

Green Politics: A Norwegian Experience¹

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Not until 1989 did a Green political party participate in a national election in Norway. The Greens, however, only received 0.4 percent of the votes, and won no seats. Does this indicate that ecology and environmental issues are of no importance in Norway? On the contrary, environmental concern has to a large extent been assimilated into the party platforms and the public. In the 1989 election, environmental issues ranked as the second most important for the voters. The electoral system makes it relatively easy to establish new parties, and also for new parties to win seats. Several new parties emerged after the divisive EC debate in the early 1970s. The Liberal Party, which split on the EC issue in 1973, deliberately tried to rebuild its platform by focusing on green issues. But the Liberal Party has to a large extent remained a one-issue party. Even though environmental issues were more prominent than ever before, the green Liberal Party did not succeed in winning a single seat in 1989. The Socialist Left Party, on the other hand, increased its number of seats from 6 to 17! Our analysis shows that environmental concern was *not* the decisive factor behind the voters preference for the Socialist Left Party as opposed to the Liberal Party. Left-right ideology was more important than environmental concern for the competition between these two parties. The data applied in this analysis are drawn from a long-standing programme of Electoral Research at the Institute for Social Research. The programme is directed by Henry Valen and Bernt Aardal.

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how does one explain the fact that the Green Party, up until now, has been able to attract but a very small proportion of voters? And what are the chances of the Green Party succeeding in future elections?

A plausible hypothesis could be that Norway is an exception to the general pattern due to low exposure to environmental problems. Compared to heavily industrialized countries such as the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, the natural environment is definitely in a healthier state in Norway. But on the other hand, pollution does not recognize national borders. Acid rain from the UK and the continent has been blamed for the pollution of Norwegian lakes and rivers, thus causing destruction of fish stocks and forests. Moum (1978) reports, in fact, that Norwegians express a very *high* level of concern about the environment, compared to citizens in other industrialized nations.⁴

An important aspect of the Norwegian energy debate is, however, that nuclear power has never been much of an issue. This, of course, has to do with the rich access to hydroelectric power and the discovery of oil reservoirs in the North Sea. The need for additional nuclear energy is thus smaller than it would otherwise have been. The particular hazards involved in the production of nuclear energy have to a large extent provided the rallying point for environmental groups in many countries (Müller-Rommel 1985). In contrast, environment protest in Norway has not 'benefited' from public reactions against nuclear power. All this would indicate a rather dull picture of Norwegian environmental politics. As we will show, however, this impression is totally false.

Environmental Protest

It may sound like a paradox, but in Norway the development of what is perhaps the cleanest and safest of all forms of energy, hydroelectric power, has been the focus of environmental protest. In terms of media coverage, it started in 1970 in *Mardøla* in the north-western part of the country (Gleditsch et al. 1971). A new dam project, if carried out, would involve damages to the surrounding environment, and waterfalls in particular. The result was large-scale demonstrations and sit-down actions in the area. Among the leaders of these protests were prominent university professors, inspired by Gandhi's non-violence philosophy. Protest against the building of hydroelectric power dams has acquired a strong symbolic significance for the environmental movement in Norway. Around 1980 the environmental protest was revitalized in connection with the building of the Alta dam in northern-most Finnmark. These protests led to major confrontations between sit-down activists and the police. The political impact of these confrontations was considerable. Not only was the dominant goal of econ-

omic growth and industrial expansion challenged, but the civil disobedience tactics used by protesters made some politicians fearful of the possible negative consequences for the very system of representative democracy (Hansen 1981).

One way of assessing the impact of the growing environmental protest at the political level is to study party platforms (programmes), in order to see whether the parties are putting more emphasis on ecology and environmental issues than they did before. Research has shown that 1973 marked the definite breakthrough for ecology and environmental concern in party platforms (Grønmo 1975). Since then ecological principles and environmental concern have been given a prominent place not only in party platforms, but also in party propaganda. In this perspective, environmental issues have been assimilated by the parties (Bjørklund & Hellevik 1989). But even more pronounced is the process by which the parties have adjusted their traditional political platforms to fit in with the new green politics (Aardal, forthcoming).

Electoral System and Political Context

When we compare the emergence of new parties across nations, it is important to take into account systemic properties of the respective countries. One factor is the general openness of the system as regards emergence of new parties. Norway must be characterized as a relatively open system. This applies to the electoral system, in particular to the regional allocation of seats, as well as to the multidimensional cleavage structure which makes it possible for smaller parties to retain niches in the electorate. In the last election, more than fifteen parties competed, and seven of them won seats in the *Storting*. A good example of an open system is the success of the *Aune* list in Finnmark in 1989. The list received only 0.3 percent of the national vote, i.e. less than the Green Party, but still captured a seat in the national assembly. Typically, Norway was the first of the Nordic countries to break away from the traditional five-party model⁵ (Rokkan & Valen 1962). In a Scandinavian context, Sweden seems to represent an extreme as the Swedish Green Party was the first new party to enter Parliament in about 70 years (Micheletti 1989; Wörlund 1989). In Denmark and Norway, several new parties not only emerged, but also won seats both on the local and the national level, in the 1960s and 1970s.

The divisive EC debate, which ended with the referendum in 1972, resulted in several new parties. Of particular interest here is the Liberal Party. When the Liberal Party was split in 1973, as a direct consequence of internal disagreement over the issue of EC membership, the party deliberately tried to build a new political platform. Environmental pro-

tection and ecological awareness were chosen, partly because these were issues not 'taken' by other parties. In this perspective, the 'reborn' Liberal Party was the first green party in Norway. This happened eight years before the emergence of *Die Grünen* in the Federal Republic of Germany! Even though all Norwegian parties, from 1973 onwards, have been emphasizing the need to take better care of the environment, the Liberal Party was successful in its attempt to portray itself as more deeply committed to this cause than other parties. But the Liberal Party was not the only party competing for the Green votes. The Socialist Left Party also incorporated ecology and environmental concern into its political profile at about the same time. A particular brand of leftist populism, combining an anti-capitalist profile with environmental protection, was the distinguishing mark of this party. This constituted a red-green alliance, with roots going back to the national opposition in the nineteenth Century (Rokkan 1967). Research has shown that the Liberal Party strategy was a success in so far as the public identified the party as the greenest of all parties, followed by the Socialist Left Party (Valen 1981; Valen & Aardal 1983; Aardal & Valen 1989). When the Green Party eventually emerged in 1988, it faced an uphill battle because it had to compete for the Green vote with parties well established in the political system. The success of *Die Grünen* in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Greens in Sweden, in comparison, seems to be linked to a lack of political alternatives. The Green movement in these countries has served as a catalyst for a number of opposition groups (Müller-Rommel 1985; Galtung 1986). In more open systems, like the Norwegian, some of these groups are already established in the party system. The Socialist Left Party, for instance, originated among groups opposing official foreign policy, and protesting against nuclear weapons and NATO membership.

It thus seems fairly easy to explain why the Green Party has not succeeded, and probably will have problems in future elections as well. Interestingly, the Danish Green Party has encountered the same problems as its Norwegian sister party, and received only 1.4 percent of the votes in 1988. The explanation seems to be similar to what has been suggested here for Norway: there is no 'vacant' position in the party system, waiting for a new environmental, left-of-centre party like the Greens (Tonsgaard 1989, 271-290). But this does not necessarily mean that it is of no interest to analyse the Green vote in Norwegian politics. On the contrary, the failure of the green Liberal Party in the 1989 election represents an analytical challenge.

Salience of Green Issues

One method of establishing the salience of various issue areas in the public

Table 1. Environment and Energy the Most Important Issue.

	1977	1981	1985	1989
Rank order	2	5	7	2
% saying most important	26	13	5	37

is to ask respondents which issue they personally hold as the most important. In Table 1 we have collected information from a number of election surveys concerning the rank order given to energy policy and environmental problems, and the percentage of respondents saying that this is their most important concern.⁶

Concerning the rank order of green issues, we see that it has varied considerably over time. This can also be seen from the proportion of respondents holding these issues as the most important ones. In 1977 environmental concern was relatively high. Then followed a downward trend with 1985 as the conspicuous record low, and eventually in 1989 environmental concern was even higher than in 1977. This obviously reflects the electoral campaigns in the respective elections. In 1985, for instance, the dominating theme was the welfare state, in particular care for the sick and elderly. The impression that environmental problems were salient in the 1989 election is confirmed by our data. Green issues were ranked as the second most important by the respondents in 1989, only preceded by social welfare and care for the sick and elderly. One reason for this dramatic change may be recent environmental disasters, including the invasion of seals both in the northern and southern parts of the country, and the algae catastrophe in the summer of 1988. One should, however, be somewhat cautious as regards the persistence over time of such 'disaster effects'. Holmberg (1988) has, for instance, shown that only a year after the Chernobyl nuclear accident, Swedish public opinion had fallen back to its pre-Chernobyl level with respect to nuclear attitudes. Downs (1972, 38–50) has made a point about the 'attention cycle' of political issues, with ecology being no exception. After a period of intense attention, the interest dwindles to a level where people are fed up. In order to maintain public interest, a problem must be dramatic and exciting.

Diffusion of Green Values?

But one thing is to recognize that environmental problems are important. It is quite another to change traditional political values and goals in order to improve the environment and prevent environmental disaster. Is it

possible that the Norwegian public does place environmental issues high on the agenda, but does *not* have environmental *attitudes* or *values* consonant with this involvement? Another way of putting this is to suggest that environmental ideas and values have not permeated the Norwegian public to the same extent as in other countries. A diffusion theory of this kind may be plausible, taking into account the peripheral location of Norway, which has been a familiar theme in previous political analyses (cf. Valen & Rokkan 1974).

Ronald Inglehart has studied value shifts in post-industrial societies, and claims that there will be a gradual change of emphasis from materialist to post-materialist values as the post-war generation grows older (Inglehart 1971, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1984). Although environmental protection did not play a significant role in the early studies of post-materialism (Bjørklund & Hellevik 1989; Aardal, forthcoming), green values have nevertheless been associated with Inglehart's theory of post-materialism. In a study of green voters in France and the Federal Republic of Germany, Hines (1989), however, concludes that the support for green parties is a life-cycle phenomenon which can not be explained by 'stable' values like post-materialism.⁷ Knutsen (1989, 228–231) shows that the Norwegian public seems to be *less* inclined to support post-materialist values than the publics in the other Nordic countries. This also applies to the relative ranking given to environmental protection. Norway is more on par with France, Belgium and Italy, i.e. relatively low, with respect to the prevalence of post-materialist values (Knutsen 1989, 234). Although Lijphart (1981) has characterized Norway as one of the very few countries where post-materialism is of importance, this conclusion has been severely criticized (Jenssen & Listhaug 1988).⁸ Recent data do also indicate that over the last decade the public has *not* been moving in a post-materialist direction in any of the Nordic countries. On the contrary, the number of post-materialists has been standing still or even declined from the 1970s to the 1980s. In Norway only 7 percent of the population was classified as 'pure' post-materialist in 1987, compared to 9 percent in 1981 (Knutsen 1989, 233). Even more challenging to the whole theory of post-materialism is the finding that the relationship between political values and age has become *weaker* in all the Nordic countries in this period (Knutsen 1989, 235).

In the Norwegian election studies we have not used the same questions as in Inglehart's value battery, but the following statement has been put in all elections from 1977 to 1989:

In order to provide economic growth we need industrial expansion, even if this may conflict with protection of the environment.⁹

Respondents were asked whether they fully agreed, partly agreed, were not interested in this issue, partly disagreed or fully disagreed with this

Table 2. Attitudes Towards Industrial Growth versus Environmental Protection, 1977–89 (percent).

	1977	1981	1985	1989
Industrial growth	55	67	49	40
Neutral	10	10	15	14
Environmental protection	27	17	26	42
Don't know	8	6	10	4
Total	100	100	100	100
N	1730	1596	2180	2195

statement.¹⁰ We have combined the two agree and the two disagree categories into one agree and one disagree category. Table 2 shows the distribution of answers to this question at four points of time.

If we focus on those in favour of environmental protection, we see that 27 percent of the respondents wanted to protect nature in 1977. There was a temporary drop in 1981, down to 17 percent, but in 1985 environmental support was back to the 1977 level. This indicates that the low general salience of environmental issues in 1985 did not transform into negative attitudes towards environmental protection.¹¹ Lastly, we see a considerable increase in 1989 as 42 percent of the respondents support environmental protection. But despite this increase, the number of environmentalists in Norway seems to be lower than in Denmark, Sweden and Finland.¹²

Environmental groups, especially in the early 1970s, emphasized the 'limits to growth' (Meadows et al. 1972), and launched *zero growth* as a new catch-phrase. Ronald Inglehart aptly includes priority of economic growth as an indicator of materialist values. In order to capture attitudes to economic growth, we chose a different approach, and have put the following statement in the election studies since 1981:

We should work towards a society with high economic growth and high productivity.¹³

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with this statement. The way the question is worded, it has the flavour of a general societal ideal. Table 3 shows the responses to this question. This table shows a surprisingly high level of support for economic growth and productivity in the 1980s. Most surprising is the increase in 1989, at the same time as support for environmental protection increased considerably. This may seem odd, and calls for further analysis.

We will not be able to go into a thorough analysis here, but we will show a table combining attitudes to economic growth and productivity with

Table 3. Attitude Towards Economic Growth and Productivity, 1981-89 (percent).

	1981	1985	1989
Want high economic growth & productivity	71	72	77
Neutral	8	11	8
Does not want high ec. growth & productivity	15	8	11
Don't know	6	9	4
Total	100	100	100
N	1596	2180	2195

Table 4. Industrial Growth and Environmental Protection vs. Economic Growth and Productivity, 1989 (percent).

	Industrial growth	Neutral	Protecting nature	Don't know
Wants high ec. growth & productivity	89	74	68	51
Neutral	4	17	9	6
Does not want high ec. growth & prod.	4	7	20	6
Don't know	3	3	3	38
Total	100	100	100	100
N	882	311	927	72

attitudes towards environmental protection. Table 4 shows the result. Although the tendency is in the expected direction, with those favouring industrial development as the most ardent supporters of economic growth and high productivity, it is interesting to note that 68 percent of those supporting environmental protection also support economic growth and productivity. The Norwegian public obviously does not see a contradiction between these two attitudes/values. Interestingly, The World Commission on Environment and Development, the so-called Brundtland Commission, does emphasize the need for future economic growth, but this is a 'growth that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable'.¹⁴ This pattern suggests that support for environmental protection had a broader ideological base in 1989 than it did in the early 1980s.¹⁵ It also

Table 5. Environmental Concern by Party, 1989 (N in parentheses, percent).

	Soc. Left	Labour	Liberal	Christian	Centre	Conserv.	Progress.
Environment most important issue	75 (212)	30 (502)	92 (74)	29 (138)	40 (96)	22 (340)	21 (176)
Supporting env. protection	62 (221)	39 (598)	76 (75)	43 (150)	37 (108)	36 (397)	40 (201)

indicates that Inglehart's assumption about a conflict of priority between economic growth and environmental concern is not supported by our data. The post-industrial societies have often been portrayed as societies where the basic economic needs have been satisfied, and where the individual is free to pursue needs higher up the need hierarchy. The crisis in the welfare state, which was especially focused upon during the 1985 election campaign, and the increasing unemployment in recent years, has demonstrated that vital problems are still unsolved. In order to improve both the economy and social welfare and care, the need for economic improvement, rationalization and higher productivity has been emphasized as a major political and economic goal. As our data shows, this acknowledgement may have changed the attitude towards economic growth and productivity, especially among environmentally concerned citizens.

Environmental concern has been characterized as typical *valence* issues where most people agree on goals, but differ on means. Nevertheless, there are variations between different segments of the population. Table 5 gives the profile of various voter groups with respect to environmental concern. The table shows both the percentage saying that energy and environmental problems are the most important issues, and the percentage supporting environmental protection as opposed to industrial expansion. The data is from the 1989 election survey.

The voters supporting the Liberal Party and the Socialist Left Party are more concerned by far with environmental problems than voters of other parties. The profile of the Liberal Party is especially impressive as 92 percent give top priority to green issues and 76 percent support environmental protection. In sum, this shows that we have two green parties, and that the Liberal Party voters are the most concerned with environmental issues. Three weeks before the election in September 1989, the opinion polls were very favourable for the Liberal Party. Estimates showed a return of 5–10 seats in Parliament. But despite this, in the election the Liberal Party received only 3.2 percent of the votes and gained no representatives. The Socialist Left Party, on the other hand, had a considerable upturn just

before the election, and increased its number of seats from 6 to 17. How did this happen? In the next section, we will attempt to analyse the relationship between these two parties.

Competing Green Parties

It is a paradox that in an election where the attention given to environmental issues was higher than ever before, the party most dedicated to these issues reached rock bottom in terms of voter support. A popular explanation of this outcome was that the Socialist Left Party attracted environmentally concerned voters at the expense of the Liberal Party. Panel data seemingly confirm this hypothesis as 42 percent of those who voted for the Liberal Party in 1985 had shifted in favour of the Socialist Left Party in 1989.¹⁶ But this does not necessarily mean that these voters changed party because they lost confidence in the ecological platform of the Liberal Party. Table 5 shows that those who voted for the Liberal Party in 1989 were actually *more* concerned with environmental issues and *more* in favour of environmental protection than the Socialist Left Party voters.

One way of studying the *scope* of a party's appeal is to see whether its support varies across subgroups of the electorate. A party with a narrow electoral base, i.e. which appeals only to a single segment of the population, will be more vulnerable than a party with a more even distribution across various subgroups. In Table 6 we show the ranking of parties according to which issue area the respondents said was the most important for them. Ranking is here based on the proportion of people voting for the party in the particular groups. We have combined several economic issues like inflation, taxes and unemployment into one economic category.¹⁷ Naturally, the largest parties will achieve high rankings. But if we compare the scores horizontally in the table, we see that the popularity of some parties varies considerably across the groups.¹⁸ The Socialist Left Party and the Liberal Party are of particular interest. Although the Socialist Left Party is the dominant choice for voters who report environmental issues to be the most important, it ranks relatively highly in other groups as well. In contrast, the Liberal Party's best rank is fourth in the environmentalist group. Because 'welfare and care' is the most frequently mentioned issue area, it has dire consequences for the Liberal Party to be the least popular party in this group.

An argument often heard from Liberal Party leaders is that their party is at least as dedicated to social welfare and care as other parties. Seen from the perspective of their voters, this is not the picture painted in Table 7, where we compare both the relative frequency of the three most important issue areas in the population at large, in the Liberal Party and in the Socialist Left Party.

Table 6. Dominant Party Choice by Issue Area, 1989 (rank order).

	Welfare (47%)	Economy (43%)	Environ. (37%)	Moral (11%)	Foreign (10%)
Soc. Left	3	4	1	2	4
Labour	1	1	2	2	3
Liberal	7	7	4	5	7
Christian	5	5	5	1	5
Centre	6	6	6	7	1
Conserv.	2	2	3	4	2
Progress.	4	3	7	6	5

Table 7. Percentage Mentioning Issue Areas in Different Groups, 1989.

	All	Soc. Left voters	Liberal voters
1. Welfare & care	46	43	20
2. Environment	37	75	92
3. Employment	19	14	15

Social welfare/care, environment and employment are the three most frequently mentioned issue areas in 1989. These are also the top three among Socialist Left Party voters and Liberal Party voters. But these voters rank environmental higher than welfare and care. On the other hand, the importance attached to welfare and care varies between the Socialist Left Party and the Liberal Party voters. While Socialist Left Voters are close to the national average, only half as many Liberal Party voters mention social welfare and care. In combination with Table 6 this does indicate that the Liberal Party attracts voters on a narrower basis than the Social Left Party.

The Green Vote in 1989

In order to establish the direct link between voting and priority of environmental issues, we must look at party choice in this particular group. In Figure 1 we show the percentage voting for the particular parties among those who hold environment as their number one priority.¹⁹

Although the Socialist Left Party received most of the green votes, this amounted only to 27 percent. As the Liberal Party received 12 percent, this means that the Socialist Left Party outdid the Liberal Party by a factor of more than 2:1! But perhaps the most surprising result is that the two

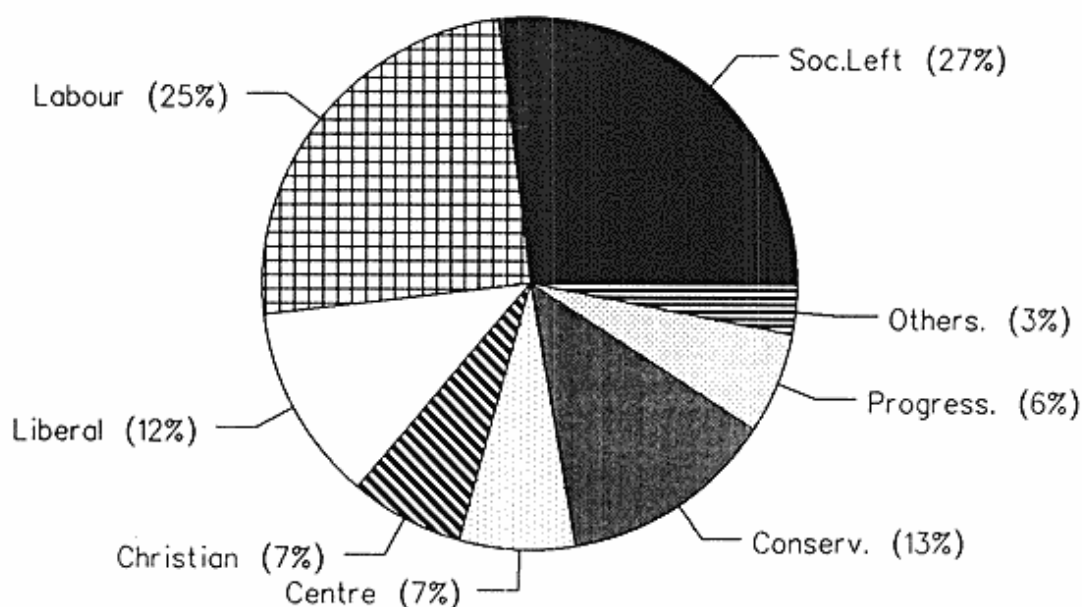


Fig. 1. The Green Vote in 1989.

traditional 'growth' parties, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, fared as well as the two green parties among those who place green politics at the top. This illustrates both the success and the failure of environmental politics in Norway. Large segments of the public have become environmentally concerned, and this also applies to parties which have traditionally been oriented more towards industrial expansion and economic growth. But at the same time, this makes it all the more difficult for particular green parties to compete for the green vote.

Lastly, we will analyse some factors which can explain why the Socialist Left Party outdid the Liberal Party. The question raised has to do with the relative importance of attitudes towards environmental protection compared to more traditional left-right orientations. We cannot go into detail in the present study, but we have included a number of control variables which usually play an important part in this type of analysis. Table 8 shows a multivariate logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is coded 1 for voting for the Socialist Left Party and 0 for voting for the Liberal Party. The independent variables are of two kinds: one group of background variables commonly used in analyses of environmental concern, namely gender, age and education.²⁰ The other group consists of two intervening variables: one measures attitude towards environmental protection on a 10-point scale, and the other measures left-right ideology on the same type of scale.²¹ In earlier studies the left-right scale has been validated against a large number of attitudes dealing with the conflict between public control and private initiative. The correlation is not only

Table 8. Voting for Socialist Left Party vs. Liberal Party, 1989 (N = 291; entries are logit-coefficients).

Variable	Block 1	Block 2
Gender	0.626*	0.170
Age	-0.170*	-0.082
Education	-0.216	-0.082
Envir. prot.		0.124
Left-right		-0.917*

convincing, but also stable over time (Aardal & Valen 1989, 71–72). In order to separate the two types of independent variables, we have conducted the analysis in two steps, in a blockwise procedure. In block 1 we include only the background variables, and in block 2 we include the two attitudinal variables in addition to the background variables. Coefficients marked with an asterisk are significant at the 0.05 level with a one-tailed test.

When we only control for background characteristics in block 1, we see that both gender and age are statistically significant. This means that women and younger voters prefer the Socialist Left Party to the Liberal Party. But these effects disappear when we control for left–right position. Only left–right ideology seems to account for preference of the Socialist Left Party as opposed to the Liberal Party.²² This obviously reflects the red–green profile of the Socialist Left Party, in contrast to the green only profile of the Liberal Party. Although the Liberal Party signalled support for a socialist government in 1985, the party turned completely around and supported a bourgeois coalition government in 1989. This may have resulted in confusion about the exact location of the Liberal Party, and loss of confidence among the voters.²³ As the election drew nearer, the question of government alternative became more focused in the campaign. This may have hurt the Liberal Party and benefited the Socialist Left Party, which has always been located on the socialist side. The ‘Attitudes towards environmental protection’ variable is not statistically significant.²⁴ This indicates that environmental concern was *not* the decisive factor for voters choosing between the Socialist Left Party and the Liberal Party.

Conclusion

The question of why the Green Party has not yet succeeded in Norway is quite easy to explain taking into account the prominent green profile of both the Liberal Party and the Socialist Left Party. The Norwegian party system is relatively open, both with respect to emergence of new parties,

and reorientation of older parties.²⁵ The party which has put most emphasis on environmental and ecological issues actually is the oldest one, established in 1884. Most parties have been through a process of gradual assimilation of ecological ideas and concern. Too many parties were thus competing for the green vote in order for the new Green Party to succeed. In contrast to countries with a more closed party system, there was no 'vacant' spot in Norwegian politics for the Green Party, much in the same way as in Denmark (Bjørklund & Hellevik 1989; Tonsgaard 1989).

On the other hand, it is more of a paradox that the Liberal Party lost out in an election where environmental issues were more prominent than ever. But this, obviously, has to be understood relative to the success of the Socialist Left Party. Not only did the Liberal Party lose credibility among its 1985 voters, but half of them actually changed over to the socialist parties. The young leader of the Socialist Left Party, Mr Erik Solheim, also made a better impression on the voters during the campaign than the liberal leader Mr Fjørtoft, but it is difficult to estimate the effect that this had on the actual vote.²⁶ But perhaps the main advantage of the Socialist Left Party over the Liberal Party was its broader appeal. This is consistent with earlier findings (Aardal & Valen 1989). Those who voted for the Socialist Left Party were not only concerned with the environment, but also emphasized social-welfare issues and care for the sick and elderly, and had a distinct position on the left-right ideological dimension. The fate of the Liberal Party illustrates the problem of being a single-issue party. For several years the party refused to relate itself to traditional dimensions like left versus right, but in 1985 it actively supported the Labour Party government. In 1989, however, they turned around and came out as very strong supporters of the bourgeois coalition. Clearly it is not sufficient that environmental concern and attention is high for a green party to succeed. Despite expectations of an emerging 'New Environmental Paradigm' transcending traditional political cleavages (Capra & Spretnak 1984; Milbrath 1984), the Norwegian experience shows that environmental awareness can to a large extent be assimilated into a political system. The analysis also shows that despite predictions of fading left-right conflicts,²⁷ a clear profile on this dimension may tip the scales in favour of one of two competing green parties. The success of the Socialist Left Party illustrates the competitive advantage of blending new politics with more established conflicts in the system.

NOTES

1. I wish to thank Henry Valen, Gunnar Vogt and Arman Aardal for valuable comments and corrections.
2. The official name was *Miljøpartiet De Grønne* (The Environmental Party – the Greens). The party did actually participate in the local elections in 1987, but only in 2 of 19

- provinces. The Greens received 0.4 percent of the votes in Oslo and 0.8 percent in Akershus in 1987 (Bjørklund & Hellevik 1989).
3. In the 1982 Riksdag election the Swedish Green Party received 1.6 percent of the votes, and in 1985 it received 1.5 percent.
 4. The countries included in this study are Norway, The Netherlands, France, Italy, USA and Japan.
 5. This happened when the Christian Peoples' Party was established on a local basis in 1933 and on a national basis in 1945.
 6. Those who could not mention a single issue are excluded from the computation. The data for 1977 and 1981 are published in Valen & Aardal (1983, 43), and the data for 1985 are published in Aardal & Valen (1989, 44). The data for 1989 are not previously published.
 7. Hines's analysis is based on data from the Euro-barometers.
 8. Some groups in Norway are, however, more post-materialist than their European counterparts, but this may have methodological explanations. Knutsen (1982, 29) shows that Norwegian farmers were more post-materialist than elsewhere in Europe, but this has more to do with the operationalizations of some items than being an indication of 'Post-materialism'. Norwegian farmers score highly on the local influence item in the Inglehart value battery. Local self-government has traditionally been very important, especially in rural areas, and this was even institutionalized in the Alderman Laws as early as 1837.
 9. The Norwegian wording is: 'For å trygge økonomisk vekst trenger vi fortsatt industriutbygging, selv om dette skulle komme i strid med naturverninteressene'.
 10. In contrast to the *ranking* procedure used by Inglehart and associates, our questions are based on a *rating* format. The ranking format used by Inglehart has been criticized both from a substantive and a methodological perspective. See for instance Alwin & Krosnick (1985) and Reimer (1988).
 11. Bjørklund & Hellevik (1989) reported somewhat deviating results for 1985, but even though they have used an identical question, they have not used the same categories as in the election surveys. The figures are therefore not directly comparable.
 12. We are here comparing scores on a similar question in Denmark, Sweden and Finland around 1985 (Bjørklund & Hellevik 1989), and in Denmark in 1987 and 1988 (Tonsgaard 1989, 277).
 13. Norwegian wording: 'Vi bør satse på et samfunn med høy økonomisk vekst og høy produktivitet.'
 14. World Commission on Environment and Development: *Our Common Future*, xii.
 15. Data from the 1981 election study show that 52 percent of those supporting environmental protection were in favour of economic growth and high productivity. Of those in favour of industrial development, 81 percent supported economic growth and productivity. The change in favour of economic growth has thus been most pronounced in the 'environmentalist' group. Although the wording of the growth/productivity question might create a 'yea-effect' in favour of agreeing with the statement, this applies only to the level of support for growth and productivity, and should not affect the changes over time.
 16. In addition 8 percent of the 1985 Liberal voters chose the Labour Party in 1989. *Statistisk Ukehefte* Nr. 50/89, Oslo: Central Bureau of Statistics.
 17. This explains why environmental issues rank as number 3 instead of number 2, as we reported in Table 1.
 18. The Christian People's Party is, for instance, ranked as number 1 among those occupied with moral and religious issues, and the Centre Party is ranked as number 1 among those most interested in foreign policy. In this context foreign policy predominantly means the EC issue.
 19. Those who did not vote are excluded from the computations.
 20. Gender is coded 1 = female and 0 = male. The following age groups are included: 18-21 years of age, 22-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+. Education is coded in 4 categories going from elementary school at the lowest level and university level at the highest.

21. The environmental scale consisted of two statements placed on each end of the scale. At one end of the scale the following statement was placed: 'Increase environmental protection, even if it leads to considerably lower standard of living for everybody – including myself.' On the other end of the scale the statement was as follows: 'Environmental protection must not be carried so far that it affects our standard of living.' Question wording in Norwegian: 'Økt miljøvern selv om det medfører betydelig lavere levestandard for alle – inkludert deg selv', and 'Miljøvernet bør ikke føres så langt at det går ut over vår levestandard.' The respondents were then asked to place themselves on a scale from 1 to 10, according to agreement with one or the other of these two statements.
22. Interestingly, Müller-Rommel (1985, 63) finds that support for the German Green Party is more strongly related to left–right orientation than to value system.
23. The argument, put forward by directional theory, that parties with a distinct profile on salient political dimensions will attract more voters than a party with an ambiguous position, may be of relevance here (Rabinowitz et al. 1988; Listhaug et al. 1988; Rabinowitz & Macdonald 1989).
24. In order to give environmental orientation a better chance of obtaining statistical significance, we conducted a similar analysis with environmental attitude as the only independent variable. But it was still not significant.
25. In contrast, Müller-Rommel (1985, 56) writes that: 'The experience of the environmentalists with the bureaucratic organizational structure of the established parties and interest groups became a major reason for the growth of the Greens in Germany.'
26. A sympathy thermometer reading in the 1989 study shows that Mr Solheim was the *most* popular of all the party leaders, while Mr Fjørtoft was the *least* popular leader.
27. Milbrath (1984, 25) claims that: 'many people, especially young people in modern industrial societies find that left v.s right is not very relevant for characterizing their political beliefs. Interpreters and consumers of public opinion should be cautious about using the left–right dimension to characterize politics and political stances in modern industrial societies.'

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