

**PUBLIKUMSDEMOKRATIE REVISITED
NACHWORT ZUR DEUTSCHEN AUSGABE**

**Bernard Manin, *Kritik der repräsentativen Demokratie*, Matthes & Seitz
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The publication of this book in German gives me great pleasure. It also offers me a timely opportunity. More than ten years have passed since I wrote the original version in French and in English. While the substance of the book would remain mostly unchanged if I had to rewrite it today, I now think that the chapter discussing the transformations of representative government could benefit from incorporating more empirical information than was available to me at the time of the original writing. The third section of this chapter, titled *Publikumsdemokratie*, offers an account of the changes that have been affecting representative democracies over the last quarter-century. Since the mid-1990s, however, a number of studies have appeared, supplying systematic cross-national information on such changes.¹ I would like to update and clarify my earlier analysis of *Publikumsdemokratie* in the light of more recent research.

I. The erosion of partisan loyalties

One of the most salient changes of the last decades concerns political parties. Parties are not in great shape, it seems. *Parteienverdrossenheit* [*dissatisfaction with parties*] has become a term in ordinary language. Scholars have devoted innumerable studies to the weakening of party ties or to the decline of political parties, assessing the extent and implications of these phenomena. Political parties, however, are multifaceted objects. Parties typically do many things and act in various arenas. For instance, they mobilize voters, they enroll members and activists, they present candidates for office, and they organize the work of legislatures and governments.² Declining capacity in one area need not mean decline across the board. Assuming, then, that political parties have lost some of their capacities, one cannot infer that

¹ See in particular, to mention some of the most significant such studies; Hans-Dieter Klingeman, Dieter Fuchs, (eds.), *Citizens and the State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; Pippa Norris, (ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999; Susan Pharr, Robert Putnam, (eds.), *Disaffected Democracies: What is Troubling the Trilateral Countries*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000; Pippa Norris, *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Bruce E. Cain, Russell J. Dalton, Susan E. Scarow, (eds.), *Democracy Transformed? Expanding Political Opportunities in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

² This list of party functions does not purport to be exhaustive. Nor does it match the standard tripartite framework (parties in the electorate, parties as organizations, parties in government) found in the literature as this framework does seem well suited to capturing the changes that parties have undergone over the last decades. The functions mentioned here aim only to illustrate the variety of things that parties do, suggesting that some of their activities may not evolve in the same manner as others.

they have been weakening generally. I should add that my earlier account of Publikumsdemokratie, and of the contrast with Parteiendemokratie, might create the impression that parties have generally become obsolete. That is not what I had in mind. In any event, if the earlier formulations were ambiguous, this is the place to make them more precise.

There is one area in which parties have undoubtedly lost ground: they no longer attract the long-standing loyalties of voters. More precisely they don't attract such loyalties to the same degree as before. Evidence of eroding partisan loyalties has even been mounting since I wrote my original account of Publikumsdemokratie. The trend has now been documented throughout established democracies.³ This suggests that we are seeing here not just the fluctuating fortunes of particular parties, nor the effects of specific party systems, but a fundamental change, driven by general developments, such as the shift from manufacturing to service economies and the concomitant erosion of traditional social milieux, rising levels of educational attainments, and the role of the mass media.

Let us review some of the major indicators pointing to the existence of this trend. The percentage of people who identify themselves with a party in surveys has consistently gone down over the last forty years in most advanced industrial societies. Decline in self-declared partisan attachment is particularly pronounced among younger cohorts.⁴ With regard to actual behavior, electoral volatility has been rising at the aggregate level: the electoral scores of parties (their share of the vote) vary more from one election to the next than they did a half-century ago.⁵ Another indicator can be found in the increasing number of voters who report that they have switched their votes between succeeding elections.⁶

³ See in particular: Russell J. Dalton, Martin P. Wattenberg (eds.), *Parties without Partisans. Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000,

⁴ R. J. Dalton, "The decline of party identifications", R. J. Dalton, M. P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.* pp. 19-36. The concept of partisan identification has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Suffice to note here that while the applicability of the notion beyond the United States (where it originated) was questioned, survey researchers in other countries came to adopt variants of it. The concept and its variants share a core meaning that involves two components. They designate a psychological orientation toward a given party that is both *lasting* (in some way bound up with the person's sense of self-identity as tapped by questions such as: "Do you consider yourself close to party X, Y, Z...?"), and *affective* (consisting in positive feelings towards the favored party, rather than in knowledge, or reasoned evaluation of it). These two components are well captured by the expression "party attachment", which is commonly used in West European studies. For a brief review of the debates over the notion of party identification, see Hermann Schmitt, Sören Holmberg, "Political parties in decline?", in H.D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, *Citizens and the State*, *op.cit.*, pp. 94-99.

⁵ See Russell J. Dalton, Ian McAllister, Martin P. Wattenberg, "The consequences of partisan dealignment", in R. J. Dalton, M. P. Wattenberg (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-42.

⁶ *ibid*, pp. 44-45

However, individual country studies suggest that many, if not most of these “floating voters” switch between voting and non-voting, or between coalition partners.⁷ In this connection, it is also worth noting that the number of parties effectively competing for votes has been generally increasing in advanced industrial democracies. This lends further plausibility to the hypothesis that much of the vote switching occurs between parties that are not far apart in their positions. Yet another sign of weakening party ties is to be found in the increasing practice of vote splitting in countries where voters can divide their votes between parties within the same election.⁸ Finally growing numbers of voters report that they decided how to vote during the campaign, or even on the day of the election.⁹ Late-decidors must be voters that do not feel a strong attachment to the party that they eventually vote for.

Recapitulating the results of recent research, one scholar writes: “Throughout established democracies, there is now overwhelming evidence of a glacial erosion of partisan identification in the electorate ... which has reduced the proportion of habitual loyalists in the electorate who support their party come rain or shine.”¹⁰ Using a familiar German word, we could say that the weakening of partisan attachments has reduced the proportion of Stammwähler [*habitual party voter*].

But erosion of long-standing partisan loyalties does not imply the obsolescence of political parties. As a preliminary remark, we should note a somewhat obvious but important fact. Party loyalists are not on the verge of extinction. They may be fewer in number than they were in the past, but they still form a significant mass that is to be reckoned with. Beyond that, closer inspection reveals two areas in which parties have not lost strength and remain central actors: parliamentary politics and electoral campaigns.

First, political parties still dominate the parliamentary arena. Across most advanced industrial societies, stable partisan alignments, not shifting coalitions of individual

⁷ On Germany, see Susan E. Scarrow, “Embracing Dealignment, Combating Realignment: German Parties Respond”, in Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Müller, Fritz Plasser (eds.), *Political Parties and Electoral Change. Party Responses to Electoral Markets*, Sage Publications, 2004, p. 91. In France, a number of studies have documented the growing importance of “intermittent voting”, particularly among the younger cohorts. See François Héran, “Voter toujours, parfois ...ou jamais”, in Bruno Cautrès, Nonna Mayer (eds.), *Le nouveau désordre électoral*, Paris, Presses de Sciences-Po, 2004, pp. 351-366.

⁸ This is possible to varying degrees in Australia, Germany, the United States, and Sweden. In all of these countries vote splitting has been rising over the last decades. See Russell J. Dalton, Ian Mc. Allister, Martin P. Wattenberg “The consequences of partisan dealignment”, in R. J. Dalton, M. P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.* pp. 46-47

⁹ *ibid.* pp. 48-49

¹⁰ Pippa Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, pp.103-104.

deputies, govern the functioning of legislatures. To begin with, it seems that only a tiny number of politicians are able to win legislative office without a partisan affiliation or without being on the slate of a significant national party.¹¹ To be sure, parties now run “candidate-centered” campaigns in which the personalities of candidates, and the personality of the party leader in particular, take center stage.¹² Thus the personalization of elections mentioned in my original account has continued. But parties have adapted to this trend and to the increased importance of the media that is driving it. As a result parliamentary elections have become personalized, yet remaining partisan. Another development was conceivable. Elections could have turned into contests featuring mostly public figures or celebrities running for office as independents. They have not. One may also argue that in a number of countries, where electoral campaigns are subject to strict public regulation, the parties’ success in getting their candidates elected owes probably much to electoral laws and various regulations giving campaign advantages, in funding and access to the public media in particular, to established parties.¹³

In any event, the notable fact is that political parties are the major forces shaping the alternatives offered to voters in parliamentary elections. Even if party candidates do not win in all cases, the fact that parties are at least present in most contests (since they win in most) compels independents to position themselves in relation to them. Thus, when electing representatives, voters face a cognitive map that is in fact essentially drawn by political parties.

Furthermore, the internal workings of parliaments show little sign of declining partisan voting discipline. Party parliamentary groups behave as cohesive units.¹⁴ This may be due in part to the fact that most deputies have been elected under party labels. A more likely explanation lies in the formal parliamentary regulations giving important procedural advantages (in committee appointments, agenda-setting capabilities, and other resources) to

¹¹ Kare Strøm, “Parties at the core of government”, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 190, 204. The author notes, however, a slight rise in the number of independents.

¹² See Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Müller, Fritz Plasser (eds.), *Political Parties and Electoral Change*, *op.cit.*, pp. 11, 265-266 (“The parties become their leaders”, the authors write, p. 265). See also, David M. Farrell, Paul Webb, “Political parties as campaign organizations”, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp.102-128

¹³ The advantages in electoral competition enjoyed by well established parties have been highlighted in Richard S. Katz, Peter Mair, “Changing models of party organization and party democracy: The emergence of the cartel party”, *Party Politics*, 1995, vol.1, (1), pp.5-28.

¹⁴ See Shawn Bowler, “Parties in legislatures: Two competing explanations”, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-179,

groups of deputies enjoying Fraktion status.¹⁵ One can also argue that Fraktion cohesiveness reduces transaction costs among deputies (a deputy that wished to pass legislation on his own would have to spend a large amount of energy building up a coalition), and that it also solves problems of collective action (deputies sharing a goal whose achievement requires the contribution of each would be tempted to free-ride on the efforts of others, or to defect in the uncertainty that others will cooperate).¹⁶ While there is an ongoing debate among scholars on what accounts for party cohesiveness in parliaments, there is little doubt that voting in legislatures is still largely governed by partisan alignments. There is more, however. Not only do party parliamentary groups [*Fraktionen*] maintain voting discipline across issues, their memberships are also stable over time. One could imagine individual deputies switching more or less frequently between voting blocs, with members of each bloc voting in a disciplined manner over a range of subjects. But in fact empirical studies demonstrate that switching from one bloc to another rarely happens, both within a given term and over consecutive terms. Most deputies remain members of the same Fraktion for as long as they sit in parliaments.¹⁷ The main reason for this seems to be that remaining a member of the same parliamentary group is the safest way of being re-selected as a candidate, although in some countries switching *Fraktionen* during a given term is also prohibited by law. Finally, in parliamentary systems, the formation and dismissal of cabinets are still determined by parties, not by variable coalitions of individual deputies. In such systems, the “core executive” is still in the hands of political parties.¹⁸ This too results

¹⁵ This is the explanation favored by Shawn Bowler (see above) on the basis of extensive documentation.

¹⁶ This line of reasoning about the causes of partisan discipline within parliaments was initiated by the work of Gary Cox. See in particular, Gary Cox, Matthew McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993. Cox and McCubbins emphasized the electoral reputation of the party as the collective good that would benefit all if they can solve the dilemmas of collective action. This is why they hire a “Leviathan” to keep them all in line. In more recent work, Michael Thies proposes to extend this logic to situations where the collective good pursued by the deputies of a given Fraktion is the promotion of some common policy position on a set of core issues. See M. Thies, ““On the primacy of party in government: Why legislative parties can survive party decline in the electorate””, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-257.

¹⁷ See Shawn Bowler, “Parties in legislatures: Two competing explanations”, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-179; “Yet legislative parties do seem remarkably stable”, the author writes (p. 177).

¹⁸ See Kare Strøm, “Parties at the core of Government”, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-207, especially pp. 197-201. See also Shawn Bowler, “Parties in legislatures: Two competing explanations”, *art. cit.* pp. 167-168.

primarily from legal regulations, sometimes from constitutional provisions. But such regulations are in force in most parliamentary systems. They show no signs of being relaxed.

The effect of party cohesiveness at the parliamentary and governmental levels is that policy-making remains in the hands of political parties, at least in those policy areas that are organized along representative principles.¹⁹ This, again, carries an important consequence. Voters can fairly easily impute responsibility for policy. To be sure, clarity of responsibility is diminished in cases of coalition governments, (not to mention cases of divided governments in presidential or semi-presidential systems). Still imputation of responsibility is a lot easier if parties behave cohesively in parliaments than if policies were determined by ever changing coalitions of individual deputies. The fact that parties are increasingly identified with their leaders even enhances clarity of responsibility. It is easier to perceive a given party as a unified collective agency if it is identified with its leader.

There is a second area in which parties have not lost strength, that of electoral campaigns. In this domain parties have become, if anything, more dynamic than they once were. The most visible, and well documented, sign of this vitality is the amount of resources that parties have been devoting to electoral campaigns. A number of studies show that the campaign expenditures of parties have been swelling. Electoral campaigns have also been professionalized, increasingly employing paid experts in both media advertising and opinion and market research.²⁰ Such developments, however, are usually not viewed as marks of continued vitality. They are even taken as signs of decline on the grounds that they depart from the model of the mass-membership party, as described by Duverger in the 1950s. On the mass-membership model grass-roots party members and activists, not party leaders assisted by professionals, were supposed to be the critical forces. It is true that in most advanced industrial societies party enrolments have declined, sometimes steeply, over the

¹⁹ Of course, one could argue that parties no longer control a number of policy areas, such as regulatory or monetary policies. But those policy domains have been removed from the representative sphere entirely (and deliberately). Independent regulatory agencies or independent central banks were not established as representative institutions.

²⁰ See David M. Farrell, Paul Webb, "Parties as campaign organizations", in R.J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-128. A number of studies have documented that parties increasingly focus on electoral campaigns and employ more professional expertise. See, for example, Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. In his book, Panebianco argues that parties have become "electoral-professional parties" (see in particular ch. 14).

last decades.²¹ However, studies covering a broader range of countries show significant cross-national differences, with the number of party members even rising in newer democracies (such as Spain, Portugal, and Greece), and in some post-communist countries (such as Slovakia and Hungary).²² Still more broadly, considering democracies around the globe, patterns of party membership seem to be correlated with patterns of socio-economic development, with the most affluent democracies having the lowest levels of party membership. More specifically the correlation appears to be driven by the penetration of television. Party membership is usually highest where television access is lowest.²³ This suggests that parties enroll large numbers of members when they need them for purposes of “face-to-face” campaigning. Viewed in this light, leaner party enrolments do not reflect decay. Adapting to technological change, parties have transformed their ways of mobilizing voters.²⁴

Eroding partisan loyalties have only heightened the need for dynamism in voter mobilization. To be sure, each party retains a core basis of loyal voters. But as this core is shrinking, each party needs to seek out voter support elsewhere. Parties do not necessarily aim to maximize electoral support. They might place a higher value on other objectives (such as ideological purity, for example). But a party that did not seek to counteract declining voter support would be on the way to obliteration. Mere survival then requires a proactive posture. At the same time, since the core basis of loyal support is declining for all parties, each is also facing an expanding “available” electorate. The question is which segments of this large available electorate should a given party target in its search for

²¹ See Susan E. Scarrow, “Parties without members?” in R. J. Dalton, M. P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-101. The author highlights, however, that declining party membership should be interpreted with caution. The decline might have occurred primarily among the more peripheral members who were never deeply involved in the regular activities of the parties. On the basis of various country studies it seems that only 10 to 45 percent of members participate regularly in the activities of their local branches (p. 95).

²² See Peter Mair, Ingrid van Biezen, “Party membership in twenty European democracies, 1980-2000”, *Party Politics*, 2001, vol. 7, (1), pp. 5-21

²³ See Pippa Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, pp. 119-134.

²⁴ Whether this change has been accompanied by a decline in intra-party democracy is the subject of much scholarly debate. It is also hard to assess as modern parties have always combined involvement of the membership and control by the party leadership. Just as representative government itself, they have always been “mixed” [*gemischt*] institutions. Present day campaign parties seem to be more centralized than their earlier counterparts with respect to party strategy. At the same time they have opened up leadership and candidate selection processes to the wider party membership, or even to supporters beyond the party organization. On this, see Susan E. Scarrow, Paul Webb, David M. Farrell, “From social integration to electoral contestation. The changing distribution of power within political parties”, in R. J. Dalton, M. P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-153.

support. In such uncertain and unpredictable environment, the answer to that question is by no means self-evident. This is why parties have recourse to precision instruments, such as opinion polls, surveys, and focus-groups, in order better to discern the concerns of the many available segments in the electorate. Ultimately, however, the leadership of each party has to choose which constellation of segments would be most suitable, given the party's constraints, its tradition, reputation and past record in particular. By making that choice each party constructs in effect its target public [*Publikum*]. It is worth stressing that in making that choice parties reason in terms of groups of voters (such as the young, working mothers and so forth) rather than in terms of individual voters.²⁵ One could say that each such public [*Publikum*] did not exist as a unit prior to the party's decision. In deciding on the composition of the public that they wish to address parties are not only active, they are also creative.

Moreover, assuming that the public targeted by a given party responds favorably in one election, meeting the party's electoral goal, the party cannot take this support for granted when the next election comes. Unattached voters do not vote for a given party just because they did so on the previous occasion. So tracking voter concerns over time is equally critical. To secure its electoral fortunes each party must allow the composition of its target public to shift, (even if marginally because of constraints set by the party's past), from one election to the next in order to adapt to changes in voter concerns. Generally speaking, parties have to mobilize citizens on each voting occasion, both bringing them to the polls, – sometimes literally–, and attracting their attention and interest each time around. Whereas traditional party loyalists would vote for “their” party unless they had a motive for not doing so, the burden of motivation has shifted for unattached voters: they would not vote for the same party in succeeding elections, or would not vote at all, unless motivated to do otherwise.

Indeed various studies show that, far from decaying, parties have responded to the volatile environment generated by eroding partisan loyalties by becoming more proactive, nimble and quick on their feet than they once were.²⁶ There is also evidence that this

²⁵ See P. Mair *et al.* (eds.), *Political Parties and Electoral Change*, *op. cit.*, p. 12

²⁶ See in particular P. Mair *et al.* (eds.), *Political Parties and Electoral Change*, *op.cit.*, especially pp. 1-19, 265-268. The authors write, for example: “Parties, or at least their leaderships, have had to learn to become more flexible and responsive.” (p. 266)

transformation has made parties “more cognizant of citizen opinion and demands”.²⁷ In Western Europe, it was found that the policy positions of parties, as expressed in their electoral platforms, matched the orientations of their supporters quite well during the 1970s and 1980s. The transformation of parties into campaign organizations does not seem to have diminished their capacity to reflect popular wishes and to link them to policy-making.²⁸

The preceding discussion shows that political parties have not been decaying generally. They remain strong as both parliamentary and campaign organizations. It is the relationship of a growing number of voters with parties that has changed: there are fewer party loyalists than in the past. But loyalty is only one kind of relationship with parties. Its distinctive characteristic is that it motivates actions independently from the context in which these actions occur. In a given election the party loyalist [*Stammwähler*] votes for “his” party out of affective attachment, or as a way of expressing his social and cultural identity, or out of habit. But whichever of these motivations is at work, his vote does not depend on the particular electoral context in which he is acting. To be sure, such long-standing loyalties to parties used to be dominant among voters when parties functioned as organizations of mass integration, providing extensive social networks for well-defined social groups, whether defined by occupation (such as blue collar workers, or farmers), or by culture (such as Christianity). This was the age of what I term “Parteidemokratie”. However, long-standing, identity-based and affective attachments are only contingent forms of relationships with parties. They became pervasive at a particular stage of socio-economic development and under the influence of particular sub-cultures. Many of today’s voters may be unattached to parties, and yet use them in some circumstances.

There are good reasons to think that unattached voters do behave in that way. First, across advanced industrial societies the weakening of partisan loyalties has been particularly pronounced among the politically involved, and better-educated segments of the population.²⁹ While unattached to parties, such citizens are interested in politics and in the

²⁷ See See David M. Farrell, Paul Webb, “Parties as campaign organizations”, in R.J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

²⁸ See Hans-Dieter Klingeman, “Party positions and voter orientations”, in H.D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, *Citizens and the State*, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-205. An earlier study established that the parties’ electoral platforms are good predictors of their legislative priorities when in government, see Hans-Dieter Klingeman, Richard Hofferbert, Ian Budge, *Parties, Policies and Democracy*, Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1994.

²⁹ R.J. Dalton, “The decline of party identifications”, in R. J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Parties without Partisans*, *op. cit.*, pp.32-33. Two further points deserve notice. First, erosion of partisan attachments has not been accompanied by growing political apathy and disinterest. Much to the contrary, there is evidence of rising

outcome of elections. Second, non-partisans or people with weak partisan ties seem to be especially sensitive to the particular character of the election they are facing. They go to the polls when the stakes of a given election are perceived as high (such as when there is the prospect of a consequential political change), and when voters anticipate the electoral contest to be close-fought. But they abstain if either of these conditions is not met.³⁰ By contrast, partisan voters participate in all elections regardless of their anticipated consequences, and of whether the results are expected to be close.³¹ Thus, in parliamentary elections (since these are dominated by parties), unattached voters do vote for party candidates, but only when the context gives them reasons for voting. As noted earlier, they may also switch parties between elections. The key point here, however, is that their decision to vote for any of the parties in presence is driven by contextual factors. It seems, then, that on some occasions unattached voters find parties useful. In other words for such voters parties are instruments that may or may not be employed.

The notion of instrumental voting that is implied here must be understood in broad terms, however. People voting for parties in high stakes and close-fought elections, but not in others, must be moved by instrumental considerations. Their vote must be motivated by the desire to produce some effect and to exert some kind of influence. Otherwise one would not explain why they vote only under such circumstances. This does not imply, however, that they have a clear and precise idea of the outcome they wish to reach. Nor does this imply that

levels of political interest and interest in the outcome of elections (*ibid.* pp.56-57). Second, in an earlier study of West European countries, the authors found that weakening partisan ties did not diminish support for democracy. See H.D. Klingeman and D. Fuchs, "Citizens and the State: a relationship transformed", in H.D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs (eds.) *Citizens and the State*, *op.cit.*, pp. 428-435

³⁰ See Mark N. Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 (see in particular pp. 163-164). One of the central claims in Franklin's book is that the "particular character" of each election largely drives variations in voter turnout. This particular character is defined by the two criteria mentioned here (perception of high stakes and expectation of close results). Franklin's theory of turnout includes other claims as well. Note that in her study of democracies around the globe, Pippa Norris reaches a fairly similar conclusion concerning variations in turnout. See P. Norris, *The Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, pp.69-72.

³¹ Although seemingly intuitive, this finding is important. A number of studies suggest that eroding partisan loyalties cause lower turnout because partisan attachment (or partisan identification) is closely correlated with electoral participation at the individual level. Such a view is to be found, for example, in Martin P. Wattenberg, "The decline of party mobilization", in R.J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, *Parties without Partisans*, *op.cit.* pp. 64-76. Franklin claims, by contrast, that: "So in individual studies that take no account of the character of elections, the function of party ID is misunderstood. It is generally seen as one of the factors that generate high turnout, but this is not so. It is a factor that prevents turnout from falling as it might otherwise fall in low turnout elections, but it most assuredly does not help to boost turnout in a high turnout election." (M. J. Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition*, *op.cit.*, p. 164). In other words, partisan attachments affect turnout primarily via their impact on turnout in low stakes and/or not closely fought elections.

they vote on the basis of an individualistic calculus along the lines of standard rational choice theories of voting.³² They act instrumentally in that their vote is generally oriented towards effects and consequences. Such instrumental action may be illustrated by the proverbial expression: “voting to send a message”. Citizens who cast their ballots to “send a message” are no doubt voting in an instrumental fashion. Their vote is aimed to bring about an effect. It is not an expressive action. The motivation comes from the anticipated effect of the vote, not from performing the act of voting. Yet this effect is not a fully specified outcome.³³

Modern political parties have always functioned as channels carrying the wishes of the electorate.³⁴ They have always in reality been links between the population and public officials. But parties of mass integration performed many other functions as well. Sending messages to public authorities was not the sole, nor even the primary goal of their supporters. Unattached voters, by contrast, use political parties only as carriers of messages. As parties are still strong in the parliamentary and electoral arenas, they offer to unattached voters an array of available channels, to be used according to circumstances.

Thus the difference between Parteiendemokratie and Publikumsdemokratie is not that under the latter parties have become obsolete. Parteiendemokratie is a form of representative government in which political parties are the fundamental units of political life. In this form parties reflect long lasting socio-economic and cultural cleavages in the society. The social groups generated by such cleavages are united by the long-standing loyalties of their members. Each party can count on the political loyalty of these members. Thus, each party constitutes a kind of unified collective agency endowed with a lasting identity. Under such conditions, parties can be viewed as the key political subjects in the functioning of representative democracy. They either alternate in office or share power (depending on the nature of the political system) according to the results of elections.

Under Publikumsdemokratie, by contrast, parties are still critical, but they are no longer well-defined units endowed with long lasting identities. They have to seek out voter support actively on each voting occasion, adjusting their campaign themes to shifting voter

³² Such theories notoriously fail to explain why people vote at all.

³³ In his theory of voter turnout, Mark Franklin highlights the importance of motivations such as “sending a message” or “giving a mandate”. However, his perspective is somewhat different from the one I am taking here. See M. J. Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition*, *op.cit.*, pp. 40-42.

³⁴ See for example Otto Kirchheimer, “The transformation of European party systems”, in Joseph Lapalombara, Myron Weiner, *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, pp. 177-200. Kirchheimer argues that among other functions the party operates as a “carrier of messages” (p.190).

concerns, and reconfiguring the composition of their target publics accordingly. Furthermore, even if a given party continues to target the same public over several elections, the composition of its *actual* support is bound to change, as the electoral responses of the diverse segments forming this target public are unlikely to vary in exactly the same manner from one election to the next. Thus, parties can no longer be viewed as political subjects in that they do not have well defined and long lasting identities. Successive elections keep altering the composition of their support. Parties have ceased to be political subjects in another sense as well. For a growing number of unattached voters, they have become just instruments to be employed depending on circumstances.

Thus under *Publikumsdemokratie* citizens participate in elections depending on the context. And the composition of each party's support also varies according to circumstances. Such a pattern of context-specific citizen involvement in politics extends further than voting, however. It also characterizes non-electoral participation.

II. The rise of non-institutionalized political participation

Indeed alongside the erosion of partisan loyalties, the other salient change that has occurred over the last decades is the rise of non-institutionalized political participation. Growing numbers of citizens, it seems, participate in demonstrations, sign petitions, or otherwise press their claims directly upon decision makers. These actions are harder to gauge than voting. Besides, there is no agreement among scholars about how exactly to conceptualize them. Some authors refer to them as “non electoral participation”. Others speak of “non-institutionalized participation” or of “unconventional participation”. Yet others prefer the term “protest politics”.³⁵ Despite these conceptual uncertainties, there is little doubt that modes of civic engagement have evolved significantly over the last decades. Both regional surveys (such as the Eurobarometer), and worldwide surveys (such as the three waves of the

³⁵ One of the most thorough studies of such actions (in Western European countries), that conducted by Richard Topf, is titled: “Beyond electoral participation”, in H.D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, *Citizens and the State, op.cit.*, pp. 51-95. The editors of this volume, for their part, use the term “non institutionalized participation”, see H.D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, “Citizens and the State: a relationship transformed”, in *Citizens and the State, op.cit.*, especially pp. 422-423, 428-432. “The observed increase in non-institutionalized participation in practically all countries”, these authors write, “is the most unambiguous finding in this volume” (p. 431). In her study of democracies around the world, Pippa Norris employs the term: “protest politics” while questioning whether it is still appropriate today. See P. Norris, *Democratic Phoenix, op.cit.*, chapter 10, pp. 188-212 (see in particular pp. 190-191).

World Values Survey) show that increasing numbers of citizens declare having actually engaged in one or more of the following activities: signing petitions, participating in demonstrations, joining in consumer boycotts, joining unofficial strikes, and occupying buildings or factories.³⁶ Survey-based evidence certainly suffers from a number of limitations. However, the trend displayed in these surveys is too consistent over time, and (more importantly) too consistent across diverse countries, to be dismissed. It is also true that surveys are usually better able to tap attitudes and values than actual behavior.³⁷ But individual country studies of actual behavior do confirm that actions such as street demonstrations have been on the rise.³⁸ Generally, empirical studies of democracies concur that the repertoires of collective action have changed in the direction of these non-institutionalized forms of political participation. Modes of action and forms of organization that used to characterize anti-system social movements in the 1960s have normalized, becoming parts in the ordinary functioning of representative systems.³⁹

Instances of non-institutionalized political participation seem to have three main characteristics. First, they occur episodically, depending on the opportunities generated by particular contexts. Demonstrations, occupations, and unofficial strikes are usually triggered by specific events and circumstances. Citizens and activists participate in these actions not out of loyalty, nor out of predisposition, but primarily because an opportunity for doing so presents itself.⁴⁰ Second, these episodes of collective action are issue-specific. Citizens get mobilized about a given issue that is of particular concern to them, not about a range of issues and public decisions. Moreover, the coalitions that get involved vary depending on the issue

³⁶ For West European countries see in particular R. Topf, "Beyond electoral participation" in H.D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, *Citizens and the State*, *op.cit.*, pp. 51-95. For democracies worldwide see P. Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, pp. 194-202

³⁷ While earlier studies focused on the "protest potential" of respondents by asking questions such as "Might you participate in demonstrations?", the more recent analyses mentioned here focus on those acts that respondents say they have actually engaged in. On this see P. Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, p. 194.

³⁸ For France, see for example the meticulous study by Olivier Fillieule, *Stratégies de la rue. Les manifestations dans la France des années 1980*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 1996.

³⁹ See Sydney Tarrow, "Mad cows and social activists: contentious politics in the Trilateral countries", in Susan Pharr, Robert Putnam (eds.), *Disaffected Democracies. What's troubling the Trilateral Countries*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 270-290. On the rise of new forms of political participation, see also R. J. Dalton, S.E. Scarrow, B. Cain "New forms of democracy? Reform and transformation of democratic institutions" in Bruce E. Cain, Russell J. Dalton, Susan E. Scarrow, (eds.), *Democracy Transformed? op.cit.*, pp. 1-20

⁴⁰ See P. Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, p. 194. The importance of the structure of opportunities figures prominently in the analyses of social movements.

at stake. Each issue involves different publics and different activists.⁴¹ In this regard patterns of non-institutionalized participation somewhat parallel the patterns of electoral participation analyzed earlier. Finally, by participating in these collective actions, citizens press their claims directly upon decision makers. In this, non-institutionalized political participation seems to deviate from the principles of representative democracy, and perhaps to put them in jeopardy. Indeed some analysts have interpreted the rise of such participation as a sign of crisis in political representation.

That is not, however, the diagnosis formulated in the various cross-national studies published over the last decade. It is striking to note that from various angles all of these studies emphasize that representative democracy has been transformed, but not undermined, by the growing importance of non-electoral political participation. In their analysis of West European countries, Hans-Dieter Klingeman and Dieter Fuchs demonstrate that the rise of non-institutionalized participation is not a sign of dissatisfaction with representative democracy. While the relationship between citizens and the State has been “transformed”, they argue, citizen support for the core structural elements of representative democracy has not eroded. Besides, the authors stress that this transformation of the links between citizens and government has occurred “*within* the institutional framework of representative democracies.” Fears of crisis, they note, derived from underestimating the adaptive capacity of representative institutions.⁴² In a more recent analysis examining the ways in which democracies are transforming themselves by expanding citizen access to public decision-making, the authors pointedly note that this is done “in a way that builds upon, rather than supersedes, representative institutions.”⁴³ Finally, in her study of democracies around the world, Pippa Norris focuses on yet another aspect. She highlights that present day citizens have not become disengaged from civic life. Political activism has not died out, she insists, citizens of democracies are not focusing exclusively on their private concerns. From this perspective, the rise of alternative forms of activism even appears as rejuvenating representative democracy. “In short”, Norris writes, “contrary to popular assumptions, the traditional agencies linking citizens and the state are far from dead. And,

⁴¹ See in particular Sydney Tarrow, “Mad cows and social activists: contentious politics in the Trilateral countries”, *art.cit.*, p. 289.

⁴² H. D. Klingeman, D. Fuchs, “ Citizens and the State: A relationship transformed”, in H.D. Klingeman, D.Fuchs, (eds.), *Citizens and the State, op.cit.*, pp. 437 (original emphasis), 434.

⁴³ R. J. Dalton, B. E. Cain, S. E. Scarrow, “Democratic publics and democratic institutions”, in B. E. Cain *et al.* (eds.), *Democracy Transformed?*, *op.cit.*, p. 252.

like a phoenix, the reinvention of civic activism allows energies to flow through diverse alternative avenues as well as conventional channels.”⁴⁴ Representative democracies have in fact been able to accommodate the rise of non-institutionalized political participation.

My earlier account did not mention this phenomenon. While I did note that non-electoral forms of political expression are no longer structured along partisan cleavages (unlike in *Parteiendemokratie*), I erroneously focused on opinion polls, rather demonstrations or petition signing, as the dominant form of non-electoral participation under *Publikumsdemokratie*. Thus, the preceding discussion must be read as a corrective to my original analysis. However, the overall account of the principles of representative government given in this book contributes to explain why representative democracy is not inconsistent with some measure of direct citizen influence over policy-making. This book also argues that representative institutions have a greater adaptive capacity than is generally assumed. Two points are worth stressing here.

First, representative government is a complex system composed of several elements. It is important to bear in mind that while recurring elections are a central mechanism in this system, they are not its sole component. Other mechanisms include provisions for public discussion, and more relevant to the present context, guarantees of what I term in this book “freedom of public opinion”, that is the freedom publicly to express opinions and to bring them to the attention of those who govern. As the First Amendment to the American Constitution demonstrates, the “right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances” has been part of the representative system since its inception. This is not to say that what counts as a “peaceable assembly” has been fixed and uncontested since the beginnings. Nor is it to say that the right to demonstrate in front of Parliament has always gone unchallenged in every representative system. Much to the contrary, both the actual exercise and the scope of this right have been the objects of fierce debate and struggles. The fact remains, however, that representative government was not invented as a system in which representatives, once elected, would entirely replace the represented until the next election. Citizens, it was understood, would retain the right to make their voices or grievances heard at *any* time.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Pippa Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, *op.cit.* pp. 222-223.

⁴⁵ See above chapter V, Freedom of Public Opinion, pp. xxx.

Beyond the First Amendment to the American constitution the writings of two major figures confirm that since its establishment representative government has been understood as involving some non-electoral expression of the people. In his classic exposition of Modern liberties, Benjamin Constant characterized the political rights of citizens under representative government as follows: "Finally it is everyone's right to exercise some influence on the administration of the government, either by electing all or particular officials, or through *representations, petitions, demands to which the authorities are more or less compelled to pay heed.*"⁴⁶ For his part, Edmund Burke, committed as he was to the independence of deputies from the wishes of their constituents, wrote in one of his letters: "The people at large have their organs through which they can speak to Parliament and to the Crown by a respectful petition, and, though not with absolute authority, yet with weight, they can instruct their representatives."⁴⁷

Secondly, representative government is constitutively flexible. There lies the source of its adaptability and resilience. The system is flexible because some of the principles organizing it are not fully specified, particularly with regard to citizen influence on policy. The principles of representative government imply that citizen preferences should have *some* influence over policies. However, these principles do not determine exactly how much weight citizen wishes should have. Representation implies that governments are *responsive* to the wishes of the represented. But responsiveness admits of degrees, unlike compliance for example. When deputies are voted out of office, they are not supposed to be responsive to the verdict of voters. They are supposed to comply with it. The relatively unspecified character of responsiveness takes on particular importance with respect to demonstrations, petitions, and other non-electoral actions. Governments have various incentives and opportunities to take these into consideration. But how much weight they need to grant to these actions is not specified. Thus there is room for adjustment and flexibility.

Much of present-day theorizing about democracy rests on a distinction between Schumpeterian democracy, in which citizens regularly choose among elites, keeping quiet in

⁴⁶ See Benjamin Constant "The Liberty of the Ancients compared with that of the Moderns", [1819] in Benjamin Constant, *Political Writings*, edited by Biancamaria Fontana, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 311. My emphasis

⁴⁷ Edmund Burke, "Third Letter on a Regicide Peace" [1797], in *Select Works of Edmund Burke. A New Imprint of the Payne Edition*, Foreword and Biographical Note by Francis Canavan, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999, 4 vols., vol. 3, p. 238.

the interim, and participatory democracy, in which citizens make political decisions at *all* times. Distinguishing between these two types may be instructive, but it leaves out representative democracy, which is neither.