the "Swiss-solution." It has been denied the right to neutrality since 1948; to a degree, it has become a major political power against its will. This is to suggest that external pressures from two opposing ideological camps have thus far kept the Vaterland from mellowing with age. The mediation skills acquired during the Ostpolitik era have not yet been applied domestically. The links between anti-nuclear energy protests and the peace movement, for instance, between domestic policies



and the state of international relations, cannot be overlooked. On the surface, the election of Helmut Kohl will have the effect of improving government-to-government relations with the US; a fundamental CDU commitment to détente will not prove detrimental to Bonn's relations with Moscow. The CDU's anticipated crack down on protesters, squatters and radicals will exacerbate polarization tendencies within the FRG. But Bonn is not necessarily Weimar.

#### OLD POLITICS, NEW POLITICS: QUESTIONS OF STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

A difficult Vaterland is bound to encounter difficult relationships, the more significant ones involving citizens and political parties. Overaccommodation, overgeneralization, overinstitutionalization and "overload" are the most serious problems affecting the party system, according to the collective findings of a new German work edited by Joachim Raschke. In the final analysis, however, the major problem is not that citizens are leaning too heavily on, but that they have accelerated their exodus from the established party organizations.

Overaccommodation: The dominant parties allegedly spend most of their energy accommodating those vested interest groups demanding preservation of the status quo, on the one hand, and making too many concessions to each other in their respective efforts to become the model Volkspartei, on the other. The SPD in particular is open to charges that it has become too comfortable with the status quo, intent on glorifying past material achievements, rather than advancing structural reform. It sooner resembles a "tanker too bulky to budge out of port" than an assemblage

of vanguard reformers.<sup>25</sup> The Grand Coalition of the late sixties has given way to the "SPCDU-Cartel" of the late seventies.<sup>26</sup>

Overgeneralization: The search for a "new party type" among radical democrats and citizen action groups is not a call for a partyless polity. They complain instead that platform differences between the majoritarian parties are meaningless, ritualistic and self-serving. As "catchall parties," the CDU, SPD and FDP have attempted to reduce interests to the least common denominator, thus evading critical Sinnfragen and acting as if "all problems were equal," according to Raschke. The end of ideology has led to a boring routinization of debate.<sup>27</sup>

Overinstitutionalization: "Dialogue" is the formula whereby the state speaks, the people listen. There is a growing gap between the social background of the leadership and those they presume to represent. Parties have created complicated filter systems for funneling discussion into already clogged bureaucratic channels, thereby shutting out those who choose to identify with neither Tweedledee nor Tweedledum. A new class of professional party functionaries has begun to spill-over into a variety of interest associations, while civil servants are being dispatched to perform party-in-government chores.<sup>28</sup>

Overload: If, as Hans Jochen Vogel argues, party officials are overwhelmed with routine tasks, it is because the established parties have actively cultivated a "jack of all trades" image, which they cannot fulfill.<sup>29</sup> Overload is in part self-imposed; the parties "feel responsible" for everything, from schools to television stations, but are re-

luctant to part with these "burdens" even when volunteers are available. Politicians perceive citizens' efforts to carve out a larger participatory role for themselves as "disruptive." The public is relegated to politics-as-spectator-sport.<sup>30</sup> The mass parties claim a monopoly over creative solutions to social problems, while a 1980 EMNID/SPIEGEL survey reveals that 78% of the electorate has lost confidence in their ability to produce solutions, period.<sup>31</sup> Voters have far greater trust in the citizen initiatives' ability to provide objective information on social issues.<sup>32</sup>

As Reichel testifies, a major stumbling block to reform is the historical weight attached to the concept of the "party-state." The Parteienstaat is a postwar invention, resting on the principle "as much consensus as possible, as little competition as necessary." Integration is seen a hedge against a reenactment of the partisan chaos that was Weimar. The "crisis of the party-state" is foresworn as a "crisis of democracy."<sup>33</sup>

One may feel a twinge of sympathy at the plight of the FDP--it chose to play the game of political opportunism, and having lost, it must drop out. But external challenges to ineffective parties are not "anti-democratic." The Basic Law does not mandate a "2½" party system; to do so would be to impose artificial limits on pluralism. The "5 percent clause" is the bottom line. Internal divisions have rendered the FDP quite capable of hanging itself, without any "help" from the Greens. The argument can be made that the FDP in many respects served as a de facto protest party throughout the 1960's and 1970's. By casting a

vote for the FDP, citizens could register dissatisfaction with SPD performance without jeopardizing the existence of the social-liberal coalition. This might explain in part the record 10.6 percent drawn by FDP candidates in the otherwise decisive rejection of Franz Josef Strauss in the 1980 elections. The proliferation of "citizen initiatives" during this period hardly suggests that the FDP, with its traditional commitment to free market growth strategies, was the beneficiary of a temporary spiritual renaissance. It was not until the promulgation of the Dortmund platform in June, 1980, that the Greens succeeded in presenting themselves as a bona fide party of protest at the national level, many of whose members were drawn from the SPD's disgruntled left wing. The vote of non-confidence was not a test of Schmidt's personal popularity, but an indictment of an equally factionalized, do-nothing SPD. The Greens become everybody's favorite scapegoat, when in fact the delegitimization of the established parties results from their own inability--or worse, unwillingness--to synthesize the requisites of the Old with the New Politics.<sup>34</sup>

Hasenclever explains that the New Politics distinguishes itself in terms of style, substance and structure.<sup>35</sup> The "new party type" seeks to build consensus--from the bottom up; the operational emphasis is on openness, rotation and internal democracy. Extraparliamentary activity is intended to complement and accelerate the long march through the electoral institutions; it is not anti-democratic behavior per se. Indeed, Kaase finds a positive correlation between those engaging in conventional and unconventional forms of participation.<sup>36</sup> Activists tend to be well

educated professionals who have more time and self-confidence; in short, the sense of "efficacy" inherent to the civic culture leads to greater interest in participation.

The revolution in values is no longer a silent one. The Green and Alternative Parties are tied to other protest groups in their rejection of efforts to play off economics against ecology. The point is that rational policies in both areas are quintessential to the nation's future. In light of their educational backgrounds, the "Post-Materialists" cannot be written off as touchy-feely idealists oblivious to the constraints of Realpolitik. Their major contribution rests in their ability to force the established parties into a fundamental reassessment of programmatic goals.

The search for a "new party type" is being conducted simultaneously at the national and communal levels. J.J. Hesse sees the greatest opportunities at the local level--where parties can be held painfully accountable for their (non) performance.<sup>37</sup> The Alternative parties hold that democracy requires a functional decentralization, not just a cosmetic déconcentration of party activity.

The very manner in which Schmidt was deposed as Chancellor seems to underline the extent to which the Parteienstaat has placed itself above the democratic process. It is not the new configurations being generated at the base that appear to be the major stumbling blocks to the further development of a German civic culture.

#### CONCLUSION: WHITHER THE CIVIC CULTURE?

Responses to the recent transfer of executive power in the Federal Republic have been confused, mixed and even contradictory. They reflect

varying degrees of confidence in the German commitment to democratic values and processes, as do the works considered in this essay. The assessments have ranged from grim ("end of postwar stability"-Z. Brzezinski), to skeptical ("mired in uncertainty"-R. Thurow), from hopeful ("miracles, détente, now normalcy"-E. Pond), to satisfied ("a change...was needed"-W. Safire).<sup>38</sup>

There is always room for doubt. But there also comes a time for redefinition. The civic culture construct advanced by Almond and Verba in the 1960's was a product of the times. Economically, the world was a much stabler place; politically, citizens appeared much more content to "feel" efficacious than to participate actively. In the 1960's, the Federal Republic was judged too young, too passive to merit the label "civic culture;" some would now deny it that honor for being too entrenched or too participatory. It would prove easier by far to revise an (undeniably valuable) political science concept than to try to reconstruct a complicated socio-political system at this point. As far as civic cultures of the 1980's go, the German Federal Republic is demonstrating itself to be no more and no less stable than the other advanced industrial nations which have sponsored its political-economic development since 1945. These are nonetheless exciting times for students of German politics. The current political mood in the Federal Republic itself is perhaps best captured in the words of Bertolt Brecht:

Ich sitze am Strassenhang.

Der Fahrer wechselt das Rad.

Ich bin nicht gern, wo ich herkomme.

Ich bin nicht gern, wo ich hinfahre.

Warum sehe ich den Radwechsel

Mit Ungeduld?<sup>39</sup>

## Notes

The ideas explored in this paper are the by-product of a politically exciting, academically productive 1982 Summer research leave, made possible by the German Academic Exchange Service, the Center for International Studies and the Political Science Department at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

1. Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, eds., The Civic Culture Revisited (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), p. 4.
2. David P. Conradt, The German Polity, second edition (New York: Longman, 1982), p. 49.
3. Ibid., p. XIV.
4. Edwin Hartrich, The Fourth and Richest Reich (New York: MacMillan, 1980), p. 52.
5. Ibid., pp. 35-36.
6. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
7. Ibid., p. 36, p. 70.
8. Ibid., pp. 154-147.
9. Ibid., p. 5.
10. Ibid., p. 271. For further examination of this issue, see Peter Katzenstein, ed., Between Power and Plenty-Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).
11. Günter Grass, Die Blechtrommel (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1959).

12. Kendall L. Baker, Russell J. Dalton and Kai Hildebrandt, Germany Transformed - Political Culture and the New Politics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 2.
13. Ibid., p. 96.
14. Ibid., p. 135.
15. Ibid., p. 287 and passim.
16. Publisher's prospectus, Longman Inc., Spring 1982.
17. Conradt, loc. cit., p. 81. A case in Berlin, where the "loyalty testing" for lifeguards applicants was drawn out so long that the swimming season was over by the time bureaucratic approval was granted, is not as exceptional as it sounds. See Martin and Sylvia Greiffenhagen, Ein schwieriges Vaterland - Zur politischen Kultur Deutschlands (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1981), p. 95.
18. Peter Frisch, Extremistenbeschluss (Leverkusen: Heggen Verlag, 1977), p. 214.
19. Conradt, loc. cit., p. 232.
20. "Bonn Parliament Votes Out Schmidt and Elects Kohl," The New York Times, October 2, 1982.
21. Ibid.
22. Greiffenhagen, loc. cit., p. 58.
23. Ibid., p. 321.
24. Ibid., p. 311.
25. Peter Glotz, Die Beweglichkeit des Tankers. Die Sozialdemokratie zwischen Staat und sozialen Bewegungen (München: C. Bertelsmann, 1981).



26. Joachim Raschke (Hrsg.), Bürger und Parteien - Ansichten und Analysen einer schwierigen Beziehung (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982).  
See in particular the essay by Detlef Murphy, "Grüne und Bunte - Theorie und Praxis 'alternativer Parteien'."
27. Raschke, "Einleitung," *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
29. Hans-Jochen Vogel, "Zukunftsprobleme und Sinnfragen - Aus der Sicht der SPD," in Raschke, *ibid.*, p. 153.
30. Gunter Hofmann, "Politik als Beruf. Bonner Beobachtungen," in Raschke, *ibid.*, p. 32; further, Frank Nullmeier, "Dezentralisation - eine Alternative zum etablierten System?" p. 344.
31. Manfred Küchler, "Staats-, Parteien- oder Politikverdrossenheit?" in Raschke, *ibid.*, p. 50.
32. Bernd Guggenberger, "Bürgerinitiativen: Krisensymptom oder Ergänzung des Systems der Volksparteien?" in Raschke, *ibid.*, pp. 150-151.
33. Peter Reichel, "Parteien und politische Kultur in Deutschland Ein Rückblick," in Raschke, *ibid.*
34. This point is well argued by Suzanne Berger, "Politics and Anti-Politics of Western Europe in the Seventies," Daedalus, Winter 1979, pp. 27-50.
35. Wolf-Dieter Hasenclever, "Die Grünen und die Bürger-ein neues Selbstverständnis als politische Partei?" in Raschke, *op.cit.*, pp. 309 and passim.
36. Max Kaase, "Partizipatorische Revolution - Ende der Parteien?" in Raschke, *ibid.*, p. 183.

37. Joachim Jens Hesse, "Bürger und Parteien auf lokaler Ebene: Die Kommune als Ort der gesellschaftlichen und politischen Integration?" in Raschke, op. cit., p. 235 and passim.
38. Cited respectively in: Roger Thurow, "West Germany Mired in Uncertainty," Wall Street Journal, October 4, 1982; Elizabeth Pond, "Germany's 4th Great Postwar Era Begins," Christian Science Monitor, October 4, 1982; William Safire, "The New Helmut," New York Times, October 4, 1982.
39. Brecht's poem, "Das Radwechsel" can be roughly translated thus:

I sit on the curb.

The driver changes the tire.

I was not happy in the place from whence I came.

I am not happy about where I am going.

Why do I watch this tire change

With impatience?