

Explaining Membership Growth in the Norwegian

Progress Party from 1973 to 2008

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with explaining the membership growth in the Norwegian Progress Party, Fremskrittspartiet, from its founding in 1973 to 2008. Two major studies, Katz and Mair (1992) and Mair and van Biezen (2001), have demonstrated that West-European parties, including Norwegian ones, are losing members, and have been doing it for several decades. Although this development was not as pronounced in the first study, it had become clear by 2001. The Progress Party has clearly deviated from both the national and the international trend of dwindling mass membership with its relatively stable growth in this respect.

Through the application of relevant academic literature, I set forth seven theoretically informed hypotheses about the causes of the Progress Party's membership growth. At the macro-level, I examine the impact of electoral success and public subsidies on membership growth. At the meso-level, the efforts of the Progress Party leadership, the party's organizational network, and its executive structure are considered. Finally, at the micro-level, I study support in the electorate for the Progress Party's policies and the availability of political positions for members in the party as possible causes of membership growth.

The central finding of the thesis is that leadership efforts appear to be the key component in the explanation, although it may depend on several other factors to be successful.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Theme

The overall aim of my thesis is to increase our common understanding of what contributes to membership growth in a political party. I pursue this research objective through a theoretically informed case study of the Norwegian Progress Party, Fremskrittspartiet.

1.2. Why Study the Progress Party?

The Progress Party has clearly deviated from both the national and the international trend of dwindling mass membership with its relatively stable growth in this respect from the founding in 1973 until today. Two major studies, Katz and Mair (1992) and Mair and van Biezen (2001), demonstrate that West-European parties, including Norwegian ones, are losing members, and have been doing it for several decades. Although this development was not as pronounced in the first study, it had become clear by 2001. The Progress Party is thus relevant to study as an exception to this trend, as the examination can shed light on the dynamics of party membership as well as other topics, which is my next point.

1.3. Motivation and Contribution

A research project should pose a question that is relevant to the real world, that is, it should have implications for political, social, or economic life (King et al. 1994: 15). My thesis does this in that the research question is of relevance for those considered the most important actors in a modern democracy: the political parties (Schattschneider 2004: 1, Schumpeter 1961: 269, Robertson 1976: 1, Dalton and Wattenberg 2002: 1). Following the definition of a political party as an organization with a set of policy objectives that nominates candidates for publicly elected offices¹, all that may affect its chances of electoral success should interest any given party. For instance, Norwegian party organizers recognize that ordinary members are important for their parties (Heidar and Saglie 2003: 232). In Norway, the Progress Party has made stable electoral progress for a long time, both regionally and nationally, and became the second largest party in the Norwegian parliament, Stortinget, after the 2005 election, with currently good odds of becoming a governing party after the election in 2009. It has also had relatively stable membership growth for a long time. Thus, if there is a connection between

¹ This is similar to Sartori's (2005: 56) classic definition; I have added "with a set of policy objectives". This was emphasized by Professor Lars G. Svåsand in a lecture August 26th 2006 at the University of Bergen.

the Progress Party's membership growth and its electoral success, my study should be of interest for other Norwegian parties, which have largely been losing members in droves at the same time (the Progress Party itself has already expressed interest in my thesis). My study should also be relevant for parties in other West-European countries, as they have been losing members for several decades (Katz and Mair 1992, Mair and van Biezen 2001).

Next, a research project should make a specific contribution to the extant scholarly literature by improving our collective ability to construct verified scientific explanations of some aspect of the world (King et al.1994: 15). I hope to do this in three ways. First, my thesis adds to the literature about the factors determining the size of mass membership in political parties. Within this subfield of research on political participation, much of the extant work focuses on micro-level variables, that is, variables explaining individual party membership (Weber 1964, Wilson 1973, Hirschman 1982, von Beyme 1985, Katz 1990). I discuss macro-, meso- and micro-level factors. Several other studies on party membership exist, although they are typically not as explicitly multi-level as my. Furthermore, they tend to focus on why parties lose members (Sainsbury 1983, Sundberg 1987, 1989, Elklit 1991, Togeby 1992). An exception in this regard is Selle and Svåsand (1983), as they discuss several multi-level factors that can influence party membership in general.

Second, my study contributes to research on right-wing populist parties in Europe. As a party that emerged to the right of the traditional right in Norway, it is not immediately obvious to which broader international party family the Progress Party belongs. It claims to be a libertarian party (Fremskrittspartiet 2008a), but in the academic literature it is commonly regarded as a right-wing populist party. Indeed, the Progress Party has been given numerous similar labels: "protest party", "tax-revolt party", "petty bourgeois protest movement", "populist party", "extreme right-wing party", "new populist party" "radical right party", "right-wing populist party", "far-out right party", and "neoliberal populist party" (Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 1990: 195, Taggart 1995: 34, Bjørklund and Saglie 2004: 2, 5, Svåsand and Wörlund 2005: 253, Mudde 2007: 47). The point here is not to engage in any concept formation, so I stick with the label "right-wing populist".

Mudde (2007: 264-267) claims that to explain the *sustained* electoral success of populist radical right parties in Europe, party organization is a critical factor². However, he continues, very little empirical information is available on the internal life and structure of

² Mudde argues that the Progress Party is best classified as an extreme "neoliberal populist party" (Mudde 2007: 47), but writes that such parties are closely related to the populist radical right, and together with social populists, form a loose category of right-wing populism.

these parties. The (cited) reason is partly that parties in general prefer to keep their internal life away from public scrutiny, and right-wing populist parties are more inclined toward circumspection due to scepticism of academics and journalists, fearing that the information they provide will not be used for strictly academic purposes. As the Progress Party has mostly been very responsive to my numerous requests for information on internal organizational matters, I provide considerable information on what the party does to recruit and retain members. My thesis thus adds to knowledge about the organizations of right-wing populist parties.

Third, my thesis contributes to modifying the literature on the alleged obsolescence of party members. As I show in Chapter 4, the debate about the usefulness of ordinary members to political parties is a perennial one. Academics like Kirscheimer (1966), Epstein (1980), and Katz and Mair (1995) all point to a diminished role for ordinary members. Kirscheimer and Epstein both argue that modern day electoral competition takes place through the mass media, and that parties seek to govern in the national interest rather than as representatives of social groups. Hence, modern parties make universal appeals to voters rather than communicating principally to and through their core supporters. Katz and Mair stress that dependence on state subsidies is both a consequence and a cause of weakening ties to members. I, however, show through my case study that members can still be considered very important to major parties.

1.4. The Organization of the Thesis

I proceed from the introduction chapter to Chapter 2, which is about method and methodological considerations important to the thesis. My thesis is a case study, and I discuss the case study method per se, continuing to considerations about the reliability of internal party documents I have used. As I have gathered much information about internal Progress Party practices through an interview with Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan, I end the chapter with a discussion of problems related to elite interviewing.

Chapter 3 is my first empirical chapter. In this chapter, I place my study in a comparative and empirical context through the examination of membership figures for West-European parties in general, including Norwegian ones, in recent decades, before continuing to discuss the membership figures of the Progress Party in detail. The chapter begins, however, with a brief account of the Progress Party's history, and also surveys some considerations in the extant literature on party organizations about the causes of declining membership numbers.

Chapter 4 is the theory chapter. Through the application of relevant academic literature, I set forth seven³ theoretically informed hypotheses about the causes of the Progress Party's membership growth that I have characterized as either macro-, meso-, or micro-level. I round off the chapter with a brief note on the possible interconnection of the independent variables.

Chapter 5 is the second empirical chapter and contains the testing of the seven hypotheses produced in Chapter 4. I test them through the analysis of internal party documents, information provided in the above mentioned elite interview, and extant academic literature.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion. I summarize my findings and discuss some suggestions for further research.

³ Hypothesis 3 has a corollary hypothesis, but I count them as one.

Chapter 2

Method

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss my method and methodological issues important to the thesis. As my thesis is a case study, the first section discusses the case study per se. I then proceed to discuss issues related to data gathering: the second section contains considerations about the reliability of internal party documents I use, and I round off the chapter discussing problems related to elite interviewing.

2.2. The Case Study

My thesis is a case study. Gerring (2004: 342) defines a case study as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. Before discussing the case study method per se, I consider the use of it in relation to my academic discipline, comparative politics. Given the name of this particular field of social science, researchers should be expected to apply one of the classic comparative methods, under which the case study is not listed. Narrowly defined, the comparative method refers to strategies used to analyze instances with few cases and potentially numerous variables, such as large macro-social units (Østerud, Goldmann and Pedersen [eds.] 1997: 124, Ragin 1987: 1, Lijphart 1971: 683). Comparative methods include: Method of Agreement/Most Different Systems Design, Indirect Method of Difference/Most Similar Systems Design, Comparative Historical Method, Typological Theory, and Boolean algebra (Ragin 1987, Przeworski and Teune 1970, Mahoney and Rueschemeyer [eds.] 2003, George and Bennett 2004).

My application of the case study, however, is comparative in three respects. First, comparison needs not imply only the snapshot of two or more units at a certain point in time (usually the present); it can also involve the comparison of the same unit at different points in historical time. Comparison, in other words, can be synchronic or diachronic (Wiarda 2005: 21-22). The study of the membership growth in the Progress Party is comparative in this sense: I try to explain why there has been growth from 1,020 members in 1973 to 25000 in 2008. Second, the context of my inquiry is comparative: I place my thesis against the backdrop of cross-national and national trends in party membership numbers in the post-war era. Third, I apply a number of theories used in comparative studies of political parties, and in so far as I take part in a debate within my academic discipline, my study is comparative.

With regard to Gerring's definition, a unit refers to a spatially bounded phenomenon, for example a political party, observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time (Gerring 2004: 342). The unit in this case study is obviously the Progress Party. He lists three types of case study research designs: the study of a single unit diachronically; the within-study of a single unit synchronically; and the within-study of a single unit diachronically (Gerring 2004: 343). My study of membership growth in the Progress Party from 1973 to 2008 falls within the third category, as I look at both temporal variation in membership figures and within-unit cases such as different levels in the party organization hierarchy.

Gerring (2004: 347-352) focuses on some trade-offs inherent to case studies. I discuss these in relation to my study. The first trade-off concerns descriptive versus causal inference. As the title of my thesis reveals, I consider the study of membership growth in the Progress Party primarily causal in its orientation. However, as King et al. (1994: 34) note, both description and causal explanation are essential. It is not possible to construct meaningful causal explanations without good description. Description, in turn, loses relevance unless it is linked to some causal relationships. Description is often a precondition for explanation. This is especially true for section 4.3., which looks at the party organization as a determinant of membership growth: *why* cannot be explored here without elaborating *what* and *how*.

The second is that of breadth versus depth, i.e. the scope of the proposition the case study makes. Research designs involve a choice between knowing more about less and knowing less about more, and the case study typically contributes to the former (Gerring 2004: 348). Although Chapter 3 discusses membership figures within the context of Western-Europe, the subsequent chapters constitute an intensive study of the (Norwegian) Progress Party.

The third deals with unit homogeneity and case comparability versus representativeness. Single-unit studies provide cases that are likely to be comparable to one another, as they are all drawn from the same unit (by definition)⁴. However, this is also a source of weakness: single-unit research designs usually have little generalizability (Gerring 2004: 348). Przeworski and Teune (1970: 17) argue that social science should attempt to explain phenomena wherever and whenever they occur rather than as accurately as possible in terms relative to specific historical circumstances. In so far as one adheres to their position, my thesis is flawed. The primary unit of analysis - the Progress Party - is an instance of a

⁴ An additional strength of such studies is that they facilitate the avoidance of conceptual stretching, defined by Sartori (1970: 1041) as extending the denotation of a concept by obfuscating its connotation.

broader phenomenon – political parties, but my findings cannot automatically be applied to other parties experiencing membership growth (of which there are few).

The fourth concerns the type of insight into causation one is able to achieve by examining empirical evidence of a particular X:Y relationship: causal effect versus causal mechanisms (Gerring 2004: 348). This trade-off corresponds to asking *how much* X affects Y as opposed to *how*. Case studies are typically appropriate for the latter. Although my thesis is mainly concerned with how X and Y interrelate, I discuss the relative impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable in my concluding chapter.

The fifth addresses the nature of the causal relationship, which can be invariant or probabilistic. An invariant causal relationship is asserted to be always true, taking the form of sufficient, or necessary and sufficient arguments, whereas a probabilistic one is true in a probabilistic fashion: a cause increases the likelihood of an outcome (Gerring 2004: 349). My findings are of the latter kind. That is, if certain factors have led to membership growth in the Progress Party, they may also do it with regard to other parties (this is my first point under 1.3.).

The sixth deals with the strategy of research, that is, whether a study is explorative or confirmatory (Gerring 2004: 349). My study is both: the testing of hypotheses H3, H4, H5, and H7 can hopefully contribute to theory development, while H1, H2, and H6 are most accurately characterized as theory-testing.

The last trade-off concerns the availability of useful variance across units. If this is limited, the case study is preferable (Gerring 2004: 351). Applied to the topic of membership growth, few units experience it, at least in Western Europe. Therefore, an intensive study of the Progress Party may produce more knowledge than a cross-country statistical research design.

Depending on the research objective, there are several types of case studies: the atheoretical/configurative idiographic, the interpretative/disciplined configurative, the hypothesis-generating/heuristic, the theory-testing, the plausibility-probing, the deviant, and the “building-block” case study (George and Bennett 2004: 75, Lijphart 1971: 691). The boundaries between these are not always definite. As the majority of my hypotheses are theory-generating, my study arguably falls within the hypothesis-generating/heuristic category. The membership growth in the Progress Party makes it a deviant or an outlier case in the context of both cross-national and national trends in party membership numbers (see Chapter 3), and if I can contribute to explaining this, the case study is theory-building. As Lijphart (1971: 692) notes, hypothesis-generating case studies start out with a more or less

vague notion of possible hypotheses, and attempt to formulate definite hypotheses to be tested subsequently among a larger number of cases. Their objective is to develop theoretical generalizations in areas where no theory exists yet, and are obviously of great theoretical value.

Two modifications of this description need to be made with regard to my case study. First, as argued above, the applicability of an argument across units may be confined due to the idiosyncrasies of the unit I study. Second, although I develop some more or less new hypotheses, I make considerable use of previous work on the general subject of party organization and party membership. I do not start completely from scratch, although there is not much academic literature on the topic of membership growth thus far.

2.3. Document Analysis and Data Reliability

I have mustered the information needed to test my hypotheses partly through qualitative document analysis. One distinction in regard to this method is whether a document expresses views, attitudes or considerations held by the person or people behind it, or merely descriptive facts (Grønmo 2004: 121-122). I use some documents produced by the Progress Party itself for internal use, such as membership figures, and the reliability of such documents is always hard to assess. The reason is that the information cannot be verified by external sources. I therefore continue with some considerations about the reliability of these figures.

In compiling the membership data I recap in Chapter 3, Katz and Mair, Mair and van Biezen, and Heidar and Svåsand have all relied primarily on the parties' own official reports or estimates of their individual memberships: in Europe from 1960 to 1990 (Katz and Mair) and from 1980 to 2000 (Mair and van Biezen), and in Norway from 1950 to 1990 (Heidar and Svåsand). I do the same in my update of Heidar and Svåsand's survey of the Norwegian parties, which include data for 2000 and 2006, as well as in my update of the Progress Party membership development, which contains annual data from 1993 to 2008⁵.

As mentioned above, the estimates or claims can usually not be verified by external controls. I know for sure that neither Statistics Norway nor the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, the two major public data banks that would collect such data, have them. Furthermore, these are aggregate figures that refer to levels of individual party membership as a whole, thus excluding consideration of the different categories of membership which often exist. And with regard to the figures for European parties, Mair and van Biezen (2001: 6) note

⁵ Heidar and Saglie (2002: 34-35) provide an update of Heidar and Svåsand's survey which spans from 1990 to 2001. As I have collected my own data for 2000 and 2006, I have not used this source.

that the membership is often reported in suspiciously rounded numbers. Although these limitations are severe, there is really no other option when we try to collect data on membership levels, cross-nationally or nationally. The only available alternative to the parties themselves as data source is evidence provided by mass survey research. However, the reliability of this data is undermined by the small number of respondents that are involved, and by the unavoidable uncertainties that surround their understanding of what party membership actually entails. At any rate, survey-based data on party membership is scant. In light of the general consensus on the importance of political parties in modern politics – they are commonly associated with democracy itself (Strøm 2002: 180), the limited availability of data on individual membership in parties is somewhat surprising. For the large variety of surveys that have been conducted on political attitudes and preferences in recent decades, and even among the now voluminous set of professional election studies, there are remarkably few that contain questions on party membership in particular and that are also suitable for cross-national inquiry (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 6).

Alas, the parties themselves are also not very reliable sources for data on individual membership. As argued in section 3.3., political parties and party analysts have a tendency of placing a particularly high value on the notion of the traditional, branch-based, mass-membership party that is best typified by the German SPD (Ware 1996: 101). That is, both party leaders and political observers have long equated properly functioning parties with parties that enjoy a relatively large mass membership representative of a wide range of society. Conversely, parties without a mass base are often viewed as elitist and even insufficiently legitimate, as they resemble party organizations in legislatures in the pre-democratic era and during the early stages of democratization, such as the conservative parties of Britain, Canada, and Scandinavia, and the Federalists and the Jeffersonians in the US (Krouwel 2006: 262-263). Consequently, almost all political parties, of whatever hue, claim to actively pursue members, and become concerned if the membership appears to be in decline⁶. Members are thus important as source of legitimacy both internally and externally,

⁶ Although generally true, this analysis must be nuanced. First of all, there has been no general “contagion from the left”; the mass party has not dominated the party organization terrain to the extent that Duverger predicted. Some parties that have had a mainly caucus structure have been able to both retain it and be electorally successful, such as the German FDP, which, although formally enrolling members, does not actively pursue membership recruitment and prides itself on being “small but select”. Another example is the two major US parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, which are considered to have gone straight from elite to catch-all status, omitting the mass stage. Moreover, those parties that have found it necessary to expand their organization so as to develop a branch-type structure, have often become hybrids of both the branch and the caucus party organization models (Ware 1996: 101, Hague & Harrop 2004: 187).

and parties may for this reason be tempted to exaggerate membership records (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 7).

Those systems of party laws and regulations that link levels or categories of public subventions to levels of party membership may provide a financial reason for parties to inflate membership rolls, in addition to the normative incentive. One of the most noticeable and pervasive trends in party financing in recent decades has been the growth of state funding of political parties (Pierre et al. 2000: 1, Scarrow 2006: 620-621). The activities of parties' parliamentary groups and extra-parliamentary organizations in Western democracies are now partially paid for by means of a system of public subventions, and such subsidies constitute an important and seemingly ever-growing component of party incomes and expenditures. In most cases, these subventions are calculated on the basis of electoral performance and parliamentary representation. There are, however, polities in which certain subsidies are specifically earmarked for particular purposes, such as educational work, media work, youth work, and the like, and within this category subventions can also be tied to the size of the membership in general, or to levels of specific categories of membership in particular (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 7) In Norway, today, all registered parties are eligible for public financial support, but earmarked subsidies for educational purposes are also granted (see sections 4.2. and 5.2.). This should also be kept in mind when considering the data on the European parties generally.

A third reason for concern about the quality of the figures parties submit is the actual procedures parties have for collecting their membership data. Parties that lack precise enrolment figures probably lack tight direct links of communication between individual members and the central party, as the central organization does obviously not have the address files it would need to send individual members mail. When central parties begin to monitor their memberships more closely, for instance by centralizing dues collection procedures, their membership counts may become more accurate (Scarrow 2002: 85).

As Mair and van Biezen note (2001: 8), there is little the analyst of party membership can do about this. Political parties remain voluntary organizations in spite of a possible interpenetration of party and state (Katz and Mair 1995), and are thus rarely obliged to share

Second, Scarrow (2002: 93-94, 99) shows that mass enrolment parties were actually not the norm for most of the twentieth century, despite their lingering attractiveness. The high enrolment numbers of the third quarter of the century were unusual in their own way. Parties around the world were initiating or reviving efforts to build mass organizations in the 1950s. Only five of the 18 OECD countries included in her study – Australia, Scandinavia and the UK – could claim well-established, democratic, membership-based parties of both the left and the right prior to WWII. In fact, before and after the 1950s and the 1960s, parties showed an uneven pattern of commitment to, and success in, enlisting supporters in permanent organizations.

the details of their internal organization and activities with the public. We thus have to rely on their courtesy when seeking to obtain information such as membership figures. Moreover, I have experienced that some of the Norwegian parties are not aware of all the details of their membership records, such as when specifically they got a central/national membership register.

It is then clear that we have to accept at more or less face value those figures that have been provided by the parties themselves, even though they may be exaggerated or crude estimates. Indeed, inflated or approximate numbers are better than none at all (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 8), and the data in Chapter 3 comprise my empirical starting point for studying the Progress Party.

2.4. Qualitative Interviewing

Qualitative interviewing is defined as interaction or communication between two parties with the purpose of one party receiving information from the other (Grønmo 2004: 164). More specifically, I conducted an organizational-culture study, defined by Rubin and Rubin (2005: 8) as an inquiry into some aspect of an organization's activity. In this section, I do not discuss qualitative interviewing in general, such as how to prepare for and conduct the interview, but some problems that may arise during this type of data collection.

First, the interaction and communication between the interviewer and the interviewee may not function properly, so that the submission of information is limited. The interviewer may not get access to all the relevant information the interviewee has, or the two parties may misunderstand each other. In the latter case, the interviewee may not understand what kind of information the interviewer wants, or the interviewer misinterprets the information given by the interviewee. The interviewer may avoid these problems through focusing on establishing good communication with the interviewee prior to the interview (Grønmo 2004: 165, Rubin and Rubin 2005: 79-89).

With regard to my interview, I thought I established an unrestrained tone with the interviewee, Progress Party Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan, in our phone conversation three days prior to the interview. Other than that, I did not believe I could influence the situation much, as I was interviewing Hauan at the Progress Party headquarters in Oslo. I did not know if the interview would take place in her office or a meeting room, or who would be present. The interview was conducted in a meeting room, and Hauan was accompanied by Progress Party Media journalist Arne-Petter Lorentzen, who expressed that he also wanted to interview me for the internal party newspaper, *Fremskritt*. However, Hauan

answered all my questions, and I thought I was given access to all the information I solicited. There were some instances in which Hauan seemed uncertain about what sort of information I asked for, but I was able to explain through follow-up questions. To avoid misinterpretation of the answers I was given, I also used follow-up questions in instances in which I was unsure about the meaning of what she said.

Another problem may be that the interviewer affects the interviewee's answers. The interviewer may, through physical appearance or behaviour, elicit biased responses from the interviewee, for example by asking leading questions. Again, the interviewer must try to maintain a neutral and suitable manner of communicating and generally a relaxed atmosphere with the interviewee during the interview (Grønmo 2004: 165, Rubin and Rubin 2005: 79-89).

I believe Hauan answered my questions in an independent and relaxed manner. That is, I thought the interview was more of a conversation than an interview. On several occasions, she answered categorically "No" to questions she interpreted as leading, and put effort into describing or analyzing the given matter as she and the party considered it. She did refer to me specifically as "you in the academic world" and the like, but this was merely the role I had; a researcher visiting the Progress Party.

Finally, some problems may arise due to personal traits of the interviewee, that is, the interviewee's memory or self-presentation may affect the answers. The interviewee may not remember all the facts of a matter, or may have suppressed certain memories. The likeliness of this problem is greater the further back in time the issue in discussion lies. Moreover, the interviewee may give distorted or incorrect information to portray him- or herself in a certain light, such as seeming more important. All of this can be difficult to discern for the interviewer, but may be circumvented through exhaustive follow-up questions (Grønmo 2004: 165, Rubin and Rubin 2005: 79-89).

The risk of incorrect accounts was minimized by the presence of Lorentzen, who listened to and supplemented Hauan during the conversation. Furthermore, the party in general and other party representatives were the subjects in much of the information she provided, and I believe this took attention away from her person.

In sum, the possible problems of the qualitative interview as a source of data may diminish the quality of the material. However, I hope to have increased the reliability of this data in the eyes of others through my account of the interview I conducted. Still, Hauan's answers reflect her perspective from her position in the organization. Hence, triangulation, defined as the examination of a matter through different data sources and methods (Grønmo 2004: 55), has been conducted to the extent available data has made it possible.

First, I have triangulated the information on membership recruitment and maintenance provided by Hauan by speaking on the phone with former organization manager Leif Hjeltnes⁷, asking him questions about internal organizational matters I discussed with Hauan. Second, I have looked for corroborating evidence in the party newspaper, *Fremskritt*⁸, as well as in (other) internal party documents. When reading a party's internal newspaper, one must keep in mind that it is in the interest of the leadership to describe the general state of affairs in the party as positively as possible to members.

⁷ Phone conversation November 4th 2008.

⁸ As noted earlier this chapter, *Fremskritt* first came out in 1974. The University Library of Bergen carries this paper, although some editions are missing for some of the years. I have tried to contact General Secretary Geir Almåsvold Mo and former party leader Carl I. Hagen to inquire about membership recruitment and maintenance, albeit unsuccessfully.

Chapter 3

Party Membership Development in a European and National Context

3.1. Introduction

Before I develop a theoretical framework for explaining membership growth in the Progress Party, it is necessary to place the party's membership development in a broader empirical and comparative context. This chapter therefore examines how parties have fared in both Western Europe generally and Norway specifically in the post-war period. In other words, is the Progress Party enjoying membership growth along with parties in general in Western Europe and Norway, or is it an outlier in one or both? As a preamble to the discussion, I include a note on partisan decline and decreasing membership numbers as a manifestation of it, continuing to an account of how to measure membership. I then examine European membership figures generally and Norway specifically, including considerations in the extant literature on party organizations about the causes of declining membership numbers, ending with a detailed account of the Progress Party's figures. The part on Europe is based on Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair's "The Membership of Political Parties in European Democracies, 1960-1990" (1992) and "Party Membership in Twenty European Democracies, 1980-2000" by Peter Mair and Ingrid van Biezen (2001). These articles provide the most comprehensive account of membership in European parties available to date, although the former includes fewer countries than the latter; 11 versus 20, respectively⁹. The purpose of Mair and van Biezen was to update the data from 1992 and expand the number of countries included in the survey. The sections on Norwegian parties in general and the Progress Party specifically is based on data collected by Knut Heidar and Lars Svåsand for their book "Partiene i en brytningstid" (1994), and data I have collected from the parties themselves.

I start off, however, with two tables mapping the Progress Party's history in numbers and names. Given that my thesis is a case study of the party, the reader should be familiar with its brief past.

⁹ There are missing data for one observation in each study (Ireland and Poland), so that the actual number of observations is 10 and 19.

3.2. The History of the Progress Party in Numbers and Names¹⁰

Table 1: The Progress Party's Election Results¹¹

Election Year	Vote Percentage	MPs
1973 (P)	5	4
1975 (R)	1,7	
1977 (P)	1,9	0
1979 (R)	2,5	
1981 (P)	4,4	4
1983 (R)	6,3	
1985 (P)	3,7	2
1987 (R)	12,3	
1989 (P)	13,7	22
1991 (R)	7	
1993 (P)	6,3	10
1995 (R)	12	
1997 (P)	15,3	25
1999 (R)	13,5	
2001 (P)	14,6	26
2003 (R)	17,9	
2005 (P)	22,1	38
2007 (R)	17,5	

The first column lists the election year (P = parliamentary election, R = regional election), the second shows the vote percentage, and the final column gives the number of seats in Stortinget the Progress Party won.

Table 1 shows that the Progress Party won 5% of the vote and four MPs in its first election in 1973, but lost parliamentary representation in the next, getting only 1,9% of the vote. With 4,4% of the vote in 1981, the party regained parliamentary representation, winning four seats. The Progress Party experienced a modest setback with 3,7% of the vote in 1985, and saw its number of MPs reduced to two. Its national breakthrough came in 1989, winning 13,7% of the vote and 22 seats in Stortinget. This group was reduced to ten in 1993, when the party “only” got 6,3% of the vote. This proved only a temporary setback, as 15,3% of the vote in 1997 gave 25 MPs. Although the Progress Party did not perform as well in the 2001 election, 14,6% of the vote led to an increase in parliamentary seats by one. The 2005 election became the Progress Party's best thus far, winning 22,1% of the vote and 38 MPs.

¹⁰ The Progress Party was called “Anders Lange's Party for Strong Reduction in Taxes, Fees, and Public Interference (ALP) from the founding in 1973 to 1977.

¹¹ Sources: Iversen (1998: 206), Fremskrittspartiet (2008b).

With regard to regional elections, the Progress Party experienced continual growth in its first four, winning 1,7% of the vote in 1975, 2,5% in 1979, 6,3 % in 1983, and 12,3% in 1987. The first setback came in 1991, when the party received 7% of the vote, markedly down from the previous election. The Progress Party grew again in the next three elections, winning 12% of the vote in 1995, 13,5% in 1999, and 17,9% in 2003. This was reduced to 17,5% of the vote in 2007.

Table 2: Progress Party Leaders

Party Leaders	Period
Anders Lange	1973-1974
Eivind Eckbo	1974-1975
Arve Lønnum	1975-1978
Carl I. Hagen	1978-2006
Siv Jensen	2006-

The first column lists the Progress Party’s leaders, and the second gives the length of their tenure.

As Table 2 shows, Anders Lange was the first leader of what was founded as Anders Lange’s Party for Strong Reduction in Taxes, Fees, and Public Interference (ALP) in 1973¹². Eivind Eckbo functioned as leader upon Lange’s death in 1974 until Arve Lønnum was elected to head the party in 1975. Carl I. Hagen succeeded Lønnum in 1978 (ALP was renamed “the Progress Party” in 1977) and served for 28 years, until Siv Jensen took over in 2006.

3.3. Partisan Decline and Party Membership

As indicated in section 1.2, political parties in Western Europe, Norway included, have been losing members for several decades. As a prelude to examining this here, I discuss what significance scholars have attached to shrinking membership figures.

Are parties in trouble? Much has been written generally in recent years about the evidence pointing to a declining role for political parties in shaping the politics of advanced industrial democracies. Not only has declining electoral turnout in recent decades been well

¹² The Progress Party, on its webpage, claims nearly 3000 people attended the founding meeting, despite that the facilities – Saga kino in Oslo - could officially house only 1300 people (Iversen 1998: 25, *Fremskrittspartiet 2008b*).

documented, but a more general trend of weakened partisan attachment has been discernable for some time. It first appeared in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, before spreading to other OECD countries in the 1980s, and accelerating in the 1990s. Initially, the erosion of partisan ties was hard to prove as partisan change is a part of the electoral process, and periods of heightened partisan volatility and fragmentation characterize the electoral histories of most democracies. However, evidence from several countries and several elections suggests that a general pattern of partisan decline is affecting most Western democracies (Dalton 2002: 183-184).

Dwindling membership figures is often taken as the foremost indicator of organizational decline. However, as Scarrow (2002: 80-81) demonstrates, the perennial diagnosis of partisan decline has continuously risen from shifting attitudes about the desirability of parties as well-organized popular associations. At the beginning of the twentieth century the verdict of decline was infused with a moral sensibility by scholars who, referring to the abuses of the American municipal patronage “machines”, feared the growing capacity of extra-legislative party organizations to manipulate the masses. They believed people are basically sensible but easily deceived about their own best interests.

Paradoxically, just as the era of the American party machine began to wane, some scholars began to re-evaluate its contributions to political life. National mass parties with local roots provided civic benefits, constructing legitimating links between citizens and their governors. The idea of organized parties as vehicles for integrating the political masses led Duverger, basing his analysis on the European social democratic parties, to praise the emergence of mass parties as a positive step in democratic evolution, because their locally articulated structures ensured a closer and more faithful contact between the masses and the ruling elites. Decline now became equated with waning organizational capacity: many scholars in the 1960s came to doubt the extent to which parties would maintain grass-roots organizations. Subsequent diagnoses include the “catch-all” party, “contagion from the right”, and “the cartel party” (Scarrow 2002: 81-82, Katz and Mair 1995).

These diagnoses share two important features. First, they all pronounce the obsolescence of hierarchical mass parties. Second, all point to similar sociological and technological changes – the erosion of the traditional social milieu, the associated weakening of political loyalties, and the shift toward more expensive mass media campaigning - as contributing to the seemingly inevitable downfall of local party organizations. These changes allegedly reduce the supply of potential party members, and at the same time make parties less interested in formally enrolling their supporters. Although parties may well maintain their

electioneering capacities, their capacity to generate political integration and political legitimacy (“linkage”) may be in danger (Scarrow 2002: 81-82).

3.4. Membership Measurement

Katz and Mair (1992: 330-332) list three principal measures by which the state of party membership can be assessed cross-nationally and over time. The first is the membership in absolute numbers (M), which captures the problem of shrinking membership from the perspective of the individual political party. A party that sees its membership cut in half will have correspondingly less resources (e.g. membership fees, personnel) to carry out its activities. However, the major shortcoming of this measure is that it precludes cross-national comparison, as the most obvious single determinant of raw numbers is the size of the available membership pool. In the absence of other factors, then, German parties should have more members than Norwegian ones, as the population of Germany is simply much larger than that of Norway. The same problem arises when comparing even the same country diachronically. Because European electorates have grown substantially over the last forty years due to population growth, shifts in age distribution, and franchise enlargement to include 18 to 21 year old citizens, a party whose membership remains constant becomes smaller in relative terms.

The second common measure often employed to standardize values across nations and over time is the ratio of party members to voters (M/V). This ratio is often used as an indicator of penetration/encapsulation, but is also flawed, as it can be said to wrongly assume each party to have a fixed electorate. Consequently, increases in M/V imply greater penetration/encapsulation, while decreases imply the opposite. In the absence of this objectionable assumption, the meaning of the indicator becomes unclear. For instance, does the M/V ratio increase because a given party has managed to recruit a higher proportion of its voters, or because the party loses voters, but not members (Katz and Mair 1992: 331)? Because of the unsatisfactory nature of both the implicit assumption and the measure, I will not use it for comparing parties, although making brief references to it in sections 3.6 and 4.4.

The third indicator of membership size, which controls for the size of the overall national electorate rather than for each party’s share of the vote and transforms the absolute numbers into a ratio of that electorate, is the M/E. This measure has two advantages. First, it is equally as comparable within nations as are the M values: if the M/E of party A is twice as large as that of party B, then party A has twice as many members as party B. Second, it is suited to cross-national and longitudinal comparison: the overall membership in Greece in

1998 was almost four times as large as that of the United Kingdom in 1998, once the relative sizes of the Greek and British electorates were controlled for, and the M/E of Norway in 1980 was more than twice as large as that of Norway in 1997, once the expansion of the Norwegian electorate was controlled for (Katz and Mair 1992: 331, Mair and van Biezen 2001: 16). I will use M and M/E in the following.

3.5. Party Membership Development in a European Context

The findings in the articles by Katz and Mair and Mair and van Biezen are reported in Table 3 and 4. There are two differences between the tables. First, Katz and Mair, while discussing the raw numbers, do not disclose them in their paper. They are therefore not reported in Table 3, and my discussion of the change in them from 1960 to 1990 is based exclusively on the authors' discussion. Second, whereas Mair and van Biezen list the specific years for which their data were collected, roughly 1980, 1990, and 2000, Katz and Mair report memberships at the time of the first election in the 1960s and the last election in the 1980s.

Table 3: Party Membership Change in Europe 1960-1990: M/E Ratios

Country	First Election in the 1960s (%)	Last Election in the 1980s (%)	Change in M/E ratio
Austria	26,2	21,8	-4,4
Belgium	7,8	9,2	+1,4
Denmark	21,1	6,5	-14,6
Finland	18,9	12,9	-6,0
West Germany	2,5	4,2	+1,7
Ireland	NA	5,3	NA
Italy	12,7	9,7	-3,0
Netherlands	9,4	2,8	-6,6
Norway	15,5	13,5	-2,0
Sweden	22,0	21,2	-0,8
UK	9,4	3,3	-6,1

The first column in Table 3 gives the countries examined, the second and third the period of examination, and the final column the change in the M/E ratio.

Table 4: Party Membership Change in Europe 1980-2000: Absolute Numbers and M/E Ratios

Country	Period	Change in numbers of members (M)	Change in numbers (M) as percentage of original membership*	Change in M/E ratio
Austria	1980-1999	-446209	-30,21	-10,82
Belgium	1980-1999	-136382	-22,10	-2,42
Czech Republic	1993-1999	-225200	-41,32	-3,10
Denmark	1980-1998	-70385	-25,52	-2,16
Finland	1980-1998	-206646	-34,03	-6,09
France	1978-1999	-1222128	-64,59	-3,48
Germany	1980-1999	-174967	-8,95	-1,59
Great Britain	1980-1998	-853156	-50,39	-2,20
Greece	1980-1998	+375000	+166,67	+3,58
Hungary	1990-1999	+8300	+5,02	+0,04
Ireland	1980-1998	-27856	-24,47	-1,86
Italy	1980-1998	-2091887	-51,54	-5,61
Netherlands	1980-2000	-136459	-31,67	-1,78
Norway	1980-1997	-218891	-47,49	-8,04
Portugal	1980-2000	+50381	+17,01	-0,29
Slovakia	1994-2000	+37777	+29,63	+0,82
Spain	1980-2000	+808705	+250,73	+2,22
Sweden	1980-1998	-142533	-28,05	-2,87
Switzerland	1977-1997	-118800	-28,85	-4,28

* The percentage change is measured relative to the earliest year for which membership is reported in these data.

The first column in Table 4 lists the countries examined, the second the period of examination, the third the change in the absolute numbers of members, the fourth the change in

the numbers as a percentage of the original membership, and the final column the change in the total party membership as a percentage of the total electorate.

I begin with change in the total numbers of party members between the early 1960s and late 1980s (Table 3). Katz and Mair (1992: 332-333) report that there is no discernable trend with regard to these. The number of countries which experienced a growth in party membership equals exactly that of countries with dwindling figures: 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%). Furthermore, there seems to be no pattern to the distribution of gainers and losers. Although the average proportionate gain is numerically greater than the average proportionate loss, there is considerable overlap between the two distributions. Nor is there evidence of geographic or cultural bias: M rose in two Nordic countries and fell in the other two; rose in Germany and fell in Austria; and rose in Belgium and fell in the Netherlands. Thus, in 1990, there was no indication of a complete collapse in absolute figures in Western Europe, with Denmark and the United Kingdom as possible exceptions. However, as mentioned in section 3.4, in the context of the considerable expansion of national electorates in Western Europe in the course of this period, both steady and growing memberships could mask substantial relative declines.

When taking into account Mair and van Biezen's (2001: 12-13) report from the late 1990s (Table 4), however, the picture changes dramatically. Measured as a percentage of the numbers recorded in 1980, the raw numbers fell in all the long-established democracies and one post-authoritarian country between 1980 and 2000. In France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, the decrease was between 50 and 65%; in Norway, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, and Austria, absolute figures fell by between 30 and 50%; and in Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and Belgium, raw numbers decreased by between 20 and 30%. 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%. In the remaining countries raw numbers increased markedly: Hungary had 173600 members in 1999 (+5%), Portugal 346504 in 2000 (+17%), Slovakia 165277 in 2000 (+29,6%), Greece 600000 in 1998 (+166,7%), and Spain 1131250 in 2000 (+250,7%) (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 9-12). These states completed successful transitions to democracy from the 1970s and onwards (Haynes 2001: 1), and this could affect the attractiveness of party membership: it may appeal more to voters that have not always had the opportunity to join the party they support compared to voters with no experience with authoritarian rule. A process of

disengagement as measured by declining party membership figures can plausibly be expected to be weak or perhaps even non-existent in countries with recent experience with dictatorship.

When I shift attention to from M to M/E, a more continuous trend emerges for the entire period. From 1960 to 1990 (Table 3), the M/E ratio fell in eight of the ten countries, with Belgium and West Germany as the only exceptions to the trend. 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 of the national figures only decreased from 14,6% in the first election in the 1960s to 10,5% in the last election in the 1980. A decline of 4,1% in the proportion of European electorates who were party members may not be very much over 30 years, although Denmark, for example, experienced a staggering loss of 14,6%. On the other hand, the proportionate decline was considerable when taking into account the initial national M/E values. Although the values of Sweden, Norway, and Austria at the end of the period were more than four-fifths of those at the beginning, the rates of Denmark, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom at the end had 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%; Finland, Italy, and Norway between 10 and 20%; and Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom between 5 and 10% in the early 1960s, only Austria, Sweden, Norway, and Finland were above 10%, and the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and West Germany were below 5% in the late 1980s (Katz and Mair 1991: 333-334). Thus, it is clear that steady or growing memberships did to some degree mask relative declines.

The trend of decline in M/E levels continued towards the end of the millennium (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 10-12). Table 4 shows that a large majority of the countries has experienced a more or less substantial 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 decline was most severe in Austria, where it was almost 11%. Norway, Finland, and Italy followed with rates that fell between 5 and 10%. France, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Belgium, and Germany suffered relatively modest losses below 5%. The only countries that countered this trend represent a group of relatively recently democratized polities, including Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and Spain, which experienced growth ranging from a little over 0% to almost 4%. Again, this may have been attributable to the relatively short amount of time that the parties had been around to mobilize freely in these post-authoritarian polities. Taken together, the average M/E loss of the 13 long-established democracies was more than 4%. This development both confirmed and accentuated the pattern from Katz and Mair's

study. In relative terms, the decline in M/E levels appeared more severe: in 1980, the 13 long-established democracies had a mean ratio of 9,81%, which by the late 1990s had shrunk to a meagre 5,72%. Thus, at the end of the 1990s, these countries averaged M/E ratios of less than 60% of the levels in 1980.

In sum, parties in Western Europe have been losing the capacity to engage citizens in the way they once did - across all of the long-established democracies, parties have lost members rapidly (Mair and van Biezen 2001: 13). Whereas no European-wide trend of membership decline was discernable from 1960 to 1990 when measured in absolute figures, with the number of countries with downslope figures equalling the countries recording a growth, the 13 long-established democracies examined from 1980 to 2000 evidenced major declines in absolute numbers. Measured by M/E, the studies yield a more continuous, yet nonetheless negative, status report: prolonging a trend that was apparent at the end of the 1980s, national levels of party membership at the dawn of the new millennium failed to keep pace with the growth in the size of the national electorates. Hence, there is evidence of dramatic decline in party membership in virtually all established democracies during the last 30-40 years (Putnam 2002: 405-406).

Exploring the causes for this generally is beyond the scope of this thesis, but Dalton and Wattenberg (2002: 10-13) offer some impressionistic suggestions that I briefly recap. At the macro-level, they cite three forces. First, technological changes, such as the growth of the media as a rival to political parties in providing citizens with political information, may make party membership less attractive from a supply-side perspective¹³. On the demand-side, public opinion polls and media advertising make politics more capital-intensive and less labor-intensive, reducing the importance of rallies and door-to-door contacting. Furthermore, personalization of politics, with focus shifting from parties to candidates, may render parties themselves somewhat superfluous. Second, some parties or entire party systems, such as the United States, have adopted primaries or other methods of candidate selection that actually lessen the importance of parties in the political process. Third, some have argued that partisan decline is part of a general crisis of contemporary democracies. The gist of this argument is that multiple and conflicting policy demands being placed on contemporary democracies exceed their performance capacity, and parties as the most important agents of the democratic process suffer as a result of this.

¹³ Dalton and Wattenberg place the mass media at both the macro- and the meso-level.

At the meso level, the proliferation of special-interest groups and single-issue lobbies have assumed some of the role parties have traditionally had in representing public interests. Another set of changes are occurring within parties themselves. Increasing professionalization within contemporary parties may, like media campaigning, make mass membership less necessary and financial resources correspondingly more important (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002: 11-12).

Finally, at the micro-level, the modernization hypothesis contains several assumptions about the changing role of the citizenry in advanced industrial societies. First, the increasing educational skills of contemporary electorates have presumably enhanced their cognitive capacities so as to make them politically self-sufficient and thereby less likely to defer to party elites or to support a party out of habit. Second, with spreading affluence, the modern citizenry's interests have expanded to include a range of new post-material issues such as environmental protection, lifestyle choices, and consumer rights. Not only have many of these issues crossed existing party alignments to make representation through the electoral-territorial arena difficult, but the participatory aspects of such values frequently lead post-materialists to avoid the hierarchic and structured nature of party politics in favor of methods of direct democracy. Third, the general erosion of group-based politics in most advanced democracies has consequences for parties. Social and geographic mobility along with other modernization forces have loosened the ties between individuals and bounded/bonded communities, such as the working class milieu or church communities, and cleavage-based partisanship may thus become less common (Dalton and Wattenberg (2002: 10-11).

In addition, as discussed in section 2.3, one should keep in mind that independently of societal factors, centralization, computerization, and other measures implemented to enhance parties' ability to monitor their memberships, have had modestly deflationary effects on membership figures. This occurred when the British Labour Party changed its affiliation requirements for local chapters in the late 1970s, and when the German Social Democratic Party began to thoroughly purge its rolls of non-paying members in the 1980s (Scarrow 2002: 85).

3.6. Party Membership Development in Norway

It is time to examine how the major Norwegian parties fare individually. Table 5 reports the membership figures for the major Norwegian parties except the Progress Party from 1950 to 2006¹⁴.

Table 5: Norwegian Party Membership 1950-2006: Absolute Numbers and M/E Ratios

	The Norwegian Labor Party	The Socialist Left Party¹⁵	The Center Party¹⁶	Christian People's Party	Liberals	Conservatives	M/E Ratio All Parties^{17*}
1950	200501	NA	NA	NA	NA	61442	NA
1960	165096	NA	NA	30346	NA	96931	NA
1970	155254	2437	70000	NA	NA	110241	NA
1980	153507	NA	53517	69697	12007	152185	NA
1990	128106	13072	47117	56176	11300	146308	12,6
2000	58769	7428	31557	47864	6552	63993	6,4
2006	51163 ¹⁸	9774	22000 ¹⁹	39337	6020	35878 ²⁰	4,8

* M/E ratios were calculated on the basis of the election year closest to my observational points (electorates in parentheses): 1989 (3190311), 2001 (3359433), 2005 (3421500).

In Table 5, the first column gives the years, columns 2-7 list the parties, and the final column shows the M/E ratios of these parties. As Table 5 shows, there is unfortunately some missing data, which prevents me from discussing general trends from the year 1950. However, the available data reveals that nearly all the major Norwegian parties, the Progress Party excluded, have experienced a severe decrease in membership since 1990, measured in raw numbers. Before 1990, there was no general downward trend. The Labor Party has

¹⁴ Source for the years 1950-1990: Heidar and Saglie (1994: 357). The membership in 2000 and 2006 for all parties were provided by Organization Secretary Kari Lindtveit of the Christian People's Party, February 27th 2008. The membership in 2007 for the Labor Party was provided by Organization Secretary Monica V. Sivertsen, February 29th 2008.

¹⁵ The Socialist Left Party was called the Socialist People's Party until 1975.

¹⁶ The Center Party was called the Agrarian Party until 1959.

¹⁷ Source of electorate data: Statistisk sentralbyrå (2000, 2005a).

¹⁸ Membership in 2007.

¹⁹ Membership in 2005.

²⁰ Membership in 2005.

experienced the most dramatic loss of members. From having more than 200000 on its rolls in 1950, it lost almost a quarter in the course of the next 20 years. The membership appeared to stabilize in the 1970s and 1980s, but it simply plunged from 1990 to 2000, and was in 2007 a meager quarter of what it had been 57 years earlier. The Socialist People's Party saw its membership increase considerably from roughly 2500 in 1970, the first year in which data was available, to 1990, when it passed 13000. Although the membership was reduced to almost half of that in 2000, it rose again to nearly 10000 in 2006. The Center Party has also suffered from a sharp decline in membership numbers. The first year of available data was 1970, in which the party had a membership of 70000. From there on the decline has been steady, with almost 50000 members lost in the following 35 years. The Christian People's Party had a little over 30000 members in 1960, the first year of available data, and the membership more than doubled in the ensuing 20 years. This trend was markedly reversed in 1980, when a decline began that reduced membership figures to about 40000 in 2006. Alongside the Socialist People's Party, the Liberals has had the smallest membership in this period. Membership numbers were not available before 1980, when the party had about 12000 people on its rolls. By 2006, half of these had left the party. The Conservatives has had the most dramatic decline after the Labor Party. From a little over 61000 in 1950, the membership skyrocketed to a high of over 150000 in 1980, whereupon it fell astonishingly to only 35000 in 2005, almost 120000 less than 25 years before.

It is not possible to calculate the M/E ratio for the entire period, as there is missing membership data for four of the six parties for the same number of observational points, but according to Svåsand (1994: 313), it remained relatively stable at around 16% from 1950 to 1990. However, I calculate the collective membership to 12,6% of the electorate in 1990, whereupon it fell quickly: the six major Norwegian parties with the exclusion of the Progress Party enrolled only 4,8% of the voters just 16 years later. Thus, Norwegian party membership has plunged in absolute numbers and obviously also in relative figures.

In addition to the putative, general causes listed by Dalton and Wattenberg, Svåsand (1994: 313-316) discusses some causes of the decline specific to the Norwegian context. Beginning with the Labor Party, it lost a third of the membership on account of the 1972 EC debacle. This was only a temporary setback, as there was some recovery in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, the membership decreased again from the 1990s. Some of this may be attributable to the dissolution of the collective membership in 1997²¹, that is, when local

²¹ Source of year: Organization Secretary Monica V. Sivertsen of the Labor Party, February 29th 2008.

union chapters could no longer collectively join the Labor Party. More generally, a declining linkage between social class and voting is reflected in the membership figures²².

The Socialist People's Party sought from the beginning to build an organizational alternative to the top-heavy bureaucratic machine they perceived the Labor Party to be. Hence, the emphasis has been on activity rather than on formal organization, and this can partly explain why the membership for the most has been below 10000 (Svåsand 1994: 316).

The decline of the Center Party is rooted in its "sectarian" character. Unlike similar parties in Finland and Sweden, it has never attracted urban voters, and remains deeply entrenched within the agrarian community: a third of its voters in 1985 were farmers or fishermen. These occupational groups accounted for between 40 and 66% of the party's regional membership in the same year. As farmers and fishermen make up progressively less of the workforce, the party's "natural" constituency has declined. The membership grew considerably in the early 1990s, but this was primarily due to the salience of the EU issue in Norwegian politics. It has been greatly reduced since (Svåsand 1994: 315).

The Christian People's Party stands out with its high M/V ratio; a membership of almost 40000 in 2006 is high for a party that has fluctuated between 5 and 10% in the polls for a long time. The loss of members from 1980 to 2006 has been gradual and is hard to link to any specific cause, but the modernization process may decrease the appeal of an originally counterculture party that has mobilized on causes such as pietism and temperance. Although it is a modern party today, it is commonly accused of having a moralist agenda²³.

The Liberals has always appealed to a wide range of the electorate, and has thus not been struck by changes in the social structure like the Labor Party, the Center Party, and the Conservatives. It has traditionally been organizationally weak, in addition to being notoriously susceptible to electoral volatility. It failed to cope with the EEC issue in 1972, and internal conflicts reinforced already existing political and personal rivalries, resulting in an actual split. Although the splinter Liberal People's Part party merged with the Liberals in 1988, the party has the smallest membership of all the parties in Stortinget today (Svåsand 1994: 315, Venstre 2008).

The Conservatives experienced a remarkable increase in its membership figures from the late 1950s and into the 1980s. A major factor contributing to this was the emergence of a new leadership in this period that had a different view of the party organization. The party had

²² As discussed in sections 3.3 and 3.5, this is not specific to the Norwegian context.

²³ Svåsand does not suggest any causes of membership decline in the Christian People's Party. The paragraph contains my reflections exclusively.

always been ambivalent with respect to its organization, which was not regarded as an activist movement like that of the Labor Party. In line with Duverger's prediction of "contagion from the left", the new leadership recognized that the party needed precisely a large group of loyal followers that could be mobilized at election time. Furthermore, the elitist style and culture of the party organization had to adapt to the rapid changes in the social structure caused by the educational expansion as well as geographic and social mobility. Thus, the membership growth reflected to some degree the change in party philosophy, whereby organization-building became a priority. The collapse in membership figures in the last two decades is just as remarkable as the growth it succeeded, and decline in class voting may have affected the party along with the emergence of a competitor to the right of it, among other factors (Svåsand 1994: 316).

As noted in sections 2.3 and 3.5, centralization, computerization, and other measures implemented to enhance parties' ability to monitor their memberships, can have deflationary effects on membership figures. The Norwegian parties vary in the extent to which they have implemented such measures that are useful for verifying membership figures. In 1989, the Labor Party began to centralize dues collection²⁴, the Socialist Left Party did so in 1982²⁵. The Center Party is currently working on centralizing its dues collection and will have a system in place from 2009²⁶. The Christian People's Party still leaves this to local chapters, although the central organization offers to do it for them. Roughly 70% have passed dues collection over to the central party²⁷. The Liberals centralized its dues collection in 1995²⁸. The Conservatives began using its first central electronic membership monitoring system in the early 1980s, but it was not before 2002/2003 that all regional and local parties were included in the central register of dues-paying members²⁹.

It is not possible to say anything in general about a possible connection between the timing of these technical measures and decline in membership numbers. The Labor Party, the Conservatives, and the Liberals all saw their membership figures decline after the implementation of centralized dues collection, but the first two had already been losing members for a long time. The Liberals' membership numbers were almost cut in half from 1990 to 2000, and it is plausible that the centralization of dues collection in 1995 can have contributed to this. It is impossible to say anything about this for the Socialist Left Party, as

²⁴ Source: Organization Secretary Monica V. Sivertsen of the Labour Party, February 29th 2008.

²⁵ Source: Administrative Leader of the Socialist Left Party's parliamentary group, Sissel Bugge, June 5th 2008.

²⁶ Source: Deputy General Secretary Oddvar Igland of the Center Party, June 5th 2008.

²⁷ Source: Administrative Leader Knut Are Hole of the Christian People's Party, June 4th 2008.

²⁸ Source: May Riseth Hamilton of the Liberals, June 5th 2008.

²⁹ Source: Organization Leader Thomas Berg Olsen of the Conservatives, June 5th 2008.

there is no membership data immediately prior to the implementation of the measure in 1982. The Center Party is still working on centralizing its dues collection. With regard to the Christian People’s Party, the entire organization does not take part in the system.

3.7. The Exception: the Progress Party

Table 6 reports the membership figures for the Progress Party since its founding in 1973. Figures are not available for each year before 1993:

Table 6: Party Membership in the Progress Party 1973-2008³⁰:

1973	1981	1989	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
1020	10000	16874	14926	13179	10555	10932	10117	12013	9841

(Continued:)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
13907	15174	16529	20104	22420	21934	20389	22295	23869	25000

Table 6 shows that the Progress Party has had continued membership growth since Anders Lange founded it in 1973. In 1973, the Progress Party had 1020 members, passing 10000 in 1981. By the end of the decade, the membership had risen to almost 17000. The dip from 1993 to 1994 was caused by the central organization’s change in its operational definition of membership from registered members to dues-paying members. Indeed, the Progress Party does not consider its membership figures reliable before 1994. The figures fluctuated between roughly 10000 and 15000 in the 1990s, before climbing towards 20000 after 2000. In 2008, the membership had risen to 25000. Thus, the Progress Party clearly counters the current trend in party membership in both Europe and Norway. Although the Socialist Left Party has seen its membership numbers fluctuate in its almost 50 years in Norwegian politics, with a growth from 2000 to 2006, no other Norwegian party has enjoyed an equally stable and positive development since the early 1970s.

³⁰ The source of the membership in 1973, 1981, 1989, and 1991 is Heidar and Svåsand (1994: 357). The data from 1993 to 2007 was provided by the Progress Party’s Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan, February 28th 2008. Figures show membership December 31st each year. The source of the 2008 membership figures is Fremskrittspartiet (2008c).

The Progress Party offers four categories of membership today. For an ordinary membership (“Hovedmedlem”), the price is 300 Norwegian kroner. If one person is either an ordinary member or elderly/disabled, other members belonging to the same household get a discount (“Husstandsmedlem”) and pay only 150 kroner. Elderly (above 67 years of age) and disabled people get the same discount (“Honnørmedlem”). Finally, people between 15 and 30 years can also be members of the youth organization, the price for which is 50 kroner. The three first categories of membership entitle the member to participate in party meetings, in which he or she can propose resolutions and voice opinions; vote on party issues; run for party and public offices; and demand information about the activities of the local branch at its annual convention. They also receive the internal newspaper, *Fremskritt*³¹, twice a month (one per household) and are offered to take courses arranged by the Progress Party Study Association (FrS) (Fremskrittspartiet 2008*d*, Fremskrittspartiet 2008*e*).

³¹ To avoid any confusion with the name of the party, I refer to this newspaper as “Fremskritt” instead of “Progress”.

Chapter 4

Explaining the Progress Party's Membership Growth

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I aim to establish a fruitful theoretical framework within which the Progress Party's membership development can be explained. The idea for the organization of the chapter came after reading Knut Heidar's article "The Polymorphic Nature of Party Membership" (1994) and Per Selle and Lars Svåsand's article "The Local Party Organization and Its Members: Between Randomness and Rationality" (1983). In the first half of his article, Heidar (1994: 61) presents different perspectives adopted in the literature on party membership, making distinctions on the one hand between research treating membership as an independent or as a dependent variable, and on the other between research focusing on different levels of analysis – macro (system), meso (organization), and micro (individual).

I treat membership as a dependent variable, and I include macro-, meso-, and micro-level variables in my analysis. It may be difficult to establish at which level a given variable is, but I believe it is not crucial where one places possible two-level variables as long as it is discussed.

Table 7: Party Membership as a Dependent Variable: A Multilevel Analysis

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables		
	Macro	Meso	Micro
Party membership as a dependent variable	National social and political structures have consequences for party membership	The party organization has consequences for party membership	Individual characteristics have consequences for party membership

My overall approach is summarized in Table 7: party membership is the dependent variable, while national social and political structures (macro-level), party organization (meso-level), and individual characteristics (micro-level) form a multi-level set of independent variables.

The contribution of the Selle and Svåsand article is the indication of various independent variables at the three levels of analysis which might have an impact on party

membership. In the following section, I use two variables from their framework – organizational network and executive structure³² - and add several new ones:

Macro-Level

- Electoral Success
- Public Subsidies

Meso-Level

- Leadership Efforts
- Organizational Network
- Executive Structure

Micro-Level

- Policy Support
- The Availability of Political Positions for Members

4.2. Macro-Level Variables

Macro-level variables concern the characteristics of the Norwegian political system. However, as Selle and Svåsand (1983: 213) note, it is problematic in an empirical study to take proper account of macro-level factors unless the study is a) cross-national, or b) covers several points in time. My study is not cross-national, but it is diachronic in that it covers the full period of existence of the Progress Party. I discuss two macro-level variables that may influence membership growth: electoral success and public subsidies.

While public subsidies to political parties are clearly an attribute of the national political structure, as they in Norway are calculated on the basis of parties' performance in parliamentary elections (NOU 2001/3: 2), categorizing electoral success as a macro-level variable is debatable. Obviously, electoral success is preceded by the existence of an electoral system, which is an attribute of the national political structure. However, electoral success denotes an action performed by political parties – participation in contests for publicly elected offices. As organizations, parties are meso-level actors, and any variable derived from them may thus be considered meso-level. Then again, it is the individual that casts the ballot in elections. In other words, labelling it micro-level is a final possibility. In my opinion, the

³² “Executive structure” is my label.

argument for characterizing it as macro-level is most convincing: without an electoral system, it would not be possible to discuss parties participating in elections or individuals casting the ballot.

Moreover, the electoral performance of the Progress Party is a system-level characteristic in so far as it depends on how other parties perform.

Electoral Success

The gist of this argument is that the Progress Party's electoral success may have led to membership growth.

Several recent quantitative studies have examined the impact of electoral performance on membership levels³³. Fisher, Denver and Hands' (2006) show that the results of the 1997 election in Britain significantly influenced party membership. In the short term, membership decline in the three major parties was greater where the electoral success was least and smaller where the electoral outcome was more favorable. Fisher (2000), also examining British parties, demonstrates that variations in the size of constituency party membership was significantly affected by the degree of previous electoral success: parties tend to be organizationally strong where they are already electorally strong. Relatedly, Whiteley and Seyd (1998) study changes in activism among grass roots members of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Britain and argue that electoral success may trigger a "spiral of mobilization" and conversely, that electoral failure may precipitate decline in activism and campaigning at the local level.

On a general level, then, there is some empirical evidence to support the idea of electoral success having positive effects on membership figures. It is plausible that a "spiral of mobilization" translates vote(r)s into members. It may be that the positive aura that surrounds a party that has done well in the electoral arena draws people to the organization, like a soccer team that gets more supporters when it is winning, but also that people already in the organization get inspired to work even harder for their party and for example manages to recruit more members. Hence, H1:

H1: Electoral Success Has Led to Membership Growth in the Progress Party

³³ The authors do not exclude any self-reinforcing patterns, i.e. that party membership in turn may influence electoral performance.

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H1

I operationalize H1 by comparing the results of the Progress Party in parliamentary elections from 1993 to 2005 and regional elections from 1991 to 2007 with membership data to see if they covary. Unfortunately, there is hardly any data on Progress Party membership figures prior to the 1990s. I have data for the year 1991, but annual membership data became available in 1993. Systematic comparison is consequently possible from the 1993 parliamentary election and the 1991 regional election and onwards. My intention was to compare such data for all Norwegian parties and some foreign/West-European parties, but scant membership data for both Norwegian and West-European parties in general, with mainly 10-year intervals between membership observations, makes systematic comparison of election results and membership figures difficult.

Before I discuss what kind of evidence is required to support H1, some comments on how I use the term “electoral success” and how I study membership increase are in place. By “electoral success”, I mean an increase in the share of the vote the Progress Party receives from one election to the next. This could seem too strict, as any party may have good reasons to be satisfied with maintaining their share of the vote from one election to the next, or even a decrease. For example, in light of five MPs leaving the party (some voluntarily and some by expulsion) and two major sex scandals, both in the winter of 2001, Carl I. Hagen writes that 14,6% in the parliamentary election in September that year was very satisfactory, although the Progress Party received 15,3% of the vote in the 1997 election (Hagen 2007: 397). However, the hypothesized mechanisms leading to H1 seem more plausible to expect when the Progress Party has increased its share of the vote from one election to the next.

As long as a statistical analysis of the hypothesized effect between electoral success and membership figures is not conducted, there are some obvious difficulties with determining the effect of the former on the latter. First, if a party experiences a surge in membership figures in the wake of an election, this may be due to numerous causes. A party mobilizes its entire apparatus well ahead of the election and maintains a high activity level until the day of the election: its representatives arrange rallies, participate in debates, and may launch a campaign to recruit more members. In short, as a party is visible to the extent that it manages at election time, membership growth may follow from several preceding events that elicit interest in the party. I must thus settle with looking for covariation between election results and membership numbers, acknowledging that the allocation of explanatory power to independent variables cannot be done with certainty.

Furthermore, it is not obvious what the most preferable date of the membership data is, when comparing it to an election result. First, when considering the effect of an election result on party membership, membership data should be collected both at the day of the election and some time subsequent to the election. I only have membership data registered December 31st for every year since 1993, and the year prior to the election will therefore have to suffice as the basis for comparison. With regard to what point in time to compare the year prior to the election with, two choices seem reasonable. First, as Norwegian elections are normally held in mid-September, instant membership growth after an election, perhaps caused by the positive aura that surrounds a successful party, may be gauged December 31st the same year. Second, to take into account a long-term effect, possibly caused by members already in the organization inspired by the election result to organize a comprehensive recruitment campaign or otherwise attend membership issues, membership data may be collected December 31st the year after the election. I include both points in time for comparison with the year prior to the election. H1 is supported if there is evidence of:

- Increase in the Progress Party's share of the vote from one election to the next, and membership figures have increased

H1 is weakened if there is evidence of:

- Increase in the Progress Party's share of the vote from one election to the next, but membership figures have decreased

or

- Decrease in the Progress Party's share of the vote from one election to the next, but membership figures have increased

Public Subsidies

Public subsidies to Norwegian political parties are calculated on the basis of their share of the vote in the last parliamentary election (NOU 2001/3: 2). These subventions may be used to build the party organization.

There are five steps in the development of state financing of political parties in Norway. From the introduction in 1970 to 1975, national party organizations were the only

recipients. In 1975, it was extended to the regional and local levels of government, and finally, in 1978, also to the youth organizations. In 1975, a 2,5% electoral payout threshold was introduced, only to be abandoned in 2005, and parties now only have to register to become eligible for public financial support (Svåsand 1991: 127, Scarrow 2006: 628). Public subsidies may be for generic use or earmarked.

In the debate about public funding of political parties, an argument about the consequences of public funding for parties' membership figures holds that it decreases parties' dependence on membership dues and other voluntary financial contributions, and therefore is likely to severely weaken their incentives to recruit and activate members. For the individual member, involvement may become less interesting as members no longer control a vital resource in their exchange with the leadership. Thus, parties may lose much of their capacity to function as participatory, representative and communicative channels in the political system (Pierre et al. 2000: 2-3, Casas-Zamora 2005: 47-48).

It is possible, however, that it can actually be the other way around, that public subsidies can increase party membership. First, the claim that there is a causal relationship between the emergence of public subsidies and declining party membership finds little empirical support. Pierre et al's (2000: 16-18) study of 12 Western democracies shows that party families which experienced a declining membership prior to the introduction of public subsidies, such as conservative and liberal parties, largely continued to do so once they were implemented, and parties with increasing membership, such as socialist/social democratic and christian democratic parties, experienced continued growth after the subsidy programs had been enacted. Casas-Zamora's (2005: 48) findings corroborate this: there is no uniform covariance between the evolution of subsidy levels and membership rates throughout Europe from 1960 to 1989. A white paper by the Norwegian government on the purposes and consequences of state subsidies finds that overall membership figures were maintained for 15 years after the introduction of subsidies in 1970 due to growth in the Conservative Party and Christian People's Party, the Labor Party's fluctuation, and the emergence of the Socialist Left Party and the Progress Party (NOU 2001/3: 12). Numbers did not plunge before the late 1980s. Second, although membership may be a function of parties' recruiting efforts, the claim seems to deemphasize that membership may follow from relatively independent individual decisions to join. Third, the claim can overestimate the relevance of financial incentives in the decision of party leaders to reach out for new members (Casas-Zamora 2005: 48). Scarrow (1994) lists numerous non-monetary incentives to recruit new members: members are loyal voters; members are ambassadors to their communities; members are

volunteer workers within the party; members keep the party in touch with the electorate; and members are potential candidates, to mention some.

If parties need members, public funding can facilitate the efforts of recruiting and retaining them rather than steer the norm of party organization back towards the caucus party:

H2: Increased Public Funding Has Led to Membership Growth in the Progress Party

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H2

To test whether increased public funding of political parties has led to membership growth in the Progress Party, I examine if the Progress Party has used considerable public subsidies to finance successful recruitment campaigns and membership maintenance work.

H2 is supported if evidence indicates that:

- The Progress Party has used significant amounts³⁴ of public subsidies to finance successful recruitment campaigns and membership maintenance work

H2 is dismissed if evidence indicates that:

- The Progress Party has not used significant amounts of public subsidies to finance successful recruitment campaigns and membership maintenance work

However, this presupposes that the Progress Party has made efforts to recruit and retain members, which is the topic of the following section.

4.3. Meso-Level Variables

The meso-level approach refers to the organization as a determinant of membership growth: what has the Progress Party itself done to increase its membership figures? What features of the organization are conducive to membership growth? In this part of the chapter I present three organizational variables: leadership efforts, organizational network and executive structure.

Whereas electoral success, as discussed above, is a possible three-level variable, leadership efforts, organizational network and executive structure all tap into actions by

³⁴ "Significant amounts" is obviously a relative term that must be specified on the basis of budget reports.

and/or qualities of the Progress Party as an organization, and are thus unambiguous meso-level variables.

Leadership Efforts

The essence of this argument is that the Progress Party as a nascent party organization has needed members, and that the leadership has realized this and worked systematically to increase membership numbers.

With regard to political parties, there has been much debate on the usefulness of ordinary members to political parties. Duverger (1959, Ware 1996: 96) forecasted the general dominance of the mass party; large membership organizations were the hallmark of a modern political society and generally the direction of the future party development. Epstein (1980: 130-166, 233-260, Ware 1996: 97), however, building upon Kirscheimer's (1966) model of the "catch-all" party seeking electoral support wherever it can find it, rejected the European orientation of Duverger's analysis and described mass membership organizations as responses to European circumstances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially those circumstances associated with class-conscious socialist movements. These parties were not normal for all Western societies, and particularly not for the United States. He saw the parties of the United States as a kind of surviving organizational relic: they had not been forced to relinquish their caucus form of organization because they had never faced the threat from a large socialist working-class party. In Epstein's view, American-style parties were best equipped to conduct modern election campaigns. In an era of radio and television campaigning, opinion polls, and the like, parties did not need a large number of dues-paying members to mobilize voters. Rather, what they needed was large sums of money to buy these and related services, and money was more effectively acquired from wealthy interest groups and individual donors than through seeking to recruit a large mass membership, as in the past. Moreover, a large membership could impede party leaders in devising campaign strategies to counter their opponents in other parties; party leaders would actually only benefit from a much looser connection between leaders and activists. Consequently, Epstein argued that it was not "contagion from the left", but "contagion from the right" – the model being the American Republican Party – that would characterize the future of party organizations in liberal democracies, and he saw evidence of this contagion in Britain, West-Germany, and France. Finally, Katz and Mair (1995) point to a diminished role of ordinary members, at least as a source of income, as parties' weakening links to society have rendered them dependent on the state for their sustenance.

Scarrow (1994:41-60), nevertheless, lists numerous ways in which rank and file membership is useful for parties, and reasons for why parties should choose to spend resources on recruiting or retaining individual members:

- *Members Improve Membership Statistics.* Parties may look at a large membership as an asset per se, and thus value members for their willingness to inflate their membership roster. The state of partisan health has historically often been considered in light of parties' increasing or decreasing membership figures (see section 3.3). Size for its own sake was used as an argument by the SPD in a recruiting pamphlet in the 1950s, where it argued that a big party organization would elicit respect from voters as well as political opponents.

Parties might also value the membership of particular social segments that can diversify the membership base. First, this can enhance the credibility of parties claiming to have a broad electoral appeal, even if the membership is largely passive. In the 1980s, the leaders of both the SPD and the CDU highlighted their membership diversity when claiming to be parties of the people ("Volksparteien"). Second, as I will get to, membership diversity might be considered a prerequisite for gaining additional (desired) support from certain social segments.

- *Members Are Loyal Voters.* Members may be valued as a distinct group of voters that are loyal to the party and have high turnout rates on election day. In 1988, the SPD party chairman argued in a pro-recruitment speech that election outcomes might hinge on whether a local party's membership was one percent or four percent of the electorate.
- *Members Multiply Votes by Everyday Contacts.* Members may be perceived as "vote multipliers", or "ambassadors" to their communities. One CDU analyst indicated in 1970 how his party thought about members as party ambassadors: "Political decisions, including voting decisions, are formed in the family, among friends, and increasingly at the workplace. In these circles, the members play an important role as multipliers and translators in more or less casual conversations about politics" (Bilstein 1970: 71, cited by Scarrow 1994: 48).
- *Members Provide Essential Funds.* The rationale behind the argument that a new party model has emerged – the cartel party – is that it is decreasing party revenues as a result of declining party membership that has led to dependence on the state for sustenance. In other words, party members have potential financial value, and the

British Conservative Party's 1988 recruiting campaign was unusually blunt when it proclaimed in large typing: "Supporting a good stable Government requires more than just your vote. It also requires an annual contribution from you" (CCO 1988, cited by Scarrow 1994: 48).

- *Members Are Volunteer Workers Inside the Party.* Members may provide a valuable source of free labor for parties during and between election campaigns, and this is the reason political scientists typically use to explain why parties might want mass membership. However, Scarrow (1994: 48) finds that the British and German parties ignore in their recruitment justifications the possibility that new members might actively carry out specific local party tasks, but acknowledges that party leaders must be even more aware than party researchers that only a minority of members will work actively within the party organization. Hence, the first four recruitment justifications are probable answers to the question of what, if anything, party leaders think the inactive members are useful for.
- *Members Provide Valuable Ideas.* Members may be viewed as communicational links between the broad electorate and the party leadership that keep the party tuned to grass roots opinion, although this contradicts the idea of members keeping their parties out of touch with their electorates by supporting vote-losing policies. The Labour Party advanced exactly this kind of argument in the 1970s, when it described potential new members as a source of new ideas preventing the party from stultifying.
- *Members as Potential Candidates.* Dalton and Wattenberg (2002: 5) identifies as a crucial task of party organizations the recruitment of candidates to party and public offices. In an open letter discussing the Labour Party's 1946 recruitment campaign, one party official stated that its purpose was "(...) the specialized enrolment of men and women who are particularly well fitted, either by character, or ability, or experience, to take on important tasks inside our Movement. (...)" (Phillips 1946, cited by Scarrow 1994: 49).

Lastly, I would like to include an argument of my own:

- *Mass membership is an ideal in itself.* Parties may seek to enrol members because they value popularly based organizations at a normative level. Based on their examination of what Norwegian party leaders have done to develop their organizations, Heidar and Saglie (2003: 219-239) conclude that these leaders clearly

regard some kind of a membership party as an ideal. Hence, the linkage function that mass parties came to be seen to perform in the mid-twentieth century still lingers in the minds of party leaders as something inherently good.

Scarrow convincingly makes the case that political parties need members, and in my view, these reasons for seeking mass membership resonate especially with parties of young age compared to established parties. Pedersen (1982: 6-9) argues that as political parties increase or decrease in strength in the electorate as well as in the parliament, they pass or eventually strive to pass (and sometimes avoid) certain thresholds. The first threshold is the point of *declaration*, i.e. when a political group declares its intention to participate in elections and effectively becomes a party. The second is the *threshold of authorization*, which denotes legal regulations intended to be a barrier against the intrusion of new parties by defining certain requirements that parties have to meet in order to participate in the electoral campaign or the election itself, for instance a certain number of signatures collected per candidate or for the party as such. The third is the *threshold of representation*, the barrier all parties have to pass to obtain seats in the legislature. Finally, a party must cross the *threshold of relevance*, which Sartori defines as the point when parties get “coalition potential” or “blackmail potential” (Sartori 2005: 122-123).

Pedersen argues that these thresholds form a lifespan continuum on which a political party may move back and forth, but that it strives to advance as far as possible beyond the threshold of declaration, aiming at becoming a ruling party. However, these thresholds also divide up the history of a party into discrete phases, each with its own dominant and different quality (Pedersen 1982: 8). In my view, a nascent party needs members in order to reach and pass, to begin with, the threshold of representation, and thus lay the foundation for eventually becoming a ruling party. Without people to represent the party and expose it to the electorate, it would be impossible for it to win seats in the parliament, let alone become a party with executive power.

Whether there actually is a cost and benefit trade-off, so that the many reasons for mass membership dwindle when it reaches a certain size, is uncertain. It could be that mass membership can become an impediment to the party leadership when it tries to devise the best strategy for winning elections, as argued by Epstein, provided that ordinary members are given a say in for instance policy formulation. Nevertheless, until the point where membership has reached a size which party leaders define as problematic, they can plausibly be expected to actively seek mass membership:

H3A: The Progress Party Leadership Has Made Systematic Efforts to Increase Membership

However, a decision by the party leadership to recruit new members and retain current ones does obviously not guarantee that it will be successful. Hence, a corollary is H3B:

H3B: Progress Party Leadership Efforts to Increase Membership Have Been Successful³⁵

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H3A and H3B

I operationalize H3A by searching for concrete efforts by the central/national³⁶ Progress Party leadership to recruit new members and measures to retain those recruited. It is not enough for the party leadership to recruit members; if it wants to keep them it must also stay in touch with them. The reason for studying the work of the central leadership is that it is unlikely that local or regional branches initiate efforts to recruit new members and measures to retain those recruited, if this has not at some point been encouraged by the central leadership. H3A is supported if there is evidence of:

- Efforts to recruit new members

and

- Measures to retain those recruited

H3A is dismissed if I do not find evidence of:

- Efforts to recruit new members

and

- Measures to retain those recruited

³⁵ Relative to other factors.

³⁶ “Central leadership” is used interchangeably with “national leadership”.

I operationalize H3B by examining if Progress Party members have joined following concrete efforts by the party leadership, centrally, regionally, or locally, to recruit new members, and membership figures remain stable and growing. H3B is supported if evidence indicates that:

- Members join the party after recruitment efforts have been conducted

and

- Membership has been stable and growing throughout the party history

H3B is dismissed if evidence indicates that:

- Members do not join the party after recruitment efforts have been conducted

and

- Membership has not been stable and growing throughout the party history

Organizational Network

The gist of this argument is that as a party expands geographically, membership growth may be a consequence.

Selle and Svåsand (1983: 214-215) argue that the opportunity for individuals to become party members depend on the availability of the party organization, and thus, that the total membership in a party will be closely linked to the extensiveness of the apparatus. The Norwegian party structure corresponds to the administrative structure of the state: all parties have municipal and regional branches, in addition to the central level. As in Duverger's tree-like mass party model, local branches - often numerous within large municipalities - are linked to the central organization by regional structures (Heidar and Saglie 2003: 223-224). Traditionally, the "access structure" of Norwegian parties has been very unequal, which seems natural, given the country's vast territory. Only the Labor Party and the Conservative Party have covered the whole country with party branches. For smaller parties, both socialist and non-socialist, the organizational network has been less extensive (Selle and Svåsand 1983: 214-215).

An individual can always become a party member by joining the regional and national party organization. However, if a political party is without local branches in numerous municipalities, it may stymie membership growth in several ways. First, when a party is absent in a municipality, it has no representatives there to expose it and its policies to potential new members. Although the national political debate is available to all through the mass media, there will be one less party participating in local politics. Furthermore, as joining a party may be a considerable political statement to make for some, the threshold to do it may be greater if potential members are not encouraged by party representatives they know and trust. Second, potential members willing to become active in a local party may remain inactive, if the party they want to join does not have a local chapter, or they may join another party.

In sum, as both the individual opportunity to become party member and a party's mobilization capacity increase when it establishes new local branches, membership growth is likely to follow:

H4: Increase in the Number of Local Progress Party Chapters Has Led to Membership Growth

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H4

I operationalize H4 by examining what role local Progress Party branches play in recruiting new members and retaining those recruited. H4 is supported if there is evidence of:

- Local chapters taking part in recruiting and retaining members

H4 is dismissed if I do not find evidence of:

- Local chapters taking part in recruiting and retaining members

Executive Structure

When a party has a centralized executive structure, this could be conducive to membership growth.

To study how the executive structure in a party may influence membership growth, I apply the *bureaucratic model* taken from organization theory. As Selle and Svåsand (1983: 216) note, in such theory, models explaining the structures and functioning of organizations

do not typically use political parties as examples. However, organization theory is a very general scientific discipline, and it should thus be just as valid to apply the models to party organizations as to hospitals, unions, firms, and public bureaucracies.

The gist of the *bureaucratic model* is that organizational action follows primarily from the executing unit's location in the authority structure. The local organization receives orders from higher up in the hierarchy and implements them according to instructions. Activities are based on abidance by a chain of command in which lower levels simply do as they are told, not the branch's own means-goal calculations. Thus, the fundamental aspect of this model is that the locus of decision-making is outside the organizational unit itself.

Whereas Michels (1968: 15) argue that leaders of organizations, including political parties, develop expert knowledge, specialist skills, and commitment to their own power that they use to subordinate the rank and file, Wilson (1973: 215) sees the challenge as the diametrically opposite: the masses are indifferent, and leaders must activate them. Applied to organizations and not individuals, this means that the party leadership has to instruct lower levels what to do, otherwise there will not be much activity. In this sense the local organization acts within a bureaucratic system and awaits impetus to activity from the outside, as it lacks both sufficient knowledge and political engagement to initiate it itself (Selle and Svåsand 1983: 220-221).

Although such a claim about the people occupying positions at lower levels in the authority structure is both extreme and an affront to them, it seems plausible that the party leadership, who defines the overall action item list, must use both carrots and sticks to ensure that subordinate levels get the work done. The Progress Party is considered to have the most centralized organization in Norway (Svåsand 2003: 12), and a centralized executive structure should be conducive to the implementation of nationally defined efforts to recruit new members and retain recruited ones:

H5: The Progress Party's Centralized Executive Structure Has Led to Membership Growth

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H5

I operationalize H5 by examining if decisions in the Progress Party to conduct recruitment campaigns and measures to retain recruited members are taken centrally, and if they have been successful. H5 is supported if evidence indicates that:

- Efforts to recruit and retain members are mainly suggested and implemented centrally

and

- Centrally suggested and implemented efforts to recruit and retain members have been successful

H5 is dismissed if evidence indicates that:

- Efforts to recruit and retain members are mainly suggested and implemented locally

and/or

- Centrally suggested and implemented efforts to recruit and retain members have failed

4.4. Micro-Level Variables

The micro-level approach refers to the factors explaining individual party membership: why do individuals decide to become members in the Progress Party? There are two main approaches in this literature. First, the Weber-Wilson tradition focuses on different types of motivation for becoming a party member. Second, it is also possible to consider the whole range of socio-demographic variables suggested by the general “participation” literature, such as gender, age, education, income, and so on (Milbrath and Goel 1977, Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Examining both of these approaches falls beyond the scope of this thesis; I confine myself to the first.

Max Weber (1964: 407-408) claims that there are two motives for becoming active in a political party: ideological or/and material benefits. The obvious reason for individuals to become party members is that they want to take active part in or endorse the formation and implementation of policy objectives, but some might join because they seek private goods bestowed upon recipients of politically discretionary governmental or sub-governmental appointments (Strøm and Müller 1999: 5-7).

Although these types of motives do not exclude one another, the distinction is useful for sorting individual motives. Klaus von Beyme (1985: 171-175) identifies four motivational factors. The first is the internal structure of a party. The rationale of this meso-level variable is that an individual’s environment influences the chances of him or her becoming or remaining

a party member: parties with indirect structures and collective membership are likely to experience less membership fluctuation. The second and third are material and ideological incentives. Finally, at the macro level, economic fluctuations can indirectly influence membership numbers, as individuals may be inspired to become active when times are hard.

Richard S. Katz (1990: 154-157) examines party membership from a rational cost/benefit perspective. He lists five possible rewards for individuals: policy influence; preferential treatment at the hands of public officials or other material benefits; political information; social rewards, such as companionship or gratification arising from a sense of performing a civic duty; and psychological rewards, such as mental well-being as a result of faith and identification experienced through membership. On the negative side, he mentions monetary expenses and opportunity costs, such as the loss of opportunities to exert influence through alternative organizations due to lack of time.

Albert O. Hirschman (1982) considers political participation within a longitudinal and dynamic perspective. Pondering why societies oscillate between periods of intense interest in public affairs and almost complete concentration on private affairs, he argues that individuals' concern with personal goals at times yields disappointment, as their materialization depends upon public change. This could trigger a willingness on their part to participate actively in collective action. However, if this proves too exacting, they may retreat to the private sphere again. Applied to party membership, an individual joining a political party might do so because it contributes to the satisfaction of a personal goal at some point in time. When this is exhausted, the person is likely to leave the party.

James Q. Wilson (1973: 33-34), however, provides the most comprehensive classification of motives for political activity. Although he acknowledges that any single classification will be either too general or too specific, he distinguishes between four incentives:

- *Material Incentives*. These are typically tangible rewards that can be priced in monetary terms, such as money, things and services. Examples include tax deductions and gifts for which one would otherwise have to pay in a market.
- *Specific Solidary Incentives*. These are abstract rewards that must be enjoyed in company with others, and that may be given to some, but withheld from others. Such rewards are scarce, non-monetary and rich in status, for instance prestigious positions in the party, invitations to gatherings with the party leadership, or perhaps friendship with a party leader (Heidar 1994: 161).

- *Collective Solidary Incentives.* These are intangible rewards that no party member can be excluded from. Examples are the sense of group identity, open gatherings, and the joy of experiencing unity in fighting for a cause (Heidar 1994: 161).
- *Purposive Incentives.* These are abstract rewards that derive from the sense of having contributed to the attainment of a worthwhile cause, such as the enactment of a certain law, the adoption of certain practises, or the alteration of certain institutions for the benefit of a larger public.

Wilson's model of motives is based on Weber's, but he expands it to include two types of solidary incentives: the specific and the collective. As von Beyme argues, it is not plausible that members of political parties are motivated by solely the desire for material gain, socializing, or ideology, but rather a more or less articulated mixture of these. But from a Weberian perspective, it is permissible to operate with ideal types (Heidar 1994: 162). On the basis of Wilson's categorization, I discuss two micro-level variables that may influence membership recruitment: policy support (corresponding to *purposive incentives*) and the availability of political positions for members (corresponding to *specific solidary incentives*).

Once again the level of the variables is debatable. On the one hand, policy support indicates that individuals become party members because they subscribe to a party's policies and want to actively or passively endorse it. If focus is on the individual, this is a micro-level variable. On the other hand, as a party's policies reflect its position on national political issues, it may be reasonable to focus on the national context of politics and thus call policy support a macro-level variable. I label it micro-level for two reasons. First, it is the motivation of the individual that interests me, regardless of incentive type. Second, an individual may join a party on the basis of interest in local rather than national issues.

The availability of political positions for individuals denotes that some may be motivated to become active in a political party because they want the positions per se. Again, if focus is on the individual, this is a micro-level variable. However, as such positions are properties of organizations, the variable could also be termed meso-level. As with policy support, I characterize it as micro-level on account of my concern with the individual per se.

Policy Support

The essence of this argument is that some individuals may join a party primarily because they support its policies.

Downs (1957: 128) argues that new parties are likely to appear and survive when there is an opportunity for them to cut off a large part of the support of an older party by sprouting up between it and its former voters. This argument is applicable with regard to the emergence of the Progress Party. In the consensus-oriented post-war Norway, the Labor Party enjoyed an uninterrupted parliamentary majority from 1945-1961, with the Conservatives as the largest opposition party. There was in general broad agreement on domestic issues such as the development of the welfare state, albeit some disagreement on which means to be used. On foreign policy issues, such as EEC membership and security policy, there was more debate between (and sometimes within) parties about the appropriate direction for Norway (Demker and Svåsand 2005: 16, Willoch 2002: 15-40). In relation to the Progress Party, there are two specific issues which are of relevance to the emergence of it: the disappointment of those who had hoped that the center-right government from 1965-1971 by the Center Party, the Conservatives, the Liberals, and the Christian People's Party would bring about substantial change after 20 years of Labor Party rule³⁷; and the EEC membership controversy (Svåsand and Wörlund 2005: 254-255). Today, the Progress Party is the second largest in Norway, receiving 22,1% of the vote in the last parliamentary election.

The general point here is that when a new party arises and manages to establish itself as one of the largest in a country through consecutive elections, it shows that its policies are supported by a large part of the electorate. It is only natural that this support also manifests itself in membership growth, as some voters are prone to take active part in politics:

H6: Support of the Progress Party's Policies Has Led To Membership Growth

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H6

I operationalize H6 by examining the reasons of individual members for joining the Progress Party. H6 is supported if evidence shows that:

- Members cite policy support as the main reason for joining the Progress Party

H6 is dismissed if evidence shows that:

³⁷ The same parties formed a coalition government in 1963 following a vote of no confidence against the Labor Party government, but were in office for only four weeks (Willoch 2002: 61).

- Members cite other motives than policy support as main reasons for joining the Progress Party

The Availability of Political Positions for Members

If it is relatively easy to acquire political positions in a party, this may induce some individuals to become members.

Although intuitively plausible, policy support as an explanation of membership growth may be insufficient at the micro-level. Individuals who join a party must be expected to do so because they subscribe to its policies. If that was the only reason, however, other Norwegian parties, and parties in other countries as well should also experience membership growth, as their voters obviously endorse some or all of their policies. Furthermore, the large majority of Progress Party voters do not join the party. Indeed, for a party that received 22,1% of the vote in the last parliamentary election, and that for some time now has been the largest party in Norway with 30% in numerous recent polls³⁸, the ratio of party members to voters (M/V) – 20,389 members to 585261 voters in 2005³⁹ - is actually quite low. Given the Progress Party's size, more voters should be expected to be members of it if H6 is the whole truth.

In addition to policy support, there may be other motives for joining a party, such as specific solidary incentives, in staying with Wilson's categorization. One such incentive is the availability of political positions in a party and later possibly public institutions that may be greater in a party with a low M/V ratio. If a party has a hard time finding enough people willing to take on positions in the party, the way to a position may be short for those interested in it:

H7: The Availability of Political Positions for Individuals Has Led to Membership Growth in the Progress Party

Empirical Testing and Operationalization of H7

I operationalize H7 by examining if getting enough people to fill political positions in the organization has been a challenge for the Progress Party. H7 is supported if evidence shows that:

³⁸ Time frame: spring, summer, and fall of 2008.

³⁹ Source: Calculated with data from Statistisk sentralbyrå (2005a, 2005b).

- The Progress Party struggles nationwide with finding enough members willing to be candidates for political positions in the party

H7 is dismissed if evidence shows that:

- The Progress Party has no nationwide difficulties with finding enough members willing to be candidates for political positions in the party

4.5. Interdependence of Variables

In light of the structure of this chapter, I may create the impression that I see my explanatory variables as basically independent of one another, and that they individually explain some percentage of the Progress Party's membership growth. However, it could be that some of the variables are merely preconditions that are contingent on other factors to lead to membership growth. For instance, the rationale behind H2 is that public subsidies have been used to recruit and retain members. This implies that state funding is contingent on membership recruitment and maintenance efforts to produce membership growth. Thus, in the following chapter, I (also) discuss whether my independent variables are causes or preconditions of membership growth in the Progress Party.

Chapter 5

Testing the Hypotheses About the Progress Party's Membership Growth

5.1. Introduction

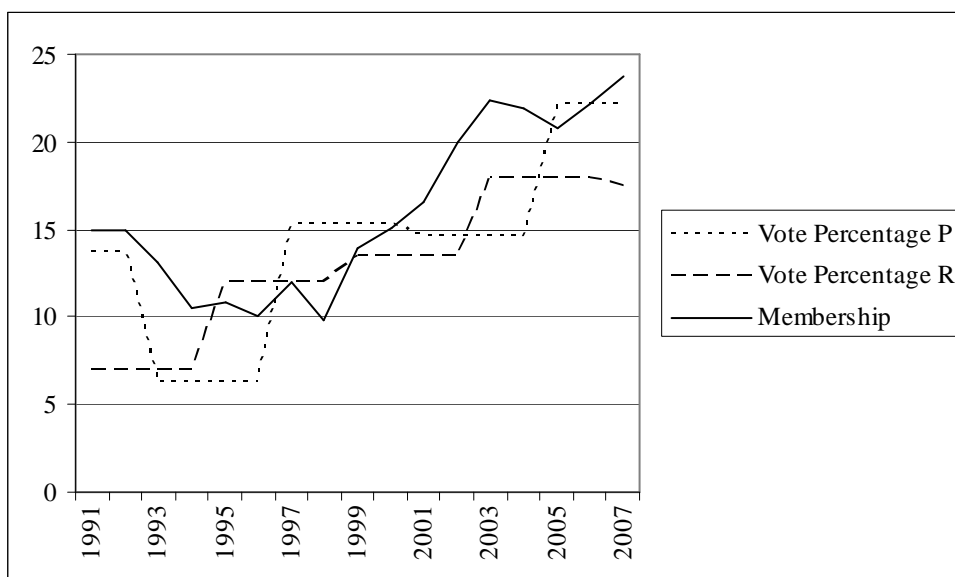
In the following, I test the hypotheses set forth in Chapter 4.

5.2. Macro-Level Variables

H1: Electoral Success Has Led to Membership Growth in the Progress Party

Before comparing Progress Party election results and membership numbers from 1991 to 2007, I illustrate them graphically in Figure 1:

Figure 1: The Progress Party: Votes and Members



In Figure 1, the Y-axis indicates *both* vote percentage and membership in thousands. The X-axis gives the year. “Membership” graphs the membership development, “Vote Percentage P” the results in parliamentary elections, and “Vote Percentage R” the results in regional elections.

The graphs show that both the Progress Party's share of the vote and membership figures have increased from 1991 to 2007. Membership numbers covary roughly with the vote percentage in both parliamentary and regional elections. This, however, does not necessarily

mean that membership figures grow on account of good election results. In light of my operationalization of H1 in Chapter 4, closer scrutiny is necessary to conclude that electoral success causes membership growth. Table 8, which lists the results of the Progress Party in parliamentary elections from 1993 to 2005 and regional elections from 1991 to 2007, and membership data from 1991 to 2007, provides for this:

Table 8: The Progress Party: Votes and Members

Year	Vote Percentage	Membership in Raw Numbers
1991 (R)	7,0	14926
1993 (P)	6,3	13179
1994	-	10555
1995 (R)	12,0	10932
1996	-	10117
1997 (P)	15,3	12013
1998	-	9841
1999 (R)	13,5	13907
2000	-	15174
2001 (P)	14,6	16529
2002	-	20104
2003 (R)	17,9	22420
2004	-	21934
2005 (P)	22,1	20389
2006	-	22295
2007 (R)	17,5	23869

The first column lists the year. Election years are marked with parenthesis (R = regional election, P = parliamentary election). The second column gives the share of the vote the Progress Party received, and the final column reports the membership in raw numbers.

With regard to parliamentary elections and their short-term and long-term effects, Table 8 shows that the Progress Party skyrocketed from 6,3% in 1993 to 15,3% in 1997, with party membership increasing from 10117 in 1996 to 12013 in 1997, yet falling steeply to 9841 in 1998. While the party saw its share of the vote decrease by 0,7% in the 2001 election, membership grew by roughly 1400 members from 2000 to 2001 and over 3500 in the following year. The election in 2005 became a major success, however, with the Progress Party winning a record 22,1% of the vote. Membership fell markedly, however, from 21934 in 2004 to 20389 in 2005, before growing to 22295 in 2006.

Hence, it is not possible to discern a clear trend with regard to the effect of parliamentary elections, neither in the short-term or the long-term. In 1997, a short-term effect may have been present as membership figures grew by the end of the year in comparison to 1996. This possible effect was absent in 2005, as membership was markedly down compared to 2004, despite the record election result. Similarly, no long-term effect was present in 1998, when membership figures fell to below the 1996 level. In 2006, however, they passed the 2004 level.

Concerning regional elections and their short-term and long-term effects, Table 8 shows that the Progress Party went from receiving 7% of the vote in 1991 to 12% in 1995. Party membership increased modestly from 10555 in 1994 to 10932 in 1995, but fell to 10117 in 1996. The electoral progress continued in 1999, as the party won 13,5% of the vote, and membership increased by over 4000 from 1998 to 1999, and passed 15000 in 2000. In 2003, the Progress Party once again beat its previous election result, winning 17,9% of the vote. Membership also continued to grow, up from 20104 in 2002 to 22420 in 2003, but fell to 21934 in 2004. The Progress Party experienced a slight decrease in 2007, with its share of the vote down by 0,4% from the previous election. Membership figures grew, however, as the party had roughly 1500 more members in 2007 than in 2006.

Again, it is difficult to say anything conclusive about the trend in regional elections. A short-term effect could be present in all four elections in discussion, as membership figures grew by the end of the election year compared to the previous. With respect to the long-term effect, it was not present in 1996, when membership figures fell to below the 1994 level. In 2000, however, they passed the 1999 level.

It is possible that the Progress Party's electoral success has led to membership growth, but not in every election. It is hard to gauge when electoral success leads to membership growth and when it does not. It is clear, however, that membership growth is not an automatic consequence of electoral success: every election has its winners and losers, but parties in general in Norway and Western Europe have been losing members in vast numbers in recent decades.

However, it seems plausible that electoral success could be a precondition for membership growth that does not automatically lead to it. It may be contingent on other factors to produce this outcome. Some comments by former organization manager Leif Hjeltnes may shed light on this. He has on several occasions related membership growth to election years, not elections per se. In a comment to membership increase in 1998, he stated: "Traditionally, we get many new members in election years" (Fremskritt 15.08.1998). In

2000, he said: “In an election year, like last year, we get a lot of new members (...)” (Fremskritt 29.01.2000). Finally, in 2002, he stated: “In election years, we usually see the largest increase” (Fremskritt 09.11.2002).

Hjeltnes is right. With the exception of the 2005 election, membership figures have risen in every election year since 1995, compared to the year before the election (I do not have membership data for 1992 to compare the 1993 election with). Although Hjeltnes does not indicate what he believes it is about election years that leads to membership growth, it is to be expected that the entire party organization is mobilized in election years. If the election becomes a success, the party may try to capitalize on it by intensifying the recruitment work towards the end of the year. Thus, the effect of electoral success in a given year may be contingent on the party leadership’s decision to maintain a high activity level in the aftermath of the election (i.e. leadership efforts) to lead to membership growth. I will return to this point in the discussion of meso-level factors below.

H2: Increased Public Funding Has Led to Membership Growth in the Progress Party

Before examining if the Progress Party has used significant amounts of public subsidies to finance recruitment campaigns and/or membership maintenance, I provide a survey of the state subsidies’ share of the party’s income. Unfortunately, budget reports for the entire period of the Progress Party’s existence are not available. The state subsidies’ share of the party’s income is shown in Table 9:

Table 9: The State Subsidies' Share of the Progress Party's Income⁴⁰

Year	Raw Numbers/Kroner	Percentage of Total Income
1976	500000	77,6
1977	700000	82,8
1983	1562072	51,1
1985	2867799	81,7
1986	1630670	91,5
1987	1883468	82
1988	2033535	87,4
1989	2143071	77
2005	26145604	82,1
2006	40505152	91,8
2007	42044336	85,1

The first column lists the year, the second gives the state subsidies' share of the Progress Party's income in raw numbers/kroner, and the final column reports the state subsidies' share as a percentage of the party's total income.

Table 9 shows that public subsidies have made up a considerable share of the Progress Party's income in the selected years. In raw numbers/kroner, state subventions increased from half a million in 1976 to over 42 million kroner in 2007. As a percentage, state subventions reached a low of 51,1% in 1983, but have largely fluctuated around 80 and 90% throughout the party's years of existence, reaching a high of 92% in 2006. Ideally, all the years of the Progress Party's existence should be in Table 9, but given the party's relatively stable electoral progress over the years, it is plausible to expect that the public subsidies' share of the party's income fluctuated between approximately 75 and 90% between 1990 and 2004.

As noted in Chapter 4, political parties in Norway receive a sum for generic use; the government does not monitor the use of them. From the Progress Party budget reports I have, I cannot tell if the party has used public subventions to finance recruitment campaigns and/or

⁴⁰ Table 9 contains the income of the central organization. Data for the years 1976 to 1989 were provided by Professor Lars G. Svåsand, University of Bergen, March 26th 2008. The source of the data for the years 2005 to 2007 is partifinansiering.no (2008a, 2008b, 2008c). For the years 1976, 1977, and 1983, the figures exclude earmarked public subsidies. For the years 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989, the internal party budget reports do not say whether or not the figures include earmarked public subsidies. For the years 2005, 2006, and 2007, partifinansiering.no also has a budget post called "Other public support", but this is not included in the numbers in Table 9.

membership maintenance; the reports do not specify this. They show that income has been spent on phoning, mailing, copying, and the like, which can be activities related to recruitment campaigns and membership maintenance, but they do not specify if this is with money granted from the government or other sponsors.

The Norwegian parties may also be granted earmarked public subsidies. A 2004 government white paper on party financing, openness and party advertising on television called “Money matters, but votes decide” (“Penger teller, men stemmer avgjør”), reported that the Progress Party Study Association (FrS), consisting of the Progress Party and its youth organization, received 192000 kroner in 2004 to support its activities. Public subsidies to the parties’ educational activities have been granted since 1959 in Norway, and the Progress Party Study Association was founded in 1998. In addition, the Progress Party received 1869000 kroner in 2003 in public support for its informational activities, under which the internal newspaper, *Fremskritt*, is included⁴¹. Public support has been given to Norwegian newspapers since 1969, and *Fremskritt* was founded in 1974 (NOU 2004/25). Both the Progress Party Study Association and *Fremskritt* are discussed in section 5.3 as important components of membership maintenance today, and in this sense public subsidies have been used to finance membership maintenance.

I cannot prove that generic public subventions have been spent on recruitment campaigns and/or membership maintenance. However, the size of the public subventions has increased enormously in raw numbers, as shown above. To the extent that recruitment campaigns and/or membership maintenance cost money, the Progress Party has been in an increasingly beneficial position due to the spectacular budget growth chiefly caused by public subsidies.

Thus, state funding seems to be a precondition for membership growth. Before the Progress Party’s electoral breakthrough in 1989, it was most likely not possible to prioritize recruitment and membership maintenance work like the party can today (see section 4.2 about state funding). Recruitment of members may have hinged on the willingness of party representatives to spend time on handing out flyers at their local town square, rather than national campaigns. With more state funding, the party could increasingly afford hiring staff to attend such matters exclusively. It was then up to the Progress Party leadership what it wanted to make out of this opportunity. In other words, state funding is contingent on other factors, such as leadership efforts, to produce membership growth.

⁴¹ In 1999, public financial support of party newspapers was reduced and replaced by general public financial support of the parties’ informational activities (Heidar and Saglie 2002: 75).

5.3. Meso-Level Variables

H3A: The Progress Party Leadership Has Made Systematic Efforts to Increase Membership

As a prelude to examining if the Progress Party leadership has worked systematically to increase membership, I want to emphasize that diametrically opposite views on party organization divided the party leadership in the first years of the party's existence. When Anders Lange founded Anders Lange's Party for Strong Reduction in Taxes, Fees, and Public Interference (ALP) in a movie theatre in Oslo in 1973, he did so out of an anti-establishment ideology. This may not amount to an ideology in the proper sense of the word, but it was a more or less coherent collection of ideas on what he saw as the ills ailing the Norwegian society. Indeed, the political message in the speech he gave at the founding meeting was based on a flyer containing 14 "We are tired of" bullets, which was distributed by his followers (Iversen 1998: 23-24). Lange argued adamantly that in order to be a corrective force, his party should be a loosely organized movement on the outside of the establishment. He was against any type of party organization, but believed the word "party" would attract more media attention. He argued adamantly in favor of decision making by "spontaneous action"; the elected representatives were to act according to their own best judgment and not be bound by any external party organization (Svåsand 2003: 6).

Carl I. Hagen (Lange's party secretary), however, strongly favored the development of both a formal party organization and a more integral party program (Hagen 2007: 49-53). Although Lange reluctantly, and only partly, accepted Hagen's request for an organizational framework, the issue split the party, and Hagen left and joined the splinter Reform Party in 1974. However, after Lange's death in 1974, the Reform Party merged with ALP in 1975, and was renamed "the Progress Party" in 1977. Had Lange not died quickly after the party founding, or otherwise been marginalized, his ideological stance may have prevailed and impeded the development of a mass party organization for a considerable time. Hagen immediately proceeded to build a conventional party organization upon assuming leadership in 1978, ending all debate about the matter (Svåsand 2003: 7).

To gather information on what— if anything - the Progress Party does to recruit and retain members, I interviewed Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan⁴². Her position was created in 2006 upon a decision by the Executive Committee (Sentralstyret) and the

⁴² The interview was conducted August 25th 2008 at the Progress Party's headquarters in Oslo. The interview was recorded and transcribed.

National Committee (Landsstyret) to formalize current practices regarding membership recruitment and maintenance, and sorts under the Department of Organization and Schooling. Hauan is responsible for administering the membership register and coordinating the work of regional and local membership supervisors by conducting campaigns, conferences, seminars, and the like (Fremskrittspartiet 2008f). She has held the position since it was created.

I begin, however, with an account of the Progress Party's attitude towards rank and file membership, as provided by Hauan. According to her, ordinary members are important for the Progress Party for numerous reasons. First, "My short answer is: no organization without members", says Hauan. "The main point here is that members inspire party representatives who work in politics and give them confidence. People voting for and sympathizing with the party is one thing, but when they also join it, they convey formal support", she continues.

Second, "to ensure that the party improves itself, it is dependent on an influx of new people. We are a party for ordinary people, and we want new perspectives and different opinions to evolve", explains Hauan. According to her, the party now has members from a broad spectre of professional groups. Says General Secretary Geir Almåsvoold Mo:

For a party that is based on the members' participation, and where policies are developed in the party organization, it is very important to have as many members as possible. The more members we have, the more people contribute to developing the party. (Fremskrittspartiet 2006)

Third, "members are ambassadors to cities and small towns", says Hauan. She believes most people have opinions about politics – "wherever you go, you hear people discuss politics". However, she admits that "the Progress Party is a controversial party, and joining it can be quite a step to take for some", and adds that "I know about many who do not dare to tell their friends that they have joined the Progress Party – they fear tough discussions".

Fourth, "it is also about money" says Hauan, and "it is not a large sum members pay, but we are very dependent upon it", she continues.

Viewed in light of Scarrow's list of reasons for why members are important, Hauan's second, third, and fourth points above correspond to *Members Provide Valuable Ideas*, *Members Multiply Votes by Everyday Contacts*, and *Members Provide Essential Funds*, respectively. Hauan's first reason for mass membership - members motivating and giving credibility to party representatives - is not mentioned by Scarrow, however.

When asked about possible costs related to mass membership, Hauan says:

When you become a member, there are both rights and obligations. If people don't care about these, there is a little extra work. All political parties experience 'disloyal' people. The more members one has, the more people it is to 'control'. Not everybody understands that they must abide by our rules – it is not that serious, but you have to pay your membership fee in time. (...) If everybody knows what they get involved in, I think a large membership is only positive.

There is a powerful example of troublesome members in the Progress Party's recent history. In 1994, the party had grown to include three identifiable factions: the populists, the value-oriented conservatives, and the libertarians. The dispute between these was resolved when the libertarians left the party after the infamous national convention at Bolkesjø⁴³ in 1994 (Fremskritt 09.07.1994, Iversen 1998: 132-136, Svåsand 2003: 8, Hagen 2007: 215-227, Fremskrittspartiet 2008*b*). Today, however, Hauan describes the membership situation thus: "We are so united, it is wonderful".

In sum, my impression is that the Progress Party wants as many ordinary members as possible, as long as they have thought it through – "Like the 93 year old, who called me and said 'Now I want to be a member'. He had agreed with our policies for many years, but now he dared to join", she says. She stresses that members do not have to be active. The general position of the party is summarized in the recruitment brochure used in the national recruitment campaign in 2007:

We need members who support our work by paying the membership fee and marketing the party to friends and acquaintances. We need members who wish to take active part in the effort to build the party – by attending seminars and conferences. In discussions in the local party. In the fashioning of programs and election material. In the work to market our policies to new voters. That is why we need you specifically as a member. We need all kinds of people with diversified competence. We need your competence, your life experience, and your views. Briefly put: we need more people on the team contributing to changing Norway. Are you in? (Fremskrittspartiet 2008*e*)

Following its attitude to mass membership, the Progress Party actively seeks it, and Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan says there are two components to this today: membership recruitment and membership maintenance. To discuss the two in depth, I treat them separately:

⁴³ Bolkesjø was dubbed "Dolkesjø" in the media after the convention (Hagen 2007: 222).

Membership Recruitment

Membership recruitment includes nationally, regionally or locally initiated efforts to bring new people into the organization, for example recruitment campaigns. Although campaigns may be initiated at any level, it is unlikely that the regional or local party organization will do much unless it at some point has been encouraged by the central organization.

I have only found scant evidence of membership recruitment in the Progress Party prior to the mid 1990s, although internal party documents indicate that the party has worked to recruit new members. In the 1986 annual report of the Secretariat, the Executive Committee “(...) believes that in the time to come it will be crucial that the work of the party organization becomes more thorough, with emphasis on recruitment, schooling, and the making of a good organization culture” (Fremskrittspartiet 1986). At the national convention in 1990, the Progress Party devised “the Progress Movement”, a white paper intended to strengthen and develop the party organization prior to the regional election in 1991 and the parliamentary election in 1993. With regard to local chapters, the Progress Party defined among seven tasks to be prioritized membership recruitment as the second most important (Fremskrittspartiet 1990). I do not have any evidence of concrete efforts to recruit new members undertaken as a consequence of these documented intentions to prioritize membership recruitment, but given that they stem from the highest level in the party organization, it seems reasonable to assume that they have been implemented in some form.

Despite the lack of evidence of recruitment campaigns, I have found some documentation of recruitment efforts in the early 1990s. Before *Fremskritt* was sent automatically to all members from 2000 and onwards, the newspaper included subscription slips⁴⁴ that readers could also use to join the party. In 1992, the Progress Party launched an activity contest in the party organization. Local party branches were given 1 to 6 points for various activities. For every new dues-paying member, the local party was awarded 1 point (Fremskritt 14.02.1992).

Evidence of membership recruitment is more easily found from the mid-1990s – at least it is more frequently reported in *Fremskritt*. This seems to be related to the hiring of Geir Almåsvoold Mo as general secretary in 1994. Although Carl I. Hagen began building a conventional party organization in 1978, Almåsvoold Mo is credited with making the Progress Party the most professionally led party organization in the country (Dagbladet 05.10.2003, Morgenbladet 26.01.07, Bergens Tidende 02.05.2008). The Progress Party launched the

⁴⁴ These slips were fill-in forms to cut out and send as mail to the Progress Party.

national recruitment campaign “Become an Element You Too!”⁴⁵ in January 1996. Almåsvold Mo stated that it marked the start of “two hectic years” in which membership recruitment and schooling of party representatives would be prioritized as preparation for the 1997 parliamentary election (Fremskritt 16.12.1995).

The next national campaign I have evidence of was “Become a Member of the Progress Party – and Take Security Back!”, conducted from September 1998 to April 1999. Former organization manager Leif Hjeltnes stated that the purpose of the campaign was both to recruit members who could form the basis for new local chapters prior to the 1999 regional election, and to increase membership in general (Fremskritt 26.09.1998).

Between the campaign in 1999 and 2007, I have not found evidence of any national recruitment campaigns taking place. Hjeltnes confirms that the party did not conduct any major recruitment campaigns between the one in 1999 and 2007, when he resigned, but stresses that he, and others in the central organization, communicated continually to regional and local party branches that they were obligated to work constantly to recruit new members. The recruitment slips⁴⁶ featured in every edition of Fremskritt corroborates Hjeltnes’ claim; the party leadership wants members to use the newspaper to recruit new ones. In 2002, an advertisement with the heading “Use Fremskritt to Recruit Members” stated this explicitly: “Do as many local branches have begun to do, use the party newspaper actively in membership recruitment”, and it noted that the newspaper included a recruitment slip (Fremskritt 20.04.2002).

Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan has been in charge of two national recruitment campaigns in the three years she has been in the job. The national recruitment campaign in 2007 was called “Join the Team”, with the subtitle “The Progress Party Needs YOU on the Team. Do You Want to Join Us?”. The campaign lasted from May 12th to November 1st. The purpose of the campaign was an increase in the number of dues-paying members (Fremskrittspartiet 2007a). The Progress Party also arranged a one-day campaign on October 25th and November 1st this year called “Join the Team”, with the subtitle “Together We Can Renew Norway!”. Again, the purpose of the campaign was an increase in the number of dues-paying members (Fremskrittspartiet 2008g).

⁴⁵ The strange-sounding title of the campaign was a humoristic spin on a statement made by former Christian People’s Party leader Valgjerd Svarstad Haugland, in which she referred to “the elements” who voted for the Progress Party.

⁴⁶ These slips were/are fill-in forms to cut out and send as mail to the Progress Party, and replaced the combined subscription/recruitment slips after Fremskritt became included in party membership in 2000.

There is some intermittent evidence of local campaigns. September 14th 1996, *Fremskritt* featured a story about Østfold Progress Party, which was conducting “Recruitment Campaign 1996”. The article claimed that many local and regional chapters were conducting recruitment campaigns in 1996. Three months later, the newspaper reported that Oslo Progress Party had conducted a recruitment campaign (*Fremskritt* 14.12.1996). Finally, *Fremskritt* April 16th 2005 had an article about the launching of a recruitment campaign in Bærum Progress Party.

Like Hjeltnes, Hauan says the central organization today communicates continually to regional and local branches the importance of being active and visible, and that the permanent obligation of every member to constantly try to recruit new members must be seen in light of this.

Membership Maintenance

Membership maintenance means all work related to retaining and activating members by maintaining a constant contact between them and the party organization. Hauan has provided detailed insight into what this involves today, but I begin with what this consisted of prior to her tenure.

As with membership recruitment, I have found little documentation of membership maintenance work prior to 1994, except for in connection to the 1992 activity contest referred to above. In this contest, in which the party leadership awarded 1 to 6 points for various organizational activities, socializing events and membership meetings were given 3 points, and information letters to members 2 points (*Fremskritt* 10.02.1992).

July 9th 1994, former party leader Carl I. Hagen had an article in *Fremskritt* about the rebuilding of the party organization following the ordeal at the national convention at Bolkesjø in April that year. With regard to membership maintenance, he stressed that every regional and local branch had to plan membership meetings, implicitly suggesting that they had not done this in any structured fashion before. This seems to have been the start of an explicit focus on maintaining party membership.

In October 1994, the reformed Service Secretariat became operative, and former office manager Per Arne Olsen was put in charge of developing the membership register, while former secretary Heidi T. Bergersen was to register all new members centrally and mail them welcome letters. However, all eleven people in the Service Secretariat were to assist in membership maintenance work when necessary (*Fremskritt* 22.10.1994). In 1998, the work of the Service Secretariat was further compartmentalized, as the newly created Organization

Department, led by organization manager Leif Hjeltnes⁴⁷, was to work more exclusively with membership recruitment and maintenance towards the regional and local levels (Fremskritt 01.08.1998). Hjeltnes describes the essence of this work as surveying the membership situation in regional and local chapters to encourage recruitment and maintenance efforts proven effective, while trying to improve the situation in regional and local chapters that were struggling.

When Hauan was hired in 2006, the intention of the party leadership was, as mentioned above, to formalize current practices regarding membership recruitment and maintenance. With regard to the latter, it involves several ongoing tasks. First, Hauan defines “exchange of experiences” among regional and local membership supervisors as perhaps the most important task. Twice a year she gathers all regional membership supervisors (every region has one). New membership supervisors are given detailed insight into what the job requires, and every one takes part in the general exchange of experiences of their own (they may convey stories on behalf of local membership supervisors), try to come up with new ideas on how to go about their jobs, and are given tasks to practise on. The positive experiences of some are used to both teach and motivate others. Hauan:

We had this sunshine story about a member who had managed to recruit 100 new ones – I then had to find out what he had done. (...) He had recruited at his job and made a list of potential members, and then contacted them. I had to follow up and ask: ‘Who can beat him?’ It is important to use stories like this as motivation.

Regional membership supervisors must also meet once a year with all the local membership supervisors (all local branches have one) to exchange experiences and discuss their jobs, she explains. Finally, Hauan travels to lecture individual regional and local branches on membership maintenance, focusing on comparing them to improve the general work of the party organization in this respect:

I’m very concerned with statistics; numbers have a lot to say; they can be depressing, but mostly motivating, I think. The goal is to get facts about the membership situation. I have to see if there is development, or has it stagnated?

Hauan says the Progress Party uses additional arenas to facilitate dialogue between membership supervisors between the gatherings, such as intra net and “The Member’s Corner”, a column in Fremskritt. An example of this is “The Recruitment Champ Wangsvik”,

⁴⁷ Hjeltnes was hired in 1997 (Fremskritt 06.12.1997).

a story in *Fremskritt* about Ernst Wangswik, who “never leaves home without the Progress Party’s recruitment booklet” (*Fremskritt* 10.06.2006).

Second, the Progress Party “offers a whole lot of great courses”, Hauan says. The Progress Party Study Association (FrS), consisting of the Progress Party and its youth organization, was founded in 1998 and is one of 20 government-approved study associations in Norway. The aim of its work is to prepare members for service in party and/or public offices (*Fremskrittspartiet* 2004*a*, 2004*b*). In 1998, FrS arranged 48 courses and 541 members participated in one or more of these. In 2007, FrS held 251 courses, and 4967 members participated in one or more of these⁴⁸. Says Progress Party Media journalist Arne-Petter Lorentzen: “The magazine *Kapital* ranked our internal schooling the best among the political parties⁴⁹, and because of these courses people think it is more fun to be members”.

Third, Hauan says she tries to encourage membership supervisors to combine political work and socializing events as a means of membership maintenance: “The combination of socializing and politics is a winner. The key is to create something interesting, among other things with the use of external lecturers, and then do it within a socializing atmosphere”. She adds: “The social part is very significant. We largely agree on politics, and it is then important to gather to get a refill of motivation and inspiration”. She cites the youth organization, FpU, as front runners in this respect: “It has arranged weekend seminars with participants as young as 13, where the focus is on politics, but in a social context”. Furthermore, “some local Progress Party chapters arrange informal gatherings where members can bring friends who are not members”.

Finally, as national membership supervisor, Hauan is responsible for constantly improving the general maintenance work of regional and local levels by trying to devise new ways of facilitating contact between members and the party organization. She claims that “it is important for us that members are contacted where they live. Political issues take time, but if we forget the members, they will leave”. In her work towards regional and local levels, she says that “I believe in focusing on single tasks to ensure continual development”. The first major task she began to work on in 2006 was reduction in the number of members with unknown address. By centrally registering the address of every member, she believed it would be easier to achieve the goal of making the Progress Party one of the first five

⁴⁸ Source: Leader of the Progress Party’s Department of Organization and Schooling, Øistein Lid.

⁴⁹ I have not been able to verify that *Kapital* ranked FrS the best among the educational organizations of the political parties.

institutions/firms/organizations members contact when moving. She is currently working on gathering the birth date of every member.

Thus, leadership efforts have been a precondition for membership growth in the Progress Party. My analysis shows that the Progress Party leadership has worked systematically to increase membership from 1994 and onwards. I did not find any documentation of such efforts prior to 1994 beyond the activity contest in 1992, and lack of systematic activity is further indicated by two factors. First, annual national membership figures first became available from 1993 and onwards, and this indicates that the Progress Party's general focus on membership recruitment and maintenance was rudimentary prior to the mid 1990s. If the party leadership had wanted to work systematically on developing the Progress Party as a mass membership organization for example in the 1980s, they could be expected to have mustered aggregate figures back then. Thus, the existence of national membership figures from 1993 and onwards could be a result of the white paper "the Progress Movement".

Second, the party was suffering from a fractionalized party organization in the early 1990s, a division that culminated in the Bolkesjø controversy in 1994 (Fremskritt 09.07.1994, Iversen 1998: 132-136, Svåsand 2003: 8, Hagen 2007: 215-227, Fremskrittspartiet 2008b). When the party elite was divided, it seems that organizational development was hardly possible, even if some in the leadership had advocated it.

From 1994 to today, there are numerous examples of recruitment campaigns, nationally and locally. One could argue, however, that four national recruitment campaigns are not much in 14 years. Hauan says such campaigns are problematic in certain regards. First, "things cost money" – during the 2007 campaign, the central organization produced recruitment flyers and mailed them to all regional chapters, she says. Second, they may not be equally effective in all regions, she explains: "(...) a skilled member can recruit 50 new ones in a short while at Karl Johan Avenue, but you cannot do that in Alta, where a recruiter will face bigger challenges". Third, "I don't think it is smart to have too many campaigns, people will get tired of them". To the extent that this scepticism is shared by others in the central organization, it could explain why there were no national campaigns between 1999 and 2007.

On the other hand, both Hauan and Hjeltnes emphasize that the party leadership has always encouraged lower levels in the party organization to be active and visible, and that recruitment does not happen exclusively through campaigns. Says Hauan: "We want to make it as easy as possible for the party representatives when it comes to the administrative part, and then it is up to each regional and local branch how they want to do it".

With respect to membership maintenance, the timeline is the same: there has been a continual focus on this with the reshaping of the Service Secretariat in 1994, the hiring of Hjeltnes as organization manager in 1997/1998⁵⁰, and the creation of membership supervisors in 2006. The gist of this work, as conveyed by Hauan and Hjeltnes, has been to ensure that regional and local branches maintain continual contact with individual members.

In sum, evidence supports H3A from 1994 and onwards, and it is strengthened.

H3B: Progress Party Leadership Efforts to Increase Membership Have Been Successful

To prove that recruitment efforts have been effective, a natural starting point is to look for documentation of members joining as a direct consequence of campaigns. I have found some evidence of this. With regard to national campaigns, a number of regions reported new members after the 2007 campaign: Troms 170, Sør-Trøndelag 155, Akershus 145, Rogaland 144, and Hedmark 123. These members had signed on using the campaign flyer (Fremskrittspartiet 2007*b*).

The results of the one-day campaign October 25th and November 1st this year are coming in as I write, and the final result of the campaign is probably not available in time for the delivery of my thesis. Several regions have reported new members thus far: Finnmark/Troms/Nordland 86 in total⁵¹, Rogaland 50, and Østfold 140⁵². In addition, Telemark Progress Party conducted a campaign from August 30th to September 7th. Together with the one-day campaign October 25th and November 1st, this had given 45 new members as of November 12th 2008⁵³.

Moreover, Fremskritt has featured several stories about successful recruiting. In 1996, leader of Alstahaug Progress Party, Steinar Albrigtsen, was able to recruit 18 new members (Fremskritt 28.09.1996*a*). The same year, former organizational deputy leader Siv Jensen in Oslo Progress Party registered 64 new members following a recruitment campaign (Fremskritt 14.12.1996). In 1998, Hammerfest Progress Party was saluted for recruiting 35 new members, which according to former organization manager Leif Hjeltnes was “completely exceptional” (Fremskritt 15.08.1998). Finally, Fremskritt July 13th 2002 featured a story about Hol Progress Party, which had recruited 68 new members in six months.

⁵⁰ As noted above, Hjeltnes was hired in 1997, but began as organization manager in 1998.

⁵¹ Source: Administrative Adviser Svein Alfred Nilsen, November 10th 2008.

⁵² Source: Membership Supervisor Liv Andresen of Østfold Progress Party, November 18th 2008. These figures combine the results of the one-day campaign and the membership growth this year prior to the campaign.

⁵³ Source: The District Office of Buskerud, Telemark, and Vestfold Progress Party, November 12th 2008.

On the one hand, these various stories indicate successful recruitment in the given years and in all of Norway. On the other hand, they remain single cases and are insufficient for concluding that the Progress Party's recruitment efforts since 1994 have been successful in general. To further explore this, I compare membership before and after recruitment campaigns were conducted. I do not know the specific time frame of the 1996 campaign, but given that General Secretary Geir Almåsvold Mo announced it in *Fremskritt* 16.12.1995, and none of the other campaigns mentioned here have lasted more than approximately six months, it seems reasonable to compare the membership in 1995, which was 10932, with the membership numbers in 1996, which were 10117. Based on this time frame, the campaign does not seem to have been successful. However, as Almåsvold Mo stated that the campaign marked the start of two years of focus on recruitment, membership figures in 1995 could also be compared to those in 1997, which were 12013. Given this extended time frame, the increase in membership from 1995 to 1997 could be partly attributable to this campaign.

The campaign launched in September 1998 ended in April 1999, and it thus seems fair to compare the membership in 1997, which was 12013, with the numbers for 1999, which were 13907. There was thus clearly a surge from 1997 to 1999, and once again, the increase could be partly attributable to the campaign.

With regard to the Progress Party's membership maintenance, I begin with some quotes by party representatives to illustrate how they have evaluated the party's efforts in this respect. The Progress Party itself has attributed membership increase to its own maintenance work on several occasions. In a comment to membership growth in 1996, Almåsvold Mo attributed it indirectly to organizational work: "The numbers show that the organization has been completely re-established after the previous turbulence" (*Fremskritt* 28.09.1996*b*). David Lande, journalist in *Fremskritt*, stated it directly in 2006: "The formidable increase in members follows among other things from the organization's broad focus on membership maintenance (...)" (*Fremskritt* 13.05.2006). In 2007, Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan stated: "There is no doubt in my heart! After we got membership supervisors, we have seen both membership growth and the number of paying members increase" (*Fremskrittspartiet* 2007*b*).

However, other statements indicate that the party has considered its membership maintenance work flawed. After campaigning in all of Norway prior to the 2003 regional election, former deputy leader John Alvheim said he had received a lot of feedback on lack of membership maintenance locally:

It wasn't just sporadic feedback I received, but a thorough criticism of local branches that didn't recognize their responsibility to take care of new members. One [member] I spoke to had paid the membership fee for two years without receiving invitation to a single membership meeting. (Fremskritt 08.11.2003)

Two years later, Almåsvold Mo stated: "Our members are our most important resource. Therefore, membership maintenance must be prioritized. Unfortunately, many members do not hear from their local chapter and the party beyond receiving Fremskritt every second week" (Fremskritt 26.11.2005).

However, the membership figures have been relatively stable and growing since 1993. Section 3.7 shows that the Progress Party had 13179 members in 1993, rising to 25000 today, albeit with some fluctuation in between. This indicates successful membership maintenance in this period, despite that some individuals have left. If membership maintenance had been generally ineffective, membership figures should have remained more or less the same, as many of those joining the party left again, or shrinking, as some old members departed as well.

Taken together my analysis shows that the Progress Party leadership efforts to increase membership have been successful. First, the party has gradually, from 1994 and onwards, built a staff that works full time on membership recruitment and maintenance. From the reorganization of the Service Secretariat in 1994, there is continual development with the hiring of Leif Hjeltnes as organization manager in 1997/1998 and Anne Grethe Hauan as national membership supervisor in 2006. Furthermore, a membership supervisor was appointed in every regional and local branch. From top to bottom, the Progress Party has 370 membership supervisors today (one nationally, 19 regionally, and 350 locally). This indicates that the party leadership has continually evaluated the Progress Party as a mass membership organization to gauge if the recruitment and maintenance work can be improved. Moreover, the leadership efforts are likely to stem from an increasing awareness and appreciation of the potential benefits members provide, which Hauan lists.

Second, I have documented direct membership growth following various recruitment campaigns. Indeed, I have no direct evidence to document that the 1996 and the 1998/1999 recruitment campaigns were successful. However, the 1996 campaign was in a sense a two-year campaign, and in 1997 membership increased, compared to 1995. Furthermore, the membership increased from 1997 to 1999. The 2007 campaign gave many new members, and the available evidence thus far indicates that the 2008 campaign has also been successful.

Third, membership figures have been relatively stable and growing since 1993.

In sum, the evidence supports H3B from 1994 and onwards, and it is strengthened.

H4: Increase in the Number of Local Progress Party Chapters Has Led to Membership Growth

Table 10 reports the number of municipalities with Progress Party branches from 1975 to 2008:

Table 10: Norwegian Municipalities with Progress Party Branches⁵⁴

Year	Number of Municipalities in Norway	Number of Municipalities with Progress Party branches
1975	443	52
1979	454	96
1983	454	158
1987	454	172
1991	448	241
1995	435	195
1999	435	259
2003	431	304
2008	430	350

The first column gives the year, the second lists the number of municipalities in Norway, and the final column reports the number of municipalities with Progress Party branches.

Table 10 shows that the Progress Party has increased its representation in Norwegian municipalities rapidly through the years. From having 52 local chapters in 1975, the Progress Party reached a temporary high of 241 in 1991. In 1995, however, this number was down by almost 50, which was probably a natural consequence of the divisive national convention in 1994, after which the libertarian faction left the party along with four MPs, and the youth organization, which was controlled by the libertarians, dissolved itself (Iversen 1998: 132-138, Svåsand 2003: 8, Hagen 2008: 215-223, *Fremskrittspartiet 2008b*). This proved a short-lived setback, as the number of municipalities with Progress Party branches rose quickly again, reaching 350 in 2008. With regard to the number of Norwegian municipalities, it has

⁵⁴ The source of the data for the years 1975 to 2003 is Svåsand and Wörlund (2005: 256). The source for 2008 is Statens kartverk (2008) and *Fremskrittspartiet (2008c)*.

decreased from 443 in 1975 to 430 today, causing the party branches to municipalities ratio to increase correspondingly in this period.

On the basis of the information provided by Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan, I would argue that the skyrocketing of the number of municipalities with Progress Party branches has not been inevitable. On the one hand, the Progress Party seems to realize that both individual opportunity to become party member and the party's mobilization capacity increase when it establishes new local branches, as Hauan states that "We obviously wish to be represented in all municipalities". On the other hand, "It is not a 'must' to have local branches in all municipalities. Partly because there are costs involved; it is expensive to make things work", she says, and "there must be enough people willing. (...) it is not enough with four members to start a branch". Accordingly, the Progress Party establishes a new local branch only on the basis of an examination of the foundation for it, which the regional organization is in charge of: "The regional chapter is required to constantly consider the possibility of erecting new local branches", and "the National Committee keeps record of how many municipalities remain."

Second, the Progress Party is principally in favor of municipalities merging if it believes it will enhance the quality of public services in given municipalities (Fremskrittspartiet 2005). As noted above, the number of Norwegian municipalities has been reduced by 13 from 1975 to 2008. I believe it is plausible that this has induced regional party organizations to exercise constraint in encouraging the establishment of new local chapters where the party favors merging of municipalities, so that the number of municipalities with Progress Party branches may have been higher if the party had a different position on the issue.

The vast geographical expansion of the Progress Party's organizational network has obviously made possible a considerable potential for the local party organization in taking part in membership recruitment and maintenance, and Hauan characterizes the local organization as important in this respect, as the 2007 statement on page 68 shows. As noted under H3A, every local branch has a membership supervisor in charge of all work related to recruiting and retaining party members in his or her branch, and he or she must be a member of the local board. Moreover, "Regional and local chapters are free to fashion and conduct their own recruitment campaigns", and "Very many local branches run their own campaigns, while others don't", says Hauan.

The rise from 52 branches in 1975 to 350 in 2008 has necessarily led to membership growth in the Progress Party; enough people have been recruited in a given municipality to

form a board, at a minimum. However, with regard to proving that local chapters take active part in recruiting more members and retaining them, there will be differences in the extent to which they do this. First, some local branches seem to be active. On the one-day campaign on October 25th and November 1st this year, eight out of 13 local chapters in the region of Finnmark participated, 20 out of 33 in Nordland, and 14 out of 18 in Troms⁵⁵. As noted above, this had resulted in 86 new members as of November 10th 2008. Membership Supervisor of Østfold Progress Party, Liv Andresen, confirms that several local chapters participated in this campaign without specifying the number. This had resulted in 140 new members as of November 18th⁵⁶. At least 11 out of 14 chapters in the region of Telemark participated⁵⁷. This had given 45 new members as of November 12th 2008, as noted above. Furthermore, as shown on page 67, the 2007 campaign also produced many new members in the Progress Party. Although I do not have data on how many local branches participated, the total number of recruited members in the given regions - 737 - indicates that local branches participated actively.

In addition, the above cited stories about Alstahaug, Oslo, Hammerfest and Hol Progress Party suggest that these local branches have been active, at least in the given years.

Second, some local chapters may have held campaigns, albeit not frequently. It could be that some of the above mentioned local branches suddenly decided to conduct their first recruitment campaign. Furthermore, some local chapters may do it only when they take part in centrally initiated campaigns.

Third, others, as the quotes by former deputy leader John Alvheim and General Secretary Geir Almåsvoold Mo indicate, seem to be rather continually inactive.

Regardless, it seems clear that the geographical expansion of the Progress Party has led to membership growth. First, every opening of a new local chapter has necessarily led to membership growth. Second, the results from the above cited campaigns show that local branches from all over the country have recruited many new members to the Progress Party, at least in the given years.

In sum, I would therefore argue that local factors and especially the expansion of the organization through the establishment of new local chapters have been influential in recruiting and retaining members. However, the role of the central party organization in initiating and coordinating local efforts should be recognized. Although it is the regional

⁵⁵ Source for Finnmark, Nordland, and Troms: Administrative Adviser Svein Alfred Nilsen, November 7th 2008.

⁵⁶ Email November 18th, 2008.

⁵⁷ Only local branches with registered membership growth as of November 12th were listed in the email.

branches that assess the possibility of erecting new local branches, they have been given this task by the central organization, which keeps tabs on how many municipalities remain with regard to having full national coverage. Furthermore, the central organization initiated both the successful 2007 and 2008 campaigns, in addition to constantly communicating to the regional and local levels that they are to keep up their general membership recruitment and maintenance work, for example by including recruitment slips in every addition of the internal newspaper, *Fremskritt*. Thus, I conclude that central leadership efforts were a precondition for the local initiatives and geographic expansion, which in turn have demonstrably led to membership growth.

H5: The Progress Party's Centralized Executive Structure Has Led to Membership Growth

Although the Progress Party was intended to be a loosely organized movement outside of the political establishment when Anders Lange founded it in 1973, it became the most centralized party in the country under Carl I. Hagen's leadership. Following the hugely successful parliamentary election in 1989, when the Progress Party went from two to 22 parliamentary seats, a significant change was made in the party statutes, as the party's parliamentary group became organizationally subordinated to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was authorised to oversee the establishment and organisation of the parliamentary group following a general election and was also the body that defined the rules of the group and decided on the group's budget and strategy. In case of a disagreement in the parliamentary group, a minority could appeal the decision to the Executive Committee, which had the final word. These changes were largely seen as an attempt by Carl I. Hagen to control the ten-fold increase in the number of MPs. The organization was further centralized in 2000 with a paragraph allowing the Executive Committee to exclude or suspend members it considers to work against the party, abuse their position in the party, or otherwise have acted in a way so as to make it inappropriate for them to stay members in the party⁵⁸ (Svåsand 2003: 12, *Fremskrittpartiet 2008h*). Moreover, in all Norwegian parties, the regional party controls nomination for parliamentary office, but in the Progress Party the Executive Committee can force the Regional Committee to call a new nomination meeting (Svåsand 2003: 12, *Fremskrittspartiet 2008i*).

⁵⁸ This is the current wording of the paragraph.

Given that the regional and the local level understand that the interests of the central organization always come first, they can be expected to loyally implement instructions received from it, including recruitment campaigns. The testing of H3 has made it clear that efforts to recruit and retain members are mainly suggested and implemented centrally, or can somehow be traced back to central initiative. Furthermore, the efforts have been successful.

However, as noted above, Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan believes national recruitment campaigns are problematic in some ways, despite that the Progress Party has conducted four national campaigns from 1996 to 2008. On the other hand, the centralized executive structure in the party is useful when they take place: lower levels in the organizational hierarchy do as they are told.

With regard to membership maintenance work, the picture is somewhat different. As local membership supervisors were created following a decision by the central organization, and their work is systematically supervised by the regional and the central level, the centralized executive structure of the Progress Party is of more permanent significance: local membership supervisors are used to constantly answering to higher levels in the party hierarchy.

Considering both centrally initiated membership recruitment and maintenance work, Hauan's statement on page 60 - "We are so united, it is wonderful" – indicates general content throughout the organization with how the party is led.

In sum, it seems clear that the central leadership described on page 72-73 as a precondition for successful local initiatives in recruiting and retaining members, is facilitated by the centralized nature of the executive structure.

5.4. Micro-Level Variables

H6: Support of the Progress Party's Policies Has Led To Membership Growth

Heidar and Saglie (2002: 157-159) apply a modified version of Wilson's framework to Norwegian parties to inquire about their members' motivations for joining. Questionnaires were sent out in 1991 and 2000. Eight answer options were combined into four categories. Political issues and ideological orientations as determinants of membership were called "Politics". Where professional background, membership in a voluntary organization, or participation in direct action/protest politics influenced the decision to join, the label "Political Environment" was used. Those attracted by a congenial party environment or persuaded by family or friends to join, were sorted under the category "Social Environment". Finally,

members that just wanted to express passive endorsement were registered as one group. This alternative indicated planned activity level rather than a motive. The reasons of Progress Party members are given in Table 11:

Table 11: Progress Party Membership Motivations

Membership Motivations	The Progress Party	
	1991	2000
Politics	72	69
Political Environment	3	2
Social Environment	6	7
Passive Endorsement	19	22
Sum	100	100

N 1991/2000: 181/214

The first column gives the categories of membership motivations, the second and third column list the answers of Progress Party members in 1991 and 2000. Answers are given in percentages.

Despite the small number of respondents, the figures provide an idea of Progress Party members’ general motivation for joining. Political motives were by far the most dominant among the alternatives. Almost none of the respondents were motivated by the political or social environment at neither point in time, while about one fifth joined to express passive support in both 1991 and 2000.

Based on this survey, it seems that Progress Party members do not join because they are motivated by past professional, organizational or political experiences, and nor are they drawn in by the party atmosphere or persuasive family members and friends. Although some just want to passively endorse the party by paying a yearly membership fee, the great majority is inspired by its policies to the extent that they plan to take a more or less active role in party work. Regardless of planned activity level, it seems clear that those who become members in the Progress Party do so because they subscribe to its policies. Actually, if the categories “Politics” and “Passive Endorsement” are added, the combined percentage is close to 100 for these two answer options.

However, Table 11 gives the answers at two specific points in time: 1991 and 2000. On the one hand, it is thinkable that answers could be different had the respondents been asked in different years. On the other hand, the nine year span between the observational points indicates continuity in the respondents' answers.

I would argue that policy support can be both a cause of and a precondition for membership growth. If members have joined the Progress Party upon becoming politically cognizant and decided independently to do it, policy support is a per se cause. However, if individuals sympathizing with the party have joined it upon being influenced by external factors, for instance party representatives conducting a recruitment campaign, policy support has been contingent on other factors to produce membership growth.

H7: The Availability of Political Positions for Individuals Has Led to Membership Growth in the Progress Party

If my last claim above is wrong, and policy support is neither a cause of nor a precondition for membership growth, members could be motivated by the availability of political positions in the party. Obviously, no one joins a party if he or she generally disagrees with it, but specific solidary incentives (see section 4.4) may be enough for individuals without strong views.

The Progress Party experienced a strongly growing support in the electorate in the late 1980s that the organizational apparatus was not equipped to handle (Heidar and Saglie 1994: 141). Hence, at the national convention in 1990, the Progress Party devised "the Progress Movement", as described above a white paper intended to strengthen and develop the party organization prior to the regional election in 1991 and the parliamentary election in 1993. The report included an analysis of the strengths and the weaknesses of the party organization. The latter amounted to a list of 12 points, one of which was the volatility of those filling political positions at the local level: they came and went too frequently (Fremskrittspartiet 1990).

I infer from this that before the overhaul of the party organization in the 1990s, political positions in the Progress Party were relatively easily available for those interested, as such positions frequently became vacant. Furthermore, political positions in the party must have had limited attractiveness, otherwise those elected would have remained in them. This seems plausible given that the smaller a party is in a municipality, the more the local representatives must work to market it. In some cases, the party's survival may be at stake.

Today, the Progress Party's organization is considered the most professional in the country (Bergens Tidende 02.05.2008), and Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan says that "we have no difficulties with filling the top positions, regardless of what list it is". This

claim is supported by a comment by former organization manager Leif Hjeltnes, who in a comment to membership growth in 2002 stated: “The phone rings constantly. People even call to say that they want to be on the list for their local Progress Party branch. But it is not that simple. We have many members to pick from” (Fremskritt 09.11.2002).

Hauan admits that “there may have been cases of such in the past”. Fremskritt July 1st 1995 had stories indicating lack of people interested in serving the Progress Party. One family in Oppdal had been put on the Progress Party list for the local election against its will. One man who was a candidate in the local election for Hobøl Progress Party had been dead for a long time. Hauan says that this does not occur anymore. Moreover, she cites incidents where “individuals have joined the party with major ambitions in very short time, but they have been exposed”. To be elected to a political position in the party today, she says “You have to market yourself; you have to prove that you have something to contribute with”, and adds that “We are one organization, and it is it you have to want to advance, not yourself”.

Furthermore, as roughly 5000 members, nearly ¼ of the entire membership, attended party schooling in 2007, a number almost 10 times what it was in 1998, the Progress Party clearly has many members willing to devote time and effort to advance its cause, in spite of the low party members to voters ratio. This should represent an impediment to anyone hoping to acquire political positions quickly. Especially gifted individuals may be able to do it, but the party is constantly increasing its share of competent members ready for service. There may still be members who have joined the Progress Party upon spotting a possibility of an easily available political position, but they are likely to become fewer.

Thus, it may have been possible to acquire political positions in the Progress Party relatively easily when the organizational apparatus was underdeveloped, and this can consequently have led to membership growth, but the party refutes the possibility of this today. In addition, formal competence through internal schooling is becoming so common among members that those aspiring to climb the party ladder are likely to have to prove their commitment by attending “boot camp” first.

In sum, the availability of political positions may explain some early recruitment in the Progress Party, but it is not an important factor anymore.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

I begin the final chapter with a brief note on the contribution of the thesis, before discussing central findings. I round off the thesis with some suggestions for further research.

6.2. Contribution of the Thesis

I believe I have met the two criteria formulated by King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 15). First, my thesis provides insight into factors having caused membership growth in the Progress Party, particularly the significance of leadership efforts in recruiting and retaining members. This should be of interest to all political parties.

Second, this insight is also of academic value, as it is a contribution to the extant literature on several topics. With regard to party membership, I have highlighted the significance of leadership efforts for the Progress Party's membership growth. This might be used to shed light on the membership situation in other parties in Norway and foreign countries more generally, particularly what party leaders do (and do not do).

My thesis also contributes to increasing our knowledge about the organizations of right-wing populist parties in Europe. I have provided insight into how the Norwegian Progress Party views the role of ordinary members, and how it goes about recruiting and retaining them. Moreover, I have accounted for the party's organizational expansion and centralized executive structure, and the significance of these factors for membership growth.

Finally, with the respect to the alleged obsolescence of party members, I show that members can still be considered very important to major parties. The Norwegian Progress Party considers them critical to its success, in diametric opposition to what scholars such as Kirscheimer and Epstein hypothesized about West-European parties.

6.3. Central Findings

Table 12 summarizes the findings from the testing of the hypotheses (due to the length of the hypotheses, only their numbers are included):

Table 12: Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Hypotheses	Status After Testing
H1	Contingent on other factors
H2	Contingent on other factors
H3A	Strengthened
H3B	Strengthened
H4	Contingent on other factors
H5	Contingent on other factors
H6	Strengthened/Contingent on other factors
H7	Possibly in the past, not anymore

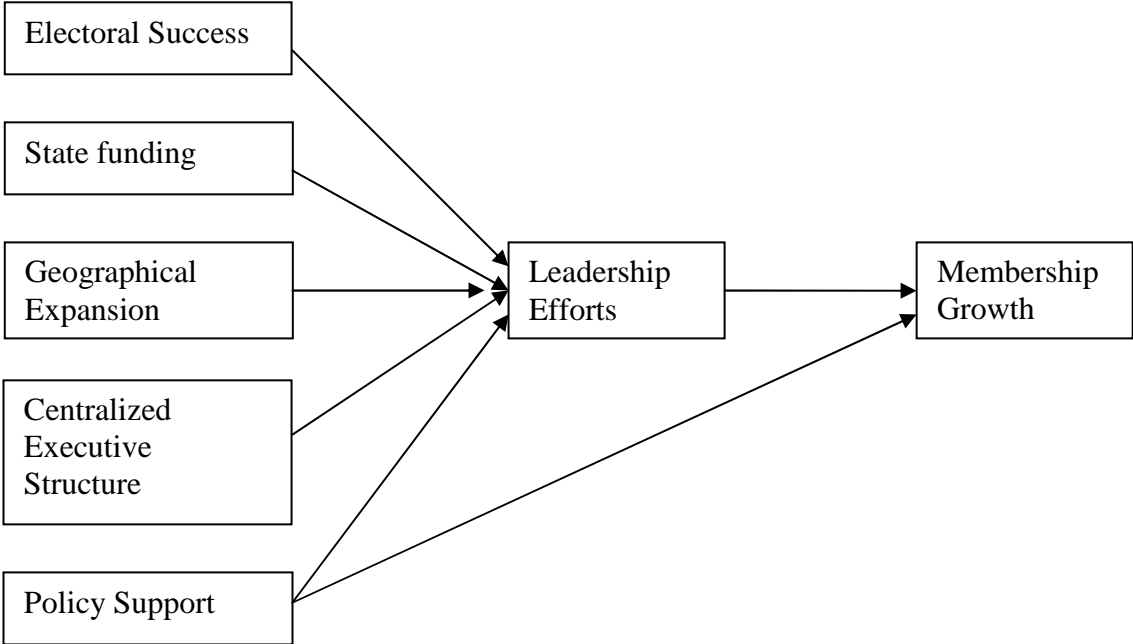
The first column gives the hypotheses, the second shows their status after testing.

Table 12 shows that hypotheses 3A and 3B have been strengthened, while H1, H2, H4 and H5 are contingent on other factors. H6 has been partially strengthened, but could also to be contingent on other factors. H7 may explain some early recruitment in the Progress Party, but it is not an important factor anymore.

Writing a thesis like this is a challenge with respect to structure. To explain membership growth in the Progress Party in an orderly fashion, I wrote a theory chapter containing seemingly independent hypotheses about the causes of membership growth. However, I did not exclude the possibility of interconnection of independent variables. Thus, whereas chapter 4 consisted of dismantling the world, I commenced the work of assembling the parts again in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 is about completing it.

Figure 2 suggests the overall findings of my analysis:

Figure 2: Factors Leading to Membership Growth in the Progress Party



To explain the Progress Party membership growth from 1973 to 2008, the party leadership’s systematic work to increase it seems to be the key factor. However, it did not step into play before 1994, and it was then facilitated by a number of factors. To begin with, the Progress Party has successively increased its share of the vote, from 5% in 1973 to 22,1% in the 2005 parliamentary election, and from 1,7% in 1975 to 17,5% in the 2007 regional election. Electoral success may have provided an impetus for the party leadership to intensify its recruitment work, but more importantly, it has led to comprehensive state funding, which has put the Progress Party in an increasingly beneficial position to spend money on membership recruitment and maintenance.

State funding has also allowed for geographic expansion. From 52 local chapters in 1975, the Progress Party now has thousands of party representatives spread over 350 local branches, ready to implement central initiatives to increase membership.

Finally, the centralized nature of the Progress Party’s executive structure and support in the electorate for its policies have also been factors conducive to leadership efforts. The party’s centralized executive structure has enabled the leadership to effectively implement measures to recruit and retain members, while the increasing support in the electorate for its

policies has increased the pool of potential members (as Figure 2 shows, policy support may also be a cause of membership growth).

In sum, the Progress Party's leadership has capitalized on a number of factors facilitating successful membership recruitment and maintenance work. It is unclear to what extent efforts to recruit and maintain members could have been conducted without these favorable circumstances. However, the Progress Party may be credited with making much out of its opportunities. From 1994 and onwards, the party leadership has worked systematically to increase mass membership by hiring staff to work on it, carrying out numerous recruitment campaigns, and devising new measures to keep members in the organization.

6.4. Suggestions for Further Research

A natural starting point for suggesting future research is the findings of this case study of the Norwegian Progress Party. I have found that leadership efforts appear to be a central component in the explanation, although it may depend on several other factors to be successful. It would be interesting to see if this holds water in a larger, comparative study. An obvious obstacle to this is the limited number of observations available in terms of parties that experience membership growth, at least within Western Europe. This could be circumvented, however, by accepting variation on the dependent variable. That is, my independent variables could possibly be examined with respect to their effect on membership figures in general. A prospective research objective would then be to gauge leadership efforts' effect on membership numbers at a given time, regardless of their positive or negative growth.

Second, I cited in Chapter 1 Mudde's (2007: 264-267) claim that to explain the *sustained* electoral success of right-wing populist parties in Europe, party organization is a critical factor. A point Mudde makes is that very little empirical information is available on the internal life and structure of these parties. A possible research objective is then to conduct more case studies of my type, if possible. I have shown that the Norwegian Progress Party considers ordinary members crucial to its viability and success, and it would be interesting to see if right-wing populist parties in general in Europe hold the same view of their members. However, and as mentioned, Mudde argues that we know little about the organizational lives of these parties. The reason is that parties in general prefer to keep their internal life away from public scrutiny, and right-wing populist parties are more inclined toward circumspection due to scepticism of academics and journalists, fearing that the information they provide will not be used for strictly academic purposes. However, I have for the most part not encountered any reluctance to sharing information with me as an academic in my encounter with the

Progress Party, despite that some in the central leadership did not answer my emails. Both Membership Supervisor Anne Grethe Hauan and leader of the Progress Party's Department of Organization and Schooling, Øistein Lid, stated that they were interested in all academic work about their party; they were interested in any knowledge that could increase their understanding of issues that affect them, such as the dynamics of party membership. Consequently, I was granted a day at the Progress Party headquarters in Oslo, letting me speak to everyone there, including mayors and consultants. I was also handed detailed information about membership figures from both Hauan and Lid in the central organization and random regional representatives. Hence, the alleged scepticism of right-wing populist parties towards academics and journalists could be exaggerated.

Finally, this thesis has demonstrated that the Progress Party puts much effort into retaining their members. It would be interesting to compare political parties systematically, in Norway to begin with, with respect to how they actually maintain contact with their members. Do they differ from the Progress Party? I have only examined one case, and it could be that other parties go to the same lengths as the Progress Party, or even further, in terms of membership maintenance, despite that they have not had the same membership growth as the Progress Party. This could produce more insight into the significance of the party organization itself as a determinant of membership growth. It is now up to others to pick up the topic where I leave it.

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