FEPS
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GET THE PARTY STARTED
MODERNISING PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

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The Young Academics Network (YAN) was established in March 2009 by the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS) with the support of the Renner Institut to gather progressive PhD candidates and young PhD researchers, who are ready to use their academic experience in a debate about the Next Europe. The founding group was composed of awardees of the “Call for Paper” entitled “Next Europe, Next Left” – whose articles also help initiating the FEPS Scientific Magazine “Queries”. Quickly after, with the help of the FEPS member foundations, the group enlarged – presently incorporating around 30 outstanding and promising young academics.

FEPS YAN meets in the Viennese premises of Renner Institut, which offers great facilities for both reflections on the content and also on the process of building the network as such. Both elements constitute mutually enhancing factors, which due to innovative methods applied make this Network also a very unique project. Additionally, the groups work has been supervised by the Chair of the Next Left Research Programme, Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer – who at multiple occasions joined the sessions of the FEPS YAN, offering his feedback and guidance.

This paper is one of the results of the third cycle of FEPS YAN, (the first one ended with three papers in June 2011, while the second one led to five papers in spring 2013), in which six key themes were identified and were researched by FEPS YAN working groups. These topics encompass: “Precarious employment in Europe”; “Full employment: A progressive vision for Europe”; “Get the party started: Modernizing progressive politics”; “The 2014 European elections”; “Enhancing EU enlargement” and “Young and easily allured? A comparative analysis on the relationship between populism and youth in Europe”. Each of the meetings is an opportunity for the FEPS YAN to discuss the current state of their research, presenting their findings and questions both in the plenary, as also in the respective working groups. The added value of their work is the pan-European, innovative, interdisciplinary character – not to mention, that it is by principle that FEPS wishes to offer a prominent place to this generation of academics, seeing in it a potential to construct alternative that can attract young people to progressivism again. Though the process is very advanced already, the FEPS YAN remains a Network – and hence is ready to welcome new participants.

FEPS YAN plays also an important role within FEPS structure as a whole. The FEPS YAN members are asked to join different events (from large Conferences, such as FEPS “Call to Europe” or “Renaissance for Europe” and PES Convention to smaller High Level Seminars and Focus Group Meetings) and encouraged to provide inputs for publications (i.e. for FEPS Scientific Magazine “Queries”). Enhanced participation of the FEPS YAN Members in the overall FEPS life and increase of its visibility remains one of the strategic goals of the Network for 2014.
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INTRODUCTION

European progressive parties are challenged in two respects. One is the upward challenge of retaining or winning governmental power. Related to this is the challenge of connecting to and maintaining member and electoral support and fostering political participation. The latter challenge has become particularly relevant in the wake of the Eurozone and sovereign debt crisis that has pointed to the challenge of established parties to reach out to and connect with citizens that feel neglected by institutionalized parties and experience harsh difficulties to meet their political needs. For progressive parties in particular there is a need to redefine their membership in order to boost electoral and political participation. This paper focuses on identifying mechanisms that carry potentials for enhancing support for progressive parties.

The first section introduces an alternative understanding of welfare support. The section argues that in the last decades targeted policies reduced the support to welfare, but that social-democratic parties can use support to welfare as a way of gaining political support, and as an instrument to pursue solidarity and collective strategies. The crisis is reversing this trend, showing an increasing support to welfare policies, and this is discussed by analyzing the case of the UK where negative attitudes towards benefit claimants have been particularly harsh.

The second section sees the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and in particular the development of the internet as a fundamental change to society. For political parties this means that the combined challenge of developing party organisations, communicating policies and reaching new electorates need to be re-thought and reconfigured as the internet is blurring the distinction between party organizations and a loosely organised electorate.

The third section focuses on social movements. It claims that that progressive politics is split into a political branch in which political parties belong and a social left wing characterized by looser forms of organization. In order to stay relevant the paper claims that political parties can pursue two avenues. One is to embrace ‘overboard’ people by relating to their demands, incentives and everyday experiences and to provide ‘specific knowledge’ on how to overcome neoliberalism’s deficits. Another possible way for left wing parties is to rationalize a vision of “new social utopia” that a better future is possible.

The fourth section aims to analyze the reforming organizational processes implemented by the social democratic parties in Europe during the last years to modernize their structures according to the citizens’ demands, in order to reconnect with their traditional voters and to reach new supporters after the impact of the information and communication technologies.
The final section argues that the decline of party membership is an opportunity to rethink how political parties can organize political participation. The section argues that a pluralistic approach to party supporters involving the creation of several party organizations and different types of party membership, despite the conflict potential and risk of fragmentation of party support, is necessary in order to increase party membership in the future. Think tanks constitute one alternative organization model that can stimulate participation by acting as a critical friend to progressive parties.
MOBILISING WELFARE STATE SUPPORT
WHY ‘REDISTRIBUTION’ REMAINS A KEY TRIGGER OF POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR
EUROPEAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

Lorenza Antonucci

Introduction
Many proposals of reforming social-democracy revolve around the possibility of re-defining the role of the welfare state. While the welfare state has played a central role in the social-democratic project, recent studies point out how welfare states deliver conservative policies for protected interests groups and that the support to the welfare state remains high for “traditional areas”. The corollary of this idea is that European social-democratic parties need to reform the welfare state and re-calibrate it to cover new social risks, rather than keeping it for traditional groups. In the last decades different welfare regimes have implemented reforms shifting the focus on targeting, activation and ‘individualised’ policy responses.

This paper shows that welfare support is a largely under-played, if not mis-played, area in the social-democracy political agenda and that its capacity to mobilise political support to social-democracy is largely under-used. The paper argues that welfare state support, now more than ever, represents a central area to gain political support from different social groups. The first part discusses how individualised and targeted policies tend to reinforce the negative perception on the welfare state. Support to welfare remains high in presence of universal policies of redistribution, showing how welfare support is still a potential catalyst of political support amongst the middle classes and lower socio-economic groups. On the contrary, individualised and targeted policies have triggered a vicious circle that leads to less support to welfare. The second part identifies possible way out to break this self-reinforced circle and mobilise the vote from new groups in times of crisis by putting welfare state in the agenda. Evidences will be presented from the UK as a case-study from a highly targeted welfare system, but showing an ongoing change in welfare attitudes.

1. Why Universal policies lead to greater support to welfare
The studies on support to the welfare state have pointed out how wide welfare state support in a country is linked to the presence of universal welfare provisions. This is the argument of the famous

1 The author would like to thank Professor van Oorschot for sending a copy of his forth-coming chapter in advance and Femke Roosma for her useful inputs during the NorWel Summer School (2013) in Iceland.
‘paradox of redistribution’ formulated by Korpi and Palme: *The more we target benefits at the poor and the more concerned we are with creating equality via equal public transfers to all, the less likely we are to reduce poverty and inequality*.3 Korpi and Palme found that not only universal welfare states were better equipped to reduce inequalities than residual/targeted systems, but also that universal provisions tend to get a larger political support compared to means-tested provisions because of the higher chances that middle class citizens to become a beneficiary. Several studies exploring the public opinion seem to confirm the preference for universal welfare schemes4.

Accompanied by a new focus on targeting and individualised policies, this idea has been later challenged: Kenworthy found that the paradox of redistribution was true for the original 1985 data, but had weakened by 1995, and vanished completely for 2000/2005.5 We could interpret this change as an effect of having more residual policies implemented since the 80s. In a recent provocative paper Marx et al challenged the “paradox of redistribution” arguing that targeted policies might attract stronger support as they are “lauded as the essential gateways of welfare to work”6.

But what has happened to the overall support to the welfare state in presence of targeted policies? Taylor-Gooby’s study has actually shown that support to welfare policies with a form of responsibility work only if accompanied by a clear offer of opportunities from state support7. Opinion studies concluded that there is no evidence that welfare states, or specific welfare programmes, are generally losing support over time8. What is emerging instead is that European people strongly support welfare provision by the state, but are critical about the process through which this takes place, especially when it comes to targeting the benefits to the people who deserve them. So the real “the Achille’s heel of welfare state legitimacy”9 is not the general support of the welfare state, but the mis-targeting of welfare state provisions. In order words, while the public opinion might show a high support to targeted

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5 L. Kenworthy Progress for the Poor, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011.
policies, social attitudes surveys point out that targeted policies end up undermining overall welfare support. When discussing social attitudes towards welfare we have in fact to remember that the public opinion is influenced by the overall institutional set-up of a welfare state.\(^\text{10}\)

Studies across ‘worlds of public support’ and ‘worlds of welfare’ confirm the idea that in countries with universal policies people have greater demands on redistribution than more Liberal systems.\(^\text{11}\) This issue is explored in detail by the recent study by Roosma et al (2013) which compares data from 25 countries using the European Social Survey (ESS) finding that Europeans not only strongly perceive abuse and misuse of benefits, but also perceive substantial underuse of benefits, especially in the Southern and Eastern European. Roosma et al. found that contextual factors differ in their influence on overuse and underuse perceptions: “overuse perceptions are shaped by the design of the redistribution system. Due to the fact that selective benefit schemes put more effort in determining whether benefit claimants are really deserving of benefits, there is more focus on possible abuse or misuse of benefits in selective welfare state compared to universal redistribution systems where everyone is included; as a result perceived overuse is higher in welfare states that have stricter eligibility criteria.”\(^\text{12}\)

Perceptions of over-use and under-use are an expression of a break in the social contract between individuals in a society. Reinforcing this point van Oorschot has recently pointed out how targeted welfare support jeopardies the entire support to welfare: “if comprehensive welfare states retrench substantially in order to sustain protection for the neediest only, this can but mean that the larger middle class will lose its actual and perceived self-interest in the welfare system.”\(^\text{13}\). Targeted policies can also decrease the support from the lower socio-economic groups as Kulin and Svallfors have shown by looking at the link between basic human values and attitudes towards redistribution, and how this link differs among classes and across countries.\(^\text{14}\) Their studies show that in countries with high level of inequality and poverty the poor groups do not make a cognitive link between their values (solidarity) and the related political support (redistribution), while this happens in countries with low inequality and poverty, both for affluent groups and disadvantaged ones. According to the authors, the different


support for redistributive policies is the effect of policies not tackling inequalities: “the existence of visible and salient redistributive policies works to make clearer the cognitive link between abstract values and support for concrete policies”\(^{15}\).

While Social-Democratic parties should use demands on redistribution to re-attract political support from the middle classes, as argued by Hacker, the current focus on target policies and individualised policies is detrimental on their capacity of forming an generating such support\(^{16}\). The main strategy to stop this self-reinforcing cycle is putting inclusive welfare policies involving middle classes and lower socio-economic groups in the agenda, using the window of opportunity of the crisis.

2. Catalysing welfare state support during the crisis

An element that could counter-balance the current spiral ‘less support to welfare leads to targeted policies which in turn leads to less support to welfare’ is the increasing support to welfare resulting from the crisis. There are, however, windows of opportunities for changes as universal schemes are more supported in times of austerity\(^{17}\). For example the study by Blekesaune connects the economic conditions to welfare state support finding that support for increasing economic provision and redistribution of income is high in times of lower employment rates\(^{18}\).

The UK can be considered a good case study to explain this change in Europe as the stigmatisation of the poor as welfare recipients as a category targeted from social policy has already had consequences. However, the crisis might change this and trigger a “tipping point”, leading potentially to the formation of a common interest between the insecure or lower middle classes and low socio-economic groups\(^{19}\).

The scenario described by Taylor-Gooby seems to explain the current case of the ‘Bedroom Tax’, a new policy affecting only housing benefits claimants which is going to cut the benefit in the presence of a spare bedroom. New research has revealed the groundswell of public opinion is growing against this policy tax with almost three in five people (59%) saying that the Government should abandon the policy

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\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 10.


\(^{19}\) P. Taylor-Gooby Why do people stigmatise the poor at a time of rapidly increasing inequality, and what can be done about it? [in] Political Quarterly, 84(1), 2013, p. 41.
entirely, while 79% of people who intend to vote Labour believe the Government should abandon the bedroom tax (and even 65% of potential LibDem voters supporting the same idea)\(^{20}\). This shows that in times of crisis highly targeted policies damaging a disadvantage part of the population are far from being popular.

The last British Social Attitudes survey conducted by Natcen shows clearly how attitudes to unemployment and to welfare payments have softened: 51% said benefits were too high in 2012, down from 62% in 2011. While in 2012 about half of the interviewees thought that the unemployed could get a job if they really wanted, two thirds thought the same in the boom years of the previous decade. At the same time, the proportion of people who believed that benefit cuts would damage too many people's lives rose to 47% in 2012, from 42% in 2011. Finally, people are showing more positive attitudes towards active interventions: the proportion of people found to be supportive of extra spending on benefits rose to 34% in 2012, compared with 28% in 2011\(^{21}\).

Goulden also pointed out that, while the public’s view towards social security, poverty, spending on benefits and income redistribution have increasingly hardened over recent decades, the results in this year’s BSA show a considerable break in current trends in views towards welfare in particular\(^{22}\). The graph below, showing the support for more government spending on welfare benefits, by party affiliation, occupational class and age, signals that support has risen for nearly every sub-group, but in particular among young people, rising by 9% from 19% to 28%, and Labour voters (36% to 44%) . The biggest increase of all is among white-collar workers, where support has gone up from 20% to 32% between 2011 and 2012, showing the presence of a rising inter-class solidarity.

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\(^{20}\) ComRes Poll Digest - Political - The Sunday People Bedroom Tax Poll in [http://www.comres.co.uk/poll/852/the-people-bedroom-tax-poll.htm](http://www.comres.co.uk/poll/852/the-people-bedroom-tax-poll.htm), 2013 [accessed 21/02/2013].


People agreeing that Government should spend more on welfare benefits in the UK (%)\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{People agreeing that Government should spend more on welfare benefits in the UK (%)\textsuperscript{23}}
\end{figure}

**Conclusion: welfare support to gain political support?**

A general widespread idea in social-democratic circles is the belief that welfare state support has dramatically declined, in particular to tackle new social risks and address new problems emerging in European societies. This paper has looked in-depth at the literature on attitudes to welfare support, considering the contextual factors and the taking into account the different dimension that influence welfare state support. Not only the paper has shown that the general support to the welfare state remains very high, but it underlined that this is just for conservative policies, but especially for universal and inclusive policies from which middle-classes can benefit to. This paper has made an argument for the detrimental effects of individualised and targeted policies which by breaking the circle of solidarity, people tend to also lower the support to the welfare state. This can reinforce the vicious circle for which less support leads to fewer policies addressing inequalities and lads to even more interest-centred and residual social policies. As it has been shown in the last part by looking at the case of the UK as a case-

\textsuperscript{23} Ibidem. Although it’s always dangerous to put too much emphasis on year-on-year changes in survey data, Goulden underlines that the sample sizes are generally big enough for these results to be relatively robust.
study of a highly targeted system, the economic crisis is a window of opportunity for Social-Democratic parties to reverse this cycle. Not only universal policies tend to be more popular in time of austerity, but also permit to reach new social groups, such as young people.

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Taylor-Gooby, P. *Why do people stigmatise the poor at a time of rapidly increasing inequality, and what can be done about it?* [in] *Political Quarterly*, 84(1), 2013, p. 41.


EUROPEAN PARTIES MEMBERSHIP DECLINE, ICTS AND CONNECTIVE ACTION

Marc Esteve Del Valle

Introduction
We are witnessing a world where information is the engine of a new socioeconomic system and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are the cables that link us to that. In this context, the Socialist and Social Democrat parties are dealing with some important challenges amongst which there should be highlighted the decline of membership (Scarrow and Greznor, 2010), the political disaffection and the necessity to adapt their organizations to the Network Society (Castells, 2000). In fact, the parties’ adaptation to the Network Society could be understood as the crucial challenge that they presently face for it unleashes a revolutionary change: the pressures for mutation from hierarchical structures to network organizations which place power and agency at the ends of networks, in the hands of individuals, rather than in central locations like the leaders of formal organizations (Bimber, Flanagin & Stohl, 2012). In this light, and related to the irruption of ICTs, two other processes may be pointed out: on the one hand, and as it has been acknowledged by the academy (Margetts, 2001; Gibson, Ward and Lusoli, 2003; Löfgren, 2003), the Internet offers to political parties an open window to blur the classical party strategy built on a sharp difference between their members and the citizenry; on the other, the Internet adds new technological resources to the parties’ organizations and for their electoral struggle. In this context, parties are pushed into using ICTs in order to reach new electorate, to increase their membership or to mobilize their militants and sympathizers by improving their participatory tools. Nonetheless, there are some impediments to the parties’ adaptation to the ICTs such as the organizational barriers, their historical backgrounds and the fear of the leaders to lose control over militancy. Therefore, the questions that arise are: How can the European Socialist and Social Democrat parties take profit from the ICTs in order to overcome the pitfalls unleashed by their membership decline? Which is the stance that may be adopted by the Socialist and Social Democrat parties regarding the change from the classical collective action to a new connective action?

Parties membership decline and ICT’s
Since their inception European left parties always considered membership as being an structural instrument to reach their aims. In this light, Maurice Duverger pointed out that this organizational technique was first adopted by parties of the left but its apparent success led other parties to adopt their own campaigns of membership recruitment (Duverger, 1955). In fact, according to Scarrow and Greznor, by the middle of the 20th century, the heyday of the membership parties, “it was not uncommon for
parties in European democracies to claim enrolments in excess of 10 percent of the party vote” (Scarrow & Grezor, 2010: 825). Since then, nevertheless, party membership in European countries has generally shrunk in absolute and relative terms. In fact, according to Scarrow and Grezor figures (see Table 1), today few European countries have more than 5 percent of their citizens enrolled as party members and in most countries total enrolments are much smaller than this.

Table 1: Enrolment in political parties as a percentage of the electorate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Survey data</th>
<th>Party data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>2002–04\textsuperscript{b}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>14 (1987)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>12 (1988)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} Widfeldt (1995).
\textsuperscript{b} Jowell et al. (2003, 2005).
\textsuperscript{c} Katz et al. (1992).
\textsuperscript{d} Scarrow (2000).
\textsuperscript{e} Mair and van Biezen (2001).

Source: Scarrow & Grezor, 2010: 825.

From Table 1 could be concluded then that whichever type of data we examine, we see that almost all the countries in the sample experienced at least small drops in party enrolment in the extended decade that lasted from the late 1980s to the early part of the 21st century. The only exceptions were Ireland, Portugal and Spain, which showed a slight increase according to one of the indicators (survey data). In short, the picture painted by both types of data is of Western European political parties with a modest and declining ability to enrol their supporters.
It is amidst this membership decline where we think that ICTs could play an important role for Socialist and Social Democrat parties not only in increasing their members but also in opening new sorts of membership. More precisely, following the present work of Professor Scarrow, we believe that parties are going from a fixed picture of their members (which was drawn by Duverger) to a more liquid and permeable one and that in this process ICTs are playing a crucial role.

Let us explore in more detail this membership transformation and the effect played by ICTs on that process. In this light, it is important to depict the characteristics of the classical Duverger’s party membership model shown in figure 1:

![Duverger’s Bullseye Model](image)

In his influential volume on political party organization Maurice Duverger’s diagrammed the mass-branch party as a ring of concentric circles, with member-militants in the center having the strongest partisancies and highest levels of activities, and voters in the outermost ring. Nevertheless, according to Scarrow this picture might be a misleading view of the contemporary parties membership for “parties are responding to declining memberships by blurring boundaries between members and other supporters [...] creating new categories of affiliation for supporters who are not interested in traditional formal membership but who want to be in contact with the party” (Scarrow, 2013: 6). In fact, it is in this specific change of membership conception where according to Professor Scarrow ICTs play an important role in opening the ways how parties can relate with citizens. More precisely, according to Scarrow, the fixed
picture of parties’ membership drawn by Duverger half a century ago might be replaced by a new one (see figure 2) characterized by three factors: a.- Centralization; b.- Digitalization; c.- Accessibility.

In that regard, Scarrow points out that in order to respond to their membership decline, parties have blurred the boundaries between members and supporters who are not interested in formal membership but who want some kind of party contact. From there, she argues that political parties are presently structured by multiple categories of permanent affiliates, a fact that she defines as “the emergence of a Multi-Speed membership parties”.

Last but not least she argues that there are two factors to understand these different modes of affiliation: On the one hand, self-identification which distinguishes them from party voters who just happen to receive mass mailings or a doorstep political visit. These affiliation modes create new types of contact with the party and may lead to different types of engagement, but one type of affiliate is not per se more actively engaged in partisan activities than others; On the other, the use of ICTs which is

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24 According to Professor Scarrow this terms must be defined as it follows: a.- Centralization: The new support categories create direct contact between a national party and its supporters; b.- Digitalization: Most of the new affiliation categories are based on electronic media; c.-Accessibility: Parties’ new affiliation schemes are readily accessible and are low-cost or free to join. Becoming a party Facebook friend, Twitter follower or blog reader generally requires nothing more than basic registration. (Scarrow, 2013: 11-12).
transversal in all the affiliate categories and more clear in some of them such as the cyber-members\textsuperscript{25} or the followers\textsuperscript{26}.

In a nutshell, according to our point of view ICTs may be an organizational instrument to take into account by the European Socialist and Social Democrat parties in order to face one of the harshest challenge that they are witnessing, their membership decline.

\textbf{From collective action to connective action: socialist and social-democrat parties response}

From a political science point of view, the study of collective action has always been a recurrent academic preoccupation. In that regard, the voting behaviour analysis of Downs (1957) is an example of a scientific attempt to uncover the rationale of the political collective action. However, if one should mention a book which shaped the way how scholars approached the relation between organizations and collective action, this would be \textit{The Logic of Collective Action: Public goods and the theory of groups} written by Mancur Olson (1965), for it is still considered a classic reading in order to understand the modern social order of hierarchical institutions and the way how these institutions carry out their collective action. In fact, the thesis of the book is that in any group attempting collective action, individuals will have incentive to “free ride” on the efforts of the others if the group is working to provide public goods. Hence, individuals will not “free ride” in groups which provide benefits only to active participants. Therefore, from that statement what could be derived is that the organizations (and indeed political parties) had to provide to their members those incentives in no matter which form they considered necessary (economic rewards, political pay-offs, etc). In brief, the self-interest approach to the collective action carried out by Olson’s could be considered as the pillar in which many authors afterwards structured their interpretations to that social domain (Tilly, 1978; Olstrom, 1990).

Yet one of the most interesting shifts in studying the relation between organizations and collective action was produced during the last decade of the twentieth century with the increasing role of the Internet. From an academic point of view, many authors started to analyze different aspects related to the effect of the Internet on organizations and on their collective action. In this line of research, Gurak (1997) studied the appearance of new forms of organizing not associated with traditional interests groups, and

\textsuperscript{25} According to Scarrow: “Cyber-members are formally registered party supporters who are generally recruited through a party’s web page […] They may receive special benefits such as password-protected access to web-sites that provide resources for building web-sites and Facebook pages to promote party goals”.

\textsuperscript{26} According to Scarrow: “Followers use Social Networking technology to join a party-led communications network. Generally they do not pay any fees. They receive messages from the party headquarters or party leader via Twitter, a blog, or the party Facebook page. Followers may have opportunities to speak back, for instance by commenting on web postings or by taking part-sponsored surveys. They do not have any obligations towards a party, nor is social network “friendship” exclusive: no rules prohibit individuals from following more than one party” (Scarrow, 2013: 15)
Bennett (2003) and Bimber (2003) analyzed the social movement organizations at the “Network Society” époque (Castells, 2000). Therefore, as Bimber, Stohl and Flanagin pointed out “because the internet and related technologies reduce transaction costs of all kinds, blur boundaries between public and private realms, and make information-intensive tasks and communicative processes and products readily accessible, those actors pursuing the organization of collective action have available to them many alternative forms and strategies. These alternatives are less dependent than in the past on constraints associated with material resources, expertise, location and target of the organizing” (Bimber, Stohl and Flanagin, 2008; in Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics: 73).

Moreover, the former authors also stressed a crucial aspect of this new collective action when they argued that “the role of organization in collective action is in many ways a resurgent problem in light of new technologies of communication and information” (Bimber, Stohl and Flanagin, 2008; in Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics: 75). And then, with regard to the organizational structures, these authors stated that “understanding contemporary forms of mobilization and collective action requires understanding the ways in which organizing processes and structures are being transformed in respond to rapidly changing social, task, and technological environments” (Bimber, Stohl and Flanagin, 2008; in Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics: 76).

By the same token, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) made an academic step forward when talking about collective action, and they differentiate the classic Olson’s collective action tenets with respect to what they call the connective action. To them, the instrument that clearly permits to make this sharp difference is the rise of the digitally networked action (DNA) and the different logic transferred by this network action to the way how the collective action is carried out. In this vein, according to these authors point of view, this connective action differentiates from the Olson’s collective action for as Bennett and Segerberg point out “Connective action networks are typically far more individualized and technologically organized sets of processes that result in action without the requirement of collective identity framing or the levels of organizational resources required to respond effectively to opportunities” (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012:750). In addition, and with regard to the free-ride dilemma posed by Olson, these authors state that “In place of the initial collective action problem of getting the individual to contribute, the starting point of connective action is the self-motivated sharing of already internalized or personalized ideas, plans, images, and resources of networks of others. This sharing may take place in networking sites such as Facebook, or via public media such as Twitter and YouTube” (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012: 753).

In a nutshell, from the literature mentioned above it could be stated that the rise of the network technologies is overturning the way how collective action was carried out and therefore rising many adaptation problems for the hierarchical organizations (such as those of political parties) to this new context of an unmediated, personalized and networked connective action. However, we believe that the recognition of these challenges together with the willingness of the Socialist and Social Democrat parties
to jump on the ICTs train may help them to broaden their organizational resources while increasing their communication channels towards the citizenry.
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IS EUROPEAN LEFT-WING ABLE TO EMBRACE TODAY’S SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?

Teodor Slavev

Critical Reflection in Crisis

Beyond all doubt, the political situation in Europe is critical. The crisis, in all of its dimensions, had given birth to crisis social consciousness which has formed conditions for its generality. The financial crisis transformation in economic and social has triggered a redefinition process of the common European values, of our understandings for public organization; the democracy, at least in its neoliberal version, deficits have come to the fore and even new lifestyles have been rationalized. This process has happened on both national and European level. Actually, due to the crises, the European Union (EU) became the focal point of political discussions. As never before in history, so many people have spoken so much about the European project. National media, politicians and even regular citizens promoted EU topic in their discourses. For example, Greek fiscal problems reverberated throughout the whole Union and turned into a European issue by itself. Among other things, this is in practice an observation of EU’s basic and of utmost importance principle – solidarity.

Despite that however, problems continue their existence and are even further intensifying. EU has been facing extreme distortions of what we were used to call democratic governance. The unprecedented low level of institutional trust (on national and European scale), the populism’s upsurge, the far-right theses making their way into parties’ platforms, the more and more people “falling overboard”, etc. seem not likely to be decisively repulsed by socialist and social democratic parties. In global perspective, EU appears increasingly weak, especially under the pressure of USA’s economic difficulties and BRICS’s' economic expansion. Apparently, the plan drawn for a neoliberal break of the crisis’ deadlock cannot give any alternative solutions for the liberal-democracy political government collapse, albeit it may get EU’s fiscal problems properly under control. That had been happening on the background of continued social protests – that long ago identified themselves as social movements, embracing in a hysteric cuddle the whole European political arena.

At the same, European socialists and social democrats are not able to achieve a categorical support in terms of voter turnout, although there has been some excitement after the French presidential election in 2012. For reasons hard to understand, the most morbid problems of European societies are within the social-economic domain but still voters do not peremptorily support the left proposals for a way out

27 BRICS is an abbreviation, coined by Jim O’Neill, meaning: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
from the economic decline and progressive growth. This raises the question if left wing would likely to
gain electoral support especially in the perspective of 2014 EU elections and if social movement energy
could be transformed into such. The answer then should be based on an analysis of today’s social
movements.

Some Thoughts on Today’s Social Movements

My aim is to scrutinize some of the social movements’ distinctive characteristics that we witness in our
everyday. The attempt is therefore through critical reflection on democratic deficits to rationalize the
internal nature of nowadays social movements and to relate them afterwards to socialist and social
democratic parties. I pose my analysis’ temporal framework after 2011 as in fact European social
movements are inspired by the Occupy movement, which was born in the USA the same year. However,
speculating on today’s social movements requires passing through some of the pillars in the tradition
social movements’ studies.

There are hundreds of definitions of what a social movement is. One of the popular one is coined by
della Porta and Diani: “A social movement can be thought of as an informal set of individuals and/or
groups that are “involved in confliction relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense
informal networks; [and] share a distinct collective identity”\(^{28}\). In a possible classification of the classical
tradition in the study of social movements and collective actions, there could be classified four periods
and predominant scientific approaches and the respective schools engaged in the study of social
movements: (1) 1950-60s: collective behavior theorists; (2) 1960 – 70s: resource mobilization theorists;
(3) 1980-90s: framing and collective identity theorists; (4) since 70s: political process theorists.\(^{29}\) In
theoretical perspective, social movements could be further approached by different theories. According
to the editors of Salem Press “the interdisciplinary history of social movement theory includes six main
areas of study: new social movement theory; value-added theory; structural-strain theory; resource
mobilization theory; mass society theory”\(^{30}\). As far as typology is concerned there have been many efforts
in this direction. One of the most popular models is that of David Aberle, used to understand all kinds of
social movements: from religious to political. Based on two criteria, the changed pursued and the
amount of change pursued, his TRRA model presents four main types of social movements, namely:
transformative, reformative, redemptive and alternative movements.\(^{31}\) Social movements are also
considered either as power-orientated (in service of groups’ larger and ideal goals) or participation-
orientated (individuals seek personal benefits); as normative-orientated (seeking changes within the

2006., p.20

\(^{29}\) Tarrow, S. Power in Movements. Social Movements and Contentious Politics. Cambridge University Press. 2011,
p.21-22

\(^{30}\) Editors of Salem Press. Theories of Social Movements. Salem Press. 2011, p. 27-8

\(^{31}\) Ibid, p. 29-30
current political system) or value-orientated (changing the basic goals of a political system). As a social phenomenon social movements have their life-cycle. Four stages could be stated: (1) emergence, (2) coalescence, (3) bureaucratization and (4) decline.

Basing on this very introductory review on some of the classical aspects of the social movements’ study some distinctive characteristics of today’s social movements emerge. In the European situation we observe a drastic loss of faith in the system’s responsive abilities towards regular people’s needs. This discrepancy – between voters’ expectations and almost identical policy programs proposed in return – is a dangerous contradiction, noticed by Jürgen Habermas. The German theorist postulates in a lecture that a choice between two alternatives is needed: we are trapped in the dilemma between, on the one side, the economic policies required to preserve the euro and, on the other, the political steps to closer integration. The steps that are necessary to achieve this objective are unpopular and meet with spontaneous popular resistance. The Commission’s plans reflect the temptation to bridge, in a technocratic manner, this gulf between what is economically required and what seems to be politically achievable only apart from the people. This approach harbors the danger of a growing gap between consolidating regulatory competences, on the one hand, and the need to legitimize these increased powers in a democratic fashion, on the other. Under the pull of this technocratic dynamic, the European Union would approach the dubious ideal of a market-conforming democracy that would be even more helplessly exposed to the imperatives of the markets because it lacked an anchor in a politically irritable and excitable civil society.

Classical studies explain workers’ class social movements with the term “interest” which lately transform into parties (stage four) and the social movements from the sixties with the terms “value” and “identity” and their loose structure. Today’s social movements differ from this typology as they reject any form of bureaucratization and leadership, while their demands may be unified with the term “interest” (the socio-economic interests of 99% as Occupy claims). If it is accepted that social movements from the sixties are based on post-materialistic values and therefore their motivation is post-materialistic, such a statement may not be valid for 2011 and onwards social movements. Oppositely, a possible claim is that social movements nowadays are motivated by material reasoning, more specifically consumption aspirations. For example, subsequent to the economic growth until 2009 in Great Britain, the crisis brought shrinking public spending for the English society’s poorest parts which resulted into marginalized groups’ grasping that they cannot consume otherwise the highly advertised products. On the night of 7 August 2011 Mark Duggan, 29, is murdered by a policeman in North London. The center of Tottenham, one of London’s poor parts, is literally set on fire by hundreds of rioters who broke in banks.

32 Morrison, D. Some notes toward theory on relative deprivation, social movements, and social change. The American Behavioral Scientist, 14(5), 675. 1971
33 Editors... (2011), p. 15-21
and shops and carried out everything – from I-pads to groceries and books. This is extremely symptomatic for the protests’ motivation and their first distinctive characteristic – the limited consumption and exclusion from material resources. In fact, the “new consumers” cast aside a capitalistic system, propagandizing unlimited consumption as a result of individual competences. After the welfare state’s collapse in Europe, the recession and the increasing unemployment, an identifying mark of the social movement become their anti-capitalistic character while keeping the consumption aspirations. In this regard, social protests are litmus for the crisis of neoliberal capitalism with the ending of mass consumption of newly arriving products but not only.

Social movements feed the sustainment of durable social relations, which are grounded on the pursuit of collective resolve of a certain social problem in an alternative way, i.e. in contrast with the imposed by the political ruling body. Another distinctive characteristic of today’s social movements is the far easier ways to sustain those relations by the options new social media offer – to be included with the rest all the time and to attend debates virtually. New social movements stimulate a new understanding of civil society – at least in the part of new cyber-civil society.

While defining the stratification profile of social movements from the sixties, Claus Offe maintains that they are disposed in civil society’s domain and are the main arena for collective action – a “bypass of state” as he calls it. The complex class structure of 60s’ new social movements, he says, is a three-component, including the new middle class, elements from the old middle class and marginal groups out of the market. Here a new difference becomes visible. The current social movements range representatives from all social classes and strata – from students to entrepreneurs. They all protest against such an organization of democratic governance, they feel equally underrepresented, and the sensation for a life on the edge is ubiquitous, no matter the social status.

Toward the core question on if left-wing parties would be able to embrace social movements very interesting conclusions by Pippa Norris comes to the front. Basing on the World Value Survey’s data Norris finds out that between the mid 1970s and mid 1990s there had been “rise of protest politics [that] is by no means confined to postindustrial societies and established democracies”. Taking as exemplary model environmental activism in regard to new social movements and basing on the same survey some characteristic of 1970s-90s movements are outlined also: “participation in new social movements [was] measured by environmental activism, which proved to be negatively related to voting turnout, but positively linked to party membership, civic activism and protest politics”. If European Left Wing will be able to embrace the social movements of today and if such efforts are useful to be made depends solely on the social and social-democratic parties.

38 Ibid, p.211-212
A Way Out: Traps and Opportunities before the European Left Wing

There is something ironic in the way social movements look at left political forces – they do not trust socialist parties and in fact parties at all. The irony is that the socialist parties themselves originate from working class’s social movement. Therefore, I dare to say that nowadays exist two left wings – the one is political and the other is social. The intellectual intuition is hence that the political left wing should be also a social left wing – to admit new social movements’ aims. It would be a harsh process as social movements do not see left parties as their ally. However, the analysis should begin with clarifying what motivated such a division.

I examine these issues in relation to that why the so called by Pierre Bourdieu “left hand” of politics is less and rarely engaged in the process of construction of our social world. Basing on Bourdieu’s ideas I will stress on few explanatory elements that I define as important and potentially bringing adverse tendencies. In general, the main problem is in the fully and gradually destruction of social democracy ideas and socialistic ideal. Thus, currently the European project’s evolution is risking to transform in “social demolition”. The recent European left wing’s retreat from left-orientated policies has also contributed to that. Even throughout the periods when European socialists have en masse been winning elections and the opportunity to realize their governmental strategies, they did not took that chance for implementing social policies but concentrating on issues as monetary stability and budgetary austerity. It has appeared that socialist and social democrat parties, when in power, use socialist symbolism only opportunistically in order to build their PR campaigns. It may be concluded that since left governments do not do anything in practice to implement the politics they preach, especially when all resources and conditions are near at hand, therefore they just do not want that politics. So, they cannot represent and hence mobilize citizens, uniting them in a social force capable to demand and impose such politics.

There is a serious problem that Europe is facing and it is a historical duty for socialist to oppose the negative consequences of the crisis. The far-right thesis, hate speech, racism, anti-immigrants and nationalistic prompts are occupying the European public discourse. The issue becomes even more problematic when studies show that far-right theses are likely to be backed-up by individuals, perceived to traditionally belong to left electorate. “Disturbing signs suggest that the postwar synthesis of economic expansion and liberal politics that brought social peace to the North and a pax Americana to the South is ending (…) Rightwing parties such as the French Front National, the Flemish Vlaams Belang, and the Austrian Freedom party, as well as skinhead violence, have gained support from those suffering from rising unemployment and anti-immigrant phobia.” What is at stake for the European socialist and social-democratic parties? First of all, a new progressive utopia has to be rationalized to fresh the socialistic ideal. It shall include incentives for a better future and society, based on the deep roots of

40 Tarrow, S. Power in... 2011, p. 267
socialist thought. On this mobilizing field however socialists meet another barrier – the intensifying insecurity in European societies. Insecurity thoroughly affects all, making future unclear and does not permit rational anticipation for a better tomorrow. In general, such collective mentality is innate for less develop countries, however the economic breakdown and the high percent of unemployed (or temporarily employed) in recent years stroke down many EU members. That is why the social movement’s strongest manifestations in European countries are where there are high levels of unemployment like Spain and Greece. A new social utopia, of an egalitarian, progressive and welfare Europe, has the potential to include successfully the syndicates and the unemployed, to activate them, providing the ideological basis.

This idea lays on constantly growing and multiplying groups who need their adequate political representation, who need to be given the “left hand of politics”. Socialists must necessarily, through collective and organized actions, initiate attempts to keep or restore the solidarities, threatened by the game of economic powers. However theory of representative democracy stipulates that those groups will not be constructed as a force until they disclaim some of their rights and transfer them to political representatives. This antinomy refers to the oppressed as “the superiors exist always, while oppressed exist only when they mobilize and provide themselves with representation instruments” 41. Finally, we come to the historically determined conclusion that “there is not social politics without social movement” 42 which have to be uphold, demanded and imposed.

It is rightful yet unfortunate to confess that all parties from left-right political spectrum are discredited. The party-ideological representation crisis leads to a condition that Collin Crouch calls postdemocracy and he gives a very logical explanation for left political forces’ ideological vacuum: “The manual working class had begun the century as the future battering on the door, representing the collective interest in an age damaged by individualism: it brought the message of universal citizenship, and the possibilities of mass consumption in a society that knew only luxury goods for the rich and subsistence for the poor. By the end it represented history’s losers: advocacy of the welfare state began to take the form of special appeals for compassion, not universal demands for citizenship. During the course of a century the class had described its parabola.” 43 Losing its traditional electoral supporters, due to global labor transformations, progressive parties orientated towards defining a new electorate. This process happened on the account of (neo)liberal ideas slipping in socialist parties’ political behavior that eventually brought us in an unenviable situation. The people from the demos are pushed aside from public affairs by the economically powerful. The mighty business lobbies (also called influential, business circles, big corporations) are simultaneously key economic and political actors, i.e. instead of parties to be the decisive factor, in neoliberal conditions, the general decisions are dictated by key minorities.

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42 P. Bourdieu, Contre..., p. 116
43 C. Crouch, Postdemocracy, St. Kliment Ohridski University Press 2012, p.66
In conclusion, the answer of the question if it is possible the political and social wings to “embrace” each other is positive. This could happen if joint actions are taken on European scale to ensure that all gain (or at least the majority) and live in harmony and solidarity. This is also possible on global level with the leading role of EU in implementing the World Social Forum’s slogan: “Another World is Possible”. A debate about an alternative to the Washington consensus agreement would clear the way for fresh ideas. I share Bernard Cassen’s opinion for the capacities of a social movement to reestablish the Union on progressive basis\textsuperscript{44}. A great intellectual and political work in the formulation of its imperatives is ahead.

\textsuperscript{44} B. Cassen, \textit{Désobéissance civique pour une Europe de gauche}, [in] Le Monde diplomatique. October, 2012. 
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Introduction
Social democratic parties have been suffering during the last years one of their worst moments in their political history. Socialist and social democratic parties -including labour and other progressive ones- have gathered a long list of election defeats either at national and European level. Europe is under a conservative government’s dominance, which dictates regressive policies not only in the European Council, and through their Commissioners, but also in the European Parliament, which is dominated too by a conservative majority.

Social democratic parties face common challenges, that can be summarize in one: to become credible and attractive for their voters, so that they could be able to win again the elections in order to carry out progressive policies. For this achievement, deep reforms are needed. The European society has vastly changed in the last years, and the political parties have fallen behind the changes as the tool to canalize the citizens’ demands and concerns. And following that, many European socialist and social democratic parties have been carrying on modernizing and reforming processes within their organizations.

This paper aims to analyze these reforming processes implemented by the social democratic parties in Europe to modernize their structures according to the citizens’ demands and in order to reconnect with their traditional voters and to reach new supporters after the impact of the information and communication technologies.

The study methodology for this paper is based on the qualitative research techniques, like the in-depth analysis of the working documents of the Parties, the websites, and the papers elaborated by the different progressive think-tanks; and the qualitative research interview with the key actors of these reform processes. Thus, the majority of the data is primary source.

45 The author wants to thank the Party of European Socialists and the national parties that appear in the paper for facilitating the interviews and for the valuable information provided.
The parties' reforms analyzed are all from member parties of the Party of European Socialists (PES): from France, SPD from Germany, PD from Italy, PS from Portugal, PSOE from Spain, SAP Sweden and LP from United Kingdom.

**Context of Modernizing Processes**

The context in which the analyzed political parties have carried out their internal reforms have many similarities, taking place always right after an important election defeat: it is always due to that dramatic moment when the parties realize that for recovering their voters' confidence a deep process of modernization is needed. All the parties aim to become more transparent and attractive to a new society that have changed a lot in the last years and claim for new ways to canalize their demands through the political organizations. Finally, most of the analyzed processes are medium and long term designed: between 3 and 20 years.

The titles of these processes have many common elements, using the words "change", "ideas", “new beginning”, "future", "refounding", “work”, “win”, etc. All of them with the same meaning: reforming the parties to win the next elections.

**Titles of modernizing processes:**

- **PES:** "Progressive Societies in the 21st Century"
- **BSP-Bulgarian Socialist Party:** "For Bulgaria, free citizens, fair state, society of solidarity"
- **CSSD Czech Republic:** "2014: A new beginning for our country"
- **SD Denmark:** "Denmark from here to 2032"
- **PS France:** "Laboratory of ideas"\(^{46}\)
- **PvdA Netherlands:** "Of Value"
- **DNA Norway:** "From here to 2029"
- **PS Portugal:** "Laboratory of Ideas and Proposals for Portugal"\(^{47}\)
- **PSOE Spain:** "Winning the Future"\(^{48}\)
- **SAP Sweden:** "Work for the Future"
- **LP UK:** "Refounding labour to Win"\(^{49}\)

Although the current study took into account all these reforms, the majority of the innovative measures analyzed in depth come from the French PS, the SPD, the PD, the UK Labour and the Spanish PSOE.

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\(^{48}\) PSOE Spain: [http://www.ganarseelfuturo.es/inicio](http://www.ganarseelfuturo.es/inicio)

\(^{49}\) LP UK: [http://www.campaignengineroom.org.uk/refounding-labour](http://www.campaignengineroom.org.uk/refounding-labour)
In spite of these nominal similarities, the current analyses shows that there are many differences among these reforms’ processes, due to the different national contexts and to the internal political culture of each party. There are three groups of modernizing processes:

1. Totally opened modernizing process, to the Party members and to the citizens that want to participate through a direct query -survey, online questionnaire or voting in their local sections-;
2. Processes only opened to Party members and to specific people outside the party (academics, researchers and some civil society organizations close to them);
3. Processes "closed" to its Party members as the only entitled to give a say on how the Party should function.

Main Issues of Modernizing Processes

Each of the analyzed modernizing processes has their own elements, according with the different diagnosis and the potential solutions that each Party has achieved and want to offer to their members and supporters.

This article will pose five big organic areas of organizational innovation, no the only ones, that should be taking into account for all the parties that would like to implement any modernizing process. These five areas are: 1) new ways of electing the Party leaders and the candidates, especially through open primary elections; 2) new ways of affiliation and funding; 3) new ways of participating in the decision making process of the Parties; 4) diversity and internal structure; and 5) tools to improve ethics and transparency.

It is important to state the crucial role that the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT’s) have played in the last years, not only in the relation between political parties and society but in the society itself. Esteve points it out very well while quoting Castells, saying that one of the main challenges that the socialist and social democratic parties are dealing with is the necessity to adapt their organizations to the Network Society. Hence, the ICT’s have completely and for good changed our relations, work, hobbies and entire lifes.

One of the most currently analyzed topics in the political sciences is the impact of new technology in the way of making politics, the well known “2.0 politics” that quickly changed the way the political parties communicate with citizens but also communications as a whole.

It is not enough to have a modern website, it is necessary to be present in all major social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and most recently Instagram or Vine. According to the prominent role of this

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instrument, the ICT’s won’t be analyzed in a separate title in this paper but treated as a crosscutting concept. Its potential is undeniable.

**The open Primaries can be a very successful tool, controlling the risks, and they are linked to the party leader election**

One of the main elements among the analyzed parties is the way they elect their candidates, specifically the top candidates and the Leader (most of the times the Party leader and the candidate for the Presidential or National elections are the same but not always).

There are three electing ways: a) open primaries, in which all members and citizens who register to vote could decide; b) closed primaries, in which only members could vote; and c) Party congresses, in which the top candidate or Leader is designated by the vote of a specific number of member delegates.

Among the three options, it goes without saying that the newest and most revolutionary one is the open primaries among all the progressive citizens to elect the top candidate or the Party leader.

The first European progressive Party to implement this mechanism was the Partito Democratico when, in October 2005, organized open primaries in which over four million Italians went to cast a vote. Romano Prodi won this primary election with over 70% of the votes and became the PD candidate for the 2006 National election. Since then, the PD has consolidated this instrument and has celebrated three primary elections more to elect its top candidates: in 2007 between Walter Veltroni (winner) and Rosy Bindi, in 2009 between Pier Luigi Bersani (winner) and Dario Fraschini and in 2012 between Pier Luigi Bersani (winner) and Mateo Renzi. After Bersani’s resignation, in December 2013, the PD celebrated new primaries to elect the new Party leader among Matteo Renzi (winner), Gianni Cuperlo and Giuseppe Civati.

After the PD, the French Socialist Party -together with the Radical Party of the Left- organized in 2011 a double round open primary to elect their candidate for the 2012 Presidential election. This project came after two years of consulting, debating and working on a deep modernizing process of the PS, which started on 2009 with a consultation to their members. In this consultation, the board of the PS asked the members about five questions related with the modernization of the Party, the first one on the open primaries. Over 92.000 PS members went to cast a vote (which represents around 45% of turnout), 68% in favor of the open primaries.

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After that, the board of the PS prepared the rules for the open primaries\(^\text{52}\). The filing deadline for primary nomination papers was fixed at 13 July 2011 and six candidates -François Hollande, Martine Aubry, Arnaud Montebourg, Ségolène Royal, Manuel Valls and Jean-Michel Baylet- competed in the first round. On 9 October 2011 no candidate won 50% of the votes and the two better candidates contested a runoff election on 16 October 2011: François Hollande (57%) won the election defeating Martine Aubry (43%). In the two rounds, 2.7 million French citizens went to cast a vote, which constituted a great mobilization and a democratization success.

Following these examples, some other European socialist parties have thought in the open primaries as a good tool to modernize their structures. The Spanish PSOE announced in its Political Conference of November 2013 that will organize an open primary to elect its candidate for the next National election. They would take place most probably on the 30\(^\text{th}\) November 2014. In the PSOE modernizing processes, like in the French PS, this is one of the main modernizing elements but not the only one.

Some other progressive parties used the second way of electing the top candidate, the closed primary election, like the Belgian Sp.a, the Danish SD, the Irish Labour Party, the PvdA of Netherlands, the PS of Portugal and the UK Labour Party. The case of UK’s Labour party leadership election is specific as three electoral colleges, each accounting for one third of the votes, participate in this primary election: Labour members of Parliament and of the European Parliament, party members and members of affiliated organizations such as trade unions.

The other parties analyzed here elected their Leaders in Party Congresses.

We can see by the successful examples of the Italian PD and the French PS how powerful this resource can be, as they achieved to mobilizing millions of progressive people before the elections, after years of infighting and political irrelevance of these parties. However, these two successes cannot lead us to see only the positive effects of this system (which are many), but it is also very important to take into account many elements to avoid risks and in order to succeed: number of rounds, census, funding of candidates, election authority, etc.

Furthermore, together with the election of the top candidates, it is also essential to face up the election of the Party leader. The theory and the studied cases show that an opening reform cannot go without other reform. If the decision to choose the candidate for the general elections can be taken by all left-wing citizens (through open primaries), the choice of the party leader cannot be left only to delegates at a congress or convention. The interest for members to keep paying their fees would disappear dramatically. Therefore, it is recommended to link the decision of Primary to the opening of the party leader choice to the whole party membership.

\(^{52}\) PS Primaries Mode d’emploi: [http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/articles/les-primaires-mode-d-emploi](http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/articles/les-primaires-mode-d-emploi)
To stop loosing members, it is necessary to make affiliation easier, modify the fees system and try to keep the existing members

All the European social democratic parties share a dramatic and constant loss of members during the last decades, which together with the last bad election results have directly influenced in their amount of available resources. At the same time, with this loss the parties also lose the social, cultural and intellectual internal variety that used to have. Furthermore, some academic studies, like Micus\(^\text{53}\) (FES, 2010) state that the social democratic parties' affiliates base have shifted during the last years from a manual workers' generation to an educated middle class and liberal professionals. However, in many cases the Parties' structures have not changed or reduced its size at the same rate than its membership.

In spite of this, Micus thinks that the parties' membership could also be benefited from the loss of votes if we take into account the parties funding issue as a reference. Thus, he states that the bad election results produce a decrease on the state compensations to the political parties, which are based on the number of obtained votes. Because of that, they should restructure their funding sources with an increasement of the membership contributions in relation with the total of the parties' incomes and therefore their influence should also -in theory- be increased.

Anyway, it seems necessary to improve the ways of affiliation and to introduce new types of quotas, according with the different profiles and needs of the affiliates. Thus, in the analyzed parties there are some innovative ways of quotas for the membership in order to attract new profiles -or avoiding losing full members-. For example, the French PS introduced a cheaper quota of 20€ for the first year of membership; or the German SPD has introduced a gradual quota system according with the income of the members, and also a special low quota (2.5€ per month) for students, pensioners and unemployed members. In the case of PSOE, after an deep analysis of its census, they proved that many members were unregistered for economic reasons, so they decided to introduce more flexibility in the quotas payment reducing their amount for unemployed, pensioners and employed people earning less than the minimum wage.\(^\text{54}\) Although the effectiveness of these new measures cannot still be valued, it seems to be a good way to make the affiliation more attractive to the ones that are a bit reluctant to enter to political parties or to the ones that want to do it (or want to keep inside of them) and are not able because of lack of resources.

On the other side, the open primaries are also a good tool to attract new supporters, as everybody who registers himself or herself to vote is automatically included in the supporters’ census of the Party. Many of them won’t be active anymore, but there is an important part that will remain being active supporters or even becoming full members.

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\(^{53}\) MICUS, 2010. Organisational Identity and Reform of Social Democratic Parties in Europe”. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Furthermore, it was proven that younger people are no longer so much involved in their local politics, but they are more interested in different sectorial issues like education, employment, environment, international affairs, social media, culture, etc. This is why the introduction of sectorial organizations inside the Party, which will function exactly in the same way, with the same organizational rules, as the local sections is a very good option to attract new members. PSOE introduced them many years ago, in the last big modernizing process almost 10 years ago, and it was a good step to take. However, there are still some changes to do to put on the same level them to the territorial sections, as for the moment the members cannot be registered in a sectorial organization directly, but through a local section.

Finally, the main challenge is not only to attract new members, but also to keep those already existing. In this sense, there is a good initiative of the SPD, which has created a specific figure for this called the “Member Representative”, and in some local sections of PSOE the Training Secretaries use to organize courses for the new members about the functioning, values and rules of the Party. However, more attention should be payed to the new members during the first months, as it is the crucial moment when a good or bad image of the internal functioning determines their continuity inside the organization.

Members are no longer interested in making amendments or campaigns only, new channels of participation are needed
One of the most repeated complaints, and that has deeply damaged the political parties' image in the last years, is the idea of lack of internal democracy, of opacity in the decision making processes. The members and supporters ask for more participation channels, besides the traditional processes of amendments and voting on the electoral lists. But these demands are very often bidirectional. This means that the affiliates not only asked for more voice in the party, to canalize their demands, but to be really listened, considered and –very important- answered.

The parties' members and supporters want to participate in the important decisions of their parties, and most of them are not satisfied doing it only through amendments to documents prepared by the same people or the high bodies, or voting delegates that will represent them in the important events, like Councils or Congresses to elect the Leader or the Candidate.

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) have opened new channels of participation, especially to be used by the young people but not only, that must be promoted in innovative and more transparent ways. Thus, the ICT's can be the best channel to ask the membership and supporters their opinion on certain issues, to listen to their demands, comments and ideas, and to provide them with information and digital materials in order to keep them updated.

Therefore, some parties, like the SPD, have decided to offer the possibility of calling referendums to ask members on specific issues. These referendums can be called when the 10% of the members ask for it.
The postal vote is admitted. This is a good way to make the members feel that their opinion is important, especially for crucial and sensitive issues.

On the other side, the Labour Party created in 1997 a very interesting tool for the participation of their members called “Partnership into power”. This is a system to prepare its electoral program that takes almost 3 years, in which everybody (members, supporters, trade unions and civil society) can participate. The Party presents a basis document at the beginning of the process and all who want to participate can do it through amendments and proposals during 2 years. The process ends with a big Conference that approves the Party manifesto for the next elections.

In spite of all the benefits that the new channels of participation have, it is important to take into account that this dialogue should be bidirectional. This means that the tools created to listen the members’ demands, complaints or proposals should be used as well by the leaders and Party representatives to answer, explain and talk in a virtual dialogue with the members and supporters.

**Parties should resemble the most to their societies, which are varied and plural**

Most of the social democratic parties have structures designed in the nineteenth century. Though they have stood the test of time and have been able to renew and adapt themselves to the present, many of the studied cases proved to be outdated in relation to its members and their voters.

These structures hold the parties and can be compared to the human skeleton, so they must be solid and strong in order to bear the pass of the time -and the blows-. Thus, they should be adapted to the new political and social realities, which are plural and diverse.

Most of the analyzed reforms in this regard have been focused on reducing the size of the decision-making bodies (like the Executive Boards) and increasing the size of the control or debating bodies. For example, the French PS has reduced the size of its National Council (the most important Party body between Congresses) to 130 members and the Executive Board to 45. In the same line, the SPD has reduced its Executive Board from 50 to 35 members, the Party Council has been substituted by a Party Convention with 200 members which now meets twice a year -with no media allowed to ensure a true debate among the affiliates-, and the Party Conference has increased its delegates from 480 to 600.

The other big change that the socialists and social democratics are currently taking has the aim to increase the diversity of political parties, making them more similar to their societies, which are generally peer, with several generations and plural, especially in regard to the origin place. In this regard, the majority of the analyzed case studies have introduced several measures focused in trying to increase the number of women, young and migrant origin people in the political parties. These three groups are the common not only among the national progressive parties but also including the Party of European
Socialists as well. These initiatives to make the Parties more plural are specially based in the quotas, which are the quickest and most effective tool of affirmative action, especially in politics.\footnote{Inter-parlamentary Union: \url{http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm}}

In this regard, the PSOE goes one step further of the rest of the socialist parties, as it introduced important measures to diversify its Party structures in the previous organizational reform (between 2000 and 2004) like the creation of a sectorial organization for people with migrant origin and the female quota to foster the role of the women in the lists and the structures of the Party. In the last reform process, it has introduced the compulsory so-called “zip lists” in all the candidacies of the Party, which is a pure gender balanced list, 50%-50% with alternate positions.\footnote{PSOE: \url{https://www.psoe.es/zaragozasfuertes/news/691152/page/psoe-propone-una-nueva-ley-electoral-con-listas-cremallera-obligatorias.html}}

The French PS has always been against any ethnic or confessional quota to elaborate its election lists. However, it has noticed an important representative shortfall among several social sectors, mainly among women, foreigners, French citizens with migrant origin and young people. At the same time, it seems clear that these groups should be the strongest basis of the Party. Thus, in their modernizing process, the PS fixed two aims for the elections of 2012: a) to include as much young candidates as possible and some others from popular neighbourhoods, trade unions and associations; b) to achieve the gender parity through at least the 40% of the elected deputies women.\footnote{It is sadly surprising that the Report from the “Comission de la Renovation” of the PS, that was in charge of elaborating the reform process of 2012, states that the French PS was fined with 2.5 million europs during the last legislative term due to it failed to complete the gender parity law.}

Likewise, the SPD, in spite of being the first German Party that introduced the female quota, it thinks it is not enough and has worked to feminize more the Party. Thus, they took two measures: a) regarding the public representation, it established that in the next elections to the Bundestag the 40% of the candidates in the SPD lists must be women; and b) regarding the internal life, a new online platform was created (\url{https://www spd-fem.net/}) in order to stimulate the participation of women -especially the young women- in the daily activities and debates of the Party, while conciliating the labour and private life. In relation with the young members, the SPD has decided to strengthen the thematic organizations of the Party, as they have noticed that the young members because of their internal mobility (inside the Party but also around the country) are more interested in specific topics than in the local issues. Likewise, the reform established that all the Party bodies must be integrated by the 15% of immigrants although the interviewed actors affirmed that this measure would be very difficult to accomplish, due to the wide definition of “immigrant” and many other obstacles.

It goes without saying that these initiatives are not only designed to make the parties more diverse and similar to their societies, but also as an election tool regarding these three target groups.
It is essential to apply measures to promote ethical practices and transparency within the party
One of the topics that parties have to face up, and try to solve urgently, is the high political disaffection, due to the image of poor transparency and false practices of the political force. Concerning this issue, people make no difference between political parties but social democratic parties should make an extra effort to apply measures that aim to cleanse the party of all unethical practices, being relentless with their implementation.

Unfortunately, the studied cases did not provide many examples of initiatives in this subject. The French PS has introduced two measures in this sense: one of them is the figure creation of High Ethics Authority, which is in charge of enforcing the ethics rules of the Party for all its members. This High Authority is totally independent from the Party and from the different families’ interests in order to be sure that its decisions are indisputable. The second one is the fight against the accumulation of mandates and public responsibilities through the implementation of the so-called “unique parliamentary mandate”. This initiative involve two things: a) one deputy or senator cannot be at the same time Mayor of a town or city; and b) limitation of three mandates on a row for the local executive Presidents.

Besides that, there is an interesting idea of the British Labour Party called “Candidate Contract”, which aims that the candidates show the Party (at the level of the correspondent election) that she/he is involved in her/his community during the whole period for which has been elected. With this Contract, the Party quantifies how many doors has the candidate (and after elected member) knocked, how many contacts has had with the citizens, with the associations, etc. This is of course very important in a majoritarian system like the British one, where the deputies by a constituency must not forget it once they are elected. If the deputy does not carry out with the contract requirements, the Party won’t include him/her in the lists for the next elections. Although it is a very innovative way of accountability, it can be also seen not as an idea to promote ethics and transparency but to control its members.

There is still much work to be done on this subject, both in the national parties, and also at European level. Citizens are not only the ones to ask for more transparency, but the members themselves, who often show upset seeing that their representatives are not ethical enough and that the party leadership should hardly act against these practices.

Conclusions
This paper aimed to analyse, from a very direct way fruit of the author professional experience and with primary sources, the key elements of the recent modernizing processes of the socialist, social democratic and labour European parties. There is no doubt that the European progressive parties had a vital need of
reforming, innovating, updating and adapting themselves to the new social and political realities after many crucial changes to which they had to react and give answer.

The current analysis has found many similarities among the studied cases, specially concerning the context of the reforming processes and the key elements of it. Nonetheless, there are also important differences product of the different political culture and national realities, which allow several degrees of speed and ambition in the implementation of the changes.

Five elements of modernization were selected for the analysis of the processes, which are not the only ones but the most shared and significant ones. In this regard, the issue of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT’s), due to its importance and its wide scope, has been treated not as another thematic but as a crosscutting element. In all these five key elements, the ICT’s have a crucial role in the innovation and possibilities to modernize the Party politics.

The analysis has found that the reforms that the socialist and social democratic European parties have been taking during the last years go in the good direction, are quite ambitious and cover a wide range of topics.

One of the issues more attractive to the media is the one related to the open primaries to select the candidates, with the main examples of the Italian PD and the French PS. The current study -and specially the election results- show that this is a very powerful and successful tool to mobilize the left wing voters and supporters that had separate themselves from these parties the last years. The PSOE has taken good note of that and taking into account the last election defeat it has decided to introduce as well this instrument to elect its candidate for the next national elections. However, the progressive parties should take this tool with caution, evaluate its risks and avoid mistakes with very strict rules, an independent and empowered Authority that monitors the process and a good census to avoid double voting.

Regarding the funding, the most repeated measure among the analysed cases is the increase of the flexibility for the fees according with the economic situation of the affiliates, especially for pensioners and unemployed people, but also to attract new members.

The ways to answer to the members’ demands of more participation in the decision making process of the Party Boards are much more unclear and not well defined by the analysed cases. The only noted tool is the referendum for crucial issues adopted by some parties or the “Partnership into Power” of the Labour Party to include not only the members but also supporters and civil society in the elaboration of its election programme for a period of 3 years. Much more ambition and imagination should be used in this area to increase not only the participation of the members but the dialogue with the leaders and elected members of the Party.
Concerning the need to make the internal structures of the progressive parties much more similar to the societies, there are three common elements among all the studied cases. Thus, the main measure in this area has been the introduction (or the improving of it) of quotas for women, youngsters and people with migrant origin. This is a very effective tool to quickly increase the ratio of these three groups in the Party bodies and in the election lists, but should not be the only one. The affirmative actions should be accompanied by other long-term measures, like the possibility to follow debates and meetings of the Party sections online in order to facilitate the political and personal life.

Finally, on the ethics and transparency field, the only interesting measures found by the author are the fight against the accumulation of mandates and public responsibilities through the limitation of positions and mandates in a row of the French PS, or the “candidate Agreement” of the Labour Party. Taking into account the importance of the current political disaffection that the majority of the political parties suffer, more measures are needed in this area.
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This section argues that the decline of party membership is an opportunity to rethink how political parties can organise political participation. The section argues that a pluralistic approach to party supporters involving the creation of several party organisations and different types of party membership, despite the conflict potential and risk of fragmentation of party support, is necessary in order to increase party membership in the future. Think tanks constitute one alternative organisation model that can stimulate political participation by acting as a ‘critical friend’ of progressive parties.

The decline of party membership and a call for organisational pluralism
This section indicates that party membership is in decline and asks what can be done to rekindle participation in political parties. It argues that parties need to accept that members are likely to participate with different levels of activity and in different aspects of politics. Progressive parties should cater to these diverse demands by developing different types of membership and organisations that members and supporters can engage through. As an example think tanks can serve the role of engaging critical friends of political parties.

There is no denying that membership of political parties in Europe has seen better days. Indeed, in the vast majority of EU member states, party membership is in structural decline and in core EU countries party membership measured as a percentage of the total electorate has reached unprecedented low levels. In Germany only 2.30 % of the electorate were members of political parties in 2007, in France the proportion was 1.85 % in 2009 and in the UK 1.21 % in 2008. These party membership rates are not only low. The fact that the vast majority of the electorate are not members of a political party constitutes a democratic challenge. Two consequences might be drawn from the decline in party membership. The first is the radical conclusion that political parties have outplayed their role in post-modern democracy. The second consequence, that is emphasised in this section, is more pragmatic and suggests that parties need to find new

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ways of engaging with citizens that are not bound to the full commitments and financial costs of membership but affiliate people in less committing and more varied ways. This means developing an umbrella of party affiliated organisations, some of which must remove ‘members only’ signs and engage with the concerns of relevant segments of the electorate on various platforms.

One of the barriers to renewing party participation is related to the loose connection between party membership and electoral performance. Below is a map of Europe in which The Guardian newspaper in the UK has coded EU member state governments as neutral (grey), left wing (red) or right wing (blue) as of December 2013. ⁵⁹ Although there is not a majority of left wing governments, the left is doing better than for example in the February 2012 when only four EU member states (Belgium, Austria, Denmark and Cyprus) had left wing governments. Although progressive parties in Europe captured more governments in the golden years around 2000 than now, there is not a structural decline in electoral performance for progressive parties. In other words there seems to be little electoral evidence to support the ‘End of Social Democracy’ thesis. ⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Bernhard Wessels, "Is There Any Truth in the Thesis of the End of Social Democracy?" (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010).
In the process of winning elections and governing, some progressive political parties have openly abandoned their ideological orientation. In Denmark, the Social Democratic Minister of Finance, Bjarne Corydon for example has stated in newspaper interviews this year that it is ‘definitely misconceived to understand the Social Democrats as a left wing party’\(^{\text{61}}\) and that the ‘competitive state’, a policy concept which argues for directing government practices to make citizens more productive whether through investments in education, research or technology\(^{\text{62}}\), is the new version of the welfare state.\(^{\text{63}}\)

On the one hand the pragmatic orientation of progressive parties can be seen as a modernisation of social democracy and an indication that parties are capable of adapting to changing times. Furthermore the orientation towards the middle of politics makes strategic sense in a Downsian perspective in the sense that capturing the median voter is the most obvious way of achieving electoral success.

On the other hand pragmatic strategies blur the differences between progressive and liberal parties. Also it can be argued that the strategy to capture the middle ground of politics leads to

\(^{\text{62}}\) Ove Kaj Pedersen, Konkurrencestaten [the Competitive State] (Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2011).
a normative concern with technocracy and epistocracy, namely that the contestation built in to policy-making is concealed and that conflict and alternatives to the existing order are excluded from everyday politics. This in turn risks alienating voters and party members. The pragmatism associated with capturing the middle ground of politics makes it unclear how exactly progressive politics is different from the status quo and what the impact of progressive government are. To take a few examples the Labour Party in the UK, the German SPD and the Danish Social Democrats all refer frequently to the notion of ‘fairness’ in party programmes but there is little agreement on what fairness entails. There is no systematic answer to the difficult questions concerning fairness for whom (working citizens as well as unemployed migrants, elderly, homeless?), at what levels of spending (minimum income?) and on what legal basis (citizenship, human rights?).

Disagreement on the political left is certainly not a new phenomenon. The pragmatic strategies that progressive parties use to capture power and govern do however raise the reflexive problem that progressives have a challenge in agreeing on what to (dis)agree about and in particular that engaging members in this process is challenging. In other words getting the leaders and members of progressive parties to ‘start at the same page’ seems to be a real challenge for progressive parties especially at the transnational arena in the EU. One way of appealing to a diverse membership base is for parties to embrace affiliated organisations such as think tanks more systematically and openly.

**Think tanks as one organisational form of new political engagement in the network society**

In view of the electoral pragmatism described in the above, an important question concerns how contestation and engagement can feed into political party supporters and the extent to which intra-partisan democracy should be supplemented by open, public contestation. One important task concerns finding out what progressive parties want their members to do. Here frames need to be defined that are open enough to allow some space for members to develop new ideas yet precise enough for members to know what sort of contributions parties are looking for. Political parties activate members and supporters in different ways including:

- Allowing party members to vote on salience issues or leaders for parties as in the case of the German SPD, Labour in the UK and Socialdemokraterne in Denmark. This carries

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potentials to strengthen internal democracy because it illustrates to party members that their voices are actually heard.\footnote{Fabio Wolkenstein, “The Spd’s ‘Referendum’ on the German Coalition Agreement Poses Legitimate Problems, but It Could Also Reaffirm Citizens’ Confidence in Party Politics,” (LSE: EUROPP: European Politics and Policy, 2013).}

- Using deliberation at conferences or gatherings to engage members and develop new suggestions as in the case of the Institut Solidarische Moderne in Germany.
- Organising the party itself as a (digital) network as in the case of the Pirate Party in Germany.

This section argues that member-oriented think tanks can provide one additional way of organising political participation that can help renew political participation in the network society. Think tanks have emerged most strongly in the context of the United States where the American scholar Paul Dickson in the 1970s traced the origins of the think tank concept in America as far back as the 1830s when the US Secretary of the Treasure contracted the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia to study why steam boat boilers kept exploding.\footnote{Donald E. Abelson, A Capitol Idea: Think Tanks and Us Foreign Policy (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).: 49f. Paul Dickson, Think Tanks (New York: Ballatine, 1972).}

James McGann and Ken Weaver relate think tanks to the development of civil societies because of their:

‘... critical roles, including: (1) playing a mediating function between the government and the public; (2) identifying, articulating, and evaluating current or emerging issues, problems or proposals; (3) transforming ideas and problems into policy issues; (4) serving as an informed and independent voice in policy debates; and (5) providing a constructive forum for the exchange of ideas and information between key stakeholders in the policy formulation process.’\footnote{J. G. McGann and R. K. Weaver, eds., Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 3.}

Despite these promises, many think tanks serve more ideological and elite functions in democracies. It has been argued that think tanks ‘...can no longer be perceived as detached observers of American politics. On the contrary, they have vested interests in participating, directly and indirectly, in the conversations taking place between the power-brokers at Capitol Hill, in the White House, and in the sterile corridors of bureaucratic departments and agencies’\footnote{Abelson, A Capitol Idea: Think Tanks and Us Foreign Policy, 111.}

The tendency in political science to assume that a firewall separates expertise and politics has also been criticised: ‘The firewall is gone, and the change in the role and behaviour of experts in recent decades suggests need for a fundamental revision in how scholars treat them in accounts
of policy making'. More recently McGann has expressed concern that the ideal of a market of ideas is turning into a war of ideas.

Think tanks however are not only about advocacy. One of the trends informing the new roles that some think tanks play is the rise of network governance. Tanja Börzel has argued that: ‘...increasingly governance becomes only feasible within policy networks, providing a framework for the efficient horizontal coordination of the interests and actions of public and private corporate actors, mutually dependent on their resources.’ Organisational networks are intermediate forms that place themselves between hierarchies and markets. For think tanks this is important because networks allow them to mediate between hierarchies, that continue to be the preferred mode of organisation in the public sector, and private corporations that operate on competitive market terms.

Many think tanks, and certainly not only party affiliated ones, take part in introducing new ideas into public debates. These ideas might originate in academia and then be picked up by politicians. The notion of ‘pre-distributive governance’ introduced and propelled by US scholar Jacob Hacker, Patrick Diamond and others has been welcomed by the Labour Party in the UK and discussed by think tanks. Introducing new concepts into political debates is important in stimulating interest because it helps create the sense that something new and interesting is going on. Another way that party-affiliated think tanks can contribute to political engagement is by offering training activities for young people. This way of engaging members has the advantage of rewarding engagement with education.

Potential party members, not least from younger generations, are likely to be inclined to participate politically in different ways. Parties can welcome younger voters by developing new and different organisations with varying degrees of autonomy from the mother party. Some participants might prefer a direct and active involvement in politics such as getting engage directly in electoral campaigns. Other might prefer do deliberate the party line critically without committing themselves to it. For this reason parties should embrace fragmentation of their

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organisations into a network of organisations with projects that appeal to different member audiences and make possible different levels of commitment and types of membership. The fragmented organisation of participation does admittedly carry with it conflict potential as party affiliated organisations are likely to disagree and contest one another. Embracing multiple and new ways of engaging in parties however carries the potential of making parties open to a more active and resourceful constituencies. In the context of declining levels of party membership the advantages of participation outweigh the risk of internal conflict. It is time that progressive parties embrace the fragmented nature of the network society.
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