

Adapt, or Die! Organizational Change in Office-Seeking Anti-Political Establishment Parties

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I Introduction

Over the last few years, the entry of radical right-wing parties into national governments in Austria, Italy and the Netherlands has made headlines around the world and sparked debates on the impact that the government participation of these formations might have on policy-making, political cultures and system stability in the affected countries (Hainsworth, 2000; Holsteyn and Irwin, 2003; Kitschelt, 1995; Luther, 2003; Minkenberg, 2001). There has been much less discussion about the effects of government participation on radical right-wing parties themselves. After all, they tend to portray themselves as challengers of the political establishment up to the moment of joining coalitions with their mainstream competitors. In this, they are comparable to new politics, left-libertarian or green parties, which began their life as challengers of the establishment as well but have joined national governments in Belgium, Finland, France, Germany and Italy over the last decade (Müller-Rommel, 1998; Taggart, 1994). These two types of parties may thus be viewed as subtypes of the broader category of anti-political establishment (APE) parties (Schedler, 1996). An APE party fulfills all three of the following criteria (Abedi, 2004):

- It challenges the status quo in terms of major policy issues and core elements of the political system.
- It perceives itself as a challenger to the parties that make up the political establishment.
- It asserts that there exists a fundamental divide between the establishment and the people, thereby implying that all mainstream parties, whether in government or in the opposition, are essentially the same.

In this paper, we explore the under-researched effects of government participation on the organizational structures and long-term survival of office-seeking APE parties. The shift to government aspiration and participation should represent severe challenges for APE parties because they tend to differ from their mainstream competitors not just in terms of their policy profiles but also with regard to their more ‘unorthodox’ organizational make-up, which is in turn inextricably linked to their populist stances and self-understanding. The electoral appeal of these formations is not the least based on such features. More than anything else, shared organizational features and challenges justify the analysis of formations whose programmatic stances range across the ideological spectrum as instances of one and the same category. Yet one might expect that the pressures of aspiring to and being in government should push these formations not only toward more moderate policy positions but also toward organizational structures more closely resembling those of the mainstream parties. One might further hypothesize that APE parties that fail to adapt their structures to their new role are more likely to be unsuccessful in the attempt to establish themselves permanently as viable governing, or potentially governing, parties. However, a closer examination of the organizational peculiarities and specific challenges of the two subtypes of the APE party also reveals crucial differences. As a consequence, the process of adaptation to government participation is likely to be even more demanding for right-wing populist than for green parties.

We shall probe into these theoretical expectations by examining the political fate of APE parties in the German city-state of Hamburg. The success of right-wing extremist and populist parties has so far been rather limited if it is considered against the comparative backdrop of neighboring countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands or Switzerland. Despite evidence of growing political disenchantment in the electorate, mostly directed at the mainstream parties, new formations capitalizing on dissatisfaction with the establishment have

faced considerable hurdles in Germany, especially if their ultimate aim, beyond mere electoral success, was the participation in government coalitions. Most notably, no radical right-wing party has so far made a successful and durable breakthrough at the national level, credibly aspired for, or joined, a federal government coalition. A study of Germany thus appears unlikely to offer many insights into the specific organizational challenges faced by this party type, and the country has indeed received less attention in the pertinent literature than other nations. However, we argue that this relative neglect is not warranted. If the usual focus on the radical right is extended to a focus on APE parties across the ideological spectrum and on developments at the level of its 16 federal states (*Länder*), Germany in fact provides many more cases of formations that based their initial electoral success on anti-establishment platforms, but later came to aspire for, and experiment with, participation in *Länder* or federal government coalitions with one of the two large mainstream parties. However, while some APE parties have become serious contenders for government participation (the Greens and, to a lesser extent, the PDS), others (various right-wing formations) have managed to gain access to parliaments and, in two cases, to join government coalitions, but have not been able to establish themselves permanently and beyond the *Länder* where they originated or had their greatest electoral success.

Using the most similar cases design and focusing on the last two decades, our paper analyzes the experiences of three office-seeking and government-incumbent APE parties and the degree to which they underwent organizational change. After a theoretical section in which we elaborate on the hypothesized organizational challenges and development of APE parties (section II), we outline the fate of the GAL, the *Statt* Party and the PRO in Hamburg. Established in the early 1980s, the GAL became the local unit of the Greens shortly after and joined the city government in the late 1990s. Hamburg, where the Greens achieved their greatest electoral success beyond the municipal level, remains a stronghold of the federal party. The other two formations, which were established and entered government coalitions during the 1990s and early 2000s, are the only examples to date of centrist (the *Statt* Party) and right-wing populist (the PRO) APE parties in Germany that have participated in *Länder* governments and run as incumbents in subsequent elections. However, in the first election that followed their initial success, both parties went down to a crushing defeat, and eventually disappeared from the political scene altogether. In section IV, we discuss the role of organizational features and problems in explaining these outcomes. Comparing, within the same political arena, examples that are located in the center, on the right and on the left side of the ideological spectrum, we attempt to shed light on shared organizational challenges, on the one hand, and diverging trajectories of change and adaptation, on the other. Our findings suggest that variables describing the degree to which effective organizational change has occurred are indeed crucial and can, to a large extent, account for the different trajectories of right-wing and left-wing APE parties in Germany.

II Organizational change and the long-term survival of office-seeking APE parties: Bringing together three theoretical approaches

In this section, we aim to provide the theoretical rationale for a set of hypotheses on the organizational development and long-term survival of office-seeking and government incumbent APE parties that will subsequently be tested and corroborated in the German context:

- (1) While an ‘unorthodox’ organizational make-up is often prominent among the features that distinguish this category of parties from their mainstream competitors, and these characteristic

structures tend to be highlighted and defended as long as policy-seeking, intra-party democracy-seeking and vote-seeking goals dominate, the shift to government aspiration and participation are likely to create pressures for organizational change in the direction of conformity.

(2) While successful organizational adaptation is crucial for office-seeking APE parties because it directly affects their chances to reach the goal of government participation and to establish themselves permanently, change along those lines is also likely to confront these parties with severe and often insurmountable challenges precisely because it entails the departure from a key element of their anti-establishment platforms. Successful organizational adaptation can thus be hypothesized to be a necessary precondition for the long-term survival of government-incumbent APE parties.

(3) Due to characteristic organizational differences between its two major subtypes, this adaptation is, however, more difficult to implement for right-wing populist than for green parties of the APE category. In other words, the two subtypes are faced with similar organizational challenges but have a diverging potential to overcome them.

The literature on party organization and change has grown considerably in recent years. Various theoretical approaches have been developed, each focusing on different explanatory factors for, or suggesting different consequences of, change in the internal rules and structures of parties. Harmel has identified three distinct perspectives that at first glance seem to be in direct competition with each other (Harmel, 2002). In this paper, we agree with his contention that these approaches “would be more correctly and usefully seen as complementary parts of a single, more complete theory of party change, and that development of appropriate bridges among today’s ‘theory islands’ should be high on the agenda for future research” (120). Our study will try to help build these bridges and hence make reference to several approaches, for we argue that in order to fully understand the reasons behind, as well as the impact of, organizational change in APE parties, such a broader perspective is in fact needed.

APE parties can, almost by definition, be expected to focus on policy-seeking, intra-party democracy-seeking and vote-seeking more than on office-seeking goals precisely because of their outsider status and declared opposition to the mainstream parties (on the notion of party goals, see Harmel and Svåsand, 1993; Strøm and Müller, 1999). As long as they remain loyal to anti-establishment stances, they are thus neither likely to be invited into government coalitions with their competitors nor to easily sacrifice any of the three former goals in order to participate in a government. This raises the question why APE parties should be expected to shift their priorities in the first place. A shift in the primary goals of parties may be triggered by internal factors and external stimuli, and they may be gradual or abrupt. Harmel and Janda, for instance, argue that change may be induced by factors like the replacement of a party’s leadership or dominant faction alone, but that external shocks are likely to produce the most extensive change because they directly affect primary goals (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Their ‘discrete change’ approach can thus be used to explain the timing of a particular APE party’s decision to become government-aspiring as the result of specific external shocks, internal factors or a combination of both sets of variables. The objective privileged by a party determines which kind of external stimuli will be most conducive to change. For a vote-seeking party, for instance, this may be a string of disappointing election results (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 269). While shifts in the nature of the party system or instances of poor electoral performance are important categories of external shocks for most parties, an APE party’s change of primary goals is more likely to be induced by an unexpectedly *successful* electoral performance that gives it a pivotal role and makes it a credible – or unavoidable – coalition partner for some of its mainstream competitors. Under such circumstances, the chance to participate in lower-tier or even national government –

and to be in a good position to dictate core elements of the coalition agreement – may be too big a prize to turn away even for a formation that otherwise strictly adheres to its anti-establishment platform. However, this argument relates primarily to newly established APE parties. Primary goal change in older, already institutionalized, APE parties is just as likely to result from poor as from successful electoral results.

While external shocks often lead parties to reassess their primary goals, this change in turn encourages them to undertake organizational reforms. The role and interdependence of external stimuli and internal factors in explaining organizational change has been substantiated both for right-wing populist and for green parties (Burchell, 2001; Harmel and Janda, 1994). But why should office-seeking APE parties be expected to change in the direction of conformity with their mainstream competitors? After all, parties in general tend to be conservative with regard to their structures, and APE parties not only develop in opposition to the policy and issue positions of the political establishment. Instead, this opposition is evident in their distinct organizational make-up as well, which tends to be part and parcel of their very anti-establishment platforms, to correspond to the expectations of their members and supporters and hence to be in line with their policy-seeking, intra-party democracy-seeking and vote-seeking goals. In spite of their conspicuous ideological differences, both right-wing populist and green parties tend to put great effort into challenges to the prevalent model of party organization. As long as APE parties are not office-seeking, but capitalize on anti-party sentiment in attracting and binding protest voters, they can thus be expected to retain their characteristic movement character and outsider posture, and hence to resist pressures to adapt to the prevalent organizational model (Taggart, 1996).

The first answer to the question raised here is suggested by the school of thought that Harmel calls ‘system-level trends’ approach – a perspective that focuses on systemic variables and a party’s reactions to shifts in its environment to explain change. According to this view, systemic pressures apply to APE parties in the same fashion as they do to their mainstream competitors once they reconsider their outsider posture in order to become government-aspiring or even decide to join a government. This is thought to be so because the political environment at any given point in time favors a particular model of party organization and hence creates strong incentives for parties to adapt their organizational make-up to that prevalent model. Thus, office-seeking APE parties are likely to experience increased pressures to adapt their peculiar organizational structures in the direction of conformity (Taggart, 1996: 110-3). Scholars like Weber, Duverger, Kirchheimer, Panebianco, and Katz and Mair have so far contributed to identifying at least four of these dominant models (Duverger, 1959; Katz and Mair, 1994; Kirchheimer, 1966; Panebianco, 1988; Poguntke, 2003; Reif, 1997; Weber, 1958). They are, in chronological order, the elite, mass, catch-all and cartel party types (Helms, 2001; Katz and Mair, 1995; Koole, 1996; Poguntke, 2002). Today, and although it is precisely the real or perceived trend toward the organizational structures of Katz and Mair’s cartel party that tends to underpin current anti-party sentiment, government aspiration and incumbency may thus even – and counter-intuitively – foster an APE party’s organizational change along the lines of a model that epitomizes much of what these formations oppose. In the process of change, they may become part of the establishment themselves.

Still, the mere reference to systemic pressures provides a rather unsatisfactory explanation of major change in a party’s organizational structures. A second school of thought, the ‘life-cycle’ approach, which focuses more strongly on internal factors and decision-making processes, appears more convincing. Building on Michels and on Stein’s work on social movements, its proponents argue that there is a nexus between a party’s stage of development and its primary

goals, on the one hand, and specific leadership tasks and organizational requirements, on the other (Harmel and Svåsand, 1993; Michels, 1911; Pedersen, 1982; Stein, 1973). According to this view, leadership and organizational change occurs gradually as parties move through three stages of development, and the nature and timing of organizational reforms can thus be thought to be a function of an “individual party’s age and/or growth pattern” (Harmel, 2002: 130). Each of the phases that a party goes through on its way to maturation thus not only requires specific leadership abilities, strategic orientations and capacity, but also the securing and implementation of appropriate organizational resources and structures. As their structures develop, parties shed their initial movement character, formulate a broader and long-term political and electoral agenda, and enter a path of institutionalization.

At the first stage, which stretches from a party’s formation to the election of its first couple of (local) representatives, it must develop and communicate its identity and message, and secure a constituency.¹ The new party – and even more so, an APE party – will be eager to achieve these objectives by distinguishing itself from its competitors. In this phase, then, policy-seeking and intra-party democracy-seeking goals are likely to be prioritized. In fact the greater opportunities for meaningful involvement that any new party tends to afford – and that formations of the APE type promise – may attract members and supporters as much as the issue positions that they stake out for themselves. ‘Novice ideologues’ with high levels of ideological commitment, enthusiasm and loyalty to the leadership, but little or no office-holding or political experience are likely to play an important role at this stage (Wellhofer and Hennessey, quoted in Harmel and Svåsand, 1993: 71, 87). Their distinctive organizational structures and anti-establishment stances make APE parties more open and attractive to this kind of members and conversely, these formations will have a strong incentive not to question or change their ‘unorthodox’ features or to deter ‘novice ideologues.’ Especially where parties have been founded and are guided through the first phase of their existence by a charismatic leader with the requisite creative abilities and rhetorical qualities, a differentiated and effective organization and electoral machinery will not be greatly missed. Instead, the leader will draw on his/her personal authority and a small cadre of activists in order to compensate for the lack of established rules and procedures. In short, the maximum visibility and freedom of action enjoyed by the leader is conducive to a new party’s development and success at this stage.

At the second stage, the period of electoral growth or 'representation' (Pedersen), vote-seeking goals come to the fore, and a party’s growing number of rank-and-file members, parliamentary representatives and office-holders creates new challenges for its as yet rudimentary organization. It can no longer be run as a one-man (or one-woman) show, responsibilities have to be delegated from the leader to others, including standing party bodies, and routinized mechanisms of control, conflict resolution, consensus building and coordination have to be established. Unauthorized statements and actions of parliamentary representatives and office-holders that contradict stated positions have to be reined in, and increased (or more visible) levels of factionalism have to be dealt with. There will also be the desire to make electoral success more durable and to maximize vote through more effective campaign management. All these organizational challenges require activists with more political experience and administrative skills than the ‘novice ideologues.’ In short, the second phase is likely to be characterized by major organizational reforms that establish formal rules and procedures, as well as differentiated and effective structures. In order to ensure the successful implementation of these

¹ In Pedersen's formulation, the 'declaration' step refers to a group's announcement that it is willing to become a party, while 'authorization' refers to the moment when the necessary requirements are met.

professionalizing reforms, the party leadership has to become less personalized and to display considerable organizational skills and strategic foresight. Moreover, this phase requires the founding leader to give up some of his/her control over the party, and “[t]he leader who opposes, as a matter of principle, routinisation at the national level or the development of organisations at the local levels will be ill-suited for leadership during the second phase” (Harmel and Svåsand, 1993: 74). If the original leader does not possess the skills necessary to steer the party through the second (or any other) developmental stage, a change in the party’s leadership, dominant faction or coalition might occur; leadership change can either facilitate a party’s move to the next phase or, if it is associated with vicious infighting, tear it apart and ultimately lead to its demise. In any case, this phase represents a crucial hurdle on the path toward institutionalization.

Finally, the third stage sets in when the party’s attention shifts to office-seeking goals, its government aspiration is noticed and taken seriously by others, and the party is invited to join a coalition.² In this phase, then, a party must put emphasis on establishing and solidifying its credibility and reputation as a dependable partner, and hence APE parties will have to tone down the criticism of their mainstream competitors. The "need to widen its concern and compromise its position in order both to enhance its appeal and to manage external and internal conflicts" will remove a party even further from its movement roots in this phase (Yanai, 1999: 11). Relationships with other parties, including prospective or actual coalition partners, must be developed and cultivated. Erratic leadership behavior, intense factionalism or unresolved conflicts are no longer tolerable because they jeopardize attempts to secure credibility. A leader now has to have the abilities of a “moderator and stabiliser” (Harmel and Svåsand, 1993: 74), administrative and human-relations skills, and a much greater degree of strategic capacity because a government-aspiring or governing party’s leadership has to play a nested, or two-level, game: an internal game with rank-and-file members and middle-level activists, and an external one with prospective or actual coalition partners (Raschke, 2002; Tsebelis, 1990; Wiesendahl, 2002). In order to achieve these objectives, existing organizational structures must be fine-tuned and institutionalized, and the requirements of successful government participation are likely to necessitate centralization.

Various dimensions of a party's organizational make-up and change are implied in the life-cycle heuristic: the degree of territorial and functional differentiation (regional and local party units, standing party bodies with specific constituencies or responsibilities, etc.), and of centralization or decentralization in internal decision-making; forms of leadership (individual or collective, etc.) and its selection; the existence and nature of mechanisms, norms and procedures that regulate the relationship between the leadership, middle-level activists and rank-and-file members, between standing bodies, regional and local units, or – in Mair's terms (Mair, 1994) – between the party on the ground, the central party organization and the party in public office; and, the existence and nature of organizational links with social movements. Drawing on a combination of classical perspectives, party institutionalization can thus be defined as a process of organizational change whereby a party acquires a set of characteristic features: autonomy and clearly demarcated boundaries with its environment; internal coherence but also complexity and differentiation, with specific roles for specific types of members and bodies, a firmly established division of labor among them and clearly defined rules of access to intra-party positions; the emergence and stabilization of rules that guide the behavior of members and regulate the flow of

² This is the phase of 'relevance' in Pedersen's terms. As suggested by Deschouwer, this stage may comprise two distinct, if related critical junctures in a party's life cycle: one from relevance based on Sartori's blackmail to one based on coalition potential, and one from opposition to government (Deschouwer, 2004; Sartori, 1976).

resources among organizational units; the availability and functioning of procedures and sanctions where these rules are disrespected; and, the existence of mechanisms that enable organizational adaptation and learning (Eisenstadt, 1964; Huntington, 1969; Patzelt, 2001; Polsby, 1968). Empirically, life-cycle stages, primary goals, strategic capacity, organizational resources and structures may or may not coincide, but a party's successful institutionalization and long-term survival appear to be strongly dependent on such a 'match.' Hence this body of literature also suggests that, and explains in a more convincing fashion why, APE parties should be expected to change their organizational structures in the direction of conformity when they start prioritizing office-seeking goals: Parties that fail to adapt in this way are unlikely to develop the strategic capacity needed for government participation and the defense of their incumbency status, to become part of the political establishment and to ensure their long-term survival. According to Panebianco, only institutionalized parties will last (Panebianco, 1988: 49-68, 161-2).

Yet this very organizational adaptation is likely to be a huge and often insurmountable challenge for APE parties – the more so the more radical they are in their ideological positions and the pursuit of anti-establishment stances. Successful adaptation is by no means guaranteed, and efforts to change structures may precipitate the demise of this party type both where they fail and where they are implemented too quickly, or lead too far. To begin with, the scope of change necessary to meet systemic pressures and the requirements of government participation is much greater for these formations than the pressures faced by their mainstream competitors precisely because their movement character, peculiar leadership style and ‘unorthodox’ organizational make-up are interwoven with the anti-establishment stances that represent their core message. A change in this dimension, then, represents no less than a shift away from their very *raison d’être*. The reassessment of primary goals and organizational reforms following it are very likely to open up a large credibility gap and to spark factional conflict in APE parties. Unlike their mainstream competitors, office-seeking APE parties face the dilemma of maintaining their radical opposition identity and challenger appeal while at the same time transforming their structures in order to enhance the effectiveness of their parliamentary and governmental work. These reforms can therefore be expected to drive a wedge between rank-and-file members, middle-level activists and supporters that are mainly ideologically motivated and want to preserve their party’s status as a challenger and those – usually the inner circle – who favor a change toward vote maximization and an office-seeking strategy. The difference between a protest movement and an institutionalized party is fully exposed: "The party acquires the capacity to compromise; the protest movement [or APE party] is built on its denial. The party is structured and socialized to maintain inhibited policy conflict and to survive personal competition. The protest movement cannot withstand any of those without undermining its capacity to promote an uncompromising idea or policy position at the expense of all other issues and political concerns" (Yanai, 1999: 11).

While mainstream parties can draw on an organizational continuity that implies "some capitulation to the requirements of competition and pluralism" (Yanai, 1999: 11), APE parties usually do not have strong and effective intra-party decision-making bodies and procedures. Therefore the described kind of internal conflict can easily tear a new and inexperienced party with anti-establishment credentials apart. Conversely, mainstream parties that return to government after a long stretch in the opposition may also face challenges but will be able to build on previous government experiences and hence manage their relationship with coalition partners, as well as swallowing the unavoidable compromises, more easily. By contrast, their hostility toward compromises is likely to make APE parties ineffective and unreliable coalition partners. Unsuccessful government participation may in turn exacerbate the disappointment of

hard core supporters and members and lead to the premature demise of government-incumbent formations of this category. Furthermore, membership dues are important resources for newer and smaller parties, and government participation may attract a great number of new members expecting policy rewards or party and public offices for themselves. Yet the quickly growing number of members may be a double-edged sword for APE parties precisely because they are likely to attract more 'novice ideologues' than persons with the required political skills and hence to exacerbate the described internal conflict, which will often take the form of a rift between 'ideologues' and 'careerists,' or between the leadership and rank-and-file members.

These dangers are likely to be compounded if office-seeking goals are envisaged at the early stages of an APE party's development, when its degree of institutionalization is still low, or when the stages of development occur simultaneously. While mainstream parties can adapt to environmental change in a gradual fashion precisely because they 'have been around for a while,' such a sequential and evolutionary path is generally not available to APE parties that decide to embark on an office-seeking strategy when they get the unexpected chance to join a government. Instead, they usually have to adapt rather quickly, which puts additional stress on their leadership and makes failure more likely, for "if more than one phase occurs simultaneously, the tasks of leading and of finding a single leader with all of the requisite skills and orientations become exponentially more complicated" (Harmel and Svåsand, 1993). Evidence gathered by Harmel and Svåsand in their study of the Norwegian and Danish Progress Parties thus not only supports the argument that different stages in an APE party's life cycle require a leadership with different, task-appropriate skill sets that enable it to steer a formation through necessary organizational change. It also shows that parties of this type are more likely to fail in achieving institutionalization and securing long-term survival if they have major electoral success and become potential coalition partners too quickly after their foundation, at a moment of organizational immaturity. Inadequate leadership skills and misguided strategic orientations are more likely to result in turmoil and the premature demise of new formations under those circumstances (Harmel and Svåsand, 1993: 77, 86).³ Thus, successful and sustainable organizational change is more likely to occur in those office-seeking APE parties that have reached the final stage of their development before they decide to make government participation their main goal.

Finally, we can now suggest a few reasons why some office-seeking APE parties may, *ceteris paribus*, be expected to be more successful in adapting their structures than others, and hence why the diverging ideological orientations and contrasting origins of our two major subtypes may, after all, translate into distinctive organizational features and challenges as well. We believe that the problems in this respect may be even greater – and the chances of long-term survival smaller – for right-wing populist than for green parties. It is true, as outlined above, that anti-establishment platforms tend to go hand-in-hand with a strong accent on intra-party democracy-seeking goals (and themes of grassroots democracy and popular sovereignty writ large) in both types. Yet upon closer inspection, their structures vary, and the extent to which democracy-seeking goals are met in reality more often than not diverges between right-wing populist and green parties. As a consequence, they may be hypothesized to have a diverging potential to overcome their organizational challenges in the process of adaptation to government participation.

³ Borrowing a phrase coined by Terry Lynn Karl in a very different context (the perverse effects of abundant resources and revenues on the political development of oil states), one may call this, at first glance, counter-intuitive phenomenon the Paradox of Plenty (Karl, 1997).

Green parties are usually deeply rooted in the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and created from the bottom up. Clinging to their movement character, they have long been reluctant to become formal parties, let alone to join governments with their mainstream competitors. According to Taggart, the organizational structures of green parties are indeed generally characterized by high levels of decentralization, pronounced elements of participatory democracy – that is, procedures and rules ensuring the involvement of as many party members as possible in decision-making processes – and an aversion to individual leadership or to the accumulation of intra-party, parliamentary and governmental leadership positions. Consequently, restrictions are placed on the role that individual leaders can play, and there is a clear preference for collective leadership whose power is narrowly circumscribed (Taggart, 1996: 25-6). Deschouwer even goes as far as to say that the very concept of intra-party democracy-seeking goals "has clearly been added to make sure that one of the primary goals of the Green parties is brought into the picture." In his view, a core "part of the Green programme is related to party organization [...]. The strong will to be organized deliberately in a non-oligarchic way, to offer the rank and file the possibility to participate and to criticize the party leadership – if leadership there is – can be an element that slows down the pace to [...] power" (Deschouwer, 2004: 8, 11). The point to be made here is certainly not that these features make organizational change along the described lines or adaptation to the requirements of government participation easier than for their radical right-wing counterparts – quite to the contrary, weak collective leadership may hinder effective action. The rift between the defenders of intra-party democracy-seeking goals in green parties and those who favor more centralized and mainstream oriented structures in order to increase effectiveness in electoral campaigns and to prepare their parties for government participation is well-documented. The former have often prevailed, and the defense of the status quo has at times hurt the electoral fortunes of green parties or made them unreliable coalition partners. In that sense, the likely effects of government participation on intra-party democracy might at first glance "be seen as much more of a problem in a Green party than in a radical right wing party [...]" (Yanai, 1999: 11).

Yet as most new politics parties owe their existence to the coalescence of various new social movements rather than to the personal initiative of a charismatic leader, they can usually rely on a well-established and relatively skilled activist core, a modicum of both decentralized and differentiated organizational structures, including the structures of their collateral organizations, and some experience with intra-organizational or intra-party pluralism and democracy, with conflict resolution and consensus formation early on (Burchell, 2001; Taggart, 1996: 85). Hence it is no coincidence that "only the environmental protest movement, which represents an issue of a permanent nature, successfully transformed itself into a political party in several democracies and managed to widen its political agenda and organize for electoral politics" (Yanai, 1999: 11). And while both democracy-seeking goals and issue positions have often been diluted in the process of moving toward the political establishment, these shifts were rarely imposed by a leader's fiat; organizational reforms and shifts in issue positions have thus led some green parties to the brink of a split (or in some cases, beyond). Still, compared with right-wing populist parties, the gap between stated principles of intra-party democracy and reality has tended to be relatively minor; leadership change and organizational reforms may therefore have been slowed down by the decentralized structures of these parties, but reforms that have passed the muster of a membership hostile to the unfettered concentration of power and top-down decision-making can probably count on broader acceptance and more successful implementation precisely because comparatively effective structures and genuine intra-party democracy tend to have a long tradition and real existence in these parties.

Unlike their green counterparts, parties of the radical right often "do not pay much attention to their party organization, and it is furthermore not possible to single out one specific type of organization that would be typical for this party family" (Deschouwer, 2004: 2). To the extent that their structures include elements of the elite or catch-all party models and hence seem to be more in line with that of their mainstream competitors, one might assume that they should have an easier time in adapting to the prevalent party model than new politics parties. As radical right-wing parties are usually established in a top-down fashion as vehicles of strong and charismatic leaders, their structures tend to be highly centralized, their leadership personalized and authoritarian (Rochon, 1985; Taggart, 1994: 36-8). Yet the movement character of these parties tends to be even more pronounced and more crucial to their electoral appeal than is the case for their green counterparts. The key problem for many radical right-wing parties, especially office-seeking ones, therefore is the difficulty of institutionalizing a party that is based on the leadership of a strong and charismatic personality. The formation greatly depends on the leader's skills, but the leader himself/herself is, in many cases, a political neophyte and hence inexperienced in the business of managing a party or government coalition. Stabilizing the party and making it fit for government participation requires the leader to give up some of his/her power in order to ensure the party's continued existence as an organization, the delegation of responsibilities, the acceptance of some internal factionalism and the capacity to solve internal conflicts, as well as the ability to compromise with coalition partners.

Instead, "[a]uthoritarian or top-down patterns of decision-making, including the muzzling of intra-party critics, periodic purges and the reshuffling of party personnel are common. Key members of the organisation depend often entirely on the leader and need to have demonstrated allegiance to him personally" (Heinisch, 2003). The typical dearth of members that are capable, experienced and 'presentable' enough to fill responsible intra-party positions or to run as candidates exacerbates the tendency of right-wing party leaders to manage their formations in a hierarchical fashion, only supported by a small inner circle that cumulates or is shifted around key positions. More often than not, party decision-making bodies and procedures are nonexistent or subordinate, and there is little role differentiation. In addition to being ineffective managers of internal conflicts, the leaders of radical right-wing parties, thriving on an 'us v. them' rhetoric, are also unlikely to be effective in handling the external relationship with coalition partners and as cabinet members. In short, these parties "may be severely hampered [...] by their complete orientation toward the leader, their lack of institutional development and, given the limited talent pool, their lack of qualified personnel. The kind of fundamental opposition necessary for achieving notoriety and thus popularity at the grassroots level requires a type of politician who is not usually a good policy maker. [...]. The complete orientation toward the leader may also cause bottleneck effects and top-down micro management when rapid decision making is required" (Heinisch, 2003: 101-2).

At this point it is important to bear in mind the difference between traditional right-wing extremist parties, on the one hand, and right-wing populist parties ('entrepreneurial issue' parties in Harmel and Svåsand's terminology), on the other. As pointed out by Heinisch and others, the latter indeed have a novel character, not the least with regard to organizational features. Due to their origins and ideological orientation, both types of right-wing parties tend to find the shift to more differentiated structures and the respect of intra-party democracy challenging. However, right-wing populist parties are faced with a particular dilemma: Unlike right-wing extremist parties, they highlight themes of grassroots democracy and popular sovereignty, and these themes play an important role in attracting and binding members and supporters. At the same time, the success of these parties strongly depends on the personality and skills of their leaders, and

democracy-seeking goals are much more part of their populist rhetoric than of their actual behavior. There is no obvious way out of the tension between populist stances and a highly centralized organizational reality for these parties, and this tension is likely to create disappointment and massive internal strife that may even jeopardize their survival. In this context, one may hypothesize that leaders of parties founded by themselves are less likely to be willing to make compromises in order to help institutionalize them, especially if these compromises entail a reduction of their own influence. Formations that are already more highly institutionalized before joining a government, such as the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) or the Italian National Alliance (AN) appear to be more successful in maintaining themselves as relevant actors in the long term than parties that are less institutionalized, such as the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List (LPF). Furthermore, right-wing populist parties need to demarcate themselves from traditional right-wing extremist formations in order to gain credibility beyond a hard core of protest voters and with potential coalition partners. Implementing genuine intra-party democracy may very well be a way to achieve this objective but at the same time, may facilitate a party's 'hijacking' by extremist free riders. Even more so than for their green counterparts, the influx of new members may be a mixed blessing for right-wing populist parties. In short, as suggested by Heinisch, the populist aspects of these parties enable them to be credible opposition forces and to make electoral gains. In government, however, these strengths are likely to turn into disadvantages, and the failure to solve organizational problems jeopardizes the long-term survival of these formations (Heinisch, 2003: 91).

III Government-aspiring and government-incumbent APE parties in Germany: The cases of the GAL, the *Statt* Party and the PRO in Hamburg

A number of formations in the APE category have competed in German elections over the last two or three decades. Even a cursory look at their respective electoral performance and history of government participation, however, shows remarkable differences in the success of left-wing and right-wing formations. On the left side of the ideological spectrum, the Greens were most successful. They first entered a *Land* parliament – the parliament of Bremen, one of Germany's three city-states – in 1979 and have been represented in the *Bundestag* since 1983. Meanwhile, the Greens or members of the green party 'family' have crossed the five-percent threshold in 62 out of 84 *Länder* elections and subsequently joined government coalitions – usually two-party coalitions with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) – a number of times; at the national level, the first-ever Red-Green coalition with the SPD, established in 1998, was renewed in 2002 (Frankland and Schoonmaker, 1992; Klein and Falter, 2003; Poguntke, 1993; Raschke, 1993; 2001). The Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) entered the political scene in the wake of reunification when the communist state party of the German Democratic Republic (the SED) changed its name and transformed itself from being, as it were, *the* establishment party to becoming the voice of left-wing and regional populism in East Germany. The PDS has been continuously represented in the parliaments of the five new *Länder* since 1990, and has participated in a couple of *Länder* government coalitions with the SPD as well. Moreover, the party was represented in the 1990, 1994 and 1998 *Bundestag*, but has been reduced to two members of parliament in the 2002 federal election (Neugebauer and Stöss, 1996).

Formations on the right side of the ideological spectrum have found it difficult so far to emulate the (relative) success of the Greens and the PDS or the performance of right-wing extremist and populist parties in other Western European nations (Decker, 2004). In the German context, the distinction between traditional right-wing extremist and populist parties is

particularly important, although formations of both types often draw on the same electoral base. The National Democratic Party (NPD), whose electoral success climaxed shortly after its foundation in the 1960s, and the German People's Union (DVU), established during the 1970s, can be qualified as right-wing extremist and hence 'unfit' for government coalitions with the mainstream parties (Backer, 2000; Betz, 1990; Falter et al., 1996; Neubacher, 1996; Schubarth and Stöss, 2001). The *Republikaner*, conceived as an 'electable' right-wing alternative to the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) in 1983, may be considered as an ambiguous case that combines ideological and organizational elements of traditional right-wing extremist and the newer type of right-wing populist parties. Yet while each of these parties has had occasional electoral success at the hands of protest voters, none of them has ever been asked to join government coalitions with the CSU or its sister party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) (Guggemos, 2000; Jaschke, 1994; Stöss, 1990). More genuinely right-wing populist parties have been rare and emerged comparatively late in Germany, and they have tended to be short-lived.⁴ The electoral and political impact of right-wing extremist and populist parties in Germany has thus been rather modest. At the national level, the combined vote for the DVU, the *Republikaner* and other right-wing parties has been relatively negligible. This leaves only two other centrist and right-wing formations in the APE category that managed to cross the five-percent threshold in the *Länder* – incidentally, both were successful in Hamburg and were asked to join government coalitions immediately after their first and, as it now seems, last electoral success. In the following we will describe the trajectories of the three major APE parties in Hamburg.

The GAL: Urban politics in Hamburg – one of three city-states in Germany's federal system and, with 1.7 million inhabitants, the third-smallest of the *Länder* in terms of population – has provided fertile ground for the emergence and, prima facie, for the success of APE parties in recent decades. Despite its peculiarities, it also epitomizes and exacerbates many of the features that are thought to have fostered anti-party sentiment (*Parteienverdrossenheit*) and hence to have given populist challengers of the establishment parties an opening throughout the country. Before APE parties made their appearance, the city had been dominated by the SPD for decades (see table). Between 1946 and 2001, the series of SPD governments was only interrupted in 1953 and 1957, when CDU, Free Democrats (FDP) and two smaller, now defunct parties of the center-right (DP and BHE) ran a common slate of candidates. The SPD's vote share peaked at almost 60 percent in 1966. Before 1993, the mainstream parties (SPD, CDU and FDP) together never polled less than 77.3 % (1949) and as much as 96.5 % (1974) of the vote. However, the SPD's dominance showed first signs of erosion in the 1970s (Lange, 1975). In 1974, the SPD failed to secure a majority of the vote for the first time since 1957; it has only regained it twice since then. Yet the party remained strong enough to prevent a change of government for another 25 years although the CDU gained a higher percentage of the vote in 1982 and 1986. The SPD's increasingly precarious hold on power forced the government to go back to the polls in each case. Internal strife, an authoritarian and unpopular leadership, the electoral weakness of the FDP, which crossed the five-percent threshold only twice during the 1980s and 1990s, and the rise of

⁴ The *Bürgerpartei*, an anti-tax party of the 1970s, remained an episode. The *Bund Freier Bürger*, established in 1993 by Manfred Brunner, the former chairman of the Bavarian FDP sought to emulate the model of the Austrian FPÖ by incorporating criticism of the European Union (EU) into a broader populist agenda with liberal and conservative elements. Yet it failed to attract prominent recruits or to make an electoral impact. It was dissolved at the end of 2000. The uncharismatic Brunner and an elitist leadership dominated by professors made a successful populist appeal impossible; at the same time, and just like the *Republikaner*, the party and its leader were criticized internally and externally for their weak efforts to demarcate themselves against right-wing extremist forces. Finally, *Arbeit für Bremen*, a formation with a right-wing tilt established by ex-members of the SPD gained 10.7 % in the 1995 Bremen election, but stayed in the opposition and did not survive.

the Green-Alternative List (GAL) on the left side of the ideological spectrum all contributed to the futility of the CDU's attempts to wrest the reins of power from the SPD (Bürklin, 1991; Lange, 1979; Saretzki, 1987; 1988; Walter, 1982).

Table: Hamburg *Bürgerschaft* elections, 1946-2004

Year	Participation	SPD	CDU	FDP	GAL	STATT	P(a)RO	Pro DM	Others
1946	79.0	43.1	26.7	18.2	-	-	-	-	12.1
1949	70.5	42.8	.*	.*	-	-	-	-	57.2*
1953	80.9	45.2	.*	.*	-	-	-	-	54.8*
1957	77.3	53.9	32.2	8.6	-	-	-	-	5.3
1961	72.3	57.4	29.1	9.6	-	-	-	-	3.9
1966	69.8	59.0	30.0	6.8	-	-	-	-	4.2
1970	73.4	55.3	32.8	7.1	-	-	-	-	4.8
1974	80.4	45.0	40.6	10.9	-	-	-	-	3.6
1978	76.6	51.5	37.6	4.8	4.5	-	-	-	1.6
1982 (1)	77.8	42.7	43.2	4.9	7.7	-	-	-	1.5
1982 (2)	84.0	51.3	38.6	2.6	6.8	-	-	-	0.7
1986	77.8	41.7	41.9	4.8	10.4	-	-	-	1.2
1987	79.5	45.0	40.5	6.5	7.0	-	-	-	1.0
1991	66.1	48.0	35.1	5.4	7.2	-	-	-	4.3
1993	69.6	40.4	25.1	4.2	13.5	5.6	-	-	11.2
1997	68.7	36.2	30.7	3.5	13.9	3.8	-	-	11.1
2001	71.0	36.5	26.2	5.1	8.6	0.4	19.4	-	1.7
2004	68.7	30.5	47.2	2.8	12.3	-	0.4	3.1	3.7

* = *Bürgerblock*.

Sources: (Feist and Hoffmann, 1994); (Horst, 2002); *Hamburger Abendblatt*, March 2, 2004, pp. 2-3; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 2, 2004, p. 6.

Like the precursor of the federal Greens in 1979, the GAL had started out as a loose alliance of individuals and groups associated with the new social (environmental, anti-nuclear power) movements. The latter had begun to transform themselves into electoral initiatives, or to cooperate with such initiatives, during the late 1970s. While some of these early green formations were bourgeois and 'eco-conservative' rather than left-wing in social composition and ideological orientation, various 'alternative' or 'colored' lists, often recruiting ex-members of the so-called K (communist) groups, had sprung up at the same time in an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of the new social movements. The electoral alliance that was to become the Greens ran in the 1979 European election with a modicum of success and, as mentioned above, entered its first *Land* parliament in the same year. Many representatives of the left-alternative spectrum now joined the alliance, whose membership more than quadrupled from 2.800 to 12.000 within months, before it was turned into a formal party organization in January 1980. In Hamburg, a Colored List, headed by three prominent ex-leaders of the city's dominant K group, was established in 1978 and the initial Alternative List (AL), in 1981. They merged in 1982 and were recognized as the federal Greens' official Hamburg unit in 1984 (on the GAL's development up to 1991, see Raschke, 1993: 295-327).

Although the Greens have now arguably reinvented themselves as a left-libertarian or even 'eco-liberal' formation, shifted to the political center and become part of the establishment, much of their initial appeal was undoubtedly linked to a typical anti-establishment platform that

repudiated both key programmatic stances and the organizational structures of the mainstream parties (Kitschelt, 1989; Müller-Rommel, 1985; Poguntke, 1987). Highly skeptical with regard to representative and parliamentary democracy, the early Greens saw themselves as a new type of party, as the political arm of the extra-parliamentary opposition groups and social movements that had given birth to them, or even as an outright 'anti-party' formation. The loose and decentralized structures of the beginnings were thus to be retained. Various institutional mechanisms were to prevent the establishment of hierarchical structures and the rise of a dominant party elite, to defy the Iron Law of Oligarchy by enabling rank-and-file members to tightly control their leadership, and hence to secure intra-party grassroots democracy – notably the principle of collective instead of individual and personalized leadership, term limits for party offices and the prohibition of their accumulation, the 'rotation' of party and public offices, (soon abolished) public meetings of party bodies, etc. These mechanisms of grassroots democracy were confirmed and detailed for the federal party in January 1983, shortly before the federal election in March, but rotation, collective leadership and frequent change in high-ranking party offices proved to be in a problematic tension with the principles of representative and parliamentary democracy and to be dysfunctional for the further development of the party early on, triggering pressures for organizational change and 'creative' ways of bending the rules. Just like the federal Greens, and in fact even more so, the GAL saw itself as an anti-establishment formation during the 1980s and was eager to keep its movement character – ties with supportive left-alternative urban milieus were never severed and its internal pluralism of groups was translated into autonomous structures for some of them – while experimenting with elements of intra-party democracy. These elements notably included the annual or biennial rotation of party and public offices, recall provisions and independent candidate lists for female party members. Furthermore, GAL MPs were to be mere delegates of the party 'base.' However, intra-party democracy was hardly a reality during the 1980s. Like its precursors, the GAL came to be dominated by K groups early on, and while there was massive internal strife between various factions of the radical left, it was entirely clear who belonged to the majority and minority factions, respectively, in the intensely polarized climate of these years (the 'realo' wing of the federal Greens was marginalized altogether, and 'eco-conservative' or 'eco-liberal' forces never played a role). An inner circle dominated by sectarian forces of the radical left, not rank-and-file members influenced the development of the GAL.

The GAL first entered the city's *Bürgerschaft* (parliament) in 1982. Until 2001, the GAL and the SPD together gained a nominal majority of the vote, but the increasingly fractured nature of the local party system not only enabled the SPD to perpetuate its role as 'natural' governing party of Hamburg, but also to choose its coalition partner. During the 1980s, the GAL shunned a coalition with the SPD, merely offering toleration on its own terms, and was in turn repudiated by the governing party. Defending Hamburg as the last regional bastion of the left against the federal Greens and the 'realos' – in September 1983 and October 1985, Joschka Fischer had 'betrayed' the radical opposition strategy of the early days by negotiating a toleration agreement and later, the first Red-Green coalition in Hesse – contributed to identity formation and even resulted in electoral success: The GAL performed well in the 1982 and 1986 Hamburg elections, in the European election of 1984 (12.7 %) and the 1987 federal election (11.0 %). However, in the 1987 Hamburg election, the party suffered a considerable setback, dropping to 7.0 %, which encouraged the moderate faction to push harder for a change of strategy toward office-seeking goals and organizational reforms. Between 1987 and 1991, the SPD ruled the city in a coalition with the FDP. The fact that many proponents of the radical left within the GAL concentrated their efforts on the federal level in 1987 and 1988, which resulted in the federal leadership board

veering to the left before being ousted in December 1988, further helped the 'realos' in Hamburg. The programmatic dogmatism and organizational immobility of the left-wing factions had visibly begun to turn against them. The failure of their so-called toleration strategy, actually a strategy of radical opposition, had become increasingly obvious. The vividly defended elements of grassroots democracy did not, as expected, activate the membership. Instead, rotation weakened the party leadership's strategic capacity and effectiveness. At the federal level, the principle of rotation had been relaxed in May 1986, and many *Länder* units went even further. In Hamburg, some MPs – the GAL's parliamentary caucus was already more moderate than its leadership – staged a 'rotation strike' in November 1988. On the other hand, and ironically, rotation had weakened the left-wing power elite's hold over the GAL, giving competing intra-party factions more influence than in previous years. The moderate faction – or 'Greens within the GAL,' as it called itself – had already had four representatives on the formation's leadership board since February 1989, when the hard left was for the first time unable to field enough of its own candidates.

In 1991, the last SPD majority government was voted into office. In the same year, a shift toward office-seeking goals had occurred together with a change of the GAL's dominant faction. The reunification of Germany and the federal Greens' tactical error in the first post-unity federal election in the fall of 1990 – the West German party had postponed the merger with its East German counterpart until after the election and failed to cross the five-percent threshold under the one-time electoral rules – provided the long marginalized 'realo' wing of the GAL with the clout to become dominant and to implement a coalition strategy aimed at joining an SPD led government. This move was encouraged by a similar development at the federal level, where the belated merger of the West German and East German Greens in 1991 (and later, in January 1993, of the Greens with the East German Alliance 90) had also triggered reforms aimed at professionalizing and streamlining the party's organizational structures. This reform process was accompanied by a power struggle between the 'realo' and 'fundi' wings of the party in which the former ultimately prevailed. A significant number of party members that were associated with the latter subsequently left the Greens (Burchell, 2001: 114, 131; Frankland, 1995). In Hamburg, two factions of the radical left within the GAL had joined the PDS or other left-wing groups in 1990. The coalition strategy had subsequently made further progress. Earlier in March 1990, when the dominant left-wing faction of the GAL vividly opposed reunification, several prominent 'realos' left the party and its caucus in order to set up the Green Forum as a presumptively authentic representation of the federal Greens in Hamburg. When the coalition strategy was adopted in March 1991, a left-wing faction broke away from the GAL and re-established an independent AL. For a moment, it looked as if the green and left-alternative political spectrum of the city would split up into five parts – the GAL, the Green Forum, the AL, a Women's Forum and the PDS –, but a month later, the Green Forum returned to the GAL and took over its leadership. Illustrating the decline of left-wing radicalism in Hamburg, the AL gained only 0.5 % of the vote in the 1991 election. The GAL, on the other hand, became a 'regular' *Land* unit of the Greens with a moderate left tilt, predominantly consensual internal relationships and clear government aspiration. Yet the SPD had not loosened its grip on power in the city-state. That there had to be a new government in order to fight back the corruption and excesses of several decades of single-party dominance had become a staple of electoral campaigns since the 1970s (Raschke, 2001). At the beginning of the 1990s, the opportunity structures for APE parties were certainly favorable, and their chances to mobilize protest voters high. Given the local CDU's failure to control the electoral space to its right as efficiently as its counterparts in the other *Länder* and at the federal level, the opportunity structures for right-wing formations were even better. Two such

formations, whose rise and fall we now turn to, made a stunning breakthrough in the early 1990s and 2000s, respectively.

The Statt Party: The early election of September 1993 had been forced by a highly controversial ruling of Hamburg's constitutional court in May (Feist and Hoffmann, 1994). With four other members of the local CDU, party rebel Markus Wegner had contested the party's massive violations of intra-party democracy principles in the candidate selection process. The court, however, not only vindicated the plaintiffs' arguments, but also voided the 1991 election altogether. The ruling was therefore widely interpreted as a verdict on lacking citizen participation in political decision-making writ large. The prevailing mood of *Parteienverdrossenheit* in Germany and Hamburg was such that Wegner, after being courted by the FDP and even showing interest to run as an independent candidate on the GAL ticket, ultimately announced that he would participate in the upcoming election with his own formation. Thus, in June, 300 interested people established a formation under the name of *Statt Partei – Die Unabhängigen* as an electoral initiative. Its membership climaxed at 500 people in Hamburg. Most members had not previously been active in politics; only a fifth were ex-members of other parties, usually the CDU. Nationwide, the formation drew 4.000 members by June 1994, but lost about 1.200 of them when its internal troubles, described below, became more visible in the second half of that year.⁵

The *Statt Party* fully concentrated on themes related to political disenchantment and anti-party sentiment in the electoral campaign; substantive policy issues like the city's housing shortage, unemployment and debt received short thrift in its two-page program. Thus, Wegner criticized the dominance and lack of transparency, accountability and integrity of the mainstream party cartel and underlined the need to mobilize the common sense and issue orientation of responsible citizens (v. partisanship), pleading for more grassroots democracy and public deliberation, less public funding for parties, a separation of administration and politics, as well as a greater role for experts, in order to overcome political cynicism. The formation called for citizen initiatives and referenda, the direct election of MPs in constituencies (v. party lists), a free vote for MPs (v. party discipline), and the incompatibility of simultaneously holding parliamentary and governmental offices. The conspicuous lack of policy competence, the refusal to formulate any concrete proposals regarding substantive issues and the deliberately 'naïve' and 'do-it-yourself' style of the formation's campaign were actively defended and indeed contributed to the considerable sympathy with which the *Statt Party* was greeted by the public and the media. Interestingly, its program already stressed the willingness to cooperate with the future city government. Given the upper middle-class background and moderate political stances of its leader and membership, the *Statt Party* could be characterized as a rare example of a centrist APE party. The context of the election was characterized by the cyclical downturn of the German economy. And while none of the established parties managed to put a truly mobilizing issue on the agenda, concerns about crime and drug trafficking, the integration of 'foreigners,' transportation and environmental issues – in a nutshell, the issues that would remain prominent during the 1990s and early 2000s – gained increasing attention.

The election results confirmed the extent to which anti-party sentiment had dominated the campaign; trust in the mainstream parties had visibly diminished. Against the backdrop of the

⁵ The name of the party is a game on words that is indicative of both the APE and (initially) local character of the party: in German, 'statt' means 'instead of' while 'Stadt' (pronounced equally) means 'city'. (Decker, 1994; 2004: 152-3; Hoffmann, 1995).

second-lowest turnout rate since 1946, the combined vote share of the mainstream parties sank to 69.7 %. The SPD lost votes and its majority of seats, although it remained the strongest party. Unlike in the past, when the CDU profited from weaker results of the SPD, it now experienced its worst-ever performance. The FDP failed to pass the five-percent threshold with the second-lowest vote share in its local electoral history. The election, then, was a success for the various stripes of APE parties that had competed for protest voters across the ideological spectrum in a kind of 'division of labour.' The GAL had campaigned with its new chairwoman Krista Sager, an exponent of the formation's 'realo' wing, once again declaring its readiness for a coalition with the SPD. It achieved its best-ever result, almost doubling its vote share. Three right-wing extremist parties had also presented candidates: the DVU (2.8 %), the *Republikaner* (4.8 %) and a *Nationale Liste*, all focusing, as in 1991, on 'foreigners' and asylum seekers, crime and social issues. They, too, were among the winners of the election, although none of them passed the five-percent threshold. The most remarkable outcome of the election, however, was the success of the *Statt Party*, with 5.6 % of the votes. The result demonstrated to what extent anti-party sentiment had taken hold of middle-class, well-educated and high-income segments of the electorate that would rather have abstained than voting for one of the left-wing or right-wing APE parties (Feist and Hoffmann, 1994: 226).

The result enabled the SPD to explore coalition options with any of the parties now represented in the *Bürgerschaft*. Negotiations with the GAL failed in November. Mayor Henning Voscherau had favored a cooperation with the *Statt Party* early on. The *Statt Party* reiterated right at the beginning of the negotiations that it would be available for a cooperation agreement, but not for a formal coalition. The agreement reached in December largely represented Voscherau's core demands, yet contained a few issues highlighted by his new coalition partner as well, including administrative, constitutional and fiscal reform. Citizen initiatives and electoral constituencies were to be introduced and the chairpersons of neighborhood councils to be elected directly; the Senate (government) was to be reduced in size from 14 to twelve members. Instead of its own party members, the *Statt Party* nominated two independent and well-respected experts to head the departments of justice and of economic affairs. Nevertheless, some media commentators immediately criticized the formation for not being able to impose more elements of its platform on the SPD. Voscherau, it seemed, had chosen the weakest available partner, while the *Statt Party* had opted for half-hearted participation in the new government instead of controlling it, thus perpetuating the SPD's hold on power once again.

The initial steps of Wegner were very much in line with the *Statt Party*'s platform: He gave up the leadership of his party in order to concentrate on his work as caucus chairman; Dieter Brandes, an ex-member of the FDP, became his successor in November 1993. Yet criticism of Wegner's authoritarian leadership style and internal conflicts, both within the Hamburg leadership board and between the leadership, rank-and-file members and middle-level activists, set in almost immediately. Many members and activists criticized that Wegner alone had selected the negotiating delegation for the cooperation agreement with the SPD, and that the negotiations themselves were led in a highly secretive fashion. Subsequently, Wegner did not restrict himself to parliamentary work, but instead attempted to control party business, often ignoring that responsibilities had been delegated and working groups had been set up in the meantime. In February 1994, he was for the first time publicly reminded by the new leadership of the separation of party and caucus responsibilities. In November 1994, Wegner was ousted and replaced by Achim Reichert. He subsequently left the party. In February 1995, two other members of the party's Hamburg leadership board stepped down. A third leader, Jürgen Hunke, was elected shortly before the 1997 election.

Two issues in particular nurtured internal strife. Government participation had never been uncontroversial, and cooperation with the SPD did not fail to reveal contradictions in the formation's platform. Wegner had announced early on that he would not enforce party or caucus discipline, but nevertheless promised to ensure a stable governing majority in the cooperation agreement. An MP who voted against cooperation with the SPD was promptly attacked and left the caucus in December 1993 to sit as an independent. In January, disciplinary measures against MPs who did not respect the party line were even anchored in the statutes. The question whether the *Statt* Party should expand into other *Länder* and to the federal level was also controversial. Wegner's first move in this direction failed in November 1993, but in January 1994, the same convention that turned the formation into a party – a decision that itself represented a shift away from anti-establishment stances – also opted in favor of expansion with a 77.9 % majority. The decision was a reaction to the high number of would-be supporters and members in all of Germany, some of whom had already begun to organize activities in the party's name, but without its authorization, and hence an attempt to control the bandwagon effect that had set in with its electoral success. Quite a few members left, though, when the formation was turned into a party and decided to expand. Some argued that it would lose its distinctive profile in doing so, others that its program was not broad enough to have success outside of Hamburg, and yet others considered its organizational, financial and personal resources to be too restricted. At the first federal party convention in March 1994, a law professor from Munich, Bernd Schünemann, became federal chairman. At that point, six officially recognized *Länder* party units had already been established, and the formation had between 2.000 and 2.500 members. The expansion process, however, ran into trouble early on and put the party's original leadership in Hamburg in a double bind. While it had to jump on the bandwagon to keep control over the direction in which it was moving, every new party unit founded in 1994 threatened to tip the power balance in favor of the new members and activists outside of Hamburg. Massive power struggles soon erupted between Hamburg and the Southern German – notably, Schünemann's Bavarian – party units. They turned into a personal confrontation which pitted Wegner and a majority of the federal leadership board against Schünemann. The two factions criticized each other for allowing right-wing free riders into the party and also differed on other aspects of the expansion strategy.

Arguing that the *Republikaner* were about to 'hijack' the party, Wegner and his loyalists opposed the establishment of a party unit in North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW), Germany's most populous state. In a tumultuous meeting, the unit was nevertheless founded, but the Wegner faction urged Schünemann to quit. The latter's exclusion from the party was initiated by seven of eleven board members in May 1994 and confirmed at a federal party convention in early June. Schünemann was replaced by his deputy Mike Bashford, but a court ruling vindicated the former's legal challenge against this measure. At the end of June, Schünemann loyalists in NRW and other *Länder* chose NRW chairman Harald Kaiser as federal chairman at an extraordinary party convention. After several weeks of legal battles, during which it was unclear who the leader of the formation was, Kaiser was confirmed in the presence of 14 *Länder* representatives. Financial statutes regulating the distribution of membership dues were only established in November 1994, and an internal court of arbitration was lacking. Ultimately, party units, albeit fledgling ones in most cases, were established in all *Länder*, but a federal program was never written. Despite pundits' optimism about its chances to expand beyond its stronghold, the *Statt* Party remained marginal outside of Hamburg. In the March 1994 election in Lower Saxony, it gained a mere 1.3 % of the vote and a breakaway New *Statt* Party, 0.5 %. In the European election of that year, the vote share was 0.5 % and in the federal election – the formation had nominated candidates in eight *Länder* –, an embarrassing 0.1 %.

The 1993-1997 legislative term had been dominated by the so-called Hamburg police scandal (related to police violence against ‘foreigners’) and characterized by frequent tensions between the cooperation partners on issues ranging from administrative reform to deficit reduction and shop-opening hours. Ironically, a constitutional reform in May 1996 ended the Hamburg tradition of semi-professional MPs and introduced full salaries; the mayor’s right to ‘determine policy guidelines’ was strengthened along the lines of the federal chancellor – both measures ran against the avowed philosophy of the *Statt* Party. Polls during the electoral campaign revealed high dissatisfaction with the Senate and little support for the continuation of the present cooperation, although it was still favored by Voscherau, who continued to oppose a Red-Green coalition. Political disenchantment and anti-party sentiment were no longer on the agenda during the campaign. Rather, the media, the CDU and the DVU focused on unemployment and crime; the SPD tried to redefine law and order as a social-democratic issue.

In the September 1997 election, the SPD remained the strongest party, but with its worst-ever post-war performance; thus continuing the downward trend that had begun in 1991 (Brunner and Walz, 1998). The CDU increased its vote share, yet not up to its 1991 result. None of the two large parties, then, had pushed the crime issue to great avail. The FDP, with its worst-ever result in Hamburg, failed to pass the five-percent threshold once again. The combined vote share of the mainstream parties edged up only slightly, to 70.4 %. On the left side of the ideological spectrum, the GAL repeated its 1993 success, but made few additional gains. The PDS achieved a mere 0.7 % of the vote. On the right side, four parties had presented candidates, profiting from the fact that their key issue had been lifted onto the agenda by the mainstream parties. The DVU, with 4.98 % of the vote, barely failed to cross the five-percent threshold, another 1.8 % voted for the *Republikaner* and 1.3 % for the *Bund Freier Bürger*. The *Statt* Party, which had also tried to reinvent itself, with its new leader Jürgen Hunke, as a right-wing populist party, polled only 3.8 % of the vote and was thus no longer represented in the city parliament. It has never again played a role in Hamburg or elsewhere in Germany. The SPD’s coalition options were thus reduced to only two. As Voscherau had stepped down in the wake of the election, and talks with the CDU went nowhere, the new mayor Ortwin Runde started negotiations with the GAL. In November, the GAL’s Krista Sager became deputy mayor and senator for university affairs, and two other Green senators were to head the departments of urban development and of environmental affairs, but Runde was largely successful in imposing his positions on the SPD’s new partner in the coalition agreement. Just like the *Statt* Party before it, the GAL was at this point and subsequently on various occasions during the legislative term criticized for caving in to SPD demands.

The PRO: After the temporary ‘normalization’ of Hamburg politics as a result of the premature demise of the *Statt* Party in 1997, the dynamics of the 2001 electoral campaign were once again dominated by the sudden rise of an APE party, the *Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive* (PRO) (Horst, 2002; Klein and Ohr, 2002). Ronald Barnabas Schill, a judge whose harsh verdicts, often against ‘foreigners’ and members of Hamburg’s left-alternative scene, soon afforded him the title ‘Judge Merciless,’ used the bench and his media presence to advocate a radical shift to a ‘zero tolerance’ policy, and for explicit attacks against fellow judges, the local judicial system and the government for being ‘weak on crime.’ Schill, then, was certainly a public figure and had already shown some talent as a populist commentator of local politics when he entered it himself. He had first expressed his intention to do so in October 1999, indicating that he was willing to join any party that adopted his political demands. In early 2000, he was courted by the moribund *Statt* Party’s leader Jürgen Hunke and chief administrative officer

Frank-Michael Bauer, but declined their offer. Talks with the CDU failed, as Schill considered it as too compromising in its policy stances. At the end of April 2000, he publicly announced the intention to establish his own formation and linked this announcement with the goal to form a government with the CDU and to claim the departments of justice and of domestic affairs for his own party. The plan was pushed ahead by an inner circle of Schill, his partner Katrin Freund, Mario Mettbach (an ex-member of the CDU and *Statt* Party founding member), Norbert Frühauf (an ex-member of the CDU) and Dirk Nockemann (an ex-member of the SPD). The PRO was founded shortly after, in July, with about 70 people attending; draft statutes were passed, and the PRO's leadership, which initially served both as *Land* and as federal leadership, was elected unanimously: Schill became chairman, Mettbach and Nockemann deputies, Freund party secretary and Frühauf treasurer; the *Statt* Party's Bauer was among the eleven other board members. That the formation was conceived as a mere electoral vehicle for Schill and his populist message was illustrated by the fact that it soon became known under the name of its founder rather than the PRO acronym.⁶ The slate of 50 PRO candidates for the upcoming election, with Schill on top of the list, was passed in February 2001, and Schill took an unpaid leave of absence from his judgeship in May 2001 in order to concentrate on the campaign.

The PRO and its leader certainly fit the criteria attached to the term right-wing populist, and in fact Schill adopted it with glee, portraying himself as a concerned citizen and advocate of the 'common people,' entering the political fray reluctantly in order to fight back the establishment and to re-establish 'common sense' in the city. A belief in the homogeneity of the 'people' and skepticism of representative and parliamentary democracy also led him to embrace principles of grassroots democracy. Both the increasingly sympathetic media attention that he received and his professional background gave him some 'respectability' in large swaths of the electorate and made it difficult for the mainstream parties to stigmatize him as right-wing extremist. The PRO platform, however, was 'unequivocally ambiguous' (Raschke and Tils, 2002) in linking crime and security – Schill famously promised to cut the crime rate in half within a hundred days – with issues like the integration of 'foreigners,' immigration and the rights of asylum seekers, and in depicting outsiders and minorities as scapegoats. While Schill distanced himself from right-wing extremist positions, individuals and groups, other PRO members were less careful in avoiding contact (Baumann, 2002; Carini and Speit, 2002; Decker, 2002; 2003; 2004: 154-6).

Although the Red-Green Senate had performed rather well, concentrating on fiscal austerity, growth and jobs, disenchantment with the SPD's tight grip on power and the corruption it had allegedly brought to the city had not withered, and this mood was kept alive by the media. The crime issue also received a huge media echo. Ole von Beust, the CDU's candidate for the office of mayor, had expressed his willingness to achieve change and hence ruled out a grand coalition early on, in January 2001. Although the PRO's electoral viability was not yet entirely clear at that point, the formation's credibility was greatly boosted by that indirect endorsement of a coalition between the CDU and the PRO. Like Schill, the CDU's Roger Kusch focused his party's campaign on the crime and security issue. The SPD first tried to keep it off the agenda, to focus on the economic success of the preceding term and to ignore Schill, but changed course in the midst of the campaign when the chairman of the Hamburg SPD, Olaf Scholz, became senator of domestic affairs and, in a spectacular about-face, attempted to give the government a law and

⁶ The name PRO had been challenged by Bolko Hoffmann, the leader of the *Pro DM* Party, another right-wing populist formation that hoped to capitalize on fears related to the euro; previously, there had been unsuccessful talks with Schill.

order image. Similarly, the GAL's Krista Sager changed from ignoring Schill to running an anti-Schill campaign, depicting his formation as right-wing extremist. This turn of events helped Schill, for even those media that remained critical of him contributed to an opinion climate that stressed the need for change and pushed the issues – rather, the single issue – on which the PRO's electoral strategy rested. Thus personalization and polarization, heightened media attention and the sharply focused candidate images these factors created were both causes and effects of Schill's dominance of the campaign. The FDP had wavered between opposition to Schill and his anything-but-liberal message, on the one hand, and the fear of becoming a victim of the polarized campaign if it did not make its coalition plans known, on the other. When it ruled out a 'traffic light' (i.e., Red-Liberal-Green) coalition (as did the GAL) and announced its willingness to join the CDU and PRO in a new version of the 1950s *Bürgerblock*, Schill received a final boost.

The election results afforded Hamburg nationwide attention once again. The mainstream parties took another beating, with a combined vote share of merely 67.8 %. The SPD experienced its second-worst postwar result, but so did the CDU. The FDP barely crossed the five-percent threshold. On the left side of the ideological spectrum, the GAL suffered massive losses, mostly to the SPD, while *Regenbogen*, an electoral initiative that had broken away from the GAL in the wake of the federal Greens' decision to support the military intervention in Kosovo, and the PDS (1.7 % and 0.4 %, respectively) remained inconsequential, as did the right-wing extremist and other small parties (the DVU, with 0.7 %, experienced massive losses; the *Statt* Party was no longer relevant either). Yet the PRO, third-largest party with 19.4 % of the vote, became the most successful new formation ever to run at the federal or *Länder* level. Schill had clearly attracted voters beyond the (considerable) electoral potential of right-wing extremist parties. Klein and Ohr argue that Schill's voters indeed wanted to give him an electoral mandate for government participation (Klein and Ohr, 2002: 78). The outstanding success of the PRO gave the *Bürgerblock* a majority of 50.7 %, despite the weak showing of the CDU and the FDP, and hence the opportunity to take the reins of power after 44 years of SPD dominance. The coalition negotiations were concluded in October, and the new government was voted into office within days. Despite some compromises, the PRO managed to make its mark in the security field. In other policy areas, the PRO's negotiation leaders Schill, Mettbach and Nockemann largely accepted the other parties' positions. In a slightly reduced Senate, two departments went to the FDP, five to the CDU, three to the PRO: domestic affairs, headed by the future deputy mayor Schill, environment and health, and public works and transportation, headed by Mario Mettbach. The new Senate was unusual in that none of its members had government experience, and more than half, including Schill, were political neophytes. Both the FDP and the PRO MPs were new to the parliamentary world.

Schill had co-opted an ex-member of the CDU and founding member of the *Statt* Party (Mettbach) and an ex-member of the SPD (Nockemann) into his five-person inner circle early on. This nurtured the hope that the *Statt* Party's mistakes would be avoided, and that enough political experience had been assembled at the top of the PRO to shoulder the tasks of organizational development, parliamentary and governmental work all at once. Complaints about Schill's authoritarian leadership style and the dominance of his immediate entourage were formulated right from the beginning, though. Intra-party democracy had already become an issue when Schill urged his party to accept his list of 50 candidates for the 2001 election, put together by the inner circle of the PRO, without debate or alterations. Later on, he deplored the problem of 'grumblers' in his formation time and again. As with the *Statt* Party, conflicts were not the least kindled by the issue of federal expansion. In the wake of its remarkable success in Hamburg, the PRO was widely credited with having the potential to become a nationwide political factor. The new right-

wing populist formation even seemed to have a chance to establish itself as a fourth *Volkspartei* to the right of the CDU and the CSU, or as a CSU of the North (Raschke and Tils, 2002). The expansion option had been embraced by Schill himself at the first party convention in November 2000, months before the Hamburg election. A party commission was established to prepare it. *Länder* coordinators were nominated by the leadership. Freund and other members of the five-person inner circle, who had already assumed various functions in the party, its Hamburg caucus and the government of the city-state, secured most of these jobs for themselves as well. Subsequently, events unfolded in a fashion that closely mirrored the *Statt* Party's experience. For despite the very early attempt to coordinate the expansion process from Hamburg, the bandwagon effect described earlier had already set in. For instance, would-be members and activists soon created proto-structures in neighboring Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony. In North-Rhine Westphalia, the ex-leader of the unsuccessful DMP (*Die Mittelstandspartei*) dissolved his ephemeral formation and merged it with the PRO in February 2002. Schill thus not only gained 800 members in the most populous *Land*, but organizational structures as well. In a similar fashion, the PRO could rely on the structures and former members of the *Statt* Party and *Arbeit für Bremen* in Bremen, the other Northern German city-state.

Between November 2001 and February 2002, polls showed promising figures for the PRO, especially in the eastern *Länder*. It was therefore decided to run in the April 2002 election in Saxony-Anhalt, the *Land* with the worst economic record and the highest unemployment rate in Germany. Moreover, party identifications in Saxony-Anhalt are notoriously weak, and its volatile electorate had given the DVU 12.9 % of the vote in the previous (1998) election (Holtmann, 2002). Dissatisfaction with eight years of largely unsuccessful SPD (and Green) minority government was intense. The upcoming election was thus seen as a perfect opportunity to warm up for the federal campaign. A party office in Saxony-Anhalt was opened in November 2001. At that point, there were already more than 700 party members in the *Land*. The first local party unit in the eastern part of the country was established a month later, and eight more in January 2002. The *Land* party unit (the second after Hamburg) followed yet a month later. However, the Saxony-Anhalt experience proved symptomatic for the difficulties encountered in the expansion process. It notably highlighted the PRO's lack of human resources. There were neither enough people in Hamburg to control the process from a distance nor enough capable and trustworthy people to 'run the show' in the *Länder*. Conflicts with the members and activists of the regional and local party units that sprang up in the rest of the country were the result. Very much like Wegner, Schill and his inner circle wished to control the process for two reasons: the first, more benign one, was the fear that the party might be 'hijacked' by right-wing extremist free riders and the candidate lists filled with political amateurs and 'village nuts,' thus jeopardizing the electoral prospects of the formation; the other, more problematic, had to do with the inner circle's unwillingness to relinquish power altogether and its realization that a shift in the power balance was almost unavoidable as soon as party units in the more populous *Länder* were up and running. In Saxony-Anhalt, the PRO indeed stumbled over the right-wing extremist links of the first regional coordinator. The party leadership then parachuted Ulrich Marseille, a friend of Schill, to Saxony-Anhalt. Schill had earlier tried in vain to make Marseille, a rich and shady (ex-) entrepreneur in the hospital and real-estate business, senator of the environment and health in Hamburg. The inner circle's choice of Marseille created irritations among rank-and-file members both in Hamburg and in Saxony-Anhalt. Reacting to this development, some members in Saxony-Anhalt left the PRO and founded the *Rechtsstaatliche Bürgerpartei*, a regional formation.

The electoral campaign in Saxony-Anhalt also exposed the weakness of the PRO's policy agenda. In a *Land* with an unemployment rate of more than 20 percent, jobs rather than crime and

security were the key issue, but the formation proved unable to broaden its platform in a convincing fashion to economic, labor market and social affairs. There were no clear signals from the CDU in Saxony-Anhalt that it might consider a coalition either. And internal strife accompanied the formation's campaign. With 4.5 % of the vote, the PRO nevertheless had a modicum of success in the April election, proving its electoral viability outside a large urban center like Hamburg. It still failed to cross the five-percent threshold, though. Despite this relative success, the PRO had clearly lost momentum, and the leadership's initial enthusiasm for expansion shrank. Schill reminded party members of the necessity to grow in a healthy fashion. Yet events showed that the dynamics could not be slowed down or steered effectively due to the high numbers of new members that the formation attracted. The establishment of local and regional party units continued at a fast pace and was usually accompanied by the difficulties experienced in Saxony-Anhalt. The third *Land* party unit was established in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in May 2002. Four weeks after the founding convention and the nomination of candidates, however, a party member challenged the results. As a consequence, the party unit was dissolved by the federal leadership although the regional chairman and board stayed on, and the candidate list was kept as well. In Brandenburg, Freund, also the formation's Berlin coordinator, had to give up her role as *Land* coordinator in January 2002, after massive internal criticism. Her successor, who had a right-wing past in the *Bund Freier Bürger*, immediately started criticizing the authoritarian streak of the federal leadership, the hierarchical party structures and the flow of a considerable share of membership dues to Hamburg as long as regional and local units did not exist. New party units were also established in Bavaria, Berlin, Rhineland-Palatinate, the Saarland and Saxony, but only Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania developed smooth relationships with the leadership in Hamburg.

The decision whether, or not, to run in the federal election provided an issue for the first major showdown between the federal leadership and the increasingly self-confident regional and local party units. The former was intensely pressured to run by members from Lower Saxony, NRW and Thuringia, and intra-party debate on the issue was lively. The leadership, on the other hand, continued to see the result of the Saxony-Anhalt election as ominous and wavered as long as it was unclear whether the CDU's more centrist Angela Merkel or the CSU's Edmund Stoiber would be the CDU/CSU's chancellor candidate. Shortly before a national party convention in May 2002, Schill indicated that he leaned against the PRO's participation in the federal election due to financial, personal and organizational limitations. As too few members showed up at the convention, the decision was postponed. Some frustrated rank-and-file members suggested that the failure to reach a quorum had been strategically manufactured by the leadership. This suspicion was reinforced when it called off the establishment of an NRW party unit on short notice in early June and dismissed the *Land* coordinators of NRW, Thuringia and Lower Saxony – all proponents of a participation in the federal election –, alleging that these newcomers had planned a 'coup.' The confrontation occurred at a moment when the party units in Hamburg and NRW had almost the same number of members (1.100). Every new unit – and not the least, the one in NRW – would now endanger the power of the temporary federal leadership in Hamburg. This fear was shown to be justified when a new party convention in June decided, against the leadership's wishes, to run in the upcoming federal election with Schill as its top candidate. Schill himself had once again spoken out against that decision, complaining about the internal strife that plagued the formation and jeopardized its survival. He urged a cleaning-up process and suggested to build up party structures in a more solid fashion. Yet 453 members (against 386 nays and 15 abstentions) voted against him.

While deputy federal chairman and vice Hamburg caucus chairman Nockemann remained sceptical about the wisdom of the decision, considering that only months remained to prepare the campaign, and qualified the putting together of candidate lists in the *Länder* as an ‘adventure,’ others quoted the Pim Fortuyn List as an example for the swift organization of a successful campaign. As the foreseeable decision to run in the federal election had once again attracted would-be members countrywide, the leadership had temporarily stopped the acceptance of new members in order to prevent people with criminal records or a right-wing extremist past from getting on the candidate lists. In order to be able to proceed with the establishment of organizational structures, the party convention decided on a change of the statutes. The hurdles for the establishment of local, regional and *Länder* party units were lowered. Dirk Weßlau, an ex-member of the CDU and of the right-wing *Deutsche Soziale Union*, and Detlef Münch, an ex-member of the *Landeswählergemeinschaft Unabhängige Bürger NRW*, were nominated as federal campaign coordinators, responsible for candidate lists in the western and eastern parts of the country, respectively. Schill made clear that their duties were merely organizational, not political, though. Among the other members of the campaign team were Frühauf and federal chief administrative officer Wolfgang Barth-Völkel. Yet the nomination conventions in Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony-Anhalt all ran into trouble for one reason or another. Ultimately, 15 candidate lists with a total of 180 candidates were established in time, and direct candidates in about 80 constituencies in Berlin, Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hesse, Lower Saxony and NRW were nominated as well. In Thuringia, two ex-members of the *Bund Freier Bürger* and the FDVP, a breakaway faction of the DVU, ended up on top of the list. In the federal election, the PRO gained a mere 0.8 %, and Schill, who saw his fears confirmed, immediately turned his attention back to Hamburg. Mettbach was elected federal chairman in February 2003.

In Hamburg, disillusionment with the new formation and its leader had set in almost immediately after the 2001 election. It was a function of the conspicuous incompetence and embarrassing mistakes of the PRO senators and MPs, including Schill, their inability to keep election promises, and a string of scandals. Many core PRO demands regarding political asylum rights and immigration touch upon federal prerogatives and hence proved *ultra vires*; the CDU and the FDP also prevented openly racist initiatives in the coalition agreement and forced Schill to withdraw or tone down subsequent proposals and statements in that direction. And while the party managed early on to shift funds to the departments of justice, domestic affairs and transportation, to implement more repressive measures against the city’s drug scene, to raise the number of deportations, to get the police act changed and the office of ombudsman for ‘foreigners’ abolished, it had to swallow a savings plan for the police, which promptly led to angry reactions in the force. Instead of reducing the crime rate or increasing the number of police officers, Schill and the PRO reverted to symbolic politics, such as buying American-style blue uniforms and Harley Davidsons for the local police force. Scandals that revealed a conspicuous gap between the PRO’s stated goals and reality involved several PRO members, not the least its leader. Half a year after the election, polls revealed that the PRO had already lost the support of a third of its voters, mostly to the benefit of the CDU and mayor von Beust, who portrayed himself as the moderating and responsible force of the coalition. As a result of these events and the increasingly erratic behavior of Schill, tensions between the coalition partners rose as well. Three weeks prior to the 2002 federal election and in the context of the flood disaster in eastern Germany, for instance, Schill linked the foreseeable repair costs with state expenditures for ‘foreigners’ and immigrants, suggesting a trade-off; even members of his own party distanced

themselves from their leader after this speech, although Schill was only mildly reprimanded by von Beust.

The premature end of the coalition arrived when Schill allegedly attempted to blackmail the mayor in a one-on-one conversation. In order to prevent the firing of his deputy, Schill threatened to expose von Beust's homosexuality and his presumptive relationship with the senator of justice, Roger Kusch. The mayor reacted immediately and fired Schill. The PRO caucus once again distanced itself from its party leader in order not to jeopardize the survival of the coalition. Nockemann became Schill's successor as senator and Mettbach, deputy mayor. Schill interpreted events as a conspiracy of von Beust and Nockemann, once head of his office. After a temporary withdrawal, he returned to the city parliament as a backbench MP and started working on his comeback. He fully re-entered the political stage at a federal party convention in October where he announced greater engagement in federal politics. In late November, he was returned as *Land* chairman with 73.5 % of the vote (down from almost 97 percent a year before). Frühauf and Barth-Völkel were elected deputies. Schill also threatened to trigger the end of the Hamburg coalition if Nockemann was elected to the board. While delegates failed to confirm three of the six candidates on a wish list presented to them by Schill right after his own confirmation as leader, Nockemann did not run in order to save the coalition. To the dismay of Nockemann and Mettbach, Schill announced more involvement in government business and participation in the coalition committee (against von Beust's explicit wishes). He suggested that voters did not expect the PRO to participate in government at any price, but to remain identifiable. After his confirmation, he began to attack the mayor in almost daily interviews. In reaction to Schill's threat to impose his will on the coalition and his refusal to stop his attacks on von Beust, Mettbach and the seven-member federal leadership board forced Schill to step down as *Land* chairman in early December 2003. In a press conference, Schill turned his wrath against Mettbach and announced legal steps against his ouster, vowing to fight back against the 'mafia' of his opponents. He also attacked von Beust himself and threatened to prevent the passing of the city budget. The mayor pulled the emergency brake and called an early election a day later. Even the PRO senators, who remained in office until the election, expressed their relief and saw the end of the coalition as the only means to rein in Schill. On December 12, 19 MPs – Schill and five loyalists did not attend the meeting – excluded the founder of the PRO from its caucus in a unanimous vote, and a few days later the federal leadership board excluded him from the party as well. Schill announced a legal challenge against this step. Seven out of twelve *Länder* party units threw their support behind Schill and demanded an extraordinary party convention in January to reinstate him as federal chairman, replace Mettbach and reunite the party around its original leader after a purge of 'insurgent' members, just in time for the upcoming election. Yet at a meeting of the federal leadership board with the *Länder* representatives on December 20, Mettbach managed to have the convention scheduled for March, i.e. after the election. Schill, who had established an independent caucus, chaired by Freund, right after being excluded from the party, therefore decided to sever his links with the PRO. Instead, he and his loyalists joined Bolko Hoffmann's *Pro DM* Party (now to be read as *Pro Deutsche Mitte*) in early January. Schill became its *Land* chairman and top candidate for the Hamburg election, Freund stayed on as caucus chairwoman. A court prohibited the use of the name Schill by the PRO (now PaRO) in late January.

Two successors of the PRO thus entered the fray in the 2004 election. During the campaign, the PaRO attempted to portray itself as a 'serious' and 'respectable,' democratic formation to the right of the CDU and instead of nominating a single top candidate, presented a team made up of Mettbach, Nockemann and Frühauf. Despite von Beust's announcement that a

coalition with any of the two successors of the PRO was excluded, the PaRO declared its willingness to participate in a future government led by the mayor. Schill announced that he would join a government coalition with the CDU if von Beust was replaced. Both formations once again focused on crime and security – senator Nockemann with diatribes against immigrants and a terror alarm in December that drew nationwide attention, Schill rambling against ‘von Beust, Turkey, the EU and the islamization of Germany.’ Yet the context had greatly changed between 2001 and 2004: Not only was the crime and security issue now covered by the CDU’s own right-winger, senator of justice Roger Kusch. But moreover, other issues came to the fore, such as unemployment and childcare, education and health policy, Hamburg’s fiscal problems, etc. And while over 60 percent of Hamburg’s citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the incumbent government in polls, this dissatisfaction only seemed to affect the small coalition partners, not the CDU. For other circumstances of the campaign had changed as well: While it was at least as personalized as in 2001, the media were now firmly on the side of mayor von Beust, who aimed at a majority for the CDU early on, against much skepticism within his own party, and largely ignored Schill. The campaign was thus characterized by the CDU’s ‘first name strategy’ that vaguely, but effectively appealed to notions of a tolerant and urbane Hamburg identity.

The February election resulted in yet another political earthquake in the city-state. Now it was the CDU that stunned observers by gaining 21 percentage points – more than any other party ever has between two *Länder* or federal elections. This victory enabled the party to govern alone, a first in the city’s history. The SPD, on the other hand, experienced its worst-ever performance in Hamburg and for the first time fell behind the CDU. The FDP once again failed to cross the five-percent threshold. Together, these three parties now represented 80.5 % of the vote. The GAL was also among the winners of the election. During the campaign, it had – despite rumours about the possibility of a coalition with the CDU – declared its willingness to enter a Red-Green coalition, and had been much less hampered by dissatisfaction with the federal government than its would-be coalition partner. In focusing on childcare and education policy, the integration of ‘foreigners’ and public transit, it almost regained its old electoral strength and hence inherited a considerable part of the urban left vote from the SPD. Finally, the election proved disastrous for the PaRO and the *Pro DM* Party. The latter, which had entertained hopes that it might pass the five-percent threshold, missed this goal by almost two percentage points; only two of its candidates were voted into a neighborhood council. The former, deprived of its founder, went down to a humiliating defeat, picking a mere 0.4 % of the vote. The PaRO thus had visibly lost its *raison d’être*. Hamburg thus seems to have come full circle, and while the CDU will govern the city-state alone in a three-party *Bürgerschaft*, the demise of the PRO’s remnants now seems to be certain.

IV Analysis

The similarity between the trajectories of the *Statt* Party and the PRO – from their spectacular rise to nationwide prominence and serious consideration as viable challengers of the political establishment to their equally swift demise after only one legislative term – is quite striking. We believe that these two local experiences also shed light on important reasons for the relative lack of success of right-wing populist parties in the wider German context. That organizational features and problems are crucial explanatory factors for this otherwise counter-intuitive outcome can be further substantiated by comparing the trajectories of the *Statt* Party and the PRO with the development of the GAL. After all, there can hardly be any doubt that the

opportunity structures for right-wing populist parties in Germany have been at least as favorable for right-wing formations as for their green counterparts and APE parties in other western nations in recent years – the initial electoral success of several of these formations demonstrates this much (Decker, 2004: 148-51). The *Statt* Party and the PRO entered the political arena with apparent ease. Why, then, the conspicuous failure to become viable governing parties and to establish themselves permanently in and beyond Hamburg like the GAL and the federal Greens?

Like elsewhere, the processes of globalization, individualization and pluralization, and of economic, social and cultural modernization have reduced the trust in, and the legitimacy of, democratic politics and its protagonists in Germany. The milieus supporting traditional parties and party identifications have been eroded. The occasional electoral success of right-wing extremist and populist parties, all of which have tried to capitalize on this alienation, illustrates that both a supply and genuine demand for their message does in fact exist. These trends on the supply and demand side have, moreover, had a visible effect on the programmatic stances of the mainstream parties. Unlike Decker, who argues that the political establishment, including the media, has so far prevented the emergence of a ‘respectable’ anti-immigrant discourse and thus has, against the “backdrop of an emerging far right at the regional level,” quasi-automatically stigmatized a policy agenda along those lines as right-wing extremist, we suggest that CDU, CSU and SPD have themselves shifted considerably to the right with regard to this issue, thus reacting to the electoral success of their competitors by appropriating their core programmatic item (Decker, 2004; Heinisch, 2003). Hence although too much real or perceived closeness to right-wing extremism continues to be dangerous for formations of the populist type, there is precious little evidence to corroborate the argument that programmatic stances that might have disqualified new formations in the eyes of the establishment until fairly recently always continue to have that effect today, or that the media have in each case shied away from considering these challengers as potentially viable alternatives to the mainstream parties and the policy solutions they propose as ‘respectable.’ Finally, the more general political disenchantment that is the basis of, and further nurtured by, populists is not only, to a large extent, anti-establishment and anti-party sentiment, a discourse with a long tradition in Germany, but has also been made ‘respectable’ by the media, by intellectuals, and even by members of the mainstream parties themselves, such as the former president of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker. In short, of the three issues that tend to propel right-wing populist challenges to the dominance of the mainstream parties elsewhere – disenchantment with party rule, immigration and perceptions of a bloated welfare state – two are just as relevant in Germany as in neighboring countries, while the third is most unlikely to have electoral potential for mainstream and APE parties alike in that country (Ignazi, 1996; Jun, 2002; Rieger, 1994; Scarrow, 1996; 1999; Wiesendahl, 1992).

It is true that ultimately, the rise and performance of APE parties like the PRO has often – and Hamburg is a case in point – improved the opportunity structures of the mainstream conservative parties. But this does not in itself explain why their challengers, arguably more authentic voices with regard to these issues, failed to capitalize on their ‘comparative advantage.’ Thus, despite the outlined shifts in urban politics, it seems implausible to suggest that the failure of the *Statt* Party and the PRO had only to do with systemic pressures and change, such as the disappearance of their electoral potential or hugely diminished appeal for their programmatic stances. One may of course point to the strategic resources and effective reactions of the mainstream parties and notably, the CDU. But not too much can or should be made out of this presumptive strategic foresight and capacity. After all, each of the mainstream parties has been faced with its own severe crisis. The SPD, increasingly unpopular after decades in government, did *not* manage to prevent its loss of power and the intrusion of challengers into its traditional

working-class and middle-class electoral base. Conversely, the CDU and the FDP were unable to greatly capitalize on the desire for change before 2001. And the argument that organizational fragmentation is the key problem of right-wing extremist or populist parties in Germany does not fly well in Hamburg either: In 2001, Schill attracted more voters *alone* than all APE parties together in 1993, when their combined vote share reached a first climax, and yet was unable to build on that success.

Turning to the institutional context, there is again only scarce evidence that right-wing populist parties may have been greatly impeded by the electoral system or other institutional barriers. The electoral threshold is, for instance, higher than in Denmark or the Netherlands, but lower than in France – and it *has* been crossed in Hamburg and elsewhere. The often heard argument that a combination of organizational fragmentation in several competing parties with hostile leaders, on the one hand, and electoral hurdles, on the other, can account for the radical right's difficulties in Germany thus has to be taken with a grain of salt, too. Again unlike Decker, who considers federalism as an impediment for these parties, we suggest that its German variant rather has the potential to *improve* the chances of new formations (Decker, 2004). Decker argues that municipal, *Länder* and European elections provide convenient outlets for the occasional expression of a protest mood in parts of the citizenry that remains inconsequential because it is not carried over to the national level. But the argument has to be turned around. The psychological hurdles for protest voters are indeed lower in *Länder* elections. Yet as most *Länder* elections are dominated by federal issues and serve as yardsticks for the mood of the national electorate in the highly centralized federal system of Germany, they give challengers the chance to achieve an electoral breakthrough in a *Land* – perhaps one of the three small city-states – with modest resources, but almost guaranteed national attention. A party that is invited to join a *Land* government can even influence federal policy-making through the *Bundesrat* and hence might be able to profit from the institutional peculiarities of the German system to make a more gradual transition from opposition to government participation, to learn and to prove its credibility to a national audience before trying to expand beyond its regional stronghold. All three formations examined in this paper have in fact used Hamburg as entry point, but only the GAL and the Greens have done so with permanent success.

Internal and organizational factors should therefore receive greater attention. We argue that organizational challenges and the way the GAL, the *Statt* Party and the PRO have dealt with them indeed help to explain their divergent trajectories. As Heinisch and others have suggested, "it may be argued that the absence of a significant populist movement in [...] Germany is largely due to the absence of [charismatic] personalities" (Heinisch, 2003: 94). One should, however, go beyond an assessment of leadership skills in the analysis of these internal factors. As erratic and inappropriate as Wegner's and even more so Schill's behavior may have been, mere references to their, or their successors', personal mistakes, their lack of charisma, intellectualism and abilities are hardly satisfactory in explaining the premature demise of their two formations. Instead, their experiences illustrate the tight nexus between leadership skills and strategic capacity, on the one hand, organizational resources and structures, on the other, in securing the successful adaptation and long-term survival of office-seeking and government-incumbent APE parties. A related argument can be made with regard to the programmatic development of our three cases: The fact that only the GAL managed to broaden its platform beyond the narrow set of issues – or, in the *Statt* Party's case, meta issues – that had carried them to initial success is only to some extent the result of the mainstream parties' effectiveness in (re)claiming issues like immigration and unemployment, and to a probably greater extent the consequence of lacking strategic foresight and organizational resources on the part of Wegner's and Schill's challenger parties themselves.

Why, then, was the GAL's organizational development more successful despite similar challenges, and to what extent can unresolved organizational problems be shown to have precipitated the demise of the *Statt* Party and the PRO? In order to answer these questions, we first recapitulate the external shocks or critical junctures that triggered the shift to government aspiration in each of the three cases. The external shocks that brought office-seeking goals to the fore in the *Statt* Party and the PRO can be easily identified. Both were propelled to their first electoral success only months after being established. In each case, the dissatisfaction with the mainstream parties in general and the SPD in particular was running high, and there was an intense desire for political change. The urban context facilitated the staging of a successful electoral campaign with limited resources. Their media-supported credibility and electoral performance gave the two formations the option to join a government coalition immediately after their breakthrough. This chance of government participation was even more tempting for the PRO, which had been provided with the clout to end the SPD's grip on power by the voters. However, it is difficult to discern a genuine *shift* in the primary goals of the *Statt* Party and the PRO. In 1993 and 2001, they most authentically represented the issue positions that were also most likely to be vote-maximizing, and unlike most other APE parties, both had declared their willingness – or eagerness, as far as the PRO is concerned – to join government early on. Because of their immediate success, the two formations had to tackle the challenges associated with the three stages of party and organizational development in a virtually simultaneous fashion. The *Statt* Party had in fact not even turned into a formal party organization when it decided to cooperate with the SPD, and the PRO's organization was fledgling at best when it joined the liberal-conservative three-party coalition of the *Bürgerblock*. Thus, both were faced with a plethora of organizational tasks that proved to be way beyond their financial and personal resources, and to surpass the strategic capacity of their leadership as well: The rudimentary party organizations in and outside of Hamburg had to be developed at the same time as first experiences with parliamentary and governmental work were made. Rules and procedures for intra-party relationships between the two formations' leadership, senators and caucuses, on the one hand, middle-level activists and rank-and-file members, on the other, had to be established. Calls for expansion beyond Hamburg had to be dealt with. Appropriate forms of interaction with the coalition partners had to be learned.

By contrast, the change of primary goals occurred much later in the GAL's life cycle, affording it much more time to develop its organizational structures and to prepare for government participation. And while it had indeed been confronted with many of the typical challenges of APE parties, they had been tackled rather effectively *before* the formation's first government participation. Policy-seeking and intra-party democracy-seeking goals were paramount in the first years. The uninterrupted presence of a GAL caucus in the parliament of Hamburg since 1982 greatly facilitated the growing together of the heterogeneous groups of which the formation was made up and also supported the creation of a GAL identity. A shift to vote maximization and the electoral setback of 1987 triggered internal change as a consequence of which the formation became a government-aspiring party in 1991. Instead of the more radical party on the ground, the caucus – and hence relatively moderate party members with political experience – became the power center of the GAL, formal organizational structures replaced informal networks, and the intensity of factionalism was considerably toned down. When it was asked to join a coalition with the SPD, the GAL could indeed present itself as a reliable partner. And while the formation experienced another schism between 1987 and 2001, the Red-Green coalition in Hamburg went down to defeat after only one legislative term and the GAL's leadership board was replaced as a consequence, its electoral comeback in 2004 demonstrated the

extent to which the formation is now on a stable path of organizational development. Furthermore, as members of the green party 'family' sprung up almost simultaneously and eventually joined forces in the late 1970s and 1980s, the GAL was not confronted with the overwhelming problems associated with Wegner's and Schill's efforts to turn local formations into national parties, and to control the expansion dynamic with the limited personal and organizational resources of their Hamburg party units. Thus, the importance of timing has to be underlined. Windows of opportunity that enable APE parties to attract protest voters come and go, in Hamburg as elsewhere. In order to repeat one-time electoral success and to defend their incumbency status, parties have to go beyond attracting protest voters, though, and have to firmly establish their identity and message, to broaden their agenda, to develop the human resources for successful parliamentary and governmental work, to prove their reliability, etc. – in short, to meet the leadership tasks and organizational requirements associated with the third, institutionalized stage in a party's development.

The timing factor is of course unrelated, *per se*, to the ideological positions and specific origins of right-wing and left-wing APE parties whose organizational ramifications we consider now. While the *Statt* Party, unlike the PRO, only began to move in a right-wing populist direction when it was already in decline, both can be categorized as 'entrepreneurial issue' parties that owed their existence to personal initiative and served as vehicles for the ambitions and restricted message of their leaders. The personalized character of their leadership exacerbated the organizational challenges faced by the two APE parties and greatly contributed to their failure in tackling them. Hence it can be said with hindsight that they managed to develop rudimentary structures that were 'real' enough to guarantee some visibility and to stage one successful electoral campaign, but they were unable to consolidate and adapt them in a way that would have enabled them to meet the challenges that lay ahead after the election was over. Shouldering the development of organizational structures, parliamentary and governmental work at the same time overwhelmed the *Statt* Party and the PRO not the least because their leaders failed to adapt their leadership styles to this triple task. The tension between stated goals of intra-party democracy, on the one hand, and an organizational reality characterized by extremely personalized and authoritarian leadership, on the other, fostered massive internal strife and factionalism early on, often dividing leadership, middle-level activists and rank-and-file members. Yet the lack of organizational structures, of established rules and procedures made coping with factionalism difficult in each case.

Would-be members of the 'novice ideologue' type flocked to the *Statt* Party and the PRO in great numbers right after they had been established and in the wake of their initial electoral success. In the eyes of their leadership, they were a mixed blessing, though. The 'novice ideologues' did not contribute administrative skills or political experience to the developmental, parliamentary and governmental work of their parties, but were eager to get involved in a meaningful way and were extremely serious about the intra-party democracy seeking goals highlighted by the *Statt* Party and the PRO. Wegner and Schill, on the other hand, were reluctant to live up to these goals and relinquish power. Both were unwilling to accept that their personal vehicles were appropriated and modified by others with political ambitions and issue positions of their own. In part, this reluctance grew out of an entirely realistic assessment of the dangers with which the two formations were confronted due to their quickly rising membership figures. Effective parliamentary and governmental work – the basis of long-term survival – could not rely on the many political amateurs in the two party organizations and caucuses. It made sense for Wegner, himself an ex-member of the CDU, and Schill, a neophyte, to try to steer their parties with a dominant faction or inner circle of activists with some prior experience in APE or

mainstream parties, but these ‘movers and shakers’ and their career goals were eyed with suspicion by rank-and-file members (and in any case, neither one of the two formations attracted high-profile recruits from the CDU, SPD or FDP). Instead of developing effective mechanisms for the resolution of internal and external conflicts, the two leaders had a strong penchant for conspiratorial accounts of events. The two experiences illustrate that consensus building is a task that is crucial, albeit *not* easily delegated, and is highly problematic where leadership is authoritarian and unable to delegate responsibilities or accept a modest level of factionalism.

At the same time, the quick pace of expansion made it more difficult to screen new members or candidates for party and public offices – an important task, for the early success, programmatic vagueness and as yet unstable organizational structures of the two formations did indeed not only attract many ‘village nuts,’ but also free riders, including right-wing extremist ones, who had not achieved their goals elsewhere and/or intended to ‘hijack’ the *Statt* Party and the PRO. The threat of a right-wing extremist take-over was of course more serious for the latter, but existed for the former as well. It may surprise that the two formations rushed into the expansion process altogether, as their organizational and personal resources were already stretched thin in Hamburg. Yet in each case, the leadership was faced with a dilemma. In their desire to grow, would-be and rank-and-file members, middle-level activists and supporters were driven by euphoria about the electoral success in Hamburg. The leaders, on the other hand, saw the danger of premature expansion both for their own power and for the development of their parties, but were forced to jump on the bandwagon pushed in motion at the grassroots level and outside of Hamburg if they wanted to maintain at least some control of the process rather than seeing their ‘creatures’ overtaken by outsiders and free riders.

Again problems such as these were not completely absent in the case of the GAL. Just like the *Statt* Party and the PRO, it had long been characterized by an obvious tension between stated goals of intra-party democracy and tightly structured, hierarchical leadership. And members of the ‘novice ideologue’ type certainly dominated the formation during the first decade of its existence, making its organizational adaptation to government aspiration and participation more difficult. Still, the gap between claims and reality was arguably smaller than in the *Statt* Party and the PRO. As the formation was initiated as a loose alliance of groups associated with the new social movements and various Marxist groups, and the principle of collective rather than personalized leadership was never questioned or abolished, there was always some degree of intra-party pluralism even if many groups were marginalized and went into ‘internal emigration’ for a long time. In contrast with the two other organizations, the new social movements not only provided the GAL with a fair number of relatively experienced, capable and ‘presentable’ members, but also with organizational resources and structures that could be built upon. These organizational ties certainly helped the GAL to steer through difficult periods of its development. Today, these ties are an important factor in explaining the remarkable degree to which the GAL is anchored in the city’s neighborhoods and able to mobilize rank-and-file members, activists and supporters for its political initiatives. The *Statt* Party and the PRO, on the other hand, were neither rooted in, nor ever managed to create ties with, collateral organizations (on this general topic, see Poguntke, 2002; Rucht, 1987).

IV Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to show that organizational challenges often proved at least as important – and in some cases, fatal – for the ultimate political fate of APE parties as the

hurdles built into the electoral system and other explanatory variables one might think about. To a large extent, the challenges for office-seeking APE parties stemmed from the hypothesized conflicts between the very rationale of being anti-establishment, on the one hand, and the organizational change demanded and triggered by electoral success, government aspiration and incumbency, on the other, thus vindicating the decision to focus on organizational features in examining this party type.

The patterns identified in the development of Hamburg's three APE parties of the 1990s indeed seems to hold if the perspective is shifted back to the national level, as well as in a European comparison. Formations that are successful in the long term have never had personalized leadership and a narrow single-issue focus or have moved away from these restrictions and developed more or less differentiated organizational structures; office-seeking APE parties that join a government for the first time are usually not torn apart by the experience if they have already reached the third, institutionalization stage of their life cycle. Hence in Germany, the more successful government experiences of APE parties – successful in terms of their impact on the participating formations, not in terms of policy output and outcomes – involved the Greens and the PDS, while 'entrepreneurial issue' parties of the right-wing extremist and populist type fared badly. The contrast between Haider and now perhaps Blocher, on the one hand, and Fortuyn, on the other, points in a similar direction. At the same time, the way the PRO was out-maneuvered by CDU mayor von Beust in Hamburg and the experience of the first national government coalition between Haider's FPÖ and chancellor Schüssel's Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) are remarkably similar.

Any new party obviously faces considerable hurdles, many are weeded out, and the failure to tackle organizational challenges is certainly prominent among the factors that determine the success or failure of newcomers. However, as we have attempted to show, the leadership styles and organizational peculiarities of right-wing populist or 'entrepreneurial issue' parties, which are closely linked with ideological positions and programmatic stances, make them even more prone to failure in this respect than the new politics or green formations of the APE type, especially if they do not manage to reach the institutionalization stage of party development.

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