Still indispensable: how modern parties need grass roots activists for campaigning and sustaining democracy

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that *modern political parties still need grass roots activists for campaigning and sustaining democracy*. Western European parties have lost members at an increasing rate over the last 50 years and the decline shows no signs of stopping, but existing literature on party organization and campaigning holds that this is mostly unproblematic, since parties have also changed the way they operate. Since the dawn of the professionalized, media-centered campaign in Western societies in the 1950s, modern campaigning has transformed from labor- to capital-intensive, and parties are therefore said to have little need for grass roots activists, whether formally enrolled or not.

In four articles and the introduction, based on both a small- and medium-N research design and data from a broad variety of primary and secondary sources, this dissertation counters the obsolescence claim by showing that modern parties in Western Europe and the US have not really changed that much. They still rely on grass roots activists to perform a variety of campaign-related functions: the activists contribute voluntary labor, funds, votes, and staff the party, including by running as candidates. Professionalized staff and media-oriented campaigns have thus supplemented rather than replaced grass roots activists. Moreover, I argue that we should think more broadly, beyond campaigns and elections, about the democratic role of grass roots activists in modern parties: by linking parties with civil society, maintaining their organizational presence in local communities, and helping parties sustain their organizational heritage as mass-based organizations, grass roots activists also support democratic government. This democracy-supporting function is insufficiently recognized by existing literature. This dissertation thus revises existing literature on parties' demand for grass roots activists in campaigning and emphasizes the grass roots activists' role in sustaining democracy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0. Introduction

This dissertation argues that *modern political parties still need grass roots activists for campaigning and sustaining democracy*. As demonstrated by a number of publications over the last couple of decades, party membership has fallen with increasing intensity in Western Europe in the last 50 years, and shows no signs of abating. According to existing literature on party organization and campaigning, this is mostly unproblematic, since parties have also changed the way they operate: since the dawn of the professionalized, media-centered campaign in Western societies in the 1950s, modern campaigning has transformed from labor- to capital-intensive, and parties therefore have little need for grass roots activists, whether formally enrolled or not. In other words, parties are said to need first and foremost professionals versed in media management, political marketing, polling, and fund-raising to wage successful electoral campaigns rather than volunteers handing out flyers, knocking on doors, etc.

This dissertation counters the obsolescence claim by arguing that modern parties have not really changed that much: they still rely on grass roots activists to perform a variety of campaign-related functions: the activists contribute voluntary labor, funds, votes, and staff the party, including by running as candidates. Professionalized staff and media-oriented campaigns have thus supplemented rather than replaced grass roots activists.

Secondly, I argue that we should think more broadly, beyond campaigns and elections, about the democratic role of grass roots activists in modern parties. By linking parties with civil society, maintaining their organizational presence in local communities, and helping parties sustain their organizational heritage as mass-based organizations, grass roots activists also support democratic government. In other words, parties sustain democracy through grass roots activists.

This introductory article first gives an overview of the steady membership decline that has taken place across Western societies for many decades in order to underline the salience of the debate over activist relevance to modern parties (section 2). Since there are fewer members to help out, the remaining ones are getting only more important to their parties. In section 3, I first account for my use of the term "grass roots activists", upon which I discuss the unifying theoretical theme of the four articles, which is the functions grass roots activists perform for modern political parties. Section 4 addresses the thesis' methodology, while the

conclusion summarizes its main findings and contributions, including those of the individual articles (section 5).

2.0. Party membership decline in Western societies in the post-war era

A number of studies have shown that Western parties are losing members, and have been doing it for three decades (Delwit, 2011; van Biezen et al., 2012; Scarrow, 2002 [2000]; Lane and Ersson, 1994). From these works we know that the high membership figures of the 1950s and 1960s – the 'Golden Era'– were unusual compared to membership in the decades before and after. New research shows, however, that with respect to European parties, a distinction should be drawn between mass parties and cadre parties: while the former lost two thirds of their members between 1975 and 2005, the latter retained 88 per cent of theirs (Delwit, 2011).

In the following, I give a detailed account of the membership development predominantly in Europe, and supplement it with data from non-European countries. In Section 2.1., I present the 1960-2009 European data by Katz, Mair, van Biezen and Poguntke, which are the most comprehensive and were collected over three rounds, approximately in 1990, 2000, and 2010. The 1990 data comprises only Western European countries; the 2000 and 2009 rounds also include newly democratized Western and Eastern European countries. Section 2.2. provides summaries of the other two major overviews; Scarrow's 1950-1990 OECD data, which includes data from non-European Western democracies, and Delwit's 1946 to 2006 European data. Obviously, there is no US data, as the US parties do not offer formal party membership.

2.1. The Katz, Mair, van Biezen and Poguntke data
1960-1990: Relative decline in Western Europe
The first round of data from the Katz and Mair project, published in 1992, shows the membership figures in 11 West-European countries measured in raw numbers and as a percentage of the electorate (M/E) at the time of the first election in the 1960s and the last election in the 1980s. The raw data shows that in the course of these three decades, five countries experienced a growth in party membership, five recorded a decline: membership increased in West Germany (+77,7%), Belgium (+37,5%), Sweden (+21,7%), Norway (+13,2%) and Italy (+1,7%), while decreasing in Finland (-0,3%), the Netherlands (-10,4%), Austria (-13,6%), Denmark (-28,5%) and the United Kingdom (-56,2%). There is no pattern to the distribution of gainers and losers. Thus, by 1990, there was no indication of a complete

collapse in absolute membership figures in Western Europe, perhaps except for in Denmark and the United Kingdom. However, with the massive expansion of national electorates in Western Europe in this period, both steady and growing memberships could cloak considerable relative declines (Katz and Mair, 1992: 332-3).

Shifting attention from M to M/E, a more uniform trend emerges for the entire period and shows that steady or growing memberships did to some degree mask relative declines. From 1960 to 1990, the M/E ratio fell in all countries but Belgium and West Germany. However, the initial M/E values in these two countries were low at the beginning of the period. On the one hand, the average M/E only decreased from 14,6 percent in the first election in the 1960s to 10,5 percent in the last election in the 1980s. An average decline of 4,1 percentage points in the proportion of European voters being party members may not be very much over 30 years, although Denmark, for example, experienced a staggering loss of 14,6 percentage points. On the other hand, the decline was considerable when taking into account the initial national M/E values. Although Sweden, Norway, and Austria retained their leadership position, having membership values at the end of the period that were more than four-fifths of those at the beginning, rates in Italy and Finland fell by approximately one-fourth and one-third, respectively. The rates of Denmark, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom dropped to one-third of what they were at the beginning of the period. While Austria, Denmark, and Sweden had M/E values of over 20 percent; Finland, Italy, and Norway between 10 and 20 percent; and Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom between 5 and 10 percent in the early 1960s, only in Austria, Sweden, Norway, and Finland was M/E above 10 percent in the late 1980s, and M/E levels in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and West Germany were below 5 percent (Katz and Mair, 1991: 333-4). With respect to the intensity of the decline, there was still no discernible geographic or cultural/systemic country pattern.

1980-2000: Uniform decline in Western Europe

The second survey, published by Mair and van Biezen in 2001, expanded the number of countries to 20 and includes both Southern and Eastern European cases, and lists the specific years for which the data was collected, roughly 1980, 1990, and 2000. Measured as a percentage of the numbers recorded in 1980, the raw numbers fell in all the long-established democracies and in one post-authoritarian country between 1980 and 2000. In France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, the decrease was between 50 and 65 percent; in Norway, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, and Austria, absolute figures fell by between 30 and 50

percent; and in Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and Belgium, raw numbers decreased by between 20 and 30 percent. Germany, which benefited from an influx of members from East Germany in 1989, was the only long-established democracy in which absolute figures fell by less than 20 per cent. In the remaining countries raw numbers increased markedly: Hungary's party membership was up 5 percent by 1999; Portugal's 17 per ent by 2000; Slovakia's 29,6 percent by 2000; Greece's 166,7 percent by 1998; and Spain's 250,7 percent by 2000 (Mair and van Biezen, 2001: 9-12).

The trend of decline in M/E levels from 1960 to 1990 continued towards the end of the millennium (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 10-2), with a large majority of the countries experiencing a more or less steep decline in their M/E levels since 1980. Without exception, a decline in M/E levels was evident in each of the thirteen long-established democracies. The near 11 percentage point decline in Austria was the most severe. Norway, Finland, and Italy followed with 5 to 10 percentage point declines. France, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Belgium, and Germany suffered relatively modest losses of less than 5 percentage points. Taken together, the average M/E loss among the 13 long-established democracies was 4,1 percentage points. This development thus reinforced the pattern from the Katz and Mair study. In relative terms, the decline in M/E levels obviously appears more severe: in 1980, the mean M/E ratio in the 13 long-established democracies was 9,8 percent, which by the late 1990s had shrunk to 5,7 percent. Thus, at the end of the 1990s, these countries averaged M/E ratios of less than 60 percent of the 1980 levels. The only countries that bucked the M/E trend from 1980 to 2000 were a group of recently democratized polities, including Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and Spain, which experienced growth ranging from a little over 0 to approximately 4 percentage points. Excluding Austria, the late 1990s membership average in recently democratized Southern European countries was higher than the West European (4,7 > 4,4 per cent).

1980-2009: Intensified uniform decline in Western Europe
The final round of data, collected by van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012), reports the change since 1980 (early 1990s in post-communist countries) in 19 countries and shows a staggering decline. In raw numbers, four countries lost over 50 percent of their members (the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Norway and France), and in none of the long-established democracies did membership fall by less than 25 percent. Measured as a percentage of the electorate, losses were greatest in Austria (-11,2 percentage points) and Norway (-10,3 percentage points) and relatively modest in Slovakia (-1,3 percentage points),

Portugal (-1,1 percentage points), and Hungary (-0,6 percentage points). Only three countries went against the general trend – Portugal, Greece and Spain, with an average 175 per cent growth in raw numbers and nearly 2 percent measured as percentage of the electorate. These polities started from a very low base in the years after their democratic transitions, however.

2.2. The Scarow and Delwit data

Scarrow, 1950-1990: Decline across OECD countries

Scarrow (2002 [2000]: 87-90) argues that the social and technological changes that have swept across all advanced industrial democracies should cause membership decline in parties in non-European countries as well. Including Japan, New Zealand, and Australia, she presents raw figures and M/E levels from 16 OECD countries (13 Western-European) from 1950 to the mid-1990s. Data is missing for Australia (1950, 1960), Belgium (1950), Ireland (1950), Norway (1950), and Switzerland (1950). From the 1960s to the 1990s raw numbers rose in five countries (Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Switzerland) and fell in 11. M/E grew only in Germany and Japan. For the 11 countries for which 1950 data exist, the general findings prevail: from 1950 to the 1990s, absolute numbers shrank in eight and rose in three (Finland, Germany, Japan). In terms of M/E, it increased only in Germany and Japan, and declined in the rest within this period. Thus, by any measure, membership numbers have dropped in the large majority of OECD countries, European and non-European alike, in the post-war era, regardless of whether 1950 or 1960 is used as the baseline. Moreover, Scarrow's data is consistent with Katz and Mair's (1992) and Mair and van Biezen's (2001) findings, showing some evidence of hikes in raw numbers from 1960 to 1990, but an almost uniform decline in M/E levels.

Delwit, 1946-2006: Mass party decline

Finally, Delwit (2011) also studies raw figures and M/E in 13 Western European countries and finds overall evidence of clear membership decline from 1946 to 2006, both in absolute and relative terms. In Eastern and Central European countries, the picture is more mixed, as in the Mair et al. data. Delwit also looks at membership figures in the context of parties' organizational characteristics and finds a significant difference between mass-based and cadre parties. The former lost two-thirds of their members between 1975 and 2005, while the cadre parties display a much lower tendency of collapsing memberships. On average, the cadre parties' 2005 memberships were 88 percent of their 1975 memberships. Accordingly, it could

'be more accurate to speak of a membership decline of mass-based parties, whose fate appears to be sealed, than of a general decline in party membership in Europe' (Delwit, 2011: 41-2).

The post-war membership decline in Western societies makes the question of whether or not parties still need grass roots activists more important: to the extent that parties need them, falling memberships render the remaining activists more valuable. In the next part, I define the concept of 'grass roots activists' and present evidence showing that modern political parties still need grass roots activists for campaigning and sustaining democracy.

3.0. The functions grass roots activists perform for modern political parties

3.1. The concept of grass roots activists

By 'grass roots activists' I am referring to all individuals who participate in some way in activities initiated and organized by political parties as organizations (i.e., inactive party members are excluded) (Rokkan and Campbell, 1960). In the case of Western European parties, this has traditionally meant first and foremost party members, whose formal affiliation to a political party has assigned obligations and privileges to them (Heidar, 2006: 301) and set them apart from non-members. But as shown in Article 2, many Western European parties also welcome non-members to take part in their activities, such that party members constitute only one source of volunteer workers for parties.

Furthermore, the concept of party membership as it is used in Western Europe is not applicable to the US case, where the parties do not have formally enrolled, card-carrying members. When used in the US context, 'membership' merely denotes party identification (Katz and Kolodny, 1994) and includes all somehow affiliated with a party, from those who are registered as Democrats or Republicans to those who work on a campaign. 'Grass roots activists', however, includes all who partake in the party's activities, whether formally enrolled or not, and can thus be thought of as a set of concentric circles indicating varying levels of involvement/attachment (Duverger, 1959 [1954]). Put differently, some individuals may enroll as formal members and participate regularly and in a broader set of activities, while others volunteer from time to time, for example during campaigns. If parties in the future come to rely less on formal members and more on non-members for labor etc., given the steady decline in party membership across Western democracies that shows no signs of levelling off, 'grass roots activists' may become an increasingly apt concept for the denotation of all individuals partaking in party activities.

3.2. The functions grass roots activists perform for modern political parties

The dissertation has grown out of one of the main findings of my 2008 master thesis, *Explaining Membership Growth in the Norwegian Progress Party from 1973 to 2008*: the Norwegian Progress Party has actively sought to develop its membership organization, as the party leadership considers members indispensable to a thriving party organization and electoral success. This study made contributions in two of the three areas of party membership research: the analysis of membership figures and the demand side, i.e. the study of party organizations and their relationship with their grass roots (the final area of membership studies is micro-level supply side studies) (van Haute, 2011). The membership growth of the Progress Party has made it both a national and an international outlier. This prompts the question: to what extent are membership figures a function of parties' own commitment to their membership organizations? While not addressing the potential link between figures and party efforts to sustain a membership organization, the dissertation analyzes across time and space what incentives parties have to cultivate grass roots organizations of activists working voluntarily on behalf of their parties. As van Haute notes about the demand side research, '(…) less attention has been dedicated to the demand side, and the literature still lacks empirical validation of the theories' (van Haute, 2011: 13). This dissertation makes a contribution to this understudied area of party membership research.

In short, the demand-side account of membership decline holds that modern parties acquiesce in membership decline, because the costs of sustaining a membership organization exceed the benefits: first and foremost, parties primarily communicate with voters in state-funded, media-driven campaigns that marginalize members' contribution. Secondly, it is financially costly to support a membership organization, and members may force their party to endorse vote-losing policies[1].

Some notable contributions have nuanced the debate, however. Scarrow (1994; 1996) asks in her study of the British Labour and Conservative parties and the German SPD and CDU how members are of use to parties and lists the functions they perform. Wiesendahl (2009b) also lists these functions on the basis of a literature review (See also Ware [1992] for a discussion of the usefulness of a grass roots party organization). In addition, the successful mobilization of grass roots supporters by the Bush campaign in 2004 and the Obama campaign in 2008 and 2012 has brought the contributions of grass roots activists to the forefront. Nevertheless, van Biezen et al. conclude thus in their cross-national summary study

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[1] For an extended version of this argument, see Article 2/Mjelde 2013 (254-5).

of membership decline in European democracies: '[t]he large majority of parties seem relatively unconcerned about their memberships and are instead much more focused on reaching out to the wider public through professional campaigning and marketing techniques' (van Biezen et al., 2012: 40).

To make the overall argument of the thesis – modern political parties still need grass roots activists for campaigning and sustaining democracy, I apply first and foremost a modified and restructured version of the seminal theoretical framework developed by Scarrow (1994; 1996) in her case study of the British Labour and Conservatives parties and the German SPD and CDU, adopted and amended by Wiesendahl (2009b). Scarrow's theoretical framework lists eight benefits of enrolling members: 1. Legitimacy; 2. Direct electoral; 3. Outreach; 4. Financial; 5. Labor; 6. Linkage; 7. Innovation; and 8. Personnel. I collapse and partly re-label them, however, as there is some substantial overlap between them: Scarrow's functions 6 and 7 are collapsed into 'Participatory linkage' in my framework; her functions 2 and 3 are integrated under 'Vote boosting' in mine, combined with the demographic composition sub point of her function 1. Also, a part of Scarrow's 'Legitimacy' argument – that a large membership may convince undecided voters to vote for the party, because the voters take it as a reassuring sign that the party has broad popular support and is internally democratic – I have not encountered in my empirics. Wiesendahl's neatly presented overview of member functions merely regroups Scarrow's eight functions into nine. It is primarily useful as a reformulation of the Scarrow framework, underlining and crystallizing Scarrow's central points. Moreover, I draw from a number of other, individual works to complement and buttress the framework developed by Scarrow. More importantly, I propose a sixth function on the basis of one of the main findings of Article 2: sustaining organization heritage. Table 1 summarizes my theoretical framework and juxtaposes it against Scarrow's:

Table 1: Theoretical framework: grass roots activist functions

Grass roots activist functions	
My theoretical framework	**Scarrow's theoretical framework**
Function 1: voluntary labor	5. Labor benefits
Function 2: financial contribution	4. Financial benefits
Function 3: participatory linkage	6. Linkage benefits; 7. Innovation benefits
Function 4: vote boosting	2. Direct electoral benefits; 3. Outreach benefits; partly 1. Legitimacy benefits
Function 5: party personnel	8. Personnel benefits
Function 6: sustaining organization heritage	

In the following, I first discuss the main functions grass roots activists perform for parties, including what the scholarly literature recognizes as societal and technological developments and trends moderating the functions' significance to parties, thus providing a nuanced account of their status. Specifically, I address five functions: voluntary labor, finance, participatory linkage, vote boosting, and party personnel. Thereafter, I present the findings of my four articles on each dimension (function) and finally introduce the sixth function, which is not discussed in any existing literature, but simply inferred from the efforts of the German SPD and CDU to maintain their membership organizations (Article 2): sustaining organization heritage.

Function 1: voluntary labor

The great functional innovation of the socialist mass parties was the enrolment of sympathizers as voluntary workers in the organization. At the turn of the 19th century, party strategists began recruiting newly enfranchised voters into the organizational apparatus characterized by a more or less nationwide network of local branches. Being the cogs, nuts and bolts of the organizational machinery, unpaid members performed two broad tasks. Firstly, they sustained their party's organizational presence in the community by attending political meetings and participating in recreational activities. The second broad task was mass propaganda and voter mobilization. Members assisted in or fully carried out the wide variety of tasks and activities that made up electoral campaigns: posting party bills and posters, handing out party newspapers, flyers and electoral programs, representing the party at stands,

rallying voters in market places and the like. Such labor-intensive campaigning was primarily a feature of the pre-modern politics of the late 19th century and onwards into the 1950s. The setting was local: campaigning was an ad hoc operation set up shortly before the election, with little centralization or coordination. As agents of pre- and well-defined social segments, parties were merely mobilizing supporters at election time rather than courting new ones. In this era of face-to-face street campaigning, the party leaders spoke at public rallies, while the grass roots organization distributed party propaganda and canvassed (Norris, 2000: 138; Farrell and Webb, 2002 [2000]: 104).

The arrival of television and public opinion polls in the 1950s signaled the start of 'parties in the media age' (Semetko, 2006: 515), in which the rank and file membership's contribution to electoral campaigning is said to have been greatly reduced. While members up to this time were active in local, short-term campaigns, campaigning now became nationalized and professionalized. Wiesendahl (2009a: 38) characterizes it as a 'Copernican turn', in which the central party now devised and executed national campaigns playing out in the media. Facilitating this process was the abatement of class conflict resulting from economic growth; the blurring of collective identities rendered it less meaningful for parties to mobilize on behalf of group interest. With an increasingly detached electorate of voters not willing to vote for a party out of habitual loyalty, party leaders set out to "catch all" voters first and foremost through television (Kircheimer, 1966). In such a political environment, members devoting time and labor were increasingly supplanted by full-time paid experts in communication, marketing, polling, and campaign management. Party leaders were media-trained to deliver a single campaign message to one national electorate (Norris, 2000: 138; Farrell and Webb, 2002 [2000]: 104).

This process may be said to have entered a third, post-modern stage with the arrival of the new telecommunications technology, in particular the internet (Farrell and Webb, 2002 [2000]: 104). With ever more sophisticated technology, the period of campaign preparations has been extended such that Blumenthal spoke of the 'permanent campaign' (Blumenthal, 1982; Ornstein and Mann, 2000: vii; Farrell, 2006: 125). With the transition to permanent campaign mode, party strategists are no longer selling political packages to voters, but marketing their malleable political message in an increasingly picky and volatile 'voter market' (Shama, 1976; Scammell, 1995; Wring, 1996; O'Shaughnessy and Henneberg, 2002). Consequently, parties have become even more reliant on professional expertise to conduct polls, focus groups and the like in order to reach voters. The Katz and Mair data shows that

the number of party-employed staff grew considerably in Western-Europe from the 1960s to the late 1980s (Mair, 1997: 135).

In short, the medialization and professionalization of campaigning have rendered it less labor- and more capital-intensive. Members are, however, still needed to hand out material and canvass, particularly in the case of nascent parties. According to Pedersen's theory of party life span, new parties growing in the electorate strive to pass the threshold of parliamentary representation (1982: 6-9). Initial electoral success may get a party into parliament, but to stay there and possibly become a government party, it needs to consolidate its organization, lest the party implodes and evaporates. In the case of established parties, Ware (1992: 89) warns against abandoning the grassroots organization altogether, as it is very hard to revive the party's workforce if it atrophies. But as stressed by Schmitt-Beck and Farrell (2002: 12), political parties are effectively forced to make use of the latest technological innovations, no matter how sophisticated and costly they are, lest they fall behind their competitors. While previously being the primary unit within the organizational structure, the local, activist-based organization branch now plays a subordinate role in campaigning, Mancini and Swanson (1996: 12) find in their study of 11 democratic and democratizing regimes.

Voluntary labor: article findings

The Norwegian Progress Party, whose organizational development as a mass party is the topic of Article 1, has come to rely on voluntary activists (i.e. members) as a key organizational resource. While party founder Anders Lange envisioned his party as a loosely organized movement, his two successors, Arve Lønnum (1975-78) and Carl I. Hagen (1978-2006)[2], favored a conventional party organization, convinced that the party could not sustain its initial electoral breakthrough without one (Lønnum, 1977; Hagen, 2007). From 1975 to 2013, the number of local branches grew from 52 to 356, and the members carry out the branches' activities by attending meetings, participating in schooling and social activities, campaigning, etc. As shown in the article, the party emphasized in particular the recruitment of new members from 2006 and onwards, with the local units and individual members having the main responsibility for recruiting. Evidence shows that relatively many of the Progress Party members – 22 243 by 2012 – has been recruited by party representatives. Furthermore, and as alluded to above, the branches have a responsibility to take action to retain the members (For

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[2] Eivind Eckbo served as interim leader from Lange's death in 1974 until the election of Lønnum as the new party leader in 1975.

more on membership maintenance, see Mjelde [2008]). The party also has provincial organizations in all provinces that organize corresponding activities.

Members matter likewise to the German SPD and CDU, two paradigmatic membership parties in Western Europe with memberships of over 500 000 in 2010 (Der Spiegel, 30.12.2010). In response to steep membership decline, both parties opt for consolidating their membership organizations, in order to accomplish which they seek to activate their members by offering more opportunities for participation in party affairs, and particularly in the case of the SPD, by emphasizing the social/recreational dimension of being a member, while the CDU points out the need to make party work more family-friendly in order to involve more women. To increase member involvement, they need active, accommodating local units as front personnel to entice both existing and potential new members to participate. Furthermore, non-members are invited to collaborate with the party organization in certain temporally and thematically fixed activities. Like the Norwegian Progress Party, both parties also impress upon their organizations the perennial importance of member recruitment if they are to succeed in reversing the massive loss of members they have experienced over the last decades.

While the two first articles focus on members and how a new party tries to build a membership organization while two old ones try to retain theirs, Article 3 shows that 28 Western European parties to varying degrees also accommodate non-members as a labor force. While some parties say non-members partake in certain activities, the data primarily documents in which areas of organizational activity the parties perceive a potential for non-member contribution. Campaign work and policy discussions are most frequently identified by the parties as suitable for non-member participation; for example, the Norwegian Venstre offers non-members the opportunity to register formally with the party as campaign co-workers. Not surprisingly, green parties list the widest specter of grass roots activities in which non-members are of use to them, including canvassing for candidates, public rallies, direct action (for example river clean ups), issue awareness meetings, policy discussions.

Finally, Article 4 finds that the Republican Party, in its reform plan issued in response to losing the 2012 presidential election to Barack Obama, links the defeat to its flawed grass roots organization, and argues that to win future elections, the party must master both the media and ground operations. "Ground operations" means the acquisition of a reservoir of grass roots activists who can contact, register, and mobilize voters on election day ("Get Out The Vote"). Notes the report:

Democrats had the clear edge on new media and ground game, in terms of both reach and effectiveness. Obama's campaign knocked on twice as many doors as the Romney campaign, and Obama's campaign had a ballot edge among those contacted by both campaigns. (RNC, 2013: 24)

To overhaul the 'ground game', the Republican National Committee stresses that the party needs more grass roots activists for voter reach-out: 'There is a strong consensus that we have not invested the financial resources in a labor pool that can actively conduct and run "in-person" contact at the ground level' (RNC, 2013: 35). Høyre, on the other hand, mostly worries that the vast membership organization it built up in the 1970s is atrophying, and like the two German parties discussed in Article 2, calls on its lower levels to engage party members more through various activities in order to turn around the membership decline.

Function 2: financial contribution

Like any other organization, political parties must finance a variety of running costs, and grass roots activists contribute to party funds, either through membership dues or by fund-raising. Organizational complexity is affected by the party's history and the institutional environment in which it operates (Panebianco, 1988; Deschouwer, 2006), but any degree of organization will be costly. Most parties have a national headquarters and regional and local sub-organizations. These party units are run by a large or small number of professional staffers and voluntary activists. As Nassmacher (2003a: 4) notes, '[t]he backbone of each organization is offices and meetings', and 'the scale and frequency of these may differ widely but at least a few offices and a handful of staff have to be available and occasional meetings of party activists have to take place' in order for parties to do the things they do. Expenses go up at election time, as parties print leaflets and buy billboard space, polls and media advertisements. What is more, medialization and professionalization of campaigning have made parties more dependent upon paid expertise.

Modern parties rely on a variety of sources to finance their operations: public subsidies, membership fees, private donations, fund-raising activities, financial investments, and support from affiliated organizations. Until the 1950s, Western European parties relied on private sponsorship, membership dues and contributions from associated organizations such as trade unions or church organizations for funding of their activities. Indeed, the collection of fees from members was always a staple of the left wing mass party model. In contrast, the notability parties of the right relied on the private wealth of their representatives and their constituents, until these parties transformed themselves into mass membership organizations

after World War II. However, the skyrocketing of campaign costs in the 1950s due to the increasing media orientation of politics and staff professionalization made it evident that existing sources of income were insufficient for most parties. The mass departure of members that began in the 1970s worsened the financial challenge, and members thus contribute constantly less to party income.

With a growing discrepancy between what members could chip in and necessary party spending, state subsidies were introduced in the 1950s to sustain extra-parliamentary party activities[3], first in Latin-American countries (Costa Rica 1954, Argentina 1955, and Puerto Rico 1957), while West-Germany pioneered it in Western Europe in 1959 (Nassmacher, 1989: 238). Public subventions have since been instituted worldwide (Fogg et al., 2003; Casas-Zamora, 2005), and over the last 50 years, Western European parties have at an increasing rate been co-funded by the state. Mair (1997: 138) reports that the incomes of party central offices have grown almost everywhere since the 1980s, and that the state is often the source of the money. Enabling parties to perform their many tasks was always a lead argument in favor of state subsidies (Pierre et al., 2000; Scarrow, 2006), so it will probably not be critical for parties should the membership share of their revenues diminish further, as the parties should have no difficulties soliciting compensation from the state they themselves operate. (In fact, this has been a central argument against subventions: they undermine parties' incentives to maintain a membership organization.) Thus, generous public subsidies arrangements could render finance a less important grass roots activist function. In the US, however, only presidential candidates – not parties – are eligible for federal financial support (Katz and Kolodny, 1994: 32-3; O'Connor et al., 2011: 463). But after Barack Obama turned down public funds for his 2008 general election campaign in order to raise and spend money freely, both President Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney nixed federal campaign funds for the 2012 general campaign.

However, this does not mean that membership dues have become irrelevant to parties. In a survey of party finance in Western-Europe, Nassmacher (2003b: 119) shows that with the exception of Spain and France, members still provide a significant proportion of party income, especially so in Germany and the Netherlands. In the case of Germany, Detterbeck (2009: 79) estimates membership fees to make up 40 to 50 percent of total party revenue for

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[3] As Scarrow (2006: 620) notes, indirect subsidies were introduced earlier in many countries in the form of state-paid voter registering and ballot printing, free campaign mailings, and free access to radio and TV. Moreover, financial support to parliamentary groups also preceded support for the party organization outside of the legislature (Pierre et al. 2000: 6).

the CDU and the SPD. In the US, where candidates run their own individual campaigns, most candidates receive a majority of all funds directly from individuals, and most individual contributions are well below the maximum level. One study found that individual donors accounted for 60 percent of contributions to candidates for the House of Representatives, 75 percent of contributions to candidates for the Senate, and 85 percent of contributions to presidential candidates (O'Connor et al., 2011: 460). On balance, parties that are able to raise funds (i.e. membership fees, contributions from individual donors, etc.) on top of state subsidies may have a significant competitive advantage over parties getting most if not all of their money from the public purse.

Financial contribution: article findings

The Progress Party cites members' financial contribution as a main motivation for the party's recruitment efforts (Article 1). While the party gets most of its income from public subsidies[4], former national membership supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan states that '(…) it is not a large sum members pay, but we are very dependent upon it'[5]. With 22 243 members and a 350 NOK membership fee, membership revenue was approximately 7,8 million NOK in 2012.

Both the SPD and the CDU explain their membership organization reform efforts with reference to the importance of membership fees, particularly since they are required by law to acquire at least 50 percent of their revenues from non-state sources, e.g. membership dues (Article 2).

The data collected in Article 3 does not contain systematically collected information on financial donations from non-members, but shows that two forms of formal affiliation to the SPD are available to non-members against a fee. The CDU offers a free guest membership, but encourages guest members to make a contribution according to their financial ability. Since non-members presumably have a higher threshold than members to partake in party activities, the fact that Germany's two main parties still ask them to contribute financially suggests that even such modest individual payments are significant to them.

Finally, the RNC highlights "low-dollar fundraising" – i.e. small contributions from activists and sympathizers – as an important but under-exploited source of party funding (Article 4). Such low-sum contributions from the Democratic base were a hallmark of the

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[4] For a detailed overview of the finances of Norwegian parties, see www.partifinansiering.no.
[5] Interview at Progress Party headquarters, Oslo, Norway, 25 August 2008. The interview was recorded and transcribed. The quote is not included in Article 1.

Obama campaign in both 2008 and 2012, and the RNC believes it is crucial that the Republicans catches up with Democrats also in this aspect. While 'the RNC had a record election cycle in major donor fundraising', the RNC stresses that 'The RNC must expand its low-dollar fundraising program. This means building a real national grassroots fundraising team through our state parties to expand our network of donors' (RNC, 2013: 57). The issue of members as funders is not addressed in the Høyre reform plan, but with a membership of 31 300 in 2011 (VG, 02.01.2012) (down from 146 000 in the top year of 1990) and the membership fee being 400 NOK, members contributed over 12,5 million NOK in revenue in 2011.

Function 3: participatory linkage

Grass roots activists, whether formally enrolled party members in Western European parties or loosely organized activists in the US case, contribute to linkage between the government and the people through their participation in party activities. One orientation within democratic theory, the participatory model, considers the citizenry's political involvement and participation crucial to the quality of democratic governance and ideally, the great majority of citizens should partake regularly, actively, and intimately in deliberating and deciding matters pertaining to public life. In this view, popular participation will make clear to the rulers as well as the ruled what popular will is; it makes certain that all relevant interests are considered; it brings new ideas on policies and practices to government; decisions emerging from a consenting populace increases the likelihood of their effective, successful implementation; and finally, participation fosters educated, politically competent, and self-respecting citizens (Katz, 1997: 67-8; Rasch, 2004: 14). In sum, participation educates, activates and integrates the citizenry; it is thus both a tool for and an ideal of democratic government (Mill, 1967 [1859]; Pateman, 1970: 42-3).

While proponents of participatory democracy favor the extension of direct participation beyond voting in elections to other basic societal institutions, such as the workplace, the local community, and through social movements (Held, 1996: 268; Ware, 1979: 1-2), the capacity of political parties to create linkage has been disputed. Parties may be seen as agents of encapsulated interests with a blind eye to the common good (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Ware, 1987: 27). But irrespective of their ability to aggregate interests, they inevitably turn oligarchic, according to Michels (1962). Parties 'institutionalize conflicts and they are often bureaucratic and representative structures' (Allern and Pedersen, 2007: 77), such that there may be little room for rank and file participation. The Green parties rose in the

1970s and 1980s precisely to be a participation-oriented alternative to the top-down mass and elite parties (Poguntke, 1993; Decker and Oeltzen, 2009: 262), and in the US primaries became the dominant form of candidate selection in the 1970s as a result of increasing dissatisfaction with the system in which presidential nominations were won by the candidates who courted the support of party leaders from the states (Polsby et al., 2012).

While interest groups and social movements represent new venues for participation, democratic government today is still very much party government (Strøm, 2000 [2002]). Political parties are thus still the primary linkage institution, in part because they offer participatory opportunities. Internally democratic parties are said to socialize the citizenry politically, foster public-mindedness, and thus integrate the masses (Neumann, 1965 [1956]: 396-7, 405; Wright, 1971). Put differently, when activists participate in internal decision-making in political parties, linkage between the people and the government is created. "Linkage" has been a much debated concept long used by political scientists to denote the interconnection between public will and public decision-making, with political parties functioning as an important relay tool in between the citizenry and the government (Key, 1967 [1961]: 411-57; Luttbeg, 1974: 1-10; Welch and Comer, 1975: 409-26). Eulau and Prewitt (1973: 217-396) go beyond this rather general definition and put the accent on participating per se, arguing that linkage happens when citizens engage in any number of party and interest groups activities. However, Lawson (1980: 14-6; 1988: 16) usefully identifies "participatory linkage" as one of several types of linkage. In this perspective, a bond is created between the citizen and the state when parties have internally democratic, sturdy grass-roots organizations. Through these, parties receive feedback and input through members who are actively involved in determining the party program, selecting party officials, and holding elected representatives accountable to the party by controlling access to the party ballot (disloyal incumbents may be denied re-nomination). In other words, internally democratic parties are said to be legitimate, because they represent government *by* the people (Teorell, 1999; Assarson, 1993). However, Macpherson (1977: 112-14) stresses that if parties are to conform to a participatory model of democracy, they must enhance intra-party democracy and make leaders and delegates more accountable to the rank and file.

Participatory linkage: article findings

None of the four articles investigates how much the grass roots actually participate in party activities, but as all the parties offer their members tangible opportunities for participation, the members contribute to linkage to the extent that they exploit these opportunities. All dues-

paying Progress Party members have speech, proposal and voting rights and the opportunity to run for elected office in the local branch to which they belong (Article 1). Members are encouraged to be active, as seen for instance in the recruitment flyers and slips the party uses, especially because active members supply the party with new ideas, according to former membership supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan. A key institution in this respect is The Progress Party Study Association (FrS), which both educates members on the party's ideology and policies and trains prospective office holders. In the founding year of 1998, FrS arranged 48 courses and 541 members participated in one or more of these, while 4967 members participated in one or more of the 251 courses held in 2007, the last year for which data is available. Secondly, lower levels are represented at the National Convention – the party's supreme decision-making body – by the National Committee, the members of which are partially elected by the province parties, and by delegates from each provincial branch in numbers proportional to each province's number of parliamentary seats. Thirdly, the parliamentary group is subordinated to the Central Committee, which represents the party organization. The grass root thus has a say in what the party in public office does.

Likewise, members hold voting and candidacy rights in the German SPD and CDU (Article 2). To strengthen members' participatory rights, however, both parties introduced various ballot measures in the 1990s. As of 1993, the SPD permitted the use of both consultative and binding membership ballots in selecting party policy and personnel. The CDU introduced consultative membership balloting in the selection of personnel in 1995, and expanded it to include policy matters in 2003. The same year it also introduced a binding membership ballot in personnel and policy selection up to the highest local level. Furthermore, the two parties seek to diversify their memberships in order to represent all demographics. Notably, both parties declare their dedication to the mass party model in part because they believe it best sustains linkage, a function the 1949 German Basic Law and the 1967 Party Law require them to perform.

Article 3 finds that also non-members may contribute to linkage in the sense that the 28 case parties are open to letting them participate in organizational activities: all allow to varying degrees non-members to join in various activities save voting on party matters and running for public office, and ten and four also permit non-member participation in one or both of those activities, respectively. Young parties, particularly greens, are most open to it, while old parties, particularly social democrats which operate in unitary states, are least open to non-member participation. Furthermore, several of the interviewed party officials report that non-members do partake in some of their activities.

Finally, the US primary elections system offers the most direct-democratic modus of candidate selection in the world and anyone is free to launch his or her own candidacy. Article 4 shows that the Republican Party doubles down on its commitment to the primary system by discouraging conventions and caucuses, which tend to draw fewer participants, and by compressing the primary calendar, so that more voters get to cast their ballot before one candidate has won a sufficient number of delegates to the national convention to become the de facto nominee. Furthermore, the RNC recommends various outreach schemes vis-à-vis ethnic minorities, young people and women to recruit them to party work, in particular as candidates for public office, lest the party fail to engage and represent the electorate in its entirety. Members of Høyre have the same voting and candidacy rights as Progress Party members, but the party seeks a more involved, active membership by having more policy discussions at meetings, expectations of participation, and rewarding those members who make an effort on behalf of the party.

Function 4: vote boosting

Plausibly, vote-maximizing party leaders could be held back by active members exercising their right to weigh in on party policy and the selection of leaders. May (1973) and Katz (1990: 145) propose that active members have more radical opinions on policy alternatives than voters and the party leadership. Hence, members concerned with fidelity to ideological principles could force their party to endorse vote-losing policies. The canny party strategist fixed on vote-maximization would thus go for a top-heavy, lean party organization, which will guarantee the maneuverability of the leadership. However, a number empirical studies have not confirmed such a distribution of purists throughout the party hierarchy (Kitschelt, 1989; Whiteley et al., 1994). Others even identify party leaders as the zealots (Norris, 1995) and members as the mainstream pragmatics (Kitschelt, 1994). In any case, grass roots activists play a key role in boosting a party's share of the vote, in three ways. Firstly, they are likely to be their party's most devout voters, voting more regularly and consistently than non-partisans (Verba et al., 1978: 153-6; Poguntke, 2002: 58; Katz, 1990: 150-2)[6]. As regards party membership, it is an extension of voting for a specific party. What more is, becoming a party member is a more costly commitment for the individual than simply sympathizing with and voting for a party every four years. The member donates a yearly fee to the party and to

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[6] Katz (1990: 150-2) finds that although members are among a party's most loyal supporters, voting loyalty does not increase by inducing supporters who are not already members to join.

the extent that she is open to fellow citizens about her membership, a social cost may arise from having to account for her political stand. Thus, most people involving themselves in a party to such degree can be expected to perform the much less intense act of voting more frequently than non-members. Enrolling members as loyal voters was partly the rationale of socialist party organizers in the early 1900s, when they integrated newly enfranchised workers into cradle-to-grave communities consisting of a wide variety of political, cultural, and leisure organizations. The members' formal attachment to the party made them turn out in high numbers for it on election day.

Secondly, grassroots activists provide their parties with outreach benefits (Scarrow, 1994; 1996). The premise of this argument is that parties usually have an untapped reservoir of potential voters that activists are uniquely positioned to mobilize. By being "party ambassadors" to their communities, members work as "vote multipliers". By declaring their political stance to colleagues, friends, and family, activists offer clues on policy issues and ideology. In the more aggressive version, activists discussing politics with undecided voters may convince them to vote for their party. What more is, suasion through acquaintances will likely draw additional citizens into party activism, who thus become vote multipliers themselves.

Thirdly, certain kinds of activists can open doors for their parties to new voter demographics, as matching social characteristics could be a precondition for gaining additional support from certain segments of the electorate a party seeks to attract, for example ethnic minorities or women (Scarrow, 1996: 42; Scarrow, 2002: 84). The social composition of a party's membership is symbolic of its representative capacity. Typically, political representation is rooted in the representative representing the constituent either substantively or descriptively (Pitkin, 1967)[7]. While parties do not necessarily need a grass roots membership organization to appeal to a broad electorate, a party with a socially homogeneous membership base risks being viewed as lacking in representative ability. Previous cross-national studies have shown that party members are usually not representative of the electorate at large: they are above the average voter in income, age, and education. Furthermore, the middle class is overrepresented and women are underrepresented (Widfeldt, 1995; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010: 829). Other studies have shown that public employees are overrepresented (Biehl, 2009: 81). This should narrow their electoral appeal. Particular groups of voters targeted by a party will be out of reach if these do not identify with it at some level.

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[7] Pitkin's conceptualization of political representation goes beyond the substantive and descriptive dimensions.

For instance, populist radical right parties have struggled to court female voters due to their image as "Männerparteien" (Mudde, 2007). On the contrary, a party with a socially diverse membership base can more credibly claim to be a "people's party", conveying an image of popular legitimacy and making the party a "safe choice" for any undecided voter.

Vote boosting: article findings

The steady membership growth in the Progress Party has in itself given it 22 000+ voters, assuming that the members are voting (Article 1). Moreover, Ms. Hauan cites members' outreach function as one of the motivations for the party's recruitment efforts. With local branches in 356 of the 428 Norwegian municipalities, and an organization in each of the 19 provinces, the party has the organizational network to reach out to voters. Notably, the absence of formal ties to civil society organizations elevates the importance of Progress Party members' role in vote boosting, as the party cannot mobilize interest group members, for example union members (unlike the Labour Party), on election day.

Also the memberships of the SPD and the CDU represent a significant vote reservoir: although both have fallen steeply since their tops in 1976 (1 022 191) and 1983 (734 555), respectively, both stood at roughly 500 000 in 2010. Both parties also make an outreach argument, stressing the need to recruit from certain demographics underrepresented among their members, in particular the CDU, which laments the shortage of women and young people in the party. What is more, both the SPD's *Netzwerkpartei* ("network party") and the CDU's *Bürgerpartei* ("citizen party") were supposed to expand the party's reach through loosely affiliated supporters and *Dialogpartner*.

Non-members, to the extent that they are involved with parties, which anecdotal evidence from some parties suggests they are, can likewise provide outreach benefits (Article 3).

Finally, Article 4 shows that one of the main foci of the Republicans is voter outreach. The demographically homogenous composition of the Republican electorate – predominantly middle-aged Caucasian males – makes voter outreach an urgent objective of the RNC, which notes that 'President Obama won a combined 80 percent of the votes of all minority voters', and that '[u]nless the RNC gets serious about tackling this problem, we will lose future elections' (RNC, 2013: 12). Hence, they recommend the creation of the 'Growth and Opportunity Inclusion Council', a central of task of which is to involve far more Hispanics, African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and other minority communities in party work, with a special emphasis on recruiting and training them as

candidates, because a more ethnically diverse party membership is seen as imperative in order to win (more of) the minority vote. Høyre's members are also their base vote, especially since the party has the second most loyal voters in Norway (Aardal, 2011). These should also provide outreach benefits, as the party has long had a local presence in all parts of the country (Selle and Svåsand, 1983). The reform commission concedes, however, that the party organization is not sufficiently outward-oriented, and emphasizes that party representatives should network more externally.

Function 5: party personnel

Finally, activists function as a pool for recruitment of organizational personnel and candidates for public offices. The latter is the distinguishing function that sets parties apart from interest groups in the conventional definition of a political party: they nominate candidates for political offices (Downs, 1957; Sartori, 2005 [1976]). As put by Dalton and Wattenberg (2002 [2000]: 7): 'Parties must actively seek out, screen, and designate candidates who will compete in elections under their label'. What more is, a large number of personnel is needed to staff the local, provincial, and central branches, in particular in parties with an expansive organizational network (Sundberg, 1987; Klein et al., 2011). Affiliated units such as youth parties and women's groups are intended to identify and train political talent for later "major league" service.

The party personnel function is among the most important grass roots activists perform. The party government literature emphasizes the central role of parties in the selection and recruitment of political elites (Rose, 1974; Katz, 1987). In most parliamentary democracies, party representatives from the grassroots member to the national party leader control the access to elected office (Marsh and Gallagher, 1988; Norris, 1997: 192). Parties perform this task more exclusively now than at any time in party history. In parliamentary democracies, it is customary that future elites are battle-tested and hone their skills through long intra-party and parliamentary service before taking higher executive office. Only in the USA and semi-presidential systems such as France and Finland are non-party ministers relatively frequent (von Beyme, 1985: 368). Strøm (2000 [2002]) finds the same: although there has been an increase in independently elected MPs and non-partisan appointments to important executive agencies in advanced industrial democracies, non-party cabinet members are still a rarity. Secondly, party appointments sometimes extend beyond the political to positions in the civil service or companies and corporations under political control. Thus, partisan patronage provides additional opportunities for the party faithful (Katz and Mair,

1994), despite efforts to reduce it in some countries (Strøm, 2000 [2002]: 201). To summarize, parties have a strong need for activists to fill the many party positions, both internally and publicly. While this may not mean that they need a large membership, more members mean a greater variety of talents to pick from.

Party personnel: article findings

Members have been indispensable to staffing the now 356 local Progress Party branches (Article 1). According to former membership supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan, the party usually demands 10-12 people willing to hold positions before a local branch is opened[8]. Thus, the opening and staffing of 356 chapters by 2013 has in itself required approximately 3500-4300 members. The same positions also exist in the 19 provincial branches and at the central level. While the article does not discuss members as candidates, members also complete the party lists (top candidates normally hold positions in the party organization already)[9], and receive training in preparation for office through The Progress Party Study Association (FrS).

The SPD and the CDU acknowledge the members' role as candidates by stressing the need to prepare them properly for service in public office, and the CDU explicitly cites this member function as a cause for member recruitment (Article 2).

Article 3 shows that the candidacy function is so important that in 13 of the 28 case parties even non-members are permitted to run for public office. Indeed, far more parties permit non-members to run as candidates than permit them to vote in internal affairs.

Finally, the RNC recognizes throughout its report the importance of systematic candidate recruitment, and that the party must actively approach, recruit, and train individuals willing to run as the Republican candidate for the many local, state and federal offices. Høyre does not address the topic in their report, but given its historical position as the largest non-socialist party with an organizational presence throughout the country, and that all Norwegian parties have adopted the mass party structure (Heidar and Saglie, 2003a), it can be inferred that its dependency on members for staffing needs is identical to that of the Progress Party.

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[8] Interview at Progress Party headquarters, Oslo, Norway, 25 August 2008.
[9] In the 2007 election, 1665 and 150 Progress Party representatives were elected to local and provincial governments, respectively. Email from Organizational Councillor Knut Gunnar Larsen, 11 July 2011.

Function 6: sustaining organization heritage

Panebianco (1988) argues that a party's organizational characteristics are defined by its history: every organization bears the mark of its formation; of the crucial political-administrative decisions made by its founders even decades after its origin[10]. On the basis of one of the main findings of Article 2, I propose a sixth function that relates retaining grass roots activists to party history: sustaining organization heritage[11]. Article 2 finds that both the SPD and the CDU reject the notion of relinquishing mass membership by stressing their organizational legacy as membership parties and a legal-normative imperative: in the post-war era, the two parties have honored the democratic linkage mandate of the 1949 German Basic Law and the 1967 Party Law through mass membership. At a general level, these arguments form a path-dependent rationale for membership: preserving a tradition of mass membership begun by organizational choices made at a distant point in time. Thus, parties that have traditionally had grass roots organizations may embrace them for the future out of a sense of identity preservation: maintaining the grass roots organization becomes a matter of supporting their organizational heritage. In the case of socialists/social democrats, their history as societally entrenched, mass-based organizations stretches back into the late 19th century. They originated outside the assembly as the organizational extension of the working class, which sought representation in the legislature. The German Social Democratic Party (SPD), founded in 1875, epitomized these externally created parties, which acquired an enormous membership in the Western and Northern European countries. When contemporary party systems thawed in the mid-20th century (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Rokkan et al., 1987), and the medialization and professionalization of politics made electoral campaigns capital- rather than labor-intensive, the left parties' organizational profile changed. While the branch structure, in which local organizational units are connected to the central level via the provincial organization, remained in place, their memberships dropped sharply. At some point, then, party organizers with institutional memory may conclude that the organizational transformation has gone too far, and that reinforced membership recruitment and maintenance are required to reconnect the party to its organizational origin.

Such an analysis may not be confined to parties of the left. Although conservative and liberal parties emerged from parliamentary cliques within assemblies joining together to

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[10] For alternative theories of party formation and organizational development, see van Biezen (2005).
[11] In my interview with the Progress Party's first membership supervisor, Anne Grethe Hauan, she suggested an additional rationale for keeping a grass roots organization: members inspire party officials to keep on working hard on behalf of the party. This perspective was not expressed in any party documents, and I therefore consider it insufficiently substantiated for elevation to the level of a general function.

reflect common concerns, "contagion from the left" led many of these parties to adopt the reformist left's bottom-up structures in the 20th century (Duverger, 1959 [1954]; Scarrow, 2002 [2000]), as they acknowledged that electoral dividends could be collected from an extra-parliamentary organization. Thus, organizational nostalgia may induce non-socialist parties to fear regress to the time when they were not popular organizations. Such concerns are not necessarily shared by neither the leaders of green parties, which sought to be alternatives to the perceived top-down hierarchy organizations of the "old" left parties by cultivating egalitarian and loose movement-like organizations, nor right wing populists, with their traditionally rudimentary party organizations dominated by a charismatic leader. On the other hand, both greens and right wing populists have to some degree streamlined their organizations in recent decades (Poguntke, 1993; Mudde, 2007), and greens have seen their membership grow at the turn of the century (Delwit, 2011). Thus, also these parties may come to lament loss of members in the future.

This rationale for grass roots activists should not be confused with Scarrow's 'legitimacy benefits' point, which holds that a large membership may convince undecided voters, because the voters take it as a reassuring sign that the party has broad popular support and is internally democratic. Legitimacy as well as other benefits may provide plenty of reasons for preserving a grass roots organization, but sustaining organization heritage for the sake of sustaining organization heritage is a non-instrumental rationale for keeping grass roots activists; doing it has intrinsic value to the party.

Having made the unifying argument of the thesis, Section 4 discusses the methodology of the thesis.

4.0. Methodology

The thesis first and foremost employs a qualitative, small-N research design, with the partial exception of Article 2, which is a medium-N study. The units of analysis are political parties in Western democracies. In the following, I discuss the scope of the thesis, geographically, with respect to the type of parties covered, and temporally. Secondly, the data selection and validity are addressed. The discussion addresses only the thesis as a whole, not the methodology of the individual articles.

4.1. The scope of the thesis

The scope of the thesis here refers to the extension of the research design in terms of the geographic area covered, the variety of parties included, and the time period investigated. These dimensions, in turn, determine the scope of the thesis' argument.

4.1.1. Geographical scope: Western Europe and the US

Because the alleged obsolescence of grass roots activists has been inferred primarily from the findings of case studies of Western European and the US parties, the dissertation studies parties in these countries. Article 3 offers the most comprehensive evidence against the obsolescence claim in terms of N, as it finds that 28 parties from Ireland, the UK, Germany, Austria, Norway, Denmark and Sweden let non-member grass roots activists perform a variety of functions. Since the article collects data on only one broadly defined dimension – non-member participation, case study data was required to show the full extent to which grass roots activists serve parties. The Progress Party (Article 1) and Høyre (Article 3) bring in-depth evidence from a Nordic country, the SPD and the CDU from the center of continental Europe (Article 2), and the Republicans from the US (Article 4). By choosing these parties for case studies to supplement the thinner medium-N data of Article 3, the dissertation in sum supports its unifying argument with new and rich data from much of Western Europe as well the US.

4.1.2. Party types: social democrats, conservatives, liberals, greens, right wing populists

To avoid confirmation bias, the dissertation includes both parties traditionally known to have a grass roots organizations and parties not so. The former includes the "old" parties: social democratic parties (the Irish, British, German, Austrian, and Scandinavian social democrats) and conservative and liberal parties (the Irish, British, German, Austrian, Norwegian, Danish and US conservatives, and the Irish, British, Norwegian and Swedish liberals). These parties, in particular the social democrats, are most-likely cases, that is, the parties most likely to rely on grass roots activists to carry out organizational tasks: social democrats pioneered the mass party model, and while these parties have embraced new media and campaign technology, it would be contrary to theoretical expectations if they were abandoning their grass roots organizations, especially if social democrats beyond the SPD perceive an affinity between social-democratic ideology and the mass party model (See Article 2).

Conservatives and liberals largely transformed from elite parties to mass parties in the mid-20th century ("contagion from the left"), with the CDU and Høyre as instructive

examples, and although especially conservative parties embraced the new media and campaign technology early on, they did so to complement, not replace, their grass roots organizations. The US Republican Party, represented here by the Republican National Committee (RNC), is a special case within the conservative party family. The two major US parties transformed straight from elite into catch-all parties, omitting the mass stage, and have always been at the forefront in terms of making use of new media and campaign technology, engaging political professionals and raising funds from private donors. They do not offer formal membership. On the other hand, the vast amount of publicly elected offices to campaign for and the primary system of candidate nomination have made the Republicans heavily reliant on volunteers running for office and shouldering retail campaigns, for instance door-to-door canvassing. However, also greens fall in the most-likely category, as these rose as movement parties with an activist profile, and typically welcome non-members to participate in activities usually reserved for members in other types of parties.

Right wing populist parties studied in the dissertation (the German and Scandinavian right wing populists) are the least-likely cases. While their populist style is compatible with reaching out to sympathizers wherever they are found and inviting them to join in organizational activities, these "new" parties have traditionally been characterized by rudimentary, secretive party organizations dominated by a charismatic, media-savvy leader. Given also that their controversial image should raise the threshold for sympathizers to work as volunteers on behalf of the party, right wing populists can be expected to rely comparatively more on a few dedicates activists, employees and aides to the leader for carrying out organizational tasks.

In sum, the dissertation finds that the reliance on grass roots activists crosses party family lines. In the medium-N Article 3, the green parties more than others are found to invite non-members to volunteer in various roles. The three case studies find that the Progress Party, the SPD, the CDU, the Republicans, and Høyre all rely on their members to perform the conventional activist functions.

4.1.3. Temporal scope: from 1973 to 2013

The demand-side argument about parties' decreased need for grass roots activists became widespread in the 1960s and -70s upon the advent of television-centered campaigns and public subsidies to political parties, and the development is said to have accelerated over the decades following parties' harnessing of the latest technological innovations (McKenzie, 1955; Kircheimer, 1966; Epstein, 1967; Katz and Mair, 1995). Articles 1 and 2 present

diachronic data to the contrary: the Progress Party data spans four decades – from 1973 to 2013, with the bulk of it covering the period from the early 1990s up until today, while the earliest data on the two German parties is from 1989 and the rest of it from the 1990s up until 2005. Articles 3 and 4 both use 2013 data. The findings of the dissertation are thus based on both historic data, which shows that a newcomer right wing populist party has attempted to develop a grass roots organization while two traditional membership parties have tried to reform themselves in order to maintain theirs, and contemporary data that contradicts the claim that parties' need for grass roots activists has diminished further in recent decades.

4.2. Data sources: party documents, interview and secondary data

Party documents (reform commission reports, statutes, party newspapers, and other written primary material), interviews with party officials and secondary data make up the empirics of the dissertation. Next, I describe each of these sets of data and discuss what they have contributed to the thesis.

4.2.1. Party documents

Reform commission reports

Articles 2 and 4 study the reform reports commissioned by the party leaderships in response to membership decline (the SPD, the CDU) and severe electoral defeat (the Republicans, Høyre). The data for Article 2 was collected during field work at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Bonn, Germany, from 29 May to 10 June 2011, and consists of three reform reports by each party, all of which were released as official statements of the central office: *SPD 2000. Die Modernisierung der SPD* (Blessing [Hrsg.], 1993); *Abschlussbericht der Arbeitsgruppe "Mitgliederentwicklung"* (SPD-Parteivorstand [Hrsg.], 1995); *Bericht und Emfehlungen der Arbeitsgruppe Mitgliederpartei* (SPD-Parteivorstand [Hrsg.], 2005); *Moderne Parteiarbeit in den 90er Jahren* (CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, 1989); *Reform der Parteiarbeit* (CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, 1995); and *Bürgerpartei CDU. Reformprojekt für eine lebendige Volkspartei (CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, 2003)*. In addition, two individual proposals by former SPD party manager Karlheinz Blessing and former SPD general secretary Franz Müntefering were analyzed: *Auf dem Weg zur Netzwerkpartei* (Machnig, 2000) and *Demokratie braucht Partei. Die Chance der SPD* (Müntefering, 2000).

These six reports and the two individual proposals are all discrepancy analyses that lay out the state of the party organization and sketch how it ideally should look and function.

Organizational shortcomings, problems and challenges are identified and improvement measures are suggested. The reports themselves have face value for the dissertation: that the two parties have conducted several internal studies to find out how they can turn around the trend of falling membership, demonstrates in itself that members matter to them. As for the reform reports' specific contents, the party commissions describe both directly and indirectly how the parties rely on grass roots activists to perform various functions. Directly, the reports identify explicit member functions; for example, the 1993 SPD report acknowledges members' outreach functions and the importance of member fees for the financial state of the party, and the 1989 CDU report describes members as candidates and funders. Indirectly, the concrete reform suggestions reveal members' usefulness. For example, enhancing intra-party democracy is fundamentally about sustaining participatory linkage, as is also the SPD's *Netzwerkpartei* and the CDU's *Bürgerpartei*.

Article 4's data consists of the reform plan The Republican Party and Høyre issued in the wake of their respective defeats, obtained from the parties themselves: *Innstilling fra HØYRES PLANUTVALG* and *The Growth & Opportunity Project*. They were endorsed by the Høyre and RNC leaderships, the two actors responsible for leading their parties' defeat response efforts. Both reports summarize the defeat, postulate its presumed causes, and propose measures to be taken. A major focus is in each report is organizational malfunctioning. One of the main conclusions of the RNC report is that the Republican grass roots organization is simply too small, ineffective and unsophisticated compared to that which Democrats have developed over the two Obama campaigns. Høyre worries about the consequences of a shrinking and demobilized membership. As in the SPD and CDU reports, the Republicans' and Høyre's reliance on grass roots activists is discernible both directly and indirectly in the two reports: the RNC emphasizes how grass roots activists are needed in retail campaigning, for example for knocking on doors, and the committee's recommendation of more primaries and fewer caucuses and conventions, as well Høyre's call for more active members, are implicit acknowledgements of for example the grass roots activists' linkage function.

Finally, Article 1 cites *Fremskrittsbevegelsen mot 1991 og 1993*, a Progress Party publication that seeks to bring the rudimentary party organization up to par with the party's electoral support upon the watershed 1987 local election and the 1989 parliamentary election. This goal illustrates especially members' voluntary labor and party personnel functions, as the goal could not be achieved without members to staff and run the provincial and local units, for which the report identifies membership recruitment as a top priority.

In sum, by studying the parties' internal assessment of their grass roots organizations we obtain information on how the activists have served the parties in the past, and still do, but also what role the activists are thought to have in the organization in the future.

Party statutes

Party statutes, which are available online or, in exceptional cases, only upon soliciting them from the central office, were researched for Article 3. They lay out the organizational structure of a party and govern intra-party activity. Through their specification of the number of party levels, and the number of offices to be filled at each level; the branches' outreach and campaigning responsibilities; the regulation of the boundaries and procedures of intra-party democracy; and the stipulation of member and, in some cases, non-member fees, the statutes testify to grass roots activists' staffing, labor, vote boosting, participatory linkage, and financing functions. In addition, I cite the Progress Party's statutes in Article 1 to list member rights and obligations and detail representation at the National Convention. As used in Article 1, then, the statutes underline grass roots activists' participatory linkage, voluntary labor, funding and personnel functions. In addition, the party statues of the Norwegian Labor Party were briefly cited in Article 1 to make a comparative argument about the Progress Party's decision-making structures.

Party newspapers

The Progress Party's internal newspaper, *Fremskritt*, is a key data source for Article 1. *Fremskritt* first came out in 1974, is available at the University Library of Bergen, and was used for two purposes: firstly, the articles provide information on the inner workings of the grass roots organization. The 11 cited stories from 1992 to 2005 about the initiatives and activities of the central organization, provincial and local branches show that the members both staff these units and carry out their various activities. The majority of the articles is about provincial or local recruitment campaigns, either to be held or their results. Secondly, the newspaper is important in the verification of the interview data. For example, former membership supervisor in the Progress Party, Anne Grethe Hauan, said in my interview with her that membership recruitment is a major organizational priority in the Progress Party, and that the central level primarily administers and facilitates recruitment campaigns, while local party branches carry them out. The numerous stories in *Fremskritt* about local recruitment campaigns corroborated both these claims.

Other written primary material

Finally, information was obtained from the Progress Party's website and the party's 1986 annual report. The website, frp.no, presents the party organization as it is currently structured and features stories on the historical development of the party's organization as well as recruitment campaigns (Article 1). The "about the Progress Party" postings give information on the number of provincial and local units, and how many internal positions need to be filled in each branch. The stories on recruitment campaigns reprint some of the recruitment material, and the latter states why the party needs members. For example, the 2008 campaign stresses that active members are needed for fresh (policy) input. Secondly, these posting also help verify the respondent data, for instance that the party indeed needs 10-12 people to staff a local branch.

The Progress Party's 1986 annual report, *Årsberetning fra Sentralstyret for 1986*[12], which was issued at a time when organizational development was not prioritized to the same extent as it was from 1994 and onwards, emphasizes the importance of membership recruitment. While not specifying why members are needed, it is an acknowledgement by the party leadership that membership is a resource that should be grown.

4.2.2. Interview data

Party officials at the central office were interviewed for both Articles 1 and 3. I conducted a two and a half hour qualitative interview with the party's first membership supervisor, Anne Grethe Hauan, at the Progress Party headquarters, Oslo, Norway, 25 August 2008, for Article 1[13]. Ms. Hauan gave insight into the party's membership philosophy, the party's various efforts to recruit and retain members, and the process of opening new local branches. Specifically, she noted that members are needed for income, innovation (i.e. the participatory linkage function) outreach, labor and personnel contributions. Head of the party's Department of Organization and Schooling, Øisten Lid, provided data on the party's internal education program, The Progress Party Study Association (FrS), which shows that thousands of members have participated in organizational activities and received training for candidacy.

In Article 3, respondent data was used to complement the party statutes, which were not exhaustive in terms of the possibilities for outsiders to partake in organizational activities. Emails were sent to the central office of all the parties to verify the document data and obtain

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[12] Obtained from Professor Lars Svåsand, Department of Comparative Politics, Bergen University.
[13] The interview was recorded and transcribed.

information on the informal practices[14]. The respondent data confirmed and elaborated the statute findings.

4.2.3. Secondary sources

Selected pieces of data were obtained from a set of secondary sources. Anders Jupskås of UiO provided yet unpublished data on the Progress Party's membership figures from 1994 to 2010 and recruitment techniques from the Political Parties and Democracy: Decline or Change? project (2008-12) led by Knut Heidar of UiO. Historical data on the Progress Party's number of local branches, and the number of Norwegian municipalities, is given in Svåsand and Wörlund (2005). Allern (2012) provides data on the Progress Party's relations with civil society organizations. Post-war membership data for the SPD and the CDU is available in Scarrow (1996), and for Høyre in Mjelde (2008).

Progress Party membership data for 2012 was obtained in a news article at nrk.no, the 2010 membership of the SPD and the CDU and the 2011 membership of Høyre in news articles at spiegel.de and vg.no, respectively. The Norwegian Mapping Authority (startkart.no) has the current number of Norwegian municipalities, and Statistics Norway (ssb.no) election turnout data. Altogether, the secondary data was collected to document the size, structure, and activities of the Progress Party's, the SPD's, the CDU's and Høyre's membership organizations, and thereby demonstrate directly or support arguments about grass

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[14] Respondents were asked two questions: 1) Must all your candidates for public office be party members? Or can non-members also be candidates, for example locally?; 2) Are non-members allowed to participate in party activities? If yes, in what types of activities, and do the non-members then have any right to participate in decision-making (right to speak, make proposals, or vote)? Some were asked to clarify their answers. Respondent data/interviews with: Labour (Ireland): Dermot Lacey, emails 28 January, 1 February, 2013; Labour (UK): Sean Orrick, email 12 February, 2013, Roisin McDermott, email 14 February, 2013; SPD (Germany): Saskia Freiesleben, emails 10, 28 January, 13 February, 2013; SPö (Austria): Oliver Wagner, email 13 February, 2013; Socialdemokraterna (Sweden): Peter Öhman, emails 5 February, 2013; Socialdemokraterne (Denmark): Maria Gudme, emails 7 February, 2013; Arbeiderpartiet (Norway): Bjørn Eriksen, email 24 January, 2013; Green Party (Ireland): Alison Martin, emails 25 January, 11 February, 2013; Green Party (UK): Adam Stacey, emails January 24, 19 February, 2013; Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Germany): Solveig Hampel, email 31 January, 2013; Die Grünen (Austria): Dialogbüro der Grünen, email 19 February, 2013; Miljøpartiet De Grønne (Norway): Sondre Båtstrand, emails 23 January, 6 February, 2013; Miljöpartiet De Gröna (Sweden): Teresia Ställborn, email 24 January, 2013; Socialistisk Folkeparti (Denmark): Jens Andersen, email 5 February, 2013; Fianna Fail (Ireland): Darragh McShea, email 27 February, 2013; Liberal Democrats (UK): Gordon Seekings, email 5 February, 2013; Venstre (Norway): Kjartan Almenning, emails 6 February, 2013; Folkpartiet Liberalerna (Sweden): Cecilia Elving, email 11 February, 2013, Natalia Rylander, email 12 February, 2013; Fine Gael (Ireland): Vincent Gribbin, email 24 January, 2013; Conservatives (UK): Joanne Lewis, emails 17 January, 8 February, 2013; CDU (Germany): Christina Hansen, emails 14, 28 January, 4 February, 2013; öVP (Austria): Ursula Kroczek, emails 1 February, 2013; Høyre (Norway): Thomas Berg Olsen, emails 24 January, 4 February, 2013; Det Konservative Folkeparti (Denmark): Mads Trustrup, emails 24 January, 4 February, 2013; Die Republikaner (Germany): M. Ewert, emails 27 January, 4 February, 2013; Frp (Norway): Øistein Lid, emails 24 January, 4 February, 2013; Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden): Joachim von Ritter, email 24 January, 2013; Dansk Folkeparti (Denmark): emails 24 January, 5 February, 2013.

roots activists' functions. For example, the Progress Party membership figures indicate the magnitude of dues as a source of party revenue, while the Allern data indirectly elevates the importance of Progress Party members' role in vote boosting by showing that the party cannot mobilize interest group members, for example union members (unlike the Labour Party).

5.0. Conclusion: thesis findings and contributions

As noted in the introduction, existing literature on party organization and campaigning holds that the party membership decline that has taken place with increasing intensity in Western Europe in the last 50 years, and which shows no signs of abating, does not pose a major organizational challenge to modern parties, because the parties have also changed the way they operate. Modern campaigning is allegedly capital- rather than labor-intensive, so grass roots activists are said to have lost most of their significance in professionally conducted, technologically sophisticated and media-driven modern campaigns.

This demand-side explanation of membership decline claim lacks empirical verification, however, and we are thus led merely to assume that parties find little or no use for grass roots activists. Studying Western European parties and the US Republicans, including both parties traditionally known to have a grass roots organizations and parties not so, and using both synchronic and diachronic data from a broad variety of sources (party documents, interview and secondary data), this dissertation finds, contrary to the demand-side argument, that modern parties have not really changed that much. They still rely on grass roots activists to perform a variety of functions: the activists contribute voluntary labor, funds, participatory linkage, votes, and staff the party. Professionalized staff and media-oriented campaigns have thus supplemented rather than replaced grass roots activists. In addition, I show in a study of the German SPD and CDU that parties' sustain their organizational heritage with grass roots activists; Western European parties across the ideological spectrum have in the post-war era fostered membership organizations modelled after those of the early- and mid-20th century social democratic parties, and their commitment to the grass roots organization model necessitates grass roots activists, whether formally enrolled as members or not.

The implications of these findings are two-fold. Firstly, Western European parties may in coming years increasingly orient themselves towards cultivating grass roots organizations made up of loosely affiliated activists rather than formal members. According to the supply-side account of membership decline, modernization processes render citizens increasingly

disinclined to become party members. In the post-war welfare state, social reforms, improved educational and leisure opportunities eroded group-based politics. In its place, dealignment, new participatory opportunities, whether in the form of social movements, single-issue groups or online, as well as changing lifestyles and values have reduced the attractiveness of party membership (Dalton 2002; Dalton and Wattenberg 2002 [2000], 10-1; Scarrow 1996, 7-8; 2007, 639-40). Thus, the membership decline of the last decades is unlikely to slow down. However, modern parties still need someone to knock on doors, select their leaders, run for public office, etc. To ensure that these requirements are met, parties may solicit citizens to engage in organizational activities on a more informal basis, and without some or all of the requirements that traditionally come with formal party membership. In other words, loosely affiliated activists could replace formal members as parties' rank and file workforce. Obviously, this does not exclude the possibility that some parties may ask volunteering activists to make some specific sacrifice, such as making a modest financial contribution, as in the case of the German SPD. However, parties are likely to stress the rewards of involvement (e.g. policy advancement, community welfare, personal development) and minimize requirements in order to entice individuals to work with them.

This dissertation has cited numerous examples of existing arrangements in which non-members are offered the opportunity to join in party activities, most notably the opportunities of non-members to run for public office in a number of parties. If citizens are indeed no longer willing to enroll as formal members, and parties themselves are unwilling or unable to recruit them, ad hoc-like volunteer engagements from time to time may come to characterize party-citizen interactions in Western European parties in the future. The rationale underlying *Sustaining organization heritage* may simply slow down rather than prevent the dissolution of the membership organizations of the post-war era. While these traditional membership organizations will still be around for years to come, Western European parties could be at an early stage in the process of adopting American-style grass roots organizations. In the case of the latter, parties and candidates typically mobilize volunteers in the run-up to elections.

Secondly, the campaign emphasis of the demand-side study of party membership, which in short amounts to the argument that members are no longer needed as voluntary workers, funders or vote boosters as much as they once were, has led to a neglect of the other ways in which activists' are of value to parties. Ever since Duverger (1959 [1954]) predicted that the electoral-strategic advantage mass parties enjoyed would ultimately lead elite parties to copy the organizational model of the mass parties, subsequent debate has predominantly centered on the status of grass roots organizations in the capital-intensive, television-centered

campaigns of the post-war era (McKenzie, 1955; Kircheimer, 1966; Epstein, 1967; Katz and Mair, 1995).

While the membership decline and its implications inform much of the current discussion on grass roots activists' role in modern parties, the relevant debate in reality spans three centuries, with Ostrogorski's (1964 [1902]a; 1964 [1902]b) late 19th century comparative study of British and US party organizations providing a groundwork for a theory of party organization. But since he found that the party organizations he observed obstructed independent participation in the political process, his concern was the party organizations' impact on democracy. Neumann (1965 [1956]), on the other side, praised the enrolment and mobilization of the masses by the socialist and fascist parties in the 1920s and -30s for providing democratic integration. More recent works have also stressed parties' important role as intermediaries between the government and the people (See for instance Scarrow, 2002 [2000]; Heidar and Saglie, 2003b; Widfeldt, 1997; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010).

Taking the longer view, then, one is reminded that parties are about more than winning elections (Strøm, 1990); they also sustain democracy by providing participatory linkage and maintaining parties' organizational presence in local communities. Put differently, grass roots activists who debate and devise party policy, select candidates and leaders, and are the ears, eyes and candidates for their parties, entrench the parties in the populace. Furthermore, they reinforce parties' self-image as popular organizations by sustaining the parties' heritage as mass-based organizations.

Thus, the democracy-sustaining function parties perform is not accorded sufficient attention by the existing demand-side literature, which is preoccupied with the impact of social and technological developments on formal members' electioneering functions. My dissertation, by contrast, argues that we should think more broadly, beyond electoral campaigns and elections, about the democratic role of grass roots activists in modern parties. In short, this dissertation modifies existing demand-side literature and emphasizes grass roots activists' democracy-serving functions.

5.1. The findings and contributions of each article

In addition to the unifying argument outlined in this introductory chapter, each of the four articles offers its own findings and makes its own contribution. I summarize these in the following:

Fremskrittspartiets organisatoriske utvikling fra 1973 til 2013: fra anti-parti til masseparti?
(Published in Norsk statsvitenskapelig tidsskrift 13/2: 120-28)
Article 1 finds that from 1973 to 2013, the Progress Party has become a mass party in terms of focusing on its membership, being territorially entrenched, and having a partly decentralized decision-making structure, but does not have a mass membership or entrenchment in civil society. The case study of the Progress Party brings new empirical knowledge about the organizations of right wing populist parties, and suggests explicit operationalizations of the mass party's defining attributes. While these attributes are well known, the existing literature has thus far not offered any specific measurement criteria for them.

How and why parties respond to membership decline: the case of the SPD and the CDU
(Published in German Politics 13/22 [3]: 253-69)
Article 2 shows that the SPD and the CDU have responded to membership decline primarily by seeking to consolidate their membership organizations, because they value and wish to preserve their legacy as membership organizations. Secondly, both the SPD and the CDU documents suggest that the legal-normative imperative of the German Basic Law requiring parties to sustain democratic linkage necessitates a membership organization. Furthermore, the SPD views mass membership as inherent to social-democratic ideology. Beyond these SPD and CDU-specific findings, Article 2 contributes to existing theory in two ways: firstly, it conceptualizes a framework with which we can now study how parties deal with membership decline, which is a major change that has been affecting most membership parties for almost half a century. As shown above, membership decline has been thoroughly documented, but not what, if anything, parties (can) do about it, despite the consequences for party government and the quality of democracy the decline could have. Secondly, the article provides three new rationales for party membership: members help parties preserve their legacy as membership organizations; they are critical to sustaining democratic linkage; and mass membership is inherent to social-democratic ideology. The two former inspired the formulation of Function 6.

A new source of linkage: non-member participation in Western European parties
(Revised version under review by Government and Opposition)
Article 3 finds that West European parties have to varying degrees opened up to non-member participation, with young parties, particularly greens that operate in federal states being most open to it, social democratic parties in unitary states the least. The findings raise important

questions about major parties' linkage capacity. Beyond this finding, the article contributes to existing literature a categorical scale for measuring the provision for non-member participation in political parties, and indicates three determinants of parties' placement on the scale.

Fumbling in the dark: Party response to electoral shocks and the case of the Norwegian Høyre and the US Republican Party
(Co-authored with Lars Svåsand; revised version under review by Comparative Political Studies)
Article 4 shows that in response to severe electoral defeats, Høyre and the Republican Party take a similar and broad "dragnet" approach, because they ultimately know neither what caused their electoral defeat nor positively what to do about it, but that system and party-specific factors contribute to setting their two responses apart from one another in their specific content. In addition to this finding, the article offers a typology of electoral defeat-induced change parties can make, and suggest two forms of constraints which impact parties' capacity for change.

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