ELITE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE STATE:
A CASE STUDY OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT DANGER

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Abstract

We suggest that both Marxist theories of the state as well as theories of social movements inadequately consider the potential class based social movements organized by the very wealthy. The concentration on mass movements by both bodies of theory has shortchanged the study of elite organizations. We explore the existence and behavior of these elite social movements (ESMOs) by examining the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), an organization deeply embedded in the New Right Movement. The CPD sought to replace Jimmy Carter's conflict management foreign and military policies with a militaristic interventionist foreign policy harking back to the cold war. Over forty of the CPD's directors were drawn from the upper class as defined by G. W. Domhoff. The bulk of the other 100 directors came from elite military, civilian government, and academic backgrounds. The CPD meets all six expectations of ESMO organization and behavior the authors derived from theories of social movements and the state. Moreover, available evidence suggests that the CPD has had significant influence over the United States Federal Government's foreign and military policies. We conclude that both theories of the state and of social movements could benefit by acknowledging the existence and importance of ESMOs. We speculate that ESMOs will prove to be important forces at work shaping society during periods when the state undertakes major changes in behavior despite the lack of powerful mass movements, support of pre-existing elite institutions or obvious commitment to the policy changes by the state.
Introduction

An important agent of social change in contemporary society is the activity of social movement organizations (SMOs). The most common contemporary target of such organizations has been the state. Therefore, despite limited overlap, research concerning social movements and research examining the operation of the state are fundamentally and inextricably linked. This linkage goes beyond just a set of common subject materials, but also includes a common flaw; their failure to address the organization of high level elites into social movement organizations.

Even a cursory overview of the literature on social movements would reveal the fundamental observation that little theory or research exists about elite social movement organizations (ESMOs). This could be attributable to two causes. Either this paucity could be due to lack of elite movement organizations to study, or it could be due to the inability of current theory to "notice" them. That is, they either do not exist or theory has constrained the definition of social movement organizations to preclude the possibility of elite movement organizations. The answer chosen has important ramifications for the two bodies of theory in sociology most concerned with processes of social change and political organizing, Marxist theories of the state and social movement theories. This paper investigates two questions. First, is there such a thing as an elite social movement organization? Second, what are the implications of elite movement organizations for theories of social movements and the state?

The principal focus of this effort is the Committee for the Present Danger (1976-current), an upper-class organization dedicated to the resurrection of "a militarized doctrine of containment as the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy" (Sanders 1983:8). An investigation of this organization is undertaken to assess its qualifications as a social movement organization. The first step in this task is to define the central characteristics of social movement organizations and see whether the CPD fits these criteria.
Literature Review

This effort examines this question from two theoretical viewpoints, each of which has something to say about social movements and elites. The first approach is resource mobilization theory, a perspective directly concerned with the factors accounting for the formation, duration and success of social movements and their interaction with elites. The second theoretical tradition that we discuss is theories of the state. These theories deal with power relations in society, theories concerning the operation of SMOs and their most common targets.

Resource Mobilization Theory

The resource mobilization theory of social movements currently represents the dominant theory in the field (Jenkins 1983). This body of scholarship views social movements as rationally motivated and directed enterprises (Gamson 1975; McCarthy and Zald 1973; 1977; Oberschall 1973; Tilly 1978). In essence, social movement behavior is equated with political behavior (Halebsky 1976); they both have as their goal the influence or attainment of power. However, social movements are unique in that power is exercised not through institutional channels but by the very fact of being outside of these channels (Jenkins 1985; Jenkins and Eckert 1986; McAdam 1982; 1983; Piven and Cloward 1977). By utilizing "negative inducements" social movements are believed to influence those in power to concede to the demands of the insurgent group (McAdam 1983:19).

Although there are a number of variations within resource mobilization theory (McAdam 1982; McCarthy and Zald 1973; Morris 1984; Pichardo 1988a), they all share common conceptions about the possibility of elite movement organizations. Since movements are powered by their use of non-institutional "negative inducements," one must question why groups that already possess power would form movement organizations especially when their power base lies firmly within the confines of institutional networks. One need only look at the principal movements that have dominated the studies of resource mobilization theorists (civil rights, women and farm workers) to see that social movements are considered as vehicles for impoverished or oppressed groups to attain power.
This is further supported by the view that social movements are rationalistically motivated endeavors, subject to cost/benefit analyses. In this view it would make little sense for elites to form SMOs since the costs would likely outweigh the benefits. Groups usually embark on social movements only when other less costly avenues of influence are unavailable or unresponsive. With elites this would not be the case for they have available to them a number of influence avenues (Domhoff 1983). Thus, the image conveyed by resource mobilization theory is that elite SMOs do not exist because they would likely produce minimal if any marginal returns. This view is further supported by the observation that there are almost no examples of elite movement organizations studied by resource mobilization theorists.

*Theories of State*

Not only does the social movement literature fail to acknowledge the existence and importance of the ESMOs, but the theory of the state literature skirts this issue as well. In general, class theorists see social movements as almost entirely a working class phenomenon. Elites of all types, especially economic elites, are seen as not needing to form powerful, well organized movements. The concentration of resources in the hands of a few plus the common material interests and the high degree of class consciousness of the wealthy are seen as making it possible for economic elites to further their interests without a high degree of social movement mobilization (Alford and Friedland 1985). Still, the different theoretical perspectives under the class theorist rubric give elite mobilizations different emphasis.

Under the umbrella of the class theorists three perspectives are usually identified (Gold, Lo, and Wright 1975; Whitt 1979). The Marxist structuralists concentrate on the structure of capitalist society and how that determines both the structure and function of the state (Offe and Renge 1975). The deterministic nature of this body of scholarship effectively excludes from significant consideration the impact of attempts by groups and individuals to actively influence the behavior of the state. The state is an actor relatively autonomous from deliberate organized human action (Poulantzas 1973). This means that not only are the mobilizations of the very rich
and powerful largely ignored by this literature, but the machinations of the impoverished are also considered peripheral to the important processes in state and society.

A second central array of class theory regarding the state is the instrumentalist perspective. This is the most traditional perspective, viewing the state as an instrument of the upper class (first explicated by Marx in Kapital, The 18th Brumiere, and other works). Unlike the structuralists who see the state as relatively autonomous, the instrumentalists see the state as wholly under the control of the owners of the means of production. The high level of obedience is maintained by the state being peopled with members of the upper class, with large transfusions of cash and other resources into the hands of state officials, and with the control the upper class maintains over the private sector. The iron fisted control over the state and the rest of society is considered the natural outgrowth of owning the means of production. Here again the concentration of resources and class consciousness of the elites in the capitalist societies makes it unnecessary for them put much deliberate work into organizing themselves to further their material interests. As individuals they can wield adequate power to get what they want (see for example Meadow 1983). Moreover, working class movements, while of interest, are not considered an important factor in determining public policy outcomes, except to the extent they cause official reactions to their attempts to influence society and the state.

The class-dialectical theorists such as G. William Domhoff (1970; 1983) and J. Allen Whitt (1979; 1980; 1982) posit a different view on the role of the state and working class social movements. Rather than seeing working class social movements as largely ineffective throughout much of the history of a society, class-dialectical theorists suggest that the state is a central arena of conflict between and within the classes. This conflict is also considered far from one-sided. Working class social movement organizations are sometimes able to influence the state into working for their interests as Domhoff describes in The Higher Circles (1970). This means that members of the upper classes must constantly be on guard and active against such activity. While the organization and mobilization of non-elites is given significance by the class-dialectical model, the economic elites are considered to have sufficient individual resources so as to make only
the loosest non-institutional political organizations necessary to counter the vast majority of working class social movements. Although permanent elite political organizations do exist -- e.g. Council on Foreign Relations, Conference Board, Trilateral Commission -- these organizations are there essentially to assist individual and groups of capitalists in working towards consensus solutions to pressing problems rather than to mobilize resources towards accomplishing significant social change (Domhoff 1983). Even lobbying groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers are viewed as status quo oriented special interest organizations rather than as social movement organizations by the class-dialectical theorists.

Although the theories discussed represent differing perspectives on how society is organized and operates, they do share some common conceptions of the propriety of elite social movement organizations. Both of the theories view ESMOs as foregone conclusions. The resource mobilization literature indicates that it makes no rational sense for elites to engage in such activity, that the costs of such enterprises would outweigh their benefits and that the necessity of forming a social movement is pre-empted by their power within institutional channels and by the capacity of the upper class to build and maintain political consensus. State theories would basically agree with this position because the power of elites would make such endeavors unnecessary and unlikely, except when unusual conditions prevail, e.g. the Great Depression.

However, there are a few problems associated with these approaches. For resource mobilization theory the problems stem from a static conception of political behavior and assumptions concerning the power of institutional channels. If social movements are indeed to be considered within the spectrum of political behavior, as a kind of political behavior, then it seems somewhat artificial to constrict this behavior to one segment of the population. Of course, resource mobilization theory would respond to this by saying that it is not that they could not exist, but that given the actors’ rational disposition, elite SMOs would not be expected rationally.

This view, however, hinges on the assumption concerning the power of institutional channels. For it assumes that the power that elites exercise within institutional channels is sufficient to accomplish their goals. If this is not the case then there might be cause for elites to
form SMOs. When we take a close look at institutionalized power we see that such a position restricts the use of power just as much as it enhances it. For example, during the civil rights movement the municipal authorities in Montgomery found that their legal authority could be successfully circumvented. Their response was to take advantage of non-institutional means of social control by forming the White Citizens’ Council (WCC). Available evidence indicates that many prominent white Southerners were believed to be involved with the WCC (McMillen 1971). The White Citizens’ Council, much like any other SMO, sought to exercise power by using non-institutionalized channels of influence. Their campaign of repression, terror, bombings and murder is well-documented.

The WCC members’ decision to utilize terror as a means of social control was not only linked to their desire to prevent African-Americans from sharing power but also to the fact that their use of legitimate authority as an agent of repression had been severely handicapped by the civil rights movement. In essence, the use of institutionalized power is governed by rules that are often determined and enforced by actors outside the local arena of conflict. These rules limit the behavior of authorities just as they empower them. Faced with this limitation, elite Southerners formed, backed and supported the White Citizens’ Council as a means of circumventing the limitations placed on legitimate authority.1

It should also be kept in mind that elites do not represent a unified group, that there may be divisions and factions within the elite (Jenkins 1985; McAdam 1982; Shoup 1980; Ferguson and Rogers 1981). Therefore, movement organizations may become useful when an elite faction is competing against other elite factions. Through such organizations elites could create an independent source for gathering and disseminating information and resources supportive of their interests. This may be desired since elites often share institutional power and thus elite factions rarely have the ability to freely exploit the full power of the institution.

1 Another example of a social movement organization formed by elites was the Associated Farmers, a group created and sponsored by the agricultural growers in California in the 1930s to combat trade unionism in the farm fields.
So it seems that when channels of legitimate authority are limited or constrained in their capacity to pursue or protect elite interests, elites may be rationally motivated to form movement organizations. And, just as in the case of typical SMOs, they are formed in order to liberate their tactical repertoire. Thus, resource mobilization theory is shortsighted in its failure to recognize ESMOs.

However, it may be argued that the social movement literature has dealt with elite mobilization except that it has done so under the heading of counter-movement organizations. We do not fundamentally disagree with the view that counter-movement organizations often are constituted by elites. Indeed, we recognized the White Citizens’ Council as a prime example of an elite movement organization. It is true that elites often mobilize in reaction to events that threaten their hold on power, in fact, we phrase this as one of the principal reasons for elite mobilization when such threats cannot be adequately dealt with through institutionalized channels. However, relegating elites solely to reactive modes of movement formation artificially restricts the range of elite movement behavior. Such a view assumes that elites are highly unified. This assumption fails to recognize that elites, especially economic elites, do not all have identical interests. That resource mobilization theory mostly ignores the ramifications of this for the formation of non-countermovement elite groups is surprising considering that the model does acknowledge that elites are not a unified bloc (Jenkins 1985; Jenkins and Perrow 1978; McAdam 1983; Morris 1984; Pichardo 1988a). It is therefore our contention that elites mobilize not only in reaction to the efforts of the working class but also to the constraints provided by other elite groups. But more importantly, elites also take the initiative in organizing and mobilizing to advance their own interests, and not just to suppress or counter the advancement of opposing interests. This organizing will occur in the absence of direct stimulus from competing groups and the life of the organization will not be defined in terms of external threats but in terms of the interests of elites.

Recent work in the class literature indicating that business elites organize themselves into remarkably coherent groups with the purpose of effecting significant social change points to
shortcomings in the theory of the state literature. Ashford’s research on the role of corporations in the 1980 congressional elections (1986) found that large businesses apparently organize themselves into effective political units when necessary to counter social changes not in their interests. Other researchers have found remarkable degrees of organization and communication among large but supposedly competing businesses that are attempting to influence congressional decision-making through campaign contributions (see Clawson, Neustadtl, and Bearden 1986; Mizruchi and Koenig 1986). Business classes and businesses might also have formed political movements during the mid to late seventies for the purposes of stopping environmentalist and consumer protection movements formed in the sixties (Useem 1983; 1984). Perhaps most importantly, conflicts within the upper class and other elites are seen as major forces behind the development of several political movements such as the Southern Rim Conservatives described by Kirkpatrick Sale (1976) and the neo-conservative groups described by Shoup (1980). The burgeoning literature on business political organizing suggests that elites, particularly economic elites, do organize for the purpose of changing state policy outcomes as well as more global aspects of society such as the distribution of wealth. Most of this research, however, looks at these phenomena as special interest seeking activity little different from normal congressional lobbying activity. Thus, despite this new information on the existence and possible power of the political organizations of economic elites no explicit acknowledgement is being made of the importance of ESMOs in the literature as key factors in influencing the behavior of the state.

We explore the importance of the concept of ESMOs by examining the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD). It is our belief that such an examination reveals that this organization can constitute only an elite social movement organization. Toward this end, we construct a set of expectations of the characteristics of an ESMO derived from resource mobilization theory and from extant theories of the state. We expect that an ESMO should have the following characteristics:

1) Much of the membership and leadership of the CPD should be drawn from other pre-existing organizations (Tarrow 1983).
2) The extremely high social status of the CPD membership suggests that the organization should rely principally, if not exclusively, on finances and expertise rather than manpower and, therefore, not take the shape of a mass-based organization (Pichardo 1988b).

3) The CPD should be motivated by and operate according to rationalistic considerations.

4) The CPD should represent the interests of its particular elite supporters rather than that of other groups or elite factions.

5) The CPD should pursue or employ strategies and tactics that they could not otherwise pursue within institutional channels. In addition to these characteristics, it is also important to show that the CPD was not formed solely to oppose working-class movements. To this end, the reasons for the formation of the CPD need to be explored.

6) The social background of the CPD membership should reflect a significant bias towards the upper class as defined by the Marxist theory of the state literature; Domhoff’s (1983) criteria are used here.

The focus of our exploration of these expectations is a short case study of the Committee on the Present Danger. The goal of this investigation of the CPD is to explore whether it qualifies as an ESMO and not just a counter-movement organization. Data for this study are drawn heavily from the original research by Jerry W. Sanders (1983) and Laurence Shoup (1980), and from various documents published by the Committee or its members. Research on upper class families by Michael P. Allen (1987) and Ferdinand Lundberg (1988) as well as Who’s Who in America (1983; 1987) were also sources for this study.

The Committee On the Present Danger

The Committee on the Present Danger3 (CPD) was founded in 1976 as a way of countering the newly elected Jimmy Carter’s campaign promises of reduction in military expenditures, self-determination for other nations, emphasis on human rights, and arms control

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2 This is not to say that institutional channels will be abandoned or ignored. In fact, given their privileged status within these channels we would expect them to be heavily utilized. The CPD should engage in both types of behavior.

3 In 1950 the first Committee on the Present Danger was founded. This committee was very similar to the CPD we describe here.
(Sanders 1983). This organization is deeply embedded in what many scholars call the New Right Movement (Shoup 1980; Sale 1976; Allen 1989; Himmelstein 1990; Hunter 1981). Twenty-four of the founding directors of the CPD are also affiliated with at least one of several new right or neo-conservative think tanks or policy organizations including the Hoover Institute for the Study of War and Revolution, Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy (Sanders 1983; Who's Who 1983; 1987).

An important factor in the committee's creation was Jimmy Carter's near total exclusion of all of the cold-warrior elites from his administration, despite having two of the most well respected cold warriors, Paul Nitze and Dean Rusk, as campaign advisors in 1976 (Shoup 1980; Sanders 1983). Therefore, in order to remain influential in national politics and promote policies more to their liking the cold warriors and their wealthy backers had to organize outside the existing mainstream institutional framework centered around the Office of the President and elite policy organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations and The Brookings Institution (Shoup 1980; Sanders 1983; Domhoff 1983).

The role of previous elite organizations in the formation of the CPD is quite extensive. The CPD was founded with 141 directors drawn from the ranks of business, the military, labor, academe, and the state plus a larger number of contributing members. Figure 1 provides just a sampling of some of the most elite CPD directors and their affiliations.

[Figure 1 about here]

Among the most prominent members and directors are ex-President Ronald Reagan, David Packard, Nathan Glaser, Saul Bellow, and President George Bush (Committee on the Present Danger 1981). Moreover, the CPD has director interlocks with many very central upper class policy making and consensus building organizations including The Trilateral Commission, The Atlantic Council, The Brookings Institution Board of Trustees, The Business Roundtable, The Business Council, The Committee for Economic Development, and The Council on Foreign
Relations. Many directors such as David Packard, C. Douglas Dillon, and John T. Connor hold positions on several of these policy groups (Shoup 1980; Who’s Who 1987). Overall, founding directors are or have been affiliated with over 70 policy, political, or philanthropic institutions. These affiliations are as diverse as Nathan Glazer’s participation on the Fund for the Republic’s Communism in American Life Project during the 1950s to Bayard Rustin’s directorship of the A. Philip Randolph Institute (Who’s Who 1987). The vast majority of CPD directors have been extremely active politically throughout much of their lives.

Not only has the CPD directorship been active in other political organizations, but it has a great deal of experience with appointed positions in the national government. The directorship includes 51 individuals (36% of directors) who held key military and civilian government positions before 1976. The most common important government positions once held by directors were in the Treasury (8), civilian military administration (6), ex-ambassadors (6), and uniformed officers (5).

In keeping with the tradition of other upper class organizations the CPD also has several representatives from organized labor (Domhoff 1983). Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO is a director of the CPD and the Council on Foreign Relations. The American Federation of Teachers and the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union both have two representatives on the CPD’s board of directors. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, Ironworkers International Union, International Union of Operating Engineers, and the Plumbers and Pipe Fitter’s International Union all have at least one representative, usually a high official, holding a CPD directorship (Sanders 1983).

The largest single group of current occupations listed for directors of the CPD is university professor or president. Of the 48 directors with academic backgrounds eight are or were university presidents and 40 are university faculty. Yale Law School, Sarah Lawrence College, Howard University, Georgetown University (home of the very conservative and politically active Center for Strategic and International Studies), the University of Wisconsin, Harvard University, Fletcher School of Law, and many other prestigious institutions are represented on the board.
This list of faculty includes such well-known and respected individuals as Seymour Martin Lipset of Stanford University, Nathan Glaser of Harvard, and Edward Teller, father of the H-bomb and very influential supporter of the Strategic Defense Initiative. With the exceptions of only Howard University, Lake Erie College and the University of South Carolina, all 23 universities and colleges with academic connections to the CPD were among the top 100 universities receiving DOD contracts in the late 1960s (Pursell 1972).

The CPD reflects a classic pattern of upper class political groups as described by G. W. Domhoff and other scholars of the upper class (Domhoff 1983; Shoup 1980; Useem 1983). Directors are drawn from the upper class, managers of major corporations, leaders of a few major labor unions, and members of prestigious academic institutions. The upper class and their helpers, the power elite, are well represented on the CPD.

The CPD is, with little doubt, an upper class political organization. Among its 141 directors and executive committee members are 42 individuals whose multiple directorships, membership in elite social clubs such as the Bohemian Grove, and other corporate leadership positions would classify them, according to Domhoff (1983; 1974), as members of the national upper class. Indeed, the directorship ties, participation in policy making groups, government positions, and social club memberships would place the majority of these people in the category Michael Useem (1984) calls the inner circle; these are the central movers and shakers of this nation's economy and polity. This list includes David Packard, part owner of Hewlett-Packard, Richard Mellon Scaife, Arthur Temple, Mary Pillsbury Lord, C. Douglas Dillon, John M. Cabot, John T. Connor, and J. Peter Grace (Sanders 1983; Allen 1987; Lundberg 1988; Shoup 1980).

These individuals are Directors, Chief Executive Officers, Presidents, Vice Presidents, or owners of 115 businesses, 44 of them insurance, banking, or investment firms, 31 of them industrial or primary extraction firms, and from some of the largest and most influential companies including Citibank, Time Inc., Prudential Insurance Co. of America, Olin Corporation, Caterpillar Tractor, Stroock, Stroock, and Lavan, and Dillon, Reed, and Co. (Sanders 1983; Who's Who 1987).
Another important facet of the CPD that is necessary to examine is the source of CPD funds. For many reasons, not the least of which is the desire for anonymity by many benefactors of the CPD, discovery of information on where the CPD gets its money has proven to be much more difficult than researching its directorships. Jerry Sanders (1983) notes that a major benefactor of the CPD and of other conservative organizations who has worked very closely with the CPD is Richard Mellon Scaife who gave $260,000 to the CPD between 1977 and 1981. The Sarah Scaife Foundation, chaired by Richard Mellon Scaife, gave The Heritage Foundation $3.8 million, The Hoover Institution $3.5 million, The National Strategy Information Center $6 million, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University (CSIS) $5.3 million during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Sanders 1983). The CSIS, an institutional base for many of the CPD academic and ex-government directors, also received significant donations from the J. Howard Pew foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation (represented on the CPD by Thomas S. Nichols), the S.R. Noble Foundation, and the H. Smith Richelson Foundation (Muscative 1986). All of these organizations have been linked with the New Right Movement (Allen 1989; Himmelstein 1990; Shoup 1980).

It is interesting to note that in its 1976 statement of goals and guidelines the CPD wrote:

We are limiting annual contributions from a single source to $10,000. Our objective is a broad base of public support. For special projects, particularly those appropriate for foundation support and not contained in our regular budget, we may accept larger amounts.

Under no circumstances, will we solicit or accept contributions from companies or persons who derive a substantial portion of their income from the defense industry.

"How the Committee on the Present Danger will Operate -- What it Will Do, and What it Will Not Do" 11 November 1976

These guidelines do not rule out directors connected to the defense industry, nor do they rule out donations from foundations linked to defense industrialists.

The resources the directors of the CPD could potentially use to further the CPD's goal of remilitarizing the United States' relationship with the rest of the world are astounding. The resources linked to the Olin family for example include a $50 million foundation, $300 million
family fortune, and a significant, if not controlling, interest in the $1.6 billion Olin Corporation (Allen 1987; Standard and Poor's 1979). Richard Mellon Scaife is the director of the $200 million Sarah Scaife Foundation and is linked to the Mellon fortune, worth at least $6 billion in 1984. David Packard and his family were reported to be worth at least $2.1 billion in 1986. John M. Cabot is a member of the Cabot family, worth over $350 million in 1979 (Allen 1987).

Along with the personal and family fortunes connected to CPD members and directors there are also considerable institutional and organizational resources that could be tapped to further the goals of the CPD. These resources include the leaders and members of 11 large and powerful labor unions such as the United Auto Workers, plus 23 prestigious universities, and many Fortune 500 firms including Exxon Corp., Mobil Oil Corp., General Motors, and Allied Chemical. Finally there are banks such as Citibank with over $74 billion worth of deposits in 1979, the largest bank in the United States and the ninth largest in the world based on total deposits, as well as insurance firms such as Prudential Insurance Company of America, the largest insurance firm in the United States. Add to these resources the political, public relations, organizational, and ideological experiences of the directorship and the potential resource base of the CPD is incomparable to most any well known social movement organization operating in the last 30 years.

While the CPD certainly has not been able to mobilize all of the resources linked to its directorship and members, it has undertaken many activities to further its cause. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to describe all the political actions of the CPD, but the CPD annual report for 1979 does give a sampling of some of the work done by the CPD. During 1979:

1) Members testified 17 times before Congress, more than all other critics together;

2) Paul Nitze's SALT II paper was updated 11 times;

3) 479 television and radio programs, press conferences, debates, public forums, etc. were given for citizen leaders; and

4) 400,000 copies of pamphlets and reports were distributed (Sanders, p. 269).
In addition to this list, the various policy papers, reports and studies published by the CPD and its members provided ideological guidance to over 50 affiliated pro-military political groups; the CPD became the umbrella organization for many groups trying to increase military spending and restart the cold war. For 1978 through 1980 the SALT II treaty was the focus of much of the CPD's and its affiliated organizations' political efforts. Towards the cause of stopping ratification of this treaty the CPD spent over $750,000 before the treaty negotiations were even completed (Christian Science Monitor 1979). Affiliated organizations spending larger amounts of money to stop SALT II included The Coalition for Peace Through Strength with $2.5 million, The American Security Council with $3 million, and The Conservative Caucus with $1 million; opponents of SALT II spent about 14 times as much money as did treaty supporters (Christian Science Monitor 1979). Another hot issue of the time was the Panama Canal Treaty, targeted for $1.8 million in effort by the American Conservative Union (Sanders 1983).

Directors of the CPD also proved to be influential in the academic policy debates surrounding United States strategic and military policy. Richard Pipes' article in Commentary entitled "Why the Soviet Union Thinks it Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War" (Pipes 1977) was first in a long series of widely cited and influential anti-Soviet articles to come from directors and members of the CPD. Colin S. Gray, though not a director of the CPD, is closely associated with several of its directors and their home institutions, including Richard Pipes and the Hudson Institute. Gray did a great deal to further the CPD's cause with his variously titled pieces on political decapitation strategies and victory in nuclear war (see Gray 1981). Some other influential and prolific CPD members and associates responsible for developing and disseminating the neo-cold warrior ideology of the CPD include Daniel O. Graham (1977), Donald G. Brennan (1975), Edward N. Luttwak (1978), and Paul Nitze (1976-77).

A common thread running through the intellectual work of the CPD and affiliated academics is a very questionable presentation of the military and political relationship between the

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4 During this time Commentary was edited by Norman and Midge Decter Podhoretz, influential CPD directors. Commentary became the intellectual forum for containment militarism, much as Foreign Policy did for trilateralism during the 1960s (Sanders 1983).
Soviet Union and the United States. For example, in a typical paper Colin S. Gray (1978) presents data on expected capabilities of Soviet ICBMs for the 1980s. Gray estimated the warhead yield for the SS-18 (the most formidable of Soviet ICBMs) as over two megatons (over 117 times the yield of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima). Government estimates of the time put the upper bounds for this warhead at about 1.5 megatons and the mid-range at 1 megaton (Aldridge 1978). By the early 1980s the Reagan administration firmly put the SS-18 warhead yield at .550 megatons (Dennis 1984). Equally biased estimates (based on little or no information) for warhead accuracy, silo hardness, and number of warheads per booster were present throughout CPD documents and articles by affiliated academics. Since these numbers are very important components of computer simulations predicting the outcomes of nuclear weapons exchanges, by using biased estimates the cold warriors could seem to provide empirical evidence supporting their positions of United States vulnerability to Soviet attack and of the Soviet intention to use nuclear blackmail against the United States. Because there is very little hard data on characteristics of the majority of the United States’ and Soviet Union’s nuclear weapons available, classified or otherwise, the CPD did not fear well documented data based criticisms (Tsipsis 1983). Moreover, since the major sources of much of this type of data, the military and the CIA, shared many of the same policy goals of the CPD there was very little chance of government organizations exposing the work of the CPD as propaganda cloaked in the trappings of mainstream scholarship.

One of the principal targets of these tactics was public opinion, both the attitudes of opinion leaders such as government and business officials and also the general public. To target both decision makers as well as the mass public is completely rational given the CPD’s exclusion from traditional avenues of influence and availability of resources. For example, as of 1976 CPD directors held high management or ownership positions with the Evening News Association, Time, Inc., Readers Digest Co., Policy Review, Des Plaines Publishers, and The Tribune-Review. Directors were editors or major contributors to 13 journals, dailies, and news magazines, including The National Review, Commentary, The Saturday Review, and Orbis. In a mobilization against
other elites, the general public is a functionally neutral party. But it does have an impact on governmental decisions. Thus, by motivating the general public to support its policies, the CPD could gain leverage over the competing elite factions. One of the principal functions of creating the CPD was so the pro-military elites could possess an independent source for disseminating information (Sanders 1983).

Sanders elegantly states the goals of this elite group: "From its founding on the heels of Carter’s 1976 victory, the CPD’s goal has been unequivocal: to resurrect a militarized doctrine of containment as the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy" (1983, p. 8). And the CPD was very successful in achieving its objectives. As further stated by Sanders:

By 1980 Carter’s original stated goal of nuclear disarmament, pledge of non-intervention, and promised roll back in military spending were no more. In their place military spending was on the rise, intervention was once more sanctioned with the announcement of the Carter Doctrine, etc., etc. Privately the CPD must have rejoiced at the turn of events (p. 270).

The efficacy of the CPD’s efforts dramatically increased when Ronald Reagan took office in 1981. The President appointed many of the directors and members of the CPD to central positions in the White House foreign policy and national security elite. Figure 2 lists the 33 directors and members of the CPD, including Mr. Reagan, who had held key positions in the White House or on influential advisory bodies by 1985 (CPD, 1985).

[Figure 2 about here]

Among the key positions held by CPD members and directors include Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman, Chief Negotiator for Theater Nuclear Forces Paul Nitze, Secretary of State George P. Schultz, United States Representative to the United Nations Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, and Director of the CIA, the late William Casey.

Robert Scheer of the Los Angeles Times wrote, "The personnel and perspectives of the Committee are represented amply on the Reagan foreign policy team. Reagan himself belonged to the 150 [sic] member committee, and 23 other members now hold top positions in his administration. The list read like a partial Who’s Who of the Reagan Administration" (Los Angeles
The outsiders of the 1970s had become the insiders of the 1980s. Many authors, scholars, and organizations ranging from the John Birch Society to well-known journalists such as Robert Scheer to scholars such as Laurence Shoup and Jerry W. Sanders have attributed the CPD with great influence over the United States' foreign and military policies. Among the successes claimed by the CPD, its promoters, and its detractors are:

1) Replacement of the Carter "appeasement oriented" foreign policy elite with old and young cold warriors;

2) Profoundly changing public opinion towards favoring more military spending and a more belligerent and bellicose foreign policy (although the best documented polls showed changes in public opinion lasting only a few years);

3) Stopping the ratification of SALT II;

4) Boosting military spending;

5) Stopping detente;

6) Putting Ronald Reagan into office; and

7) Giving respectability to what were once considered alarmist and extremist views.

Once the Reagan Administration had hired many of the most active and important directors and members of the CPD it became less visible and certainly less politically active. For many key figures such as Eugene Rostow of Yale Law School, Richard Pipes of Harvard University, and Paul Nitze of Johns Hopkins as well as others both inside and outside academe, the movement from jobs allowing them to pursue CPD political activities to jobs with high administrative and travel workloads must have severely curtailed their social movement activities. Additionally, once inside the institutions originally targeted by the social movement, they could no longer lobby as challenging groups; rather they now found themselves in the unenviable position of being a target for other SMOs! The cooptation or institutionalization of SMOs is a common path to ultimate dissolution (McCrea and Markle 1989; Piven and Cloward 1977).

The CPD, according to Sanders and many other authors, proved to be a very influential organization. By about 1983, however, after having many of its members take high level positions in the White House including the President of the United States, the organization began
to wind down its activities, largely content with the direction of United States foreign and military policy. The CPD is still formally operating today, but with many of its key figures either in government or taking up other interests such as making money, it is no longer nearly as active and influential as it was during the last two years of Jimmy Carter's and the first years of Reagan's administrations.

Another potential causative force in the decline of the CPD was the apparent withdrawal of key sources of support. McCrea and Markle's (1989) study of the Nuclear Freeze movement cites data from the Forum Institute (1985) detailing the upsurge of foundation support for groups and organizations furthering liberal and traditional mainstream approaches to international conflict, e.g., traditional deterrence theory, conflict management, and arms control. The Forum Institute documents a more than 200% increase in this type of support from less than $16 million in 1982 to over $52 million in 1984. Among the foundation contributors cited by the Forum Institute as supporters of the liberal establishment orientation are organizations such as the J. Howard Pew foundation that were once top supporters of groups such as the CPD. Possibly this increasing support for "liberal establishment" perspectives on the arms race by major upper class institutions represented a shift in upper class support from the new cold warrior perspective of the CPD to the more mainstream deterrence orientation. Or, it perhaps could be the result of the mobilizing of the liberal faction capital into a social movement of its own to counter the successes of the CPD.

Whatever the source of the reduction in the apparent effect of the CPD on United States military and foreign policies, the high profile contributions of the CPD to the political direction of the national government present in the late 1970s and early 1980s largely ceased by 1985. New publications have became fewer, updates of older publications no longer occur, and fundraising letters are distributed less often (one of the authors used to get two per year, more recently this has dropped to just an occasional letter). A visit to the CPD office in Washington, D.C. during the summer of 1986 found a sleepy but spacious office inhabited by a secretary, a couple of young interns, and an assistant administrator.
The CPD is indeed an organization made up of and supported by elites, especially economic elites. To many scholars the organization is structured like most traditional upper class policy organizations. Unlike these types of organizations, however, the CPD had a well defined social movement agenda. The policy changes promoted by Jimmy Carter's administration and the exclusion of the cold warriors from their influential positions in government prompted the organization of the CPD. Once the constituents of the CPD were able to gain positions of influence within the government it was no longer expedient, necessary, or perhaps legitimate to work through the CPD. This highlights the role of the CPD as a movement organization created to utilize extra-institutional tactics.

Discussion

The data on the Committee on the Present Danger we provide here strongly indicate that the CPD is an ESMO. All of our expectations described at the outset of this study are met by this organization. The leadership of the CPD is drawn from over 70 preexisting nongovernmental political or policy organizations, including some of the most influential such as The Council on Foreign Relations and The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy. The availability of money and special expertise to the CPD allowed it to attain its goals by lobbying elites, disseminating ideology through CPD distributed publications (400,000 copies in 1979 alone) and through organizations headed by CPD directors, e.g. Time, Inc., American Federation of Teachers, Reader's Digest Co., and the expenditure of huge sums of money to run more traditional lobbying campaigns (e.g. to stop SALT II). When Jimmy Carter and his supporters denied the old cold warrior elite access to the traditional upper class channels of policy influence, the only alternative to the founding of a social movement organization would have been to embrace the available traditional institutional channels of influence (special interest lobbying) or to sit quietly by while Carter's less-militaristic conflict management agenda was enacted. Therefore the primary targets of this SMO were not working-class political endeavors, but the actions of the state and the consensus of other elites of wealth. Finally, with more than 40 wealthy and highly-connected
founding directors, to state that the membership of the CPD has an upper class bias is an understatement.

The CPD is, in our view, clearly an elite social movement organization. The impacts of this on the resource mobilization theory of social movements and theories of the state are several. With regard to resource mobilization theory, it appears that it is overly constricted in its position that there are no conditions under which elites would be motivated to form social movement organizations. Institutional channels do possess a high degree of power but they also limit the use of power or may be controlled by other elite factions. This means that in order to exercise power, the dispossessed elites must pursue alternative channels.

It is also worth reiterating that the CPD did not resemble the type of social movement that is normally envisioned, that is, a mass movement. But this is only to be expected given the resource profile of elite movements (such as the CPD) versus that of working-class movements. Working-class movements of necessity have to rely on people power rather than money power because they lack significant financial resources. Elite movements, on the other hand, have the advantage of financial and occupational resources. They need not worry about maintaining the commitment and dedication of a mass following because of their ability to use money as a selective incentive. Monetary resources are also an advantage because they are extremely flexible and transferable resources (Pichardo 1988b). So it is to be expected that elite movements would approximate professional movement organizations (as discussed by McCarthy and Zald) rather than mass-based organizations such as the civil rights movement. ESMOs lack a mass base, therefore, any organizational efforts are centered around their monetary and occupational resources.

The extreme concentration of wealth in the upper class means that a very small number of individuals, if organized, can have a profound effect on the outcome of state decision processes. Therefore, despite (or perhaps because of) the high degree of consensus and overall level of

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5 For CPD actors this includes positions in large and powerful organizations, academic expertise and contacts, experience with Washington politics, just to name a few.
political consciousness present in the upper class, ESMOs are likely to be relatively common. The rewards of organizing are probably much higher to the individual person of wealth than to the average citizen because so little effort need be devoted to organizing and solidarity building. To a large extent the solidarity structures are already in place and to organize a few hundred people into a coherent political group is certainly much easier than trying to mobilize the thousands necessary to make a mass movement efficacious. Moreover, the significant institutionalization of upper class political behavior and organization noted by the class theorists such as Domhoff (1983) means that in order for any excluded faction of the upper class to attain its goals, it must form an ESMO.

With the exception of special interest groups the extant theories of the state give little weight to the existence or significance of ESMOs. The burgeoning research on class-based political organizing and consensus building in conjunction with the apparent importance of the CPD indicates that mainstream theories of the state must begin to realize the potential importance of studying ESMOs in order to more completely understand the workings of the capitalist state. The state is not just an autonomous actor managing the affairs of capital, nor is it strictly the instrumental tool of big business. Indeed, even the class-dialectical theorists, who acknowledge the impact of conflicts between the class conscious bourgeoisie and the less well organized proletariat on the state, seem willing to present an oversimplified picture of the main forces acting on the state. The presence of social movements organized, led, and supported almost entirely by a wealthy elite, who are but a small fraction of the richest of citizens, must be taken into account when the formation, evolution, or elimination of state policies is under examination.

Even non-Marxist theories of the state must make a special place for the role of elite social movements. The dominant pluralist paradigm readily acknowledges the importance of all types of political groups, elite or otherwise, to policy development by the state (Alford and Friedland 1985). The availability of resources to ESMOs, however, is so much greater than for the vast majority of political groups that pluralist theory cannot contribute much to understanding policy making processes targeted by ESMOs. The ease with which the CPD and its affiliates swamped the
supporters of SALT II (the CPD was able to spend 14 times the amount spent by its competition), despite the support provided by the state apparatus, indicates that pluralist theory is sadly lacking in explanatory power. Perhaps Ralph Miliband had ESMOs in mind when he cited the presence of "imperfect competition" as a major critique of pluralist theory (1969, p. 146). Without acknowledging a special role for ESMOs, pluralist theories of the state will likely never be able to adequately explain major changes in state policy making direction such as the one spurred by the actions of the CPD.

Conclusion

We find that the literature on the functioning of the state and on the behavior and effects of social movements shows several common concerns. These two literatures also pay little attention to social movement organizations organized, supported, and peopled by the highest level of elites. The case we examine here, the Committee on the Present Danger, fits the central criteria defining a social movement. The evidence is clear; ESMOs do form in contemporary society.

The existence and apparent efficacy of ESMOs indicates that they are probably important causal agents in setting the course of social change in capitalist societies. Researchers concerned with either SMOs or the state should look for the presence of ESMOs in order to be able to more adequately understand the nature of social change in a complex society. We speculate that ESMOs might prove to be important forces at work shaping society during periods when the state undertakes major changes in behavior despite the lack of powerful mass movements, support of pre-existing elite institutions or obvious commitment to the policy changes by the state. Surely ESMOs deserve a great deal more scrutiny by scholars of the state and social movements than they have been given.
References


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Figure 1.
A Sampling of Elite Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger and their Affiliations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Theodore C. Achilles| Vice Chairman, Atlantic Council
Former Ambassador, Peru
Director, Eastman Kodak Co., International Management and Development Institute
NATO pact negotiator, planning conference, CENTO, SEATO, and Columbo organizations
Member of the Alibi, Yale, and Brook Clubs |
| Karl R. Bendetsen    | Former Under Secretary of the Army
Consulting Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (1948)
Director General, U.S. railroads (1950-52)
Chairman of the Board of Directors, Panama Canal Co.
Vice President of Operations, Champion Paper
CEO, Chairman of the Board, President, Champion International
Director, Member of the Executive Committee, Westinghouse Electric
Governing Board, N.Y. Stock Exchange
Directed evacuation of Japanese from the West Coast
Member of the Links, Metropolitan, Brook, Chicago, Washington Athletic, Bohemian, Pacific Union, Houston Country, Petroleum, Tejas, Bayou, Washington F Street, Georgetown, Everglades, and Bath and Tennis Clubs |
| John M. Cabot       | Former Ambassador to Sudan, Colombia, Brazil, and Poland |
| W. Glenn Campbell** | Director, Hoover Institute, Stanford University
Advisory Board, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown
Board of Directors, NSF
Regent, University of California
Member of the Bohemian Grove, Cosmos, and Commonwealth Clubs |
| Peter B. Clark      | President of Evening News Association
Former Chairman, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Member of Detroit Athletic, Detroit Country, and Economics Clubs |

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Former Secretary of the Treasury
Former Secretary of the Navy
Former Governor of Texas
Partner, Vinson and Elkins
Director, Justin Industries, Falconbridge Nickel Mines, Ltd.,
First City Bancorp of Texas, Inc., First City National Bank of
Floresville, Continental Airlines, Inc., and Dr. Pepper Co.
Trustee, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Member of Houston Chamber of Commerce, Conference Board
Member and Director of the Houston Metropolitan Racquet Club

John T. Connor
President, Allied Chemical
Former Secretary of Commerce
Director of J. Henry Schroeder Bank and Trust Co., G.M., ABC,
Schroders Ltd., and Merck & Co.
Member of Business Council, Council on Foreign Relations
Trustee, Syracuse University

C. Douglas Dillon
Former Secretary of Treasury
Former Member of U.S. Stock Exchange
Former Director of U.S. and Foreign Securities Corp.
Director and Chair, Dillon, Reed, & Co.
Former Chairman, Rockefeller Foundation
Former Trustee, Brookings Institute
President of Board of Overseers, Harvard University
Member of Society of Colonial Wars, N.Y.
Member of Racquet and Tennis, Knickerbocker, Links, River,
Century, Pilgrims, and Metropolitan Clubs

Henry H. Fowler
Partner, Goldman, Sachs & Co.
Former Secretary of the Treasury
Vice Chairman, Atlantic Council
Member of the Conference Board
Member of the Recess River (NYC), Links, and Metropolitan
Clubs

William H. Franklin
Former Chairman, Caterpillar Tractor Co.

Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen
Former Congressman
Investment Broker (NYC)
Trustee, Howard Savings Bank

J. Peter Grace
President, W.R. Grace & Co.
Director, Brascom Ltd., Ingersoll-Rand Co., Stove and Webster,
Inc., Omnicare, Roto Rooter Inc., Universal Furniture Ltd.
and Miliken & Co.
Trustee, Atlantic Mutual Inc.
Director, Boys Club of America
Chairman, Radio Free Europe
Trustee, Grace Institute
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Member of Racquet and Tennis, Madison Square Garden, Links,
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Clubs
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Director, The Middle East Institute, Columbia University
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Consultant to the Departments of State and Defense, Council on
Foreign Relations, ABC News, Stanford Research Institute,
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Director, Campbell Soup, ST&T, Tenneco, First City Bancorp of
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Former Director, Active Communication on Critical Choices for
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Former Co-Chair, Republican National Committee
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Truman
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Member of the Cosmos, Harvard, and Columbia University
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Executive V.P., National Enquirer (1976-7)
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CEO, Media General Broadcast Services Inc.
Chairman of the Board, American Thai Corp.
Member, Economic, Racquet of Chicago, Round Hill, Country of
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Ambassador to Italy
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CEO, Hospital Corp. of America  
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Director, Third National Corp., New York Stock Exchange  
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Member, Business Council  
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Former Chairman, Federal Reserve Board  
Member, New York Stock Exchange (1931-38)  
Board of Directors, Import-Export Bank  
Chair, Federal Reserve Board (1951-70)  
Director, Freeport Minerals Co., Scandinavian Securities Corp.  
Member of the West Side Tennis, Yale, Metropolitan, Alibi, and Chevy Chase Clubs

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Former Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs  
Former Ambassador to Turkey  
Owner, McGhee Production Co. (oil)  
Chairman of the Board, Saturday Review  
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                   | Chairman, American Council for Capital Formation  
                   | Co-Chairman, Bretton Woods Committee  
                   | Member, Council on Foreign Relations  
<pre><code>               | Member of the Union League, Burning Tree, and Congressional Clubs |
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* Adapted from The Committee on the Present Danger (1985).
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