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R E P O R T



CADRE, CATCH-ALL OR CARTEL?

A Comment on the Notion of the Cartel Party

Ruud Koole

ABSTRACT

The recently proposed (ideal) type of a modern political party, the ‘cartel party’, evokes questions both about the conceptual clarity of the new type and about its empirical validity. The analysis of the relationship between civil society and the state, which constitutes a central element in Katz and Mair’s concept of the cartel party, is considered to be too static to grasp the increased intervention by the state in society. The application of a term derived from the level of the party system (‘cartel’) to individual parties does not seem to be a happy choice, while the reality of western party systems does not show an effective cartel of parties. It is argued that, instead of trying to formulate (again) an alleged dominant party type for the present time, it seems more fruitful to develop a classification scheme of parties that allows for different types of parties to co-exist at the same time, without considering one of them as the most up to date.

KEY WORDS ■ cadre party ■ cartel party ■ catch-all party ■ party competition
■ party organization

The Notion of the Cartel Party

Party research has been recently enriched by a new (ideal) type of modern political party, the *cartel party*, introduced by Katz and Mair (1995). The cartel party is portrayed as characteristic of a fourth stage of party development. After the ‘elite party’ of the first stage (19th century), the ‘mass party’ of the second (1880–1960), and the ‘catch-all party’ of the third (after 1945),

the 'cartel party' (after 1970) differs from the previous types by the interpenetration of party and state and by a pattern of inter-party collusion. The emergence of the cartel party has implications for both the party system as a whole, where a cartel of parties relying heavily on the resources of the state makes it difficult for new parties to rise to power, and the organizational profile of each individual party within the cartel.

Katz and Mair give much attention to the second feature, although they do not give a clear conceptual definition of a 'cartel party'. Instead they describe several 'characteristics',¹ of which the most important seems to be the fact that cartel parties depend to a large degree on state subvention, on which they themselves decide. Party work and party campaigning is professionalized and almost exclusively capital intensive; labour-intensive organization and campaigning have become unimportant. Ordinary members are sometimes given more formal powers, but since party membership is atomized, ordinary members hardly challenge the leadership of the party. Neither is there a challenge from the local office-holders, because the internal party structure is characterized by stratarchy: elite and local office-holders are mutually autonomous. Politics is seen as a profession rather than a way to achieve social reform; hence, claims to managerial skills and efficiency constitute the basis for inter-party competition.

The cartel party also illustrates a different normative conception of democracy, as a service provided by the state for civil society, rather than a process by which civil society is able to control the state. Voters can choose from 'a fixed menu of political parties', but cannot really change the menu, because 'parties are partnerships of professionals, not associations of, or for, the citizens'. Of course, Katz and Mair are aware of the challenges to the cartel parties. Interest organizations may take over demand articulation and new parties may arise when the cartel parties fail to provide for a minimal feedback to the needs of the citizens.

The notion of the cartel party is an appealing one. And the learned article by Katz and Mair offers an interesting assessment of the functioning of political parties today. But it also triggers some criticism on several aspects associated with the phenomenon of the alleged cartel party. But first we have to point out a general problem with the notion of a cartel party. Apart from the absence of a clear definition, the most evident criticism is that a systemic property (a cartel at the level of the party *system*) should not be used to characterize *individual* parties. Moreover, the idea of a cartel is that it involves all major competitors in a 'market'. How, then, can the term be applied to only some of the competing (major) parties, which together may not have a clear electoral 'market dominance'?

Even if one considers this problem only as a terminological one, other questions can be raised. This is done by concentrating on the following themes: the relationship between civil society and the state, the cartel of parties at the level of the party system, and the features of the individual cartel party. In the final section, the 'evolutionary' basis of the party type as

proposed by Katz and Mair is questioned and a plea is made for a more 'pluralistic' approach in the classification of political parties.

Civil Society and the State

Understanding the relationship between society and the state is imperative in understanding the way political parties function. Katz and Mair rightly try to link the assessment of political parties with the relationship between state and society. But their approach reveals a rather static view on how state and society relate to each other. Since their main contention is that parties move from civil society toward the state 'to such an extent that parties effectively become part of the state apparatus itself' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 14), a different evaluation of the relationship between state and society also affects the appreciation of the functioning of political parties. Here it will be argued, first, that the distinction between the state and civil society has become blurred in the 20th century, because of increased state intervention, and that a greater identification of parties with the state does not, therefore, necessarily mean a greater distance of parties from civil society. Second, it is suggested that the *loci* of power within the state are less easily identified than before and that the society is less 'knowledgeable' than before, which makes the general statement that parties move from civil society to the state problematic.

The analysis of politics has long been dominated by the perceived division of labour between political parties, interest groups and government. Political parties were seen to play an intermediary role between the demands of interest groups and the authoritative decision-making of the state. The aggregative function of parties was considered to be central. With the research on neocorporatism in the 1970s this image began to fade away. As Suzanne Berger observed in 1981, 'there is no longer any conception of a stable division of labor among parties, interest groups, and government' (Berger, 1981: 10). In another article she underscored the importance of 'the growing responsibility of the state for matters that in the past had been left to the market or to the individual or to families' (Berger, 1979: 31). During recent decades much criticism has been expressed on the degree of state intervention. Popular catch-words such as deregulation, decentralization and privatization only illustrate the impression that the state has expanded too much. And although growing international competition and economic crises forced many West European countries to curb spending on the welfare state, the state still provides many regulations and services in Western Europe. As the Dutch historian Kossmann recently said: the present state is much more powerful and present than the state in so-called 'absolutist' regimes in the past.

Since the mid-19th century a twofold trend can be observed: while the extension of suffrage integrated more and more people into civil society

(making the distinction between society and civil society rather academic), society itself became more and more penetrated by the state. Whereas before, families, churches and workers' cooperatives played important roles in organizing social solidarity, now the state has taken up this enormous task, for example. The growth of social welfare and state bureaucracy has made many people directly dependent on the state for their personal income. But people working outside the state bureaucracy were also confronted more and more with state acts in their daily life. From licences to start a firm, to stipulations regarding the quality of goods, education and health services, to subsidies for the export of goods, the building of houses or the delivery of services, state activities have expanded enormously. The state has become almost omnipresent and its responsibility for the (personal) welfare of its citizens has grown to enormous proportions.

Expanded state intervention, however, also solicited more criticism when the capacity of government was questioned by a series of economic crises from the beginning of the 1970s onwards. While in the past, personal sorrow could be blamed on God, Fate, Capitalism or just had to be accepted, now it was ascribed to the failure of the state or of 'politics' in general. This is what Berger calls 'anti-politics': instead of trying to capture the state, as the emancipatory movements had done in the past, now the state had to be dismantled.

The position of political parties was deeply affected by these trends. But this is not true for parties only. The role of other 'intermediary' organizations was also drastically altered. The best known is the position of the classic interest organizations. Neocorporatist studies have stressed the importance of legal recognition of interest groups. Once legally sanctioned, the state delegated public functions to them, often accompanied with transfers of public funds. In the same vein, other societal organizations like schools, hospitals and socio-cultural institutions, while originally being the result of private initiative, now function more and more as 'subcontractors' of the state, often wholly financed by the state (Huyse, 1994: 29). In some aspects they belong to the state, in others to the private sector. And in many countries the state participates in private companies, often after a process of so-called 'privatization'. As Huyse observes: 'Society in the 1980s and 1990s is characterized by a transitory area between the public and the private sector, that has features of both' (Huyse, 1994: 28).

How do we position political parties in this changed landscape? If we follow the format of the figures used by Katz and Mair, we could present the development of the position of parties by three figures, one representing the situation in the 19th century before the introduction of general suffrage, the second the situation around 1920, immediately after general suffrage was accepted, and the third representing the present situation. Figure 1 shows how, before the introduction of general suffrage, political parties only partly overlapped with civil society, and even less with the state. Emancipatory parties, like socialist and some religious parties, were more than

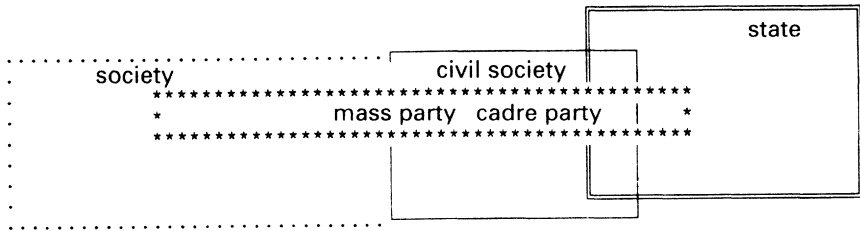


Figure. 1 The position of political parties before the introduction of general suffrage

organizations of voters. They also mobilized ‘the people behind the voters’, as the Dutch protestant ARP used to say. Taking the right to vote as a criterion for membership of civil society, mass integration parties originally extended beyond civil society. That was one of the main reasons for their existence: to turn second-order inhabitants into full-blown citizens. The struggle for the right to vote was a struggle about the definition of civil society. While part of the liberal movement of the 19th century, which had sometimes effectively challenged the conservative power of a *ménagerie du roi*, thought of themselves as ‘the thinking part of the nation’ and defended a civil society based on a *regime censitaire*, new movements contested this claim. In many countries it was a socialist movement which took the lead, but the case of the Dutch protestant ARP proves that, *malgré* Duverger, the weapon of mass parties was not a socialist monopoly. In the second half of the 19th century, therefore, two general types of parties could be seen to exist next to each other: mass parties or social integration parties, with a popular basis outside civil society, on the one hand, and caucus parties, cadre parties, parties of individual representation or elite parties, which drew their resources exclusively from the still limited civil society, on the other (Duverger, 1951; Neumann, 1956; Katz and Mair, 1995).

With the introduction of general suffrage, the political landscape changed drastically. Parties needed to have massive popular support in order to be able to exercise governmental power. Thus, the major parties were parties that attracted many voters, although they were not necessarily ‘mass parties’ in Duverger’s terms. Also former cadre or caucus parties, in order to survive, adapted to the new situation by orienting themselves to a larger electorate, without necessarily assuming the form of a mass party in all its aspects. What all major parties had in common from then on was that they all operated within an enlarged civil society, which in its turn began to be penetrated more and more by the state (Figure 2).

With some delay the state reacted to the undesired effects of industrialization by several laws on social policy. Even if the ultimate goal was not always social justice (as in the extensive programme of social legislation by Bismarck in the 1880s in a vain attempt to kill socialism in Germany), the

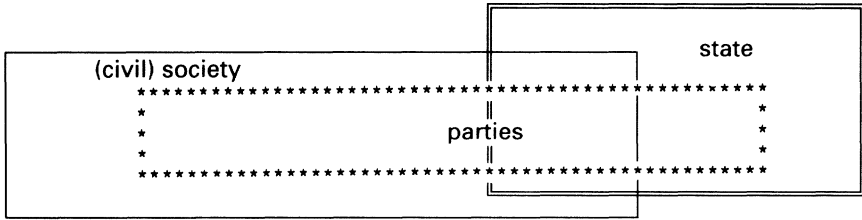


Figure 2. The position of political parties during the first decades after the introduction of general suffrage

immediate effect was increased state intervention. State insurance against sickness, accident and incapacity in old age was introduced (in Germany earlier than in other major western countries) and state regulation of working conditions was adopted. Of course, the extent of state expansion was almost nothing compared with the degree of state intervention today, but a qualitative jump was made.

Against the background of the enormous growth of the electorate, and hence of civil society, political parties were devices to structure the masses and to integrate them into the political system. State intervention found its necessary counterpart in increased possibilities for control by the people of the state. Parties provided the linkage. The intermediary role of parties, therefore, should not be interpreted as bridging a gap between society and the state, but rather as structuring the increasing interweaving of society and state: not a bridge, but a binder.

Apart from wars and periods of dictatorship, general suffrage remained a permanent feature of modern societies. What changed was the degree of state intervention, reaching its peak in the welfare state. Notwithstanding all the criticism voiced against the present welfare states, they still provide the main framework for analysis of today's societies in the western world. What also changed was the degree of *encadrement* of individual citizens in social organizations. Once the welfare state had been reached, individuals began to loosen their ties to parties (and other societal organizations) that were originally set up to defend specific religious or class interests. That is not to say that socialist, christian-democratic or other emancipatory parties necessarily lost their share of the popular vote. But they could not automatically count any more on voters from a specific segment of the electorate. Volatility increased, or to put it differently: voters began to choose (Rose and McAlister, 1986).

The vulnerability of political parties grew, not only because of the augmented volatility of the popular vote, but also because the control over resources to mobilize the voters was reduced considerably. At the very moment that parties were forced to engage in fierce electoral competition, they lost much of their control over the tools to mobilize the voters. The electronic mass media are especially important here. While in the past many

parties had their own newspaper or had strong ties with a part of the press, they were now confronted with broadcasting organizations, especially television, that adopted a more independent attitude vis-a-vis parties and politics in general. Even if in most countries broadcasting organizations were publicly controlled, which gave the major parties some control over them, these controls were less direct than with many of the newspapers of earlier days, to which political leaders were able to dictate their political orientation on a daily basis. Moreover, during the last decade, with deregulation and satellite developments, the already weaker grip of parties over mass media is loosening even further. But mass media also offered opportunities. Voters could be reached rather easily through television sets in each home. The importance of party organization decreased in this respect.

The trend of individualization, as sociologists have called the process of loosening ties between individuals and (traditional) groups, also hit the parties in another way. Parties were no longer the only vehicle to defend one's interests *in politics*. Personal interests were less and less identified by (permanent) group bindings. Group representation in an atomized society is not impossible, but is less likely to be very stable. Party membership was also affected in this way. Although there is variation between parties and countries, the overall trend of party membership is downwards, certainly if considered as a proportion of the electorate (Katz et al., 1992).

But individual citizens have other ways of expressing opinions or defending interests. Individualization has led to a diversification of political participation, not automatically to less political participation; single-issue organizations sometimes receive massive support (e.g. ecological, peace or human rights movements). And if one considers the recourse to the judge as the ultimate form of individual political participation, then the increase of appeals to courts in many countries indicates a rather high degree of political activism. The increase in administrative law cases shows how the individual citizen knows how to use other ways than political parties to defy decisions by administrative bodies.

Also increased neocorporatism in various (continental) European countries has provided alternative ways to influence governmental action. In fact, neocorporatism is the perfect illustration of the growing entanglement of society and the state, as mentioned above. It is true that interest organizations, especially trade unions, also feel the impact of the process of individualization, in that their membership also seems to be less stable than before. But they still exist and play an important role in many West European countries, thus providing the individual citizen a channel to influence state politics that is separate from the political parties.

Therefore, in Figure 3 political parties possess a less prominent place than in Figure 2. But if the state overlaps more and more with society, and parties overlap with the state (as Katz and Mair suggest), one cannot simply conclude that parties are completely isolated from society. They still serve as a binder between state and society by offering the voters a certain context for

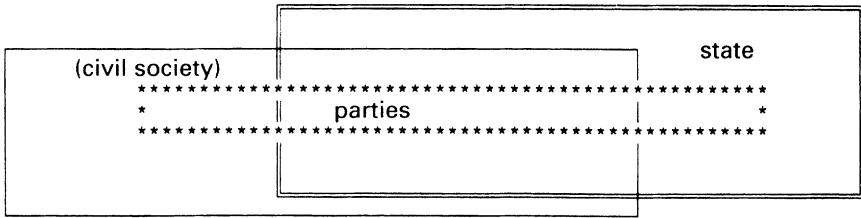


Figure 3. The position of political parties today

political orientation and a channel to voice approval or dissatisfaction, but they are no longer vehicles for mass encapsulation. They continue to possess a quasi-monopoly on the recruitment of political personnel and they still serve as structuring devices of public opinion by evoking sympathy or antipathy. As such they are ‘a sort of guarantee of political mediation, a kind of “political credit” institution, made possible by a continual verification of the available credit, through the electoral process’, as Pizzorno (1981) has stated.

Concurrent with state expansion and individualization, another important development changed western political systems. While in the past political power within a political system found its summit in the power of the state, and within the state in national government, political power today has a more diffused character. The *loci* of political power have been multiplied, in and outside the state. Local authorities, neocorporatist bodies and international organizations have taken over some of the sovereignty of national governments. State bureaucracy itself is far from a unitary actor: the various ministries often act as independent ‘kingdoms’ and more recently a trend can be discerned towards autonomous administrative bodies, which fulfil functions hitherto exercised by state bureaucracy, but without formal control by representative bodies.

Political parties are commonly oriented towards the state. There is nothing new about that. Also in the past they drafted platforms in which they formulated what they would do once in power and they organized themselves in an attempt to conquer state power. The present-day diffusion of state power, however, confronts political parties with enormous problems. If political power is hard to locate, what does it mean to be ‘in power’? And if the steering capacity of the state has been reduced drastically, what can be expected from parties once ‘in power’?

Both the expansion of the state and the diffusion of power create problems for party scholars. When state and society overlap to a large extent due to increased state intervention, a phrase like ‘no longer simple brokers between civil society and the state, the parties now become absorbed by the state’ (Katz and Mair, 1995: 16) loses much of its meaning. And when state power is no longer concentrated in one place (*unilocus*), the image of a state

as an 'institutionalized structure of support [for parties], sustaining insiders while excluding outsiders' (p. 16) takes too much for granted that the state acts as a monolith (*quod non*).

A Cartel of Parties?

In his well-known typology of democratic regimes, Lijphart differentiates between four types of regimes, one of which is called 'depoliticized democracy'. This type is characterized by a homogeneous political culture and coalescent elite behaviour and bears a strong resemblance to the 'democratic Leviathan' Robert Dahl has described: 'addicted to bargaining and compromise' and 'an instrument of political elites' (Lijphart, 1975: 209, 212). Lijphart applied his typology to a study of the political system of the Netherlands. Dutch society had long been characterized by consociationalism, but was moving into the direction of a 'depoliticized democracy'. It is interesting to note that in the Dutch translation, Lijphart (who knows Dutch perfectly) called this type *kartel democratie*. And it is equally interesting to observe that the efforts by a part of the Dutch elite at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s to effect a transition from depoliticized to centripetal democracy by means of the democratization of Dutch society, are called efforts to 'de-cartelize' the party system, according to the literal translation of the Dutch term *dekartellisering* (Lijphart, 1984: 211). Lijphart adds that the existence of a cartel was 'nothing new' in consociational democracies. What distinguishes consociational democracy from depoliticized democracy is not the cartel, but the degree of homogeneity of the political culture.

Lijphart's typology may help to evaluate the notion of the 'cartel party' as introduced by Katz and Mair. In their article they emphasize that the process towards the cartel party is 'likely to develop most easily in those political cultures marked by a tradition of inter-party cooperation and accommodation', especially if combined with pronounced state aid and support for parties. Although Lijphart's analysis and Katz and Mair's study seem to be going in the same direction, their comparison poses some problems. First, *what is new about a cartel of parties?* That established parties try to prevent the entry of newcomers into the party system is a phenomenon as old as the parties themselves. But that is not what Katz and Mair point at. The newness of the cartel party would be that the established parties do so in collaboration with each other, and with the help of state resources. But as Lijphart's analysis shows, cooperation between established parties is not a new phenomenon either, at least not in countries with a consociational tradition. And one may wonder whether rather old terms like *Parteienstaat* (Germany; see Leibholz, 1974), *partitocrazia* (Italy) or *particratie* (Belgium) do not point at the same phenomenon. Moreover, the use of the spoils of the state as resources for the parties themselves was not limited to consociational

democracies. Patronage, for instance, already figures prominently in Ostrogorski's study of American and British parties at the end of the 19th century (Ostrogorski, 1903). And also in other countries various ways to take advantage of the possession of state power by established political parties have already existed for a long time: from 'gerrymandering' in the electoral system to the (illegal) flow of state money to political parties. It is true that not in all countries were all major parties in a position to profit from participating in state power. In this respect Katz and Mair rightly stress the fact that today's major parties are almost all *Regierungsfähige* parties, i.e. 'all substantial parties may now be regarded as governing parties' (p. 16). And co-government of oppositional parties is an increasingly common phenomenon, one might add (see Von Beyme, 1994). But the fact that all major parties have a 'governmental' status has already been the case for a long time in several (consociational) countries, at least since 1945. The existence of such a 'cartel', therefore, does not justify the introduction of a new ideal type.

Is it then perhaps the increased power of the cartel of today that allows the labelling of a new party type as 'cartel party'? The increased state subvention for political parties is indeed a new and important phenomenon since the 1960s. The ability of the (major) parties to increase their income from the state by the simple act of a majority vote in parliament may make them less susceptible to signals from the grassroots, because they are less dependent on them in financial terms. But does it add to the solidity of a cartel of parties?

This leads us to the second problem of the idea of a cartel of parties: *how successful are the alleged cartels?* If one looks at various western countries one cannot observe a development towards 'concentrated' party systems, i.e. systems that allow fewer new parties to enter than before. On the contrary, mainly due to the growing volatility of the vote, more new parties than ever had a chance to win a seat in parliament. Of course, countries vary. In some countries the electoral system makes it difficult for parties to enter the parliamentary arena or to increase their share of the seats, even with high degrees of volatility. No general trend can be observed, however, that electoral laws are sharpened in order to hinder the entry of newcomers. Most electoral thresholds that exist also existed before about 1970. But even if one argues that other ways exist to effectively hinder newcomers and non-established parties from becoming important (by a monopoly on state resources, for example), then evidence does not support such a contention. The Greens in Germany are not the only (famous) case in point. The electoral growth of the FPÖ challenges the traditional predominance of the Christian democratic and social democratic parties in Austria. D66 in the Netherlands, explicitly set up to defy the established parties, has turned itself into one of the major political forces in the country. And more recently, in the same country, new parties that claim to defend the interests of the elderly were among the major winners at the 1994 national elections. The rise of regional or nationalist parties in other countries is also proof that an effective cartel

is absent. To argue that the latter parties are always a response to the existence of a cartel would not be very convincing. Criticism of the established parties does not necessarily mean that these parties form a cartel. To use the notion of a 'cartel' in this respect might very well be an example of taking too easily the rhetoric of the challengers for real.

Moreover, the competition between established parties has become fiercer than ever in an open electoral market. The 'toning down of competition', as Katz and Mair (1995: 22–3) observe or foresee as a consequence of 'the increasing need [of professional politicians] to lower the costs of electoral defeat' is highly speculative. Furthermore, how this 'toning down' relates to the statement that 'the state provides contested elections' (p. 22) remains unclear.

Thus, the rate of success of alleged cartels of parties has not been high in recent decades. But this does not necessarily mean that cartels do not exist; only that they are not successful. To the extent that they exist, however, they do not seem to constitute a new phenomenon. Applying the term 'cartel' to label a new party type, therefore, does not seem to be a happy choice. It also risks mixing scholarly research on parties with neopopulist sentiments that appear to be widespread in present-day western countries. The term 'cartel party', supposedly characterized by 'inter-party collusion', has a conspirative connotation that should be avoided as long as evidence is lacking that established parties as a group consciously and effectively try to impede outsiders from getting in. [It is true that Meisel (1958) in his famous C-formula defined the political class by the terms 'consciousness, coherence and conspiracy' (which again proves that a general idea of a political 'cartel' is nothing new), but exactly the term 'conspiracy' has been attacked because of its 'misleading' nature (Von Beyme, 1994).]

The Individual Cartel Party

Apart from evoking hesitation about the use of term 'cartel', the new party type, as presented by Katz and Mair, comprises various features of individual parties, that also deserve a closer examination. Compared with the catch-all party type (Kirchheimer, 1966), each new party type has to deal with the phenomenon of *state subvention* to political parties (Panebianco, 1988). The introduction of public subsidies to parties is indeed a major change. The conclusion that state subvention helps the established parties to maintain their position is true, although it goes too far to suggest that state subvention necessarily leads to the petrification of the party system. The German system of state financing of parties, one of the first in the world, has clearly led to an *Etatisierung* of party finances (Landfried, 1990: 280). But the German system also implies the application of the criterion of *Chancengleichheit* (equality of opportunities), which guarantees reasonable protection of the smaller parties. This is equally true for Italy (where the equality of chances

was even criticized, exactly because it supported too many small parties in the multi-party system). Sweden and Canada, on the other hand, are examples of countries where formal rules clearly work to the advantage of the established parties (Landfried, 1990: 298).

A second interesting feature of the cartel party is that the organization of the party is characterized by *stratarchy*: local office-holders and the national party elite act relatively independently of each other. This 'mutual autonomy' gives the party elite the possibility of securing its own dominant position, while at the same enhancing the legitimacy of the party by formally empowering ordinary members. Direct participation of members in the selection of candidates by postal ballot, for instance, without the interference of a middle-level elite, gives the party elite a great possibility of dominating the selection process. Atomized membership is a weak basis for the mobilization of challenges. The local office-holders are ready to accept this influence by the elite in national affairs, as long as they are given a free hand to manage their own local affairs.

It is an interesting thought. It is indeed true that elements of direct democracy – or plebiscitarian procedures to put it differently – are being introduced in many western parties today, including traditional hierarchical ones. The example of the German SPD, which introduced the selection of the party chairman by membership ballot in 1994, is telling. Not all parties go as far as the Liberal Party in British Columbia in Canada, which presented the technique of 'televote', by which voters could choose their leaders by simply punching buttons on their touch-tone telephones. But the need for legitimization of the party in the eyes of the general public has forced parties to adopt 'democratizing' measures for their own organizations. Internal party democracy is important for the external legitimacy of the party.

There are, however, several questions to be asked in this respect. First, is it really a general phenomenon that the local elites within parties abstain from challenging the party leadership because they are happy with the non-interference of the leadership in their own (local) affairs? Particularly since so-called 'second-order elections' (including local ones) tend to be dominated by national politics and the image of the national party (Reif and Schmitt, 1980), it is hard to conceive of local office-holders not trying to influence the comportment of the national party leadership, which is so important for the electoral results in their own locality or region.

Second, it remains to be seen whether in most parties the national elite only consists of professionals without strong ties with local party echelons. If national committees of parties are composed to a large extent of delegates from lower strata within the party, then the term 'stratarchy' seems difficult to apply. It is, perhaps, better to speak about a 'federalization' of political parties: local party branches have a certain autonomy in local affairs, but when acting together they are still able to wield considerable power on the national professionals. In a 'federal' party structure the national party elite cannot ignore the ties with lower strata with respect to national politics,

while the local party elites are relatively free from interference of the national party in local issues.

A third feature of the cartel party is the fact that, as Katz and Mair (1995: 18) say, the '*party gains privileged access to state-regulated channels of communication*'. It is true that in many countries political parties are given (free) time on the airwaves. Of course, access to television has become extremely important nowadays. But, again, two questions can be raised.

First, the privileged access to television is not everywhere restricted to the established major parties. Smaller existing parties, and in some countries even new parties that are not represented (yet) in parliament, are also given a certain broadcasting time on the state-regulated networks. The Dutch example that all parties that present lists at the national elections are given the same amount of time on radio and television in the period of election campaigns, regardless of their size, may well be interpreted as a measure to prevent the working of a cartel. What needs to be researched in more detail, however, is how effective television broadcasting in state-guaranteed time really is.

Second, and more importantly, the role of the independent (mass) media is not given a proper place in the description of the cartel party (see also above, p. 513). This touches upon the core of the analysis. Even if one accepts the interpenetration of parties and the state, then the growing power of the mass media must be taken into consideration in order to assess the position of parties. The access to state resources does not guarantee access to the powerful media. In fact, one might argue that the vulnerability of political parties is greatly enhanced, notwithstanding the availability of state resources, by the overwhelming power of the mass media. Mass media possess political power less and less controlled by the state, illustrating the above-mentioned diffusion of political power. Control over the mass media is at least as important as control over the state; hence the growing significance for parties of political marketing expertise. As long as the mass media are able to maintain or enhance their independent position, they are a powerful counterweight to a possible cartel of parties, if the latter exists at all. The analysis of the 'cartel party' remains imprisoned in a state-centered approach, while reality shows that political power is not concentrated any more in a monolithic state apparatus (see above, p. 514).

Towards a Structured Plurality of Contemporary Party Types?

The above-mentioned criticism of the notion of a 'cartel party' leads to a more general questioning of the 'evolutionary' aspects of the argument for a cartel party. A cartel party is seen as the type of party belonging to a fourth stage in an evolutionary process that changed the boundaries between parties, the state and civil society. We have already presented a different

assessment of this evolutionary process (pp. 509–15). What is criticized here is the idea that each period in time apparently necessarily has its 'own' party type which best fits into the changed environment. Where Duverger clearly believed that mass parties were electorally more effective than the old cadre parties, and Kirchheimer predicted that other parties would follow the example of catch-all parties, also because of the electoral potential of the latter, they both subscribed to an evolutionary argument. Duverger's 'contagion from the left' is an example of conceiving certain party types as better equipped to respond to the challenges of a certain period than other party types. This approach was already debatable in the first decades after the introduction of general suffrage, but it is even more questionable that such an approach would hold for the more contemporary period.

Therefore, I would like to suggest another possible direction for further research on parties. The main thesis here is that comparative party research gains more from the development of a classification scheme of different contemporary party types, rather than from a mass of literature that tries to illustrate why specific parties do or do not comply with the model of an alleged dominant party type. Next to, or maybe instead of, trying to prove the existence of such a 'one best' party type that is typical for a certain period of time, party research should concentrate on the question why, and under what circumstances, a certain category of parties develop in one direction and another category in another. Between the search for a dominant party type and idiosyncratic studies of individual parties, a classification of parties at an intermediate level may help to understand better how parties function.

An ever closer symbiosis between parties and the state, for instance, may have a totally different impact in different situations, depending on the electoral system, the organization of the mass media, the character and history of the party system, the functioning of the judiciary, and so on. To give an example: the history of dictatorship and its aftermath in Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal has perhaps given political parties in these countries a common trait that is different from parties in countries without such a past. Or to repeat a suggestion by Wolinetz (1991): parties in multi-party issue-oriented markets will evolve as programmatic parties rather than as catch-all parties. Instead of using an evolutionary language, Katz and Mair could help us to understand their 'cartel party' better if they would concentrate on developing propositions about the forces that tend to produce parties of the alleged cartel type. Why do these parties develop in certain countries and not in others? Or: why can some parties be called cartel parties and others in the same country cannot be characterized as such?

A structured plurality of contemporary party types may include such types as the 'catch-all party' (Kirchheimer, 1966), the 'electoral-professional party' (Panbianco, 1988), the 'horizontal party' (Seiler, 1986), the 'witness party' and the 'responsible party' (Sartori, 1976), the 'programmatic party' (Wolinetz, 1991), the 'modern cadre party' (Koole, 1994), and so on. The 'cartel party', albeit preferably with another name, could be added to this

list. But these different types need to be neatly described in relation to each other. It must be clear where and to what extent these types overlap. For instance, the cartel party and the electoral-professional party do have various features in common: how different are they really? Once we know where and how much party types overlap, we might try to develop a theory explaining how parties sometimes move from one 'type' to another and back. By accepting the simultaneous existence of party types and rejecting a 'one best' epochal format, it is easier to understand why the same party hesitates between two organizational modes within a relatively short period of time (see the case of the French Socialist Party; Sferza, 1994).

One could also try to formulate a typology of parties that distinguishes between general types and subtypes (without linking it too closely to a genealogy of parties). The cadre party, the mass party and the catch-all party could serve as general types; the electoral-professional party, the modern cadre party, the programmatic party, the horizontal party, the cartel party, and so on as subtypes.² Thus, various types of parties co-exist, without implying that one type is more up to date than another. But whether cadre, catch-all or cartel, political parties will continue to exist. Or as Katz and Mair (1995: 25) rightly state: 'there is little real evidence to suggest that the age of party has waned'.

Notes

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- 1 Following suggestions by Kenneth Janda, I would stress that it is not clear which of these 'characteristics' are 'defining' properties and which are 'empirical' properties. For a proper analysis of party types this seems to be a useful distinction. If, for example, cartel parties were defined as parties that depend for more than 50% of their income on state subsidies, this would be a clear definition. The other 'characteristics' of the cartel party (politics as profession, privileged access to state regulated channels of communication, a 'stratarchical' relation between ordinary members and the party elite, etc.) could then be regarded as features most cartel parties possess, but which may not be limited to the cartel party type only. In this example, the latter characteristics describe, but do not define, most cartel parties.
- 2 Wolinetz has made an attempt in this direction by linking ideal *types* of parties to *functions* ascribed to parties. Thus, according to Wolinetz, the catch-all or electoral-professional party is linked to the vote-seeking function, the cartel party to the office-seeking function and the mass integration party to the expressive/representative function of parties. Within the boundaries of the triangle thus formed, several mixed types are possible (Wolinetz, 1994).

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