

THE FORMATION OF PARTIES IN NORWAY: THE PROBLEM OF RIGHT-LEFT DIFFERENCES*

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1. Introduction

The problem of locating the source of early party formation and the question of between-party differences in organizational neatness and bureaucratic efficiency at some specific time are two topics that have often been dealt with in the same context. The development of the modern "mass" party¹ is linked with the development of a large electorate. This essentially means the introduction of the lower strata into politics, and these strata form the basis for reformist liberal parties, and at a somewhat later stage in the development, of socialist parties, as well as their leftist offspring. Efforts have been made to link the broad temporal changes in the overall characteristics of the party system, and the general features of these to an assumption about the dynamics of that change, which would make the left-wing parties into the political innovators, with the right-wing parties in some sense lagging behind. This seems to be the broad conceptions of both the dynamics of change as well as the differences between the parties at any one time, as it has been presented by Max Weber, in his classic passage in "Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft" and subsequently redefined by Duverger. By the same factor, the rise of new groups to political power through universal or broadly extended suffrage, one explains two central features (as they are conceived by Duverger) of the political system and its development, with the "left-right" axis as the main dimension, and the leftist parties as the initiator and continuous leader in the adoption of the different aspects of the "mass party".²

The Norwegian case of party formation, which in many ways may be considered a good example of the processes of change indicated by Duverger, seems to indicate support for this assumption. It is a commonplace of Norwegian history that the Conservative party, and before the formation of that party the elements from which it was created, expressed considerable misgivings about parties, deplored their presence and urged the alleviation of the conflicts between the

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parties as well as a tempered party discipline. This hostility to parties is consequently very clearly on the record, and it seems to provide quite a persuasive case for the point raised by Duverger. Comparatively, I would assume that similar evidence of hostility to parties might be found in most systems where the emergence of new groups take the form of parties.

It should be noted, however, that the Conservative party ideology just referred to is of a special kind. It tells us about the desirable state of affairs. But as such it might play a more limited part in the formation of actual behaviour than one might initially expect. Since behaviour is not only dependent upon the conception of the intrinsically good but on the most appropriate behaviour in a world where close approximation to an ideal state is out of the question, the clue to actual behaviour may only to a very limited extent be found in official statements of the kind mentioned above.

In the following pages we purport to give a rather detailed description of the stages in the formation of the Norwegian parties, as well as the organizational characteristics of them, with the following problem as the central: What is the *difference between the Conservative party and the Liberal party* with respect to the time they are formed, at the national level, at the county level, and at the local level; is there a difference in the way they are formed; can one find discrepancies between the organizations established? In short: is it possible to find any difference between the parties, and if so, what does that difference reveal about the mechanism of party formation, and the causes behind it?

Such a study essentially requires two sets of information: the requisite data pertaining to the questions just raised for the two parties, the differences found or the similarities discovered. For the Conservative party, some very important data about the time of party formation have been presented by the historian Alf Kaartvedt. He has described the place of the party formation within the context of power struggles on the Conservative side in the last years before the final defeat of the civil servant regime in 1884, and has cast light on the function of the local party organizations as agencies working for a moderate line in an otherwise very bitter strife. Kaartvedt has analyzed the interesting process by which the Conservative leader, Emil Stang, gradually came to use, and in turn be used by, the growing Conservative associations. He gives a penetrating picture of how the change in the outlook of this Conservative statesman is inextricably bound to the numerical increase of the Conservative organizations and their moderating influence on the Conservative strategy.³

While utilizing Kaartvedt's data for our purposes of comparisons, we have — in addition to the necessary complementary information about the Liberal party organizations — assembled information about the procedure applied in the formation of the organizations of both parties at the different levels. We have also looked at the statutes of the organizations of the two parties, as printed in the various party newspapers.

The source material in this study is essentially newspapers. The formation of local chapters of the parties has been reported by the central Liberal newspapers,

which commented upon the growth of local organizations and found it satisfactory or lagging behind schedule. They usually also published the statutes of the newly formed associations, and they reported, though less regularly, on the success of the locals; membership figures were frequently presented. In addition, the major regional newspapers have been scanned for the period 1883–1884.

The question about the quality of these newspapers as sources of information about party formation needs comment. I have a series of major central (Oslo) newspapers, as well as a considerable series, about 30, of regional newspapers. I consider this array of sources to be satisfactory for my purpose. The central newspapers were eager to report activity and initiative and declare in their columns that they were interested in being informed about any party formation.⁴ The regional newspapers should be a good supplement to this source: I should be highly surprised if much more than 5 % of all Liberal associations formed have escaped my notice, and among these there are probably none from the cities.

The organization of the presentation is as follows: First come sections dealing with the procedure of forming local organizations (2) and with the statutes (3). Then we treat the problem of when the organizations got started (4) and discuss their relative success in drawing the voters into their organizations (5). Finally, we will discuss the broader question of between-party differences in these respects, and try to draw some broader conclusions.

2. The Way of Establishing the Party Locals

Generally speaking, the formation of local organizations follows a standardized pattern in the different communes which were the smallest local administrative as well as electoral units. Roughly, one may distinguish between the following phases:

(1) Some few people started to collect signatures for the establishment of an organization.

(2) An appeal to the rank-and-file citizens in the commune was published in a newspaper or otherwise made public. This admonished people to come to a meeting at a certain day and time, in order to form an organization.

(3) This meeting was held, and, either the statutes were accepted, or a committee to work out statutes was chosen, and a new meeting held later.

A relatively large number of people attended the first constitutive meeting. It is difficult to give precise figures, but 50 seems to have been an average figure in many rural communes and amounts to a large percentage of the vote on election day (frequently more than 50 %).

Thus a formal and standardized procedure was followed in this building of the organization. To the extent that organizations were formed they seem to have been established according to a very strict notion of openness and accessibility. Information about closed organizations established by a few persons who kept others outside, is non-existent. Since our sources comprise newspapers of both

political colours, I tend to emphasize this. Any deviance from the procedure just described would have been seized with glee by the press of the other party. In those extremely tense months, fraught with bitter strife, this kind of possibility would not have been missed.

Party formation seems to be an undertaking quite similar to the formation of other organizations, like the temperance and artisans organizations. It seems reasonable to assume that the mode of establishing local political parties is part of a broader feature of Norwegian political culture and political organization.

3. The Nature of the Statutes

The local parties were formed at a publicly announced meeting to which all male citizens of that locality were invited. The statutes were accepted in the original form or revised, quite slightly, and the first board was elected.

The overall impression acquired from scanning the available party statutes is that there is considerable similarity between them. There are important features common to all, or a large majority of the published statutes. This does not prevent minor variations between the different local. We find some slight differences between countryside and the towns: while the statutes of the town organizations are quite elaborate, those from the countryside are likely to be somewhat briefer, and leave more to be settled. But apart from this and some other smaller differences, one statute is remarkably alike another, be it from the same party or not.

Some similarities are quite mundane, such as the fact that they contain conditions for membership, election and composition of the board of directors, as well as the choice of the chairman and statement of purpose. But the common organizational features extend further than these general comments suggest; there is also a marked similarity in the sequence in which these problems are settled in the clauses of the statutes and in the solution to the problems. The similarity in the sequence is quite marked: after a discussion of the purpose of the organization, a statement of the means for implementing this goal is given. The statute moves on to a specification of the membership requirements, questions of dues and amount. Then follow rules regulating the manner in which the board is chosen, as well as the competence of the annual assembly. At this point something is usually said about the majority requirement in votes in this assembly, as well as about rules for changing the statutes. The statutes are invariably phrased in rather terse, matter-of-fact language, bearing the imprint of people well acquainted with matters of organizational procedure, possibly also with legal problems. Essentially they appear to be documents put together in a considerate and orderly manner.

The reasons for this general characteristic are several. Those who were handling these organizations were well-read and self-confident men with a solid background of experience in matters of public organizations, such as voluntary

organizations, local boards and joint stock company-boards. Moreover, blueprints existed for the establishment of such organizations, in a narrower sense. When an organization was started the central Conservative and Liberal organizations usually printed its adopted statutes, particularly if the organization was formed in a community of some size. Several of these statutes were by that token soon known all over the country. But there is also reason to believe that certain persons in central positions in Oslo were instrumental in spreading "model statutes" to the local regions, and that they encouraged the sending in to the central newspapers the statutes of existing political organizations. The party founders all over the country were thus not only men who by themselves could have managed very well to get an organization set up: they were also furnished with standards already adopted. That the forms of the statutes were not invented locally is also clear from more direct evidence. In newspapers one frequently encounters examples of associations which emulated statutes of already established organizations. When a county Liberal association was formed in Nordre Bergenhus the Liberal newspaper reports that the chairman read aloud the similar statutes for Stavanger and Søndre Bergenhus, and suggested that they be adopted as the basis for *their* laws.⁵ Haugesund Liberal association adopted the Bergen Liberal association's statutes with minor modifications. Mandal, Halsaa and Hartmark Liberal association states: "The statutes adopted are similar to those of the Liberal association in Kristiansand, somewhat abbreviated". The same statutes are also said to be used by the Liberal association in Oddernes.⁶

The substantive content of these statutes will now be examined in order to get a more concrete picture of the nature of the organizations.

The fact that conflict between the Liberals and the Conservatives focused on the proper interpretation of the constitution had one somewhat curious consequence. Since both parties were eager to present themselves as the true guardian of the constitution, they even came to christen their local association by the same names. To be sure, the Conservative associations used the words "Constitutional" and "17th of May" more often than did the Liberals. Still there are quite a few cases in which the Liberals used similar labels. To name some: the Liberal association in Hamar called itself "Hamar Constitutional 17th of May Association"; a Liberal organization in Bergen called itself the "Bergen 17th of May Association"; and in Trondheim the Conservative association had named itself "Trondhjem Constitutional Association", while the Liberals christened their organization "The Constitutional Association of the Throenders". In Kristiansund the Liberal organization would have liked to call itself something like that, but they feared that they might become confused with the Conservatives and had to stay away from such a title. When the Trondheim Liberal newspaper calls for Liberal associations it calls them "Grundlovsforeninger".⁷

This naturally leads to quarrels about the right to the various names. *Budstikken*, (a Conservative paper) found that the use of "constitutional associations" as label for Liberal association was "meant to confuse people's ideas

about the true situation".⁸ It seems reasonable that this was indeed intended by the liberals, who had found that a glorious name had been appropriated by the enemy. But when the Conservative organization on Kongsberg had named itself "Kongsberg Liberal and constitutional association", the Liberal paper pulled no punches:

"By seeing this magnificent title we were automatically reminded of the old pirates, who used to sail under the flag of some respectable nation, only to lower this when ships came closer, and replace it with the black flag with the skull and cross-bones."

In Bergen the Liberal newspaper said that the Conservative manifesto was "of such a nature, that it might have been signed by every liberal man in the city," and expressed the idea that maybe Liberals should join it to see what it was like.¹⁰

The *purposes* of these organizations were somewhat differently stated from city to city, but it usually included "working for the Conservative (Liberal) cause", work to spread the "constitutional (Liberal) point of view" etc. The purpose might be put quite briefly, like the statement of purpose in the Trondheim Conservative Organization's statutes, where it declares itself to be for "supporting the Conservative party in its defence against the attacks for the Liberal party against the Constitution and the Union with Sweden." Occasionally, however, it might be more involved, like the Sarpsborg and environment Conservative Organization, where the statement of the purpose was long and cumbersome, referring both to religion and the constitutional question in considerable detail, and Fredrikshald Conservative Association, where the statement of the purpose was very legalistic.¹¹

The purposes of the Liberal association were usually presented as a protection of the constitution as well. The purpose of the constitutional Association of the Throenders, e.g., was:

"on the basis of the constitutional monarchy and the Union with Sweden to protect the Constitution of Norway and its development in the spirit of the founding fathers..."

Stenkjær Liberal association wanted to protect the constitutional monarchy and the union with Sweden, and to "protect the Constitution against legalistic hairsplitting".¹²

Occasionally the Liberal statutes support the "liberal policy" with express reference to the lack of any absolute veto for the king.¹³ Haugesund and environment Liberal association declared that the purpose was "the carrying out of the selfgovernment of the people on the basis of the constitution". Kristiansand Liberal association emphasized "the foundation of Christianity and the Constitution", its desire to "protect the constitution and the liberty and self-government there given to the people, and "to protect the union between the twin countries".¹⁴

The strong Liberal emphasis on the support of religion and the union with Sweden were probably moves to ward off Conservative claims that the Liberal

party stood for godlessness and a break with Sweden, and the reference to the union as one of the bases on which the Liberal party built was later introduced into the statement of purpose of the National Liberal Union.

By and large, the political goals of the organizations were reasonably clearly expressed, but a large number of statutes presented them in an utterly general form. Apart from a broadly stated goal, an organization also needs a notion of how this goal shall be reached.

The purpose was almost exclusively stated as one of external propaganda. Hamar Conservative Association states as the means employed by the organization to reach its purpose:

"meetings, festive get-togethers, dispersion of good literature and the establishment of more specialized organizations for narrower purposes"¹⁵

One aspect of this is very clearly seen in the character of the geographic border of both the Liberal and the Conservative organizations. In many cases the organizations of the cities did not strictly follow the city limits. Since the electoral units strictly separated the city from the hinterland, this suggests that the purpose of the organizations was propaganda as it did not matter exactly where the electoral borders were. But ideas on this matter are also based on the entire temper of the politics of those days. The political battle raged, the two sides were fighting each other; proselytizing, not internal decisionmaking appeared to be the most pressing need. Indeed, were there any other ones?

The *entrance requirements* were usually rather simple, both few and easy to fulfill. In what was meant as a model for such associations, no conditions for becoming a member were mentioned. It is likely that this "omission" flows from a rather limited concern for keeping people out: other statutes do not require much more.¹⁶

Such modest entrance requirements seem to be the pattern for the organizations. Haugesund and environment Conservative association declared itself open to "all honest and grown-up men", so did Sarpsborg and environment Conservative association. Hamar Conservative association declared itself open to "all grown-up men living in Hamar". The organization in Larvik permitted membership to "all grown-up men of good reputation".¹⁷

Tönsberg and environment Conservative organization was open to "all grown-up Norwegian men". They must however, not have "bad reputation".¹⁸ In quite a few of the organizations the board is given the right to expel members if they do not stay "of good reputation" or "work against the purpose of the organization". The reason for this arrangement seems to have been a rather simple wish to keep drunkards and notoriously disreputable elements out. I have never found any record that bears upon this problem, so most likely it has never really played any role. One may speculate about the reason why this right was vested in the board, rather than, in the yearly assembly, or some special assembly. But if we assume that this was done to exclude the rank-and-file members from the decision, we shall most likely make a gross error; it seems more reasonable to

assume that one simply wanted to have a system whereby one could get rid of liberals who joined their organizations for fun, and constant troublemakers who behaved so that any organization would like to get rid of them. Particularly, on the basis of subsequent experiences one can hardly infer that it was meant to serve as a weapon for an oligarchic group eager to maintain its influence within presumably democratic forms. Of little practical importance as this clause is, still it tells us something about the difference between the parties. The Liberal statutes usually did not include anything about good reputation, nor did they contain this expulsion clause. It probably also tells us something about the somewhat prudish, petty bourgeois fear of people who were not nice or respectable.

By and large, the Liberal statutes put the same conditions for membership in their organizations as did the Conservatives. In the model statutes printed in the leading liberal newspaper, the requirements were, in addition to agreeing with the program and the purpose of the organization, simply; "every grown-up man" could become a member.¹⁹

In Bergen, 25 years was proposed, but 21 years adopted by the association.²⁰ In quite a few cases the Liberal organizations were even more lax: they occasionally let people become members at the age of twenty, in some cases even 18. There were also some Liberal organizations that were open to women as well as men. That was rather unusual and new, because women did not have the right to vote at that time. Stenkjær Liberal association was open to both men and women over the age of 21. Övrebö and Hægeland's Liberal association probably had the most "liberal" rules: all men and women age 15 and more.²¹

That membership was open to all adult males is a matter of considerable interest. Because the Norwegian system was one with somewhat limited suffrage (the proportion of adult males who had the right to vote could vary from city to city, and varied from 20 % to almost 50 %) one might have considered it "natural" that only people who had such rights were the only ones who formally had the right to become members. Why bother with the rest of the population?

This reasoning leads us to question the character of our finding. But there can be little doubt that not only voters were welcome in the organizations, because certain organizations even took the trouble to specify when only voters who are members of the organizations can participate. Other types of evidence point in the same direction. The Nedenes county Conservative association statutes requires that each association keep a record of the members "whether these according to the Constitution have the right to vote or not..."²² We are forced to conclude then, that both parties tried to mobilize the broad masses and that membership was open to practically everybody. Exceptions may exist (I have not surveyed the statutes of absolutely all the local associations), but since I have not found any, they are probably just a few stray anomalies. For a conservative party, such a policy is most certainly interesting. It indicates a strategy of bringing in the masses.

A Liberal paper, which had turned conservative, wrote retrospectively about

the openness of the Liberal party, and considered its initial rules to be one of openness to those without suffrage:

"When the Liberal organization was formed, this was in a way an expansion of the suffrage in itself." The paper describes how relatively limited suffrage was at that time and adds: "But having entered the Liberal organization one could participate and have some influence on the political course taken by the party, even though one did not have the right to vote. So, one joined the party and participated."²³

But open as the organizations were to the disenfranchised there was still not complete equality for them within the organization. In some statutes it is said expressly that in meetings where the questions pertaining to the elections are discussed, only those members with a right to vote shall be present. When the Liberal association was formed in Bergen, it was suggested that in matters pertaining to elections everybody, with or without suffrage, should be allowed to participate, but this proposal was turned down "with a great majority".²⁴ By and large, it seems as if this rule has been practiced with few exceptions in the next two decades. Usually the two parties called in people with the right to vote in order to nominate party candidates, but they were not too particular about membership.²⁵

The *membership fee* was ordinarily two kroner per year; occasionally the fee was lower for workers than for others. Almost all the statutes stipulate some membership dues. In the model statutes for Conservative Associations²⁶ clause 6. contains this provision:

"The members of the association pay a yearly due of 2 kroner, the less well-off, however, pay only 1 krone, and the crofters 50 øre."

It seems as if a special effort here was made to make it economically possible for the poor to be a members. But it is not in many organizations that we find this model applied. Apart from the Larvik Conservative Association where the dues are stipulated to kr. 2,—, "though workers pay 50 øre only",²⁷ we have come across very few organizations where some distinction between social classes or economic categories were made with regard to duties towards the organization. Disregarding the difference between people with and people without suffrage (a distinction largely coinciding with that between classes), members were considered to be alike, in rights as well as duties.

It appears that the Liberal party presented itself as somewhat more open in being a little less expensive. As opposed to the suggested "stratified dues system" suggested by the Conservatives, the Liberal model statute suggested 60 øre, without further fuss or distinctions.²⁸ But this initial difference seems to have been of highly limited consequence. The two parties' locals do not really differ very much in this matter, and none of the newspapers try to utilize any such slight differences for political propaganda or even treat the matter in the context of political principles.

After listing membership requirements, and the size of the dues, the statutes dealt with *the formal structure of the organizations*. Two bodies emerge as the

main pillars of the organization, the board and the annual assembly. The purpose of the board (membership size varying between 5 and 10) was to run the organization; the board should arrange political meetings, take care of the preparations before elections, and in all respects be the most active core of dedicated party members. The annual assembly was to represent some kind of mild check on the board; the board was elected at the annual assembly at which time local finances were examined.

According to most statutes, the board was to be elected at each annual assembly, and usually only half of the board members were up for election each year. A certain continuity of the board was consequently guaranteed. Each year the board selected the chairman and the deputy chairman from within its own ranks, while selecting the man to check the economy from outside. This pattern is almost universal, and it seems as if this system is consonant with the practice common in most other organizational setups in the cities at that time. The system of partial exchange of the board, and the choice of chairman and deputy chairman of the board from within the board, indicates similarity to the other organizations and bears close resemblance to the rules in municipal government. The *present* rule stipulating that all members of the board be elected at the same time and that all the positions in the board be decided by the annual meeting, seems to have been adopted somewhat later, probably around the turn of the century. If this assumption is correct it would strengthen the idea that some of these rules and procedures were modeled on the municipal government since the system of having only one half of the various boards up for election was abolished in 1896 in a revision of the laws regulating municipal self-government.

On the whole, the political organizations of the right and the left do not seem to display markedly different organizational forms. They are cut out of very much the same cloth, both with respect to mode of electing the board, the way of electing its chairman, the annual assembly and its functions, as well as the membership requirements. With the exception of the organizations' purpose, little or nothing differs that does not derive from differences in political goals.

This contention is supported very directly by a statement in a liberal party newspaper in an article in which the editors of the newspaper presented pattern or a model for liberal party locals' statutes:

"It is with some few exceptions almost a direct copy of the usual Conservative statutes, that in turn are modified Liberal statutes etc. We think that the main thing is what goal the organization works towards. Once we agree upon that goal we think that the use of the "apparatus" will largely be subsidiary."²⁷

Another piece of evidence may be found in the nature of the reports about the clubs of the opposite party in the newspapers. I have not found any explicit criticism of the way the organizations are set up or supposed to function. I take this silence as an index of the degree to which the organizational forms were taken for granted.

4. When Did the Parties get Started?

The development of the Norwegian parties from informal groups of people with roughly similar opinions on major political issues into formal organizations, with rules and regulations, statutes and by-laws, (and with at least certain rudimentary agencies through which the opinion of the party shall be expressed) took place in roughly four years, from 1880 to 1884. Before the first year, there were only the slightest indicators of formally organized parties. At the end of 1884, the existence of the two parties and the channeling of political activity through them is the main fact of political life in Norway. These boundaries indicate that whatever the differences between the Conservative party and the Liberal party, the difference must have been rather slight. But we ought to be able to trace the growth of the parties in greater detail. We shall start with the problem of the *local* organizations, proceed to the *county* organizations, and end with the *national* organizations, in order to be able to say something about the stages of growth for each party, and their mutual influence on each other. The latter objective will occasionally require lapses from the outlined procedure.

If we look at the *local* party organizations, it appears that the initiative to formation of local branches was not taken by the Liberals. Kaartvedt has studied this in great detail.³⁰ According to his data, only two Conservative associations were formed in 1882 (in Skien and Larvik). In the first half of 1883, however, 13 conservative town associations were formed, in the second half 7, in the first half of 1884 only 4. This means that the first big wave of organization building in the town followed the Conservative electoral defeat in 1883.³¹

The nature of the Bergen Conservative association and the manifesto urging its establishment called the attention of the liberal paper to the signers of that document:

"One may for that matter well name it the Association of the rejected" or the "Association of the losers." It is the "rejected" city councillors and the "rejected" city representatives, the "rejected" electors, "rejected" Parliament deputy members, and rejected Parliament members. They are men whom the Conservative party has put up as candidates to all the positions mentioned, but who have been rejected by the voters."³²

The earlier part of 1883 can be singled out as the time when the Conservatives get around to putting up local associations, and when the abrupt break with the previous conservative strategy occurs. Looking at this important rise of formal organizations instead of cliques of conservative *Honoratioren*, the Liberal newspapers express deep fear. The "liberals" had just won a smashing victory at the polls in 1882, but the importance of the rise of the Conservative local branches was perceived quite well. Moreover, the Liberals said all the time that the Conservatives were ahead of them in organization. They maintained that as far as matters of organization were concerned, the Conservatives were far more clever, and indeed had gained important ground by being the party that stated along this road.

But is this image of the Conservative party as more effective as pioneering party organizers a valid picture of what went on, or is it essentially an excuse

for starting political organizations, a smokescreen covering a group of still more active party organizers? I think that it really was a true picture. While an active attempt at founding the Conservative organizations had been afoot for some time before 1883, and a strong wave of foundation of such organizations had taken place already in the first half of 1883, there is clear evidence to the effect that the Liberal organizational wave did not really start until well into the summer 1883 and reached its greatest momentum in the autumn 1883.

If the defeat at the polls in 1882 is the valid explanation of the Conservative organizational drive in spring 1883, it follows that the Liberal party should be somewhat more slow. It could also explain the slight difference in the arguments presented for the establishment of party locals on the Liberal side. The main reason for the establishment of organizations was the attainment of greater unity and efficiency. But other reasons are also given, such as the sheer value of being able to stress and prove the support of the Liberal cause. "If", it was said in a Liberal newspaper, "it can be established with solid figures, that in this country there are at least 10 – ten – Liberals for each Conservative, it is obvious that this is something that commands respect." The same newspaper also mentioned a different argument for establishing these organizations: one had gotten along "pretty well without any organization, but then one usually had to blindly follow the say of some individual or of some little coterie, and this is not at it should be."³³

But let us briefly relate the story of the formation of Liberal locals. In 1883 there does not seem to be any strong need within the liberal party to form associations. In a general statement the main Liberal newspaper states that one really should not form associations if one had a solid position in any one place, but if the enemy did, one should follow suit. This reflects a clearly defensive and not very principled pro-party orientation. A slight reorientation appeared in May when the same newspaper asked for information about all the local newspapers.³⁴ Apparently some starting of organizations was going on. After the parliamentary decision to impeach the existing cabinet a Conservative new wave of organization followed.³⁵ Now the Liberal side also launched an active drive to create local organizations. By the end of June there must have been more than 30 local liberal organizations.³⁶

From now on there was a steady trickle of new Liberal organizations. "Constitutional Associations must be formed everywhere", *Verdens Gang* declared. In *Dagsposten*, the active Trondheim organization pushed actively. Already early in 1883 this newspaper had launched an active drive for the establishment of "liberal 17th of May associations in the cities and in the countryside", and throughout the year it had followed the same line. One had to create, it said,

"a counterweight to the numerous Conservative associations, which to some extent with very few members, shoot up like toad-stools in the countryside."³⁷

The effect on the recently formed Conservative associations was felt also in the political center. *Dagbladet* commented upon the state of affairs with great con-

cern: "The Organization of the Conservative party is excellent". It declares that one has been too lazy and inactive: "Because we have got to work, the position of the Conservatives must not be underestimated". One must now form associations whether one is in the majority or minority.³⁸

Other newspapers expressed the appeal for organizations in somewhat different terms but acknowledged that a strong position had been won without much formal organization. No doubt, a Liberal paper stated, the Liberal party has won victories and progressed,

"in spite of the fact, that it has been almost without organization, it is the goodness of its cause, that has given the victory." However, a critical point has reached: "Many times it has been pointed out that the Conservatives are organizing better than the Liberals, and that this firmer organization has given the Conservatives a great advantage and increased its ability to resist."³⁹

This point did not always get across. In a few cases one can discern some animosity to a party. In Søndre Bergenhus, where the Conservative party polled less than 30 % at the election of 1882 there was great reluctance to form Liberal county organization. In a discussion about the question of forming such an organization for Hardanger og Voss, one of the principal Liberal leaders there "expressed himself to the opposite effect; he could not see what use there might be for the Liberal cause from such an external party-organization." Several other speakers apparently agreed.⁴⁰

Quite possibly it is an answer to this kind of misgivings that the liberal *Romsdalsposten* wrote:

"Where there still does not exist any organization ("Lag"), one must not postpone the formation of one, or omit forming it because one thinks that this is unnecessary, since the community only contains liberal elements."⁴¹

The purely propagandistic value of the organizations was not missed either; there were supposed to be "a marshalling of ones troops, a tally ("Mandtal") of ones politically likeminded". Even in the beginning of November there are some misgivings about the speed of organization. *Fjordenes Blad* quotes *Bergens Tidende* to the effect that, while two months had elapsed since the drive was started, "yet only very little (had been) achieved. To a large extent the reason may be found therein, that the farmer as yet has been busy on his farm."⁴²

Others are more satisfied. *Dagbladet* expressed satisfaction that the establishment of new locals has been started and moved in the right direction.⁴³ This attitude seems to be warranted: the Liberal party had actually started a vigorous counteroffensive, and within a relatively short time the results of the organizational drive began to show: in December 1883 there were 123 local Liberal organizations all over Norway. At least 80 more were added before the summer of 1884. This meant that the Liberal drive had surpassed the Conservative since Kaartvedt reports 99 local Conservative organizations by the end of 1883.⁴⁴ Was this situation maintained? It is difficult to answer, but according to Kaartvedt the total number of organizations on the Conservative side was 174 by the end of June.⁴⁵ This is approximately the strength of the liberal front. By and large the

two political wings managed to put up roughly the same number of locals before the final defeat of the old regime in summer 1884. The growth after this event is flagging and rather inconsequential.

We have emphasized that all these organizations, Conservative as well as Liberal, are new organizations formed in the heat of battle as political weapons. The novelty of these organizations has, however, been subject to doubt. Some have suggested that the Liberal organizations were little more than the old "Friends of the Farmer", initiated by Sören Jaabæk about 20 years earlier.⁴⁶ This proposition may contain some truth though I would opt for a more careful statement. In local rural newspapers there is little to indicate that only the name was changed. More possible it seems as if some of these organizations had simply been dead since the 1870's and that their leaders now started the local Liberal organization. The same thing may also have been the case for so-called "Discussion Groups" (*Samtalelag*), some of which just changed their name. But the overwhelming majority of the Liberal associations were built anew, though an overlap of members may have occurred.⁴⁷ There is one notable exception: Lister and Mandals Friends of the Farmers Association County Organization was changed into a Liberal county organization. Even there it is pretty evident that it was not an active and vigorous organization that changed its name. Rather it was a completely newborn baby that was given the name of a highly respected deceased person.⁴⁸

The *county organizations* are partly products of the local organizations but partly instruments for creating them, formed usually by delegates from local commune organizations on a date fixed well in advance. Usually, the proposed statutes were published simultaneously with no differences between the Conservative and the Liberal organizations with respect to the mode of formation of the organizations. The organizations themselves are also quite similar, with a small executive body, and a larger representative body with some representation from each local organization according to slightly varying rules. This larger body was designed to be the annual assembly with all its normal functions; it was obviously built according to the model for the local organizations.

Nor is it easy to detect any noticeable differences between the parties when we look at the *time* county organizations were forming. Like the local organizations, the Conservatives start out, well ahead of the Liberals. The first county organizations were the Aust Agder Conservative county association, and the Opland Conservative county association. Then initiative seems to have shifted to the Liberals. In summer 1884, there are 9 Conservative county associations and 16 Liberal associations.⁴⁹

While the drive for local liberal associations gained momentum, there was also an effort to build up a *national party* organization. Contrary to the local level, the Liberals took the first step. On August 16, the board of the Trondheim Liberal association issued a statement, deploring the lack of national organization.⁵⁰ On August 25, Akershus County Liberal Association had summoned its members to a mass meeting at Klöfta, where a message from the Liberal chieftain Johan

Sverdrup (a representative from Akershus county) urging the Liberals to start a move for a national organization, was read. This policy was unanimously adopted, and the Akershus County Liberal Association prepared the national meeting, January 15, 1885, where the National Liberal Union was formed.⁵¹ The leading figure in this drive to build up a national organization was farmer K. Dieseth, the chairman of the Akershus Liberal County Association,⁵² a close friend of Sverdrup. He issued a statement calling for the establishment of local and county organization on September 3 and added a supplementary admonition on November 24 with the proposed laws for the national organization. These statements were printed in the liberal press all over the country. Kaartvedts description of the Conservative party indicates a slower development. Its national organization was not established until August, 1884.⁵³

The overall picture of the two parties may be summarized as follows: the Conservative organizational drive started earlier, but the development of the liberal party from budding local organizations through the establishment of county organizations to a truly national organization was more contracted. It lasted about five months, while the birth of the Conservative organization lasted from early 1883 to August, 1884.

5. The Success of the New Institution

By the formation of local, county and national party organizations a new element had been added to the political life of Norway. We shall now turn to the *scope* of this political innovation. The question seems to divide itself quite naturally into two different parts, the *predominance of the institution* over other and alternative forms of political association and activity, and the degree of *involvement of the population in that institution*. The *first* question is essentially a question of where the local party associations were formed, and persisted. In what kind of communes do party organizations grow up and strike roots, in which types of economy, in which regions, in what kind of political climate? The *second* question concerns, within those communes where party organizations do exist, the extent of mass involvement in such organizations: what percentage of the voters (or enfranchised, or registered voters) were enlisted in this novel and revolutionary organization type — the party? We shall, in this order, try to provide the main solutions to these problems.⁵⁴

The question of *where* the organizations were formed relates to the degree of commonness in the establishment of Liberal and Conservative parties. Is there a *common* pattern for both parties, in the sense that they both exhibit strength in the same areas? If true, we are faced with the problem of party formation as *such*, and may disregard the party differences. To the extent that this is *not* the case, we will have to work with different explanations for Conservative and Liberal success in putting up locals. One might expect a certain *common* basis on the assumption that a certain density of population is a necessity, but on the

basis of voting strength one might expect that one party exists where the other party is weak. On such grounds one might derive a varied set of assumptions. We first look at the question of co-occurrence.

At the end of December 1883 the Conservative party had established local organizations in 99 communes, while the Liberal party had started local organizations in 123 communes. There was a total of 457 communes; the amount of overlap between them is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The existence of Liberal and Conservative locals in all Norwegian communes, end of Dec. 1883.

		Conservative local		Total
		Present	Not present	
Liberal local	Present	27	96	123
	Not present	72	262	334
Total		99	358	457

There is almost no clear relationship between these two organization drives at this point in time. Kaartvedts assumption about the mutual influence of the organizational drives seems to be that the establishment of one of these produced the other.⁵⁵ While not amounting to a rigorous test of his thesis, our findings seem to point in a different direction: the correlation is, indeed, almost zero. It is quite possible that this relationship would disappear if a third variable (e.g. density of population) was introduced, but as a broadly descriptive statement at the end of 1884, it cannot be maintained.

The more impressionistic evidence seems to throw some light on the questions of the spread of party organizations: which areas had no organization, which had one (liberal or conservative) and which had organizations of both parties?

The communes where both parties have been successful in putting up a club seem to have been the cities, and the larger communes in the Eastern area and the Trøndelag area. Kaartvedt emphasized this for the Conservative party, and the same seems to be true for the Liberal party. A Liberal newspaper, summing up the results of the efforts to get the Liberal party organized, noted at the end of 1883 that the success of the drive had not been equally great in all parts of the country. In some areas the activity was high, in other areas it was rather low: "Lowest were the counties Finnmark, Tromsø, Northern and Southern Bergenhus, Stavanger and Nedenæs."⁵⁶

In Table 2, we have presented some information on the distribution of the Conservative and Liberal associations in the rural areas.⁵⁷ The table allows us two kinds of comments: if we look at the chance that a rural commune should have a Liberal association, we find that this is largest in Trøndelag, smaller in the East, still smaller in the South and the West, at lowest in the North. The chance that a rural commune shall have a Conservative association, however, is similarly largest in Trøndelag, somewhat smaller in the East, smaller in the South and the West, and lowest in the North.

Table 2. Percentage of the number of rural communes, within the 5 major regions, with Conservative and Liberal associations.

Regions	Cons. associations	percent	Liberal associations	percent	Total number of rural communes
East	42	32	49	37	132
South	4	6	12	19	69
West	9	8	24	20	118
Trøndelag	16	36	25	57	44
North	—	—	8	13	62

If, however, we look at the organizational balance between the Liberals and the Conservatives we find a certain if slight Liberal dominance in the East. Somewhat more pronounced, this dominance may be found in Trøndelag, while the South and the West both are characterized by heavy Liberal dominance. In the North the Liberals reign supreme. If we look at these figures in a somewhat different way (see Table 3), it appears that the Conservative organizations to a large extent (59 %) are found in the eastern region, and in Trøndelag. The proportion of the Liberal organizations in the Eastern area is smaller (41 %), and the corresponding percentages for most other regions are higher than for the Conservative party.

Table 3. The rural local Conservative and Liberal organizations according to region.

Regions	Conservative		Liberal	
East	42	59 %	49	41 %
South	4	6 %	12	10 %
West	9	13 %	24	20 %
Trøndelag	16	23 %	25	21 %
North	—	—	8	7 %
Total	71	107 %	118	99 %

Various factors have caused this picture of the organizational strength of the two parties. We are unable to give any detailed account of the factors involved, but since the less organized territories for both parties are the Western and the Northern, while Trøndelag and the East distinguish themselves as well-organized areas, some kind of population density and contact with central agencies and institutions must be among the more crucial. This makes for a considerable degree of difference between relative voting strength and relative organization strength of the two parties. If we looked at the relative organizational strength and tried to use this to guess the relative voting strength for the East and Trøndelag we would overestimate the Conservative strength, while for the North, we would underestimate it. This uneven fit between organization strength and voting strength is of interest since it is an element in the dynamics of party change.⁵⁸

In this context it seems appropriate to notice that a highly similar consideration holds true for some other kinds of political mobilization outside a strictly party frame, but with unmistakably partisan character. We have selected two varieties of this semi-partisan activity. On the Conservative side, we have the *plebiscites* in favor of the establishment: these essentially were lists of signa-

tures, collected to buttress the *regime*. On the Liberal side we have as a useful counterpart the para-political *People's Militia*, an army of Liberal marksmen who often owned their own rifle and would be ready to fight if a *coup d'état* was

Table 4. Number of militiamen and petitioners, and the voting strength of the parties, by region, in 1882.*

Regions	Total number of voters	Conservative voters	Liberal voters	Liberal Liberals in % of the total vote	Riflers	Petitioners
Oslo area	10851	4692	6159	56	2369	5601
Eastern area	11628	3488	8140	70	4773	3696
Southern area	8328	2917	5411	65	2009	3104
Western area	14964	4078	10886	73	2221	2640
Trøndelagen	5679	1595	4084	72	3562	1650
Northern area	4084	1256	2828	69	352	1196

* The figures have been obtained in the following way: Voting figures and figures concerning the party distribution are from Jon Uthheim's corrected sources, see *Søndre Bergenhus Folkeblad* Aug. 24, 1883. Information about the geographical distribution of the *Rifleringer* (Rifleclubs) associated to the *Folkevepningsamlagene* is found in the same newspaper for September the 4, 1884. Information about the petitions to the Selmer ministry have been found in the same newspaper March 13, 1884. I have also relied on the figures obtained from Lars A. Havstad: "Adressene til ministeriet Selmer" *Nyt Tidsskrift*, (2) 1883, 490-502. — For information by county see Ulf Torgersen, *The formation of Parties in Norway* (Institute for Social Research, Oslo 1966, mimeo), p. 60.

carried out, or attempted. These two kinds of activity do not constitute emotionally equivalent states of commitment, but we do not have to make such assumptions in order to carry out the analysis.

Table 4 corroborates the findings for organization strength of the parties relative to regions. With the exception of what we have called the Oslo Area (Akershus, Østfold and Vestfold counties), there are rather limited and probably not too easily explainable differences between the counties and/or regions. The Western Area is strongest for the Liberals, but exceeds the Trøndelag Area, the Northern Area, and the Eastern inland only by a minuscule difference. However, the degree of activist involvement (activist/voter-ratio) varies quite considerably from county to county, and from one region to another. The ratio for the *Liberals* seems to be highest in East inland, drop off in the South and particularly the West, rise to a maximum in Trøndelag, and then drop to a minimum in the North. The *Conservative* party exhibits a slightly similar picture: in the Oslo Area, East inland and the South as well as Trøndelag, the number of petitioners exceeds that of the voters, the obverse is true for the West and the North. This makes for a situation rather similar to the one we just described concerning organizational strength, with the same imbalance between activists and voters. The Liberal party had 70 % of their militiamen from the East and Trøndelag, while 49 % of their voters came from that area. The Conservative party seems to have somewhat less of an imbalance; while 54 % of their votes come from the East, 61 % of its petitioners came from this region. By and large, the two parties have strong organizational bases in roughly the same territories, a fact which does not preclude variation in their relative strength from one region to another.

It is clear that the purpose of both parties was to become ubiquitous, inclusive organizations. In the course of a reasonably short period both parties developed from pale shadows of organizations into comparatively full-fledged ones, with locals in communes containing a very large majority of the actual voters and the suffraged, due to their relatively strong position in large and/or urban communities.⁵⁹ But how deeply was the new institution anchored in the society? One clue to this is a study of the numbers of men who enlisted in those newly formed political armies, willing to serve as Conservative cavaliers or Liberal roundheads. The figures for "petitioners" or "militiamen" are useful to describe some kind of partisanship. Such figures are presented in the newspapers, intermittently and in a rather unsystematic way, but nevertheless frequently enough to provide the basis for an assessment of the magnitude of party membership figures.⁶⁰

For the Conservative party figures are presented for the country as a whole. In November, 1884, Emil Stang claimed to have 170–180 organizations with 15–20,000 members. In the 1882 election 28,500 voters had cast their vote for the Conservative candidates; the proportion of members should then be about 70 %.⁶¹

I have not found any statements about Conservative membership figures on the county level. But information is available for several cities and for certain rural communes, and they seem to point in the same direction as the nation-wide figures: they indicate a high member/voter ratio and add to the credibility of the central figure. On the national level it is difficult to make a similar assessment for the Liberal party. No statement comparable to that from the Conservative party has been made; the newspaper reports covering the first national convention tell nothing about the number of members.⁶² But we *do* have information about some counties (see Table 5).

Table 5. Voting strength and party membership of the Liberal party in some selected counties.

	Votes 1882	Party members		Member/voter ratio
Akershus	2464	2030	(17 June 1884)	77 %
Østfold	1744	1500	(7 July 1884)	86 %
South Trøndelag	2018	1912	(15 Jan. 1884)	95 %
Buskerud	2017	648	(29 Jan. 1884)	30 %
East-Agder	1438	2200	(21 Jan. 1883)	153 %
Hordaland	3367	1100	(5 Jan. 1884)	33 %
Sogn og Fjordane	2048	1750	(15 July 1884)	84 %
Møre og Romsdal	3436	3500	(Jan. 1884)	102 %

Some of these counties are among those with good organization, while others fall in the other category; still all have a high percentage of voters as members. It seems reasonable to assume that the remaining counties will display a comparable picture. The same seems to be the case in the cities. Table 6 presents some figures for the larger cities, and a more cursory inspection of the smaller towns leaves us with essentially the same impression. On the whole, I would estimate the national member/voter ratio in the Liberal party to be just as overwhelming as the one for the Conservative party, if not higher.

Table 6. Voting support and membership figures for the Liberal party in the 4 large cities.

	Members		Voters 1882	Member/voter ratio
Oslo	3000	(Feb. 4 84)	779	380 %
Bergen	400	(June 83)	1286	32 %
Stavanger	1200	(Jan. 84)	828	140 %
Kristiansand	700	(Oct. 10 83)	466	150 %
	S u m	5300	3239	161 %

There is one problem with this kind of ratio: it must rely on measures made at different times. Our election figures are from 1882; our membership figures are picked from 1883 and 1884. This was a time of mobilization of the electorate, and we must consequently warn against a too "liberal" interpretation of our findings. It is possible that new groups would have voted had there been an election in 1883 or 1884. Nevertheless, to establish an organization in 1883 and 1884 in which obviously a very large section of the voters of the previous year were members is in itself a remarkable feat.

Consequently, despite the various shortcomings of our data, we may nevertheless safely infer that no noticeable difference exists between the parties to rally their voters to the support of the different causes. Both parties seem to have been able to draw two-thirds or more of their voters into the formal organizations. There may be some differences between percentages here, but their importance seems minor when the gross similarities are kept in mind.

The importance of membership has probably been quite limited with regard to the external commitments of the individual party member; mostly he was a member and nothing more. But granted this limitation, it tells us about an identification with one wing in a political conflict, and a willingness to declare support. Political color was, from then, a property which even the less active were known to have and about which knowledge existed. Our membership figures indicate that identification with the parties must have been very high.

This indicates a very interesting feature of the party system at the stage of its inception. Because of the high degree of involvement of the politically active part of the population (the voting citizens) in this conflict, and in the party system, the political life exhibits features which distinguishes it from the preceding epoch as well as the subsequent phase. Surely, the process of involving people in party work and the mobilization of previously inert citizens to perform the minimal part in politics of voting, occur at the same time; these processes are, by the political actors, especially the Conservatives, perceived as intimately linked. It is difficult to understand how political life moved towards a system where this level of engagement and commitment became less and less characteristic of politics. In certain respects one might even view this aspect of the mass parties in their embryonic form as deeply archaic. Anyway, this aspect of the mass parties at the initial stage makes it different from both the preceding stage of the development of political organization and later phases.

6. Summary and Interpretation

Summing up the relationship between the Conservative party and the Liberal party with respect to the various features we have been exploring, a relatively simple picture emerges. There are *some* differences, e.g., concerning the time that associations got going on the different levels of organization. But with that exception, and it runs against the central assumption concerning right-left differences, there are almost no differences discernible over a large spectrum of organization properties. Essentially the two parties emerge simultaneously and alike. This similarity seems to belie assumptions about ideology as important in the adoption of party organization as a tool of politics, and suggests that more mundane concerns may have played a larger part in propelling the two political wings towards the adoption of formal party organizations. Such concerns, e.g., tactical calculations, may explain why the Conservative party was more of an early bird than fits Duverger's theory, and, conversely, why the Liberal party was a latecomer.

Both on the Liberal and on the Conservative side the emergence of party organizations is a result of two needs. One is the need for electoral success and a machine for promoting it. In his work on the Conservatives, Kaartvedt has emphasized this element and has pointed out how electoral defeat gave the initial impetus.⁶³ Linked to this phenomenon is another: the party organization was a way in which sectors of one political grouping could make their influence felt without any parliamentary backing. Within both parties it seems to be the unrepresented voters who urged some organizational forms: the city Liberals and the countryside Conservatives pushed for this new institution.

The eagerness of the Trondheim Liberals to get a national association started highlights this source of the Liberal organizational drive. There were few places where the political strife was more bitter, and all the parliament seats were safely in conservative hands. This made the active Jacob Lindboe try to acquire influence through the establishment of a national party, and once it was established he was given a prominent position on the national Liberal executive. The party machinery is a way in which groups unrepresented in the parliament can acquire some representation and hence parliamentary influence. Conversely, it is easy to understand why the leading liberals were not too eager to found an organization. In the countryside the opinions were usually somewhat split. Since the support of the Liberals was heavy, almost each of the communes sent Liberal electors, which meant that the parliament members were Liberal. In such a situation, it might be somewhat complicated for the liberals to start an organization, and they simply did not need one.

On the national level, other and no less important reasons existed for taking it easy. The establishment of a national organization, apart from its novelty, would mean something for the balance of power in the Liberal "party": the establishment of a national party apart from the parliamentary caucus would bring in the party organizations of the urban Liberals, who were largely unrepresented in the

parliament, and frequently represented activist groups dead set at drastic measures. It was to be seen later that the urban Liberals dominated the national meetings far beyond their voting strength, and it seems reasonable that this was envisaged by the liberal leader Sverdrup. He was a master of parliamentary strategy and the handling of the parliament farmers. The mass party was not necessarily his style. While the growth of Conservative organizations and their fusion to a national association was pulling the Conservative "party" towards a moderate center position, the adoption of a Liberal association highlighted and emphasized the tensions.⁶⁴ To be sure, Sverdrup placed himself in the center of the activity to start the party, but he had no choice, and probably was aware of the inherent complications.⁶⁵

The confusion about the Liberal organization's function as well as its formal shape is revealed in several situations. At the Akershus meeting Berner appealed both to the left and the right wing in his argument for a national Liberal union. Such an organization "held back the immature and rebellious thoughts from bursting forth uncontrolled" while it also "strengthened the weak and the fickle to stick to the course" and would "give the political purposes a durable, an institutional strength." Furthermore, there was no complete agreement as to the character of the national organization. *Dagbladet* aired the idea that this central organization somehow should be formed, but in any case the parliamentary Liberals should play an important role in the formation of it, and doubted that the local organizations easily could be "assembled". The article is (symptomatically) somewhat confused, but states that political influence also must be given to the liberals who have no parliamentary representatives.⁶⁶

The more moderate Liberals probably felt the need for an organization which could define the goals of the party. The Conservatives identified the Liberal cause with anti-union, with Sweden, republicanism, atheism, and other disreputable brands of opinion. Small wonder that the more careful but firm Liberals wanted some organization which could state goal of the Liberals authoritatively and moderately and thus eliminate all kinds of badly founded but sticky charges of mad extremism. In the statutes adopted for the national Liberals union, section 9 made it mandatory that election platforms be discussed by local associations prior to the national convention; this was a concession to the more conservative Liberals. Another check against the more radical wing was also established; a two thirds majority of the city or county associations was required in order to put a plank into the Liberal platform.

These considerations should make us keep in mind how utterly false is the prevailing picture of the reforming Johan Sverdrup, eagerly introducing the new political institution, *the party*, an institution hated and despised by Conservatives. It is one that has been common, even popular, among liberal writers. Still, it also adopts the Conservative point of view, because it accepts lock, stock barrel the conservative myth of their bitter animosity to "parties", their devotion to the "independence" of the mind, and "impartial" handling of public issues.

In addition to our emphasis on the similarity of the formation of Conservative

and Liberal parties, we should like to point out the absence of any relatively coherent time perspective. It is extremely seldom that one encounters a statement that bears upon the prospective functions of a party. In one of the few broad statements the point of view is expressed that parties are not an ordinary part of the political life:

We do not belong to those, who believe that the formation of such a national party organization is an indicator of politically sound conditions. Political associations should under normal conditions, when the state machinery ticks along in the constitutional ways, be limited to the election districts, and even there we do not think that local and other conditions in our country are of such a nature that they may play the same role as abroad. But the matter is entirely different when the constitution itself is at stake.⁶⁷

The temper of the fierce political battle, verging on recourse to unconstitutional means, was one in which the attention was fixed on the immediate present. The eyes of the antagonists followed closely the actions of the enemy, and hardly went beyond trying to guess what his next, devilish move would be. Occasionally, there was an admission of further purposes for the party organizations:

"Associations and discussion groups are, furthermore, in themselves strong instruments for self-government. Through them the general will in the communes will get its due expression; they will conquer the municipal boards, they will mould the folkways and mores and civilize the country side." — The newspaper urged the liberals to start.
"Discussion groups, Liberal Associations, Constitutional associations, or whatever one feels like, as long as they are intended to create agreement and spread light."⁶⁸

But by and large, the formation of the parties were discussed as a matter of fighting technique in an immediate conflict.

The transition from a political system without parties to one in which the parties were a natural element took less than 4 years. Most interesting is the change in the Conservative camp. Here the change also represented the discarding of presumably deepseated ideological convictions: the ideas that parties were to be avoided and that the representative should be "free". But in spite of this change, the Conservatives seemed to take to the formation of a party with energy, enthusiasm, and above all, *skill*. They remind one of a person who has always feared water like the plague, but, once he is in it, swims like a fish. The Liberal party, whose leaders were less ideologically opposed to parties, were behind, but jumped in shortly afterwards. More forceful than principles was the logic of the situation. Universally accepted ideas were quickly discarded once they did not fit strategic needs.

It may elicit surprise that the two parties were organized in the same way, that this way included a relatively high degree of formality and a high degree of openness of the party, and that this change was a rapid one. That a novelty is introduced so rapidly suggests that there are certain elements in the new which have been part of the culture in other areas of life. The late arrival and universal acceptance of the parties is paradoxical. Could it be that features making for comparative peace before 1870 also made for this special variety of party structure?

On this score it would be of interest to compare the Norwegian case with other societies with a different history of party growth. Unfortunately, lack of descriptions of party structure on the local level makes a comparison quite problematic, since close attention to statutes and similar minutiae is timeconsuming and difficult. Awaiting such studies, one can only speculate, but I would like to suggest some dimensions fruitful in such comparisons:

- (1) we may see quick or protracted party formation, in the sense that the formation of one party may take a longer or shorter time;
- (2) we may witness parallel development of local party organization in which case the different wings on the political spectrum are passing through essentially the same phase of formalization and systematization, or we may witness a highly uneven growth. In which case the right wing may refrain from entering into the formal organizational phase, due to the function of the central administration or its local agent as *deus ex machina* for the right wing elements;
- (3) we may also witness considerable differences in the way the rank-and-file are admitted to the local organization, thus crosscutting the elite-mass distinction of DUVERGER with the level of formalization, essentially leaving us with 4 main types rather than Duvergers' two. The existence of formal organizations with little or no provision for rank and file influence on candidate selection, and the somewhat diffuse parties which have a formal organization but let every friend in on the nomination issue, are the deviant cases in the typology of the DUVERGER theory.

These suggestions are not meant to overlook the broad and massive contribution to the theories about political parties from the Weber-Duverger school. But my work with the Norwegian party system, which presents the case of a quick party formation, of parallel development, ending in a system of formalized organization with provision for formal influence from non-members at open nomination meetings seem to indicate that a reworking of the typologies of party organization and the sequence of organizational development may be useful. It will require a systematic study of neglected areas of political organization in the formative period and free us of the opposition of the small clique of country squires and the large urban mass party with strict membership requirement as the poles. In those countries where democracy is now working relatively effectively this typology might be the least satisfactory in explaining both the character of party formation and the nature of party organization once the parties are brought into being.

NOTES

¹I use term "mass" party quite loosely, to indicate a party with some, though not necessarily all of the following characteristics: a certain minimum of formal organization, some membership arrangement or other institutionalization of commitment, and some forms of mobilization of votes on election day. For a critique of the assumption that these criteria form a syndrome, see my article "The Structure of Urban Parties in Norway During the First Period of Extended Suffrage 1884-1898" in E. Allardt and Y. Littunen (eds.), *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems*. Transactions of the Westermarck Society, Helsinki, 1964, particularly pp. 394-399.

Similar misgivings are expressed by Jean Blondel in his unpublished paper on the topic of party structure presented at the 2. Conference for Comparative Political Sociology at Cambridge, 1965, and the paper by Giovanni Sartori, on the same subject, also presented at that conference.

²Linked to his distinction between right-wing and left-wing parties is another more loosely indicated, but clearly visible dimension: the one between country-side and city. The importance of this latter one is nowhere, however, really worked into the analysis, and the main bulk of his argument is based on the left-right dimension, closely tied with the class dimension.

³Alf Kaartvedt, *Kampen mot parlamentarisme 1880-1884*. Den konservative politikken under vetostriden. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1956; particularly chapter VII.

⁴Kaartvedt seems also to rely on the information of essentially one newspaper, *Fedrelandet*, for data on the point of time of formation of the local "Constitutional" associations. See Kaartvedt, *op. cit.* p. 502. He mentions explicitly that he builds on a broader material than the material he uses as reference, his frequency of use of the *Fedrelandet* may consequently be looked at as a test of the adequacy of that source. It appears that of the 88 associations he mentions as formed in 1883, 74 are mentioned in *Fedrelandet*. His other, unrevealed sources consequently must be considered of limited marginal utility. The proportion of the associations Kaartvedt has uncovered which actually were reported formed in that single newspaper approach 90 %.

⁵*Nordre Bergenhus Amtstidende*, 17 July 1884.

⁶*Romsdalens Budstikke*, 27 Oct. 1883; *Agder*, 11 Jan. 1884; *Fædrelandsvennen*, 23 Nov. 1883.

⁷*Dagsposten*, 7 July 1883.

⁸Quoted from *Dagbladet*, 12 Jan. 1883.

⁹*Buskeruds Amtstidende*, 13 Dec. 1883.

¹⁰*Bergensposten*, 29 May 1883.

¹¹*Fædrelandet*, 24 Jan. 1883, 2 June 1883, and 1 March, 1883.

¹²*Dagsposten*, 20 Jan. 1883, and 10 Feb. 1883.

¹³*Dagsposten*, 10 March, 1883.

¹⁴*Haugesunds Budstikke*, 15 Oct. 1883; *Fædrelandsvennen*, 13 June 1883.

¹⁵*Hamar Stiftstidende*, March 1883.

¹⁶*Hamar Stiftstidende*, 20 Jan. 1883.

¹⁷*Fædrelandet*, 9 Oct. 1883, June 1883, and March 1883; *Jarlsberg og Larvik Amtstidende*, 14 Dec. 1882.

¹⁸*Tönsberg Blad*, 14 Feb. 1883.

¹⁹*Verdens Gang*, 19 June, 1883.

²⁰*Bergensposten*, 19 June 1883.

²¹*Dagsposten*, 10 Feb 1883; *Agder*, 16 Oct. 1883.

²²*Kongsberg Adresse*, 11 Jan. 1883.

²³*Morgenavisen*, 20 Feb. 1906.

²⁴*Bergensposten*, 19 June, 1883.

²⁵For a more detailed description of this practice, see Ulf Torgersen, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

²⁶*Hamar Stiftstidende*, 20 Jan. 1883.

²⁷*Jarlsberg og Larviks Amtstidende*, 14 Dec. 1883.

²⁸*Dagsposten*, 26 June, 1883; *Verdens Gang*, 19 June, 1883.

²⁹*Oplandenes Avis*, 9 June 1883.

³⁰Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, chapter VII.

³¹The defeat at the polls as the most important source of more effective political organization is indicated by the study of the British Conservative Party. See James Cornford: "The Adoption of Mass Organization by the British Conservative Party", in Allardt and Littunen, *op. cit.*

³²*Bergensposten*, 29 May 1883.

³³*Stavangeren*, 25 Aug. 1883.

³⁴*Verdens Gang*, No. 1, 1883, and 1 May 1883.

³⁵Kaartvedt, *op. cit.* p. 416.

³⁶According to the liberal paper *Verdens Gang*, 5 June 1883, and No. 75, 1883.

³⁷*Dagsposten*, 5 Jan. 1883, 7 July 1883, and 17 Aug. 1883.

³⁸*Dagbladet*, before 20 July 1883.

³⁹*Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 16 Sept. 1883.

⁴⁰*Søndre Bergenhus Folkeblad*, 21 Jan. 1883.

⁴¹*Romsdalsposten*, 6 Dec. 1883.

⁴²*Bergensposten*, 4 Sept. 1883; *Fjordenes Blad*, 13 Nov. 1883.

⁴³*Dagbladet*, end of Sept., before 3 Oct. 1883.

⁴⁴*Verdens Gang*, 15 Dec. 1883; Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

⁴⁵ Kaartvedt, *op. cit.* p. 416.

⁴⁶ Jacob S. Worm-Müller: "Etvordan Venstre ble til". *Venstre i Norge*, Oslo, Olaf Norlis forlag, 1933, pp. 9-41 and particularly p. 39.

⁴⁷ This fits completely with Kaartvedts assumption. See Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁴⁸ *Fædrelandsvennen*, 24 Aug. 1883. — See also *Agder*, 16 Oct. 1833 and 4 Jan. 1884. For a few other of local old Farmers Associations turning into Liberal associations or initiating them, see *Søndre Bergenhus Folkeblad*, 7 Jan. and 21 Jan. 1884. See also 11 Feb. 1884 for formation of Kvam Liberal Association.

⁴⁹ Some slight error may have crept in, since I have included in the list of Liberal associations Troms Liberal association (formed 11 8-1884), while it is possible that Conservative county associations formed after June 1884 have not been included in Kaartvedts list. See Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 586.

⁵⁰ *Verdens Gang*, 23 Aug. 1883.

⁵¹ See *Venstre i Norge*, p. 62.

⁵² Not, as J. Worm-Müller states, Akerhus Farmer Friends County Association. See Worm-Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵³ Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

⁵⁴ A more detailed analysis of this problem will be carried out later. It is, however, not likely that our findings, as they are presented here, will be appreciably affected or altered.

⁵⁵ Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

⁵⁶ Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 247; *Romsdals Budstikke*, 29 Dec. 1883.

⁵⁷ A word of caution concerning the interpretation of this table should be added. Some associations, while hearing the name of a city, may comprise adjacent areas and consequently the neighbouring rural communes. We have omitted these cases, except when the name of the adjacent communes have been mentioned specifically.

⁵⁸ I have dealt with this problem at some length in a short monograph on Norwegian national party conferences and the different principles that have governed their composition, entitled "Landsmötet i norsk partistruktur. 1884-1940" (Institute for Social Research, 1966). A shorter version of the thesis may be found in "Den demokratiske gullalderen — når var den?" (Institute for Social Research, 1966, mimeo).

⁵⁹ One may notice that there was one exception to this rule: the two organizations in the capital got started relatively late, both in 1884.

⁶⁰ The accuracy of the figures is probably quite satisfactory. It vary rarely happens that the newspapers of the other party really question the reliability of information about party membership figures. The *interpretation* of the figures will be discussed a little later in this article.

⁶¹ Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

⁶² This practice has continued in the Liberal party. I have looked through all important newspaper reports on the national Liberal conventions, but I have not come across a *single* instance when the national membership figure has been reported before 1940.

⁶³ Kaartvedt, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁶⁴ The imbalances within the parties with respect to membership figures, voting strength and parliamentary strength for the different parties with respect to countryside/city are treated in my paper "Landsmötet i norsk partistruktur" (The national conference in the party structure), Institute for Social Research, Oslo 1966.

⁶⁵ Little information is given about this in the classic work on the great Liberal leader Johan Sverdrup, written by Halvdan Koht. The establishment of a Liberal party is described only briefly in Halvdan Koht, *Johan Sverdrup*, III, Aschehoug, 1925, pp. 92-93.

⁶⁶ *Dagbladet*, 27 Aug. 1883, and 29 Aug. 1883.

⁶⁷ *Søndre Bergenhus Folkeblad*, 28 Jan. 1884. The statement is quoted from *Romsdalens Budstikke*.

⁶⁸ *Romsdalsposten*, 5 July 1883.