

Demassified Mass Parties or Overloaded Cadre Parties? The Impact of Parties on Electoral Outcome in Finland*

Jan Sundberg, University of Helsinki

This article examines the frequently cited hypothesis of the changes in modern party organizations towards the catch-all model, and of the attempt of political parties to counter threats of electoral failure by intensifying membership support. The results indicate that in Finland former mass parties have been demassified and cadre parties have been overloaded. However, there are differences in party alignments and in the internal organizational structure of the parties that make a strict application of the catch-all concept problematic. The findings also give evidence of a threat of declining electoral success that has implications for the membership support in the parties in very special situations. The threat from other parties seems to have only little or no effect on the membership figures. But when this threat is combined with a steady erosion in the traditional social bases of the parties, then the party response can be strong for the purpose of widening the electoral market by personal influence, as was the case with the rural Center party in Finland.

Introduction

Electoral studies in general are focused on the question of what variables determine the voters' choice. These determinants can be grouped into socio-economic, cultural, and territorial factors. However, the importance of each set of variables varies from country to country. According to Richard Rose, voting behavior in the Scandinavian countries is mainly explained by socio-economic variables, such as occupation. In many other West European countries, especially in the south, cultural factors, such as religion, are more important. To a lesser extent territorial factors also affect voters (Rose 1974, 16-20). Very often, however, there is overlapping in the sense that many variables coincide in affecting voters. Also, the concept of territory is difficult to delineate because it usually covers both socio-economic and cultural factors.

The variables alluded to above have a high explanatory effect in static multi-party systems, where the basic cleavage structures are reflected in the party systems. This at least has been the case where cleavages in question were in place

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already at the time when universal suffrage was introduced (Lipset & Rokkan 1967, 50-56). In most countries today, however, cleavage structures clearly differ from those of the past, though the old party systems persist.

The latest electoral studies show new trends in voting behavior. The common feature is that electoral volatility has increased. This new trend is emphasized in Mogens Pedersen's studies of voting behavior. Pedersen's main argument is that electoral volatility is not only caused by changes in the factors discussed above; it is also connected with changes in the number of parties and in the changing campaign styles of the parties (Pedersen 1983, 29-65, Pedersen 1979, 1-24). He also identifies other factors related to the electoral system, but the main determinants affecting the voters' choice can be found among those that have been mentioned.

And yet the explanation of electoral behavior remains a difficult and complex affair, even though party choice can be a most simple matter for the voter himself. This contradiction is at least to some degree connected to the lack of information on what significance the voters attach to parliamentary elections. To be sure, elections have a much more obvious impact on the competing parties than on the individual members of the electorate. The political man can somehow live without universal suffrage; multiparty systems and parliamentary democracies cannot.

Electoral Behavior and the Parties

This paper will not cover electoral behavior in all its complexity. The argumentation will rather emphasize the importance of parties for the electoral outcome. This of course presupposes the existence of free competition among parties in the electoral arena. This presupposition is reflected in Giovanni Sartori's definition of political parties: 'A party is any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office' (Sartori 1976, 64). According to comparative measures made by Kenneth Janda, the success of parties in this competitive process depends to a major extent on the activity of parties and variations in party organizations. He concludes that almost 30 per cent of the variance in electoral success may be attributed to party complexity, centralization, and involvement (Janda 1983, 319-330).

In trying to reach the potential voters the parties have many possibilities. This paper will examine the much discussed relationship between party members and their impact on electoral success. As Joseph Schumpeter has emphasized: 'A party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power' (Schumpeter 1957, 283). In this statement there is an underlying assumption that party members are politically active and therefore have an important function in the electoral party competition. Furthermore, we can assume that party members are generally more active than voters. But we must also take into consideration that the impact of party membership varies

within parties and between parties.

Maurice Duverger has stressed the concept of membership in different party types. He makes the important distinction between mass parties and cadre parties. The main difference between these two types can be found in the internal party structure. For the mass parties, recruitment of members is one of the most fundamental activities, both for political and economic reasons. According to Duverger, an essential point for the mass parties is to educate the working class to be prepared for taking over the government and the administration of the country. Duverger states that without members 'the party would be like a teacher without pupils' (Duverger 1978, 63). Furthermore, the party is financially dependent on the subscriptions paid by its members.

The conception of membership is different for the cadre parties. Duverger points out that party members are less important in these types of parties. The party activity generally concentrates on preparing for elections. While in the mass parties this activity is achieved by a well organized general membership, in the cadre parties it is achieved by:

Influential persons, in the first place, whose name and prestige, or connections can provide a backing for the candidate and secure him votes; experts, in the second place, who know how to handle the electors and how to organize a campaign; last of all financiers, who bring the sinews of war (Duverger 1978, 64).

According to this argument cadre parties have no real members. Hence the cadre parties have a much weaker organization than the mass parties. Cadre parties are decentralized and weakly knit whereas the organization of mass parties is centralized and hierarchial.

The party types discussed here are the pure forms, but Duverger also underlines that mixed forms exist which make the distinctions less clear. However, he does not find any reason for creating a new concept of party type. More recently Otto Kirchheimer has argued, in a frequently quoted article, that the structural changes in the post-war European societies have caused a process of uniformity among western party alignments tending toward the catch-all type. This change implies above all for the well organized mass parties a 'Downgrading of the role of the individual party member' (Kirchheimer 1966, 190). In a recent study by Steven Wolinetz there is some evidence that supports this statement regarding changes in party alignments. However, according to Wolinetz the catch-all scenario has its greatest validity for changes in party style, strategy, and functions (Wolinetz 1979, 4-26).

On the basis of the discussion above we can now formulate the following hypothesis:

1. *The difference between mass and cadre parties exists in terms of party alignments, but the internal organization of parties has changed toward the catch-all model.*

Following the catch-all assumptions to the effect that party organizations have become more uniform we can hypothesize that findings from studies of mass parties are valid for cadre parties as well. Such speculation is made necessary by the fact that there is much less available research on cadre parties than on mass parties. One crucial finding of studies on mass parties is the positive relationship between party membership and other forms of political participation. Palle Svensson has studied this in his research on the Danish Social Democratic party during the period 1924-1939. He has also suggested the possibility that a mass party could regulate its membership support by securing more members when voting support is declining or threatened (Svensson 1974, 127-144). Stefano Bartolini has investigated this possibility in comparative research, but the result was not impressive (Bartolini 1983, 196-198). The idea pursued by Svensson may, however, be quite useful. His hypothesis could tentatively be extended to cover not only electoral outcomes, but also preceding changes in the social bases of the parties. The following hypothesis can now be formulated:

2. *Parties attempt to extend and intensify their membership support as a response to threats caused by changes in their social bases or by declining electoral success.*

This hypothesis will be the main theme of the empirical part of this paper. But before proceeding with our examination, we will present the data.

The Data

When discussing the results of the analysis it is important to note that the data only cover parties in the Finnish political system. The party system in Finland is, however, not exceptional. According to Giovanni Sartori, the party systems in Finland as well as in Weimar Germany, Italy, the French Fourth and Fifth Republics, Chile up to 1973, and the Spanish Republic of 1931-1936 represented a polarized pluralism with a high degree of fragmentation (Sartori 1976, 131-173). This party fragmentation can easily be exemplified in Finland where the voters are represented by 8 to 10 parties in Parliament at the moment (the number varies depending on how parties are defined).

Not all the parties represented in parliament are, however, included in this examination. Three of the four biggest parties have been chosen. The Communist party is excluded in part because of the deep conflict within the party, which makes data collection for purposes of academic research difficult. The exclusion can also be defended by the fact that communist parties do not constitute a pure form of mass parties. The socialist parties are instead represented by the Social Democratic party, while the non-socialist parties are represented by the Center party (the former Agrarian Union) and the conservative National Coalition party. All of these three parties are old and established. The Social

Democratic party was founded in 1899, the National Coalition party's predecessor in the late nineteenth century, and the Agrarian Union (from now on the Center party) in 1906, the year when universal suffrage was introduced into the constitution.

All the available data have been collected from party archives. The access to historical data is without doubt best in the Social Democratic party, but the closer we come to present times, the better becomes the access to valid data from the non-socialist parties. However, it is quite complicated to compare data among the parties. Data systematically found in one party are not necessarily available in another party's documents. In short, the same problems of comparability have occurred in this study as in that made by Stefano Bartolini, except for the first on his list of problems:

1. the problem of collective versus individual membership; 2. the problem of whether or not to include women's party units, youth organizations, mutualities, co-operatives and other ancillary organizations linked to the parties; and 3. the problem involved in the changes that have occurred in the accountancy methods of the parties (Bartolini 1983, 1977-178).

As opposed to some other Social Democratic parties, all members of the Social Democratic party in Finland are individual members. But whether to include women's party units and youth organizations is problematic, especially because of overlapping membership. As a rule of thumb all organizations represented in party congresses were included. A stricter procedure would in this case have been impossible. Also, the accountancy methods vary among the parties, as well as within parties during longer time periods, adding to the comparability problem.

Cleavages in Party Alignments

A common feature of fragmented and polarized party systems is that cleavage structures are organized and politicized. According to Giovanni Sartori's argumentations, each ideological faction is inversely related to the number of parties in a system of polarized pluralism. Therefore, if there are enough parties to accommodate the ideologies, then the factional divisions will tend to coincide with the party divisions (Sartori 1976, 102-103). This statement can easily be applied to Finland, where the number of parties is high and the electoral thresholds are low for new parties entering the electoral arena.

The three parties discussed explicitly here traditionally represent the working class (SDP), the farmers (Center Party), and the upper-class (National Coalition). This party division reflects the major cleavages in Finnish society: the cleavage between the classes and the cleavage between rural and urban areas. This cleavage structure is also displayed in the composition of cabinets. According to Sartori's notion of polarized pluralism, governing is concentrated on the political center, whereas the opposition is bifurcated (Sartori 1976,

132-145). After the Second World War, most cabinets in Finland have been composed of parties from the center (mostly the Center party) in coalition with the Social Democratic party. The opposition has in general been represented by the Communist party on the left and the National Coalition on the right. In general, the formation of cabinets has been complicated and governance unstable, which is illustrated by the fact that the country has been governed by approximately forty different cabinets since the Second World War.

The cleavage structure, party system, and government instability all indicate that there are sharp divisions in party alignments. On the other hand, there are also tendencies in the reverse direction. Since the late 1960s, the notion of consensus has been a fairly common one for government politics in Finland. The coalition parties have found a new neutral governmental ideology in welfare policy (Heiskanen 1977, 44-77). In addition, it is not only the coalition parties that have embraced the welfare policy program. The same holds for most other parties. Another neutral issue is the official foreign policy. All parties declare officially, both in programs and policy making, loyalty to the established foreign policy program, and all parties with influence want to improve the Finnish-Soviet relations within the framework of the friendship and co-operation treaty.

Before drawing any conclusions about differences in the party alignments of cadre and mass parties, we must examine the significance of changes in conflict patterns. As Gunnar Sjöblom puts it, a conflict pattern can be changed when a party decides to politicize a particular issue. Sjöblom explains this phenomenon by dividing the conflict patterns into manifest and latent cleavages. The manifest cleavages are politicized by their current actuality, whereas the latent cleavages have lost their salience and can therefore be regarded as depoliticized, at least for a limited time period. However, Sjöblom points out that issues which were earlier matters of conflict between parties, but later depoliticized, can continue to play a role in voters 'party images' and also serve as general characteristics of the various parties (Sjöblom 1968, 180-182).

The notion of consensus with regard to welfare policy can quite easily be applied to the model of changing conflict patterns. This is possible since the Social Democratic party politicized the issue of social security and social welfare already in its first party programs. During the whole century up to the late 1960s, this question has been a main source of conflict with other parties. Notwithstanding the fact that the welfare policy issue has been depoliticized, the Social Democrats have not lost their traditional image, just as the conservative national Coalition is stuck with the image of reluctance to social reforms.

The question of foreign policy, on the other hand, is more complicated. Until the beginning of the 1960s, both the Social Democratic party and the National Coalition were restrictive and even critical of the official friendship policy towards the Soviet Union. This policy was led and developed by the Center party

with the support of the Communist party. The National Coalition may still have an anti-Soviet image in parliament. But the Conservative party leaders have actively strived to change that image since the early 1960s, and the voters seem to have responded positively. As a result of this new policy, the party's youth association is now the only conservative organization in western Europe which has established official contacts with the Soviet Communist party.

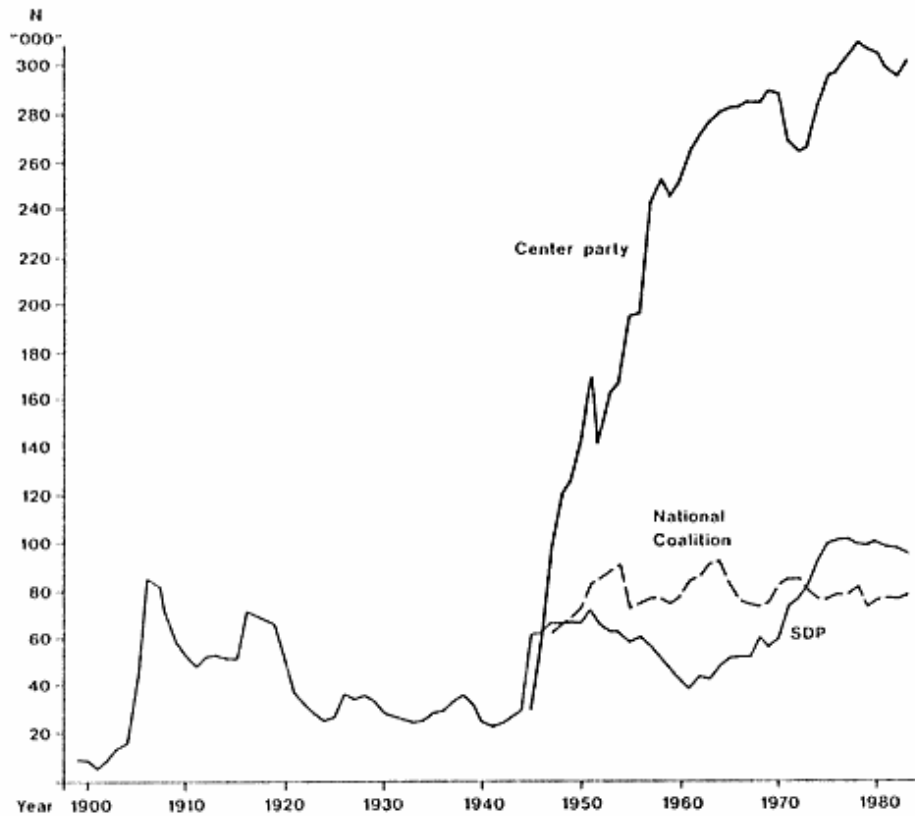
All in all, however, a polarized party system that is strongly affected by the cleavage structure continues to prevail, even though the recent political integration has moderated party differentiation. The consensus may only be temporary or concerning specific and delicate policy issues. On the other hand, it is important to emphasize the existence of visible and invisible politics, i.e., the difference between public and private politics. According to Sartori's argumentation, this divergence grows greater the more a polity 'abandons itself to out-bidding, irresponsible opposition, and to ideological setting' (Sartori 1976, 143). The consensus issue can also be interpreted from this point of view, which seems especially valid in more detailed questions and in the field of foreign policy just below the presidential level.

Contagion from the Right or from the Left

According to the arguments of Maurice Duverger, the concept of membership applicable to mass parties has been adopted by other parties. The well organized mass parties have served as a model for the cadre parties, indicating that there has been contagion from the left (Duverger 1978, 62-132). But according to Leon Epstein mass membership parties are not really needed in a modern society. The modern parties of today do not have to fulfill the functions of providing education, political information, and social events, and what is more, membership fees account for only a minor part of the parties total expenditures. In modern welfare states, education and political information are attended more effectively by the all encompassing educational system, social activities are sponsored by commercial interests, and the parties get financial aid from the taxpayers, companies, and other external sources (Epstein 1967, 257ff.).

If in retrospect we look at studies that cover comparable data on membership development, there is at least slight evidence for the arguments put forward by Epstein (Bartolini 1983, 182-191, Berglund & Pesonen 1981, 116-119). But the available data are limited to the examination of mass parties, so we have no valid information on the cadre parties that can answer the question regarding contagion from the left. To pursue this question the following figures compare the three parties we are discussing.

Fig. 1. Membership Figures of the Social Democratic party, Center party, and National Coalition

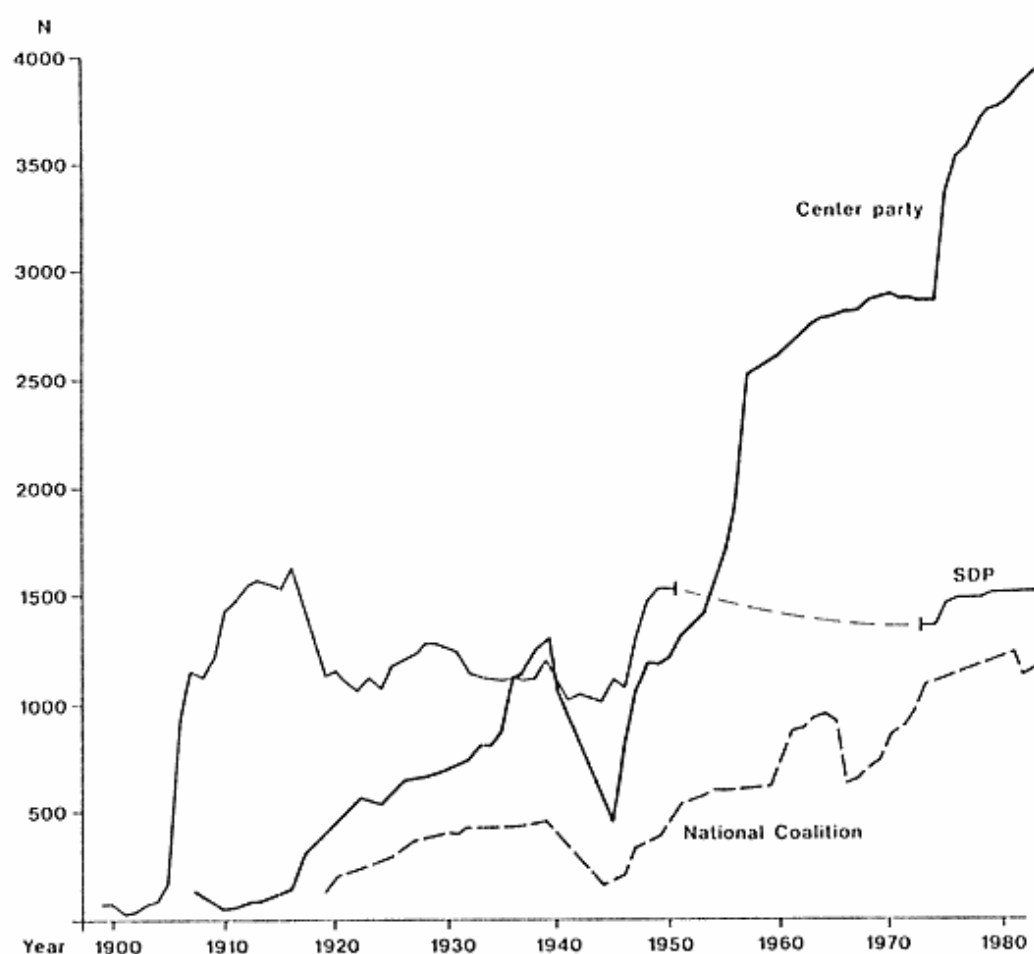


Source: Available data gathered from the respective party archives.

Membership data from the pre-war period are available only for the Social Democratic party. No valid and continuous data can be presented for the non-socialist parties from that period. The mapping of membership figures begins in 1899, the same year the Social Democratic party was founded. Valid information for the Center party is available from 1945 and for the National Coalition from 1947. In the pre-war period it was only the Social Democratic party that had a strong organization on a mass basis. This does not, however, imply that the other parties were totally unorganized. As indicated by Fig. 2, a local organized network existed, but the lack of membership data indicates that the local associations were weakly knit. In fact, these pre-world war organizations correspond closely to Duverger's notion of cadre and mass parties. The non-socialist parties were predominantly organized and activated to prepare for elections, whereas the Social Democratic party had many more functions to perform within the organizational network. Organizational activity grew rapidly before the breakthrough of universal suffrage in 1906 and the civil war of 1918, or rather class war according to the Social Democratic conception of that time.

In sum, there is no evidence to indicate a contagious effect from the left or

Fig. 2. The Local Association Figures of the Social Democratic Party, Center Party, and National Coalition

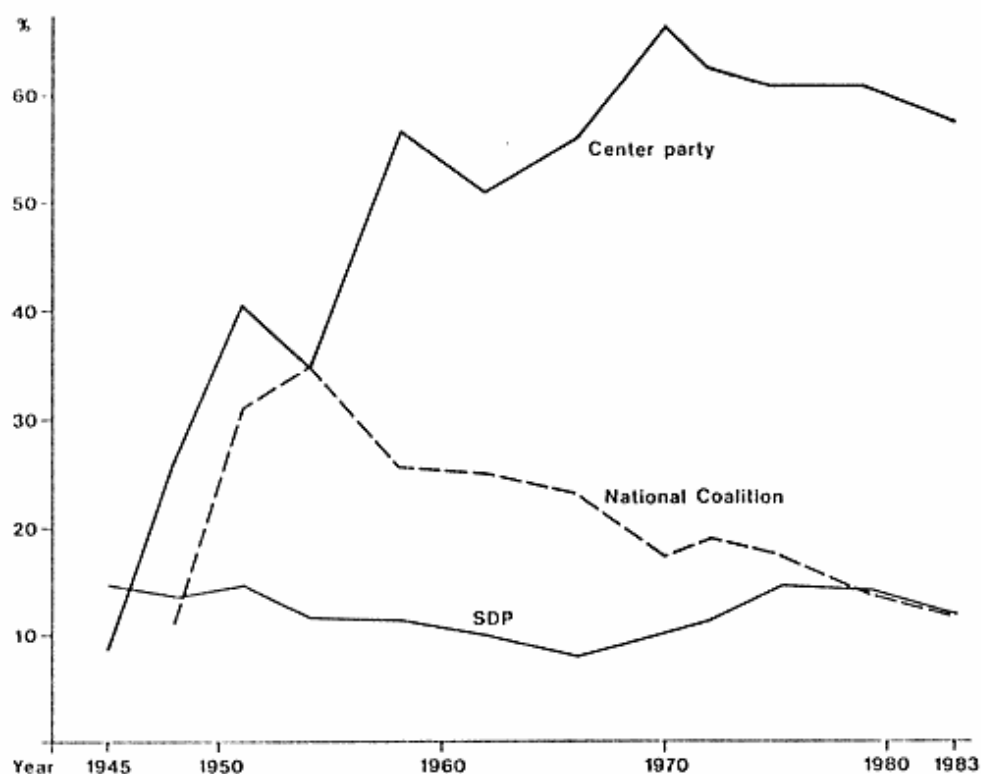


Source: Punnonen 1978, Hölttä 1982, and available party data.

from the right. But the findings discussed cover only the pre-world war period. Can the same conclusions be drawn for the post world war period as well? There is no doubt that the answer is no, but a more complete answer requires a comprehensive analysis. Let us therefore start with a discussion of differences in organizational build-up, and then the disparate meanings of membership in local party associations.

The Second World War was an adversity for most parties and their local associations, but for the Center party the war was close to a catastrophe. The constituency of east Viborg, which was the most powerful organizational stronghold of the Center party, was lost to the Russians, and the evacuated party supporters were scattered all over the country. Thus, the Center party had to be reorganized to reach all the voters, and moreover, the party had to maximize its votes in order to stay in office. The most comprehensive organizational enlargement of the Center party started in the early Fifties as a leading component in the presidential campaign to get Urho Kekkonen elected (Virkkunen 1976, 62-71). The

Fig. 3. Membership of the Social Democratic Party, Center Party, and National Coalition as a Percentage of Their Votes



Source: Party data and Official Statistics of Finland XXIX A.

organizational extension work proved effective; Kekkonen won the election in 1956 and all subsequent presidential elections too until he retired in 1981.

This post-war contagion from the left also influenced the conservative National Coalition, as the party was reorganized in 1950. Local women and youth associations received status equal to that of the local party organizations. Each of these associations now had an equal right to send representatives to party congresses. This criterion had also been applied in the definition of membership for the other parties. But the National Coalition was first to grant full membership to these associated organizations. In the case of the Center party, a similar reform did not take place until 1975, and in the Social Democratic party the individual congress participants do not represent their local membership associations but rather all members within a specific geographical area. This criterion puts somewhat greater demands on the registered Social Democratic party members than on members of the other parties (Fig. 3).

The organizational reform in the National Coalition party resulted in a statistical fallacy in that multiple membership registration became a common occurrence. It was not until 1973 that this fallacy was removed at least partly, thanks to the computerization of the membership registers. In general the non-socialist

membership registers lag behind the factual basis, whereas the Social Democratic registers since 1974 are more accurate (year of computerization). During the period from the early 1950s to 1973 the lack of statistical data in the Social Democratic party is striking, especially concerning local associations and their members. Before as well as after this period such data are most carefully documented. Why this inconsistency? The answer is that within the period described the party suffered two organizational splits. The first of these was the exit of the communists, which was strongest during the socialist boom directly after the Second World War. Later, in the Fifties, the criterion of a new Social Democratic party represented an even more serious split. It was not until the early Seventies that the party was reunited. During the years of internal division, membership and local association figures were concealed from the public for tactical reasons.

After all these changes, the organizational structures of the parties discussed here are more similar than before. This is indicated by the fact that there are only small differences in the average membership of the local associations of each party. In 1983 the average number for the Social Democratic party was 64, while the National Coalition scored 69, and the Center party 77. This suggests that the organizational build-up in the cadre parties now is comparable to that of the mass party organizations.

If we summarize the findings concerning absolute membership and associational development with membership as a percentage of electoral outcome, it seems quite obvious that the impressive non-socialist organizational build-up in the beginning of the period did not have immediate effects on the electorate. But the work was not in vain, even though the effects on the electoral outcome were delayed. This pattern was especially evident for the National Coalition, which enjoyed rising electoral support after a period of intensive organizational build-up. The pattern corresponds with the experience of the Social Democrats after entering the electoral arena in 1907.

For the Center party, however, things have developed quite differently. Organizational growth has continued and members now represent 58 per cent of the party's electoral support. No other party can show similar figures. The Swedish People's party comes closest with 40 per cent (Sundberg 1985, 166-169). It seems that the Center party has developed in a direction quite in the reverse of that of the competing parties. But an attentive reader may immediately ask if the notion of membership in the Center party is equivalent to that of the other parties.

The Different Membership Concept

Maurice Duverger made an important point when he emphasized the difference in membership participation among three party types. The social links of participation are interpreted by applying the Ferdinand Tönnies classification of

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft to parties. In the terms of Duverger the social links can be grouped into the following three types:

For some members, governed by tradition, class necessity, family, local or professional habits, the party is a Community. For others, who are attracted by possible material advantages, by the desire for political action, by a moral or idealistic impulse, the party is an Association. For still others, who are driven by enthusiasm, passion, or the desire for communion the party is an Order: this is often the case for young or the intellectual (Duverger 1978, 127-128).

A party is considered a Community when the Gemeinschaft link predominates and an Association when the Gesellschaft link is predominant. The Order type, on the other hand, is more descriptive of totalitarian parties. As Duverger correctly points out, the types are not distinct, since the modes of participation overlap. None the less, in the case of Finland, the concept of Order corresponds only to the Communist party (Allardt 1970, 45-57). We can therefore exclude the notion of Order from the present analysis and concentrate on the concepts of Community and Association.

According to Duverger, socialist parties correspond to the Community type since they, at least traditionally, are typical class parties. It is, however, apparent that in Finland the agrarian Center party comes even closer to the Community type. I will argue that this is the only way to really understand the large membership figures. The members are often farmers and people living in rural areas in the periphery. By their work as cultivators and landowners, their class position is well maintained. Moreover, life in remote rural areas is more traditional and the pressure toward uniformity is higher than in urban areas. These party members are in Duverger's words born into the Community or belong to it automatically without consideration (Duverger 1978, 124-132).

In order to support my argument with more empirical evidence, I have compared the membership figures of 1983 given by the parties themselves with the figures from a Gallup poll of 1984 (Table 1).

Table 1. Party Membership as a Percentage of Votes: Recorded Party Data from 1983 (Year of Election), Compared to a Gallup Poll from 1984

	1983 Party data %	1984 Gallup poll %
Center party	58	23
National Coalition	12	15
Social Democratic party	12	15

The Gallup sample covers 883 valid replies on this issue, of which 186 have stated their vote for the National Coalition, 150 for the Center party, and 239 for the Social Democratic party.

Even though the Gallup sample is small, it is striking how the party data of the National Coalition and the Social Democratic party correspond with the Gallup poll. It can therefore be concluded that the recorded party data from these two

parties are valid. But what about the membership data from the Center party? First, it must be emphasized that the recorded membership data are as well kept in the Center party as in the other non-socialist parties. The difference, however, is that Center party members do not always regard themselves as members or even do not know about their membership in the local association. This difference hinges crucially on Duverger's notion of Community. In Finland it is often the case that a rural village often almost totally supports the agrarian Center party, or alternatively not at all. The difference between a supporter and a party member is difficult to determine; usually when one family member is engaged in the local party association, the rest of the family is also involved as more or less active members.

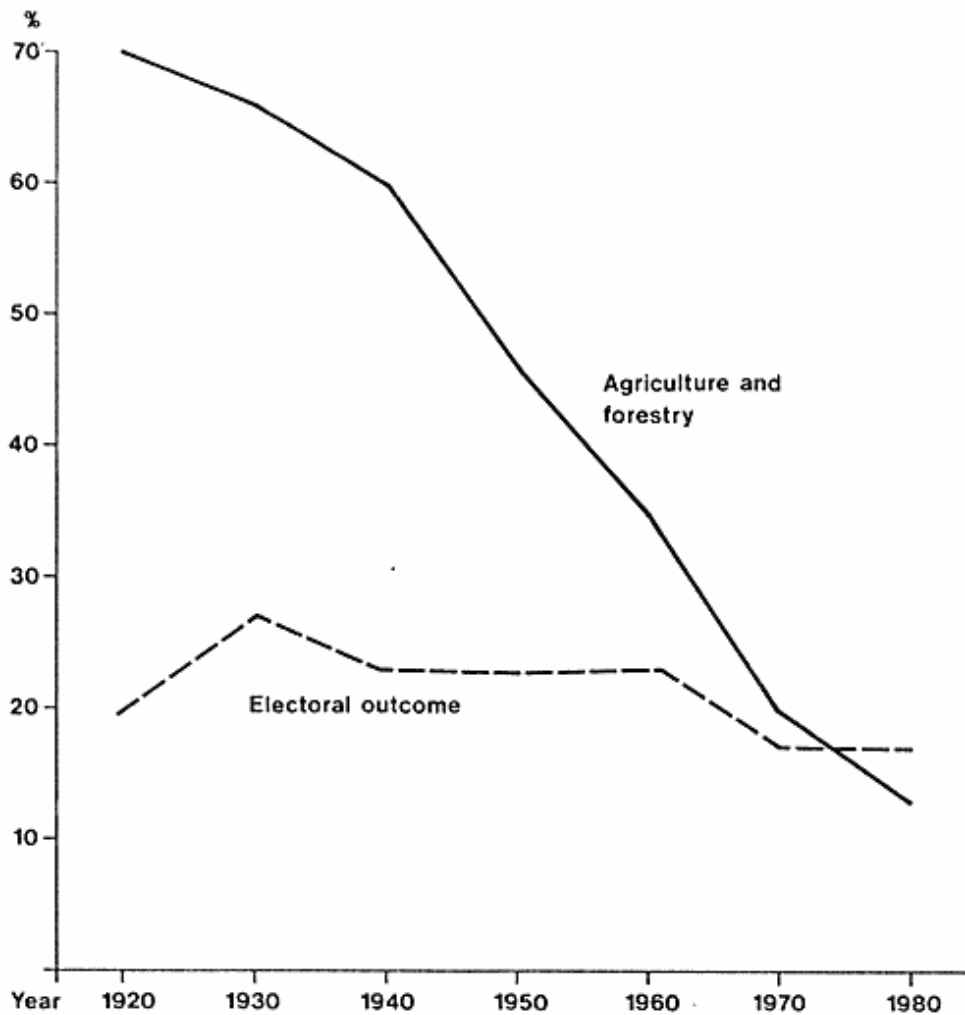
Both the conservative National Coalition and the socialist Social Democratic party can be seen as representing the Association type more than the Community type. This does not necessarily imply that the Community type is totally without relevance in explaining the links of participation, especially if we look at the local level. But in the main, these two parties try to attract voters by offering material advantages in the predominantly non-personal urban areas. These advantages need not be class advantages, since traditional class politics has lost much of its actuality in the prevailing welfare society.

Variations in Membership Support

The variations in membership support as shown in Fig. 1 can only to a limited extent be related to the threat of declining electoral success. This is the unambiguous conclusion if we confine ourselves to examining only official electoral statistics. However, according to my argumentation the idea is good, but the method must be improved. Then what is the point of confusion? A simple answer would be that the figures of electoral outcomes which are related to membership data constitute both a dependent and an independent variable. In our example occupation is the variable with the highest explanatory value in determining electoral outcome. All changes in the occupational structure therefore affect the ways people decide to vote. The party vote is, in this respect, a dependent variable. But in the example above it serves as an independent variable, which consequently reduces its informative value.

Fig. 4 illustrates the threat of future declining electoral success for the Center party. However, if we study the electoral outcomes approximately every tenth year from the election of 1919 onwards, evidence can hardly be found to indicate any threat of electoral loss. In fact, the elections have proved to be occasions for the voters to repeatedly demonstrate their loyalty to the party. Therefore electoral stability has been very high and volatile voters relatively few. But the figures give a false sense of safety if we do not consider the effects of the change in the sector of agriculture.

Fig. 4. Percentage of Total Votes Cast for the Center Party Compared to the Economically Active Population in Agriculture and Forestry



Source: Population by industry in 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1980, and 1980. Year of election 1919, 1930, 1939, 1951, 1962, 1970, and 1979. Central Statistical Office of Finland.

In 1919 the gap between the percentage of votes for the Center party and the percentage of the population working in the agricultural sector was as high as 50 per cent. Not all of this population was represented by independent landowners and the size of the farms varied from very small holdings to big land estates. Since then, the gap has narrowed continuously and very rapidly after the Second World War. But meanwhile the part of the population working in the agricultural sector has become more homogenous. As shown in Fig. 4, in the 1970s the development led to the point where the line indicating electoral support for the Center party crossed and exceeded the line indicating the proportion of the population in the agricultural sector. What causal inferences can be drawn from this development?

First of all, in the pre-war period the party had an almost limitless market of

Table 2. Party Voting and Changing Occupational Structure

		SDP	Center Party	National Coalition		SDP	Center Party	National Coalition
Managers, owners of enterprises, higher white collar employees	1948	3	1	22	Lower white collar em- ployees	7	2	26
	1958	3	1	29		8	3	29
	1966	3	4	35		16	6	33
	1974	4	4	24		23	8	40
	1984	13	19	44		26	16	26
Workers	1948	76	16	25	Farmers	14	81	27
	1958	84	11	23		5	86	19
	1966	74	18	20		7	72	12
	1974	69	23	27		4	65	9
	1984	56	29	19		3	34	9

Source: Reports from the Finnish Gallup and computer runs made at the Department of Political Science University of Helsinki.

potential voters in the agrarian dominated society. Then there was no need for a strong party organization, since the socio-economic structure and the predominantly agrarian culture were in favor of the party. In addition, no other competing party in the non-socialist block constituted a real threat. The weak party organizations were not even prepared to compete in order to restore national unity after the civil war in 1918.

Secondly, in the period after the Second World War, the political situation changed radically. The most influential faction in the Center party not only had strong intentions to stay in government, but considered it a national duty for the party to do so. These extended aspirations for governing and policy making were put forward even though the traditional social bases of voter recruiting were rapidly declining. The party responded with a strong organizational build-up, as shown in the figures presented above. Moreover, this build-up proved to have impressive effects on the electoral outcome. Totally new groups of voters were included in the multitude of party loyalists. The process can only be understood against the background of a coming electoral threat. In that respect the agrarians behaved similarly to the Swedish-Finns when their ethnicity and political influence were threatened by the Finns. The stronger the threat the more important the ethnic organizations and the stronger the loyalty to them (Sundberg 1985, Sundberg 1984).

In the following table (Table 2) Gallup poll results from 1948 and onwards have been used to illustrate changes in the social bases of the voters.

Even though it is quite apparent that the occupational classifications to some degree overlap, the table fulfills its functions. To be on the safe side, however, it is better to talk about trends than about exact percentage figures. Nevertheless, we can conclude that the rapid decline in the agricultural sector has been compensated with votes from the working class, and to a lesser extent from the lower and higher white collar workers. Conversely, the Social Democratic party has

lost support in the working class and competes strongly with the conservative National Coalition for votes from the lower white collar workers. The National Coalition has also lost support from the farmers, but this loss has been compensated by an expanding success among the higher and lower white collar workers.

In sum we can conclude that the threat of a coming electoral decline according to our hypothesis can only be applied to the Center party. But does this imply that the National Coalition and the Social Democratic party were not exposed to this threat? If we look at post-world war development, the National Coalition has experienced a steady gain in electoral success, and in the elections of 1983 the party won 22 per cent of the total votes cast. The development of electoral success has been less smooth for the Social Democratic party, a fact that to a major extent must be attributed to the organizational splits in the party. Nevertheless, with an electoral outcome of 27 per cent in the election of 1983, the party is the biggest in the electoral arena.

The main determinant of a threat occurring or not is connected both to the electoral market and to competing parties. As we have seen, the threat to the Center party grew in proportion to the shrinkage in the number of traditional supporters in the electoral market. The threat was increased by the introduction of a successfully competing smallholder party. But the declining sector of agriculture and forestry did not represent a catastrophe for the conservatives or the socialists. On the contrary, their market was expanding with the rapid decline of the primary sector, since the decline made room for a corresponding growth of the secondary and tertiary sectors. The organizational growth in these parties obviously is connected with the urbanization process and to the increasing party competition for these 'new' votes. In short, the parties and their organizations followed the wave of migration and moved into the towns, which they already controlled. To illustrate this in numbers: in 1945 the Social Democrats got 65 per cent of their votes from rural areas, whereas the figures for the competing Communists were 66 and for the National Coalition 52. In 1970 the corresponding figures were 33, 44, and 32 per cent respectively.

But how about the Center party? In 1945 as much as 82 per cent of its votes came from the rural areas, and in 1970 the figure was 84 per cent. From this we can conclude that the Center party has been and still is a rural party. To put it in another way, when other parties moved into the towns the Center party utilized the empty space by recruiting new members and supporters not only from farmers but from all categories of employees and employers that stayed behind in the countryside. After this change the Center party has represented the rural population in general rather than mainly the cultivating farmers. By this transformation the Center party has grown to become the biggest party in the rural areas. However, due to the many municipal amalgamations during 1970s, it is becoming more complicated to distinguish between rural and urban areas. Through these amalgamations the Center party has managed to use its com-

prehensive rural support to strengthen its local representation in the urban districts.

Concluding Discussion

This study indicates that the pure forms of mass and cadre parties do not exist any more in Finland. However, mass and cadre parties are still useful concepts in studies concerning the early development of present party types. In this study the comparison of parties is restricted to figures of membership and the network of local associations. The findings make it apparent that the former mass parties have been exposed to a demassified contagion from the right, whereas the former cadre parties have been overloaded by a contagion from the left. The outcome is not, however, a pure and distinct catch-all party type as defined by Otto Kirchheimer. There still are differences in the ideological baggage and in internal organizational structure of the parties.

The polarized party system in Finland gives ample space for deep conflicts in party alignments. Most commonly this space has been utilized by the parties in order to win advantages over their adversaries. But there also are tendencies towards conformity and consensus among the competing parties. Consensus is not general, however; it is, rather, restricted to specific issues and may also be temporal. To be sure, there is a chance that the party system really is undergoing a more fundamental transition. However, this is only an assumption that can neither be confirmed nor rejected on the basis of the evidence presented here.

The findings concerning the impact of parties on electoral outcome is restricted to the connection between organizational strength, i.e., growing membership support, and electoral success. Other studies have yielded promising results when the total impact of parties is measured in terms of electoral outcome. However, the correlation between regulations in membership support and electoral success has never proved impressive. In the case of Finland the results indicate similar conclusions. To be more accurate, the early build-up of the Social Democratic party had a great impact on its electoral success when democracy was young in Finland, but for the period after the Second World War no such evidence is clearly visible. This is also partially true for the conservative National Coalition, except for a short build-up period directly after the war.

These two parties have certainly been threatened by other competing parties. But their electoral market, i.e., the social bases of the electorate, has meanwhile expanded. Thus, the membership figures have not increased in pace with the number of votes, since the expanding electoral market can be influenced by other and more effective methods than increasing the membership in urban areas. The Center party, on the other hand, was exposed to a threat not only from other parties but from a shrinking electoral market as well. Instead of yielding during the rapid decrease of agriculture and forestry, the party strived to keep its territorial strength by embracing voters from all social classes. The Center party was

transformed from a typical agrarian party to a party for all those rural residents who felt disregarded in the tremendous urbanization that took place during the post world war period. However, this transformation would not have been possible to achieve without a comprehensive organizational build-up and a considerable membership increase. In this situation, under the impending threat of a coming electoral failure, the Center party was forced to activate and expand the network of local party associations to cover all responsive villages. This strategy proved to be the most effective method to influence the remaining voters in the rural areas, where the pressure towards uniformity and solidarity is higher than in urban regions.

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