TITLE: THE LANGUAGE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE ETHOS OF SOLIDARITY

PART I: THE ETHOS OF SOLIDARITY AS A DISCOURSE OF RESISTANCE

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH

TITLE VIII PROGRAM

1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
PROJECT INFORMATION:

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COUNCIL CONTRACT NUMBER: 808-22

DATE: January 5, 1995

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1 The work leading to this report was supported in part by contract funds provided by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, made available by the U. S. Department of State under Title VIII (the Soviet-Eastern European Research and Training Act of 1983, as amended). The analysis and interpretations contained in the report are those of the author(s).
NATIONAL COUNCIL NOTE

This Report is an analysis of the political evolution of "reform" from opposition movement to fragmentation, rivalry and even reversion. It uses political 'discourse' as its analytic instrument, and Poland as its case study. Its relevance to Russia and other countries of the former Soviet bloc will be evident to the reader, and immediate. The Report is in four Parts, as described in the following Executive Summary, Part IV of which is perhaps misleadingly titled. That part opens with a penetrating critique of assumptions about the indigenous political "citizen", derived from Western culture. The de-legalization of abortion, a major political issue in Poland, is analyzed in illustration.

The Council is distributing the Report in four separate Parts, seriatim, on consecutive days beginning on January 5, 1995.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Janine P. Holc
"The Language of Democracy in Post-Communist Poland"

This Report is divided into four parts, as follows:

Part I: The Ethos of Solidarity as a Discourse of Resistance

In this paper, I introduce the idea that the movement called "Solidarity" in Poland, active legally in 1980-81 and illegally in 1982-89, represented itself publicly through a discourse about its guiding ethical principles, or its "ethos." This ethos (in Polish, etos) provides a crucial way of understanding the movement, its power and its long-term significance. I criticize the mainstream scholarship on social movements as focusing too much on concrete "benefits" of protest and on measurable effects and behaviors; my research has indicated that the Solidarity movement provided not concrete benefits to members, but an alternative way of talking about politics and about political identity. In the paper I explore different approaches to studying political identity and also pose the question of what resistance means to those participating in it. I conclude that we should not evaluate acts of "resistance" according to whether they functioned to hinder the state, but rather according to how they provided alternative ways of creating meaning for a particular community.

Part II: The Content and Form of Ethos Discourse

In this section I examine the way this alternative discourse was constructed, how different people used it, and how it provided meaningful resistance to the Communist Party-ruled state. The etos of Solidarity included several discrete elements that made sense only when bound together in a specific way and only in the context of opposition to state power. A careful interpretation of Solidarity documents and language shows that these elements were: self-determination, unity, moral guidelines for individual behavior, truth-telling, religiosity and nationalism. Furthermore, all these elements were mediated by gender, that is, they made sense when viewed from the standpoint of a male. Women were major participants in Solidarity, but were accommodated by the etos discourse on different terms than were men. This point illustrates the manner in which the stated ideology or principles of a movement do not only constitute acts of resistance, but create ways of viewing subjects, or participants, in society at large. In other words, this discourse created identities through which individuals could act.
This section examines form of the ethos discourse as well as its content. Different people prioritized the discrete elements of Solidarity in different ways; for example, the Catholic Church privileged the religiosity of opposition activity. Thus, there were disagreements within Solidarity on this basis; but ethos also provided a range of different ways to invoke opposition values. One could de-emphasize religiosity and still participate fully as a resister. This fluidity gave Solidarity its power and was the reason so many people could join.

The flip side of the variable form of ethos was that there were indeed limits to the identities it could include. Indeed, if this were not so, the movement would have no meaning at all. Because of this, Solidarity was often as exclusionary as it was inclusive. The case of women participants, again, illustrates the boundaries within which resistance identities functioned.

Part III: The Lack of Ethos

This section should be of particular interest to government readers because it traces the influence of the ethos discourse on post-1989 politics. This discourse was indeed the dominant way of talking about political action and political community after the collapse of communism. However, competing elites began to argue over the proper interpretation—the proper hierarchy of the elements—of ethos to justify their differing economic and political programs. The argument over who had the authority to interpret ethos properly was transformed into an argument over the "lack of ethos." By 1991, elites were arguing that the principles of the Solidarity period had been lost: the right argued that the absence of moral values in public life was a negative phenomenon and should be corrected, while the neo-liberals argued that the absence of ethos was positive because it opened the way for "pragmatic" politics. Both sides, importantly, relied on the resonance of the ethos of Solidarity with the population at large to give their "lack of ethos" claims power.

Another important result of the shift of Solidarity discourse from the opposition in the 1980's to the government itself in the 1990's was the marginalization of the Solidarity labor union itself. While the labor union dimension of Solidarity had been the source of immense authority during resistance to the Communist Party regime, after 1989 the influence of the union diminished drastically. I explain this in part by the ability of other elites, such as those of the right and the neo-liberals mentioned above, to appropriate the authority of Solidarity's ethos for their own claims. Because ethos had been so porous and so fluid, it became available for a variety of interpretations once the opposition context had changed.
Part IV: Ethos Gendered: The Case of Abortion

In this final portion of the research report I pursue two issues. The first concerns the assumptions about the "citizen," specifically the democratic citizen with rights and interests, in elite discourse in post-communist Poland. To this end, I also critique Western, "elite-choice" democratization theories for their neglect of the characteristics of the citizen. The second issue I take up is the manner in which citizenship discourse affected the abortion debate in Poland. I find that a liberal, rights-oriented argument about political freedom did not guarantee that arguments for women's rights would be articulated and taken into account; rather, women themselves had to put into play a rights discourse that incorporated them into the polity as women, that is, as citizens who may become pregnant. I conclude by noting that "democratization" discourse, whether it be about resistance or about rights, is always part and parcel of the relationship between the governed and the governing.
THE LANGUAGE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE ETHOS OF SOLIDARITY

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PART I: THE ETHOS OF SOLIDARITY AS A DISCOURSE OF RESISTANCE

This paper is an examination of the manner in which the "ethos" (in Polish, etos) informing the 1980-81 Solidarity opposition movement in Poland developed into a larger narrative about the moral limits of political action during the 1980's and became a dominant, if contested, form of political discourse in the 1989-93 period. The "etos of Solidarity" was a language of values that was used by opposition activists to justify the existence and activities of the movement itself and to serve as a counterdiscourse to the language of the Communist Party-ruled government. In broad terms it encompassed a commitment to greater self-determination for the individual in economic life, a broadened role for the Catholic Church in social life, sovereignty for the Polish state and support for Polish nationalism, an increased role for moral guidelines in public life, and a particular type of positivism, or "truth-telling," as a position from which to critique the government. The meaning, form and parameters of this etos were widely accepted by those participating in opposition to the state, whom I call "oppositionists," in the period of legal Solidarity (1980-81) and during martial law and underground Solidarity (1982-1989). While many of the individual elements of the ethos listed above may seem contradictory, in practice this discourse functioned as a cohesive, coherent form of structuring experience that was an alternative to the narratives offered by the Communist Party-led state.

One implication of the development of the "etos of Solidarity" in the specific context of opposition to Communist Party rule was the glossing over of any principles of government. The language of Solidarity was a language that worked to counter state power, not to justify it. "Etos" did not provide a way of talking about governing. Thus, the authority to define the "etos of Solidarity," as well as its coherence and resonance, was suddenly put into question when oppositionists gained state power in 1989. The discourse itself was still quite powerful: but elites disagreed over which elements were most important and which individuals could legitimately claim "ethos" as inspiring and undergirding their roles and activities in public life.
The most visible indication of this disagreement was the split between Lech Walesa, the leader of the Solidarity opposition movement, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a prominent Solidarity activist and the individual who had been given the office of prime minister in the 1989 negotiations between the government and the opposition. This division, however, just marked the beginning of the apparent fragmentation of Polish political activity into many groups, a fragmentation that became more visible and institutionalized as these groups began to form political parties and compete for votes, voice and influence.

I went to Poland with the hypothesis that arguments over the location of the authority to define the *etos* of Solidarity represented the continual reference point against which competing elites constructed their political claims. The *etos* discourse was the major form of political debate over who should be allowed to participate in the new, "post-communist" polity and in the re-building of Polish national identity. In other words, when participants in public language put forth arguments about who should lead Poland and who should be excluded from leading Poland, I suggested their disputes would take the discursive form of whether or not individuals, organizations or specific actions "fit" within the parameters of the "etos of Solidarity," or were somehow "loyal" to it. Arguments that did not take this form would have difficulty establishing themselves; they would "fall out," be set apart and isolated.

The outcome of my research was much more complex. In tracing the discursive strategies of elites competing over public positions, influence and/or voice I found two patterns, separate yet intertwined and interdependent. One was indeed an argument over who could define *etos* now that Solidarity oppositionists had state power: another, however, was an argument based on the *historicity* of *etos* itself. In this latter discourse, what was at stake was not the internal hierarchy of Solidarity's *etos*, but whether, given a changed historical context, it was still relevant for Polish politics. The question was not "what is our ethos" but "should the *etos* of Solidarity continue to play a role in political life?" Furthermore, the displacement of the ethos question was crucial in allowing for new ways of talking about politics.

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1 The idea that narrative traditions differ according to where the authority for the tradition is located, and that a community's traditions function as reference points for the development of shared meanings, is drawn from J.G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

specifically those arguments supported by liberals and the right. It was only by positing a "lack of ethos" that these groups could create a space for themselves in public debates about the appropriate boundaries of the political community.

In the discursive shift to this second pattern, "etos" was contrasted to a "lack of ethos," the latter becoming the new form for talking about the political community. "Etos" was relegated to history; it was not a timeless moral imperative but a part of the "Polish past," albeit an important part. In the discourse about the "lack of ethos," the major debates centered on the implications of this retirement of the once-dominant moral hierarchy of values. The meaning of the "lack of ethos" was ambiguous and open to widespread disputes. In the arguments of Catholic and nationalist groups, the lack of ethos in the 1989-93 period had created the conditions for unethical political behavior, the parameters of which were defined through contrast to the original ethos. These arguments addressed phenomena such as economic and political corruption, the betrayal of Polish national interests to Russia or Germany, the extent to which members of the old regime should be either prosecuted or excluded from public positions, the lack of unity among elites of the former opposition, the persistence of wildcat labor strikes, abortion and contraception practices and the decline of the influence of the Catholic Church. Importantly, the original etos discourse from which Poles were seen as straying and to which they should "return" was crucial to the meaning of the "lack of ethos."

For many others, however, the lack of ethos ushered in a new era of "pragmatic" politics, the pursuit and representation of interests unhindered by religious or moral considerations. Not surprisingly, many liberals used the discourse of the lack of ethos in a positive way, linking it with individual rights, limits on state interference in the economy and the imposition of constraints on labor power and autonomy. Many argued that the "original" etos of Solidarity was desirable and effective against a totalitarian state but had meaning only as part of a specific context of opposition politics. "Etos," they claimed, should have no influence on the shape of the political community or on standards of behavior in public life after 1989. While the lack of ethos for the first group of elites was a way to talk about immorality in public and private life, for this second group it allowed space for a "non-moral" political discourse. The second group appropriated the lack of ethos narrative from the first in order to historicize the values of the Solidarity social movement without abandoning their links

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1 Some elites claim that the ethos of Solidarity of 1980-81 was a flawed and misguided strategy for that time. See Janusz Rolicki and Zbigniew Bujak, Przepraszam ze Solidarnosc (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza "BGW," 1991).
to Solidarity altogether. It was really a re-interpretation of the "Solidarity tradition" of the
1980's by reconfiguring the source of authority in that tradition.

Thus, Solidarity and particularly its etos provided a major narrative form in which
political experience was described and debated in the period of legal Solidarity (1980-81),
the period of underground Solidarity (1982-1989) and the period of Poland's "transition" to
democracy (1989-93). While the content of the etos formulated in the 1980's did not
determine the shape of the political landscape after 1989, the discourse of etos of the first two
periods functioned to create discrete alternatives and discredit others in the post-transition
period. While etos came to the fore with the Solidarity movement, it was not dependent on the
organization Solidarity for its power; rather, etos had power as a discourse above and beyond
that of its originating spatial and temporal home.

My analysis is presented in two parts. First, I ask how a particular form of talking about
political action, etos, came to have such significance and even to dominate the discourse of a
very diverse social movement (and society) in the 1980-81 and 1982-89 periods. Second, I
explore what happened to this dominant discourse once it came to justify not a resistance
movement, but state power itself after 1989. To these ends, my paper establishes first the
content of etos in the years of 1980-89, meaning the different values it represented; its form,
or the hierarchy and order of these elements; and its function, or how it affected the political
alternatives perceived, adopted and discarded by participants in public language. To evaluate
the impact of etos I then compare its content, form and function in 1980-89 to that of the
1989-1993 period. In this paper I will show that 1) etos played a dominant role in post-1989
political language, even while the fortunes of the Solidarity organization ebbed and flowed; and
that 2) the form in which etos was invoked and even appropriated by political actors was
crucial to who had power and why, even after etos was displaced by a discourse of the "lack
of ethos." Etos was powerful in the 1980's in Poland to the extent that it provided a
justification for a variety of ways to resist the Communist Party-led state. It lacked power after
1989 because it provided no justification for ways to govern a Solidarity-led state.

Recent literature on social movements

Most studies of social movements protesting state power evaluate those movements
according to concrete benefits that members derive from the movement or the ability of the

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4 For the crucial role of "forms" in the power of public discourse I draw heavily on Hayden White,
*Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University
movement to achieve its stated goals, usually measured in terms of public policy outcomes or integration into government structures. The problem with much of this work is the inherent dualism that constrains both the directions in which theorizing may proceed and the categories of experience that can be counted as significant. Rooted in a fundamental dyad of "state versus society," social movements are often valorized as being desirable in and of themselves, and are evaluated according to whether they "successfully" achieve specific goals for their members.6 The success of a social movement is then measured by comparing the stated intentions or goals of the movement with political outcomes and judging those outcomes as to whether they indicated the "success" of the movement, its partial success, or its failure.7 In addition, social movements are said to have a constricted circle of "beneficiaries," the "members" of the social movement, and again success is evaluated against the desires or material gains of those self-declared "members."8 Even studies that try to avoid the problems of the rational-choice model that dominated the resource mobilization approach of the 1970's do not escape the language of specific, bounded "members" and notions of "success" based on the distance between stated goals and outcomes, between social and state power.

The strict division between state and society in social movement literature spawns a number of derivative dualisms. The assumption in this literature is that 1) state and society are bounded, separate entities; 2) they are inevitably at odds; 3) the social movement always "comes out of" society, contesting the state for material or public goods on behalf of a non-state group; 4) there is an inherent "alternativity," or assumption of natural alteration between social and state actors. By this I mean that underlying social movement theory is the idea that participation in the polity and the decision making process through which goods and services are distributed is necessarily desirable and should eventually occur: in the long run, in an open and democratic polity, representatives of these social movements will find their way into the state, after which new movements will spring from the leftover, opposing "society."


7 See, for example, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail (New York: Pantheon, 1979).


9 This assumption has found its way into "civil society" approaches, from which social movement arguments sometimes draw. "Civil society" as a concept has come a long way from Hegel's conception of a bourgeois society complementing state power (or Locke's view of a community of individuals that provides the basis for
The alternativity of social movement theory can be critiqued from the viewpoint of Roger Chartier's discussion of the production/consumption dualism in historiography, the tendency for representations of "cultural consumption [to be] opposed term for term to that of intellectual creation: passivity against invention, dependence against liberty, alienation against consciousness." Indeed, social movement theory uses a "split" of production versus consumption remarkably similar to that of the approaches in historiography that Chartier criticizes. "Goods"—collective, material, symbolic or textual—are "consumed" by social actors, individually or in groups. The identity of the producer is unclear; it is either the state—the endower of rights, privileges and material goods—or a narrow group of movement mobilizers who inspire amorphous publics. At the same time, the social movement is viewed as "producing" outcomes vis-a-vis the state on behalf of its members, who consume them. Finally, the movement produces action and protest, consumed by the state almost as a reader consumes a written text. The shift between production and consumption, or rather the reliance on the images of production and consumption to explain social movements, reproduces the problematic dualisms inherent in the state/society distinction, even while it makes them more complex.

A final criticism of the alternativity of social movement theory grows out of the new focus on the construction and fluidity of shared identities. The assumption in this literature is that social movements work to either create a new identity for a social group or to replace one identity with another. Again, a pre-determined, rather stable "membership" is implied.


11 For example: "From the point of view of the leaders of the SMO [social movement organization], the kind of collective identity they shape for consumption will, in large part, determine both the number and the kind of people who are likely to be attracted." From Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices, and the Life of a Social Movement" in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., Frontiers in Social Movement Theory (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 164.


13 Proponents of the collective identity approach within the field of social movement theory often claim that they incorporate the idea of unfixed identities. However, upon close examination, their work reveals a reliance not on the position that identities are fragmented, partial and layered, but that they fluidly "shift" from one complete identity to another. These studies confuse the idea that identities are constructed and thus may change, with the idea that identities are indeterminate. For example: "Socially constructed identities, however, do not exist independent of shifting realities and exogenous events. As political, social, and economic conditions
with identities competing for allegiance or resonance. However, the work in this area sees only two possibilities: the continuation of the "present" identity, usually one coercively imposed by the state, or the (voluntaristic) acceptance of a new, mobilizing identity. The membership or potential membership of the social movement then shifts back and forth until one identity gains hold; if the state identity does, the social movement has "failed;" if the new identity takes hold, the social movement is "successful." or on its way to being so. The source of this identity is never clear--indeed, it is often explained in tautological terms.

While recent work has attempted to move beyond the limits of behavioralism, even studies that take discursive forms of protest seriously fail to overcome the conceptual rigidity of mainstream social movement theory. For example, recent work by Sidney Tarrow attempts to incorporate the idea that meaning is constituted by discursive practice into an analysis of the relationship between consciousness (individual or social) and political protest. The author


Social movement theorists who use the concept of "collective identity" take great pains to emphasize the distinction between their work and the "resource mobilization" approach of Mancur Olson and others, which includes the focus on memberships, benefits and outcomes. I find that both share the same syndromes relevant to this paper and treat them as contingent on the series of state/society assumptions noted above.


... a public can be persuaded if one of the following conditions prevails: the public adheres to the collective belief system of the persuading agent; the persuading agent can, in one way or another, anchor its arguments in the collective beliefs of the public; or the persuading agent succeeds in transforming the collective beliefs of the public. (p. 84)

The "persuading agent" here is the protest or social movement leader or recruitment mechanism and the "public" is the potential membership of a social movement, and it has only two choices: to be persuaded or not.

An example is again found in Friedman and McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism:" "To partake of a collective identity is to reconstitute the individual self around a new and valued identity." (p. 157) An improvement on the above is taken from Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier, "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," in the same volume, "Collective identity is the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity." (p. 105) This conception first reduces identity to a "shared definition of a group" (do the authors mean a definition shared by a group?) and then locates the source in "members'" practices. Thus, the evidence that an identity exists and its source are the same thing, members' practices. However, the Taylor and Whittier article is the most conceptually interesting in the Frontiers in Social Movement Theory volume, in part because the authors place identity at the center of their analysis.

initially poses the questions, "do the belief systems and symbols that inspire protestors to take collective action possess autonomous mobilizing potential" and "do the ideological discourses of social movements produce new social understandings among a mass public?" As the analysis continues, however, Tarrow's project quickly becomes one not of how a social movement is represented "ideologically," but of how ideologies support social movements. In other words, the behavior of the social movement or the collective public takes on a primary, independent reality and the problem to be explained is how to conceptualize the "ideological" resources that the social movement necessarily makes use of.

Tarrow makes this move by redefining the purpose of his research as an examination of "how people choose the symbols and definitions of the situation that lead them to act collectively," a rather tortuous reconfiguration of cause and effect in which the autonomy of discourse disappears entirely. Its substitute is "ideational material," a concept that takes consciousness out of ideology and remakes it into an instrument of "movement entrepreneurs" (p. 186). For Tarrow, the history, tradition, culture, and shared values of a community--its social context--are the elements of a marketing strategy used by social movement leaders. He draws on the concept of "framing," first developed by Donald Snow and Robert Benford, to explain this strategy:

In all their efforts, Snow and his collaborators argue that movement organizers construct symbol systems designed to attract supporters to their views, but that they do not invent them out of whole cloth. On the contrary, in all but the most transformational framing efforts...organizers attempt to relate their goals and programs directly to the existing values and predispositions of their target public. They are thus in a certain sense both consumers of existing cultural meanings and producers of new meanings, which are inevitably framed in terms of organizers' readings of the public's existing values and predispositions. (p. 189)

The metaphor of the protest leader as media advertiser allows Tarrow not only to construct a powerful agent with the marketing tools of all "existing cultural meanings" at his disposal, but to posit a consumerist "public" hungry for the benefits the social movement has to offer, which apparently consist of "symbols." Thus, while Tarrow's ostensible purpose is to explore the way meaning may be embedded in or constituted by practices, he simply reduces this meaning to a commodity.

For example, in Tarrow's view, one factor in the success of the civil rights movement in the United States was the prominence of "rights" and (economic?) "opportunity" ideas, which

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acted as "frames" to link the specific demands of black citizens with traditional values in the broader culture and history of the United States. In this argument, the question is not over the competing sources of civil rights discourse or the impact of this discourse on the social movement, but over how, given the presence of the civil rights movement, its claims were successfully justified. Its leaders chose the best or most proper "frames of meaning" to allow their movement to translate the "ideational material" of justice into concrete and successful political action. If a movement fails, it is because, in part, its leaders did not successfully employ these frames. In Tarrow's formulation, in the contest between state and society, between producers and consumers, "meaning" is just another product endorsement.

The series of alternations interwoven into recent approaches such as Tarrow's, or the alteration dynamic itself, is not essential to the idea (or the reality) of a social movement. The case of Solidarity in Poland points to another way to look at the interaction of protest, social change and political power. One published study on Solidarity that does not employ the assumptions of other social movement work is that of a group of Polish sociologists, Anna Blaszkiewicz, Zbigniew W. Rykowski, Piotr Szwajcer and Jerzy Wertenstein-Zulawski. Their analysis found that in 1988, when protest increased in Poland after several years of martial law, Solidarity not only functioned to defend workers' political and economic interests in the face of the state, but "also acted as a normative concept in the entire sphere of interpersonal relations." 19

The case of Solidarity also compels us to recognize that, rather than identifying themselves as consumers of the benefits of an organized resistance group, people in Poland in 1980-81 and in 1988 moved among categories of "striker," "activist," "leader" and "member." Indeed, it was the practice of resistance itself that gave these identities their meaning. As Chartier notes, "[r]eading, viewing, and listening are, in fact, so many intellectual attitudes which...make possible reappropriation, misappropriation, defiance, or resistance," and dividing political action into that which is produced and that which is consumed is an imposition on the part of the historian/social scientist interpreting the social movement.20

Along with this, we find in the experience of Solidarity various possible futures, not simply "success" or "failure."21 Indeed, a social movement may fail utterly in its "intended"

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20 Chartier, "Intellectual History or Sociocultural History," p. 37.
21 While analyzing Solidarity in his book, Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), sociologist Michael Kennedy argues, "The success of a movement does not depend on its organizational survival or conquest of state power, but whether it contributes to the realization of
goals. provide no benefits for its "members," yet transform completely the context within which state power is viewed by all of a community, even those who are part of the state itself. This was the case with the revolution in Hungary in 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968 and the suppression of Solidarity in 1981.

A close study of Solidarity also points to the idea that various identities and memberships can coexist, often perhaps contradicting each other and working at cross purposes. Boundaries of identities, organizations and self-declaratory language are porous. For example, a member of the Communist Party in Poland may have been part of the state for career goals, even calling on the army to shoot protesting workers, yet harbor deep convictions supporting an independent Poland and silently wish the group success. Moreover, policy issues that do not fit precisely the boundaries of social movement activities may be difficult to evaluate if one assumes a rigid "collective identity." Outcomes may affect only part of the "membership," or may benefit both the movement's members and its opponents or competitors. The restriction of the abortion law in Poland in 1991 was in part an expression of the deeply religious Catholic identity of many, but not all, of those who had been part of the Solidarity movement. It affected, however, only a portion of Solidarity members; it affected men quite differently from women, and it affected a large part of non-Solidarity society.22

The variety of fragmented and coexisting identities complicate the social movement picture, of course, providing little of the parsimony that social scientists treasure in their explanations. "Identity" is neither a voluntary expression of group membership nor a social category imposed by ethnicity, gender, national origin or other categories. It is a reference point of the negotiation between individual perception and externally available categories, and is always "imagined" in some way, as noted by Benedict Anderson's work on nationalism.23

The product of a set of practices, identities function to provide an individual with a cohesive...
sense of self and to link that self with a larger community in multiple ways.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, as practices, communities and individuals change, so may identity. It is seldom as fixed, stable or univocal as discourses of ethnicity, gender or nationalism represent it to be. This position on identity calls forth another set of questions which, once addressed, may explain more fully social movements across cultures and across time.

First, in the case of the community or "identity" that gives a social movement its appearance of coherence, perhaps we should set aside the problem of precisely defining the identity or membership and ask, where does this identity come from? Often it is a collection of various historical narratives or symbols. How do some histories make their way into protest movements while some do not? How does one set of characteristics cohere into an "identity" that comes to dominate a space and time of political action? How does one future become generally accepted and other futures repressed or discredited? What happens to this identity after shifts in social and political power, such as the transformations of Central and Eastern Europe in 1990, occur?

Another set of questions comes from the easing of the state/society dichotomy. If the distinction is an imposed one,\textsuperscript{25} what does that mean for the idea of "resistance," often crucial to the identity of the social movement? In addition, can a social movement employ a coercive ideology or identity, and what does this imply for "resistance?" Recent work on nationalism and national movements speak to the powerful exclusionary forces embedded within these types

\textsuperscript{24} This particular concept of identity draws on recent theoretical work on feminism and nationalism. An excellent discussion can be found in Chantal Mouffe, "Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics," in Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, eds., Feminists Theorize the Political (New York: Routledge, 1992). Mouffe notes:

A single individual can be the bearer of this multiplicity [of relations of subordination] and be dominant in one relation while subordinated in another. We can then conceive the social agent as constituted by an ensemble of "subject positions" that can never be totally fixed in a closed system of differences... The "identity" of such a multiple and contradictory subject is therefore always contingent and precarious, temporarilly fixed at the intersection of those subject positions and dependent on specific forms of identification. (p. 372)

\textsuperscript{25} For a discussion of the difficulties with the concept "society," see Ernesto Laclau, "The Impossibility of Society," Canadian Journal of Social and Political Theory 15 (1991), pp. 24-27. Criticizing the idea of society as a "founding totality" with an "essence of a social order which had to be recognized behind the empirical variations expressed at the surface of social life," Laclau argues for the "infinite of the social, that is, the fact that any structural system...is always surrounded by an 'excess of meaning' which it is unable to master and that, consequently, 'society' as a unitary and intelligible object which grounds its own partial processes is an impossibility." (p. 25) For a dissection of the essentialist bases of the concept of the "state," see Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," American Political Science Review 85 (March 1991), pp. 77-96.
of movements. Every community is constructed on the basis of its difference from an outsider, usually a threat or alien, and a social movement should be no different, even if it may be somewhat more spatially or temporally contingent than a nation or a religion. If communities develop through practices, as Anderson implies, then surely social movement politics provides ample resources for one. John Bornemann has noted that between kinship and nation is the idea of "belonging," a strong affective bond that creates the idea of a common fate or a common history, and thus the basis of a community. Can this concept help us explain social movements in which individuals risk great costs, or in which a group stays together even in the face of a decline in benefits?

Another implication for the acknowledgement of multiple identities in social movements is the question of the extent to which a movement, or its meaning for the rest of the polity, is context-driven rather than substance-driven. In other words, the specific context in which that movement came to exist and have meaning for participants and non-participants may be more important for evaluating that movement’s power (or the relationships of individuals to the movement) than any internal drive, message or vision. Solidarity in Poland had a strong message regarding workers’ rights and freedoms, but when its leaders took state power in 1989 it became clear that the movement was most powerful as an alternative to communism rather than a guide to government, and provided identities centered on oppositions rather than citizenships. As Dominick LaCapra has noted, a text—in this case an historical experience—may have "a set of interacting contexts whose relations to one another are variable and problematic" and whose relevance must be made explicit and defended.

Finally, the principles or goals on behalf of which a social movement claims to act may be not a public good but a discourse constructing those goods, and thus constituted more by shared practices than the expectation of material benefits. A discourse that appears to be about the most appropriate distribution of goods or obligations may be a discourse about fundamental issues of legitimacy and authority that has taken the form of distributive issues. Thus, even if demanded goods are distributed, as was the case in the 1970’s in Poland and Hungary.

26 See Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yeager, eds., Nationalisms and Sexualities (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992).


legitimacy issues may not necessarily be resolved, although social protest may temporarily be silenced.\textsuperscript{29}

In conclusion, while social movement theory has progressed far from the rational-actor limitations, it seems still unduly dependent on the measurement of intentions (and on the accompanying dualisms of intentions met and intentions frustrated). The research presented in this paper seeks to examine the manner in which a social movement interacts with a wider historical and political context. It documents the way that a discourse of resistance served to transform the limits of state power, added to a particular tradition of political action and changed meanings or definitions of public language. In other words, the construction and circulation of the discourse itself constituted resistance. In contrast to other work on Solidarity specifically and social movements generally, I also address the exclusion of certain "memberships," such as national minorities, from the identities constructed by the etos discourse and how such exclusions functioned within a social context of resistance. My examination incorporates the notion that social movements are not always liberating and empowering for all. Social movements can derive power by privileging some traditions, discourses and visions over others.

A note on terminology

In the critique of social movement literature above, I noted the problematic status of the term "resistance," especially if we begin to question the strict boundary between state and society. This problem came to the fore in Poland in 1994, when newly available police documents show that the underground publishing movement was completely infiltrated by police informers. The Communist Party-ruled state had information on the location and activities of almost every single illegal publishing group during the period of martial law, 1981-86, and after. While the question of why the state tolerated this activity is an open one, this information also raises the question of the meaning and definition of "resistance" to the state. Were these basement xeroxers resisting state power if they were working side by side with a policeman who used their actions to give the government more precise information about Solidarity? Whose meaning of "resistance" should we privilege, that of the resister, or the policeman, or the outside observer? James Scott and others have argued that resistance is meaningful even if the state does not respond to it, or if the state tolerates it, in part because his argument concerns the relationship between the consciousness and the actions of

\textsuperscript{29} See Marek Tarniewski, \textit{Plonie Komitet} (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1982).
resisters. However, Scott leaves (perhaps purposefully) ambiguous what one is "resisting," if not state power or legitimacy: other theorists on resistance, from bell hooks to Michel Foucault to historians such as Carrol Smith-Rosenberg, are more concerned with the independent power of subjugating discourses once they are put into play than with any "original source" of coercion, such as a "totalitarian" state.

Rather than defining a set of activities that are essentially acts of resistance, I use the term "resistance discourse" to refer to the set of practices that were commonly held as "oppositional" for those who engaged in them. The methodological focus on "discourse" itself draws on two theories of politics, that of Ludwig Wittgenstein and that of J.G.A. Pocock. Wittgenstein gives us the idea that the "language games" of a particular community are what gives words and terms their meanings, and that these games are not just verbal expressions but a coherent set of meaning-producing practices necessarily shared. Pocock finds that "diversely originating" language games can constitute coherent "paradigmatic structures" of argument, "distributing and defining authority in a number of variant ways, at any one time." These structures are discourses, apparently coherent ways of talking about authority in politics, history and systems of thought that are "stable enough to be available for the use of more than one discussant and to present the character of [language] games defined by a structure of rules for more than one player." Discourses allow us to argue but also limit us:

The author [or protestor in the Polish context] inhabits a historically given world that is apprehensible only in the ways rendered available by a number of historically given languages; the modes of speech available to him give him the intentions he can have, by giving him the means he can have of performing them.

But the author is also an "expropriator," "acting upon language from others and using it to his purposes, and the innovator, acting upon language so as to induce...change in the ways in which it is used." The ethos of Solidarity was constructed as such a discourse, and both allowed and disallowed forms of protest and resistance. The meaning and authority of this resistance depended on the forms it took and the power and stability it came to have.

33 Pocock, Virtue, Commerce and History, p. 7.
34 Pocock, Virtue, Commerce and History, p. 5.
35 Pocock, Virtue, Commerce and History, p. 6.
Because my goal here is to evaluate the way opposition to the Communist Party-ruled state was represented, and what happened to that representation once the state was transformed by the opposition. I privilege the "oppositionists" or "resisters" interpretations. The strikers and the protestors were themselves the authoritative interpreters of what the "opposition" was. I should note that Solidarity activists themselves often used the terms "society" and "state" in ways that I have criticized in the social movement literature. The positing of a unified "society" behind Solidarity was important to their discursive strategy, and should not be confused with any assertion of an essential "social" by the author.

The "state" was also used by Solidarity activists, although it took the form of the collective term "the authorities" (władza). "The authorities" referred to a group of individuals who were viewed as occupying positions of state power and who had a monopoly of the use of force to back up their arguments, based on a legitimacy conferred from the leadership of the Soviet Union and on a history of repression of the citizenry. At times activists separated the authorities from a wider "system" of Communist Party power and from the police or the military:

Until February 1982...I considered a general strike to be a feasible solution. By March, however, I realized there was no point...if the strike were successful, the authorities (and I don't mean just a specific group at the center but all those who were part of the Communist power structure) would be finished in Poland: all that would be left for them would be to announce the collapse of the system. the greatest defeat for communism ever...There was...a possibility that we could exert pressure on the authorities and force them to make concessions. On the other hand. there was no possibility at all of overthrowing the generals in a confrontation...

While the terms may shift from "structure" to "authorities" to "generals," at the center of this language is the notion of a stable, fixed "state" with a specific rationality of the costs and benefits of the use of force. Indeed, much of the language of the activists that dealt with the state at all focused on "figuring out" what the władza would do in response to a particular protest action. The point is that while theories of resistance do not need to posit a state against which to resist, for the Solidarity movement this position for the state was quite important. For this reason, the term "state" is often used in this paper--without it. the ethos of Solidarity would be unintelligible.