

The contemporary significance of Schmalenbach's concept of the Bund

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Abstract

This paper will look at a form of sociation known as the Bund, conceptualized by Schmalenbach in the 1920's. I shall argue that this long ignored concept, dealing with affectual form of solidarity in small groups, is of considerable relevance to contemporary issues concerning individuality and lifestyle, particularly in relation to debates surrounding their significance in modernity and postmodernity. After looking at the historical origins of the German word Bund and its usage by various groups from the Bundschuh to the Wandervogel, I shall consider its significance in the sociology of Herman Schmalenbach, particularly in relation to his critiques of Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* dualism and Weber's typology of social action. A comparison of the Bund will then be made with Victor Turner's concept of *communitas* and Maffesoli's concept of the neo-tribe. The paper will conclude by looking at some contemporary examples of Bund-like sociations using a diverse range of examples including: the womens' peace camp at Greenham Common; soccer crews and Tom Peter's notion of the workplace based 'self-managing team'. My central argument shall be that an understanding of the Bund is of use in explaining the significance and dynamics of all manner of elective groups and lifestyles

Introduction

This paper is about a concept that has largely lain submerged in the footnotes of sociological theory over the last seventy years. The concept describes the basis of a type of human sociation that cannot be neatly fitted into any of the old dichotomies; rational/irrational, pre-modern/modern or *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*. The concept is that of the Bund. Bund is a German

noun that is usually translated as either 'league', 'federation' or 'communion'. A Bund can be defined as an elective form of sociation, in which the main characteristics are that it is small scale, spatially proximate and maintained through the affectual solidarity its members have for one another in pursuit of a particular set of shared beliefs. This is not a complete definition of the phenomena, but a summary, I shall however, give a more complete definition below. Its etymological origins are obscure but interesting and I shall have something to say of them below as well. It is however, the sociological use of this term as a concept by Herman Schmalenbach in an essay published in 1922, that makes the concept of interest.

Schmalenbach, a German sociologist whose work spans the period from 1910 until around 1950, is, like his most important concept, also largely an inhabitant of footnotes. In this paper I intend to look at this conceptualization of the Bund in order to suggest that it is of continuing relevance as a basic form of sociation in many areas of contemporary life. If any attempt made in reclaiming old ideas by marginal figures is to be of relevance, they must retain a degree of conceptual sharpness not blunted by years of subsequent research. I shall argue that the concept of the Bund, although originally conceived as an elaboration of Tönnies dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, retains its significance long after that original set of concepts have come to appear dated and somewhat simplistic. Furthermore, to see Schmalenbach use the concept in 1922 to suggest, that with the emergence of many Bünde in the early part of the century, we were then witnessing the end of modernity and the ushering in of a new historical period which he calls the 'late period' (Schmalenbach, 1977:122), will alone make it of interest in the context of debates about postmodernity.

I shall give a description of the historical origins and usage of the word Bund,¹ followed by a consideration of Schmalenbach's use of it. In addition I shall also consider the similarities of this concept with that provided later by other theorists on the same phenomena, notably Turner (1969), Gurvitch (1941) and more recently Maffesoli (1988). Throughout I shall cite examples of these Bünde, in the hope that both theoretically and empirically the concept's significance might finally receive more general attention than it has had up until now.

Origins of the concept of the Bund

The term 'Bund' comes from Indo-Germanic verb *bhend*, 'to bind' or 'to tie'. It was first used as a noun to describe something bound or bonded from about the second half of the thirteenth century. After that time it became, along with words such as *Einugen* (Union, as in the modern German *Vereinigung*) a legal term implying 'that which has been made into one', as in a legal covenant, as distinct from the less personalized contract.² It has also come to mean federation and alliance often of Germanic principalities or cities and other forms of legally binding association which historically were often based on oath. The word has continued, after many changes to retain this sense as with *Bundesrepublik*, *Bundesbank*, *Bundesliga*, all modern German words implying a federation.

It was from the fifteenth century, that the word *Bund* also began to be used in a different and distinct way outside of its earlier usage. The loose, non-institutional nature, at least initially, of such association implied by the word *Bund* made the word appear appropriate to millenarian religious movements in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The most significant of which would appear to be the *Bundschuh*, the 'Tied Boot' (Mullett, 1987:85) that played a prominent role in the peasants revolts in Germany. The symbolism that they used of a laced peasant's boot suggests this idea of close union and solidarity, which had perhaps religious connotations associated with the idea of communion and this wordly salvation. Thus in them we see the connection in the idea of the *Bund* the development of the concept to include reference to the legal rights of peasants, and close-knit political and religious association.

Although the *Bundschuh* was suppressed during the Reformation, the word was retained with its more religious connotations attached to the idea of a covenant, notably in Luther's ideas about the covenant with God. This religious reading of the word *Bund* was to have increasing significance in the political field as well, notably amongst the Anabaptists around Thomas Muntzer, who saw themselves as an elect with an established covenant with God (Koselleck, 1972:604).

Unlike the word federation, *Bund* retains a notion of something holy, as in the English word communion, yet it also contains something of an organizational meaning that is found in the

word league (particularly to be 'in league' with someone). The term Bund began from the end of the eighteenth century to take on a more directly political meaning, at one level in calls for a Unified Germany, implying a sense of national unity and self determination. However, the term was also used to describe informal, sometimes secret 'societies' such as Freemasons and student fraternities such as the 'Deutscher Bund' (1810-1813). While many of these groups can be seen as forming a significant part of the political right in Germany, the left also had its use for the term Bund, as in 'Bund der Gerechten' (League of the Just), the precursor to the Communist League (Marx was associated with both of these organizations to some degree). The word Bund has also been significant for anarchists, for whom federations, secret societies and more open, leaderless groups of people with a common aim have at one time or another been important. A significant figure here is the mystical anarchist Gustav Landauer, who in the first decade of this century formed the most notable example of a radical Bund, 'The Socialist Bund', (Landauer, 1978) which acted as an organisation that offered an alternative way of living that promoted a brand of utopian socialism and a somewhat mystical attempt at the rejuvenation of Spirit or Volk (used in this instance without fascist overtones) (Maurer, 1971; Lunn, 1973; Link-Salinger, 1977). It is perhaps significant that the Theologian Martin Buber, an important influence on the Kibbutz movement, should have been both influenced by, and a friend of, Landauer (Buber, 1950) and that the ideas of close union, with *völkisch* and mystical associations should have influenced his thinking as well as other Jews associated with Hasidim, early Zionism and the Kibbutz movement.³ In many ways Landauer's Bund was a 'Kibbutz' in all but name, something that seems to have been missed by those who used the Bund concept to understand the early Kibbutz Movement (Talmon, 1972; Cohen, 1983).

Before going on to consider the sociological significance of the Bund, as originally set out by Schmalenbach, one further example of the use of the Bund word has to be given; that found in the early German Youth movement, the Wandervogel. The Wandervogel was originally conceived as a means of rejecting what many young people saw as the spiritlessness of Wilhelmism (equivalent of Victorianism) in favour of the 'authentic' life of the nomad and the simple pleasures of roaming in the forests among the peasants (Becker 1946; Laqueur 1962). The type of social organization that the early youth movement established

was expressed in terms of the idea of the Bund, which was to provide those involved with sense of common feeling, belonging and the means of regenerating society. Becker (1946) gives a good summary of their lifestyle and aspirations,

In the late nineties and early nineteen hundreds there were no youth hostels, no well travelled routes, no easily transmissible techniques of roaming. The pattern was that of prolonged truancy or vagrancy, accompanied by a little rowdiness . . . Costume was highly individualised and sometimes approached the rags and tatters of the quasi-mythical 'wandering scholar' of medieval times or the nondescript, dirty garb of the 'raggle-taggle Gypsies, O!' (Becker, 1946:67).

These young people desired a Bund in the sense of a communion in small groups, which provided a sense of fusion (Bunderlebnis), and an idealized authentic experience of what they saw as the 'Gemeinschaft' of the past. They attempted to contrast the experience of the Bund with what they saw as the spiritless individualizing tendencies of modern bourgeois culture.

As Mosse suggests,

The Bund was no ordinary group, but a specific product of the German Youth Movement. It resolved the urge toward an organic, rather than an alienated man, by positing unity of soul, body and spirit as the prime law. This law bound together individuals who had voluntarily entered the Bund: unity of soul and spirit was to be attained through shared eros (Mosse, 1971:99).

The month-long roam into the forests of Bohemia provided this fusion of a set of disparate people into Bund, or what Becker rather nicely describes as 'conventicles of the elect' (Becker, 1946:75).

[T]hrough identification with the group, as demonstrated by successful assimilation of the unique experience of the expedition, rapidly came to be the way in which the initially random conventicles of dissenters were fused genuine sects [Bünde] of the likeminded and consciously elect (Becker, 1946:83).

That the Wandervogel had their 'roots' in Romanticism and ended up, although it was not certain at the outset, as one aspect

of the conservative revolution, is beyond question. Later still their original spiritual revolt was politically appropriated by the Nazi's (a mass political movement quite different from the much more small scale Bund), who propagated the idea of Bünde as the germinating cells of a fascist state (Mosse, 1964:189). No doubt these latter uses to which the concept was put were perhaps one reason why the reception of Schmalenbach's work in the post second world war period was minimal. However, it was the Bund as an idealised form of sociation found in the youth movement that provided the inspiration for Schmalenbach's sociological conceptual rendering of it (Becker, 1946:105).

Schmalenbach and the Sociology of the Bund

Schmalenbach's work is not well known to the sociological community in either Germany or elsewhere. Those books which do mention his concept of the Bund generally tend only to give a sketchy outline of its use as a critique of Tönnies's concept of Gemeinschaft (Abrams and McCulloch, 1976:165-6; Bell and Newby, 1976:196-7). Histories of sociology have also been generally cursory although almost always approving (Aron, 1964:18; Shils, 1970:40- 1). Freund is typical,

... Schmalenbach tried to complete or correct the distinction established by Tönnies, adding a third category, that of the league [Bund]. The attempt had practically no success. As opposed to community, inspired by tradition, and to society, inspired by rationality, the league was supposed to have a more instinctive and sentimental basis. It would be a place for the expression of enthusiasms, of ferment, and of unusual doings. And yet, German sociology continued to think – albeit with diverse and sometimes confused variations – in the categories elaborated by Tönnies, the only ones which stayed meaningful (Freund, 1978:183).

As well as a critique of Tönnies, Schmalenbach's essay was also a critique of Spengler and more significantly an attempt to apply a phenomenological approach, influenced by Husserl's practice of categorical intuition, to the Simmelian inspired study of social forms. The essay also uses the concept in a critique of Weber's theory of the routinization of charisma and of his fourfold typology of social action (Weber, 1978).

The essay was originally published as 'Die Soziologische Kategorie des Bundes' (Schmalenbach, 1922:35-105). With the full English version only following some 55 years later (Schmalenbach, 1977). If the essay is remembered at all, it is usually in the form of a truncated version that was translated in English in the well known *Theories of Society* collection (Parsons and Shils *et al.*, 1961:331-47). Most of the works that do cite Schmalenbach's concept use this as a source. Much of what is said in the full essay however, is missing in this extract, such that only the first of the issues; as a corrective to Tönnies' description of *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies, 1955) is usually remembered.

The one body of literature that is an exception to this is that concerned with the Kibbutz. Notably the influential book by Talmon (1972) introduced, although rather arbitrarily, the Bund concept in order to show the stages through which a Kibbutz passed in its development. As Talmon suggested in a footnote

For lack of a better term, I use here the term 'bund' which was coined by the German Sociologist Schmalenbach for similar purposes (Talmon, 1972:2).

Her lack of real desire to understand the origins of the concept she was using is shown in the misspelling of Schmalenbach's name and a failure to recognise the rudimentary fact that German nouns like Bund should start with a capital letter. More recently however, Cohen has attempted to develop a more systematic use of the Bund concept in his research into Kibbutzim, in particular, on the means by which the original affectual Bund is transformed in to the more stable conditions found in longer established Kibbutz (1983).

Significantly, he goes on to add,

Schmalenbach's much neglected concept can be applied to many of the social and religious movements which, nourished by the discontent of contemporary life, strive to renew and rejuvenate society through a complete abandonment of its established institutions and through a radical or revolutionary transformation of its value and ways of life (Cohen, 1983:76).

Shils also suggests that, with reservations, he also found Schmalenbach's category of the Bund useful in his study of comradeship among German prisoners of war during the Second

World War (Shils, 1957:133). Given that he believes not all Bünde are ideological in nature, he goes on instead to speak of personal and ideological primary groups, preferring Cooley's concept of the primary group (Cooley, 1962) to the Bund concept (1957:141). He also makes the interesting suggestion that Sorel in his *Reflections on Violence* is using the Bund concept, without of course calling it that, as the ideal of the revolutionary cell (1957:138).

The main sources of inspiration for Schmalenbach's categorical understanding of the Bund however, were twofold; the Stefan Georg circle, a small group of acolytes who had formed around the charismatic poet Stefan Georg (Leppenes, 1988:281-2), and the German Youth Movement (Luschen and Stone (eds), 1977:24). In this case, as in both Landuer's socialist Bund and also in Kibbutzim, there was an emphasis on elective membership in small groupings that promoted a sense of participation around a set of strongly held universal values, with there sometimes being a charismatic leader as the focus of the group. In each case the political response was a utopian rejection of some of the consequences of modernization, in particular on the perceived breakdown of organic ties of community.

Most of those sociologists who do remember Schmalenbach's essay make the point that it was originally conceived sociologically by Schmalenbach as a third term which would correct the simplicity of the dualism of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in Tönnies. The difference comparing a Bund with a *Gemeinschaft* is precisely that the ascriptive and constraining aspects of *Gemeinschaft*, based as Tönnies would have it on the natural will, are missing in the Bund. Schmalenbach sees this longing for community, exemplified by Tönnies, as romantic and confused. What this longing seeks is not so much the ascriptive conditions of a community but the elective, affective-emotional solidarity of the Bund. The essay goes to some length, therefore, to disentangle the idea of the Bund from that of *Gemeinschaft* and also from *Gesellschaft*. Schmalenbach's aim is to replace the usual dichotomy with a trichotomy of what he sees as 'fundamental sociological categories' (Schmalenbach, 1977:102). These are then seen as offering a less rigid and more cyclical view of change than the unilinear one offered by both Tönnies and Spengler (Tönnies, 1955; Spengler, 1967).

The main basis for this distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and Bund, according to Schmalenbach, is that *Gemeinschaft* is based

in the unconscious, in a taken for granted belonging to a group, habitually grounded in what Weber described as traditional social action (Weber, 1978:25). The Bund on the other hand, is a wholly conscious phenomena derived from mutual sentiment and feeling, from what Weber describes as affectual social action (1978:25). The three categories are not wholly separate however and any approach which wishes to show how any period is determined by either *gemeinschaftlich* or *gesellschaftlich* social relations, which was of course Tönnies original intention, must take into account the intermediate social category of the Bund. For Schmalenbach, Bünde are inherently unstable and liable to be transformed into either *gemeinschaftlich* or *gesellschaftlich* forms of sociation as they break up or are routinized. Schmalenbach uses a number of examples to show this, most notably the transformation of religious sects into churches, and the communion of heterosexual love into the community or marriage and family.

The second concern of Schmalenbach's essay, and one which is less well reported, is the way he uses the Bund concept as a critique of Weber's methodologically individualist typology of social action, and in a less pessimistic re-evaluation of Weber's ideas about personality implied in his theory of the routinization of charisma. It is through this critique that Schmalenbach offers an alternative to Weber's view of the individual in modern 'Gesellschaft' condition.

Weber's fourfold typology of social action at the beginning of his *Economy and Society* (Weber, 1978) is one of the best known pieces of sociological writing. Weber describes these types as: instrumentally rational, value rational, affectual and traditional (1978:24-5). According to Schmalenbach, Weber goes beyond simple dichotomies but in an incomplete and confused way which derives from his belief that meaningful social action can only be understood in terms of the intentionality of the act by the individual. Schmalenbach puts this down to Weber's 'epistemological asceticism' (Schmalenbach, 1977:110). According to Schmalenbach, there remains a false dichotomy in this typology in its distinction between the rational as conscious and the irrational as unconscious. In other words, Weber ignores, it is argued, the fact that feeling does not derive from unconscious irrational motivations, but is a conscious phenomena that is neither simply rational nor irrational by affectual. Schmalenbach thus accuses Weber of subsuming affectual action within the bounds of traditional

action, which he has already described as based on unconscious motivations such as habit. As Schmalenbach puts it,

[For Weber] Only aspects manifested explicitly in consciousness can be known. This, however, is already derived from a consciousness of feeling, and it abstracts through feeling its understandable meaning in Weber's sense. Consequently, the distinction between the traditional – insofar as it is still understandable – and the affective emotional, between community and communion is blurred (Schmalenbach, 1977:110–11).

Schmalenbach's main aim is to stress the significance of forms of sociation (in a Simmelian sense) into which social action is organised, coupled with a *phenomenological* apprehension of the unconscious motives of individuals engaged in social action. This allows him to treat the individual as both subject and object of analysis in a way that avoids Weber's methodological individualist standpoint, with its stress on the use of *Verstehen* in relation to the individual's conscious motives for action. In so doing, Schmalenbach's aim in particular is to differentiate between traditional and affective forms of conduct, with the Bund as a form of sociation associated with affective social action. He does not dismiss Weber though in doing so, rather, he sees the basis for his analysis implicit in what Weber has to say about charisma and types of governance.

Weber provides a trichotomy of legitimate governance: legal-rational, traditional and charismatic. The importance of this for Schmalenbach is that unlike his typology of social action, here Weber does provide evidence in the case of charismatic governance, against his methodological standpoint, of an example of affective social action that reveals it not to be unconscious and irrational at all. Schmalenbach argues that this is an example of where affective conduct does have a role to play in rational governance, notably in the manner in which traditional governance is transformed into rational governance via charismatic governance (Schmalenbach, 1977:118). The Bund as a form of sociation involving affective, as well as value-rational, conduct is described, therefore, as often involving sociation around a charismatic leader. Schmalenbach, establishes a trichotomous basis for social action which corresponds to his social forms, *Gemeinschaft*, *Bund* and *Gesellschaft*, in so doing he adds an element of circularity to the idea of the routinization of charisma,

which suggests that the Bund as a form of sociation acts *reflexively* to counter the dominant trend of rationalization into the Weberian iron cage.

The Bund, and affective social action in general, according to Schmalenbach, offers a means of renewal or reversal of the general trend to rationalization. While there remains a strong trace of Weber's theory of the routinization of charisma in Schmalenbach, it is seen historically as a continuous circular process rather than a unilinear one as in Weber. There are two consequences of this, a circular view of history which is developed by Schmalenbach, and secondly, and more implicitly, a different view of personality and the relationship between universal values and individuality.

In the first case therefore, it is necessary to say something about Schmalenbach's view of history. He suggests that the transformation of historical epochs is based upon the interplay of the forms of sociation based upon these three social categories. In doing so he anticipates many of the current themes in what is now described as a period of postmodernity, for which Schmalenbach even had a name, 'The Late Period'.

The late period ultimately follows the modern period. The modern period is very gradually (again, not continuously) transformed into it. Only the most outstanding of its earliest marks evidence to us its emergence. Yet antiquity provides the insights . . . The world economy and world trade of the world empire, for which the age of society has provided the formative conditions, have meanwhile meshed together in greater and greater degree all the peoples of the earth. Torn from every mothering environment, individuals wander homelessly through the cities of the world: the amorphous mass of a chaotic amalgam of people formed out of atomised, pulverised individuals, who, however, are held together less and less by the society code of honour and who are set against one another in cold isolation. Moreover, they are uprooted mentally and psychically, no longer satisfied by the rationality of the systems, driven along by the boredom from their desperate frustrations to 'something else' which manifests itself in avid religious desires . . . A principled exoticism and an arbitrary modernism are combined, and the mishmash is brewed as a religious syncretism . . . In this way hearts are merged in the blissful sobbing of salvation found in brotherhoods and cults

of all kinds, frequently to be reduced in a short time to flotsam and cast out in other directions – where they find similarly harassed souls in this over-populated world with whom they can join together in other communions . . . Status groups are split asunder. The people are mixed together as they experience the highest raptures of the heart, uplifting inspiration, and sacrificial surrender, even in the same minds and at the same time. Yet whether positive or negative, these experiences are all smoldering surges of feeling, affective-emotional – the mentality is communionlike and the associations are communionlike (Schmalenbach, 1977:122–5).

Despite the somewhat overly speculative nature of this passage, which forms the concluding part to Schmalenbach's essay, all the contemporary concerns ascribed to conditions of postmodernity are there: the globalization of the economy, the decline of status based identities, de-individualizing and individualizing processes, the de-centring of identity, the dis-embedding of social relationships in time and space and the rise of affective-emotional groupings as distinct lifestyles not that dissimilar from some of the contemporary new religious and new social movements. It is not the accuracy or otherwise of this description that is significant but the fact that in the Bund, Schmalenbach offers us an ideal type sociological category which underlies a form of sociation that can be taken as the basis for the sorts of groupings and lifestyles that are currently of interest, above all it is their elective, tribal and affectual condition that his category is good at describing.

In a book on postmodernism, Lash (1990) in discussing the accounts of modernity given by Bell, Foucault and Habermas suggests that a re-periodization of premodern, modern and post-modern society is required,

[This periodization] is one that in particular creates a challenge to the classical sociological periodization of *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, status to contract, mechanical to organic solidarity, or, more generally tradition to modernity. What I have argued is that after modernity, or perhaps at some point during modernity, something new came into being. This something has often been termed 'Postmodernity' (1990:139).

Schmalenbach's 'something else' described above is interestingly paralleled by the 'something new' suggested by Lash some sixty years later.

This essay by Schmalenbach also suggests a different conception of the individual and of personality offered by Weber. For Weber, like Nietzsche before him, the ideal personality was an individualist personality, *Persönlichkeit*, emphasising through inner direction, asceticism and a desire for self-overcoming (Hennies, 1987; Schroeder, 1991; Owen, 1991). This is the Puritan personality that played such a significant role in the emergence of capitalism and, therefore, the modern world for Weber, but is supposedly destroyed by the success of the routinization of the puritan outlook in the process of rationalization. In contradistinction Schmalenbach, with his focus on the renewal of charisma and affective social action offers us a different perspective on the effects of modernity on the individual.⁴

If one were to follow Weber's description of the charismatic sect, it is only the person with charisma whose individuality is expressed, while the supporters subsume their individuality within that of the sect. (There is more than a trace of Nietzsche here in Weber). For Schmalenbach, however, and here he is closer to a Simmelian definition of the ambiguous than to Weber, the Bund both promotes and denies individuality.

The comrades of communion [Bund] have nothing at all to do with one another in the beginning. The communion is originally established when they meet each other . . . The experiences that give rise to communion are individual experiences. While it appears here that the communion is closer to society [Gesellschaft], it approaches community [Gemeinschaft] after it has been established (Schmalenbach, 1977:94-5).

In stressing that it is the individuals who choose whether or not they want to become part of a Bund, Schmalenbach shows that it is an intentional act of joining together with strangers that is the basis of their common feeling and mutual solidarity. Weber on the other hand reads into the support for charismatic leaders and sects a set of unconscious motives and irrational behaviour, by subsuming affectual action within his category of traditional action. For Schmalenbach then, individuation is not a condition of the *Gesellschaftlich* conditions of modernity to be contrasted with the unconsciously accepted dense sociability of a romanticized pre-modern *Gemeinschaft*, instead, like Simmel he presupposes the individual prior to social relations, but an individual that can only realise him or herself within human sociation.

Unlike Simmel, however, Schmalenbach does not focus on the atomizing conditions of modern life (Simmel, 1991). Instead by introducing this third sociological category, Schmalenbach can also say something about *gesellschaft*, that is perhaps now only beginning to be realised. Just as there is an oversimplification of *Gemeinschaft* which has its origins in Tönnies' romantic view, so too is the world of *gesellschaftlich* conditions as an alienating 'lonely crowd' (Riesman, 1950) of atomized individuals an overstatement, premised on a fear of the consequences of anomic condition. While the modern world promotes greater individuation through weakening 'organic' tie of community, it also promotes elective conditions of 'community', *Bund*, that act to promote individuality as well as provide an intense experience of *communitas* into which it is subsumed.

This ambivalence as a condition of modern individual experience has best been described by Simmel, notably in his essays on fashion and on mental life in the metropolis (1971), in which the individual uses the alienating experiences of modern life to promote a more cosmopolitan form of individuality. Where Schmalenbach improves on this is that in Simmel the old *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* dichotomy is retained, only he chooses to focus on *Gesellschaft* in a positive way (at least until his later work on the more tragic aspects on modern cultural experience). However, he retains the idea that the individual in modern society is ultimately defined by being isolated and alone, whereas for Schmalenbach, under such conditions people reproduce their individuality by forming *Bünde*. While these early *Bünde* were themselves often nostalgic for the past, promoting the ideology of *Gemeinschaft*, as indeed more recent communes and counter cultural groups have done, what they actually achieve is something quite different given their elective and affectual starting point. Within modernity the experience of individuality is a collective one, promoted by associations of all kinds, it is the significance of the *Bund* form in such a process that has perhaps most importantly been overlooked.

Precisely this point has recently been raised in the context of debates about post-modernity by the French sociologist, Maffesoli (1988) who has recently suggested that we no longer live in an era where social solidarity can be defined in terms of class; occupation, location or even nationality. In their place there are a series of '*neo-tribes*' elective and affectual in nature as opposed to more traditional conceptions of tribes as ascriptive.

The shift to a postmodern society, it is argued, is one where a dionysian sociality becomes the defining social characteristic, where there exist a plurality of different lifestyles and identities from which one can choose, play around with, adapt and enjoy. Yet all this is already to be found in Schmalenbach's essay.

Bund and communitas, a comparison with Turner

Maffesoli is not the only person to re-invent the concept of the Bund, there have been others who have tried to conceptualise the same phenomena, notably Gurvitch (1941) and Turner (1969). Gurvitch is concerned with the types of social bonding, mass, community and communion, the latter corresponding to the Bund, while Turner introduces the concept of communitas, I want to suggest this can also be seen as synonymous with a Bund.

In his anthropological studies of liminality (Turner, 1969, 1974), Turner introduces the concept of communitas. Liminality is an anthropological concept, associated originally with the work of Van Gennep (1960). Generally the concept is usually concerned with the study of rites of passage. A rite of passage can be separated as a process into its three stages; separation, margin and reaggregation (1960:11). Liminality is associated with the transgressive middle stage, the threshold, or point at which activities and conditions are most uncertain, and the normative structure of society is temporarily overturned. This liminal state is characterized, according to Turner by feelings of communitas, which is an experiential condition comprising a set of 'flow experiences' (Turner, 1977:48ff). These flow experiences are said to involve: the merging of awareness between group and actor, loss of ego, narrowing of consciousness on a limited number of stimuli, ability to control one's actions and gain a subjective sense of control, coherent demands for action and finally flow experiences are said to be autotelic, that is they are their own goal (1977:48).

Communitas is contrasted with social structure, with Turner making the claim that in periods and places of liminality, the means by which social order is maintained is allowed to be challenged, as in the case of festival, by a period of inversions characterized by this intensely affectual sociality. What is of interest for our purposes is that in an earlier study Turner uses the concept of communitas against Tönnies, in the same way Schmalenbach had done previously,

The term *gemeinschaft*, similar to 'community' as used by Ferdinand Tönnies, combines two major social modalities which I distinguish, structure and *communitas* . . .

Gemeinschaft in that it refers to the bonds between members of tightly knit, multifunctional groups, usually with a local basis, has 'social structure' in this sense. But insofar as it refers to a directly personal egalitarian relationship, *gemeinschaft* connotes *communitas*, as for example, where Tönnies considers friendship to express a kind of *gemeinschaft* of 'community of feeling' that is tied to neither blood nor locality (Turner, 1974:201).

It is quite clear from this that the concept of *communitas* and Schmalenbach's concept of the *Bund* are attempting to describe the same thing. Where Turner speaks of liminality as a state of transition from one structure to another, Schmalenbach uses Weber's theory of the routinization of charisma to explain the unstable nature of the *Bund* and its transition into a more stable state.

Having shown the similarities between these writers I am able to produce my own ideal typical description of the *Bund*: As well as being small scale, based on face to face interaction, the *Bund* is an elective, unstable, affectual form of sociation. *Bünde* are maintained symbolically through active, reflexive monitoring of group solidarity by those involved, in other words they are highly self-referential, in which participants define themselves as individuals in relation to the others that make up their *Bund*. The social bonding involved is very weak, requiring considerable effort in self-management (Gurvitch, 1941). The *Bund* is self-enclosed and produces a code of practices and symbols which serve as the basis for identification. *Bünde* involve the blurring of public and private spheres of life of their members. One source of their instability may be due to the fact that there is little that is private for the individual, the maintenance of the *Bund* as a group is paramount and individual wishes secondary to that. As a consequence however, the continual self-management of the *Bund* acts reflexively to provide not only a collective identity for its members but also a greater degree of interpersonal skills that as an unintended consequence produce a heightened sense of self-identity.

Examples of the Bund

In this paper I have, in passing, given a number of examples of the Bund. I would now like to consider, in more detail some other cases to show the continuing as well as historical significance of the Bund as a sociological concept. First I would like to take the famous study by Shils and Janowitz of German Army prisoners of war (1948) and following that more contemporary cases drawn from new social movements, youth cults and popular cultural 'enthusiasms' and also recent thinking on new business and managerial techniques.

The study of German prisoners of war was carried out by Shils and Janowitz as members of a team employed in psychological warfare during the second world war. Their aim was to try to understand why when the Wehrmacht, largely a conscript army, was in the process of being defeated, most of its soldiers did not at first surrender in large numbers. They continued to put up resistance far beyond what might have been expected by the Allied armies. Their findings, based on many interviews and on survey analysis was that, except for a small core of strong Nazi supporters, National Socialist ideology was not the reason for this resistance, but it could be put down to 'the steady satisfaction of certain primary personality demands afforded by the social organization of the army' (Shils and Janowitz, 1948:281). They attempted to explain the social cohesion and solidarity among ordinary soldiers by applying Cooley's concept of the primary group. This is defined as:

characterized by intimate face to face association and cooperation . . . The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group (Cooley, 1962:23).

Originally published in 1909, this description is much less clear conceptually than Schmalenbach's concept of the Bund. Obviously one cannot fault Cooley for that. What is surprising however, is that Shils and Janowitz both German emigres, should resort to Cooley's concept rather than that of Schmalenbach, especially when they cite him in a footnote in the paper (1948:286). Indeed they use the description of the Bund as a

means of analyzing what they insist on calling a primary group. Speaking of the 'hard core' of Nazi supporters in the army they say,

They were imbued with the ideology of *Gemeinschaft* (community solidarity), were enthusiasts for the military life, had definite homo-erotic tendencies and accordingly placed a very high value on 'toughness', manly comradeship, and group solidarity. The presence of a few such men in the group, zealous, energetic, and unsparing of themselves, provided models for weaker men, and facilitated the process of identification (1948:286).

This is an archetypal description of a *Bund*, to which the footnote referring to Schmalenbach, on the same page, is related. Indeed the paper goes on to give a convincing account of the reason for social cohesion and solidarity in an army that was being defeated, as being due to the existence of a series of *Bünde* at squad level in that army. Yet the paper uses the term *Gemeinschaft* rather than *Bund* and prefers to speak of primary groups, which do not make the distinction between an organic community and a community of feeling. Although the men had no choice in being in the army, they did have the choice of whether to act in solidarity with one another, in a way that they would not in say a family setting where the habitual identification with others would be unconscious. What made the German army hold together, it was argued, was the *conscious* way in which people identified with one another, something that cannot be conveyed by the concept of a primary group.

They do not give their reasons as to why they do not use the *Bund* category, although in a later article Shils goes on to describe Schmalenbach's concept of the *Bund* adding that, given its charismatic nature it was essentially 'disruptive of the civil order' (Shils, 1957:134). Shils gets this idea not from Schmalenbach's essay, but from Weber's study of charisma which he sees in providing this insight with reference to the sect as being a more accurate analysis of such a type of affectual solidarity (1957:134). Yet in the earlier essay the condition of charismatic authority was taken as a feature of primary group solidarity in the Wehrmacht, a highly conformist social setting in which its civil order, as hierarchic and authoritarian as could possibly be imagined, was maintained rather than disrupted.

As a second example, quite different in substance from the German Army, I would like to suggest that Bünde are a condition of new social movements, to show this I would like to use an example from the feminist movement, that of the Womens' peace camp at Greenham Common. This might appear a somewhat controversial example to compare with the Wehrmacht. However, my intentions are solely on the grounds of attesting to the conceptual power of the Bund as a sociological approach to the understanding of *forms* of sociation. Feminism provides a set of examples for the existence of the Bund as the sociation into which the affectual solidarity into women have brought to their organizations, notably in the early seventies of the consciousness raising group and affinity group. Freeman's well known criticism of these consciousness raising groups, their 'tyranny of structurelessness' (1984), a condition derived from affectual solidarity, which shuns a more institutionalized style of organization, is a good example of a condition of the Bund. She criticises 'friendship groups' for being elitist,

Because these women share common values, ideas and political orientations, they too become informal, unplanned, unselected, irresponsible elites – whether they intend to be or not (1984:12).

While she may be right in terms of movement building and political effectiveness, the Bund in this case provides a source of empowerment through affectual solidarity, given the name, in this instance, of sisterhood. This form of sociation has been favoured by many feminists because it is seen as being spontaneous, not formally structured, libertarian and opposed to the perceived usual male forms of organization. As well as being a source of empowerment, a Bund, because it is maintained by intense, emotive forms of interaction also has the tendency to be brittle, it can also become the source of recrimination and fragmentation when personal animosities become overwhelming. A condition that Gurvitch also notes in his description of communion social bonds (Gurvitch, 1941:493).

Many women who visited Greenham, either to stay or just for a demonstration, place an emphasis on the feelings of togetherness and empowerment they got from acting as women to oppose the base and war as symbols of male violence. Protests were not marshalled by stewards nor organized by committees, instead,

networks of support groups (Bund) around the country would respond to the call of women residents on the perimeter of the base to come and take part in a protest action. Protesters would organise themselves into affinity groups (Bund), with some members taking part in the actions and others acting as observers when arrests were made or when women were physically removed from blockades by the police. As Liddington puts it,

It revealed small informal affinity groups as an ideal feminist way of working (Liddington, 1989:247).

The sense of being outside the normal patterns of sociation was provided by much of the pagan and New Age symbolism that infused the camp and the protests:

the camp grew increasingly mystical and spiritual; the gates round the base were named: New Age Gate, Forgotten Gate (and later called by rainbow colours). The pragmatism of the original Welsh women [camp originators] was overtaken by talk of witches and goddesses and being nice to trees. At first sight, such mumbo jumbo might seem irrelevant to stopping Cruise missiles. But extraordinary times call for extraordinary responses; and ritual, symbols and incantations soon assumed a vital role in sustaining such an unlikely being as a women's peace camp outside a nuclear base (1989:236).

The symbolism of weaving webs in wool on the gates of the base and amongst women engaged in a blockade, a symbol of interconnectedness and of the strength of a multitude of fragile single strands, and the positive reclamation of the witch/goddess as an icon of female power were strong at the base (Harford and Hopkins, 1984:92). The witches coven, as the camp was sometimes depicted in a hostile press (and reclaimed as a positive image by the women) is another good example of a Bund. Other examples of the conditions which maintain this Bund-like sociation are to be found in: the emotional communion of singing resistance songs, of 'keening', of the emotional solidarity among women found through pinning familiar household items, photographs or 'shared and trusted items' (Harford and Hopkins, 1984:113) onto the perimeter fence, the symbolic nature of most of the protests; of surrounding the base, of the 'organic' nature of the protests, of the importance of collective decision making

and of the carnivalesque spirit that infused many of the protests, especially the larger ones. Some of the more negative aspects of the Bund are also to be found, notably arguments and hostility between camps at different gates, the way campers drifted in and out of activities as their commitment ebbed and flowed (Blackwood, 1984:26).

Briefly two other examples can be given, quite different in substance again, first there is the case of football supporters or 'crews' as they became known. The fighting of opposing fans, trying to take over their territory at away matches, pitch invasions and general support for clubs was organised through the form of the Bund. Speaking of following a club in the early seventies one fan reports that:

In those days there were no organized gangs, just groups of football fans who were drawn together by the common love of the team and the excitement of the terraces (Ward, 1989:8).

He goes on to add of the nostalgia felt for these early experiences, now lost and in doing so gives us another example of a Bund in the process:

What we had at Leatherhead was unique, a close-knit community growing up, travelling and fighting together. I would liken them to the friendship units that were formed and went to war together in 1914. The difference is that we returned (Ward, 1989:43).

A final example of the condition of the Bund is what Peters has recently called 'self managing teams' (1988:297). As a leading exponent of new thinking in management, Peters has promoted the idea that for firms to remain innovative and competitive they must become more flexible in their organization and attempt to 'empower' their workforce in order to promote an enterprising zeal, self-initiative and company loyalty. Peters draws on the Japanese experience with twelve person teams as the basis for his model (1988:297), but in effect he is suggesting that the Bund form of sociation will provide the intensity of solidarity that will be able to channel the enthusiasm and commitment that it produces into innovation flexible working and thinking.

Conclusion: the contemporary significance of the Bund

In these four, quite diverse examples, in terms of their objectives and of course politically, we see things that are quite different in nature, but what they have in common is the experience of the Bund. In evaluating Schmalenbach's concept of the Bund, I have attempted to show its significance as a 'fundamental sociological category' which in its opposition to thinking in terms of dichotomies makes it appear in line with contemporary thinking. As well as being able to give both historical and contemporary examples of Bünde, I have tried to use the concept to understand something of what modern individuality is like.

The concept of the Bund, largely overlooked for so long provides perhaps a unique opportunity not only to examine present conditions in a new light and with greater conceptual clarity than has yet been given, but also to re-evaluate some of the classical works of sociology by people such as Weber and Simmel as well. I have attempted to make a start on this dual process of evaluation in this paper. The concept of the Bund, I would argue is an extremely strong one that is especially useful when looking at all manner of social activities and enthusiasms that exist outside the normal institutional realm such as in the cases of new religious and new social movements, youth cultures, many new styles of which may well originate in a Bund.

At a time when the individual considered as a Cartesian subject is coming into question, by those who suggest that individuation is an ongoing but reflexive project that involves all manner of 'life politics' (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992), the Bund form may well be of significance in trying to understand how people organize their selves in relation to the others, through whom a self-identity is established. Given the unstable nature of the Bund, particular examples are likely to be fleeting and somewhat ephemeral, but as a social form the Bund remains of significance. It is hoped that this paper will provide some understanding of the phenomena itself, attempts to conceptualize it, and the basis for further empirical research. It would be a shame if the concept had to be re-invented, yet again, some time in the future.

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Notes

- 1 The singular of the Bund is spelt with a capital 'B', the plural is Bünde. I would like to thank Caroline Schwaller for pointing this out to me. I would also especially like to thank Dominique Corazzola for helping me to understand the texts in German referred to in the Bibliography.
2. All etymological references come from the essay describing the etymology of the concept Bund by Koselleck in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon Zur Politische-Sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* Band 1. A-D. Under the entry for Bund (Brunner, Conze and Koselleck, 1972). In this paper I refer to the entry by its author (Koselleck, 1972).
3. It might strike the reader as odd to associate völkisch ideas with radical Jews, given the nationalistic and later Nazi connotations of the idea of the Volk. The reality, however, as Mosse has shown, is that not all Völkisch ideas had the racist connotations assumed by the Nazis (Mosse 1971:77ff). What is also significant is that the idea of the Bund strongly associated with the idea of Volk should have played such an important role not only in the anarchist ideas such as Landauer's but also in early Zionist movements (1971:99ff). It was only later that the Nazis appropriated words like Volk, Bund and Gemeinschaft for their own purposes (1971:123ff).
4. It would be interesting to re-examine the protestant sects that Weber considers in his Protestant Ethic Thesis (1985), to see whether they were the ascetic, 'Cartesian' individuals that he tends to assume, or whether they too produced their own Bünde.

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