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# **The Changing Political Economy of Party Membership**

**Riccardo Pelizzo**

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## The Changing Political Economy of Party Membership

### Introduction

Although few scholars would dispute from an empirical point of view the fact that parties change their electoral strategies, ideological stances and organizational structures over time, there is not much agreement on how these changes, above all party organizational change, have to be understood from a theoretical point of view. This is especially true with regard to the transformations that party organizations have undergone from the early 1970s on. In fact, although party organizational changes in the past three decades have generally been considered to be signs of the so called party crisis<sup>1</sup>, the agreement on this analytical perspective is far from being unanimous. The party crisis interpretation of parties' organizational changes has recently been challenged by Katz and Mair<sup>2</sup>. These scholars remarked that the party crisis is predicated on the assumption that the mass party of social integration represents the only model of party organization and that any departure from the experience of the mass party model indicates the failure of the party *tout court*. In contrast to this interpretation, Katz and Mair pointed out that

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of party crisis is a multifaceted one. In his discussion of the party crisis literature, Angelo Panebianco suggested that the crisis of political parties derives from their increasing inability to perform their traditional functions. On this see, Panebianco, *Modelli di Partito*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1982. For a discussion of the traditional functions performed by political parties, see Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of Western European Party Systems", in Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966, pp. 395-421. For a critical assessment of the party crisis literature, see Hans Daalder, "A Crisis of Party ?", *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 15, pp. 269-288, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> See Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization: the Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics*, vol. 1, n. 1, 1995, pp. 5-28; see also Peter Mair, "Party Organizations: From Civil Society to the State", in Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize. Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, London, SAGE Publications, 1994, pp. 1-22. Similarly Piero Ignazi suggested that the party crisis concerns only one type of parties rather than the party

regardless of its importance, the mass party represents only one historically limited stage in the development of party organizations<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, departures from the mass party model are not necessarily the symptoms of an irreversible party crisis, but might instead be conceived as parties' attempts to adapt to the changes in the environment in which they operate.

In this respect, Katz and Mair hypothesized that two major changes have reshaped the environment in which parties operate in the past three decades. The first change resulted from the transformation of the relationship between parties and society, which is now characterized by greater detachment between parties and society. The second change resulted from the transformation of the relationship between parties and the state, which have become increasingly inter-penetrated. By reshaping parties' habitat, these two changes have created the conditions for the emergence of a new type of party, for a new stage in the development of parties, or rather a new party model that Katz and Mair defined as "cartel party"<sup>4</sup>.

More precisely, the cartel party hypothesis elaborated by Katz and Mair postulates the existence of a causal pattern: first, parties and society become increasingly detached from each other and this detachment is particularly noticeable with regard to party membership. In fact, as Katz and Mair pointed out Western European parties have experienced "a general decline in the levels of participation and involvement in party

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per sé. See, Piero Ignazi, "The crisis of parties and the rise of new political parties", in *Party Politics*, vol. 2, n. 4, pp. 549-566, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> On this see, Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, "The Evolution of Party Organizations in Europe: The Three Faces of Party Organization", *The American Review of Politics*, vol. 14, 1993, pp. 593-617; see also Richard Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization: the Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics*, vol. 1, n. 1, 1995, pp. 5-28.

<sup>4</sup> Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization: the Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics*, vol. 1, n. 1, 1995, pp. 5-28.

activity”<sup>5</sup>, a decline that is, in part, explained by the fact that party membership is no longer economically efficient for parties. This transformation is associated with, and to a certain extent caused by, a second albeit equally important transformation in the organization and in the functioning of political parties: parties have become increasingly dependent on (and inter-penetrated with) the state and its resources. The cartellization of parties, the formation of the cartel, represents the following stage in this causal pattern: parties collude, thus forming the cartel, in their attempt to prevent divisive issues from emerging, to resist change and, ultimately, to protect the system that they established and in which they prosper.

The purpose of the present paper is twofold: on the one hand I plan to analyze the detachment between parties and society as reflected by party membership decline, while, on the other hand, I plan to investigate some of the factors that may have led to party membership decline. In order to do so, I will proceed as follows. In the first section, I will present Katz’s economic explanation for party membership decline. In this section I will argue that the decline in the size of party membership is associated, among other things, with a decreasing demand for party members, which, in turn, is a function of the vanishing benefits and the rising costs associated with party membership. In the second section, I will discuss some measures of party membership size and party membership change as well as the data that I will use in the course of the present analysis. The third section provides some evidence, gathered from both aggregate and survey data, on the party membership levels and trends in 11 Western European countries. The data presented in this section sustain Katz and Mair’s claim that Western European parties have experienced “a general decline in the levels of participation and involvement in

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<sup>5</sup> Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, “Changing Models of Party Organization”, *op. cit.*, p.15.

party activity”. In the fourth and the fifth sections, I will provide some evidence as to the changing economy of party membership. The data presented in these two sections show that, from the point of view of the party, party membership has become increasingly inefficient, because the benefits associated with party members have declined while the costs have increased. Similarly, the data analysis suggests that party membership has become increasingly inefficient also from the point of view of the party members, because, even in this case the benefits associated with party membership have decreased, while the costs have increased. In the sixth and final section I will draw some conclusions as to the significance of my findings.

#### The Political Economy of Party Membership

In 1990, Katz proposed an ‘economic’ explanation for the decline in the number of party members. According to Katz, the decline in the number of members reflected a transformation of the perceived costs and benefits for both parties (and, of course, party leaders) and party members. Specifically, Katz argued that the costs of party membership have increased and the benefits have declined both from the point of view of parties and from that of party members. Therefore, as the utility attached to party membership declined, the number of party members also declined because parties were less committed to recruit and retain party members, and also because would-be members had fewer incentives to join a party<sup>6</sup>.

Katz’s article sparked a renewed interest in the long-neglected study of party membership and several studies were developed either within or in reaction to Katz’s

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<sup>6</sup> Richard S. Katz, “Party as linkage: A vestigial function?”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 18, 1990, pp. 143-161.

framework of analysis<sup>7</sup>. For example, in her analysis of the British and the German party members, Scarrow argued that from the point of view of parties and party leaders there are several benefits that are still associated with party membership. A large membership base may provide legitimacy, electoral, outreach, financial, labor, linkage, innovation and personnel benefits<sup>8</sup>. In their analysis of the Danish party members, Bille and Pedersen found that there is great variation in the extent to which members participate in party activities and thus represent an asset for their parties<sup>9</sup>. According to Bille and Pedersen, party members provide significant outreach and innovation benefits, while they do not provide major financial or direct electoral benefits<sup>10</sup>.

These analyses refined the demand side of the argument developed by Katz. These analyses have in fact shown that in some respects parties benefit from their membership base. And in so far as this is the case, and provided that these benefits of party membership are not exceeded by the costs, parties still have an incentive to have some members and, therefore, to preserve some links with society. However, neither Scarrow nor Bille and Pedersen have paid much attention to the supply side of the argument developed by Katz, that is to whether the costs and the benefits of party membership have

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<sup>7</sup> Richard S. Katz, Peter Mair *et alii*, "The membership of political parties in European democracies, 1960-1990", *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 22, n. 3, 1992, pp. 329-345; Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *Party Organizations. A Data Handbook*, London, Sage, 1992; Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize*, London, Sage, 1994; Susan Scarrow, *Parties and their Members. Organizing for victory in Britain and Germany*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996; Peter Mair and Ingrid van Biezen, "Party Membership in Twenty European Democracies, 1980-2000", *Party Politics*, vol. 7, n. 1, pp. 5-21; Karina Pedersen, "How Do Party Members Contribute to Parties?", Institut for Statskundskab, Arbejdsrapport, 2001/9; Lars Bille and Karina Pedersen, "Danish Party Members: Sleeping or Active Partners?", Institut for Statskundskab, Arbejdsrapport, 2002/14; Karina Pedersen, *Party Membership Linkage. The Danish Case*, Ph. D. dissertation submitted in December 2002 and accepted for defence of the PhD degree in February 2003, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Scarrow, *Parties and their Members. Organizing for victory in Britain and Germany*, op. cit., p. 40-50; a similar point can be found in Karina Pedersen, "How Do Party Members Contribute to Parties?", op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Lars Bille and Karina Pedersen, "Danish Party Members: Sleeping or Active Partners?", op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Lars Bille and Karina Pedersen, "Danish Party Members: Sleeping or Active Partners?", op. cit., p. 23.

changed in such a way that would-be party members have less of an incentive to join the party. The purpose of this paper is to show how changes in both the demand and the supply of party membership have led to the decline in the party membership levels.

### Party Membership: Measures and Data

In this paper, I will analyze the size of party membership and its transformations over time on the basis of both aggregate and survey data. The size of party membership will be measured by two basic indicators<sup>11</sup> constructed with aggregate data. The first indicator is simply the total number of members (M), which is calculated by summing up the number of members of all the parties in a given year for each of the countries included in our sample. My second indicator measures instead the total number of party members as a proportion (M/E) of the whole national electorate (E). The figures concerning the total number of members, the size of national electorates, and the M/E ratio for a selected number of years from the 1970-1999 period are presented in Table 1.

Party membership change will be measured on the basis of three indicators constructed with aggregate data: the first is just the change in the total number of members from the first year in the 1970s and the most recent year in the 1990s for which data were collected. For example, the change in M in Italy has been of about 2,063,142 members from a peak of 4,037,182 members recorded in 1970 to just 1,974,000 members recorded in 1998. The second measure measures instead the change in M as a percentage of the original membership. In the British case, this indicator takes a value of - 64.73, since British parties lost by 1998 about 1,541,889 of the 2,381,889 members that they had



in 1974. The third and last indicator of party membership change measures the transformation in the M/E ratio from its initial to its most recent value. In the Danish case, for example, this indicator has a value of - 9.08 because while the total number of members in 1970 were 14.22 % of the whole Danish electorate, in 1998 the total number of members was just 5.14 % of the overall national electorate. The figures concerning the change in the total number of members, in the total number of members as a percentage of the original membership and in the M/E are reported in Table 2.

Aggregate membership figures were analyzed for 11 Western European countries for which, membership figures could be collected for at least a year in each of the past three decades. My sample includes all of the 9 countries<sup>12</sup> that were analyzed by Katz<sup>13</sup> in 1990, and 10 of the 11 countries<sup>14</sup> analyzed by Katz, Mair *et alii*<sup>15</sup> in 1992.

As it was previously noted, party membership size and its changes will also be analyzed on the basis of survey data taken from four German surveys (conducted in 1969, 1972, 1994 and 1998), from three Italian surveys (conducted in 1968, 1972 and 1996), from seven Dutch surveys (1971, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1994 and 1998) and from the British surveys (conducted in 1983, 1987 and 1997). For each of these countries, the size of party membership is simply measured on the basis of the number of self-reported party members. Data are reported in Table 3.

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion on the advantages and the liabilities of these and other measures of party membership strength, see Richard S. Katz, Peter Mair *et alii*, "The membership of political parties in European democracies, 1960-1990", *European Journal of Political Research*, 22, 1992, pp. 329-345.

<sup>12</sup> These countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> Richard S. Katz, "Party as linkage: A vestigial function?", *European Journal of Political Research*, 18, 1990, pp. 143-161.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to the nine countries analyzed by Katz in his "Party as linkage", *op.cit.*, the study conducted by Katz, Mair *et alii* also analyzed Finland and Ireland, see Katz, Mair *et alii*, "The membership of political parties", *op. cit.*, p.334. Finland was excluded from my sample and replaced by France, which had not been investigated in the two above mentioned studies.

### Party Membership: Levels and Trends

Looking at the total number of members, it is possible to note a general downward trend in the 1970-2000 period: the overall number of members has fallen in every country with the exception of Germany, where it has increased by 573,201 members. This decline has been particularly large in the larger Western European democracies: Italian parties lost 2,063,142 members, British parties lost 1,541,889 members and French parties lost 1,222,128 members. On the contrary, the loss of members has been considerably smaller in the small Western European democracies: Irish parties lost 27,856 members, Dutch parties lost 63,725 members and Belgian parties lost only 13,868 members. Data are presented in Table 1.

[Table 1 about here]

The analysis of the change in the total number of members as percentage of the original members displays a very similar picture: party membership levels declined in every country with the exception of Germany, where it increased by 47.7%. Interestingly enough, even this set of data shows that party membership decline has been particularly marked in the larger Western European countries: it decreased by 64.73% in the United Kingdom, by 64.59% in France and by 51.1% in Italy. More interestingly, a very similar pattern can be observed in Denmark, where party membership has declined by 56.66% from its 1970 value, and in Norway, where membership level declined by 47.49%. On the contrary, the change in the number of members as percentage of the original membership has been less impressive in the other small Western European states: it declined by

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<sup>15</sup> The study in question is Richard S. Katz, Peter Mair *et alii*, "The membership of political parties in European democracies, 1960-1990", *op. cit.*

28.05% in Sweden, by 24.47 % in Ireland, by 21.20% in Austria, by 17.79% in the Netherlands and only by 2.76% in Belgium. Data are presented in Table 2.

[Table 2 about here]

Tables 1 and 2 also provide the figures concerning the change in the M/E ratio in all of the countries under study. The analysis of these data also testifies to the vanishing of party members in Western Europe. The analysis of the M/E ratio suggests three interesting observations. The first is that there is a clear, European-wide, downward trend in the number of party members as a percentage of the national electorate in 10 of the 11 countries under study. The German case is somewhat exceptional even in this respect, as the German data suggest that party membership levels have either stagnated or modestly diminished in the 1970-1998 period, but have not undergone a decline comparable to that experienced in the other Western European countries. The second observation is that the decline in the levels of party membership has followed three different patterns. The first pattern, which can be observed in 7 countries<sup>16</sup> out of 11, is that of a constant, monotonic decline over time. The second pattern, which can be observed in 3 of the countries<sup>17</sup> under consideration, is that of a period of growth followed by a period of decline. Interestingly, both the Austrian and the German levels of party membership reached their peak in 1980, while in the Irish case the peak was reached in 1987. The third pattern, which can be observed only in the Belgian case, is that of period of increase followed by a period of decline, which were then followed by a second period of increase and a second period of decline. The third, and final observation, is that the decline in the M/E ratio has profoundly altered the picture displayed by the data of the early 1970s. In fact,

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<sup>16</sup> These countries are, respectively: Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

in the early 1970s, one country had a membership rate of over 20 % (Austria), three between 10 and 20% (Denmark, Italy and Norway), five between 5 and 10% (Belgium, France, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and only two countries had a membership level of under 5% (Germany and the Netherlands). By the late 1990s, no country had a membership level of over 20%, only one country had a membership rate between 10 and 20% (Austria), four countries between 5 and 10% (Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden) and six countries had a membership rate of under 5% (France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

The picture displayed by the survey data is quite similar to the picture portrayed by the aggregate data: there is a marked decline in the levels (of self-reported party) membership in Italy, in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, but not in Germany. Data are reported in Table 3.

[Table 3 about here]

### The Vanishing Demand for Party Members

Although the data analyzed in the previous section show that there has been an overall decline in party membership levels, they do not provide any evidence as to why such a decline has occurred. Building on my previous discussion of the economy of party membership, I plan to test whether the overall decline in the levels of party members is associated, if not caused, with a decline in both the demand and the supply of party members. While in the next section I will to assess whether the supply of party members ha become increasingly economically inefficient, in this section I will focus on the demand-side of the problem.

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<sup>17</sup> These countries are, respectively: Austria, Germany and Ireland.

Specifically, I plan to test whether party membership decline can be ascribed to the vanishing of the benefits that parties once derived from a large membership base, to the rising costs associated with party members, or to the interaction of the above mentioned factors. The analysis of the benefits associated with party membership will focus on the electoral, financial and political benefits allegedly associated with party member, while the analysis of the costs will focus on the demands that members place on the party.

The first benefit associated with party membership is that party members are a highly loyal segment of the electorate and they represent, thus, an asset on which parties can capitalize in elections. The data presented in Table 4 suggest that this is indeed the case. The 1968 and 1972 Italian data allow to construct two different measures of party voting loyalty: the first measure records the percentage of respondents who reported to have always voted for the same party before respectively the 1968 elections and the 1972 elections, while the second measure records which percentage of 1968 voters had voted for the same party in the 1963 national elections and the percentage of 1972 voters who had voted for the same party in the 1968 elections. The first measure of party voting loyalty is also constructed with the 1971 and 1981 Dutch data, which also allow to measure the percentage of 1981 voters had voted for the same party in the 1977. The second measure is instead the only indicator of party voting loyalty that could be constructed for the 1996 Italian data, for the 1969, 1972 and 1994 German data, for the 1982, 1986, 1989, 1994 and 1998 Dutch data, and for the 1983, 1987 and 1997 British data. In each case, party members are significantly more loyal voters than are ordinary citizens.

[Table 4 about here]

Although the data reported in Table 4 sustain the claim that party members are more loyal than ordinary citizens, they also show that party members' voting loyalty has markedly declined from the late 1960s and early 1970s to the mid-1990s in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. This point is corroborated by the analysis of both measures of party voting loyalty. The analysis of the first measure of party voting loyalty shows that from 1971 to 1981, the percentage of Dutch party members who reported to have always voted for the same party before that election dropped from more than 94% in 1971 to just 61.5% in 1981. A similar, albeit less dramatic trend, can be observed in Italy where the percentage of members reporting to have always voted for the same party declined from almost 96% to 89% in the four years between the 1968 and the 1972 elections. Consistently with the picture drawn by these data, the analysis of the second measure of party voting loyalty shows a decline in the voting loyalty of party members. The percentage of German party members voting for the same party in two consecutive elections dropped from 92 % in 1969 to 81.5 % in 1994, while the percentage of Italian party members voting for the same party in two consecutive elections fell from 92.7% in 1972 to 81.5% in the 1996 elections. An analogous conclusion can be reached in the Dutch case, where the percentage of party members voting for the same party in the 1994 and in the 1998 elections was inferior to the percentage of 1971 party members reporting to have always voted for the same party. This finding is of some importance for the purpose of this study, because it shows that party members are no longer the safe vote reserve

that they used to be and, as a consequence, they have become a less valuable asset in the eyes of parties and party leaders.

Important as these data may be, they fall short of showing whether the greater stability of party members' electoral behavior is determined by party membership as such or whether it is associated with party membership because they are both produced by the same, underlying, set of factors. In other words, party members' electoral loyalty should be ascribed to their being members or to the fact that they have a strong partisan attachment? In order to answer this question, I analyze the relationship between party voting loyalty and party membership by controlling for the strength of party identification in the 1994 German elections, in the 1996 Italian elections, in the 1998 Dutch elections in the 1997 British elections<sup>18</sup>. In the German case, the control for the strength of party identification radically transforms the value gamma correlation from 0.09 for the uncontrolled relationship to 1.0, -0.42 and -0.42 for the three levels of party identification for which the computation could be performed<sup>19</sup>. In the Italian case, the control for the strength of party identification reduces the gamma correlation from 0.32 for the uncontrolled relationship to 0.22, -0.10 and -0.11 for the three levels of identification. In the Dutch case, the control for the strength of party adherence transforms the value of the gamma correlation from 0.70 for the uncontrolled relationship between party membership and voting loyalty, to 1.0, 0.22 and 0.00 for the three levels of

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<sup>18</sup> Note that the variable measuring the strength of party identification is trichotomous for both the 1996 Italian elections and the 1997 British elections, while it is not in the German case. Note also that, in the case of the 1998 Dutch elections instead of measuring the strength of party identification, I measured the strength of adherence. The strength of adherence was also measured on the basis of a trichotomous variable, taking value 1 for respondents reporting to be very convinced adherents, value 2 for respondents reporting to be convinced adherents and value 3 for those respondents who reported to be adherent but not convinced.

strength in party adherence. In the British case, the control for the strength of party identification reduces the gamma correlation from 0.68 for the uncontrolled relationship to 0.63, 0.55 and 0.08 for the three levels of identification. These findings are of some interest because they show that although party members are among the most loyal voters that a party may have, their loyalty is not a function of their membership. The relationship between party voting loyalty and party membership is a spurious one as both variables are affected by the same set of underlying factors, so that once these other factors are controlled the net effect of membership on loyalty varies from little to none. This has, of course, important implications with regard to the relationship between parties and party members, because if members no longer provide the benefits for which they were a valuable resource in the past, parties have little incentive to recruit and maintain a large membership base.

The second benefit associated with party membership is that party members may provide significant contributions to party finance<sup>20</sup>. This was especially true in the past when membership fees and members' donations to political parties were the major, if not the only, source of resources with which parties could finance their activities. However, the picture has profoundly changed in the past four decades with the introduction of state subventions to party finance either as a reimbursement for parties' electoral expenses or as a financial contribution to parties' ordinary activities<sup>21</sup>. In fact, as the data presented in

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<sup>19</sup> These three levels are very strong, somewhat strong, medium; while the gamma correlation could not be computed when the strength of party identification is somewhat weak and weak, because the strength of party identification never takes these values for party members.

<sup>20</sup> For a more extensive discussion of party finance and its transformations in the past four decades, see the next paper.

<sup>21</sup> A good source of information, in this respect, is represented by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *Party Organizations. A Data Handbook*, London, SAGE Publications, 1992. Additional information can be found in Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994; see also Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi and Pippa Norris (eds.), *Comparing*



Table 5 show, a considerable portion of the expenses Italian parties have to sustain each year to finance their electoral and ordinary activities, is now covered by state subventions instead of being covered by members' dues and contributions. This means that, as important as membership fees and contributions still may be, they are certainly not as important as they were when they represented the only way to finance parties activities and, in the Italian case, one might actually wonder whether they matter at all. This has profound implications for the present analysis because it suggests that from 1974, when public financing of political parties was introduced, to the late 1990s, when the most recent piece of party finance legislation has been enacted by the Italian Parliament, the financial benefits associated with party membership have dramatically declined, if not vanished altogether. Italian parties no longer need members to finance their activities, because most, if not all, of the financial resources that they need to perform their tasks and activities are provided by the state<sup>22</sup>.

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*Democracies. Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, London, SAGE Publications, 1996, pp.38-41. For a discussion, see Richard S. Katz, "Party Organizations and Finance", in Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi and Pippa Norris (eds.), *Comparing Democracies*, op. cit., pp. 107-133.

<sup>22</sup> Italian parties received a reimbursement for electoral expenses and a contribution for their ordinary activities from 1974, when public financing of political parties was introduced, to 1993, when the contribution to parties' ordinary activities was abolished by the referendum. The party finance legislation was then modified by the law n.2 of January 2, 1997, which introduced, in addition to the above mentioned reimbursement for the electoral expenses, a semi-public or semi-private form of contribution to political parties. Art. 2.3 of this law established that all parties that are represented in the Chamber of Deputies or in the Senate by at least one member are eligible to receive a contribution proportional to the number of votes won in the previous elections. The costs of this contribution to party finance were charged to a fund which was created by citizens' voluntary contribution (0.4% of the IRPEF). This legislative provision has come under some severe criticism and it has been modified and integrated by a later legislative act. What remains true, however, from 1974 and 1999 is that while the reimbursement for electoral expenses and the contribution to parties' ordinary activities were recorded as 'state subventions' in the party budgets, the yearly contributions that each parliamentary group receives from the Parliament were not always recorded in this way or in a way that would disclose the 'public' origin of this money. The analysis of the budget of Rinnovamento Italiano from 1996 to 1999 is quite emblematic in this respect, as the Parliament's contributions to the parliamentary group of Rinnovamento Italiano have always been recorded in the budget as 'contributions by non-members'. This budgetary recording has important implications for the study of party finance, because by hiding the public origin of the Parliament's yearly contributions it undermines our ability to provide better estimates of Italian party finance, although it suggests that Italian parties' dependency on state resources is much larger than official budgets suggest.

[Table 5 about here]

The German case is quite different from the Italian one, because although state subventions do cover a certain portion of the expenses sustained by German parties to finance their activities, they do not represent the single most important source of income. This difference is due to the fact that one of the provisions of the German party finance law<sup>23</sup> establishes that state contributions cannot be larger than the sum of all the other financial resources that a party collects with its own autonomous activities, i.e. state subventions cannot represent more than 50 % of a party's total income<sup>24</sup>. In this way, the German party finance law managed to preserve the financial benefits associated with party members and, by doing so, it created an incentive for parties to recruit and maintain a large membership base. Data are reported in Table 6.

[Table 6 about here]

The third potential benefit associated with party members is that they may work and campaign for their party at no cost. The 1968 and 1996 Italian data allow to investigate whether this is actually the case, as both surveys asked party members whether they try to convince friends, relatives and colleagues. Note, however, that the data provided by the two Italian surveys cannot be compared with each other because the wording of the 1968 question is different from the wording of the 1996 question. The respondents to the 1968 survey were, in fact, asked, whether they try to convince any

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<sup>23</sup> BT-Drucks. 14/41 of November 17, 1998 and BT-Plenarprotokoll 14/11 of December 3, 1996, p.669 B. For a discussion of the German party finance law and its changes over time see, Thomas Poguntke, "Parties in a Legalistic Culture: The Case of Germany", in Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize*, op. cit. , pp. 185-215; Arthur B. Gunlicks, "The New German Party Finance Law", *German Politics*, vol. 4, n. 1, (April) 1995, pp. 101-121; Martin Morlok, "Finanziamento della Politica e Corruzione: il Caso Tedesco", *Quaderni Costituzionali*, anno XIX, n. 2, (Agosto) 1999, pp. 257-272; Massimo Teodori, *Soldi e Politica. Quanto costa la democrazia in Italia?*, Firenze, Ponte alle Grazie, 1999, pp. 202-204; Peter Pulzer, "Votes and Resources: Political Finance in Germany", *German Politics and Society*, vol. 19, n. 1 (58), 2001, pp. 1-36.

member of their circle of friends to vote as they did, while the respondents to the 1996 survey were asked whether they try to convince friends, relatives and colleagues when they have a political opinion.<sup>25</sup> Given these differences, it would not be entirely correct to conclude, on the basis of the data reported in Table 7, that members and nonmembers have become more involved in party activity from 1968 to 1996. These data are, nonetheless, very suggestive in at least two respects: first, because they show that the percentage of members advising friends and relatives how to vote as well as the percentage of members trying to convince relatives and friends is significantly larger than the percentage of ordinary citizens reporting to do so both in 1968 and in 1996. Second, because data seem to show that the differences in the behavior of members and ordinary citizens, as measured by the gamma correlations, has declined from the late 1960s to the mid-1990s. In fact, while the gamma correlations had a value of 0.80 in 1968, it had a value of 0.61 in 1996. Interesting as these data may be, they do not show whether membership is a determinant of (higher levels) partisan activity, or whether party membership and partisan activity are correlated because they both respond to the same set of underlying factors such as party identification. When party identification is controlled, the gamma correlation changes from 0.61 for the uncontrolled relationship observed in 1996 to 0.56 and 0.07 for the two values of party identification.

[Table 7 about here]

From the point of view of parties, there are also several costs associated with party membership. As Katz pointed out “quite aside from the material costs of recruitment,

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<sup>24</sup> This disposition is known as the *relative Obergrenze*.

<sup>25</sup> The question in 1968 asked the following; “Did you try to convince any of your circle of friends to vote as you did? “, while the 1996 question asked the following: “If you have an opinion on political or electoral issue, do you attempt to convince your friends, relatives and colleagues?”.

organizational overhead, and the possible need to devote party resources to the provision of nonpolitical selective benefits for members, members may impose other costs on a party”<sup>26</sup>. For example, party members may seek party aid more often than non-members. The Dutch data allow to investigate whether this is, in fact, the case as the respondents in the 1971, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1994 and 1998 Dutch surveys were asked whether they had sought party aid in the past. To the extent to which seeking party aid represents a cost for the party, the analysis of the data presented in Table 8 suggests two considerations. The first consideration is that party members represent and have always represented in the period under study a cost for the party, because the percentage of party members seeking party aid has always been significantly larger than the percentage of non-members reporting a similar behavior. The second consideration is that the costs associated with party members not only exist (and, one should note have existed in the past three decades) but that they have also increased both in absolute and in relative terms. In the first respect, it is possible to note that the percentage of party members seeking party aid has increased<sup>27</sup> from less than one member out of four in 1971 to almost one member out of three in 1998. Far more interesting is to note that the difference between the percentage of members and that of non-members seeking party aid has also increased in the course of the past three decades from about 18 percentage points in 1971 to almost 23 percentage points in 1998<sup>28</sup>. Although, the evidence provided by the British, Italian and German survey data does not allow to assess whether the costs of party membership have followed the upward trend observed in the Dutch case, additional

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<sup>26</sup> Richard S. Katz, “Party as linkage: A vestigial function?”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 18, 1990, p. 152.

<sup>27</sup> The correlation between the percentage of party members seeking party aid and time has a Pearson r coefficient of .523.

evidence of the costs associated with party membership can be found in the 1998 German survey data. In fact, the respondents to the 1998 German survey were asked whether they would seek party aid in order to exercise political influence over an issue which they consider important for them<sup>29</sup>. This 5 point scale variable was then transformed into a dummy variable, with value 1 for respondents reporting that they would probably or that they would absolutely seek party aid and value 0 otherwise. Data reported in Table 8 provide some evidence on the relationship between party membership and seeking party aid, and they show that party members are indeed more likely than ordinary citizens to seek party aid. When asked whether they would seek party aid<sup>30</sup>, about 71.6% of the party members gave an affirmative answer in contrast to just 37.7 % of the ordinary citizens<sup>31</sup>.

[Table 8 about here]

In sum, the data discussed in the previous sections suggest that party membership has become increasingly economically inefficient from the point of view of political parties not only because the benefits associated with party membership have declined but also because the costs associated with party membership have increased. Vanishing benefits and rising costs have depressed the quantity of members demanded and this, in turn, has exercised a negative influence on the total number of members joining political parties. Note, however, that where the benefits associated with party members have survived

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<sup>28</sup> The increase in the value of the gamma coefficients also testifies to the growing differences in the behavior of members and non-members.

<sup>29</sup> The wording of the question was the following: “*Wenn Sie in einer für Sie wichtigen Sache politischen Einfluss nehmen und Ihren Standpunkt zur Geltung bringen wollten, welche der Folgenden Dingen würden Sie denn tun. Bitte sagen Sie es mir anhand dieser Skala. Um politischen Einfluss zu nehmen, würde ich versuchen von einer Partei Unterstützung zu bekommen*”.

<sup>30</sup> The German words are “*versuchen von einer Partei Unterstützung zu bekommen*”.

<sup>31</sup> These percentage refer to the percentage of respondents who said that they would probably or would absolutely seek party aid.

virtually undiminished, as in the case of the financial benefits associated with German party members, the demand for members has not undergone a decline comparable to the one observed in the other countries.

### The Vanishing Supply of Members

Although the data presented in the previous section show that party membership has become increasingly inefficient for parties and that this, in turn, may have depressed the demand for members, they do not provide sufficient evidence as to why party membership levels have actually declined in the absence of information concerning the supply of party members. The purpose of the present section is to fill this information gap by assessing whether party membership decline is associated with, or rather caused by the vanishing benefits that members once derived from joining a party, from the rising costs of being a party member, or from an interaction of both these factors.

From the point of view of party members, there are several potential benefits associated with party membership. As Katz put it, party membership may be a valuable source of information, may lead to preferential treatment at the hands of elected officials, may be a source of social and psychological rewards and, last but not least, it may give members greater policy influence<sup>32</sup>. Although the survey data analyzed in the course of the present research do not provide evidence on most of these potential benefits, they allow nonetheless to investigate whether members perceive themselves to have a greater influence on the party, its decision and the policy making. The respondents to the 1998 German survey were asked whether they agreed with the statement ‘even for simple party

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<sup>32</sup> Richard S. Katz, “Party as linkage”, *op. cit.*, pp.154-156.

members it is possible to bring their opinion in the party'<sup>33</sup>. The results, presented in Table 9, show that the percentage of party members agreeing or agreeing strongly with the above mentioned statement is considerably higher than the percentage of non-members: almost 46% of the party members either agreed or agreed strongly that party members can express their opinion in the parties, while less than 33% of the non-members shared this view. In other words, although these findings do not provide any evidence as to whether there are real, objective benefits associated with party membership, they nonetheless sustain the claim that party members are more likely than non-members to perceive that there are some benefits associated with party membership.

[Table 9 about here]

Interesting as these findings may be, they do not show whether party membership is the cause of members' confidence in their political influence or not. In fact, one could argue that party members are a self-selected sample of citizens particularly interested in politics who believe that it is still possible to influence policy making process<sup>34</sup>, but that party membership does not have any additional net effect on the sense of political efficacy of members. This can be investigated by controlling the relationship between party membership with the perceived policy influence of party members by controlling for efficacy. By controlling for efficacy, the value of the gamma correlation declines from 0.27 for the uncontrolled relationship between party membership and members' perceived influence to 0.23 and 0.23 for the two levels of efficacy. This finding suggests

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<sup>33</sup> The exact wording of the question was the following: *Auch einfachen Mitgliedern ist es möglich ihre Vorstellung in den Parteien einzubringen.*

<sup>34</sup> Such an argument would not be arbitrary at all. The respondents to 1998 German survey were asked whether they agreed with the statement 'people like me have no influence on the regime'. Interestingly, 54.6% of the 172 party members surveyed disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement. On the contrary, only 34 % of the ordinary citizens disagreed or disagreed strongly with the same statement.

that it is party membership itself that makes people believe in the benefits associated with party membership.

This said, do members believe that their policy influence and the other benefits associated with membership have declined over time? Since time series data are not available, I will use differences between age groups as a surrogate for time series data. Specifically, all the respondents in the 45-92 year age-range were coded as 'old', while all the respondents in the 44-16 age-range were coded as 'young'. When the controlling for age, I find that the relationship between the perceived policy influence of party members and party membership is much weaker for the young than for the old (38% of the young versus 50% of the old) and this, in turn, suggests that members perceive that their policy influence has declined over time.

Beneficial as it may be, party membership is not costless. First of all, party members have to pay their annual fees to enjoy the dubious benefits of the membership status. Second, members have to devote some of their free time to participate in party activities or attend party meetings where members' opinions can rarely be expressed and, when expressed, are systematically discounted. Finally, members are often required, in order to be good and loyal members, to give up some of their intellectual freedom and accept the decisions taken by the party. These costs are not unbearable *per sé*, but they become unbearable "as alternative means to the same ends become more attractive"<sup>35</sup>.

The data presented in Table 10 suggest that party members are more likely, though not always in a significant way, to get involved in any form of political action than ordinary citizens. In fact, party members are significantly more likely to contact a members of the parliament, to activate an interest groups, to seek party aid, to contact a



mayor, an alderman or a members of the municipal council and to join a civic action group. The significance in each of these case is 95% level or higher. Party members are also more likely than non-members to contact a cabinet minister, sign a petition and participate in a demonstration. In each of these cases, the differences between members and non-members are significant at the 90% level, but not at the 95% level. Finally, the percentage of party members activating radio and/or TV, lodging a complaint or contacting a departmental official is not significantly different from the percentage of non-members.

[Table 10 about here]

Looking at the two age groups is of particular interest, for it highlights three peculiarities. First of all, in every case the gamma correlation for the older age group is positive, while the gamma correlation for the younger age group is negative in two instances (contacting a cabinet minister and contacting a departmental official).

Second, in five cases the correlation is stronger for the older group, while in the remaining cases the correlation is stronger for the younger age group.

Third, and more interestingly, the data reveal two major differences between the older and the younger groups: first, the older group is more likely to get involved in more traditional forms of political action, while the younger group is more likely to participate in ‘unconventional’ political activities; second, the younger group is more inclined to act locally (by activating mayors, aldermen, members of the city council), while the older group is more inclined to contact politicians more detached from the local territory (cabinet minister, the members of the parliament). This finding has profound implications

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<sup>35</sup> Richard S. Katz, “Party as linkage”, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

for my argument, because it suggests that the emergence (and availability) of new, unconventional forms of political action makes the traditional party activism and activities less cost-efficient, which means that, by eliminating the (economic) incentives to join a party, it ultimately paves the way to a vanishing supply of party members.

### Conclusions

The findings presented in the course of this paper are significant for empirical, methodological and theoretical reasons. At the empirical level, the data discussed above are significant because they show that the levels of party membership have declined in most Western European democracies in the past three decades and that this decline is related, and in my view is caused by, a transformation in the structure of incentives: the benefits and the costs associated with party membership have changed in a way such that party members are not actively demanded by parties nor generously supplied by the population, and the decline in the quantity demanded and supplied, in turn, has lowered the quantity of members joining a political party. Interestingly, though, where the benefits associated with party membership have survived, as in the German case, not only the demand for members but also the number of members have not diminished. These findings have, of course, important implications for they show two things: first, that economic explanations of party membership and party membership change might explain transformations other than decline; second, that there is nothing inevitable in the decline of party membership and party membership organizations.

At the methodological level, the analyses performed in this paper also represent an important contribution to the understanding of party membership and party

membership change in Western European democracies for several reasons. The first, and the most obvious of which, is that I showed that the economic explanation of party membership remains a valid analytical framework even when it is applied to a larger range of cases. This has two quite important implications, from an epistemic point of view, because my analyses did not simply increase the explanatory power of the economic framework, but they also, and simultaneously, increased its reliability. In other words, the economic explanation is further corroborated by the findings presented in this paper. The second, and not less important, reason is that my survey analyses were performed with better data, because instead of investigating temporal trends with age differences, I relied, whenever it was possible to do so, on the methodologically more appropriate time series data.

At the theoretical level, the findings presented in this paper provide some evidence with regard to the cartel party hypothesis in two different, though related, ways. First, the party membership decline observed above is a sign of the increasing detachment between parties and society and, as such, it corroborates one of the postulates of the cartel party hypothesis. Second, and more importantly, the data reported in Tables 5 and 6 support the cartel party hypothesis in another respect, as they show, as Katz and Mair hypothesized, that one of the most significant determinants of the growing detachment between parties and society has been and still is the availability of state resources and public funding to political parties. In fact, data make clear that the introduction of public subventions reduced, if not eliminated, the financial benefits associated with party members and this, in turn, depressed parties' demand for members. The comparison of the German and the Italian case is, in this regard, absolutely enlightening: in Italy, where

the financial benefits associated with party membership were dramatically undermined by the very generous Italian party finance legislation, parties' demand for members decreased and the number of party members declined even before the eruption of the *Tangentopoli* (Bribesville) scandal which, incidentally, marked the end of some of the historical Italian parties; on the contrary, in Germany where the party finance legislation preserved the financial benefits associated with party membership, parties' demand for members did not vanish and the number of members did not drop.

Table 1: Party Membership in Western Europe: 1980-2000

Country, year	Electorate (E)	Total party Membership (M)	Membership as % of the electorate (M/E)
<b>Austria</b>			
1970	5,045,841	1,308,302	25.92
1975	5,019,277	1,286,964	25.64
1980	5,186,735 (79)	1,477,261	28.48
1985		1,257,481	
1990	5,628,099	1,334,554	23.71
1999	5,838,373	1,031,052	17.66
<b>Belgio</b>			
1970	6,271,240 (71)	494,672	7.88
1975	6,322,227 (74)	580,145	9.17
1980	6,878,141 (81)	617,186	8.97
1985	7,001,297	602,621	8.60
1990	7,039,350 (87)	644,110	9.15
1999	7,343,464	480,804	6.55
<b>Denmark</b>			
1970	3,332,044 (71)	473,891	14.22
1975	3,447,621	349,402	10.13
1980	3,776,333 (81)	275,767	7.30
1985	3,829,600 (84)	274,717	7.17
1989	3,941,499 (90)	231,846	5.88
1998	3,993,099	205,382	5.14
<b>France</b>			
1978	34,394,378	1,737,347	5.05
1988	36,977,321	1,110,398	2.98
1999	39,215,743 (97)	615,219	1.57
<b>Germany</b>			
1970	38,677,325 (69)	1,205,972	3.12
1975	42,058,015 (76)	1,795,576	4.27
1980 (west)	43,231,741	1,955,140	4.52
1985	45,327,982 (87)	1,920,614	4.24
1989 (west)	48,099,251	1,873,053	3.89
1999	60,762,751	1,780,173	2.93
<b>Ireland</b>			
1980	2,275,450	113,856	5.00
1985	2,445,515 (87)	123,837	5.06
1987	2,445,515	134,477	5.50
1990	2,471,308	120,228	4.86
1998	2,741,262	86,000	3.14
<b>Italy</b>			
1970	35,566,681 (68)	4,037,182	11.35
1975	40,423,131 (76)	4,524,259	11.19
1980	42,181,664 (79)	4,073,927	9.66
1989	45,583,499 (87)	4,150,071	9.10
1990	45,583,499 (87)	4,297,046	9.42
1991	45,583,499 (87)	3,442,191	7.55
1992	47,780,167	1,361,910	2.84
1993	47,780,167 (92)	1,946,613	4.07
1994	48,135,041	1,438,752	2.99
1995	48,135,041 (94)	1,710,969	3.55
1998	48,744,846 (96)	1,974,040	4.05

Table 1: Party Membership in Western Europe: 1980-2000

Country, year	Electorate (E)	Total party Membership (M)	Membership as % of the electorate (M/E)
<b>Netherlands</b>			
1970	8,048,726 (71)	358,194	4.45
1975	9,506,318 (77)	351,139	3.69
1980	10,040,121 (81)	430,928	4.29
1985	10,727,701 (86)	346,645	3.23
1989	11,112,189	354,915	3.19
2000	11,755,132 (98)	294,469	2.51
<b>Norway</b>			
1980	3,003,093 (81)	460,913	15.35
1985	3,100,479	441,370	14.23
1990	3,190,311 (89)	418,953	13.13
1997	3,311,190	242,022	7.31
<b>Sweden</b>			
1980	6,040,461 (79)	508,121	8.41
1989	6,330,023 (88)	506,337	8.00
1998	6,601,766	365,588	5.54
<b>United Kingdom</b>			
1974	39,753,863	2,381,889	5.99
1980	41,095,490 (79)	1,693,156	4.12
1982	42,192,999 (83)	1,544,803	3.66
1989	43,180,573 (87)	1,136,723	2.63
1998	43,818,324 (97)	840,000	1.92

Source: For the 1970-1990 period data are taken from Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (eds.), *Party Organizations. A Data Handbook*, London, SAGE Publications, 1992. The data for the 1990-2000 period are taken from Peter Mair and Ingrid von Biezen, "Party Membership in Twenty European Democracies, 1980-2000", *Party Politics*, vol. 7, n. 1, pp. 5-21. Additional Italian data are taken from the website of the Istituto Cattaneo of Bologna. Note that only the 1991 membership figures for the Northern League were disclosed by the LN. The Dc/Ppi data were no disclosed for 1992. The Pri membership figures for 1992, 1993 and 1995 were estimates provided by the party. The Belgian party membership figures do not report the data concerning the Pcb/Kpb. The Austrian party membership data do not provide any evidence as to the Kpö. The Danish membership figures do not report the figures of Cd and Frp in 1970 and of Frp in 1975. The German membership figures do not report the data concern ing the Csu in 1970. With regard to the Irish data, the missing data have been estimated as follows: the figures for the Workers Party have been estimated as follows: 1987 as the average between 1985 and 1990. The British membership figures for 1974 do not report the data concerning the Sdp, while they do not report the data concerning the Liberal party for 1982. The Dutch membership figures for 1970, 1975 and 1985 do not include the members of Sgp, Gpv and Rpf. Some of the Norwegian membership data were missing. Missing data have been estimated as follows: the 1985 figure for the V is estimated as equal to the average of 1984 and 1986; the 1985 figure for the Frp is estimated as equal to the average of 1982 and 1989.

Table 2: Party Membership change, 1970-2000: M/E ratios and absolute numbers

Country	Period	Change in M/E ratio	Change in numbers of members	Change in numbers as percentage of original membership
United Kingdom	1974-1998	-4.07	-1,541,889	-64.73
France	1978-1999	-3.48	-1,122,128	-64.59
Denmark	1970-1998	-9.09	-268,509	-56.66
Italy	1970-1998	-7.30	-2,063,142	-51.10
Norway	1980-1997	-8.04	-218,891	-47.49
Sweden	1980-1998	-2.87	-142,533	-28.05
Ireland	1980-1998	-1.86	-27,856	-24.47
Austria	1970-1999	-8.26	-277,250	-21.20
Netherlands	1970-2000	-1.94	-63,725	-17.79
Belgium	1970-1999	-1.33	-13,868	-2.76
Germany	1970-1999	-0.19	+574,201	+47.6

Table 3. Self-reported party membership.

Country	Year	%	N
			of
Germany	1969	3.5	1100
Germany	1972	4.4	1193
Germany	1994	2.2	1994
Germany	1998	5.0	3303
Italy	1968	9.5	1841
Italy	1972	8.4	927
Italy	1996	6.2	2516
Netherlands	1971	11.7	2486
Netherlands	1981	8.6	2292
Netherlands	1982	8.6	2473
Netherlands	1986	7.9	1629
Netherlands	1989	7.6	1751
Netherlands	1994	5.6	1809
Netherlands	1998	4.3	2101
United Kingdom	1983	7.0	3942
United Kingdom	1987	5.9	3816
United Kingdom	1997	4.1	3599

Source: The 1969 German data are taken from the ZA-Studiennummer: 0525 Titel: Politik in der Bundesrepublik (August 1969) Erhebungszeitraum: August 1969 bis September 1969 Primärforscher: M. Kaase, U. Schleth, R. Wildenmann, Lehrstuhl für politische Wissenschaft, Universität Mannheim Datenerhebung: INFRATEST, München. The 1972 German data are taken from the ZA-Studiennummer: 0635 Titel: *Wahlstudie 1972* (Panel: Voruntersuchung, September - Oktober 1972) Erhebungszeitraum: September 1972 bis Oktober 1972 Primärforscher: M. Berger, W. G. Gibowski, M. Kaase, D. Roth, U. Schleth, R. Wildenmann, Lehrstuhl für politische Wissenschaft, Universität Mannheim Datenerhebung: INFRATEST, München. The 1994 German data are taken from the ZA-Studiennummer: 2601 Titel: *Nachwahlstudie zur Bundestagswahl 1994* Erhebungszeitraum: Oktober 1994 bis November 1994 Primärforscher: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin; ZUMA, Mannheim; in Zusammenarbeit mit: M. Berger, M. Jung, D. Roth, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Mannheim; in Zusammenarbeit mit: W.G. Gibowski, Bundespresseamt, Bonn; M. Kaase, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin; H.D. Klingemann, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin; M. Küchler, Hunter College New York; F.U. Pappi, Universität Mannheim; H.A. Semetko, Syracuse University Datenerhebung: GFM-GETAS, Hamburg. The 1998 German data are

taken from ZA-Studiennummer: 3066 Titel: *Politische Einstellungen, politische Partizipation und Wählerverhalten im vereinigten Deutschland 1998*. The 1968 Italian data are taken from Samuel H. Barnes, *Italian Mass Election Survey*, 1968 (ICPSR 7953), First ICPSR Edition 1982, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (producer and distributor); the 1972 Italian survey data are taken from Samuel H. Barnes and Giacomo Sani, *Italian Mass Election Survey*, 1972 (ICPSR 7954), First Edition ICPSR 1982, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (producer and distributor); the 1996 Italian Survey data are made available by the Istituto Cattaneo. The 1971 Dutch data are taken from Robert J. Mokken and Frans M. Roschar, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1971* [computer file]. Conducted by N.V.V./H Nederlandse Stichting Voor Statistiek. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1975. The 1986 Dutch data are taken from C. van der Eijk, G.A. Irwin, and B. Niemoeller. *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1986* [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Interuniversity Election Study Workgroup [producer], 1988. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994. The 1989 Dutch data are taken from H. Anker and E.V. Oppenhuis, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1989* [computer file]. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Electoral Bureau of Statistics [producers], 1993. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1994. The 1994 Dutch data are taken from H. Anker and E.V. Oppenhuis, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1994* [computer file], 2<sup>nd</sup> ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON)/Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) [producers], 1995. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1997. The 1998 Dutch data are taken from Kees Aarts, Henk van der Kolk and Marlies Kamp, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1998* [computer file]. ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: NIWI-Steinmetz Archive/Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON) [producers], 1999. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: NIWI/Steinmetz Archive/Koeln, Germany: Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1999. The 1983 British data are taken from A. Heath, R. Jowell and J.K. Curtice, *British General Election Study 1983* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], 1983. SN:2005. The 1987 British data are taken from A. Heath, R. Jowell and J.K. Curtice, *British General Election Study 1987* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], 21 April 1993. SN:2568. The 1997 British data are taken from A. Heath et alii, *British General Election Study 1997* [computer file]. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], 28 May 1999. SN:3887.



Table 4. Party Voting Loyalty and Party Membership.

	Members	Non-members	Gamma
Germany			
Voted for the same party in 1965 as in 1969	92.0 % of 25	76.8 % of 768	0.55
Voted for the same party in 1969 as in 1972	88.0 % of 50	77.6 % of 937	0.36
Voted for the same party in 1990 as in 1994	81.5 % of 38	78.8 % of 1138	0.09
Italy			
Always voted for the same party before 1968	95.8 % of 72	78.3 % of 758	0.73
Always voted for the same party before 1972	89.0 % of 173	76.6 % of 1606	0.42
Voted for the same party in 1968 as in 1972	92.7 % of 165	85.4 % of 1286	0.37
Voted for the same party in 1994 as in 1996	75.7 % of 132	61.7 % of 1795	0.32
The Netherlands			
Always voted for the same party before 1971	94.4 % of 253	83.6 % of 1307	0.54
Always voted for the same party before 1981	61.5 % of 148	50.6 % of 1248	0.22
Voted for the same party in 1977 as in 1981	89.0 % of 146	77.7 % of 1159	0.40
Voted for the same party in 1981 as in 1982	96.8 % of 221	82.7 % of 1911	0.73
Voted for the same party in 1982 as in 1986	88.6 % of 114	75.9 % of 985	0.42
Voted for the same party in 1986 as in 1989	90.4 % of 115	77.0 % of 1116	0.48
Voted for the same party in 1989 as in 1994	88.2 % of 85	70.1 % of 1041	0.52
Voted for the same party in 1994 as in 1998	92.2 % of 77	67.1 % of 1305	0.70
United Kingdom			
Voted for the same party in 1979 as in 1983	84.8 % of 243	71.3 % of 2454	0.38
Voted for the same party in 1983 as in 1987	96.7 % of 215	78.9 % of 2468	0.77
Voted for the same party in 1992 as in 1997	93.9 % of 132	74.6 % of 2264	0.68

Source: The 1969 German data are taken from the ZA-Studiennummer: 0525 Titel: Politik in der Bundesrepublik (August 1969) Erhebungszeitraum: August 1969 bis September 1969 Primärforscher: M. Kaase, U. Schleth, R. Wildenmann, Lehrstuhl für politische Wissenschaft, Universität Mannheim Datenerhebung: INFRATEST, München. The 1972 German data are taken from the ZA-Studiennummer: 0635 Titel: *Wahlstudie 1972* (Panel: Voruntersuchung, September - Oktober 1972) Erhebungszeitraum: September 1972 bis Oktober 1972 Primärforscher: M. Berger, W. G. Gibowski, M. Kaase, D. Roth, U. Schleth, R. Wildenmann, Lehrstuhl für politische Wissenschaft, Universität Mannheim Datenerhebung: INFRATEST, München. The 1994 German data are taken from the ZA-Studiennummer: 2601 Titel: *Nachwahlstudie zur Bundestagswahl 1994* Erhebungszeitraum: Oktober 1994 bis November 1994 Primärforscher: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin; ZUMA, Mannheim; in Zusammenarbeit mit: M. Berger, M. Jung, D. Roth, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Mannheim; in Zusammenarbeit mit: W.G. Gibowski, Bundespresseamt, Bonn; M. Kaase, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin; H.D. Klingemann, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin; M. Küchler, Hunter College New York; F.U. Pappi, Universität Mannheim; H.A. Semetko, Syracuse University Datenerhebung: GFM-GETAS, Hamburg. The 1968 Italian data are taken from Samuel H. Barnes, *Italian Mass Election Survey*, 1968 (ICPSR 7953), First ICPSR Edition 1982, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (producer and distributor); the 1972 Italian survey data are taken from Samuel H. Barnes and Giacomo Sani, *Italian Mass Election Survey*, 1972 (ICPSR 7954), First Edition ICPSR 1982, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (producer and distributor); the 1996 Italian Survey data are made available by the Istituto Cattaneo. The 1971 Dutch data are taken from Robert J. Mokken and Frans M. Roschar, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1971* [computer file]. Conducted by N.V.V./H Nederlandse Stichting Voor Statistiek. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1975. The 1986 Dutch data are taken from C. van der Eijk, G.A. Irwin, and B. Niemoeller. *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1986* [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Interuniversity Election Study Workgroup [producer], 1988. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994. The 1989 Dutch data are taken from H. Anker and E.V. Oppenhuis, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1989* [computer file]. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Electoral Bureau of Statistics [producers], 1993. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1994. The 1994 Dutch data are taken from H. Anker and E.V. Oppenhuis, *Dutch*

*Parliamentary Election Study, 1994* [computer file], 2<sup>nd</sup> ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON)/Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) [producers], 1995. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1997. The 1998 Dutch data are taken from Kees Aarts, Henk van der Kolk and Marlies Kamp, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1998* [computer file]. ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: NIWI-Steinmetz Archive/Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON) [producers], 1999. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: NIWI/Steinmetz Archive/Koeln, Germany: Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1999. The 1983 British data are taken from A. Heath, R. Jowell and J.K. Curtice, *British General Election Study 1983* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: Uk Data Archive [distributor], 1983. SN:2005. The 1987 British data are taken from A. Heath, R. Jowell and J.K. Curtice, *British General Election Study 1987* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], 21 April 1993. SN:2568. The 1997 British data are taken from A. Heath et alii, *British General Election Study 1997* [computer file]. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], 28 May 1999. SN:3887.

Table 5. Membership Fees and State Subventions as proportion of Party Total Expenses in Italy, 1974-1999.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Membership fees as proportion of Total Expenses</i>	<i>State Subventions as proportion of Total Expenses</i>	<i>Total Expenses in Billion Lire</i>
1974		68	66
1979		35	127
1984		34	245
1987		27	304
1990	32.7	34.8	330
1991	34.1	29.7	300
1992	12.8	36.4	316
1993	4.0	53.6	156
1994	3.1	72.2	213
1995	8.6	39.6	143
1996	9.7	60.4	158
1997	11.1	98.4	164
1998	14.1	74.6	149
1999	9.1	63.1	275

Source: the data for the years from 1974 to 1987 are taken from Massimo Teodori, *Soldi e partiti. Quanto costa la democrazia in Italia?*, Firenze, Ponte alle Grazie, 1999, p.270. The data for the 1990-1999 period are taken from the Gazzetta Ufficiale. The computations were made by the author.

Table 6 Membership Fees and State Subventions as Proportion of Party Total Expenses in Germany, 1986-1998.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Membership fees as proportion of Total Expenses</i>	<i>State Subventions as proportion of Total Expenses</i>	<i>Total Expenses in Million DM</i>
1986	38.3	26.2	545
1987	42.6	34.1	531
1988	51.2	29.4	446
1989	38.1	27.6	618
1990	15.1	22.1	1817
1991	42.9	23.1	697
1992	51.9	26.4	582
1993	50.7	28.2	607
1994	30.9	33.3	995
1995	50.1	35.4	637
1996	47.9	32.9	670
1997	54.0	37.4	606
1998	35.8	25.4	913

Source: the data for the 1986-1998 period are taken from the website of the German Bundestag.

Table 7. Party Membership and Party Activity.

	Members	Non-members	Gamma
Italy 1968			
Did you try to convince any of your circle of friends to vote as you did?	58.4 % of 77	13.5 % of 839	0.80
Italy 1996			
If you have an opinion on political or electoral issue, do you attempt to convince your friends, relatives and colleagues	70.9 % of 153	40.6 % of 2334	0.58

Source: The 1968 Italian data are taken from Samuel H. Barnes, *Italian Mass Election Survey, 1968* (ICPSR 7953), First ICPSR Edition 1982, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (producer and distributor); the 1996 Italian Survey data are made available by the Istituto Cattaneo.

Table 8. Party Membership and Seeking Party Aid.

	Members	Non-members	Gamma
Germany 1998			
Would you seek party aid?	71.6 % of 169	37.7 % of 2999	0.61
Netherlands			
Has sought party aid in the past? (1971)	23.0 % of 242	5.0 % of 1694	0.68
Has sought party aid in the past? (1981)	29.8 % of 151	4.4 % of 1442	0.80
Has sought party aid in the past? (1982)	34.2 % of 114	3.9 % of 1395	0.85
Has sought party aid in the past? (1986)	27.1 % of 118	5.7 % of 1220	0.72
Has sought party aid in the past? (1989)	40.7 % of 118	8.5 % of 1386	0.76
Has sought party aid in the past? (1994)	40.0 % of 90	4.5 % of 1422	0.87
Has sought party aid in the past? (1998)	28.8 % of 80	6.0 % of 1734	0.73

Source: The 1998 German data are taken from ZA-Studiennummer: 3066 Titel: *Politische Einstellungen, politische Partizipation und Wählerverhalten im vereinigten Deutschland 1998*. The 1971 Dutch data are taken from Robert J. Mokken and Frans M. Roschar, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1971* [computer file]. Conducted by N.V.V./H Nederlandse Stichting Voor Statistiek. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1975. The 1986 Dutch data are taken from C. van der Eijk, , G.A. Irwin, and B. Niemoeller. *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1986* [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Interuniversity Election Study Workgroup [producer], 1988. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994. The 1989 Dutch data are taken from H. Anker and E.V. Oppenhuis, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1989* [computer file]. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Electoral Bureau of Statistics [producers], 1993. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1994. The 1994 Dutch data are taken from H. Anker and E.V. Oppenhuis, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1994* [computer file], 2<sup>nd</sup> ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON)/Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) [producers], 1995. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1997. The 1998 Dutch data are taken from Kees Aarts, Henk van der Kolk and Marlies Kamp, *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study, 1998* [computer file]. ICPSR version. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: NIWI-Steinmetz Archive/Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON) [producers], 1999. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: NIWI/Steinmetz Archive/Koeln, Germany: Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 1999.

Table 9. Party Membership and Members Policy Influence.

	Members	Non-members	gamma
Germany 1998			
It is possible for the simple party member to bring his opinion to the party?	45.6 % of 169	32.6 % of 2769	0.27

Source: The 1998 German data are taken from ZA-Studiennummer: 3066 Titel: *Politische Einstellungen, politische Partizipation und Wählerverhalten im vereinigten Deutschland 1998*.

Table 10. gamma correlations between various political actions and party membership (Dutch 1998 survey).

	Total	Young	Old
Contact a cabinet minister	0.49	-1.0	0.49
Contact a member of the parliament	0.74	0.49	0.74
Sign a petition	0.23	0.64	0.17
Activate an interest group	0.49	0.57	0.42
Activate radio and/or TV	0.32	0.49	0.24
Seek party aid	0.73	0.37	0.74
Activate mayor or alderman	0.39	0.53	0.27
Activate member of municipal council	0.52	0.62	0.50
Join a civic action group	0.36	0.05	0.52
Join a demonstration	0.25	-0.01	0.42
Activate a newspaper	0.36	0.32	0.36
Lodge a complaint	0.09	0.20	0.01
Contact a departmental official	.024	-1.0	0.32