

# 'The report of my death was an exaggeration'. Party Membership in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain

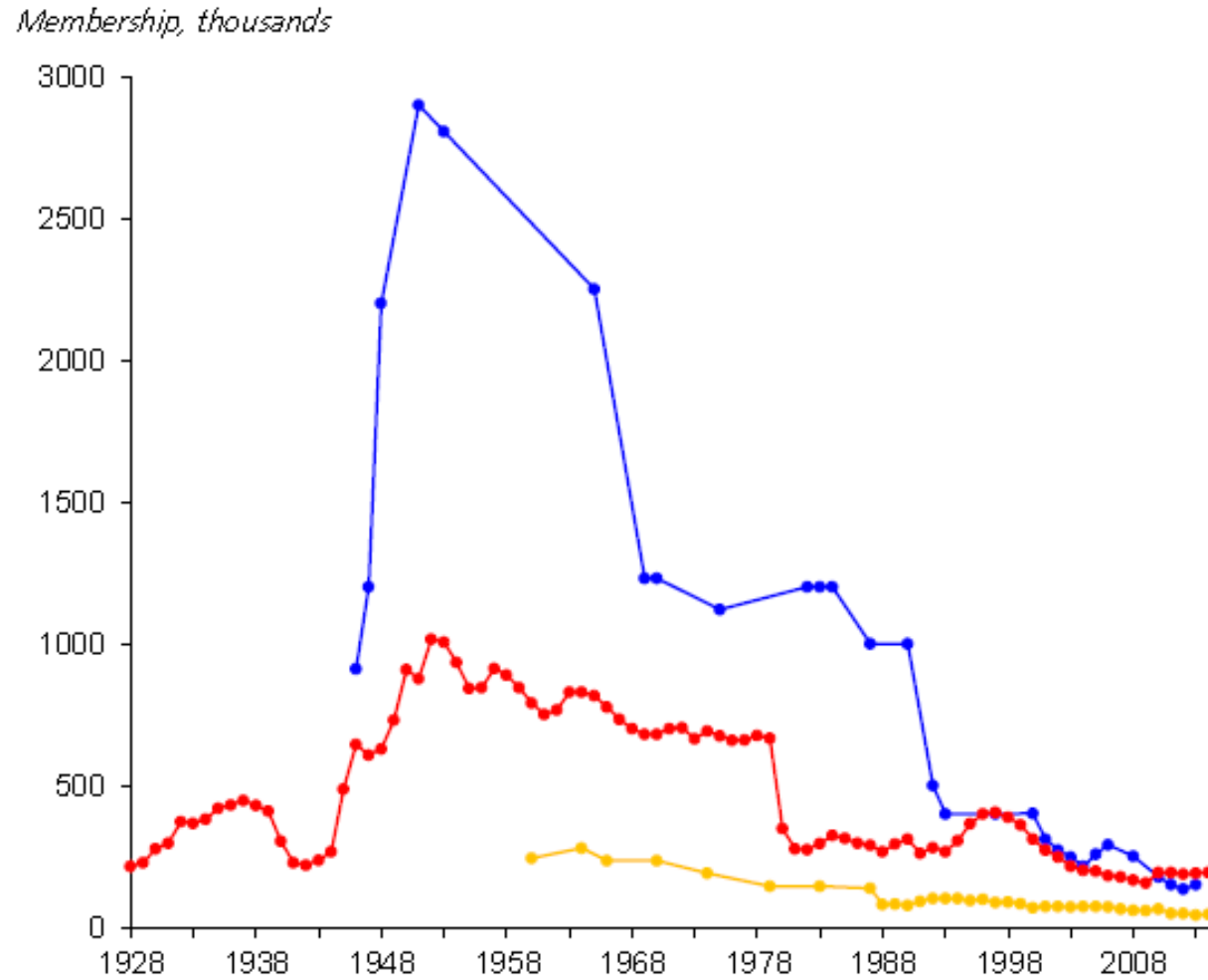
25 November 2015

Tim Bale

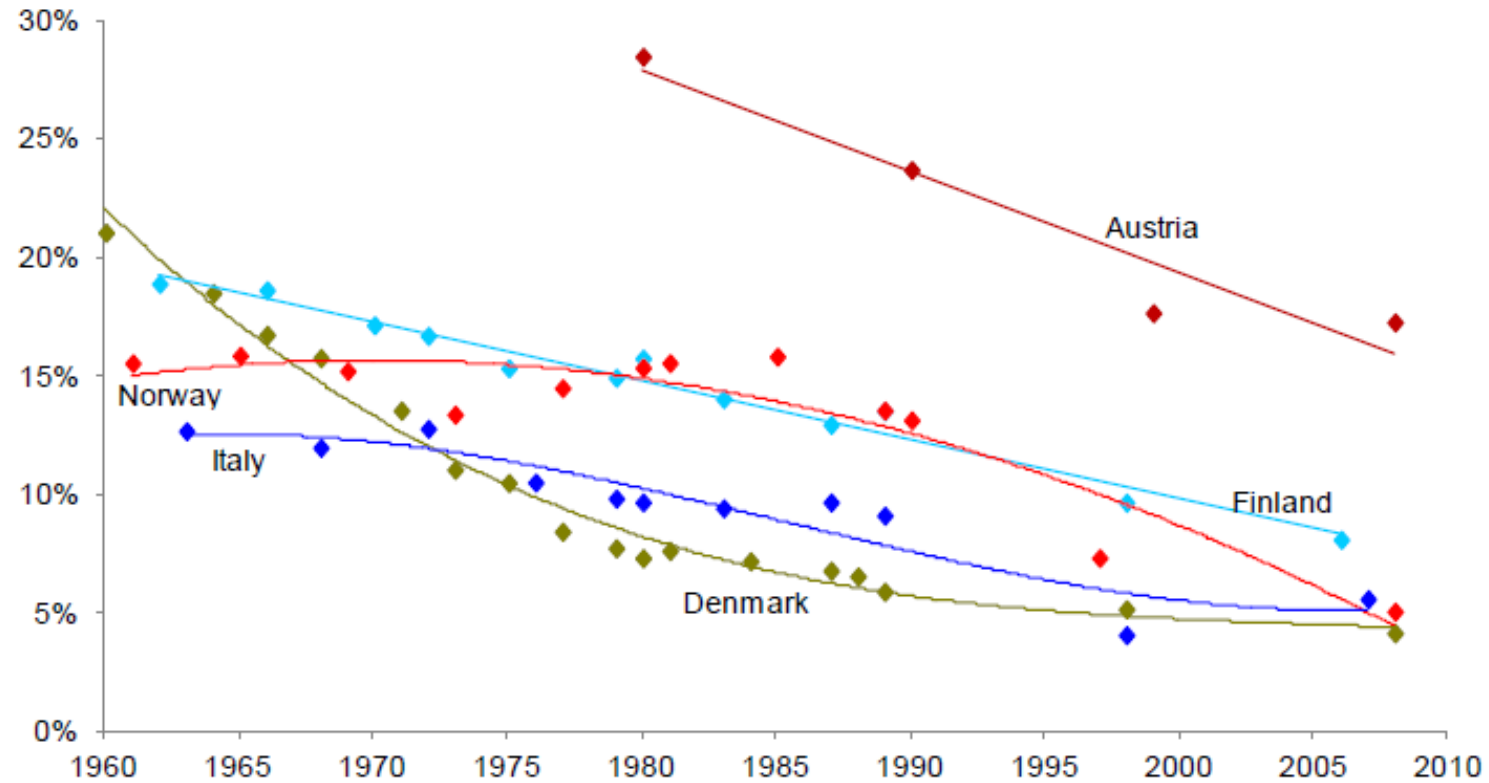
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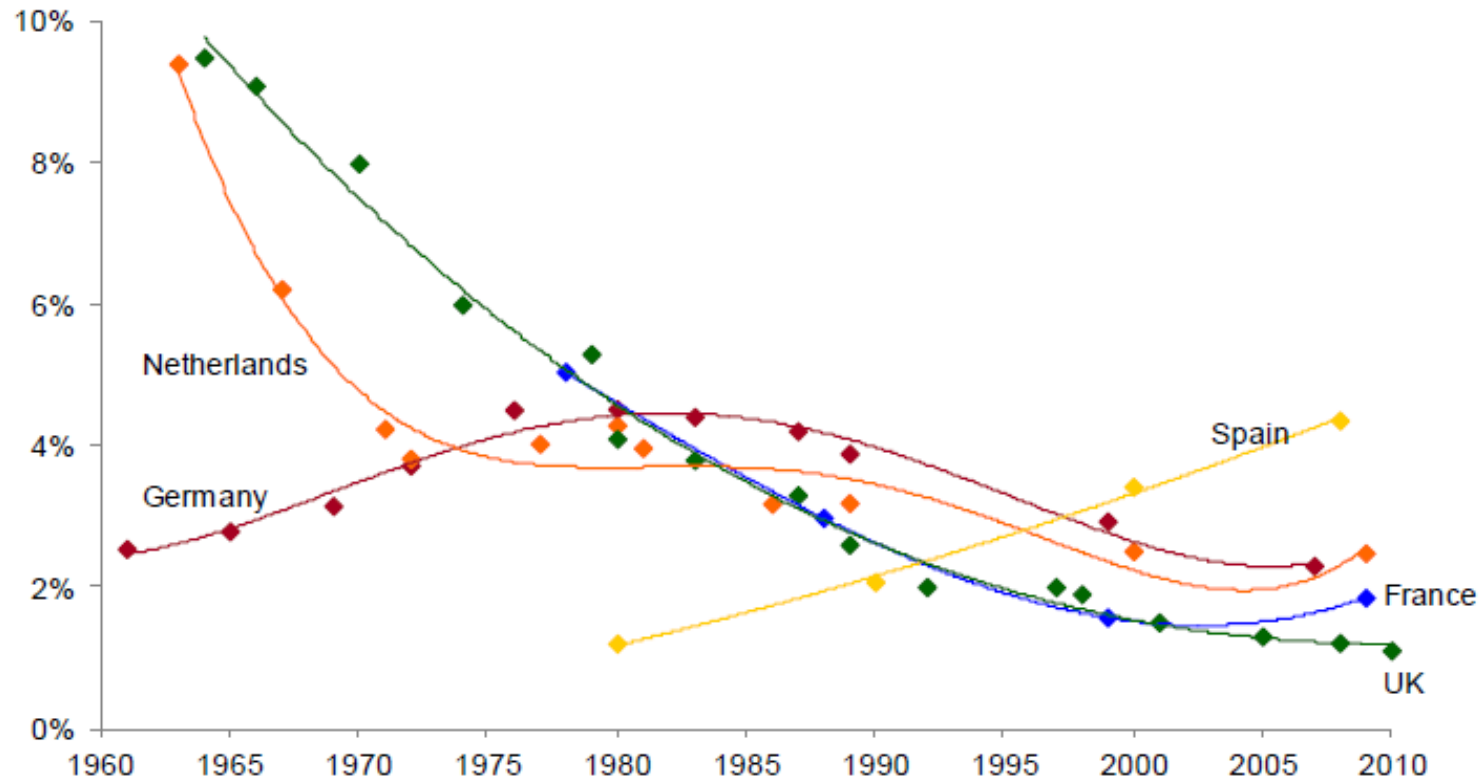
# Membership of the big three, 1928-2014



# How we compare (I) 'High' membership/Electorate ratio, 1960-2010



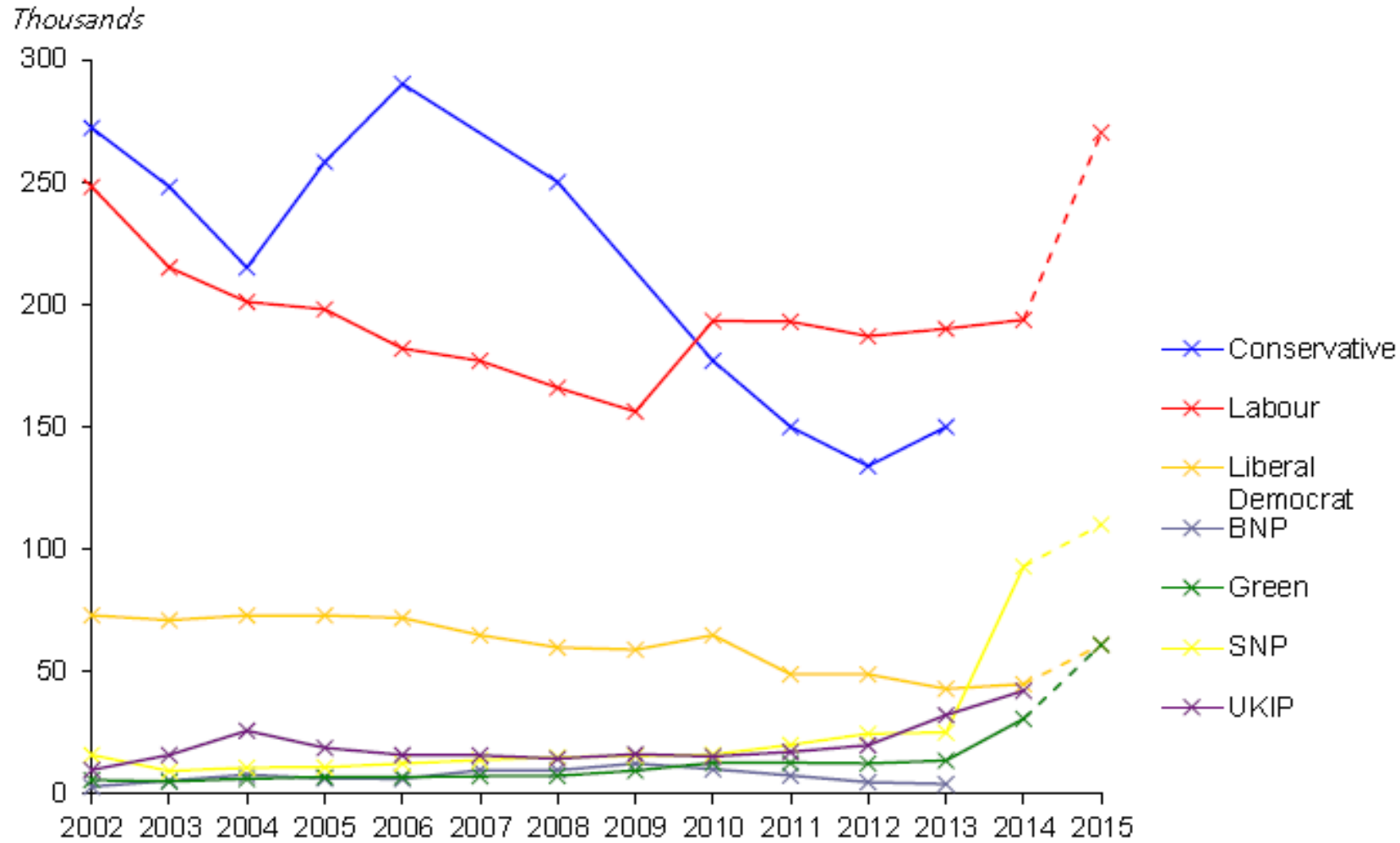
# How we compare (II): 'Low' membership/Electorate ratio, 1960-2010



	<b>Total number of members</b>	<b>Percentage of electorate belonging to parties</b>	<b>Percentage change over time</b>
Italy (2007)	2,623,000	5.6	−36 (since 1980)
Spain (2008)	1,530,803	4.4	+375 (since 1980)
Sweden (2008)	267,000	3.9	−47 (since 1980)
Netherlands (2009)	304,000	2.5	−29 (since 1980)
Germany (2007)	1,423,000	2.3	−27 (since 1980)
Czech Rep. (2008)	165,000	2.0	−70 (since 1993)
France (2009)	814,000	1.9	−53 (since 1978)
UK (2008)	535,000	1.2	−68 (since 1980)
Poland (2009)	304,000	1.0	−7 (since 2000)

Source: Data from van Biezen et al. (2012).

# Race to the bottom?



# Latest Figures

- Labour c. 370,000, as of Oct 2015
- SNP c.110,000, as of Jun 2015 (up from 25,000 Dec 13)
- Conservatives c. 149,800, as of Dec 2013
- Lib Dems c.61,000, as of May 2015
- Greens (England and Wales) c. 61,000, as of June 2015 (up from 13,800 Dec '13)
- UKIP c. 42,000, as of Jan 2015 (up from 32,000 Dec '13)

## Social and political characteristics of British political party members, 2015.

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>UKIP</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>SNP</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mean age</b>	54	51	51	58	42	49	51
<b>% male</b>	71.2	61.6	68.5	75.9	57.5	56.4	65.0
<b>% graduates</b>	37.9	56.3	55.8	23.1	56.4	41.7	45.4
<b>% ABC1 (HH)</b>	83.1	75.9	84.5	64.0	75.5	68.1	75.5
<b>% ABC1 (personal)</b>	74.6	69.7	76.0	59.9	65.2	61.9	68.2
<b>Mean left-right*</b>	7.76	2.39	4.1	7.34	1.9	2.96	4.44
<b>N</b>	1193	1180	730	785	845	963	5696



# What did you do in the 2015 election?

Activity	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	SNP	Total
'Liked' something by party/candidate on FB	39.6	51.1	47.4	44.2	67.6	72.7	53.4
Tweeted/re-tweeted party/candidate messages	26.0	36.9	31.1	22.9	45.7	48.6	35.2
Displayed election poster in window	29.6	51.2	37.8	42.9	45.1	67.7	45.7
Delivered leaflets	43.5	42.5	45.9	38.3	28.8	35.4	39.4
Attended public meeting or hustings	31.3	31.4	28.2	40.5	27.3	49.0	34.6
Canvassed face to face or by phone	36.5	35.7	32.6	26.1	19.1	28.2	30.4
Helped run party committee	12.5	8.4	13.0	5.7	2.4	5.3	8.1
Drove voters to polling stations	6.4	7.2	4.9	5.7	2.6	7.5	5.9
Stood as candidate (councilor or MP)	9.1	7.0	15.1	13.0	10.2	0.2	8.6
Other	16.3	14.2	20.8	14.1	12.8	16.6	15.7
None	23.0	12.9	18.4	20.8	15.3	7.8	16.3

# What did you do in the 2015 election? Members v Partisans

Activity	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	SNP	Total
'Liked' something by party/candidate on FB	39.6	51.1	47.4	44.2	67.6	72.7	53.4
	10.2	18.8	14.8	17.2	35.4	31.2	21.0
Tweeted/re-tweeted party/candidate messages	26.0	36.9	31.1	22.9	45.7	48.6	35.2
	3.4	7.8	7.8	4.4	18.5	10.4	8.6
Displayed election poster in window	29.6	51.2	37.8	42.9	45.1	67.7	45.7
	2.5	10.7	6.0	8.1	6.0	21.1	9.5
Delivered leaflets	43.5	42.5	45.9	38.3	28.8	35.4	39.4
	2.4	3.0	3.8	1.6	2.4	2.6	2.6
Attended public meeting or hustings	31.3	31.4	28.2	40.5	27.3	49.0	34.6
	4.2	4.8	6.8	3.4	8.7	12.6	6.6
Canvassed face to face or by phone	36.5	35.7	32.6	26.1	19.1	28.2	30.4
	1.6	2.4	2.2	2.2	4.0	2.4	2.4
Stood as candidate (councilor or MP)	9.1	7.0	15.1	13.0	10.2	0.2	8.6
	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.3
N (members)	1193	1180	730	785	845	963	5696
N (partisan identifiers)	1142	1136	1004	1069	1026	1067	6377