## **'Green party ideology today: Divergences and continuities in Germany, France and Britain'**

### **Introduction[1]**

In much of western Europe, Green parties have persisted for three decades or more. Many of these parties have undergone a series of transformations. Some have achieved significant electoral successes and have even participated in national government; others have remained on the fringes of national political life; many have lost several aspects of their organisational distinctiveness in the process of their development. Nevertheless, it is still possible to speak of a partial continuity across time in terms of party membership and organisation (see other chapters in this volume). But what of Green party ideology? Today, is it appropriate to speak of a single Green 'party family' in ideological terms?

'Ideology' is one of the four approaches to the classification of party families, as theorised by Mair and Mudde (1998). However, in recent years in particular, Green party ideology has received little scholarly attention. There have been some studies which draw on the results of the Comparative Manifesto Project, which provide a useful aggregate picture of where Green parties stand today (Bukow and Switek 2012; Carter 2013). However, it is difficult to gain a particularly deep insight into the nuances of party ideology through such quasi-quantitative approaches. This chapter addresses precisely this gap in the literature. It

consists of a close qualitative textual analysis of recent manifestos and press releases produced by three western European Green parties; and it considers to what extent these documents reflect the preoccupations and emphases which have been known to mark Green party ideology over the past thirty years.

In the first section of this chapter, I explain the basis of my approach via a brief analysis of the relevant literatures, both on the party family and on Green party ideology itself. I affirm the existence of a distinct ideology, and follow the terminology of Thomas Poguntke in classifying this as 'new politics'. In the second and lengthiest section of the chapter, I study the content of this ideology in closer detail. I move between its most significant themes one-by-one, explaining the significance of each in the history of Green party development and testing its continuing salience in recent party documents. In the final section, and on the basis of this three-party study, I suggest that one can indeed speak of Greens as forming a distinct party family, at least inasmuch as ideology is concerned. Finally, I offer some reflections on the ambiguities which surround this conclusion, and on possible future directions for Green party ideology.

## I) 'Party families' and Green party ideology

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the question as to whether contemporary Green parties may be understood as comprising a single party family along ideological lines. The concept of the 'party family' thus provides the rationale for the study, as well as the prism through which the parties' modes of thought will be analysed.

The concept of the party family is a broad one, and Mair and Mudde argue that it is to some extent still 'under-theorized' (1998: 214). Nevertheless, in the same article, the authors emphasise the continuing importance of the concept for the classification of political parties

via their ideological characteristics (224). What is more, there are already several examples of ideological theorisations of the party family which identify the Greens as a distinct type, though these are rather cursory in their engagement with the question as to what Green party ideology actually is (Gallagher et al 1995; Ware 1996) or are by now rather outdated (von Beyme 1985). Conversely, the term 'party family' itself crops up quite frequently within the literature on Green parties (Bomberg 2002; Belchior 2010; Carter 2013). This testifies to the popularity of the notion that Greens across Europe, which act within quite different political environments, nevertheless possess a mode of thought which is both relatively homogeneous across the different parties and relatively distinct from the ideologies of other types of political parties. In this broad sense of the ideological 'party family', it can be argued that the concept underlies all discussions of a posited transnational Green party ideology; and it is to these which I now turn.

There is, of course, no academic or social consensus as to the nature of 'ideology' itself (Williams 1988: 153-7). It is therefore unsurprising to discover that there is no consensus within the literature on Green party ideology as to how it should best be theorised. The problem is perhaps accentuated in the case of Green parties, for two reasons. First, Green parties are thirty years young as well as thirty years old. They have shown themselves to be a relatively enduring phenomenon of the later postwar period in Europe, certainly, but this is hardly a *longue durée* when compared to the centuries of experience accumulated by conservative, liberal and socialist parties. The second reason is related to Greens' preference for open forms of party organisation and mistrust of political elites. Greens shun explicit appeals to intellectual orthodoxy, and have made little attempt to develop a canon of 'great thinkers'; they have no 'Mill, Marx, or Freud' (Freeden 1996: 546). This is suggested in the

2002 party programme of *Die Grünen* where it is claimed that '[w]e are united […] by a set of basic values, not by an ideology' (2002: 9).[2]

Approaches to the theorisation of Green party ideology range from the narrow ('ecologist') to the broad ('left-libertarianism'). At the one end of this continuum, one finds interpretations which are highly specific, conceiving of the ideology at hand as a form of radical environmental thought and as deriving from principles inherent in nature itself; the 'environmental' aspect of the ideology is, therefore, emphasised above all others. Such analyses tend to favour terms such as 'ecologism' or 'green ideology' to refer to the object of study. Some of these approaches tend to be political theoretical in nature, and offer a complex analysis of the ideology at hand, but place rather less emphasis on the sociological and political context of its elaboration (Freeden 1996; Talshir 2002). There are also works which do discuss the provenance of the ideology in more detail (Young 1992), some of which do not adopt a fully 'ecologist' interpretation of the ideology's structure (Doherty 2002), but which nevertheless still conceive of it as deriving from the environmental movement in particular.

On the other end of the spectrum, the environmental aspect of the parties' thought is acknowledged, but it does not receive as great an emphasis. Instead, the ideology is understood to be comprised of multiple central themes, most of which are related to the concerns of the 'new left' or the 'new social movements' in general rather than the environmental movement in particular. Generally speaking, such accounts are more sociological than political theoretical in approach, and place greater emphasis on the common demographic qualities which marked participants of many of the new social movements, and not just those of the environmental movement, and which still characterise much of the electorate of Green parties today. One recent empirical study of note is offered by Martin

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[2] This and all further citations from German and French-language documents are of my own translation.

Dolezal (2010). The two most influential theoretical accounts, though, are that of Thomas Poguntke, who refers to Green party ideology as 'new politics ideology' (1993), and of Herbert Kitschelt, who prefers the term 'left-libertarianism' (1988).

I adopt the term 'new politics' for two reasons. First, it is quite clear that Green parties are ideologically united by more than just their concern for the natural world, and it is therefore too narrow to speak of just 'green' or 'ecologist' ideology. Second, by contrast, I find the term 'left-libertarianism' of Herbert Kitschelt to be too broad in scope. While the term is fitting, it could equally be applied to many other political currents in history, to the point where the distinctive nature of the positions taken by Green parties is lost. The term 'new politics', by contrast, both allows for a multiplicity of components within the ideology, and simultaneously highlights its relative novelty. It might be added that the term has a great deal of currency outside of Poguntke's own writings (Jahn 1993; Faucher 1999b: 487; Burchell 2001; Bomberg and Carter 2006: 105; Spoon 2009), and continues to inspire theoretical debate (Blühdorn 2013).

## II) Empirical analysis

### Method

It will be noted that I have not as of yet offered a definition of the new politics ideology. This task will be accomplished in the course of the empirical analysis which follows. I have selected six themes for close analysis, which are grouped under the three major fields of this

mode of thought: ecology, radical democracy and egalitarianism.[3] In each sub-section of the empirical analysis, I first clarify the nature of each field of the ideology, providing an assessment of the role that its themes have played in the history of the new politics ideology. In more detail I then test each theme's continuing salience in documents produced by contemporary Green parties, in order to gauge whether this theme continues to preoccupy Greens today. Finally, in the essay's concluding section, I consider what this empirical study reveals about the nature of the Greens in party family terms.

I draw primarily on recent manifestos of the German, French and British Green parties.[4] In manifestos, parties have to formulate an integral plan of action, one which encompasses all fields of political planning and which goes beyond the more narrow significance of individual policy areas. This is especially so in the case of Green parties, which on the whole still possess a holistic approach to policy-writing (Doherty 2002: 70) and which – at least in the case of the three parties under study – still produce manifestos which possess an explicitly ideological tone. Mair and Mudde are, however, correct to highlight the fact that manifestos are 'explicitly designed in the context of election campaigns' (1998: 219). It is for this reason that, where relevant, I draw also on party press releases from a broader time period around the publication of these manifestos (between 2008 and 2012) as an additional window into Green party thought.

These parties were selected because of the rather different positions they occupy within the party system. *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* (DG) is the prototypical case of the

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[3] These three overarching fields were selected on the basis of the analysis of Brian Doherty (2002) which, despite its (in my opinion) too narrow conceptualisation of Green party thought as 'green ideology', presents the most accurate general structure of the ideology under study.

[4] For the sake of brevity, I often refer to the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) as the 'British' party. I acknowledge that this is not strictly accurate, given that there has been a separate Scottish Green Party since 1990 (Rüdig 2008: 200).

successful Green party; *Europe Ecologie – Les Verts* (EELV) has achieved a measure of influence, but only via dependency on its centre-left rival;[5] and the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) remains on the fringes of national politics, having only recently won its first Member of Parliament. In Pedersen's terminology, they occupy different positions within the lifespan of the political party (1982). What is more, the three countries in which these party systems are situated possess three distinct political cultures. Hence, if there is a reasonable degree of ideological continuity across these three parties, it seems fair to posit the existence of an ideological Green party family more generally, at least in western Europe.[6]

In the course of the analysis I show that this is indeed the case: that Green parties today do indeed form a party family, in ideological terms. One certainly cannot speak of an ideological homogeneity, as there are some divergences between the parties in different directions on different points. But, in the aggregate, there are sufficient 'family resemblances' (to borrow a phrase of Wittgenstein's) to be able to speak of a relatively coherent collection of ideological tendencies which distinguish the Greens from rivals on the left and right of the parliamentary spectrum.

Field 1: Ecology

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[5] At the beginning of the period under study, the French party was known simply as *Les Verts*. It participated in the European elections as part of a broader list of candidates known as *Europe Ecologie*. Partly as a result of the successful result of those elections, the party was refounded as *Europe Ecologie – Les Verts* in late 2010. However, for the sake of economy, and given the clear continuities between these bodies in terms of party members, institutions and ideology, I will at times continue to refer to the present-day party as *Les Verts*.

[6] The Green parties of central and eastern European countries (CEECs) are known to differ from their western European counterparts in ideological terms (Rüdig 2002a: 24). But they are considerably more marginal, and at present there are no elected CEEC Greens sitting in the Green group in the European Parliament. For more detail on Green parties in the CEECs, see Gene Frankland's contribution in this volume.

It is important not to reduce the new politics ideology to its most obvious component, but it is still appropriate to begin any analysis with this same topic. After all, it is precisely 'Green' parties which are under discussion; the names of the vast majority of members of the European Green Party, for example, contain a word which implicitly or explicitly relates to the environment. Of course, the health of the natural world is not a new concern, in historical terms (Worster 1994), and concern about environmental degradation has become increasingly widespread within and beyond late capitalist societies (Inglehart 1995). Even among political parties, Greens cannot claim exclusive ownership of the ecological issue (Gallagher et al 1995: 189; Markovits and Silvia 1997: 59; Carter 2013). Nevertheless, Green party ideology has long been understood to entail a particularly radical perspective on nature (Poguntke 1993: 36-7; Talshir 2002.

The most fundamental elaboration of such a perspective can be found in Tim O'Riordan's concept of 'ecocentrism' (O'Riordan 1976: 1-11; see also Eckersley 1992). An ecocentric position entails an appreciation of the natural world for its own intrinsic value, and a conception of the human being as just one part of earth's broader ecology; this stands in contrast to more 'anthropocentric' approaches which calculate the environment's worth on the basis of its utility to humankind, and see humans as distinct from and possibly superior to the habitats in which they live. The corollary of this viewpoint is that human interests may on occasion have to take secondary status next to the overall wellbeing of nature as a whole (Poguntke 1993: 36); and this, in turn, is at the heart of the distinctively Green rejection of economic growth (Kitschelt 1988: 195; Poguntke 1993: 36; Barry and Doherty 2001: 601; Doherty 2002: 70; Talshir 2002: 15). Contrary to the received wisdom of the postwar era, Greens understand growth be deleterious to the wellbeing of the planet as well as to human beings. In the following analysis, I gauge whether each of these two themes of the new

politics ideology – an appreciation for the intrinsic value of nature, and an anti-growth stance – may be said to endure among Green parties today.

*i) The conception of nature*

The three parties share a very similar conception of nature, which is marked by a degree of new politics radicalism. All three gesture, at least sporadically, towards an ecocentric positioning. In the most straightforward formulation of this stance, and relating to a specific aspect of environmental policy, the German Greens claim that they 'tirelessly support the protection of biological diversity *for its own sake*' (DG 2009a: 49; my emphasis). More generally and rather more explicitly, *Les Verts* argue that '[i]n opposition to a purely utilitarian vision of nature […] human beings must redefine their place in the equilibrium of the living world' (EELV 2012: 30). The first part of the citation explicitly rejects the wholly anthropocentric conception of the natural world, while the second asks the manifesto's readers to question their assumptions about their relation to nature; it also lends a kind of agency to nature as a system which is self-regulating ('equilibrium').

These examples aside, there are also many instances within the manifestos which indicate the appreciation of nature from a utilitarian – and therefore specifically human – perspective. The national election manifesto of *Die Grünen* contains a chapter devoted to environmental policy which is titled, 'An intact environment: Preserving that which preserves us' (DG 2009b: 131). This turn of phrase suggests a very pragmatic reason for the protection of the natural world: we humans could not survive without it. Similarly, the French party can be seen to translate its aforementioned concern for nature in itself into a concern for nature as a mechanism for the fulfilment of social and economic policies. Its electoral documents refer to the 'irreplaceable services which nature provides [humanity] with' (EE 2009: 61), as well

as the importance of these 'services' for the sustenance of 'the world economy' (EELV 2012: 29).

This is not to argue that the clear ecocentric streak indicated above should be ignored. But it does suggest three parties have become caught between the more radical aspirations which one might have attributed to Green parties in their early years, and the practical necessities of representing one's ideological position to mass publics which are by no means ecocentric in orientation. This conclusion is in accordance with Andrew Dobson's reflections that the concept of ecocentrism may itself have lost ground within the broader environmental movement in recent years, to the benefit of 'pragmatic environmentalism' (Dobson 2010). Today, Greens are trying to have their cake and eat it, a position which is aptly depicted in couplets which indicate both ecocentrism and anthropocentrism simultaneously, such as the British party's claim that '[w]e must protect our wildlife and landscape and their diversity, both for their own sake and ours' (GPEW 2010a: 41). In other words, even if you don't believe in the intrinsic value of nature, you will commit yourself to its defence – if you know what's good for you!

*ii) Growth*

I turn now to the question of growth. This, incidentally, allows an insight into the parties' economic as well as environmental positioning. Again, the parties under study do partially retain a distinctively new politics character. The British party states in its 2010 national election manifesto that 'size matters: if the economy gets too big it will grow beyond its ecological limits' (GPEW 2010a: 8). Here, then, the document appeals explicitly to environmental boundaries which objectively dictate that the growth paradigm must be brought to an end. Rather more poetically, the French Greens claim at the very beginning of a

chapter on economic policy that '[o]ur goal is not to increase the size of a cake which is more and more poisonous […] for the planet' (EELV 2012: 59). The party is similarly emphatic in a press release issued at the height of the financial crisis where it rejects the notion of 'green growth' put forward by then President Sarkozy, claiming that his use of this oxymoronic term calls into question 'his ecological virtues' (2008).

However, these individual instances of anti-growth sentiment cannot be said to receive particular emphasis. In the case of the French party, the references to the matter are extremely few and far between. The British party refers to the matter more often, but it gently qualifies this stance on many occasions, such as where the party refers critically to the current 'obsession with growth' (GPEW 2010a: 8), to 'indiscriminate growth' (GPEW 2009: 8) and to 'growth-as-usual' (ibid). Does the party oppose growth outright, or simply an excess of growth? In these instances, one cannot be entirely sure. Most strikingly, while *Die Grünen* does imply a certain scepticism towards the concept of economic growth on a few occasions (2009a: 111; 2009b: 25), it also shows indications that it might be on the cusp of abandoning an anti-growth position altogether. At one point it adopts the concept very concept which *Les Verts* had rejected in its critique of Sarkozy, that of green growth: '[e]nvironmental protection is a global growth market. Investments made today into technologies and jobs are the prerequisite for the export successes of tomorrow.' (DG 2009b: 30) Whereas an anti-growth position is usually predicated on the existing processes of environmental degradation, here the German Greens present the logic of growth as a strategy for avoiding such damage in future.

In this case equally, therefore, it can be stated that the parties have retained an aspect of their new politics distinctiveness, but that the radicalism of their claims has softened a good deal. In the case of the German party, the party expresses its traditionally anti-growth stance in such a weak and ambiguous form that it might go unnoticed by the layperson. One

might speculate that this is the result of the comparatively deep integration of *Die Grünen* within the party system in which it operates.

Field 2: Radical democracy

The second broad component of new politics ideology – which I need not split into various distinct themes, and instead engage with in its integrity – is a radical conception of democracy. Like ecology, this theme is not solely the purview of new politics ideology; one thinks in particular of the older-established ideology of anarchism. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the scholarship, it has been recognised that Greens call for greater public participation in politics and for the decentralisation of power in all of its forms (Poguntke 1993: 37-8; Doherty 2002: 72). Indeed, Kitschelt's early studies made this radical democratic aspect of Green thought visible in the very term he constructed to denote it: 'left-*libertarianism*' (1988; 1989). Today, too, Green parties are still frequently studied for their still relatively grassroots forms of organisation (see Benoît Rihoux in this volume). This institutional framework derives from a particular tenet of new politics ideology: namely, that all of society ought to have a greater say in the making of decisions which affect society as a whole.

On this topic, again, it is clear that Green parties have retained at least some significant aspects of their traditional aspirations. There is a full chapter in both German Green manifestos which engages with related topics (2009a: 112-133; 2009b: 161-72). In the case of the GPEW, the theme is also prominent: for example, there is within the national election manifesto the call for the creation of a 'citizen culture', which is accompanied by the claim that '[c]reating a fair and sustainable society is a job for government at all levels – but also a job for us as citizens' (GPEW 2010a: 28-9). This same sentiment regarding citizen

duty is advanced within the European manifesto also: 'a job for every member of the community' (2009: 26).

It is this last citation which indicates a related ideological facet of the British Greens which serves to ground their radical democratic tendencies: localism. Localism refers to the advocacy of smaller units of political organisation, geographically decentralised and therefore closer to those who are on the receiving end of political decisions. The emphasis on local forms of political organisation is an emphatic concern of the British party, as is indicated by the fact that the word 'community' arises 30 and 25 times in the national and European manifestos, respectively. Hence, more decentralised, participatory forms of democratic engagement are never far from the concerns of the GPEW; and, while they do not receive as consistent an emphasis, similar localist tendencies may be found within the German party ('the communes are important germination points of democratic society and of citizen participation', 2009b: 164).

Like the German and British parties, *Les Verts* displays a marked radical democratic tendency. This is evident both in its policy – calls to support the use of citizen-initiated referenda, and for other such democratic experiments (EELV 2012: 161) – and in the way the party conceives of itself. In the national manifesto, it claims to be part of a broader 'movement' (2012: 12), in such a way as to imply that 'political ecology' (the party's term for its ideology) is concerned not only with institutional politics but also with more direct forms of political activity. This aspect of the party's ideology can also be seen in visual terms within the European election manifesto, as every other page bears a stylised image of a crowd of protestors, implying that the party continues to self-identify with the radically democratic movement politics from which it was originally formed.

On the other hand, the French Greens do not possess the same localist streak as may be found within the German or, especially, the British party. It does speak of the need for

decentralisation, but this is couched in terms of 'a new, federal form of state organisation' which argues in favour of granting further autonomy to the 'regions' of France (2012: 158). These proposals would amount to a French Republic which, in terms of its institutional framework, looks rather like the German state as it is configured today. The degree of ideological radicalism on display here is more modest than that of the other two parties, though when one takes the context into account – the French Greens are part of a particularly centralised political system – then it is clear that *Les Verts* is at least tending in the same direction as the other two parties. It is unsurprising that differences in national political culture should strongly influence how Greens concern themselves with the reform of existing political procedures. In sum, one can still identify a series of shared preoccupations which may be said to identify the parties under study as a part of a broader family.

Field 3: Egalitarianism

The final broad component of the new politics ideology is egalitarianism, or an insistence on social justice for all groups of society (Kitschelt 1988: 195; Poguntke 1993: 37-8; Doherty 2002: 71). Unlike other ideologies which have a similar emphasis on the equality of all human beings – most notably, socialism and classical anarchism – the new politics does not emphasise the exploitation of the working class more than it does any other demographic. Instead, there is a relatively high degree of attention given to the rights of women, migrants, sexual minorities and the inhabitants of developing countries.

In this section, I first consider the extent to which Green parties today might be broadly understood as feminist parties. Given the influence of the women's movement in the historical development of Green parties (Kolinsky 1988; Doherty 2002: 54-5), it is important to ask whether these parties still place particular emphasis on the maintenance and expansion

of women's rights. Second, given the Green defence of migrants' rights (Poguntke 1987: 78) and of ethnic minorities (Kitschelt 1989: 93; Poguntke 1987: 78), I study how the three parties conceive of issues of migration. Finally, as a further indicator of whether the Greens may be seen as egalitarian on a global scale – and because it is a topic which cannot be bypassed in any study of new politics ideology – I look at the extent to which the German, French and British Greens express pacifist concerns. Green parties took up the cause of peace in Europe and beyond from a very early point (Kolinsky 1984; Bomberg and Carter 2006: 103; Carter 2013: 75), and as a part of this advocated unilateral disarmament in opposition to the arms race between the American and Soviet powers (Poguntke 1993: 39).

*i) Women's rights*

On the topic of women's rights, it is difficult to speak of ideological consistency across the three parties. The French party is the most straightforwardly new politics of the three cases. Consider, for example, the breadth of forms of discrimination against women considered by the party: political under-representation, economic hardship, physical violence, and so on. Consider also the radicalism which the tone of the documents sometimes takes: '[f]or Greens, it is argued, 'a solidaristic world can only be constructed if the social relations between women and men change considerably […] From school to work, it is all of society which must be transformed to make possible respect [for women] via a feminist approach' (EELV 2012: 131). A radically systemic conceptualisation of gender inequality is suggested elsewhere in both manifestos, as well as in press releases issued by the party: it is claimed in one release that 'acts of violence against women are not individual problems', but are instead the result of 'a society where women-men relations […] still rest on a dominant-dominated basis linked to the patriarchal system' (EELV 2010b).

In the case of *Die Grünen*, the question of women's rights receives even greater emphasis. It raises its head throughout the manifestos, and not merely in specific policy chapters. Furthermore, press releases issued by the federal party (*Bundespartei*) on the topic far outnumber those produced over the same period by the French and British parties. The content of its feminism, however, is a little different. At times the tone struck is indeed radically new politics ('[w]e Greens stand in the tradition of the women's movement', DG 2011). But undoubtedly, there is also a strong bourgeois streak to the party's feminism. Unlike in the case of the French party, *Die Grünen* gives particular emphasis to the economic status of women, the need to move away from the 'mode of the sole male breadwinner' (2009b: 180). So for example, the very first section within the chapter on women's rights is called 'Equal opportunities in the labour market' (2009b: 181-2). But apart from the emphasis on women's economic position in general, there is an explicitly careerist element which is articulated from time to time, where the party discusses the need for more women in leading positions within companies and other institutions (2009b: 49-50; 181; 2009a: 123-4) and in scientific and academic roles (2009b: 110).

Lastly, and interestingly, it is important to note that the British party's manifestos devote no particular space to the topic. Instead it is referred to in passing, within the context of other policy fields (examples on 2009: 15, 27; 2010a: 12, 25, 31). The point is true also of the party's press releases, of which very few are devoted to the question of women's rights. This is not to say that the British party turns an entirely blind eye to questions of gender; to take a current example, its two most prominent leadership roles must be allocated according to principles of gender parity. Nevertheless, on the basis of this analysis, women's rights do not form a central aspect of the party's ideology. As such, and given also the somewhat different approaches to the topic espoused by the *Les Verts* and *Die Grünen*, with the latter adopting a rather liberal feminist stance, it would seem that Green parties today cannot

straightforwardly be identified by a new politics, radical position on women's rights; though, certainly, one might still argue that their aggregate position is still reasonably distinct from that of other types of political party.

*ii) Migration*

On the subject of migration, there are certainly clear areas of overlap in the position taken by the parties. All three are highly critical of existing policies which are being deployed at the European and national levels in order to kerb immigration. The French Greens, for example, are forthright on this point in their statement that 'WE REFUSE FORTRESS EUROPE' (EE 2009: 48; emphasis in original). In opposition to this, the party claims the need for 'an immigration policy which is open and humanist, and which permits another approach to North-South relationships than the war on migrants which the European Union is currently leading' (EELV, 2012: 139).

Die Grünen places an even more continual emphasis on the question: the rights of migrants is a question which arises continually throughout the manifestos. Like *Les Verts*, the party is highly critical of existing immigration policy, as like *Les Verts* it castigates the conception of the European Union as a '"fortress" against refugees'(2009a: 115); and, furthermore, it advocates 'a society which is open for immigration and which makes possibly integration through participation' (2009a: 115). It goes perhaps even further in its cosmopolitan stance than the French Greens, though, as it speaks of the outright cultural necessity of migration for the creation of a diverse national culture: most strikingly, it speaks of the need to 'advance integration and to democratically create multicultural reality' (2009b: 147). There is one subtle aspect in which *Die Grünen* differs, however, and this is in the relative importance placed on the economic integration of migrants ('[t]he labour market is a

key to integration', 2009b: 148). This process is essential not just for migrants themselves but also for national economic productivity ('Legal immigration is a way of meeting the labour market's demands for skilled labour', 2009a: 115). To some extent, then, this mirrors the party's somewhat bourgeois approach to feminism noted in the discussion of the previous theme, and further implies an integration of the ideological concerns of the German Greens into more mainstream, liberal discourse.

Finally, the GPEW mirrors the preoccupations of the French and German parties, for the most part. It is similar to the multicultural position taken by *Die Grünen* where it claims that '[m]uch of our language, culture and way of life have been enriched by successive new arrivals [of migrants] over two thousand years' (2010a: 45). Furthermore, the party seeks to enforce the notion of 'British Citizens' as themselves migrants, both historically and in the present ('[w]e in the UK are part of the pattern of global migration', 2009: 30). There is, though, a slight distinction in nuance regarding the British party's approach to the topic of migration, which is that the party is not absolutely new politics in its approach; at one point it shows a gentle ambivalence towards the effects of migration (2010a: 45), and it would appear to do so partly on the basis of the localist position indicated in the above analysis of the party's stance on radical democracy. The point should not be overemphasised, because for the most part its arguments are close to those of the other two parties. But to a similar – if slightly lesser – degree as with the previous theme, I have shown that there are differences in the parties' positions on migration, even if Green parties still can in general be thought of as staunch defenders of migrants' rights.


*iii) Pacifism*

This final topic proves to be the least helpful of all six themes in the identification of a Green party family. Of the three parties, it is the Green Party of England and Wales which perhaps makes the greatest case to be qualified as pacifist. Unlike the other two parties, it demands the immediate recalling of British troops from Afghanistan. This is made clear in the manifestos (2010a: 42) and in press releases ('There is no military solution to this conflict', 2010b). However, the party does not explicitly claim to oppose the use of military force in all circumstances; and, furthermore, where it argues against it, it sometimes does so through a language of pragmatism rather than one of morality. For example, the 'invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan' are said to be 'counterproductive' (2010a: 42), and the document here claims that '[i]t is now absolutely clear that our security has been compromised, not improved' as a result of these actions. Here, then, the wars are partly criticised from the standpoint of efficacy, implying that 'our security' was and remains the central question at stake.

The German and French parties are even less easily qualified as pacifist. It is well known that *Die Grünen* underwent a rather tumultuous stage in its development shortly after acceding to national office when German air forces participated in the NATO military actions in the former Yugoslavia (Rüdig 2002b: 95). Interestingly, the party implicitly refers to this series of events in its European manifesto, in the introductory section to the chapter on foreign policy:

> With the end of the confrontation between the two blocs and the flaring up of new wars and civil wars, ethnic cleansings and massacres against the civilian population, the majority of the party has brought itself to a reappraisal of the military. (2009a: 146)

The text here denies that the party has changed its position in disavowing pacifism. It is, instead, the world which has become more violent, and the party has simply adapted its perspective to accommodate this new geopolitical context. The party thus presents itself as unrepentant regarding the Balkan episode. In more recent terms, and in quite stark contrast with the British party, *Die Grünen* claims that some meaningful successes have been won in

Afghanistan – 'the liberation of a great part of the population from the despotism and terror of the Taliban, better access to education and opportunities for economic development' – even though this is heavily qualified with reference to the suffering that the war has also entailed (DG 2011c).

As for the French party, *Les Verts* does at one point in the manifestos make an explicit statement in favour of '[n]onviolence', which 'as a mode of resolution of international crises represents a constitutive value of political ecology' (2012: 184). Yet this reads as somewhat paradoxical in the face of some of the party's policy positions. Like *Die Grünen* (DG 2011c), though unlike the GPEW, the French party is not in favour of an immediate withdrawal of national troops from Afghanistan (EELV 2010a). More strikingly, the party was in full favour of a multilateral military action against the Gaddafi regime in Libya for the creation of a 'no-fly' zone (EELV 2011a; 2011b), the party's rationale being that this would protect civilians against airstrikes by the regime's forces. The prospects of such an action received a much more ambiguous appraisal by both the British and German parties (DG 2011b; GPEW 2011).

In sum, then, none of the parties are in principle opposed to the use of military force under specific circumstances. Two of the three – likely not coincidentally, those which were in national government at the time of the military actions in the former Yugoslavia and in Afghanistan – explicitly talk of the benefits of the intervention of armed forces in recent historical events. On the basis of this analysis, it would seem that Green parties today cannot be identified as 'pacifist' parties.


## III) Conclusion and discussion


What, then, are the results of this study? To come to the point, it would seem plausible to conclude that Green parties today do indeed constitute an ideological party family, at least

within western Europe. I premise this conclusion on two claims. First, the three parties under study – which have enjoyed very different levels of success, and which function within three rather different national political cultures – have been shown to possess a great many commonalities across the six themes studied. And second, the commonalities which exist generally suggest an ideology which is sufficiently distinctive from that of other types of party. But the question remains: is it as straightforward to speak of a Green party family today as it was thirty years ago? The remainder of the essay engages with this very issue.

On the first point, as to the degree of ideological overlap evident between Green parties, it is clear that the picture is not one of absolute homogeneity. Differences have arisen in the course of the analysis, most prominently within the themes of economic growth, feminism and pacifism. Furthermore, the German and British parties in particular have indicated multiple divergences from the historical model of the new politics ideology. Why should this be the case? On the part of the German Greens, its relative integration into the party system within the *Bundestag* is surely the most plausible explanation; and the ideological distinctions within the British party might best be understood as a result of the somewhat different origins of the GPEW, whose relation to the new social movements were at the time of its foundation rather more indirect (Faucher 1999a). Furthermore, in the case of all three parties, national differences in political culture must also provide part of the explanation, and these have been referred to in the individual thematic analyses above. Perhaps, then, Green parties are becoming increasingly heterogeneous over time.

But this is likely not the case. It must be remembered that I have been comparing individual party ideologies against an aggregate model of new politics ideology; and that, in fact, Green parties have never been ideologically homogeneous (Müller-Rommel 1985; Müller-Rommel and Poguntke 1989). Furthermore, the specific influences on Green parties, considered immediately above, are not new. Green parties across Europe have always been

partially divided by their differing levels of integration into their national political systems. Their origins have tended to be similar, but they have never been precisely the same in any two cases. And, of course, Greens have been exposed to the pressures of distinct national political cultures from their foundation; indeed, to some extent it can be said that each Green party has grown out of its own particular nation-state, even as it has argued against the inadequacies of a solely national politics in the face of contemporary environmental and social crises. Party family approaches to ideological classification have always had to take such factors into account and to make allowances for them.

However, regarding the distinctiveness of Green party ideology, the last thirty years have taken their toll. The thematic analysis above has shown that while all the parties advocate more direct forms of democratic participation, the state is tacitly accepted as the principal lever of social change, as is reflected in the texts as well as in the primarily electoral strategy of most Green parties. While the Greens under study here have a partially radical view of nature, they compromise and understand the environmental partly in utilitarian terms, even if they do so primarily to attract more votes. Their egalitarianism is still very much in view, but the parties do not on the whole approach discrimination against women and migrants in a radically systemic fashion. Finally, they say little of their opposition to economic growth; and they can scarcely be thought of as pacifist, often adopting positions compatible with 'liberal humanitarianism', even if the parties remain on the sceptical edge of this philosophy of military activity.

In sum, Green parties have lost some of their radical edge. The aggregate Green party ideology discovered in the analysis above has partially shifted away from the historical model of new politics, and one can no longer easily speak of them as 'anti-party' parties, neither in the organisational nor the ideological sense. This is very likely so because over a period of thirty years they all, including the more marginal amongst them, have become relatively

established institutions seeking national political influence. All Green parties have undergone a greater or lesser degree of integration within the existing party system. Herein lies a potential challenge for future attempts to classify party families by ideology. If even the newest challenger group within European party systems has lost some of its ideological distinctiveness, and if this process of incorporation into the political mainstream continues, then this suggests that we must be prepared to adopt a more subtle approach than in the past; we must acknowledge that, in general, the gaps between party family ideologies are becoming less substantial than in past years.

However, it is by no means certain that Green parties will continue on their trajectory of integration and deradicalisation. Thirty years on, Green parties endure, and occasionally still sometimes achieve considerable electoral successes. But one cannot speak today of an upwards trajectory of Green parties comparable to that which was in evidence in the 1980s and 1990s. It is now rather difficult to believe that Greens will achieve political influence comparable to that of the older-established party families, at least in the foreseeable future, and in the absence of any sudden increase in the salience of environmental degradation among voting publics. To take a dramatic example, the German Greens have recently suffered a disappointing result in the federal elections of 2013, despite their considerable successes in recent years (Rüdig 2012) and discussions of the possibility that they might become a new catch-all party (Kroh and Schupp 2011; Probst 2011; Schneider and Winkelmann 2012); and, furthermore, despite the possibilities granted by the increase in public opposition to nuclear technology in the aftermath of the nuclear disaster at Fukushima.

Green parties which remain on the relative fringes of their national political systems might decide that further ideological moderation is needed if they are ever to appeal to greater swathes of the public. On the other hand, their role of permanent opposition or at best junior coalition partner might incite them to emphasise their ideological distinctiveness, and

therefore contribute to a phase of ideological stability or even reradicalisation, as they continue to find greater support among those sympathetic to the social movements from which they originated than they do among voters inhabiting the middle ground of society. One thing is for sure. If the Greens' 'long march through the institutions' has indeed been halted, then making any accurate guesses at the future development of Green party ideology is a difficult task.

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