

Abstracts

Jørgen Goul Andersen

Green Politics

The article discusses various theoretical perspectives on the so-called »new« or »green« politics. Is »green« politics an expression of the political mobilization or even of the class interests of a particular class – »the new middle layers« of the employees within the reproductive apparatuses of the state? Is »green« politics more adequately understood as an expression of post-materialist »value set« conditioned by the unprecedented wealth in the decades since World War II, as most election research would have us believe? Or should »green« politics be interpreted as an expression of problems of crises immanent in capitalism or industrialism? The answer to these questions is important not only in analysing »green« politics but also in judging the future of the labour movement as an agent of social change.

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Social Cleavages in Environmentalism

The article focuses on the relevance of the theory of postmaterialism vis-a-vis a structural theory of capitalism/industrialism in explaining environmental attitudes in Denmark. It contends that the relevant field of testing the theories is not in contrasting ideological factors with social factors. Rather, the theories should be tested on the basis of their implications for the social variations in attitudes.

Here, the theory of postmaterialism faces severe problems. It fits most adequately with participation in the traditional »nature conservation movement« of the 1970's but here there are no generational differences. These generational cleavages are indeed found when it comes to environmental attitudes or participation in the actions of the radical ecological movement; but here the implications concerning class differences are contradicted by empirical evidence. On the whole, »progressive« attitudes towards the environment are as widespread within the working class as within the middle class, and childhood experiences within an unskilled working class family actually produce more »progressive« attitudes than middle class experiences, other things being equal.

This is explained by the Danish labour movement's successful articulation of environmentalism with a socialist discourse and demonstrate that environmentalism (and probably more generally, »new politics«) does not necessarily erode but might rather reinforce traditional political cleavages, depending upon the strategies adopted by the labour movement.

Tor Bjørklund & Ottar Hellevik

The Green Controversial Questions in Norwegian Politics

In the beginning of the 1970s one can detect a breakthrough for the ecological message about the inseparable connection between man and nature in most of the party programmes. There is a parallel development between the parties. But in spite of small differences in platforms and verbal expressions, there are clearcut differences in the support for environmental protection among the voters. The pattern does not fit with the traditional left/right axis. The most negative segment towards the environmentalism is an alliance of two traditional opponents, socialdemocrats and conservatives. The radical middle-class is the most solid base for the environmentalists.