Herbert Kitschelt *

Diversification and Reconfiguration of Party Systems in Postindustrial Democracies

Grand theories of social and political change in advanced capitalism, such as those originally proposed by Daniel Bell or Alain Touraine in the 1960s, were right in predicting a sea change in the alignment of political interests and the practices of political participation in the transition from industrial to postindustrial societies. With the benefit of hindsight provided by another forty years of technological innovation, economic growth, and political battle, of course, many details of their original visions have become implausible. Nevertheless, two predictions stand up to the test of time. First, we do observe the end of class politics, conceived in a Marxist binary class framework, though not the end of distributive conflict in the politics of postindustrial capitalism. Second, as predicted by Bell and especially Touraine, politics is no longer just about distributive arrangements of who gets what when and how, but also about the governance structures of social organization and cultural life styles. Postindustrial politics is indeed shot through with conflict about the control of individual and group conduct - what sort of authorities with what kind of regulatory powers are entitled to determine individuals' life styles and how citizens can exercise capacities and rights to participate in binding collective decisions. All this has contributed to a reconfiguration, if not a crumbling of traditional party systems certainly in the sense that established parties had to redefine their programmatic appeals and often enough with the successful appearance of new partisan labels in the electoral competition. In this process, parties geared to the interests of the "working class" have vanished. On the theoretical plane, conventional conceptions of social structure dividing the population hierarchically into a manual blue-collar working class and a white collar middle stratum have lost their analytical significance for the study of political mobilization. Political parties, however, have not become "catch-all" parties in the sense a melancholic, Frankfurt School influenced critique of pluralist democracy envisioned (Kirchheimer 1965), but express, enact, and exacerbate new lines of issue divides concerned with economic distribution and political-cultural governance structures that call for precise analytical characterization and explanation. At the same time, political participation has vastly expanded beyond the realm of the party-dominated domain. The same set of societal and political mechanisms that drive the reconfiguration of the party systems has also promoted the differentiation of modes of political action.

On the following pages, I try to offer some sketchy justifications for this barrage of bald assertions. I begin with a sociological view of political preference formation in postindustrial society as exogenous to the *current* political process and policy formation, but endogenous to the cumulative consequences of past political decisions, and here primarily the development of welfare states. Based on this exogenously constituted space of salient preference distributions, I then discuss the strategic programmatic options parties advertising under different labels may face contingent upon the configuration of competitors they encounter in individual polities.[1]

The third section outlines why I believe that it is unhelpful to characterize the current transformation of postindustrial party systems as a decoupling of the political agents from their principals, electoral constituencies. I addressed this subject in my critique of Katz and Mair's (1995) influential and often cited article on the rise of "cartel parties" (Kitschelt 2000a). I will argue here that, if anything, the responsiveness of political parties to citizens' demands has increased in recent decades, as can be inferred from the decline of clientelistic citizen-politician linkages in advanced capitalist democracies, a topic I have also dealt with before (Kitschelt 2000b; 2002; 2003b). In fact, we have evidence that even in the recent era of "globalization" partisan responsiveness continues to affect policy making. I provide an incomplete literature review to illustrate this point in section four. In the final section, I briefly dwell on the issue of differentiation of political modes of action.

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1 These sections are meant to update and revise the analytical schemes I have employed in earlier work (Kitschelt 1994, 1995, and 2001 and as case studies 2003a and Kitschelt/McGann 2003).

Differentiation of Political Preferences and Interests

Sociologists and political scientists deplore that they do not have good theories of political preference formation, but in theoretical and empirical political sociology they at least tacitly draw on theories of preference formation, although they test them only occasionally. Here I wish to lay out a set of propositions about preference formation that have two analytically separate, but empirically intertwined aspects, contingent on prevailing political economic conditions. First, there are income- and material-asset maximizing preferences, in the sense of actors searching for ways to optimize the future income of resources by taking the size and the certainty (security) of that flow into account. At one extreme, such preferences call for an authoritative redistribution of asset endowments and flows by means of politics to the least fortunate or at least to particularly deserving groups in society. At the other extreme, distributive preferences insist that the only acceptable mode of allocation is spontaneous, voluntary exchange in the market place. Second, there are preferences over the governance structures of social life that range from "libertarian" to "authoritarian" positions. The former emphasizes the individual autonomy of citizens to govern their life styles, the tolerance and respect for socio-cultural difference, be they related to gender or cultural beliefs and practices, and on the right of autonomous individuals to participate in all collectively binding political decisions. The "authoritarian" counter view envisions the conduct of social life as governed by compliance with collectively shared, uniform norms and regulatory principles of "decency" that endorses cultural homogeneity, a particular form of family organization and its corresponding sexual code, justified by a dominant religious belief system and enforced by a higher social, moral and political authority to which individuals are expected to show deference.[2] I sometimes have referred to the distributive politics extremes as "left" and "right," a characterization that is imprecise, if not misleading, given the everyday semantics of the left-right (liberal-conservative) notions. Empirically political actors who employ this unidimensional, formal spatial metaphor to characterize preference profiles signal with it positions over both the dimensions of economic distribution and socio-cultural governance structures. For the sake of consistency with my past use of terminology, I nevertheless use compound adjectives to characterize individuals and groups on both dimensions, such as left-libertarians, right-libertarians, and so on.

Preferences over distribution and resources have traditionally been associated with the "factors" of land, capital and labor. But I concur with Rogowski (1989), as amended by Alt et al. (1996) and Frieden and Rogowski (1996), that in advanced capitalism the scarcest and most precious market income producing "factor" is human capital. Moreover, given that this asset is comparatively "specific" in the sense that costs incurred during its acquisition are unrecoverable ("sunk") and often hard to redeploy from one task structure to another, sectoral and occupational divisions play an important role in shaping people's economic interests. Actors' desire to employ politics as a redistributive mechanism that trumps spontaneous market allocation depends on the size and security of the revenue flow they experience in markets. Individuals who derive a great deal of market income from their superior human capital assets and whose market income is comparatively certain are most inclined to embrace a "rightist" distributive position to let free market contracting allocate scarce resources. Individuals whose income is derived from non-market sources or whose market income is comparatively low and/or uncertain prefer an authoritative allocation of resources that provides hedges and reassigns property rights.

Empirically, the propensity to endorse authoritative political redistribution, primarily through the welfare state should therefore decrease from public and non-profit (subsidiary) sector employment, particularly in social services (education, health care, counseling…), through private market, but internationally sheltered sectors, to export exposed sectors. Higher skill (education) may translate into more market orientation, provided that highly skilled individuals do not work primarily in non-market social services. Asset specificity may result in greater propensity to endorse political hedging mechanisms and redistribution, provided this effect is not counteracted by other attributes of market location.[3]

2 For an instructive way to characterize the authoritarian-libertarian dimension empirically, see the new article by Flanagan and Lee (2003).

3 In this regard, I like Iversen and Soskice's (2001) theoretical model, but I am skeptical of empirical findings that assert a net influence of asset specific skills on preferences over welfare state redistribution that (1) do not control for the market exposure of individuals with specific skills and (2) that cover areas of social policy for which the authors do not lay out a logic of why individuals with asset-specific skills should be more security oriented than those with unspecific skills (universal health care, public pension system). Market exposure may trump the asset specificity of individuals in political interest formation.

Further elements that may affect preferences concerning the authoritative (re)allocation of resources and that I did not discuss in my previous work are organizational authority relations—in the sense Wright (1985; 1997) employs the term—and gender. People in charge of the allocation of scarce resources generally consider agency problems and scarcity relations more keenly than individuals who are subordinates or those involved in a collegial decision structure. On balance, this makes wielders of authority more inclined to rely on voluntary contracting that sharpen individual incentives to perform rather than on centralized redistribution that may blunt individual incentives. With regard to gender, the critique and amendment of Esping-Andersen's welfare state analysis (Esping-Andersen 1990; 1999; Sainsbury 1999) has shown that women have a distinctive preference toward more welfare state redistribution and security as long as they are exposed to the risks of market integration to a much greater extent than men because the prevailing socio-cultural division of family labor thrusts the bulk of caring tasks for children and the elderly onto them. Consequently, as Estevez-Abe et al. (2001) have convincingly argued, women's current insertion in the system of family reproduction makes it harder for them to invest in labor market skills and orients them more toward jobs in the "soft" non-profit sector where discontinuous or flexible time participation carries fewer penalties, particularly for career advancement, than in the for-profit market sector.

Table 1: Political Preferences over Economic Distribution (Social Policy Preferences/Welfare State)

	Employed in the public sector?	Employed in non-traded sector?	Low level of educational skill?	Subordinate role in organizational hierarchy?	Female rather than male?	Summary propensity to support a redistributive welfare state (male-female)
GROUP I: low-intermediate skill public service sector	+	+	+	+	+	4.0 - 5.0
GROUP II: public service sector professionals	+	+	-	=	+	2.5 – 3.5
GROUP III: domestic private sector low-skilled wage earners	-	+	+	+	+	3.0 – 4.0
GROUP IV: trade-exposed sector intermediate skilled wage earners	-	-	=	=/+	+	1.0 – 2.5
GROUP V: professionals and entrepreneurs in symbol producing domestic sector	-	+	-	-	+	1.0 – 2.0
GROUP VI: corporate managers, owners and professionals in business services	-	-	-	-	+	0.0 – 1.0
GROUP VII: small business without professional training	-	-/+	=	-	+	0.0 – 2.0

In order to account for distributive political preferences, what we end up with is a complex combinatorics of asset endowments and modes of insertion into labor markets that defy a simply factor or sector classification of distributive economic interests. A model of preference formation would have to test the impact of these attributes simultaneously and in interaction with each other. Unfortunately, cross-national surveys typically lack the data to accomplish this, primarily because their authors derive survey questions still from old-fashioned theories of class and social stratification. For heuristic purposes, table 1 (page 3) identifies six "social structural locations" and their joint impact on distributive preference formation, provided that all criteria are weighted equally and additively. I assign only high, low and a few times intermediate scores to each location, sometimes with ranges (e.g. to reflect gender differences). I do not hazard guesses on the asset specificity of human capital skills and therefore have left out that dimension. What this heuristic exercise should demonstrate is that conventional notions of the manual wage-earning working class or the salaried white collar middle class "explode" when we take the asset control and labor market position of citizens into account. The heterogeneity of distributive interests *within* these classical social categorizations is at least as great as that *between* them. The distributive orientations of workers, for example, may range from the rather "pro-capitalist" positions of male skilled technicians working in export-exposed manufacturing industries (group V: combined score of 1.0 out of 5.0) to female, low to intermediate skilled workers in domestically oriented industries or services (4.0 out of 5.0). Among non-workers, most pro-capitalist are male self-employed academically trained professionals or managers of large companies (e.g. in law, accounting), most anti-capitalist are female public or non-profit service sector professionals (e.g. teachers, health care professionals).

With regard to the orientation over libertarian-authoritarian socio-cultural governance structures, my earlier work emphasized as predictors (1) education, (2) occupational task structure (client-interactive versus object/document processing tasks) and (3) gender. I still believe that these social attributes matter most for political preference formation. Much sociological and political-psychological research confirms education to be a robust predictor of tolerance for ambiguity and diversity as well as for participatory dispositions (willingness and demand for political participation; personal sense of political efficacy). The fact that people working in client-interactive and symbolic-cultural task structures (education, health, social work, cultural activities/media) are more libertarian may be in part a self-selection into a task structure in which they operate with highly uncertain technologies (understood as indeterminate cause-effect relations) that require constant adjustment, bargaining and feedback from the social "objects" of treatment. In part, the exposure to a highly unstructured work environment, however, may also create a socialization effect disposing people toward more tolerance for difference and participatory process orientations. This effect may be reinforced by the authority structure of formal organizations operating around uncertain work technologies engaging decentral, localized knowledge of employees and clients. As research within the theoretical frameworks of organizational contingency and transaction costs has shown since the 1960s, organizations involved with uncertain, client-interactive technologies tend to have flatter hierarchies with more collegial decision making than top-down hierarchical structures. Compared to my earlier work, I therefore add the authority structure of people's work organization (collegial is disposing people to libertarian views) as a reinforcing influence. Finally, we may have to take into account the effect of aging on declining willingness to remain open to diversity—and that also means: innovation over time—as a further life-cycle determinant of political preferences, but it may well be that age drops out, once we control for education, client-interactive task structures and involvement in socio-cultural governance structures.

Table 2 (page 5) presents the same six exemplary sociological "sites" in postindustrial society and computes their disposition toward libertarian orientations based on an additive, linear logic equivalent to what is presumed in table 1. The striking result is that if there is any conventional "class effect" in political preference formation it operates in the realm of socio-cultural libertarian-authoritarian preferences, not that of distributive relations (see also Kitschelt 1993). On average, members of the "working class" tend to be more authoritarian than members of the middle class, although again we also find quite considerable intra-class variance (consider groups I and V versus groups II and VI). This intra-class variance is a bit lop-sided. The table does signal a bit of "working class authoritarianism" (Lipset 1960/1981), yet signals high diversity among the categories that in the past were lumped under the middle class characterization. Treating the middle class as a category to which we might potentially attribute political agency because of collectively united preferences does not get us anywhere.

Table 2:
Political Preferences over Socio-Cultural Governance Structures (Libertarian versus Authoritarian Principles)

	Higher education?	Client-interactive occupational task structure?	Collegial authority or high work place autonomy?	Young or old?	Female rather than male?	Summary propensity to support libertarian socio-cul-tural governance (range old male – young female)
GROUP I: low-intermediate skill public service sector	=	+	-	+/-	+/-	1.5 – 3.5
GROUP II: public service sector professionals	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	3.0 – 5.0
GROUP III: domestic private sector low-skilled wage earners	-	-	-	+/-	+/-	0.0 – 2.0
GROUP IV: trade-exposed sector intermediate skilled wage earners	=	-	=	+/-	+/-	1.0 – 3.0
GROUP V: professionals and entrepreneurs in symbol producing domestic sector	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	3.0 – 5.0
GROUP VI: corporate managers, owners and professionals in business services	+	+	-	+/-	+/-	2.0 – 4.0
GROUP VII: small business without professional training	=	-	-	+/-	+/-	0.5 – 2.5

For the consequences of political preference formation for the development of democratic politics in contemporary postindustrial polities what is interesting, of course, is not primarily the micrologic of preference formation based on citizens' insertion in labor markets, family and work organizations, but *the aggregate effects of such micro-processes on preference profiles in entire polities, conditioned by economic development and past policy interventions*. Depending on the relative frequency of "sites" describing the preference shaping position of citizens in a polity, we obtain a different political preference distribution for politicians to work with.

In my previous work, I argued that the economics and politics of the post-World War II "Golden Age" of capitalism tend to rotate the densest areas of preference distribution from an axis that runs from distributive leftist to distributive rightist positions, yet remains rather neutral on libertarian-authoritarian positions, to an axis the extreme poles of which are left-libertarian and right-authoritarian positions. The major mechanisms bringing about this rotation are (1) postindustrialization, working through the educational revolution and the emancipation of women from confinement to the family sphere and (2) the rise of comprehensive welfare states creating a large non-profit sector of

educational, health, social, and cultural services. As a flip-side of this development, postindustrializing societies experience (1) the decline of the petty bourgeoisie of independent self-employed individuals without high human capital endowments (particularly of farmers, small shopkeepers, craftsmen, etc.) and (2) a leveling off, differentiation, and decline of the working class, particularly of low-skilled workers.

What my earlier work ignored, but I would like to add now as an amendment is that *the process of post-industrialization and welfare state formation unfolded in cross-nationally different trajectories and patterns that also influence preference distribution*. Let me elaborate by loosely building on Esping-Andersen's (1990) three worlds of welfare. In residual welfare states, with relatively few decommodified services, distributive class conflict remains comparatively more intense and the left-libertarian pole of the distribution is weaker because the expansion of non-profit social services proceeds much slower than elsewhere. In social democratic, redistributive welfare states, with large public service sectors the potential for a left-libertarian versus right-authoritarian rotation of the main axis of preference distribution is most pronounced. The size of the public sector, however, is bound to energize distributive conflicts. Conservative continental (Christian Democratic) welfare states assume an intermediate position with less redistributive and smaller welfare states than in Scandinavia, but a greater effort to organize an inclusive class compromise through a dense network of social security.

My previous conceptualization has also neglected the demographic profile of polities as a determinant of preference distributions. In general, high dependency ratios, and here especially the presence of a large share of elderly people should promote left-redistributive politics, but restrain libertarian politics. Elderly recipients of welfare state services and financial transfers will insist on their continuation, if not expansion. At the same time, the elderly have less tolerance for cultural diversity and dynamism, whether for reasons of period effects (socialization) or life cycle.

These macro-level propositions are entirely comparative static or cross-sectional, yet do not take the pace of dynamic change into account. What does rapid deindustrialization/fast postindustrialization and a rapid increase of the dependency ratio achieve? Iversen and Cusak (2000) suggest that the former accelerates welfare state growth, at least in the 1970s and 1980s, as heightened levels of labor market uncertainties make people yearn for safety nets and redistributive hedges. The change in the economic structure precipitated by the revolution of information technology and the growth of welfare states to limits, particularly in social services, however, may stimulate a rather different dynamics in the 1990s and beyond. Particularly young professionals no longer face a big labor market expansion in client-interactive services associated with non-profit or public agencies, but in the private, market-exposed and even internationally traded sectors of financial and managerial business services, information technologies, and personal services. If this tendency continues, my theory would predict a relatively growing share of voters who combine market-oriented, rightist distributive economic preferences with libertarian socio-cultural orientations[4]

At the same time, the second half of the 1980s and particularly the 1990s saw an accelerating decline of the industrial sector in many countries. Among those forced out of manual labor jobs in manufacturing, pushed into lower salaried jobs, or prevented from ever obtaining a family-wage paying manufacturing job, this may intensify political demands for redistribution. This especially applies to lower-skilled manual and clerical wage earners. At the same time, those who keep their manufacturing jobs tend to have better skills. Given that they tend to operate in an internationally exposed environment in which their job depends on the profitability of their company, old class preferences may give way to a new company-syndicalism that gradually disposes them toward a market-oriented view of distributive issues and moderate socio-cultural views, predicated by their levels of education and object-processing task structure (group IV in tables 1 and 2). In order to preserve such jobs, skilled workers may opt for limits on the redistributive welfare state and public sector activities. Their views may then sharply diverge from low-skill elements of the working class who embrace both redistributive and authoritarian positions (group III in tables 1 and 2).

At the macro-level, figures 1 and 2 depict the changes in the distribution of political preferences from the 1970s to the era beyond the turn of the millennium in ideal-typical fashion. A rotation of the main axis of preference distribution takes place in which there is no longer a natural affinity between economic "leftism" and socio-cultural "libertarianism" or economic "rightism" and socio-cultural "authoritarianism."

4 On the level of social science popularization, the rise of a new professional and entrepreneurial middle class of symbol producers who are centrist to right-wing on the dimension of economic distribution, but libertarian in their socio-cultural pursuits, is captured well in books such as David Brooks' Bobos (*Bourgeois Bohemians) in Paradise. The New Upper Class and How They Got There (New York: Simon and Schuster 2000) or John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira's The Emerging Democratic Majority (New York: Scribner, 2002).

Figure 1: Distribution of political preferences from the postwar decades to the 1970s and 1990s

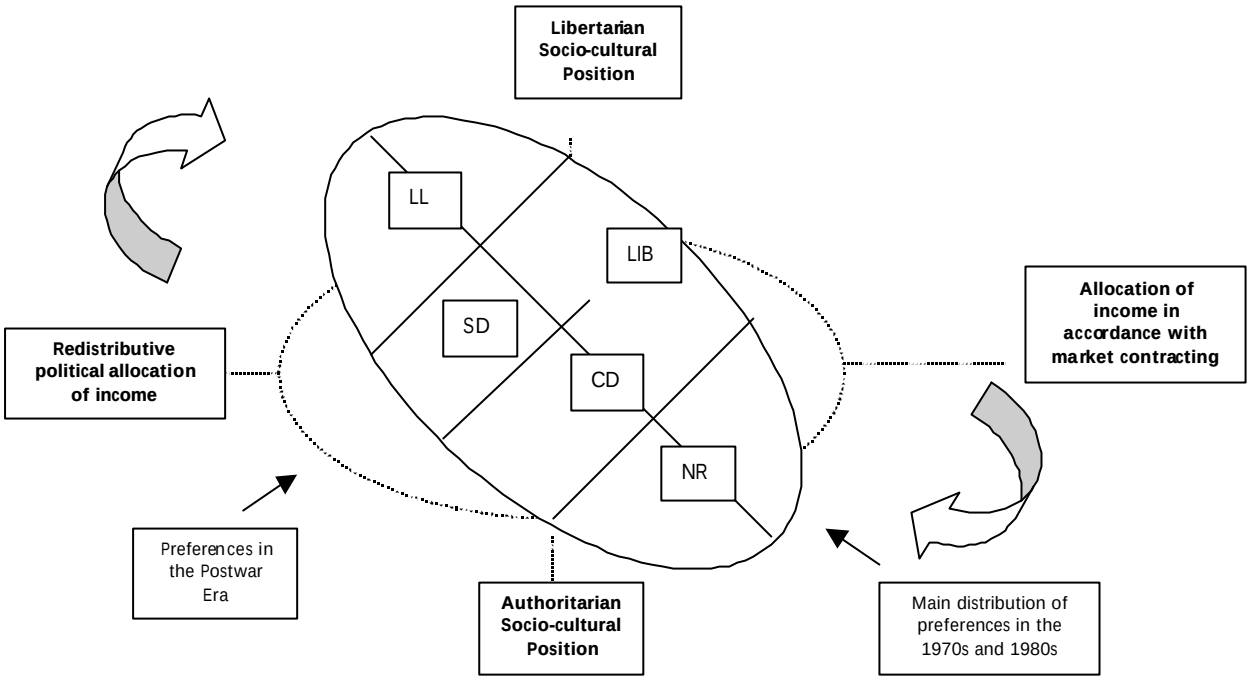
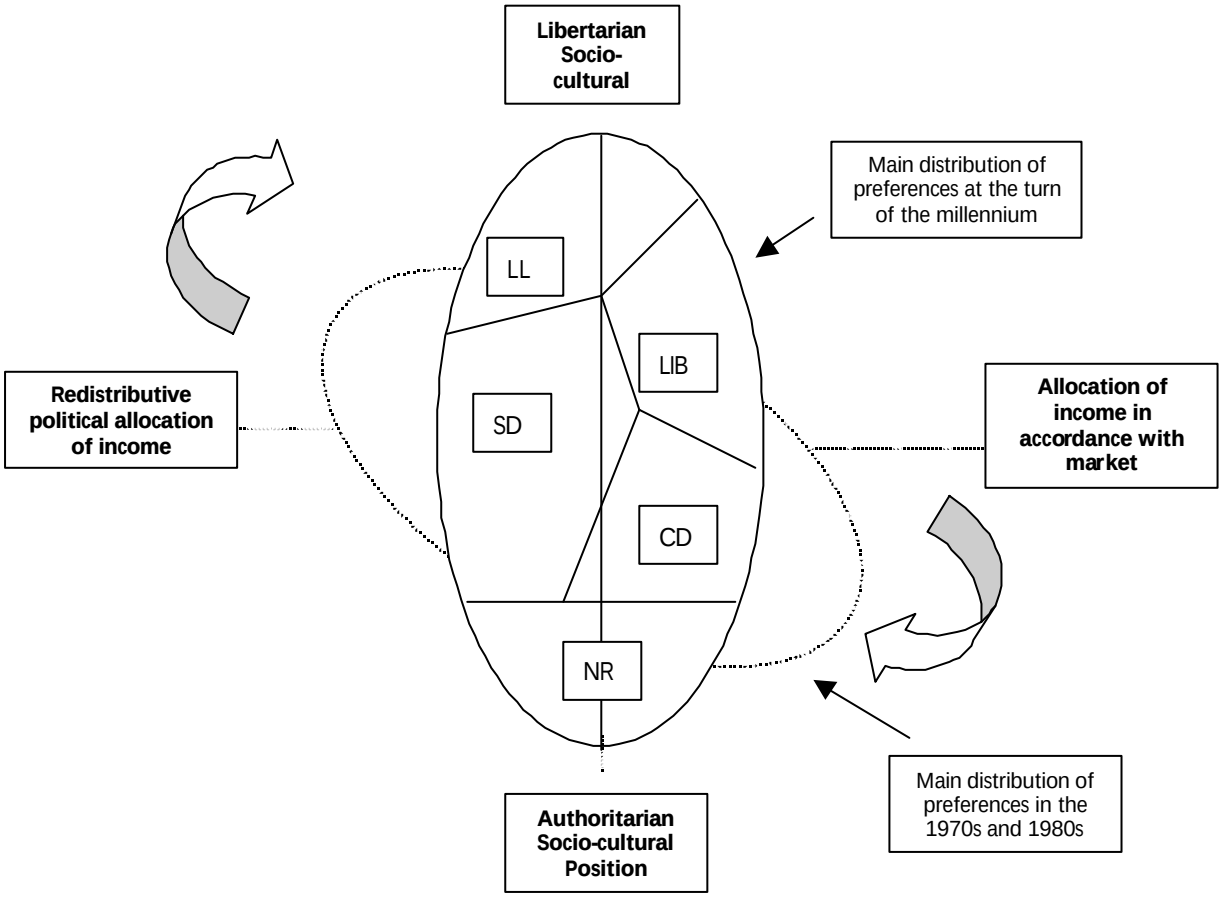


Figure 2: Distribution of political preferences from the 1980s to the turn of the millennium



At the same time, political-economic developments have narrowed the range of distributive disagreements, although such conflicts remain salient or even intensify in salience given new conditions of scarcity. To make the figures more realistic, the axis of preference distribution in figure 2 might have been shifted further to the right as well. The narrowing of the range of relevant positions over distribution and the general right-shift of positions, of course, is due to two macro-developments I have not yet mentioned. One is the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it the collapse of the model of economic planning and import-substituting industrialization. The other is the growth of the welfare state to limits, as imposed by economics and demography.

My bottom line, therefore, is that the distribution of political preferences is never a static affair. As we compare across decades and across polities, theoretical models of political competition must take new sources of variance into account. According to one of the most frequently advanced criticisms of my book on the new radical right, I did not acknowledge the rise of authoritarian segments of the working class with intermediate or social-redistributive positions on issues of economic resource distribution. I now do so, but with the qualifier that this development has become much more pronounced in the course of the 1990s, whereas my past empirical analysis covered only the time period until 1990. In the spirit of the same logic, I expect the macropolitical distribution of political preferences to keep changing in the future, and maybe in hard to anticipate ways. What I would claim to remain constant, however, is the underlying micrologic of political preference formation that links market, organizational, and socio-cultural sites to political positions.

Repositioning and Differentiation of Partisan Alternatives

Figures 1 and 2 already suggest a political partisan elite response to distributions of voter preferences by associating sectors of the preference space with political labels. Before I return to this, let me first clarify the underlying theoretical premises of my arguments. They are loosely based on spatial theories of competition (see Ordeshook 1997), combined with voter theories of cognitive processing that assume rational information misers (Downs 1957; Zaller 1992; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Erickson, McKuen and Stimson 2002). Some citizens vote for parties that are closest to their ideal points, corrected for strategic considerations in systems with small electoral districts and few parties that generate Duvergerian equilibria (Cox 1997). They matter for the ultimate outcome of elections and for the strategic appeals of politicians, even though most citizens do not respond to political signals, or respond to such signals in a random fashion, or simply vote based on habit. Rational cognitively sensitive minorities (elites?) make all the difference for the operation of democracy (Erickson et al. 2002). The spatial logic of partisan choice may be slightly tempered by rational voters demanding a small dosage of directional "issue leadership" from politicians, but that ingredient is generally too small to matter for a broad cross-polity and cross-time analysis (cf. Merrill and Grofman 1999).

In a uni-dimensional space with sincere voters and certain weak assumptions about entry costs and voter abstention due to indifference or alienation (see Kitschelt 1994: chapter 5), vote-seeking parties will spread out over the preference space to corner distinct market shares, even if the voter distribution is single-peaked. A logic of office seeking, i.e. maximizing bargaining position to obtain cabinet seats, may modify, but not erase this strategic baseline in multi-party systems. The same applies to a logic of seeking influence over policy-making.

For the predominant preference distribution of the 1970s and 1980s, I claimed that a uni-dimensional representation of the salient competitive policy space is a fair approximation for almost all postindustrial democracies. By the time we get to preference distributions approximating that depicted in figure 2 in the run-up to the new millennium, however, we may be increasingly dealing with an irreducibly two-dimensional preference distribution in which politicians can identify equilibrium strategies only if very strong and improbable constraining assumptions about the nature of preference distributions were empirically valid. Instead of assuming such conditions, let me suggest two behavioral mechanisms that restrict the strategic mobility of political parties in the electoral space even under non-equilibrium conditions. They impose limits on the speed of strategic movements of parties away from positions that have manifestly frustrated their vote- and/or office-seeking ambitions in previous rounds of electoral competition.[5] First, voters process parties' strategic positional changes with some time lag and incompletely. Second, particularly in highly

5 The theoretical implication here is that electoral defeat is one important trigger of strategic repositioning of parties. The literature on strategic choice in parties, of course, points out that sometimes parties also respond to new opportunities or preempt external threats (through the entry of new parties or the revised strategic appeal of established parties) before they precipitate the electoral defeat of the focal party.

institutionalized party systems with relatively steep entry costs—whether they are due to electoral thresholds, party finance, or media access—parties value credibility of their position, derived from the perceived consistency and continuity of their policy position over time. Rational policy voting would be impossible, if casting a vote would have no predictable consequences for the behavior of parties. Credibility based on consistency is a critical ingredient in the "vote production function" of parties in highly institutionalized democracies where electoral outcomes are dominated by rational, policy-sensitive minorities in the electorate.

Based on these general considerations, let me characterize strategic options and dilemmas for political parties in the transition from a uni-dimensional left-libertarian versus right-authoritarian distribution of political preferences to a two-dimensional distribution where knowledge of citizens' economic distributive preferences does not allow us to predict their libertarian-authoritarian preferences. I spell out strategic implications of the changing preference distributions for the five basic party families prominent in most postindustrial European polities: left-libertarian parties, social democratic (labor) parties, Christian Democratic parties or national-secular variants thereof (Gaullists), secular market-liberal parties, and right-authoritarian parties.

Parties that start out with *left-libertarian positions* in the 1980s reach a support ceiling that is partly constrained by the limits of public service sector employment and more generally that of employment niches protected from market exposure with "hard budget constraints" that may cause layoffs and bankruptcies. If in the new millennium much of the growth of employment among highly educated professionals takes place in the market exposed sector, the electoral expansion of such parties may depend on moving to the market-liberal right on economics while preserving their libertarian socio-cultural appeal so as to prevent social democratic or established market-liberal, secular parties from poaching in their electoral issue space. This economic policy shift has manifestly begun in a number of left-libertarian parties and is reflected in their superior capacity to attract young professionals and entrepreneurs.[6] This strategic reorientation is also furthered by the demographic revolution that pits younger, educated people against older, less educated retirees. Left-libertarian parties tend to advocate a retrenchment of spending on the current generation of the elderly (pay-go pension benefits, health care and even unemployment insurance) so as to dedicate resources to human capital investments in the young (improved education and university training, public child care). This perspective on social policy, of course, is also consistent with the parties' feminist-libertarian agenda. Left-libertarian parties therefore are becoming spearheads of welfare state reform associated with partial market liberalization. If they move too rapidly in this direction, however, they may alienate their traditional left-libertarian electoral stock. Such traditionalists may then defect to the party of non-voters or to conventional social democratic parties, although it is unlikely that this constituency by itself could give political leaders an opportunity to form a new party winning a critical mass of electoral support.

Social democratic parties can rely progressively less on shrinking and shriveling working class constituencies and instead become the major parties rallying better educated elements of the service sector, particularly the social-protectionist public, non-profit employees and to a lesser extent private service sector of society. The policy appeal that can weld together a coalition among these electoral constituencies involves moderately libertarian and economically centrist policy programs. This necessitates that the parties partially embrace the current social policy retrenchment agenda. The strategic movement of social democracy toward economic centrism and socio-cultural libertarianism leads to a collapse of their old manual working support base, particularly among male workers. Those without much education and occupational skills will be alienated from social democracy both on economic as well as socio-cultural grounds. They drift into the reservoir of non-voters or that of parties with authoritarian appeals, even if the latter may situate themselves on the economic right. Those manual workers with high technical skill and jobs in competitive firms situated in market- and export-exposed sectors may abandon social democracy in favor of more market-liberalizing, conservative parties with middle of the road socio-cultural appeals, whether these run under Christian Democratic or secular labels. The bottom line is that among younger manual workers the "Alford index," measuring the difference between the percentage of workers and non-workers supporting social democracy, will decisively turn negative. In cross-sectional perspective, this tendency will be partly conditional upon the incorporation of manual workers in interest associations and organizational networks traditionally affiliated with the social democratic left, above all labor unions. Unencumbered young workers turn to right-authoritarian or mainstream market liberal parties.

6 In the German and Austrian Greens, for example, since the mid-1990s younger private businesspeople are the most sociologically over-represented group right behind students and public sector employees.

Christian Democratic parties, together with other national "bourgeois" parties that conventionally engaged in a cross-class appeal cemented around a centrist economic position strongly supportive of a comprehensive welfare state, combined with a mildly traditionalist, authoritarian socio-cultural appeal, find themselves in great strategic difficulties. The electoral trade-offs encountered by such parties may account for their precipitous decline and ultimately their beginning repositioning over the past thirty years. This applies at least outside Scandinavia where such parties were always niche players serving a small constituency. The decline of major economically centrist Christian or national parties was evident first in the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland, then also in Italy, France, and Austria and finally even in Germany. In recent decades this decline is not so much due to the secularization of societies, but the impossibility of maintaining a centrist stance on economic-distributive policy issues when faced with a status quo baseline of large, comprehensive and moderately redistributive welfare states facing the new technological and demographic challenges of the 1990s and beyond. With increasing pressure to liberalize parts of the economy and impose a cap on transfers and services to the elderly, Christian Democratic politicians can no longer combine their strengths among the elderly, among segments of blue and white collar electorates, and among business, professional, and managerial constituencies. One strategy may be to the support of the most social-protectionist elements of the parties' conventional electoral coalition, especially pensioners, fade and fall by the way side. This would open up the opportunity to reconstitute what were old "centrist" parties with a more pronounced market liberalism, now primarily catering to "new" high skill blue and white collar voters in the market exposed sectors and business-professional communities. Part of the old social-protectionist constituency would simply stay with these parties as long as such parties continue their Christian and moderately traditionalist socio-cultural appeals that make such voters tolerate the parties' newly found market liberalism with clenched teeth. This process is associated with fierce internal combat over social policy in such parties.

Secular parties of the market-liberal right may be, on balance, the great winners of the process of socio-economic and demographic transformation with new constraints on the welfare state. This shows up particularly in countries where they have made electoral headway at the expense of centrist bourgeois Christian Democratic parties that were internally divided over economic and social policy issues. Their greatest strategic challenge for liberal parties is the question of how to combine an appeal to market liberalism with socio-cultural libertarian strategies. If market-liberal parties become fiercely libertarian, they compete mostly against formerly left-libertarian parties, but lose conventional petty-bourgeois constituencies. If they embrace more authoritarian appeals, they limit their reception among young educated private sector professionals.

Parties of the new radical right with right-authoritarian appeals unify their constituencies primarily around a variety of issues associated with authoritarian socio-cultural governance structures, such as insistence on cultural homogeneity (against immigrants, multicultural pluralism, socio-culture based affirmative action, etc.), limiting the participatory politicization of regulatory economic policies (concerning the ecology, job safety, etc.), or preserving the role of the paternalist family. But the constituencies of such parties are internally divided over the extent to which they should embrace economically rightist market-liberal agendas. The parties' petty bourgeois supporters are much more enthusiastic about market liberalization than their young, male, working class followers. This internal conflict is exacerbated by accelerating socio-economic change and the strategic repositioning of social democrats in the 1990s. With social democrats becoming moderate white-collar libertarian and economically centrist parties, the reservoir of low-skill workers available to the socio-cultural appeals of right-authoritarian parties has grown. As a consequence, right-authoritarian parties sometimes attempted to tone down their market liberal rhetoric so as not to alienate potential working class constituencies. The internal conflicts within new rightist parties over economic policy, however, come to the fore when such parties join government coalitions with market-liberal Christian Democratic or secular-liberal conservative parties that configure their alliances around policies of accelerated economic liberalization and welfare state retrenchment.[7]

7 For the time being, empirical evidence about the divisive effect of government participation for new right-wing parties can be derived only from the experience of parties that are not strictly "right-authoritarian" because in the 1980s and early 1990s they could also appeal to broad constituencies of educated voters alienated from established parties by their clientelistic, partitocratic practices. I am thinking here of the Austrian Freedom Party and the Italian Lega Nord. In the former case, the party indeed did attract the plurality of manual workers in the late 1990s, but shed this support in the 2002 election after a spell in government office when it delivered mostly market-liberalizing policies. After the fall of partitocracy in Italy, the Lega Nord reoriented its strategy somewhat around authoritarian issues, but mostly tried to refashion itself as a purely regional lobby with limited national appeal. Presumably because right-authoritarian politicians know the internal division of their electorate, in Scandinavia they have

Party families in postindustrial capitalist polities are thus involved in systems of strategic electoral trade-offs that do not permit easy equilibrium solutions. While comparative political science cannot stipulate (Nash-)equilibrium conditions where such strategic games may come to rest, it can investigate the empirical association of parties' strategic choices, their ability to attract and hold electoral constituencies with different market profiles and political preferences over distribution and socio-cultural governance, and their electoral payoffs, contingent upon the choices of all their competitors.

The rotation of the salient space of preference distributions since the Golden Age of the 1950s and 1960s, combined with the increasingly two-dimensional unfolding of that space in the 1990s and after, exacerbates tensions and trade-offs in partisan politicians' choices of programmatic appeals targeted at the crucial electoral minorities of rational issue voters. This should affect both the strength of ties between voters and parties as well as the ideological make-up of party systems. First of all, it should precipitate a *general decline in partisan identification of voters, particularly in those party systems in which large "omnibus parties" captured substantial market segments in the first post-World War II decades*. This first hypothesis thus stipulates a decline of party identification and an accelerated decline in systems with low fragmentation, as measured by the Laakso-Taagepera formula determining the effective number of parties among voters (ENPV). Change and differentiation of voter preferences makes it harder for parties to capture a broad segment of voter positions through a singular programmatic appeal. At the same time, as general education and voter sophistication improves, the proportion of rational issue/program voters increases and that of blind partisan loyalists decreases. More voters strategically reward or punish parties for their programmatic positions and policy performance with their electoral choice.

My second hypothesis also postulates both a general trend over time in postindustrializing polities and cross-nationally differential developments. Most polities will develop (left-)libertarian and (right-) authoritarian parties as ways to differentiate their partisan appeals, although the respective growth and strength of these parties will depend on a number of contingencies (cf. Kitschelt 1995: chapters 1 and 2). The critical variables that improve the opportunities for such parties and make it harder for established parties to master the electoral trade-offs they face in light of changing popular preference profiles are (1) the existence of comprehensive welfare states of the conservative-continental or social democratic redistributive type, (2) the convergence of established social democratic, center-Christian Democratic and secular-conservative parties on a narrow band of "mixed economy" policies prior to the rise of new challengers and (3) the prominence of non-programmatic, clientelistic voter-politician linkages through direct material side-payments to voter constituencies (e.g. through public sector jobs, public housing, regulatory favors or procurement contracts for partisan supporters).

With respect to the first hypothesis, consider the cursory evidence presented in table 3 for all but the smallest advanced postindustrial OECD democratic polities. Column 1 provides the effective number of parties at the electoral, not the legislative level (ENPV) around 1970 and column 2 the percentage of respondents who identify with political parties in the first two national election studies available, as reported in Dalton (2000: table 2.1., p. 25). For the United States, this is the 1950s, for about half of the countries it is the 1960s and for the rest it is the 1970s. This temporal heterogeneity matters little, as most aggregate level change in partisan identification occurred from the 1970s to the 1980s and 1990s. For each country, Dalton (2000) calculates regressions of the timing of each survey on the percentage of respondents who are identifiers or who are strong identifiers with political parties. In just about all countries, there is a tendency for party identification to decline, but at differential rates. Because the size of the coefficients is hard to interpret, given differential length of time periods and standard errors in the regressions, column 3 simply summarizes dummy scores awarding a point each if (1) a statistically significant decline of the share of party identifiers has taken place over time and/or (2) a statistically significant decline is the case for strong identifiers over time (one point each for each equation). The most consistent and broad-based decline of partisan identifiers receives a score of 2, the absence of significant decline a score of 0.

The last two rows in table 3 report bivariate correlations for our 18 cases. Party system fragmentation around 1970 exhibits a strong negative relation with levels of partisan ID toward the end of the Golden Age of economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. The more relevant parties existed in that period, the fewer voters claimed identification with any one of them ($r = -.77$). More important for my concerns, however, is that in party systems with low fragmentation the de-

confined themselves to indirect support of governments in legislative politics, but without taking responsibilitye through cabinet appointments.

Table 3: Party System Format and Partisan Dealignment in 18 Democracies

	Effective number of parties (around 1970)	Party identification (% respondents in the 1960s or 70s)	Decline of party identification 1970s –1990s (score range 0-2)	Decline of established parties from the 1960s to the 1990s (last election)
Australia	2.98	92	1	-12.2
Austria	2.32	67	2	-36.3
Belgium	4.49	50	1	-22.0
Canada	3.25	90	1	-21.8
Denmark	4.55	52	0	-15.6
Finland	5.97	57	0	-18.0
France(Blocs)	2.35	59	2	-25.1
Germany	2.44	78	2	-10.1
Ireland	2.76	61	2	-16.3
Italy	3.92	78	2	-49.6
Japan	2.57	70	(1)*	-38.7
Netherlands	7.13	38	0	-4.3
New Zealand	2.50	87	2	-27.1
Norway	3.91	66	0	-15.2
Sweden	3.20	64	2	-12.1
Switzerland	6.10	no data	no data	-21.5**
United Kingdom	2.02	93	2	-13.8
United States	2.05	77	2	-4.8
Correlation with the effective number of parties around 1970		-.77	-.78	+.18 (no plurality voting systems: +.36/N=13)
Correlation with party identification in the 1960s or 1970s			-.66	-.18 (no plurality voting systems: -.54/N = 12).

Data Sources: see text.

*) only regression result for party identification, not for strong identification, available;

**) Given the decentralization and hegerogeneity of Swiss parties, half of the Swiss People's Party voter support in 1999 was counted as "new party" support. This biases results against hypotheses in the text.

decline of partisan ID is most pronounced over the twenty to forty years of survey taking from the 1960s or 1970s to the 1990s (r = -.78) and that in general the reduction of partisan ID is most statistically consistent in countries that started out with very high proportions of partisan identifiers (r = -.66). Under conditions of dynamic and diversifying political preferences, parties can no longer craft bedrock loyalties among constituencies as large as those they captured in the post-World War II era.

Since the electoral rise of new left-libertarian and right-authoritarian parties is a more complicated matter the opportunity structure of which I have discussed elsewhere (Kitschelt 1988; Kitschelt 1995), I will not engage this subject here in a comprehensive fashion. Because of the strategic complexities of party entry costs and benefits in each polity, there is only a weak direct relation between the effective number of parties in each democratic polity around 1970 and the subsequent decline of the combined vote total of all estab-

lished parties until the last national legislative election of the 1990s, respectively presidential election in the United States. I operationalize established parties as those that received an average national electoral support of five percent or more of the vote total in all elections held in the 1960s for which they nominated candidates (column 4, table 3).[8] Most of the decline is actually due to the rise of left-libertarian and right-authoritarian parties, with the exception or regional-linguistic-cultural issues Belgium, Canada, and New Zealand.

In polities where votes were initially concentrated on few parties, the decline in the strength of established parties is slightly stronger than in systems with high fragmentation already by 1970 (r = +.18; N= 18), but the relationship is statistically insignificant. Even if we take out single-member district systems with a plurality vote electoral formula because of the high costs of entry they inflict on newcomers, the relationship gets little stronger (r = +. 36; N = 13). The same applies for the relationship between the proportion of identifiers with established parties around 1970 and the relative electoral decline of established parties since the 1960s or 1970s (r = -.18/N=18; r = -.54/N=13). Electoral systems, per se, have little bite in explaining changes in party system format, but so does general party system fragmentation before 1970. The entry of new parties requires a more subtle account of strategic opportunities and costs than the consideration of electoral institutions would deliver by itself. I will return to this issue in the next section by elaborating only on one of the three strategic conditions for the rise of new rightist parties, the presence of clientelistic voter-partisan linkages in postindustrial democracies.[9]

De-cartellization of Political Parties and Dissatisfaction with Democracy

My theoretical outline is predicated on the tacit assumption that political parties are accountable and responsive to citizens through their programmatic appeals and past track record of delivered policy, compared to that of partisan competitors in the same polity. An influential article by Katz and Mair (1995; reprinted in Mair 1997), however, has challenged this assumption. The central gist of their argument is that parties have been increasingly successful in insulating themselves from the preferences of electoral constituencies by extracting critical resources that guarantee their viability, especially party financing, from the public sector. Based on such control of public resources, the established parties create "insider cartels" that limit the range of competitive programmatic appeals they agree to issue in electoral campaigns and thus disenfranchise important voter groups whose political opinions are situated outside the set of options endorsed by the party cartel. As a consequence, postindustrial democracies experience an increasing level of citizen frustration, alienation from the established parties, and willingness to support political mavericks as an antidote to the impenetrable and unresponsive national political cartels.

Katz and Mair thus postulate a linkage between the public resources accruing to parties, their electoral success, and the level of popular dissatisfaction with parties and political democracy in a polity. Even when we employ their own data, however, there is no association between changes in public party financing and the electoral fortunes of established parties (cf. Kitschelt 2000a: 172). The basic problem underlying their theoretical propositions is an inadequate model of principal-agent relations that does not sufficiently appreciate incentives for political parties to defect from "cartel" arrangements, when electoral payoffs from serving constituency preferences look sufficiently promising that have been ignored by the set of programmatic appeals authorized under the terms of a party cartel. Akin to Robert Michels' (1911/1962) theory of unaccountable party oligarchies, the cartel hypothesis under-emphasizes inter- and intra-party competition for political support under conditions of multiparty democracy with relatively modest entry thresholds. Without dwelling further on Katz and Mair's interpretation of postindustrial democracy, [10] let me turn to a phenomenon that gives their arguments a

8 For a list of the parties, see Kitschelt (2002b), p. 194.

9 For an interesting, but problematic effort to formalize the general conditions under which new parties enter and gain substantial market shares, divided into two objects of explanation, the decision of politicians to enter with a new party label and their achievement of electoral success, see Hug (2001). If we focus on left-libertarian and right-authoritarian parties, however, there is no variance to be explained with regard to politicians' initial decision to form parties that would cater to the respective general programmatic market niche. Virtually all countries experience the formation of such parties because the dynamics of societal preference formation creates sufficient expectations among at least some political entrepreneurs that a new party could enter the electoral arena with reasonable promise of electoral success. Why some new parties then perform better than others, however, depends on the proportion of voters not served by established parties because of their history of strategic appeals and coalition practices in interaction with the size and intensity of new popular demands.

10 For a more detailed critique of the Katz/Mair argument, see Koole (1996) and Kitschelt (2000a).

semblance of plausibility, the decline of political satisfaction with and confidence in democratic institutions. Especially important in this regard is the evaluation of parliaments and civil service organizations as the institutions through which party governments bring about and implement authoritative decisions. Academic studies as well as the mass media have also reported a broad-spread decline of trust in the honesty and responsiveness of politicians (e.g. *Economist*, July 17, 1999: 51). But we have to unpack these developments and distinguish different causes that may contribute to levels and change rates of trust in democratic institutions across countries and relate those to the respective party systems.

First, there is a baseline trend in all countries amounting to a moderate decline of institutional trust that may be due to the postindustrialization of the political economy and to associated changes in the cognitive competence and demand for political participation among citizens. Better educated and more libertarian individuals tend to be more suspicious of political agents and demand closer democratic oversight by the principals. Democratic participation is about control based on an attitude of suspicion vis-à-vis all authorities, not trust in (and deference to?) elected decision makers. For this reason, the declining institutional trust has not negatively affected the mass public's generally almost universal beliefs that democracy is the best political order (Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999). And it is particularly individuals who uphold such democratic values in a highly pronounced fashion who also express more intense distrust of political agents. Rising demands for democratic participation may thus moderately increase institutional distrust over time.

Second, the baseline decline of trust in political institutions has been rather slight, when measured by the *World Values Surveys* taken in 1980/81, 1990/91 and 1995/6, except in Finland, Austria and Canada, three countries where population averages for trust fell by more than ten points from the early 1980s to the early 1990s. In at least two of them, however, entirely idiosyncratic reasons may play a crucial role. Finland went through a wrenching and unparalleled economic crisis in the early 1990s in part due to the collapse of trade relations with its neighbor, the Former Soviet Union. Canada experienced a political crisis of institutions due to a failure to resolve the constitutional conundrum of Quebec. Austria, finally, found itself mired in a slew of party scandals that signaled a more systematic deficiency to which I return momentarily in the comparative study of established party decline. Compared to these idiosyncratic national developments, the general decline in economic growth rates in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the differential performance of countries in this regard, may contribute to the overall trend to declining institutional trust as well as cross-sectional variance in levels and change rates of trust. Yet only for extreme outliers, such as Finland, a robust pattern of association between economic performance and institutional trust can be established.

Third, Katz/Mair would lead us to predict an association between (1) the entrenchment of established parties under conditions of cartellization resulting in greater electoral resilience to decline when compared to party systems where the established parties do not benefit from cartellization, (2) a weakening of parties' representativeness of electoral constituencies, and therefore (3) cross-national diversity in the slopes along which popular trust in democratic institutions declines across polities. But no such pattern can be established. In general, change rates of aggregate national institutional trust over time have been too small in most countries to determine systematic patterns of association with domestic partisan features. Most importantly, a cross-sectional analysis of *levels of trust* among postindustrial OECD polities reveals much greater variance between countries than *over time trend changes* within and across countries. It is a closer analysis of these cross-sectional differences that enable us to refute Katz and Mair's claims in the most straight forward fashion.

If Katz and Mair were right, inter-party cartellization and collusion should be a recent and intensifying practice that helps established parties to protect themselves from new challengers, staves off the decline of their combined electoral share, limits their policy appeals to certain constituencies, and therefore ultimately produces a growing reservoir of dissatisfied, if not alienated citizens. A theory directly contradicting these claims would argue that the presence of old, not new hegemonic parties and party cartels has been associated with an endemically low level of public satisfaction with democratic institutions. For many decades these *clientelistic cartels* have been able to avail themselves of state resources in order to give voters material incentives to support the partisan establishment. The magnitude of these resources far exceeded the amounts appropriated by parties today through public party funding. What happened in the 1980s and 1990s was that political-economic circumstances made it possible for existing bottled-up popular frustrations against clientelistic cartels to articulate themselves in the political arena and at least in part bring down the established party systems.

Table 4:
Clientelism, Popular Dissatisfaction with Democratic Institutions and the Decay of Established Parties

	Importance of clientelistic exchange relations between parties and constituencies	Confidence in legislatures high 1991 (% respondents)	Confidence in the civil service high 1991 (% respondents)	Decline of established party support from the 1960s to the last election in the 1990s (% loss)	Decline in voter turnout in national elections (registered voters) 1970 – late 1990s (% loss)	Decline of established parties among registered voters, 1960s – late 1990s (% loss and % voting for such parties in the late 1990s)
Italy	5	32	27	-49.6	-11.2	-52.3 (38.1)
Austria	4	41	42	-36.3	-13.7	-42.8 (49.7)
Japan	4	29	34	-38.7	-20.0	-40.4 (30.0)
Belgium	3	43	43	-22.0	-1.2	-20.2 (64.8)
France	2	48	49	-25.1	-14.8	-30.1 (44.1)
Germany	2	57	39	-10.1	-15.1	-22.3 (66.9)
Ireland	2	50	59	-16.3	-12.9	-23.0 (57.7)
United States	2	46	59	-4.8	-8.0	-11.1 (64.9)
Australia	1	no data	no data	-12.2	-10.3	-11.2 (81.5)
Canada	1	38	50	-21.8	-12.3	-25.5 (44.9)
Netherlands	1	52	46	-4.3	-8.2	-10.5 (63.4)
New Zealand	1	no data	no data	-27.1	-2.5	-34.5 (53.4)
Switzerland	1	no data	no data	-21.5	-14.3	-21.9 (29.0)
United Kingdom	1	46	59	-13.8	-3.4	-13.2 (55.8)
Denmark	0	42	51	-15.6	-0.6	-14.0 (68.0)
Finland	0	34	33	-18.0	-12.0	-25.3 (53.5)
Norway	0	59	44	-15.2	-6.7	-17.9 (58.5)
Sweden	0	47	44	-12.1	-7.4	-17.2 (69.1)
Correlation with clientelism score		-.49 (without Finland: -.66)	-.38 (without Finland: -.54)	-.74	-.42	-.73

The entrenchment of clientelistic cartels in the post-World War II era is associated with a state regulated or owned sector of industry and finance whose employees and owners have directly benefited from the largesse of the established parties. These clientelistic sectors entered an era of precipitous decline in the 1980s and 1990s for reasons I elaborate elsewhere (Kitschelt 2003b). As these sectors and industries weaken economically and as the costs of maintaining the rent-seeking privileges of sectors propped up by party clientelism imposed on the rest of the economy increase, voters dissatisfied with the old partisan cartels exit from electoral politics (result: lower voter turnout) or voice opposition by supporting short-lived protest parties without clear programmatic thrust, or left-libertarian parties or right-wing populist parties that incorporate elements of the right-authoritarian appeal, but are able to attract a broader audience because of their anti-clientelistic thrust. *The real problem of cross-national variance in the institutional trust in postindustrial democracies and resulting differential party system reconfiguration in the 1980s and 1990s, therefore, may be not the emergence of "new" cartels of established parties through extended public party finance,*

but the tenacious persistence of old clientelistic party cartels. Political-economic crises discredit politicians' clientelistic control of public sector jobs, social benefits, company subsidies and favorable contracts as ways to maintain the political compliance of political constituencies. The crisis of public enterprise, as particularly in Austria and Italy, and of public regulation of private enterprise to the benefit of rent-seeking groups, as in Japan, precipitates the erosion of clientelistic exchange relations between politicians and electoral constituencies and thus of parties associated with such practices.

Column 1 in table 4 lists eighteen OECD countries ranked by the extent to which clientelistic exchange governs the linkage between politicians and electoral constituencies in the post-World War II period. A detailed justification of scores for critical cases, particularly those at the high end of the scale, can be found in Kitschelt (2003b). Scores correlate closely with country experts' judgment of comparative levels of corruption and of the rule of law, arguably indirect tracers of clientelistic deal making.[11] The second and third columns provide the percentage of respondents in fifteen of the eighteen countries that indicate "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in parliament or the civil service according to the 1990/91 World Values Study. No data are available for the remaining three countries. Column 4 repeats vote loss of established parties from the 1960s to the late 1990s as a measure of "voice" against the political establishment. Column 5 provides a measure of "exit" from politics tapped by the decline in voter turnout. Based on a regression of voter turnout on the sequence of national legislative (U.S.: presidential) elections from about 1970 to the late 1990s, it indicates the predicted turnout difference between the first and the last election held in this about thirty year period of time. With the exception of Australia, the slope coefficient of this regression is negative everywhere, though with very different magnitude and significance. Column 6 finally combines "exit" and "voice" strategies. It presents the percentage decline of support for established parties among *registered voters* from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. In countries where both turnout and support of established parties declined strongly, such as Japan, this combined exit-voice measure magnifies the effect of each of these variables take separately.

Clientelism displays a moderate relationship with variance in levels of trust in legislatures and the civil service once the outlier Finland is removed (r = -.66 and -.54), but other economic and social-structural variance between the countries is not controlled for. Highly clientelistic countries display systematically lower trust levels than non-clientelistic countries. More impressive are the associations between clientelism and the long-term vote loss of established political parties (r = -.74) as well as the combined exit/voice effect (r = -.73). If we remove outliers like Finland and New Zealand that went through a deep structural economic transformation to emerge from an import substituting industrialization with distorting effects unparalleled by any other industrialized economy, the associations of clientelism with established party loss and combined exit/voice activation by dissatisfied voters become stronger than r = -.80. The association of clientelism with the change in electoral turnout, however, is a weak -.42, primarily because two of the four highly clientelistic countries where we would have expected an exceptional decline of voter turnout, Belgium and Italy, had compulsory voting written into their electoral laws.

I infer from this cross-national pattern of relations that *it is not new party cartels, but old, clientelistic arrangements that facilitated cartellization by offering side-payments to rent-seeking electoral constituencies and that drive low levels of voter satisfaction with democratic institutions*. Political economic circumstances in the 1980s and 1990s motivated substantial segments of national electorates to choose exit/voice strategies in order to signal dissatisfaction with the time-honored clientelistic arrangements. All this applies beyond a certain baseline trend of increasing suspicion vis-à-vis democratic institutions and voter resistance to established parties in all postindustrial democracies. As argued above, I would attribute this baseline trend to the general dynamics of electoral preference change and diversification laid out in the first section of the paper, combined with the generally weaker performance of capitalist economies toward the turn of the millennium.

Unresponsiveness of Political Parties?

In the previous section, I have argued against the claim that the linkage between public opinion (citizens' political preferences), on the one hand, and party competition as well as partisan government, on the other, has broken down. Quite to the contrary, the crumbling of clientelistic parties and party systems, precipitated by an underlying dynamic of greater voter demand for participation and programmatic, issue

11 The only outlier with high clientelism, but low corruption and strong rule of law is Austria. Under the system of "Proporz" among the major parties, many clientelistic practices constituted legally enforceable and encoded principles of political allocation, not tacit, informal, if not illegal transactions.

based public policy, particularly in the area of political-economic policies, is likely to improve party responsiveness to electoral constituencies' programmatic demands. There are, however, political-economic theories that have postulated the decline of party government and of meaningful programmatic party competition that have to be take seriously. According to such theories, it is the constraints of (1) economic globalization, particularly that of open capital markets, of (2) technological change precipitating an ever greater premium accruing to labor market participants with high human capital investments, and of (3) the impending demographic revolution resulting in skyrocketing dependency ratios in most advanced capitalist democracies that ultimately constrain politicians from pursuing diverse "responsible" partisan policy strategies in legislatures and government executives and from delivering political-economic results that carry the imprint of "responsible partisan government." According to this view, financial globalization and technological innovation reduce the wages of the low-skilled, increase inequality, and even restrict redistributive social policies because they put companies in countries with high social wages at a comparative disadvantage. The demographic aging of postindustrial societies further weakens the financial viability of the existing social security net and depresses economic growth.

There is little doubt that all three forces have some effect on declining rates of economic growth and on the improvement of life chances and distributive outcomes. More contentious, however, is the relation between structural economic change, partisan politics and political economic results. Is partisan politics only an intervening variable with little independent effect on the political economy of growth and distribution or does partisan politics shape the impact of structural forces associated with economic globalization, technological innovation and demographic change on the growth and distribution of citizens' incomes and life chances? Without engaging the vast topic of "welfare state retrenchment" here in a theoretically and empirically adequate fashion, let me simply summarize how a significant strand of research finds continued partisan effects both in terms of levels as well as change rates of social policy even in an era of globalization and postindustrialization. Accountable partisan government may not be vanishing even under trying political-economic background conditions.

Partisan political theories of welfare state policy change now contend with at least three other theoretical accounts of social policy retrenchment and political-economic reform over the past several decades. First, while there are no representatives of a simple, direct globalization theory in the comparative political economy of the welfare state, Scharpf (2000) has probably advanced a perspective that puts most emphasis on the politically unmediated impact of exogenous economic developments, particularly global exposure of domestic economies, on pressures to change the welfare state, such as levels of taxation and social benefits. Second, some authors emphasize the importance of politics in shaping welfare states, but locate the causal efficacy of political alignments primarily in issue-contingent constellations of political interest group mobilization more so than competitive configurations of political parties (e.g. Pierson 1994; 2001). Partisan governments enact social policy reform contingent upon the distribution of costs and benefits among mobilized political-economic interest group constituencies that were created by past social policy reforms. Third, there are theories of political institutional veto-points that account for differential speed of policy reform net of partisan political constellations (e.g. Bonoli 2001).

The rival literature on welfare state retrenchment that emphasizes partisan politics essentially divides into three streams. First, there are those who claim an unbroken influence of conventional left-right accounts of responsible partisan government on social policy. Where the (coalition) partisan government's center of gravity is more tilted toward leftist, socially redistributive parties, less welfare state retrenchment—in the sense of a narrowing of citizens' benefit entitlements—will take place than where rightist, market-liberal centers of gravity in partisan government promote severe social policy retrenchment (cf. Korpi and Palme 2001; Allen and Scruggs 2003). Globalization has effectively precipitated social policy cutbacks only contingent upon the market-liberal, conservative partisan stripes of governments in pluralist democracies without corporatist, centralized and comprehensive economic interest intermediation between social classes (Swank 2002). Second, there are those who see continued partisan effects in the cross-nationally persistent differential levels of welfare state social policies, combined with weakener and weakening partisan effects on change rates of social policy, as captured social policy expenditure levels corrected for demographic and economic problem load (Iversen and Cusak 2000; Huber and Stephens 2001).

Third and finally, there are those who wish to reconceptualize partisan government and its social policy effects contingent upon the strategic interaction among governing and opposition parties that creates or forecloses opportunities for social policy reform in a

fashion not directly linear to the left-right economic complexion of government and opposition camps (cf. Visser and Hemerijk 1997; Hemerijk and Schludi 2000; Kitschelt 2001; Green-Pedersen 2002 and 2003). In these accounts, even leftist social democratic governing parties embrace welfare state retrenchment, provided their main competitors in the opposition do not have a reputation as builders of comprehensive welfare states and offer distinctly more market-liberal social policy retrenchment programs. This is the case only where the main rival to social democracy is a secular, conservative, market liberal party and/or where conventional economically centrist Christian Democratic or secular national-conservative parties have begun to abandon their conventional electoral appeal based on support for moderately redistributive and universalistic social policies. As discussed in section 2, this strategic reversal may begin, when differentiating economic and socio-cultural preferences unravel the old electoral coalitions assembled under the umbrella of centrist parties and force them to recognize that all of their programmatic-strategic options involve severe trade-offs among potential electoral constituencies.

Furthermore, the strength of new left-libertarian or right-authoritarian opposition parties may affect the electoral trade-offs partisan governments face when deciding among alternative social policy options. Christian Democratic and other national-conservative centrist parties with a legacy of expanding social policy benefits, and particularly those of pension and health care schemes enjoyed by elderly people, refrain from profound economic reforms whenever their competitors on the market-liberal or the new authoritarian right are weak and their social democratic competitors on the left have a credible track record of welfare state expansion when serving as governing parties. Social democratic governments, in turn, feel more constrained in retrenchment oriented social policy reform, when an electorally strong centrist opposition party promises to restore social policy cutbacks, thus leapfrogging to the left of the governing party, and/or when electorally credible left-libertarian parties threaten to attract a large share of disaffected voters away from social democratic government incumbents in case of substantial social policy retrenchment. The effect of partisan government on the political economy is hence contingent upon the strategic alternatives on offer to voters in a particular party system constellation.

The constraining economic circumstances in place since the end of the post-World War Golden Age of economic growth may have contributed at the margin to a trend toward declining citizens' satisfaction with democratic institutions and to a narrowing of the degrees of freedom enjoyed by political parties in the pursuit of responsible party government. Nevertheless, the literature on welfare state retrenchment shows that this may not spell the end of partisan politics. Conventional partisan politics may live on in a diluted fashion, or operate through more complex strategic calculations of party politicians monitoring the policy alternatives offered by their competitors in the salient issue space. Even under altered political economic conditions, responsible partisan government leaves its imprint on the practice of democratic governance.

Political Differentiation beyond Parties

In its first section on exogenous political preference formation, this paper has implicitly critiqued, but then still assumed in subsequent sections that democratic politics, in the perception of citizens, is primarily about the capture of legislative seats and executive office by teams of ambitious political agents coordinating around competing partisan labels. As Dalton has argued in many publications (e.g., in various contributions to Dalton and Wattenberg 2000), this may be too narrow a view of democratic politics. As the participatory capacity of critical minorities within the electorate increases, such citizens discover the complementarity and partial substitutability of different modes of political activation through elections and parties, interest groups, and political protest movements.

In the democratic mass politics of the late 19th and the first two thirds of the 20th century, political modes of articulation through parties, interest groups and social movements were tightly fused, as can be illustrated by the rise and decay of Christian Democratic, social democratic, communist or agrarian political "pillars" or "segments." Interest groups and parties were closely linked to each other, with one or the other taking the lead in the formative stages of a political segment. Political parties in cooperation with affiliated interest groups were also the main organizers of political protest events and social movements. This fusion of party organization, interest group and social movement was sometimes promoted by narrow clientelistic practices, understood as direct material relations of exchange between principals and agents in which politicians obtain votes and material benefits from societal constituencies in exchange for state material resources disbursed as selective rewards (e.g. public sector jobs, procurement contracts, public housing, etc.) and advantages (e.g. regulatory consideration) by the holders of elected public office funneled to their

partisan supporters. Sometimes, parties achieved this fusion without clientelism based on associational networks with social and purposive incentives designed to cement citizens' affiliation with established political pillars.

Outside the United States - where early universal male suffrage initially promoted clientelistic politics, but then crumbled in the face of a progressive anti-clientelistic movement in the early twentieth century which encountered no encompassing, organized clientelistic networks of resistence to its charge -, before the 1970s democratic polities rarely produced social movements and political interest groups that operated in domains untouched by partisan political governance. In spite of sometimes vast organizational scale and capacity to mobilize members in elections or public demonstrations, it was typically very small cadres of political professionals who governed these political pillars and segmented organizations, while the vast mass of their members lacked the material and cognitive capacities required for effective autonomous political participation.[12]

The fusion of movement, interest group and party begins to unravel only in the last third of the twentieth century as greater capacities for political participation enable larger shares of the citizenry to engage in political participation based on a reflective, deliberative and therefore autonomous process in which they also choose among alternative modes of political mobilization. Before the 1960s, parties, interest groups, and social movements might express similar political stakes, but are distinct simply because they mobilize in different institutional contexts, with parties operating in the electoral, legislative and executive arena, interest groups in bargaining arenas with other groups, parties, and government executives, and social movements in the arena of street politics. Since the 1960s, and associated with the reconfiguration of political preferences discussed earlier, it becomes increasingly the nature of the stakes as well as the institutional arenas that set apart movements, interest groups and parties as vehicles of political participation. This differentiation can be reconstructed according to a *transaction cost logic of differential investment in collective action from the vantage point of political entrepreneurs and cadres who organize political causes*.[13]

Social movements, in the sense of street politics of protest, form around stakes and causes that have neither temporal durability nor substantive interdependence across political issue domains. Such single-shot issue movements may assemble broad coalitions of followers precisely because they narrow the scope of necessary agreement among potential adherents by focusing on a single issue and by virtue of advancing negative demands addressed to political authorities and powerful groups in society rather than constructive policy alternatives. As long as a movement's stakes are temporally discrete and substantively independent from other causes, political entrepreneurs make virtually no investments in administrative-organizational structure to sustain mobilization around the cause or investments in conflict resolution and collective choice to elaborate a linkage between the movement's narrow operational demand and other political issues mobilizing citizens in a democracy. Political entrepreneurs will entertain such investments only, when the stakes of the movement are generalizeable in the temporal and/or the substantive policy dimension.

Temporal generalizeability of political stakes prompts entrepreneurs to invest in the administrative infrastructure of a political cause, i.e. organizational statutes that define an internal governance regime with differentiated political roles according to which the tasks of running the mobilization effort are delegated to specialized cadres. It results in the construction of interest groups. Substantive generalizeability of stakes beyond a single issue domain allows actors to coordinate around a broader political program combining positions on many issues while also avoiding the internal problem of social choice and cycling majorities. Many participants may find that they have enough in common over a wide range of salient political issues to stay loyal to the mobilizational effort, even if they disagree with the cause's collective stance on a few individual issues. If entrepreneurs see a prospect to generalize political stakes across issue domains, such entrepreneurs may invest in formal procedures of collective decision making, conflict resolution and interest aggregation that result in the formation of political parties.

While there are many single-shot, temporally bounded issues that attract political mobilization in social movements, only rarely are conditions of temporal and substantive issue generalizeability met in ways such that a cause successfully climbs up the ladder of associational investment to the level of interest group formation through creation of an organizational infrastructure, let alone to the level of political party through investment in procedures of conflict resolu-

12 It would be misleading to equate large membership of political organizations (e.g. of socialist or Christian Democratic parties) with high levels of political participation. Membership in parties and levels of effective participation may vary independently, if not be negatively correlated.

13 I set aside, of course, the general problem of collective action to create selective incentives for any form of political participation.

tion. Electoral alliances that coordinate around single, isolated issues, regardless of whether they are temporally durable or not, are doomed to failure. Recent examples abound that illustrate the fate of shell parties without issue generalization. They paralyze themselves, as soon as they are compelled to discuss issues on the political agenda that go beyond their singular core concern. Green parties remained electorally irrelevant, as long as they did not define themselves in broad programmatic terms as left-libertarian, but thought they could run on the single ecology issue. Examples are the electoral ecologists in France in the 1980s or Sweden until after the party's defeat in 1992. A similar fate befell pensioners' parties in the Netherlands and more recently Pim Fortuyn's party, a jambalaya of political ideas and orientations that had not sorted themselves out beyond the shared sense of its followers that Islamic culture has no place in Western Europe. Elsewhere, incipient right-authoritarian parties could not sustain electoral success as long as they coordinated around a single issue, such as opposition to high income taxes in Scandinavia in the early 1970s.

Many causes with limited potential for substantive-programmatic generalization, such as gender, therefore only indirectly and in a statistically probabilistic fashion feed into the formation of durable interest groups or electorally successful parties. We may find that left-libertarian parties attract many more women than right-authoritarian parties under conditions of postindustrial societies with comprehensive welfare states and large sectors of public employment, but few ambitious political entrepreneurs have drawn from this empirical regularity the theoretically mistaken expectation they could start a successful women's party. Conversely, political entrepreneurs in feminist movements and interest groups would not want to tie their political fate even to those political parties that incorporate feminist issue positions because they would undercut support from women who do not share those parties' programmatic positions on issues only vaguely related to gender or not at all.

A transaction cost perspective on the differentiation of modes of political participation is thus consistent with a number of phenomena empirically observed in many postindustrial polities. First, a decline of electoral turnout does not reflect a decline in political interest or participatory dispositions. It is often accompanied by intensifying activities in social movements or interest groups. Empirically it is wrong to claim that a general decline of social movements set in after the mobilization of a few social movements with spectacularly large protest events, such as the anti-nuclear power and the nuclear disarmament movements of the 1970s and early 1980s. Quite to the contrary, empirical investigations into the profile of protest events show a diffusion of social movement practices across a range of issues at local, regional, national or supranational levels of scale (cf. Rucht 2002; 2003).

Second, the almost universally declining formal membership of political parties says little about the vibrancy of participatory processes of interest aggregation through political parties (cf. Scarrow 2000). The parties' losses of members are primarily due to the exit of, or lack of entry from the ranks of societal groups whose salient interests such parties may represent, but most of whose members lack the capacities to engage actively in the internal process of interest articulation and aggregation within parties. This applies to citizens with little education, particularly among low-skill blue and white collar wage earners and homemakers (mostly housewives). While such individuals are only mildly less prone to participate in elections than other social constituencies, provided the costs of registration and participation are negligible, their involvement in more demanding modes of participation, such as active contributions to parties, interest groups or social protest events, sharply drops off compared to individuals with greater cognitive material and cognitive resources. There is no systematic evidence, however, that the relative size of the small capable minorities of individuals who actively participate in the life of political parties has generally declined in recent decades.[14]

Third, social movements and interest groups are progressively less willing to craft tight linkages to political parties or even try to make such linkages more flexible and loose, where they already exist. This applies to the efforts of union leaders and social democratic party politicians in corporatist democracies to put some distance between their respective organizations as much as to environmental movements and interest groups whose leaders resist subordination under green or ecologist parties for fear of dividing their own constituencies according to ideological lines not perfectly aligned with the cause of environmental protection.

The upshot of these considerations is that political parties do not become irrelevant, but that they are confined to a more narrowly circumscribed place in the democratic politics of postindustrial polities. Politicians have to expend more thought and energy on finding niches in which the mobilization of political parties enjoys comparative advantages over the use of other vehicles of interest articulation.

14 This, of course, does not exclude that levels of intra-party participation vary across parties, party families, and polities contingent upon the strategic stances and electoral attractiveness of its leaders.

Conclusion

My roundabout interpretation of the dynamics of parties and party systems in postindustrial politics can be summarized in a couple of economic metaphors: from encompassing department stores to specialized boutiques, as consumer demands become more discriminating; from the diversified task structure of holding companies to a concentration on "core competencies" and comparative advantages, as many activities elude the grasp of party organizations and bring about an inefficient dissipation of resources.

Because parties institutionally participate in games of territorial representation where elected politicians have limited agenda control in legislatures or government executives and must represent citizens over an uncertain range of issues, they are condemned to focus on those programmatic issues that provide "connectivity" within a broad agenda of political-economic and socio-cultural principles around which politicians can resolve problems of social choice. All those issues that cannot be parsimoniously associated with one or two dimensions of programmatic diversification within the party system, must be delegated to interest groups and social movements that organize around political stakes with a narrower scope, but therefore have an easier time to appeal to more encompassing coalitions of citizens than parties.

Furthermore, as the conditions of connectivity between distributive and socio-cultural governance issues change and diversify, there is a tendency for parties to face sharper trade-offs among electoral constituencies and to be forced to carve out narrower, better defined, but over time possibly more volatile electoral constituencies. Whereas broad parties that capture upwards of forty percent of the electoral market share in any given polity used to be common in many democracies during the "Golden Age" of post-World War II capitalism, they are now becoming the exception. The tendency toward diversification has been greatest in polities with relatively low electoral thresholds, but also low fragmentation of party systems. In already highly fragmented systems of proportional representation and polities with constraining electoral rules, particularly in single member district systems with a plurality electoral formula, this partisan differentiation takes place to a lesser degree and at a slower pace.

The postulated functional specialization and differentiation of the role of parties in postindustrial polities claims in some ways exactly the opposite of what theorists of "partisan dealignment" have claimed to take place. Instead of an increasing randomness in the relations between social-structural and market experience of citizens, political preferences, and partisan choice, I would expect a tightening linkage between citizens' social-structural conditions for preference formation, citizens' actual articulation of political issue positions, and the choice among parties in a programmatically differentiated field of competitors. Historically, "catch all" parties never existed but in the imagination of disappointed former advocates of revolutionary class politics, on the one hand, and of ideological enthusiasts of postwar capitalism in the guise of functionalist social science that postulated the end of societal conflict and the advent of an era of consensus. In the late 20th and early 21st century, the narrowing of the political-economic feasibility space—constrained by the globalization of capital markets, technological innovation putting a premium on high, versatile human capital investments, and the demographic revolution of ageing—may suggest a seemingly inevitable rise of catch-all parties. What counteracts this development, however, is the differentiation of political-economic and socio-cultural interests in postindustrial societies. It is combined with increasing capabilities of growing electoral minorities to monitor and process information about democratic politics and to participate in political interest articulation in highly sophisticated, strategically deliberate fashion.

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