The Evolution of Party Organizations in Europe:
The Three Faces of Party Organization

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At least since the beginning of the 1980s, much of the writing on the strategies, tactics, and policies of parties has explicitly cautioned against the treatment of party as a "unitary actor" (e.g., Daalder 1983; Laver and Schofield 1990). Party leaders, it is now argued, may differ from one another and from party followers with regard to the ends which they pursue and the resources which they employ; even within the leadership itself, it is suggested, the conflict between factions may be such as to militate against any theories taking the party as a whole as the relevant unit of analysis. Nonetheless, there is a striking lack of consensus regarding the number and type of different units into which a party may be disaggregated, and the extent to which this disaggregation may be applied to an understanding of processes of organizational change.

When parties are disaggregated in the organizational literature, writers still tend to fall back on the simple division between leaders and followers on which Michels based his influential law of oligarchy. This dividing line is, of course, sometimes qualified or refined, and more nuanced distinctions are occasionally drawn between "the party in government" and "the party in the electorate," or between "the parliamentary party" and the "extra-parliamentary party," and so on. Attention is also sometimes drawn to separate groups of "activists" or "middle-level elites," that is, to groups mediating, or simply located, between "the leaders" and "the followers." Despite these nuances, however, when party is broken down in organizational terms, the process now, as before, seems to hinge on a single hierarchy (e.g. Duverger 1951; Kirchheimer 1966).

Even when one moves beyond simple dichotomies, the unidimensionality of these distinctions remains a serious problem. For example, the simple leader-follower dichotomy fails to distinguish between those party leaders who are in public office (in parliament or in government) and those party

leaders who instead are based in the party's own "private" offices. Both are party "leaders" within the same party; their interests, however, and hence their interaction with "the followers," need not coincide. In a similar and overlapping sense, the parliamentary versus extra-parliamentary dichotomy not only ignores the fact that the parliamentary organization may be divided into those members who are actually in government and those who are not (e.g., Andeweg 1992), but also fails to recognize that the extra-parliamentary party may be divided between its own leadership, on the one hand, and the ordinary members (as well as the activists and middle-level elites, and so on), on the other. Panebianco does allude to this theme, both in his reference to the potential conflict between a party's national apparatus and its peripheral organizations (1988, 58) and in his discussion of the tension between "internal leaders" and the parliamentary group (1988, 173), but in neither case is this developed into a more comprehensive attempt to analyze organizational change and adaptation.

Three Faces of Party Organization

It is our contention that rather than analyzing parties according to a simple parliamentary versus extra-parliamentary dichotomy, or a simple leaders versus followers hierarchy (no matter how finely subdivided), it is more productive to consider parties as being comprised of a number of different elements, or faces, each of which potentially interacts with all of the others. Although each face may itself be quite heterogeneous, and a full analysis of party organization would require that these faces be disaggregated and analyzed, we believe it to be possible to identify subsystems within parties that, by virtue of their location in the party and the wider political system, will interact with one another in understandably patterned ways.

As a first approximation, we propose consideration of three faces of party organization. The first is the *party in public office*, e.g., in parliament or government. The second is the *party on the ground*, that is the members, activists, and so on. The third is the *party central office*, that is, the national leadership of the party organization which, at least in theory, is organizationally distinct from the party in public office, and which, at the same time, organizes and is usually representative of the party on the ground.

In an earlier stage of developing these ideas, we suggested a different set of three faces to characterize party organizations: the party as governing organization; the party as membership organization; and the party as bureaucratic organization. Our argument was that each face entails a different set of resources, constraints, opportunities, and patterns of motivation that bear on party leaders based within it, and that because of these differences, there

would be conflicts among party leaders (beyond those simply engendered by personal ambition) on the basis of which organizational change could be understood.

In this revision, we retain the basic argument, but now believe we see a more effective way of dividing the same pie. The "party in public office" takes the place of what we originally called the "party as governing organization." Although this is primarily a change in nomenclature, it underlines the fact that even parties that are in opposition usually have leaders who occupy public office in parliament, in regional and local councils, and so forth.

The "party on the ground" and the "party central office" were, in the old trichotomy, combined into the "party as membership organization." On the one hand, as noted above, the party central office has sometimes been treated as if it were annexed to, and hence also absorbed within, the party in public office, thus allowing the simple distinction between a unitary set of party leaders and a unitary set of party followers. Such a perspective thereby tends to attribute to the party central office the incentives and resources which really apply primarily to the party in public office. In addition, this perspective tends to end up by treating the extra-parliamentary party as if it were without leadership or organization, and as if the party congress, for example, were no more than a mob or a mass-meeting.

On the other hand, and more frequently, the party central office has been equated with the party on the ground, thus permitting a distinction between a homogeneous parliamentary party and a homogeneous extra-parliamentary party. Not only does this force us to ignore important aspects of each of these two faces, however, but as well it forces us to ignore tensions between the party on the ground and the party central office. Yet, it is precisely these tensions that give rise to accusations of oligarchic tendencies within political parties. Indeed, Michels' whole theory fails unless we can distinguish these two faces.

Finally, rather than aggregating the party bureaucracy into an independent element of party organization, we now put more emphasis on the fact that parties often have several separate bureaucracies. Thus, in the present conceptualization, we disaggregate the party bureaucracies into parts associated with each of the three faces.

The Party in Public Office

The key feature of the party in public office is that, at least in democratic countries, it is dominated by those who have themselves been successful in elections, and who depend on continued electoral success in order to

keep their positions. If one of the defining characteristics of parties is they "bas[e] claims of legitimacy on electoral success" (Katz 1987, 8), then the party in public office is the quintessential core, and the outward symbol of success, of party writ large.

The rewards or goals pursued by members of the party in public office may be of several types. First in much of the theorizing about parties (e.g., Downs 1957), if not necessarily in the minds of party actors, are the personal rewards of office. Aside from material benefits, these include the psychic rewards of power and status. As pointed out in the literature, these rewards are divisible and transferable only to a limited extent, and fundamentally accrue only to the particular individuals holding office.

Downsian assumptions that suggest policy is only a means to the end of office notwithstanding, a second set of goals is undoubtedly (in most cases) the pursuit of particular policy objectives. Here the distinction between the party in public office and other faces of party is not that these rewards are uniquely available to the party in public office, but rather that the actors in this face of the party are uniquely positioned to have a personal role in their achievement. While one consequence might be to give these goals greater immediacy, another is likely to be a greater appreciation of the constraints and limitations on policy making. In this respect, members of the party in public office are more likely to see compromise as incremental movement toward a desired goal rather than as partial retreat from a correct position.

An important characteristic of the party in public office is its transience, with continued corporate existence and individual membership dependent on extra-party (i.e., electoral) forces. Moreover, although some of the rewards of office, as well as the capacity to influence the course of public policy, are available to members of the opposition, the total stock and value of individual rewards is far greater for the party(s) in government. And this, as well, is ultimately in the hands of the voters, rather than the party itself.

The need to win elections, both in order to remain in office and to pursue effectively the other rewards that attracted them to politics in the first place is the first important constraint on members of the party in public office. This means that they must be attentive not only to the electorate, but as well to those who control the resources necessary for a successful election campaign.

A second constraint is the obligations of government. Although one might argue that some parties have been devoid of any sense of civic responsibility, and it is unreasonable to assume that self-interested politicians undergo some kind of apotheosis on achieving office, government responsi-

bility, and perhaps to a lesser extent the public responsibilities of being the "loyal opposition," do appear to constrain most parties in government. This undoubtedly is in part for moral reasons, but there are also reasons of a more practical nature. Parties in government must expect to be held electorally accountable for the general condition of the country (Lewis-Beck 1988), and thus have an incentive to care for the general welfare. Governing brings members of the party in public office into regular contact, and mutual dependence, with members of the higher civil service whose views about the nature of the national interest and the proper role of government are likely to be far less partisan and short-term than their own (Aberbach et al. 1981); both the need to develop a cooperative relationship with members of the civil service and the simple social pressure inherent in working with them are likely to foster a sense of general responsibility on the part of the politicians. Moreover, even if responsibility does not constrain officials, the fact that they must work cooperatively—with coalition partners, civil servants, officials at other levels of government—if they are to be effective limits the freedom of action of members of the party in public office.

At the same time, being in office gives the party in public office a number of important resources that can be used in internal party politics. The most obvious is that the members of the party in public office have the legal authority to make governmental decisions; they vote on the bills, direct the bureaucrats, and so forth. One class of such decisions relates to a second resource available to the party in public office: patronage. A third set of resources is time, expertise and information. The members of the party in public office often are paid salaries that allow them to devote full time to politics; their positions give them experience and expertise; and, moreover, they have access to the expertise and information gathering and processing capabilities of the state bureaucracy. Finally, the party in public office has the legitimacy conferred by a public mandate.

The Party on the Ground

In the case of parties with formal mass memberships, the members are the basis of the party on the ground, but more loosely it can be taken to include the core of regular activists, financial supporters, and even loyal voters, whether or not they are formally enrolled as party "members." The key characteristics of this face of party are voluntary membership, permanence, and regularity. Although there may be various requirements for joining and maintaining formal membership, entry and exit are, for the most part, based on the private choices of the individual members. For most parties, both the scale and the intermittent participation of the average member

require representative institutions. While the primary locus of the party on the ground is, of course, diffused throughout the country, it is manifested organizationally at the national level by the party congress, and at various other levels by other committees and congresses, with established rules to fix the number and types of officials, their competence and terms, etc.

Although there may be some individual incentives for membership and activity in the party on the ground—for example, the local party office may serve various social functions for its members, local leadership positions may confer some status, activity may put the member in line for rewards of patronage or nomination to office (and thus, if successful, membership in the party in public office)—the primary incentives for members of the party on the ground are public purposive (policy), symbolic, and solidaristic. Thus, making and adhering to formal statements of party policy and identity are likely to be of great significance, and this may put the party on the ground in conflict with the party in public office. Moreover, while members of the party on the ground will certainly see winning elections as preferable to losing, the sacrifices they are prepared to make for that end may be quite limited.

The party on the ground has a variety of resources. Most typically, they have their own labor, which can be important both for election campaigns and other political propaganda/agitation and also for filling the variety of positions on local governing and advisory boards that are allocated to or won by the party. The party on the ground can be a source of other electorally important resources, especially money and votes. They also bring local knowledge to the party, in some cases augmented by a paid staff. In some conceptions of democracy, the party on the ground also has its own special legitimacy as the political embodiment of the segment of society that the party as a whole claims to represent.

The most important constraint on the party on the ground is simply that they are not the party in public office, and consequently are unable to make governmental decisions themselves. A second constraint applies not so much to the party on the ground as a whole as to its leadership, and that is that the party on the ground is generally a voluntary organization, from which exit is always a viable option. Leaders of this face must, therefore, satisfy their members not only to retain their positions of leadership, but also to maintain an organization to lead.

The Party Central Office

Generally located in the national capital, the party central office consists of two (frequently overlapping) groups of people, the national executive

committee or committees, and the central party staff or secretariat. Members of the first group may be recruited in a variety of ways. Some may be elected by the party congress, or in some other way appear to represent the party on the ground; others may be representatives or leaders of the party in public office; still others may be representatives of ancillary or affiliated organizations. In many cases, not only will the top party bureaucrat be an ex-officio member of the national executive, but (s)he may appoint several other officials who become ex-officio members as well. In other words, despite appearances, the national executive of a party may be less a representative body than a self-perpetuating and autonomous element of the overall party structure.

In principle, the central party bureaucracy should be the servant of the national executive, but it may have many resources (not least of which may be ex-officio members on the national executive) to support a more assertive role than "servant" implies. Thus, one might ask for any party whether the national executive or the party bureaucracy is the dominant force in the central office. In some cases, indeed, the party bureaucracy may be the true central office, with the national executive reduced to a purely nominal or ceremonial role.

The primary resources of the party central office are its centrality, expertise, and formal position at the apex of the party organization. To these might be added that many of its members are leaders of other faces of the party. This is an ambiguous situation, however. On one hand, it means that when it is united, the party central office can draw on the resources of the other faces to establish itself as the dominant locus of decision within the party. But, on the other hand, when its members are not united, their status as leaders of the other faces can transform the party central office from the dominant locus of decision into merely a battle-ground, or alternatively an empty shell that is both impotent and largely ignored.

It is, of course, true for each of the faces of party that its strength is maximized only when its individual members are united. This is a particularly important constraint on the party central office, however, because the individual motivations of its members and the individual level constraints on them are likely to be more disparate. In particular, the members of the party executive are likely to owe their positions to *different* faces of party, and have to maintain the support of their individual constituencies if they are to remain in the central office. For example, members representing the party on the ground should value ideological purity more, while those representing the party in public office value electoral victory more. Security is likely to be extremely important to party bureaucrats, who even more than the party in public office are virtually by definition individuals who live from rather

than for politics, but it is the security of their own positions within the party hierarchy rather than the security of the party's position within the political system that should be their most immediate concern.

Another constraint on the party central office is that it, even more than the party on the ground, which may be taken to include (or be fused with) the holders of local political office, cannot make and implement public policy on its own. Indeed, in a sense, the key question regarding the party central office is not to detail its resources and the constraints it faces, but rather to ask why a party would have a central office at all. From this perspective, the key resource of the central office is its unique ability to perform the functions assigned to it, and the constraint is that to the degree to which those functions lose their value or alternative means of performing them are found, that resource is devalued.

If the defining characteristic of a party is that it is attempting to win power, there is no need to ask why a party would value its public office holding face; it is the *raison d'être* of the whole enterprise. Various studies (Katz 1990; Scarrow 1991) have addressed the question of the value of the party on the ground, primarily asking its utility for the party in public office. The value of the party central office, however, generally has not been questioned (perhaps because the central office is not generally considered as a separate face of the party), even though, as we will suggest below, its value to the other faces is the most problematic.

While not an exhaustive list, we suggest four primary functions for the party central office. The first is to be the nucleus from which the other two faces are formed; that is, the party central office may be the core of initial party activists who go out into the country and organize a party on the ground that eventually fields candidates who win elections and become the party in public office. Obviously, this is only one of the possible stories of party genesis, and it refers to a function whose importance declines as the party succeeds. A second function of the party central office is to coordinate national campaigns, which may mean that it supervises or controls the party on the ground on behalf of the party in public office. Third, and conversely, on the basis of its permanence, expertise, and location at the seat of government, the party central office may supervise the party in public office on behalf of the party on the ground. In the same vein, it may aggregate and articulate the demands of the party on the ground, "producing" the party congress and acting in place of the congress on a daily basis. Finally, the party central office may provide a variety of services, such as a party press or other media of communication, policy research, an efficient fund-raising organization, and so forth, to the party on the ground and/or in public office.

Before attempting to apply these ideas, a final qualification is appropriate. Although we are treating the three faces as monoliths for analytic simplicity, one should remember that they not only may be internally diverse but also may intersect at multiple points. We have already alluded to differences between members of the party in public office who are and are not members of the government; to local activists and more passive members; to members of the party central office based in the party in public office, the party bureaucracy, and the party on the ground. In a fuller treatment, one would also need to remember the possibility that particular members of the party in public office may have strong ties (rooted perhaps in local control over nomination) to the party on the ground, etc.

Using the Three Faces to Explain Party Organization

How can one employ this characterization of party to understand organizational change and adaptation? In particular, bearing in mind that the relationships among the three faces of party allow for three dyadic relationships, what sorts of questions do we ask about them? Here, we suggest three classes of questions as particularly relevant.

The first, of course, is to ask about the resources and constraints of each face, as we have just done, but bearing in mind that these may vary over time. In some cases, as for example with the ability of the party in public office to communicate directly with their electoral supporters without the intermediation of the party central office or the party on the ground which was made possible by broadcasting, these changes may be exogenous, with parties perforce adapting to a new situation. In others, however, as with the introduction of state subventions (which make the financial resource of the party on the ground relatively less significant), or the changes in representation on the national executive (perhaps giving the party in public office relatively greater weight), they are endogenously introduced to institutionalize or attempt to redress a particular balance within the party.

A second set of questions concerns the independence versus the interdependence of the various faces. This has two aspects. On one hand, two faces of the party may be in constant contact and exchange relationships with one another or, alternatively, they may work quite autonomously, each in its own sphere. For example, there may be a single fund-raising drive with a uniform national appeal in which both the party on the ground and the party in public office participate and with a mutually agreed division of the proceeds or alternatively, each may raise its own funds and control their disbursement without regard to what the other is doing. On the other hand, to the extent that there is interdependence between the two faces, the

relationship may be characterized by mutual influence and accommodation, or alternatively by the dominance of one face over the other.

Finally, as already suggested in the discussion of party national executives, one may ask the degree to which the faces are distinct versus the degree to which they overlap.

Before applying this approach to the analysis of recent changes in party organizations using the data that we have been collecting together with a team of country collaborators, we can demonstrate its utility by using it to characterize the three major types of party (cadre party, mass party of integration, and catch-all party) most widely discussed in the literature.

The Cadre Party

The cadre party is characterized by a strong overlap between the party on the ground and the party in public office. In the pure type, each individual MP is, from the perspective of the party on the ground of his or her own constituency, "one of us." There is not so much a division between leaders and followers as there is a division of labor within the party on the ground, which is, by definition, entirely made up of leaders.

The MP essentially combines the roles of member of parliament and congress delegate, with the parliamentary party in effect serving as the party congress as well. Resources, however, are monopolized by the party on the ground, that is by the caucuses of local notables that put up one of their number as candidate and then support him or her with their private resources. In many cases, the primary source of political capital is the candidate him- or herself. In this situation, party discipline is hard to maintain, largely because those in control of resources do not want it.

With a cadre party, there is little need, or desire, for a party central office. Campaigns are local affairs, centering around the mobilization of local and personal clienteles; thus coordination is not necessary and intervention from outside is more likely to be regarded as interference than as assistance. While there may be a national executive, and a central headquarters that provides some services to the party on the ground or the party in public office, they have little independent access to resources, and because they are so dependent on the sufferance of others, they have little independent weight in the party.

The Mass Party of Integration

In its "genetic myth," the mass party of integration begins without either a party on the ground or a party in government. Instead, an initial group of organizers forms a "central office" which then goes about creating

the other two faces of the party. While this myth does not completely describe the genesis of any particular party, just as there are no real parties that conform totally to the ideal type of the mass party of integration, the intervention of central leadership is always a necessary catalyst in turning a mass into a movement or party, and those parties that we usually identify as mass parties of integration usually went through a process approximating that in the genetic myth. In particular, even if the party central office was originated by a few out-cast MPs, they constituted themselves as an extra-parliamentary organization, and then went about recruiting members.

The mass party of integration is primarily the child of expansion of citizenship and participation beyond the limited social basis that formed the natural home for the cadre party. The mass party arose primarily among the newly activated, and often unenfranchised, elements of society in their (ultimately successful) struggle to gain a voice in, and eventually control over, the ruling structures of the state. It relied on quantity of members/supporters, attempting to make up in many small membership subscriptions for what it lacked in individual patronage, to make up in collective action for what it lacked in individual influence, and to make up through a party press and other party controlled channels of communication for what it lacked in access to the commercial press controlled by its political opponents. Naturally, this required organization.

The strategy of encapsulation is both a response to the need for mobilization and organization and one of its causes. On one hand, by integrating the citizen into a network of groups which attend to all the needs of life—news, insurance, union representation, social activities—the party both provides itself with a mechanism for mobilizing its supporters and a way of insulating them from alternative influences. On the other hand, the strategy of encapsulation requires that the party in fact produce that panoply of organizations and then mobilize its potential supporters to join them.

Underlying the mass party is not only an organizational strategy but also a distinctive conception of democracy and of the role of a political party within it. The mass party emphasizes the representation of a particular social constituency, and its authorization to do so on the basis of the internally democratic nature of the party itself. Thus, the party congress, as the representative institution not simply of the party on the ground but (in theory synonymously) of the politically active portion of the entire social segment that the party represents, ought to be the supreme decision-making body in the party and the source, along with electoral success, of democratic legitimacy for the party as a whole. Elections, moreover, are seen as contests not between independent candidates competing for the favor of local constituencies, but between representative teams with alternative programs.

In particular, the candidates of the mass party are the agents of the party congress, pledged to support the coherent program that the congress has enunciated, and competing for a national mandate to put that program into action. To be able to claim a national mandate, however, requires that the party mount a nationally coherent campaign, and this as well requires organization.

In theory, the party in public office is the agent of the party on the ground, as embodied in the congress. Since the congress cannot be in continuous session, however, it elects a standing committee, or executive, to act in its place, both in articulating party policy and elaborating on the party's electoral mandate and in supervising and directing the party in public office. Moreover, this executive requires a strong and well endowed central office in order to perform the various organizational and coordinating functions that the mass party model implies.

In the original mass party of integration, the balance of resources clearly favors the party central office, as the coordinator and controller of the party on the ground. The party in public office is relatively weak, in part because it is initially very small. At the same time, the party on the ground and party central office control the resources required by members of the party in public office if they are to win elections and so stay in office.

The Catch All Party

The third of the major types of party organization, the catch-all party, arose as a response to the mass party of integration. Essentially that response had three underlying roots. The first was the success of the mass party in elections, and especially its success in altering the situation under which elections were held by expanding the suffrage so that electorates numbered in the millions rather than the thousands. Under these circumstances, the informal networks of the cadre party were inadequate to canvass, mobilize, and organize supporters. The second was the growing acceptance of the mass party model of democracy, particularly popular control of government through choice among unified national parties, even among segments of society that had traditionally supported the cadre parties. If these two primarily affected the existing or might-have-been cadre parties, the third root applied (and continues to apply) particularly to the mass parties. This was that electoral success altered the balance of resources within the mass party itself, in particular strengthening the hand of the party in public office.

While the success of the mass party led to adaptation by its competitors, they did not adopt the mass party model root and branch. First, they could not accept the idea that parties exist to represent well defined

segments of society, because the segments which would have been left to them (farmers, industrialists, etc.) were obviously and increasingly permanent minorities. Similarly, the idea that the party on the ground, or a party central office whether independent or primarily responsive to the party on the ground, ought to be dominant was unappealing to those already established in government. Further, while they needed to organize and mobilize electoral supporters, they were not so dependent on them for material resources.

These considerations lead the catch all party to differ organizationally from the mass party of integration, but organizational differences also stem from differences in conceptions of the role of parties in democratic systems. Rather than seeing party as the agent of a particular organized segment of society, the catch all party model sees party as a broker between autonomous social groupings and the state. The catch all party defines its constituency electorally—it is those people who voted for it, or might be enticed to vote for it in the future—rather than socially and culturally. The party in public office is seen as an independent entrepreneur responsible to the electorate rather than to the party on the ground, the party central office, or the party congress.

The party on the ground remains necessary within the catch all party model (at least in its initial stages) for several reasons. Just as in the mass party model, it is a source of important material resources and a channel of communication between the party in public office and the electorate. The prevalence of the mass party conception of democracy makes it convenient for the party in public office to have a mass organization which it can claim to represent and to which it can claim to be accountable. But the word "claim" is central to this formulation. That is, the party in public office wants the appearance, but not the reality, of a strong party on the ground.

This difference is reflected as well in the party central office. So long as campaigns remain labor intensive and membership contributions remain an important resource, the party central office remains important, but there is a strong pressure by the party in public office to domesticate it, particularly in those parties that evolve toward the catch all model from the mass party model. (In the case of parties evolving from the cadre model, the central office is, of course, already subservient.)

Into the Present

Having demonstrated how the three faces framework can be used to illuminate the development of party organizations in the past, we now turn to illustrate its application to current developments.

Indicators of Power

Three dimensions of power are of crucial importance in assessing the relationships among the three faces of party. The first concerns the numbers and disposition of the party staff and professional bureaucracy, and the extent to which these are biased in favor of the party in public office, on the one hand, or the party central office, on the other. (A heavily decentralized party bureaucracy may also, of course, reflect a bias towards the party on the ground.) The second is of specific relevance to the conception of the party central office as a battleground between the other two faces, and concerns the extent to which the national organs of the party reflect a bias towards the representation of the party on the ground or that of the party in public office. The third dimension of power, which can be related to both of the above, concerns the intra-party decision-making structure, and the extent to which any of the three faces may enjoy an authoritative say in matters such as the formulation of party policy and strategy or the selection of candidates for public office.

The most obvious of these dimensions is that concerning the numbers and disposition of the party bureaucracy. Analysis of this dimension faces two problems, however. In the first place, the resources of the party in public office may not be visible in pure party terms, especially when the party in question includes a governing as well as a parliamentary face, and when key staff are appointed to positions in the public, as opposed to the party, bureaucracy. In 1993, for example, in the wake of the formation of the new *Fianna Fàil*-Labour coalition government in the Irish Republic, it was estimated that the various ministers had appointed 135 personal staff to their public offices, at an estimated annual cost of IR£ 3 million (*Irish Times* 20 February 1993). While this sum dwarfs the expenditure on salaries for the central office staff for both coalition parties (IR£ 321,000 in 1990—Farrell 1992, 449-50), the bias which it may reflect clearly could not be gauged solely through an analysis of the parties' own records.

The second problem concerns the actual responsibilities of the party bureaucracy. In some cases, for example, parties may derive a substantial proportion of their income from state subventions to the parliamentary party (see below), that is, to the party in public office. Indeed, in some countries, parliamentary subventions remain the only source of state funding. In such circumstances, the party central office may lack the resources to employ its own independent staff, and hence in practice those party bureaucrats who are funded through state subventions in order to facilitate the work of the party in public office may actually end up working for the central office. Conversely, bureaucrats who are formally employed by the party central

office sometimes actually work in the offices of the party in public office. Knowledge of the formal disposition of the party bureaucracy may not therefore provide an adequate guide to the real bias in organizational resources.

We are on surer ground in relation to the second dimension, which concerns the bias in the pattern of representation in the national executive committee or committees which constitute a major component of the party central office. As noted above, the members of these committees may be elected and/or appointed in a variety of ways, whether by the party congress, the party in public office, or the various affiliated organizations. Some of these members may be the mandated delegates of any of these constituencies, while others participate on an ex-officio basis. Either way, these persons are often crucial to the decision-making procedures in the party, in that they are typically responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the party between congresses or between elections. The extent to which these committees are dominated by the representatives of the party on the ground, as against the representatives of the party in public office, can therefore indicate the extent to which either element is seen as the key actor inside the party as a whole.

Even here, however, any assessment is complicated by a number of key problems, two of which merit particular attention. In the first place, an analysis of the bodies formally represented in a committee may have to be supplemented by an analysis of the individual representatives themselves. The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the British Labour Party, for example, is almost entirely constituted by representatives of the local constituencies and of the affiliated trade unions, all of whom are elected by the annual conference of the party. The party in public office formally is represented only through the inclusion in the NEC of the leader and deputy leader of the party, both of whom are selected by an electoral college which is itself only partly constituted by the members of the parliamentary party. Here, then, we can see a bias towards the party on the ground. In practice, however, the actual persons who are elected as representatives of the local parties within the NEC are almost exclusively members, and are often among the small leadership elite (e.g., ministers or potential ministers), of the parliamentary party. In practice, therefore, the formal representation of the party on the ground may in this case be associated with effective dominance by the party in public office.

In the second place, if a party's national executive committee itself lacks real power and authority within the party, then an analysis of changes in its composition may tell us little about the shifting organizational bias within the party. Thus, for example, while the party membership might have the exclusive right to select the members of the national executive

committee, a factor which would indicate a profound organizational bias towards the party on the ground, the committee itself might in practice enjoy no real control over the party in public office, thus indicating a bias towards the latter.

In this sense, any such assessment should properly be complemented by an analysis of the third dimension indicated above, that is, the actual decision-making structure. A full analysis should therefore assess the locus of authoritative decision-making in matters relating to the party policy, party strategy, party discipline, and party rules. Does the chain of authority run from the party on the ground to the party central office and then to the party in public office, or is it precisely the other way around? The problem with these two scenarios, however, is that each assumes that the party central office is subordinate. A third possibility is that the party central office acquires its own independent authority. For example, when the party central office enjoys the right of final approval of the lists of candidates to be nominated for election, not only does it curb the independence of the party on the ground, but it also gains a potential sanction against indiscipline in the party in public office. Final approval of the party election program offers it a similar dual advantage.

Party Central Office v. Party in Public Office

A full assessment of the relevance of the three faces of party organization to the understanding of processes of organizational change and adaptation clearly requires the sort of complex analysis which is beyond the scope of this brief paper. Rather than focusing on all of the possible inter-relationships, we will therefore limit our concluding discussion only to the (potential) conflict between the party central office and the party in public office. As we have argued elsewhere (Katz and Mair 1991, 1992a), there is an increasing tendency for the party in public office to be the dominant of the three faces, a development which may well lead to conflicts with the party central office. Moreover, from the wider literature we can also assume at least the possibility that the interests of the party in public office conflict with those of the party activists and militants, which, in turn, may have a major influence on the composition of the national executive, and hence on the party central office. For both these reasons, therefore, we can anticipate that the party in public office will increasingly attempt to assert its autonomy of, or even its control over, the party central office.

In pursuing such a goal, the party in public office may follow any of three distinct strategies, each of which involves one of the dimensions of power identified above. In the first place, it may push for the introduction

or expansion of state subventions for the parties in parliament, and so build up its own independent resources and bureaucracy. Second, it may seek to exert more authority over the party central office by increasing its own voice on the national executive committees. Third, it can seek to reduce the weight accorded to the party central office in the intra-party decision-making structure, and to assert its own individual autonomy. This it might do through changes in the party rules, or alternatively, by simply ignoring the party central office, and appealing to the general population, or to the (normally largely passive) membership at large.[1]

Rather than assess all three strategies, however, we will focus instead only on the first two, and we will concentrate specifically on shifts in the balance of resources available to the party in central office, on the one hand, and the party in public office, on the other, as well as on the extent to which the formal pattern of representation at the national executive level reflects an increasing voice for the party in public office. The data which we cite are drawn from the various country studies in Katz and Mair (1992b).

Balance of Resources

We have data regarding two resources that may bear on the potential conflict between the party central office and the party in public office: state subventions and staff. Insofar as we anticipate that the party in public office is seeking to assert its autonomy of, or control over the party central office, we hypothesize that it will be increasingly favored by the distribution of these resources.

As far as state subventions are concerned, there is one clear pattern which emerges and which emphasizes the weight of the party in public office: in four of the eleven European countries for which data are available, subventions are provided for the party in public office, with, as yet, no subventions for the party central office (Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, UK); in five other countries, subventions were first introduced for the party in public office, and only later for the party in central office (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway); in two countries, subventions for both faces of party were introduced simultaneously (Finland, Sweden); and in no country for which data are available were subsidies first introduced for the party central office. Moreover, looking at the most recent data, in only three countries is the subvention to the party central office greater than that to the party in public office: Austria, where the ratio is in excess of 3:1, Finland, where the ratio is more than 6:1, and Sweden, where the balance only marginally favors the party central office.

In these terms at least, the party in public office has appeared to acquire substantial additional and independent resources. That said, the fact that in a number of countries the party central offices began to receive separate subventions after public office subventions were already in place (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Norway) suggests at least a partial redress of the balance in their favor, and may in fact indicate a shift in resources away from the party in public office.

As far as party staff and bureaucracy are concerned, two patterns are discernible in the nine countries (see Table 1). In the first place, the ratio of central office staff to public office (parliamentary) staff has declined quite dramatically over time, a trend which is probably partly the result of the early introduction of state subventions to the party in public office. In the first year for which data are available, for example, an average of almost four times as many staff were employed by the party central offices than were employed by the various parliamentary parties. In the most recent year, by contrast, there were fewer than twice as many staff in the central offices. This shift in the balance of staffing is most dramatic in Denmark and Ireland, where in both cases some three times as many staff were originally employed in central office, and where now central office staff are actually in the minority. In the Netherlands, by contrast, the shift has been only marginal. In general, however, the direction of movement is clearly and consistently in favor of the party in public office.

Table 1. Ratio of Central Office Staff to Parliamentary Party Staff*

	Time 1[a]	Time 2[a]	Relative Change (%)
Austria	3.9 : 1	2.2 : 1	-43.5
Denmark	2.7 : 1	0.6 : 1	-77.8
Finland	9.4 : 1	4.1 : 1	-56.4
Germany	0.3 : 1	0.1 : 1	-66.7
Ireland	3.3 : 1	0.6 : 1	-81.8
Italy	5.5 : 1	3.1 : 1	-43.6
Netherlands	0.7 : 1	0.6 : 1	-14.3
Norway	3.0 : 1	2.0 : 1	-33.3
Sweden	5.9 : 1	2.3 : 1	-44.1
Mean	3.9 : 1	1.7 : 1	-56.4

[*]Average per country.
[a]Refers to the earliest (Time 1) and most recent (Time 2) years for which data are available.

Notwithstanding this, the second pattern is a continuing bias towards the party central office in absolute terms. Indeed, as noted, the party central offices now employ an average of almost twice as many staff as the parliamentary parties. This is not true for each individual country, however, and the national patterns are quite varied. Even in the earlier period, for example, both Germany and the Netherlands were characterized by a bias towards the parliamentary party; in Finland, on the other hand, central office staff outnumbered parliamentary party staff by more than nine to one. By the later period, Denmark and Ireland had joined Germany and the Netherlands with a balance favoring the parliamentary party staff, whereas in the remaining five countries the bias, while reduced, continued to favor the central office.

Composition of National Executives

It is far from easy to present a general picture of the shifting balances of representation on the national executive committees of the various European parties. The pattern not only varies substantially across countries and over time, but also across the different parties within individual countries, with rule changes and organizational restructuring in the past three decades marked more by their frequency than by their absence. Accordingly, rather than presenting a systematic cross-national comparison over time, this discussion will focus simply on some illustrative examples of the sorts of changes which have taken place since the early 1960s among a set of 35 parties in nine countries.

A large number of parties specify the number of members and/or representatives of the party in public office who are entitled to membership of the national executives. More significantly, taking cognizance of the possibility that even those who formally represent the party on the ground may actually be drawn in practice from the ranks of the party in public office, a handful of these parties are also very firm in ruling that even in practice this number should never exceed a stated maximum. Any restriction of the latter type is an especially important indicator of the desired balance between the different faces, and is clearly intended to preserve the independent voice of the party on the ground.

Such restrictions are particularly common in the Netherlands, where maximum limits on the number of MPs and public office holders have been established by parties as diverse as the christian-democratic CDA, the liberal VVD, and the social-democratic PvdA. Since the foundation of the CDA in 1980, for example, the rules regarding the composition of the party's national executive (*partijbestuur*) state that no member is allowed at the

same time to be a member of parliament, a minister or secretary of state, or a provincial governor. All elements of the party in public office have therefore been kept at one remove from the party in central office. The national executive of the PvdA, on the other hand, is more open to the party in public office, although here also there are restrictions which have been strengthened over time. Thus in 1960, it was stipulated that no more than half of the (19 to 25 member) national executive could be MPs, whereas by 1969, a maximum of seven (of the then 21) members could be MPs. The PvdA also ruled in 1969 that a maximum of three members of the (9 to 11 member) permanent committee could be MPs, whereas in 1960 no such rule existed. Nonetheless, the party was clearly intent on having at least some representation from the members in public office, since it also (and unusually) included a stipulation regarding the minimum number of MPs who should be included in the national executive. The VVD, on the other hand, has moved in the opposite direction to the PvdA, initially stating that a maximum of three and later four of the (21 to 28 member) national executive (*hoofdbestuur*) could be MPs, and later, in the context of a reduced overall number of members (11 to 13), removing this restriction.

Other examples of parties which are characterized by similar stipulations regarding the maximum number of members from the party in public office include the Danish Socialist People's Party (SF), which initially included no specific rules regarding the inclusion of MPs on either its national committee (*Hovedbestyrelsen*) or national executive (*Forretningsudvalg*), but which later, in 1965, limited their number to a maximum of five out of 33 in the former body, and to three out of nine in the latter body; the Finnish National Coalition (KOK), which also initially included no rule regarding the inclusion of MPs, but which introduced in 1967 the stipulation that a majority of the members of the national executive (*hallitus*) may not be members of the parliamentary party; and the Irish *Fianna Fàil* (FF), which, from the beginning, stipulated that there could only be a maximum of five MPs or Senators in its traditional "Committee of 15," and that none of the 50 or so constituency representatives on its broader national executive committee (*Àrd comhairle*) could be MPs. In this case, however, the restriction was balanced by subsequent rules (in 1971) which broadened the executive committee's membership to include three co-opted members of the government or front bench, as well as five backbench members of the parliamentary party.

These six parties are particularly important insofar as they place limits not only on the formal representation of the party in public office, which is in fact quite common among all of the parties which we have examined, but also because they are illustrative of a relatively significant group of parties

which, in one way or another, are explicitly concerned to limit this representation in practice. Moreover, it also should be emphasized that there is little sign of a softening of this emphasis on the need to give practical voice to the party on the ground. Indeed, of the six examples cited here, only two, the VVD and FF, can be regarded as having eased the limits on the party in public office, while three others, the PvdA, SF, and KOK, have actually adopted a more restrictive attitude.

These latter three parties seem exceptional, however, in that the more general trend does tend to reflect a gradual strengthening of the position of public office holders. Thus, in a wide range of parties, including the FPÖ in Austria, the PRL/PVV and *Volksunie* in Belgium, the RV in Denmark, the FDP in Germany, the Labour Party in Ireland, and the Conservatives in Norway, the balance of representation on the various national executives is now more likely than before to favor the representation of the party in public office.

In the FPÖ, for example, the rules concerning the representation of the party in public office on the 40-member national executive (*Bundesparteileitung*) initially stated only that it should include the deputy chairman of the parliamentary *fraktion*; by 1972, however, the now 86-member body was defined as including all the party MPs in both the *Bundesrat* and *Nationalrat*. In the case of the Norwegian *Høyre*, the rules concerning the composition of one of the two national executive bodies, the *arbeidutvalegt*, initially included no stipulation regarding the party in public office, but were modified (in 1962 and 1970) to ensure that both the chairman of the parliamentary group and the chairman of the government group would be included as members; the rules concerning the party's second executive body, the *sentralstyret*, were also modified, increasing the public office representation from simply 3 MPs in 1960, to the chairman of the MP group and five other MPs in 1962, and then to the full executive committee of the parliamentary party and the party cabinet members in 1970.

The other parties listed above evidence similar trends. In the case of the Belgian Liberals, for example, the executive committee of the formerly united PRL/PVV already accorded a substantial weight to the party in public office, including the *fraktion* leaders in both houses of parliament, the members of the government, and the ministers of state. By the end of the 1980s, the two executives of the now linguistically divided party also included all MPs. In the case of the *Volksunie*, the rules regarding the composition of the national executive initially included nothing specific about MPs; by 1989, they specified the inclusion of four MPs, together with all members of the government (albeit without voting rights). The pattern in the Danish Social Liberal Party was similar, the initial absence of any stipulation being

succeeded by the inclusion of two MPs. In the case of the national council of the German FDP, the inclusion of all *fraktion* members in an advisory capacity was succeeded by rules which reduced this to eleven *fraktion* members in an advisory capacity but which also added the 7-member *fraktion* executive with full voting rights.

Finally, in the case of the Irish Labour Party, an initial representation of the party leader and deputy leader, together with two MPs on a 25-member body (the administrative council), was modified to include an additional four MPs and the chairman of the parliamentary party on a newly-structured 52-member body (the general council). In addition, this new body was also obliged to elect a core 13-member executive committee, which had to include the party leader, deputy leader, and the chairman of the parliamentary party. That said, it should also be emphasized that from 1989 onwards a new rule stated that the positions of party leader and deputy leader were to be filled by a postal ballot among all party members, whereas prior to this it was only MPs who enjoyed the right to vote in leadership elections (MPs do, however, continue to have the exclusive right to nominate candidates, and both positions can be filled only by MPs).

In general, then, these examples suggest a relatively widespread tendency to strengthen the position of the party in public office on the various national executive bodies. And except in the few cases where more severe limits have been placed on what was already a specified maximum level of representation by public office holders, the trend rarely seems to go against this face of the party. One important exception, however, is the Austrian Peoples' Party (ÖVP), the executive committee (*Bundesparteileitung*) of which in 1960 included six members of the parliamentary party, as well as all government ministers among its 47 members. By 1990, however, following a restructuring, this committee included among its 52 members only the Federal Chancellor, the President of the *Nationalrat*, and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the *Bundesrat*. The parliamentary representation had therefore been reduced, while the representation of members of the government had effectively ceased.

The Decline of Central Office?

Each of these elements—resources, staffing, and pattern of representation—tends to indicate that greater weight is being given to the party in public office. We now return to the question raised at the end of Section II, to speculate about the future of the party in central office as an independent face of European party organization.

As the proportion of electorates that are included among party members declines—as it is doing virtually everywhere in Europe (Katz, Mair et al. 1992)—and as the atypicality of the party activists who dominate local party organizations and national congresses seems more apparent, the claim of the central office to legitimacy as the democratically elected representative of an encapsulated political community might be expected to weaken. If there is also a tendency among voters to revalue the "public interest" over the partisan interests of their own social and cultural segments, the legitimacy of central office should be further reduced.

Party central offices may also be losing the power that flows from the unique ability to perform crucial functions for the other faces of the party. Mass media and computer-generated direct mail allow the party in public office to communicate directly with the electorate and with the party on the ground without the intervention of an elaborated party organization. As shown above, the party in public office increasingly has its own staff and its own financial resources. The members of the party on the ground also have many alternatives: media to keep informed; interest groups and new social movements to become involved and to exert pressure. Further, with the possibility of postal ballots and other forms of *direct* decision by members, there is less need for representative institutions, such as the central office might claim to be, within the party.

As these trends develop, the central office may, indeed, lose its centrality. Looking at party central office budgets, it appears that there is still plenty that the central office does. The point is, however, that while the central office may still be useful, it is not indispensable, because most of the services it provides can now be secured through alternative means. For the party in public office, communications services can be bought on the open market, perhaps at a higher price in money, but without the added costs of subservience to a party organization whose goal priorities may be quite different from their own. For the members of the party on the ground, as well, the alternative ways to be involved in national politics may be less confining and more satisfying, and this may help explain the relative decline in party membership itself.

The scenario this leads us to hypothesize for Europe is in many ways one that is already familiar to Americans, although in other respects it remains quite distinctive. Here it is worth recalling that it is only in the mass party model that the party central office plays an especially important role. A decline in importance of central office is not so much a crisis of party, or a decline of party, as it is a redefinition and reorientation of party—a crisis of the mass party model, indeed, but not necessarily of party itself, unless the very definition of party is tied to the mass party model. On

one hand, the party central office simply becomes a bureaucracy serving the party in public office, perhaps supplemented or even largely supplanted by consultants hired on a contract basis, but with no independent authority except that based on the ability to get politicians to defer to their professional expertise. Moreover, as they channel their political participation through organizations other than party, the members of the party on the ground have less interest in a party central office to supervise the party in public office. In these respects, European parties might come to look like their American counterparts. At the same time, the exigencies of parliamentary government suggest that the party in public office will remain far more centralized and disciplined than in the United States.

On the other hand, the party on the ground may become far more autonomous with regard to local politics. In some countries (e.g., Norway), this face of the party now receives direct public subventions, and so is not financially dependent on the central organization. As the party on the ground becomes less necessary to the national party in public office, the party in public office has less need of a central office to supervise the local party on the ground. And although the central office may be able to provide services to the party on the ground "wholesale," the members, like the party in public office, have the possibility of alternative suppliers. Organizationally, the projection would be for stratarchy to replace hierarchy. More generally, it is a projection of the party central office transformed from a potential power center into a service organization.

NOTE

[1]Discussions of party organization which are based on a simple dichotomous division between leaders and followers, or between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary party, necessarily assume that any such circumventionist strategy involves an appeal to the population at large, or to the voters at large. However, once we allow for the existence of three separate faces, and recognize that the party on the ground consists both of activists (who are likely to occupy local party offices, serve as congress delegates, etc.) and of more passive members, we can also envisage circumventionist strategies which are aimed at the membership at large. Indeed, it is precisely this strategy which seems to be increasingly characteristic of a large number of contemporary European parties.

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