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PARTY MEMBERSHIP IN TWENTY EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES, 1980–2000

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ABSTRACT

This article reports a comprehensive overview of new data on the levels of individual membership of political parties in twenty contemporary European democracies. Among the patterns noted in the data is the contrast between large and small democracies, as well as that between new and older democracies. However, the most striking feature to be noted is the sheer extent and consistency of membership decline through to the end of the 1990s. Not only have levels of party membership continued to decline as a proportion of the electorate, a trend which was already apparent at the end of the 1980s, there is now also compelling evidence of a major decline in the absolute numbers of party members across all the long-established European democracies. As these data clearly reveal, parties in contemporary Europe are rapidly losing their capacity to engage citizens.

KEY WORDS ▪ disengagement ▪ party membership ▪ party membership decline

Introduction

This article reports a brief but quite comprehensive overview of new data on the levels of individual membership of political parties in contemporary European democracies. Our first intention here is simply to update the data originally reported in Katz et al. (1992), and to extend their coverage to as many additional European democracies as possible. Our second intention is to assess the extent to which the trend towards declining levels of membership noted by Katz et al. at the end of the 1980s has continued through the 1990s. As that original report concluded, the evidence of membership decline through to the end of the 1980s was in fact uneven, for while the levels were almost consistently falling when measured relative to the size of the overall national electorates (the M/E ratio – total party membership taken as a percentage of the total electorate), this was not always the case

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when looked at in terms of the raw numbers involved. Thus, while the overall numbers of members in a number of polities had actually remained stable or had even grown in the period from 1960 to the late 1980s, they had usually failed to keep pace with the enormous expansion of electorates in this same period, and hence had registered a relative decline. What we see here now, however, when extending these data through to the end of the 1990s, is not only an accentuation of this decline in membership relative to the electorate, but also, and for the first time, a strong and quite consistent decline in the raw numbers themselves. As we show in this article, in each of the long-established European democracies, without exception, the absolute numbers of members have now fallen, and sometimes quite considerably. What we see here, in other words, is concrete and consistent evidence of widespread disengagement from party politics. In this sense, these data, however crudely aggregated, tell an important story.

For reasons indicated below, in compiling these data we have relied primarily on the parties' own official reports or estimates of their individual memberships, and we have been helped in this effort by the generous assistance of a large number of colleagues across Europe.[1] In some cases, it is obvious that these estimates or claims cannot be additionally verified by external controls. These are aggregate figures – that is, they refer to the levels of individual party membership as a whole, thus excluding consideration of the different categories of membership which often exist – and they are sometimes reported in suspiciously rounded numbers. Although these limitations are severe, there is really no other option if one is seeking to compile cross-national data on membership levels. The only major alternative to this data source is the evidence provided by mass survey research, the reliability of which is undermined by the small numbers that are involved and by the inevitable uncertainties that surround survey respondents' understanding of what party membership actually entails. In any case, as anyone researching in this area already knows, survey-based data on party membership levels are scarcely available (the most complete overview is provided by Widfeldt (1995)). Indeed, it is striking to observe that among the huge variety of surveys that have been carried out on political attitudes and preferences in recent decades, and even among the now voluminous set of professional election studies, there are remarkably few that include questions on party membership in particular and that are also appropriate to cross-national inquiry.

For the purposes of this present report, we have based ourselves on the original data summarized in Katz et al. (1992; see also Katz and Mair, 1992), while offering an update of these figures as well as an extension to as many additional countries as possible. Throughout, however, for reasons of reliability and also because of limitations in the resources available, we have confined our coverage to European polities. In this update and extension of the original data, we have relied heavily on information gathered by the members of the Katz–Mair project, as well as by other scholars, either

directly or through their published work. We cannot guarantee these data, of course. In most cases, the scholars who have provided the information have had to depend on what the parties themselves were willing to report or claim, and in some cases these are inevitably crude estimates. Nevertheless, given the expertise of the scholars involved, and the care with which they handled the information, we are reasonably assured that these are the most reliable figures that are possible to acquire. In this limited sense, they may be considered authoritative. Moreover, since they cover a large number of European polities, and since they also offer figures updated to the end of the 1990s, we hope that these data may offer a useful source for comparative party research.

That said, it should also be recognized that the parties themselves are also not very reliable sources for data on party membership. For reasons that are perhaps too complex to go into in detail in this brief overview, there exists a tendency among both political parties and political analysts to place a particularly high value on the traditional notion of the 'mass' party. That is, both party leaders and political observers tend to assume that parties, when properly functioning, will enjoy a relatively large mass membership that is drawn from a wide range of society. Conversely, parties which lack such a mass base are often seen to be in some ways elitist or even as insufficiently legitimate. Hence almost all political parties, of whatever hue, claim to be active in the pursuit of members, and become concerned if levels of affiliation appear to be in decline. Members in this sense offer a source of legitimation to parties, both within the parties themselves and also without. For this reason, parties are often likely to claim larger (active) memberships than seems in fact to be the case.

This tendency for political parties to exaggerate their membership levels can also sometimes be exacerbated by those systems of party laws and regulations that link levels or categories of public subvention to levels of party membership. One of the most noticeable and pervasive trends in party financing in recent years has been the growth in the public funding of political parties, whereby the activities of parties in parliament in almost every polity, and also those of the party organization outside parliament in many cases, are partially financed by means of a system of state subsidies. Indeed, such subsidies now constitute an important and ever-growing component of party incomes and expenditures. More often than not, these subsidies are calculated on the basis of the parties' levels of electoral support and parliamentary representation. In some cases, however, certain subsidies are specifically earmarked for particular purposes, such as educational work, media work, youth work, or whatever, and within this latter category subsidies can also be tied to levels of party membership in general, or to the levels of specific categories of membership in particular. For this reason also, parties will often have an incentive to claim higher levels of membership than is in fact the case. Not only is this seen as desirable from a normative point of view, but it may also bring certain financial benefits.

There is little the analyst of party membership can do about this. Despite the growing importance of public subventions and the increased relevance of party laws, parties remain voluntary organizations. As such, they are rarely obliged to divulge to the public the details of their internal organization and activities. Obtaining detailed information on even the inflated membership figures that are often claimed by parties is therefore difficult in itself; verifying membership figures as supplied by the parties themselves is sometimes well nigh impossible. Moreover, in some cases the parties themselves are not even aware of the details of their membership levels, since no central national register of members is maintained.[2]

The choice for the analyst is therefore either to accept at more or less face value those figures that are made available by the party organizations, while accepting that these are probably exaggerated or, in some cases, merely crude estimates; or simply to do without, and to accept that little meaningful work can be done on party memberships on a comprehensive cross-national basis. For the purposes of this report, and in common with strategies adopted by previous researchers in this field, we have opted for the first alternative. Our view is that any figures, even if inflated or crudely estimated, are better than none, but we also operate on the assumption that those figures that we do report, while as authoritative as possible, should sometimes be treated with a pinch of salt.

Party Membership at the End of the 1990s: An Overview

The first set of data that we present here summarizes the overall aggregate levels of party membership in the different polities, taking the most up-to-date figures that are available.[3] We report these data under two headings: first, the aggregate sum for the overall level of membership across all parties for which figures are available and, second, this same sum taken as a percentage of the relevant national electorate – the M/E ratio (see Katz, et al., 1992). A set of summary figures by country over time, as well as a more detailed breakdown by party, is given in the Appendix. The purpose of this first overview is simply to offer a global figure for the overall level of party membership, since it is this figure that offers the most telling indicator of the extent to which parties might be regarded as retaining a hold within the wider society. Moreover, by reporting membership as a percentage of the electorate, we have a relatively straightforward measure that is suited to cross-national comparison.

These summary figures are reported in Table 1, covering data from twenty countries in the late 1990s and 2000 ranked in order of M/E level. The countries reported here include most of the long-established European democracies, as well as the first 'third-wave' democracies in southern Europe, and some of the most recent 'third-wave' democracies in east central Europe. Taking all twenty countries together, the mean M/E ratio is almost 5 percent,

Table 1. National levels of party membership in the late 1990s

Country	*Year*	*Total party membership*	*Total party membership as percentage of electorate (M/E)*
Austria	1999	1,031,052	17.66
Finland	1998	400,615	9.65
Norway	1997	242,022	7.31
Greece	1998	600,000	6.77
Belgium	1999	480,804	6.55
Switzerland	1997	293,000	6.38
Sweden	1998	365,588	5.54
Denmark	1998	205,382	5.14
Slovakia	2000	165,277	4.11
Italy	1998	1,974,040	4.05
Portugal	2000	346,504	3.99
Czech Republic	1999	319,800	3.94
Spain	2000	1,131,250	3.42
Ireland	1998	86,000	3.14
Germany	1999	1,780,173	2.93
Netherlands	2000	294,469	2.51
Hungary	1999	173,600	2.15
United Kingdom	1998	840,000	1.92
France	1999	615,219	1.57
Poland	2000	326,500	1.15
Mean			*4.99*

which is considerably lower than the figure of 10.5 percent recorded among a smaller group of long-established democracies by Katz et al. (1992: 334) at the end of the 1980s, which itself reflected a decline from almost 15 percent recorded at the beginning of the 1960s. At the same time, however, it is also evident that this particular distribution is somewhat skewed, with the overall mean level being exaggerated by the impact of the exceptional Austrian case, where almost 20 percent of registered electors are still claimed to be party members. Elsewhere, the M/E ratio never exceeds 10 percent, and excluding the Austrian case serves to reduce the overall mean to just 4.4 percent.

Even excluding Austria, however, quite substantial variation does exist across the remaining countries, ranging from Finland in 1998 with an M/E ratio of 9.65 percent and Norway in 1997 with 7.31 percent, to France (in 1997), Poland (in 1998), and the United Kingdom (in 1998), all of which fall below 2 percent. Nevertheless, what is perhaps most striking is that this variation bears less relation to whether the democracy in question is long established than might have been anticipated. Given that many of the parties in the newer democracies will have had to build their organizations from

scratch, and given that the more recent period will probably have led to the prioritizing of electoralist as opposed to organizationally penetrative strategies, it might have been expected that membership levels in the newer democracies would still be lagging far behind those in the established democracies (van Biezen, 2000). Yet, this is not so evidently the case. Thus, although Greece is the only 'third wave' democracy which ranks above the 19-country mean, and although the ratio for the new democracies taken together is just 3.65 percent, the average membership in the new South European democracies – 4.73 percent – is actually higher than the West European mean (excluding Austria) of 4.36 percent.

In fact, it seems to be the post-communist democracies, each of which fall below the 19-country mean, rather than the recently established democracies *per se*, which show markedly low levels of party membership. Poland sits at the very bottom of the list, while Hungary ranks just above the United Kingdom. In addition, the mean ratio of the post-communist polities included in the present analysis amounts to just 2.84 percent. In this sense, therefore, the post-communist democracies provide the sharpest contrast with both the relatively recently established South European counterparts and the long-established liberal democracies in Western Europe.

Another interesting pattern which emerges with some degree of clarity from these simple summary figures is that of large versus small polities, with the former tending to have lower M/E ratios. If we include only the 13 long-established democracies, for example, then the ranking in terms of M/E ratios places Germany (10th), the United Kingdom (12th), and France (13th) among the four lowest-scoring polities – the fourth country in this group is The Netherlands (11th). The five highest scoring polities, on the other hand, are, in order, Austria, Finland, Norway, Belgium and Switzerland, in none of which the size of the overall electorate currently exceeds 7.5 million. Both Ireland and The Netherlands flout this pattern, however. Ireland, with one of the smallest electorates in Europe, ranks just above Germany in terms of its M/E ratio; The Netherlands, a middle-sized country in terms of population, now has one of the lowest M/E ratios in Europe. Italy also stands out as having by far the highest M/E ratio of any of the larger European polities, although in this case the decline in membership levels in recent years is such that it may well soon conform to the apparent large country pattern. Although the patterning is not wholly unequivocal, this large versus small dichotomy does nevertheless suggest that membership levels may to some extent reflect a systemic bias, which, in turn, might also be reflected in membership levels in other forms of association and organization.

Declining Levels of Party Membership

The second set of data which we present concerns changes over time, the measure which is perhaps of most interest to contemporary party studies.

For the purposes of this brief overview, we simply present summary measures marking the change from 1980 (or from the early 1990s in the case of the post-communist democracies) to the late 1990s, with more detailed figures for three points in time – 1980, 1989–90, and the late 1990s – being reported in the Appendix. For evidence of membership levels in 1980 we have employed the original Katz and Mair (1992) data, relying on separate published sources for the countries that were not included in that project. It should be noted, however, that extrapolations based on this evidence of change over time are probably meaningful only in the cases of the long-established democracies and, to a lesser extent, in the cases of Greece, Portugal and Spain. The limited trends that can be derived from membership figures in the post-communist democracies are as yet of doubtful value. Party membership data in post-communist democracies are generally distorted in two ways. In the first place, many of the parties are very new and still volatile formations which began their organizational lives with almost no real presence on the ground (van Biezen, 2000). Second, membership levels in the polities as a whole are sometimes initially inflated by the organizational legacy of the former ruling communist parties and their satellites, which, albeit in reformed versions, continued within competitive politics. The combination of both these factors makes it both more difficult and less meaningful to try to establish and interpret changes in party membership levels over time.

Changes over time in party membership levels are summarized in Table 2, which includes data on both changes in the M/E ratio as well as in the raw numbers of members. The Table ranks the countries according to the proportionate degree of change in this latter measure. Details on the breakdown by party are reported in the Appendix. Although, as noted, complete time-series data are not always available for all parties and all countries, the trends in these data are quite unequivocal: *total party membership, expressed in both absolute numbers and as a percentage of the electorate, is now markedly in decline*. This can be seen in a number of ways.

In the first place, the large majority of countries have experienced a more or less substantial decline in their M/E levels since 1980. Indeed, the only countries which have bucked this trend are drawn from the group of relatively recently democratized polities, including Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and Spain. More strikingly, and without exception, a decline in M/E levels is evident in *each* of the long-established democracies, ranging from Austria, where the decline has exceeded 10 percent, to Germany, now including the former East German Länder, which has experienced a more muted 1.6 percent fall. Taken together, the 13 long-established democracies have seen their M/E levels fall by an average of more than 4 percent, a trend which both confirms and accentuates the earlier and more gradual pattern noted by Katz et al. When seen in relative terms, of course, this decline appears even more marked. In 1980, these 13 long-established democracies had a mean M/E ratio of 9.81; by the late 1990s this had fallen to just 5.72. In

Table 2. Party membership change, 1980–2000: M/E ratios and absolute numbers

Country	*Period*	*Change in M/E ratio*	*Change in numbers of members*	*Change in numbers as percentage of original membership**
France	1978–1999	–3.48	–1,122,128	–64.59
Italy	1980–1998	–5.61	–2,091,887	–51.54
United Kingdom	1980–1998	–2.20	–853,156	–50.39
Norway	1980–1997	–8.04	–218,891	–47.49
Czech Republic	1993–1999	–3.10	–225,200	–41.32
Finland	1980–1998	–6.09	–206,646	–34.03
Netherlands	1980–2000	–1.78	–136,459	–31.67
Austria	1980–1999	–10.82	–446,209	–30.21
Switzerland	1977–1997	–4.28	–118,800	–28.85
Sweden	1980–1998	–2.87	–142,533	–28.05
Denmark	1980–1998	–2.16	–70,385	–25.52
Ireland	1980–1998	–1.86	–27,856	–24.47
Belgium	1980–1999	–2.42	–136,382	–22.10
Germany	1980–1999	–1.59	–174,967	–8.95
Hungary	1990–1999	+ 0.04	+ 8,300	+ 5.02
Portugal	1980–2000	–0.29	+ 50,381	+ 17.01
Slovakia	1994–2000	+ 0.82	+ 37,777	+ 29.63
Greece	1980–1998	+ 3.58	+ 375,000	+ 166.67
Spain	1980–2000	+ 2.22	+ 808,705	+ 250.73
Poland	2000	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

* The % change is measured relative to the earliest year for which membership is reported in these data (see Appendix).

other words, by the late 1990s, M/E ratios in the long-established democracies were averaging less than 60 percent of the levels recorded just two decades previously.

The contrast between older and newer democracies in this regard is not wholly decisive, however. Portugal, for example, records a minor decline in its M/E level relative to 1980, while the Czech Republic also records quite a substantial decline relative to 1993. In the Czech case, however, the largest component in this decline can be attributed to the massive and quite predictable decline in the membership of the former Communist Party, which claimed some 350,000 members in 1993 as against 160,000 in 1999 (see Appendix). Nevertheless, even without the impact of the exceptional inheritance of the Communist Party, Czech membership levels still evidence a decline of some 35,000 members in this brief period, equivalent to a drop from some 2.52 percent of the electorate to 1.97 percent.

What is even more strikingly evident with these new data, however, is the scale of decline in the raw numbers of members. Comparing the early 1960s

to the late 1980s, Katz et al. (1992: 332–3) observed no European-wide trend in this measure, with the number of countries recording a decline in overall numbers being more or less matched by those recording a growth. Indeed, the relative decline in the M/E ratio which was then noted in all but two countries was explained by the failure of membership levels to grow at the same rate as did the national electorates. By the late 1990s, however, this picture has changed completely. Thus in each of the long-established democracies the absolute number of party members has now fallen, and sometimes substantially. In France, for example, where the reliability of the data is admittedly most open to question, membership levels have fallen by more than 1 million, equivalent to almost two-thirds of the numbers recorded in 1980. In both Italy and the United Kingdom, raw numbers have fallen by more than 50 percent, and in Norway by more than 47 percent. Germany, which emerges as relatively exceptional in this regard, but which has clearly benefited from an influx of members from the former East German Länder, is the only long-established democracy in which the raw numbers of members have fallen by less than 20 percent with respect to the levels claimed in 1980. Across all 13 long-established democracies, membership levels in absolute figures have fallen by a staggering average of almost 35 percent.

What is important to recognize here is therefore not only the sheer scale of the decline, but also its consistency. Not only have national levels of party membership across all of the long-established democracies failed to keep pace with the growth in the size of the national electorates, a trend that was already apparent in the late 1980s, they now are also evidencing substantial declines in absolute numbers. Parties in western Europe are clearly losing the capacity to engage citizens in the way they once did. Across all of the long-established democracies, these parties are simply haemorrhaging members.

As with the M/E ratio, the only countries to counter this trend and to record a substantial increase in absolute numbers of members are the more recently democratized polities: Hungary, with a modest increase of some 5 percent; Portugal, with an increase of some 17 percent; Slovakia, with an increase of almost 30 percent, albeit with respect only to 1994; Greece, with an increase of almost 167 percent; and Spain, with an increase of more than 250 percent. This in itself is hardly surprising, since, as noted above, these polities are characterized by parties which have been obliged to build their organizations more or less from scratch. What is noteworthy, however, is again the exceptional Czech case, where membership is falling even among parties other than the Communist Party.

Conclusion

Given that this brief report has been intended mainly to present an overview and an update of party membership levels in contemporary European democracies, this is not the place to try to derive any far-reaching conclusions

on the changing role or style of party organizations, or to develop any systematic hypotheses which might explain the patterns which we have identified, or which might relate these patterns to other and more widespread processes of disengagement within the wider society. Suffice it to suggest that what appears to be happening to party organizations – their general withering on the ground – may well be related to the declining importance of other traditional forms of institutionalized mediation, be these churches, trade unions, or whatever. Political parties, together with other traditional and hierarchical organizations, appear to be suffering from the impact of the individualization of social and political preferences, as well as from a more general unwillingness to rely on existing institutional structures to represent and articulate what appear to be increasingly particularized demands.

This is not to suggest that parties lack their own specific story. As has been already widely discussed in the literature, party membership no longer carries with it the same practical benefits for the party leadership as was the case in the heyday of the mass party. There is now simply less practical incentive for parties to build and maintain a mass membership, and in this sense it is striking to note how relatively few members there are among many of the new and alternative parties that have emerged to gain electoral support in recent years (see Appendix). Moreover, as party identities have waned, and as partisan politics itself has become eroded, individual citizens are themselves probably less likely to be willing to devote the time and energy that is often required by active party membership. A more passive membership, on the other hand, while likely to be welcomed by party leaders, is unlikely to prove attractive to ordinary voters in an increasingly depoliticized environment. For this reason it is also crucial that we learn more about precisely who is remaining within the parties, since it is this now much reduced constituency that will do much to define party identities in the future.

In terms of party membership levels, therefore, and as has already been noted with regard to patterns of electoral participation (Mair, 2000), it is precisely in the 1990s that we now witness the first substantial and consistent aggregate evidence of growing disengagement from conventional politics across western Europe. As the recent literature on values clearly attests, citizens in western Europe appear to be as supportive of the idea of democracy as ever they were. Nowadays, however, they do not appear to be quite so willing to involve themselves in actively maintaining the very institutions which democracy requires if it is to thrive.

Notes

1 We may note here that one of the most obvious benefits of the increasing professionalization and internationalization of political science in Europe has been the emergence of networks of like-minded scholars whose support can be relatively easily tapped, not to say exploited, for exercises such as this, and in preparing this

report we gratefully acknowledge the help of Lars Bille, Pascal Delwit, Zsolt Enyedi, Andrew Knapp, Petr Kopecký, Andreas Ladner, Darina Malova, Radoslaw Markowski, Leonardo Morlino, Wolfgang C. Müller, Thomas Poguntke, Jan Sundberg, Lars Svasand, Paul Webb and Anders Widfeldt. An earlier and lengthier version of this paper, including material on youth membership in particular, was presented to the conference on *Youth and Democracy*, International IDEA, Stockholm, 17–19 June 1999.

2 It should also be noted that we do not report any separate figures or estimates regarding levels of activism within the parties, a qualification which is perhaps particularly important since we can anticipate that large numbers of members exist on paper only, and play no active role in regular organizational activities.

3 While we have tried to build as comprehensive a data set as possible, we inevitably miss membership data for some of the smaller parties as well as the more short-lived parties that have contested election during the period with which we are concerned. Given that we have included all of the major parties, however, these missing data are unlikely to have made much difference to the overall national-level patterns summarized here.

Appendix

Table A1: Summary data, by country

Country, year	*Electorate*	*Total party membership*	*Membership as % of electorate (M/E)*
Austria			
1980	5,186,735 (79)	1,477,261	28.48
1990	5,628,099	1,334,554	23.71
1999	5,838,373	1,031,052	17.66
Belgium			
1980	6,878,141 (81)	617,186	8.97
1989	7,039,250 (87)	644,110	9.15
1999	7,343,464	480,804	6.55
Czech Republic			
1993	7,738,981 (92)	545,000	7.04
1999	8,116,836	319,800	3.94
Denmark			
1980	3,776,333 (81)	275,767	7.30
1989	3,941,499 (90)	231,846	5.88
1998	3,993,099	205,382	5.14
Finland			
1980	3,858,533 (79)	607,261	15.74
1989	4,018,248 (87)	543,419	13.52
1998	4,152,430 (99)	400,615	9.65
France			
1978	34,394,378	1,737,347	5.05
1988	36,977,321	1,100,398	2.98
1999	39,215,743 (97)	615,219	1.57
Germany			
1980 (west)	43,231,741	1,955,140	4.52
1989 (west)	48,099,251	1,873,053	3.89
1999	60,762,751	1,780,173	2.93

Table A1 *continued*

Country, year	*Electorate*	*Total party membership*	*Membership as % of electorate (M/E)*
Greece			
1980	7,059,778 (81)	225,000	3.19
1990	8,050,658	510,000	6.33
1998	8,862,014 (96)	600,000	6.77
Hungary			
1990	7,824,118	165,300	2.11
1999	8,062,708 (98)	173,600	2.15
Ireland			
1980	2,275,450 (81)	113,856	5.00
1990	2,471,308 (89)	120,228	4.86
1998	2,741,262 (97)	86,000	3.14
Italy			
1980	42,181,664 (79)	4,073,927	9.66
1989	45,583,499 (87)	4,150,071	9.10
1998	48,744,846 (96)	1,974,040	4.05
Netherlands			
1980	10,040,121 (81)	430,928	4.29
1989	11,112,189	354,915	3.19
2000	11,755,132 (98)	294,469	2.51
Norway			
1980	3,003,093 (81)	460,913	15.35
1990	3,190,311 (89)	418,953	13.13
1997	3,311,190	242,022	7.31
Poland			
2000	28,409,054 (97)	326,500	1.15
Portugal			
1980	6,925,243	296,123	4.28
1991	8,222,654	417,666	5.08
2000	8,673,822 (99)	346,504	3.99
Slovakia			
1994	3,876,555	127,500	3.29
2000	4,023,191 (98)	165,277	4.11
Spain			
1980	26,836,500 (79)	322,545	1.20
1990	29,603,700 (89)	611,998	2.07
2000	33,045,318	1,131,250	3.42
Sweden			
1980	6,040,461 (79)	508,121	8.41
1989	6,330,023 (88)	506,337	8.00
1998	6,601,766	365,588	5.54
Switzerland			
1977	3,863,169 (79)	411,800	10.66
1991	4,510,784	360,000	7.98
1997	4,593,772 (95)	293,000	6.38
United Kingdom			
1980	41,095,490 (79)	1,693,156	4.12
1989	43,180,573 (87)	1,136,723	2.63
1998	43,818,324 (97)	840,000	1.92

Table A2: Membership levels, individual parties

Austria											
Year	SPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ	Greens							
1980	719,881	720,000	37,380	–							
1990	620,141	670,000	42,413	2,000							
1999	400,000 (00)	579,000 (95)	50,052	2,000 (95)							
Belgium											
Year	PSB	BSP	PSC	CVP	PRL	PVV/VLD	PCB/PKB	VU	ECOLO	AGALEV	VB
1980	154,798	113,922	57,904	125,141	47,233 (81)	58,625	10,000	49,563	–	–	–
1989	157,000	101,863 (88)	43,353	127,306	76,298 (87)	75,390	10,000 (87)	43,247	1,423	1,730	6,500 (90)
1999	104,000	78,300	30,000	116,134 (96)	38,600	74,900	800 (PCB)	21,831 (94)	2,900	3,300	10,039 (96)
Czech Republic											
Year	KSCM	CSSD	KDU-CSL	ODS	ODA	SPR-RSC	US				
1993	350,000	13,000	100,000	22,000	–	60,000	–				
1999	160,000	18,000	62,000	19,000	2,800 (98)	55,000 (96)	3,000				
Denmark											
Year	SF	SD	RV	KRF	CD	V	KF	FRP	DF	EL	
1980	4,668	101,387	10,100	10,400	1,585	94,754	44,873	8,000	–	–	
1989	8,797	75,162	9,900	9,629	2,141	79,425	40,392	6,400	–	–	
1998	6,416	59,500	6,200	6,700	1,434	83,946	30,650	5,000	3,485	2,051	
Finland											
Year	SKDL/V	SDP	KESK	SFP	KOK	FKF	LFP	G			
1980	55,223 (79)	100,161	304,679	42,423	76,815	20,280	7,680	–			
1989	33,425	85,242	286,865	45,918	70,500	17,085	3,710	674			
1998	12,885	64,111	224,811	32,427	47,000	15,070	3,230 (95)	1,081			
France*											
Year	PCF	PS	UDF	RPR	FN	Greens	RPF				
1978	632,000	200,000	145,000	760,347	–	–	–				
1988	604,285 (87)	180,000	109,000 (83–86)	142,113 (89)	65,000 (85)	–	–				
1999	210,000 (98)	148,795	73,000 (97–99)	80,424	60,000	10,000	33,000				

* Membership levels as claimed by the parties themselves and those estimated by observers differ markedly in the French case, and hence these data are probably less reliable than those provided for other countries. Note also that the figure for the UDF includes separate figures for Centrists and Conservatives in 1988 and 1999. For a more detailed analysis see Knapp (forthcoming).

Table A2: Membership levels, individual parties *continued*

Germany (West Germany in 1980 and 1989)												
Year	SPD	CDU	CSU	FDP	Greens	PDS						
1980	986,872	693,320	172,420	84,208	18,320	–						
1989	921,430	662,598	185,853	65,216	37,956							
1999	755,244	630,413	184,765	64,407	50,897	94,447						
Greece												
Year	PASOK	ND										
1980	75,000	150,000										
1990	110,000	400,000 (91)										
1998	200,000	400,000										
Hungary												
Year	MSzP	SzDSz	MDF	KDNP	FKGP	Fidesz/MPP	MIEP					
1990	59,000 (89)	24,000	33,800	3,500 (89)	40,000	5,000	–					
1999	39,000	16,000	23,000	10,000	60,000 (98)	15,600	10,000					
Ireland												
Year	Labour	FF	FG	PD	SF	Green	WP	DL				
1980	6,009	75,000	32,847	–	–	–	–	–				
1990	7,028	75,000	20,700	9,000 (89)	3,200	1,400	2,800	1,100 (89)				
1998	6,150 (99)	50,000	21,800	4,000	2,600	700	750	–				
Italy (I)												
Year	PCI	PSI	PSDI	DC	PRI	PLI	MSI					
1980	1,753,323	510,424	108,470	1,384,398	106,536	44,966	165,810					
1989	1,417,182	641,126 (88)	110,000	1,675,724	99,386 (88)	40,491 (88)	166,162					
Italy (II)												
Year	DS	RC	PPI	AN	PSI	Lega	FI	CDU	CCD	Greens		
1998	621,670	127,446 (97)	130,887 (97)	485,657	35,000	160,000	140,000	130,000 (97)	130,000 (97)	13,380		
Netherlands												
Year	GL	CPN	PSP	PPR	PvdA	CDA	D66	VVD	SP	SGP	GPV	RPF
1980	–	15,510	8,703	11,500	112,929	143,000	14,638	85,881	–	20,300	12,922	5,545
1989	–	5,700	3,612	6,510	95,600	125,033	9,561	64,554	–	23,000	13,015	8,330
2000	13,855	–	–	–	61,000	82,000	12,027	49,000	26,198	23,860	13,857	12,672
Norway												
Year	DNA	SF/SV	ALP/FRP	SP	KRF	V	H					
1980	153,507	10,000 (79)	10,000 (82)	53,517	69,697	12,007	152,185					
1990	128,106	13,072	16,874 (89)	47,117	56,176	11,300	146,308					
1997	64,415	8,609	12,018	39,766	50,295	10,300	56,619					
Poland												
Year	SLD	UW	PSL	ROP	UP	SKL	ZChN	PPChD				
2000	87,000	22,000	150,000	15,000	5,000	20,000	10,000	17,500				

Table A2: Membership levels, individual parties *continued*

Portugal												
Year	PCP	PS	PSD	CDS/PP								
1980	187,018	64,155*	38,128	6,732								
1991	199,275 (88)	69,351	122,239 (90)	26,801								
2000	131,504	100,000	75,000	40,000								
* Authors' estimate based on linear extrapolation												
Slovakia												
Year	HZDS	SNS	ZRS	SDL	KDH	DU	MK	SZ	DS	SDSS	SOP	
1994	40,000	2,000	2,000	27,600	10,000	5,900	40,000	–	–	–	–	
2000	72,200	13,000	–	21,223	27,348	5,489	11,600	900	4,232	2,785	6,500	
Spain												
Year	PCE/IU	PSOE	AP/PP	PNV	CDC	UDC						
1980	160,000 (81)	97,356 (81)	56,319*	–	8,870	–						
1990	44,775 (91)	262,900	284,323	–	20,000 (92)	–						
2000	70,000	410,000	601,731	32,000	30,000	17,519						
* Authors' estimate based on linear extrapolation												
Sweden												
Year	VPK/V	S	C	FP/FPL	MSP	KD	MPG					
1980	18,157	214,379 (74)*	137,057	50,553	63,955	22,041	1,979 (81)					
1989	12,935	229,095 (91)	112,848	43,061	77,393	24,005	7,000					
1998	12,942	162,578	66,561	22,932	69,171	23,504	7,900					
* For most years prior to the 1990s, the figures for Social Democrat membership are highly inflated by the inclusion of corporate membership. Since 1974 is one of the very few years for which a reliable estimate for individual membership is available, it is included here to allow for better comparability over time.												
Switzerland*												
Year	FDP	CVP	SPS	SVP	LPS	LdU	EVP	PdA	SD	Rep	GPS	FPS
1977	121,000	90,000	55,000	80,000	9,000	10,700	10,000	10,000	10,500	15,600	–	–
1991	150,000	60,000	40,000	80,000	15,000	5,000	4,000	–	–	–	6,000	–
1997	87,000	74,000	38,000	59,000	10,000	2,500	3,500	2,000	5,000	–	6,000	6,000
* While the 1997 figures compiled by Ladner and Brändle (1999) are quite authoritative, figures for earlier years are often very crude estimates by either the parties themselves or by observers												
United Kingdom												
Year	Lab	Con	Lib/LD	SDP	Greens							
1980	348,156	1,200,000 (82)	145,000*	–	–							
1989	293,723	750,000	82,000	11,000	–							
1998	385,000	350,000	100,000	–	5,000							
* Authors' estimate based on linear extrapolation												

Sources: Katz and Mair (1992), which covers Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK through to the end of the 1980s. In addition to information received directly from the parties themselves and/or through the help of colleagues, we have also relied on the following published sources: van Biezen (2000); Bille (1997); Dachs (1997); *Irish Political Studies*, various years; Knapp (forthcoming); Kopecký (1999); Ladner and Brändle (1999); Morlino (1998); Müller (1997); *NRC Handelsblad*, 27 January, 2000; Pappas (1998); Spourdalakis (1998); Sundberg (1999); Voerman (1996), and Widfeldt (1999).

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