7

The Hybridization of the Party System

I began this book with a definition of social movements as a form of contentious politics that combines sustained campaigns of claim making with arrays of public performances, adding up to public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (Tilly & Tarrow 2015: ch. 1). That definition has served us well through the last six chapters. From the abolitionists to the agrarian movement to the women's suffrage movement to labor and civil rights, movements used marches, rallies, strikes and demonstrations, public meetings, public statements, petitions, letter writing, and lobbying by specialized associations at the gates of conventional politics to put forward their claims (Tarrow 2012). But I also argued that, as the United States reached the second half of the twentieth century and the party system began to hollow out, the movement repertoire was expanding and increasingly overlapped with interest groups, nonprofit advocacy groups, and the party system. The results were the hybrid forms of collective action that populate the space between parties and movements today.

Does this mean that the distinction political scientists have employed for decades between articulating interests – the specialty of movements and interest groups – and aggregating them – the stock-in-trade of political parties – is no longer valid? I am not inclined to go that far but in examining party/movement intersections in the early twenty-first century, an additional distinction seems to be called for: Given the hollowing out of the political parties and the rise of what David Meyer and I called "a movement society" (1998), a variety of forms of collective action have filled the corresponding gap. To understand it, I will introduce the concept of "hybridity" that I have borrowed from the field of contentious politics.

This is a concept that has been employed to analyze the multiple forms of collective identity held by individual militants (Heaney & Rojas 2014); to designate the nested relationships of individual organizations in networks of

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organizations (della Porta & Diani 2006: ch. 6); and to describe movements that make multiple claims and aim to represent a variety of claimants (Rich 2019). I will employ it to examine organizations that maintain close ties with individual parties but that are not subsumed by those parties. An early example was the creation of the Labor Nonpartisan Action League in the mid-1930s, which we met in Chapter 5. Another was the Eagle Forum of Phyllis Schlafly, which was the instrument she used to defeat the ERA in the early 1980s. A third was the creation of the Moral Majority by Jerry Falwell in the 1970s.

Such relationships were relatively rare in the United States until the combination of the "hollowing out" of the parties and the strengthening of social movements after the 1960s. This suggests the need for a category that has some of the properties of movements – for example, their ideological "purism" (La Raja & Schaffner 2015) – and some of the characteristics of interest groups – their policy orientation and tactical flexibility. If the early twenty-first century is the age of "hollowed-out parties," it is also the age of expanded, politically connected associations using both conventional and movement-like tactics.

Looking at the broad array of groups that circulate around the party system today, we can identify three types of hybrid formations:

- *horizontal hybrids*, the traditional form of group/party relations that is based on common political interest and specialization of function;
- *vertical hybrids*, group/party relations based on the provision of resources to the party and the use of those resources to influence it; and
- *blended hybrids*, a combination of the first two types of hybridity.

We will see a prominent example of a "horizontal hybrid" in the relationship between the anti–Iraq War movement and the Democratic Party in response to President George W. Bush's plan to invade Iraq in 2002. The most prominent example of a "vertical hybrid" that we will examine is the Koch network of organizations that developed in the 1980s and 1990s outside the Republican Party but that became quietly influential in that party's political-economic policies. The most successful case of a "blended hybrid" was the Tea Party movement, which had grassroots origins but developed links to Washington-based advocacy groups. That movement ended up helping to elect a new cadre of Tea Party–linked candidates who brought the "take-no-prisoners" culture of the movement into the halls of Congress after the 2010 elections.

In this chapter, I will compare these three forms of party-movement interaction. I begin by reviewing some of the major changes in movement activism and the party system as the country entered the new century. In Section II, I will turn to the antiwar movement, which developed a symbiotic relationship to the Democratic Party base. In Sections III and IV, I will focus on what I will call a "blended hybrid" – the Tea Party – and its impact on the

Republican Party. In Section V, I will examine the Koch network, a "vertical" hybrid that may have ushered in a new phase of movement/party relations.

Focusing on two crowded decades of recent history has certain risks, including the risk of eliding important social movements.[1] But these omissions are inevitable if we are to focus on a central theme of this book – *the increasingly intimate relations between parties and social movements in the early twentieth century*. Although the antiwar movement's move into the grassroots of the Democratic Party and the Tea Party's entry into the GOP are familiar patterns from American history, the Koch network's interpenetration with the Republican Party, while maintaining its independent base, was a fundamentally new phenomenon. But before we turn to these variations, it will be important to at least gesture toward the general changes in contentious politics in the contemporary period. I will argue that the expanding resources of movement groups and the hollowing out of party organizations have led to a more intimate relationship between the two and contributed mightily to the current polarization of American society.

I PARTY/MOVEMENT CHANGE IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Contentious forms of politics have always appealed to groups other than classical social movements, but this trend has expanded enormously in what David Meyer and I called "the social movement society" (1998). By this term, we intended to demarcate two things: first, the expansion of contentious forms of activity from movements to other collectivities; second, the legitimation of these forms of action that allowed them to spread beyond classical social movements and to lose the elements of surprise and shock they possessed as part of the movement repertoire.

An example: When Alice Paul organized the first mass women's suffrage march in Washington in 1913, it shocked the public and challenged the more conventional parts of the women's movement (see Chapter 4). But by the second decade of the twenty-first century, a march led by women – like the anti-Trump marches in early 2017 – was a regular occurrence (see Chapter 8). It was only because that movement spread so widely and so rapidly across the country that it drew so much attention (Berry & Chenoweth 2018; Fisher 2019).

The expansion of contentious politics that Meyer and I discerned in the late 1990s has gone well beyond what we predicted then, for several reasons.

First, a technological revolution that we failed to predict has put access to the Internet and to social media within the reach of even the most informal

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[1] I am thinking, in particular, of the Occupy movement, the "Me-Too" movement, and the young people's anti-gun movement that was touched off by the mass murders in Parkland, Florida.

groups of activists, as well as at the disposal of established groups and parties (Earl & Kimport 2011; Bennett & Segerberg 2013; Schradie 2019). As Dana Fisher points out in her book *American Resistance*, it was by using the mechanism of "distributed organizing" through the Internet that the anti–Trump Resistance was able to coordinate online with offline mobilization (2019: 85–86). In her book, *Twitter and Tear Gas* (2017), Zeynep Tufekci argues that social media make the staging of large-scale events much quicker and easier, but the organizing still needs to be done on the ground, which means that traditional methods of mobilization are unlikely to disappear.

Second, increasing inequality and the international financial crisis that exacerbated it led to a revival of the kinds of class-based movements that scholars of "postindustrial society" once thought were becoming obsolete (compare Inglehart 1990 with Inglehart & Norris 2017). Inequality has also created new strata of workers, those with short-term contracts, temporary workers, and workers in the gig economy, and has subjected them to new forms of exploitation. As the organizers of the "Gig Economy Data Hub" write: "Many data sources suggest the nature of work is indeed changing, with workers increasingly engaging in short-term and project-based work outside of, in or addition to, full-time, long-term employer-employee relationships."[2]

A sequence of critical events, both global and national, reflected these structural changes, helping to blur the lines between electoral and protest politics, as Endre Borbath and Swen Hutter (2020) point out.[3] Their research underscores the fact that party-sponsored protests are an important feature of contemporary protest politics. Sometimes these pairings take the traditional form of movement groups turning into parties, but parties are also mounting protests through the "civil society" groups they sponsor to advance their interests (Greskovits 2020).

Expanding the Movement Repertoire

During periods of rapid change, familiar claim-making routines have always dissolved in spurts of innovation (Tarrow 2011: ch. 10). Recall that the civil rights activists in the 1960s did not simply rely on the decorous performances inherited from the past – the march, the public meeting, the prayer service – but developed new kinds of performances that disrupted existing routines and put

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[2] The "Gig Economy Data Hub" is a collaborative venture of the Aspen Institute's Future of Work project and the Cornell University School of Industrial Relations. For information, go to www .gigeconomydata.org/about-us.

[3] The major results of the study are found in Hanspeter Kriesi, Jasmine Lorenzini, Bruno Wieest, and Silja Hausermann, *Contention in Times of Crises. Comparing Political Protest in 30 European Countries, 2000–2018* (2020).

opponents off balance (McAdam 1983). New and old actors used new kinds of performances, culminating in extended cycles of contention – mostly peaceful but with outcroppings of violence alongside a trend to institutionalization (della Porta & Tarrow 1986; Meyer & Staggenborg 1996).

The period since 2001 has seen an increase in the use of contentious forms of collective action, their spread from movements to other collectivities, and their increasing penetration into parties. Although this has been true throughout the world (Chenoweth 2017), it has been aided in advanced industrial countries by the increasing organizational capacity of private associations and their amplification by the Internet and social media.

These interactions have produced movements that put pressure on parties but have also led to the formation of movements *within* parties and encouraged the growth of a new layer of conventionally organized groups that employ both traditional interest group practices (e.g., lobbying, supporting candidates) and movement tactics. As Mayer Zald and Michael Berger argued decades ago, "belonging to associations and networks eases the cost of information flow and mobilization" (1987: 208). As Rachel Blum writes of the Tea Party, "Insurgent factions are characterized by their willingness to destabilize their host parties in order to seize control of them" (Blum 2020: 6).

Some conventional lobbying groups have learned to sponsor groups that adopt some of the repertoire of social movements. For example, the Obama campaign created a new hybrid online/offline activism called Organizing for Action (Milkis & York 2017). On the right, the Heritage Foundation, an inside-the-beltway legal think tank dating from in the 1970s, created Heritage Action for America, which maintains a grassroots network outside of Washington based on coordinators who recruit and train "Sentinel activists." The new group's first campaign was to try to defeat Obama's Affordable Care Act (i.e., "Obamacare"),[4] while the most recent was to back the countermovement to defend the police against the charge of abusing African Americans (see Chapter 8). If these are not signs of the intrusion of the "movement society" on conventional politics, they are the next closest thing to it. They were advanced by a simultaneous decline of the central organizations of the two major parties and the growing resources of social movements.

Changes in Parties

While movements and movement-like performances were gaining greater purchase outside the traditional precincts of contentious politics, political parties were losing their centrality to institutional politics. In their research on European parties, Richard Katz and Peter Mair found in the 1990s that party systems were getting weaker as institutions for representation (Katz & Mair

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[4] "The Fight to Repeal Obamacare," www.humanevents.com/20110/07/05/the-fight-to-repeal-obamacare

1993). As we saw in Chapter 6, these structural trends were accompanied by institutional changes – like the shift of partisanship to the executive, the near-universal adoption of the direct primary, and the evisceration of campaign finance legislation, which further reduced the centrality of party organizations to representative politics. While during the "Party Period" of American history, parties were effectively organized at the local level and maintained themselves through the distribution of patronage; parties today are focused on raising funds nationally. "A critical facet of contemporary polarization," wrote Nolan McCarty and Eric Schickler, "is that group alignments and issue stances appear to be far more consistent across states, as national-level cleavages permeate the fifty states" (2018: 189).

We could already see the decline of what David Mayhew called "traditional party organizations" in the 1970s and 1980s (1986). In the decades since Mayhew wrote, there has been a decline in the central funding of party organizations and a diffusion of campaign funding through nonparty organizations. In an original effort to compare the resources of extra-party consortia with party-linked organizations, Theda Skocpol and Alexander Hertel-Fernandez found that although the resources of party-linked groups have dropped sharply, those of extra-party consortia have sharply increased. Between 2001–2 and 2013–14, the resources controlled by these "nonparty funders" more than tripled, while the proportion controlled by Republican Party committees was almost cut in half. "Crucially," they conclude, "the resource shifts on the right ... have largely occurred through the rise of new far-right organizations instituted after 2002, not through increases in the resources controlled by older groups" (Skocpol & Hertel-Fernandez 2016: 683).

Institutional changes are partly responsible for this shift from party to nonparty funding. In striking down the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, the Supreme Court's *Citizen's United* decision (558 US 310, 2010) held that the free speech clause of the First Amendment prohibits the government from restricting corporations, labor unions, and nonprofit associations from making independent contributions to political candidates. This opened the gates to a broad spectrum of mainly moneyed groups inserting themselves between parties and candidates to office (La Raja & Schaffner 2015). However, short-circuiting of party organizations as brokers between corporations and policy makers has also been responsible.

Have the organizational cores of political parties declined so completely that they are no more than "coalitions of policy demanders," as members of the UCLA research group maintain (Cohen et al. 2008; Bawn et al. 2012)? That might be a step too far, because, as McCarty and Schickler note, "parties respond to particular group demands, *but only to the extent that the party's officials and candidates judge that doing so serves their interests, either as individuals or as partisans*" [emphasis added]. Parties are more than an aggregate of "policy demanders" and spend much of their time "making

decisions about how to respond to the array of pressures emanating from both groups and voters" (2018: 184).

Of course, the ability of parties to make these decisions ebbs and flows, having reached its nadir in the failure of the Republican Party in the campaign of 2015 to block the "outsider" candidacy of Donald Trump. Subsequent to that, it also failed to prevent the infiltration of MAGA hat-wearing militants into its party organizations and the effective merger of the party with lunatic far-right networks like Q-Anon. The culmination of this trend came when Republican members of Congress fought to block a commission to investigate the insurrection of January 6, 2021.

In the rest of this chapter, I will argue, with David Karol (2014), that there have been fundamental changes in the party system, but I will also argue that the most significant developments have taken place *outside* traditional party organizations in the creation of intimate links among movements, nonmovement groups, and the party system. We will begin with a traditional kind of linkage that briefly created a horizontal relationship between the anti–Iraq War movement and the Democrats. From there, we will examine the better known example of the Tea Party, which created a mixture of horizontal and vertical ties with the Republicans, before concluding with the case of the Koch network, which has penetrated the policy-making levels of the GOP.

II THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT: A HORIZONTAL HYBRID

Almost by definition, antiwar movements arise during wars and threats of war. Thus, the anti–Vietnam War movement came at the high point of the development of 1960s activism, building on the Civil Rights and New Left movements but also drawing on traditional pacifist groups, religious activists, veterans' groups, and even members of the armed forces (Cortright 1975). But unlike that earlier movement, the anti–Iraq War movement was a coordinated transnational movement organized on the Internet, much like the global justice movement that preceded and fed into it (Walgrave & Rucht, eds. 2010; Hadden & Tarrow 2007).

More than most other movements, "antiwar movements" have never been unified collective actors. This is not only because more than one organization shares space within a unified movement – that would be true for the labor movement, the women's movement, the civil rights struggle, and the environmental movement – but because they bring together movement groups with broader claims. The antiwar movement not only attracted traditional pacifists, opponents of particular wars, and opponents of certain kinds of wars but also those whose primary commitment was to other forms of collective action. As David Cortright writes, "The term 'peace movement' refers not only or even primarily to the organized activities of specific groups ... . Of course, such groups are essential to the movement, but the movement extends far beyond traditional peace organizations to include

people of all walks of life who commit themselves to the prevention of war" (Cortright 1993: 3).

Many different tendencies and political approaches, some at odds with one another, coexist within the same antiwar movements, but all contribute directly or indirectly to political pressures for arms restraints (ibid, p. 3). These organizational differences have not always fractured peace movements, but they do constrain their capacity for concerted collective action – as they did in the "freeze movement" of the 1980s (Meyer 1990) and in the movement against the war in Iraq.

Not only the heterodox nature of the coalition that arose in 2002 against the looming war with Iraq but the conditions in which it emerged limited activists' ability to mobilize large numbers of Americans. The country had been struck by the cruel massacre of 2001; the government was scrambling for an adequate response to it; and the public was thunderstruck by the vastness and brutality of the attacks and was ripe to "rally round the flag." When, in early October 2001, American special forces joined Afghan militants in attacking the Taliban government, the response from the peace community was therefore muted. Not so the attack on Iraq in early 2003. The Iraq War led to the most extensive peace mobilization since the Vietnam War.

George W. Bush's war not only left a long-term legacy involving the United States in a prolonged military involvement in the Middle East, but it also contributed to the defeat of the Republican Party in the November 2008 presidential election and to the election of the nation's first African American president, who campaigned as a peace candidate. If we think of critical junctures as often leading to "reactive sequences" (Mahoney 2000), the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were reactions to 9/11 while the defeat of the Republican Party and Obama's election victory in 2008 were reactions to that reaction.

There were many causes for the reversal in party fortunes, the most fundamental of which was the 2007–8 financial crisis; the Bush administration stumbled badly in response. But Obama's victory was in no small measure due to his embrace of an antiwar position, first as a senator from Illinois and then as a candidate for the presidency. Of course, his victory was also due to an unusually high turnout of African American voters and to reactions to the financial crisis that had emerged during the waning days of the Bush administration. But his electoral edge also came from antiwar voters who had been animated by his early and determined opposition to the war, while competitors like Hillary Clinton and John Kerry had been hesitant to go on record against it.

The anti–Iraq War movement was born even before the attack on Iraq that was launched in March of the following year. It produced its largest turnouts between 2003 and 2006. Along with millions of protesters around the world, in what was probably the first global protest organized on the Internet (Bennett et al. 2010: 231–32), the movement began on February 15, 2003, when

something like 2.5 million Americans (Verhulst 2010: table 1.1) protested against the impending attack. It was not only on the east and west coasts – where we find the usual suspects of progressive activism – but in the conservative heartland of the country that Americans turned out in force to oppose the war that President Bush had decided upon. This was the most broadly based antiwar protest since the Moratorium against the Vietnam War (Cortright 2008).

During a series of demonstrations between 2003 and 2006, the number of people turning out to protest remained at historic peaks, but the numbers began to decline during the electoral season of 2007–8 and even more sharply after Obama assumed office in January 2009. In their book, Michael Heaney and Fabio Rojas traced the average size of the largest antiwar protests by month between 2001 and 2012.[5] The movement peaked quite early – between the outbreak of war and the beginning of the 2006 midterm election – after which average participation declined from more than 100,000 in the early demonstrations to much lower proportions afterward, reflecting the gravitational pull of elections on the party, as we can see in Figure 7.1.[6]
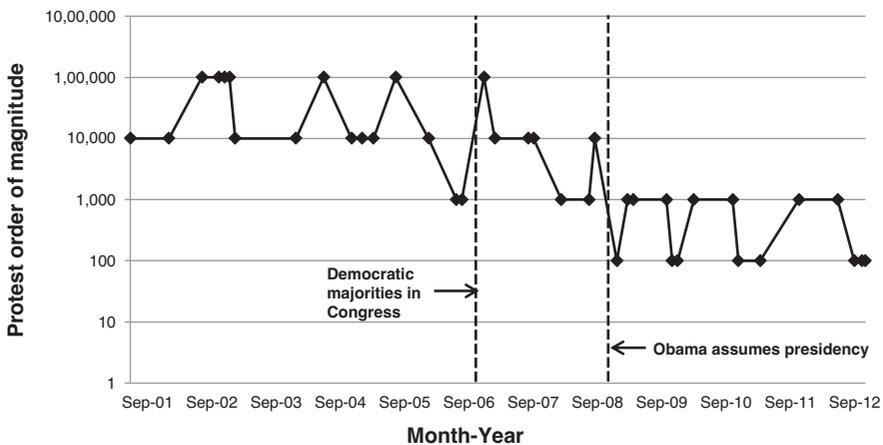

FIGURE 7.1 Size of national and nationally-coordinated antiwar protests, 2002–12
Source: Michael T. Heaney and Fabio Rojas, *The Party in the Street*, ch. 2 and Appendix D. I am grateful to the authors for allowing me to reproduce this data from their book, published by Cambridge University Press.

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[5] The events they studied were mostly organized in Washington, DC, with some demonstrations held in New York, Denver, St. Paul, and elsewhere. These authors conducted surveys in Washington, DC, as well as in one city on the East Coast, one in the Midwest, and one on the West Coast.

[6] I am grateful to Michael Heaney for providing the data for this figure, prepared for his and Fabio Rojas's *The Party in the Street* (2015).

The movement was made up of a number of constituent organizations and coalitions (Heaney & Rojas 2014), some of which predated the outbreak of the war and had much broader missions than opposing this particular war. It drew heavily on recruits from the nascent global justice movement, the environmental movement, the women's movement, the LGBTQ movement, the labor movement, and other sectors of movement activism. A number of organizations that participated in the protests were themselves hybrid formations, such as Code Pink: Women for Peace, which combined peace and women's activism; US Labor against the War; and Veterans for Peace, which drew on veterans from the Vietnam War as well as from the earlier Gulf War. Heaney and Rojas found that such "hybrid" organizations played a key brokerage role in bringing together disparate strands of a movement that might otherwise not have held together.

As is the case for most hybrid movements, some participating organizations in this new movement were moderate, while others were more radical and couched their opposition to the war in a broad anti-imperial discourse. In the early years, animosity to President Bush and to a war they considered illegitimate helped keep the movement's different strands together. However, once Obama came into office, "they clashed on whether the administration represented a real change in US foreign policy or was simply another incarnation of more of the same" (Heaney & Rojas 2015: 134). Some groups – like United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) – collapsed of their own weight, while MoveOn shifted the core of its interests from the war to health care organizing (Heaney & Rojas 2015: 134), becoming little more than an adjunct of the Democrats. As a result of these defections, space was created for more radical groups like End US Wars, the Black Is Back Coalition for Social Justice, and the National Assembly to End the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Occupations to become more prominent in the movement.

The slide toward radicalization after Obama's election was evident at events organized by these coalitions when speakers tended to frame their concerns in ways that were not likely to resonate outside the community of hard-core peace activists. As a result, the movement never again achieved the unity or the dimensions it had enjoyed between 2003 and 2005 (ibid., p. 135). A good part of the decline in the size of the demonstrations we saw in Figure 7.1 was due to this collapse in unity and from the defection of some of the largest and more moderate sectors of the movement (Meyer & Corrigall-Brown 2006).

Where did these activists go when they moved beyond their antiwar activities? We can get a hint of their destinations from the network analyses that Heaney and Rojas carried out for their book. Democratic Party–identified interests experienced a surge within the antiwar network during the 2007–8 period, but, after this period, as Heaney and Rojas observe in their book: "Democratically identified organizations – notably MoveOn and the Democratic party itself – moved to the sidelines (i.e., of the antiwar demonstrations) as a Democratic president assumed office" (ibid., pp. 145–47).

Heaney's and Rojas's individual-level analysis triangulates with their findings about organizational persistence and defection in the antiwar movement. As it settled into a more stable phase, movement and partisan identities "pulled activists in different directions after the election of a Democratic president" and "Democratic identities were associated with individuals who eventually withdrew from antiwar activism" (ibid., p. 116 and table 4.4). Antiwar activists with strong Democratic Party identities (i.e., those who had identified with the party during their youth) were more likely to defect after a Democratic president was elected.[7]

How much the antiwar movement contributed to Obama's victory is difficult to sort out from the survey data because, by 2008, opposition to the war was so widespread among Democratic voters. Antiwar sentiments were probably more important for white voters, because the African Americans who flocked to the polls in 2008 were more likely to turn out for identity reasons. What was certainly the case was that Obama's ability to gain the nomination over Hillary Clinton was helped by her early support of the war. The antiwar movement was a horizontal hybrid formation, one of whose main components was support for the Democratic Party. That left the movement adrift when a Democratic president was elected. By the time his administration had begun to consider intervening in the Syrian civil war, most of these antiwar Democrats who had returned to their Democratic roots were engaged in domestic concerns – like the passage of Obama's signature Affordable Care Act.

The dynamics of the relations between the antiwar movement and the Democratic Party illustrate the major weakness of horizontal hybrids. Once the events that create an incentive for activists to organize outside a party are past, the durability of the alliance subsides. More enduring are the vertical ties created by the dependency of a party on its external partners, especially when that party is dependent on external financial resources, as we will see in the relations between the Republican Party and two major networks that grew during the first decade of the new century – the Tea Party and the Koch network of organizations.

III   THE TEA PARTY: A BLENDED HYBRID

The growing intersection between party and movement activism in the early twenty-first century was not limited to the left. Soon after Obama's election, a new movement arose on the right, one that eventually became a key component of the Republican coalition – the Tea Party. In fact, the emergence

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[7] From interviews they carried out at the US Social Forum in 2010, Heaney and Rojas found that even participants who were highly committed to movement activism were more likely to reduce their involvement in antiwar protests after 2008. Thus, even in the movement-leaning share of their sample, the authors found that partisan identities were a more powerful draw than movement identities (2015, p. 121).

of a mostly white, mostly comfortable movement on the right of the Republican Party had many of the properties of a countermovement to the election of this African American president. However, it was constituted at the base by grassroots groups and at the summit by national advocacy groups with deep pockets and a libertarian mission. True, it drew on traditional sources of conservative commitment, including religious faith, racial resentment, and status insecurity, but what was new about it was what the antiwar movement lacked – a combination of a grassroots base and a national organizational network.

We know how that movement began. Although there were early premonitions of turbulence on the right before 2008, the Tea Party's emergence was triggered soon after Obama's election when broadcaster Rick Santelli railed about the government's bailout of large firms following the financial crisis. Santelli's call for a Chicago Tea Party was picked up by the *Drudge Report* and "quickly scaled the media pyramid." Web-savvy activists saw Santelli's outburst as rhetorical gold. "Operating at first through the new online social networking site Twitter, conservative bloggers and Republican campaign veterans took the opportunity offered by the Santelli rant to plan protests under the newly minted 'Tea Party' name" (Skocpol & Williamson, p. 7).

Building on a vast "tax day" turnout, many of these participants created what seem to have been more than 1,000 local groups, "taking grassroots activism from the realm of occasional outbursts connected by Internet communications into sustained, face-to-face community organizing" (ibid., p. 8). The potential firepower of these activists was revealed at town hall protests before the 2010 midterm elections, when many thousands of them came out to shout at Democratic candidates. Their efforts were amplified by the mainstream media and by the alacrity with which moneyed groups – some of them coming from the Koch network – noted their potential and claimed their leadership.

Who Were the Tea Partiers?

Because of the attention of a group of intrepid social scientists, we know a great deal about the Tea Party's activists and sympathizers. From Michael Bailey and his collaborators' analysis, we know that they came disproportionately from the Midwest and the West, from areas with a high median household income, and from election districts dominated by Republicans (Bailey et al. 2012: 784). Although they should not be confused with the Christian Right that came before them, they were largely Protestant, came predominantly from evangelical denominations, and were for the most part regular churchgoers. We also know that they shared a dislike of immigrants and harbored a high degree of racial resentment (Jacobson 2011).

From David Kirby's and Emily Ekins' early analyses of Tea Party sympathizers, we also know that roughly half of them could be identified as

"libertarians" while the other half were coded as "conservatives" (Kirby & Ekins 2012). This distinction is an important one, especially when racial resentment is included in the definition of social conservatism. In comparison, the national-level organizations that claimed leadership of the movement were mainly libertarian – especially those associated with the Koch network. As Bryan Gervais and Irwin Morris concluded from their exhaustive analysis, "Tea Party *organization*s tend to focus on policy objectives driven by fiscal conservatism. Tea Party *supporters* among the members of the mass public, however, tend to care far less about fiscal conservatism (apart from tax cuts) than Tea Party organizations" (Gervais & Morris 2018: 39).

The distinction between libertarians and social and racial conservatives was to some degree obscured by the fact that the media focused attention on the "business friendly libertarians" who tried to take hold of the grassroots insurgency from Washington and New York. These groups were within easy reach of the media and tried to emphasize the new movement's opposition to taxation, regulation, and the welfare state (Van Dyke & Meyer 2014: 15). In contrast, more than four-fifths of the grassroots Tea Partiers were social conservatives who were, for example, worried that "religion as a whole" was losing influence on government leaders and institutions (Kirby & Ekins 2012: 18). They also harbored deep racial resentments, fearing that they were "losing the America they have known and cherished" (Skocpol & Williamson, p. 32).

This fear was enhanced by the financial crisis of 2008–9, but it went deeper than economics. Their sense of dread was deepened when – after eight years of a Republican administration – Americans elected as president a mixed-race law professor with an African father and a background of community organizing in Chicago.

The merger of economic libertarianism and social conservatism among these groups of voters was a carryover of the fusion of ideological elements we saw in Chapter 6 and presaged the merger of populism and plutocracy we would see in the Trumpist movement later in the decade (Pierson 2017). However, the rejection of "the other" went deeper than antipathy for the new president. Many Tea Partiers looked with equal disdain at black and brown Americans, illegal immigrants, lazy young people, and "freeloaders" on government largesse. Based on in-depth interviews with activists in three states, Skocpol and Williamson concluded: "The nightmare of societal decline is usually painted in cultural hues, and the villains in the picture are freeloading social groups, liberal politicians, bossy professionals, big government, and the mainstream media" (p. 75).

Some scholars saw an authoritarian streak in many of these voters, a tendency that Donald Trump would later amplify with his attacks on immigrants and his bleak warning at the state of "American carnage" (Hetherington & Weiler 2009). In the same spirit, Inglehart and Norris (2017) see authoritarian orientation as a durable factor in American politics (Merciera 2020). More interesting: Many of

the authoritarian supporters of Donald Trump also see themselves as defenders of the American republic (Parker 2021).

In their penetrating study *Change They Can't Believe In* (2013), Parker and Barreto tried to explain Tea Party sympathizers' attitudes. They began their book by quoting a speaker at a 2011 Tea Party gathering who claimed that President Obama was "a closet secular-type Muslim, but he is still a Muslim. He's no Christian. We're seeing a man who's a socialist communist in the White House, pretending to be an American ... he wasn't even born here" (Parker & Barreto 2013: 1). Leaving aside the speaker's casual acquaintance with the facts, Parker and Barreto saw in such statements an expression of the status anxiety of Tea Party supporters. They argue that

[P]eople are driven to support the Tea Party from the anxiety they feel as they perceive the America they know, the country they love, slipping away, threatened by the rapidly changing face of what they believe is the "real" America: a heterosexual, Christian, middle-class, (mostly) male, white country. (ibid., pp. 2–3)

Parker and Barreto tested their theory with a battery of interview items that led them to conclude that Tea Party activists were "*reactionary* conservatives: people who fear change of any kind – especially if it threatens to undermine their way of life" (p. 6). Although there were strong racial components to their suspicion of Obama, for these authors, he also "*represents* change in which the Tea Party, and their many supporters, cannot believe; change they don't support" (p. 11). After a series of empirical tests and "after accounting for a host of alternative explanations," their central claim was that "support for the Tea Party represents the reaction of its constituents to their perception that America no longer belongs to them" (p. 156).[8]

Along with their conspiratorial views, Tea Party sympathizers displayed an alarming indifference to facts, a property that would expand in the Trumpist movement to which many of them transferred their loyalty after 2016 (see Chapter 8). For example, when Parker and Barreto asked their respondents if they thought Obama was a Christian, 71 percent of Tea Party "true believers" disagreed; when they were asked if he was born in the United States, 59 percent disagreed (p. 209).[9] Gervais and Morris also found that "hyperbolic" (and in

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[8] Parker and Barreto fortified their theory with an ingenious paired comparison between official Tea Party websites and the conservative website that guided the development of the New Right, *The National Review Online*. The authors examined a total of forty-two Tea Party websites from March 2009 through the midterm elections of 2020, selected based on official domain names and state or regional representation. For the list of the websites they examined and their geographic distribution, see the appendix to their book (pp. 280–81). In contrast to the economic conservatism of the magazine, the Tea Party websites revealed a tendency to promote conspiratorial views and antiminority sentiment, sharply different from what the authors found on the *National Review's* website (p. 160).

[9] On Tea Partiers' disdain for expertise, which resembles that of Donald J. Trump, see Skocpol and Williamson, pp. 52–54.

some cases apocalyptic) language about the effects of the stimulus package, bailouts, the Affordable Care Act, and other Obama policies was a hallmark of Tea Party rhetoric after 2009 and potentially a boon to congressional Republicans (Gervais & Morris, p. 158).

Was the Tea Party a true grassroots movement as many activists and some outside observers claimed? Or was it an "astroturf" expression of big-money groups, like the Kochs, who were hoping to use the movement to give their plutocratic aims a patina of populism? Or was the Tea Party a creation of the expanding right-wing mediascape, led by Fox News? In a period marked by the rise of "hybrid" mobilizations, for Skocpol and Williamson, it was all three of these things. Their conclusions are worth quoting in detail:

Grassroots activism is certainly a key force, energized by angry, conservative-minded citizens who have formed vital local and regional groups. Another force is the panoply of national funders and ultra-free-market advocacy groups that seek to highlight and leverage grassroots efforts to further their long-term goal of remaking the Republican Party. Finally, the Tea Party cannot be understood without recognizing the mobilization provided by conservative media hosts, who openly espouse and encourage the cause. (ibid., p. 13)

As we have seen, the antiwar movement was a hybrid, too, but the Tea Party's hybridity was also *vertical*, with links to the polished operatives of the national advocacy groups that aimed to represent it. Much of the visibility of the Tea party came from above – from national advocacy organizations like FreedomWorks and newly formed groups like the Tea Party Express. These entities "suddenly saw fresh opportunities to push long-standing ideas about reducing taxes on business and the rich, gutting government regulations, and privatizing Social Security and Medicare" (Skocpol & Williamson 2011: 9). In short order, large, wealthy organizations had found an outlet to claim authorship of the kind of grassroots movement they had been unable to create themselves.

This was not the first time that national advocacy organizations had attempted to latch onto grassroots activism in order to advance their agendas. Remember how the Democratic Party in 1896 attempted to capture the grassroots energy of the agrarian movement behind the candidacy of William Jennings Bryan? What was unusual in the case of the Tea Party was the number of organizations that competed for sponsorship of the movement. Some, like FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity (AFP), had been in the field for years and maintained their activities after the Tea Party had disappeared as a distinct movement. Others, like the Tea Party Express, were founded by California Republicans to support the movement and advance their political interests. The Tea Party Patriots, begun in 2009 as a "citizens' group," organized many of the anti-Obamacare town hall protests in 2010 and also offered "training opportunities" to local Tea Party groups (Fetner & King, 2014: 40). A fifth group, calling itself Tea Party Nation, was largely a commercial enterprise that

organized a Nashville conference featuring Sarah Palin, which failed to attract a large enough audience to justify continuing the practice (Meyer & Pullum 2014: 87). A sixth, founded by Glenn Beck, called itself the 9/12 Project and was designed to build national unity around nine principles and twelve values. Unlike FreedomWorks and AFP, whose goals were libertarian, Beck's group was the only national "Tea Party" group that endorsed religious principles designed to appeal to social conservatives (ibid.).

In summary, rather than an astroturf organization manipulated from the top or a true grassroots insurgency, the Tea Party was what Skocpol and Williamson call "a field of loosely interconnected organizations" in which each level attempted to "leverage" something – ideas, information, political and financial support – from the other.[10] These links helped the Tea Party "negotiate a far more rapid emergence and effective entry into mainstream politics than most social movements" (Van Dyke & Meyer 2014: 6).

The Mediascape and the Tea Party

But this would not have happened – or, at least, not so quickly – without availability of both free and paid media, as well as from the newly available online social media. "These resources added rapid growth, but created other dilemmas for the movement," write Nella Van Dyke and David S. Meyer. "Perhaps the most salient dilemma centered on political identity, as conflicts played out about both ultimate goals and tactics" (2014: 6).

In the lead for this affordance was Fox News, not only because it saw the potential of the movement for improving its ratings but because it saw an opportunity to shape the new movement's identity. By allocating prime space to Tea Party activities, Fox "served as a kind of social movement orchestrator, during what is always a dicey early period for any new protest effort." As a result, "a community of Fox-viewing Tea Partiers came to share a powerful, widely shared political identity, and the Fox News framing, in due course, shaped national perception of the Tea Party phenomenon" (Skocpol & Williamson, p. 135).

Fox was not alone. Apart from talk radio, where the new movement found homespun and religious broadcasters' support, the mainstream media soon felt a commercial need to join in – especially during the 2009 congressional recess,

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[10] That these were not "astroturf" organizations appeared clearly from the links in local Tea Party websites. When Skocpol and Williamson carried out an analysis of Tea Party group websites, their results showed extensive digital connections between the local and national expressions of this movement. For example, AFP was cited on 206 local Tea Party groups' websites and FreedomWorks on 267. Tea Party Patriots was mentioned almost 500 times on local Tea Party websites, while the Heritage Foundation was mentioned on 345 (Skocpol & Williamson, p. 114). These findings, although persuasive, should be interpreted with caution. As anyone who has constructed a website knows, the "mention" of links to a national organization can be purely nominal.

when Tea Partiers began to attack Democratic candidates in their town hall appearances. As the 2010 midterms approached, coverage of Tea Party rallies heated up in both parts of the media landscape. In this unusually polarized midterm election, when thousands of conservative voters turned out to vote against President Obama and his health-care plan (Jacobson 2011), the media "began to portray the Tea party as a full-fledged independent political movement, and speculated about whether it might even be an alternative to the two parties" (Skocpol & Williamson, p. 142).

Of course, this was never going to happen. In addition to the powerful constraints that the American system imposes on third parties, Tea Party voters were basically Republicans, and their deep-pocketed backers would never have backed a move that would divide the Right. The 2010 election demonstrated the movement's independent clout, but it also showed that the Tea Partiers aligned themselves predominantly with the right wing of the Republican Party (Jacobson, pp. 10–12).

IV   OUTSIDERS INSIDE: TEA PARTIERS IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

We now know what happened to the Tea Party in the years that followed its appearance in 2009. Although the Tea Party was never a party, many of the activists who identified with the movement gravitated into an "insurgent faction" of the Republican Party, from which many of them had come (Blum 2020). But they were different than most Republican voters in that many were willing to support lost-cause candidates and embrace policy positions that were almost guaranteed to fail. As Rachel Blum writes, in her recent book:

Tea Partiers were willing to contest Republican incumbents in primaries, even if this meant later losing the seats to Democrats. They had no qualms about pushing Republicans to oppose popular legislation or obstruct government operations, even if doing so would damage the party's reputation. (ibid., p. 3)

These were *movement Republicans* with the kind of "purist" attitudes to politics that we saw in the Garrisonian abolitionists, Alice Paul's National Women's Party, and the radical wing of the civil rights movement.[11] This was evident in their willingness to take positions in Republican primaries that were so extreme as to virtually guarantee the failure of the candidates they supported, from their use of brash, uncivil language to their willingness to accept as fact

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[11]   In her book, Blum sees the Tea Party as an "insurgent" faction (2020, pp. 22–23). She contrasts the movement to the Christian Right, which, in her view, employed a "consociational strategy" to push the Republicans to prioritize religious traditionalism (pp. 21–22). Blum's distinction between an "insurgent" and a "consociational" faction is a useful way of distinguishing between "inside" and "outside" strategies of ideologically driven groups, as far as parties go. But when they rallied in the thousands against the income tax, shouted down congressional candidates at town halls, and – most importantly – organized an independent network of local groups at the grassroots of American society, the Tea Partiers were more "outsiders" than "insiders."

conspiratorial speculations that no rational individual could believe in. Probably the best way to characterize the Tea Party at its height was as a social movement on the boundary of an institution, one that reflected the dissatisfaction of many Republicans with the direction and the lassitude of their party (Almeida & Nella Van Dyke 2014, p. 61). They contributed mightily to the movementization of the party system.

In this development, congressional elites played an important part. In July, 2010, a Tea Party–inspired group in the House of Representatives was created by Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann under the label "The House Tea Party Caucus." "Its ranks swelled after the 2010 midterms, but by 2013 many of the caucus's founding members had left office or lost energy, and the caucus went dormant" (Blum 2020: 81). Bachmann's effort was followed by the creation of a "Liberty Caucus" in 2011, "which claimed kinship with the Tea Party and was even chaired by Tea Party favorite Justin Amash" (ibid.). The House "Freedom Caucus," founded in 2015, solidified the Tea Party's presence in the House. This new caucus avoided direct association with the Tea Party label but "carried on the Tea Party's obstructionism" (ibid.). Its early success was to oust House Speaker John Boehner from his post before turning into a loyal buttress of the Trump administration. The Tea Party, which began as a social movement at the grassroots with support from well-funded national right-wing groups and sympathetic media outlets, evolved into an "insurgent faction" within the Republican Party, laying the groundwork for the Trump movement that followed.

Sociologist Rory McVeigh made a linkage between the Tea Party and earlier right-wing movements. In his contribution to *Understanding the Tea Party Movement* (2014: 15–34), McVeigh saw the popularity of the Tea Party as the result of "power devaluation," a theory of movement emergence that he developed in studying the 1920s-era Klan. McVeigh notes that, much like the twentieth-century Klan, the Tea Party was based on the mobilization of predominately middle-class whites who already enjoyed some level of political access and resources. He argues that a threatened loss of power in three realms, politics, economics, and status, inspired their mobilization.

Although I am not sure we need to return to the Know-Nothings or to the Klan to understand the Tea Party, the movement certainly included familiar motifs of reactionary mobilization based on race, anti-immigration, suspicion of government, fear of the unknown, and a recurring alternative to the "liberal tradition" (Smith 2010). But as Gervais and Morris demonstrated in their 2018 book, the Tea Party also laid the foundation for a new and even more disruptive movement/party interaction – the presidential campaign and election of Donald J. Trump in 2016, to which I will turn in Chapter 8.

V   THE KOCH NETWORK: A VERTICAL HYBRID

Some scholars, like David Karol (2014), have argued that, since the 1970s, there has been a revival of parties in a new form, based largely on the weight of the

"outside groups" that support candidates under a variety of guises. Karol writes, "The groups that scholars saw replacing parties, political consultants, and interest groups work within parties to a great extent" (2014: 9) But while they carry out many of the functions once monopolized by party organizations – especially fund-raising and allocation to candidates – it is not clear what is gained by defining parties so broadly that "outside groups" are seen as evidence for "the revival of the party system."

To avoid misunderstanding, I agree with Karol that the weight of outside groups has increased, especially on the Right and particularly since the Supreme Court's *Citizens' United* decision. But to employ the language of Daniel Schozman (2015), it is no longer clear which is the "anchor" and which is the "ship" in this relationship. The enormous financial clout of the Koch network, the intellectual and organizational skills of its leaders – the Koch brothers – and their ability to create "purpose-built" organizations to surround and, to some extent, infiltrate Republican policy making made them a powerful challenge to the party system as a whole. Unlike traditional business-funded groups that focus on either lobbying or electoral activity, the Koch network created a full spectrum of organizational and educational endeavors.

Playing the Long Game

But it didn't start out that way. The origins of the network go back to the 1970s, when Charles Koch, the source of the intellectual firepower of the network, began to seriously study the work of the "Austrian school" of economics represented by Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Hayek. The intellectual broker of this filiation was public choice economist James Buchanan; Charles got to know him when Buchanan was teaching at Virginia Tech University in the 1970s. "In the eventual merger of Koch's money and managerial talent and the Buchanan team's decades of work monomaniacally identifying how the populace became more powerful than the propertied," writes historian Nancy MacLean, "a fifth column movement would come into being, the likes of which no nation has ever seen" (MacLean 2017: 127).

Accumulating money and resources and spending it to advance their companies' interests is what has gained the Koch brothers their notoriety and power. But it would understate the importance of their organizational model to reduce them to common or garden fat cats with a special talent for mobilizing other wealthy Americans into a well-oiled political and financial machine. What they began to fund in the 1970s was not an interest group but a movement – granted, mainly an *elite* movement but one with a high degree of ideological coherence and consistency. As Jane Mayer writes of Charles Koch, "His language was militant," demanding that "our movement must destroy the prevalent statist paradigm" (Mayer 2017: 66). "It is undeniable," wrote Koch, "that ideas do determine actions and that we should refine and apply our ideas. But ideas do not spread by themselves; they spread only through

people. Which means we need a *movement*. Only with a movement can we build an effective force for social change."[12]

Charles Koch had the classical movement activist's disdain for parties and politicians. In his 1978 article, he hardly bothered to hide his dismissal of Republicans who sought to influence regulation rather than attacking the entire statist paradigm. And although much of the network's resources were channeled to Republican candidates, some of its affiliates – like AFP – had more than fifty paid staffers. "Other Koch-related advocacy groups, such as Generation Opportunity and the LIBRE Initiative, planted grassroots organizers wherever there were hotly contested elections" (Mayer, p. 454).

The Koch's long-game strategy of building up an intellectual brain trust was also familiar from the social movement playbook. They spent lavishly to create a network of students and academics who would support their ideas, spread the libertarian message, and eventually take up positions in the movement. This involved a long-term investment in educational institutions, including the creation of some two dozen privately funded academic centers. At George Mason University, they created the Mercatus Center and funded the law school. The Kochs also subsidized colleges that would promote the libertarian message and produce the shock troops for future battles. "The students that graduate out of these higher education programs," explained Kevin Gentry, vice president for special projects at Koch Industries, "populate the state-based think tanks and the national think tanks" and become the "major staffing for the state chapters" of the "grassroots groups." "Those with passion," he continued, "would be encouraged to become part of what he called the Kochs' *fully integrated network*" (quoted in Mayer, p. 449).

Building the "Kochtopus"

There have been plenty of big money pressure groups leaning into both political parties since the Gilded Age, but the Koch network is unusual, both for its extensive reach and for its long-term plan to instill a libertarian culture at the peak of American politics. This is not an old-fashioned lobby (although it spends lavishly on lobbying) nor is it a foundation (though it has that, too) but a conglomerate of foundations, special-interest pressure groups, educational initiatives, think tanks, and a billionaire's caucus that meets twice yearly in great secrecy to plan and collect donations for its initiatives. It is, as its libertarian allies characterized it, a "*kochtopus.*"

For example, the Koch-funded keystone organization, AFP, which was created in 2004, combines lobbying and publicity efforts at the national level with mobilizing citizen activists in the districts. AFP has 38 statewide

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[12] Charles Koch, "The Business Community: Resisting Regulation." www.libertarianism.org/pub-lications/essays/business-community-resisting-regulation

chapters and claimed, in 2020, to have more than 3.2 million activists and 100,000 financial supporters. AFP can organize demonstrations in legislative hearings about legislation it supports or opposes (Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez, p. 689). As these observers write of AFP, "It more closely resembles a European-style political party than any sort of specialized traditional US advocacy group or campaign organization" (ibid.). The network's power over the Republicans depends on both its financial clout and its ability to shape the policies of the party, as the following episode testifies.

John Boehner Goes to New York City

In 2011, in the course of the congressional conflict over raising the debt ceiling, Republican House Speaker John Boehner traveled to New York City to ask for the help of billionaire David Koch in convincing congressional Republicans to support the compromise he hoped to fashion with the Obama administration. As *New Yorker* reporter Jane Mayer recalls, "One former adviser to the Koch family says that 'Boehner begged David to call off the dogs. He pointed out that if the country defaulted, David's own investments would tank'" (Mayer 2017: 366). The plea would have been unusual for any member of Congress to make of a billionaire with no direct role in the Republican Party. "But the spectacle of the Speaker of the House, who was among the most powerful elected officials in the country, third in line in the order of presidential succession, traveling to the Manhattan office of a billionaire businessman to ask for his help in an internecine congressional fight captures just how far the Republican Party's fulcrum of power had shifted toward outside donors by 2011" (ibid., p. 367).

In the event, Boehner failed, and after his return to Washington, opponents to the deal that he had laboriously worked out with President Obama – many of them who had recently arrived in Congress with Tea Party support – prevailed, and Congress was forced to agree to indiscriminate spending cuts, mysteriously called "the sequester." The sequester caused enormous economic damage and made clear that a new and radical group of Republicans were now in the saddle in Congress.

The writing was on the wall for Boehner, who was forced to resign in 2015 after his next encounter with the radical right of his party in another fight over funding the government. "I got overrun, that's what happened," Boehner confessed to President Obama after he failed to stop a government shutdown in 2013 (Mayer, p. 434). He was replaced by Congressman Paul Ryan, who was elected with the support of the Tea Party–linked Freedom Caucus.

A House Speaker pleading for a billionaire for help in keeping the government afloat was atypical, but it starkly illustrates the subservience of the party's new conservative majority to its outside funders. After the 2012 election, Mayer wrote:

Hugely wealthy radicals on the right hadn't won the White House, but they had altered the nature of American democracy. They had privatized much of the public campaign process and dominated the agenda of one of the country's two major political parties. (Mayer, p. 408)

This shift was in part the result of the accumulation of the enormous wealth and political influence of the Koch family and its allies (Skocpol & Hertel-Fernandez 2016), but of a nest of other developments also contributed:

- First, the primary reforms of the 1970s that had weakened the weight of the central organizations of both parties and led to the rise of a "supercharged" primary electorate;
- Second, the campaign financing reforms of the 1970s and 2002 opened the gates to a flood of largely anonymous private money pouring directly into Republican election campaigns;
- Third, in its 2010 Citizens' United decision the Supreme Court opened the door to virtually unlimited and largely anonymous private funding of election campaigns.

All that money and all those troops had an inevitable effect on policy making. The Koch network was instrumental in defeating the Obama administration's cap-and-trade bill, which would have impacted the company's oil and gas interests (Mayer, ch. 8). It created an organization dedicated to whittling down and almost killing President Obama's Affordable Care Act (ch. 7). And, through the American Legislative Exchange Council and other decentralized groups, the Kochs created "what appeared to be a conservative revolution bubbling up from the bottom to nullify Obama's policies in the states" (Mayer, pp. 424–28).

But the Koch network was not always successful in its assaults on Obama and the Democrats. For one thing, as power shifted from central party professionals to what Mayer calls "rogue billionaires," top-down consensus was giving way to warring factions in the party (Mayer, p. 376). Party professionals, as La Raja and Schaffner remind us, are in it to win, and winning usually consists of making compromises, rolling logs, reaching out to moderate voters, and shifting ideological ground (La Raja & Schaffner 2015). Although the Kochs were flexible tacticians, their strategy of whittling down the regulatory state was based on rigid ideological convictions that came across as massive indifference to ordinary Americans.

Second, despite their obsessive preoccupation with secrecy, the insistent spread and enormous financial investments and rapacious politics of the network could not remain under wraps indefinitely. When, despite the millions poured into the campaign to make him a one-term president, Obama won the 2012 election, even the normally ebullient Charles Koch was chastened. "Our goal of advancing a free and prosperous America is even more difficult than we envisioned, but it is essential that we continue, rather

than abandon, this struggle," he wrote in the *National Review Online* after the Republicans' defeat.[13] It was not long after this – following a close analysis of the election results – that the Charles Koch Institute announced a new "Well-Being Initiative" aimed at softening – but not reducing – the network's links to the Republican Party.[14]

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have made three interrelated arguments about movements, parties, and their relations to each other in the early twenty-first century:

First, though there has clearly been an increase in movement-related politics over these two decades, the shift goes beyond the thesis of a "movement society" in the expansion of movement mentalities and movement tactics to groups beyond classical social movements. While the anti–Iraq War movement fit the traditional model of hybridity, neither the Koch network nor the Tea Party were classical social movements or traditional lobbying organizations, but they adopted familiar movement discourses and forms of action. The Tea Party movement shared many properties with "reactionary rightist" movements of the past, but it was built through a combination of grassroots organizing at the base and modern media and advocacy group intervention at the summit. Charles Koch, from the heights of the American capitalist system, saw himself acting on behalf of a movement and adopted both the uncompromising language and the organizational weapons more familiar from the history of social movements than from the repertoire of interest groups and lobbies. Had Lenin witnessed the strategic rigidity and tactical flexibility of the network that the Kochs built, he would have felt right at home.

Second, the weakening of the classical party organizations that has occurred over the past few decades made these institutions vulnerable to the entry of the movements outlined in this chapter. Though the antiwar movement was able to coordinate impressive national and international demonstrations, it virtually vanished as a movement while Bush was still in power. The Tea Party gained greater purchase over the Republicans, combining grassroots mobilization with the prominence it gained from the sponsorship of national advocacy groups. As for the Koch network, while beginning its life with the classical abhorrence of parties typical of movements, its "tentacles" have surrounded the Republican Party from many angles and influenced its adoption of hard-right libertarian policies.

[13] www.nationalreview.com/corner/kochs-postpone-post-election-meeting-robert-costa
[14] In 2019 and 2020, Charles Koch reduced even further his group's ties to the GOP, unhappy with the Trump administration's policy stances. www.cnbc.com/2020/09/29/2020-presidential-election-why-koch-network-wont-help-trumps-bid.html

Third, while it would be an exaggeration to conclude from these trends that parties need to be redefined to include the internalization of these "outsiders," there is no doubt that parties and movements now share intimate connections, of which we have seen three variants in this chapter: *horizontal hybrids* like the antiwar movement, which could still be understood as a familiar form of division of labor between a movement and a party; *blended hybrids* like the Tea Party, which assailed the party system from the bottom and from the top through a combination of grassroots organizing, advocacy group pressure, and amplification by the media;[15] and *vertical hybrids* like the Koch network's imbrication with the Republicans, in which the former employed vast resources and organizational innovation to advance major changes in the latter's public policies.

It is too soon to decide whether these hybrid forms are part of a general trend or constitute transitional forms between past and future. What seems clear is that they laid the groundwork for a more direct insertion of a new movement into the Republican Party – the Trump movement – one that may crash and burn after Trump's loss of the 2020 election and the tragic events that followed or may have a lasting impact on the party system and on American democracy. We will turn to that movement and to the countermovement it triggered in Chapter 8.

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[15] Another form of blended hybrid are the top-down controlled "grassroots" insurgencies created by professional organizations on behalf of big money funders. For this type of "invention of the grassroots," see Walker (2014).