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From Nuclear Building Sites to Cabinet: The Career of the German Green Party

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Keele European Parties Research Unit
(KEPRU)

Working Paper 6

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ISSN 1475-1569
ISBN 1-899488-24-3

KEPRU Working Papers are published by:

School of Politics, International Relations and the Environment (SPIRE)
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ST5 5BG, UK

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KEPRU Working Papers are available via SPIRE's website.

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Introduction*

Whoever has followed the development of the German Green Party over the past two decades will remember these three pictures: The first one was taken when the Greens entered the Bundestag in 1983 under the bewildered and anxious looks of the parliamentarians of the established parties. The latter dressed in their uniform-like dark suits, few women among them, most of them beyond their thirties or even forties while the newly elected Green MPs wore the casual outfit of the student generation and carried flower pots with them – a symbolic gesture not least aimed at providing TV with symbolic pictures. The second picture shows Joschka Fischer being sworn in as Minister of the Environment of the Hesse Land government in 1985, wearing a casual jacket, jeans and trainers. The third photograph shows the newly formed red-green federal government in 1998, and the Green ministers stand out, if at all, only by their exquisite outfit. Again, Joschka Fischer, now Minister of Foreign Affairs, has set new standards, and is henceforth mainly pictured wearing dark three-piece suits with fashionable, tasteful ties.

There can be little doubt that these pictures epitomise more than a change in style. Evidently, the Green Party has matured, has undergone substantial ideological and organisational change since its foundation in 1980 and its first entry into national parliament just three years later. The Greens started out in 1980 as a party which did not only ask radically new questions, but which also attempted to realise a new form of organising party politics, aiming at a decidedly anti-hierarchical model of party organisation that at the same time was meant to be a model for the democratic organisation of society as a whole. In other words, the way the Greens changed their organisational structure has always been both, an indicator of their ideological conviction and an expression of their adaptation to the constraints of modern parliamentary democracy. When analysing the process of party maturation we will therefore focus primarily on the changing Green party organisation which reflects the overall change of the Greens.

* Paper Delivered at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco; Panel: Life-Cycle Theories and the Maturation of “New” Parties; Panel Chair: Robert Harmel

Throughout, this adaptive process has taken two different routes (Harmel & Janda, 1994: 275): On the one hand, the party gradually changed its actual working mode, mainly in response to external stimuli and resources, which had a substantially differential impact on different party arenas. This, on the other hand, widened the gap between formal party organisation and the de facto power structure which then, in turn, led to structural reform, which invariably was highly contested and ideologically charged.

Although any attempt to identify discrete phases of what is essentially a continuous development is troubled with inaccuracies, it is nevertheless meaningful to identify four important phases of Green party development, each of which confronted the party with unique challenges and hence adaptive pressures. Each of these phases is defined by substantial change in the party's external environment, which induced essential abrupt changes in party organisation and strategy. Borrowing from Pedersen's typology of party lifespans (Pedersen, 1982), we can identify the following discrete phases in the development of the German Green Party

- from movement to party
- getting into parliament
- moving towards government
- entering national government

The analysis is complicated by the fact that German parties, due to strong federalism, are essentially federations of Land parties united and integrated by little more than a common political project and the willingness to co-ordinate political activities. Essentially, German parties are held together by permanent negotiation relations between elites on different levels of the party organisation (Eldersveld, 1964: 9-13, Poguntke, 1994: 205-07; Poguntke, 2000: 32-35).

Individual Land parties have developed at a very different pace. While most West German Green Land parties crossed the threshold of representation (Pedersen, 1982: 7) in the early 1980s, there were some latecomers. The Bavarian Greens missed the 5

per cent-hurdle in 1982 by an extremely narrow margin and had to wait until 1986; the North Rhine-Westphalian Land party had to wait until 1990; and the Greens in Schleswig-Holstein only made it in 1996, but jumped two hurdles at once and made it straight into a governmental coalition within the SPD (see table 1). It goes almost without saying that such uneven development meant that individual Land parties have been exposed to very different adaptive pressures. While we will restrict our analysis on the national party, this inevitably means that the boundaries between individual phases are blurred because experience on the national level may not be matched by corresponding constraints in Land politics.

A brief glance at table 1 highlights another complication: The East German Land parties have developed at a completely different pace. After a brief spell of political relevance immediately after their emergence, when they (or their organisational precursors) participated in two post-unification Land governments, they were relegated to almost complete oblivion (Wielgohs, 1994; Wielgohs, Schulz, & Müller-Enbergs, 1992; Müller-Enbergs, Schulz, & Wielgohs, 1991; Probst, 1993, Frankland & Schoonmaker, 1991; Hoffmann, 1998). By 1999, the Greens held no seats in East German Land parliaments and their membership accounted for a mere 6.3 per cent of the national party membership. Despite the laborious unification process between Alliance 90 and the Greens, which had implemented several safeguards to guarantee the continued influence of the traditions of the East German citizens' movements, the impact of the East German Land parties on the national party has been almost negligible (Poguntke, 1998a). For the purpose of this analysis, which focuses on the national level, the specific developments in East Germany therefore can be largely disregarded. They would, however, warrant an analysis in their own right in that they represent rare examples of parties achieving relevance even before they had actually crossed the threshold of authorisation – only to face almost immediate annihilation.

Table 1: Green Land Party Development¹

	entry into parliament	first in government	exit from parliament
Baden-Württemberg	1980		
Bavaria	1986		
Berlin ²	1981	1989 ³	
Brandenburg	1990 ⁴	1990 ⁵	1994 ⁶
Bremen	1979 ⁷	1991 ⁸	
Hamburg	1982 ⁹		
Hesse	1982	1985 ¹⁰	
Mecklenburg-West Pomerania			
Lower Saxony	1982	1990	
North Rhine-Westphalia	1990	1995	
Rhineland-Palatinate	1987		
Saarland	1994		1999
Saxony	1990 ¹¹		1994
Saxony-Anhalt	1990	1994 ¹²	1999
Schleswig-Holstein	1996	1996 ¹³	
Thuringia	1990		1994

Source: www.gruene.de

¹ The West German Green party merged after an intricate process with its East German counterparts after unification. From 1993 onwards the official name of the united party was 'Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Grüne)'; for details see Poguntke, 1998a.

² Alternative List, which is the Green Land party in Berlin

³ Red-green coalition.

⁴ Bündnis 90.

⁵ 'Traffic Light Coalition' consisting of SPD, FDP, Bündnis 90.

⁶ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen.

⁷ Bremer Grüne Liste (an organisational precursor of the Green Party)

⁸ 'Traffic Light Coalition' consisting of SPD, FDP, Greens.

⁹ Grün-Alternative Liste (GAL), which is the Green Land party in Hamburg.

¹⁰ Preceded by a period of Special Democratic minority government tolerated by the Greens.

¹¹ Joint list of Greens and Citizens' Movement

¹² Red-green coalition.

¹³ Red-green coalition.

From Movement to Party

While the exact beginning of the first phase of Green Party development is difficult to pin down given the diverse origins of individual Land parties in loosely organised green and alternative lists (Müller-Rommel & Poguntke, 1992), the identification of its endpoint is straightforward, in that it is marked by the party's entry into national parliament in 1983. Beginning in the second half of the 1970s, growing disaffection with the governing social-liberal coalition first led to the formation of local green and alternative lists and then to the first participations in Land elections. While these groups had, in Pedersen's terms, crossed the thresholds of *declaration* and *authorisation*, because they participated in elections, and hence fulfilled the necessary legal requirements (Pedersen, 1982: 6-7), they remained, technically speaking, below the threshold of becoming a fully-fledged political party. Even when the Greens first participated in a nation-wide election (the European elections of 1979), they avoided organising themselves as a party and ran as an 'other political organisation'. This highlights the strong orientation of Green activists towards movement politics. In other words, they saw their political formation primarily (or even exclusively) as a 'promoter' (Harmel & Robertson, 1985: 517) of new themes and issues without considering winning parliamentary representation a primary goal. Typically, the debate about role and function of Green electoral participation throughout their early years was characterised by a profound scepticism about the meaningfulness of parliamentary representation (Kraushaar, 1983).

The conflict between 'fundamentalists' and 'realists' which ravaged the Green Party throughout the 1980s can be read in these terms: *Fundamentalists* maintained that parliamentary representation should primarily be instrumentalised to further the mobilisation of the extra-parliamentary movements by lending them a voice in parliament, by channelling state money to them, by providing them with infrastructural support which became accessible through Green parliamentary parties (Rucht, 1987; Beyme, 1986; Müller-Rommel, 1985). The 'Ecofunds', which collected the donations Green MPs were required to make in order to keep their incomes on par with that of a skilled worker, supported a host of movement initiatives, and there were many instances when the staff of Green parliamentary parties effectively ran

extra-parliamentary campaigns (Poguntke, 1993a: 145-6, 172-79). *Realists*, on the other hand, aimed primarily at becoming a party that would cross the threshold of relevance permanently (Pedersen, 1982: 7) in order to change things through exerting parliamentary blackmailing power or, even better, through joining a governmental coalition.

During this first phase of Green Party development, the *fundamentalists* who wanted the Greens to be primarily a promoter of new causes maintained the upper hand when it came to deciding on the rules that should govern the party's behaviour in parliament. Embodied in the concept of 'grass roots democracy', they consisted of two inter-related sets of rules: The party statute as such and rules regulating the conduct of Green parliamentarians. The party statute defined the party as an organisation which should be controlled by the grass-roots, giving as little steering power as possible to party leaders. To this end, a host of measures were introduced aiming at dispersing power. They included the separation of party office and parliamentary mandates, rotation rules for leadership positions, collective leadership, amateurism, a ban on intra-party office accumulation, the requirement to hold public meetings, and the principle that local and land organisations should be completely autonomous (Heinrich, 1993; Kitschelt, 1988; Poguntke, 1987; Raschke, 1991; Frankland & Schoonmaker, 1992). Equally important, the party organisation was made accessible to activists from the new social movements. Consistently, no clear boundaries were drawn between the party and the movement, and it was a frequent occasion that individuals were selected for party lists or even party posts without being formally party members.

Green parliamentary parties were regarded as 'instruments' of the of the extra-parliamentary party which, in turn, regarded itself (at least its majority) as an integral part of the new social movements. Therefore, likely trends of detachment and professionalisation were to be counteracted by a range of measures. The principle that a Green MP should not take home more than an average skilled worker has already been mentioned. Also, Green parliamentary parties, though formally entirely autonomous when it came to deciding about their own procedures and standing orders, were expected to adhere to the same principles as the party at large. Consistently, the first green parliamentary party institutionalised collective leadership,

held public meetings, and limited the term of office of their leadership (Ismayr, 1985). Most importantly and most controversially, MPs were required to adhere to the principle of rotation which meant that they had to resign their seats after two years of service. More than anything else, the rotation principle reflects the dominant organisational and strategic philosophy of the Green Party during its early years. The party's primary goal was not performance in parliament, because this would have required to allow MPs to acquire the expert knowledge necessary to operate the complicated procedures of modern parliamentary politics successfully. Instead, the party aimed at getting its message across, at creating as much public attention for its causes as possible. From this perspective, the implementation of rotation in 1985, which effectively paralysed the Green Bundestag group for several months, was certainly functional, in that it created an enormous public debate about the Greens' democratic credentials and their concept of grass roots democracy.

Correspondingly, Green party programmes and policy statements tended to lack coherence. The party considered itself as the mouthpiece of a range of new social movements which promoted causes that were related to a common, yet at times diffuse cluster of convictions inspired by the New politics. Since the party regarded itself primarily as the 'parliamentary arm' of these extra-parliamentary movements, little attempt was made to integrate their demands into a coherent programme. In other words, interest aggregation, one of the core tasks of conventional parties, tended to be neglected. In the course of parliamentarisation of the party, this neglect led to some acrimonious internal conflicts (see below).

Getting into Parliament

By and large, grass roots democracy represented the attempt to defy the constraints of parliamentary democracy by trying not to play by the rules of the game. However, the rules proved to be stronger. As soon as the Greens had entered the Bundestag (and several Land parliaments) a host of gradual changes resulting from the logic of parliamentarism set in which could hardly be resisted. First and foremost, the enormous media attention, which mainly focused on the most eloquent and witty Green parliamentarians, created 'unofficial' party leaders while the extra-

parliamentary leadership was increasingly relegated to a secondary role in public perception. This seriously undermined the principle that the extra-parliamentary party, intimately connected to the movements, should preside over the parliamentary party. Equally consequential was the enormous imbalance of resources available to the national party leadership and the parliamentary party. While the extra-parliamentary party remained organisationally on the level of a medium-sized grass roots initiative with virtually no full-time political staff, the parliamentary party had access to the full range of generous resources available to Bundestag MPs. Quickly, this shifted the programmatic leadership to the Bundestag group which could employ scores of full-time staff to work on policy proposals, while the extra-parliamentary party could do little more than criticise their papers on ideological grounds without having to offer much alternatives (Poguntke, 1993b).

To be sure, these developments were also resented by a considerable part of the Green Bundestag group who wanted to adhere to the pure doctrine of grass roots democracy and tended to criticise *realists* for watering down its principles. Those, in turn, had never fully subscribed to the idea of a Green party relegating itself to the role of a 'promoter' rather than trying to become a serious 'contender' for power (Harmel & Robertson, 1985: 517) and quickly seized the opportunity to undermine some of the principles of grass roots democracy by emphasising the structural requirements of parliamentary politics and exploiting their media prominence as well as the resources available to them as MPs.

All this resulted in years of factional strife which the party survived electorally because the relatively high levels of movement mobilisation 'delivered' Green voters almost irrespectively of the party's performance. To an extent, and for a limited period of time, Green internal debates were regarded by parts of the public as an indication of the party's democratic viability, which contrasted favourably with the lack of internal debate typical of the established German parties. As time went by, however, this effect gradually wore thin.

While rotation was implemented by the Green Bundestag group in 1985, quickly it became apparent that this did not only paralyse the parliamentary party for several months, it was also not fully effective. Whereas the intention had been to counteract

professionalisation, German federalism provided ample opportunities for ambitious Green parliamentarians to continue their full-time political careers by ‘rotating diagonally’, that is, into a Land parliament. Joschka Fischer was but the most prominent example in that he became the Hesse Minister for the Environment shortly after he had left the Bundestag. By the end of their first legislative term in the Bundestag, most Land party organisations had succumbed to realities and implemented a four-year rotation rule, which, in the end, was never applied, because the West German Green Party lost all seats in the subsequent first all-German elections of 1990.

Likewise, other tenets of grass roots democracy became gradually eroded. Income limitations for MPs were relaxed although there remained the strong expectation of substantial donations to the party and the Eco-funds. Public meetings gradually gave way to seclusion, and the media presence of prominent Green politicians became increasingly less resented by party activists and Green MPs alike. In other words, the balance shifted slowly to becoming a contender party. This was also reflected by the efforts of the parliamentary party (or parts of it) to engage in serious policy formulation. The drafting of a ‘conversion programme’ (Umbauprogramm) by the parliamentary party, which was approved by the Nürnberg party conference of 1986 represented a milestone in the development towards a party which engages in serious policy formulation in that this document attempted to gauge the costs and benefits of ecological conversion of modern industrial society. In other words, the party began to aggregate interests, to check policy demands against reality. Inevitably, this led to conflicts with single-issue movements, as was epitomised by the conflict over animal rights. When the 1985 Hagen party conference agreed to a proposal by the Bundestag parliamentary group and accepted limited exceptions from an outright ban on animal experiments, this led to the exodus of founding member Rudolf Bahro from the party (Raschke, 1993: 906).

The gradual reorientation of the Greens towards a parliamentary or even governmental role owed much to the developments in the Land of Hesse where the Greens entered a coalition with the Social Democrats in 1985. In the run-up to the 1987 Bundestag elections, the Greens decided on their Nürnberg conference of 1986 to at least sound out the possibility of a coalition with the SPD, should the possibility

arise. It needs be added, though, that the SPD Chancellor-candidate had made it clear that he would not want such a coalition. Nevertheless, this decision represented a cautious approach towards a potential role as a governing party on the federal level.

Moving towards Government

In the late 1980s, the stage seemed to be set for a red-green government in Bonn. The SPD had selected a Chancellor-candidate (Oskar Lafontaine) who clearly favoured an alliance, and the Social Democrats had also re-written their basic programme which now incorporated many green ideas. The Christian-Liberal coalition did not exactly look like potential winners of the next election context either. However, German unification frustrated all red-green hopes and left the West German Greens without any seat in the legislature of the united Germany. This induced some thorough-going structural reforms within the party. No doubt, a severe external shock (Janda et al., 1995; Harmel & Janda, 1994; Harmel et al., 1995) had led to a substantial crisis in the party and the *realists* successfully pushed for organisational reforms which were, above all, intended to increase the steering capacity of party elites in order to prevent a lasting decline of the party.

The major objective of these reforms was to improve communication between the thus far rather disparate power centres of the party. To this end, the federal council (Bundeshaupt-ausschuß), which had been a *fundamentalist* stronghold, was replaced by a newly created Land council (Länderrat) at the Neumünster party conference of 1991. The federal council had been composed of delegates elected by individual Land party conferences plus the federal party leadership. Neither the Land leaderships nor members of Land or federal parliamentary parties were members of this body which explicitly had been designed to guarantee grass roots supervision of the federal leadership and the Bundestag parliamentary party. Since membership in the federal council was incompatible with positions of real power within the party, the election of federal council delegates tended to be of comparative little interest to the delegates of Land party conferences. Consequently, the composition of this body did not always reflect the political will of the Land parties. In addition, the strict application of the principle of separation of party office and mandate that the federal council was largely

immune against the moderating experience of involvement in parliamentary politics. Above all, however, it was not suited to serve as a body for co-ordinating Land and federal politics, because neither parliamentarians nor Land party leaderships could participate. In other words, there was a conspicuous lack of communication and co-ordination between the principle power centres of the party.

The introduction of the Land council represented a significant violation of the sacred principle of separation of office and mandate in that members of Land party executives and Land parliamentary parties now had access to this new body, which also included two MPs from the Bundestag group and one from the Green delegation to the European parliament. Also, it diluted another element of *Basisdemokratie* by taking away the right from this intermediate body to issue binding decisions for the federal executive, which previously had caused much friction and conflict. Even though this was little more than a symbolic gesture, it indicated a changing organisational philosophy of the Greens who were beginning to accept that party executives need a degree of discretionary power for leadership and cannot always be controlled tightly by lower level party bodies. It also meant that the party, and particularly the party in public office, was acquiring increasing autonomy from the party on the ground, and hence from the new social movements (Katz & Mair, 1995). As such, these reforms clearly marked an important stepping stone of the Green Party's route towards a governing party. They were complemented by a moderate streamlining of the federal executive and, more significantly, the abolition of the rotation principle for members of the federal executive, who had previously been allowed only four years of continuous service. However, organisational reform stopped short at facilitating a direct personal link between the national parliamentary party and the national party leadership. A motion to open one-third of the seats in the federal executive to members of parliament was narrowly defeated. This lack of a top-level steering body proved to be debilitating when the Green finally entered national government seven years later.

After the Greens had made an easy comeback in the 1994 Bundestag elections, these structural problems were upstaged by a convincing parliamentary performance of the parliamentary party and, above all, Joschka Fischer, who took advantage of the Social Democratic predicament. For a while, the Greens acquired almost the status of a

leading opposition parties while the Social Democrats were struggling with a severe leadership crisis which led to the unprecedented ousting of party leader Rudolf Scharping at the 1995 Mannheim party congress. When the 1998 elections approached and a red-green coalition was beginning to seem possible, the party leadership initiated a renewed debate about the party structure. Although it was widely considered desirable to finally abolish the strict separation between Bundestag *fraktion* and federal executive in order to establish a 'strategic centre' (Raschke, 2001), no renewed attempt was made in this direction as it seemed unlikely that a party congress would approve. Instead, the Greens had become used to living with regular informal meetings of the federal executive and the leadership of the Bundestag parliamentary party. While this was obviously not an ideal solution, it could be regarded as a functional equivalent of a central steering body, although it lacked transparency and legitimation.

Another unresolved problem was the deficient steering and co-ordination capacity of the federal party vis-à-vis the party as a whole (Bundesvorstand Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen, 1998; Rühle, 1998). Rather unsurprisingly, the 1991 reforms had stopped short of institutionalising a streamlined leadership structure. While the introduction of the Land council improved the co-ordination between federal and Land parties, the frequency of its meetings was too low and its size too large for an efficient secondary leadership body; and it had not been intended to be one. Basically, the Land council tended to function as a 'small party congress'. In anticipation of the greatly enhanced need for efficient steering and co-ordination which would be the inevitable consequence of a possible participation in federal government, the introduction of a smaller secondary leadership body, a so-called 'party council', was proposed. Disastrous management problems throughout the 1998 federal election campaign convinced many sceptics that there was indeed need for reform (Poguntke, 1999).

Simultaneously, and also in anticipation of the likely challenges of government participation, Joschka Fischer initiated a debate about possible involvement of the German army in peace-keeping, or even peace-enforcing mission like on the Balkans. Clearly, this touched upon the very core of Green beliefs, namely the widely shared conviction in the party that the use of military force should be avoided under all circumstances. After all, the party had regarded itself as a constituent part of the peace

movement which had mobilised against the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe in the early 1980s.

Entering National Government

Shortly after the new red-green government had been sworn in, the Leipzig party congress of December 1998 reformed the party structure. Typical of Green reluctance to give up the last elements of grass roots democracy, the reform that was eventually passed did not fully conform to the original intentions of the party leadership. Still, the reform represented an important step towards adopting a conventional party structure. Although the actual names of different party bodies deviates from the conventional nomenclature, the Greens adopted a configuration of leadership bodies which closely resembles that of all other German parties (Poguntke, 1998b). The party executive, which was reduced to five members functions as an executive committee and is in charge of running the party on a day-to-day basis. The newly created party council (Parteirat) is effectively a national executive and is to meet every month; twelve of its 25 members could also be parliamentarians or members of government. The Land council, which used to meet four times a year, was going to be convened only twice a year and corresponded now closely to what other German parties call 'party council'. With the introduction of the party council the Greens effectively closed the gap between a very small national leadership and the more grass roots-oriented Land council, which was too large and met too infrequently to assist the national executive in leading the party.

Little more than a year later, and not least because the Greens had a very rough start as a governing party and considerably lost votes at any subsequent Land election, another attempt was made at reforming the party structure at the Karlsruhe conference of March 2000. The size of the newly created party council was almost halved and the partial separation of office and mandate was finally abolished. The expectation was that this body would now provide an institutionalised forum for the most senior politicians active in the federal leadership, the national parliamentary party and the government.

Another endemic problem of the Greens remained unresolved. Due to the incompatibility of party leadership with a parliamentary mandate, the party has always had extremely high turnover in the federal executive, which has, contrary to the ideals of grass roots democracy, augmented the overweight of the parliamentary party. Given the limited role of party chairs, parliamentary mandates have tended to attract the most ambitious and prominent Green politicians. As a result, the Greens have frequently experienced that a party chair resigned shortly after he or she had acquired some national standing in order to take up a parliamentary mandate or even a post in government. Yet, another attempt to abolish the strict separation between parliamentary party and party executive failed again to reach the necessary two-thirds majority. Still, the 'external shock' of government participation had compelled the Green Party substantially to revise its party structure in order to meet the requirements of participation in national government.

To this date, however, adaptation has remained confined to party organisation, party strategy and policy, while a fundamental revision of the party programme was only initiated after the Greens had joined national government. The rewriting of the party's basic programme, which dates back to 1980 and still calls for the dissolution of Nato and Warsaw Pact (!) is, however, of little more than symbolic significance. After all, the party was subjected to a sudden ideological purgatory soon after its accession to national power. The painful and highly controversial acceptance of German participation in the Kosovo mission certainly amounted to a Green 'Godesberg'. Despite Fischer's attempts to prepare the party for such hard choices between governmental incumbency and ideological purity, the Greens found themselves largely unprepared. For many Green activists, the extraordinary party congress of Bielefeld in May 1999, which finally approved of German military involvement in Kosovo, was a traumatic experience. While the party was engaged in acrimonious debates inside the assembly hall, it had to be protected by strong policy forces against its former allies from the peace movement. Similarly, the decision to agree to a very long-term phasing out of nuclear energy put the party at loggerheads with another significant part of its formerly most loyal supporters, namely the activists of the anti-nuclear movement. The new and difficult role of the German Greens was epitomised by the pictures of the newly elected Green Party chair Claudia Roth getting jeered by

anti-nuclear activists when she turned up at a rally against nuclear transports in early 2001.

Table 2: Phases of Green Party Development

phases of party development	constraints	external shocks	organisational response	strategic response
from movement to party (1977-1983)	legal requirements for electoral participation		creation of a party organisation strongly geared to grass roots democracy; dispersion of power; rotation	party as a mouth-piece of movements; little interest aggregation; party as a 'promoter'
Getting into parliament (1983-1990)	parliamentarisation; differential resource allocation; media attention directed at MPs		gradual erosion of grass roots control; erosion of egalitarian measures and rotation rules	from promoter to contender: development of policy programmes by the parliamentary party; interest aggregation; growing autonomy from movements
moving towards government (1990-1998)	anticipation of need for enhancing steering capacity of leadership if joining government	election defeat of 1990	partial abolition of separation of office and mandate; creation of Land council, abolition of rotation rule for federal leadership	contender party: increasing concentration on electoral and parliamentary performance; receding movement mobilisation
entering national government (1998-)	experience of need to enhance steering capacity	Land election defeats after joining federal government	creation of party council; abolition of separation of office and mandate for this body,	government party: increasing conflicts with movements over implementation of policy

Conclusion

20 years of Green Party development testify to the power of systemic constraints which parties in parliamentary democracies probably can only avoid if they are prepared to face electoral annihilation. To an extent, the Greens had learned their lesson in 1990, when they ignored the overriding theme of unification (Kaase &

Gibowski, 1990) and continued to campaign on global climate change. After this crushing defeat, the party initiated the first thorough-going structural reforms, while gradual adaptation to parliamentary politics had been going on all the time. Still, these reforms proved to be insufficient to perform adequately as a governing party, which is highlighted by two important organisational revisions within little more than one year after joining the federal government.

Over the course of 20 years, the German Greens have turned themselves into an almost conventional, electoral party which is largely independent of movement mobilisation (see table 2). This was, however, as much necessity as a conscious choice. As long as movement mobilisation was high, the Greens could survive electorally with an underdeveloped organisational structure. The party hardly needed to effectively devise and steer political campaigns because it rode on the waves of movement mobilisation which would guarantee sufficient votes almost irrespectively of the Green Party's performance. When movement mobilisation began to recede, the need to become an electoral contender party was as much induced by the lack of movement support as it was by the need to enhance the steering capacity of a party with national governmental ambitions. Or, to put it more bluntly, high movement mobilisation throughout much of the 1980s had allowed many Green activists to ignore the constraints of the parliamentary system. Especially in the age of extreme media exposure, successful parliamentary performance and, above all, government incumbency requires co-ordinated political action by a party elite. This, in turn, presupposes a configuration of leadership bodies which institutionalise permanent communication between the most important party arenas, most notably the extra-parliamentary and the parliamentary leaderships. In a federal system, it needs to include also the elites of Land parties in that they play a crucial role not only for policy making but also for the public appearance of a party as a whole.

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