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Comparing Democracies
Elections and Voting in Global Perspective

Lawrence LeDuc
Richard G. Niemi
Pippa Norris
editors

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7. It is in this sense that closure also involves what Schattschneider (1960, 69, and passim) has termed the mobilization of bias, with the emphasis on particular conflicts and on distinct alternatives acting to preserve the interests of the various protagonists.

8. See Sartori (1994, 37); "When the electorate takes for granted a given set of political routes and alternatives very much as drivers take for granted a given system of highways, then a party system has reached the stage of structural consolidation qua system."

9. See Sartori (1994, 181, fn. 7); the lack of structuring is also reflected in the persistently high levels of electoral volatility that are strikingly and substantially higher than those occurring in the relatively structured West European systems (Coppedge 1992).

10. As noted, it is also probably less pronounced in the legislative electoral arena in presidential systems, notwithstanding any strong structuring that might be evident in the presidential electoral arena in these same systems.

11. See, for example, Rose and Urwin (1970), whose analysis of persistence and change in party systems was almost exclusively devoted to an analysis of persistence and change in patterns of electoral support. For an earlier discussion of this problem, see Maier (1989, 271-3).


14. The index of volatility measures the net aggregate shift in votes from one election to the next and is the equivalent of the total aggregate gains of all winning parties or the total aggregate losses of all losing parties (see Pedersen 1983). The average volatility in postwar Europe has been less than 9 percent, and apart from the 1994 election in Italy, only four other European elections in the past century have exceeded 35 percent: Germany in 1919 (47.5 percent), France in 1945 (36.4 percent), and Greece in 1950 (47.0 percent) and 1951 (45.1 percent)—see Bartolini and D’Allimont (1995, 443-4); on electoral stability in Europe more generally, see Bartolini and Maier (1990).


16. This argument therefore echoes that by Bakvis (1988, 263), who seeks to explain the Canadian paradox of party system stability in the context of weakly anchored electoral alignments by pointing to the existence of “a more generalized loyalty to the party system as a whole.” A similar argument might also be advanced for Ireland (see above), and perhaps even for the United States.

17. Note, for example, the strong relationship between the number of parties in competition, on the one hand, and the degree of electoral volatility, on the other (see Pedersen 1983, 48-55; Bartolini and MacIvor 1990, 130-45).

Elections often are treated as contests among political parties. Bill Clinton is identified as “the Democrats’ candidate for president”; it is reported that Forza Italia won 21 percent of the vote in the 1994 Italian parliamentary election; the Progressive Democrats are said to have called for more competition in the provision of health insurance in the 1992 Irish general election. Each of these statements, however, is problematic. Who are the “Democrats” who are said to have chosen Clinton as “their” candidate? In what sense should votes received by candidates endorsed by Forza Italia be regarded as votes for the party? And indeed should Forza Italia be regarded as a party in the first place? What of Progressive Democrats who did not emphasize health insurance?

Although no significant national elections are truly nonpartisan, elections vary in the degree to which they are contests among parties rather than contests among individuals who may (or, at least in form, may not) bear party labels. Elections vary in the degree to which party organizations recruit candidates and control access to the ballot; in the degree to which parties develop
positions on issues to which all their candidates adhere; in the degree to which parties generate and channel the resources required for effective campaigning; in the degree to which voter choice is oriented toward party rather than individual candidate; and indeed in the degree to which it makes a practical difference which party wins. Where a system falls on this dimension depends on many things, including its political traditions, the structure of government (presidential or parliamentary, federal or unitary), and the electoral system (especially whether PR or plurality). The degree of “partyness” of elections also both depends on, and is reflected in, the nature of the parties and the way in which the state regulates the campaign activities of candidates, parties, and their supporters.

Place of Parties in a Democracy

Parties perform two classes of functions in modern democracies. Within government, they provide a regular structure for the organization of legislative chambers (e.g., the allocation of committee positions), for coalition building, and for coordination among individual officials both within and across branches of government. Externally, parties provide a forum for the debate of political ideas and a ready-made venue for political involvement by interested citizens. These two functions come together in the centrally defining activity of both parties and democracy, contested elections. The ways in which parties are organized and behave in elections fundamentally shape the nature of democracy, but party organizations also reflect differing conceptions of democracy and the role of elections in it.

In general terms, democratic elections serve two roles, which are only partially compatible. On the one hand, they allow groups of people (whether defined by residence, ethnicity, or opinion) to choose representatives who will articulate their views, protect their interests, and intercede with the government on their behalf. This “liberal” role can be contrasted, on the other hand, to a “populist” or “popular sovereignty” role of allowing the people to choose the government itself, and thus indirectly the policies it will pursue and interests it will serve (Riker 1982; Katz 1997). Although party organizations may facilitate the first role (e.g., by recruiting candidates, structuring the ballot, organizing campaigns), they are particularly crucial to the second, and indeed for some analysts they are defined by it.

All democratic elections serve both of these functions, but the relative emphasis given them differs considerably. In most democratic countries, relatively greater weight is given to elections as choices of governments. The most common institutionalization of this popular sovereignty ideal of democracy is “democratic party government” (Castles and Wildenmann 1986; Rose 1974a). Although not fully realized in any country, this model is approximated by the parliamentary systems of Western Europe. It assumes that elections are primarily contests among parties that are competing for the right to form a national government. Important political decisions are made first within parties, and public officials are elected primarily as representatives of their parties. If a single party wins an electoral majority, it should be able to form the government on its own and make all important decisions, and correspondingly the voters should be able to hold it fully accountable. If no party achieves a majority, there should be a coalition government or a minority government, with the parties negotiating and taking responsibility for the decisions they accept. All of this requires that parties be cohesive at the national level, so that voters are choosing among substantially the same alternatives throughout the country and so that votes for a party and votes for its particular candidates are substantively synonymous. It says nothing, however, about the way in which the party makes its decisions, how it generates its resources or recruits its candidates, or how, if at all, it is linked to other organizations or groups in society.

The United States is an important exception to this emphasis on “popular sovereignty” and competition between national parties, emphasizing instead liberal values and giving particular weight to the representation of individual constituencies. Voters are supposed to choose candidates rather than parties, and elected officials are supposed to be individually responsive and responsible to their constituents rather than being obedient to the dictates of their national parties. One result is a Congress that at least in some respects reflects the diversity of the country, in which a variety of interests and groups are given voice and in which it is difficult to muster majorities. But for precisely this reason, other results are that the people never have the opportunity to give or withhold an unambiguous mandate for particular actions; it is often unclear who is responsible for what, and when it is clear (as, e.g., when a congressional committee chair unilaterally blocks a piece of legislation) most voters, residing in other members’ districts, have no way to reward or punish that person.
Although in some respects the American system is unique, it may also be seen as one extreme along a continuum, with the model of democratic party government at the other extreme. Questions about the organization and operation of parties are important all along the continuum. For example, notwithstanding its basic hostility to strong parties, American experience has shown some form of political party organization to be useful both for candidates and officeholders and for the functioning of the system as a whole. The same has proven true in other democracies with presidential systems and an emphasis on the representative functions of the legislature.

Elements of Party Organization

Although the party government model is based on parties as unitary actors, no party is or can be entirely monolithic. For one thing, there inevitably will be differences of opinion or emphasis, rooted in the backgrounds, values, and experiences of the individuals who collectively make up the party. As well, individuals with differing positions in the party structure have different responsibilities, experience different problems, and confront different patterns of incentives and opportunities. Moreover, these two aspects of the problem of party coherence are likely to be mutually reinforcing, as different kinds of people are channeled into different organizational roles.

Party actors may be classified in a number of ways: between amateurs and professionals; between those who hold or aspire to public office and those who hold positions in the party's extragovernmental organization; between those at the national level and those at the local level. All of these classifications are confused by the fact that an individual may occupy more than one position, for example, as a local party chair and a member of the party's national committee or as party official and elected officeholder. Looking particularly at parties as national organizations, and focusing on roles rather than individuals, many of these differences can be subsumed into a threefold classification (Katz and Mair 1993).

The first element of party organizations is the party in public office. These are the public officials who identify themselves, and expect to be identified by the electorate, as representing the party. Archetypically at the national level, this is the parliamentary party or Fraktion, but it may also include the national president and a variety of appointed officials. All these owe their positions either directly or indirectly to electoral success, and they potentially face a conflict between loyalty to their party and its program, on the one hand, and their responsibility to the electorate as a whole, on the other. Because they disproportionately enjoy the personal rewards of victory, the potential conflict between electoral expediency and principle can be especially acute for the party in public office.

Organizationally, this facet of party organization can vary in a number of respects. Most simply, there can be one national party in public office or several. The British Conservative party provides an example from one extreme, with a single leader elected by the Conservative members of both houses of Parliament, plus Conservative members of the European Parliament. The United States is at the other extreme, with completely separate party caucuses and leadership hierarchies in the two chambers of Congress, and with the presidential establishment excluded from both (Katz and Koldon 1994). Several Latin American systems (e.g., Peru or pre-1993 Venezuela) occupy intermediate positions toward the American end of the continuum, with some separation of, and possible opposition between, presidential and congressional parties of the same denomination (Coppedge 1994); Italian parties, on the other hand, are near the British end, but still with separate party groups in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Parties in public office in parliamentary systems also differ in whether the party's members of the national cabinet (when it is in office) are included in the regular parliamentary party, or excluded from it; for example, in Canada members of the government attend the regular weekly meetings of their parliamentary party caucus, whereas in the British Conservative party the cabinet (and junior ministers) are excluded from the "1922 Committee" when the party is in office. Some parliamentary party organizations vote to make binding decisions, others provide an opportunity for members to express their views while deciding policy remains the prerogative of the party congress or leaders, while still others provide a structure for regular but purely voluntary cooperation with virtually no enforcement of party unity at all (e.g., the United States, Brazil, and Ecuador).

The second major element of party organizations is the party on the ground, consisting of the organized supporters of the party throughout the country. This element may employ some professional staff, and its leaders may include public officeholders, but it is made up primarily of volunteers. Thus, in contrast to the party in public office, the individuals making up this element
of the party are motivated primarily by solidaristic and collective incentives, and so are less inclined to sacrifice policy consistency or party identity for electoral advantage (Panebianco 1988).

The most important organizational distinction here concerns the status of party members. Although in recent years a number of countries have enacted special party laws, most modern parties are structured like any private association. Individuals apply for membership and are accepted (or rejected). In joining a party, a member accepts certain obligations, most commonly the obligation to pay a membership fee, but sometimes also a commitment to attend meetings or do other party work. In return, members have rights and privileges within the organization, including the right to vote, either directly or through elected delegates, on the management of the party and the selection of its candidates. In most membership-based parties, the highest decision-making authority formally is the national congress, in which delegates (or in small parties, the members themselves) can decide major questions of party policy and elect the party's national executive. In reality, a variety of procedural devices, as well as deference to, and political skill by, the leadership may make the congress little more than a pep rally for the party's leaders. In some cases (e.g., the British Conservatives), there is a membership organization but it is explicitly an organization supporting the party, rather than being the party itself.

The American Democratic and Republican parties are highly unusual in having no members in the formal sense at all, although partisan registration is sometimes mistakenly taken to be the equivalent of party membership. Parties with formal memberships differ significantly, however, in the density of their memberships. Usually measured by the ratio of party membership to the party electorate, this “organizational density” tended in Europe in the last part of the 1980s to be well under 10 percent, although there were wide regional and intranational variations (see Table 4.1). Even the peak of 55 percent achieved by KESK in Finland pales, however, in comparison to the claim of Acción Democrática in Venezuela that in 1985 it had card-carrying members equal to over 60 percent of the vote received by its presidential candidate in 1983 (Coppedge 1994, 29).

The final element of party organization is the party central office or national headquarters. It is composed of some mix of representatives of the two other elements of the party, often supplemented by representatives of various affiliated or ancillary organizations, plus the central party staff, generally headed by a national chairman or general secretary. Except in parties founded to support a charismatic leader or adhering to the principle of democratic centralism, the national headquarters tends formally to be in a dependent position. In reality, however, if it is able to maintain tight control over such “organizational uncertainties” as communication and resource allocation, it (or its head) may be the dominant element of the party (Michels 1911/1962; Panebianco 1988). The presidents of the two Belgian Socialist parties are clear examples of a strong party central office.

The proper relationships between the party in public office and the rest of the party organization (especially the party on the ground), and between the party in public office and the electorate as a whole, have been a subject of continuing debate. From one side, it is argued that because parties are so important, true democracy can only be realized if the parties themselves are internally democratic. In practical terms, this would mean that the members (registrants or ordinary voters in the American case) would control the party in public office by controlling (re)nomination, and officials elected under the party's label would be expected loyally to support the program that the party congress, or the party executive as the agent of the congress, lays down. The other side, however, argues that the primary loyalty of public officials must be to the electorate rather than to their parties. In this view, democracy is realized by electoral choice between politicians who are free to pursue whatever policies they feel will meet with public approval or be in the public interest (Schumpeter 1942). Although of little practical effect, the constitutions of many countries reflect this position by asserting, for example, that "all binding instructions from outside bodies on members of Parliament shall be null and void" (Constitution of the Fifth French Republic, art. 27) or that "deputies...shall be representatives of the whole people, not bound by order and instructions, and shall be subject only to their conscience" (German Basic Law, art. 38).

**Types of Parties**

These three organizational "faces" may be balanced in various ways to produce different types of parties. These originated in response to social and political developments, and so there has been an identifiable evolutionary sequence. Many parties have retained characteristics associated with their genesis, however, and elements of earlier models have persisted even as new types emerge. Moreover, once a party type enters the menu of possibilities, it
TABLE 4.1 Party Membership as a Percentage of Party Vote for Selected Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>1988</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSDI</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLI</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>D66</td>
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<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>SV</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>PSL</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>UD</td>
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<td>PC</td>
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<td>CEC</td>
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<td>Sweden, 1988</td>
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<td>MP</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

remains available to party organizers after “newer” types emerge. Even when parties face common pressures, their individual circumstances may lead to differing responses. Thus, although the various types developed in a historically determined sequence, this does not mean there is an inexorable pressure for all parties to follow a common path.

Beyond reflecting social conditions at the time of its origin, each party type has also tended to be associated with a particular conception of democracy, which both reflects and legitimates the political interests of the dominant actors within the party. These differing conceptions of democracy then set up expectations that condition the parties’ behavior.

Elite Parties

The earliest modern parties were of the caucus or elite type. These were based locally, in a quite restricted elite core that constitutes the party on the
ground. The resources supporting an elite party, often primarily the personal clientele of the core elites themselves, were generated locally, and consequently there was little need for deference to any central organization. Candidates, and hence ultimately those comprising the party in public office, were either the agents or among the leaders of the local caucus, obviating potential conflict between the party in public office and the party on the ground. Although there may have been an organized parliamentary party to coordinate activities in government or a rudimentary central office providing some services for both the party on the ground and the party in public office, these relied primarily on the voluntary cooperation of independent local actors. Particularly in the early days of elite parties, the rhetoric of politics tended to emphasize a single national interest, although different parties might have widely divergent views of where that interest lay, views that often coincided with the private interests of their own core groups.

This type of organization originated in Europe and Latin America under the predemocratic but liberal régimes consititaires of the 19th century, and it continues to typify many parties of the right. It also characterized the Japanese Liberal Democratic party, particularly in rural areas, well into the 1960s (Thayer 1969). The political situation in the United States was quite different, especially because universal manhood suffrage essentially was achieved for whites by the 1850s, and for citizens of all races in 1870 (although there was then substantial disenfranchisement of nonwhites, particularly in the South). Nonetheless, in important respects the European elite party and the American caucus party were similar. The caucus was dominated by a self-selecting and self-perpetuating group of leaders, generally nominating candidates from its own ranks. As with the European elite party, the party on the ground (really a collection of loosely allied parties on the ground) was central. National party organizations did little beyond nominating candidates for president and vice president and organizing Congress, without controlling the votes of its members (Ostrogorski [1902] 1964).

Mass Parties

The politics of elite parties was dominated by individuals with private wealth and position. The European mass party arose as the instrument of those groups that lacked these advantages. It was originally the party of those excluded from power, and in many cases, indeed, initially excluded from the vote altogether.

Although in some cases mass parties were organized by dissident members of parliament, in principle mass parties originated outside of government. Schematically, a group of founders organized a party central office, which then built a party on the ground with the ultimate aim of winning elections and thus building a party in public office as well. Because these founders were the leaders of the party on the ground, as well as constituting the party central office, they naturally privileged these elements of the party, casting the party in public office as the agents of the extraparliamentary party. But they also built hierarchical structures linking the party’s local organizations into a single national unit (Duverger 1951).

The prototypical mass party represents groups that are individually weak but collectively numerous. It tries to substitute many small subscriptions for large individual patronage; collective action for individual influence; a party press and organizational networks for access to and sympathy from the commercial communications media. Structurally, its base is a number of card-carrying individual members organized into local units. Most generally, these are branches drawing their members from territories corresponding to local government units, but these might be supplemented or replaced by workplace-based cells (particularly Communist parties) or military style militia units (Fascist parties). Additionally, some socialist parties (e.g., the British Labour party and the Swedish Social Democratic Workers party) have allowed other organizations, principally trade unions, to affiliate en masse, creating a class of indirect members. The branches and other local units then send delegates to higher levels of the organization, and ultimately to the national congress, which is in theory the supreme authority on all matters. In fact, real authority generally lies with the national executive elected by the congress, and possibly supplemented by representatives of affiliated or other organizations.

The basic political strategy of a mass party is one of mobilization rather than conversion. As an ideal type, the mass party is rooted in a particular segment of society. Most commonly, this is the working class, but religious subcultures also have been the basis for mass parties. Because it sees itself as speaking only for a particular group, it tries to mobilize and integrate the members of that group while insulating them from possible counter-pressure. This strategy leads the mass party to erect a panoply of ancillary organizations—trade unions, sporting clubs, insurance providers, and so on—that encapsulate the members of its classe gardée. Party loyalty is thus less a matter of policy preference or ideological commitment (although mass parties tend to espouse
ideologies, be they socialism, Catholicism, Calvinism, fascism, etc.) than simply part of one's social identity.

In addition to a particular organizational form, the mass party model also introduced a distinctive view of democracy, and of the place of the party within it. The mass party specifically claims to represent a particular class or group. The party's claim to that role rests on its internally democratic nature. Elections are seen not as contests between individual candidates, but rather between parties, each representing a distinct social group and advancing a coherent program, legitimized by its congress. Candidates are representatives and agents of their parties, and the mandate won by victorious candidates is precisely a mandate to act cohesively in pursuit of that program. In contrast to the party in public office of the elite party, which may be united but is neither disciplined nor accountable to any central authority, the party in public office of the mass party in principle is supervised and disciplined by its party central office acting in the name of the party on the ground.

**Catch-All Parties**

Mass parties could organize the expanded electorates of the 20th century far more effectively than the informal networks of the old elite parties could do. Moreover, the idea of popular control of government through choice among unified parties was widely accepted, even among groups that did not support the mass parties themselves.

These successes forced the mass parties' competitors to adapt. Two further successes led to adaptation on the part of many mass parties as well. Electoral success altered the balance within the mass parties; particularly once they entered cabinets, or even formed governments on their own, members of the party in public office were far less willing to accept the subordinate position assigned to them by the mass party ideal. Furthermore, once in office the mass parties implemented policies that ameliorated the conditions of the groups they represented and transferred many of the social welfare functions that the parties and their auxiliary groups had performed to the state. In doing so, however, they also undermined the social conditions that made a strategy of encapsulation possible.

The result was the emergence of what Kirchheimer (1966) described as the catch-all party, but which also has been described as the “electoral-professional” party (Panebianco 1988) and the “rational-efficient” party (Wright 1971a). On the surface, the catch-all party may look very much like a mass party, but several changes in orientation and practice mark it as a different type. Most fundamentally, the party in public office begins to think of itself as a potential government responsible to the nation as a whole, rather than as the agent of a particular sectional interest. Moreover, having personally experienced the rewards of office, it comes to value electoral victory over ideological or sociological purity. It comes to prefer a strategy of vote-mongering over one of encapsulation. All of these lead it to want to be free of the control of the party on the ground. (On the value of members, see Katz 1990; Scarrow 1996.)

The membership base of the party on the ground remains important in the catch-all party, at least initially, both as a font of political resources and as a legitimizing touchstone, but there is a tendency for the party central office to shift from being the agent of the party on the ground overseeing the party in public office to being the agent of the party in public office managing the party on the ground. In effect, the members become organized cheerleaders for the party leadership. Furthermore, as campaigning has changed to emphasize television and polling rather than rallies and personal canvassing, national campaigns and personalities rather than local activity and candidates, and professional consultants rather than party bureaucrats, money, which can come from many sources, has become relatively more important, whereas labor and local knowledge, two resources that the members were uniquely able to provide, have become less important (Bowler and Farrell 1992b; Butler and Ranney 1992).

The catch-all model entails its own conception of party democracy. Conflict is not about ends, which are agreed, or about ideologies, which have “ended” (Bell 1988), but rather about means. Parties are not the champions of particular interests, but brokers among interests and between interests and the state. The responsibility of the members of the party in public office to the people is direct, rather than being mediated by the external party organization, and therefore they are entitled to decide the line the party will take in government.

**Cartel Parties**

Developments contemporaneous with, and in some cases flowing from, the rise of the catch-all party, confronted nearly all major parties with a number
of common problems. As shown in Table 4.2, the period since the late 1960s has seen a decline in party membership in nearly all European systems, if not in absolute terms then both relative to the size of the electorate and relative to the resources required for effective political competition (Katz, Mair et al. 1992). External and historical forces (accumulated debts, globalizing economies, etc.) have limited the freedom of action of any party in power (Rose and Davies 1994). Independent interest groups and citizen initiatives challenge the claim of parties uniquely to represent the people. The muting of conflict implicit in the catch-all strategy has lowered the policy stakes of party competition and has made it easier for politicians of all stripes to do business with one another. At the same time, the professionalization of politics has raised the personal costs of defeat, particularly for the party in public office. But even more than with policy compromise, the intensity and costs of competition over office can be contained by sharing, especially over a period of time. Thus, the situation is ripe for the formation of a cartel, in which no party definitively wins, but neither does any party definitively lose.

According to some interpreters (Katz and Mair 1995), this is what has been happening in most of the industrial democracies over the past three decades. The cartel, if there is one, is implicit, but nonetheless potentially very significant. Certainly, cartel-like behavior can be observed in many arenas. There has been a gradual inclusion of virtually all significant parties in national governments and a widening of the range of acceptable coalitions. (See chap. 3 in this volume.) Nearly all significant parties can expect to be in office at the national level some of the time, and at the subnational level virtually all of the time. Even at the national level, the distinction between government and opposition has become blurred, as all-party compromise and sharing of patronage become more common. Various provisions (restrictions on ballot access, artificial thresholds for representation) aimed at protecting the established parties from new competitors have been introduced into electoral laws.

Perhaps the most significant development, however, has been the introduction of state subventions. In their role as governors, the parties partially solved the problem of dependence on decreasingly adequate internally generated resources by providing themselves with subsidies from the state. Although these generally have been justified with reference to the essential role of parties in the maintenance of democratic government, they also have contributed to a change in the character of the parties and hence also of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Election in the 1960s</th>
<th>Last Election in the 1980s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.3 Models of Party and Their Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Inclusion</td>
<td>Restricted suffrage</td>
<td>Enfranchisement and mass suffrage</td>
<td>Mass suffrage</td>
<td>Mass suffrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of political resources</td>
<td>Highly restricted</td>
<td>Relatively concentrated</td>
<td>Less concentrated</td>
<td>Relatively diffused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis for claims to support</td>
<td>Ascribed status</td>
<td>Representation of group</td>
<td>Policy effectiveness</td>
<td>Managerial skills, efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of electoral competition</td>
<td>Managed</td>
<td>Mobilization</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Contained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of party work and campaigning</td>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>Labor intensive</td>
<td>(mixed)</td>
<td>Capital intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal source of party’s resources</td>
<td>Personal contacts</td>
<td>Members fees and contributions</td>
<td>Contributions from a wide variety of sources</td>
<td>State subventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations between members and party elite</td>
<td>Elite are the “ordinary” members</td>
<td>Bottom up (pace Michels); elite accountable to members</td>
<td>Top down; members are organized cheerleaders for elite</td>
<td>Strararchy; mutual autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character of membership</td>
<td>Small and elitist</td>
<td>Large and homogeneous; activated and encouraged;membership a logical consequence of identity; emphasis on rights and obligations</td>
<td>Membership open to all (heterogeneous) and encouraged; rights emphasized but not obligations; membership marginal to individual’s identity</td>
<td>Neither rights nor obligations important (distinction between members and nonmembers blurred); emphasis on members as individuals rather than as organization; members valued for contribution to legitimizing myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party channels of communication</td>
<td>Inter-personal networks</td>
<td>Party provides its own channels of communication</td>
<td>Party competes for access to nonparty channels of communication</td>
<td>Party gains privileged access to state-regulated channels of communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parties, Candidates, and Campaign Finance

The sources and uses of funds are among the key features distinguishing types of parties. These questions of finance, like the organization of parties, also relate strongly to the character of democracy.

Concern that elections will be tainted by disproportionate or inappropriate spending by or on behalf of candidates greatly predates modern conceptions of democracy. Candidates’ offers of hospitality to prospective voters were limited in the Roman Republic, and an analogous prohibition of “treating” and excessive spending by candidates was introduced in Britain as early as 1695. As parties developed, in many countries supplanted individual candidates as the primary organizers and financiers of campaigns, they increasingly were subjected to regulation as well. In some countries, however, the myth that elections are contested by individual candidates rather than by parties continues to limit the effectiveness of campaign finance regulation.

Regulation of campaign spending and contributions necessarily limits freedom of speech; particularly in an era of mass electorates, the freedom to speak is far less significant than the freedom to disseminate one’s speech, yet the means of effective dissemination—broadcasting, hiring a hall, displaying posters, advertising in the print media—all cost money. As the U.S. Supreme Court observed in striking down the expenditure limits of the Federal Election Campaign Act, “Expenditure ceilings impose direct and substantial restraints on the quantity of political speech” (Buckley v. Valeo, 424 U.S. 1, 57 [1976]). Where such limits have been accepted, it has been on the ground that unrestricted spending both gives unfair advantage to those interests with privileged access to money and makes elected officials excessively dependent on contributors at the expense of being responsive to the people at large (Alexander and Shiratori 1994).

Regulations concerning campaign (and other political) finance can be divided roughly into two categories: those concerning expenditure and those concerning contributions and other forms of income. Simplifying, the first are intended to prevent candidates or parties from buying elections, and the second are intended to prevent those with money from buying candidates. Each of these types of regulation then can be directed at any combination of candidates as individuals, parties, and other individuals or groups. Finally, the regulations can take the form of limitations or prohibitions on specific kinds of total amounts of expenditure or contribution, or they can merely require disclosure. (For extended discussions of these issues, see Seidle 1991; Alexander and Shiratori 1994.) Table 1.5 (chap. 1, this volume) summarizes the current variety of financial regulations in force in the major democracies.

Expenditure Controls

Expenditure limits can either restrict the total amount a candidate or party may spend, or they can limit the amount spent in particular ways, including the possibility that some forms of expenditure will be banned altogether. British and Canadian limits on spending by candidates (Britain) and both candidate and parties (Canada) based on constituency population illustrate the first type, and the French ban on paid broadcast advertising illustrates the second.

Three questions are central to the effectiveness of expenditure controls. The first is, to whom do the limits apply? As the British experience indicates, the entire exercise may be rendered nugatory if parties are excluded from the limitations; in 1983, for example, the Labour and Conservative parties spent more than three times the total amount allowed to their candidates (Butler and Butler 1986, 228, 248). Further complications are added by the possibility of spending on behalf of candidates or parties by individuals or groups that are not formally connected to either. The response in Britain and New Zealand has been to ban all spending supporting a particular candidate unless authorized by the candidate’s agent and counted against the allowable limit. In India, on the other hand, such spending has (since 1974) been specifically excluded from control. Spending by candidates is not limited in the United States (except for presidential candidates who voluntarily accept spending limits in exchange for public finance), nor are “independent expenditures” made by nonparty groups without consultation with a candidate’s own organization. Spending by parties on behalf of federal candidates, however, is treated as a contribution (see below) and is regulated under this guise.

One step beyond “independent expenditure” to support named candidates or parties is advertising in favor of specific policies. Even if no party or candidate is named, such advocacy advertising can have a significant effect on an election if it addresses questions on which the commitments of the candidates are particularly clear. This kind of activity may be used by interest groups, or by supporters of a party or candidate, to circumvent campaign spending limits, but it is virtually impossible to control without abandoning principles of free speech altogether.
The second central question is, what counts as an expenditure subject to control? One problem is the treatment of expenditures that are not directly related to the campaign of an identifiable candidate but that nonetheless may substantially contribute to it. British exclusion from control of spending on behalf of a party, rather than any of its particular candidates, is paralleled by American exclusion of “party building activities” like “get out the vote” campaigns or the 1980 “Vote Republican, for a Change” campaign. A second problem is the accounting of noncash or below-market-value transactions; in Canada, for example, if a self-employed individual donates services for which he or she normally would be paid, the value of those services must be counted as an expenditure by the candidate supported (Beyer 1983, 73). Because the most effective campaigning is likely to be that which looks like public service rather than self-aggrandizement, the use of the perquisites of office to benefit the reelection of the incumbent becomes a third problem. This is especially the case in the United States because of the scale of facilities that members of Congress have given themselves. Although the use of these facilities for overtly electoral purposes is illegal, the distinction is not always easy to draw.

One answer is that constituent service becomes self-advertising if it comes too close to an election, for which reason congressional mass mailings, for example, are forbidden within 60 days of any election in which the member is a candidate.

As this suggests, the third central question is one of timing, when do the limits begin? This is particularly significant in the context of personal campaigning, because advertising for a private business (e.g., by a lawyer) can have significant spillover effects for a political campaign as well. In some systems, the applicability of spending limits is triggered by the calendar—either on a fixed date or a specified number of days before the election will be held. In others, the trigger is some action by the candidate or party. Thus, British parties avoid formally selecting candidates until an election is actually called (until then, they have “prospective candidates”) to avoid the imposition of the strict limits applied to candidates.

Although it is easy to talk about a well-defined “formal” campaign period, the campaign for one election really begins almost immediately after the conclusion of the last election. The effectiveness of spending limits is seriously undermined if they are applied only to the few weeks before the election. Because New Zealand’s controls only apply during the 3 months before an election, parties have been able to evade them simply by prepaying many expenses (Penniman 1980a, 90). Pre-1988 French restrictions applied only during the official 3-week campaign, making them largely irrelevant (Avril 1994, 90).

Control of Contributions

The other side of financial regulation is the control of contributions. These fall under three main headings: limits on the acceptable source of contributions, limits on the acceptable amounts, and requirements concerning disclosure.

In the United States and Canada, early limits on acceptable donors were introduced by agrarian interests deeply suspicious of the power of business. The Tilman Act (1907) prohibited contributions from federally chartered banks and corporations. A similar ban was introduced the next year in Canada, but it proved ineffective because it applied only to candidates and not to parties, the existence of which the law did not recognize. Unions were included in the prohibition in 1920 in Canada, and in 1943 in the United States. Other frequently prohibited donors include foreigners, public employees, and state or semistate agencies.

One justification for barring union contributions has been that the union’s majority should not be able to use funds collected from all members to support candidates that the minority opposes. A similar argument might be raised with regard to minority shareholders in corporations. Whatever the merit of this argument, the problem can be solved with measures less extreme than total prohibition. For example, since 1913 British unions have been allowed to contribute to political campaigns provided that (a) they raise the funds contributed through a political levy that is kept separate from regular union funds, (b) the creation of the political fund be approved by ballot of the members, and (c) any member so desiring may “contract out” of the political levy without penalty. In the United States, the employees or members of an organization that is barred from making political contributions can form a political action committee (PAC), with substantially the same effect.

Even if acceptance of contributions from some groups is not prohibited, an attempt may be made to limit the concentration of influence in a few hands by limiting the amount that may be accepted from a single source. For such limits to be effective, however, total contributions from a single source must be limited as well. For example, the American Hatch Act’s (1940) limit of $5,000 per year on individual contributions to a candidate or political committee was easily circumvented by multiplying the number of nominally separate committees all supporting the same candidate. After being modified
several times and repealed in 1972, contribution limits were reimposed in the United States in 1974 in the wake of the Watergate scandal. Japan introduced similar, but apparently less effectively enforced, restrictions after the Lockheed scandal. Under the simpler circumstances of a party-oriented electoral system, Spain in 1985 limited individual contributions to a party to 1 million pesetas. With a candidate-oriented electoral system, French law limits contributions from individuals to FF 30,000 in a single election, and for corporate bodies (including parties) to 10 percent of the legal spending limit for the office. Donations to parties by individuals and corporate bodies are limited to FF 50,000 and FF 500,000 per year, respectively.

Financial Reporting

Although a requirement that expenditures, contributions, or both be reported may supplement other restrictions, more often it is a substitute for them. Thus, when the Canada Elections Act of 1974 introduced the requirement that all contributions over C$100 be reported, it repealed the earlier bans on corporate and union contributions. In the United States, however, the Federal Election Campaign Act not only limits contributions but also requires federal candidates to list all contributors, and all recipients of expenditures, of over $200 in a single year.

The intention of reporting requirements is to fight potential corruption or influence buying and selling with the cold light of publicity. For this to be achieved, several things are necessary. First, the reports must be public and timely. Ideally, reports should be available in time to allow a candidate’s opponents to publicize any questionable transactions before the election. Reports that can be delayed long after interest in the election has waned are unlikely to be of much deterrent value. American law, which requires quarterly reports, plus a report filed no later than 12 days and complete through the 20th day before the election and a report filed no more than 30 days and complete through the 20th day after the election, is particularly stringent in this regard. British candidates, who need only report expenditures, must do so within 35 days of announcement of the result. In Canada, on the other hand, candidates’ agents have 4 months and parties have 6 months, and agents in Australia have 20 weeks. And indeed in some cases, such as Spain in 1989, it is not clear that the fact that reports are required implies that they must be made public.

Second, effective reports must be detailed and comprehensive. In the United States, Canada, and Spain, for example, even relatively modest contributions must be itemized; in Germany and Austria, on the other hand, only quite large contributions (roughly $6,000 and $10,000, respectively) need be listed individually; Italian reports simply list private donations as a single aggregate entry. Moreover, whereas American and Canadian reports are required from all entities attempting to influence the outcome of an election, Austrian, Italian, and Swedish party reports include only the finances of the central party, leaving local parties, ancillary enterprises, and independent factions to raise and spend funds without reporting. Conversely, only candidates, not the central parties, are required to report their expenditures in Britain. In either case, this opens the possibility that parties and politicians will be able to evade control by transferring questionable items from a budget that must be publicized to one that is not.

Third, reports are only likely to be effective if they are subject to independent audit, and the regulatory body must have the capacity to seek out violations. The Federal Election Commission in the United States provides an outstanding negative example in both respects. Although presidential campaign reports are audited, reports from other campaigns are audited only if the Commission receives a signed and notarized complaint and at least four Commissioners vote to pursue the investigation. Because the Commission consists of three Democrats and three Republicans, the chance that four votes will be mustered to investigate any but the most flagrant violations by major party candidates is slim. A further problem with Federal Election Commission enforcement is that the Commission has no investigators; although it once had them, they were eliminated, in part because of pressure from Congress (Jackson 1990, 7). In Canada, on the other hand, one reason why reports need not be filed immediately after the election is that they must be audited before filing.

Subsidies and the Public Finance of Campaigns

The development of new campaign technologies has been associated with an explosion in the cost of political campaigns. According to Federal Election Commission reports, candidates for the U.S. House and Senate spent $459 million in the 1987-1988 elections cycle, more than double the figure from 10 years before. To this may be added the $250 million spent by candidates in presidential primaries and the $90 million spent by the major party presi-
dential candidates. Similarly, campaign expenditures doubled in Austria between 1975 and 1990 (to Ös300 million), nearly doubled in Britain between 1983 and 1987 (to £ 22.4 million) and in Sweden between 1982 and 1988 (to SEK 70.4 million). The 1989 presidential campaign in Brazil is estimated to have cost in the neighborhood of $2 billion (Aguiar 1994). In the face of these dramatic increases in perceived need, and the failure of membership-generated income to keep pace, many parties have turned to the state for financial support, arguing that effective democracy requires vigorous parties and campaigns. Public support has also been justified by claiming that the alternative is excessive dependence of parties and politicians on contributors. The arguments against public support are essentially the same, as Koole (1989, 210) has summarized the debate in the Netherlands:

First, public subsidies are thought to reinforce the status quo of the party system. Secondly, the danger of manipulation and control by the state would be enhanced. Thirdly, the distance between elite and grass roots would increase because the parties would no longer have to rely financially on their members.

That public support of parties and campaigns has become virtually universal among democracies is evidenced by Table 1.5 (chap. 1). In general terms, public support can take any one of three forms. Least subject to objections of the sort that Koole cites are indirect supports, such as making political contributions deductible against income tax or maintaining artificially low prices for goods and services required by the parties or candidates (e.g., the requirement that American broadcasters charge candidates the lowest rates charged for comparable time). Second, candidates or parties can be provided with goods or services without charge directly by the state. The most common supports of this type are the provision of free broadcasting time, mailing of election addresses, and meeting halls. Finally, most controversial, and increasingly common, is the provision of cash.

One of the attractions of indirect supports is that they do not require the state to make overt decisions regarding allocation. The others, however, force the state to decide which candidates or parties are eligible to receive support in the first place, and then to choose between two criteria of allocation: equality and proportionality. Equality has the advantage of apparent fairness and neutrality, as well as reflecting the fact that the costs of many forms of campaign activity are independent of the level of a party’s support. On the other hand, it encourages candidacies motivated only by the availability of resources (e.g., the candidate of the “Connoisseur Wine Party” who used the free mailing provided to British candidates to advertise his wine shop) and the splitting of parties (particularly in highly proportional systems) to multiply the resources provided. The alternative of providing resources in proportion to support, whether measured by vote shares (e.g., Austria, Denmark, Mexico, Turkey), seats in the legislature (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Sweden), or private contributions raised (in the case of matching funds, as provided for American presidential primary candidates), however, tends to entrench the already strong.

Resources such as free mailings and use of meeting facilities generally are allocated on the basis of equal shares for all. The formula for the allocation of broadcasting time is the most variable. In France, Denmark, Italy, and Norway (where a party must have been officially recognized for at least 6 months), the policy has been one of strict equality. This has, for example, precluded direct debates in the first round of French presidential elections. Sweden and Britain have adhered to equality with regard to the big parties, but have given smaller and new parties less time. Canada, on the other hand, has allocated time in proportion to the number of seats a party holds in the House of Commons, with some time allocated to any party nominating candidates (and paying a deposit) in at least one-fourth of the ridings (constituencies).

Where significant direct cash subsidies are provided, they are invariably allocated roughly in proportion to strength. American public finance of presidential campaigns provides a particularly egregious example of the way in which such subsidies can entrench the status quo. First, all parties are divided into three classes: major parties (those whose presidential candidate received at least 25 percent of the vote in the previous election—that is, always and only the Democrats and Republicans); minor parties (those whose presidential candidate received between 5 and 25 percent of the vote in the previous election—generally none); and new parties (all others). Candidates of major parties who agree to accept no other contributions and to spend no more than $50,000 in personal and family funds receive equal public support ($20 million adjusted for inflation since 1974—$55.24 million in 1992) in advance of the election. Candidates of minor parties who agree to limit their spending to the total allowed to major party candidates receive a subsidy that is proportional to their previous support; were Ross Perot to be a candidate in 1996, he would be entitled to just under half the support given to the Democratic and Republican candidates. New party candidates also receive
support in proportion to their strength, but based on the current election and paid only after the election has taken place.

Subsidies can be restricted to election campaigns (Australia, France, Germany, the United States) or they can be given for general party maintenance (Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Turkey). In the former case, they still can be given to the parties as organizations, or they can be paid directly to the candidates’ independent organizations. Giving support directly to candidates, of course, tends to undermine the authority of the parties.

Conclusion

Parties are becoming increasingly expensive, and yet with such major issues as whether to have universal suffrage, a welfare state, a market economy apparently resolved, and with the parties’ freedom of action on the small issues increasingly constrained by decisions of prior governments and the international economic environment, parties apparently have less to do. Moreover, with increases in education, leisure time, disposable income, and so on, ordinary citizens have less need of parties to speak for them or to channel their political activity.

Whether or not the major parties effectively have established a cartel, the old epigram that “two deputies have more in common, one of whom is a Socialist, than two Socialists have in common, one of whom is a deputy” has seemed to many to ring ever truer. As politicians of all parties have become more similar sociologically (middle class) and politically (moderate), there may appear to be less point in electoral competition and less reason for involvement in parties. When all parties are moderate and responsible, there is little opportunity for the disaffected to use the ballot box either to protest or to call for fundamental reform.

One response has been the growth of new parties not only outside the cartel but explicitly opposed to it. These have taken three general forms. First, a variety of “left-libertarian” and ecologist parties, most notably the Greens in Germany, have sprouted on the left. Second, these have been complemented by a number of neo-populist parties, including the National Front in France, the Northern Leagues in Italy, and the Progress parties of Scandinavia. In both cases, the grassroots organizations are extremely important. These two groups of parties differ in their value orientations and organizational styles—those on the left emphasizing postmaterialist issues (Inglehart 1990a) and an organizational structure reflecting participatory values and a hostility to formal leadership (Kitschelt 1989), whereas those on the right generally emphasize lower taxes and traditional social values and have been characterized by strong, in some cases charismatic, leaders. Finally, Ross Perot’s “United We Stand” movement and, most spectacularly of all, Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia represent a third type of anti-party-system party—effectively the personal organization (in many respects, effectively the employees) of a single wealthy individual prepared to mount a campaign funded by his own resources. Although organizationally quite different from the first two types, all three are united in their disdain for the complacency of the established parties, the degree to which they appear to conspire to keep significant questions off the political agenda, and the degree to which they “feed at the public trough.” Whether their antiparty zeal can survive electoral success remains to be seen.

Notes

1. Indirect membership was abolished in the Swedish case in 1990.
2. These limits are FF 500,000 for Parliament, except in districts with fewer than 40,000 inhabitants where the limit is FF 400,000, and FF 120 million for the presidency.